

THE HISTORY OF PRAHRAN

1925 – 1990



Sally Wilde

The History of Prahran Volume II
1925-1990

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Introduction

When the Prahran Council decided to commission the writing of an official history of the municipality, it was among the pioneers of such an enterprise. The 1906 Jubilee marking fifty years of Prahran Council rule had recently been celebrated and the Council was justly proud of Prahran's achievements. It wanted a permanent record of the municipality's development and of the part played in that development by the Council and by others prominent in the district. The Council saw Prahran as a city within settled boundaries rather than as a suburb of Melbourne and regarded its industry, commerce, residential areas and social amenities as unique rather than as part of the wider metropolis. The official history was to be, as its author describes it, 'a civic work, authorised for public information', to be read by its citizens and by admiring outsiders.¹

At the turn of the century there were few trained historians to undertake the task, in any case, the Council preferred to engage a practised writer with a wide experience of men and events in Melbourne. It was believed that a seasoned journalist could most aptly tell the story of Prahran's growth and rising prosperity. The man chosen was a well-known journalist of many years' standing named John Butler Cooper, who was also commissioned to write histories of St Kilda and Malvern.

The history was published in 1912, with a second, revised edition in 1924. Cooper's skills lay in his ability to collect facts and to weave them into a short account—as he did in his descriptions of the evolution of an adequate water supply and of the volunteer fire brigade—or into a lusty, often humorous account of the day-to-day struggles of protagonist and

antagonist in many of the controversial issues that emerged as the century wore on. He could tabulate facts and figures and summarise the achievements of schools and churches and build up the picture of a settlement which, as an inner suburb of Melbourne proper, developed from a stretch of bushland in the 1830s to a municipality in 1855, a borough in 1863, a town in 1870 and a city in 1879. Though anecdotal and sometimes episodic, Cooper's *The History of Prahran* has been invaluable as a starting point for all later researchers into this most interesting of districts. Cooper's work is still fresh, lively and informative and many of the people important in Prahran's growth, who might have remained as mere names, come to life in its pages.

He drew his material, as he himself wrote, from 'Council's minute books, newspapers, documents and plans', as well as 'by listening to the tale told in the speech of old residents where their memory served'.² He had no computers or data processors to aid him and when he was ready to put pen to paper, he told the story of Prahran in the ornate style so suited to the age for which he was writing.

He knew he could never write a complete history. Quoting Montaigne, he claimed to have 'made here only a nosegay of culled flowers' and to 'have brought nothing of my own but the thread that ties them together'.³ In this he was too modest. He selected his 'flowers' very carefully in an effort to tell his story of people, institutions and places with as much breadth and detail as possible and he interpreted his facts as honestly as he was able. As well, he added his own personality to the history, as all good historians must do. Though much new material has since been discovered and new aspects of Prahran's history have been examined by historians, Cooper's *The History of Prahran* remains an invaluable reference.

An analysis of the development of local governments in Victoria was published in 1979. Written by Bernard Barrett, the State Historian, *The Civic Frontier* deals with municipalities and boroughs in the colony and places the tangled history of Prahran's politics into perspective as part of the wider history of Melbourne and its suburbs. Other historians, notably Geoffrey Serle, Graeme Davison, Michael Cannon and Paul de Serville, have examined social, political, commercial and industrial developments in late 19th-century Victoria and in doing so have drawn into the general historical picture the events of Prahran's history and the doings and misdoings of many of its leading citizens.⁴

Local societies have been active in the municipality. The Prahran Mechanics' Institute has amassed a valuable reference library of books and documents concerned with local and Victorian history. The Prahran Historical and Arts Society has undertaken a long, continuing task in the sorting, tabulating and computerisation of its collection of archival

material, much of it official Council records. The municipal library holds important research material.

During the 1980s and early 1990s a series of books and booklets was planned and published under the joint sponsorship of the Institute and the Historical Society, with the blessing of the Prahran Council.⁵ These historical publications are known as the Prahran Historical Series and the Prahran Heritage Series and examine separate aspects of the community—education and schools, religion and churches, commerce and industry, police, hotels, streets and districts, charities and entertainments. Little by little, a more detailed picture of Prahran has been developed.

It remains for a second volume of the official history to draw all these diverse threads together and to present a comprehensive picture of Prahran's progress in the 20th century.

The aim of this introduction is to summarise the history of Prahran as we now know it during the 19th and early 20th century, thus laying the foundation for the more modern period which was to follow, and which is the subject of Volume II. One of the main themes to provide continuity between the centuries is that of diversity. From the first, Prahran was a district of sharp contrasts in its geography, its economy, its districts, streets and people, and this diversity, which has been intensified rather than modified in the 20th century, is clearly illustrated in the community which evolved in the 19th century and which is still evolving.

The first Crown land sales in Prahran were held in June 1840, others took place in 1849 and 1850. Until 1852, development was slow. With the easing of the first gold rushes and the return of miners to the city, development was rapid and by 1856, when the first Council elections were held, the district had about 8000 inhabitants. Some were itinerants but many were young men and women eager to settle there. By this time all but a small triangle of land in the south-east corner of what was to be the Prahran municipality had been sold and already some blocks had been subdivided for streets and housing. Agitation for local government led to a stormy conception and gestation, with almost as many inhabitants against as in favour. Prahran was gazetted as a municipality in 1855 and the first Council of seven members elected nine months later.⁶ Even as early as 1855 the diversity which was to mark Prahran was apparent, though it was to become much more complex as the century wore on.

Cooper traces the adoption of the name of Prahran to a meeting between Robert Hoddle, Melbourne's City Surveyor, and George Langhorne, a missionary who had been working among the Aborigines living south of the Yarra.⁷ Hoddle adopted the native name, which Langhorne pronounced *Purraran*, to designate a much larger area stretching south-east

towards Oakleigh and Brighton and this appears on land titles issued at that time. This was the Parish of Prahran.

By 1850 the name Prahran was also used for a small settlement clustering along today's Chapel Street, High Street and Commercial-Malvern Roads, which at that time were mere tracks through the bushland. In 1855 Prahran was the name given to the new municipality which was bounded by the river, the Punt Road, the main road to Dandenong and Boundary (Kooyong) Road. It covered an area of about 4 square miles and included two other small settlements known as Windsor and South Yarra.

Prahran is a combination of two Aboriginal words meaning 'land partly surrounded by water'. It was a good description of the new municipality and introduces one aspect of the district's diversity. There was good high land along much of the river front and in the eastern half. Much of the level land and the slight inundations were well-drained, especially at the southern end where the water flow was to the Bay and not, as in most of Prahran, to the river.

Unfortunately, these good stretches were separated by deep gullies, by creeks, by swamps, by bogs and even by quicksands. A main tributary to the Yarra crossed the district from the Malvern hills in the south-east to a huge swamp near the river end of Chapel Street. After heavy rain the creek flooded as storm water flowed down from the hills and the Yarra waters were forced back along the creek. In other places swamps became lakes, a few of them 4 to 5 feet deep. It was good land for nomadic Aborigines. It was patchy land for Europeans who wished to create permanent streets and houses and to build a settled community. Those who petitioned for local government in 1855 stressed the great need for drainage.

When the auction sales were first held the allotments offered to buyers were still bushland. Early settlers often became lost if they wandered off the rough stock routes and found themselves in thick scrub or deep in the mud of boggy creek banks. Vegetation was coastal, with river gums, she-oaks and wattles. Spring wildflowers were abundant and the bush was full of bird song and the soft sounds of small animals. The Aborigines were still in the area, moving quietly like shadows half-glimpsed. Most avoided contact. Much of the soil was sandy but there was good yellow clay along the waterways. Prahran's rocks were mainly sandstone and metal for roads had to be brought from other suburbs.

As might be expected, rich and poor were soon separated by the quality of land. High ground attracted the wealthy and the poor had to be content with the lower stretches. In 1856 the swamps were, as yet, undrained and were left to the animals who grazed nearby and to the brickmakers who worked there.

At that time Prahran resembled a country town. Most of the urban development was to be found in the western half and even here the rough highways with their small shops and houses, the side streets leading down to the swamps and creeks, the scatter of farms and market gardens and the hotels placed at strategic corners, all gave Prahran a distinctly rural appearance. Move a mile to the east and the town disappeared. Nothing was to be seen but bushland.

No regulations existed to limit the uses to which a landowner might put his property. He could subdivide it as he pleased or leave it to lie unused until prices rose. He could create a large, self-sufficient estate. He could construct a nest of narrow streets and tiny cottages on minute blocks of land and he could rent these out at any price the market would stand. Even after 1856 by-laws passed by the Prahran Council relating to buildings were limited to the removal of nuisance caused by noxious runoff from properties and to the prevention of fire. Prahran's landlords being no better or worse than those elsewhere, Prahran soon became a mishmash of large holdings, small suburban streets and lanes, strips of small shops, hotels and industrial plants, all separated by bushland, cleared areas of farms and gardens and acres of swamp.

In the 1840s a minority of wealthy families had settled along the river bank, living on estates that were almost self-sufficient and drawing other necessities and luxuries from the city, to which they travelled by carriage or on horseback. Many of these estates have been described in detail by contemporary writers or depicted in maps. As well as a comfortable house and outbuildings, most of them of bungalow style, these estates had kitchen gardens, space for poultry and farm animals, beehives, stables and coach houses and sufficient unfarmed land around the house for a formal garden with conservatory and greenhouse.⁸

Of the eighteen allotments sold along the river in 1840, eleven had been settled in this way by the mid-1850s.⁹ The early owners were all Britishers who had emigrated to the colony and prospered, they were members of that conglomerate of wealthy and influential settlers who held power in the mid-19th century. Some were city merchants while others were pastoralists, professionals, government officials or military officers. Most were shrewd land owners and made money by buying and selling land and by judicious subdivision of their estates when the prospects were good. Most were comparatively young men with growing families. These estates were gradually subdivided to form the streets that bear their names and most houses had been demolished by 1900. Little Rockley survived till the 1920s, as did Waterloo Cottage on Forrest Hill. Mount Verdant was finally demolished in the 1930s, while Yarra Bank, which had been converted to serve as a school, was not subdivided until 1959. Four of the old

houses are still extant. These are Avoca in Gordon Grove, South Yarra, Buona Vista (now Grantham), in Kensington Road, Como House and Toorak House (now the Swedish Church complex). After the later sales of 1849 and 1850 other families decided to set up estates, both large and small, like those along the river. These, too, were eventually subdivided and only a few of the ornate mansions of the mid- and late 19th century still survive.¹⁰

Most of the early land owners divided their blocks into 5- or 10-acre allotments. As demand for worker housing was strong, several of these were soon used to create narrow streets and small lots on which one- to two-roomed cottages were erected. These small streets are still in existence in the older parts of South Yarra, Windsor and Prahran, and even on the south side of the Toorak Village. Permanent reminders of Prahran's early history, they are often picturesque but a hazard to traffic.

In 1856 most of Prahran's residents lived in these small cottages. The residents were not wealthy, belonging by birth and income to the working and lower middle classes. Many were ex-miners, resourceful and optimistic, ambitious to carve out a fortune for themselves and their families but happy if they could find work and provide an adequate living for themselves and their wives and children. Those not employed in brickmaking, timber-getting and sawmilling, carting and farming, set themselves up as store-keepers, hoteliers, teachers or skilled artisans. There were butchers, bakers and candle makers, blacksmiths and saddlers, brewers and ironworkers. Some of them became wealthy and augmented the growing group of middle-class citizens who were able to build and own larger houses. Some who had begun by carting nightsoil for the councils or by hewing down the huge logs needed for railway construction ended by living in a fine house and sending their children to private schools. It was a busy, thriving district, peopled by young families who wished to settle there for life.¹¹

Thus, from the beginning of Prahran's history there were contrasts between rich and poor. As their fortunes rose and fell, and newcomers made their homes there in turn, Prahran's social classes came to include every level of income and life style. There were pastoralists and merchant-men, small shopkeepers and industrialists, workers of all kinds and degrees, and a depressed minority who needed constant care and support.

The Prahran Archives record the fortunes of many of Prahran's families, from members of the *bon ton*, like Mayor Davidson and his son-in-law William Acland Anderson of Yarra Bank, and William Montgomery Bell and his family who lived at Avoca and Tivoli, to 'Squint', whose boyhood was spent roaming the streets of Prahran with his mates and rafting on the lakes in flood time, and Eliza and Edwin Pearce who lived a decorous life with their parents in Punt Road, attending the local State

school and finding their entertainment at the local Wesleyan church.¹² Their stories emphasise the great differences that always existed in Prahran's society.

There was diversity also in the way in which settlement had developed and this surfaced as soon as the move for local government gained momentum. Prahran's swampy areas separated three distinct communities—Central Prahran, Windsor and South Yarra. The boundaries of the new municipality satisfied the inmates of Central Prahran, which sat comfortably in the middle of the new district and which had now two other communities to help pay for the development of the as yet unsettled eastern half. Very few from Central Prahran had opposed local government.¹³

Windsor had hoped to become part of St Kilda. The main streets of this little settlement were close to the St Kilda Junction and the inhabitants felt nearer to their friends in the little seaport than to those along Chapel Street Central. The boundary lines were not as divisive as they first seemed, for the people of Windsor and Central Prahran were closely allied in occupation and class. Though Windsor has retained its name, it has gradually come to accept its place in Prahran. Much more traumatic has been the division created by the Queensway, which cuts a swath through the south-west corner of the little district.

The residents of South Yarra, especially the wealthier families, were not as complaisant. The new Punt Road boundary cut this select little community in two, divorcing those west of Punt Road from those to the east. Not all South Yarra's inhabitants were wealthy but the brickmakers and the tradesfolk were separated from those in Central Prahran by the swamps.

The diversity of settlement was never quite resolved and Windsor and South Yarra retained their individuality throughout the 19th century. As animosities faded there were less threats of secession but people seldom thought of themselves as living in Prahran unless they lived or worked close to the heart of Chapel Street.

This feeling of being different from the rest applied to an even greater extent in what, in 1856, was still a sparsely settled district. Toorak House, an ornate mansion that was rented to the State government in 1854 and which was occupied by successive Governors for the next twenty years, gave its name to the select settlement and later ward of Toorak.

To live near the Governor was to acquire prestige. To dine at his table was to be accepted in polite society. The land round Toorak House was hilly and well-suited to residential development. A small village of shops and businesses was developing around Notley's Hotel in Gardiner's Creek Road, and soon village and Government House were ringed round with fine estates with mansions to match those along the river.¹⁴ When the Toorak House estate was eventually subdivided in the late 19th century,

after the Governor had removed to the Domain, the new allotments were popular not for nearness to the Governor but because they were in Toorak.

Throughout the second part of the 19th century, Toorak's residents paid their rates to the Town Hall and attended Mayoral and Return Balls. They did not, however, identify with their poorer neighbours in the other three wards, seeing them, no doubt, on a level with their servants and the shopkeepers and artisans who attended them in the Village. Many of these latter, mindful of the influence that wealthy Toorak residents could wield, took their tone from their betters.

Despite all these differences of geography, housing, occupation and income, Prahran's inhabitants in the 19th century had one very important factor in common: nearly all were of British stock. Dialects were different but all spoke English. Almost everyone had been brought up in a Christian society with a basis of English law and their customs were similar. The few foreigners, mainly Germans and Jews, fitted in without friction.

Few, however, disregarded the desirability of being wealthy and this was to prove the greatest point of agreement and, at the same time, the greatest point of division. To some extent divisions of wealth were reflected in the various Christian denominations, the most important of which were the Church of England and the Presbyterian. The wealthiest of their churches were in South Yarra and Toorak. The most numerous non-conformists were the Independents and the Wesleyans, most of whom lived in and around Central Prahran in the less wealthy section of the municipality. There were several small sects including the Baptists and the Church of Christ. Most of the Roman Catholic families in Prahran at this time were poor and almost all were of Irish extraction. The churches did not quarrel openly but they kept to themselves and few sons and daughters married out of their family's religion.

One of the big State issues—that of secular education—did raise sectarian feeling in the late 1860s and thereafter, but most of the squabbles over issues such as trade unionism, the Irish question and Scottish nationalism were debated in the hotels and friendly societies rather than in the streets or the Council. When tempers flared and Council elections were fought most fiercely, it was usually, as it is today, because some local issue affected residents most closely.

Cooper relates the progress of three of these issues in great detail. They were the new regulations concerning buildings and the way land could be used, the division of the municipality into wards and the raising of a municipal loan to purchase land for gardens and playing space.¹⁵ The regulations, part of State legislation to control urban development, were passed and put into operation, the city was divided into wards, a logical move endorsed by all councils in suburban Melbourne, and the parks and

gardens were created, but all these ventures produced loud and bitter controversy between those who approved and those who opposed them. Such controversies and citizen interference to ensure that the Council should listen closely to ratepayers and residents is still a part of the municipality's life.

In 1906, when the municipality was fifty years old, the Jubilee was celebrated. This important landmark was the occasion for official dinners, course after course served with the best of wines, but to male diners only. There were concerts, balls, school picnics and outings. The Town Band played night after night in joyous celebration. A special *Jubilee Book*¹⁶ set out a brief history of Prahran's development and illustrated this with photographs of the city and its shops and industries. The Prahran Pioneers' Association organised a grand reunion of early Prahran residents and their families which was attended by over two hundred guests. A long scroll, on which were inscribed the names, dates of entry into Prahran, as well as the present addresses, was signed by all present. This scroll, an important and nostalgic reminder of those early residents, was presented to the Prahran Archives by the family of John Furneaux, secretary of the Association and the Prahran Mechanics' Institute (1900-38).¹⁷

Many of the pioneers who attended the reunion were still living in the district, some in the very houses they had rented on their arrival there. Those who came from elsewhere must have seen many changes. Many of the little cottages had been replaced by late Victorian terraces and small villas. The old horse-drawn omnibus had given way to steam trains and cable trams. Chapel Street, once so quiet and countrified, was now almost too narrow for the traffic that passed through the city each day and its grand stores, particularly in Windsor, were the envy of many other suburbs. It no longer meandered around natural obstacles like small lagoons and tree stumps, but stretched straight and level, the small rise near the Jam Factory now gone and the old cutting near the river widened to facilitate the steady traffic from Richmond and beyond.

Even in 1906 drainage was still incomplete. The earliest channels had been deep ditches on either sides of the roads or across open paddocks. These had been widened and deepened after the 1891 floods, which Cooper so graphically describes. In 1911 both State and local councils combined to prevent another such inundation and the river's course was altered to prevent back flooding.¹⁸ The open channels were replaced by underground brick storm drains.¹⁹ Even this was not a final solution and there were to be other floods before drainage in Prahran was satisfactory.

Prahran had become an important industrial suburb and in the years before World War I, many thought that the old western streets with their mid-century houses would give way to factories and workshops. Prahran

specialised in light industry, mainly food processing and textile manufacture. There were also a few ironworks and furniture factories. The Jam Factory, the largest of Prahran's industries, employed about two hundred hands. There were several large cordial factories, headed by the OT factory in King Street which, like the Jam Factory, traded world-wide.²⁰ The textile factories, most of them small family firms employing less than twenty employees, produced knitwear, clothing, babies' wear, millinery, leather goods and footwear. The old catering firm begun by Mr Plisch had expanded to become Table Talk Biscuits. Prahran had several breweries but most of these had been absorbed into larger companies based in other suburbs. Many of the old hotels had also been bought by outside breweries. About forty hotels still traded in the area.

The population had been growing steadily. In 1881 it was 21 380, in 1886, 32 606 and it was to pass the 50 000 mark two decades later. Most of the inhabitants were still of British stock though this, too, was changing. After World War I a vanguard of Mediterranean emigrants, mostly from Italy and Greece, began settling in Prahran. This was to add a new dimension to the diversity.

Such diversity was to remain. By the turn of the century each street had its social classification and most people if asked their address would have answered by street and area, designating Armadale, Hawksburn, Toorak or Windsor, rather than the single word, Prahran. Street and area diversities were augmented by schooling.

The school to which a child was sent would determine his or her social status then or later. Miss McComas of Glamorgan prepared her boys for entrance to a public grammar school, for a career in business and for marriage to a privately schooled girl of the same social group. Prahran, Windsor and Hawksburn State Schools drew their pupils from the small streets of Prahran and Windsor and both boys and girls left at the age of fourteen or so to be apprenticed to a trade, to find work in a shop or factory, or as a last resort, to become domestic servants. A servant's job, once thought of as a secure, desirable position, was becoming much less popular before the war and was to be much less so after.

It would have been surprising for pupils from the various schools to meet and even less likely that they would marry out of their social group. The differences were apparent in speech, in manners and in dress. Most boys enjoyed a game of cricket, but while the grammar school boy set out to play for his school against another public school, clad in immaculate white flannels, school blazer and cricketing boots, with his own bat under his arm, the boy from Prahran State played in his working school outfit, only changing his boots for sandshoes and grabbing the school bat as the outgoing batsman relinquished it. Society girls made their debut at the

Mayoral Ball, at a private function at home or at one of the big banqueting halls. The girl from Windsor looked for entertainment and her future husband at church gatherings, at work or in a local dance hall, and her wedding, though no less important to her, was a much less expensive affair than that of her society sister.

The central organisation binding this diversity together was the Prahran Council. Expanded to twelve, three from each ward, when the district was divided into its four wards (Toorak, South Yarra, Prahran and Windsor), this group of hard-working men was unpaid. They attended regular Council meetings and served on numerous committees and were often asked to support local fund-raising efforts or celebrations. Most were on the Council for a year or so but a few served for long terms of ten years or more.²¹ Except for the early Councils when the councillors were mainly drawn from lower class groups, all councillors were men of means, for their duties involved hours of unpaid work and there were many calls on their generosity. The Mayor was appointed for a year and a few served two or even three terms. A small allowance was granted to the Mayor to cover inevitable running expenses. By the end of the 19th century the Council formed a tight little group, almost a private club, and this helped to unify what might have been a disparate collection of men.

Assisting the Council was the Town Hall staff. The first Council officers formed a small group of four—the Town Clerk, the Surveyor, and two clerks to assist them. John Craven began his duties as Town Clerk in his own parlour, moved to a rented room in the Mechanics' Institute, and finally to good quarters in the new Town Hall. All work the staff could not handle was let out on contract so that for some years all property valuations, rate collections, road work, etc. were handled by outside contractors. Each year the Council hired a conveyance and made a stately progress through its domain, noting what had been achieved and what remained to be done.

During the 19th century and the few years beyond, much had changed. The work done by Council in the early period was mainly that of road-making, drainage and the construction of the Town Hall. By the beginning of World War I the Council staff had increased dramatically. There were now outside staff and a depot for horses and vehicles to handle the collection of garbage, the maintenance of parks and gardens, roadmaking, street cleaning and other duties. The State Government departments had taken over some duties, particularly that of maintaining roads used for through traffic, and the regulation of health, water supply and fire prevention. The Council now had its own Building and Health Inspectors, as well as maintaining a close connection with the relevant State departments.

The Council had also become more and more involved with the welfare of its citizens, a function now recognised as a legitimate part of local

government. After 1908 when old age pensions were introduced, applicants were screened for eligibility at the Town Hall. The Prahran Creche, established in 1890, was the first fully funded Council amenity for children, though grants had been made previously to many charitable organisations such as the Ladies' Benevolent Societies and the Try Society. This interest in, and concern for, the well-being of individuals in the Prahran community was to become the fastest growing aspect of the Council's work.

The Town Hall, first opened in 1861, had been substantially altered and enlarged and now boasted a fine City Hall where local functions could be held. Nearby were the Court House and Police Station. The Town Hall housed a library and an art room. It was the hub of Prahran's community activities and stood in Prahran's premier street. In the early 20th century Chapel Street was considered to be the most important commercial street south of the Yarra and played host to visitors and shoppers from as far away as the country districts of Victoria. The fine buildings of Windsor were being rivalled by the monster emporiums going up on either side of the Town Hall and people came by bicycle, carriage, motor car, train and cable tram to see these wonders.²²

For all that, Prahran had many small centres of community interest in its churches and friendly societies, and while Chapel Street catered for a local market as well as for visitors from elsewhere, there were several small shopping strips along other main roads and many friendly little corner shops in the side streets that had their own clientele.

The greatest historical event that occurred in Prahran before 1920 was, of course, the 1914–18 world war. When Cooper came to write the story of the Great War and its effect on Prahran he was an old man. He had lived through the war as a civilian and was a very loyal member of the British Empire. He draws attention to the patriotic feelings of the councillors, to the many successful recruiting drives in halls and cinemas, to the sterling work done by the Prahran Patriotic Society and the Red Cross and to the multitude of war comforts provided by Prahran's women. He praises the allied victory and cites the efforts made by the Prahran Council and community to repatriate and praise returning soldiers. His is a very positive contemporary account. It is a picture of a suburban district united by a common enemy and of a time when the people of Prahran forgot their differences and diversities and came together in a co-operative drive for victory.

Looking back at the 1914-18 conflict now that another global war and many smaller campaigns have followed that 'war to end all wars', we cannot be quite so positive. No war is ever won, even by the apparent victors, and every glorious victory brings with it destruction, heartbreak and hatred, losses to individuals which take far longer to reconcile and forget. A letter

held by the Prahran Archives from Dr Bertie Fetherston, then in Gallipoli, to Mr John Romanis, the Town Clerk, gives a far less sanguine picture of the campaign.²³ The war cost Prahran, as it did all the suburbs of Melbourne, many of its best young men. Many more came home wounded, disillusioned and with little hope of secure jobs in the future. Many of its young women were destined, for want of those young men who had died, to face spinsterhood. It is fitting that the first volume of Prahran's history should end at this point for the war provided the end of an era.

The period of Prahran's development from the 1850s to the end of World War I had been one of steady growth. The city had weathered the 1890s depression (indeed Cooper finds nothing worth mentioning of that time), and it emerged from the war with every appearance of continuing to grow and to consolidate along the lines already mapped out. For some years there appeared to be few differences and only the most perceptive marked the changes which had already begun. These changes, which were to increase the diversity of the city and of the way its residents lived out their lives, are a major theme in Volume Two of *The History of Prahran*.

Betty Malone

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I would like to offer personal thanks to some of the many people who have helped me over the last two years. Janet and Laurie McCalman have been unfailingly helpful and enlightening. Bruce Turner and the staff of the Mechanics' Institute's excellent local history library have provided valuable assistance, as well as the venue for several fortuitous meetings with other helpful people. Betty Malone is the author of several volumes in the Prahran Historical Series. She has also written the introduction to this volume, which is appropriate, because she is, in a sense, its midwife.

In 1990 the City of Prahran commissioned this history as a part of the Council's longstanding interest in Prahran's heritage. It could not have been written without the help and support of a great many members of the Council's staff, particularly David Jesson and Sue Loukomitis. Thanks

must also go to Ian MacDonald, Stephen Lardner, Ken Chalmers, Sarah Murray, Janet Irwin and Nigel Lewis. Thanks are also due to the councillors who read and commented on the drafts and to the many residents of Prahran, past and present, who gave their time and a part of their personal history to help with this project. They are all acknowledged individually in the text, but I would like to offer particular thanks to Bill Dane, Chris Gahan, Pat Rayson, John Velos and Norman Wettenhall, and also to those people who generously supplied photographs: Alan Shinkfield; Arthur Hinton; Philippe Batters; Ann Clemens; Win Vears; Max Chapman; Barbara McCumisky; Beverlie Asprey and Mr Collins-Persse.

Among the major documentary sources for this history are two private collections of papers. Pat Rayson provided generous access to the Rayson collection and Fred Farrall's papers were made available through the kind assistance of Laurie McCalman. Many of Prahran Council's records dating before 1980 are held by the Public Records Office, particularly committee minute books, but a more entertaining source of information are the City of Prahran Annual Reports. Unfortunately the last one of these was produced in 1952, but they are a mine of information for the period before then, which is particularly important because of the absence of a local newspaper during the 1930s and 1940s. The last issue of the *Prahran Telegraph* was produced on 30 August 1930 and the *Southern Cross*, with its various changes in name and area of circulation, did not begin covering the Prahran area on a regular basis until the late 1950s. But the most important and interesting source of information throughout the research for this volume was the people of Prahran, past and present.

Despite the efforts of the many people who have read and commented on drafts, any remaining errors are, of course, my own responsibility.

SALLY WILDE

January 1993

NOTE ON CURRENCY AND MEASUREMENTS

Australia changed to decimal currency in 1966 and the metric system for weights and measures was adopted over the next few years.

Currency

12 pennies (d.) = one shilling (s.)

20 shillings = one pound (£)

The colloquial term for a shilling was a 'bob'.

When Australia changed to decimal currency \$2 = £1

Area

1 acre = 0.40 ha

1 square mile = 2.59 km²

Length

1 mile = 1.61 km

Weight

1 pound (lb) = 454 g

Volume

1 pint = 0.57 L

1 gallon = 4.55 L

Part 1
The Physical Framework—
Roads and Houses

1

Lines on the Map¹

If you look at a map of Prahran you see straight lines running from side to side and top to bottom of the page, intersecting at right angles. This is not the result of the growth of a settlement on the ground—where stock routes intersect at a river crossing, for instance, or where brickmakers set up their homes around their holes in the ground. Nor is it the result of deliberate planning by careful administrators to produce an efficient road network for an existing or proposed town.

The shape of the City of Prahran as we know it began as lines and rectangles drawn on a map, the simplest way to divide up land for sale, when the land concerned was regarded by the surveyor as empty, or as T. L. Mitchell described Victoria in 1836, 'a fair blank sheet'.² The only natural feature on the ground of which surveyor Hoddle took any account was the River Yarra, which forms the meandering northern boundary. But Hoddle did take account of his own plans for surrounding areas. Thus the rectangles laid neatly on the map with north at the top vary in size according to whether they were supposed to be for small farms of 60 acres or so (Central and eastern Prahran), or 'cultivation allotments' of 10 to 20 acres on the fringes of the proposed townships of St Kilda and South Melbourne, (Windsor and the somewhat larger South Yarra lots). Because the area of Prahran itself was not planned as a village or township, there were no reserves of Crown Land for future public buildings or open space.³

With a fine disregard for the plans of surveyor Hoddle and Superintendent La Trobe, buyers of the rectangles on the map at the Crown Land sales of June 1840, June 1849 and May 1850 began the long and

River Yarra. Burnley.



THE PADDLE STEAMER *ALEXANDRA* ON THE YARRA BETWEEN TOORAK AND BURNLEY, c.1910



THE FERRY TO GRANGE ROAD WAS ESTABLISHED IN 1872 AND THIS PHOTOGRAPH WAS TAKEN A FEW YEARS LATER

complicated process of subdivision and resale that is still in progress. Although some farming of sorts, and more market gardening, went on in the area for many years, the general purpose the purchasers had in mind was to build houses and gardens for themselves, or to resell the land in smaller blocks to build houses for the working class. Broadly, the pattern that emerged was mansions on the big lots to the north and east, cottages in the south and west and a complex mixture of all sorts and sizes in between. In the middle were shops and a few factories.

The straight line boundaries between the allotments of land generally formed the location for roads, running north-south and east-west in obedience to the surveyor's ruler on the map. Over the years, the tracks that wandered around trees and swamps were replaced by straight roads. As a result, horses, cattle and humans struggled up hills and down through bogs for the best part of a hundred years. There was a sign on Malvern Road near the corner of Clendon Road that read 'Steep Hill Spare Your Horse', to warn travellers about to make the climb up to the east.⁴

The growth of the entire area around Melbourne was far more rapid than that envisaged by Hoddle when he drew up his plans. The gold rushes of the 1850s brought a deluge of people to Victoria, pouring in through all the ports, especially Melbourne, and streaming off to wherever they thought they could get rich. Generally, it was not the gold diggers who made the most money but those who chose to supply them with food and clothes, picks and shovels and all the other necessities of mid-19th century life. Melbourne was the principal hub of all this activity and it grew at a dramatic rate, overflowing Hoddle's original parish boundaries and covering the bush, paddocks and market gardens of Collingwood, Fitzroy, Richmond, Prahran and Emerald Hill with houses, shops and factories.⁵

After an initial period of difficulty when rural labour could not be had for love nor money because all the shepherds and shearers had gone to the diggings, the wool growers of the Western District also enjoyed a period of rising prosperity, with increasing output and high overseas demand for their wool. Following the boom in the Victorian economy in the 1850s, growth slowed considerably and at times there were severe problems of unemployment, particularly for disappointed diggers, but the wealth generated by the gold boom funded development in a range of other activities. One of these was railway building, including that in Prahran.⁶

Roads are not the only lines on the map of Prahran. Overlaid on the street pattern of straight lines and right-angled turns are the gentle curves of the railways. Surveyors of rail lines had to pay close attention to topography. Steam engines could not cope easily with steep gradients, so hills and valleys involved either very expensive tunnels, cuttings and viaducts

or diversions. Sharp bends were also out. The combination of problems of topography and arguments between private railway companies over routes gave Prahran two main lines in four stages.

First, at the end of 1859 the St Kilda and Brighton Railway Company opened a line from Brighton to Flinders Street with a loop curving from Windsor to St Kilda Station. Nearly a year later, the Melbourne and Suburban Railway Company opened a line from Princes Bridge through Richmond and over the Yarra, terminating at Windsor. In 1862 this company bought out the St Kilda and Brighton Railway Company, ran their trains through Windsor to Brighton and closed the loop.

In 1878 following a period of ownership by the Melbourne and Hobson's Bay United Railway Company the lines were finally bought by the Victorian government. The government was in the process of building a major rail line through Gippsland and ownership of the line through Prahran signalled its intention to complete the Gippsland line from Oakleigh to South Yarra, to the delight of local residents and the dismay of those who had hoped that the Gippsland line would run north through the eastern suburbs. The resulting rail line was completed in 1879. It curved through the south-east of the City of Prahran with stations at South Yarra, Hawksburn, Toorak and Armadale.⁷

Both phases of railway building had a significant impact on the development of Prahran. In the era of horse power and shanks's pony,



DRIVER LYON BRINGING HIS ENGINE THROUGH THE FLOODS OF 1907 INTO SOUTH YARRA STATION

Prahran was a long way from Melbourne in both time and effort. Steam trains made it relatively easy for Prahran residents to work and even go to school in Melbourne. In 1859 there were forty-five trains a day at one shilling return, first class.⁸ Trains also made it possible for people from a far wider area to get to Prahran and the growth of Chapel Street as a shopping centre really dates from the first trains. In the 1860s the growth of Windsor in particular was consequently rapid, while the opening of the Gippsland line led to significant building development in Armadale twenty years later. Steam moved people further, faster than horses and suburban development followed the rail lines.

From the 1880s Melbourne's commuters had, in fact, a choice of two kinds of steam powered transport. On 11 November 1885 the first steam powered cable tram began taking passengers from Richmond to Melbourne. Development thereafter was rapid, with lines radiating out from the city. The cable tram along Toorak Road and down Chapel Street was opened on 26 October 1888, the extension further east along Toorak Road



A CABLE TRAM ON TOORAK ROAD, 1892: N.J. CAIRE WAS A PARTICULARLY TALENTED PHOTOGRAPHER. HE CAPTURED IMAGES ALL OVER VICTORIA BUT HIS STUDIO WAS ON TOORAK ROAD AND CAN BE SEEN IN THE RIGHT OF THE PICTURE.

on 15 February 1889 and the line from Windsor to St Kilda Esplanade was completed in October 1891.⁹

In the early years of the new century, people of all social classes made use of public transport. The various tram routes were identified by different colours, with coloured lights at night.

The yellow tram ran to Toorak once an hour. There were not nearly so many people living there then. I don't think it ran as far as Glenferrie Road. The red tram ran along St Kilda Road, Domain Road and Toorak Road and then turned down Chapel Street . . . When we were living in Grandview Grove [c.1920], I caught the tram from the bottom of High Street to go to the University. The fare was threepence.¹⁰

The trams added further ease of access to Chapel Street and by the outbreak of World War I, there were those who thought it rivalled even The Block in Melbourne as a shopping centre.

FROM STEAM TO ELECTRICITY

Betty Malone has described the development of Chapel Street in some detail.¹¹ Major building development in the 1880s and again between the 1890s depression and World War I had seen Chapel Street emerge as one



SHOPPING ON CHAPEL STREET BEFORE THE MOTOR CAR CHASED PEDESTRIANS AND CYCLISTS OFF THE ROAD

10 The History of Prahran

of the most important shopping streets in Melbourne. Susan Priestley has noted how Smith Street in Collingwood and Chapel Street in Prahran were pioneers in the move towards the suburban shopping strips with which we are now so familiar. They served not only their own local communities but also residents of the growing suburbs around them. Smith Street served the north and east and Prahran the southern and south-eastern areas of dairy farms and market gardens.¹²

Local residents walked to the shops but those from further afield came by horse, tram or train. The success of Chapel Street as a shopping centre was based on its accessibility by these means of transport. But by the 1920s methods of transport were undergoing radical change. Conversion of suburban rail lines from steam to electricity was agreed in 1912, but operations were delayed by the war and conversion did not commence until 1919. The St Kilda line was among the first group to be electrified.¹³ The conversion of cable trams to electricity was spurred on by the success of rail electrification.

From its earliest years, tramway operation had involved the local councils. Although Francis Boardman Clapp's Melbourne Tramway and Omnibus Company was a private enterprise, the terms of the 1883 Melbourne Tramways and Omnibus Act under which it operated directed local coun-

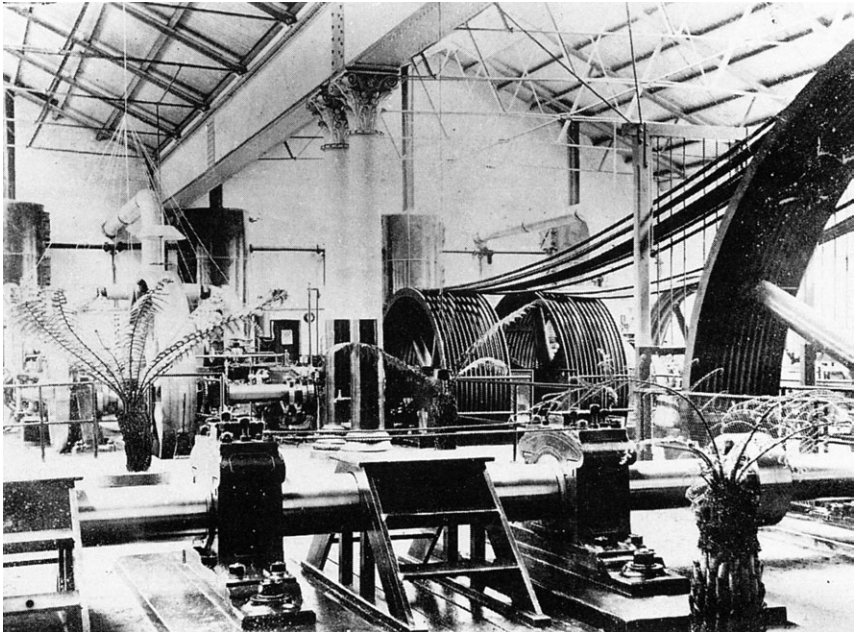


ANOTHER BUSY DAY ON CHAPEL STREET IN THE ERA OF THE CABLE TRAM

cils to construct the necessary trackwork, cable systems and power houses. Clapp's company held the exclusive franchise to operate the tramways until 1916, and it did so under the watchful eye of the government-appointed Melbourne Tramways Board.¹⁴ Although Clapp held the monopoly on operating trams into and out of Melbourne, others watched his success and began running trams around what, at the time, were the outer suburbs.

Prahran Council joined with Malvern to form the Prahran and Malvern Tramways Trust which operated electric trams from May 1910.¹⁵ By the time Clapp's lease on the cable trams had expired there were eight separate companies operating trams in and around Melbourne. The government decided that some sort of co-ordination of routes and method of operation was in order. In 1916 the Melbourne Tramways Board took over running of the cable trams and in 1919 the newly constituted Melbourne and Metropolitan Tramways Board took over operation of all trams within a ten-mile radius of the General Post Office, and bought out all the suburban lines—including Prahran and Malvern.

The next major step was electrification of all the old cable trams and expansion of the network. The last cable tram did not run until October



PART OF THE MACHINERY THAT KEPT THE CABLE TRAMS RUNNING: THIS PROUDLY MAINTAINED WINDING GEAR WAS HOUSED IN THE BUILDING ON THE NORTH WEST CORNER OF CHAPEL STREET AND TOORAK ROAD.



AN ELECTRIC TRAM AND ORIENTAL PLANE TREES ON DANDENONG ROAD IN 1920

1940, but electrification of the lines through Prahran was much earlier and work on Chapel Street began in 1925. The process involved major disruptions to Chapel Street and Toorak Road while the tracks were dug up, the central cable and its tunnel removed and new lines laid.¹⁶

Since at least the turn of the century, Prahran Council has been involved in a range of initiatives designed to make the city a beautiful place to live. Local pride was important, particularly when Prahran's councillors compared their area with neighbouring Melbourne and St Kilda. The early years of the 20th century saw major changes to the east-west roads at the northern and southern boundaries of Prahran. Both were landscaped with the deliberate intention of producing splendid wide avenues, and work on the north side of Dandenong Road was particularly urgent so that Prahran was not outdone by St Kilda to the south.

The transformation of Dandenong Road began in 1909/10¹⁷ with work on the construction of the electric tramway by the Prahran and Malvern Tramways Trust. The four adjoining municipalities and the Tramways Trust got together at the same time to plan a central reserve with trees, to be planted in 1911. Oriental plane trees were chosen and almost as much attention was paid to their planting and care as to the roads, curbs and tram tracks.¹⁸ The members of the Council were consciously attempt-

ing to produce something grand and gracious and they repeated their efforts when it came to the planning of Alexandra Avenue to the north.

Very great improvements have been made along the Alexandra Avenue during the year, the sharp angle near the railway bridge has been reduced and the corners at the bridge have been rounded off so as to minimise the danger of turning at this point. A large number of trees have been planted along the road and also upon the hill on the west of the railway line. Mostly Australian gums have been planted on the hill, and English elms and silver poplars along the drive.

Expensive work has been undertaken in excavating the rock along the drive in order to provide a trench for the better propagation of the trees; they will have a better chance of growing to maturity than they would have if only holes were excavated and no provision made for drainage.

It is proposed to place a gardener in charge of the drive in the future and the work of beautifying can be continued, together with the maintenance of the tree plantations already established.¹⁹

The avenue was begun in 1903 and initially ran only as far as the railway bridge, but the Council completed the road under the bridge to Chapel Street in 1918 and work on the extension eastward began in 1924/25. Throughout, the Council was agreed that it wanted not just a road but a true avenue in a park-like setting.

It is not clear when the Prahran Council first adopted this favourable view towards the expense of planting and maintaining trees along its roads. Cooper noted that the Council was against anything of the kind in 1877. In that year Cr William Bowen proposed planting trees along the Prahran side of Dandenong Road to match those already planted by St Kilda. The Council pleaded poverty, despite subsequent requests from ratepayers for trees in their particular streets, and offers to contribute to the cost.²⁰ The change of heart probably came in the boom of the 1880s when land values and rates rose and everyone was tending to feel more affluent. Certainly, by 1909/10 there were already 4515 trees planted in Prahran's streets and the Council was planting at least another hundred or so every year. In the early years the Council planted considerable numbers of oaks, particularly in Toorak. Several fine avenues of these trees survive. The oaks in Douglas Street, for instance, were planted in about 1903. But oaks could present problems, especially in drought years and when the new concrete pavements and sealed roads encroached on their water supply. The oaks on Wallace Avenue, among other places, suffered in this way and the Council turned increasingly to other species.²¹

By the 1920s the Council's laudable attention to the beautification of streets was in full swing and considerable expertise had been developed in the planting and care of the most suitable species. One of the problems was the potential conflict between trees and the new electricity lines.



YOUNG TREES ON IRVING ROAD IN 1911: THE STREET IS WIDE, THE HOUSES ARE SET WELL BACK, AND THERE IS PLENTY OF ROOM FOR THE TREES TO GROW.

Prahran had gas lights from as early as 1861, but in 1890 electricity began to be supplied to the city. In 1907 the Council built a refuse destructor and from 1909 the power generated by the burning of refuse was partly converted to electricity. This was sold to the Melbourne Electric Supply Company. The resulting revenue was estimated at £650 per annum.²² The Council responded by installing new electric lights in some streets and by 1920 Prahran was illuminated by a mixture of gas and electric light. However, in 1920 the Metropolitan Gas Company almost doubled their annual charges—from £4 7s 6d to £8 5s per lamp per annum. The Council was outraged and resolved to arrange with the Melbourne Electric Supply Company for the entire lighting of the city's streets by electricity.²³ The following year councillors were not especially pleased to discover that they had committed themselves to a system about to be taken out of the hands of private enterprise and run by the State Electricity Commission, but the deed had been done and Prahran had electric light.

Trees and electricity supply lines should not come into contact with each other, and following an abortive attempt to persuade the electricity suppliers to run all their lines underground, the Council resigned itself to pruning trees. Oriental planes had the advantage of a nice round canopy that could be pruned in the middle to make room for electricity without



BOYS PLAYING CRICKET UNDER THE TREES ON PERTH STREET IN 1910: THESE MAY HAVE BEEN ELMS WHOSE ROOTS PROVED TOO DAMAGING TO THE ADJACENT HOUSES. IN 1938 THEY WERE REPLACED BY NINETY-ONE DESERT ASH TREES.

totally destroying the Council's efforts to beautify its streets, and so they remained among the species most frequently planted for the rest of the decade.

At the end of World War I there were only 32 acres of parks in Prahran, and the largest were Orrong Park and Toorak Park, both in Prahran ward. But there was still plenty of open space. For example, the Council's horses were turned out in a paddock off Grange Road for the weekends, and in 1911 it was alleged that at least twenty people were keeping cows 'within gunshot' of Yarra Street.²⁴ What the Council wanted was more *public* open space and it succeeded in more than doubling this by the end of the decade. The biggest project was the purchase of Como Park. At the time, most parks were more or less public gardens, but the 1920s saw the conversion of at least parts of them to more specialised use. Tennis courts were built in Orrong Park in 1922; Gladstone Park was converted to a children's playground in 1923.

The 1920s was a good decade for parks. General provision of public open space in the city was poor because no land had ever been reserved for the purpose, although residents in the west did have the benefit of the Botanic Gardens and Fawkner Park across the boundary in Melbourne. In



OPENING THE NEW ORNAMENTAL GATES ON THE PRINCES GARDENS, MALVERN ROAD, 23 DECEMBER 1924: A SERIES OF PHOTOGRAPHS WAS TAKEN THAT DAY, GIVING RARE APPROXIMATIONS TO UNPOSED PICTURES OF SOME OF THE CHILDREN OF PRAHRAN.

1920/21 the Council began negotiating to purchase part of the Como Estate. Much of the area that was bought was swamp and it was to be a number of years before Como Park took on the appearance of grass and trees suitable for large scale fetes and public celebrations, but from the beginning the Council set to work on the task with some enthusiasm. The vision they had for their city was a beautiful place with parks and trees of some distinction.

The Prince of Wales visited Prahran in 1920 and the Malvern Road gardens were renamed in his honour the following year and equipped with glasshouses as a centre for the propagation of plants for Council use. In 1923 extensions to the Princes Gardens became possible as a result of a gift of adjoining land and this section was laid out as another children's playground, as was land in Lincoln Place, Windsor, in 1924. In that year there were also improvements to the cricket facilities in Toorak Park with the building of a pavilion. Even Como Park, which had originally been planned as an area of native trees and bird sanctuary, was laid out with an oval for organised games.



THE NEW CHILDREN'S PLAYGROUND IN THE PRINCES GARDENS, 1924: SOMETHING OF THE SOCIAL DIVERSITY OF PRAHRAN IS TO BE SEEN IN THIS PICTURE, TAKEN JUST BEFORE CHRISTMAS. THE WELL DRESSED SMALL GIRL OF THE PERIOD WORE BOTH HAT AND SHOES, LUXURIES NOT POSSESSED BY A NUMBER OF GIRLS FROM THE SURROUNDING SMALL HOUSES.

In 1925 the Council produced what was virtually a plan for the development of open space in the city, which considered Prahran area by area. There was particular concern to provide adequate playing space for children in the more densely populated parts of Windsor and South Yarra, and talk of demolishing areas of 'old, insanitary dwellings, packed closely together' to make the requisite 'open playing grounds for children in closely congested areas'.²⁵

By the end of the 1920s Prahran had about 75 acres of parks, many of them laid out as tennis courts, cricket grounds and children's playgrounds. The latter were supplied with swings and roundabouts and carefully segregated into separate areas for girls and boys. But public gardens were not forgotten and the Princes and Victoria Gardens were a source of pride with their showy displays of annual bedding plants.²⁶



THE NEW PADDLING POOL IN THE PRINCES GARDENS, 1924



CHILDREN BEING CHILDREN, WHILE THE OPENING CEREMONIES CONTINUE AT THE NEW CHILDREN'S PLAYGROUND, PRINCES GARDENS, DECEMBER 1924.

FROM HORSES TO CARS

Electrification of trams and trains, the planting of trees and changes to parks altered the look and the sound of the city, but the most significant change in the way Prahran looked and sounded in the 1920s was the rise in popularity of the internal combustion engine.

In 1920 only the wealthy owned motor cars, but it was already becoming clear that 'motors' were not destined to be confined to the very rich. Buses were beginning their career as a popular and flexible means of public transport, motor taxis were replacing horse-drawn cabs, motor bikes were becoming enormously popular with young men, and in the United States Henry Ford was successfully marketing his Model T as a cheap, reliable form of transport for the masses. This revolution was eventually to change the way the world looked. Cities expanded outward as long-distance commuters were no longer confined to areas within easy reach of a rail station or a tram. Road surfaces were improved and eventually sealed to cope with heavier traffic at higher speeds. Stables and paddocks were replaced by garages and car parks. Road signs, roundabouts, traffic lights, dual carriage-ways, freeways, flyovers and ever wider roads and bridges were built to ease the passage of the motor car around the world.

The costs were enormous, but the convenience to the car owner ensured an enduring popularity for this new means of transport. The problem for areas like Prahran was that they had been built for the horse, not the car. Adaptation was both difficult and expensive. Chapel Street was designed to be only 44 feet wide with an 11-foot reserve for pedestrians on either side, and it was suffering congestion problems as early as the 1890s when there was barely room for vehicles to pass between the trams in the centre and any buggies or carts parked at the side of the road. The splendid shops on either side made the option of demolition and road widening prohibitively expensive. In later years, several areas of small houses and businesses were to be demolished in streets behind the main shops, to make way for car parks. Compared to the newer suburbs further out, Prahran was at a disadvantage in the sheer cost of adapting and making room for the car. But adapt it did and the responsibility for this gargantuan task fell on the Council.

Local government in Victoria was originally set up in the 1850s to replace the District Road Boards, and one of the first and most important tasks of local councils was to build roads. Many councils appointed a surveyor or an engineer for the roads before any other staff. Prahran took a rather broader view and appointed a Town Clerk and a surveyor, as well as consulting solicitors, engineers and a health officer, but it was on roads that the rate revenues were spent. Of course, even before the first Council



COMMERCIAL ROAD IN 1892 WITH A ROLLED METAL SURFACE

was elected there were arguments about the propriety of spending the hard-won money of Prahran's ratepayers on roads that would be used by a great many people just passing through. As a result, a working compromise evolved over time as to just which roads carried sufficient through traffic to warrant additional central government funding.

The particular nature of the site of Prahran meant that until the advent of motor vehicles, drainage was more of a problem than were road surfaces. The first calls in 1854 for a District Roads Board were made following a public meeting on the subject of drainage, and the issue remained important for nearly another hundred years.²⁷ It was not for nothing that parts of the area were sometimes referred to as 'swampy poor Ann'. Roads on the hills worked well enough; it was the bogs at the bottom which caused the trouble. From 1897 to 1913 William Calder was Prahran's City Surveyor and during those sixteen years considerable progress was made in both drainage and road surfacing, before Calder moved on to become the first Chairman of the Country Roads Board. Little by little, as the 20th century progressed the emphasis shifted. Drains already laid were doing an adequate job, except during periods of particularly heavy rain such as in 1911, 1928 and 1934. Besides, after 1923 drainage became the responsibility of the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works (MMBW).²⁸ Meanwhile, road surfaces were suffering from increasingly heavy traffic.

In October 1912 the Council made its first essay into 'the field of motor traction' when three motor lorries were purchased for the City Surveyor's department.²⁹ The Council had already embarked on an extensive programme of tar painting streets 'to reduce the dust nuisance', while main roads were being reconstructed in wood blocks or concrete. Tar painting was fine for side streets, but it did not stand up to the increasingly heavy wear suffered by main roads. Hard wood blocks and concrete did withstand hard wear, but were very expensive to lay so the Council decided to spread the cost by working on a limited section of road each year. In 1918/19, for instance, it was decided that '... Malvern road to be blocked from Essex street to Williams road' with red gum blocks.³⁰

The 1920s saw an enormous programme to surface virtually all the streets in Prahran, employing day labour in addition to the Council's more permanent staff. Some streets were metalled or sheeted with tar macadam but most were painted with tar on the existing rolled metal surface. There had been a great deal of debate in the preceding years on the best surface to take the wear and tear of motor (or as they were called at the time, 'self propelled') vehicles. William Calder had played a leading role in this debate on the problems raised by the new vehicles and their extraordinary speeds, sometimes in excess of 20 miles per hour, and it had been generally agreed that rolled metal alone was not up to the task.³¹ Like other councils, Prahran built tar stills and tar oil tanks and began to seal the roads. At the same time, footpaths were either concreted or also paved with tar. All of



COMMERCIAL ROAD IN 1912 WITH ITS NEW NEUCHATEL ASPHALT PAVEMENT



WORKING ON THE ROADS TO MAKE THEM FIT FOR MOTORISED VEHICLES

the Council's annual reports for the 1920s contain lengthy lists of the year's tally of roads and footpaths thus sealed. Unfortunately, of course, if the coat of tar on the road was thin and/or the traffic was heavy, holes soon developed and running repairs were a continuous problem.

At this stage, Chapel Street was the main north-south road through the district because it was the only one that linked directly to a bridge over the River Yarra. The northern end of Punt Road was a quiet street that led to a punt, while there was a ferry at the northern end of Williams Road and another that ran from Grange Road to Twickenham. The first Chapel Street Bridge was purchased from the British government at the end of the Crimean War and erected to link Chapel Street and Church Street, Richmond, in 1857. This metal bridge remained in use for well over half a century, but eventually it succumbed to age and the increasing volume of traffic, and a new concrete bridge was opened with extraordinary public fanfare in July 1924.³² 'When the bridge was built and the tram crossed the river, that was a great occasion—the Governor came across in the tram—we were all waiting at the corner of Toorak Road and Chapel Street to see the tram and as it stopped, the lights went out'.³³

The new bridge was the result of a joint project between the Prahran, Richmond and Melbourne Councils, the Metropolitan Tramways Board and the State government. H. Desbrowe Annear and T. R. Ashworth

designed the bridge and the Prahran Council was so proud of it that it was still publishing colour pictures of the bridge in the annual reports as late as 1928/29.³⁴ It was seen as Prahran's gateway to the north and a funnel for traffic to rival Princes Bridge. However, even before the bridge was opened others were thinking about traffic flows in and out of Melbourne in a wider context than just Prahran.

In 1922 the Metropolitan Town Planning Commission Act was passed. Under its terms architects, engineers and representatives of the MMBW and local councils were appointed to consider the overall planning of Melbourne. Traffic was the Commission's primary concern. It considered roads, trams, trains and waterways and also the planning of residential and industrial areas, building regulation and provision for public open space. The Commission's first report was published in 1925 and it included big ideas for the roads through Prahran.³⁵

The Metropolitan Town Planning Commission found that about three-quarters of the traffic heading south over Princes Bridge turned east before it reached St Kilda Junction. In other words, most of the vehicles were heading for Prahran and beyond, and the Commission wanted to provide facilities for them to cross the river into Prahran east of Princes Bridge.

The map of the arterial roads of Melbourne . . . shows the potentialities of the longest straight road in the metropolis, which is made up of the following streets, between Epping and Point Ormond—

Epping-road Reservoir
High-street Preston and Northcote
Hoddle-street Collingwood and Richmond
Punt-road Richmond, South Yarra, and Prahran
Barkly-street St. Kilda

This great north-south artery intercepts seven municipalities, but its usefulness as a main road has never been realized, because there is no connecting bridge over the Yarra, and because of the steep grade at Punt Hill, in South Yarra.

The only direct north-south routes which now cross the Yarra are those via Prince's-bridge and Church-street bridge, which are over two miles apart.³⁶

The Commission noted that: 'The bridge at Anderson-street is of little use because it is out of alignment with any through route, it is much too narrow, and the steep grade of the Anderson-street approach precludes its general use'.³⁷

Four years later the Commission produced a *Plan of General Development—Melbourne*, which included proposals for a bridge at Punt Road, a new road from this bridge swinging through the Botanical Gardens and Fawcner Park, major extensions of the road system along the Yarra on

both banks, including Alexandra Avenue and the 'Prahran Valley Road Scheme'.

The route for this highway in the inner area ... is located so as to follow a course along the valley of the northern side of the railway between South Yarra and Armadale Stations and it would thus intercept practically all of the east and west roads which feed St. Kilda-road. It would encourage a greater use of north-south streets such as Kooyong-road and Williams-road, which it intercepts ...³⁸

The idea was to avoid both congestion and expensive bypasses to Wellington Street and Chapel Street, but the road was never built. Even in 1929 it was an expensive proposal, but the depression and then the war intervened and by then priorities had changed. But many of the Commission's ideas of the 1920s were implemented in the 1930s, particularly where they involved the minimum of expenditure on land acquisition and the maximum of manual labour for unemployment relief.

THE ROAD THROUGH THE 1930s

In 1930-31 the Mayor of Prahran, Cr John McDonald Ellis, described his term of office as a year 'which I regret to say has covered a period of unparalleled distress, not only in this City, but throughout the whole Commonwealth'.³⁹ The early 1930s were to become the reference point of economic disaster for the rest of the 20th century. Industrial output was already falling by the middle of 1929, but in October the Wall Street crash in New York was followed by a chain reaction of financial ruin, bank failures, spiralling protective tariffs and dramatic rises in unemployment around the world. This led, among other things, to a sustained crisis of confidence in the workings of the capitalist economic system. At the time, most economists and government economic advisers believed that if governments should do anything they should cut spending, and that business costs, especially wages, should be cut before recovery could take place. Most employers cut wages and laid off staff, firmly believing they would thus aid a rapid end to the economic whirlwind which was stripping so many of any protection from the cold. The Prahran Council was no exception and did its bit by cutting the general rate by twopence in the pound and laying off outdoor staff. Meanwhile, the responsibility of public-minded citizens was to rally round and help those less fortunate than themselves.

Prahran already had an established tradition of relief activity of this kind. Assistance for the unemployed was not initiated in the 1930s, it was simply put into high gear and the Council set to work to build a road through the depression. As early as 1924/25 the extension of Alexandra

Avenue had been funded jointly with the government 'as a means of affording relief to the unemployed . . .'.⁴⁰ At this stage, relatively small sums of money were involved. In July 1925, for instance, the Council applied for £300 in unemployment relief from the Minister of Public Works and was prepared to spend an equal amount from its own funds.⁴¹ Government funds were used for this purpose throughout the rest of the 1920s, particularly on the eastward extension of Alexandra Avenue. It was, therefore, only natural that when the level of unemployment escalated dramatically, the Council looked to an expansion of this project.

From as early as May 1929, Cr William McIlwrick made special appeals for assistance for the unemployed. Gifts of food, clothing and firewood were distributed under the auspices of the Ladies Benevolent Society and the Salvation Army. Mr F. C. Wilmot worked with Miss Jaffray and members of the Ladies Benevolent Society investigating applicants for relief. Initially, a depot for the distribution of items such as firewood was set up at the Town Hall. The Mayor and councillors did not feel it was right to increase Council spending during the depression, but they certainly increased Council effort. Within the limits of what was considered to be appropriate, the Council in Prahran, as in other suburbs, became a real focus of activity. 'As the numbers of unemployed increased so rapidly, I found it necessary to supplement the sustenance allowance by establishing a depot at the Market for the distribution of groceries, vegetables, boots, clothing etc', wrote Mayor John McDonald Ellis in 1931. Meanwhile, work on the Alexandra Avenue extension was stepped up with a combination of government and Council funds. Unemployed men were provided with short periods of work and soup for lunch handed out by the wife of the Council's road foreman.⁴²

The long-delayed construction of Alexandra Avenue, between Chapel Street and Williams Road, was made possible by the Public Works Department agreeing to list it under Relief Works, and granting a subsidy of £2/10/- for every £1 expended by the City Council in wages. The cost of materials, tools and machinery was borne by the Council.

The work commenced on the 8th April and continued through the winter months, until the end of September. The men were engaged in gangs of from 25 to 32, under Foreman Jannese, and by employing the men on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday in the first week, and Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday in the following, a full week's work was given to each man.

In all, 720 men were given employment, and although many of them were quite unaccustomed to manual work, the combined result was satisfactory.⁴³

The men moved hundreds of cubic yards of broken concrete, saved by the Council since the conversion of the cable trams, rock from the old

brickworks on the east of Chapel Street north and hard-burnt schist from the cliff near Como Park. This was all crushed and rolled to form the road surface and then sprayed with tar. There was also the heavy labour of moving soil from the river banks and spreading it ready for trees and grass.

The Council was not happy with the idea of handing out money to the unemployed unless they worked for it, and this was one of the many areas of conflict between Labor and conservative politicians. The Council had no objection to distributing food, clothing and firewood to the deserving, but there was a strong feeling that even non-cash handouts should be earned in some way. In 1931-32 Mayor Ellis, elected for a second consecutive term as the result of the special circumstances of the depression, reported:

The Council also took advantage of the provisions of the Unemployed Relief Amendment Act to require men receiving sustenance to do some work in return, and the result has been satisfactory, in that most of the men were very glad to be occupied, and responded to the calls most willingly; they have been occupied principally on weeding in parks, cleaning up, trenching, etc., under the control of the Curator, Mr. Greenwood.⁴⁴

In the 1930s, depression or no depression, the Council remained very concerned with the appearance of Prahran. It was one of Melbourne's most affluent suburbs and the councillors saw it as their responsibility to ensure that Prahran, or rather Toorak and South Yarra and Armadale, continued to look the part. In 1932 'The Council decided to commence a liberal scheme of tree planting in the residential streets with the object of beautifying and enhancing the appearance of those parts of the City which lend themselves to treatment of this kind'.⁴⁵

The parts of the city which lent themselves to treatment of this kind in 1932 and 1933 were Williams Road, Dandenong Road, Alexandra Avenue, Kooyong Road, and Como and Orrong Parks. Of the 662 new trees planted in 1933, only two were planted west of Chapel Street and south of Toorak Road (on Donald Street), while 138 or 20 per cent were planted east of Williams and north of Malvern Roads and a further 404 or more than 60 per cent were planted in Alexandra Avenue, Dandenong Road and Como and Orrong Parks.

At this stage, the narrower streets of Windsor were not a priority for beautifying with trees. Elsewhere, the oriental plane trees of the 1920s had gone out of fashion. It was considered that they did too much damage to roads and pavements. Instead, the Council began to plant large numbers of pink flowering gums, lilly-pilly, English ash and golden poplars. Although there was a high mortality rate from vandalism, the Council continued to plant upwards of 600 trees per year and pollard a thousand more.

In a sense, both governments and local councils were caught in a paradox during the 1930s. The arguments over policy were bitter and painful and the resulting policies somewhat confused, but what governments and councils ended up doing, in the main, was cutting expenditure under one heading while increasing it, to a lesser extent, under another. The roads continued to be built, but by part-time labour working a week or so at a time for sustenance payments, rather than by full-time labour working for wages. Those who wish to be cynical may point out that, as a result, all around the country the road through the depression was built very cheaply in taxpayers' money, if not in human sweat. Prahran Council cut rates and laid off staff, but the parks were still maintained, the trees planted and the roads built by the army of the unemployed:

The Council has been anxious to provide in every way possible for the relief of the unemployed of the City, and when the Lord Mayor of Melbourne convened a conference of municipal representatives to consider the question of providing suitable employment for men out of work, a hurried estimate of the cost of extending the Alexandra Avenue to Grange Road was made and submitted; it was also agreed to contribute to the cost of the scheme an amount equivalent to a rate of one farthing in the pound in the event of it being proceeded with; however, difficulties arose, mostly political, which interfered with the progress of the work at the time, but an Unemployment Council, constituted by the Argyle Government, now has the matter under consideration, and it is hoped that some action will be taken to put the work in hand as a Government responsibility or national work.⁴⁶



REMOVING SOIL FROM COMO PARK TO LANDSCAPE ALEXANDRA AVENUE: THE WORK WAS PAID FOR BY SIDNEY MYER, WHO DONATED £10 000 OVER TWO YEARS TO BE EXPENDED ON UNEMPLOYED MARRIED MEN BEFORE CHRISTMAS.'

A hint of the extent of the 'difficulties . . . mostly political' is provided in this account. In 1932 the Mayor, Cr Ellis, was elected to the Legislative Assembly. Conservatives are not noted for their overt references to politics at the local level. No other Mayor before or since had ever referred to politics in his annual report. A much more characteristic tone was set by the dignified recognition of those who gave charitable assistance to the unemployed. Sidney Myer, for instance, donated £5000 in 1931 which was used to provide 852 men with about nine days work each in the period around Christmas. They worked on the landscaping of Alexandra Avenue, removing rock, replacing it with soil from Como Park, and planting it with couch grass.⁴⁷ Myer donated a further £5000 for similar work the following year 'to be expended on unemployed married men before Christmas on the extension of Alexandra Avenue'. John Romanis (Town Clerk) and Councillors Ettelson and Ellis 'waited upon Mr Sidney Myer and expressed the Council's appreciation'.⁴⁸

By the end of 1933 several thousand men had worked for varying periods on the Council's parks and gardens, the 'repair and painting of fences, seats and exteriors of minor buildings . . . the maintenance of roads and footpaths . . .'⁴⁹ and the extension of Alexandra Avenue. They were rewarded with food and money provided by government, private charity and the Council.

The Council's philosophy on the subject was most fully expressed in the *Annual Report* of 1932/33, when the number of men receiving sustenance in Prahran had already fallen from its peak of 1700 in 1930-31 to about 800. The Council expressed itself in sympathy with the objectives of the Unemployment Relief (Administration) Act of January 1933, which included preventing 'The demoralization of the individual due to . . . indiscriminate relief. . . and . . . Mixing of the "Decent" and the "Dissolute" to the detriment of the former'.⁵⁰

If any success is to be achieved in the attack on this social problem, there must be close . . . co-operation between Federal, State and Local Governments and between Public Departments and Private or Voluntary Welfare Associations.

The latter are a most important factor. Without their aid and assistance the Government would have been almost unable to cope with the difficulties that arose during the last two years. Public assistance can only be given in a standardised form, and to a large extent merely touches the fringes of the real social problems, which are tackled by the host of voluntary workers. The personal service and personal touch are often of more value than monetary payments.⁵¹

Unfortunately it is now impossible to determine how many of the unemployed of Prahran would have agreed.

In the same report, the Council complained about cuts in the Government's grant for main traffic routes:

In view of the relief the Council has afforded to ratepayers in reducing the rate by twopence in the pound, it seemed unjust that the Government should still further deplete the Council's revenue at a time when it was depending on receiving its share of the fees for the registration of motor vehicles.⁵²

Meanwhile, special government assistance continued in funding the extension of Alexandra Avenue to provide work for the unemployed. The work was deliberately labour intensive and openly acknowledged to be an inefficient way of building a road:

In a relief work job such as this it is impossible to obtain a high standard of efficiency. Many of the men sent by the Department in charge of Sustenance are quite unfitted for hard work, however willing they may be, and, unfortunately, many others do not try to give fair value for the wages paid to them.⁵³

The shift in tone from the report two years earlier is clear: some people on both sides of the sustenance handouts were getting tired of the whole business. But by the following year, the number of men registered as receiving sustenance in Prahran was down to 400 and the worst was over. Unemployment relief works continued for a number of years, including on Williams Road, but in October 1936 Council employees' wages were restored to pre-depression levels and in 1937/38:

A resolution of the Council was passed to the effect that in its opinion in view of the comparatively small number of men who are unemployed, the unemployment relief tax imposed during the recent depression had served its purpose, and the Government should now withdraw the tax or reduce it to the very smallest proportions.⁵⁴

The Mayors' annual reports had already shifted their focus to other things, including the highlight of the official social calendar, the Mayoral Balls, and fund-raising for a wide range of charities.

FROM BOATS TO BRIDGES

Meanwhile, various people continued to put their minds to ways of improving routes across the river. At the height of the depression, in July 1931, Lou Harding began operating hourly ferry services from Princes Bridge to the Botanic Gardens and Punt Road. The service was a great success for a few years and was operating half-hourly by the end of 1931.⁵⁵ In 1933 John Parker and his wife were living in the new flats on the corner of Caroline Street and Alexander Avenue. The ferry provided a perfect commuter service for them to get to work in Melbourne:



A PICNIC IN COMO PARK, 24 OCTOBER 1934

An entrepreneur had established a ferry—a little launch service. It carried 20-25 passengers. There was a jetty on the south shore at Caroline Street. It ran to a jetty at Swanston Street via another jetty on the south west side of the Punt Road [foot] bridge. It was a great thrill—like Venice . . . it was very popular . . . so novel. Our first car was a long way off. We knew where we lived. Every Monday the smell of Rosella tomato sauce wafted across the river. You could almost spread it on your bread. There was just a foot bridge at Punt Road. Mother walked over it one stormy night . . . there was a broken plank—she hurt her leg.⁵⁶

In November 1934 a new bridge over the River Yarra was opened to connect with Grange Road and the extended Alexandra Avenue. This provided a brand new grandstand for viewing the spectacular floods of December 1934:

We stood on MacRobertson's Bridge, the new bridge . . . and watched the boathouse just upstream on the north shore . . . Young people were passing out canoes from a hole in the roof . . . the whole building started to tremble, washed off its footings into the river . . . it spewed up cushions, paddles . . . the ridge roof, both halves, floated slowly down underneath the bridge and lodged in water in a cul-de-sac on the north shore. It was lodged there for weeks . . . Como Park was flooded . . . the water came across the road—it's below river level . . . they brought every Metropolitan Fire Brigade pump in onto the river bank and pumped the water [from Como Park] back into the river.⁵⁷

The floods of 1934 also caused the Hawksburn Creek to overflow its channel and spread out over the surrounding streets:

The flood in 1934—there was a boat in Toorak Road . . . The Hawksburn now runs entirely underground . . . Floods had happened before . . . there was sort of a vent in the middle of Toorak Road, in the middle of the tram line, at Clara Street and River Street where [the Hawksburn] crosses Toorak Road. The Hawksburn came up through it and flooded Toorak Road. The trams had to stop each side. We had to cross at the level of Wilson Street and come back . . . The trams could run on Chapel Street but the ground floors of the buildings down there flooded . . . we were just clear of it [in Kensington Road] . . . Crossing the river in the train, the water was up to the level of the train . . . it didn't last very long but it was quite exciting. I don't think it could happen again, they've done so much more draining.⁵⁸

In 1937 work began on a road bridge at Punt Road. In December 1938 the Hoddle Bridge was opened with a minimum of fuss, particularly when compared to the celebrations surrounding the new Church Street Bridge in 1924. The Hoddle Bridge replaced the punt and the old foot bridge and nobody in Prahran seems to have been prepared for the volume of traffic that began to flow over it. There is a vague aura of surprise surrounding reports on the consequent traffic problems on Punt Road.

In 1944 the increasing number of accidents forced the councils of Prahran, Melbourne and St Kilda to consider installing traffic lights at all



BOYS ENJOYING A SPOT OF BOATING ON TOORAK ROAD, DECEMBER 1934

major junctions along Punt Road. Some explanation was felt necessary, though this had not been the case when traffic lights were installed on Williams Road in 1940 or for the long-delayed lights in Chapel Street: 'The opening of the Punt Road Bridge over the River Yarra, and the stream of traffic including heavy tramway buses have converted Punt Road into an extremely busy main highway carrying much traffic between the northern and southern suburbs'.⁵⁹

In fact, although traffic lights in Chapel Street were considered from as early as 1937, those installed on Williams Road seem to have been the first in Prahran. On 23 December 1940 lights at the junctions of Toorak and Malvern Roads and High Street were officially switched on by the Mayor: 'These are most helpful in regulating traffic and reducing street accidents. They are warmly commended by the Police'.⁶⁰

In 1932/33 it was planned to build a bridge over the Yarra at Williams Road, but this project never went ahead. The MacRobertson Bridge at Grange Road was built instead and it diverted some traffic east. In 1944 the Williams Road ferry closed for lack of customers.⁶¹

Before the arrival of the traffic lights, the Council and the Police experimented with a number of methods of traffic regulation. The most obvious were constables regulating the flow at junctions, particularly along Toorak Road. In 1932 there were efforts to make them more visible at night by providing them with white capes or coats.⁶² For a while the Royal Automobile Club of Victoria (RACV) operated a timing clock on Chapel Street north in an attempt to deter speeding motorists, but it was so unpopular that the Council had it removed.⁶³ The RACV was active in the early years in erecting street safety signs and from 1933 there were 'traffic buttons'—yellow circles painted in the centre of roads at intersections around which cars were supposed to drive.⁶⁴ But most of the Council's efforts during the 1930s were designed to speed up traffic rather than slow it down, particularly by rounding off corners and improving and repairing road surfaces.

Throughout the decade, the horse continued to be replaced by the internal combustion engine. The Town Clerk and Clerk of Works were provided with cars in 1924, but the Council continued to use horses for much of its road maintenance. The unemployed were accompanied by horses and drays in their work on Alexandra Avenue. At the same time the sides of streets were increasingly dotted with 'bowser petrol pumps' each of which required a Council permit, and the Council bought itself more and more trucks, mainly Fords. All this motor traffic seems to have been forcing horses off the streets and in 1932 there were complaints of people riding horses on the footpaths. However, the Council's stable manager was still an important employee and new horses continued to be



THE COUNCIL'S TRAFFIC OFFICER ASSISTS CHILDREN ACROSS THE ROAD IN 1933.

purchased for Council work, particularly garbage collection, for nearly another thirty years.⁶⁵

As the 1930s drew to a close, many areas of Prahran had taken on a leafy and shady appearance. The 4515 street trees of 1910 had been added to by so many thousands that the Council no longer bothered to keep count. It was enough trouble keeping track of the six or seven hundred new ones they planted each year. The changing fashions of planting by streets and species over the decades had meanwhile given a distinctive pattern to the trees of Prahran. The oldest trees and the biggest species were mainly in the streets of the east, and along the northern and southern boundaries were the superb avenues of mature oaks and oriental planes. In the west and centre, younger plantings and more mixed species were appearing. The narrower streets of Windsor and Prahran seldom provided sufficient room for the splendour of a mature oak or plane. The result was a pattern of street trees which served to emphasise the social and economic diversity of the city.

WAR AND PEACE

Labour shortages in the 1940s affected work in parks as well as on roads, but the demands of World War II had a dramatic visual impact on Melbourne's public open space. It was dug up and filled with trenches so that people could shelter from the air raids that never came. Prahran was

no exception: 'Parks and Gardens: This Department has suffered during the year owing to labour call up, etc.; also trench shelters have been constructed in many of the Gardens, but even with these factors the Parks and Gardens continue to be a credit to the Municipality'.⁶⁶

Labour shortages also curtailed the tree pruning programme, and if anything, the number of trees in Prahran possibly declined during the war years:

Golden Poplars in Streets: Some hundreds of golden poplars planted in the various streets of the City have had to be destroyed on the recommendation of the City Engineer and Curator of Parks, owing to the root action interfering with footpaths, kerbs and channels, in addition to the nuisance caused to residents by roots entering private gardens . . .⁶⁷

The year of 1942 was when civilians in Melbourne were perhaps most affected by the war. It had all seemed rather far away until the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor in December 1941, Singapore fell in February 1942 and Darwin was bombed soon afterwards. Blackouts, air-raid drills and trench digging added to a sense of emergency which was reinforced when American troops made Melbourne their Australian base. Thousands of them had arrived by April 1942,⁶⁸ but as the year progressed and the raids never came, interest waned. The trenches filled with water in winter and



'CITY OF PRAHRAN DEMONSTRATION PLOT. AUSTRALIAN BROWN ONION SEED FOR BRITAIN. PLANTED 4TH JULY 1942.'

children were prone to fall in them, not surprisingly as the trenches zig-zagged their way not only across parks but also across most school playgrounds. The trenches remained in use for another two years, but by the middle of 1944 they were already seen as obsolete: It is anticipated that all trench shelters will be filled in during the next financial year, and since most of these shelters occupy lawns, etc., in Gardens and Playgrounds, these areas will be sown down in grass and Playground equipment replaced'.⁶⁹ This was apparently done in time for the parks to provide the venue for many of the victory celebrations at the end of the war. A children's Victory Carnival was held in Como Park, for instance. But the end of the war did not bring an end to labour shortages, and the Parks and Gardens Department began to look for ways of reducing the labour required for maintenance in the post-war era. This was most obvious in the new designs for the Victoria Gardens, drawn up by Edna Walling. Island beds of flowering annuals were replaced by lawns sweeping around borders of shrubs and trees.⁷⁰ The programme of tree planting in streets also failed to return to the levels of the 1930s and there was a reduced emphasis on trees like oriental planes which were considered to be too big. The mess created by the falling leaves of deciduous trees was also out of favour and there was a greater emphasis on Australian natives.⁷¹

After 1939 the pace of change in Prahran's streets slowed considerably. While money had been in short supply during the depression, both labour and materials had been freely available, generally at bargain basement prices. The outbreak of war was rapidly followed by full employment, shortages of materials and rationing of a number of commodities, including petrol. During the war there was very little building of any kind and a huge backlog of demand accumulated, particularly for housing. This meant that the shortage of building materials did not disappear with the war and remained a problem well into the 1950s. As a result, in the early 1940s the appearance of Prahran's streets almost marked time, particularly when compared to the rapid changes of the 1920s and 1930s. After 1945 the City Surveyor did his best to complete the latest programme of street surfacing, begun in 1935, but there were few other developments.

The Council supported the war from the beginning and offered to pay all employees signing up for the armed forces the difference between their military and civilian pay. Their jobs were also to be kept open for them when they returned.⁷² The unemployment that remained from the depression disappeared rapidly, as the Council noted in 1941:

It has been the practice of the Council to set aside a regular sum of money for the relief of unemployed in this City, and £1,000 was provided for this purpose in the estimates this year, but as there were no unemployed available, the amount has been used for Patriotic and Charitable purposes.⁷³

Labour shortages were soon evident and the war also delayed the arrival from overseas of special lenses for the traffic lights on Chapel Street. Petrol and tyre shortages were causing problems by 1942, despite rationing by the Liquid Fuel Control Board and special allocations based on war priorities:

The position became so acute that a conference of delegates from Transport Advisory Committees had under consideration the use of horse-drawn transport as a substitute for motor transport and the matter was taken up with the Commonwealth Authorities, the objective being to endeavour to obtain the best possible priority for the supply of the necessary materials associated with the use of horse-drawn transport.⁷⁴

Petrol rationing had been in force since 1940, and by 1942 Melbourne's citizens were quite accustomed to packing themselves onto overcrowded, blacked-out trams and trains, where women sat and knitted khaki socks for the troops.⁷⁵

The year has again been a most difficult one [reported Prahran's Surveyor in September 1943]. Shortages of staff and difficulties in obtaining suitable material have made the carrying out of work in the various departments most difficult; in fact, with regard to staff, I would like to place on record that a very dangerous state has been reached, particularly in the Street Cleansing, House Garbage, and Destructor Departments, as I have not been able to replace any of the various members of the staff who have enlisted in the A.I.F., R.A.A.F. or other Services. I have made repeated requests to Manpower Authorities, without success . . .

Essential maintenance and some sealing was carried out, and the policy of preserving good roads has been, where possible, followed, as I consider that these good surfaced roads are an asset to the City and should be maintained; there are many roads in the City which are deteriorating as to surfaces, but these unfortunately cannot be touched owing to lack of labour and materials, and these will, in most cases, be post war reconstruction jobs.⁷⁶

During the war, the Council took the prudent step of saving the money it could not spend on roads for post-war developments. As the Surveyor reported in 1946: 'On taking up my duties in March I found that bitumen was becoming available, and that Council had immediate funds to commence their post war work'.⁷⁷ The Surveyor's Department spent the next six or seven years catching up with a road surfacing programme initiated in 1935, whereby roads were given multiple coats on the existing foundations. This raised the level of the road, and drains and curbs had to be modified accordingly.

In other areas, change remained slow. Punt Road was widened to accommodate the increasing traffic, and from 1949 there were increasing requests for school-crossing lights on main roads.

The 1950s were very much transitional years between the slow change of the 1940s and the dramatic boom of the 1960s. The number of cars began to rise again after the war and problems of street parking started to come to the attention of the Public Works Committee from about 1953, but they were minor compared to later years. Ian MacDonald joined the Council in 1956 and rose to become a long-serving City Engineer. He maintains there were no traffic problems in the 1950s. Chapel Street was always an area of extreme congestion, but there were as yet no problems of conflict between residents and cars. 'Residential amenity was not an issue'.⁷⁸ The decade of the 1950s was something of a period of calm before the storm.



PUNT ROAD HILL IN 1952, SHORTLY AFTER WIDENING TO ACCOMMODATE THE TRAFFIC THAT CAN BE SEEN CROSSING THE HODDLE BRIDGE IN THE BACKGROUND.

2

Housing High and Low in Prahran, 1920-1950

In 1886 Toorak was described as 'a district chiefly occupied by gentlemen's houses standing in the midst of ample pleasure grounds and maintained in perfect order and adorned with conservatories, ferneries, tennis-lawns, shrubberies and flowery parterres of considerable beauty'.¹ The following thirty years saw a number of these 'ample pleasure grounds' disappear under gentlemen's residences of a more modest variety, but this description still essentially fitted much of Toorak in 1920. Extensive landscaped gardens were commonplace, and at the 1921 census the City of Prahran included 160 houses of more than twelve rooms.² This was by far the greatest concentration of large private houses in any city, town or borough in Victoria. During the 19th century, much of the east and north of Prahran was occupied by a small group of substantial estates, featuring mansions of greater or lesser splendour, and they were not confined to the area generally known as Toorak. South Yarra, Armadale and Hawksburn also contained sites considered suitable for the building of mansions. High ground was of particular importance to provide the natural drainage necessary to keep the rich well above their sewage and also above the floods which still periodically plagued Prahran. These large houses were frequently occupied by large households, including several domestic servants. A cook and a couple of maids would have been regarded as modest help for a Toorak family of the time.³

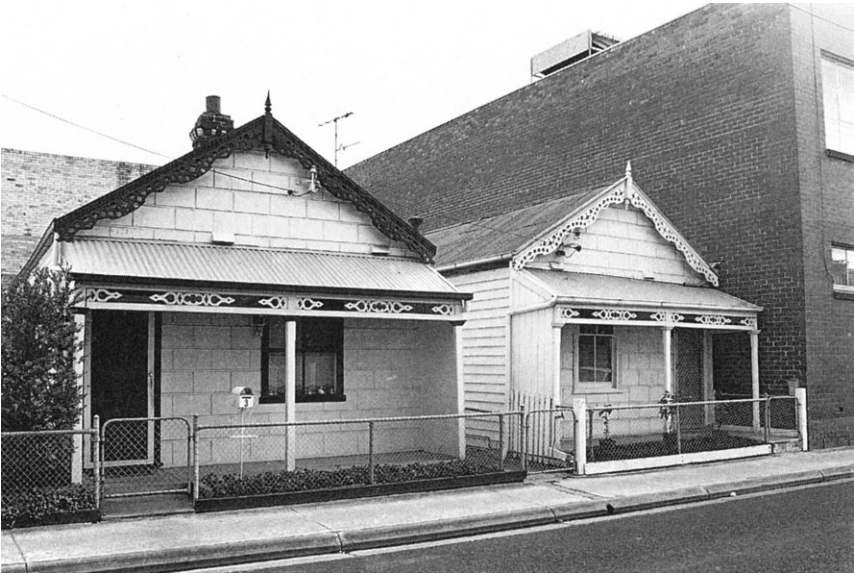
But this was the high ground in the north and east. Not all of Prahran offered panoramic views and natural drainage. In the south and west, the city contained housing at the opposite end of the social scale; the sort of



THE TOWERS, PHOTOGRAPHED IN 1912 BY N.J. CAIRE. IN 1895 THE GROUNDS WERE LAID OUT WITH TRELLISES FOR TREES AND VINES, A TENNIS COURT COMPLETE WITH PAVILION, A FERNERY, FISH PONDS, AVIARY, TWO SUMMER HOUSES AND PATHS SWEEPING AMONG STATUES. IN 1927 THE HOUSE WAS DEMOLISHED AND THE LAND SUBDIVIDED FOR '15 MAGNIFICENT RESIDENTIAL SITES' AROUND KINGSLEY COURT AND ON LANSELL AND ORRONG ROADS.

housing that featured in inquiries into the impact of slums on the morality of the people who lived in them; the sort of housing where rats and open drains prompted the authorities to worry about public health.⁴ In the lower lying areas of Prahran, houses were smaller and built more closely together on narrower streets than the houses on the high ground. At the 1921 census, one in three houses in Prahran had four rooms or less, and nearly one thousand were tiny cottages of one, two or three rooms. Like the big houses on the hills, in the 1920s these cottages were also frequently occupied by large households.⁵

At the 1921 census the average size of a household in Prahran was 4.2 people and more than a quarter of the population lived in households of seven or more. Very few people lived on their own: only 542 or just over 1 per cent of the population.⁶ By the 1986 census this picture had changed dramatically. People in Prahran no longer lived in large households. They



MANY OF PRAHRAN'S OLDER SINGLE-FRONTED HOUSES WERE DEMOLISHED IN THE 1950s AND 1960s TO MAKE WAY FOR HOUSING COMMISSION FLATS, BUT SOME SURVIVED INTO THE 1990s; THESE ARE ON MACQUARIE STREET.

lived on their own, or with one or two other people. More than half the population lived in one- or two-person households, and more than half the population lived in flats. The number of private dwellings had more or less doubled since 1921, but the total population had fallen. The number of houses had fallen from about 10 000 to about 9000, but the number of flats had risen from just 845 in 1921 to nearly 12 000 some sixty-five years later.⁷

The story of how this change took place is a complex one. There has not been a smooth progression from large households to small or from houses to flats. The pattern of change in Prahran has been the result of interaction between many factors.

This chapter deals with changes in the housing pattern between 1920 and 1950. By the end of the 1950s most of the remaining big estates had been subdivided under the combined pressures of probate, depression and profit. The pattern of streets in the east of Prahran began to stabilise, and flats had become fashionable. In the west, the street pattern had been established much earlier. During the period 1920-50 the focus in the west was more on the repair or replacement of insanitary buildings than on new development. There was considerable concern for the public health issues raised by poor drainage, poor housing and overcrowding.



MODEST VILLAS IN ARMADALE, 1927

MANSIONS AND COTTAGES

There was no typical house in Prahran in 1920. The house on Regent Street with three rooms and no bathroom, occupied by two adults and six children, was not typical.⁸ Kilbride (formerly Beaulieu) on Heyington Place, with twenty-two rooms, three baths, including one outside for the servants, but only one toilet, was not typical either.⁹ The average for Prahran was 5.54 rooms occupied by 4.2 people, but this tells us nothing except that houses in Prahran were slightly larger than in Victoria as a whole (5.21 rooms). Most houses—two out of three—had four, five or six rooms and were modest, comfortable homes. In them lived an enormous range of households. We must not imagine any average or typical family living in this modest comfort. Prahran was home to a great range of people and even in 1920 they did not generally live their whole lives there. They came and went as circumstances changed. Generally, they moved into houses built by somebody else and modified them to meet their own requirements. Houses frequently survive to a greater age than people and this adaptation of buildings to changing fashions and standards is a continuous feature of living in all but the newest towns and suburbs. A few examples will illustrate something of the variety of houses and people in Prahran in this period.



BEAULIEU, LATER KILBRIDE AND FROM 1922 A PART OF ST CATHERINE'S SCHOOL



HOUSES ON REGENT STREET

Mick Keane was one of seven children. He was born at Mooroopna near Shepparton, but the family moved to Melbourne while he was still a small child. In 1926 Mr Keane started work for a grocery firm with a shop in Chapel Street and for a while lived in Nicholson Street, Prahran. During the 1930s he spent some time in the country and the early 1940s found him in the army, but in 1946 he returned to Prahran. Mr and Mrs Keane took up residence in a new house on Lang Street. For a while, Mr Keane worked on the tramways, then in about 1950 he got a job on the waterfront and spent the rest of his working life commuting from Prahran to Port Melbourne, initially by push bike.¹⁰

By World War I, women who had seven children were not unusual, but families of that size were no longer as common as they had been. The birth-rate was on the way down and ideas were changing about the appropriate number of children to have.

Valentine Leeper had a brother, a sister, two half-brothers and two half-sisters. The family moved to Grandview Grove in about 1920. Miss Leeper remembered that most of the houses on the street were large and some of them were operated as boarding houses: 'We realised why [it was called Grandview Grove] when we looked out from the upper storey at the back. [The windows] looked right over the bay and we could see the weather coming in. On the other side the railway was rather noisy'. Miss Leeper's father was Warden of Trinity College, University of Melbourne, and she spent her early years at the college: 'Father married twice. By the time we left Trinity the elder ones had all gone to England . . . my brothers both went to Oxford after courses here . . . They both rather despaired of finding work here'. The remaining family of five lived at Grandview Grove for two years and then moved to a house on Kensington Road. There were no live-in servants at Grandview Grove: 'People came'.

In Kensington Road after 1925 we had a live-in maid. By that time my mother had lost her eye-sight. . . We never had a car. People didn't have cars. Father used to have very faithful people who drove him to meetings.

There was a garage at Kensington Road—very useful during the last war when wood was rationed. The out-houses have all been demolished now. There was a stable, a buggy shed and a man's room, although I don't think anybody could ever have slept in it. The garage and the laundry were a bit later. They were all joined together down the back and they were all very useful, though not for the purposes they were built for . . . The house was built in 1886 . . . most there were the same vintage. The Toorak Road end is much altered but still there . . .

[The house in Kensington Road had] all been electrified before the twenties . . . It was fairly typical except that obviously a big room had been built on at the back for a billiard room. It was the only house we saw with a room big enough for all father's books . . .

There was a long passage running from front to back with three rooms off on each side. That big room was built as a billiard room, we bought the carpet with it and it lasted until we left [in 1988] . . . Mr Chirnside, the previous owner, was a single man. He had scrapped the gas. We got it put on again and had a hot water service put onto the range. This was all very well until fuel was rationed, when it became awkward. Not enough hot water for the family. We had to have a good deal done. The man that came to improve the hot water service—insulating it—said there was something illegal on the back wall of the kitchen. A little timber room had been built on the back opening out of the pantry, partly blocking the water pipe. They couldn't have been as keen in those days on checking when houses were altered.¹¹

Miss Leeper remembered when Como Park was still part of the Armytages property and the land south of the house had yet to be subdivided: 'In my childhood I remember paddocks coming down to Toorak Road between Kensington and Williams Roads. By the time we moved in it was all divided up and built over . . . People talked very much more than now. We knew everyone in Kensington Road. There were no flats then.'¹²

Not everyone lived in old houses that had to be adapted to provide the conveniences expected in the 1920s. There were new houses too, on subdivisions like that south of Como House and also on smaller blocks in Windsor and Prahran. In about 1925 Freda Harridane and her family moved into a new house on Andrew Street, near the Punt Road end. It was one of a group of three built in double brick. The house was double-fronted with three bedrooms, a dining and lounge room combined, a kitchen with both a gas stove and a fire stove and a separate laundry. Round the side was the toilet, outside but under the same roof. There were two troughs in the laundry and a wood-fired copper. There was a chip heater for the hot water and Freda Harridane remembers screwing up newsprint to start it.

There were quite moneyed people down further, opposite St Francis and near the State school. Across the road in Andrew Street were posh—no children . . . Children played in the streets. We called at one another's gates 'Can I go out and play please?' . . . no cars went by. It was perfectly safe after school.¹³

Later, the family moved to a house in South Yarra, her mother's family home. It was a double-fronted, wooden house with six rooms. The bathroom was inside but at the back, off the living room. There was a wood copper in the laundry.

the fernery and then the laundry and toilet [were] down the back. There was an asphalt backyard, a garden in the front. They weren't big on gardens in those days in those areas . . . Father was away a lot working. We

had hollyhocks . . . Things were tough, just a different world, three children, Mum and Dad . . . My mother was clean to the point of. . . well . . . but we only bathed once a week. Father was in the building trade. Mother made everything but our woollens. We were always beautifully dressed. She made our overcoats. We were extremely well fed and well dressed. We were a bit ahead of the time in quality. My mother's mother died in childbirth—eight children. Mother was a beautiful cook—superb meals on practically nothing . . . always fruit and vegetables. Sunday was a roast, the big cooking day. When the stove was hot all the baking was done . . . we always had cakes . . . [mother] made cream cakes and eclairs . . . always Sunday tea.¹⁴

Ann Clemens, nee Turnbull, was a child of nine when the family moved into Dunraven in 1927:

My grandmother was one of the first people out in Toorak because in those days East Melbourne was the place to live and her friends said she was mad going to Toorak because no one would call on her and the hill was too high for the horses. My grandmother, who had a very good eye for country, said 'The air is better in Toorak. It will be *the* place to live and my horses can manage the hill very nicely'.

My grandmother's house was a single-storey house which of course no longer exists . . . and I used to keep my pony at the back of that. I could ride . . . and Toorak Road was the only metalled road I had to cross . . .



DUNRAVEN: DURING THE 1930s AND 1940s THE HOUSE WAS HOME TO THE FAMILY OF RICHARD TURNBULL, PRESIDENT OF THE VICTORIA RACING CLUB. IT WAS DEMOLISHED AFTER HIS DEATH.

Old Nareeb in Kooyong Road, there were two sisters there and they used to ride side-saddle on matching horses . . . with veils and hard hats . . . damn good horsewomen.

My father was a grazier and, of course, travelling took a long time in those days and he was away a lot, going from one property to the other. Mother was a Sydney woman and liked to be high on a hill.

Towards the end of the 1920s Mrs Clemens's mother bought Dunraven from Lady Fairbairn and then did it up:

It was a strange house with a very strange atmosphere . . . Those houses were very difficult to run by modern standards. The servants were in a wing . . . difficult to connect with the house, and the bedroom accommodation itself was quite small . . . there were big reception rooms and then . . . the servants, of course, had a large number of small rooms.

In the 1930s the staff at Dunraven consisted of cook, nanny, the under-nurse, the butler, the downstairs maid, the upstairs maid, the gardener, Mrs Turnbull's maid, the chauffeur and an odd-job man.

Your servants were part of your family really. After I was married I came back and looked at the kitchen at Dunraven and I said to Cook 'This is one hell of a kitchen Cook' and she said 'Yes Miss. I came for three weeks to oblige and I've been here thirty-seven years this September'. It was a dreadful kitchen. There were miles of it, you know. Miles and miles.¹⁵

Shirley Paine, nee McConnochie, lived in Chapel Street with her mother, father and a younger sister. Her father was an ex-serviceman. That 'coloured all our lives'. They had had a successful milk-bar business in Moonee Ponds and took over a similar business in Chapel Street at the end of the 1920s. They lived behind and above the shop. Downstairs was a small living room and kitchen with a wood-fired copper. Upstairs were a bathroom and four bedrooms. There was a toilet in the yard outside, near the back door. Life was dominated by the shop. There was a very large refrigerator, leased from Frigidaire, for the ice cream, and a machine for making soda water: 'It came into a fountain in the shop'. In winter they sold hot malted milk. The 'bane of those things was to see the milk didn't burn . . . on the stove in the kitchen'.

From an early age Shirley McConnochie worked in the shop on Friday evenings and Saturdays. She 'started off just selling ice cream . . . one or two prices to remember'. The day revolved around the times of the intervals in the films across the road and her games were regulated by the requirements of the business. She 'had to keep clean for interval'. There was a nectarine tree in the backyard and she had her own garden plot where she grew diosma, asparagus ferns and friesias. A Chinese tree of heaven appeared in the middle.¹⁶



HOUSING IN CENTRAL PRAHRAN IN THE 1950s, ON THE EDGE OF A HOUSING COMMISSION REDEVELOPMENT AREA

Norman Wettenhall also spent time in the garden: 'We always grew our own vegetables . . . raspberry canes, gooseberries, cherries . . . we grew our own seedlings for all sorts of plants . . . we had our own chooks . . . There was a good deal of self-sufficiency.'¹⁷ In 1912 Dr Wettenhall's parents bought Aberfeldie from the Robertson family. The original house was built in 1865: 'I don't know, but I think it was built as a spec, by somebody in England . . . the verandah was on the south . . . a northern hemisphere design . . . ' The main house looked south to Toorak road, with a wing running back on either end to the north and stood on a 1-acre lot: ' [Father] could see from his consulting rooms in the city that this was the highest point to the south . . . From the garden we could see the bay and ships coming up to Port Melbourne . . . Toorak is an incredibly convenient place to live. I can get into the city in ten minutes'.¹⁸

Dr Wettenhall's father, also a doctor, was the seventh son in a family of nine from the Wimmera. Following post-graduate work in England and stints in both the British and Australian Army Medical Corps, Dr and Mrs Wettenhall, by now with a son, Norman, returned to Australia and moved into Aberfeldie. A second son was born in 1918.

In Norman Wettenhall's memory the house always had electricity, with gas and coal fires. Briquettes and wood fires came later. Besides the main

house, the property included a wooden stable block with three loose boxes and a loft above, plus a groom's room, all with the original Scottish iron roof. There was also a small coach house and a curious shower/changing room for the tennis court. All pre-dated the Wettenhalls by many years. They never had any horses, but they did have a car: 'We had an old FN ... which once had to go up a hill backwards because it had insufficient power. [The tennis court is] probably the oldest court in Victoria [known to have been in existence by at least 1870, and still in regular use in the 1990s]'. The house also had a billiard room, a Victorian rose garden and a water garden designed in the 1920s by Rodney Alsop, a Melbourne architect. The west wing was lower than the rest of the house, with a laundry and store rooms down the slope.

Sort of a servants' wing ... it was a small house by Toorak standards of the time ... Miss Calcutt did sewing and mending ... Mother died in 1928 ... After she died there was a series of housekeepers ... always a cook ... a parlour maid and a house maid, sisters ... gone in the 1930s ... the gardener was a cricket fan ... didn't live in ... There was an odd-job man in the 1930s, father wanted to help him ...

In the laundry there was a copper and all the steam coming up from it ... the sheets were run through a great big mangle into the wash trough. Washing on Monday, ironing on Tuesday. There was an absolute pattern. On Sunday ... roasts ... afternoon tea. We'd go visiting, or people would come. I was brought up with prayers after breakfast, the staff and everybody came ... my brother and I rebelled against prayers when we were older.

Father made himself the centre of the family. There were forever families staying ... lots of aunts and uncles and cousins ... always had cousins or some relations staying—working in a bank or going to university ... Holidays ... not too many were spent in Melbourne ... They were bigish families. We went off and stayed with cousins, uncles, aunts in New South Wales ... a very family-orientated thing ... We very rarely stayed with anyone but family. Mother's family were in the Riverina—Swan Hill ... father's family in the Wimmera.

[At Aberfeldie] the house was never without dogs—Australian terriers, cocker spaniels—companions for the children ...¹⁹

In this era, Toorak was still home to a wide variety of birds and animals. Owls, kingfishers and blue wrens, squirrels and ringtail possums all lived in the big gardens, and this was in addition to the wallabies and koalas and ostriches in the private zoo on Lansell Road.

HOUSING AND PUBLIC HEALTH

In the 19th century household sewage was generally either removed by a pan collection service or, if the house was not too closely crowded by its neighbours, the sewage stayed in the immediate vicinity and decomposed



TOORAK HOUSE

or trickled away slowly through some sort of septic tank or seepage system. By the end of the century most of the more densely populated areas of Prahran were covered by a pan collection service. Toilets were built at the end of the yard, close to the back lane through which the pans were removed.

After 1891 the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works was responsible for water supply and sewerage. Two main sewers were installed in the metropolitan area—the North Yarra main sewer and the Hobson's Bay main sewer, covering areas north and south of the river respectively. By the end of 1920 the sewerage system was more or less complete in Melbourne, South Melbourne, Port Melbourne, Collingwood, Fitzroy, Hawthorn, Prahran, Richmond and St Kilda, although considerable work was still under way in Prahran during the year to connect areas of new subdivision. As at 31 December 1920, 12 028 buildings in Prahran were connected to the sewerage system, which included virtually all dwellings plus a number of offices, factories and shops.²⁰ Despite this, as late as 1925 the Council remained concerned with sewage removal from 'some nine or ten properties in unsewered areas, near or adjacent to the River Yarra'. There was some argument as to whether the Council or the MMBW should be responsible for organising the 'nightsoil' contractor.²¹

When houses were connected to the sewers, the most common procedure was to install a flush toilet in the building at the end of the backyard. Even when the new toilet was moved nearer to the house for greater convenience, it seldom actually moved inside because toilets were still strongly associated with flies and an unpleasant smell, and because of the cost that would be involved in internal alterations to the building. Even in new houses built in the 1920s toilets were still frequently segregated in this way. The acceptance of toilets into the house and eventually into the bedroom was a gradual process, particularly at the bottom end of the housing market. Buildings which had never had a pan system, but had enjoyed sufficiently spacious and well-drained grounds for a septic tank, had accepted the toilet into the house much earlier.

The provision of sewerage systems was just one of many ways in which various levels of government became involved in housing standards in this era. Most were particularly concerned with the newly fashionable problem of slums. Ideas changed frequently during the century as many minds applied themselves to the problems perceived to be associated with poor people in poor houses. Over the years, virtually every major study of poor housing in Victoria included parts of Prahran among the areas investigated. In the first half of the century the Prahran Council was particularly interested in the issue of public health. Houses were inspected, particularly if any of the occupants suffered from an infectious disease; the Council employed a full-time rat catcher; and if any houses were found to be so damp, dark, insanitary and vermin-infested as to be, in the opinion of the Medical Officer of Health, beyond repair, they were demolished. The owners of less seriously insanitary houses were served with notices ordering them to bring the building up to the required standard.

The Victorian government also began to take an interest in housing and in 1914 Constable Halpin of Prahran was among those who gave evidence to the Royal Commission on the Housing Conditions of the People:

In 1910 twenty houses in Daly-street South Yarra, were condemned by the Council and pulled down. New good villas have been built there, and the place is now called Alexandra-crescent. [Almeida Crescent]

Question by Mr Solly: They have practically driven the poor people out and put a better class of people in? — Yes.

Question by Mr Menzies: Have you any idea where those people went to who left the condemned houses? — In a good many instances those houses were occupied by criminals, and several arrests were made in that street. In a good many cases they went to Pentridge.²²

Every year the Council ordered between fifty and one hundred houses to be put in a sanitary condition and decreed that a dozen or so more should be closed and pulled down:

The council of Prahran has been doing pretty good work from time to time and there are no slums. There are some small places in some streets as, for instance, in Bangs-street, Mount-street and Regent-street . . . The building at No. 3 Oak-place, South Yarra, has no conveniences; but No. 8 has three rooms and a bath; but I noticed yesterday green, slimy water there. The building at No. 23 Arthur-street, South Yarra has no bath . . .

In the whole of the Prahran municipality, including Windsor, South Yarra and Toorak, there are 2357 acres. There is no building regulation as to area, but one is about to be enacted in the course of a few days, with respect to the area of the yard space, &c. I believe they are going to make the area 40 by 10, or 20 by 20 feet . . . P

At the time of World War I most of Prahran's housing was considered to be very good by current standards, with the exception of houses in a few small streets. 'There are baths in nearly every house'. The politicians who initiated the study of the Housing Conditions of the People were not interested in poor housing for its own sake. They were concerned about the impact of such houses on the health and morals of the people who lived in them. Constable Halpin's evidence about the residents of Daly Street and Pentridge probably reinforced their views, but he may have surprised them when he answered a leading question about the state of children's health in poor and in good housing: 'There is not much difference. In this house owned by the council which I have mentioned, there are six strong, healthy, fat children, while one might visit a large mansion and see white-faced, sickly children. The children in those small streets do not look sickly'.²⁴

Until 1909 Prahran Council had a consulting Health Officer, who was called in as necessary, but from 1910 Dr R. H. Fetherston 'attended daily

at the City Offices'. He immediately set to work to tackle what he considered the most serious problems: the high level of infant mortality and the incidence of infectious diseases in Prahran. The emphasis was on prevention and the Council war on smelly drains and rats entered a new phase.²⁵

Dr Fetherston's efforts to reduce infant mortality were eventually to make Prahran's Infant Welfare Department a model for other local authorities and this is discussed in further detail in chapter 6, but he was also concerned with community health in a much wider context. He complained about keeping horses in residential areas. He wanted the Council to provide refrigeration for storing perishable food because he believed private enterprise was unlikely to 'establish a refrigerating plant for this purpose'.²⁶ He also showed educational films on public health issues, and he inspected houses. In the early 1920s there was something of a housing shortage, so he shifted his emphasis from demolition to repair:

Owing to the scarcity of houses very few orders for closing of same have been issued. Every effort has been made for landlords to renovate and make the houses fit for habitation. Still there are a good number of houses in the City approaching the time when it will be necessary to condemn them as unfit for habitation.²⁷

There is no reason to doubt Dr Fetherston's assumption that houses in an unsanitary condition were rented. In 1921 only 35 per cent of Prahran's housing was owner-occupied. In keeping with his concern for the housing shortage Dr Fetherston only condemned three houses that year, but he issued seventy-nine orders under the Health Act against insanitary premises, five against insanitary drains and fifteen against insanitary fowlyards, but only seven against insanitary stables.

By the early 1920s, the number of typhoid cases each year had fallen to three or four and Dr Fetherston began to devote more time to the problems of diphtheria and tuberculosis, but his campaign to clean up Prahran was not relaxed:

As the City is being more and more closely built upon, trouble and danger to the inhabitants through the keeping of horses is being more accentuated and more difficult to deal with. Regulations have been brought into effect, and are being enforced, preventing horses being run on vacant land in close proximity to dwelling houses. This will, to a certain extent, abate the fly nuisance, but it will be necessary later on to amend the By-laws to make them more stringent from time to time.

Bubonic Plague

The Combined Municipalities during the year carried out a very vigorous attack upon rats and fleas, with the object of minimising the possibility of an outbreak of Bubonic Plague.²⁸

Dr Fetherston was particularly concerned with the health of children, and the nurses at the Prahran Health Centre did not confine themselves to examining babies there. Sister Duddy went to inspect the children's homes. 'Defects and insanitary conditions are reported to the Health Officer, and in many cases orders were made on owners or occupiers'.²⁹

Reg Rogers started working for the Council in 1924. He began in the paint shop where he came to the attention of Dr Fetherston. He was offered the chance to join Dr Fetherston's staff as a junior and leapt at the opportunity. While he was still a junior he made house to house inspections around Prahran: 'A systematic house-to-house inspection of the City is being made, and a record of each property filed', reported Dr Fetherston in 1930.³⁰ 'We concentrated on the small houses', said Mr Rogers. The depression was in full swing and he found some houses empty where people couldn't afford to pay the rent, and others overcrowded for the same reason:

There was one bedroom at the back of a butcher's shop in Chapel Street, South Yarra, thirteen people living in one room . . . a number of houses didn't have baths, didn't have cooking facilities, didn't have laundries . . . some baths were full of wood or coal or coke . . . some properties were very damp, no damp courses . . . hand-made bricks absorb water.

In Simmons Street there was one weatherboard terrace Mr Rogers could never get into, but there was smoke about. Eventually he found 'a grimy old man, absolutely smoked with grime in an old felt hat . . . the rooms packed high with rubbish. He cooked on an open fire and had blocked the chimney up'.³¹ In 1932 the City's rat catcher caught or poisoned 3607 rats.³²

In fact, the depression years seem to have triggered a renewed focus on the problems of poor people in poor housing. In 1934 F. Oswald Barnett formed the Barnett Slum Study Group. Initially, Barnett studied housing in Fitzroy, but during the 1930s he and his associates widened their inquiries to include most of inner Melbourne. By the State election of 1935, slum housing had become a high profile issue.³³ In 1936 the government set up the Housing Investigation and Slum Abolition Board and Barnett was appointed as Deputy Chairman. The Board studied housing conditions in Melbourne's inner suburbs, including most of Prahran west of Williams Road.

Dr Fetherston's response was defensive. 'Much attention has been directed to the question of slums during the past year. They have been blamed for causing sickness and inefficiency without any definite proof. He discussed the problem of defining slums and argued that no whole districts or even streets in Prahran were insanitary. Problems were confined to isolated houses and the Prahran Health Department had the matter

fully under control through its programme of issuing repair notices and occasionally condemning houses. Most of the affected houses were old:

Occasionally, comparatively good houses are found to be in an insanitary state, and in the majority of those cases the condition is due to the dirty, careless and neglectful habits of the tenants.

In some good houses the rooms are sublet to poor tenants, and unless very carefully controlled rapidly deteriorate . . .

If the comparatively small number previously referred to are excepted, the City is free from insanitary dwellings, and compared with other large cities in Australia the houses of city dwellers are satisfactory to good . . . A definite habitable minimum should be laid down and full control given to local authorities over any house occupied by or sublet to more than one tenant.

It is from this last class that trouble is likely to arise and the health of the community suffer. The people who rent such rooms (nearly always furnished in a way) are poor, and not able to choose or complain, and are those whom I consider should be protected.³⁴

This passage is remarkable for illustrating something of the range and complexity of ideas on poor housing. Within a single brief report Dr Fetherston espouses both the idea that the poor cause bad housing, and that the poor need to be protected from bad housing. He hints at the great divide in his own mind between the poor who are 'dirty, careless and neglectful' and the poor who are 'not able to choose or complain'. Perhaps most interesting, though, is his assumption that housing the poor should not be left to an unregulated free market. He is careful to tie his remarks to local authority regulation in the interests of public health, which was, after all, his job, but even though he shows some uncertainty about the exact nature of the problem, he had no such doubts about the solution. Housing for the poor needed to be 'carefully controlled' and 'full control given to local authorities'.

In 1937 the report of the Housing Investigation and Slum Abolition Board recommended that the government set up a State housing authority. The Housing Commission was duly set up under the Housing Act of 1937. In 1933 Mr Rogers was appointed City Inspector for Prahran, and apart from a break while he was in the RAAF, he remained in the post until he retired in 1976. He therefore worked under both the old and new systems of housing inspection. In fact, there were not too many immediate changes in the practical regulation of housing in Prahran, because the Housing Commission delegated its powers to identify houses deemed in need of demolition, and Mr Rogers continued to go on his inspections.

The duties of the City Inspector also included the registration of boarding and lodging houses:

Boarding Houses . . . they were very large up in Orrong Road, Toorak, in Armadale—very fine, very large for those who could afford it, but also right down the scale . . . For a boarding house, you had to stay at least a week and were served meals. Common Lodging Houses . . . there were not many of those—mainly in the city. They had to be registered and the character of the person had to be O.K. They could be houses of ill fame. We didn't have many of those . . . people just passing through . . . could stay one night.³⁵

In Prahran in 1920 there were 536 registered boarding houses and about 10 per cent of the population lived in them. Many more people boarded with families under less formal circumstances, a source of continuing annoyance to Dr Fetherston because the 1937 Act had not given him any power to control the process. 'We still have no way of finding people living in rooms and have no power to effectively control this often objectionable practice, which is becoming more common in the city.'³⁶

Meanwhile, throughout the 1920s and 1930s some twenty to thirty new boarding houses were registered with the Council each year.

BOARDING HOUSES, OR MAKING ENDS MEET AROUND THE HOUSE

Whether they enjoyed views across their lawns to the ships on the Bay, or across their backyard to the dunny and the neighbour's fence, residents of Prahran in this period tended to live in groups. Very few lived on their own. The kind of people who in later years might rent a one-bedroom flat were more likely in this era to find a spare room in a house and pay board and lodging.

All sorts of people rented out rooms. It was the time-honoured method of making ends meet. Taking in boarders was a respectable way to make a bit of money, and it was a particularly attractive option for women left in the house on their own. But even married women with children took in boarders if they could find a spare room or two. The extra work was rewarded with cash in hand and there were no problems of finding someone to mind the children, or fitting work in around school hours.

In the early 1920s Jean Taylor used to visit her grandmother in Windsor:

Grandpa was eighteen years older than Grandma. She used to live in Raleigh Street . . . a double fronted house . . . antimacassars, gas light. There was a man who used to ride round on a bicycle with a long stick to light the gas lights in the street. Grandpa died and Grandma was on her own . . . she moved to another house on Raleigh Street . . . very narrow frontage . . . wood fire stove, kitchen down the back . . . funny little sink . . . toilet down the bottom of the yard covered in majolica with a coloured

photo of Collingwood Football Team on the back of the door . . . sunflowers in the front yard . . . sitting out there . . . normal to be outside in the street.

Grandma used to love people . . . some houses on the south side, tiled porch, iron-spear front fences, they all talked to each other. Often Grandma used to stand outside and wait for someone to talk to . . . It was a tough time. She moved to a little doll's house in De Murska Street . . . no front garden, no side way. I used to spend a lot of weekends with Grandma . . . used to make toffee, blow bubbles . . . she'd give me pennies to save up.

[Everybody rented houses.] A few people owned a lot. Renting half a house was very common. Rented out a room to help pay the rent . . . had one daughter living with grandma . . . A piano in the house . . . daughter played . . . very small . . . could hardly get in the living room, lounge suite, dining table. We ate well—the roast dinner and the cold meats and salads.

As circumstances changed, people let rooms or moved house. Jean Taylor's father was a journalist and in 1922 he returned to Prahran after six years in Euroa. At one stage, the family lived in a house on Norman Avenue.

Edwardian—huge rooms—used to depress me. It was a big house with rows of bells in the kitchen. Mother let some of that house later on. On Dad's journalistic salary—not enough. Mum was good with money. She bought our houses . . . there were out houses, an attached outside toilet . . . wood shed. Mother had a car . . . the fence next to Benalbo Avenue—built a ramp to the garden and the garage in that way.³⁷

For a while, Jean Taylor and her parents shared the house with another family of about the same size. 'It was only a short term thing. There were two kitchens, one big, one small'.

Letting out a part of the house or taking in boarders was a particularly common expedient during the depression years when more people had trouble making ends meet. But the vagaries of family life affected circumstances as much as unemployment or pay cuts. The poverty reports made by the staff of the Prahran Health Centre illustrate some of the problems that could arise.

In 1927 Mrs Walker of Surrey Road, Hawksburn, needed assistance. Her husband was in Oakleigh and she had six children still at home, plus one away. Four of her children were working, but they brought in very little money. Her 22-year-old daughter earned the most—£1 12s per week at Farris. Her 14-year-old son worked at Love & Lewis and made the grand sum of 14s 6d per week. Their rent was £1 7s 6d per week, two weeks were owing, and all the repayments on the furniture were also in arrears. Sister Chester recommended fifteen shillings per week for groceries for three weeks.³⁸

The authorities were not always so helpful. In 1920 a young man with a child applied for charity. He was boarding at Gray Street, South Yarra. The secretary of the Benevolent Society wrote to the Town Clerk pointing out that the young man had given up his gardening job and did not deserve assistance because he was 'able bodied'. He should 'go up the country for work': 'the child that he always takes with him wherever he goes would be better cared for in one of the homes ... if he had any manliness in him he would be ashamed to seek charity'.³⁹

It is doubtful whether a young woman with a child in similar circumstances would have met with the same disapproving response. The idea that men were supposed to go out to work and women were supposed to look after home and family was deeply entrenched. In many ways, this attitude lay behind the pattern of taking in boarders. Men did not expect to cook or clean or do their ironing, so if they were on their own in the city they stayed with someone who would do it for them. Although many women had always gone out to work and increasing numbers were doing so in the 1920s, it was not seen as the norm. Women worked until they got married, or to make ends meet if their husband was not earning enough. Taking in boarders and doing the extra cooking and ironing was regarded as more natural than 'going out to work'.

Betty Malone moved to Glassford Street in 1925: 'We lived in Malvern before that. Prahran was just a name. We didn't come to live in Prahran. We came to live in Armadale, which was quite different'. The family consisted of Betty, her younger brother, and their parents:

We brought a couple of boarders with us. If you had a spare room you took in a young man. We had an elderly man with us for fifteen years and a young woman came over with us too. Mother cooked for them ...

Dad died in 1929 and Mum set up a real boarding house ... sometimes a couple of them shared—twenty five shillings a week double, thirty shillings single ... that covered dinner, cut lunch and all washing, ironing and mending ... a quarter of an average salary ... 'all found' as they say.

Quite a lot of people did it ... Often if you attended a church ... someone would come to church from the country and the vicar would find a room for them ... You could just have a room. Some St Kilda friends had a little room and a kitchen, etc., but men liked to be mothered—they liked full board. It has altered quite a lot. My two men [Mrs Malone's sons] are quite used to looking after themselves.

The house in Glassford Street is a substantial villa. Unlike the doll's house in De Murska Street, several of the rooms could accommodate a piano, lounge suite and dining table in some comfort. In the 1930s the rooms accommodated boarders, as a widow brought up two children through the depression:

It wasn't much fun for me, partly because instead of going to University . . . I went into the office where father had worked. I used to rush home and help with the meals . . . eleven boarders at one stage . . . couldn't bring a boyfriend home.

We had bank clerks and my aunty, she had a big boarding house in Malvern . . . a lot of them came in for meals [at lunch time] to her . . . We had a couple from Coles—young executives . . . a couple of elderly gentlemen came in during the depression—retired. There was one from the Post Master General's Department, a top executive. The first call ever to come through from London came here. We had the phone on especially.

An aunt next to the Orrong pub, her husband was an engine driver. He lost his superannuation in the strike in 1926. When he died, Auntie Jenny only had £1 a week . . . she always had bank boys, for company. There was no stigma attached to it. You were doing a service.⁴⁰

Betty Malone described Glassford Street as she knew it in the late 1920s as mainly the home of men in their forties and fifties with teenage children, 'all very respectable, even if they didn't always go to church . . . this was a relatively affluent pocket'.

The pattern of letting out rooms in some form or another affected all areas and all social classes in Prahran. There were common lodging houses where working-class men and the unemployed could rent a bed and make do as best they could for the rest. There was the solid respectability of bank clerks boarding in Armadale. And there was the spacious existence in upmarket establishments like Illawarra on St George's Road.

Illawarra was built in 1889-91 and replaced a smaller house on the site. Its first owner was one of the most notorious of the land boomers who was heavily involved in launching loan companies to buy land in the 1880s and who became bankrupt when the depression of the late 1880s and early 1890s closed in.

The house had to be let out. The first tenant was George Chirnside of Werribee Park. Later Illawarra became Mrs Wynne's guest house.

The Towers at the western end of St George's Road went through a similar process. The owner, Sir Matthew Henry Davies, went bankrupt in 1894. After periods of standing empty and being let out to the Oldham family, The Towers became a boarding house in about 1910 and shortly afterwards the grounds were subdivided and built over with Towers Road.⁴¹

James Paxton lived at Illawarra between 1909 and 1914, and his description gives us some idea of how people made ends meet when they owned mansions that they could not afford to run as private stately homes:

In 1909 my parents, tired of renting a house, began looking for suitable land on which to build a house of their own. Flats had not yet appeared in Melbourne so whilst waiting, we left Kooyong Road and went to live in St George's Road at Illawarra guest house.

It had 25 main rooms plus a ballroom. There were two and a half acres of magnificent garden and a tennis court. A cow was kept in the back-ground and it supplied fresh milk to the household. The stables had been converted into two garages which were quite adequate as only two of the residents owned a car.

The guests consisted of about five families, each of whom had their own suite and some had their own private sitting room. The staff numbered about nine and included a butler, Adams, who supervised their duties, and two gardeners. All the staff lived in.

There was a large dining room, with separate tables for each family. Adams and two or three parlour maids waited on the guests . . . Everyone changed for dinner, even the children.

There were three staircases (one for staff only) but only two bathrooms for the guests. Westside for ladies and east for men which was just as well as the W.C.s were in the bathrooms and the queues were spared the embarrassment of any confrontation of the sexes. The outside men's lavatory near the garages though miles from the house was often a life saver.⁴²

Even if you had a butler, you still had to queue for the loo and probably only had a bath once a week, if that. In some ways, the story of the 20th century is of an increasing importance attached to personal cleanliness and sanitation and the facilities provided for the purpose. Betty Malone recalls that in Glassford Street they had one toilet and one bathroom for as many as fourteen people: 'You only had a bath once a week . . . had to wash in the bedroom . . . a bath with a shower over it. . . two or three men in the bathroom at a time—they managed'.⁴³

In contrast, probably far more time than in the 1990s was devoted to keeping houses clean—polishing the front step in working-class homes where cleanliness of that kind was perceived as a vital ingredient in respectability; all those maids dusting ornaments for the incontrovertibly respectable, while no woman would have dreamt of washing her hair every day.

The process of adapting houses to cope with financial difficulties, a process often in the hands of women, can be seen in a number of different stages. If one was prepared to do the extra cooking and washing for other people, one might take in boarders. If the woman wasn't prepared to do so, she might come to some temporary arrangement of letting off part of the house as a flat—like Jean Taylor's mother in Norman Avenue, or like Betty Malone's mother in Glassford Street. When war broke out the boarders began to leave and in 1941 the house was divided into two and half let as a flat.

Sometimes such arrangements were temporary and seen as such. Sometimes they were regarded as more permanent and a certain amount of building alteration took place to produce a workable conversion from a single house to flats.

In 1934 Mr and Mrs Parker moved into a flat of this kind on the corner of Chastleton Avenue. Chastleton is a two-storey mansion with a tower; it was the home of the Blundell family for much of the last half of the 19th century: 'A lovely old home for the gentry ... beautiful entry, marble floor. We were poor as church mice ... lived up there ... we had the tower'.

John Parker recalled that there was a certain amount of subdued animosity between the tenants and their landlady:

She let every cubic foot of space. There were about five flats. She built a house on the tennis court to the west and sold that. They were self-contained flats. We had our own bathroom ... a tiny kitchen under the tower ... a huge lounge/dining room overlooking the city. I suppose she put in partitions ... She converted the stables into two or three carport things, garages ... we had free access to the garden. We were only there a year or two because of the stairs and the baby.⁴⁴

Mrs Parker had even clearer memories of Chastleton:

It was absolutely huge. We could see the ships leaving the Bay. We had the whole of upstairs and the tower for £1 per week ... an enormous bedroom and balcony, kitchen and bathroom. The owner bought some other places in Toorak ... it was a very big bathroom, an old-fashioned marble bath. The owner would complain about washing water. I think our hot water supply was 'central', i.e. she had to pay for it. So she begrudged every 'unnecessary' (?) drop used by us.

Mrs Parker had her first child, a son, while living there, and she shopped in Toorak Village:

I'd wheel the pram up and down Orrong Road ... Richard Pratt's, the only grocers ... you had to watch the docket. I think I was the only poor person in Toorak. The owner and her daughter lived in the house, plus a spinsterish couple in two large rooms downstairs ... I began another baby ... there were complaints about Catholics breeding like rabbits ... we left.⁴⁵

A number of the bigger Toorak houses went through this kind of process in the first half of the 20th century. Eventually, many of the old mansions were demolished and replaced by purpose-built flats. Sometimes they were rescued to be preserved in something like their former glory by institutional use: the National Trust administers both Como and Illawarra, although the latter is divided into flats; Toorak House is in the hands of the Swedish Church; Mandeville Hall is a part of the Loreto Convent; Trawalla has survived in the hands of the Victorian College of General Practitioners.

But the area did not suffer a decline in status as these old homes passed out of family use. On the contrary, if anything, the status of Toorak

and South Yarra rose in this period, when compared to formerly favoured areas like St Kilda.⁴⁶ Those who could afford to live in a mansion in the 20th century were as likely as their 19th-century predecessors to choose Toorak. As often as not they preferred to build their own dream homes with air conditioning and security systems, rather than cope with the trouble and expense of adapting an earlier generation's ideas about the relative importance of billiard and bath rooms.

SUBDIVISION AND FLATS

The street layout in the western half of Prahran was largely in place by the 1870s. Most of the eastern half was divided into mansion allotments, some of them very large. There were, however, some areas still held for speculative building purposes. Developments in the 1870s and the boom of the 1880s saw most of this land divided into streets and houses, generally at a significant profit. The owners of a number of mansion allotments also saw the opportunity to make some money at this time by selling off a part of their estates. Unlike the streets in the west laid out on a rectangular grid oriented to the cardinal points of the compass, many of these newer roads in the east were built on curves and lined with solid villas and new mansions. The railway of the late 1870s, on its diagonal line, also forced a number of streets to deviate from the regular grid pattern.

When the crash came in the 1890s many of Prahran's wealthiest citizens, particularly those involved in land deals, went bankrupt. The result was a further rash of subdivisions of mansion allotments, as they attempted to stay afloat by selling off more land. Generally, the mansions remained standing in truncated grounds, even if they had to be let or converted to guest houses.

In 1920 there were no significant areas of vacant ground held for speculative purposes, but there were still a great many substantial mansion allotments, with houses standing in several acres of ground. These provided the basis for the further development of the street pattern in the east of Prahran during the remainder of the 20th century. In 1914 Constable Halpin reported that there were virtually no vacant blocks in Prahran, one or two in South Yarra, but quite a lot in Toorak and Armadale. Land in Toorak was selling for £18 to £20 per foot, whereas in Prahran the going rate was between £6 and £8 per foot.⁴⁷ The modest houses on narrow streets in the low lying areas of Prahran remained working-class houses as they had been since the earliest of them were built on land originally purchased by Peter Davis and other speculators.

The high ground was very different. Whole allotments covering the hills remained undivided for years, and a number of estates covered more

than one crown allotment. In 1855 Como, Toorak, Orrong and Hawksburn between them covered nearly seven Crown allotments and well over 300 acres. All had been subdivided by 1920, but the estates of Toorak and Orrong, in particular, continued to be occupied by mansions nearly as grand as the originals, set in far smaller grounds. Many solid villas were also built in the north and east, with pockets of smaller houses and cottages on lower ground or along the railway line.

In the 1920s, most houses in this area still stood amidst substantial gardens, but the fashion was changing. When the division of family estates between children or other financial pressures arose, the gardens tended to go up for sale. The process was accelerated by the depression of the 1930s.

In the 1920s and 1930s there was a further change besides that to small gardens. Many of the new buildings weren't houses. They were flats. On 18 October 1919 the following article appeared in the *Prahran Telegraph*:

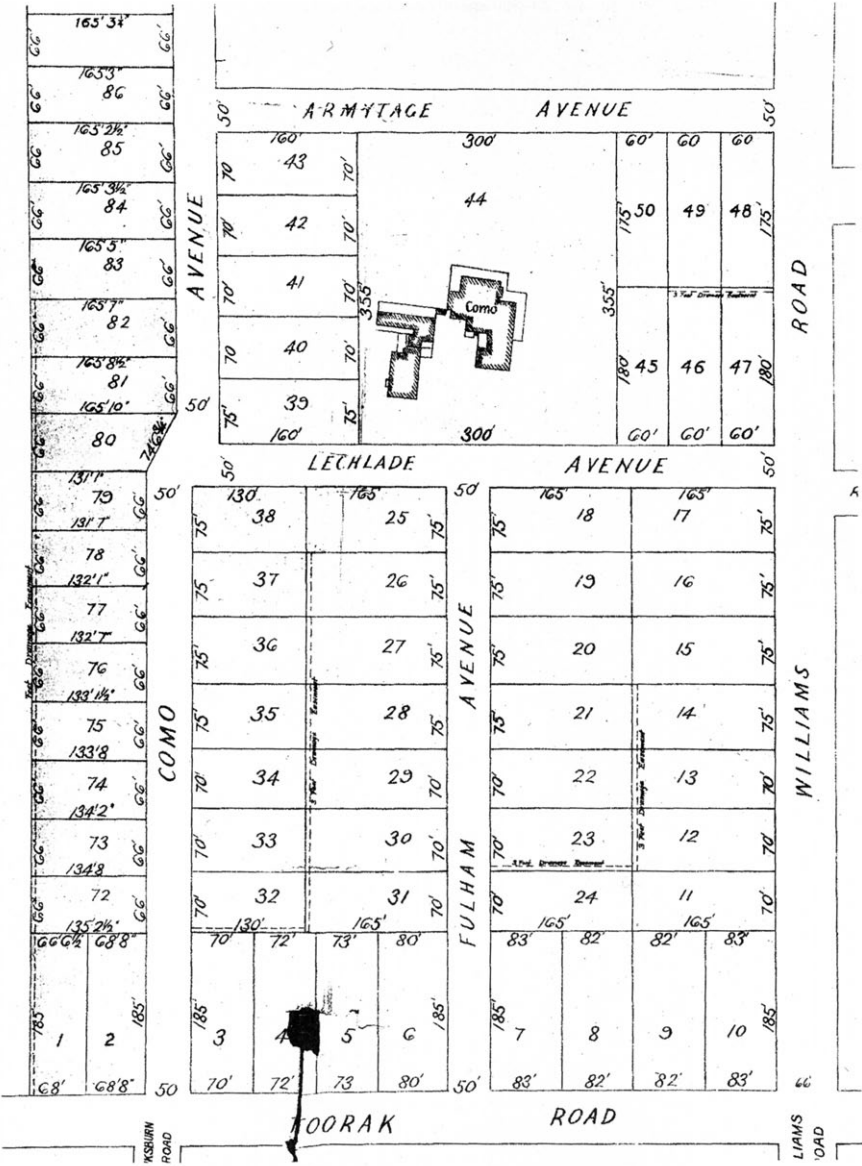
It was held to be no longer necessary to labour with a house and all the domestic drudgery that entailed when by borrowing Continental ideas, people who could afford it could live in flats. To a large extent it was anticipated that would do away with the trouble of domestic servants which has become more and more accentuated with the march of Democracy throughout the world . . .

Now flats are as common as aeroplanes, or more so . . .

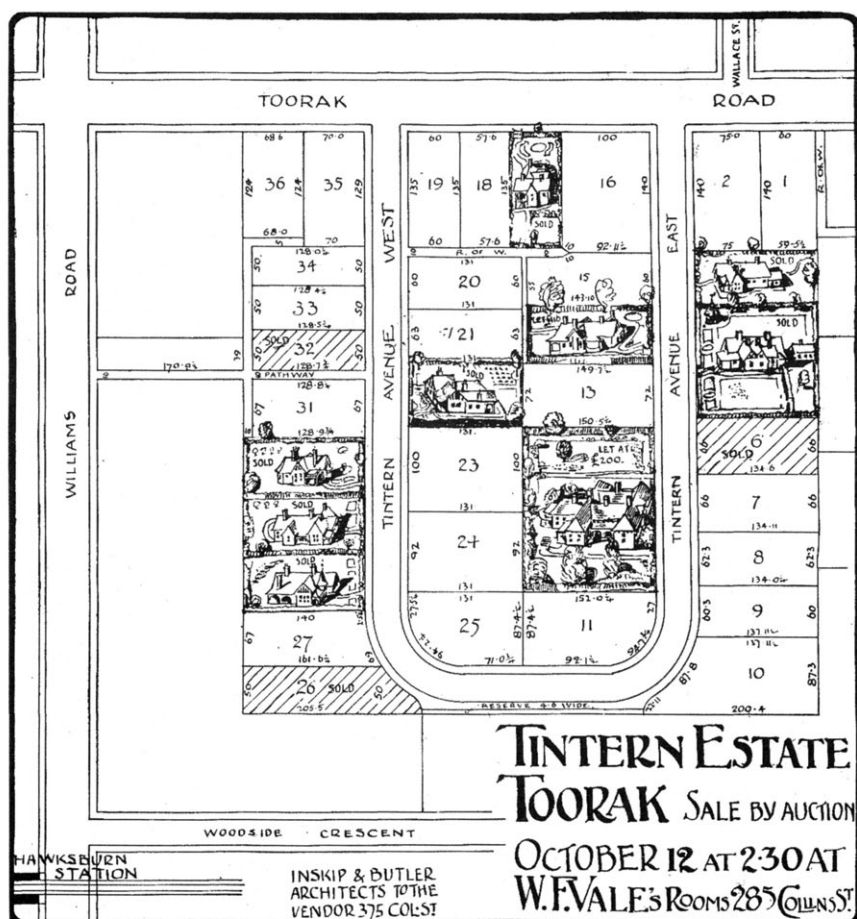
Land has become so valuable that the villa of the Victorian days, in a crowded thoroughfare, no longer shows anything like an adequate return of interest on the land's present capital value. It is more profitable to pull the house erected thereon down, and to erect flats.⁴⁸

The article was mainly referring to neighbouring St Kilda where the new trend was in full swing, but owners of valuable land in Prahran were not slow in appreciating the benefits of increased profits. At the 1921 census the three areas of Victoria with the greatest number of flats were Melbourne, St Kilda and Prahran, in that order. By the 1954 census the number of flats in Prahran had more than quadrupled, outstripping the number of flats in the City of Melbourne, but failing to catch St Kilda where flat building had proceeded even more rapidly. In this era flats were, indeed, for 'those who could afford it' and who might even be worried about the servant problem.

The City of Prahran is divided into four wards running in strips from west to east and divided by Toorak and Malvern Roads and High Street. The most northerly ward and the biggest in area is Toorak, which includes the high ground and more affluent areas of the district generally known as South Yarra, plus the block east of Orrong and south of Toorak Roads. South of Toorak is the South Yarra ward, which includes the district



PLAN OF SUB-DIVISION OF THE COMO ESTATE, 1911: ARMYTAGE AVENUE WAS NEVER BUILT. THE LOTS IMMEDIATELY AROUND THE HOUSE REMAINED AS GARDEN AND COMO HOUSE SURVIVES UNDER THE PROTECTION OF THE NATIONAL TRUST.



PLAN OF SUB-DIVISION OF THE TINTERN ESTATE: W. R. BUTLER BOUGHT A LOT ON THE CORNER OF TOORAK ROAD AND BUILT 'STUDLEY' IN 1910. IN 1918 HE CONVERTED THE HOUSE TO FLATS AND IN 1922 MORE FLATS WERE BUILT ON WHAT HAD BEEN PART OF THE GARDEN.

generally known as Hawksburn. South of Malvern Road is Prahran ward, including part of the district generally known as Armadale in the east. Windsor ward lies between Dandenong Road and High Street and also stretches east into parts of Armadale.

In 1920 only 5721 people lived in Toorak ward, just over 11 per cent of the total population of Prahran. This reflected the generally spacious grounds of houses in the area at the time. Between 1920 and 1940 the population of Prahran grew by about 12.5 per cent, but over three-quarters of that growth was in Toorak ward where the population nearly doubled.



KAMILLAROI, BUILT IN 1910 ON LAND THAT HAD ONCE BEEN A PART OF THE GROUNDS OF TOORAK HOUSE, PHOTOGRAPHED BY N.J. GAIRE IN 1912

Over the same period the population of the South Yarra ward remained more-or-less constant, and population in the Prahran ward actually fell, while Windsor enjoyed a modest growth of just under 1 per cent per year.

The story of house building in this period, therefore, is very much the story of the latest stage in the subdivision of Toorak and parts of South Yarra and Armadale. Most of the subdivisions produced houses, but some produced flats and this was the first time that purpose-built flats on any scale had appeared in the area. In 1921/22, for instance, there were twenty-three subdivisions in Prahran, most of them in Toorak ward. They included Avoca between Domain Road and Alexandra Avenue, and Darling-street Extension (Howard R. Lawson).⁴⁹ At one stage, William Montgomery Bell owned the whole of Crown Allotment 2, from Toorak Road to the river. In about 1848 he built Avoca to the north of Domain Road. The land south of Domain Road was subdivided in 1854 to produce Caroline and Avoca Streets, and a vineyard was planted on the slope down to the river, but Avoca remained with its grounds, coach house and stables.⁵⁰

Howard R. Lawson and partner Reginald W. Biffen bought the whole of the land from Punt Road to the South Yarra railway bridge [north of Domain Road], in approximately 1922 and commenced development on the site shortly afterwards. The early buildings on the site included small scale Californian Bungalow style maisonettes designed for easy conversion to flats . . .⁵¹

Not all of the site was developed at once, and after the depression Lawson, an architect, resumed building with multi-storey blocks of flats in a version of the Spanish Mission style. During 1934 and 1935 Lawson put up 175 flats including landscaped terraces down the hill to the river and a swimming pool. Local residents began to object to the density of development, and in 1936 'Lawson responded by reducing the height of his blocks . . .' He set to work on three-storey blocks at the corner of Alexandra Avenue and Darling Street:

The whole development is without equal for the period in Melbourne. The variety in buildings, the integration of the well-landscaped site and the excellent Spanish Mission/Exotic style flats in particular make the precinct unique . . . The Alexandra Avenue flat precinct is arguably the zenith of the career of the man who was probably Melbourne's most prolific flat builder.⁵²

Lawson was not the only noted architect who turned his talents to building flats in Prahran in this period. Harold Desbrowe Annear, celebrated designer of projects as diverse as the Church Street Bridge and Sidney Myer's garden in Clendon Road, designed 'an important group of residences' near the corner of Heyington and Toorak Roads. Walter Burley Griffin, famous for his design of the nation's capital, designed the Langi flats in 1926.⁵³ Flats were fashionable, but they were put up by people interested in profits, and they were put up for rent. This was the philosophy that had always predominated in the erection of working-class housing in Prahran, but it was something a little different among the owner-occupied dream homes of Toorak and South Yarra. Many mansions were rented at some stage or other in their lives, but virtually none had been built to rent, or even to sell.

In St Kilda, flat building consolidated a change in the social status of the suburb, in South Yarra and Toorak it did not. Successful merchants, pastoralists, lawyers and newspapermen continued to live in the area and they were joined by a number of manufacturers. They came and went as fortunes rose and fell, but the status of the hills south of the river remained as high as ever.

Among the other areas which came up for subdivision in 1921/22 were Homeden and Corry on Heyington Place, the north-east corner of Lansell and Toorak Roads, and Murray Smith's estate Repton, on the



FLATS IN LAWSON GROVE, SOUTH YARRA, ARCHITECT HOWARD LAWSON

opposite side of Lansell Road. Sir Lauchlin Charles Mackinnon, general manager of the *Argus* and *Australasian*, lived at Corry from about 1907 until he retired to Devon in 1919. It was soon after this that some of the land was subdivided, but his son Lauchlin Mackinnon took over both the house and the position on the paper and lived at Corry until his death in 1934, when the house was demolished.

Homeden was built in about 1889 for Supreme Court judge Justice Henry Edward Hodges. When he retired to Mt Macedon in about 1900, Edward Norton Grimwade of the firm of Felton & Grimwade, wholesale druggists, bought what was then one of the largest properties on Lansell Road. When he, in turn, retired to Macedon, the property came up for subdivision and the house was bought by George Nicholas of Aspro fame. It was eventually replaced by multi-storey flats, but the stables and clock tower survived rather longer.⁵⁴

The subdivision of these kinds of properties led to a greater population density in Toorak, but the likes of Lauchlin Mackinnon and George Nicholas hardly represent a lowering of the social tone of the area. It was still as conveniently close to the city as it had always been, and this exclusive north-east corner of Prahran remained characterised by wide, quiet streets, mature trees and absolutely no shops, hotels or industry.⁵⁵

Deaths and retirements remained the commonest causes of subdivision, supplemented by financial stringency during the early 1930s. The

Montalto estate on Orrong Road was subdivided in 1931/32, when Mrs George Kelly died, and 'private substantial owner occupied homes' were built.⁵⁶ Trawalla was subdivided shortly afterwards. James Paxton wrote that 'Trawalla's interior was the most elegant of all the mansions in old Toorak'.⁵⁷ Clearly this is a matter of opinion. Others remember the glories of Leura, south of Toorak Road. Leura has gone but Trawalla remains, surrounded by houses and flats on what were once its gardens. To the south-west, another new street appeared with the subdivision of what had originally been part of the Hawksburn estate. Coolullah Avenue was completed in May 1936.

Building in Toorak began to recover as early as 1933, when the value of new building in Prahran was greater than for any other Melbourne suburb, and by 1935 a minor boom was in progress.⁵⁸

A fact of interest noted during the year is the increasing popularity, for investment in this City, of the erection of flat buildings consisting of two units only, being either the maisonette type, or two unit buildings, having one unit on the ground floor and one on the first floor. Out of the total of 123 multiple type buildings registered during the year and consisting of 338 units, 91 buildings were of the two unit type, leaving 32 buildings of between four and five units each.⁵⁹

Flats were not always popular with the neighbours. In October 1934, for instance, there were numerous letters of protest to the Council over the proposal to build four shops and fourteen flats in Toorak Road near the Grange Road junction. Dr Law felt sufficiently strongly to support the protests from his pulpit at St John's Anglican Church, but this did not stop the development.⁶⁰

By 1934/35 there were 570 flats in Toorak ward, as many as in South Yarra and Windsor wards combined, while there were hardly any flats in Prahran ward. The minor boom in flat building in the later 1930s saw this number double in five years. By the outbreak of World War II there were almost as many flats in Toorak ward as houses.

3

Houses and Flats, 1950-1970

The late 1940s and early 1950s saw a boom in the number of babies, and for many people in those post-war years there was a particular focus on home and family. For most, the appropriate place to bring up all those children was somewhere in the new outer suburbs. The population of Prahran, like that of most inner suburbs, declined significantly. Manufacturing industry was also relocating to the new outer suburbs so that there was a shift in both jobs and people. Relative housing costs in the inner city tended to fall and some of the working-class people who moved out of western and central Prahran in this period were replaced by migrants from overseas, particularly Europe.

Meanwhile, government policy makers at various levels were trying to work out ways to halt the population decline in areas like Prahran. The solution most widely advocated was higher density housing, particularly flats. This generally accorded with the wishes of the local real estate and building industries, and as a result the late 1950s and 1960s saw a major boom in flat building in Prahran. This included private developments, particularly in South Yarra, Toorak and parts of Armadale, Hawksburn and East Prahran, and also Housing Commission developments in Prahran and Windsor. The combined effect of these developments was that the population losses of the 1950s were halted, and by 1971 the population of Prahran had nearly returned to the levels of the immediate post-war years.

MIGRATION AND THE CHANGING ROLE OF THE INNER CITY

During World War II the population of Prahran reached a peak of about sixty thousand, but after that it began to decline. This pattern could be seen in most of the inner suburbs, as members of the working class began to move out to the new houses going up around the fringes of Melbourne. Between 1947 and 1954 the population of Prahran declined by about 10 per cent, and for the next decade or so, the Australian-born population continued to fall. Thousands and thousands of people moved out of the area, and by the 1966 census the Australian-born population of Prahran had dropped to just over 36 000 people. But during the same period new residents were moving in. They came from England, Austria and Germany, from Latvia, Lithuania and Poland, from Italy and Greece, and some of them even came from Asia and America. By the 1966 census the population of Prahran was beginning to recover from the losses of the 1950s and one in three of the residents were overseas-born.¹

Post-war migration to Prahran took place in a number of phases. At first, new arrivals were mainly from northern Europe, including the United Kingdom. They joined earlier migrants from Britain, Germany and Austria and included a significant proportion of Jews.²

In the early 1950s, Jocelyn Newman and her family arrived from England. By about 1955 they were living in Trinian Street, Prahran, in a house that was one of a pair. There were a couple of Victorian houses on the street, but most were small Federation style brick homes, and slightly more recent weatherboard houses. There was one pair of maisonettes, the newest building on the street. She attended Windsor State School:

The children couldn't handle the fact that I was both Jewish and English—had to be one or the other. I was considered strange . . . The children were a bit unforgiving—but in other ways accepting . . . they made special allowances . . . they were friendly, open, boisterous, but if they needed a scapegoat it was one of those groups . . . It was a nice school, a good feeling . . .

There were lots of children in the street—a number of Greek families—those children didn't play outside so much—Hungarian, German, us English, but basically Australian kids.³

At about the same time, Lindy Cox lived with her family in a flat on Malvern Road, East Prahran:

It was a big old mansion . . . there were six modern flats, self-contained, joined to the mansion where we rented a flat . . . in those new flats lived mainly Jewish refugees . . . the billiard room was our lounge . . . there were about thirty kids . . . we played ball games and footie, all out the back . . . The Lieberman family lived in one of the new own-your-own flats and I tagged along behind their children . . . Mum used to babysit for

most of the families . . . she took a lot of the recipes from the migrant women . . . lots of garlic . . . the Rozorskys were Hungarian . . . At Toorak Central School, there were fifty something in a class. One-third were migrants—Hungarian, German, Polish, Israeli, Czech, Swedish, Greek . . .⁴

When the Australian government found that migration from northern Europe in general and Britain in particular was failing to meet its target of 1 per cent population growth per annum, the criteria for entry were altered. Eastern Europeans and Italians then began to arrive in significant numbers:

In early 1947 the Australian press aired the possibility of immigration from among the 'displaced persons' of Europe. It was said they faced either life in a camp or starvation and possibly death if they returned to their homelands which were now under Soviet control . . . Calwell [Minister for Immigration] was in Europe where he found that there was no shipping for British immigration to Australia, but that transports were available to move refugees.⁵

Poles, Yugoslavs, Latvians, Ukrainians, Hungarians, Lithuanians, Czechoslovakians, Estonians, Russians and Rumanians began to arrive in Melbourne. During the 1950s those arriving under the various refugee schemes were joined by others under assisted immigration agreements. Such agreements were signed with Italy and the Netherlands in 1951 and with Germany, Austria and Greece in 1952. Despite having only one-quarter of Australia's population, Victoria took one-third of all post-war migrants, and most of those came to Melbourne.⁶ Besides the post-war displaced persons and those choosing to live in Australia for economic reasons, there were also later waves of refugees from other troubles. A number of Hungarians, for instance, came after the troubles of 1956:

I've been thirty-two years in Australia . . . came with three little girls, one two-years-old, my mother-in-law, eighty-four, and husband . . . we are going cleaning in Melbourne . . . spoke no English . . . working with Hungarian people, working night and day—at Channel 9 for five years . . . then Hungarian College cooking for fifty-two people, working too, too much—still, have been happy. The three girls go to Presentation School, very good school and Prahran technical school, High Street—all three married with children now, one in England . . . ?

The Requini family arrived in Melbourne on a Tuesday and had started work by the following Monday. In Hungary, Mrs Requini was a bookkeeper and her husband was a qualified barrister and solicitor, with a doctorate in law. He was fifty-seven years old when they arrived and was told that he couldn't work here as a lawyer unless he first went to university for two or three years. So they both worked as cleaners for Channel 9. Mrs Requini says they got what they expected when they came here: 'good friends, good neighbours, hard work and freedom'. The Hungarian

College in Armadale was something of a focus for the Hungarian community. 'In Armadale priest always expecting people—Hungarian Club, Hungarian school, Hungarian dance in costume—danced in festival in Prahran Town Hall'.⁸

The late 1950s and early 1960s also saw a marked increase in Greek migrants joining the older community of Greeks already established in Prahran before World War II. The strength of the Greek community well before the 1950s is indicated by the fact that in 1941 they got together to present the Mayor, Alfred Woodfull, with a Greek flag: 'On 3rd February, 1941, members of the Greek community in Prahran attended the Council meeting to do honour to their country and the men of Greece who were fighting to retain their liberty.' They presented the Mayor with the Greek National Flag and this 'was flown from the Town Hall on the day of the Greek Appeal' for contributions to the war effort in Greece.⁹

John Velos and his family arrived in the area in the early 1960s. They lived on Barry Street, South Yarra, and Mr Velos attended Hawksburn Primary School. He remembers that there was a high proportion of migrants at the school, mainly Greek, but some Italians and Yugoslavs. There were no facilities for non-English speakers, no remedial classes and no Greek-speaking teachers, but Mr Velos recalls no animosity towards the migrants:



MEMBERS OF PRAHRAN'S GREEK COMMUNITY PRESENT THE MAYOR, ALFRED WOODFULL, WITH THE GREEK NATIONAL FLAG, FEBRUARY 1941.

Had some lovely teachers—some better than others—some dedicated. It was very interesting. The headmaster was very severe looking but very, very strict in his administration of the school . . . I enjoyed it—a quiet student . . .

Out of school, I went exploring—seeing the trains at South Yarra and Windsor Station, Toorak Station . . . explore the City, find the parks, play football, cricket—used to do a lot of walking—two brothers and two sisters . . .¹⁰

By 1966 there were more Greeks in Prahran than Britons. These were the two largest migrant groups, between them making up nearly one in five of the population, but there were also significant numbers of Germans, Italians, Poles, Hungarians and Yugoslavians in that order. At the 1966 census 15 697 residents of Prahran had been born in Europe, 1133 were from Asia, 797 were from Africa and 393 from America. The result was a diverse and highly dynamic cultural mix.

Frequently, migrants began their lives in Australia in poor housing. They rented rooms and they shared houses. A survey of Melbourne in 1966 found that more than one in four of Greek households lived in rooms, compared to just one in fifty of Australian households, but this changed rapidly. 'Most southern Europeans tried to purchase their homes quickly and those here more than five years had higher home ownership rates than Australians'.¹¹ Figures for Prahran are patchy, but there is evidence that the proportion of houses in the south and west that were owner-occupied was rising at the same time as the Australian-born population was moving out. Migrants changed the nature of Prahran and Windsor, in particular, in a number of ways, and during the late 1950s and early 1960s this process of change was accelerated by the government, which embarked on a major programme to pull down the worst housing in Prahran.

HORACE PETTY AND THE HOUSING COMMISSION

Among the legacies of the Metropolitan Town Planning Commission's Report of 1929 was the scheme for zoning Melbourne's land into residential, shopping and industrial areas. There were three classifications for residential land, each with different maximum density provisions: A—outer suburbs; B—middle suburbs; C—inner suburbs. The minimum allotment size for area C was 4000 square feet and a frontage of 35 feet. Thousands of inner suburban allotments fell below that minimum.

The zoning scheme gave the Housing Commission a tool to work with in its attempts to remove existing sub-standard housing and prevent any more being built. From 1938 local councils such as Prahran were supposed to prepare zoning proposals for their own areas and submit them to the Housing Commission for approval. The Housing Commission was also

supposed to have taken over responsibility for issuing demolition and repair orders, previously issued through the Medical Officer of Health in Prahran. But the Housing Commission's powers were limited, as were its funds and its staff, and it depended on the co-operation of local councils. In 1939 Oswald Burt of the Commission set out new standards to replace those under the Health Acts, below which a house could be declared unfit for human habitation. The Commission then relied on Council Inspectors to identify such sub-standard housing.¹²

Prahran already had a well-established system for inspecting the state of housing. It had been set up years before under the various Health Acts. Both the Medical Officer of Health, Dr Fetherston, and the Inspector, Mr Rogers, were away on military service during the war years, but Sister Chester was appointed Acting City Health Inspectress in Mr Rogers' absence.¹³ There is no evidence that the City of Prahran was ever tardy in identifying sub-standard housing, or issuing demolition and repair orders. In any case, during the war years and right into the early 1950s the emphasis of the Housing Commission was on repairs and new building, not demolition, because of the acute housing shortage that developed as a result of the lack of building materials. Barnett's explanation for this shift away from slum demolition was that 'it was better to live in a slum, and provide a home for those who didn't have one'.¹⁴

Meanwhile, during the war years the Victorian government began to take a wider view of housing. The Town and Country Planning Act of 1944 undermined the Housing Commission's limited planning powers, and the first Minister of Housing was appointed in 1945. The emphasis shifted from the removal of slums to planning the spectacular growth of Melbourne, but by the early 1950s there were already pressures to take another, closer look at Melbourne's inner suburbs.

Business interests in Melbourne were among those who put pressure on the government to attempt to revive the Central Business District, which was seen to be suffering with the growth of the new outer suburbs. Business men were: 'joined in this by members of the intellectual elite who deplored the supposed cultural barrenness of suburbia ... an opportunity to revive or create the cosmopolitan life of the central city ...',¹⁵

This kind of thinking accompanied the renewed attention to slums by the Housing Commission during the late 1950s and 1960s. Up until 1958 the Commission had only demolished 568 houses, but by 1970 this had risen to 3788. The Victorian Housing Commission had broad powers to demolish buildings under the Housing Act. If houses were designated unfit for human habitation, insanitary, unhealthy, crowded, badly laid out, or with narrow streets, 'or for any other reason', the Commission could declare a reclamation area and set to work.¹⁶

The major campaign to demolish Melbourne's slums required the commitment not only of the Housing Commission, but also of the State government. In 1952 Horace Rostell Petty, Toorak newsagent and Prahran councillor since 1949, became the Liberal/Country Party member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA) for Toorak. In 1955 he was appointed Minister of Housing and stayed in the post until 1961. He remained a Prahran councillor until 1964, when he was knighted for his services to housing and moved to London as Agent-General for Victoria. Sir Horace Petty helped promote the Housing Commission's plans to build high-rise flats from components manufactured at the Holmesglen factory and invited members of Prahran's Public Works Committee to tour Holmesglen in November 1958.¹⁷

In the late 1950s local residents put up considerable opposition to the Housing Commission's plans. Not everyone was keen on seeing their home demolished and replaced by high-rise flats. There were rows about the level of compensation offered under the Commission's compulsory purchase and valuation arrangements, and some tenants were reluctant to be rehoused in buildings of the Commission's choosing.¹⁸

One of the earliest declared reclamation areas in Prahran was around Essex and Bella Streets:

In Prahran, at the end of July 1957, a protest meeting was held against the declaration of houses around Essex and Bella Streets at which it was maintained 'There is not one condemned house in the lot'. The Essex Street Residents' Protection Association was formed and Angus Melver was elected secretary to the group.¹⁹

Despite the opposition, in 1960 sixty-three concrete flats were completed in the Essex Street development.²⁰

Jones has argued that the Housing Commission was less sympathetic to human problems in this era than it had been before the war. Whereas men like Oswald Barnett were concerned with 'subtle human problems', the Housing Commission of the 1950s focused on buildings rather than people.²¹ The demolition and rebuilding continued, and ambitious plans emerged to remove all of inner Melbourne's sub-standard housing.

In July 1960 Horace Petty wrote a brief report on 'Slum Reclamation and Urban Redevelopment of Melbourne Inner Suburban Areas':

There is no doubt that one of the major changes that must take place in metropolitan development in Victoria is that the sprawl of new suburbs up to 20 miles from the inner city area must be arrested, and the inner suburban areas replanned and rebuilt to carry a reasonably increased population living in comfortable and up-to-date houses and flats. The problem of how this is to be achieved is one of finance.²²



CONCRETE FLATS UNDER CONSTRUCTION ON ESSEX STREET, c.1959: DESPITE STRONG PROTESTS FROM THE ESSEX STREET RESIDENTS' PROTECTION ASSOCIATION, FORMED IN 1957, HOUSES ON ESSEX AND BELLA STREETS WERE DEMOLISHED TO MAKE WAY FOR THESE HOUSING COMMISSION FLATS.

Following consideration of slum reclamation—or as Petty preferred to call it 'urban renewal'—in the United States and the United Kingdom, the report included a listing of 'areas in the various inner suburbs which have been selected as those in which housing is most run-down and depressed'. Nearly 1000 acres of inner Melbourne were identified in this study, including about 80 acres in Prahran. In his report to Cabinet, Petty noted that: 'There are approximately one thousand acres of run down, depressed and slum housing areas requiring immediate attention in the inner suburban areas of Melbourne'.²³

The 1000 acres had been identified by two officers of the Housing Commission, working independently—Grahame Shaw, Senior Architect, Design and Research and J. H. Davey, Slum Research Officer. Shaw and Davey were careful to point out that they had not found 1000 acres of slums:

There is a high percentage of very old single fronted houses in poor repair . . . There is not much good standard housing in any of them, nor perhaps is there a great deal of really dilapidated property—probably eighty per cent of these still have an effective shelter life of up to 15 years. The term 'slum' cannot be applied to most for population densities are not high compared with overseas standards.²⁴

The Shaw/Davey report, with its listing of areas in the inner suburbs, became the effective basis for the Housing Commission's urban renewal programme of the 1960s.

Two large areas of Prahran were identified and many of the houses in those areas were subsequently demolished and replaced by Housing Commission flats. The first priority was about 50 acres between High Street and Malvern Road, east of Chapel Street. It included the Essex Street area. The second priority area was about 27 acres north of Malvern Road.

This area east of Chapel Street of little old houses on narrow streets, much of it poorly drained, was already very familiar to the Council's Inspector, Reg Rogers:

in Prahran the main areas were Malvern Road, Simmons Street, Surrey Road and what is now the Sir Horace Petty Estate ... It was declared as suitable for slum reclamation ... I went round with Bradley from the Housing Commission ... King Street, Princes Street, Union Street ... Another area declared for slum reclamation was Surrey Road, Clara Street to Toorak Road north of the [garbage] destructor ... Took photos of it from the top of the destructor stack, very frightening. They declared it, then it was found the Commission hadn't notified the local MP Mr Hudson ... People appealed to him and he kicked up and it was scrapped.²⁵



COMPONENTS FROM THE HOLMESGLEN FACTORY BEING HOISTED INTO POSITION IN THE RALEIGH STREET FLATS, 1962

Many local residents remained opposed to these schemes, but by this stage the Prahran Council had become a firm supporter of the Housing Commission's plans. By 1962 work had begun on what was to be the Horace Petty estate at Malvern Road/Simmons Street, and also on the smaller redevelopment area of De Murska Street to the south-west. When it was completed in 1967 the Horace Petty estate consisted of a total of 614 concrete flats divided between four-storey and twelve-storey blocks. The Raleigh Street/De Murska Street development was on a smaller scale, totalling 71 flats when completed.

The other major Housing Commission development in Windsor was at Union Street, and consisted of twelve-storey blocks to provide a total of 212 flats by 1968. It was called Loxton Lodge after Sam Loxton, sometime test cricketer and Liberal MLA for Prahran from 1955.²⁶ Throughout this time, the Prahran Council was enthusiastic. The Mayor, Cr Emlyn Jones, hailed the declaration of the Simmons Street area in 1961 as 'the rebirth of Prahran'.²⁷

The Housing Commission managed to persuade many local councils that redevelopment would mean increased population, prosperity and higher rates, and embarked on a campaign to get councils to vote them funds to assist with the cost. Prahran was the first to comply. In November 1954, following a proposal by Cr Petty, the Council introduced a special rate levy of one penny in the pound.²⁸ 'Ratepayers in reclamation areas



VIEW OF FOUR-STOREY BLOCKS UNDER CONSTRUCTION ON THE HORACE PETTY ESTATE, APRIL 1965



HOUSE ON REGENT STREET WITH HOUSING COMMISSION FLATS IN THE BACKGROUND

were indirectly paying for the destruction of their property', noted Renate Howe.²⁹ By 1970 local councils had contributed \$1,725 million to the Housing Commission. Most of this came from the City of Melbourne, but the second largest contributor was Prahran, providing \$280 000, or more than Port Melbourne, Williamstown, Richmond, South Melbourne and St Kilda combined. Even the objection of Prahran's businessmen to the building of the Horace Petty estate failed to shake the Council's backing for the project. Everyone was being swept along by development fever that was far more extensive than the activities of the Housing Commission alone:

Prahran is currently enjoying a phenomenal comeback in a rip-roarin' building and trade boom. [This was] rocking the critics who not so long ago were gloomily predicting the extinction of the old, established centre in the face of modern, drive-in shopping centres . . . Perhaps the key factor in the feverish building activity is the drift back of people from the outer suburban areas, many of which are still without sewerage, transport, shopping facilities and other essential services . . .³⁰

During the year 1954/55, 23 new flats were built in Prahran, but in 1959 there were 600, and there were already permits for 387 flats in the first quarter of 1960. Prahran was embarked on a building boom, as private enterprise joined the Housing Commission in attempting to meet Horace Petty's aim of rebuilding the inner suburbs at a higher population density.

PRIVATE FLATS—ON THE UP AND UP

In 1947 William Dane joined the firm of Campbell, Hogg & Daughter, Toorak estate agents, and spent the next forty-five years observing changes in the local property market:

The change in housing never came really until the early fifties, when the developers took a great deal more interest in the City of Prahran, being close to the city. People wanted something to live near and at the time there wasn't a great deal of money about, so the developers got into the habit of pulling down the old homes, the existing homes, and putting flats up . . .

There was no architectural flavour . . . purely a square block . . . cat ramp . . . three storeys . . . one bedroom units to start with. As they got more adventurous they bought larger blocks of land and fitted on two bedroom units . . .

Where the over-developing came is that the Council had no control over it. The Board of Works had the planning authority and they virtually allowed anything so long as it was x amount of feet from the side, rear and front boundaries . . . so they did it, and did it to some of our most beautiful streets . . .

In the late fifties and early sixties the builders and the public both got together and they realised they had to improve the commodity that they were trying to sell and then came the own-your-own flats. Before that . . . purely leasing. The first type of own-your-own flats that were put on the market were called 'company share' . . . no title . . . They bought shares in the managing company . . .

As we became more sophisticated and the flats seemed to improve they then started to give a title called a 'stratum' title—in other words you had a title to the flat itself but the balance of the land surrounding it was still company shareholding . . .

Later still when you saw the high rise going into it with very sophisticated flats even twenty-five years ago, twenty years ago, when they really made them magnificent, that's when the 'strata' title came in—each person had title to the whole of the property—I think 1968 . . . There was volume and folio for each flat unit and volume and folio for each car parking . . .

In the last ten to fifteen years flats have had to be of a very high quality mainly because of the affluence of the people who wanted to live in this area and even back in 1980 flats, good flats, were bringing \$300 and \$400 thousand. Today [1991] those flats exceed well over the million mark.³¹

At the 1954 census, flats in Prahran were big, expensive and rented. Forty years later, they were bigger, even more expensive, and owner-occupied. The flats that were built during the 1950s were small by later standards, put up to repetitive designs by tradesmen-turned-developers, and more than 85 per cent of them were rented. But the average weekly rent for a flat in Prahran was more than £3, compared to as low as 17s 6d in Port Melbourne, or £1 17s 6d across the river in Richmond, and Prahran

had by far the largest number of flats of more than six rooms of any area of the city. Interestingly, rented houses in Prahran were not expensive—about the average for Melbourne—but flats were. The developments described by Mr Dane reinforced the elitist image of flats in South Yarra and Toorak. Not long after the Housing Commission had built flats for the poor in Prahran and Windsor, up on the hills to the north and east some of the most expensive flats in Australia appeared among the mansions.

During the 1950s there was little concern with the quality or design of the buildings. So long as the plans complied with the Uniform Building Regulations (UBRs) that regulated the area of the building in relation to the size of the block, the developer could go ahead. In any case, the problem that mainly concerned the Council was not too much development, but too little. The population of Prahran was declining and anything that appeared to help redress that process tended to be welcomed. Mrs Jones moved into Oban Street, Hawksburn, in 1955 and described the area as run down:

Houses . . . all of them were run down, due to the war . . . You can't imagine how hard it was. When the men returned they were glad of any sort of accommodation. A lot of older women and widows let rooms. Every second house was a rooming house of some sort or another . . .

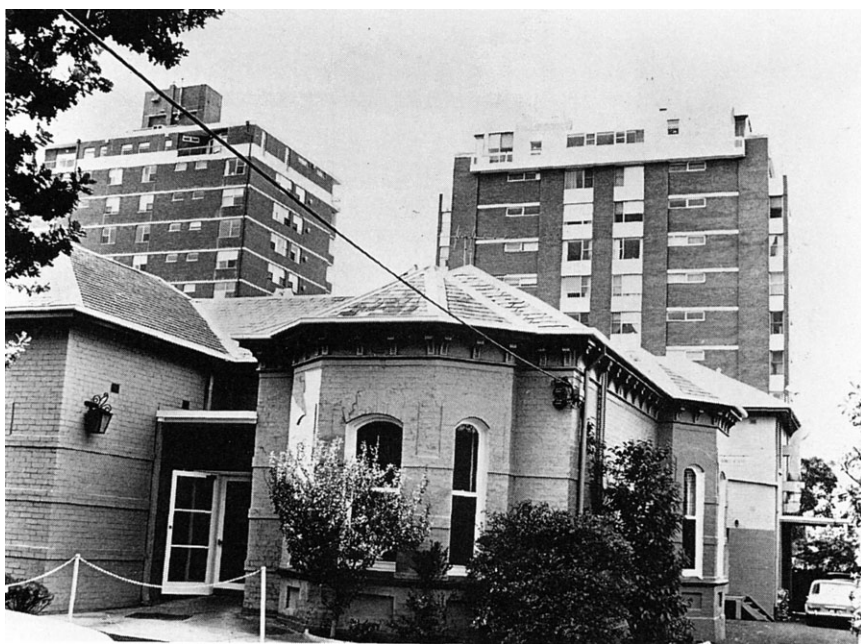
One by one people found other accommodation . . . There was a big move out to the new part of North Blackburn—the very outer suburbs—people moved out. These houses were sold very cheaply . . .³²

Developers who came in and put up flats were seen as helping to halt the population loss and potential decline of the prosperity of Prahran. The Board of Works endorsed this thinking in the major planning report produced in 1954. Redevelopment of the inner suburbs at a higher density would help stem population loss and remove some of the outward pressure on the growth of Melbourne. So around Prahran, plumbers, carpenters and electricians began to put up flats to standard plans and turned themselves into developers.

By 1958 there was a significant rise in the annual number of proposals for subdivision and responsibility for dealing with all the applications for building permits was transferred from the Health to the Public Works Committee. By the beginning of 1959 the Committee found itself dealing with upwards of a dozen applications a month. Not all applications were approved, and the Council began to worry about multi-storey blocks of flats, particularly in the north and east. In July 1960, for instance, the Council opposed an application to build a multi-storey block of flats on the north-east corner of St George's and Lansell Roads, but the Council could not stop the development. All it could do was oppose the application when it appeared before the Uniform Building Regulations Committee of the

MMBW. By August 1960 councillors had resigned themselves to pointing out that they had no power over development proposals, providing they were in accordance with the UBRs. The Council appointed a Town Planner and made a series of abortive attempts to regulate development through the by-laws. Mr Dane, not noted for his opposition to development, either professionally or after he became a councillor for Toorak ward in 1968, described this period of development as a rape of some of Toorak and South Yarra's best streets: 'The early flats were very basic—mainly through South Yarra and Prahran, and then they moved into parts of Toorak. The area that I would describe as being raped would be Rockley Road, Kensington Road, Toorak Road, Gordon Street, Mathoura Road, mainly . . .',³³

In October 1959 the *Southern Advertiser* offered readers a glimpse into life in the surrounding homes, opened to the public in aid of the University of Melbourne Building Fund. Visitors to K. O. Geiger's house on Kooyong Road could view a 'marble enclosed courtyard and magnificent chandeliers . . .', Dame Mabel Brookes was putting a 'Georgian setting for dessert' on display, and Mr and Mrs Harold Holt of St George's Road were charging £1 a day to those who wished to see inside their home and support the University of Melbourne. By way of contrast, Mr and Mrs Robin Boyd were opening their 'contemporary home' on Walsh Street, South Yarra.³⁴ The



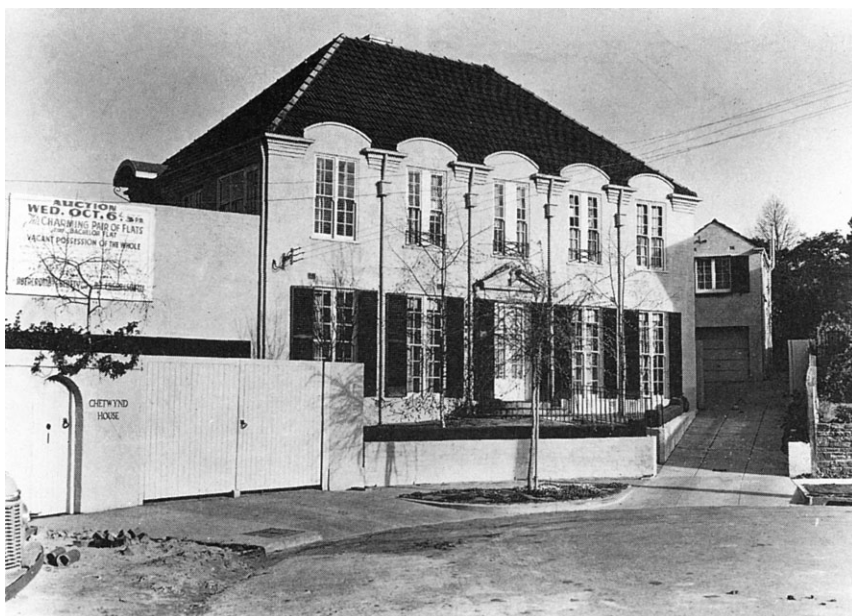
HIGH-RISE FLATS, PRIVATE ENTERPRISE STYLE, ON TOORAK ROAD

working class might have deserted Windsor and Prahran, but the rich and famous had not deserted Toorak and South Yarra.

Meanwhile, there was a building boom underway. It was estimated that £1.5 million worth of new buildings went up in Prahran in the first four months of 1960, 'believed to have set a new record for building activity in Prahran'. The Town Clerk was reported as saying that there was a 'complete rejuvenation of the place; an upsurge in building and trading that is being felt'. In April a £500 000 block of luxury own-your-own flats was announced for South Yarra, complete with four penthouses and space for over fifty cars. In July, a ten-storey block of own-your-own flats was announced for the corner of Lansell and St George's Roads. There were to be twenty-seven three-bedroom units with a penthouse on the top, despite Council opposition. In October the Mayor of Prahran, Cr Gawith, was optimistic about the swing back to the city from the outer suburbs, and argued that 'more skyscraper housing for Prahran' was needed. At the same time, neighbouring Malvern was trying to enforce a two-storey limit on new building. Some residents of Prahran agreed and in November seventeen ratepayers petitioned the Council against plans for multi-storey flats in Smyth Street, Toorak. Cr E. L. Jones replied that 'if the plans complied with building regulations, council had no power to refuse a permit'. All the same, Prahran tried to pass a similar by-law to that of Malvern, restricting development to two storeys.³⁵ Acceptance of the restriction depended on the Local Government Minister, but government policy at the time was generally in favour of encouraging higher density development in the inner suburbs. This accorded with the wishes of the developers and many property owners in Prahran whose blocks were more valuable if they could be sold and covered with multi-storey flats. So the old houses continued to be knocked down and the flats to be knocked up.

ROADS AND CARS

While the boom in flat building was underway, the amount of traffic in Prahran was increasing, and the problem was not confined to Prahran. During the 1950s, at a number of points around Melbourne traffic congestion was emerging as a new and troublesome headache for motorists and public authorities alike. St Kilda Junction was one bottleneck where it became clear that the problem was too big to be resolved by local councils. In 1956 the Bolte government decided to give the MMBW wider powers to design and construct new roads. By mid-1957 a list of twelve urgent works had been prepared. The list included alterations to St Kilda Junction and a St Kilda Road underpass, improvements to Punt Road, and plans for Melbourne's first freeways. The government and the MMBW then



THERE ARE FLATS, AND THERE ARE FLATS.

faced the problem of how to finance all this rebuilding of the city around the motor car.

Work on the South Eastern Freeway began fairly rapidly and the first phase, including the Morshead Overpass over Punt Road, was opened in May 1962. The road helped ease congestion problems on Alexandra Avenue, but the south of Prahran had to wait longer for any major changes. Although detailed plans for St Kilda Junction were prepared by 1961, Cabinet did not give final approval until July 1967. Work began almost immediately amidst general relief that something was finally being done.³⁶

The new St Kilda Junction was opened in December 1968 by Sir Rohan Delacombe, Governor of Victoria, and the Premier, Sir Henry Bolte. The narrow section of Wellington Street between the far wider sections of Dandenong and St Kilda Roads had been by-passed by the broad swathe of Queensway, sweeping under St Kilda Road and hemming in residents of the south-west corner of Windsor with its associated concrete walls and access ramps. Cr Martin Smith, Prahran's representative on the Board of the MMBW, claimed that from 'the point of view of local people [it was] a project which will be very much appreciated'.³⁷

The MMBW found that it did not need all the land originally set aside for the scheme and leased a block on the corner of Dandenong Road and Chapel Street to the Prahran Council. Cr Chris Gahan, chairman of the

Parks and Gardens Committee, drew up a plan and the area became a park.³⁸

On a smaller scale, the Council was battling with traffic problems within its own boundaries. By the 1960s the revolution to replace horses with engines was complete. The last Council horse was pensioned off in 1961 and a whole new generation was growing up that had never ridden in any form of horse-drawn transport. Prahran found itself with a new problem: where to park all those extra cars and how to accommodate all that extra traffic in residential streets.

The provision of parking space and the problems of traffic in residential streets were the responsibility of the Prahran Council, especially the Public Works Committee. During the 1950s there was a steady trickle of agenda items on car parking problems, both around the major shopping centres and in residential streets. In 1954 the committee even discussed building an underground car-park to relieve the parking problems at the Town Hall, but the proposal was rejected as too expensive.³⁹ As the decade progressed, the emphasis shifted to the problems of providing parking for the residents of all the new flats that were being built. In 1959 the Council tried to amend the building regulations to provide for one car parking space to each flat.⁴⁰

Meanwhile, the Council's budget for car parking acquisition more than doubled. In August 1960 there was a proposal to compulsorily purchase land behind Chapel Street to provide parking for 104 cars. The proposal was vigorously opposed by Cr George Gahan. He argued that local ratepayers would be funding parking used by people from other suburbs and that the Chapel Street traders should pay. Cr Gahan lost.⁴¹ In the late 1950s and early 1960s Cr Gahan generally did lose his battles, outvoted by the other eleven councillors. He was first elected to represent the ratepayers of South Yarra ward in 1958, and immediately upset the other councillors. George Gahan was not a conservative which, in the cold war climate of the 1950s on a conservative Council like Prahran, meant that he was accused of being a Communist (which he was not).⁴²

Although many areas of the South Yarra, Prahran and Windsor wards were solidly working-class, the electoral system had ensured a conservative council for generations. Keith Nicholls, who became a councillor in 1971, alleged that until the 1950s 'Prahran Council and the Upper House in Spring Street were the two best clubs in Melbourne'.⁴³ Tenants had no vote, and that included more than half the population. Property owners had votes and the larger the property they owned, the more votes they had. But an increase in the proportion of owner-occupiers during the 1950s and 1960s, particularly among migrants, and the move towards owner-occupied flats in the later years saw a slow change. The local business

interests that had dominated the Council since at least the 1870s were joined by councillors who were not estate agents or shopkeepers. In fact, in that context, George Gahan was not so different from the others. He was a builder. However, Gahan wanted to improve facilities for groups other than business—particularly the elderly—even though he agreed with many of the other councillors in wishing to continue to keep rates in Prahran low.

But in 1960 business interests still predominated. It was, therefore, not surprising that the Council objected to the efforts of the Traffic Commission to ban parking in Chapel Street and Toorak Village. The Town Clerk, Mr H. Jones, said it was 'unfair to local traders' and the Council took down the Traffic Commission's 'no parking' signs. For his part, the Chairman of the Traffic Commission said 'The demands of moving traffic must come before the demands of kerb-side parking'.⁴⁴ Fortunately for Prahran's shopkeepers, the Council included some powerful voices to speak out against the Chairman of the Traffic Commission, particularly Horace Petty.

Parking for shoppers remained a priority, and in October 1960 W. D. & H. O. Wills offered to lease the Council some vacant land. The site was off Izett Street, adjacent to the factory. It provided parking for eighty cars, and the earlier plans for compulsory purchase were shelved.⁴⁵ Meanwhile, Cr Martin Smith of Windsor, a Chapel Street trader, was asking whether the Council, the police or the Traffic Commission should control street parking on major roads. He was among those who set up the Prahran Development Association to promote population and business growth. Besides businessmen with wider interests, the Association included six councillors who were all involved in retailing in Prahran.⁴⁶

During the 1960s this solid business representation was to change. In 1968 Fred Farrall, who really was a Communist, was elected to represent Windsor, and the Reverend J. Hartley, a peace activist, was elected to represent Prahran the following year, while 1969 also saw Prahran's first woman councillor, Mrs M. Bulbick, in Windsor ward. Chris Gahan had already joined his father and represented South Yarra from 1966. In 1969 G. Giasoumi became the first councillor from Prahran's Greek community and Chris Gahan was elected Mayor. His father had already been Mayor in 1965 and was Mayor again in 1970:

I was part of the Gahan machine, Dad made them read the minutes, so you knew how people voted . . . Before that everything was behind closed doors in committee . . . The councillors had to face elections . . . We ran candidates in all four wards . . . They got fed up . . . little town halls all over . . . Dad would have cups of coffee. The Mayor used to rotate around the wards . . . They wouldn't give it to G. T. Gahan on that system, so he said 'get the numbers'. He was the first Labor Mayor in this city, very

welfare orientated . . . big ethnic following, big elderly citizen following . . . There was multiple voting at first. Three people had to vote for him to counteract one vote at the other end of South Yarra. Then tenants could vote, then there was no multiple voting. Now it's compulsory.⁴⁷

Prahran was changing in a number of ways. The move towards a more democratically elected council was taking place at the same time as major shifts in the composition of the population of the area. At the 1966 census the number of private houses in Prahran had fallen from 10 090 in 1954 to 8786 and the number of flats had risen from 3424 to 8307. Meanwhile, the number of shared houses had fallen from 1595 to just 451 and the total population remained more or less the same. Increasingly, residents of Prahran were beginning to live alone or with one or two other people. This trend towards smaller and smaller households meant that despite the building boom, hopes for an increased population were disappointed. The population of Prahran was changing because the people who wanted to move into all the new flats tended to be either young and single, or retired. These new residents also tended to want to keep Prahran the way it was when they moved in, with a mix of houses and flats. They turned out to be particularly well-equipped with the necessary lobbying skills to keep Prahran the way they wanted it—as the Council found out when it finally acquired some powers to plan for future development.

4

From Perrott Plan to Strategy Plan— Housing, 1970-1990

The population of Prahran recovered during the 1960s and by 1971 had nearly returned to the levels of the immediate post-war years. But this population rise was shortlived. In the early 1970s the residents of Prahran decided that they did not approve of the planners' and developers' dreams for higher density development and ever higher blocks of flats. In addition, household size continued to fall as more and more single people and childless couples decided they wanted to live in the area. By 1976 the population had fallen to about the level of 1921, and it kept on falling.

The people who were moving in to the area didn't like the idea of high-rise flats, but they did like the idea of inner-city living in a suburb with a history. They were interested in preserving Prahran's heritage and renovating houses. So this was the era of the progressive gentrification of Prahran's extensive stock of modest cottages. To grossly simplify the story—the post-war migrants had bought the cottages from the working class, generally kept them in very good repair, and sold them to the middle class.

SHINING TOWERS

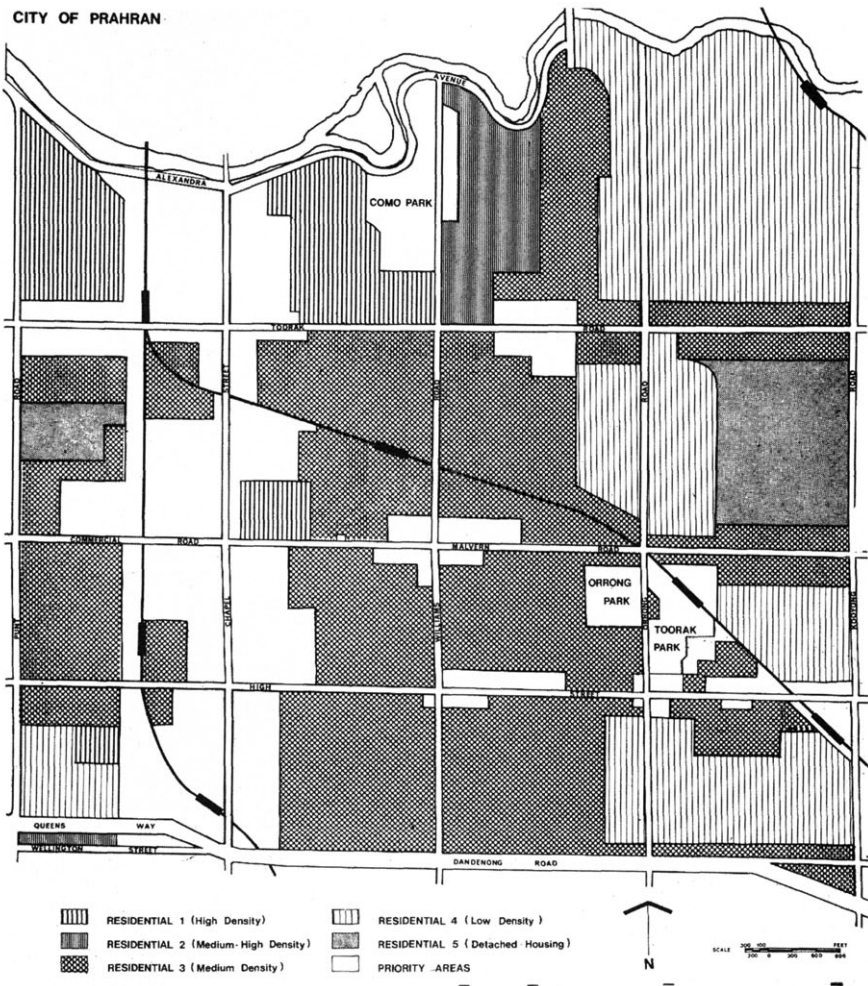
In the late 1960s a series of changes in the planning framework gave local councils a greater degree of influence over development in their areas. The boom in flat construction during the 1960s had resulted in a backlash of bad feeling against large-scale flat building. There was concern at both the high-rise flats constructed by the Housing Commission and at those

erected by private enterprise. Pressures of this kind eventually persuaded the Housing Commission to move away from high-rise building, and by the early 1970s the State government was already advocating the sale of Commission land in inner suburban areas to private developers. As demonstrations and community activism became increasingly popular in the late 1960s, the MMBW, like other planning authorities around the western world, began to see a certain level of public participation and delegation of powers as an appropriate way of overcoming opposition. The Melbourne Metropolitan Planning Scheme was approved in April 1968 and in December it was amended so that 'all multi-residential development within the Residential "C" Zone required Town Planning permits to be issued by the Responsible Authority'.¹

Until then, flats had been a permitted use within most of the residential areas of Prahran, requiring a building permit but no planning permission. In February 1969 the MMBW introduced arrangements to enable local councils to take over delegated powers as the 'Responsible Authority'. In other words, for the first time Prahran Council could, if it so desired, exercise some control over flat development within Prahran. The Council became one of the first to make use of these new powers and in December 1969 appointed Perrott, Lyon, Timlock & Kesa as its Town Planning Consultants. As the first part of their brief, they set about preparing a Residential Zoning Plan and Code for Prahran.

In retrospect, the 'Perrott Plan' was seen as providing for an unacceptable level of development in Prahran, but Perrott himself and some councillors saw it at the time as a way of *limiting* the amount of permissible building. The pressure for development in Prahran was high, and considered likely to remain so. The population was estimated as being about 58 000 and rising: 'the total net population capable of being accommodated at the densities allowable under the current zoning provisions of the Melbourne Metropolitan Planning Scheme . . . has been calculated to be to the order of 300 000 persons'. It was not envisaged that quite such a high level of growth would occur, but even half that level of development would 'severely overtax the ability of the various authorities to provide services and facilities'.² The planning consultants came up with a proposed level of population increase of 30 000-40 000 over thirty years, later revised downward to 20 000-30 000. In other words, the plan was to drastically limit development, as opposed to that theoretically possible under the overall MMBW scheme.

Cr John Holdsworth argued that the current Board of Works' proposals allowed for a ten-fold increase in the population and that Perrott, Lyon, Timlock & Kesa had been appointed to: 'help resolve the enormous



THE PERROTT PLAN, OCTOBER 1970

growth pressure problems facing Prahran . . . When all the noisy hysteria dies down it will be seen that Mr Perrott has presented a feasible solution to Prahran's problems'.³

Throughout the early part of 1970, as the consultants worked on their plan, the *Age* newspaper was running a series of articles on high-rise housing. Virtually all of them were antagonistic to high-rise flats in general and the Housing Commission, in particular, with headlines such as 'Horror of our high-rise flats'.⁴ Not surprisingly, the consultants took the problems of high-rise living into consideration when drawing up their plan for Prahran. They were keen to give residents of any new high-rise flats in

Prahran the best possible position and views, to remove them from the stigma already associated with Housing Commission flats: 'Very careful consideration has been given to the concept of locating high-rise buildings on the highest land with maximum building height decreasing as the level of land falls away'.⁵

The initial plan was for a maximum height of twenty storeys in some of the highest parts of South Yarra, ten storeys in the western area of Toorak, and two or three storeys almost everywhere else except the existing Housing Commission blocks. 'He created his "New Jerusalem" ', said Margot Nicholls, 'he saw these high, shining towers'.⁶

The preliminary zoning map was considered by the Public Works Committee in September and does not seem to have met with any dramatic opposition from that quarter. But news of what was in the plan began to get around, and it was decided to put the plan on public display. Mr Perrott would talk about it at an official launching of what he was careful to call a preliminary zoning map. The draft plan was unveiled to the public at a meeting in the Town Hall on Friday 8 October 1970, and the planners began to get an inkling of their mistake.

The proposal to allow twenty-storey flats on the heights of South Yarra and Toorak looked very attractive to developers and might, indeed, have diffused criticism from the kind of people who bemoaned the fate of Housing Commission tenants in their low status boxes in the sky. But it failed to reckon with the outrage of the existing residents in the area, faced with the prospect of having their rather valuable real estate overlooked by tower blocks. 'Residents were outraged about having Toorak and South Yarra's traditional character raped to financially benefit land developers—to the city's detriment and no one's benefit except the wallets of the developers'.⁷

Prahran Council town planner Mr Les Perrott will announce tonight a plan to rezone parts of Toorak for high-rise flats. And it's expected to raise a rumpus with residents of Melbourne's most exclusive suburb . . .⁸

TRAK TO FIGHT THE BIG FLATS [was the headline the next day.] Miss Valentine Leeper—a South Yarra resident for nearly 50 years—said today: 'But, darling, I am naturally perfectly horrified when I think of all those skyscrapers looming over me'. Prahran City town planner, Mr L. M. Perrott, announced the plan to a rowdy meeting of about 600 residents last night.⁹

Those who were acquainted with Miss Leeper might doubt the accuracy of the exact phrasing of the quote, even though it was repeated in the *Age*, but the sentiment was captured admirably. Residents of Toorak ward in general and Kensington Road in particular were, indeed, perfectly horrified.

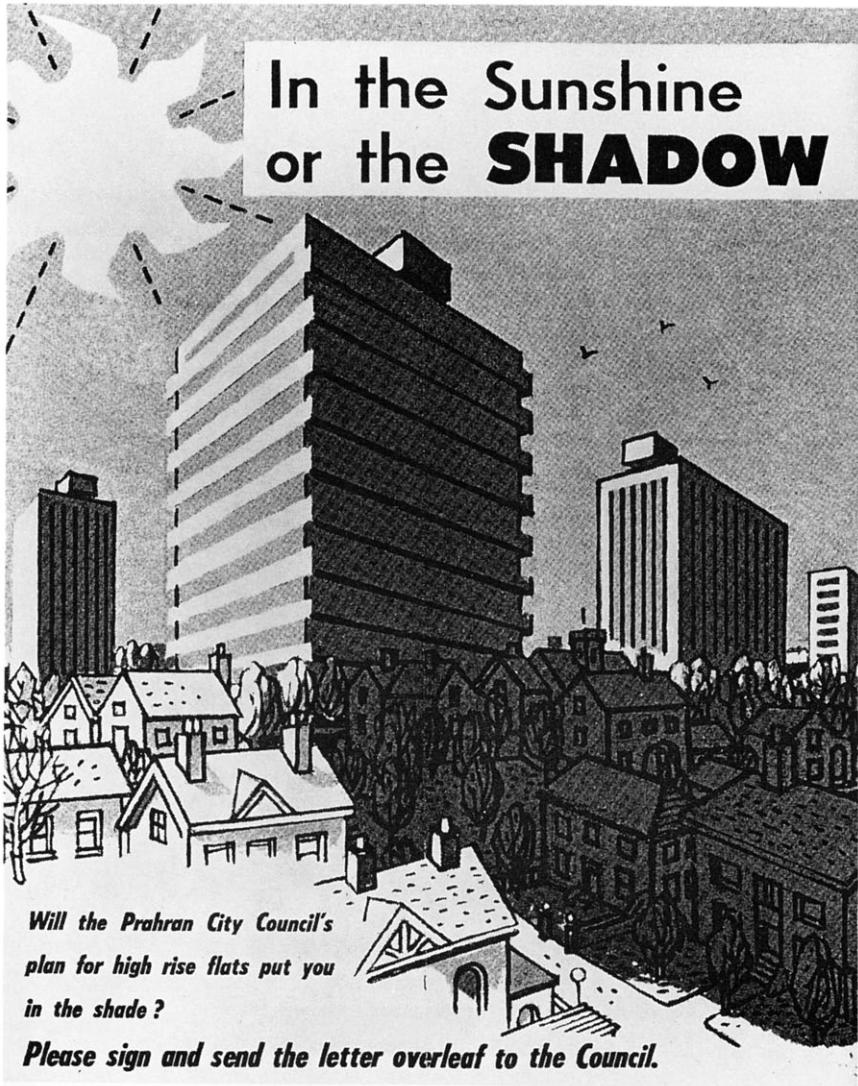
The Perrott Plan unleashed a storm of local protest that did not come from the type of people normally associated with such phenomena. It came

from the likes of Lieutenant-General Sir Sydney Rowell, Dr Michael Searby, Tony Sallmann (Toorak estate agent), Mrs Margaret Roxburgh, Mr Howson (ex-Minister for Air), and Mrs Patricia Rayson, long-time member of the Liberal Party. From the beginning they were well organised, and within days the Toorak Residents' Committee had been formed and appointed its own planning consultant, John J. Bayly. All the next week the phones ran hot, reporters ran around collecting stories on the novel spectacle of protest in Toorak (almost always Toorak—somehow South Yarra was considered less newsworthy), and on 19 October twelve people met at Miss Leeper's house in Kensington Road to form the South Yarra Anti-High Rise Group.

A public meeting was organised and held in St John's Hall, Toorak, with members of both the Toorak and South Yarra groups. Tony Sallmann was there, and John Bayly, speaking against the Perrott Plan. The meeting was packed but orderly until the Mayor, Cr George Gahan, stood up and said that Toorak residents were misinformed about the plan. He was booed into silence. At the end of the meeting there was a call for funds to fight the plan. 'They dropped money into our hands . . . We collected up to \$1000 . . . At the second Council meeting there was standing room only . . .'¹⁰

Meanwhile, the South Yarra Anti-High Rise Group was writing to the Minister for Local Government, Mr Hamer, and collecting signatures on a petition. They had already appointed a Chairman, Treasurer and Secretary at the first meeting. By March 1971 they were considering standing candidates in the local elections the following August, and by May they had a legal constitution, drawn up by a solicitor.¹¹ Although formed to fight the Perrott Plan, the group consisted of energetic people with a wide range of interests. They maintained close links with other pressure groups of various kinds, including the Committee for Urban Action and the United Melbourne Freeway Action Group. They were interested in conservation, the National Trust and local history. They also regularly sent observers to meetings of the Melbourne-South Yarra Group. This body had been formed a few months earlier across Punt Road in the Melbourne half of South Yarra and had a similar range of interests.¹²

Throughout the rest of 1970 and the first few months of 1971, most councillors and the planners seemed to have their heads firmly in the sand. Despite all the protests Cr Dane said in November that the plan was unlikely to be changed and the *Southern Cross* ran a feature under the headline 'Planners Press On': 'Senior planner . . . Mr Greg Tulloch, said today he doubted that any substantial changes would be made to the plan as a result of the public meeting held at the Town Hall last Wednesday'.¹³



FRONT COVER OF THE LEAFLET PRODUCED BY THE SOUTH YARRA ANTI-HIGH-RISE GROUP

The consultants went ahead and produced a written planning document early in 1971. This document glossed over the protests:

the Council received a considerable number of comments and submissions from individuals and from groups of interested persons, all of which were taken into consideration by the planners during the successive

phases of the study . . . [but the preliminary zoning map, displayed in October 1970, remained] generally suitable for providing the framework upon which subsequent proposals have been based.¹⁴

However, in February 1971 Cr Holdsworth attacked the plan in Council and the City Engineer, Ron Gould, set to work to come up with an alternative. He and the Deputy Engineer, Ian MacDonald, produced a set of proposals that formed the basis for the revised plan, but it was not accepted without a fight. Gould's proposals were passed on to the consultants at the end of March, but Mayor George Gahan remained more worried about the spectre of declining population than about over-development. In June he called a special meeting of estate agents and architects to discuss the latest version of the Perrott Plan, prior to consideration by Council. This managed to upset councillors as well as residents and the balance began to turn.¹⁵ The new, revised plan took account of Gould's proposals for significant reductions in the level of permitted development and on 7 June the Council, led by Mayor George Gahan, rejected it. 'We must continue to develop and progress' he said. Cr Gahan said the council had agreed to scrap the new proposal and revert to Perrott's original plan as a basis for future discussion.¹⁶

Cr Dale Fisher, an architect himself, was also in favour of greater development. Although the original plan for twenty storeys seemed to have been abandoned, ten-storey development in significant areas of Prahran seemed to be the Council's brief to the planners. So Perrott set to work yet again and in the middle of July the Council voted on a new plan which was later described as zoning most of Prahran for three-storey walk-up flats.¹⁷ At this stage, with the Council somewhat divided on the issue, Cr the Reverend J. Hartley died during a Council meeting and a by-election was held in Prahran ward. Keith Nicholls, civil engineer, local resident and husband of anti-high rise campaigner Margot, was elected to the vacancy. If any of the sitting councillors got a shock they didn't show it, and in August things seemed to be proceeding as usual. The latest version of the Perrott Plan was to be sent off to the Board of Works without further reference to the residents. 'The public should be able to view it' said Cr Holdsworth. 'It is not nearly good enough for Prahran'.¹⁸

In the August Council elections, Cr Holdsworth held his seat in Prahran, but Garry Giasoumi lost his in South Yarra. Maclaren Gordon, who was backed by the residents' action groups and said 'he was anxious to see the residents of small streets protected from being hemmed in by vast buildings' became the latest councillor for South Yarra.¹⁹ It was the beginning of the end of the old council. Even George Gahan paid attention after that: 'It's time the councillors, including myself, woke up that Prahran

City ratepayers do not want any more high-rise flats'. Chris Gahan said his father 'wasn't a high riser . . . but he wasn't anti-development . . . a building contractor himself'.²⁰ Cr Dane, unopposed member for Toorak ward, became Mayor. The new Council resolved to put the latest version of the plan on public display for two months before sending it off to the Board of Works.²¹

In fact, two plans went on display. One was the relatively low density revised Holdsworth/Gould/Perrott Plan of June 1971 and the other was the higher density version called for by Cr George Gahan and adopted in committee in July 1971. The plans remained available for inspection and written comment until 8 April 1972, and Cr Nicholls was particularly active in calling for public comment and further reductions to permissible building heights. By May he had managed to swing most of the Council behind him:

Cr Nicholls said: 'The Council vote represents the culmination of 18 months of hard battling by civic reform groups in the municipality. The energy and persistence of these public action groups has been continually backed by support from the three civic-reform councillors—Crs M. Gordon and F. Farrall and myself—who are in a definite minority in council . . .',²²

The Prahran City Council Planning Code, as adopted on 22 May 1972, allowed for a maximum height on future buildings of two storeys over parking, with the exception of part of Punt Hill, where the limit was to be three storeys over parking.²³ Residents' action groups had won and they promptly set about consolidating their victory. In August 1972 Keith Nicholls had to defend his seat because he had been voted in at a by-election. Reg Wallace stood in Windsor, Colin Bell in South Yarra and Pat Rayson in Toorak, so that there was a residents' candidate in every ward. Pat Rayson lost her fight in Toorak in 1972 (although she was later elected and became Chairman of the Planning and Building Committee) but Keith Nicholls was re-elected in Prahran, Reg Wallace defeated Marge Bulbick in a landslide victory and Colin Bell narrowly defeated Chris Gahan in South Yarra. There were now four councillors representing residents' groups. They felt strong enough to try and elect Nicholls as Mayor, but failed. Instead, Bill Dane was elected Mayor for the second year running. Cr Dane was as much influenced by the upheaval in Council as everyone else. His comments twenty years later are interesting:

[The MMBW] thought they'd give the local councils planning authority, but . . . too much can be done through local councils by pressure groups . . . should be taken out of the hands of local councils. A group of ten

people who are terribly vocal can sway a council—or at least four of them . . . [Four members of the Prahran Council come up for election each year.]²⁴

FREEWAYS: TO BUILD OR NOT TO BUILD?

During the second half of the 20th century, the growth in motor traffic exceeded the worst expectations of the members of the Metropolitan Town Planning Commission. There was also a shift away from public transport to the private car and a dramatic increase in the size of Melbourne. The result was a growing strain on the main routes through suburbs like Prahran. None of the major through roads were wide enough and the problem was compounded by on-street parking where shops had grown up along the roads. By the 1960s the difficulties of widening any of these major streets proved insurmountable. Besides the cost, widening of Toorak Road or Chapel Street, for instance, would have involved demolishing whole business communities. Over the years, there were a series of proposals to widen Punt Road and property prices in the affected areas went up and down like yo-yos.

In 1963 the Metropolitan Transportation Committee was set up to look at the whole problem of Melbourne's roads.²⁵ There were particular difficulties in suburbs such as Prahran where the network of roads had been laid out for a different city in a different century.²⁶

Between 1947 and 1961 the population of Melbourne increased by 650 000, as a result of both the high post-war birth-rate and high levels of immigration, and by the beginning of the 1970s twice as many people lived in Melbourne as at the end of World War II. Much of this growth took place in new suburbs on the outskirts of the city, and although many of the new factories of the 1950s and 1960s were also built in the outer suburbs, new jobs and new houses were not appearing in the same areas at the same time. More and more people began to travel further to work, and they travelled increasingly by private car. The standard picture of commuting is of flows between jobs in the inner city and houses in the suburbs. In fact, this can be quite misleading. The pattern that developed in Melbourne in the 1950s and 1960s was very much more complex with new jobs as well as new housing to the north and west and, to a lesser extent, industrial development in the south-east, although in the eastern suburbs in general, the emphasis tended to be more on housing than on industry. The overall impact on transport was more traffic on the roads going in almost all directions. However, particular bottlenecks developed on the narrow streets in the inner suburbs like Prahran, and a body of ideas

developed around a division of the city into the old, crowded, unhealthy inner city and the new, spacious, clean air outer suburbs:

Eventually the town planners succumbed to the image of the evil city. In the years immediately after the war they planned huge, radial freeways capable, it was then believed, of bringing the workers daily to and from the dormitory suburbs on the edge of the bush where everyone, it seems, wanted to live.²⁷

This kind of thinking eventually sparked a fierce reaction from those who lived in the inner city and liked it where they were. Many of the people who moved into Prahran during the 1960s came precisely because they wanted to live in an inner suburb and not out on the fringes. It is no accident that the same people who opposed high-rise flats and comprehensive redevelopment were very often involved in the conservation of urban landscapes, opposition to freeways and a vision of the beauty and history of the places where they lived. They were often also well-educated, articulate and accustomed to dealing with bureaucracy. The result was a grave shock for established local politics in areas such as Prahran.

The Board of Works began preparing a planning scheme for Melbourne in 1949. It took nearly twenty years before it was finally approved in 1968, but meanwhile the major reports of 1954 and 1960 had provided some overall planning guidelines. The MMBW scheme included ideas for comprehensive urban renewal of the inner suburbs, with satellite city development on the fringes of Melbourne, connected to the city by growth corridors alternating with wedges of open country. There was to be a three-tier planning structure, delegating some functions to municipal councils within the approved planning scheme. The main implication for Prahran was population growth as a result of increased residential density: 'Provision was to be made for the renewal and redevelopment of the inner areas of Melbourne at higher levels of density so as to reduce outward growth and to cater for a growing dwelling demand in those areas . . .'.²⁸

It was a planners' and engineers' plan, produced with very little public consultation, but by the time it was approved in 1968 the MMBW was already very conscious of the problems of organised public opposition. The findings of the Metropolitan Transport Committee the following year met a similar response. The Committee proposed 307 miles of freeways all over Melbourne and launched its report into a hail of protest from residents, particularly in the inner areas. Almost immediately, the MMBW began work on a revised plan. This had eight major objectives, including 'the involvement and participation of the public in the planning process'.²⁹ Perhaps the single biggest change in the planning framework for Melbourne between the 1950s and the early 1970s was the attitude to growth.

In the 1954 MMBW Report: There was no thought at that time that Melbourne would not continue to grow, and it was hoped that growth would be rapid'.³⁰ Twenty years later, general public opinion, as expressed in objections to the MMBW Planning Schemes was against growth: 'A general theme of objections lodged against the Board's proposals was a strong view that, in some way, a halt should be called to Melbourne's growth'.³¹

After more than twenty years of rapid growth the citizens of Melbourne had become increasingly conscious of the problems rather than the advantages. Full employment and rising real incomes were set against pollution and overcrowding, particularly on the roads. In 1971 Bolte handed over the Premiership of Victoria to Hamer, a small T liberal, who favoured conservation and environmental planning policies. The Environment Protection Authority was set up in 1970 and the Ministry of Planning in 1973.³²

The tide had turned against freeways. Whereas the building of Queensway in 1968 had been completed when new and bigger roads were generally considered, at least by the Board of Works, to be a good thing, later major road proposals, particularly for freeways, met concerted, organised opposition. Unlike Cr Martin Smith in the 1960s, the Board of Works representatives in the 1970s were quite likely to argue with officers' suggestions. In the early 1970s Prahran was not the only local council to elect itself new kinds of councillors, conservationists and representatives of residents' action groups. A number of these went on to represent their councils on the fifty-four member Board of Works.³³

It was against this background that residents of Prahran joined others in campaigning against freeways in general and freeways through Prahran in particular. The United Melbourne Freeway Action Group (UMFAG) had delegates from a wide range of local groups, including residents' associations in Prahran, and fought hard throughout the early 1970s. The particular freeway proposal that bothered locals most was known as the F2. 'They'll build the F2 through Prahran over my dead body' said local Liberal MLA, Sam Loxton.³⁴ Inner-city politicians knew they would not have the support of their constituents if they backed freeways through inner areas, and in 1973 the State government knocked some 150 miles off the proposed freeway network, including the F2 through Prahran.³⁵ It would have run down to the east of Punt Road, more or less along the line of the railway. Elsewhere in Melbourne campaigns against freeways continued sporadically throughout the 1970s, but Prahran's anti-freeway campaigners such as Jackie Bell, Margot Nicholls and Pat Rayson had won their particular battle for the moment.

This removed all the potential difficulties associated with freeways through residential areas, but left unsolved the problems of Prahran's roads. They were carrying far more traffic than they had ever been designed to do and there were particular difficulties on Chapel Street and Toorak Road. Not surprisingly, the idea of building a road over the railway appealed to those concerned about the future of Chapel Street and was revived in various forms throughout the 1970s and 1980s. John Velos was one of those supporting such a move in the 1980s:

use the railway land and cover that from Toorak Road to beyond Peel Street ... It can be decked with a road on top and appropriate parking on the left and the right ... It doesn't have to be extravagant ... so anyone shopping can park along there ... so you as a visitor can choose where you stop ...³⁶

The proposal did not receive majority support on Council. Time and again throughout the 1970s and 1980s councillors and Council officials struggled to find a solution to Prahran's parking and traffic problems. In the early 1970s, the new groupings on the Council took an interest in this as in many other issues which affected the residential environment. Given the ever increasing level of traffic and the overloading of Prahran's major roads, it was only a matter of time before residents turned their attention to the problem of through traffic encroaching on residential streets. There was considerable potential for conflict over this issue, because what might be bad for residents might be good for shopkeepers. The free flow of traffic to and from Chapel Street and Toorak Road in particular was seen by traders as essential for business survival, while nearby residents worried about the safety of their children and parking conflicts between residents and shoppers. Councillors representing the various groups tested their respective strengths in the battle of Canterbury Road.

On 22 October 1972 Keith Nicholls called a public meeting to discuss the possible closure of Canterbury Road: 'Hegarty and I lived in the area ... The school council—Toorak Central—came and said: "you're the person who's supposed to get things done". There were the same number of cars on Canterbury Road in the peak hour as on Orrong Road ...'³⁷

It was always a thorn in the side of the council ... there was a health centre, kindergarten, school—lots of parental traffic ... but it was also at the time a short cut from Orrong Road to the Grange Road bridge or Toorak Road. Long before closure pedestrian safety was an issue—parking restrictions didn't work. Along came Keith Nicholls—anti-high rise—he suggested closure—it solved all sorts of problems as well as creating some ...³⁸

Crs Nicholls and Bell collected several hundred signatures on petitions calling for the closure and in March 1973 the Council approved a temporary closure for six months. The residents were happy, but the traders in Toorak Village were worried about the effect on business. Councillors representing their interests began to collect petitions for reopening the road. Cr Fred Farrall found himself in a strange position:

That there was no opposition at first was due to the clever way it was introduced by Bell. I was not aware that he was working for Nicholls and Hegarty.

In so many words at that point, February/March '73, I was being conned by them, because of the struggle against the Gahan group in the Council. Bell and Nicholls were helping me. Hegarty was not elected till August '73, so was waiting in the wings, so to speak.

When I became aware of the manoeuvres taking place I opposed this move to close Canterbury Road.³⁹

In August 1973 Farrall was elected Mayor and joined the Toorak business interests in voting for the reopening of Canterbury Road. It was an interesting position for the man who had refused to sit down to dinner after Council meetings and went home for fish fingers: 'Fish Fingers Fred' they called him—he refused to eat at Council . . . the silver service and all the courses . . . Charlie Lux was Mayor at the time [1968] . . . He lived in Toorak and ate like that all the time . . .⁴⁰ Prahran's Communist Mayor Fred Farrall and his unlikely allies were out-voted by the councillors in favour of making the closure permanent. However, the closure turned out to be illegal under the Local Government Act and the row dragged on well into 1974 with tempers running high on both sides. Accusations of pecuniary interest were flung around freely in all directions: 'Hegarty and I got rubbished for pecuniary interest because we lived there, but the school council came to us . . .'⁴¹

Hamer was overseas . . . Alan Hunt was acting Premier—he signed the Bill to close Canterbury Road—but it was illegal under the Local Government Act . . . They amended the Act . . . It was the first official road closure for safety reasons in the State of Victoria, so Alan Hunt told me. They'd closed them for other reasons, but that was the first one for traffic and child safety.⁴²

The permanent closure needed the removal of the temporary closure . . . The locals wouldn't let us . . . It was eventually closed permanently, but not without a lot of fighting . . . There were TV cameras on the day . . . We did it early one morning . . . It was the first road closure we did.⁴³

Other closures followed, including Fitzgerald Street, Bendigo Street, Murray Street, Hornby Street, Upton Road, Oxford Street and Garden and Wilson Streets when the Jam Factory shopping centre was built. Where closures affected traffic in shopping areas, they tended to meet the same

sort of objections from business interests as Canterbury Road. Garden and Wilson Streets featured in that kind of row.

Meanwhile, the Council was learning about local residents' interests and public participation. In 1976 Alan M. Voorhees & Partners were commissioned to prepare a traffic and parking strategy for Prahran, including consideration of the closing of Chapel Street to through traffic. They decided that it was impossible because there was no alternative through route and therefore: 'conflict between pedestrians and vehicles in Chapel Street will remain,' as would the unused upper floors of premises in Chapel and Greville Streets, 'a mute testimony to the extent to which the area has declined over the years due to changed trading habits and poor accessibility by motor vehicles . . .'⁴⁴

While the conflicts in shopping areas remained unresolved, a happier outcome began to emerge in residential streets. The Council began to divide the area into residential precincts and set up a series of detailed area studies involving extensive consultation with local residents. It closed some streets, narrowed others, made some one way, built roundabouts and embarked on a successful programme of streetscaping with trees, widened nature strips, new kerb and channel building, seats, bollards and miniature parks. Street representatives were elected to the various local committees, which proved an important field of action for a whole new group of local activists and councillors in the 1980s. Examples include Cr John Velos on the Windsor West Residential Street Planning Group for several months before he was elected to Council in 1983; Cr Sandra Gatehouse on the Surrey/Cromwell Residential Street Planning Group, which reported in 1984, two years before she was elected to the Council; Jane Moffat on the Toorak Village Group was elected to the Council two years after the Group produced its report in 1985; Leonie Burke was a member of the Prahran East Residential Street Planning Group before she was elected to the Council in August 1986.⁴⁵

I had no connection with the Town Hall at all . . . It was my 21st year in Prahran . . . I only paid my rates. Then I got a letter from the Council about streetscape works within the city—would we meet in Orrong Park? Cr Dieter Habicht knew I had landscape experience and suggested that I be the leader for this area . . . We met for a year, about every two weeks . . . I was always distressed with the streetscape. The flats out of keeping with the area on Wynnstey Road are a perfect example . . . I felt I had something to contribute . . . We'd bought four houses in the area to live in. When looking for a house I was always impressed with the streets with avenues of trees . . .⁴⁶

Cr Burke was elected Chairman of the Parks and Gardens Committee at her first Council meeting. As a result of these detailed local street design exercises, the beautification of Prahran made great strides in the 1980s.



STREETSCAPING ON SUTHERLAND ROAD, ARMADALE, EARLY 1990s

To complement the process, the Council commissioned Green & Dale Associates, landscape architects and environmental planners, to produce a Street Tree Master Plan, which appeared in July 1990. Fashions change in trees as in everything else. Prahran Council had begun planting English trees in the 19th century, moved to a wider variety of European species and some natives by the inter-war years, and swung further towards natives in the 1950s.

We set about changing the policies on trees. If necessary we would remove the whole street and start again. I felt that native trees were very false in this environment. . . They didn't fit in with the character . . . The English type let the sun in in winter, fitted in with the streetscape . . . We did Royal Crescent. It was all little paper barks—every house was classified—we put in a special new variety of pear. It had a better canopy. In effect we were changing the look . . .⁴⁷

Sometimes this policy met with opposition from residents who didn't wish to see a particular native tree removed, but generally the redesigning of Prahran's streetscapes was both highly effective and, because it generally followed extensive local consultation, popular.

Trees—we plant about 500 a year . . . Up to 60 per cent are replacements. Others are part of major or minor projects . . . a residents' approach. Sometimes the design is by consultants from outside, sometimes it's done internally. For example, Royal Crescent, Armadale, we re-did the streetscape on the basis of new kerb and channel, reduced road width and made the nature strip . . .

In comparison to . . . Footscray . . . chalk and cheese . . . We do very, very well. There is a level of commitment, resources wise, a fairly active local community . . . a Council that has a commitment to maintaining fairly high standards.⁴⁸

A similar process of local consultation with residents also operated over the implementation of plans for up-grading the various parks, including Como, the Victoria Gardens and the Princes Gardens and the Council was prepared to commit substantial resources to changes in design and planting. The Master Plan for Como Park included planting to emphasise the entrances and boundaries:

Stage 2 after three to five years will look at removing trees inconsistent with the river, Como House, etc. . . some of which are quite good trees . . . The emphasis will be on natives and eucalypts—will be controversial. Consultation is more prevalent here—to a greater extent than anywhere else . . . Some officers may find it frustrating but I live in the western suburbs . . . I wish councils there were as open as here . . .⁴⁹

Whatever else the changes of the 1960s and 1970s produced, they made Prahran a more democratic and responsive Council.



MURRAY STREET, PRAHRAN, EARLY 1990s

GENTRIFICATION

The early 1970s saw an end to more than twenty years of solid growth in the Australian economy. Between 1946 and 1974 unemployment seldom reached 2 per cent and growth in output averaged 4.5 per cent p.a.⁵⁰ In 1973 the major oil producing countries, particularly those on the Persian Gulf, got together to co-ordinate their oil output and pricing policies. As a result, oil prices quadrupled and the major western countries were made forcibly aware of their dependence on Arab oil. Everywhere inflation escalated as the significance of oil was demonstrated by the impact of its price on the price of almost everything else. Australia had its own oil in Bass Strait and did not suffer as severely as some countries, but nevertheless, by 1974 inflation was running at 15 per cent. Meanwhile, rises in real national income were cut from up to 5 per cent per annum in the 1960s to just over 1 per cent between 1973 and 1976, and unemployment rose to more than 4 per cent. Everywhere, prices and unemployment rose simultaneously in a phenomenon given the name of stagflation.⁵¹

The growth in manufacturing industry behind tariff walls that had characterised the post-war boom came to an end. Investment in this sector had seen particularly rapid growth in Melbourne, but in the 1960s investment began to focus on other areas of Australia in the so-called 'resources

boom', finding and digging up Australia's mineral wealth to send it overseas. Although it was not obvious at the time, the relative position of Melbourne in Australia's economy began to shift.

Meanwhile, the combination of generally restrictive planning policies in the inner suburbs and an explosion in petrol prices led to an increase in the trickle of residents wishing to move back to the city from the suburbs. In May 1970 an article in the *Age* described the popularity of Prahran as: 'Immigrants—mainly Greek—young single swingers and young married couples have flocked to the area. All are attracted by the cheapness of its old decaying lace-edged Victorian and Edwardian houses, its booming apartment development and its good transport'.⁵²

The population of Prahran already displayed many of the characteristics that were to predominate there for the next twenty years. Compared to Melbourne as a whole, Prahran had few children and a large number of retired people. There was also a high proportion of people aged between twenty and thirty. Prahran was popular with the retired and the 'young single swingers and young married couples'. The new residents tended to be white-collar rather than blue-collar workers, including a large number of clerical and professional women, and with a level of tertiary qualifications that was well above the Victorian average.

By 1975 the 'cheapness of its old decaying . . . houses' and 'its booming apartment development areas' had gone. The changes in planning policy of the early 1970s shifted the emphasis from building new flats to renovating old houses. Interestingly, it was Les Perrott who summed up the trend in an article in the *Herald* in November 1975: 'If you have a family and you look forward to the children marrying and settling down in Melbourne, then forget it . . . They'll never be able to afford it'.⁵³

In fact, Mr Perrott was talking about the whole of greater Melbourne and bemoaning restrictive planning policies affecting large development sites, but his remarks have a particularly ironic ring for Prahran. The enormous oil price rises of the 1970s persuaded an increasing number of people to abandon the car-based life style of the outer suburbs. If they were going to move back to the inner suburbs they had the choice of an old house or a new flat. Flats were no longer as fashionable as they had been and many people preferred to buy an old house. The cheapness of Prahran's old working-class housing was becoming a thing of the past. 'House prices rise 15 to 20% in '75' ran a headline in the *Age* in September 1976. 'Brighton, Kew and Prahran head the list'.⁵⁴

In the year to June 1976 nearly \$8 million worth of new buildings went up in Prahran, but more than \$4 million was spent on repairs and alterations to existing buildings.⁵⁵ Prahran Council saw the trend towards

renovation and inaugurated a Home Renovators Advisory Service, available free to residents on Monday evenings at the Town Hall.⁵⁶

Between 1977 and 1978 property values in many areas of Melbourne fell, including in some inner suburbs such as Carlton and North Melbourne, but prices in the already more expensive suburbs such as Brighton and Malvern continued to rise. In Toorak and South Yarra the rise was far higher than anywhere else—21 per cent. In the 1970s the area became more fashionable than ever, with particularly large rises in the price of the most prestigious homes: 'Mansions have been bringing staggering prices with homes jumping from \$200 000 to \$300 000 in a very short period'.⁵⁷ By 1978 the average price of a house and land in Toorak and South Yarra was \$103 000, compared to \$40 000 in Prahran-Windsor. By way of comparison, average prices were around \$49 000 in Malvern and \$23 000 in Richmond. In November that year, a World Town Planning Day Seminar was held at the University of Melbourne. Summing up at the end of the day, Keith Dunstan made the following comment:

I regret to have to tell you that I am a middle-class trendy. I have just moved into the inner suburbs a year ago. I bought a place in South Yarra, which was almost a classic. It cost more than a new place would cost to put up and there are no parking facilities, no garages in our street. So I can tell you what there is—I will try and enumerate them for you—two Lamborghinis, three Porsches, a Mercedes Benz and a \$36 000 12-cylinder Jaguar. I ask your sympathy that all these unfortunate cars have to stay out in the rain.⁵⁸

Between 1974 and 1985 residential property prices in Melbourne's inner suburbs rose by more than 350 per cent, more rapidly than prices anywhere else in greater Melbourne.⁵⁹ The combination of an increasing number of people wishing to move back to the inner city and planning policies restricting higher density development in areas like Prahran pushed prices up and the working class out in a process sometimes called gentrification.⁶⁰

In November 1968 Laurie and Helene McCalman bought an old house on Chatsworth Road, East Prahran. Their pattern of moves is interesting and not untypical. In 1947 they rented a flat in Armadale for a while before moving out to Box Hill. When they decided to move back to an inner suburb they looked at Albert Park and South Melbourne, but their first choice was Prahran.

We liked the proximity to everything ... I thought it was an interesting place ... liked Prahran market ... liked Chapel Street and I liked the variety of Prahran, the great variety of different types of housing and people—from the very rich in Toorak to the slum dwellers almost as they were in 1947 ... liked the fact that Prahran was so foreign—cosmopolitan ... the accessibility in Prahran to be able to go to things ...

They described Chatsworth Road in 1968 as very much run down. They renovated their house and other people in the street followed suit. Mr McCalman described changes in the street in three overlapping phases:

the old Prahran residents of the late 1960s—most of them old working class . . . they've died . . .

The second phase was underway, the influx of Greek migrants. Some of those are still here . . .

The third phase—the influx of younger couples, Dinkies [Double Income No Kids]—two cars—a lot of houses for rent now, whereas they were mostly owner-occupied before . . . groups of young people renting . . .

This process of change can be illustrated by the house next door to their own:

The old house next door—two storey, 20-foot frontage—1880s—in 1968 it was run down, ripe for demolition. The plumbing was terrible. You couldn't flush the toilet in the backyard . . . corroded pipes . . . an old war widow from World War I lived there, quite deaf, but very sweet . . . lived in poor conditions . . .

We bought our house and did it up and the owner of [next door] got ideas . . . told [the widow] to go—put the rent up so she couldn't afford it . . . The owner got cheap renovation done—a lick and a promise of paint—plumbing, then she sold it . . . She sold the house and successive owners then improved it . . . the last owner but one spent a lot of money—lace work, upstairs balcony . . . did it up to sell—wanted \$2 million. The property market declined so he never got his price. It was bought by a young couple who were very happy there [both working in aspects of advertising]. The slump [of 1991] hit them both . . . A Dutchman bought it to let . . . New Zealand couple moved in, one cat and no kids . . .

These are the sort of people now moving into East Prahran—yuppies, trendies, two-income families—young, up to thirty-five or so, no children yet, pretty good incomes . . .

It was rather a slummy looking street when we moved here. Now it's restored, renovated, properly landscaped gardens . . . also the narrowing of the carriageway, when Keith Nicholls was councillor, protagonist of conservation. He initiated a move to reduce the speed of traffic by narrowing the carriageway—footpaths concreted, nature strips constructed and widened, kerb and channel, a lot more trees. The trees used to grow out of the bitumen . . . The whole appearance of the street has changed. It hasn't slowed the traffic noticeably, but has improved the whole look of the street . . .⁶¹

In other areas of Prahran the process of change was slightly different depending on the character of the area concerned, but a common thread in most areas was the emergence by the 1980s of an articulate, well-educated population with relatively few children. Betty Malone described the changes in Armadale:

We had a raggle taggle population during the war ... a boy mending cars in the backyard ... the butcher opposite was incredibly dirty, kept a big barrel of grease over there ... We had some quaint people—Jewish refugees ... a German Judge lived next door ...

As the war finished, there was a gradual move back into Armadale— young families who came, when I was bringing up my two in the 1950s—children of money ... a little group of professional people ...

The trendies came in when that generation grew up in the 1970s. [They get together] when they want angle parking or to keep bluestone instead of concrete kerbs. The whole street was up in arms in the 1980s ... the Council relented under the pressure and put in the bluestone. It had to be laid by hand ... Very articulate residents have moved in since the 1970s—not like the migrants who weren't interested in or were afraid of authority ...⁶²

During the 1970s and 1980s many migrants moved out of the area, selling their homes to the latest group of arrivals, but a large number chose to stay. After all, a significant proportion of the younger generation, like John Velos, had grown up in Prahran: 'A lot of areas have a Greek flavour, but Prahran has a higher concentration than most ... In terms of quality of merchandise, amenities and people it rivals Lonsdale Street ... Most of those [Greeks] eager to go out to the suburbs with big gardens have gone— went in the 1970s'.⁶³ Those who remained were frequently as articulate and well-educated as the 'very articulate residents' moving in since the 1970s. Mrs Jones watched this process taking place around her in Hawksburn:

When I came [in 1955], nearly every child went to State school. ... change everywhere ... women starting to go to work. The people coming here were better off. ... People coming in would do up the houses. They have a different socio-economic group—university educated—don't know them ... Some of them stay just a few years and move out ... It has led to more robberies. These ugly bins [garbage bins] are a sure sign that people are away at work. Nearly all the houses except mine have been robbed—they come in the back lane ...

The Council put in traffic restraints. They are hideous—don't look attractive—and the most awful flowers, so called. They don't look after what they do on the roads. I don't think it's helped. My son does ... People drive very fast, fast enough to put cars on two wheels ...

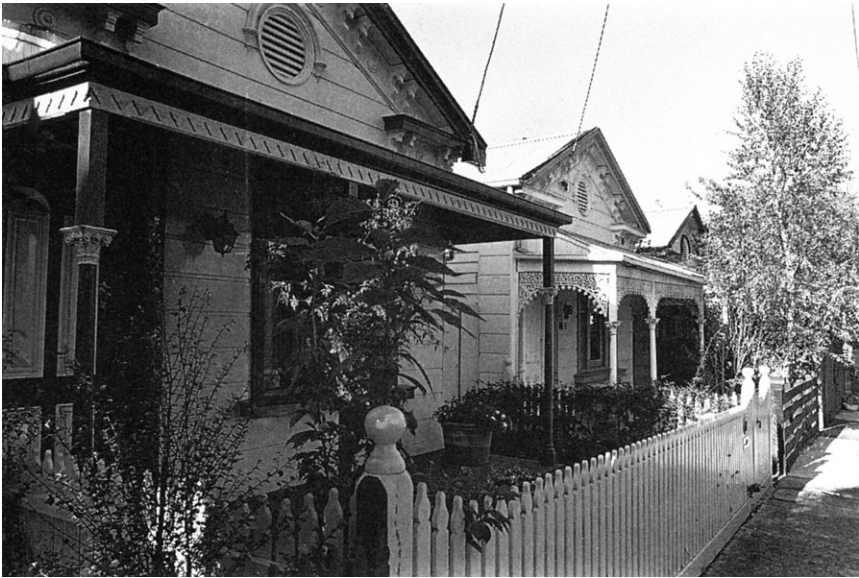
In the 1950s ... all of these houses were run down, were sold very cheaply—£3000. Some were not fit to live in ... It's not so very long ago since people started to do it in earnest—doing up houses ... Now one or two have swimming pools, jakuzis, sauna baths ...⁶⁴

David Jesson, Prahran's Town Clerk 1978-92, believes that this whole process of gentrification and renovation was the most important change in Prahran in the late 20th century:

In the early 1970s the issues were predominantly planning, particularly high-rise flats . . . The Perrott, Lyon, Timlock & Kesa Plan . . . I can't remember another single incident that has had quite the same impact. [The Prahran Council changed.] The change was to do with the retention of residential character and amenity. It came and became more and more important. It continues to be probably the most important thing. [The residential amenity issue] spread from the more affluent areas of the city to areas that were not affluent. They have become increasingly so over time . . . It has enhanced the affluence of the south-west part of the City. The shift of the very large Greek population from here to outer areas . . . They have been replaced by young professionals . . . A great degree of care and attention to detail in restoration of what was relatively poor housing stock . . .⁶⁵

Those members of the old working class who remained in Prahran and Windsor and South Yarra found the price of everything going up around them. On Lang Street, South Yarra, Mr and Mrs Keane first noticed the absence of children.

Years ago there was kids galore. Now it's girls in flats, girls living together—move in with a suitcase and move out tomorrow . . . People come and go—unsociable . . .



CAMBRIDGE STREET, ARMADALE, WHERE WHAT WERE ONCE IDENTICAL LITTLE COTTAGES ARE NOW PROTECTED FROM DEMOLITION OR DRASTIC CHANGES TO THEIR STREET FRONTAGES

Shopping—the supermarkets are cheaper than the market . . . Toorak Road—fifty years ago I could name seven butchers shops. Now there's one—so dear . . . Moran & Catos grocers—not there any more . . . People go to Prahran to shop—Toorak Road's gone. All there is now is expensive clothing places and dining establishments . . . Prahran is not like it used to be—you could buy the biggest bananas imaginable for a penny half-penny per dozen . . . There's a men's wear shop opposite South Yarra Post Office . . . I looked in the window—\$795 for a jumper. People, they just can't buy in the area . . . The area, it's got to go on residential. It's so handy to the heart of the city . . . Market people come and go. There's not much trade in the market now—too dear—it's all in Safeways . . .⁶⁶

A range of people have moved into the old, working-class housing of Prahran, and not all of them can be classified as well off, but very few are working-class, and very few are members of families with children. There are young couples with two cars and two jobs who can afford to buy and renovate; there are those who renovate for profit and then rent the houses out while the value continues to rise. Rents on such properties are generally too high for single people to afford on their own, so they are frequently occupied by groups of unrelated young, single people. Tom Cullen, for instance, moved into the area early in 1991. He and a friend looked for a place together, because of the level of rents in the city:

We chose Windsor. We looked at Carlton, North Melbourne and that area and then we came over here and thought it was more cosmopolitan and trendy . . . Carlton is dominated by students and we didn't want to be dominated by that [Tom and Jeremy are both music students]. We wanted to live in Prahran, but it's more expensive . . . There's an unseen line—Windsor's a step down from Prahran, but it's close to the city and Melbourne Uni and the Catholic Uni . . . and transport. Jeremy doesn't have a car . . .

We wanted to live in a house not a flat, for privacy, but terrace houses don't give you that much privacy. The neighbours are quite amazing. There's a Greek family one side—husband, wife, two sons and a grandfather . . . They have conversations at twenty decibels . . . If she was a singer she'd do very well. . . great breath control at high pitch—in Greek. One son plays the drums and the other plays guitar. We can hear them very clearly. They compete with our piano. They are very nice, very extending . . . no problems. We don't see them much . . .

There were four guys the other side . . . It's a very small house. Two have since moved out . . . They had a party and we heard them singing happy birthday through the wall . . . We played it on the piano and they invited us in . . .

On the street, everyone very much keeps to themselves . . . It's totally different to being in a country town . . .⁶⁷

By the end of the 20th century areas like Prahran were occupied by people at particular stages in their life cycle. Those whose children were

grown tended to form a fairly stable element in the population, but the younger childless couples and particularly young single people came and went as their personal circumstances changed.

In general terms, the new residents of Prahran of the 1970s and 1980s had a particular vision of the kind of suburb in which they wished to live. Generally, they were against high-rise flats and freeways, and as the seventies progressed they began to campaign for reduced traffic in residential streets. By the 1980s the vision included bluestone kerbs, plentiful street trees and immaculately renovated Victorian and Edwardian houses among the low-rise flats. Generally, they elected councillors who shared this vision and fought, on and off, with the continuing representatives of business on the Council. The new residents were as keen to preserve the old as they were to regulate the new, and this interest was shared by a number of people who had been in the area a great deal longer, people like Dr Norman Wettenhall who had lived in Toorak all his life:

I was interested in conservation ... so was the family ... In 1956 the National Trust was founded. I was a member of the foundation Council and remained so until 1978. I helped set up the landscape preservation section in 1959 and later became Chairman ...

The National Trust had a great many of its beginnings in this area. The original meeting was in the City—Daryl Lindsay, Director of the Gallery,



NEW STREET TREES ON ROYAL CRESCENT

was a prime mover . . . He was impressed by the National Trust in England. He persuaded the Armytage family to make Como available for the Trust. Oswald Burt who lived in Toorak was the lawyer who obtained tax deductibility . . .

Many architects, such as Roy Simpson, Tristan Buesst, Mick Richardson, and also Rodney Davidson, a solicitor, all Chairmen of the Trust, lived in Prahran.

Members of the National Trust Women's Committee, who were enormously strong in raising funds [many were from this area]. Toorak and South Yarra drove the National Trust.

We had to have something, a major acquisition . . . Then we got Como—something people could identify with—the *sine qua non* of the National Trust . . .⁶⁸

Interest in Australia's heritage increased over the next twenty years and in 1975 the Commonwealth government passed the Australian Heritage Commission Act. Lists of buildings began to appear on the Register of the National Estate and Prahran featured prominently in the early listings.⁶⁹ Meanwhile, the Prahran Historical and Arts Society was founded in 1973 and from 1979, the centenary of the City of Prahran, it began producing a newsletter containing notes on the history of a wide range of local subjects, from cricket clubs to factories.

The centenary celebrations reinforced an already strong interest in local history. Officially, this took the form of measures to conserve the built environment. In 1982 Nigel Lewis & Associates, conservation planners, were commissioned to produce a conservation study. Besides identifying buildings and areas of particular historic interest, the study included a brief history of Prahran, with particular emphasis on the history of the building stock. Part of the object of the exercise was to identify buildings worthy of preservation, duly ranked according to their significance, so that their existence and appearance could be preserved for posterity. Throughout the 1980s and 1990s other local authorities around Victoria went through a similar process. But in Prahran the study took place in the midst of a renovation boom: 'Guidelines are being prepared to provide positive advice and assistance with the design of new buildings and additions as well as alterations and restoration work'.⁷⁰ The Prahran Conservation Guidelines, produced for the City of Prahran and the Historic Buildings Council, were published in 1984. Essentially, this was a style guide for renovators of Prahran's older houses.

Nigel Lewis and his conservation planners produced their reports in association with work on Prahran's Residential Local Development Scheme. The emphasis was on diversity and flexibility whilst preserving as many existing buildings as possible. Conservation areas were identified in detailed studies of Prahran, past and present.

The Prahran that had emerged in the decade since the Perrott Plan was very different from the Prahran of the 1960s. Redevelopment with high-rise flats replacing single-storey housing had ceased, and with it population growth. From a high of 56 766 in 1971, the population fell to 45 013 at the 1981 census.⁷¹ Gentrification had produced smaller and smaller households living in more and more expensive housing. Prahran was still very diverse, but the exclusive price tags in the north and east were spilling downhill to encompass increasing numbers of streets and houses in the south and west. Within the local context, residents were getting the kind of suburb they paid to live in and voted to keep, but within the wider context of Victoria, things were changing.

In 1977 Mr Croxford, the Chairman of the Board of Works, was reported as saying that Melbourne was taking on the shape of a doughnut, spreading ever wider at the edges, but losing population from the middle. 'Melbourne needs new planning policies to encourage population and employment growth in the inner areas', he said.⁷² There was evidence of conflict between the plans of local councils for their areas and the broader strategies of State-wide planning bodies. Melbourne City Council produced a strategy plan that was seen to give too much emphasis to conservation, while the MMBW was calling for increased housing density. In 1980 the Liberal State government sacked the Melbourne City Council: 'largely on



A RENOVATED HOUSE ON YORK STREET

the grounds that it was seen to be less than sympathetic to large-scale investment and redevelopment in the central area and that this was deleterious to the economic well-being of the entire city and state'.⁷³

In 1982 Victorians voted for a Labor government for the first time in twenty-seven years. One of the issues that the Cain government attempted to address was the decline in Melbourne's manufacturing base. The Melbourne City Council was reinstated, but significantly, the State government retained control over issuing development approvals. The stage was set for a conflict between the State and local levels of government over planning issues.

THE COMO PROJECT

In April 1981 the South Yarra Fire Brick Consolidated Pty Ltd decided to sell the land it held between Chapel Street, Toorak Road, River Street and the main drain. The site consisted of a total of 1.4 hectares. The blocks along Toorak Road were occupied by shops and zoned for restricted business use, while the rest of the site to the north was zoned for light industry.

The Prahran South Yarra Group (formerly the South Yarra Anti-High Rise Group) became aware that the site had been offered to the Myer group, which was considering establishing a Target store. On 20 April it passed this information to the Council which rapidly set to work, and by May officers had produced a 'Report on the Future Development of the South Yarra Fire Brick Consolidated Sites and Surrounds'.⁷⁴ This was designed to provide firm planning guidelines for the future use of the site, within the existing planning framework. It took account of very important recent modifications to the MMBW plans for Melbourne.

In July 1980 the MMBW produced its Metropolitan Strategy which included provisions to encourage a wider range of housing types and higher residential densities in selected areas. The Prahran Council felt that, given the continued local population decline and the overall MMBW strategy, it would be appropriate to rezone the South Yarra Fire Brick site for mixed use, including residential, within the framework of the Council's existing planning restraints on high-rise flats.

On 28 April 1981 the MMBW adopted Amendment 150 to its Metropolitan Strategy. The Amendment identified a number of existing regional centres, including Prahran, where higher density development would be encouraged, particularly higher density residential development close to good public transport.

The Prahran Council came up with a set of planning guidelines which provided for mixed residential and commercial/industrial use, subject to a number of restrictions. It was felt that there were already more than

enough shops in the area and there was to be no extension of retail use. Traffic generation was a particular concern, given the already heavily loaded local road network, and the development was to make considerable provision for parking, setbacks and vehicular access. Maximum building heights were to be limited to two and three storeys along Toorak Road and Chapel Street respectively, with buildings up to six storeys permitted well back from the major roads. Generally, the local residents' groups seem to have been happy with these guidelines, while local businesses were pleased that the site was to provide them with more potential customers, through residential use, rather than more potential competitors through a major shopping development.

The site went up for auction in June and was bought by Jack Chia, Singapore-based businessman. Shortly afterwards an even bigger nearby site came on the market, to the north of Malcolm Street. This was the Electrolux site of about 2.4 hectares between Chapel Street, Alexandra Avenue, River Street and Malcolm Street. Again, the Council rapidly produced a planning brief, which foreshadowed a change of zoning of the site from light industrial to mixed use, 'to meet the demand for higher density residential development'. This time the Council opted for guidelines on residential density rather than a fixed height limit for buildings.⁷⁵

On 7 September Jack Chia announced his plans for a \$400 million mini-city on the whole site between Toorak Road and Alexandra Avenue. Chia and his Melbourne manager, Tim Hewison, had put together a \$15 million land package that included a number of small blocks, besides the two big sites, and totalled some 4.8 hectares acres:

It is expected to be the biggest and most expensive property development of its kind in Melbourne's history . . . Mr Hewison said Mr Chia planned to use the site for a combination of residential and commercial development . . . This would include a hotel, an office block, several low-rise blocks of flats and an amenities centre with indoor tennis and squash courts . . .⁷⁶

The news was announced in the *Herald* on 7 September, and the *Southern Cross* reported two days later that the plans had taken the Council by surprise: 'Councillors, including Town Planning and Building committee chairman Cr David Cran, confessed that they had not seen the plans and knew only what they had read in the *Herald*'.⁷⁷

Mr Chia and his representatives had, however, both shown the plans to the City Engineer, Ian MacDonald, and written to the Secretary of the Prahran South Yarra Group, Pat Rayson.⁷⁸ Jack Chia was being very careful to play the game by the local rules, so far as he and his advisers could determine what they were. He had had his fingers burnt in 1978 when he bought Qantas House on Collins Street in blissful ignorance of the Foreign

Investment Review Board. He was not a man to make the same mistake twice. Advisers with some knowledge of local Prahran history presumably told him about the significance of the Prahran South Yarra Group in arguments over planning in Prahran in general and South Yarra in particular, and the Group was contacted at the same time as the Council. Chia and his consultants also set up close liaison with all levels of the planning hierarchy, including the Minister for Planning.

From the beginning, Chia wanted a higher density of development than did either the local Council or the local residents, but his plans met with a much warmer reception from the State government. Mayor Chris Gahan pointed out that the building height of eighteen storeys on Chia's plans was three times the maximum allowed by the Council's planning brief. Former councillor and ex-Mayor, Rob Wilson Reid, accused the Ministry of Planning of being the 'Ministry of Scheming' and putting pressure on Prahran Council to give Chia what he wanted.⁷⁹ The Minister, Lou Lieberman, made some ill-advised remarks and Pat Rayson wrote to him in October 1981 pointing out that 'The Government is not yet the planning body for the City of Prahran'.⁸⁰ In retrospect, the comment was prophetic.

In March 1982 Chia opened a shop-front display of four alternative plans for the site, and his public relations consultants were kept busy on a major programme to convince locals of the merits of the scheme. There were those who supported the project and some of them even lived locally. John Holdsworth, for instance, wrote an article entitled 'Two Hearty Chias', but the Council and many residents remained opposed to the scale rather than the principle of the development. By April 1982 Chia had indicated his preference for scheme C, with twelve- and fifteen-storey flats, a fifteen-storey motel and an eighteen-storey office/apartment block. The plan also included a canal, water basin and dock, which turned the main drain and the fact that part of the site was liable to flooding into a feature rather than a drawback. The scheme began to be dubbed Chia's little Venice.

Then Labor won the election and Chia found himself with a State government if anything more helpful than the one which had just lost office. From Cain's point of view, Chia's millions promised a much needed shot in the arm for the local building industry. The local Labor member, Robert Miller, was, like most of his constituents, opposed to high-rise development, but the Cain government as a whole embarked on a programme to positively encourage developments of the kind proposed by Mr Chia. It was decided that planning permission for the site should take the novel form of an amendment to the Melbourne Metropolitan Planning Scheme to provide for mixed use development. The Minister appointed a panel to hear submissions and the battle over Amendment 185 began.

Both the Prahran Council and local residents' groups prepared detailed submissions against various aspects of the proposed amendment, but it is difficult to avoid the idea that the result of the panel's deliberations was a foregone conclusion. The panel sat during September and October 1982 and received submissions, before being adjourned. The developer was invited to submit more detailed proposals and the panel reconvened in November. When the decision was finally announced, Pat Rayson's reaction was that the developer had effectively been allowed to write his own amendment to the MMBW planning scheme.

Basil Theophilos was a councillor at the time and was elected Mayor later that year. In 1987 he talked to the *Southern Cross* about the events surrounding the granting of planning permission to the Chia project:

Cr Theophilos, who was mayor at the time, said council special sub-committee was called into parliament house in late 1983 for a meeting with a high-powered government committee including Premier John Cain and senior Cabinet Minister Ian Cathie.

He said the Ministers gave his sub-committee a choice—it could accept the project or have its powers minimised in order for the project to go ahead . . .

Cr Theophilos said all councillors at the time had reservations about the project—mainly because of traffic and parking problems.

Cr Theophilos said that after the meeting with the Premier he received two telephone calls from a parliamentary source, which he would not name.

'Both calls were to the effect that Evan Walker (Planning and Environment Minister) had drafted a Bill to take the matter out of council's hands, and it was in his pocket ready to present to parliament,' he said.⁸¹

On 3 May 1983 the Premier issued a press release confirming that approval had been given to the Chia development for South Yarra:

It will be the largest urban redevelopment ever undertaken in Victoria and is the largest currently proposed for Australia . . . Mr Cain said the development would provide an important boost to employment in the building industry . . . The Government's amendment to the Melbourne Metropolitan Planning Scheme will give the developers the right to go ahead with most future major projects on the property without applying for further planning permits. Mr Cain said this represented an innovation in planning controls in Victoria.⁸²

It did indeed. The Cain government was keen to develop Victoria, and help developers cut through the difficult and time-consuming process of obtaining planning permission. It saw lack of central control over planning as a major obstacle. As a result, responsibility for planning was taken from the MMBW and passed to the new Ministry of Planning and Environment, under direct governmental control. Particular emphasis was given

to the central area of Melbourne and its international image as a dynamic focus of trade and development:

The economic strategy which was released in 1984 was intended to foster the economic growth and development of the State, particularly through making the trade-exposed sector of the economy more competitive, and by focusing efforts on those areas of the economy in which Victoria was seen to have a comparative advantage . . . The part of the strategy in which the Ministry of Planning and Environment had a lead role was the emphasis on, and strengthening of, the national role of Melbourne, particularly in terms of a commercial and trading centre.⁸³

Within that context, Prahran Council and local residents were losers from the start in attempting to modify the biggest urban redevelopment project in Victoria's history.

However, the granting of planning permission was not the end of the story. Chia needed more than government approval to build his little Venice. He also needed money. In the euphoria of the early 1980s the press generally gave the impression that he had it, in virtually limitless quantities, but those who paid attention to the actual nature of his projects in Melbourne, rather than the glossy brochures produced by his public relations firm, noted that most of the projects, including that in South Yarra, seemed to be very good for Melbourne, but not so good for Jack Chia. It was not clear how they were ever going to be profitable.

As early as May 1983 *Business Review Weekly* noted that high borrowings and Foreign Investment Review Board constraints had put Chia in a tight corner, and a slump in the economy in general and the property market in particular promised difficult times ahead.⁸⁴ Nevertheless, building continued on the South Yarra site, and in the middle of 1985 Chia managed to buy the Incarus building on the corner of Toorak Road and Chapel Street, allowing for an ambitious redesign of the project to include considerably more shopping space. In September 1985 the Jack Chia group of companies announced a significant loss to Singapore shareholders, mainly as a result of falls in the Australian dollar, affecting the Melbourne projects.⁸⁵ But it was not until the following year that Chia's financial difficulties became sufficiently severe to affect the South Yarra project. In retrospect, he blamed falls in the Australian dollar, cost overruns, a bad winter and industrial relations problems with the Builders Labourers' Federation, particularly at the time of its deregistration by the State government.

Following months of rumour and speculation, early in 1987 Chia sold his share of the project to his Australian partner, Australian Guarantee Corporation (AGC), at a personal loss variously estimated as \$6.25 and \$12.5 million.⁸⁶ AGC was then left with the problem of finishing at least

Stage 1 of the project and working out how to make a profit. As building progressed, a series of design modifications led to a complex with a lower residential and higher retail component than originally planned, every modification being justified on the grounds of profitability—which was a continuing problem. All the same, the first groups of high-rise apartments did begin to sell, with price tags anywhere up to \$750 000. The shops were let, mainly to designer fashion retailers, but customers were in rather shorter supply: 'Inside the forbidding pastel facade of the Como Project in South Yarra, some of the most successful names in fashion are displaying their merchandise to a near-empty Promenade . . .' ran an article in the *Age* in December 1988.

As of 1992 it could not be said that the State government's foray into planning the City of Prahran had been a conspicuous success.

THE STRATEGY PLAN

Meanwhile, Prahran Council got on with planning for the area. Following extensive consultation the Strategy Plan was published in 1991. It proved a considerable contrast to the Perrott Plan, twenty years earlier, particularly where it dealt with residential areas. The first goal of the Strategy Plan was to enable the Council to 'Preserve and enhance the City's



ARMYTAGE APARTMENTS FROM THE GREEN

unique architectural and historical character' and the strategies listed in the summary volume included that it would:

Provide for further medium density residential development (i.e. flats) only in non-residential zones and, in certain circumstances, along main roads...

Elsewhere within residential zones, generally limit further multi-unit development to two dwellings per site...

Ensure that any development, including alterations and additions, is designed to respect the scale and character of the street or surrounding area...⁸⁷

Heritage rather than redevelopment was to be the focus for planning the physical structure of Prahran in the 1990s:

What occurred during the 1980s was a greater refinement of the principles that had been established during the 1970s—fine tuning. Rights were enshrined and could be protected—the conservation study—whole areas, streetscapes, are going to be protected... pretty solid foundations... going to serve our people well.⁸⁸

Prahran was always a city with affluent areas, but the changes of the 1970s and 1980s have seen this affluence spread, with a corresponding increase in the rate base:

10 per cent commercial property yields 30 per cent rate revenue... parking fines, market rentals, government subsidies, fees and charges make up 50 per cent of revenue... It's very true that Toorak properties do pay a significant proportion, but more yesterday than today. The rejuvenation of Prahran and Windsor has led to a proportional increase compared with Toorak in rateable value... Thirty or forty years ago, Toorak paid...

As a city we haven't borrowed for twelve years... We're still paying off some loans, but will be debt free by the end of the century... I'm proud of it... Less than 2 per cent of rate revenue is debt servicing. Elsewhere it can be up to 25 per cent...

The rate is generally low because there are a lot of highly rated properties, both commercial and residential... [Prahran is] in absolute terms... hectare for hectare, a mile in front.

What happened during the seventies and eighties has enhanced our financial position. There has always been a Toorak which paid its way plus. But changes in the seventies and eighties—the spin off benefit has ensured continued and enhanced financial well-being for the Council and ratepayers.⁸⁹

In 1920 the main housing problems in the low lying areas of Prahran were public health and poverty. By 1990 concern had shifted to the increasing shortage of inexpensive housing as rising land values threatened to squeeze the poor out of more and more parts of Prahran.

Part 2

The People

5

Working in Prahran

This chapter looks at some of the working people in Prahran and the changing ways in which they made a living. The period 1920-1990 has seen considerable changes in the social structure of Australia and in the balance of power between the different groups within society. World War I, the war to end all wars, cast long shadows over the ensuing years. Many of the men who left to fight at Gallipoli or the Somme failed to return, and those who did return had been deeply affected by the experience. In a sense, the men who sailed home were different people from the ones who had sailed away, and they returned to find that Australia had changed without them, and at least partly because of them. It can be argued that the war accelerated the rate of change in social structure and accepted values.

Within that context, the first part of this chapter examines some of the conflicts that arose over disagreements as to what was right and what was wrong. In the end, these conflicting views led to changes in the law. It is, perhaps, provocative to talk about crime in a chapter on work, but the focus here is mainly on occupations such as bookmaking, which were criminal in the 1920s, but considered legitimate ways of making a living in the 1980s.

Far more obvious visible changes in society since World War I have followed in the path of the internal combustion engine as the motor car has conquered the world. The impact of some of these changes on the shops and factories of Prahran is the major focus of the rest of the chapter.

CRIME AND CONFLICT

Australians were not united in support of World War I. Opposition to the war in general and conscription in particular, especially among Catholics, was sufficiently widespread to defeat two referenda on the subject. In contrast, there were those who saw support of the war as a patriotic duty in defence of the mother country, Britain. They did not see eye to eye with those who believed that to send their husbands and sons to fight in France was to risk getting them killed for somebody else's benefit. Bad feeling between Protestants and Catholics reached new lows.

In Prahran, Protestants of various kinds outnumbered Catholics by about three to one and local support for the war was generally strong. While the young men sailed away to fight, those they left behind worked hard to raise money to support the 'war effort'. Many who fought died, but many more of those Diggers who survived came back from France to face unemployment. This was agreed to be wrong and the gentlemen of Toorak were among those who set to work to try and put matters right:

Prahran Repatriation Committee, Toorak Division.

Hon. Secretary C.J. Harris, 'Doval', 14 Lambert Rd. Toorak.

May 5 1919.

Dear Mr. Mayor,

Mr. Goodrich asked me at your instance to call on Mrs. Fitzgibbon c/- Mr. Ryan 545 Malvern Rd. Toorak as she was said to be in poor circumstances. I did so and I found them in a pretty bad way—the husband was out of work and the wife and children were being given food and shelter by the Ryans in return for her service. Mrs. Fitzgibbon will have to give up work this week as she expects to be confined next month. Neither she nor the children had much clothing so I arranged for our workers to fit them out and also to provide some clothing for the expected little one. I arranged to fix up the husband and he has gone to the State Coal mine to work and Mrs. Fitzgibbon is going to take a furnished room until she is over her trouble. I left her my card and asked her to let me know where she will be located so that we can look after her. She is most grateful for the £2 you sent along some few weeks ago.

Yours sincerely,
C.J. Harris.

E. H. Willis Esq.
Mayor.¹

The cynical might say that the special arrangements made for the employment of returned Diggers were born of the fear of thousands of unemployed trained killers. But a close reading of the documents of the time gives a very different view. The Diggers had risked their lives for their young country and providing them with jobs if they lived to return was no more than their due. Unlike thousands of unemployed men and women before and since, they were not blamed for their unemployment. It was

not seen to be their fault. Other members of society considered it their duty to try and find them jobs.

From the beginning, councillors were prominent in the Local Repatriation Committee, which at one stage even set up a small furniture factory in the Town Hall. The government Public Works Department asked the Council to appoint returned soldiers to vacancies wherever possible, and it complied, but this kind of assistance proved insufficient. By August 1918 the Council was being asked to consider providing special relief work for returned soldiers, particularly unskilled labourers, who were proving the most difficult to employ.² Eventually, the efforts of organisations such as the Soldier Settlement Board placed large numbers of Diggers out of sight of the cities, if not out of mind.

At the time, poverty was literally a crime and the pages of the *Prahran Telegraph* provide a number of examples of people being locked up for it. This remained the case throughout the inter-war years. In March 1930, for instance, Samuel Tucker was found lying drunk on the pavement in Chapel Street. He was fifty-seven years old and charged with drunkenness and having no visible means of support. The magistrate sentenced him to one month in prison for vagrancy.³ Generally, Diggers were regarded as deserving of special consideration and not overtly punished in this way if they were poor or 'down on their luck'.

Large areas of Prahran were 'down on their luck' for much of the time, particularly in the south-western corner. A gang of young men, presumably most of them unemployed, called themselves 'Struggletown' and terrorised parts of the area for some years. Alan Shinkfield was a witness to an example of their exploits around 1920. About thirty or forty members of Struggle town, most of them sixteen or seventeen years old, walked along Greville Street from Chapel Street towards Punt Road. Electric street lights were strung above the road, with a single light in the centre. As the members of the gang walked they were breaking all the street lights and the shop windows on either side. It was the morning of a public holiday and the shops were closed. As the gang approached Punt Road, Mr Shinkfield, who was only about six years old at the time, followed behind. Word must have run ahead to Wesley College and about fifty school boys, boarders, were waiting behind the fence with cricket bats and cricket stumps. As soon as the first stone from Struggle town hit the fence, the Wesley boys retaliated, climbing the fence and pouring through the gate to something of a pitched battle. Wesley seems to have won that particular battle but the war was apparently won by a young policeman known, perhaps appropriately, as 'The Basher'. If he saw three or more young men standing talking, he'd move them on 'and they'd get a swift kick in the tail if they didn't'.⁴

Another noted policeman in western Prahran was Detective Dickie Alpine, who lived on Donald Street. One of his more famous exploits was apprehending a burglar misguided enough to enter that particular house in Donald Street while Detective Alpine was at home asleep. Encounters between policemen and those on the other side of the law did not always turn out so well from the point of view of local members of the force. At least one constable was shot in the inter-war years, a reminder that Constables Tynan and Eyre from Prahran Police Station, killed in October 1988, were not the first to face death in the performance of their duty.⁵

It was not, however, the dangers of the job but generally poor working conditions and mistrust between constables and senior officers that led to the police strike in Cup week 1923. The leader of the strikers was Prahran resident and, until 1923, exemplary policeman, Constable William Brooks. By 2 November a total of 636 men all over Melbourne had failed to report for duty and they all lost their jobs. Perhaps because William Brooks had spent much of his eleven years as a policeman in Prahran, local support for the strike was strong. Thirty-one of the forty-five police in the area supported the strike and lost their jobs. Apart from the sergeants, virtually the whole of the local force changed in Cup week 1923.⁶

Meanwhile, the shops of central Melbourne were hit by an orgy of looting and residents feared for a while that Chapel Street would suffer a similar outbreak of lawlessness. In some ways, this is the most interesting aspect of the strike and provides a glimpse of very considerable pressures within the society of the time. The presence of the police is not the only factor that keeps you and me from breaking shop windows. One suspects that a police strike in, for instance, Cup Week 1983 would not have had similar results. There was an air of carnival defiance about the crowds in the centre of Melbourne that Saturday night in 1923. People were actually seen trying on clothes for size before they stole them. The law was not just broken, it was flouted.

James Paxton of Toorak was at a dance on the night in question, and rumours began to circulate but the guests were committed to remain until the close of proceedings. The ladies had dance programmes and the gentlemen pencilled in their names, booking partners for the evening. With a commitment to order and good manners a world apart from the events in Bourke Street, the gentlemen duly danced all their dances and only then piled into cars and headed for Bourke Street, leaving the ladies behind: 'It was a dreadful sight. The scum of the population had apparently gone mad that night. Shop windows had been shattered, their contents stolen or wrecked. The roads were covered with broken glass and ruined merchandise'. It need hardly be said that the gentlemen had not driven from Toorak to join the fun but to try and stop it. Mr Paxton

volunteered as a special constable the following Monday. The government had appointed another Toorak gentleman, Lieutenant-General Sir John Monash, to restore order and Lieutenant-Colonel A. A. Holdsworth was his local deputy. 'Recruiting was very successful in Prahran . . .' noted the authors of the history of Prahran's police, ' . . . hundreds of "well known citizens" were sworn in as Special Constables . . .'⁸ 'They used to march around in groups of about twenty swinging truncheons' recalled Mick Keane.⁹ 'Citizens', 'councillors' and 'Council staff all volunteered and the Children's Lending Library became a temporary barracks.'¹⁰ Briefly and clearly, gentlemen and others could be seen to be imposing law and order before the job was returned once more to the working-class police force.

Among those reported as joining and even helping to organise the flouting of the law that week was one Joseph Leslie Theodore ('Squizzy') Taylor. By 1923 he was almost as famous as Ned Kelly and for similar reasons. He liked to write to the press, and the press published his letters because they helped sell newspapers. 'Squizzy' Taylor lived in Prahran for brief periods, including on Greville Street in the early 1920s, but he could be said to work there more frequently. His hours were irregular. Shop breaking generally took place in the middle of the night, and Mr Taylor's name was linked to incidents of this kind on Chapel Street in 1919.ⁿ He also chose an address in Mackay Street, Prahran, for himself, and another in Darling Street, South Yarra, for his bride-to-be at the time of his divorce from his first wife and remarriage in 1924. 'Squizzy' Taylor operated all over the inner and south-eastern suburbs, and showed no particular favoritism. When crime was paying, his address became more fashionable. When it was not, he moved to less conspicuous accommodation.

Many members of the public seem to have taken some delight in the activities of this particular thief, perhaps because he didn't just break the law. He made fun of it and somewhere or other this struck a chord in the society of the 1920s, so that a murderer with a keen eye for public relations could be regarded in some quarters with tolerant amusement.

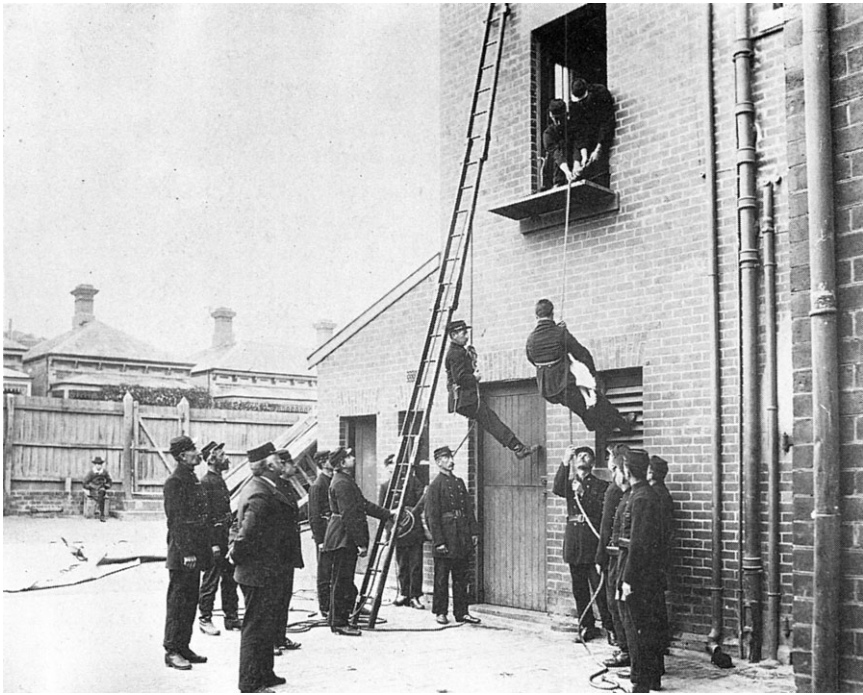
Mr Taylor made his living from a complex web of activities that included, at various times, armed robbery and drug dealing, but the hub of the world in which he operated seems to have been gambling. At the time, apart from strictly controlled exceptions at race courses, gambling was illegal, but gambling was also a firmly established part of Melbourne culture. From two-up schools to SP (starting price) bookmaking, thousands of men in Melbourne regularly placed bets—and even some women did so. For the social groups centred around Toorak and Government House, horse racing was a natural part of life and Cup week the height of the social season. For the middle and upper middle-class residents of Prahran, the

car-park at Flemington in the first week of November was the easiest place to catch up with all their friends. A little betting went with the clothes and the parties and a personal interest in the breeding of the runners. Among large sections of the working class, the betting was all there was and they didn't go to the course to do it. It was known to be against the law, but it was not seen to be wrong. The people who took the bets were generally acknowledged to be at best shady and at worst criminal, but the people who placed the bets were not. There were too many of them and they were otherwise generally law-abiding citizens. This continued to be the case until the law was changed.

In inner suburbs like Prahran, SP bookmaking was a thriving small business. It was found in 1959 that: 'Although there was not unanimity of opinion it seems reasonably clear that, on metropolitan race-days, there is a bookmaker operating in close proximity to almost every hotel in Victoria'.¹² In some areas such as North Fitzroy a small boy was paid six-pence to 'keep nit' on the corner, watching for the police who never came, or not without warning.¹³ In Prahran, the police seem to have been slightly less accommodating and John Holdsworth remembers that a grown man was employed to 'keep nit' on the lane that led to the back of the Railway Hotel. Customers seem mainly to have come from the Vine Street area, including the firefighters living there and working at the Windsor Fire Station. Before 1950 firefighters were continuously on duty and lived either at the fire stations or in adjacent houses. Mr Holdsworth remembers that there were wires over the top of Vine Street to ring the alarm bells in the Fire Brigade houses.¹⁴

Street bookmaking was well known, but telephone bookmakers were slightly more discreet. 'The telephone bookmaker does a much greater volume of business than does his brother of the street, since the big bettors deal with him . . . One of them built a block of flats, the top floor of which was designed to be, as he said, "police proof . . .",¹⁵ This kind of illegal gambling, catering to wealthy customers, was considerably more than a small business. Fines were regarded as normal business expenses, and the risk of gaol after a conviction or two was avoided by employing an agent without a record. The bookmaker could then provide himself with an alibi by going to the races. He could afford it, with turnovers as high as £30 000 per week during the Spring Racing Carnival.¹⁶

During the 1940s Prahran was a particular centre for another kind of illegal gambling—baccarat. For some years a number of people made a living from a complex of activities including blackmarket operations, SP bookmaking and baccarat. St Kilda Junction, as the focus for both American and Australian servicemen during the war years, was the area around which semi-organised crime developed. James Coates, a prominent



CARRY-DOWN DRILL AT WINDSOR FIRE STATION IN ABOUT 1903: UNTIL THE 1950s, FIREFIGHTERS WORKED CONTINUOUS DUTY AND LIVED THEIR WHOLE LIVES IN AND AROUND THE FIRE STATION.

figure in local crime in the 1940s, was murdered opposite Windsor Police Station, probably by a rival criminal.¹⁷

Gambling was illegal but it was a part of Melbourne life. At one extreme it involved the sort of people who were killed in gun fights between rival criminals, but at the other it was a regular activity for otherwise perfectly law-abiding citizens. The sub-culture inhabited by people like James Coates was very different from that of the members of the Prahran Bowling Club, but in 1919 when members of the bowling club bet on card games to raise funds, they too were involved in illegal gambling. In January an anonymous letter was sent to the City of Prahran. It concerned euchre parties organised by the club manager, Charles Alfred Browning. Prizes were offered and the money raised from the card games went to bowling club funds:

this Euchre party is only a gambling school for mostly old women as well as men he [Browning] gives money for prizes and he allows the women and men to play cards for money as well as Browning himself up till 12 O'clock at night and I think this is a thing that should be stopped as it is only learning my wife a bad habit as I suppose other men's wives . . .¹⁸

Constable Halpin was asked to report. The club is run very quietly', he noted, 'and visited by a respectable class of people, and the party is over before midnight. . .' but both Constable Halpin's superiors and Prahran's councillors took a different view. The Council demanded to see the Prahran Bowling Club's books and gave the club notice to quit. The worthy patrons of the club were somewhat startled and announced that the euchre parties had been stopped. All the same, the Council wanted the bowling club out of its premises by 30 June 1919.

One is reminded that at that time some people regarded raffles for church or hospital funds as immoral gambling. In some areas the churches and hospitals in question were likely to be Catholic and the objectors of a more puritan persuasion, but in Prahran discreet raffles for charity were approved in the most socially elevated, and generally Anglican, circles. Anglicans, Presbyterians and Methodists outnumbered Catholics in Prahran by about three to one. Besides gambling, most Methodists, perhaps half the Presbyterians and at least some of the Anglicans were also against drinking. During the 1920s the *Prahran Telegraph* gave considerable space to these views with articles asking 'Is alcohol a poison?' and reports on the



MEMBERS OF THE PRAHRAN BOWLING CLUB IN THE 1920s: THE WOMEN ARE WELL IN THE BACKGROUND.

effects of prohibition in the United States and Finland. Closer to home, 6 p.m. closing of hotels had been introduced as a special war measure and, under pressure from the temperance lobby, was not repealed for half a century.

Many residents of Prahran seem to have felt the same ambivalence about the laws on drinking as about the laws on gambling. The pubs closed at 6 p.m. but did that mean it was wrong to buy a drink later in the evening? It was certainly against the law. After-hours drinking was widespread and, as with gambling, depended on both local citizens and the police becoming somewhat shortsighted. One taxi driver recalls that in the 1950s there were sly-grog shops where it was possible to get a drink at almost any hour of the night. 'Take me to Argo Street, driver' his passengers would say.¹⁹ At least two shootings are associated with this establishment. In 1949 Edward McMahon was shot on Davis Avenue and in 1962 Raymond Burns was killed outside 62 Argo Street. 'Jocky' Doyle was subsequently convicted of Burns's murder, apparently as a result of an 'underworld feud'. The other well-known local sly-grog shop was on Stewart Street, Windsor.²⁰

There were two other areas of partially tolerated law-breaking, which also required selective myopia from some members of the public in order to survive. It is doubtful whether prostitution and abortion were ever such important small businesses in Prahran as gambling and the illegal liquor trade, but both were always available and because they were legalised more recently, there are more people around who still remember when they were criminal activities. During the 1940s prostitution was particularly associated with the area around St Kilda Junction, with some of the best known establishments in Melbourne on Wellington, Nelson and Green Streets, Windsor, as well as across the border in St Kilda.²¹ The end of the war did not mean the end of prostitution in Prahran and there were brothels close to the Victoria Gardens in the 1960s, as well as on Thomas Street where the girls apparently liked to tease the junior boys from the Prahran Technical School.²²

The standard view of illegal abortionists is some horrendous effort on a kitchen table with a knitting needle. This may have been the kind of service provided by Mrs Becker of Wilson Street, South Yarra, in 1910. She was reported to the police by 'Squizzzy' Taylor, although presumably from his point of view her real crime was failing to pay him sufficiently well to keep his mouth shut.²³

There is evidence that some of the people involved in providing illegal abortions were also involved in SP bookmaking and the 1971 Board of Inquiry into abortion and police corruption was concerned at such links, but to see abortion in Prahran as part of such an 'underworld' of crime haunted by the ghost of 'Squizzzy' Taylor is misleading. The image ought

to be balanced by a picture of doctors and nurses, sometimes retired, keen to save young girls from the spectre of unscrupulous crooks and bent policemen.²⁴ One popular doctor on High Street was often investigated but never convicted of performing illegal abortions: 'His motivation is said to have sprung from a deep sense of compassion for the poor and an understanding of the toll an unwanted pregnancy could take on a woman living in poverty'. If the thousands who attended his funeral are any guide, his efforts were appreciated.²⁵ A generation later, three doctors with a practice on High Street, Prahran, were mentioned in the Report of the 1971 Board of Inquiry into abortion, although there were no findings against them.

By the 1970s it was possible to perform abortions without facing criminal charges, but there were still local residents who believed this to be wrong: 'Wholesale Abortion! is it the answer?' ran a headline in the *Green Place* in 1975.²⁶ The possibility for conflict between an individual's views on 'right' and 'wrong', and the judicial position on what was legal and what was not, remained.

SHOPPING PATTERNS IN THE DAYS OF TRAMS, TRAINS AND HORSES

In the 1920s the Haynes family lived in Malvern:

We always went to Prahran for shopping—it was the mecca for shoppers . . . We'd go to Foy and Gibsons for the butter. Downstairs in the basement they had a punkah fan and you'd always be given a bit of cheese to taste on the end of the knife and the butter would be cut off a block and patted both all ways to make it square with nice marks on it. They always seemed to be able to cut off a pound of butter to the exact weight . . .

Love & Lewis had a little cage that you pulled and the money shot up to the cashier's desk . . .

Reads or Moores, they had suction. The money and docket were put into a container and that was sucked up to the cashier's desk . . . You were always given a high chair to sit in when you were being served at the counters . . .

As well as shopping in Chapel Street, we'd go to the market. We had a horse and phaeton and we, my younger brother and I, were left in the parked vehicle while the family went in to do the shopping . . . We would be left there in one of the side streets watching the people passing and look after the horse . . . well into the 1920s.²⁷

Vi and Harry Peagram grew up in Prahran and remembered Chapel Street as far back as 1913:

Vi said that in 1913 Chapel Street was the real centre of activity. 'The city was too far away' . . .

'I can remember when the Colosseum, a department store, burnt down . . . and there was of course Theiler's, a beautiful hairdressing shop for the ladies opposite the Town Hall . . .'

'Back then Chapel St was wonderfully busy and every Friday night parents and their children would come down from no matter where to socialise in the street'.

It was that busy you couldn't walk on the footpaths and you had to watch out for the cable trams whizzing down the street'.²⁸

Between the wars, shopping patterns were based on public transport and horses. Sensible shopkeepers located their premises near railway stations and tram routes and many people walked to do their shopping. Every railway station in Prahran except Heyington, in its exclusive corner of Toorak, was the focus of a group of shops, and there were also shops clustered along most of the roads with tramlines.

Of course, not everyone who lived in Prahran shopped in Prahran. If they lived in the north and were counting their pennies they might cross the river. 'We went shopping in Swan Street, Richmond . . . It was very cheap', recalled John Parker. On those expeditions, they caught the tram, but when she was on her own, Mrs Parker pushed the pram down to Toorak Village to shop in Richard Pratt's, the grocers.²⁹ The Toorak shopping centre had very much a village feel to it, with its cosy sweet shop, Mr Hall standing outside his shoe shop in his long, green apron and the bottles of coloured water in the window of Wallis's chemist shop. In the 1930s R. T. Hamilton set out to emphasise the notion of an English style village by using mock Tudor beams.³⁰

Mrs Guest remembered the early taxi service in the village:

The livery stable in Toorak Village was run by an old boy called Patrick. We called him Dad Patrick . . . It was perfectly alright for Dad Patrick to collect you and take you home . . . There was a great fire and he was a hero. He let everything go but saved his horses . . . His two sons came back from the war—Les and Stan. They were up and coming and they bought a car. Les Patrick was almost as reliable as Dad Patrick and he was allowed to take us places. Taxis weren't all that common then . . .³¹

Those who lived in the south-east of Prahran were more likely to shop on Glenferrie Road, Malvern. It was not as big a shopping centre as Chapel Street, but much nearer. In fact, the shops around Armadale Station and stretching east along High Street are more a part of Malvern than Prahran. Recent street planting by both councils has recognised this and visually links the shops west of Kooyong Road to the shopping centre further east.

Mr Cowen was born in Chapel Street, Windsor, and worked as an optometrist for fifty years, taking over from his father:



THE NEW COLOSSEUM ON CHAPEL STREET: FOLLOWING A FIRE IN 1914, THE COLOSSEUM WAS REBUILT IN THE STYLE OF SELFRIDGES IN LONDON.

My earliest recollections are of Chapel Street in the 1920s. Chapel Street was the next most important commercial area to the City. In fact, for Friday night shopping you had to walk on the street to pass the crowds. There were about five department stores . . . four or five large furniture shops with four floors, like six normal shops . . . You could buy anything. That part was from High Street to Malvern Road. The Windsor end was never so busy. The South Yarra end was dead as a dodo.³²

The family knew Chapel Street very well indeed. His mother was also born there and worked as a cashier at Fallons before she married in 1908. The family lived above the shop—babies upstairs, optometry downstairs. Business boomed as Chapel Street thrived in the 1920s and the family found it could afford to stop living above the shop and move into a separate house. Then came the 1929-32 depression. While Mr Cowen junior went to school at Wesley, Mr Cowen senior moved the shop north towards the busier part of Chapel Street. Windsor and especially Prahran Stations remained significant focal points through which customers poured on to Chapel Street.

Toorak and Hawksburn Stations both had smaller groups of shops. Mrs Jones recalled that Hawksburn Station had a dairy, a butcher, a grocer, a fruit and vegetable shop that sold produce grown in the Dandenongs and an old-fashioned sweet shop that sold lemonade and English chocolates: 'You could buy anything you wanted except alcohol'.³³ The story is repeated in the groups of shops along High Street and Malvern Road, particularly near their junctions with Williams Road. High Street between Williams Road and Chatsworth Road once had a butcher, a hardware shop and a chemist. In 1917 O. R. Crittenden opened a grocery shop on Glenferrie Road. The business did well, and following enlargements on that site the licensed store on Malvern Road, Toorak, opened in 1935.³⁴

Except in the heart of Toorak, almost everyone in Prahran lived within easy walking distance of a butcher, baker, grocer and greengrocer. Shopkeepers went to a lot of trouble to try and ensure that customers were not discouraged from spending money by the inconvenience of carrying their purchases home. In fact, it was not really necessary for customers to leave their front doors to shop for food because like the milkman and the iceman, the butcher, baker, grocer and greengrocer all delivered.

White's dairy was at Hawksburn Station:

It was a very big dairy . . . covered the whole of South Yarra and almost to St Kilda Road . . . They delivered by horse and cart . . . The stables were next to the dairy. There was a strong smell of manure in hot weather. [The delivery route began near Mrs Jones's house.] The horse would be fresh and making a burst of speed around this corner . . . It would leave about midnight . . . I was sometimes wakened by it.³⁵



BOTTLE DEPOT ON BANGS STREET, *c.* 1925: THERE WERE TWO BOTTLE DEPOTS ON BANGS STREET—SCHWERKOF'S AND SCHWARZMAN'S. BOTH WERE REGISTERED AS OFFENSIVE TRADES, NOT BECAUSE THEY RECYCLED BOTTLES, BUT BECAUSE THEY ALSO COLLECTED FAT AND RAGS. ONE OF THE MEN IS WALLY CRUICKSHANK.

Mrs Guest remembered the Chinaman's cart that delivered vegetables. Every Christmas the proprietor gave her mother either a lacquer tray or a jar of ginger.³⁶ The Misses Leeper remembered a wider range of deliveries:

To begin with that was wonderful. The baker came up and down the street in a little cart. The grocer rang up twice a week and came in a cart.
[Valentine Leeper]

There was a butcher just around the corner in Toorak Road until a few years ago and there were the Chinamen's carts going up and down the road—very good vegetables—and there was a fish one, too. The man used to shout 'fisho'. Yes, the tradesmen generally saved our legs a lot. . . . That stopped during the second war. [Molly Leeper]

We went to Prahran Market. Molly was the marketer. That went on getting enlarged. I used to think all the people parking their cars in front of the little houses would be a great disadvantage to the occupants—no privacy.
[Valentine Leeper]³⁷

In the inter-war years, shoppers travelled to Prahran by tram and train and even, like the Haynes family, by phaeton. They came mainly from the suburbs to the east and south and a major attraction seems to have been the Prahran Municipal Market.

THE MARKET

In 1864 the Prahran Market began, under Council auspices, in Greville Street, but from 1881 stallholders sold their wares from a site north of Commercial Road. As Miss Valentine Leeper noted, the market 'went on getting enlarged', and from 1907 the Council directly managed the market itself. Business was good, but by the end of World War I the market was clearly in need of updating to the standards of hygiene expected in the 20th century. Horses were kept behind the stalls and 'fowls were kept in pens in the market in close proximity to food' remembered Reg Rogers.³⁸ The Council decided to do something about it and major extensions to the facilities saw Council revenue rise from £3155 in 1918 to £9251 in 1927. This was despite a serious miscalculation as to the continued use of horses by stallholders. In 1919/20 the Council made a major investment in the provision of stabling, which was recognised as obsolete by 1926. The stables: 'now occupy a much smaller area, as most of the stallholders have exchanged the old horse and waggon for the newer motor truck'. The 1920 stable block was converted to a new meat market: 'All floors, paths and roadways are of impervious, dustless materials, so that every part may be thoroughly cleansed and hosed down. All windows are provided with copper fly screens'.³⁹

At this stage there was no provision for refrigeration: 'In the 1930s they had ice, then your mechanical came in—sawdust-packed fridges, no plastic, a marvellous place for rats to live . . .'⁴⁰

The market boomed throughout the 1920s, with increasing numbers of stalls as the Council bought up adjacent land. It was believed that investment in the market was good for business in the neighbouring shops. Customers flocked in 'from all parts of the metropolis, aided by the good railway, tramway and motor 'bus services leading from all the surrounding suburbs'.⁴¹ Even the depression years of the early 1930s seem to have had a limited impact. While the market was being used as a depot for distributing groceries, vegetables, boots and clothing to the unemployed: 'on market days the place is an exceptionally busy rendezvous and splendid business is carried on by stallholders'.⁴²

Presumably hard times made customers more likely to forsake their local greengrocer in search of bargains in the market. Prahran Market had become a Melbourne institution, thriving, it seemed, under all circumstances. Even the fire of Boxing Day 1950 couldn't put a stop to business. The fire destroyed the grocers' arcade and numbers 1, 2 and 3 open sheds, plus twelve brick shops on Market Street. Temporary provision was made for the stalls in the open market and the place reopened within a couple of days. The Council, in expansive mood, held several days of special



TOUGH'S FLOWER STALL IN THE PRAHRAN MARKET IN 1946

meetings and talked of rebuilding on a grand scale: 'Meanwhile the market carries on cheerfully in improvised stalls'.⁴³

The 1950s did not, in the event, see grandiose rebuilding, partly because of a shortage of building materials in the post-war era and partly because of shortage of funds. The Council commissioned Melbourne University to draw up plans for the future of Prahran. The resulting report was most ambitious and drew heavily on work by students in the School of Psychology, as well as the ideas of Professor Brian Lewis and his students in the School of Architecture. The scheme for the demolition and rebuilding of Central Prahran with high-rise flats was far grander than that eventually undertaken by the Housing Commission, but it never got off the drawing board.⁴⁴ However, funds were found for a modest rebuilding of the market. Using the £50 000 insurance money, a new brick building appeared with a sawtooth iron roof and room for 213 stalls. The new building was hygienic and well run and the market continued to prosper.⁴⁵ Many of the old working-class residents moved out from the surrounding streets of Prahran and Windsor, but they were replaced by Italian and Greek migrants who gave a whole new impetus to the market, both as stallholders and as customers. By the 1980s they had been joined by Vietnamese in the delicatessens and on the fruit and vegetable stalls.

In the 1960s Betty Pollock started a fruit stall on the market. At that stage there was considerable specialisation by individual stallholders: 'Brash's only used to have peas and beans . . . managed to make a living out of it . . . Used to be always good, there was quite a lot of money then'.⁴⁶ Later, Mrs Pollock and her sons moved to a bigger stall selling vegetables as well as fruit. Mr Pollock also worked in the market for a while. He said that the biggest change came when the Greek community moved out: 'They used to be every second house . . . Then they moved out to places like Doveton and Noble Park . . . My boys grew up with them. Fawcner Street used to have a lot of Greeks'. He maintained that in the sixties and seventies all the local children learned to speak a little Greek. 'They were good customers. Wouldn't muck about with a kilo of grapes—10 kilos—"Give us a case mate" . . . They moved out to bigger houses, more land'.⁴⁷

In 1971 the Council announced plans to rebuild and modernise the market. There was considerable argument as to exactly what form the rebuilding would take:⁴⁸



A VEGETABLE STALL IN THE PRAHRAN MARKET IN THE 1960s

President of the Prahran Market Tenants' Association, George Hall has had a stall on the market [since the 1930s] 'Look, it'll only take a small amount of money to do the place up ... A new roof would go down well ...

Mr Loy Chan has worked in his father's stall for the last seven years [since 1965] I think the scheme to rebuild the market is shocking. Why should we have a new market when this one is all right ...⁴⁹

Eventually a design was chosen that kept the original facade whilst making substantial modifications behind it. The rebuilding accompanied other changes which affected the market so that stallholders tend to see the last twenty years in terms of 'before' and 'after':

It was old and the delicatessens and butchers were small little shops, old-fashioned tile front type of thing. It was like a market not a shopping complex ... All the roof was renewed ... We carried on the same but shifted around when our part was done. We were allotted our places after it was completed.⁵⁰

The market redevelopment was completed in May 1981 at a cost of \$6.5 million:⁵¹

the same amount of fruit stalls ... The variety and hardware has expanded ... We used to open Tuesday, Friday and Saturday. Then they reopened on the Thursday. We were against it, but you know the Council ... We handled lots of money then but the rents are too dear now ... Used to always be good until the changing since its been modernised. The Greek community changed, also a lot of other markets and supermarkets ... Now we have fruit all the year round instead of coming into and out of season ... My sons are up at 3.00—2.30 in the morning. Try to have the produce fresh every day ...⁵²

The market is not quite as busy as it used to be, but it is still a thriving institution and in many ways the heart of shopping in Prahran. Around it, the shops have changed.

SHOPPING AND THE MOTOR CAR

Mr Hinton was born just west of Chapel Street, in the same house as his father, next door to the workshop begun by his grandfather. Initially, the Hinton's were coachbuilders. For many years they specialised in commercial vehicles—delivery carts for the bakers, milkmen and butchers, and for the bigger stores. They built vehicles for Buckley & Nunn and from the 1920s they were producing bodywork for motor vehicles for firms like Maples. In the 1890s Hinton's were coachbuilders. In the 1990s they were panel beaters. The family business perfectly illustrates the replacement of horses by motors in Prahran.



TWO MODEL T FORD CHASSIS WITH BODIES BUILT FOR FARR & CO., PASTRY COOKS, BY A. W. HINTON & SON, 1922

The big department stores began to deliver using engines in the early 1920s, but dairies and bakeries continued using horses until the 1960s. Partly the difference is a matter of who had the most money to spare, but more interestingly, horses remained more efficient at some kinds of delivery work for many years. Where the delivery route was different every day and involved long distances between stops, engines replaced horses almost as soon as they were available. Where the delivery route was the same every day and involved frequent stops, horses were a great bonus. They knew the job and got on with it by themselves, leaving the driver free to unload orders or, in the case of the garbage carts, to jump up and down on the garbage to make it fit in. There was no need to drive most of the time. There was a brain and a memory between the shafts, not just an engine.

During the inter-war years, Hinton's employed blacksmiths, wheelwrights, painters and signwriters to maintain the fleets of commercial vehicles. They needed repainting more frequently than motor cars: 'They'd come through every twelve months—varnish the body and the undercarriage and wheels needed repainting . . . They had accidents too. Cars would run into horse waggons . . . but most of the work was maintenance

and repainting'.⁵³ In 1907 the highest paid worker in the business was the blacksmith on £2 17s per week. There were also two woodhands, two painters and a 'striker', a young man with muscles who wielded the hammer for the blacksmith and was paid ten shillings per week. They all worked a 48-hour week. The blacksmith would boil his billy on the forge for lunch.

Mr Hinton went to the Working Men's College (now RMIT) and trained as a coach painter/signwriter. He joined his father in the business in the 1930s. By then, a large and growing proportion of the business involved bodywork on motor vehicles. One of the firm's early contracts with motors involved nightly servicing of Maclellan's fleet of twenty-six delivery vans. They were parked at the rear of the premises and Mr Hinton's father had to fill them all up with petrol from 4-gallon cans—no bowsters—ready for the morning. In the 1920s Maclellan & Co., The Big Store, Chapel Street, Prahran, was the place to go for the latest fashions. In 1931 The Big Store, which was already owned by John Maclellan's uncle, William Gibson, was amalgamated with the other Foy & Gibson enterprises.⁵⁴ In 1930 ... he shifted the cars over to Foy & Gibson. Maclellan lived on Dandenong Road, a very big block ... He did a lot of good things for his people—tennis and squash courts, a switch-back railway for the kids at Christmas ...⁵⁵

Despite the growing number of cars, Hinton's continued to repair some horse-drawn vehicles until about 1960. The butchers phased their horses out in the 1950s and for a while some of them went over to motor vehicles for deliveries, but by the time the bakers and dairies stopped delivery by horse, they had generally stopped delivery all together. Too many people had private cars and shopping patterns were changing.

This change affected the whole distribution of shops in the area. In the 1950s the groups of shops based solely on their proximity to a railway station began to go into decline. This was particularly noticeable around Hawksburn and Windsor Stations.

Mr Holdsworth, jeweller, whose family has also been in business in the area for three generations, recalled that the peak of business at the Windsor end of Chapel Street was 1954: 'Then it turned down because that end of the street was turning down ... There was less railway travel'.⁵⁶ The building of the Queensway further affected that end of Chapel Street, cutting the area off from St Kilda. Holdsworth's business was moved further up Chapel Street, but meanwhile, a wider reaching change was affecting shopping patterns throughout the metropolitan area. The shopping centre, built for a car-based society, with wide access roads and acres of car park, had arrived in Melbourne.

In 1886 Jacob Read built a large store on Chapel Street. For many years it was known as Charles Read's although in 1902 it was bought by



MAPLES CORNER, CHAPEL AND HIGH STREETS, 1910: THE OLD TOWN HALL CAN BE SEEN IN THE BACKGROUND.

the Moore family. For three-quarters of a century Charles Moore Read Co. Pty Ltd ran one of the major department stores on Chapel Street. It stayed in business by adapting to changing times and the arrival of shopping centres clearly required major investment if it was going to compete. In April 1960, Charles Moore Read Co. Pty Ltd announced a £100 000 face-lift to its Chapel Street store. There were to be escalators, a new shop-front, and a mezzanine floor. Six hundred car parking spaces were planned for the future—and there lay the problem. In October of the same year, Chadstone opened and sounded the death knell of the big department stores on Chapel Street. They knew it, too. All the protestations to the contrary only served to emphasise the importance of Chadstone.⁵⁷

John Bayley, lecturer in Town Planning at Melbourne University, spoke on the long-term impact of Chadstone. It provided comfort and convenience for the shopper. Nearby centres had to modernise and provide the same or go under.⁵⁸ Moore's survived until 1977 when the building was sold and turned into the Pran Central shopping centre, but other major stores on Chapel Street did not last so long. Foy's and Big W closed in 1968, for instance. Southlands shopping centre in Cheltenham opened in the same year. Other big stores survived far longer. Maples, the furniture retailer, opened its first branch on Chapel Street in 1904. It sold a wide

range of household goods from pianos to linoleum but eventually closed in 1987.⁵⁹ Other stores thrived in the era of the shopping centre. In 1948 the Bloom family took over a store on Chapel Street, in premises rented from the Mechanics' Institute. At first, it was called *Revue de Modes*, and the family was sufficiently successful to open its first branch, on Elizabeth Street in the city, in 1950. A few years later the name was changed to Portmans. By the 1990s the Bloom family had Portmans stores in shopping centres all over the country.⁶⁰

John Holdsworth estimated that it took about a decade for the impact of the new shopping centres to be really felt on Chapel Street: 'Since 1970 there's been a gradual demise of strip shopping, affected by the enormous growth of Chadstone and other centres . . . We have diversified into them as a survival strategy'.⁶¹ Holdsworth Brothers opened branches at Eastland, Bayside, Highpoint and Knox shopping centres.

Shopkeepers around Prahran have adapted to the change. The rise of the shopping centre was closely followed by the gentrification of Prahran. Butchers, bakers and dairies, delivering to those who were not close enough to walk with a full shopping basket, disappeared. In their place appeared specialists catering to the new customers who went everywhere by car: antique shops along the eastern end of High Street; an upmarket village on the part of Malvern Road known as Hawksburn, where the Mercedes park bumper to bumper; Toorak Road specialised in restaurants and fashion, both at the South Yarra end and further east. Toorak Village ceased to be the kind of place where Lady Fraser could get her chauffeur to double park the Rolls Royce and hold up the trams while she went shopping.⁶² If anyone tried it in the 1990s, the tram driver would certainly ring her bell, even if she wasn't game to try shunting the Rolls. By the 1990s corner shops in Prahran were more likely to be nurseries selling lavender in terracotta pots than butchers or bakers.

But in the south-west corner, older shopping patterns remained. Many residents continued to walk to do their shopping, either because they couldn't afford a car, or because they had chosen to live in Prahran or Windsor precisely because there it was still possible to get about by public transport. Even at the South Yarra end of Chapel Street, shops that catered to this kind of customer survived into the 1990s. The D'Andrea family's fruit business, for instance, had to close during World War II because of the family's Italian origins, but it reopened afterwards and three generations of D'Andreas continued to sell fruit in South Yarra, many of them growing up behind the shop. They became wholesale suppliers to local restaurants and cafés, as well as retailers.⁶³

Much of Chapel Street was undergoing a painful transition. The big department stores had gone, but could Chapel Street be a successful re-

gional shopping centre as the builders of Pran Central and the Jam Factory had hoped?

The 1990s depression was testing local businesses to the limit. Shopkeepers who had made a living from high quality merchandise in the 1980s found themselves forced to move downmarket to survive the 1990s. Mr Adamopoulos was selling fewer leather lounge suites from his Windsor furniture store, while Mr Iatrou was reluctantly cutting back on his imports of quality men's clothes. Both complained of inadequate parking for their customers. Vacant shops and a high turnover of businesses told a tale that made some remember the 1930s when Moran & Cato had wire bins outside their grocery store, selling 40 pounds of potatoes for one shilling.⁶⁴

SMALL BUSINESSES AND FACTORIES

Until the 1970s about one in three of the working population of Prahran was employed in manufacturing industry. Of course, not all of them worked in Prahran. Some commuted to factories elsewhere. Similarly, residents of other suburbs travelled into Prahran five or six days a week to earn their living in the local factories. There used to be literally hundreds of factories in Prahran, particularly in the central and western areas, and they made everything from postcards to pyjamas. Their story is broadly of a marked rise in importance during the 1920s and 1930s to a peak in the 1950s, and a decline since the 1960s. The complicated picture of the changing fortunes of individual companies can be simplified into a few general patterns of change.

The virtual end to imports during World War I, and the generally high levels of tariffs after it, provided considerable stimulus to Australian industry. This was as true of Prahran as it was anywhere else, and during the 1920s an average of seventy or eighty new factories were registered with the Council each year. Most were small and did not stay in business long, but the economic climate was clearly inducing a great many people to set up or expand within the broad field of manufacturing. Perhaps more surprisingly, growth continued, although on a more modest scale, during the 1930s. Comparable statistics on the number of new businesses are not available but between 1930 and 1940 the number of actual factory buildings increased by 35 per cent.

During the 20th century, Prahran's best known manufacturing industries have perhaps been the brickworks at the northern end of Chapel Street, Hecla and Electrolux which took over some of the land formerly devoted to brickmaking, Henry Jones IXL's jam factory further south on Chapel Street, OT Cordials (later known as Kia-ora) and Red Tulip chocolates. Brickmaking had passed its peak by 1925 as suitable clay was

progressively used up, but the others continued to expand into the 1950s. At their peak, between them Prahran's manufacturers employed thousands of people, but medium-scale electrical goods production and food processing were not really typical of manufacturing industry in Prahran. Generally this was small-scale with a wide range of enterprises, each employing a couple of dozen people or less.

Perhaps half of the factories in Prahran at any one time were involved in some branch of the clothing and textile industry—dressmaking, tailoring, men's ties, underwear—but furniture making was also important, especially in the inter-war years. There were also a number of large timber yards, including Linay's on the corner of Chapel and Gray Streets, Smith's in River Street and Davis's on the corner of Williams and Malvern Roads.⁶⁵

Big businesses manufacturing for national or even international markets were the exception. Particularly during the inter-war years, most of Prahran's factories were small and they produced goods for a local — sometimes a very local—market. In fact, much of the manufacturing in Prahran took place in what are best described as workshops, rather than factories.



FURNITURE STORES ON CHAPEL STREET AT THE TURN OF THE CENTURY: THEY WERE AT LEAST PARTLY SUPPLIED BY A NUMBER OF LOCAL FURNITURE MANUFACTURERS.

Holdsworth's, the jewellers, made a certain amount of its own jewellery in a workshop behind the shop on Chapel Street.⁶⁶ Paterson's, founded in 1916, made its own cakes. By 1955 it was employing forty people and besides selling cakes in the Chapel Street shop, supplied cakes and pastries to Government House and all the official functions attended by the Queen on her Melbourne visit. In 1913 Berkowitz began making its own furniture in the workshop on Commercial Road, before moving to bigger factory and showroom premises on Malvern Road, Hawksburn.⁶⁷

Another local example of this kind of partial vertical integration of manufacturing and retailing was Hall's Book Store on Chapel Street. Sydney Hall opened the shop in Prahran in about 1920. Over the years it specialised to a certain extent in school-books, both new and second-hand. Hall's also sold general books. The rush for those was in December, with the school-book rush in January and February. The dozen or so staff were augmented at those times by about twenty extras. Jack Bradstreet worked for Hall's for twenty-five years, in charge of the General Book Department:

Almost anybody who was anybody used to work for Hall's in the holidays ... In the 1960s we had the great tussle over hair length. Charlie Hall wanted to sack long-haired youths on the spot ... There was a constant change-over of juniors, but no really strict supervision. Every now and again he'd think up these odd ideas and issue these edicts, but so long as everything went along fine [they were not enforced] ... At one stage he had us clocking on and off, but that didn't last long. Robert [Rooney] and I were both anarchists in principle and we neglected to do it.⁶⁸

Hall's were also printers and publishers and at the back of the book-shop was the printing works. Mainly, Hall's were jobbing printers doing all manner of local work, but they also published books. Some of them, such as Marcus Clarke's *For the Term of His Natural Life* and Eddie Carroll's book on square dancing sold very well. About fifteen people worked in that side of the business. Despite the wider market for books like these, and the youthful customers for school-books from all over Melbourne, most of Hall's business as both a bookseller and a printer remained local.⁶⁹

This was also true of the archetypal local manufacturer/retailer, the baker. Initially, Prahran had a number of local bakers shops, and they all made their own bread, but from the 1920s the business was concentrated into a few hands, and they all delivered direct to their customers.

The Golden Crust Bread Company began in Sutherland Road, Armadale, in 1915. In 1927 it opened a self-raising and macaroni factory in Oxford Street, South Yarra. In the 1950s Golden Crust delivered by motor vehicle to shops and by horse and cart to houses.⁷⁰

The Stockdale family began baking bread in Prahran in 1860 in premises on Punt Road. In 1933 the bakery was moved to Shipley Street,



BLACKWOODS, ONE OF PRAHRAN'S SMALL PRINTERS, IN 1923: THE BUILDING WAS DEMOLISHED LATER THAT YEAR TO MAKE WAY FOR EXTENSIONS TO THE PRAHRAN MARKET.

South Yarra, and by 1955 there were ninety employees turning out 100 000 loaves per week. Like Golden Crust, Stockdale's was still using horses as well as engines for deliveries.⁷¹

Stockdale's main rival seems to have been the Gawith Brothers, who had a bakery on Elizabeth Street, South Yarra. They vied with each other to install the latest and most hygienic equipment. Sliced bread was the great innovation of the 1950s, and in 1955 Charles and George Gawith announced the installation of slicing and wrapping machinery at their bakery. They delivered by 'modern truck'.⁷² The families seem to have been political as well as business rivals. Charles Gawith served on the Council from 1949 to 1964 and E. B. Stockdale was a councillor from 1957 to 1966. Charles Gawith went one better and got elected to the Legislative Council in 1955. In 1960 he was Mayor and managed to persuade Premier Bolte to open the Gawith Bros 'new fully automated bakery'. Stockdale's had to content themselves with announcing that it was celebrating a hundred years of baking in the area.⁷³

The general trend in food after World War II was for increasing levels of processing and packaging, which usually accompanied increasingly large-scale production. In bread, for instance, there was a trend from consumers baking their own, to local shops baking their own, to factories delivering to shops and customers, to factories delivering only to shops, and increasingly delivering pre-sliced, pre-wrapped bread. It was at this



A. TRACY HINTON PUTTING THE FINISHING TOUCHES TO ONE OF GAWITH'S VANS IN ABOUT 1955: BY THIS STAGE, HINTONS WERE PROVIDING THE SIGNWRITING BUT NOT THE BODY BUILDING AS IN EARLIER YEARS.

stage of the process that the bigger bakeries tended to take over their smaller rivals or force them out of business. By the end of the 1970s most of Prahran's bakers had gone, including the Capitol Bakery on the corner of Toorak Road and Chapel Street in a building with a particularly chequered history.

Interestingly, in the late 1970s and 1980s consumers staged a minor rebellion against this increasingly large-scale production. Most of those who went back to trying to bake their own bread decided it was not that easy, but customers flocked to the new hot bread kitchens, representing something of a return to local shops baking their own bread, and a greater variety of breads, many from small bakeries, reappeared in the supermarkets.

Biscuits underwent a similar process of increasingly large-scale production. In Prahran, the small-scale factory stage is represented by Table Talk Biscuits Pty Ltd, which began in the 1930s. During the 1950s the company 'pioneered use of Cellophane packs for biscuits' in its factory on Charles Street, near Prahran Station.⁷⁴ Before that, biscuits came loose and were weighed out by the shopkeeper. For special occasions such as

Christmas, they also came in tins. Biscuits were a luxury food until the increasing affluence of the 1960s put them within the reach of most Australians. The Table Talk factory on Charles Street closed early in 1981, but not for long. It enjoyed a new lease of life when it was reopened later in the year to manufacture 'boutique' biscuits, using honey instead of refined sugar.⁷⁵

Another grain-processing industry in Prahran was macaroni making. T. C. Reynolds founded Rinoldi Products in 1894, when he began making macaroni paste in a factory off Williams Road. Later, the business transferred to premises on Aberdeen Road in Prahran. In 1955 it employed sixty staff and was the largest macaroni manufacturer in Australia.⁷⁶

Although food processing of various kinds was important, probably the biggest industry in Prahran from the 1920s to the 1960s was the rag trade. Its various branches accounted for more than one in three of the new factories opening in Prahran in the 1920s, and they tended to be slightly bigger businesses than the furniture and upholstery factories, which were also opening in significant numbers. Consequently, the rag trade provided more than half of the new jobs in manufacturing. In 1920, for instance, three fur clothing businesses were registered, employing fifty-two people, while another three making 'mantles and costumes' employed sixty-nine people.⁷⁷ Hats were also a significant part of the business in the inter-war years, when no one, male or female, was properly dressed without a hat. New millinery and hat and cap businesses opened almost every year during the 1920s, but fashions began to change in the 1940s and business declined. Already by the outbreak of World War II, the younger generation was rebelling against the convention of never leaving home without a hat:

Mrs Elliott [nee Thrower] grew up in a small wooden cottage in Garden Street near the Jam Factory . . . Her father was a member of the Fire Brigade . . . There were four girls and four boys . . . One brother began work at Read's in the war period [c.1940]. He was fourteen and had to attend the shop in a suit, collar and tie and hat. He used to put on his hat, which he loathed, just before he went in the door . . .⁷⁸

Women worked in the millinery trade making women's hats, and men worked making men's hats. In 1925, for instance, two millinery factories employed eight men and twenty-eight women, while one hat maker employed twelve men.⁷⁹ Glimpses of 1920s ideas on the fitness of things can be had from the statistics on the sexual division of labour in the clothing business. Six 'costumes and dresses' factories employed 186 people, all women. Five knitted goods factories employed 151 people, all women. Five tailors employed thirty-six women, but also five men. Like men's hats, shirts and fur dyeing seem to have been male dominated. Only the fur coat and leather businesses seem to have employed roughly equal numbers of each



MAKING HATS ON CHAPEL STREET: MILLERS FEATHER FACTORY, OSMENT BUILDINGS, 1910

sex (although not, we may be sure, at equal pay). Overall, however, the rag trade was a major employer of women. Sheppard & Stenson Pty Ltd and the Black Lance Knitting Mills, for instance, employed 'girls' during the 1940s. In marked contrast, Prahran's other important group of small factories employed virtually exclusively men. Thirteen furniture makers, three french polishers, two upholsterers and four woodworkers were registered in 1925. Between them they employed 205 men and no women at all.⁸⁰

Boot and shoe repair works feature regularly in the inter-war years, but shoemaking in Prahran was more of a novelty, although in 1952 K. O. Turner opened a factory on Toorak Road. It took over the site of the Rockley Dance Hall near Chapel Street and employed 130 people to turn out 1800 pairs of ladies shoes per week.⁸¹

More typical of Prahran were the oil-skin clothing manufacturers and leather workers cleaning and dyeing skins and making leather clothing or bags rather than shoes. Prahran also had raincoat manufacturers, some longer lived than others. The Newmans were post-war Jewish migrants from England:

The family had a factory on High Street above a pressing shop which was staffed almost entirely by Italians. One of them was a 17-year-old Italian god. I used to walk past on a daily basis—was Fortunado there or not?

... My parents made gabardine raincoats. It was a most unsuccessful business ... for eighteen months before my mother died [in 1959].

Prior to that they both worked very long hours and very hard for a very large gabardine raincoat factory off Chapel Street ... at the back of the Presentation Convent ...

I would walk to the factory after school and spend some time there until my mother finished and then we'd walk home together ... Just about everybody in that factory was either middle European or Jewish ... men and women ... more men than women. The cutters were both men. Three or four of the machinists were men.⁸²

Prahran also had a small factory making brooms. It was staffed by blind workers, many of whom lived in Prahran because of the location of the Victorian Institute for the Blind on St Kilda Road. In July 1930 Cr Mcllwrick, the Mayor, wrote to the *Argus* to appeal for funds for the blind, who were suffering, like everyone else, from the depression:

Sir—I have been requested to bring under the notice of citizens the position of the blind in our midst. A large number of those afflicted by blindness are residents of Prahran, South Yarra and Windsor, owing to the fact that the Victorian Institute for the Blind is on the border of this city and the hostels for men and women are situated in South Yarra and Windsor. The finances of those institutions are at a very low ebb ...

Contributions to be forwarded to Town Hall

Wm. M. Mcllwrick, Mayor.⁸³

However, it is not the small factories that remain in the memory of the long-term Prahran residents, unless they were attached to a shop or in some other way advertised themselves in the community. Generally, people recall the success stories whose products became familiar in almost every household in Australia, and even overseas. Sooner or later, for various reasons, all these larger companies moved their manufacturing operations out of Prahran.

The first to move was Aspro. During World War I, Bayer's aspirin, made under a German patent, became unavailable to the Allies. Allied governments offered huge rewards and the race to produce a substitute was won by the Nicholas brothers, chemists of Windsor.⁸⁴ The Nicholas Brothers began making aspirin in 1915, and following a number of difficulties set up their first factory in Windsor in 1919. They employed eight people, but not for long. The business grew with extraordinary rapidity as this cheap wonder drug became fashionable for 'colds, 'flu, neuralgia, headaches and sleeplessness' in the post-war years. The manufacturing operation was moved to more spacious accommodation almost at once, and Aspro was manufactured in Britain from 1925. George and Alfred Nicholas launched from Windsor what has been called 'the most remarkable instance of Australian business success overseas' but they retained



WORKERS AT THE ROYAL VICTORIAN INSTITUTE FOR THE BLIND MAKING BROOMS

their links with the area for many years, living in Toorak and rescuing Wesley College from potential financial disaster in 1933.⁸⁵

Another very successful business which began in Prahran was OT Cordials. The company was founded by John Dixon in 1905 and produced a drink, one of the significant ingredients of which was hot chilli peppers. As early as 1911 the company had agents in England, India, South Africa, Singapore, Hong Kong, Japan, Korea and Fiji. There was also a factory in England, but the headquarters remained on High Street, Prahran.⁸⁶

In the early 20th century, bottled soft drinks were sweeping the world. Fanta and Coca Cola and their rivals with international sales were replacing the late 19th-century pattern of a cordial manufacturer or two in every small town. OT Cordials and Kia-ora followed this pattern. The Kia-ora Fruit Juice Company was founded in 1924 to produce orange- and lemon-based drinks. Dixon entered the right market at the right time. While OT chilli punch was popular in India and south-east Asia, Kia-ora orange was a hit in western Europe and America. There were factories in Valencia, Spain; Messina, Sicily and San Francisco in the United States. In 1929 the business was sold to a public company and the whole concern operated under the name of Kia-ora Industries Ltd. After World War II the company



THE KIA-ORA FLOAT, REGISTRATION NUMBER OT 091, IN PRAHRAN'S CENTENARY PARADE, 1955

diversified into canned food, including baked beans, spaghetti and soup, but Kia-ora orange remained the brand leader in Australia and the United Kingdom, where it was frequently the only soft drink sold in cinemas during the 1950s.

Throughout this expansion the Prahran origins of the company were not forgotten and under the name of Kia-ora, manufacturing continued on High Street, although 'OT' remained in large letters on the chimney above the factory. 'Kia-ora makers of Fine Foods and Fruit Juice Cordials in Prahran for 50 years' read an advertisement in 1955.⁸⁷ 'Kia-ora Industries' spectacular rise has been due to the strict quality controls laid down by the founder, Mr John Dixon', was the proud boast of an advertising feature for Prahran's centenary year.⁸⁸

Although OT/Kia-ora has had the longest association with the area, it is not the only cordial manufacturer to have operated in Prahran. Cottee's Passiona, a New South Wales company, began its Victorian operation on Cliff Street, Prahran, in 1939. It also operated a factory on Chapel Street for a while before moving to more spacious premises in Blackburn in 1951.⁸⁹ One way or another, a great deal of fruit was processed in Prahran, but most of it was not turned into cordials. It was either canned or made into jam.

Jam making on Chapel Street seems to have begun in 1873, when the Victoria Jam Company moved from Fitzroy to premises on the western side of the street. In 1876 the company bought what had been a brewery and moved across the street to continue making their Red Cross jams. Jam was then made in that factory for the next ninety-seven years.⁹⁰

The first commercial jam maker in Australia was George Peacock, who began his business in Hobart in 1861. In 1885 the Victoria Jam Company ran into financial difficulties and George Peacock began making jam in what had been its premises on Chapel Street. The products were marketed under the names of Wandin OK Jams or Peacock OK Jams. In 1903, A. W. Palfreyman came to Victoria from Tasmania and took control of the Peacock OK Jam factory. Palfreyman had been working for Peacock's for many years, as had Henry Jones. Both worked their way up through the company and eventually put money into the business, as did E. A. Peacock, the nephew of the founder. The Chapel Street factory later became a division of the Tasmanian-based Henry Jones' IXL, under the name of the Australasian Jam Company (AJC). A. W. Palfreyman continued to work for the company, eventually as Chief Executive, until his retirement in 1965.⁹¹

The AJC made jam and canned fruit and vegetables. It became one of Prahran's largest employers, with work for up to a thousand people during the soft fruit season. Despite various complaints about wages, hours and the hygiene, or lack thereof, in the men's toilets, by 1944 AJC in Prahran was being held up as a good example of working conditions by the Department of Labour and National Service: 'The work of employees should be so arranged as to avoid fatigue, unhealthy posture, and unnecessarily awkward movements'.⁹²

During the 1930s when jobs were scarce, employers could pick and choose their employees. At AJC 'if you didn't go fast you were out' according to Cyril Danson, who began working there in 1930.⁹³ This changed from about 1939. Although many shops suffered badly during World War II because of the shortage of goods to sell, manufacturing enterprises had a rather different problem: shortage of labour. AJC was no exception, especially as the hard work and low pay were proving unattractive to the local work-force once there was a return to full employment. A partial solution to the problem was to use migrant labour.

Alceste and Peter Casalaz arrived in Melbourne from Italy in 1951. At first, they were sent to the reception camp at Bonegilla. Then a group of Italian migrants were sent by bus to the Williamstown camp, specifically to work for AJC. The company provided a bus to pick them up from Williamstown every morning and return them there at night. Almost immediately Peter Casalaz, who had been a ship's officer, was appointed as a leading hand, but Mrs Casalaz was put to work on the pear machine. Mr Casalaz

was warned by the more experienced workers that this was a dangerous machine and she might cut her hand. So he tried to persuade Alceste to stay at Williamstown. When that failed, he told the manager she had a bad back and had her sent home in the middle of the day. This was something of a problem because Mrs Casalaz spoke no English and had no idea how to find her way back to Williamstown without the aid of the company bus. She found herself shuttling between South Yarra and the city by train for the rest of the day, until Mr Casalaz came and rescued her.⁹⁴ Soon afterwards, the family moved to Malvern and eventually settled in Armadale. Alceste never went back to the jam factory, but Peter Casalaz stayed there for more than twenty years. He would leave home in time to open the factory for everyone else at 5 a.m. and frequently didn't return until 11 p.m. At times he was something of a stranger to his growing family, but all the overtime helped pay for the house in Armadale. Mr Casalaz remained with AJC until Henry Jones IXL was taken over by John Elliott in 1972. Elliott and his backers thought the site would be more profitable as a retail centre and the Prahran factory was closed at Easter 1973.⁹⁵

By this stage, Peter Casalaz was a senior employee at AJC and he was offered the job of managing the company's Shepparton factory. However, Alceste did not want to leave Armadale. They had four children at local schools and university and the disruption to their education seemed too high a price to pay for staying with AJC.⁹⁶

In 1979, after six years of negotiations over finance and planning permission, the Jam Factory opened as a shopping centre. Some of the quainter machinery from the building's earlier years was carefully preserved and displayed, and its existence featured prominently in the marketing campaign for the new shops: 'Visit the historic Jam Factory Shopping Centre' was the headline on one brochure.⁹⁷ In 1991 many of the shops in the centre were vacant and the local unemployed, like their parents and grandparents in the 1930s, could only dream of a labour shortage in the local factories.

Further north up Chapel Street, the Hecla and Electrolux sites conjured up similar images. The development of the Como Centre is discussed in chapter 4. The land to the north was planned as a part of the complex but, despite a series of renewed hopes and plans, remained vacant in 1991.

During the 19th century Chapel Street ran through a cutting at its northern end, through the high ground immediately south of the river. Over the years, much of this ground was turned into bricks and the hill shrunk. Although brickmaking continued for some years on the west side and for some decades a little further south, operations on the north-east corner ran out of suitable clay and had ceased by 1925. When the news got around, there was considerable competition for using this prominent

site, so handy to the new, improved Chapel Street Bridge over the river. Plans for Melbourne High School on the other side of the road were already well advanced and for a while the favourite candidate in the race to take the site was a matching girls' school. There were also those who wanted the area turned into a park. At the time, the land was zoned for shops and residential use under the brand-new Metropolitan Town Planning Scheme. Then certain elements within the Council began to campaign to get the zoning changed to allow factories. The lure, of course, was jobs for Prahran. It was the City's first major row over planning matters as such, and the factory lobby won.⁹⁸

The Hecla company began operations almost at once, manufacturing electric heaters. C. W. Marriott had first begun making Marriott 'Glow' Radiators in 1916, from a factory in Little Bourke Street. The Chapel Street factory represented an expansion of operations on to a more spacious site. T. S. Gill set up his adjacent factory at about the same time. "His business was as typical of the 1920s in its own way as the manufacture of new-fangled electrical appliances. He was a shopfitter and advertised prominently in the *Modern Store Design and Manufacturing*. 'A monthly journal devoted to better merchandising methods and ideas'.¹ Shops were beginning to take heed of the novel idea that 'if the goods are seen they will be bought'.² T. S. Gill was among those busily converting shops to display as large a proportion of the merchandise as possible, and not always behind glass. The work of the shop assistant was being transformed. No longer did everything have to be 'shown' to the customer. The customer could increasingly see for herself or himself. The march towards self-service stores and super-market checkouts had begun.

For a while, there was also a furniture factory—Goldman's—on this part of Chapel Street, but over the years the manufacture of electrical goods came to dominate the old brickworks site. In her history of Chapel Street, Betty Malone has described how in 1936 Electrolux began the South Yarra part of its growing Australian manufacturing operation.³ Expansion during and after World War II saw it take over the Goldman and Gill sites and build another factory west of Chapel Street. In 1975 Hecla sold out to Electrolux which by then owned all the land between Malcolm Street and Alexandra Avenue. The site was sold to Jack Chia in 1981 as, like so many other manufacturers operating in Prahran, Electrolux decided the land could more profitably be sold than used for factories. There were cheaper and more convenient manufacturing sites elsewhere.

Red Tulip Chocolates is another firm that has found it prudent to move to cheaper and more spacious premises. The business was started just before World War II by migrants from Europe. Mr and Mrs Nassau were German Jews who were lucky enough to leave Berlin before it was

too late. They were told it was useful to learn a craft before going to Australia, so Mrs Nassau took a course in chocolate making. She learnt how to make them by hand, training with one of Berlin's leading confectioners. The Nassaus arrived in Australia in May 1939 and Mrs Nassau began making chocolates in her Caulfield kitchen. Mr Nassau delivered the orders on his bicycle and they were so popular that they decided to expand. At about this time, they met George Gorog, a migrant from Czechoslovakia, whose parents had owned a chocolate factory. The final member of the group was Mr Olion and they called their company Olgana from the three names: Olion, Gorog and Nassau. They began making chocolates in a factory on the corner of High Street and Bendigo Street, Prahran.

Once the war started, the Nassaus were classified as enemy aliens and in 1941 Mr Nassau went to work in the Labour Corps. Mr Olion had already left the group. For health reasons, Mr Gorog did not become involved in the war and in 1942 he registered the name Red Tulip Chocolates, Pty Ltd.⁴ The following year, the business moved to a factory at 266 High Street and remained there for twenty years.

During the 1950s there was considerable expansion. Distribution was the key to growth and in 1958 the company began an association with Henry Berry. The old OT cordial factory, further west on High Street, was acquired in 1965 and in 1976 a new factory was opened on a far more spacious site at Scoresby. In 1988 Red Tulip was taken over by Cadbury-Schweppes and the Prahran factory was closed, transferring all manufacturing operations to Scoresby and Ringwood.⁵ Once again, someone decided that land in Prahran had become too expensive to be used for factories. The new businesses in Prahran in the 1980s were more likely to be aimed at providing specialist high cost, high quality services to an elite clientele. It is too soon to tell how many of these will survive into the 21st century.

6

Volunteers, Professionals, and the Rise of the Expert

The second half of the 20th century saw an enormous increase in the number of experts of one kind or another living in Prahran. During the gentrification process from the 1960s onwards, literally thousands of professionals and experts in everything from banking to babies moved to live in the area. At the 1947 census people working in finance and property, in the professions such as medicine, law and teaching, and for government at all levels, made up just 16 per cent of the work-force in Prahran. By the 1986 census they had more than doubled in numbers, while the total population had fallen and they made up 42 per cent of Prahran's work-force.

This rise in the number of white-collar and professional workers was associated with a rise in the proportion of women working. Between 1947 and 1986 the proportion of the female population in Prahran in paid employment rose from less than one-third to about one-half, and about one-half of them were white-collar and professional workers. The women of Prahran in the 1920s and 1930s typically only went out to work between school and marriage, and they worked in the jam factory or behind the counter in shops. The women of Prahran in the 1970s and 1980s were far more likely to go to college or university, to marry late and to continue working as management consultants or marriage guidance counsellors.

Partly, this chapter deals with the rise of professionals and experts in this sense, but the major focus is rather different. During the 20th century a great many activities that were previously regarded as 'natural', or simply taken for granted, became specialist fields of study for a whole new range of experts. Housework, housekeeping, childbirth, child-rearing and even

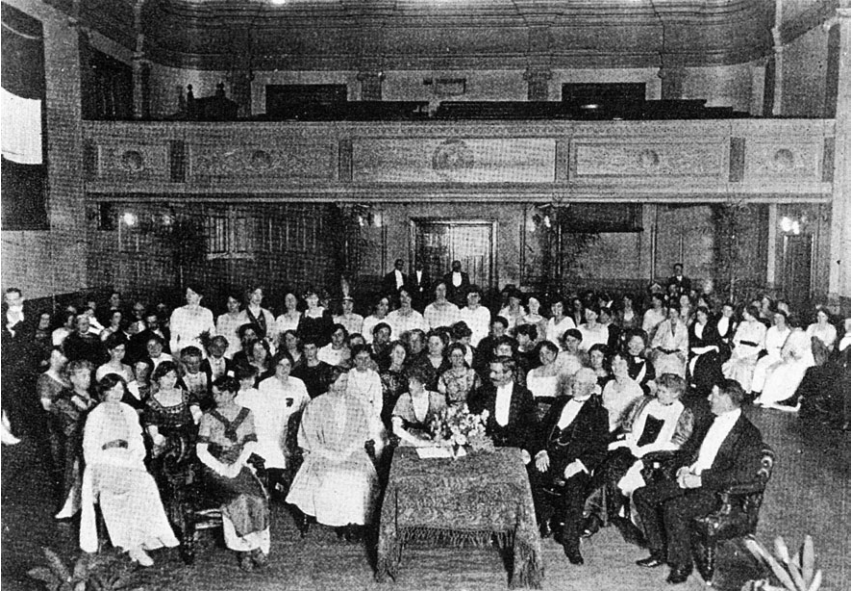
sex became things to be taught by outside experts rather than passed on from mother to daughter. Should babies be fed on demand, or at regular intervals according to the clock? Should they be breast fed or bottle fed? What constituted a balanced diet? If children turned to crime, was it the fault of the parents? If children got sick, was it the fault of the parents?

Changes in thinking about home, family, health, poverty and personal development were accompanied by the appearance of a range of new professions, including psychologists and social workers. These changes were initially associated with pioneering work by upper middle-class women involved in private charity and social reform. Subsequently, the work was largely taken over by government agencies and local councils. Possibly because a significant degree of leadership of the charity and social reform movements involved women from the kind of social circles that revolved around Toorak and Government House, Prahran Council was very much a pioneer in providing funding and support for these new experts. Socially diverse Prahran accommodated both the experts and the subjects of their studies. It is this story that provides the major focus for this chapter.

WORLD WAR I: PATRIOTISM AND CHARITY

In this era, private charity was an important component of life for both rich and poor. There were times when the poor depended on it to stay alive, while anybody with money and time who was the least bit public spirited, devoted effort to charitable work. For the mayors of municipalities like Prahran, charitable work was the principal public face of their years of office.

In 1914 Ernest Willis was Mayor and he and his wife devoted their time to activities such as raising money for the Alfred Hospital.¹ The Prahran, South Yarra and Toorak Ladies' Benevolent Society held their annual carnival in the Victoria Gardens and a Juvenile Ball in aid of the Talbot Colony for Epileptics was a 'success socially and financially', under the watchful eye of the Committee President and Mayoress, Mrs Willis. A fire at the Town Hall on 11 January had not put a stop to charitable activities. Prahran came to a friendly arrangement with St Kilda and held official functions in their Town Hall until Prahran's was rebuilt. Charity balls, then as now, depended for their success on the price of the tickets, the social standing of those who bought them, and the 'worthiness' of the cause. The worthiness of the Talbot Colony for Epileptics and the social status of those who supported it were more than a little influenced by the fact that Sir Reginald Talbot was Governor of Victoria. His wife was particularly active on the charity scene. However, it was not Lady Talbot but



THE ALFRED HOSPITAL BAZAAR COMMITTEE, APRIL 1914, INCLUDING THE MAYOR AND MAYORESS OF PRAHRAN, CR AND MRS ERNEST WILLIS

Lady Madden who opened a new home for the Prahran Creche in November 1913. It was described as:

a charity deserving of the support of all citizens, as it confers upon mothers a great boon in allowing them to place their young children in the care of a competent matron each day, and thus enables them to earn a living, which otherwise would be almost impossible in a large number of cases.²

Mr and Mrs Ernest Willis of Toorak played a prominent role on Prahran's charity stage for the next four years. When the war broke out, the Patriotic and Red Cross Society was inaugurated under the presidency of Mrs Willis. Phil Leggett remembered one of their earliest functions:

The Council and engineer decided to make the burnt out [Town Hall] building safe so they removed the debris the floor still intact, so after they cleaned it up The Prahran Patriotic Society decided to conduct a fete in the burnt out shell without a roof. They put in Stalls, conducted raffles the Prahran Municipal Band playing, and Spinning wheels for prizes donated by the local shop keepers. Instead of the present day wheel which you see on various TV Shows, the spinning wheel was on a round table with a dart or pointed arm which they spun . . .³

When the war ended the same Mayor and Mayoress presided over the peace celebrations. Peace medals and boxes of chocolates were distributed



PRAHRAN, SOUTH YARRA & TOORAK CRECHE SOCIETY'S PRAHRAN CRECHE, FOUNDED 1891: SOME OF THE YOUNGER CHILDREN POSE FOR THE CAMERA FROM THEIR COTS IN THE NEW PRAHRAN CRECHE BUILDING, OPENED BY LADY MADDEN IN NOVEMBER 1913.

to all the children of Prahran.⁴ But peace brought a new emergency as the returning soldiers helped spread influenza around the world. In Australia it was the most serious epidemic yet to affect the white population and in Europe it killed 15 million people in twelve months. Australia lost 60 000 people in World War I and 12 000 more died in the influenza epidemic, about 3000 of them in Melbourne.⁵

Prahran Council, like others, responded to the emergency. This was too big a problem to leave to the normal mechanisms for health care. Council staff, volunteers from the Red Cross and medical students from the Alfred Hospital began vaccinating citizens at the Town Hall. They worked under the supervision of the City's Medical Officer of Health, Dr R. H. Fetherston, and vaccinated 14 000 people within a matter of weeks, but rather more time was required for those who had contracted the disease: 'The Education Department placed the whole of the Armadale State school at the disposal of the Council and this was immediately equipped for the treatment of bad cases . . .'⁶ By August 1919 the makeshift hospital had treated 716 patients, 43 of whom died. Mr A. E. McMicken was Secretary of the Hospital Committee and faced the task of administering the place. The Council was paying the bills, but the Town Clerk, John Romanis, was instructed to recover what money he could. It was estimated

that each patient was costing nine shillings per day, and they generally stayed between ten days and two weeks, providing that they recovered. Mr McMicken was instructed to send them bills accordingly, but £5 was a considerable sum in 1919. Mr McMicken said the patients were poor and requests for payment were futile. Those of Prahran's more wealthy citizens who contracted influenza employed a nurse and stayed at home. The bills were sent out anyway and the letters poured back, explaining why payment was impossible.

The Council had not set up the hospital as a charitable venture. It was begun in the post-war spirit of patriotic duty, but there is no evidence that the bad debts were pursued with any great vigour. The Council effectively provided free hospital care for those who could not afford to pay. Of the £428 17s that the hospital had cost by March 1919, the Council had recovered £19 3s by July. The eventual cost was nearer £3000, of which little was recovered.⁷

The Council's other major charitable venture that year was to build sixteen houses on Ashleigh Road, Armadale, later known as Victory Square. The land was provided by the Council from its small stock of open space, and the houses were built specifically for Prahran's war widows. The widows had to be both 'worthy' and poor and the rent was one shilling per week,



ONE OF PRAHRAN'S WAR WIDOWS POSES WITH HER CHILDREN OUTSIDE THEIR NEW HOUSE ON VICTORY SQUARE, 1919

about one-tenth of the amount the women might otherwise expect to pay. If they remarried, they had to move: 'Mrs Doeg, Mrs Bailey and Mrs Wilson . . . made a number of enquiries into the merits of the various applicants, and assisted the Trustees in the selection of the most worthy of them'. An important component of worthiness in this context seems to have been fertility. The sixteen widows eventually chosen had fifty-six children between them. They enjoyed the benefit of four-roomed houses 'in which they may bring up their children respectably and make them good citizens, worthy of the fathers who laid down their lives for the homes and families they loved so dearly'.⁸

For Mayor Willis, however, the real local hero of the war years seems not to have been any of those widows, or their husbands, but Mrs W. R. Young, Honorary Secretary of the Prahran Patriotic and Red Cross Society:

It is a happy consummation of all her splendid work to know that her esteemed husband, Mr W. R. Young, has been spared to return from the War this year . . . We hope . . . they will be long spared to look back upon their work for the Empire, undertaken and carried out voluntarily . . .⁹

Lorraine Wheeler has described how in the years after 1918 Australia set up a welfare system specifically for returned soldiers and some of their dependants.¹⁰ Prahran did its own little bit by contributing to the welfare of the dependants of some of the local men who had lost their lives in Europe, but the patriotic and charitable intentions behind the Victory Square houses were limited to that specific group. Cr Marje Bulbick takes up the story in 1972:

As time elapsed tenants vacated premises and other tenants (some Council employees) went into these houses at adjusted rentals at very reasonable cost. Of more recent years it was decided by Council that three years' notice be given to residents as only a few originals remained and the houses had fallen into very bad repair. This decision by Council included the plan that this area should revert to sporting fields. Only three of the originals were occupying houses towards the end and at the time of final demolition none of these were in tenancy. Two had passed away and the other person entered a nursing home for life.¹¹

The land became part of Toorak Park and the home of the Prahran Slavia Soccer Club.

THE 1920s: PAID AND UNPAID WORK

In the 1920s only a minority of women in Prahran went out to work, and most of those were unmarried. Indeed, in some occupations such as teaching, women automatically lost their jobs if they took a husband. This also

usually applied to domestic servants, young women who did other people's housework until they got married, when they were expected to move out and do their own. Mr Paxton, who grew up in a Toorak family with a number of servants, believed that their conditions of employment were among the main reasons that servants were becoming rather hard to find by the middle of the century:

Domestic servants only customarily received one free day per week, as well as every second Sunday afternoon and evening. And even on their day off, they had to get up at the usual early hour to cook breakfast, wash the dishes and do a few chores before setting out. Then they were obliged to be back again at a respectable hour.

Many of the older and some of the faithful servants preferred to remain but when these too either married or retired because of old age, their ranks gradually reduced to zero. However, they remained intensely loyal to the families they had served so well.

My parents were often visited by our ex-maids and cooks who, in turn, received a warm and sincere welcome. When my first nurse, Emily, married and went to New Zealand, we were very complimented when she named her first son Jim after me.

In our household we regarded our servants as being almost members of the family though mutual respect was always maintained. They ate the same food as we did and without stint. If one became ill, we looked after her, called in our family doctor and paid all her medical expenses. However, I regret to say that some employers were unkind and/or ungenerous and they of course received no loyalty or respect at all from those who worked for them.¹²

Domestic work was women's work and during the 19th century it was generally assumed that women naturally knew how to do it. Cleaning houses, washing clothes, cooking and bringing up babies, whether for themselves or their employer was assumed to be the natural biological occupation of women. Or was it? During the 1920s more and more women became aware of a different way of looking at housework and child rearing. They began to encounter increasing numbers of people who thought they needed to be *taught* how to run a home and bring up children.¹³

Women in Prahran perhaps first began to encounter these ideas on a significant scale through the auspices of the Ladies Benevolent Society. Women in difficult circumstances applied to the ladies for charity. Before they were prepared to give away any of the money raised at balls and fetes, the ladies investigated applicants, frequently by visiting their homes. They brought with them their own ideas on thrift, economy and good household management, as well as on sobriety, gambling and the relationship between cleanliness and godliness. Women whose ideas about how to run a home fitted well with those of the visiting ladies were rewarded accordingly. This

was the way things had been for some time. The new element in this relationship came when the ladies took steps to instruct the women in the error of their ways, other than by withholding cash.¹⁴

In her book on the history of these changes, Kerreen Reiger refers to the 'upper-middle-class charity network' of reformers active on a wide range of campaigns, including those for 'pure milk, kindergartens, playgrounds and temperance'.¹⁵ Toorak was home to many of the women who played a leading role in these campaigns. Mrs Clemens, nee Turnbull, a grazier's daughter, was brought up in this tradition. Girls from her circle were not expected to work—or rather they were not expected to take paid jobs—but they were expected to work very hard at least three days a week for charity. Mrs Clemens's grandmother was involved in founding the auxiliaries for the Children's Hospital and from 1938 to 1948 her mother was President of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children. The Society was founded in 1896 by the wife of the Governor and run for many years by 'so-called society ladies'. Mrs Turnbull and her friends 'had the right of apprehension and took children to the court'. In 1963 Mrs Clemens became President:

It was jolly hard work making the money and running the thing . . . Mother had a big fete or garden party every year for the Society . . . A lot of the women did the most beautiful sewing . . . The sort of money that they raised was £2 to £3000 . . . Lady Fraser always had [a fund-raising fete] I remember.¹⁶

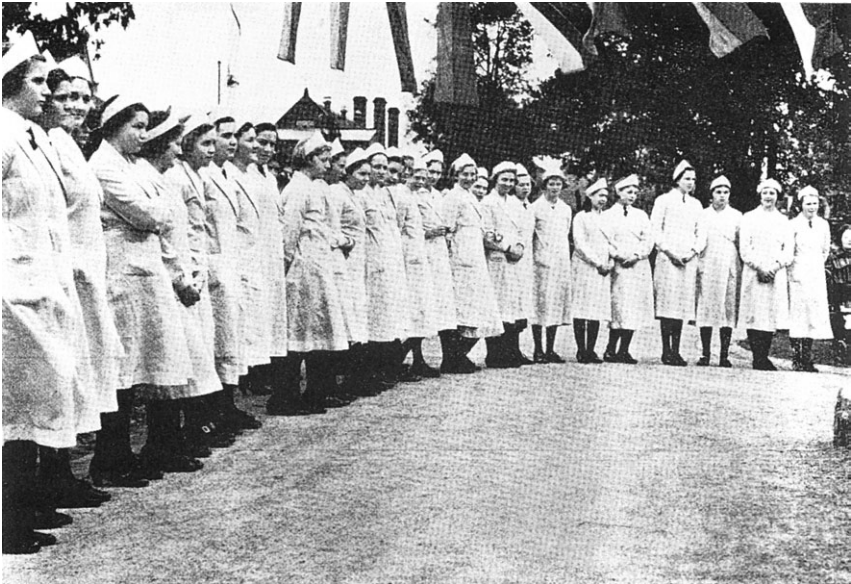
Until the 1960s, the paid staff of the Society consisted of two inspectors and an office worker, but after that the number of professionals began to increase. By 1973 the Society had four social workers, a welfare officer and a secretary, and in 1975 government funding was offered for the first time. Over the next decade there was rapid expansion of what was now the Children's Protection Society until in 1985 it relinquished its role as the authorised child protection agency in Victoria, and the work was formally taken over by the Department of Community Services. The Society continued on a smaller scale as a family care agency.¹⁷ This pattern of work begun by volunteers and increasingly taken over by professionals and government agencies, was followed in many areas of what had once been the exclusively private domain of home and family.

Child rearing was not the only area of generally unpaid women's work to come under scrutiny at the beginning of the 20th century. The other major new field of intervention was 'housekeeping'. The Australian Institute of Domestic Economy was formed in 1904 and acted as a pressure group through which some members of the upper middle-class charity network tried to persuade the government to fund formal training in 'domestic economy'. Among the group's supporters were women such as

Lady Janet Clarke and Lady Margaret Talbot. Both were active in charitable ventures in Prahran for many years. Sir William Clarke, for instance, was among the early supporters of the Elizabeth Fry Retreat in South Yarra. The Retreat, originally founded in 1883, was set up for older women ex-prisoners. Many of them were alcoholics, and besides providing a 'dry' environment the Retreat offered training in domestic work. Sarah Swinborn was the driving force behind the Retreat and she hoped that at least some of the women would be able to move on as domestic servants. Lady Clarke opened the Retreat's first fund-raising sale in 1885.¹⁹

By the 1920s, the Australian Institute of Domestic Economy also had the support of George Swinburne and Sir William McPherson. Domestic science began to be taught at the technical schools which Swinburne supported and Sir William endowed a college devoted entirely to 'domestic economy'. Named after his wife, Lady Emily, work began on the Emily McPherson Domestic Economy College in 1926.²⁰

This fashion affected Prahran at about the same time. The girls' school originally planned for a site opposite the Melbourne High School on Chapel Street was being called a 'Girls' Technical School' when it was planned for Union Street, Windsor, in 1927, and had become a 'Girls' School of Domestic Economy' on the eventual Hornby Street site in 1928.²¹



MEMBERS OF THE COOKERY CLASS FROM THE 'SCHOOL OF DOMESTIC ECONOMY, HORNBY STREET, PHOTOGRAPHED IN 1937

Not surprisingly, all those ladies involved were accused of setting up schools of domestic economy to train themselves servants, and with some justice in the case of Lady McPherson, Lady Talbot and Lady Clarke. The siting of the Girls' School of Domestic Economy in Windsor rather than South Yarra did nothing to dispel this impression. But, in fact, the teaching of domestic economy did not work like that. Whatever the intentions of the founder, 'Emily Mac' drew girls mainly from private schools and ended up being a bit of a finishing school for the middle class. Women generally saw anything other than compulsory schooling, if they could afford it, as a route to 'bettering themselves', which didn't mean becoming a domestic servant. Taking formal training in domestic economy was seen as a way to raise their bid in the marriage stakes. The working class, whether as servants or wives, generally couldn't afford it.²²

Meanwhile, the volunteer ladies of the Benevolent Society had been joined in their inspections of the poor by nurses employed by the Council. The overlapping of their roles can be seen as an indication of the links between poverty and ill-health, but it also demonstrates that the Council was not employing nurses to investigate conditions in middle or upper middle-class homes. Dr Fetherston sent them out to investigate the poor.

DR FETHERSTON AND TEACHING WOMEN ABOUT BABIES

In 1901 Dr R. H. Fetherston was appointed to succeed his father as Consulting Health Officer to the Prahran City Council. In 1909 the Council decided to increase the amount of money it spent on its health services, and from then on Dr Fetherston attended daily. He knew the work of the Council well. Not only had his father been Consulting Health Officer since 1871 but R. H. Fetherston served as a councillor between 1893 and 1896. Between 1921 and 1924 he also managed to find time for State politics, representing Prahran in the Legislative Assembly. During World War I Dr Fetherston was Director-General of the Army Medical services and held the rank of Major-General.²³

Until 1919 there were two organisations providing advice to mothers and babies in Melbourne. Both were voluntary associations and both recommended bottle feeding of babies. Dr Fetherston referred to them as 'undoubtedly more or less jealous of each other, while the only difference in their work that I have been able to see is that one Society uses fresh Cow's milk and the other humanized milk'.²⁴ The war had caused a local shortage of nurses, but once it ended, Dr Fetherston recommended that the Council set up its own Baby Welfare Centre:

Now that the nurses have returned in large numbers it is recommended that the Council should themselves establish a Baby Welfare Centre for Baby Welfare and pre-maternity advice.

Instead of subsidising either of the previous named Associations, the Council should appoint a Trained Nurse, expert in children's diseases as an Inspectress, who could establish and conduct this work; She being an Inspectress under the 'Health Act' would give her much more power in entering and visiting houses and compelling attendance at the Centre than an Officer of one of the Voluntary Asstns.²⁵

The Council followed this advice, and almost immediately the Baby Health Centre became a major component of the Health Department. Other councils were later to follow Prahran's example, but in 1919 the only other clinics providing comparable advice were at the Women's, Queen Victoria and Alfred Hospitals. The Associations referred to by Dr Fetherston were the Baby Welfare Society and the Visiting Nurses Association. The former did operate a number of baby welfare centres, but the latter concentrated on home visiting.²⁶

Despite the importance that Dr Fetherston attached to home visiting, the first nurse appointed to the Baby Health Centre was so busy with women calling on her that she had little time to call on them. Sister Chester had the power to inspect homes, but all births were reported to Dr Fetherston by the Registrars, and the mothers were supposed to call on Sister Chester twice a week for 'advice and instruction' on 'the feeding and nursing of infants'. Every baby was 'weighed and advice given as to treatment' and the mothers were 'instructed in clothing, diets etc'. Sister Chester found the 'general health of the babies . . . good—most of the ailments being due to improper feeding'.²⁷ In 1919 births to mothers resident in Prahran came to the grand total of 1226. Clearly Sister Chester had her work cut out for her: 'The work has developed and proved such a boon to parents that the Council has since opened two branches at Argo Street, South Yarra, and the Try Society Hall, necessitating the appointment of a second Nurse, Sister Riley . . .' reported the Mayor, Cr George Heyward.²⁸ Despite this expansion, the work rapidly outgrew the space available at the Town Hall. Besides administering the temporary influenza hospital, Mr A. McMicken was also the Council Librarian. He and Miss Enid Joske, a doctor's daughter, operated a children's library from a shed in the courtyard of the Town Hall. They shared the building with the Baby Health Centre. 'Scales came out one day, books the next'.²⁹ So the Council bought a block of land on Malvern Road, but not to build a library. The foundation stone of the first purpose-built infant welfare centre in Victoria was laid in May 1923: 'When the building is completed in a few months' boasted Mayor William Chambers, 'and fully equipped, it will be found

that the City will have better facilities for carrying on this important work than any city in the State, if not in Australia'.³⁰

The South Yarra and Hawksburn branches were closed and on 17 December 1923, the new building was opened by the Countess of Stradbroke. The building was known as the Prahran Health Centre, because Dr Fetherston was in the process of widening the work of educating the people of Prahran. From 1924 he began to show films at the Health Centre with titles such as 'How Plants and Animals Cause Disease', 'How Disease is Spread' and 'General Personal Hygiene'. By 1925 he claimed three thousand people had seen the films. Dr Fetherston was also pressing on with his original plan to include provision for ante-natal, or what he called 'pre-maternity' care. The Alfred Hospital's Pre-maternity Centre opened in 1925. Within twelve months, the Prahran Health Centre was showing films and holding lectures on the subject and the Prahran Pre-maternity Clinic was taking patients from 1927. Dr Mary Herring was appointed to deal with ante-natal care and in 1928 the Health Centre was enlarged to make more room for the new department. Again, this was a first for Prahran. Nothing like it existed anywhere else in Melbourne at the time.

The ante-natal clinic took Prahran Council into the controversial area of contraceptive advice. Dr Herring 'advised against repeated pregnancies too close together, or against further children if there were serious



THE PRAHRAN HEALTH CENTRE WAS OPENED ON 17 DECEMBER 1923 BY THE COUNTESS OF STRADBROKE.

problems'. Partly as a result of her experience in Prahran, in 1934 Dr Herring helped found Melbourne's first contraceptive clinic, under the deliberately ambiguous name of the Women's Welfare Clinic.³¹

Prahran's ante-natal clinic remained the only one of its kind for many years. Similar facilities were available through the Women's, Queen Victoria and Alfred Hospitals and the Victorian Bush Nursing Association, but not through local authorities. This was despite support from such a highly respectable quarter as the *Argus*. Under the headline 'Clinical Services for Poor Women', Prahran and Dr Herring received warm praise: 'The health centre at Prahran might well serve as a model for other suburbs, for it has treated 500 cases without a death, all of them poor women, who would certainly have gone without proper care and attention had they been left to their own inadequate devices'.³²

Dr Herring played a particularly interesting role in the introduction of experts to what had once been the 'private' preserve of the family. As a doctor, she was one of the professional experts, and a pioneering one at that, but she was also a member of what Reiger calls the upper middle-class charity network. Indeed, in 1944 as Lady Herring, she resigned from her professional position with the Prahran Council because of the pressure of her duties as wife of the Lieutenant-Governor of Victoria.³³

Meanwhile, the work of the Prahran Health Centre continued to grow and reach out into the lives of its clients. In 1924 Sister Duddy was appointed specifically to visit children too old to attend the Infant Welfare Centre and she did so with quite extraordinary energy. In 1925, for instance, she made 1297 visits to homes and 179 to schools, or an average of more than 28 calls per week: 'Defects and insanitary conditions are reported to the Health Officer, and in many cases orders were made on owners or occupiers'.³⁴

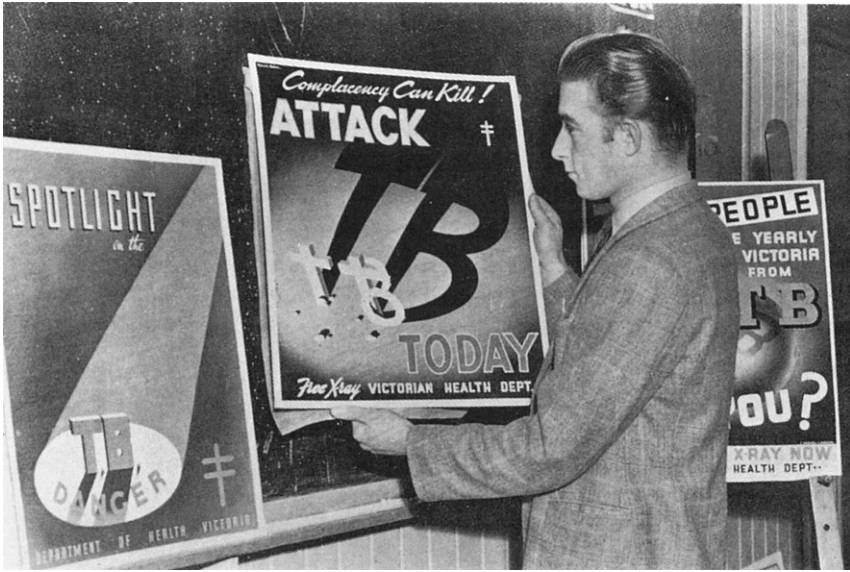
Dr Fetherston was also exceedingly busy. In 1925 he was appointed to a State government committee overseeing research into the reduction of maternal and infant mortality. Through him, Prahran Council was working with Melbourne University and the teaching hospitals at the leading edge of maternal and infant care, and he brought people like Professor Marshall Allen to lecture at the Prahran Health Centre. In the early years of his career Dr Fetherston was particularly active in measures he hoped would help reduce infant mortality. Some of the advice given at the Health Centre may have helped, but in the early 20th century there were a range of factors combining to improve the chances that babies had of surviving their first year. Improved sanitation was important. So were the wide range of public health matters that came within the scope of far less active Medical Officers of Health than Dr Fetherston—the inspection of smells, drains, rats, noxious industries and food retailers. An increasing proportion of

women were having their babies in hospital rather than at home, and they were tending to have fewer babies. The birth-rate fell particularly dramatically during the depression years of the 1930s and smaller numbers of young children in a family at any one time seem to be associated with lower levels of childhood illness. There has been much argument about the exact reasons, but infant mortality did fall.

In 1921 the infant mortality rate in Prahran—that is, deaths in the first year of life per thousand births—was 71.5; by the 1930s it had fallen to just over 46 deaths per thousand births, a marked improvement. Most of the decline seems to have been the result of a significant reduction in deaths due to 'infant summer diarrhoea'. However, the infant mortality rate in Prahran remained above the average for greater Melbourne. Generally, the inner suburbs had higher mortality rates than the less densely populated outer areas. Prahran's mortality rates were closer to those of areas like Richmond than they were to Kew or Caulfield.³⁵ This was as true in the 1930s as it had been before World War I when infant mortality rates were markedly higher.

As infant mortality fell, Dr Fetherston increasingly turned his attention to the causes of death in adulthood. He was particularly interested in tuberculosis (TB). Tuberculosis went under many names in the early 20th century, including consumption and phthisis. In Prahran, twenty-nine people died of it in 1920, eleven in 1925, six in 1931 and thirty-three in 1936. But the major problem associated with TB, as with all slow, debilitating diseases, was not death but poverty. TB was more likely to strike the poor in the first place, living in damp, dirty conditions and working too hard, and they were less likely to recover if they couldn't provide themselves with rest and fresh air. TB sufferers were supposed to go to sanatoriums where the risk of passing on the disease could be reduced, but few could afford it. The case of the Rowe family of York Street illustrates some of the possible side effects of TB.

In 1920 Mr and Mrs Rowe had twelve children aged between nineteen and one year old. Mr Rowe was a painter and could earn a decent wage, but he was a consumptive and was supposed to go to the sanatorium. Without him, the family had 'no income but charity'. It was alleged that one of the children caught diphtheria at the Alfred Hospital and subsequently ten out of the twelve caught the disease. They all appear to have recovered, but the two oldest boys lost their jobs. All of these problems brought the Rowe family to the attention of the authorities. The Health Inspector was concerned with all notifiable infectious diseases which included both TB and diphtheria. Following the outbreak of the latter, the house was fumigated with sulphur. Mrs Rowe appealed to the Ladies Benevolent Society for charitable assistance, but in the end, poverty was a



THE PRAHRAN HEALTH CENTRE BEGAN SCREENING FOR TB IN 1936, BUT ELSEWHERE, LARGE-SCALE CAMPAIGNS CAME A LITTLE LATER. THESE ARE WINNING DESIGNS IN THE STATE GOVERNMENT'S CAMPAIGN, 1947, PRODUCED BY STUDENTS AT THE PRAHRAN TECHNICAL SCHOOL.

police problem. Anyone without visible means of support could be charged with vagrancy and sent to prison. If they could produce a bank book as evidence of savings or some evidence of income, they were free to go. The Rows had no such savings or income. Clearly, the authorities did not want to lock them up, and they were neither the first nor the last family to get into such difficulties.

In this era, at least one member of the local police force performed what later came to be considered a social work role. Constable Halpin developed a particular knowledge of local poverty and his work brought him into contact with the Benevolent Society and the Health Inspector. Over the years, the police had evolved a working compromise to deal with the particular problems of a family with young children facing destitution. If their parents could not support them, they became a charge on the State. By an ingenious, but by no means unique, bending of the rules, the police report recommended putting the younger Rowe children 'on the State' and then boarding them back with their mother at the State's expense. That way, the family stayed together and Mrs Rowe avoided the spectre of vagrancy and prison.³⁶

In fact, any incapacitating accident or illness to the breadwinner could have similarly disastrous consequences for a family, but TB was the single

most obvious cause of these sorts of tragedies. So in 1929 Dr Fetherston set up an anti-TB bureau at the Health Centre under the supervision of Dr J. P. Major. X-ray facilities were installed in 1936 and Prahran began screening for TB on a significant scale. Once again, Prahran was a pioneer. Elsewhere, large-scale screening for TB was not undertaken until after the discovery of cheaper, new X-ray techniques in 1938.³⁷ By 1940 Prahran was being described as 'a model of publicly administered "total" community health organization' and as having 'the most comprehensive and up-to-date health centre of the metropolitan municipalities'.³⁸

Dr Fetherston's plans for Council-sponsored health care were certainly ambitious, as he himself explained: 'This was to start with the unborn babies and expectant mothers, to care for the young infants and the pre-school children, leaving the care of school children to the schools and parents, to take up the post-school adolescents, following them to adult life'.³⁹

Before his death in 1943, the activities of the Health Centre had been extended to include a gym for adolescents, but Dr Fetherston remained disappointed that he had been unable to appoint a Dental Officer. The doctors who took over from General Fetherston and Lady Herring in the 1940s had large shoes to fill.

THE 1930s: POVERTY AND CHANGES IN PREVENTATIVE HEALTH CARE

In May 1929 Prahran Council began sponsoring appeals for assistance for the unemployed. The goods were collected at the Town Hall and distributed by members of the Ladies' Benevolent Society and the Salvation Army. The government provided money for meat, bread and grocery orders and this, too, was distributed through the Ladies' Benevolent Society (LBS). Mr F. C. Wilmot, Miss Jaffray and the other ladies investigated applicants and decided who was eligible for assistance. Firewood from the Mallee and clothing were also distributed through the Town Hall and the LBS.⁴⁰

Throughout the rest of 1929 and the whole of 1930, the numbers applying for assistance continued to rise. By the middle of 1931 the Prahran Council was co-ordinating the distribution of relief to 1700 local men, and the numbers involved were too large to cope with at the Town Hall. Mayor John McDonald Ellis opened a special depot at the market. Everyone did their bit for the unemployed. The Royal Automobile Club of Victoria arranged cars to call for clothing and boot parcels and local Dramatic Societies put on fund-raising dramas.

In 1931 the Hon. John McDonald Ellis, MLA, was elected Mayor for a second consecutive term. The depression gave a particular sense of

urgency to the charitable functions with which the Mayor and Mayoress were normally involved: 'As the financial depression has continued without any signs of lifting during the year, our time has been almost exclusively devoted to the work of relieving as far as possible the distressed families caused by the widespread unemployment'.⁴¹ This was actually a revolutionary statement. Until the 1930s it was customary for the kind of men who became conservative MLAs and Mayors of Prahran to consider that poverty (if they considered it at all) was caused by idleness or immorality or both. The only significant exceptions had been the returned soldiers from World War I, who had not been held responsible if they or their families became 'distressed'. By the 1930s several benefits were available to the Diggers without any means test. These included a range of pensions and the provision of housing, health care, education, training and employment programmes.⁴² No comparable range of welfare benefits was available to anyone else.

The new assumption by men like Mr Ellis that financial depression and widespread unemployment were causing distress was to help change that situation, but not for another decade. Indeed, there were signs in 1933 that some members of the Prahran Council, at least, were getting rather tired of the unemployed and losing sympathy for their plight. 'The recent tendency to magnify the unemployment figures is harmful' it was claimed in a report on the Unemployment Relief Act of January 1933. Some of those claiming assistance were, according to the report, 'Decent', and some were 'Dissolute'. Mixing them up led to 'demoralization of the individual'. But despite these echoes of older ways of looking at the problem of poverty, the report included hints of a very different approach:

it is hoped to achieve ... a more scientific attack on the whole problem of post-war unemployment, which cannot be regarded as a passing phase, especially when combined with the second industrial revolution of mass production, the second agricultural revolution of farm mechanization, the feminine age, the problem of tariffs in relation to the dislocation of trade, and the new era of currency problems ... Such a combination of circumstances adds to the immensity of the problem ...⁴³

The report called for close co-operation between governments and private charitable bodies, but it also called for 'accurate information', 'correct statistics', and a 'scientific attack' on the problem. The volunteers were to be joined by 'experts' in dealing with poverty, which was acknowledged to have something to do with structural unemployment and not just the 'unemployables' and the 'Dissolute'.

Despite the grumbling in 1933 when Alfred William Cole was Mayor, the overall tone throughout the 1930s was one of sympathetic assistance from the worthies of Prahran. Even when the first concern of the Mayors'



MAYOR ALFRED WILLIAM COLE AT HIS CHRISTMAS PARTY FOR CHILDREN OF THE UNEMPLOYED, 1933

annual reports had moved from unemployment to the Mayoral Ball, concern for 'the poor and needy' remained. Henry Rudolph David was Mayor in 1937/38 and he records the continuing commitment of a number of individuals and charitable groups:

I take this opportunity of thanking Cr J. McD. Ellis, M.L.A., the Prahran Benevolent Society, Salvation Army and Rev. P. W. Robinson, St. Matthews' for their help in rendering assistance to the poor and needy during the year.

All cases that were referred to me were first fully investigated by Sister Chester of the Health Centre, before assistance was given, and in this regard, I would like to also thank her for the very able and sympathetic manner in which she handled these applications.⁴⁴

John McDonald Ellis was joined by many in his concern for the impact of the depression on Prahran. Dr Wettenhall remembers that his father employed an odd-job man during the 1930s, mainly to give him a bit of financial help. John Holdsworth, who was a small boy at the time, remembers that his father also employed people to do odd jobs such as chopping wood.⁴⁵ Travelling salesmen went from door-to-door selling patent medicines or coffee: 'Father was very proud of the fact that he went right

through [the depression] without ever dismissing people . . . They always paid the wages but sometimes didn't pay themselves . . .⁴⁶

The Holdsworths were not alone in that attitude. The Paxtons shared their view:

Like the rest of the world, Toorak became severely dented during the early 1930s.

I had my own small textile business at the time and when the 'Depression' hit Australia, like the majority of the population, I stared disaster in the face almost daily for the next two years.

I employed twenty people and dreaded the possibility of being forced to reduce the number. New jobs were non-existent and thousands of highly trained men and women were walking from door to door, looking for any kind of work at all. It was mainly due to my mother and father that not one of my employees was put off and that I didn't go out of business . . . on many occasions my parents helped me financially to meet the weekly wages bill.⁴⁷

But of course many local businesses did have to lay off staff or cease operating all together:

I don't know which were worse off—the people that couldn't get paid or the people that couldn't pay. The people who suffered to begin with were the wool growers . . . The fall in prices made things so bad here . . . All prices went down . . . I remember buying two and a half pounds of grapes for sixpence. That was some compensation for no dividends coming in . . .⁴⁸

The depression affected such a wide range of people, to a greater or lesser extent, that it was no longer possible to treat people in financial difficulties as 'different' or 'other'. They were clearly not a race apart, but on the contrary often acquaintances, friends, or even members of the family. It was perfectly possible to treat the unemployed as morally suspect if you only ever met them as candidates for your charitable assistance. It was very much harder to see them all as work-shy if you had been through the painful process of sacking a few the week before because you could no longer pay their wages.

The depression had a powerful impact on ideas about the causes of poverty. 'Unemployment' and 'the economy' joined more traditional explanations such as 'idleness', 'immorality' and 'drunkenness' on many people's mental lists, but it was to be another decade before 'accident' and 'ill-health' were added, and governments took any concerted steps to attempt to relieve the problem. Until the 1940s government pensions were available to the aged—subject to a means test—but virtually the only other benefits available as of right, rather than subject to the vagaries of charitable whim and availability, were for World War I veterans.

What was considered the appropriate role for government was very patchy and never logically consistent, but by the 1930s public health was firmly on the agenda. Governments subsidised the major public hospitals, but apart from that the actual business of 'cure' was generally left to doctors and chemists in private practice and the pharmaceutical industry. However, Prahran Council joined other government agencies with an increasing enthusiasm for involvement in 'prevention'. Clean water and sanitation had been generally considered to be government responsibilities since the 19th century, but the inter-war years saw increasing government activity in attempting to limit epidemic disease. In particular, epidemics of poliomyelitis in the 1930s and typhoid in the 1940s were followed by important government initiatives in preventative health care.

Dr Fetherston first mentioned polio in his annual report for 1925, when there were six cases in Prahran. For the next thirty years it was a much feared disease and at times provoked a response that was close to panic. John Powles has pointed out that polio was more of a problem in the 20th century than in earlier years, because of improved standards of hygiene in the home:

The dangers of paralysis from this disease were gradually becoming more severe, mostly as an unintended consequence of cleanliness. Polio is caused by an endemic virus. In earlier times, grubbier infants and toddlers had caught it at an early age. Later, an increasing proportion of children did not encounter the virus until they were at school. At this age, they were at much greater risk of developing serious complications.⁴⁹

In 1925 Dr Fetherston was one of four Health Officers appointed by the State government to undertake preventative measures. The State Government met half the cost, and participating councils covered the rest. The following year, the danger of a polio epidemic seemed to have passed and the committee was disbanded, but in 1927 there was another polio alert. Dr Fetherston believed he could halt the spread of polio by dealing with 'all likely carriers'. There were a number of cases in 1934, but then very few until 1937: 'The second half of the year has been one of considerable anxiety, owing to Poliomyelitis (inflammation of the upper region of the spinal cord), which is always with us assuming an actively infectious form, large numbers of cases being reported from many parts of the metropolis'.⁵⁰ Only seven cases were reported in Prahran, but there were fifty cases in South Melbourne and thirteen in St Kilda. By September there were 271 cases in Victoria.⁵¹ 'Fortunately the poliomyelitis epidemic occurred when there was not many cases of other infectious diseases being notified, and the I.D. [Infectious Diseases] Hospital at Fairfield was able to admit and handle cases demanding hospital treatment'.⁵² The community became very alarmed and all young children were treated as poten-

tially dangerous. They were banned from cinemas, trains stopped carrying babies in prams and schools attended by polio victims were closed.⁵³

In Prahran, where the epidemic was less severe than in some neighbouring suburbs, Dr Fetherston tracked down as many people as possible who had been in contact with polio victims: 'Except when under their own medical practitioners, nearly all contacts have been treated by spraying the nasal cavity and olfactory regions with a weak solution of sulphate of zinc'.⁵⁴ Dr Fetherston was not at all sure whether this did any good, but he thought 'the proceeding . . . worthy of wider trial'. As Health Inspector, Reg Rogers came into contact with the polio victims: 'you had your big outbreak of polio. At this time they thought it was an infectious disease spread through the olfactory nerves and they stopped people travelling—they thought it was spread like 'flu'. Mr Rogers was asked whether he would have his olfactory nerves sprayed with the zinc solution: 'it was far worse than any horse radish and mustard. Gaaah! . . . That was very bad but the medical staff—the sisters and I—we had to go along and visit premises where these people were located or had gone to hospital'.⁵⁵

Although both Dr Fetherston and Mr Rogers had their doubts about the efficacy of the measures they were taking, the Mayor, Henry Rudolph David, was quite sure that they explained the low incidence of polio cases in Prahran: 'There appears to be no doubt that the action taken by Dr Fetherston and his staff saved Prahran from a severe outbreak of this dreadful disease'. If nothing else, Dr Fetherston's actions may have helped alleviate the fears and even panic of parents. At the height of the epidemic they were not only keeping their children home from school. If possible, they were moving them to the country. At one stage, all State schools were officially closed and there were attempts to monitor the daily lives of all children who had been in contact with the disease. They were supposed to stay home, but in many working-class homes this was impossible. As Dr Fetherston put it 'the older children become an integral part of the domestic economy'. Polio contacts or not, they continued 'going messages to nearby shops and dairies'. 'If given up it meant not only parents leaving their work, but dressing for street from working clothes. I am confident that child isolation, though carefully watched, was not good'.⁵⁶

It is hardly surprising that Dr Fetherston and his staff were unable to prevent several hundred of Prahran's children from leaving their homes, even to pop down to the local shop. What is rather more surprising is that they should even try.

Polio seems to have been less of a problem during the 1940s, but in the early 1950s there was another serious outbreak. Then in 1955 Salk vaccine was discovered in the United States.⁵⁷ In the United States, Europe and Australia governments embarked on blanket immunisation

programmes. Later developments produced an oral vaccine and generations of children grew up taking it for granted that 'the government' would protect them from all manner of formerly life-threatening diseases—through pills and shots in the arm if all else failed.

In the 1930s governments at various levels also increasingly took responsibility for the quality of food, and in particular milk, that was supplied to the public. The duties of the Council's Medical Officer of Health had long included inspecting premises selling food, but Mr Rogers maintains that the regulations were fairly loose until the 1950s. Vermin, general hygiene and forbidden additives were the main areas of concern. But Dr Fetherston and his inspectors were also worried about freshness. In the 1930s very few shops, including butchers and dairies, had any form of refrigeration. In 1920 Dr Fetherston went so far as to suggest providing a Council cool store for meat, but this idea was dropped and during the 1930s small-scale refrigerators became more widely and cheaply available.

There were some matters in which customers could make up their own minds. If meat smelled bad, they didn't have to buy it. Council inspectors, testing three samples of food per thousand population, helped keep down the number of butchers using chemicals to disguise the state of the meat.⁵⁸ This left the problem of milk. If it was off, it was off, but if it was not, it might be watered down. Mr Rogers used to have to go out and sample milk. The Council had a jinker, but he couldn't drive it, so the Council allowed him one gallon of petrol per week for his bull-nosed Cowley. He would drive out and stop the milk men. They got to know the old jinker and used to run away from it if they had a fast enough horse, but the car could catch them all.⁵⁹

In the 1980s it became fashionable to buy milk with a low fat content, but in the 1920s and 1930s conscientious parents attempted to provide their children with milk that had as high a fat content as possible. Standardised testing of milk was available to measure the butterfat content. But the new worry in the early 20th century developed from new ideas on the causes of disease. From 1928 the Department of Agriculture tested milk for 'germs' and Prahran, like other councils, helped pay the bill. Ten years later Dr Fetherston was defending the expenditure: 'this is a necessary and very valuable work, for it is just as important that milk should be fresh and contain small numbers of germs as that it should contain a specified amount of fat and other solids'.⁶⁰

In the 1930s there were forty dairies in Prahran, about half of them wholesale operations and the rest delivering milk to customers. Only one, White's Cotswold Hill Dairies in Williams Road, had a pasteurisation plant. Milk for delivery was put into fifty quart cans and these were then driven round the streets on the back of a jinker. Each can, and there

were generally two to a jinker, had a tap on the back, protruding through the tailgate:

When delivering milk to households, they used a 2-gallon can, with a lid. Inside was a small rail on which the half-pint measure was hooked. Of course this was done by a hand which had adjusted the harness on the horse, taken the strap off the wheel, and contacted many other items which could introduce contamination.⁶¹

Mr Rogers and his staff were given the task of collecting samples of milk for testing. They went around the streets between 1 a.m. and 5 a.m. to ensure that the milk they obtained from the dairymen was the same as that being delivered to homes:

What we had with testing of milk was to go out and test it for fat . . . but Dr Fetherston, he realised we can have too much fat . . . 'we're more concerned with purity' he'd say . . .

Then he arranged with the University that we would take samples, keep them cold and take them straight in there to see what the temperature was like, what the condition was and rancidity . . . they had a special box made, I remember, and it was packed with ice and we used to take the jars and immerse them in ice and take them back to the University and it had methylene blue in it and was called the methylene blue reduction test . . . It was aimed at getting milk in cold condition right from the start so that you didn't have an increase in bacteria.⁶²

The state of the milk sold in Prahran also had a bearing on one of the diseases that Dr Fetherston was particularly concerned to combat—tuberculosis. In 1937 it was estimated that 8 per cent of cows had TB. If they did, they could pass it on to humans through their milk. There were two ways of attacking this problem and neither brought significant results until the 1950s. One was to get rid of tubercular cows and the other was to pasteurise milk. From 1949 legislation in Victoria initiated a phased move towards universal pasteurisation and bottling of milk. There was little point in killing all the germs, if the milk was then carried on the backs of jinkers under suspect conditions and dished out into dirty billycans and jugs. From 1943 about half of Melbourne's milk was already bottled, but Reg Rogers, Prahran's Health Inspector for forty years, had his doubts about the efficacy of bottling alone:

The early days of bottling were terrible . . . supposed to bring in purity and cleanliness . . . only the big [dairies] put in efficient botding equipment. [Some others] stole bottles left out for the big people . . . put them on the cart, with cans and a tap at the back tied with rag to stop it leaking . . . hold the botdes to die light . . . fill them from the back of the cart . . .⁶³

The dairyman would then seal the bottle with a wad by hand. 'We always knew when bottles weren't machine wadded because the wad had been

pushed in by a thumb'. It was then up to Mr Rogers and the Health Department to prepare cases for prosecution through the courts.

In fact it was not TB but a typhoid epidemic associated with a dairy in Cheltenham which prompted the Milk Pasteurization Bill. Compulsory pasteurisation and bottling also removed the risk of spreading diphtheria and scarlet fever, both dangerous childhood diseases in the inter-war years: 'Diphtheria was a throat infection—bacterial—it usually only struck where there'd been something else before . . . The throat got terribly swollen—the kiddies almost choked. It was like curtains hanging down'.⁶⁴

Dr Wettenhall remembers being told that doctors of that era had to be prepared to carry out a tracheostomy on the kitchen table. In 1937 there were sixty-eight cases of diphtheria in Prahran, one of them fatal, and twenty-eight cases of scarlet fever. By then work on the earliest antibiotics was already well advanced, particularly in Germany, and the 1940s saw the first widespread use of penicillin in the armed forces.⁶⁵ By the 1950s anti-toxins, vaccines and antibiotics had largely tamed the tigers of infectious disease. The fear of TB and polio was replaced by the fear of heart disease and cancer. It was not until the 1980s that the spectre of an infectious disease not controllable by antibiotics—AIDS—led to a renewed emphasis on government-sponsored preventative public health campaigns.

THE 1940s: KNITTING SOCKS

In 1939 Prahran Council was still involved in the distribution of relief to the unemployed, although their numbers were considerably lower than five years earlier. The unemployed were particularly heavily represented among early volunteers for the A.I.F., but by 1940 they were already being joined by significant numbers of men from a wide range of occupations. Prahran Council was typical of many organisations in agreeing to pay those employees who volunteered the difference between their civilian and military pay. Their jobs were to be kept open for them on their return. Although it was mainly the young men who went away to war, young women also served overseas. Celia Leon, for instance, who was a nurse at the Alfred Hospital before the war, went to work as a nurse in Palestine.⁶⁶ By 1941 unemployment had ceased to be a problem.⁶⁷

Instead, employers faced the novel problem of labour shortages. In 1942 the government set up the 'Manpower Directorate' to juggle the available labour and ensure that the requirements of priority industries such as munitions factories were met. Long hours, regular overtime and restrictions on holidays replaced the short time and unemployment of a decade before.⁶⁸



SOME OF PRAHRAN'S EARLY VOLUNTEERS FOR THE AIF SHARE A TOAST WITH THE MAYOR, CR GABRIEL SLOMAN

The war years saw considerable growth in industrial output, particularly in those areas where the war increased demand for goods. For instance, output in the textile and food-processing industries increased by 20 per cent to meet the demands for food for Britain and supplies to the US army. Prahran's textile and food-processing industries shared in both the growth in orders and the shortage of labour. These were industries that had traditionally employed women at low wages, but the war years saw a greater range of job opportunities opening up for women.

In many areas, women were promoted to replace men who had joined the armed forces, but the promotions were seen as temporary and very seldom involved equal pay. While the men were away, the women did their jobs more cheaply as a part of the war effort. In 1943, for instance, Sister Chester was appointed Acting City Health Inspectress while Reg Rogers was away on military duty. Just nine months later, she was replaced as Acting Health Inspector by Alfred Gray.⁶⁹ The City's Librarian, Mr Gregory, was sent to Sydney in the army's education branch and women moved into more senior positions in the library, but they did not receive equal pay with the men until the 1970s.⁷⁰

Perhaps the most visible area of women's work was on the trams. Because of labour shortages, women were employed as conductresses on Melbourne's trams from 1941, but when the men returned from the war they lost their jobs and were more or less phased out again by 1947.

There was considerable public awareness of women working during the war, and this has tended to result in an exaggeration of the increased numbers of women in paid work. In fact, by 1945 women still only made up one-quarter of the labour force and only one in three women of working age were in paid employment. The main contribution of women to the war effort was in unpaid voluntary work. To caricature the situation, working-class women worked in munitions factories and knitted socks for the troops in their lunch breaks. Middle-class women worked for the Red Cross and the Australian Comforts Fund and knitted socks all day.

While the men were away, the middle and upper middle-class women of Prahran ran the local 'war effort' virtually on a full time unpaid basis. It has been noted that 'government attempts to abolish domestic servants in 1942 were defeated because of official recognition that middle-class women needed home help to continue voluntary activities'.⁷¹ In fact, there was no need for the government to abolish domestic servants. During the war maids could quite easily find themselves jobs in factories. If the factory in question was in a priority industry, they found themselves with shorter hours, higher pay and greater personal freedom and at the same time considered themselves to be making a greater contribution to the war effort. It was no contest. The factories won hands down.

Most of the local voluntary work was co-ordinated by the Prahran Patriotic Society (PPS). This was set up in 1939 under the sponsorship of the Council, with Alice Sloman, the Mayoress, as President. The PPS began with a grant of £500 from the Council and raised over £6000 in its first year of operation. This was a considerable amount of money at the time. Just a few years earlier, £90 raised by charitable efforts could be described as 'a splendid sum'. Decades of experience in charitable fund-raising had equipped the women of Prahran in general and Toorak and South Yarra in particular with formidable administrative and organisational skills. To those were added enthusiasm for the task. There were some mutterings that local support for the war was not all it might be in the first year or so, but all that vanished after Pearl Harbor and the fall of Singapore. From the end of 1941 there was a war in the Pacific which was seen as a direct threat to Australia. But even in the first year of the war, the women of the PPS seem to have given wholehearted backing to the decision of Prime Minister Menzies to send the men off to Europe.

There were bridge parties, of course, an Empire Day Carnival and a tennis tournament, but the largest single sum was raised by an 'Art Union' publicised through the radio. The 'Art Union' was effectively a giant raffle



MEMBERS OF THE PRAHRAN PATRIOTIC SOCIETY EXAMINING AND RECORDING SOCKS IN 1941

running over several months and seems to have followed the pattern of 1914 in using spinning wheels. Many local firms donated prizes, including a 'Vauxhall Wyvern 10 H.P. Caleche motor-car'. Stalls were set up outside the Town Hall to collect donations of goods and money. Waste material and paper was collected for recycling through a depot in Surrey Road and dozens of local groups from the Windsor Community Singers to the Temple Beth Israel Ladies Guild did their little bit to raise money. Employees of local firms set up their own auxiliaries to raise funds, including at Read Co., G.J. Coles Pty Ltd, Hancocks Golden Crust bakers, T. Harris Pty Ltd and Hoyts. Church auxiliaries and bowling clubs were also active and even the Market Hotel Social Club managed to raise £24.

More than £2000 of the money raised was immediately spent on wool and a further £775 was spent on flannel, flannelette and pyjama material. Raising the money was only part of the job. The women then set to work to turn all that wool and flannel into socks and pyjamas. The output would have rivalled that of outworkers at a small factory. Volunteers at the Prahran Technical School alone managed to make 55 pairs of socks, 140 scarves, 134 hot water bag covers, 35 sleeveless pullovers, 98 pairs of cuffs, 25 pairs of mittens, 20 (balaclava) helmets, 24 pairs of gaiters, 40 pairs of pyjamas and 24 flannel shirts. In the first year of the war, the women of Prahran knitted at least 4720 pairs of socks, 746 pairs of mittens and 1414 scarves,



MAKING JAM TO RAISE MONEY FOR THE WAR EFFORT



MEMBERS OF THE PRAHRAN PATRIOTIC SOCIETY ROLLING SOME OF THE 5947 POUNDS OF WOOL THAT THE WOMEN OF PRAHRAN MANAGED TO KNIT INTO COMFORTS FOR THE TROOPS IN 1941

besides thousands of other assorted woollen articles, including 'airmen's muffs' and cardigans. The material was turned into 782 pairs of pyjamas and 226 shirts. This was in addition, of course, to whatever the women may have made privately for their own particular friends and relations in the forces.⁷²

Betty Ridley, then Betty Fitzgerald, was one of the many women who worked to raise money through the Red Shield Units of the Salvation Army. Women came to her home to sew 'for the bomb victims of England', and they also collected food around Prahran for the Salvation Army's Red Shield office in Melbourne.⁷³

Women's work for the war was diverse and a large number of organisations were involved, but the PPS was a particular focus for the local efforts. In 1940/41 the amount of money raised and the number of socks knitted were double the efforts of the first year, and some of the money began to be spent on rather larger items of equipment than socks and pyjamas. There was a mobile surgical unit for the RAAF in 1941, for instance, while in 1943 the PPS presented a mobile canteen to the Army and a bus to the Mission to Seamen and its members still managed to knit their way through 1729 pounds of wool.

Women wanted to help and, initially at least, they made what their fathers may have found useful in the trenches of France and Belgium. Woollen scarves and mittens were to prove rather less useful to soldiers in the deserts of North Africa.⁷⁴ There is also some evidence that the troops were overwhelmed by all those socks. One soldier at least wrote to his wife asking her to stop knitting so many: 'After all, dear, I'm not a centipede'.⁷⁵ This was a female example of the old adage about always starting off trying to fight the last war.

It is easy to be wise with hindsight, particularly when it comes to preparations for war. The air-raid precautions taken in Melbourne ended up being a bit of a joke mainly because the air raids never came, but they were not a joke at the time. Australia's air-raid precautions were modelled on those in Britain and they benefited from the considerable experience of civilians under fire during the blitz of 1940. Particular importance was given to black-out regulations, because the Germans mainly bombed England at night. The fact that the Japanese bombed Darwin in broad daylight did not alter the authorities' view that Melbourne would be safer without street lights. The city remained in darkness at night from December 1941 (after the bombing of Pearl Harbor) to May 1942. Presumably by then the absence of any bombing and the arrival of about 30 000 American troops persuaded Premier Albert Dunstan that it was safe to turn the street lights on again, at least along tram routes.⁷⁶

The State government issued instructions on how to build air-raid shelters in the home. There was advice on varying levels of protection from underground concrete bunkers to adapting rooms as refuges.⁷⁷ In public parks and gardens, trenches were much in favour. John Holdsworth remembers that all the trenches in the lower lying parts of Prahran were a failure because the water table was so near the surface. The trenches filled with water and collapsed. At home, his father 'constructed a great big reinforced wooden box in a hallway', to protect the family in case the Japanese bombed Melbourne.⁷⁸

The jewellery business was one that did not benefit from the war. Stock was very hard to get. Some of the staff volunteered for active service. Others retired and were not replaced. There was very little to sell. The occasional barrel of china got through from Britain and there was a meagre supply of watches from Switzerland. Like other shopkeepers, the Holdsworths ended up rationing goods and virtually only selling to men in uniform. Elsewhere, government coupons had to be produced for clothes and some foodstuffs. Meanwhile, on Chapel Street the windows were all taped up and wooden barricades erected in readiness for the expected Japanese invasion.



DAD'S ARMY, PRAHRAN STYLE, TAKING PART IN AN ARP EXERCISE IN MAY 1942

Because so many men were away, women were prominent in the various civil defence organisations. Teachers and librarians were among those who offered to help. The Misses Leeper walked down from Kensington Road to Malvern Road:

During the war there was a brown-out—some lights were left. Molly and I both went to the Red Cross place in Malvern Road—where the Health Centre is now. I think some people were quite disappointed that they never had occasion to use all the things they learnt there. We learnt quite a lot. We were having lectures on poison gas one night, all of us had gas masks—it was the Black Maria in the Town Hall yard that we got into in instalments—we all came out sneezing and coughing. We only did that once . . . We made camouflage nets. I never worked in any money raising things.⁷⁹

Miss Haynes spent part of the war years training at the State Library on an Andrew Carnegie scholarship. When she returned to Prahran she was made reference librarian:

During the war years there were lighting restrictions so the reading room closed at 6 p.m. When we were open at nights we had to have black-out curtains. We had loads of people coming in looking for Leggett's Ballroom—it was free to service personnel. The library was a great solace to the many war widows and women with their husbands away . . . They'd get their children to bed and read the hours away . . .

The staff room was hung with hams—the Patriotic Society had spinning wheels and they stored the hams in the women's staff room . . . The rats came after the hams . . .

I belonged to the ARP—in communications. We had gas masks, tried to see how long it took us to man our posts without transport. We did first aid. We trained perhaps twice a week—always carried our helmets and gas masks with us . . .

The Patriotic Society—the library was always involved with helping them. They made mufflers and balaclavas and gloves and knee pads. We used to distribute instructions for making socks and preserving eggs . . . was an issuing centre for all sorts of information like that in the library.⁸⁰

In the early part of 1942, when the danger was perceived to be greatest, provision was made for the evacuation of children to the country. In the course of examining the children, Dr Fetherston found many to be 'suffering from contagious conditions and would be a menace to children in the country homes to which they were evacuated'. Other Health Officers reported similar problems and the Education Department investigated their claims:

Your Council was ordered to undertake the treatment of these children, and to provide buildings and plant to cope with the cases. This was done at the Prahran Cricket Ground, Toorak Park.

Slightly less than two thousand school and pre-school children were examined or treated for Scabies, Impetigo and Pediculosis by the Staff of the Health Department under Sister Lesley Wilson, extra Nurses and lay assistants having to be employed.⁸¹



THE PRAHRAN EXHIBIT AT THE CIVIL DEFENCE DAY, 4 SEPTEMBER 1943

Generally, the activities of the Health Department increased during the war and took on a new edge of patriotic importance. Dr Major, the chest specialist in charge of the anti-TB Bureau, joined the AIF. Dr Laura Weir was his temporary replacement and her duties were enlarged to include examining men rejected for military service because of 'chest weakness':

A number had subsequently shown such improvement in their condition that they were accepted for enlistment in the AIF. At present lists of rejects were being obtained from the city recruiting centre with a view to affording them an opportunity to avail themselves of the assistance offered by the bureau.⁸²

The increased role of government in the war years, coupled with the increased level of sacrifices made by citizens for their country, provided the climate in which an increased range of welfare benefits was introduced. In 1941 the Menzies government set up a joint Parliamentary Committee on Social Security. Child endowment of five shillings per week for the second and every subsequent child was introduced the same year. In 1942 the Curtin Labor government set up the Department of Post-War Reconstruction. Pensions for widows and deserted mothers were introduced in 1942, funeral benefits and increased maternity allowances in 1943 and unemployment, sickness and dependants benefits in 1944. Free hospital treatment for low income earners followed in 1945 and pharmaceutical benefits in 1947. This was all made possible by the uniform taxation legislation for the Commonwealth, introduced in 1942.⁸³

If only full employment could be maintained in the post-war era, governments had the problem of poverty under control. Or did they?

OLD AND YOUNG: FROM CHARITY TO WELFARE

In the late 1940s and early 1950s the experts were still, as in Dr Fetherston's day, concentrating on the children. The general pattern was for the Council to take over operations that had been initiated as more or less independent charitable ventures. In 1947, for instance, the Council took over the Prahran Creche from the Prahran, South Yarra & Toorak Creche Society. From its foundation in 1891 the Creche, the oldest in Victoria, received Council support. However, full financial backing only came in 1947 and was made legally possible by the Local Government Act of 1946. This Act allowed councils to set up Child Welfare Centres, an activity pioneered by Prahran stretching the definition of a local government health department under earlier legislation. The Creche was duly renamed

the Prahran Municipal Day Nursery and continued to care for over forty children under school age.⁸⁴

In the late 1940s the Council began sponsoring holiday play centres in municipal gardens for school-age children. In 1951 an emergency home-help service was set up at 54 Orrong Road, Armadale, mainly for expectant mothers. The shift in emphasis to care for the elderly infirm came later. In 1951 the Council also appointed a Child Welfare Officer to co-ordinate its increasing range of activities. Dr Margaret Aikin was appointed on a part-time basis. By 1952 there were three pre-school centres and Prahran was still a pioneer in local government provision for infants and children. This was to change. Over the years, the emphasis shifted to the elderly. The explanation lay partly in changing attitudes to welfare, partly in availability of funds and partly in changes to the composition of the popu-



THE MAYOR, CR L. H. BUDDLE, WITH A GROUP OF CHILDREN AT THE OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE HOLIDAY PLAY CENTRE IN ORRONG PARK, JANUARY 1953

lation of Prahran. In 1952 the population of Prahran was 63 000. In 1955 it was 54 000 and falling.⁸⁵ Marion Hartley describes the area as she and the Reverend Frank Hartley found it when they moved to Prahran in 1955:

At that time the multi-storeyed Housing Commission flats of Prahran were non-existent. All those areas held tightly packed tenement blocks of small houses. Young Australians tended to move into outer suburbs, while the elderly tended to stay in familiar surroundings. With decreasing earning power the old were often compelled to rent back rooms and outbuildings, often in squalid surroundings with no real facilities for cooking or heating.⁸⁶

During the 1950s unemployment seldom rose above 2 per cent. This, combined with the welfare provisions of the 1940s, led many to believe that poverty was no longer a problem in Australia. Throughout the 1950s and 1960s as stubborn causes of poverty emerged, State and Commonwealth governments brought in a series of *ad hoc* measures to stop up what were perceived as minor holes in the welfare safety net. Churches and what were now called 'service' rather than charitable groups took their own more local steps to deal with poverty. They reacted to 'need' as they saw it. In the 1950s most dealt with the elderly. The problems of large families, single parents, 'youth' and 'drugs' were only really 'discovered' on a significant scale in the late 1960s. These were not areas in which Prahran Council led the way. Neither were the descendants of the upper middle-class charitable ladies particularly prominent. Their efforts continued, but were more likely to be devoted to raising money for organisations concerned with a particular disease or disability. Those who pioneered provision for the elderly in Prahran were generally very different: Quakers, like Sarah Swinborn, for instance, working with elderly alcoholic women in South Yarra from the 1880s, or radical pacifists like Frank Hartley.

By the 1970s the range of non-governmental organisations working to help other people in Prahran was enormous. The Methodist Babies Home, for instance, was opened in 1929, on Copelin Street, South Yarra. Win Vears remembers collecting money for the Home through her local church: 'the Little Blue Book ... I used to collect from people for the Babies Home. All the churches were involved. Once a year one of the men from the Babies Home came to talk to each church ... I used to act as a guide, showing people around the Babies Home ...',⁸⁷ Over the years, the nature of the services changed, and the Copelin Street Centre began to concentrate more on adoption and family care and on providing family aides and specialist advice, with the assistance of considerable volunteer effort and private charitable donations.

Throughout the 20th century institutions such as the Alfred Hospital and the Red Cross have been assisted by the fund-raising efforts of



DURING THE WINTER OF 1957, PRAHRAN COUNCIL EMPLOYEES DELIVERED FIREWOOD TO PENSIONERS. THE COUNCIL BOUGHT THE WOOD FROM THE STATE FORESTS DEPARTMENT AND THE EMPLOYEES DELIVERED IT IN THEIR SPARE TIME.

hundreds and thousands of volunteers. Many have given fifty or more years of dedicated service. In the single year 1990/91 the Alfred Hospital Auxiliaries recognised fifty years service from Mrs J. Pritchard and twenty years service from five other volunteers. Constance Bryce, President of the Central Council of Auxiliaries, worked for the hospital for most of her life, and she has not been alone. Similarly, Margaret Parker began working for the Red Cross in 1929 and was Secretary sixty-two years later. The major local effort for the Red Cross is a door knock under Council sponsorship, and Lady Petty began the tradition of selling raffle tickets every weekend in March outside the family's newsagent shop in Toorak Village. The volunteers work in shifts, two to a table.

A comprehensive history of volunteer efforts in Prahran would require a large book to itself, and there is really no objective basis for mentioning some and not the others. The Prahran Methodist Mission, with its prominent building on Chapel Street, illustrates as well as any the growing range and complexity of services for the elderly poor.

Frank Hartley was a Methodist Minister and a foundation member of the World Peace Council. During the Cold War, peace activists were frequently branded as Communists. Although Menzies managed to have the Communist Party banned at the beginning of World War II, he failed to have it banned again in the 1950s—but only just. Like Catholics during World War I, Pacifists during the Cold War were regarded in some quarters as potentially disloyal subversives. In 1955 Frank Hartley was appointed as Superintendent of the Prahran Methodist Mission. He took over in an era when thinking on the role of such institutions was undergoing radical change. Charity was becoming a dirty word. Social welfare was provided instead:

The aftermath of war and the depression of the thirties had given city missions the image of soup kitchens and humiliating hand-outs. Progressives within and without the church recognised that new concepts of social welfare had to be found, enabling people to stand on their own feet and make their own contribution to society; new ways of helping without patronage, of giving without damaging self-respect, self-esteem or self-confidence of the recipient... By the fifties the trend was moving again. Increasingly local and government authorities were accepting responsibility for pensions, allowances, social welfare and care of the helpless.⁸⁸

Soup kitchens were no longer the fashion, but other and more varied kinds of services were provided, particularly for the elderly. In 1955 the Prahran Methodist Mission began providing wood. It was collected out in the bush and chopped by voluntary labour, then brought back to Prahran using a semi-trailer and driver provided by Mayne Nickless. Eventually the

job got too big for that system and so the Methodist Order of Knights in Warragul would collect the wood and send it in to Prahran by train in 6-foot lengths. It arrived at Toorak Station, from where volunteers collected it and cut it up into smaller lengths for stacking around the church buildings at Mt Erica.⁸⁹

In 1956 work began that eventually led to holiday cottages for the elderly and a youth camp at Somers on the Mornington Peninsula. Frank Hartley interviewed the first two women to holiday at the cottage on his weekly radio show. It was their first holiday away from Prahran since before the war 'and their first sea paddle for as long as either could remember'.⁹⁰

The Mission was also involved in the early provision of meals on wheels in Prahran. One of the volunteer workers at the Mission was Mrs Gladys Brearley, and she began delivering meals from the Mission cafe to the house-bound. At first, meals on wheels was meals on foot, but then Ruth Webster began to use her own car to deliver meals to the growing list of recipients, and eventually the Mission raised sufficient funds for a mini-van. By 1968 the Mission had to build a new, extended kitchen to cope with the demand and eventually the Council began contributing to the cost and referring their own applicants to the Mission.⁹¹

Meanwhile, elsewhere in Prahran others were also beginning to work for improved services for the aged. George Gahan was President of the Prahran Club for the Aged and in the late 1950s the members began building themselves a club house on Osborne Street, South Yarra. Collecting funds took some time and the building went up in stages, eventually providing kitchen facilities as well as a club room. In 1961 Cr Gahan tried to persuade the Council to help out with money for building materials. Voluntary labour was already arranged.⁹²

A little further south, Mary Veal was working for the Prahran Elderly Citizens Welfare Club. The club was formed in 1952 with Ms Veal as the foundation President. It met in the Protestant Hall, Cecil Street, but members went to the Will Sampson Centre for lunch. Will Sampson was a World War I veteran who became something of an expert in raising money for worthy causes. Between 1942 and 1945 he held the post of Organizer of the PPS and from the end of World War II until his death in 1951 he was Appeals Organizer for Prahran Council.⁹³

In the late 1960s no State government subsidies were available for meals on wheels services, but they were available for elderly citizens' clubs —up to 80 per cent of the running costs, in fact. Prahran Council began sponsoring meals on wheels services based around clubs such as these, using club kitchen facilities and volunteer networks. Government advice was that meals 'should be limited to those elderly persons who, because of sickness or infirmity, are unable to provide adequate nourishment for

themselves. Consequently a meal should only be provided on receipt of a medical certificate from a doctor or district nurse', and reviewed regularly. Recipients were expected to pay anything from the full cost downwards, 'according to their means'.⁹⁴

Capital grants were available to the Council for building elderly citizens' clubs on a \$2 for \$1 basis. It was expected that volunteers would actually deliver the meals—'Red Cross or one of the Service Clubs'. Charity was no longer fashionable and volunteers and local councils had a complex structured role to play in government-organised welfare provision. Indeed, the interlocking nature of funding and work sometimes made it difficult to disentangle whether a particular service was provided by government or voluntary effort. The foundation stone of the Izett Street Child Minding Centre, for instance, was laid by Mayor George Gahan in 1971, and a plaque was set up to commemorate the fact. This led to considerable acrimony on the grounds that the plaque glorified Cr George Gahan and had failed to mention that the Prahran Rotary Club had donated \$5000 towards the building cost.⁹⁵ In 1972 the building was renamed the Rotary Wing of the Prahran City Council Day Nursery and a plaque to this effect was unveiled by Mayor Bill Dane.

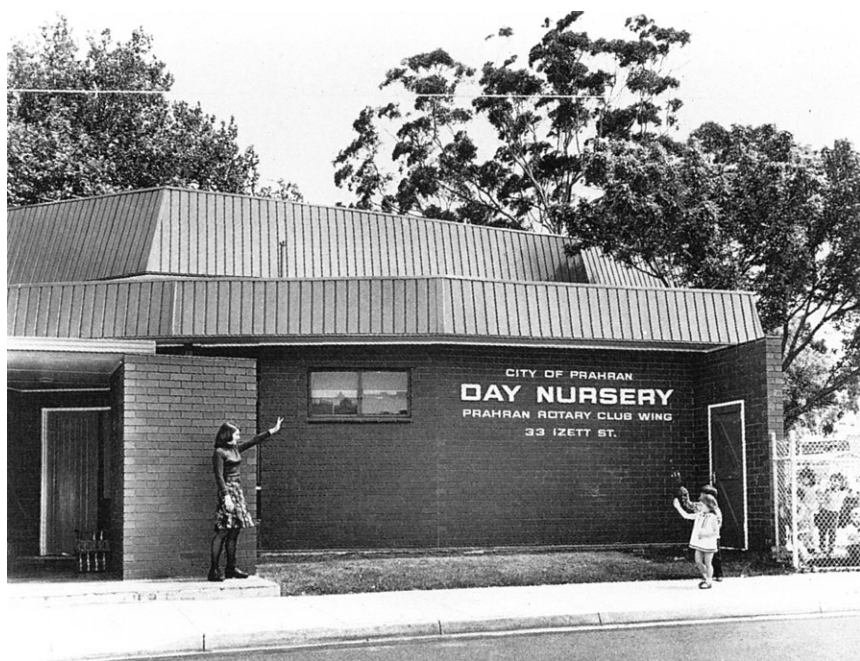
The overall impression from the 1960s and 1970s is that everyone was striving to get funding for their favourite charitable venture from some level of government. Both George Gahan and Mary Veal wanted money from the Council for their elderly citizens' clubs, and they were not alone. Meanwhile, the Council itself was attempting to get funding from the State and Commonwealth governments. When Charles Hodges was appointed as Prahran's new Welfare Officer in 1969, he was able to argue that: 'One of my functions as welfare officer will be to ensure that the council does not become overladen with welfare work which is the proper responsibility of the Government'.⁹⁶ This did not appear on his job description but was his own contribution to local thinking on welfare. It seems to have met with the approval of a majority of councillors. His role was originally envisaged as a co-ordinator and adviser to local welfare groups.⁹⁷ By 1969 a list of 'Direct Helping Services' provided by Commonwealth and State governments covered three pages of closely typed text and included services as varied as War Widows Pensions and Hospital Travel Allowances for Pensioners—and then there were all the voluntary groups.

By the late 1960s there were so many organisations involved in welfare provision, most of them in one way or another linked to various levels of government by complicated funding provisions, that simply working out who was doing what had become a major task. Cr George Gahan was chairman of the Prahran Welfare Council, set up in February 1969 to attempt to co-ordinate welfare provision in Prahran. 'Unmarried mothers and

deserted wives, poverty, aged people who need care, youth and migrant problems' were amongst the areas where co-ordination seemed to be necessary. There were plenty of opportunities for volunteers to feel aggrieved in areas of overlap between the multiplicity of organisations. There was also a good chance that the public would not know what was available.

The Prahran Citizens' Advisory Service on Vine Street, Windsor, was opened by Mayor Charles Lux in March 1969. The service was a good example of the complicated mix of private and public effort. It was sponsored by the Cairnmillar Institute and also supported by the Council to 'offer information on local matters, and guidance on how to use and benefit from community service organizations and State and Federal Government welfare departments'.⁹⁸

The range of services provided by experts had become so great and so diverse that a whole new category of experts was set up, just to tell people what all the others were doing.



THE IZETT STREET DAY NURSERY HAS TWO SEPARATE PLAQUES COMMEMORATING THE LAYING OF THE FOUNDATION STONE BY MAYOR GEORGE GAHAN IN 1971 AND THE OFFICIAL OPENING BY MAYOR BILL DANE IN 1972.

Generally in this era, Prahran was not a particular pioneer in the range and complexity of services provided within its boundaries. The Health Department of the Council remained active in preventative health care, providing vaccination services to both children and adults, for instance. But it was no longer a centre for innovation in public health provision as it had been in the 1920s and 1930s. However, in the late 1960s Prahran did embark on an innovative measure of income support for the elderly.

In 1968, mainly as a result of a campaign initiated by Cr Fred Farrall, Prahran became the first Council to grant 50 per cent rate remission to pensioners. In 1972/73, this was increased to a 100 per cent rebate, and it was not means tested. The initiative is interesting. It was rather expensive for Prahran which, by then, had a particularly high and growing proportion of elderly ratepayers, but, of course, it also had a particularly high and growing proportion of elderly voters in Council elections. Rate rebates illustrate some of the enormous differences in thinking between the 1920s and the 1970s. In the 1920s decision making on charitable provision revolved around what the givers thought of the receivers. In the 1970s decision making on welfare provision revolved around pressure groups and the ballot box and included taking account of the views of the recipients of welfare. The assumption that governments should provide through the tax or ratepayer's dollar permeated thinking at all levels.

In 1975 the Commonwealth government opened a branch of the Department of Social Security on Chapel Street. Mayor Colin Bell took the opportunity to call for more government assistance:

'Local councils are having to bear too much of the burden of social welfare today.

'We are spending far too much of our ratepayers' money on facilities which should be provided by government, because government is there for all the people and not just the few . . .' Pointing out the high concentration of pensioners in Prahran, Cr Bell called for particular help in funding local rate remissions.

'The Federal Government should pay for remission of pensioners' council and Board of Works rates. Prahran was one of the few councils to remit rates.

'Prahran ran child-minding services which got a government grant, but not enough to provide the service required', he said.

Cr Bell pointed out that the Council also provided a social worker to handle housing and other problems, an occupational therapist and an interpreter service. The Mayor of St Kilda echoed his calls to pass the tax buck back down."

If the range of Council services was great in 1975, a decade later it was even greater. This was despite the general moves in the late 1970s and

1980s to attempt to increase the application of the 'user pays' principle. The overwhelming picture of welfare services in the 1980s was their complexity. Perhaps rather fewer were free at the point of use in 1989 than in 1969, but the processes by which they were funded and run were, if anything, more complicated than ever. Armies of experts and volunteers worked together on what no one any longer claimed was a welfare safety net, and the growing unemployment of the 1990s exposed gaping holes in their ever more complex cat's cradle of service provision.

In 1985, among the services available in Prahran were four Council infant welfare centres and a pre-school Child Development Officer; two family planning clinics; The Copelin Street Family Centre in South Yarra run by the Uniting Church offered services which included foster care, a family aide service, family counselling and emergency accommodation; the Australian Jewish Welfare and Relief Society, also in South Yarra, provided a Council-approved adoption agency; abortions were available at the Planned Parenthood Clinic on High Street; adult literacy classes were available at the Migrant Resource Centre on Victoria Street, Windsor, and the John Macrae Centre at the Uniting Church on Toorak Road provided craftwork, hot lunches and a physiotherapist for the elderly. There was even an aged foster grandparents' scheme associated with an organisation named after someone who featured earlier in this chapter; the Dame Mary Herring Children's Accommodation on Huntingtower Road, Armadale, was run by the Spastic Society and older people were invited to act as foster grandparents to the children.¹ It was all a long way from the Ladies' Benevolent Society.

Educating Prahran the Government Way

Schools are places where parents send their children to be given ideas by other adults. This is the formal agenda, but parents also know very well that their children are informally given ideas by other children. The immediate questions suggested by this way of looking at education are: 'What sort of ideas?'; 'How do the ideas vary from school to school?'; and 'How much choice do parents and/or their children have in the matter?'. Chapters 7 and 8 attempt to provide some answers to these questions.

Since the introduction of free, compulsory education in Victoria in 1872, children and their parents have risked conflict with the law if they tried to avoid school altogether, but at least, if they chose the State system, it didn't cost them very much when they got there. In fact, one of the major trends of the 20th century has seen parents and children choosing to consume larger and larger quantities of education and governments spending more and more money meeting this consumer demand. This pattern can be divided into three major stages.

Firstly, by the 1920s most children were attending school at least until the minimum leaving age of fourteen. This increase in regular attendance was associated with a rise in basic numeracy and literacy skills. In this era most people chose State primary education, while secondary education was almost entirely confined to those whose parents could afford to pay for it through the private sector. Even in the private sector, the number of secondary students was small and several schools faced the problem of attracting sufficient pupils to stay in business.

Secondly, after World War II there was a dramatic increase in the demand for education beyond the minimum leaving age. Enrolments at schools in the private sector increased substantially and their financial position was further improved by a return to government funding for selected projects. In this era, large numbers of State (and Catholic) secondary schools were built to deal with the increased demand for places. In 1920, for instance, Prahran had no government-funded provision for education past the age of fifteen with the exception of a few places at the Prahran Technical and Art School. In 1990 Prahran had a selective boys' high school, a comprehensive co-educational secondary college, an 'alternative' secondary college, a Technical and Further Education (TAFE) institution and a tertiary college. This boom in post-compulsory education first became obvious in the 1950s and it was sustained for three decades as the children born in the 'baby boom' after the war grew up and went through school.

The third phase in the trend towards consuming more and more education was less obvious at first, because it involved children born in the 1970s, who were likely to come from smaller families than their parents. They not only showed an inclination to stay at school longer than they had to by law, but were also more likely than their parents to go on to some form of further education. During the 1970s and 1980s there was substantial growth in the number and range of tertiary places offered in Prahran. Despite this growth, in the 1990s the demand for tertiary places exceeded supply.

Meanwhile, the primary sector of education was shrinking as the number of young children in Prahran declined. Schools that had been bursting at the seams in the 1920s were closing for lack of customers in the 1990s.

STATE PRIMARY SCHOOLS

In the 1920s most of the children of Prahran went to school on a regular basis, and most of them attended the free, secular State schools. This had not always been the case. In her book *Across the Slate*, Jane Chatham describes the variety of church, private venture and common schools that existed before the Education Act of 1872.¹ Even after attendance became compulsory⁷, not all children went to school on a daily basis. After all, until 1889 the law only required them to attend on ninety days per year. At Hawksburn school, for instance, then known as Prahran, the number on the roll in 1875 was 1616, but average daily attendance was only 737.² By the 1920s this gap between enrolments and attendance had shrunk dramatically. Going to school was now what all but a tiny minority of

children did between the ages of five and fourteen.³ The result was almost perpetual overcrowding in Prahran's State schools.

South Yarra State School (SS 583) was the earliest local school to be run by the Education Department. Founded in 1854 it was run as a Presbyterian Church school until taken over in 1872.⁴ Although well attended, it was never as big as Hawksburn (SS 1467) which was built in 1875 to replace no less than three already overcrowded Common schools. Hawksburn served one of the most densely populated parts of Prahran, where relatively large families went with the small houses crowded on narrow streets. In 1911 a new infant building was opened with room for 300 children, but despite this, accommodation was stretched to the limit as upwards of a thousand children turned up every morning. Some idea of the size of the school can be gauged from the fact that more than 800 Old Boys served in World War I, and then, of course, there were all the girls.

Reg Rogers attended Hawksburn in this period, leaving in 1923-24. The children sat in rows on wooden forms and the floor was stepped up towards the back of the classroom. At the front was a blackboard on a small dais from where the teacher presided over the room. Mr Rogers remembers being taught maths, English, geometry, poetry and recitation, writing with pens that they dipped in inkwells on the desks. They used to put wattle seeds in the inkwells and the result 'smelt like blazes'.⁵ Every Monday morning the children gathered to salute the flag and recite: 'I love God and my country; I honour the flag; I will serve the King, and cheerfully obey my parents, teachers and the laws'.⁶ Mainly, however, Mr Rogers remembered the games. The official agenda of the school was what went on in the classroom, but what they learnt in the playground was sometimes more important to the children. The yard at Hawksburn was unpaved and in spring the boys would dig a hole in the dirt and take bets on throwing cherry stones—cherry bobs—from a certain distance. Around the time of the Melbourne Cup every year, cherry bobs mysteriously became a kind of playground currency. Peep shows were constructed in boot boxes and the boys paid cherry bobs to look inside. They also played a game called Toodlum Bucks. The names of race horses were fixed to a spinning disk constructed from a broom handle, nails, cardboard and string, and the children bet cherry bobs on the outcome of the race.

Mr Rogers also remembers collecting silk worms from white mulberry trees. They kept the worms in a box and the cocoons of silk were taken and dropped in water and the silk could then gradually be wound up. The yard at Hawksburn was also home to generations of marble players and to the more organised games of foot races and Siamese, or three-legged, races.

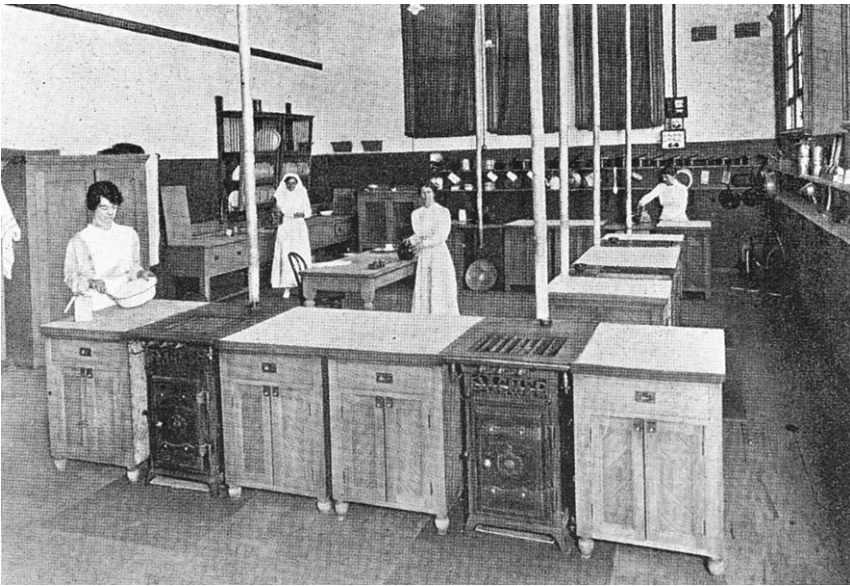


EMPIRE DAY CELEBRATIONS AT ARMADALE STATE SCHOOL, 1937

If you were good enough, you were picked to take part in the races against other schools held every year on the Prahran Football Ground.⁷

The third State school in Prahran was Windsor (SS 1896). It was opened in 1877 with an enrolment of more than 700 and until World War II average attendance was around 500. Like Hawksburn, it served a densely populated area of small houses and was frequently overcrowded. In 1912 the problem was so severe that for a while the headmaster had to refuse to take more children. Expansions in the buildings in 1915 eased the situation a little, but large classes remained the norm throughout the inter-war years. Around the turn of the century, a cookery centre was set up at Windsor and another, possibly better equipped, at Armadale (SS 2634). The obvious function of the centres was to provide equipment for cookery lessons for the girls, but they also operated as canteens or restaurants, selling meals to help cover costs.⁸

From the beginning, the cookery centre at Armadale was very much more outward looking. It provided instruction for girls from a number of surrounding schools, sent meals to the armed services at Caulfield Hospital during World War I and fed the occupants of the infant hall in 1919 while this was being used as an emergency influenza hospital. During the 1920s the kitchen was also used on a daily basis to provide meals for up to fifteen local business people: 'After cooking a three course meal the girls were required to wait on table before having their own lunch'. Armadale was



THE COOKERY CENTRE AT ARMADALE STATE SCHOOL IN 1919: NURSES ARE PREPARING FOOD FOR THE PATIENTS IN THE TEMPORARY INFLUENZA HOSPITAL IN THE INFANT HALL.

also a specialist centre for sewing and woodwork and boys from six surrounding schools, including Windsor, Prahran and Toorak Central came to attend Sloyd classes, especially in woodwork. By the 1950s Armadale was catering to about four hundred visiting pupils.⁹

Jean Taylor and Freda Harridane are among those who remember attending such specialist classes at Armadale. It was taken for granted that the girls would study cooking and sewing while the boys confined themselves to wood-work and metalwork. Jean Taylor walked to Armadale once a week from her regular classes at Toorak Central, and Freda Harridane travelled the greater distance from Prahran (SS 2855). Ms Harridane remembers Prahran as a strict school. She was sent off with her older sister on her first day and instructed to put her feet firmly on the floor as she sat on the bench. The teacher went around smacking the legs of those who disobeyed 'but my feet wouldn't reach the floor'. The strict discipline was retained through all grades. For the older children the day began with mental arithmetic. The teacher would call out a question and the children vied to be the first to put up their hand with the right answer. The classroom was strictly segregated by sex. Boys did not sit next to girls. Indeed, one of the punishments for a girl was to make her sit next to a boy. Other punishments were more severe. To the strap that Mr Rogers remembered

from Hawksburn, at least one teacher at Prahran added a ruler: 'They were allowed to do dreadful things to the boys'.¹⁰

Lindsay Fox attended Prahran State School during the 1940s

If you ever had a dispute with a fellow, you'd go and see the Principal, Pop Lowen, and he would draw a boxing ring in chalk on the asphalt. He would then put the boxing gloves on you and the person that you had the conflict with and he would referee the bout. Every one would be outside of the ring and he had a little whip and he'd whip your feet or your legs if you crossed the line . . . and you settled your disputes by fisticuffs in the true Marquess of Queensbury fashion . . .¹¹

Away from the classroom, life revolved around friends and prowess at sport, rather than academic subjects. Having a 'tough girl' for a friend could be an advantage against bullying. Girls and boys played different ball games. One girls' game involved two rows throwing a ball back and forth and another involved passing the ball over their heads. The boys played tunnel ball, passing the ball between their legs. Like Hawksburn, children from Prahran took part in the annual combined school sports, and there was considerable pride when one year the girls won the basketball and they were photographed for the local paper.¹²



PRAHRAN STATE SCHOOL ON HIGH STREET, 1922: THE SCHOOL OPENED IN 1888 AND CLOSED IN 1990. THE BUILDING WAS LATER USED BY THE GOULD LEAGUE OF VICTORIA, AN ORGANISATION CONCERNED WITH ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION.

Shirley Paine, nee McConnochie, attended Prahran in the 1930s and enjoyed it: 'I found it incredible, all those people chanting all those things—spelling, multiplication tables, addition and subtraction tables . . .',¹³ In the asphalt yard outside there was a gutter between the girls' and boys' playgrounds. The boys had peppercorn trees on their side. Like Freda Harridane, Shirley Paine remembers the girls playing crossball, passing the ball diagonally, and the boys playing tunnel ball. There was also a lot of hopscotch and games with skipping ropes on the girls' side of the gutter. The young Shirley McConnochie walked home for lunch but some of the other children would buy penny potato slices dipped in batter from the fish and chip shop next door in High Street.

The Monday morning ceremony of saluting the flag was still followed to the letter, as it had been since it was instituted as a 'loyal and patriotic observance' by the Minister of Education in 1914 'On Monday morning everybody stood to attention in our lines in the school grounds, the flag was raised, boys had to salute the flag and girls just stood there and there was something we said . . .'.¹⁴

Mrs Paine couldn't remember 'I love God and my country . . .' but she remembered that some of the children had no shoes. In the central school there was a uniform. The girls wore a navy tunic, black shoes and black lisle stockings, even in summer, but they could wear a cotton dress with a white collar if they had one, and a blazer.¹⁵

The sixth State school in Prahran was Toorak Central (SS 3016), opened in 1888: 'Toorak Central was an excellent school . . . It was considered a cut above the State schools . . . We did a language, French . . . and we did science'. Jean Taylor attended Toorak Central in the 1920s and cut above the others or not was glad to have a protector in the playground: 'In most schools there are bullies . . . any of those rough girls go for me . . . she'd scratch their eyes out. It was a mixed area—quality and not quality . . . a venue for the wealthy and areas which were poor'. The classrooms were remembered as very big and cold in winter. There was a low platform for the teacher with a fireplace behind: 'He was the only one who got the heat'. Jean Taylor remembers being taught arithmetic, geometry, algebra, English, geography, history, French, science and drawing, which she particularly enjoyed.¹⁶

Mrs Rogers also attended Toorak Central and remembers playing rounders, but it was mainly basketball for the girls and cricket for the boys. She did well in arithmetic, spelling, geography and history but Mrs Rogers maintains that 'sewing and what cooking I ever did I learnt from my mother and Reg's mother'.¹⁷

The birth-rate fell during the 1930s, and the numbers attending Prahran's State schools had eased a little by World War II. After the war,

the birth-rate rose dramatically and the post-war baby boom is associated with changing attitudes towards children. In the newspapers, on the radio and in a wide range of social activities children received a greater degree of attention. In public life, too, the emphasis shifted perceptibly from the world of adults, where if children appeared at all they were to be seen and not heard, to the world of home and family, including children.

The annual reports of the Prahran Council reflect this change. Until the 1940s children were hardly ever mentioned and only appear in the background in photographs concerned with such specialist matters as the opening of children's playgrounds. From the late 1940s children pop up all over the place. The births of Charles and Anne to the Princess Elizabeth were recorded. The activities of the Prahran Younger Set received almost as much space as the Mayoral Balls and in 1949 the Mayor, E. L. Jones, was photographed almost completely buried in children whilst opening new traffic lights opposite Hawksburn State School.

However, changes in Prahran and other inner suburbs resulted in a decline in the numbers of children attending school, just at the time when children were most fashionable. This was because the young couples of the working-class areas around Hawksburn, Prahran and Windsor schools frequently chose to move out to the new suburbs to bring up their children. Even at Armadale the number of children on the roll fell from 512 in 1932 to 366 in 1945 and about 300 in the 1950s.¹⁸ At Hawksburn, enrolments fell from over 1000 to less than 700 by 1965.¹⁹

At the same time as enrolments were falling, the kind of children attending Prahran's schools was undergoing a dramatic change. Jocelyn Newman, a migrant from England, attended Windsor State School in the 1950s. She was joined by children from Greece, Hungary and Germany. The recent migrants, mainly from Europe, joined the Australian-born children in the classroom and on the playground:

Everybody went to the local State school . . . There was a beautiful peppercorn tree . . . It was a nice school . . . a good feeling, but there were some very strange teachers. One little lady used to have violent outbursts of temper . . . she had a preoccupation with the strap . . . used to go very red in the face and put all her power into one almighty stroke which hardly touched your hand . . . The maths teacher was very withdrawn and spoke in a monotone without moving his lips. I learned a number of Christmas carols and hymns [Ms Newman is Jewish]. I learned the Anzac song that we sang every Anzac Day. I learned the little thing that we used to say every Monday morning . . .²⁰

The main team sports for girls were rounders and racquet ball, but Ms Newman loved the skipping: 'big ropes, double ropes—whole hordes of girls . . . only the best skippers were allowed. We had rhymes. I remember a lot—Far Out Brussel Sprout . . .'



THE MAYOR OF PRAHRAN IN 1949, CR E. L. JONES, WITH CHILDREN FROM HAWKSURN STATE SCHOOL: THEY ARE ABOUT TO TEST THE NEW CROSSING LIGHTS ON MALVERN ROAD.

Lindy Cox was at Toorak Central State School in the same era. She lived in one of the flats of a converted mansion that was joined to a new block of flats on what had been part of the garden. About thirty children of various ages and ethnic backgrounds lived there and played together in the remaining grounds. They played ball games, built cubbies and even put on theatrical shows, and most of them went to Toorak Central School.

Although they played together at home, at school they were segregated by age and sex like the other children.

Mrs Cox remembers that there were about fifty children in each grade at Toorak and one-third of them were migrants—Hungarian, German, Polish, Israeli, Czech, Swedish, Greek:

We had poor kids from the slums and the very rich kids . . . parents would start them off there and then send them to a private school after grade 2 or 3 . . . the American Consul's kids . . . the Swedish Church, the Padre's children. Parents came in and showed slides . . . we learnt a lot that way. There was not a lot of racial prejudice.

We were very loyal to school—everybody loved Toorak . . . It was just a lovely school, a happy school.²¹

Mrs Cox is now a teacher herself, but remembers the teaching at Toorak as good. Clearly she did well there.

John Velos has equally positive memories of Hawksburn from a decade or so later. Pupil numbers at Hawksburn increased significantly in 1966 with the opening of the first adjacent Housing Commission flats: In my late primary years the flats were built across the road. Some of the children



CHILDREN AT HAWKSBURN STATE SCHOOL IN 1955: THE CLASS, INCLUDING JOHN SHINKFIELD IN THE FOREGROUND, IS BEING TAKEN BY A VISITING TEACHER.

from there were pretty ragged looking. Very few children came with their parents . . . They crossed the road on their own'. Mr Velos vividly remembers a collection of stuffed birds at Hawksburn in glass cases: 'Australian parrots, kookaburras . . . many types . . . very colourful as you went up the stairs'. He spent his lunch times looking at them and began a lifetime's love of birds. Mr Velos was at the school for four years until 1968 and although there was a high proportion of migrants, Greek like himself, or Italian and Yugoslavian, there were no facilities for non-English speakers, no remedial classes and no Greek-speaking teachers. But despite this, his memories are positive: 'We had some lovely teachers . . . dedicated . . . I was very good at maths and enjoyed history and geography . . . there was some Australian history . . .' Games were also important at Hawksburn, particularly marbles. The boys played a large range of games with them, including, on occasion, marksmanship with slingshots. There was also cricket, football and a racquet game. In the early 1960s handwriting classes still featured nib pens and porcelain inkwells which the children queued up for the teacher to fill. By the end of the decade ballpoint pens had arrived, revolutionising writing procedure.²²

By this stage, far more radical changes were beginning to affect primary schools. The rote learning of the inter-war years had already gone, but until the 1960s the curriculum at all levels remained heavily influenced by academic criteria as represented by the entrance examinations for the University of Melbourne. The late 1960s saw a marked shift away from this approach. A decade later team teaching, open-plan classrooms and child-centred learning were on the agenda, even if they were adopted with varying degrees of enthusiasm. The overall result was a reduced emphasis on formality and discipline at the same time as the adoption of a broader curriculum and an increased use of project work. 'All those people chanting all those things' in the 1930s had been replaced by an approach which encouraged children to find things out for themselves.

Meanwhile, the population of Prahran was falling and the number of children was falling even more rapidly as the area became popular with young, single people, two-income families with few or no children and the retired. Gone were the days when Hawksburn State School alone struggled to accommodate close to 1000 children. In 1982 there were just 1618 children in Prahran's six State primary schools and by 1992 the number had fallen to 913.²³

At the end of 1990 the school at 67 High Street closed. Following a lengthy period of consultation with the school community, the Prahran and Windsor Primary Schools merged. There was a certain amount of sadness but the merger was accepted as in the best interests of the children.²⁴ The old State school building remained in educational use as the home

of the Gould League of Victoria. The League produces specialist material on environmental education.

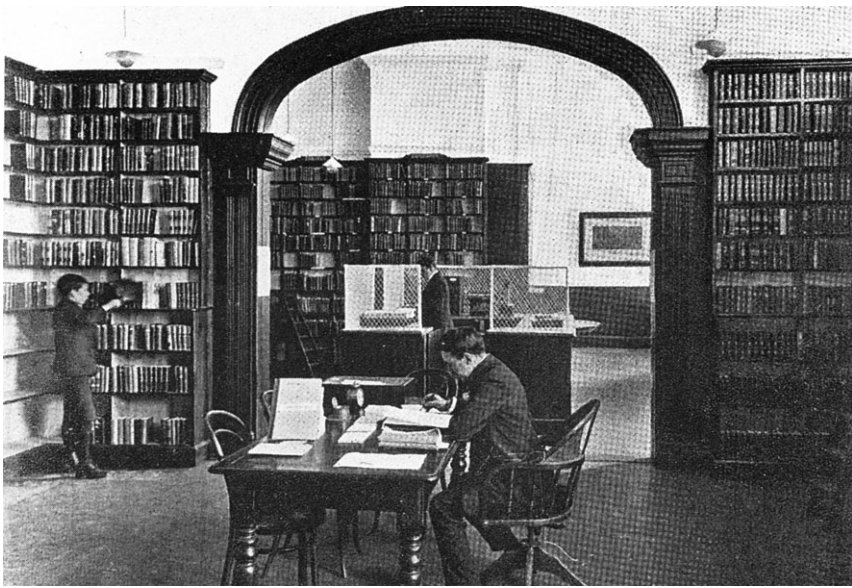
The Prahran Windsor Primary School continued as very much a community school for the south-west corner of Prahran. The Greek community remained important, but children with Greek and Australian-born parents were joined by the children of more recent Chinese and Russian migrants. Parents were encouraged to participate in decision making through the School Council. In the 1920s the parents of children at State schools more or less had to hand them over every morning to be dealt with in whatever manner the Education Department, the Head Teacher and the individual teacher considered best. In the 1990s parental involvement with the school was not only allowed, it was positively encouraged.²⁵

PRAHRAN MUNICIPAL LIBRARY

Schools are not the only places in Prahran that were built to pass on information. From an early date the City also had libraries. Work on the Prahran Town Hall began in 1860, and from the beginning it was designed with a special room for the 'Free Public Library'. During the 1870s William Nunnington was employed to look after the books and he seems to have doubled as a deputy to the Town Clerk when John Craven was out collecting rates.²⁶ The library was much used and a new and larger room was opened in 1878.

Prahran's library was modelled on what was to become the State Library in Melbourne and operated as a reference library only. However, in 1902 A. E. McMicken was appointed as librarian and one of his ideas was to begin lending books to the public. The lending library was duly opened by the Mayor, E. H. Willis, in 1914 and soon had hundreds of customers, but the Council was a little disturbed to find that members of the public were more inclined to borrow fiction than anything else. It was decided to allow borrowers to take out two books at a time, provided that at least one was not a 'novel': 'Almost imperceptibly to the borrower the librarian in this way seeks to extend the usefulness of the Library, and to stimulate in the minds of the borrowers a taste for a better class of books, and even for literature itself.'²⁷

In 1918, a children's library was added and proved very popular. It was only the second such library in Australia, the first having been opened in Sydney. For three afternoons a week, local children turned up to sit at the tables and read, or borrow books. In the 1920s fairy tales were particularly popular. In 1922 the children's library was visited by a reporter from the *Age*, who noted that 'Many of the little readers at Prahran are



THE PRAHRAN FREE LENDING LIBRARY IN 1923

obviously from homes where books could not be bought'.²⁸ Molly Leeper was among the volunteers who helped Enid Joske with the books and the children in the building in the yard of the Town Hall. In later years the children's library acquired a more permanent home on Greville Street.

In 1934 the American Carnegie Corporation sponsored a survey of libraries in Australia that became known as the Munn-Pitt Report, after its two authors. They found that Prahran had the second largest rate-supported free library in the country.²⁹ It is interesting and perhaps significant that the two best examples of work with children are at Sydney and Prahran—the two leading municipal libraries' noted the Munn-Pitt Report'.³⁰ This report was influential in the events leading up to legislation to establish municipal libraries around Australia, the relevant Victorian legislation following in 1946. Until then Prahran Library, although not unique, was very much a pioneer. For more than eighty years Prahran Council and its appointed librarians had been providing information for the local citizens. As the quote from Cooper suggests, their objectives were more educational than recreational and the Library attempted to set something of a high moral tone. While Mr McMicken was Librarian he added to the range of services by instituting winter lectures. These were held once a month and intellectuals of all sorts lectured on a wide range of subjects that could all be broadly described as 'educational'. In 1924, for instance,

Miss Jean Robinson MA, lectured on Ancient Egypt; the Vice Principal of the Teachers Training College spoke on 'Germany's Problem—Reconstruction or Bolshevism?'; Dr A. E. Floyd lectured on music; a representative from the Melbourne Trades Hall spoke on the Geneva Conference and the Chief Inspector of Secondary Schools gave an illustrated talk on High Schools in America.

Edna Haynes joined the staff of the library in 1940 and subsequently served as Reference Librarian, Children's Librarian and from 1952 to 1975, City Librarian. The winter lectures continued for many years and Miss Haynes remembered that the mailing list for the syllabus included addresses all over greater Melbourne. In the 1950s the Council acquired a 16 mm movie projector and operating it was the only part of her work that Miss Haynes did not enjoy. She was too nervous about the whole procedure: 'The library belonged to the State Film Centre and had access to a wonderful range of films'. In later years, Miss Haynes was allowed to employ someone to operate the projector and she could enjoy the films.

The paternalistic concern for the population of Prahran remained. For a while there were doubts about the suitability of some of the films being shown to children in Chapel Street's cinemas on Saturday afternoons, so rival free picture shows were held in the Small Hall under the



MS J. McCALLAN, THE RETIRING CHILDREN'S LIBRARIAN, BEING PRESENTED WITH FLOWERS ON HER RETIREMENT IN APRIL 1946.

patronage of the Mayoress. At this stage Miss Haynes was still operating the projector: 'Relax dear, relax, the Mayoress would say. Fortunately the local theatres changed their policies so we stopped that. All things to all people that library'.³¹

Generations of Prahran residents grew up using the Library from childhood into old age. As migrants arrived in increasing numbers in the post-war years, the Library tried to cater for them with foreign language books, but with limited success. Miss Haynes tried to learn Greek but didn't get very far. She enjoyed the dancing. Unfortunately the International Book Club through which the Library ordered had only a limited range and it ended up with more books in Ancient Greek than in the modern language. Over time the situation improved with assistance from the Council's Migration Officer, but it remained easier to cater for the children of the Greek community than the adults.

By this stage, most municipal councils had joined Prahran and set up libraries. The librarians around greater Melbourne got together and started a scheme of library specialisation and inter-library loans. Prahran's specialities became political science and Welsh literature—one big subject and one small one. The demands for books on political science were enormous. The libraries operated a van which called around the western suburbs one day and the eastern suburbs the next. On average, a borrower through this inter-library loan system could have the book the following day.

In 1946 an English librarian, Lionel McColvin, visited Prahran and made two major recommendations. The first was that the reference stock should be made available for loan and this was done by about 1948. However, in the 1950s Miss Haynes found she had to return to maintaining a special reference collection for a while because 'the boys from Melbourne High set up cartels to close the market on one book—they'd pass it from one to the other . . .', a sure sign of a much-used library.³² The other major recommendation for change from the McColvin Report was that the library service should be within pram-pushing distance of every home. The fashion for children and families had entered the thinking of librarians as well as everybody else. Prahran Council began to consider branch libraries.

Armada was the first branch opened, in 1951, on High Street. Over the years it grew and moved into larger premises in the 1970s. The second branch was opened in the Village Theatre, Toorak, a decade later, and again grew so much that it had to move into larger premises—two rooms next to Hall's shoe shop. The third branch was opened at South Yarra in 1967 in the old Post Office building. All three operated on a part-time basis, but with a steady tendency towards increasing use and longer hours of opening.³³

Unfortunately, the Toorak premises were rented on a short-term lease and in the early 1970s the South Yarra premises were under threat from road development. The Council decided to build a single new library between the two on the corner of Cromwell and Toorak Roads. However, the early 1970s was a time of particularly deeply felt divisions on the Prahran Council. The pro-development group, including George and Chris Gahan, Bill Dane and Charles Lux, who was Chairman of the Library Committee in 1972, was in favour of building a grand new library and cultural centre. The anti-development councillors, including Keith Nicholls and Fred Farrall, opposed the new library, mainly on the grounds of cost but also on the grounds of convenience and location. They argued that it was not in a shopping centre, relatively difficult to get to and that the basement would be liable to flooding. In addition there were all manner of allegations about shady land deals. Meanwhile, library staff had produced a major feasibility study of what kinds of people lived where and which of them used the library. Mayor Bill Dane laid the foundation stone for the Toorak/ South Yarra Library in August 1972, and it was opened twelve months later.³⁴

In 1978 the Council again reviewed library services and it was decided to move the headquarters to the Toorak/South Yarra building. A few years later, major refurbishments to the Town Hall saw the original library moved downstairs in the Town Hall building, providing much easier access for the elderly, the disabled and mothers with pushers. They no longer had to negotiate all those steps to get to the books.³⁵

THE MECHANICS' INSTITUTE AND EDUCATING PRAHRAN

In the 1990s the Prahran Mechanics' Institute was mainly known for holding one of the better local history collections in Victoria. This represented a new lease of life for a library that had oscillated between limping mediocrity and successful innovation since 1854. It is one of the few Mechanics' Institute libraries to have survived the Victorian Municipal Libraries Act of 1946 and has therefore been much written about. While elsewhere in Victoria during the 1950s similar libraries withered away in the face of competition from the new, free, rate-supported municipal libraries, Prahran Mechanics nearly faded away in the 19th century—for the same reason.³⁶

In 1854 a small band of public-minded citizens founded the Prahran Mechanics' Institute as a variation on similar institutes they had known in Britain. The Prahran Council held its first meetings in the Institute's building on Chapel Street and F.J. Sargood, James Mason, J. B. Crews and

Andrew Izett were all active members of both bodies.³ John Romanis was Secretary of the Institute, his son William was Librarian and his grandson John was later to be a long serving and notable Town Clerk. The Mechanics' and the Council were, it could be said, closely linked.

When John Butler Cooper wrote his revised history of Prahran in 1924 there seems to have been some confusion as to exactly which library fell within the purview of William Romanis. The Municipal Library is usually cited as having been founded in 1860, but at that date there was no Town Hall and no City Librarian. Cooper simply says that when the Town Hall was completed in 1861 'the library' was moved from the Mechanics' to the Town Hall premises and a number of books belonging to the Council, as well as their habitual readers, shifted venues at the same time.³⁸ The Mechanics' Institute Library suffered a decline while the Municipal Library embarked on a period of rapid growth.

In his history of the Mechanics', Laurie McCalman entitles the chapter on the period 1863-1900 'Fall and Resurrection' and that is more or less what happened. The resurrection came via the Council and government intervention in 1899 to give control to a committee consisting of the Mayor, four members of Prahran Council and four members elected by subscribers to the library. In 1900 the new committee appointed J. H. Furneaux as Secretary. Some indication of the extent of the fall can be gleaned from the fact that virtually all the old books had to be burned and the library collection rebuilt.³⁹

Whether by accident or design, the Mechanics' then hit upon a recipe for success as a library in opposition to the services provided at the Town Hall. The City Library did not at the time lend books, and even when it did after 1914 it tried to encourage a certain moral tone. The Mechanics', in contrast, began to stock up with 'up-to-date fiction'.⁴⁰ As a result membership grew and the Mechanics' enjoyed a boom period. Readers who exhausted the possibilities of popular fiction supplied by the Town Hall moved on to a larger collection, which after 1914 was housed in the new Mechanics' Institute building on High Street.

In the inter-war years there were no longer any conscious efforts to educate the reading public through the kind of books offered in the library, but the Prahran Mechanics' had not lost touch with the original educational aims of the Mechanics' Institute movement. One of the few activities that had kept the Mechanics' afloat in the latter years of the 19th century was the provision of lectures and talks, and from 1870 classes had been offered in art and design. After 1900 Furneaux had revived these ideas with some enthusiasm. In 1905 the Institute began offering cookery classes. Then in 1908 Mr Furneaux persuaded Mr T. Levick from the Working Men's College (RMIT) to begin part-time art classes. In 1909 the

Prahran Technical Art School was registered with the Education Department. This grew so rapidly that the original Chapel Street building became inadequate. The new building on High Street was opened in 1915. Prahran Mechanics' Institute built it, but then leased it to the Education Department for a nominal rent and it became the home of the Prahran Technical School, as well as the Mechanics' Library. Wisely, the Mechanics' Institute retained ownership of the Chapel Street site and the resulting income was to keep the library afloat for the rest of the century.⁴¹

The Prahran Technical School was divided into Junior and Senior sections. The junior school took pupils who had not yet reached the minimum school leaving age of fourteen. In practice it took boys from the surrounding primary schools at year 6. The boys then received specialised education in woodwork and metalwork. The senior school was a far more *ad hoc* collection of mature students attending evening classes and teenage boys interested in becoming teachers, particularly in technical subjects.

Girls also had their place, although for many years it was a limited one. In the 1920s the cookery classes begun in 1905 prompted consideration of a girls' technical school. State secondary education was expanding and Melbourne High School transferred to a new site at the northern end of Chapel Street. While in East Melbourne it had provided secondary education for pupils of both sexes, but the move to Prahran left the girls behind. Meanwhile, cookery and cake decorating classes were offered at Prahran Technical School from 1923, and in 1925 the school, the Mechanics' Institute and Prahran Council began to consider possible sites for a girls' school. Sites on Chapel Street, on the corner of St John and Thomas Streets, and on Union Street were all considered and vetoed from various quarters, before building began on Hornby Street in 1929.⁴² Originally, a grand Girls' Trade and Technical School, plus a Girls' High School and School of Domestic Arts was planned for the site, but the depression squashed that idea. The Girls School of Domestic Economy was opened in 1937. The school grew in numbers, but not in space until after World War II. A new girls' school building was opened in 1955.⁴³

In the 1920s Alan Shinkfield attended the junior classes of the Technical School. At that stage the girls were separated from the boys by a bridge, which they were forbidden to use. The only times any of the boys were ever officially allowed to fraternise with the girls were when the members of the choir practised together for speech nights in the Prahran Town Hall.

In this, as in other ways, the boys were treated differently from their earlier years in the surrounding primary schools. They arrived at Prahran Tech. aged about eleven. Mr Shinkfield remembers the boys being told

that they were old enough to know the difference between right and wrong, and they were to be treated like men rather than boys, so long as they deserved it. Relations between pupils and teachers were generally very friendly both inside and outside the classroom, although as in other schools of the time, the strap was used regularly.

By the time the boys left at age fourteen they had had a fair bit of specialist instruction in woodwork and metalwork, besides classes in maths, English, art and sport. Wednesday afternoons were spent at Fawkner Park, marching in the Junior Citizen Forces and then playing cricket, football and athletics. Competitions against other technical schools were highlights of the year, with the boys crowding on to special trains to travel to places such as Ballarat or Geelong. The carriages were divided by school so that the authorities knew who to bill for broken windows. Mr Shinkfield remembers that Prahran Tech. always wound all the windows down as soon as they climbed aboard and damage to their part of the train was absolutely



PRAHRAN TECHNICAL SCHOOL ATHLETICS TEAM, c.1929, WINNERS OF THE PHILIP JOSEPH CUP

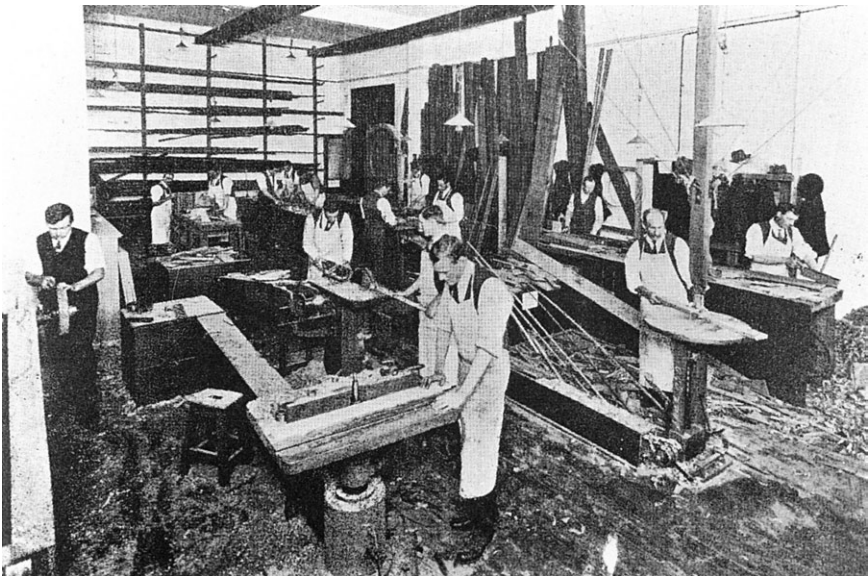
BACK ROW FROM THE LEFT: G. PRINGLE, BILL PAGE, BRUCE FURNEAUX
L. CLARIECOTES, A. SHINKFIELD, G. RICHARDSON

FRONT ROW FROM THE LEFT: B. BAINBRIDGE, A. TYRER, F. MOORE AND
N. PAUSEY

minimal. The same could not always be said about damage to pupils at rival schools.⁴⁴

Reg Rogers was at Prahran Tech. at about the same time and remembered classes in geometry, modelling, metalwork, trigonometry, science, English and grammar, but he particularly remembered the sport in Fawcner Park and a boxing tournament held in a cleared classroom. Charles McNamara, the art teacher at the school, was also a noted tennis player. He inspired some of the boys and possibly some of the girls. Alan Shinkfield remembered him as very handsome 'broke the girl's hearts'.⁴⁵

There were a total of about two hundred boys at Prahran Tech., divided into classes of thirty or forty. Classes in the senior school were much smaller, at least during the day. Most of the pupils were there for the art and 'Ginger', later Sir William, Dargie was a pupil teacher, some years before he painted the portrait of the Queen that hangs in Government House, Canberra. There were about twenty pupils in the art classes, but only four or five boys were taking classes in cabinet-making. In the evenings, however, they were joined by another dozen or so people, including bank clerks and solicitors. The full-time boys helped the part-time students with their studies. French polishing and upholstery classes were also offered at night. Once the compulsory school leaving age was passed, few could afford to continue their education full-time, and Prahran Tech.



MATURE STUDENTS IN A WOOD MACHINING CLASS AT PRAHRAN TECHNICAL SCHOOL IN 1929

continued the adult education tradition of providing lectures and classes outside normal working hours.

Names can be very confusing when attempting to summarise changes to the Prahran Technical and Art School, but essentially the junior and senior schools of the 1920s and 1930s were the foundation of the secondary and tertiary institutions of the later years of the 20th century.

The Girls, Technical School was moved to the Hornby Street site in 1955. The new buildings cost £200 000 and were officially opened by the Minister for Education, Mr Shepherd: 'Highlight of the modern . . . school is the big double kitchen with its refrigerator, dish-washing machine and three types of stoves—electric, gas and slow combustion'.⁴⁶

The junior boys remained adjacent to the Senior Technical School on High Street until they joined the girls on the Hornby Street site in 1971. By then the separation between the old junior and senior schools was complete. The junior school became the co-educational Prahran Technical School, with a woman Principal, Kathleen McKemmish, and 520 pupils. In 1980 the name was changed to Windsor Technical School to remove lingering confusion with its old parent on High Street.

At this stage it is probably a good idea to provide a brief history of Ardoch High School. The school opened in 1977 with pupils who had previously been a part of years 7 and 8 at Toorak Central School. This was the first stage in a complicated process that led to the formation of the Ardoch Windsor Secondary College through the merger of Ardoch High and Windsor Tech.

From the beginning of the 1970s Toorak Central School had been suffering from a chronic shortage of space. Years 7 and 8 were particularly popular with parents as they provided an opportunity to have their children selected for entrance to Melbourne High School or MacRobertson Girls' School. The Education Department found a temporary solution to the resultant overcrowding by renting premises from the Try Boys Youth Club, but another High School seemed the only long term answer.

The Ardoch site was bought for the Education Department in 1976 and from the beginning the buildings themselves gave the school a special atmosphere. Ardoch had had a number of interesting residents over the years, including the Armytages' horses, Dame Nellie Melba and the head of the Federal Defence Department.⁴⁷ Most of the buildings on the site in 1976 had been built in the 1920s as a group of luxury town houses. Although considerable work was needed before the children could move in, the general air of genteel decay amid mature gardens added considerably to the special atmosphere of what was planned as an 'alternative' State high school: 'it looked different . . . It didn't quite seem like a school . . . non-institutionalised'. Visiting tradesmen could be heard to remark that

'it was too nice to be a State School'. It was also small with room for a maximum of 320 pupils and rapidly became exceedingly popular. 'Kids from all over the city came for the family atmosphere'.⁴⁸

The school did not select pupils on the basis of academic qualifications or class, but it had to turn some away. The rule was 'first come first served' with preference given to local children wishing to enter at year 7. The teaching ethos 'was very much "we really must train children who can learn to express themselves" but there were lots of kids who weren't fitting in elsewhere . . . weren't coping . . . withdrawn kids. At Ardoch it was not so much "yell first and ask questions later" but more "hold on, could we talk about this?"'⁴⁹

Although this ethos was popular with middle-class parents, Ardoch also had a fair proportion of working-class and migrant children. At one stage 63 per cent of the pupils had a Greek background, and in the 1980s when it was Housing Commission policy to offer flats in Prahran and Windsor to migrants from South America, Ardoch had an influx of children with a Spanish-speaking background.

In about 1987 the process of amalgamation with Windsor Technical School began. Numbers at the latter had been falling, and increasing areas of the Ardoch site were being taken over by Education Department consultant services. The merger took a number of years and 1992 was the first year of complete joint occupation of the Hornby Street site.

Broadly speaking, Ardoch Windsor Secondary College lost the Ardoch site but retained the Ardoch ethos. The school advertised on local radio station Triple J: 'If you want to go to a place that is different, come here'. In 1992 the school had 291 pupils, but 200 of those were in years 11 and 12, studying for the Victorian Certificate of Education, and up to 20 per cent of them were mature students. One teacher estimated that the average age of the year 11 and 12 students was creeping over twenty.

In 1991 there was a major upgrading of facilities on the Hornby Street site when the Recreation Centre opened. The Dandenong Road Schools Recreation Centre was discussed as early as 1981, but was not an Education Department priority, largely because of falling rolls in the area. However, after ten years of hard work and campaigning, particularly by Cr Chris Gahan, the centre finally opened.⁵⁰ It provided playing-field space, changing rooms and a gymnasium, besides general purpose rooms and a canteen. The centre was funded jointly by the Ministry of Education, the Department of Sport and Recreation and the City of Prahran and was available for community as well as school use. However, the College buildings remained in need of renovation, particularly on the upper floors of the original 1955 Girls' Technical School.

TERTIARY EDUCATION IN PRAHRAN

The years since World War II have seen increasing Commonwealth Government involvement in what had previously been an almost exclusively State-based education system. This began with Commonwealth finance for universities in the 1950s and continued, following the Martin Report of 1964, with funds for other areas of tertiary education.⁵¹ Partly as a response to this, the Victorian government set up the Victorian Institute of Colleges to channel Commonwealth funds into a wider range of tertiary education. The Prahran Technical and Art School affiliated with the Institute in 1967 and became known as the Prahran College of Technology.

The Prahran College of Technology continued the traditional emphasis on art, but began to broaden the curriculum. Throughout the 1960s students studying for their Diploma in Art and Design could take classes in drawing, graphics, three-dimensional design and fashion. However, from 1955 both day and evening classes had been offered in typing and shorthand, and from 1961 diploma courses were available in commerce, and from 1967 in business studies, including accounting and data processing. In addition, the College continued to offer apprenticeship courses in fibrous plastering, woodwork and upholstery, and from 1965 in the flat glass trade. The fibrous plastering courses operated on a block release system from the student's employer, a system pioneered at Prahran, while students in the other courses attended on the more conventional day release system.⁵²

During the 1970s there was considerable expansion in the College buildings and student numbers, so much so that at times the Prahran Council had reservations about the resulting parking problems just off Chapel Street. But as Mr Loxton, MP, pointed out, the expansion to the equivalent of 1000 full-time students made a considerable addition to the amount of money spent in the local shops.⁵³

Name changes to this tertiary institution followed with confusing rapidity as Victorian post-secondary education expanded and changed. From 1974 it was known as the Prahran College of Advanced Education. The College of Advanced Education acquired a major new building, opened by the Governor-General, Sir Zelman Cowen, in November 1978. In 1982 the College amalgamated with other campuses at Toorak, Burwood and Rusden to become part of Victoria College.⁵⁴

Throughout these changes the Commonwealth had broadly funded the tertiary part of the College's activities, with funding for technical and further education provided by the State government. In 1982 the two components were officially split into separate Colleges and the single campus

accommodated part of the Victoria College and Prahran College of TAFE. Broadly, Victoria College offered degree and diploma courses while Prahran College of TAFE offered associate diploma, certificate and apprenticeship courses. Ten years later there were further major changes. Prahran College of TAFE became a part of Swinburne TAFE, which was itself a part of Swinburne Limited, which became Swinburne University later in 1992. Victoria College was split. The Fine Art Department became a part of the Victorian College of the Arts, which was to amalgamate with the University of Melbourne, and the Design Department became a part of Swinburne, while Business Studies came under the wing of Deakin University. The Furniture Studies department of Prahran TAFE was due to move to Holmesglen in 1992.⁵⁵

In 1992 the overall impression at the campus on the corner of High Street and Chapel Street was that an awful lot of time and effort was going into changing names and organisation, but little attention was being devoted to the problems of what remained a cramped and under-funded site. To anyone who, for instance, was familiar with the library at the University of Melbourne and had also been in the joint Prahran College of TAFE/Victoria College library, the hierarchy of post-secondary education in Victoria would be dramatically evident.

HIGH SCHOOLS

Melbourne High School is the oldest State secondary school in Victoria. It grew out of the Melbourne National Model and Training School, which was founded at Eastern Hill, Melbourne, in 1854.⁵⁶ This pioneer State school went through a number of changes over the next fifty years, but it remained co-educational and at various times provided everything from infant education to teacher training. Following a period of decline, the buildings underwent major renovation and the school reopened in 1905 as the Melbourne Continuation School.

The Continuation School on Spring Street, Eastern Hill, was a conscious venture by the State into secondary education, which until then had been the exclusive preserve of the independent schools. Allen Inch, in his history of the school, describes how the early efforts were tentative and designed not to upset the independent schools and their supporters in parliament. As a result, there was an emphasis on training junior teachers, but from 1905 the school also accepted pupils wanting to qualify for university entrance. The fees were £6 per year, providing a far less expensive option than the private sector or church schools. Pupils came from all over Victoria and at first there were more girls than boys. They had to be at least fourteen years old and meet certain academic standards.⁵⁷

Over the next twenty years the school built up an academic reputation in deliberate competition with the independent schools. The Education Act of 1910 allowed the Education Department to begin setting up a system of State high schools and partly as a result of pressure from the Country Party, most of the early ones were in country areas. In Melbourne, University High School was opened in 1910 and the Continuation School was officially renamed Melbourne High School in 1912. It continued to be coeducational, selective and academic, despite rapid deterioration in the old buildings and a cramped and inadequate site.

In 1923 the Education Department began seriously looking for a new site and Prahran Council entered the story, enthusiastically campaigning to win Melbourne High for Prahran. The original sites offered were in Windsor, including on Hornby Street, and Toorak Park, but it was the possibilities of some 12 acres of government land on Forrest Hill on the west side of Chapel Street North, that most impressed Tate, the Director of Education. In the end, Prahran Council donated 2.5 acres of adjacent land and £5000 to the Education Department and Prahran got Melbourne High.⁵⁸ But Prahran did not get a coeducational High School.

In 1924 Claude Searby was appointed Headmaster at the High School and he seems to have had a major influence on the decision to divide the girls from the boys. When the school began its move to the Forrest Hill site in 1927, the girls stayed in the old buildings on Spring Street. Searby became Headmaster of a school that increasingly looked like a State-run version of the big six Victorian independent boys schools. He was quite clear what he wanted, and so was everyone else. Searby wished 'to train leaders for the higher places in the community'.⁵⁹ Melbourne High even tried (unsuccessfully) to make a seventh in the inter-school sporting activities of the big six.

Despite being excluded from the Independent Schools' sporting club, Searby and his successors more or less succeeded in their aim. From the 1940s headmasters at Melbourne High tended to be Old Boys with exceedingly distinguished careers, and by the 1970s the listings of Old Boys in the Australian *Who's Who* made up 10 per cent of all entries, a total exceeded only by Scotch College and Melbourne Grammar.

Lindsay Fox attended the school in the early 1950s:

Melbourne High School. . . was the State school system's public school—or private school—and everything about Melbourne High was centred around a fellow called Brigadier George Furner Langley, the Principal of the school—an outstanding man and had such a huge influence on any of the pupils that were there between the years of 1949 to [1956]. I can still clearly hear his Monday morning addresses. They were all outstanding . . .

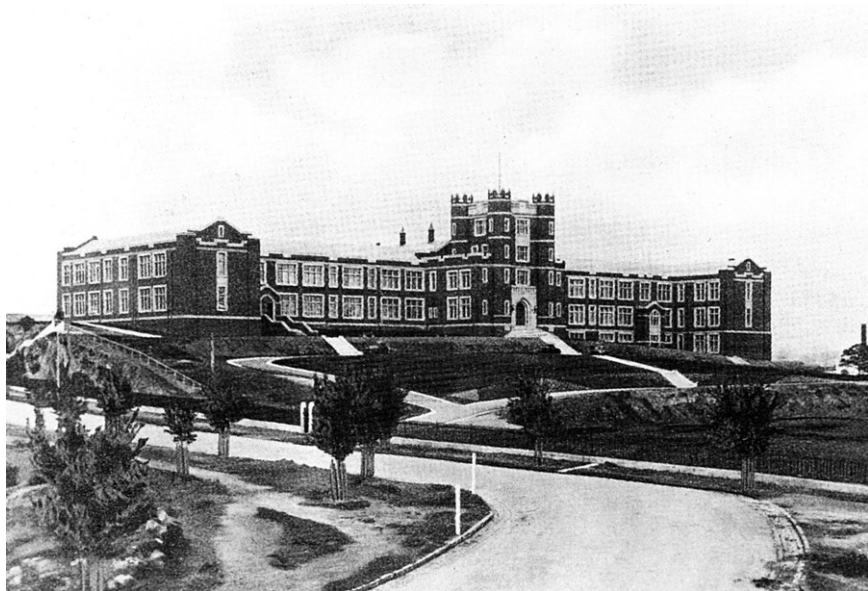
'What's right is right and what's wrong is wrong. What's thine is thine and what's mine is mine' . . . He talked about the Australian attitude of 'she'll be right mate' or 'no worries' and then he'd bang on the desk and say 'It will never be good enough. We can't accept anything that isn't the best' and lots of these things were indelibly imprinted into the students that were fortunate enough to be at the school during that particular era. It's still a great foundation for the community. The level of achievers is quite outstanding . . .⁶⁰

In 1982: Steven Loukomitis left Caulfield Central for Melbourne High:

I preferred a boys' school. Caulfield is coeducational and as boys we were restricted. Girls at that age are a bit more mature. The teachers didn't realise it themselves . . . they saw the girls studying hard and the boys being boys as they will be at that age—the girls got better support . . . approbation from the teachers.

The uniform I quite appreciated as well. Sure, you can't be free in it, but you don't have to worry about what to wear in the morning . . . getting accustomed to wearing a suit and learning how to tie a tie . . . There were minor differences in fashion by year . . . turn the jacket collar up; long narrow tie; short fat tie . . . Now they are all wearing the sports blazer. We didn't wear it, even though we could. We wore a grey suit, no badge.⁶¹

With that uniform, much depended on the tie. Gold unicorns meant the wearer had been awarded school colours for some academic or sporting



MELBOURNE HIGH SCHOOL, 1927

distinction. Mr Loukomitis was in the rowing team, which involved getting up at 5 a.m. to catch the first train to Flinders Street. The school trained on the river below the Swanston Street Bridge. There is more than a hint that in rowing, in particular, Melbourne High School was prone to compare itself with the private schools, who also rowed on the Yarra, but generally in different competitions: 'Ballarat High School is the only other real rowing State school'.⁶² Melbourne High School's boats are named after the school's principals.

MacRobertson Girls' High School is not actually in Prahran, but its story is very much a part of State secondary education in the area. When the boys moved to Forrest Hill in 1927 the girls stayed in not merely dilapidated but positively dangerous buildings until 1931.⁶³ This second-class treatment of the girls raised a few murmurs of protest, even then, but any chance of splendid new buildings to rival the boys was removed by the depression. Fortunately, in 1931 Government House became vacant and the girls and their teachers moved to more luxurious surroundings, but not for long. A new Victorian Governor was appointed and the girls had to move again, this time to King Street, West Melbourne. By then, however, they were in the process of being rescued from their peripatetic existence by Sir Macpherson Robertson. He donated £100 000 to mark the centenary of Victoria, stipulating that £40 000 of it should go to build the MacRobertson Girls' High School. The school was opened in November 1934.⁶⁴

Despite the disadvantages of the late 1920s and early 1930s, the girls and their teachers set to work to build a school with a reputation for academic excellence in rivalry with the major independent girls' schools. As a journalist wrote in 1974: 'Melbourne High and MacRob are the academic showpieces of Victoria's State education', or as the Headmistress put it in 1975, the school was concerned to provide 'Education for our Future Leaders'.⁶⁵

From its earliest years, Melbourne High School took students at year 9 who had some academic ambition. In the inter-war years the demand for places was limited, as the demand for secondary education generally was limited, but after 1945 this changed. Melbourne High and MacRobertson Girls' High School had, over the years, evolved a special relationship with a group of central schools that continued to educate pupils at years 7 and 8. Elsewhere, primary schools finished at year 6 and the new comprehensive secondary schools that were being built to cope with the increased demand for secondary education took pupils at year 7. Melbourne High and MacRobertson Girls' High School took pupils at year 9 and Toorak Central, Malvern Central, Gardiner Central, Caulfield North Central, Gardenvale Central and Malvern East Central continued to be

their major feeder schools. Traditionally, pupils from these six central schools had open access to Melbourne High and MacRobertson Girls' High School, but in practice they were encouraged to send only those pupils they thought could cope, that is, those who had reached a certain academic standard.⁶⁶ Pupils at other high schools could take an examination if they wished to transfer at the end of year 8.

In the 1970s Melbourne High and MacRobertson Girls' High School found themselves in the slightly anomalous position of being openly elitist schools in an increasingly egalitarian State education system. Not surprisingly, they felt threatened. At least one girl, who began her career at MacRobertson Girls' High School in 1972, thought the pupils from the central schools were undermining standards: 'Tradition shows us to be an elite and privileged institution. I'd have liked us to stay that way, while not wanting to offend, but obviously doing so, the increasing number of central school recruits, in my eyes, are the main cause for most of the decline'.⁶⁷ In 1982 the headmaster at Melbourne High made the same point in a rather different way: 'We must ensure there is a full public awareness of the school's value and of the need to maintain its selective nature which is necessary for full attainment of its objectives'.⁶⁸

Whatever the fears to the contrary, after the election of the Labor government in 1982 the 'selective nature' of Melbourne High and MacRobertson Girls' High School was, in fact, consolidated during the 1980s. Following the recommendation of a 1985 report, all but one of the central schools were closed at the end of 1988. Entrance to Melbourne High and MacRobertson Girls' High School was thereafter by examination only, with a limit of 3 per cent intake from any one school.⁶⁹ As a result of considerable local pressure, Malvern Central remained open in 1992, but with no privileged access to the selective high schools.

The first non-selective, fully coeducational secondary school in Prahran was something of a late starter. Parents began campaigning for a local high school in the 1950s. If their children failed to get into Melbourne High or MacRob., they had to travel a considerable distance to a non-selective high school. Rising numbers of children, rising expectations of secondary education for all and the raising of the school leaving age to fifteen combined to persuade the Education Department to build a new school in the area.⁷⁰ Problems then arose over the site. Toorak siding was considered, but the Department's preferred site was Prahran Council's depot on Molesworth Street. Crs Petty and Gawith, both Liberal-Country Party representatives in Parliament as well as Prahran councillors, backed the Molesworth site. For once they were on the same side as Cr George Gahan, who had been campaigning for the school for some time. Despite

opposition from the Windsor councillors, the site was made available in 1963.⁷¹

The long-awaited Prahran High School first began taking pupils in 1965, but the staff and pupils had to wait until November 1966 for buildings of their own. For the first year and a half they borrowed classrooms from Armadale State school. Even when they moved to the Molesworth Street site, they had to share with commerce students from Prahran Tech. for most of 1967.⁷²

Prahran Council's donation of the site to the Education Department was reminiscent of the Melbourne High School forty years earlier, but there the similarity ended. Where the school on Forrest Hill had space and adequate funding, Prahran High had to make do with a cramped site. It was designed to accommodate 750 pupils but there were nearly 1200 on the roll in 1976. It began with access to the Council park next door but no gym, no playing fields and no assembly hall. From the beginning, it was a working-class and migrant school that was sometimes on and sometimes off the disadvantaged schools list. Linda Heims-Robinson taught English as a foreign language there in the late 1970s. She remembered that it had the largest migrant population of any school in Victoria—about 80 per cent—and a Migrant English Department of thirteen teachers, appropriately also the largest in Victoria: 'Prahran High School is an oddity because it's stuck in a really swank area . . . but it's an anomaly because it drew from working-class areas but there was no one from the houses around it—on Orrong Road, for instance . . .' The school seems to have attracted committed enthusiastic staff: 'Some of the kids went through and got very good results . . . every now and then there was an accolade happening somewhere along the line . . .'⁷³ However, the overall emphasis of the school was not academic. Rather it was strong on 'the creative sixties, early seventies sort of approach . . . creative expression rather than traditional stuff.'⁷⁴ This approach did not always meet with the approval of either parents or pupils, but it was an approach favoured by many very good teachers in this era.

Dr Geoff Reid was appointed Headmaster in 1976, by which date he had already been President of the Victorian Secondary Teachers Association for five years.⁷⁵ As might be expected with such a background, he did not preside over a conservative school. If Prahran High was going to be a Cinderella, it certainly wasn't going to be a quiet Cinderella. In 1978, after years of argument, Commonwealth funding for an expanded library was made available. A major new activities centre and gym that had also been discussed for the best part of the decade was eventually opened in 1982.

Something of the flavour of the school in the early 1980s can be gleaned from the school magazine. Basically the school was Greek and the Greek Parents' Association was described as one of the school's most active bodies. To surnames like Papadopoulos and Kimonides were added a sprinkling of older Australian names like Green or Turner, but there were virtually no Aboriginal Australians. Most of these children had grown up through the local primary schools together and shared a school culture, even though the values and expectations to which they went home might be very different.

At Prahran High in the 1970s and 1980s, the children of the migrants of the 1950s and 1960s and the Australian-born were joined by more recent migrants. Most came from non-English speaking backgrounds and many had come to Australia to escape violence and war in the countries of their birth. Argentinians, Malaysians, Lebanese and Turks, Cypriots, both Greek and Turkish, Vietnamese and Kampuchians, they all found their way to Prahran High. A few of their stories appear in the school magazine—a grandfather killed by US bombing in Vietnam—memories of the fire bombing in Famagusta, Cyprus, one Saturday night in 1974: 'The people ran away from the places of the fire, screaming' wrote Alkis Panayides. 'I finally left Vietnam in the second week of October, 1978, and took nothing with me', wrote an anonymous student three years later.⁷⁶

From its earliest years, Prahran was concerned to provide a wider range of educational services than just the conventional full-time secondary school courses. Part-time and evening classes were made available to mature students and over the years this provision grew to meet increased demand. Bernard Brosnan began working at the Adult Study Centre when it first opened. Originally, the centre came under the control of the school, but from the 1980s it became a part of Prahran College of TAFE, offering courses ranging from adult literacy to VCE and tertiary preparation. In 1992 the centre had 729 students. Most of them were studying part-time, but about 150 were taking courses in four VCE subjects. This was more than the number of full-time students enrolled in year 12 at Prahran Secondary College, where a total of 387 students were enrolled in all years in February 1992.⁷⁷

By the 1990s, the falling birth-rate of the 1970s and 1980s was making itself felt in the secondary schools, and this was particularly noticeable in inner suburban areas such as Prahran where the demographic structure had shifted markedly away from families with children towards other kinds of households. This was one of the factors behind consideration of greater co-operation between Prahran Secondary College, Caulfield Secondary College and Ardoch/Windsor Secondary College in 1992. In February 1992

the three principals were careful to point out that 'any consideration of amalgamation will only arise provided complete support exists at school level'. At that date the school councils had agreed to preliminary discussions and a programme of visits to each other's schools involving parents, students and teachers.⁷⁸ There was a concern at all levels to ensure that both parents and pupils had a say in what happened to their schools. This move towards participatory decision making was one of the significant changes in the State sector of education in the 20th century.

Educating Prahran the Private Way

Given that since 1872 the State sector of education has been largely free, parents who have chosen to send their children to other sorts of schools have presumably done so because they thought there was a difference and that it was worth paying for. On the whole, those who have had the most money have had the greatest choice. Although there is by no means a free market in education, generally speaking the most expensive schools have been those at which there has been the greatest demand for places. However, historically the non-state sector of education has had as much to do with religion as with money. Early in the history of the colony of Victoria the government decided to allocate funds for education to the various religious denominations. The money was divided up on the basis of church membership as recorded in the censuses. The Church of England received the most money and used it to build Melbourne and Geelong Grammar Schools. The Roman Catholics built St Patrick's College, which in turn launched Xavier College in the 1870s. The Presbyterians built Scotch College and Geelong College and in January 1865 the Wesleyan Methodists laid the foundation stone of Wesley College. Government aid for religious education ceased in 1872 and remained in abeyance until the 1950s, but in the interim these six schools became the 'big six' in Victoria's private education system. They were all boys' schools. They all provided education up to university entrance and, except for Xavier, they all more or less deliberately modelled themselves on the British public school system, as revolutionised by Dr Thomas Arnold at Rugby.

The subtle variations in the clientele of these schools have been discussed at length elsewhere.¹ Geelong Grammar, for instance, developed as a school for the sons of squatters, while Wesley was rather more bourgeois. But all were elite schools—and for a social elite first and an intellectual elite only second, or even third, after sport. This was also true of the diverse group of other and generally smaller private schools that flourished in Prahran at one time or another.² The emphasis on sport seems to have been less pronounced in the girls' schools such as St Catherine's or the Melbourne Church of England Girls' Grammar School, but the ethos was otherwise similar.

Although none of the big six boys' schools are actually in Prahran, it is to those schools that Prahran's social elites have generally sent their sons. Melbourne, Scotch and Wesley are all geographically close and Wesley traditionally gives its address as Prahran. Glamorgan, however, is in Prahran and for many years acted as an informal prep, school, particularly for the two Church of England Grammar Schools and Scotch College, until in 1947 it was taken over by Geelong Grammar.

While the State sector of education has been overwhelmingly coeducational with a few single sex exceptions, the private sector has historically been almost exclusively divided into boys' and girls' schools. Until the 1960s the main exceptions were a sprinkling of children of the opposite sex in the earliest grades—a handful of small girls at Glamorgan, for instance, and a handful of small boys at Presentation College, Windsor. But since then there has been a significant shift towards coeducational provision in the private sector. This has taken place at more or less the same time as a move away from another key difference between State and many private schools—the provision of facilities for boarders. Improvements in transport, changes in country schools and rising costs have all contributed to this change, but perhaps the single most important factor has been a shift in parental attitudes towards children, particularly since World War II.

Despite the religious origins of most non-government schools there is considerable evidence that religious instruction, except in the very broadest moral sense, is no longer an important component of the curriculum for parents, pupils or teachers, but there are exceptions. The King David School, for instance, was set up in the 1970s to provide education with a specifically Jewish religious and cultural component. However, most of the schools where religion receives a high priority in the curriculum are Catholic. That is the reason why they were set up and that is the justification for the continued major investment by the Catholic community in keeping them going.

CATHOLIC EDUCATION IN PRAHRAN

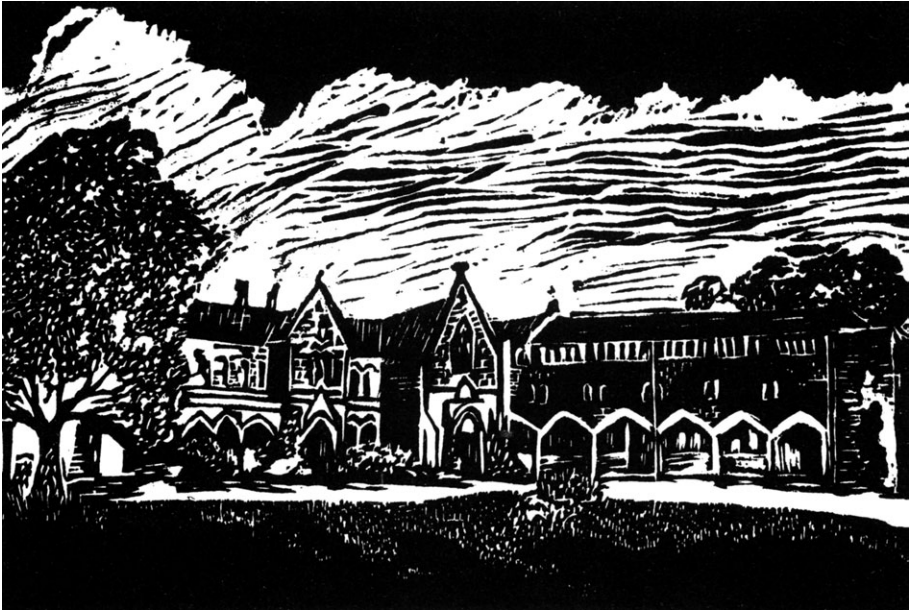
The 1872 Education Act in Victoria ended State support for religious education and introduced compulsory, free, secular schooling. Catholic Victorians were horrified and set to work to build a parallel Catholic education system. The Reverend James Francis Corbett, parish priest of St Mary's, St Kilda, was among those who responded by appealing to members of the teaching orders he had known in Ireland: 'From the ends of the earth I write to you for help . . .' In January 1873 he wrote to the Presentation Sisters in Limerick, and they must have set sail very soon after receiving his appeal 'from the ends of the earth' because Sister Paul Mulquin and her small group were able to found Presentation College, Windsor, on Christmas Day 1873.

The school began with 120 primary pupils attending classes in St Mary's Church and twenty-three older girls in the Presbytery, but by the end of 1874 they were able to move north of Dandenong Road to the site on the corner of Hornby Street. The school began taking boarders in 1877 and there remained boarders at the Windsor site until 1986, when they were moved to the Sacred Heart Convent at Oakleigh.³ However, the major emphasis of Presentation College, Windsor, was on local children attending both primary and secondary classes on a daily basis.

The Presentation Order was founded in the 18th Century by Nano Nagle, who 'said she'd go to the ends of the earth to help the poorer people'.⁴ This remained the emphasis of the Presentation Sisters in Australia, and at the invitation of the parish priests they expanded their teaching activities from Presentation College, Windsor, to staff parish primary schools. The City of Prahran is covered by several Catholic parishes and each at one time had its own parish primary school, the result of a major effort by the Catholic community to try and give every Catholic child the opportunity of having a Catholic education:

The Catholic primary school has developed almost as a necessary adjunct to the parish church . . . under the parish church . . . [They cover] prep to grade 8, equivalent to the local State school. . . open to anybody within the parish . . . You brought along what school money you could on a Monday morning . . . It was collected sixpence at a time . . . The Religious were not paid anything⁵ . . . [To raise more funds they] had fetes and collections on Sunday'.

The Presentation Sisters taught at the first school of this kind in the area attached to the Parish Church of St Mary's, St Kilda, a parish that included part of Windsor. Presentation College, Windsor, was separate and attached to the convent where the nuns lived. Sister Agnes Tuomy attended



PRESENTATION COLLEGE, WINDSOR

Presentation College in the 1920s, first entering the school when she was about ten years old.

Over in the primary school, they didn't pay very much. We had to pay more ... I suppose it sounds awful really ... more well to do ... I seemed to enjoy it always ... Some special boys got in, too. Some boys were allowed in ... Mother Joseph, a little old lady, she taught us. We always used to say that [a small boy] got preference ... We used to tease [him], he was the spoilt one ...

Those who went to the convent paid a little more ... The convent schools are independent ... not attached to the parish ... but the policy of Presentation was to charge low fees for poorer children ... catering for the neighbouring parishes ... but they were also invited by the parish priests to go out and staff the local primary schools where they came under the jurisdiction of the local parish priest.⁶

St Joseph's in Fitzgerald Street, South Yarra, was founded in about 1888. The parish struggled with the problems of funding a school of this kind, particularly the cost of paying lay teachers. In 1905 the Good Samaritan Sisters began teaching at the school but in 1933 the Santa Maria Convent moved from South Yarra to Northcote and in 1941 Presentation Sisters began teaching at St Joseph's. However, over the years there were

just not enough nuns to fill all the teaching positions and lay staff returned to St Joseph's. At the end of the 1980s the Presentation Sisters decided to pull out of some of their parish schools: 'Presentation felt teaching was the need originally but now lots of other needs are perceived. We tend to move where there are gaps . . . education, health . . . where there's not money to finance the position'.⁷ In 1992 St Joseph's once more had a nun as Principal, even if most of her staff were lay teachers.

St Francis Xavier and Our Lady of Lourdes schools, in the parishes of Prahran and Armadale respectively, were both opened in 1922 by Archbishop Mannix. Both were run by Presentation Sisters, but increasingly with the assistance of lay teachers. Prahran is a relatively small parish in area and St Francis Xavier was an early victim of falling rolls as increasing numbers of single and elderly people moved into the catchment area. It closed in 1969.⁸

In contrast, the convent schools continued to grow. Since at least the 1870s there has been a general tendency for parents to send their children to State primary schools and private secondary schools, initially because the private sector offered secondary education from a much earlier date. Presentation College, Windsor, offered secondary education for girls in Prahran forty years before the Prahran Technical School got under way on High Street, and it was to be another fifty years before Prahran High School began offering girls in Prahran a State high school education.

Presentation College, Windsor, grew steadily in the early years of the century and shared in the boom in demand for secondary education in the 1950s and 1960s. Subsequent improvements in buildings and facilities were greatly assisted by Commonwealth government funds. The departure of most Catholics from the Labor Party to form a party of their own helped Robert Menzies remain Prime Minister of Australia for a very long time. As an appropriate gesture of gratitude he revived the idea of government support for private schools—most of which were, and remain, Catholic schools. There are those who argue that Menzies was really seeking to assist non-Catholic private schools: he himself attended Wesley College. Whatever the rationale, Catholic schools benefited significantly from the change in policy. Presentation College received government grants for the library and biology room, completed in 1970, and for a major refurbishment programme in 1990. Federal Labor governments have, despite considerable debate, continued and expanded the policy of financial support for private education, and they have been joined on a smaller scale by State governments of all political complexions. It has been estimated that the total level of support by the late 1980s, towards both capital and recurring costs, offset what would otherwise be the necessary student fees by between 40 per cent and 90 per cent. In a study in 1984 it was calculated that the price a

household paid for a given level of private education fell by an average of 70 per cent between 1968/69 and 1981/82.⁹

In the 1960s, Presentation College, Windsor, phased out the primary school and became exclusively a secondary institution, for both boarders and day girls of diverse ethnic backgrounds, but Catholic (including Greek Orthodox) religious belief.¹⁰

Like the Presentation Sisters, nuns of the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary were called to Victoria to teach, following the 1872 Education Act. Mother Gonzaga founded Victoria's first Loreto Convent at Mary's Mount, Ballarat, in 1875. In 1890 Loreto bought a property in Albert Park and began teaching in South Melbourne in 1891. In 1924 Loreto bought Mandeville Hall, and the nuns moved from Albert Park to Toorak. They ran a rather different sort of school from the Presentation Sisters in Windsor and perhaps the addresses suggest something of the contrast.

Mary Ward, founder of the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary (IBVM), was an English lady at a time when Catholics in England went in fear of the block and the stake. She began teaching Catholic English ladies in exile in St Omer, running a boarding school for them and a day school for the local children.¹¹ The emphasis was necessarily on educating young ladies of some means, whilst also teaching the less affluent local children. Generally, Loreto at Mandeville Hall retained this emphasis. As Sr Deirdre Rofe, Principal of Loreto, Mandeville Hall, said in 1986: ' "Educating the leaders of our society" has been a catch-cry of I.B.V.M. education'. Generally, pupils at Loreto came from comfortable backgrounds and did not go on to become politicians or women 'in positions of real influence in the community', but Sr Deirdre suspected that many of them went on to be leaders in what she called 'service'. I believe we have been relatively successful in awakening a social conscience in our students'.¹² Fees were significantly higher than at Presentation College and the grounds more spacious. The school grew steadily over the years from about fifty students in 1924 to about a thousand in 1992. The size of the school at that date was limited not by the number of girls wishing to attend but by the parking and traffic difficulties in the surrounding streets.¹³

A case could be made for calling the IBVM the women's liberation branch of the Catholic Church and something of this flavour has run through the teaching at Mandeville Hall. There has been a tradition of acknowledging girls as more than potential wives and mothers which was commonplace by the 1980s, but was nothing of the kind when Mary Ward first espoused the idea in the early 17th century, or, for that matter, when Loreto first moved to Mandeville Hall in 1924. But the traditional curriculum for well-brought-up young ladies was also always present—deportment, for instance, and hostess cookery—and there was always a

particular emphasis on music.¹⁴ It has been a popular mixture with daughters following mothers and grandmothers through Loreto's primary and secondary schools: 'We were spoilt by one of the nuns' recalled Mrs O'Rorke and Mrs McCardel of their time at the school in the 1920s. 'In summer we wore a tunic of pale blue silk but in the winter we would wear a dark blue tunic with a black blazer, hat, stockings and gloves'.

Mrs Ryan remembered that in the 1930s the girls began learning French in year 3 and Latin in year 5, and the 7-year-olds regularly began the day with French conversation. Music played a big part in the life of the school and the girls wore white silk dresses for their performances. The boarders began their day with mass in the chapel before breakfast. In the 1940s veils were kept in special cubicles outside the chapel and the girls had to put one on before entering. They also had to cover their arms. Silence had to be maintained until after grace had been said and the girls sat down to breakfast.¹⁵

While the 1872 Education Act led to one great burst in Catholic educational effort, World War I led to another. Bad feelings between Protestants and Catholics contributed to a self-consciousness among Catholics about their position in Australian society:

Nineteen-eighteen was a year of tremendous importance in the field of education of Catholics in Victoria. In that year was founded Newman College (and its affiliate St Mary's Hall) and St Kevin's. I have the temerity to disagree with the contention of one historian that, like the other two colleges, it owed its foundation to the Archbishop of Melbourne at that time, Dr Mannix (one who loved and admired greatly the Christian Brothers). It is my firm belief that its conception in 1917, its birth in 1918 is completely attributable to the Christian Brothers themselves.

Such a College was sorely needed. It was in an age of discrimination; we suffered from lack of opportunities; we were in a ghetto; we were almost completely in the lower levels of the socio-economic strata; in the tertiary sphere (and so in the professional sections) we were very poorly represented, in numbers and mostly in quality.¹⁶

St Kevin's began in cramped quarters in Albert Street, East Melbourne and the school set out to provide for Catholic boys what Melbourne High School was setting out to provide in the State sector. It measured its own achievements by academic results, as indicated by success in the university entrance examinations. In 1932 St Kevin's moved to the corner of St George's and Orrong Roads, Toorak, and in 1933 the school began rowing at the invitation of the Melbourne Rowing Club, but rowing was not particularly popular until after 1958. In that year St Kevin's began to take part in the Australian public schools sporting competitions.

Over the years, the school expanded. In the first decade there were less than 100 students at any one time, but by 1950 there were about 450

boys in all years from grade 3 upwards. In 1978 there were 900 boys in the secondary school alone. By that stage the school—or rather schools—had moved again. The college moved into premises on Moonga Road, Toorak, in 1960, while a separate junior school was opened on Lansell Road in 1974, with room for 400 boys.¹⁷

St Kevin's has a large number of distinguished Old Boys who achieved prominence as academics, in law, medicine and engineering, not to mention politics, both state and federal, but its principal contribution seems to have been to religion. Almost every year, three or four Old Boys from St Kevin's enter the priesthood, and seven of them have become bishops.

PRIVATE PRIMARY SCHOOLS

The King David School in Armadale began taking pupils in 1978. It was set up as a Jewish day school by educationalists, rabbis and members of the Temple Beth Israel. The school began on Kooyong Road and Munro Street, but has since expanded with the purchase of property on Orrong Road.¹⁸ Like the Catholic schools, parents send their children to the King David School because they want a particular kind of education with a significant religious component.

To a certain extent this is also true of Christ Church Grammar School. As Jane Chatham pointed out, it is the only remaining Anglican parish primary school in Prahran. Despite becoming a coeducational school as early as 1921, it was unable to attract many pupils until after World War II. However, since then numbers have grown steadily and by the mid-1980s there were about four hundred children at the school, so that Christ Church had survived to become, in the end, a larger school than the neighbouring State and Catholic primaries which had once dwarfed it in terms of pupil numbers.¹⁹

This pattern is also to be seen in the history of Glamorgan. In the 1920s the school had significantly fewer than 200 pupils, while the average enrolment in Prahran's State schools to the south was three or four times that number. In the early 1990s Glamorgan had more than 400 pupils, while all the remaining State primary schools in Prahran were less than half that size. Miss Annie McComas and her sister Isabel originally ran Glamorgan as a private venture school with vaguely Anglican leanings. At the end of World War I they moved their school into the premises just vacated by Toorak College, on Douglas Street, Toorak, and Isabel McComas continued to run Glamorgan until her retirement in 1946. In the early 1920s Norman Wettenhall was one of her pupils:

I went to Glamorgan, down the hill . . . [He could already read but at Glamorgan Dr Wettenhall was] taught writing—pot hooks and cross hatching . . . a very good school . . . Isabel McComas, she bought it and set up a boys' school. She was very proud that Stanley Melbourne Bruce had been a pupil . . . Miss Katherine Alexander was a wonderful teacher . . . biblical teaching, St Paul's journeys—we learnt the history of Asia Minor . . . we were taught French by the one male teacher . . . indoctrinated with Latin. Our reading . . . in the Assembly Hall, we lined up and were asked to read a passage. You'd go up or down the line on performance . . . There was a gymnasium, carpentry, cricket, football. A great big happy family . . . singing, I got a singing prize . . . On speech night every boy in the school got a prize—a broad education, a broad range of things to do—a real community spirit. There were 100 or 120 boys . . .²⁰

Glamorgan boys played sport against schools such as Christ Church Grammar and The Grange. There also usually seem to have been one or two small girls among all the boys. Most of them lived in the surrounding houses of Toorak and South Yarra, 'not just the big houses' remembered Dr Wettenhall, 'but they were the majority'. There was always at least a small group of boarders, generally from the country or interstate, although some parents thought boarding was good for their boys, even if they lived close by.

The school rolls show that among the parents of boys were many pastoralists, surgeons, barristers and managing directors. Some lived as far



CLASS 1 AT GLAMORGAN IN 1924

away as New South Wales or South Australia, but most sent their sons to school at Glamorgan from their homes in Toorak, South Yarra and Malvern. During World War II the sons of senior army and naval officers and foreign diplomats began to appear with greater frequency. Except for the scarcity of girls, Glamorgan was just as much a community school for Toorak as Hawksburn State school was for Prahran. The boys were neighbours. Many could walk home to lunch, and after school they played cricket together on each other's lawns. Even the sons of the pastoralist families were as likely to attend Glamorgan from the family home in Toorak or South Yarra as from their properties at Macedon or Corryong or Deniliquin.

When Miss McComas retired Glamorgan became an official preparatory school for Geelong Grammar. This involved very little change. During the 1950s and 1960s the background of parents became slightly more diverse, but this probably reflected changes in Toorak as much as changes in the school. Boarders ceased at the end of the 1960s. By then it was simple to deliver children by car from Brighton or Balwyn or Glen Iris, but Toorak remained the home of a majority of Glamorgan boys, and they were soon to be joined by their sisters. In 1970 girls ceased to be a rarity and by 1973 Glamorgan was fully coeducational.²¹

PRIVATE SECONDARY SCHOOLS

Dr Wettenhall remembers that his contemporaries at Glamorgan mostly went on to Melbourne Grammar, Geelong Grammar or Scotch College. He himself went to Geelong College. This was unusual:

I didn't go to any of the usual schools ... I went to Geelong College because my father had been there and my Uncles ... Nobody else from Glamorgan was there. My father and his brothers were from the Wimmera. Father was on the school council from 1927 ... a friend of the head ...²²

Originally the Wettenhalls were Anglicans, but it became a family tradition to attend Presbyterian schools, and Norman Wettenhall's father became a Presbyterian. The Grammars were Anglican schools. Most of the boys at Glamorgan were Anglican or Presbyterian, so it was natural that they should confine their secondary careers to three or four of the 'big six'. There were virtually no Catholics at Glamorgan until the 1970s, but there were a few Methodists and Jews and some of them went on to Wesley.

Generally, however, boys in the secondary school at Wesley had come from Wesley's own junior school or State primary schools. Although the fees were somewhat lower than in the Anglican and Presbyterian schools, Wesley was always a member of the 'tight exclusive association' of what

some called the Victorian 'public schools'. Members of the group competed against each other in football, cricket, rowing and athletics. In the tradition of Arnold and rugby they even participated in the development of a new game. The first recorded Australian Rules Football match was played between Scotch and Melbourne Grammar in 1858.²³

While Adamson was Headmaster in the early 20th century Wesley became a sporting school above all else, but this does not seem to have lessened the school's ability to nurture the future leaders of Australia. Robert Gordon Menzies and Harold Holt were both Wesley boys and an ex-Headmaster of Wesley wrote an impromptu poem about them when Holt succeeded Menzies as Prime Minister:

When R.G. was followed by Holt,
Scotch and Grammar received quite a jolt,
There's only one College
For 'Liberal' knowledge—
Three cheers for the purple and gold!²⁴

Mr H. Cowen was a Wesley boy. Following attendance at schools in St Kilda and North Caulfield his father sent him to Wesley College. 'Still' he said, 'the best school in the Commonwealth, the most tolerant'. But Mr Cowen remembers it as a school that was short of money, as indeed it was when he was there in the late 1920s and early 1930s. The Nicholas brothers made their generous gift for rebuilding the year he left.²⁵

John Holdsworth was at Wesley during World War II. He attended Caulfield Central School and went on to Wesley at the age of eleven. Mr Holdsworth was there when the US army took over the school buildings and the boys moved to share with Scotch College. The Wesley boys had the school in the afternoon, Scotch in the morning: 'School results improved out of all sight—people knew they had to work harder. The war was taken seriously. [Scotch and Wesley were] traditional enemies, but it all worked out well'. Wesley shared Scotch College's premises from 1942 to 1944. It was an exciting time to be a school boy: 'reading about the successes in North Africa ... I remember when the Germans got close to Moscow and the winter set in ... we were aloof from the bloodshed—it was exciting .

During the 1970s Wesley participated in the general trend towards coeducational day schools. In 1978 girls were admitted from prep, to grade 3 and the last of the boarders left at the end of 1980.

Not all the private educational bodies in Prahran were schools. In 1918 the Braille Library moved to Commercial Road, South Yarra, where it continued providing not only books but also lessons in elocution, dancing and swimming for the blind. Skilled volunteers worked with the library,

converting university texts into braille, as well as more general books. By the 1930s, it was the third largest braille library in the world and assisted many blind students to complete their university studies.²⁷

Another rather different private educational body was the Try Society. In February 1883 William Mark Forster invited three underprivileged boys to his home in Toorak. On that first meeting they simply played games with his own children, but the encounter was a great success. A growing number of boys turned up every week and they soon had to move their activities to the school room at the rear of St John's Church. The boys took part in singing, reading, gymnastics and sport and the group became the Try Boys' Society. Self-improvement and self-reliance were high on the agenda. In 1887 the Toorak and South Yarra Try Society moved into its own building on Surrey Road, on land donated by Mrs Margaret Hobson. Over the years a reading room was added and the buildings expanded. The Try Society offered a number of facilities to its members, including an employment bureau, savings bank, sickness insurance and classes in a wide range of subjects. These included boot repairing, carpentry, shorthand, bookkeeping, reading, writing, elocution, singing and printing in the Society's own print shop. In 1977 the buildings were sold and the money used to expand Try Youth and Community Services, which by then catered for boys from all over Melbourne. During the early years in South Yarra the emphasis was on helping unemployed boys find work and, if necessary, homes.

The girls were not completely forgotten. The Girls' Try Society began in 1894 in the South Yarra Hall, but the Society steered well clear of a coeducational approach. In 1895 the girls moved to the Presbyterian Sunday School Hall in Hawksburn and became the Hawksburn Girls' Club. The emphasis was helping the girls to find jobs, but the range of assistance offered was rather more limited than for the boys. Members of the Girls' Club could attend classes in gymnastics, drill, dressmaking and singing.

Forster's vision in his youth work was to offer underprivileged children a little information to help them increase their chance of getting a job.²⁸ This was generally not at all what the founders of private girls' schools had in mind.

Molly and Valentine Leeper were both pupils at the Melbourne Church of England Girls' Grammar School and their father, the Warden of Trinity College at the University of Melbourne, was involved in the purchase of the school by the Anglican Diocese of Melbourne:

Mother was at a little private school . . . quality depended entirely on the Principal. Bishop Moorhouse wanted a Church of England school for girls but failed to get it . . . PLC [Presbyterian Ladies' College] started in the

eighties, MLC [Methodist Ladies' College] a bit later. The Church of England was much too late in getting on to the job. Then my father said 'sell the land in East Melbourne and buy the Miss Morris's school', which they did.²⁹

In 1893, Miss Hensley and Miss Taylor opened Merton Hall on Domain Road as a girls' school. They had been Principal and vice-Principal of the Women's Hostel attached to Trinity College, and they founded their school following a row with Dr Alex Leeper, the Warden of Trinity.³⁰ In 1898 the school on Domain Road was purchased by W. E. Morris, Registrar of the Anglican Diocese of Melbourne. His daughters, the Misses Mary and Edith Morris, took over the running of the school. In 1900 Mr Morris bought the site at 86 Anderson Street and the school was transferred. The purchase by the Church of England described by Valentine Leeper took place in 1903.³¹ 'The Miss Morris were both born teachers. When the church bought the school, they contracted that the Miss Morris would stay on for ten years, but both were in their twenties and got married, so they didn't stay'.³²

From a handful of pupils in 1893 the school grew until there were 140 on the roll in the first year after purchase by the church, about twenty of them boarders. New buildings and facilities were provided over the years, but the increased demand for secondary education in the 1950s had the most marked impact on the size of the school. By 1953 there was a total of 892 students, and numbers remained around that level for the next forty years. In February 1992 there were 883 students, including 230 girls at Morris Hall, the junior school on the corner of Domain Road and Caroline Street.

Morris Hall has been on the Prahran side of Punt Road since 1966. Before that date the site was used for boarders for a decade or so, then in the 1960s the old Morris Hall on Anderson Street was demolished and the new one opened on Caroline Street. In 1992 there were still 120 boarders at Melbourne Church of England Girls' Grammar School, in an era when other schools were closing their boarding houses. As the convents moved away from providing boarding facilities there was an increase in the number of Catholic girls at the Grammar School. In the inter-war years there were no Catholic girls at the school. By the 1990s about 40 per cent of girls were Anglican and Catholics were the second largest religious group.

The school aimed to attract girls from 'a balanced cross-section of the community it serves' and in 1992 pupils certainly came from a very wide area, including interstate and overseas. In the 1980s there was a tendency to attract an increasing proportion of girls with an Asian background, and Buddhists joined the other denominations at the school: 'We have girls

coming from every direction, and also a broad socio-economic sweep—not as broad as it could be, but broader than many people allow.³³

St Catherine's school was founded in 1903 and began as a girls' college in Castlemaine. Like Melbourne Church of England Girls' Grammar School it was closely associated with the Anglican Church, although the relationship was never formalised in the same way. Henry Langley, Anglican Bishop of Bendigo, proposed that his daughters take over the Castlemaine Girls' College and Ruth Langley was the first Principal of St Catherine's. In 1920 the school moved to Toorak, at about the same time that Toorak College was moving out to Malvern, *en route* to Mount Eliza. St Catherine's began its years in Toorak on Williams Road. One of the first pupils was Patricia Guest, nee Hammond:

I went there the first day it opened down in Williams Road and we used to walk to school across the Como paddocks to the top of Como Avenue ... It was this old house and it had a dusty playground, and a pepper tree. We all stood around in heaps that morning. We'd had a governess. St Catherine's picked up all the children around Toorak and South Yarra who'd had governesses. Miss Templeton herself had been a governess ... for the Hunters ... at Blair in St George's Road ... Jean Hunter and Wilma Clarke and I think probably Valerie Moule who lived in St George's Road, they all had lessons at the Hunter's ... They all came to St Catherine's when it started ... [Before St Catherine's opened, the Hammond family also had governesses.] First of all we had a French governess, then we had Miss Watson—terribly nice girls. They were both charming people. My two elder sisters, Jean Ferguson and Alison Fenner [from the Kensington Road area] they all had lessons [at the Hammond's].

Miss Templeton—her brothers were very well-known in Melbourne. They were a very well known family ... Miss Langley came from Castlemaine ... It was a most lucky chance. She had always run the school, so she knew how to do that. I must say Miss Templeton, she was perfectly sweet, but the only thing she ever taught was mythology ... Miss Templeton would have been quite, quite hopeless at running the school ...

It had a lot of charm ... We just didn't go to school if we didn't feel like it. I used to carry around excuses that my mother wrote and I told her never to date them and ... so I used to produce one of these grubby things out of my pocket ... My ... sister said to me the other day ... 'do you remember when I walked into the class and they all stood up and clapped because they hadn't seen me for so long?' ...

The education was very, very haphazard. There were one or two good teachers ... Miss Hines taught English and Latin and she was an excellent teacher. There were good French and history teachers ... It wasn't meant to be a nasty sort of educational establishment. It was really a place where you made friends ...³⁴

The school moved to 17 Heyington Place in 1922. Like Lore to at Mandeville Hall, St Catherine's took over what had been a private family



ST CATHERINE'S SCHOOL, EARLY 1990s

mansion. As the school grew, it needed more space and surrounding properties were acquired as they became available. The junior school moved to 33 Heyington Place in 1948 and the intervening properties were mostly bought during the 1950s.

Like Wesley, St Catherine's had to find a temporary home during World War II. The buildings were taken over by the WRAAF and the school moved to Warburton Chalet. In March 1942 the girls walked from Heyington Place to Heyington Station, knapsacks on their backs. Life in the hills turned out to be relatively comfortable, according to the School Log. The girls found that:

we were quite close to the Yarra, beyond which was an excellent 9-hole golf course, while at the Chalet itself we were provided with two good tennis courts. Later we played baseball on the sportsground on the other side of the village, but at first we were forced to use a rather rutty paddock. A swimming pool in the Chalet grounds was, though small, a welcome place after the day's work. As soon as we had time we explored the country round about the Chalet, and discovered some lovely walks.

At the end of the year the Headmistress, Miss Holmes, was in reflective mood in her report.

The peace and beauty of the mountains and the country, and the freedom of life away from the city, which we have been fortunate enough to enjoy without being under the shadow of imminent danger, must leave their mark upon us. Will this alter our attitude? Will we continue to be indifferent, or grow up indifferent, to the disgrace of city slums?

We have had to turn into being a boarding school from being largely a day school, and I know you have felt the quickening and stirring of that intangible thing which can be so precious, and which we call the school spirit . . .

Up here you have become much more self-reliant, and at the same time inter-dependent. It would have affected the whole school if, for instance, the vegetable squad had not been faithful in its very monotonous tasks. At this point I should like to thank the girls who have so cheerfully and capably carried out the 'background' jobs. It is very seldom that they have been found wanting, and we owe them a great deal in the smooth running of community life. I know you recognise the fact that it is very good for you, especially for some who were a little ignorant of that side of things, to learn how to do many of the routine household tasks. You will have a greater understanding of, and respect for those who do these tasks in your own households, if the day ever returns when we cease to do them for ourselves . . .³⁵

For many of the young ladies who attended St Catherine's, that day never did return. Servants were far less common in the 1950s than they had been in the 1930s, and even those women who continued to employ domestic help were likely to do so on a part-time basis, and refer to their employees as staff, not servants. But the differences in income and expectations between most of the children who attended private schools and those who attended State schools remained significant.

This chapter has dealt only with those private schools actually within the boundaries of Prahran, which has resulted in a brief discussion of the history of Wesley College and the Melbourne Church of England Girls Grammar School, because only a few of their buildings lie on the Prahran side of the border. Melbourne Grammar, Scotch College, Lauriston Girls School, St Michaels Grammar School and De La Salle College are all within easy walking distance of Prahran, but they have not been discussed because they are not actually inside the City boundaries. This approach is inevitable in a work of this kind but it fails, perhaps, to give the true picture of the position of Prahran at the heart of Melbourne's private education industry.

9

Meeting Places, 1920-1950

Over the years, the citizens of Prahran worked out a wide range of activities through which they could get together and have fun. Despite the enormous variety of these social events—callisthenics, Mayoral Balls, football matches, Sunday School picnics—they fall into two broad categories: those that provide opportunities for meeting members of the opposite sex, and those that do not. The mixed sex activities can be further subdivided into those attended by young, single people and those attended by mature, and frequently married, men and women. There is an added agenda at a mixed doubles tennis match, for instance, that is missing in a game of football, while a Cup Week Ball at Government House is likely to be attended by men and women with rather different aspirations from those of their children at a debutante party a little further up the Yarra.

Virtually all social gatherings have some sort of a class context, but this is likely to be particularly pronounced where young people of the opposite sex get together. Their parents, and frequently the young people themselves, are very careful about just who it is they meet. After all, Romeo and Juliet notwithstanding, most of the firmest friendships are based on shared experience. The added dimension to this pattern of going out to meet people is that children who attended State schools or Catholic parish schools met members of the opposite sex at least five days a week, while children who attended private schools generally did not. They did, however, meet members of the opposite sex on Sundays.

SUNDAY SCHOOLS

During the inter-war years, a significant proportion of the population of Prahran went to church on Sundays and sent their children to Sunday school. Many more parents packed their children off for a bit of weekly religion, even if they did not attend church themselves. Later in the century, the religious associations of Sunday were to fade dramatically, but in 1920 they were still very strong.¹ Once a week thousands of children, freshly scrubbed behind the ears and wearing their Sunday best, packed the church halls. There they were divided by age. The infant and primary groups were treated to simplified versions of Bible stories while the older Bible classes studied the scriptures directly.

No statistics are available to indicate how many girls and boys of this era met their future spouses at Sunday school, but the number would be large, especially among Methodists and Presbyterians. Betty Malone estimates that of the young people attending the Armadale Methodist Church in this era, as many as eight out of ten married within the group or someone from a nearby Methodist Church.² By 1920 Prahran was covered by a dense network of churches of all denominations and on Sundays the children were carefully divided up by area and religious affiliation in a manner that probably reflected the subtleties of social structure almost as faithfully as the schools.

It would appear that John Wesley invented the Sunday school in 1736 or 1737 and so it is perhaps not surprising that the institution was particularly strong among the Methodist congregations of Prahran.³ In the late 1920s Freda Harridane attended the Methodist Sunday School attached to the church on the corner of Upton Road and Union Street, Windsor:

I loved Sunday school ... it filled Sundays ... provided other activities too ... concerts, yearly anniversary ... picnic and Harvest Festival, where a tiered platform was erected in the church ... the children brought greengroceries and flowers ... these were placed in the front, a special service for the young. We were always given a small cardboard tract after Sunday school ... I attended a weekly gym class in the Sunday school hall ... run I think by Bosworths. We marched in formation—my big love—and did set exercises with hoops and rods and dumbbells. We wore little black tunics edged with gold braid—slightly Grecian—black 'running' shoes ... wonderful freedom after strong school shoes. I remember taking part in a combined classes display at Wurth's Circus. Within the small class we competed—with medals for the best.⁴

Ms Harridane's family did not send her to Sunday school out of any great commitment to Methodism because later she changed schools and

attended the one attached to St George's [Presbyterian] Church south of Dandenong Road, opposite the Astor cinema. Ms Harridane loved that Sunday school too, although she was not so involved. The family moved to South Yarra and as an adolescent Freda Harridane attended a youth group, this time attached to the Toorak Presbyterian Church:

I belonged to the PFA—Presbyterian Fellowship of Australia—held at the Peace Memorial Hall in Toorak Village . . . that was largely my social life in my teen years, still difficult times financially. Many social activities . . . dancing not permitted in the Church Hall. I attended church . . . my sister sang in the choir . . . also met her husband there. After Sunday night church we would go to a friend's home for coffee . . . and talk. Pulled the world apart . . . discussed many issues. It was good training . . . mixed backgrounds. Happy days.⁵

The congregation of the Toorak Presbyterian Church was divided between those who lived in the Village and those who lived on the hill. They came from different social backgrounds. After World War I the Memorial Hall was built in the Village for the congregation there. It was used for a range of community activities and on Sundays it was the venue for the Village's Sunday school. A second Sunday school appeared up the hill, but not until much later. During the 1920s the more affluent members of the congregation tended to provide religious instruction for their children in their own homes.

Norman Wettenhall's father was an elder of the Toorak Presbyterian Church: 'Father was very much involved with the church and St Andrews Hospital . . . he was reasonably strict . . . Sundays we were not allowed to do anything much—I read a lot'. There were strong links between the Presbyterian Church and the Wettenhall family and for many years, church Christmas parties for the local children were held in the gardens at their home, Aberfeldie. All the same, the main division was not between Presbyterians and others. There were also family links with the Anglican Church, for instance. The big division was between Catholics and the rest. Kitty and Teany Rush, who worked as maids for the Wettenhalls, were Catholic, but members of the family seldom met anyone else who was not Protestant. The Catholics went to different schools and if they were sick they went to a different hospital: 'The opportunities for mixing were not so great. The people you meet are the ones you marry'.⁶

Mrs Rogers attended the Grandview Grove Methodist Church in the inter-war years and remembers the gym classes there. Like Freda Harridane, she went on from gym classes at Sunday school to ballet classes.⁷ Often the church attended seems to have been the result of chance and location rather than religious conviction. In the 1930s Shirley Paine attended the St Matthews Anglican Sunday school because it was the nearest

to the family shop on Chapel Street, but Mrs Paine's mother was a Baptist and walked up Chapel Street to the Baptist Church.⁸ Similarly, Betty Malone began attending the Methodist Sunday school on Kooyong Road when she was five years old, because that was where the girl next door went: 'That supplied a lot of my social life—gymnasium classes, Guild for older kids . . . I played early morning tennis with the people from the church on Union Street'. Mrs Malone went on to Methodist Ladies' College and also played tennis at night after school and belonged to the tennis club attached to St George's, Malvern.⁹

Alan Shinkfield's attendance at Sunday school was very much more a part of a family commitment. For the best part of half a century his father was the superintendent and Sunday school teacher at the Punt Road Methodist Church. Naturally, all the Shinkfield children attended the Punt Road Sunday school:

We all went—two o'clock in the afternoon. We went right up to the Bible Class there—young men . . . the Sunday school picnic at Aspendale Race Course—we went by train from South Yarra Station . . . had foot racing—the young couples used to go off together—the younger ones would play cowboys and indians or whatever—we had lunch and tea down there and came home, quite often badly sunburned . . . we used to tie the girls' hair round the back of the seats at Sunday school . . .

But all your life was round your Sunday school—seventy odd members of a club. One member had a house with a ballroom near Albert Park—we had various instrumentalists, our own orchestra. We'd go down there and have dances about once a month on Saturday nights—about seventy of us. We didn't have motor cars. We walked, or public transport.

The club was pretty active . . . something almost every week: we paid an educational visit to Australian Glass; went through the telephone tunnels in Melbourne; went to see neon lights being made; one night we had a mock wedding; we made our own entertainment. There was never any trouble. Everyone knew each other. [If you did anything wrong] it would get back to your family.¹⁰

Which, of course, was the whole point. Friends made through church groups were a part of the same community where everyone knew about everyone else. This pattern continued even through World War II: 'You did everything from the church—badminton club, all sorts of social youth groups and things. The majority of them all intermarried'.¹¹

CHILDREN OUT OF SCHOOL

After school and on Saturdays children devised a range of activities of their own. Reg Rogers remembers kicking a paper football and stuffing his poc-kets with mulberries. Children played marbles or cricket in their backyards if there was room and in the street if there was not. There was very little

traffic so that this was not so dangerous as it was to become later in the century. Lindsay Fox remembered playing cricket in the street during the 1940s:

In Windsor at the end of Stuart Street down to Union Street there was a horse trough and that was a T intersection. So we played cricket. In those days after school... you'd have two teams. The middle of the horse trough was painted up as the wicket. You'd bowl down Stuart Street and hit to square leg or the off or straight drive and score your runs, and we did that for years.

We used to play football in the football season with either a sock football or a cigarette paper football and the goals were normally between the fence and the street light pole...¹²

In the 1920s, Prahran had even less traffic and was also very much less densely settled than in later years. Before Como was subdivided, children in South Yarra had a large area of bushland and swamp in which to play. Patricia Guest remembers that 'it was a magic world really, because we had the Como paddocks behind us... there was a swamp at the bottom where the playing field is now'. Reg Rogers also played around the Como swamp and along the river: 'Well, when I got my pants wet I'd been... in the swamp... I used to go off along the River Yarra, trees hanging right down to the bank'.¹³

Valentine Leeper remembers seeing a heron on Como swamp, and kingfishers. During the early 1930s, those with no other job worked to build Alexandra Avenue and at least partly fill in the swamp below Como. Until then, Miss Leeper used to walk through the bush along the Yarra bank: 'Before that I had managed to get the whole way along struggling through bushes, a lot of wattle growing there, before Herring Island was built. I could only get along on foot'.¹⁴

Norman Wettenhall used to climb trees or walk with his dog all over Toorak. In the 1920s the area still had a semi-urban feel to it with open paddocks between some of the houses in their spacious grounds. On Lansell Road there was even a private zoo. Dogs and children could roam relatively unconstrained. Brogan, the Wettenhall's Irish setter, enjoyed the society weddings at St John's Church. He would wander across Toorak Road and join the bride's party.¹⁵

In the opposite corner of Prahran, the Shinkfields had an Irish terrier called Paddy. His favourite occupation on a Saturday afternoon was to jump the fence and head off to the football at St Kilda. He would sit on the boundary and run away if the ball came too near him: 'At three-quarter time he would jump the fence, find my father and go home with him. Footballers remember that dog. Quite a lot would go up and pat him'. Sometimes the Shinkfield boys took Paddy to the golf course where he

exercised another of his talents—stealing golf balls: 'Mum would leave the pram outside the shops on Chapel Street [guarded by] Paddy. He was practically human . . . the dog catcher would come round and try and catch him. My father said he'd pay the fine willingly if [the dog catcher] could catch him'.¹⁶

Don Moore lived near the Victoria Gardens and as a child in the 1920s he used to fly kites there, or have races with his friends rolling down the slopes of the sunken oval in an old car tyre. Children in Prahran's parks and gardens were likely to come at least nominally under the eye of adults. The head gardener tried to keep some sort of order at the Victoria Gardens, chasing children out of the flower beds and in extreme cases banning them from the gardens for up to a week.¹⁷ Children could, at times, come into considerable conflict with authority where their ideas of the appropriate behaviour in parks differed from those of the gardeners. Sometimes matters went so far as to be reported to the Council, as when sixty carnation plants were stolen from the Grattan Street Gardens in 1917. These gardens seem to have been subject to particular conflicts over use and at one stage there was even barbed wire around the flower beds, until the Council agreed that this was tipping the balance between the interests of plants and children too far in the direction of the plants.¹⁸

Adults organised various activities for children to keep them occupied when not at school. Among the most structured of these activities was scouting. The first troop in Prahran seems to have been formed in 1909 and in that era scouting had patriotic and imperial overtones that were to fade as scouting became more international in outlook. In 1912 a Scout Rally and Display was held in the grounds of Government House for 'Imperial Boy Scouts, Victoria Section'. The Governor, Sir John M. Fleetwood Fuller, Bart., KCMG was Chief Scout for Victoria, and Charles M. Read Stores, Chapel Street, advertised themselves as the 'Headquarters for Scout outfits'. The advertisement featured swastikas in the design. They seem to have been fashionable at the time. Following the fire two years later, the Town Hall was rebuilt with swastikas featuring prominently in the design of the entrance foyer.

Throughout the inter-war years, scouting was an activity for boys that was sanctioned at the very highest levels and there were several troops in South Yarra, Toorak and Prahran. The boys learnt how to pitch tents, tie knots and even build bridges, but they also devoted a fair proportion of their time to charitable activities of one kind or another. For instance, in 1946, Prahran's scouts were deeply involved in the campaign to raise money and collect food for Britain. Churches, schools, factories, clubs, the Red Cross and the South Yarra ARP were all involved in the campaign, but it was scouts and cubs who went round from door to door collecting goods



BOY SCOUTS BUSY WORKING ON PRAHRAN'S FOOD FOR BRITAIN APPEAL, FEBRUARY 1946

and cash and piling up their home-made trolleys with the tins donated by Prahran's housewives. Fund-raising for charity was very much the fashion in that era and boys from the Technical School seem to have been as enthusiastic as the Scouts in collecting things.

At the end of 1950 the Prahran Boy Scouts' Local Association was formed with the Mayor as President, Cr Jones as Chairman and a council employee, L. C. Carew, as Secretary. By then, the Scouts Association was negotiating to lease the island in the Yarra as a training centre. It was due to be handed over to the Chief Scout, Sir Edmund Herring, at the end of 1951, and became known as Herring Island.¹⁹

Not all children's activities, however, were sponsored in such exalted quarters. There was money to be made out of keeping children (and adults) entertained and the inter-war years saw a boom in this sort of business.

MOVING PICTURES

During the inter-war years the world was swept by a new form of entertainment. New buildings were constructed for the purpose of showing the flickering black and white images and every week thousands of residents of Prahran flocked to see the fun.



TINS OF PLUM PUDDING COLLECTED IN PRAHRAN AND DESTINED FOR BRITAIN, MARCH 1946

In the early days silent films were sometimes shown in the Victoria Gardens. Don Moore remembers that two poles were erected on one side of the sunken oval and a screen was hung between them. The children sat on the grass to watch, while adults brought their own chairs. Music was provided by the Prahran Municipal Band.²⁰

On 2 October 1911 the Mayor of Prahran officially opened the Royal Picture Theatre in Chapel Street, Windsor. By the end of World War I Prahran had four picture theatres and they featured prominently in the children's part of the peace celebrations on 18 July 1919: 'All the school children of the City were entertained by the Council at Picture Entertainments at the following Theatres: The Royal; The Lyric; The Empress; The Armadale'.²¹

In the early years, moving pictures were considered educational and even religious. There were a number of documentaries on such topics as the life history of a grain of wheat and Brian Lewis remembers that the Salvation Army was among Australia's first film-makers, while a family visit to *Quo Vadis* was considered almost as acceptable as going to church.²²

Meanwhile, Australian film companies were recording the adventures of local heroes, real and imaginary, until films on bushranging were banned in New South Wales, thus effectively killing the local rival to



THE EMPRESS THEATRE

cowboys and indians. Raymond Longford directed his silent version of *The Sentimental Bloke* in 1918 and followed this triumph with *On Our Selection* in 1920.²³

In 1920 the Lyric Theatre on Chapel Street was advertising that Paramount, Goldwyn and Metro Pictures were always shown there.²⁴ Hollywood had come to Prahran, and by about 1928 the local film industry had more or less collapsed and been replaced by the imported article. Susan Dermody and Dianne Collins have described a number of aspects of this process.²⁵ One of the significant players in this drama was Toorak resident, Frank Thring.

Mr Thring was managing director of Hoyts, one of the two major chains of cinemas in Australia, the other being Union Theatres. In 1930 Thring sold his controlling interest to Fox, so that control of this important route for the distribution of films passed into American hands. However, long before then both Union Theatres and Hoyts had concentrated on showing overseas films, and engaged in a race to build bigger and better cinemas precisely in order to keep their American suppliers happy. The capital involved was enormous and led both companies into financial difficulties. After he had sold out to Fox, Frank Thring set up Efftee Film Productions in Melbourne, one of the earliest local companies to produce 'talkies'.²⁶ In 1932 he directed a sound remake of the *Sentimental Bloke*.

Dermody argues that both this film and the sound remake of *On Our Selection* that appeared in the same year display Australian culture through American filters in a way that the earlier silent versions do not. In the intervening decade, Australian audiences had become familiar with American films, American ideas and American values. They lapped them up every Saturday afternoon, along with the local and British products:

In understanding the variety of community responses to the cinema during the motion picture's golden age it is essential to recognise that the rise of 'movies' for the millions' challenged traditional sources of authority in Australian life . . .

As a mass entertainment the cinema disregarded from the first the established social and intellectual elite and its notions of culture, education and art.²⁷

Criticism of the 'movies' from the social and intellectual elite grew accordingly, while thousands flocked to see the films anyway and mass advertising campaigns fed the cinema public's huge appetite for information on 'the stars'. Valentine Leeper remembers that during the 1920s cinema hoardings changed the appearance of Prahran:

On nearly every corner on the east-west streets there was a hoarding. There were usually houses behind them . . . The hoardings were the important things. In particular they advertised the theatres with very large posters. Going along High Street every day in 1920, 1921, going to university, I learnt the names of a lot of film stars that way.²⁸

In the late 1920s, Union Theatres and Hoyts engaged in a race to build the biggest and best Capitol and Regent Theatres respectively, to show the latest silent Hollywood films. The Regent Theatre in South Yarra was on the south side of Toorak Road. It was an easy walk for Miss Leeper from her home in Kensington Road: 'There was a good film theatre in Toorak road . . . The Regent'. Splendid buildings were a part of a conscious attempt to give the cinema a respectable image and attract a middle-class audience. Then came the talkies and grand cinemas no longer needed organs, orchestra pits and large stages for the live shows in the intervals.

With the aid of overseas capital, Hoyts was able to open new theatres especially designed for the talkies. The Windsor Theatre on the corner of Peel and Albert Streets was opened by the Mayor, Cr R. J. Grant, in April 1936 and seems to have been welcomed as 'an added attraction to the district'.²⁹ In contrast, the Village Theatre in Toorak, opened a month earlier by Sir Stanley Argyle, MLA, met considerable local opposition. In an attempt to allay middle-class fears, the souvenir programme produced for the opening announced: 'Pictures are but the tracing of our own history that began in the first crude carvings of our race'. The brochure included poetry, a brief history of Lieutenant Charles Forrest in Toorak and his



ONE OF THE SPLENDID NEW CINEMAS BUILT EXCLUSIVELY TO SHOW TALKING PICTURES: THE WINDSOR THEATRE OPENED IN APRIL 1936.

picture, besides photographs of 'Manly Clark Gable' and 'Lovely to Look at Jean Harlow'. Readers were informed that Jean Harlow 'now has 'brownette' hair—which makes her about the most provocative girl on the Screen' while Clark Gable was 'the Screen's most popular Male Star who recently went to the far Countries of South America, where he found they worshipped Strange Gods—and he was one of them'.³⁰ The Village seems to have been a semi-independent theatre and it showed MGM and Paramount pictures.

In the 1930s Shirley Paine lived above a milk bar in Chapel Street, opposite the Empress Theatre. 'We really lived on the interval trade from the Empress theatre opposite. We shared it with Miss O'Brien right next door'. The working life of the family was organised around the rushes from across the road. As a small girl, Shirley helped out during the rush on Friday evening and again for the matinee on Saturday afternoon and the Saturday evening show:

Shirley Temple and Jane Withers—a nasty girl with straight black hair—Charlie Chaplin—there were very long queues of children on Saturday afternoons to get in. If the film was popular a full house, almost. The children would fill it ... I went to the cinema about once ... I didn't think Charlie Chaplin was funny. We all longed to be exactly like Shirley Temple ... The cigarettes had film star cards in them.³¹



THE VILLAGE THEATRE, TOORAK, WAS OPENED IN MARCH 1936, DESPITE LOCAL PROTESTS. THE OPENING PROGRAMME FEATURED CLARK GABLE AND JEAN HARLOW.

Even the lives of those who did not go to watch the films were influenced by what went on in Hollywood.

COURTING, BUT FIRST FIND YOUR PARTNER

During the 1920s in Toorak it was:

unthinkable for . . . wives or daughters to have jobs or careers. The young girls diverted themselves with bridge, golf, tennis, etc., and the social round. Servants were still plentiful so housework and cooking were

unnecessary skills for the Toorak girls. Their suitors had to be well established financially and good prospects were essential before one dared propose marriage. A man was expected to maintain his bride 'in the style of living to which she was accustomed' by his own efforts, even if she possessed independent means.³²

Social functions in such circles were seldom open to any except invited guests:

Girls were always addressed as Miss Whatever-their-surname after an introduction. This formality continued indefinitely during the acquaintance-ship until one was invited by them to use Christian names . . .

When I was in my late teens there was a terrible row when a Toorak matron started serving wine-cup and punch at her Sunday evening parties for young people. When the guests' parents heard of this they were furious. She was teaching the young to DRINK! The parties soon faded out under the strong blasts of disapproval.³³

Some mothers went to a great deal of trouble to ensure that their daughters had an opportunity to meet all the suitable young men:

There was a lot of social life in those days and really and truly I think you youngsters miss a hell of a lot. I know we used to think it was terribly stuffy and all this nonsense about leaving cards and that sort of thing but nobody came . . . nobody who had any education or friends at all came to this town and weren't immediately recognised and known because they went around leaving cards . . . You were immediately entertained . . .

My mother worked much harder for me than I did for my girls, I suppose simply because my girls wouldn't take it but I met all the people of my age group and if we were going to a ball we always had dinner laid on . . . and then of course you had to be taken and brought back and all that sort of jazz. They were quite a thing, some of those balls. Mrs Creswick, for instance, had beautiful balls.

When I came back from France . . . I was eighteen or nineteen I suppose . . . Mother gave a ball for me in a marquee and old Alistair Clark was a great friend of hers and he brought down huge bushes of Sunny South roses . . . just masses of them. It was the most dreadful night, I remember. At 5 o'clock the ballroom floor was under inches of water. Mother pulled up the drawing room carpet and polished the floor but they only danced one dance in the drawing room and then it cleared up and we went outside again . . . but they were fun parties you know. There was always some sort of novelty . . . I remember, one of the Creswick's parties I think, they had a merry-go-round set up there . . .³⁴

If the group of young men and women who were considered suitable for each other was of a manageable size, then a structured system of introductions and parties worked quite well, but in less affluent circles the range of possible suitors for young women widened. Interestingly, middle-class girls may have met fewer young men than the belles of Toorak. Safe introductions tended to come through church, family and limited mixed

activities where two single sex schools got together to put on a play or a dance. In Armadale in the 1930s and 1940s:

We went dancing always in a group . . . the church didn't approve . . . I went with cousins, a group of ten . . . if you had no regular boyfriend you'd make up a mixed group . . . We went to the Bambalina in Malvern or the Palais Royal. I went to the Mayoral Ball in Malvern once with an elderly admirer . . .

There was no hanky-panky with the boys—people had to wait to get married in the depression . . . you didn't go to bed before marriage . . . It wasn't done in the circles I moved in and the boys knew it. They didn't attempt anything. In the second year of your engagement you bought a block of land and saved and the girls left work . . .³⁵

In large areas of Prahran and Windsor, Sunday school was an important focus of social life for young people, but at some stage in their teens or early twenties the focus was likely to shift. For those boys who were interested in sport, a natural centre of social activity was the local football or cricket club. Tennis was also popular, and girls played too. Miss Mary Hulme and Miss Win Summers were among the young women who played tennis on the court attached to the Congregational Church on Malvern Road, Armadale. In 1914 it was still slightly daring for women to play tennis, but by 1939 it was not only acceptable but positively encouraged, even by churches that frowned on dancing. Alan Shinkfield remembers playing a number of sports, but it was at the church tennis club that he remembers meeting girls:

When we got older, social life revolved around the cricket club or the football club—or later the tennis club. I ended up meeting again girls I went to school with.

All your social life was round the locals because you didn't have a car. The last tram would leave before the dance was over. I went to Leggetts a few times, but I was not really interested. We used to like going where you knew everybody. There was a terrific pianist at the Masonic Hall . . . The MC would not let you sit out . . . He'd come down and introduce you to someone when you really needed a rest. They had little acts between the dances.

Always of a Saturday night you went somewhere. The Palais de Dance was cliquey. If they didn't know you, you'd get a knock-back, and sometimes impolite. We went to hear the band sometimes, the orchestra, and we'd possibly have one or two dances. I went into town occasionally, to Collins Street, to the Freemasons. Myer sometimes had a dance. You'd go with a crowd you knew . . . the smaller dances appealed to us, more friendly. The small dances, too, they used to turn on a supper for us . . . a real friendly atmosphere.

You got to know people because you didn't travel far—that made it a lot of fun. It also kept you on the straight and narrow. If you did the wrong thing, everybody would get to hear. The decent girls wouldn't have anything to do with you.³⁶



MARYHULME AND WIN SUMMERS PLAYING TENNIS IN HATS AND BUTTON BOOTS, c.1914, MALVERN ROAD CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, ARMADALE

Dancing in that era was a serious business. You had to know how to dance, and many people made a living teaching dancing. You also had to dress for the occasion and however hard up they might be, most young women possessed some kind of evening dress. Those who couldn't afford to buy them made their own or improvised. Mrs Elliott, nee Thrower, was one of a family of eight children who grew up in the centre of Prahran. Their father was a firefighter for some years and the family lived in a Metropolitan Fire Brigade cottage on Garden Street. The girls were in the local church basketball team and did gym at the Try Boys' Society Hall. Unlike the young ladies of Toorak, girls in Mrs Elliott's circle went out to work, at least until they were married. She and one of her sisters worked at the Empire Dance Hall (later Chaser's night club) as cloakroom attendants: 'They had to wear evening dress and after work, at about 11 or 11.30, the local policeman on the beat usually walked them home'.³⁷

The biggest and best-known dance hall in Prahran was Leggetts. The ballroom was conveniently situated a short walk from Prahran Station and drew customers from all over Melbourne. Harry and Emily Leggett had many years of experience in vaudeville and running dances in various venues, including the Prahran Town Hall, before they opened their own ballroom in 1920. From the beginning there was a lounge, a conservatory and a lawn, as well as the ballroom itself:

We always had a lawn at the ballroom. I think there were more lies spoken on that lawn than any place in Melbourne. If you get what I am talking about. They would dance together and then he would sit with her, buy

her a drink [non-alcoholic], perhaps 6d, that's all it would cost, and then he would turn around and say 'Where do you live?' That was always the first question because if she lived too far . . . he wouldn't take her home. So he would say 'Where do you live?' She would say, 'Oh, South Melbourne'. 'Oh, fine', so he would take her home. That was how they met, that is how they married and that is how some of them got divorced as well!³⁸

Leggetts catered for 'the ordinary people, the working people, the middle-class people' and they did so with notable success.³⁹ In 1921 the balcony was added and the ballroom was extended in 1924, 1926 and 1939. After the 1926 extensions there were cloakrooms for 4000 people.

Every man wore a hat and a coat . . . Ladies brought their shoes and changed them, or wore their silver shoes and put their other shoes in the cloakroom with their bags. We had to have big cloakroom space.

Of course the gentlemen always had to wear their coats and ties. You were not allowed to take your coat off—no way—no matter if it was 104 degrees in the shade.⁴⁰

Men wore stiff collars, patent leather dancing pumps, and, until 1920, Harry and Emily Leggett required them to wear white gloves to their



THE MAYOR, CR WILLIAM FLINTOFT, AND HIS WIFE WELCOME THE DUKE OF GLOUCESTER TO PRAHRAN, OCTOBER 1934

dances: 'In 1920 H.R.H., the Prince of Wales (who became King Edward VIII) visited Melbourne. He attended a Ball at the Melbourne Town Hall and was not wearing white gloves. From that time on, male dancers ceased to wear them and Harry and Emily no longer required them to'.⁴¹ By 1920 lady's hemlines were starting to rise. Women were wearing three-quarter length dresses, with silver shoes and a ribbon around their foreheads. With the Charleston came shorter, beaded frocks, but hemlines dropped again in the depression years, by which stage men were wearing double-breasted suits and turn-down collars had replaced the winged variety on men's shirts.

Dancing lessons were an important feature of Leggetts. Phil Leggett, from 1932 with the assistance of Beryl, introduced all the latest dances to Australia. They were even given a special preview of *Flying Down to Rio* so that they could demonstrate the carioca. Phil's parents also employed a large staff of dancing teachers who taught the beginners in a curtained off area of the ballroom: 'The teachers taught from 8.15 p.m. until interval, when they could be hired out as professional partners'. By 1939 Leggetts had thirty teaching staff instructing 50 000 pupils a year.

Harry and Emily Leggett did not let their vaudeville and theatre experience go to waste in the ballroom, and son Phil kept up the tradition. Special nights might feature anything from chariot races on the ballroom floor in 'A Night in Ancient Rome' to a sword swallower on 'Pirate Night'. By the outbreak of war in 1939 the ballroom could hold 6000 dancers. There were lawns and lounges and a huge stage, all of which were fully used by Allied troops:

The soldiers could come there any night in the week from any of the armed forces for nothing. They could go to any hospitality bureau, get a pass to come in . . .

Then we ran a free Sunday night show . . . a free dance . . . Now you can imagine what it was like . . . girls admitted free, and the whole of the Armed Forces . . . they were there from 6 o'clock waiting to get in. It was absolutely packed and jammed. The Americans arrived. We found that they were very, very gentlemanly . . . When that show was over of a night, we used to put blankets around the ballroom floor, if they had no place to go, give them blankets and supply them with breakfast.⁴²

In the 1950s, square dancing became popular and Leggetts employed first Jim Vickers-Willis and then Eddie Carol as callers. The look of the ballroom was very different from the evening dress of the 1920s. Patrons turned up with picnic baskets and check shirts to dance Alabama Jubilee, Sioux City Sue and the Docey Do. Then came television and rock and roll and the Leggetts leased the ballroom out. It was finally sold in 1981 to become a sporting complex and night club, where young people continued to meet, and even marry. However, the days were gone when thousands

of young Melburnians met every week, and even every night, at Leggetts Ballroom.

THE SOCIAL CALENDAR

Spring time was party time for the wealthy families in Prahran. Celebrations centred on the first week in November, Cup week, when Toorak and South Yarra were the places to be. In contrast, many people spent Christmas with relatives elsewhere and there seems to have been a general exodus from Prahran. At the hottest time of the year, those who could afford it left town and headed for the beach or the bush.

The first term of the year was marked by rowing, particularly the Head of the River Competition and Henley on Yarra, involving the major public schools, their families and prospective girlfriends. In autumn most people were back in town again and there were the March races and another round of balls and parties. In June and July there were the Mayoral and Return Balls, while July was also the time for the Sheep Show and a bit of steeplechasing, when Victoria's 'country' families came to Melbourne. In August, those who could afford it left town and spent the depths of winter elsewhere, whether on business or pleasure. During the 1920s and 1930s it was still common for members of the Toorak elite to visit Europe every couple of years. Most would time their visits to be back for Cup week in November: In fact a lot of families took trips to England every two or three years, for six months. It was always by ship and you took a flat in London or a house . . .⁴³

A visit to relatives in England was compulsory and there would probably be a visit to the Paris fashion houses. Significant pieces of furniture might also be chosen in Italy or France and the latest European design ideas on home furnishings and clothes returned to Melbourne in time for the Spring Carnival. 'The value to a nation of a leisured class lies in its power to preserve high standards of taste, in its ability to encourage art and literature and music . . .' wrote 'Vesta' in the *Argus* on 2 November 1921. It was the day after the running of the Melbourne Cup:

How far do the girls now growing up to be members of the leisured class realise their privileges and their responsibilities in this direction? Are they conscious of the fact that, since women of wealth and leisure set the fashions in amusements and in dress for the whole community, they can to no small extent determine the standards of taste and of behaviour of the people as a whole?

For Cup week in 1921, such women would expect to have at least three day-time outfits, plus a different evening frock for each dance and coats

and parasols to match. Even for the wealthy, this effectively represented their investment in a wardrobe for the rest of the summer. The outfits might have been purchased in Paris earlier in the year, or they might be copies of Paris originals made in London or Melbourne. A number of people also imported clothes from Paris. Le Louvre and later Magg, on Collins Street both imported and made clothes, and there was also a shop called the Rue de la Paix. Customers were made to feel welcome and could expect to make their decisions on what to buy whilst sitting down with a cup of coffee. Rocher and Pellier from Sydney would also bring clothes down and show them at the Menzies Hotel. The general pattern seems to have been a greater wearing of Paris models in the 1920s than in the 1930s. The depression affected both the frequency of family trips to Europe and the frequency with which brides imported their trousseau directly from European dressmakers who already had their measurements. Patricia Guest 'came out' at the height of the depression:

Mother had four daughters. My elder sister came back [from Paris] with clothes from Worths and Lanvin . . . but she didn't like it. People stared at her, she said . . . My other sister and I didn't have clothes . . . we were not so affluent then—Shaftesbury Avenue—a lot got their clothes there—frightfully cheap, very quickly run up, effective, pretty dance dresses.⁴⁴

Ann Clemens 'came out' in the late 1930s when the worst of the depression was over:

Mother was used to going to England every couple of years . . . Mother used to dress at Patou and Lelong. I used to dress at Nina Ricci . . .

Quite a lot of people used to do this going to England on the ship . . . The Misses Wilson on Grosvenor Street used to buy Paris models and do them cheaply for the colonials . . . you used to have to tell them where you were going and who you would see . . .

Even so, there were sometimes embarrassing occasions when two women wore the same dress to a ball: 'Lady Brookes . . . was giving a ball. The Duke of York came . . . She was in her receiving lounge, receiving the guests . . . the Duke and Duchess arrived and the Duchess had the same dress on . . . All those sort of things were great conversation pieces'.⁴⁵

Royal visits were important occasions on the Toorak social scene. Mrs Guest remembers having a dress made at Le Louvre for a Government House Ball in honour of the Duke of Gloucester. The Town Hall was decorated with flags and a banner of welcome and special seating was erected for the ceremony of greeting Prince Henry in October 1934.

Spring was definitely the right time to visit Melbourne: 'I think people, if they were coming just for society, they came at race time. Mother was always entertaining for somebody who was here from abroad'.⁴⁶

Melbourne also filled up with country and interstate visitors. Cup week was the highlight of the social year, but it was particularly important for those involved in the world of owning, breeding and training race horses. Richard Turnbull followed his father on to the committee of the Victoria Racing Club and eventually became Chairman:

Dad had two trainers. One was Joe Mulcahy who trained at Caulfield and every Sunday we used to go out and see them parade and the other fellow was Fisher, Elwood Fisher, who trained out at Flemington ... I used to sit on the fence at the back and listen to the jockey boys chatting, hear all the gossip, and Dad used to look at his horses.

Of course the race meetings ... it was mainly the country people came down you see ... Both the Flemington at the Cup meeting and the Autumn meeting at Flemington. I suppose because we were involved with Flemington always that we used to think it was much more interesting ... But of course Flemington also was very big. It's a wonderful race course there I mean. Sirius, the horse we won the Cup with, you see he was a very big horse and he couldn't get round the other tracks and I think this applied to quite a number of horses that they were at their best at Flemington ...

It was great fun if you liked horses ... all the visitors were all entertained there. The club rooms were, you know, big parties every day. They used to at one time have lunches under the elms right at the end of the straight. I can remember long tables full of people there.⁴⁷

Mrs Guest also remembers the big luncheons under the elms. Country families who wished to return hospitality would hold luncheon parties for sixty to a hundred guests. For Derby Day and the Oaks, the men, or at least all the men at VRC luncheons under the elms, wore morning suits. Cup Day on the Tuesday was slightly less formal.

In 1923 Cup week was disrupted by the police strike, when it was argued that 'Any person coming into the city after night fall, except on the most urgent business, commits an act of disloyalty', but everything was back to normal in 1924.⁴⁸

The Governor-General and his wife, Lady Stonehaven, presided over festivities that were also attended by the Governor of Victoria and the Countess of Stradbroke, the Governor of New South Wales and Lady De Chair, and Sir James O'Grady, Governor of Tasmania. Ostrich feather fans and bands around the hair were all the rage for the ladies. The ball at State Government House was patronised by the older generation, but their children were to be found at the embassy ball. Mr and Mrs Robert Simson hosted 'the most brilliant ball of the Cup-time festivities'. Guests included the daughters of the Governors of both New South Wales and Tasmania, duly chaperoned, but not by their mothers.

Governors figured prominently in the local social scene, two at a time until 1931 when the Governor-General took up residence in Canberra.

During the 'roaring twenties', Prahran lay neatly between Federal Government House to the west and State Government House to the east. Although there was not the segregation of the generations that was to become fashionable in the 1960s, the young and unmarried were likely to be less enthusiastic about Government House Balls than about balls and parties thrown for teenage daughters, such as that provided by the Baillieu family on Friday 1 November 1929: 'One of the most attractive features of the dance which Mr and Mrs Clive Baillieu gave last evening at Kamillaroï, Toorak, for their younger daughter, Miss June Baillieu, was the exquisite appearance of the lawns and flower gardens, which were illuminated with the soft glow of a thousand electric lights'.⁴⁹

Earlier that afternoon Mrs Konrad Hiller gave a tea party at her home in South Yarra, assisted by her schoolgirl daughter; a bridge and tea party was held in Toorak to welcome Mrs Arthur Price on her return from England; and Toorak Old Collegians took tea for the first time in the College's new buildings at Franks ton. This was the curtain-raiser to Derby Day on Saturday when 'every State except South Australia was represented in the Vice-regal parties' and 'after the Derby Mrs Edward Richardson and Mrs Arnold Johnson entertained more than 200 guests at afternoon tea'. Those who survived the ensuing balls met again at 'several informal tea and supper parties on Sunday':

in honour of country and interstate visitors in town for the Cup-time festivities. One of the most charming of these gatherings was given in the afternoon by Mr and Mrs Archibald Currie at their home, Millicent, Clendon road, Toorak. The garden proved a source of unfailing interest, and guests found their way through winding paths from a miniature English glade with a sunken forest pool and banks of foxgloves and daisies, to a stately rose terrace and a quaint little Japanese garden complete with lacquered bridge and dwarf shrubs.⁵⁰

Other guests played tennis on the lawns before going dancing somewhere else that evening. During the late 1920s there were dances every night during Cup week and the March races: 'All these big houses were still going. Coonac had a ballroom and it was used a great deal. [At Miss Hammond's coming out party] they had an enormous marquee and supper in the ballroom . . . The Creswicks [on Irving Road] always had beautiful, beautiful dances'.⁵¹

But even this carefully cultivated world suffered during the depression. The big private balls more or less came to a halt:

But people had simpler parties and that was when the charity balls got going to a great extent, because people couldn't give the big balls. The charity ball was an answer to it and it was really like a private party. We organised one for the Children's Hospital and it was only people you knew anyway that bought the tickets and so we had private parties in

another sort of way. We gave depression parties, too, at Coonac . . . We had candles in bottles on the table, you know, and red and white checked table cloths . . . The big difference was you had Australian wine, which cost nothing at all, you see.⁵²

When the dancing began to get into full swing again in 1933 and 1934, fashions had changed. The trend towards flats and smaller houses and fewer servants was accompanied by an increasing tendency to hire venues such as 9 Darling Street, South Yarra, for balls and parties, rather than hold them in private homes. However, it was still an exhausting business, having all that fun:

It is only the very young who can go through the whole programme of races, balls and garden party, with luncheons and dinners, afternoon teas, and suppers and little dances to fill in the intervals and say honestly at the end of it that they have enjoyed it all the time.⁵³

'Then after the Cup when everybody was dead-beat you know it got very hot and we used to go to the sea side or to the farm for the summer'.⁵⁴ Those who were keen on sport also took the opportunity to play tennis or cricket, and rowing and cycling were also both very popular. Even those who had to work six days a week might find time to make an occasional trip to the beach or to the Dandenongs for a picnic. Then in autumn the focus shifted back to town and around Prahran a lucky few would begin having lessons with the Leggetts for the debutante set at the Mayoral Ball.

Winter was almost as hectic in local government circles as spring among the socialites. Not only Prahran but also most of the neighbouring municipalities held their Mayoral and Return Balls in June and July. The balls were not on the same scale as dances at Leggetts, but six or seven hundred guests packed the Town Hall. Traditionally, the Mayor and Mayoress gave the Mayoral Ball and then the guests paid for tickets to put on a Return or Citizens Ball for them, a few weeks later.

Many local businesses were employed to decorate the hall and provide invitations, menus, dance programmes, flowers, food and music.⁵⁵ In 1925, when Cr J. C. Pickford was Mayor, he requested that the mayors of other municipalities should attend his ball in their official robes. There were a couple of preliminary dances, but the evening really began with the Lancers at 9.15 p.m. Then the debutantes and their partners formed one set and the mayors and their wives another. Waltzes, One Steps and Fox Trots followed. At 10 p.m. supper was served in the Small Hall and the official party sat down to a seven-course meal supplied by local caterers for the grand sum of 3s 6d per head. In 1925 Charles Ford, the caterer, also provided a marquee so that all the guest could sit down simultaneously. After supper there was more dancing and a cold buffet was available until 2 a.m. with oyster soup served at midnight.



THE MAYOR, CR HARRY LANDON AND THE ACTING MAYORESS, HIS DAUGHTER MRS J. W. MOLONEY, WELCOME GUESTS AT THE MAYORESS' RECEPTION, OCTOBER 1938: THEY SEEM UNPERTURBED BY EITHER THE SYMBOLS ON THE FLOOR AT THEIR FEET OR ANY FEARS ABOUT THE COMING WAR.



THE DEBUTANTES AND THEIR PARTNERS FROM THE MERCHANT NAVY AT THE BALLON 17 MAY 1944

The debutantes were generally, but not exclusively, local girls, whose mothers requested that they make their debut that evening, and they came from all areas of Prahran. Most of the other guests were prominent citizens who had worked hard for charity. It was largely a gathering of middle Prahran. The very rich and the very poor were absent. The Governor generally sent a polite refusal through an aide-de-camp and even some members of parliament had more pressing engagements elsewhere, but among those who worked hard for organisations such as the hospital auxiliaries, the arrival of an entree card for the Mayoral Ball was a highlight of the year.

A feature of balls in this era were the spectacular decorations. Frank Walker of 9 Darling Street specialised in such affairs. Mrs Pickford chose a rose, amber and mauve colour scheme and Mr Walker offered to carry it out with festoons of flowers, including out-of-season roses, pot plants and trellises. In some years the stage decorations were quite elaborate, recreating scenes in much the same way as theatre sets. The difference was that the decorations were continued around the body of the hall, through the entrance foyer and even out on to Greville Street with special lights. In the marquee and Small Hall, Charles Ford ensured that the decorations for supper did not pale by comparison.

If anything, the Return Balls, with patrons paying about 12s 6d per ticket, were even more luxurious. In 1925 Dr Fetherston was Chairman of the Return Ball Committee and Cr F. C. Wilmot was Honorary Secretary. They sold over six hundred tickets, took nearly £400 and managed to make a small profit. Such annual events were a significant boost to local business in June and July.

The balls suffered somewhat during the early 1930s and again during the war years, but there were additional civic festivities of other kinds for special occasions. On 12 May 1937 the Coronation of George VI was marked by a Gala Day in Como Park when more than five thousand children were provided with lunch, afternoon tea, speeches and a programme of inter-school sports. St Kevin's won the boys' events by a large margin and the girls of Hawksburn State School triumphed in their events. Later that year, the Mayor revived the custom of holding a Mayoress' Reception in October, just before the Cup week festivities. The usual pattern of Mayoral Balls was interrupted by the war, but every now and then an excuse was found for a party, like the special Maytime Debutante's Ball in 1944 when all the girls were partnered by boys from the Merchant Navy. The end of the war, of course, provided the best excuse of all. There was a Children's Victory Carnival in Como Park in September and a Grand Victory Ball in October 1945.



CHILDREN ENJOYING THE VICTORY CARNIVAL IN COMO PARK, 13 SEPTEMBER 1945

Social Life, 1950-1990

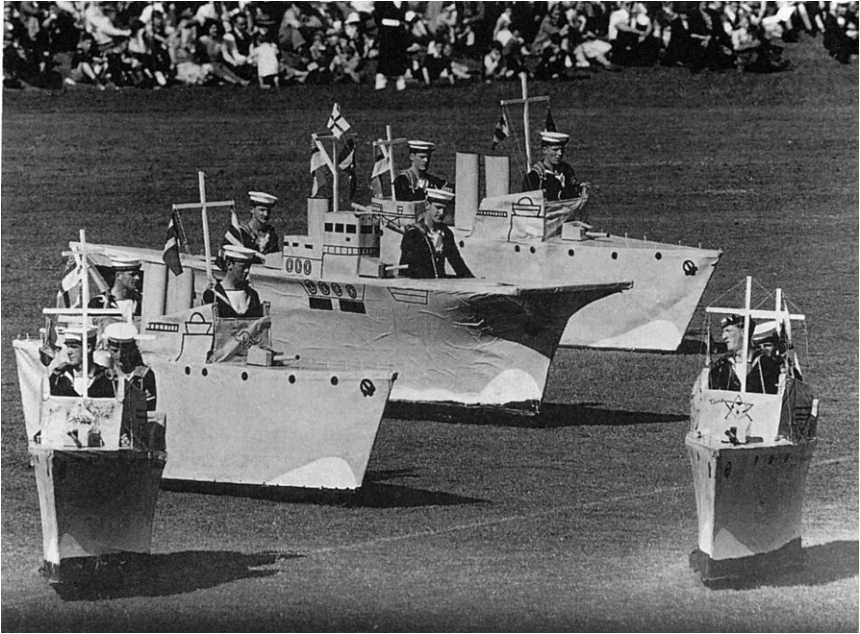
Despite the Cold War, the atmosphere during the 1950s was generally light and optimistic. Most people were busy trying to build a better life for their children than they had had themselves, and this was a dream that came true for a great many families. Having children was the thing to do and in the late 1940s and early 1950s the baby boom generation was born. Although many of Prahran's young couples moved out of the area to have their children, there were still plenty around.

If the 1950s was the decade of the child, the 1960s was the decade of the teenager. All those babies began to grow and get used to the idea that their generation, because it was so large, would remain the focus of attention. At the time, Prahran was becoming increasingly diverse ethnically. While Melbourne's outer suburbs experienced an Anglo-Australian baby boom, Prahran's baby boomers were multicultural.

By the 1970s, with the shift in focus to residential amenity rather than growth, Prahran's population size declined once more and the structure changed. There were increasing numbers of both elderly and young, single people, and fewer and fewer children. The focus of social life shifted from children to recreation for those with increasing levels of leisure time, and to a night life for the young that made Prahran in general and South Yarra in particular a focus for young people from all over Melbourne.

CELEBRATIONS

In March 1954 the Queen came to Prahran. Unlike later Royal visits, this one created enormous interest. The young Royal family with its two baby



NAVAL MANOEUVRES IN COMO PARK, TRAFALGAR DAY, 19 OCTOBER 1952

boom children, one boy and one girl, perhaps struck a particular chord with the Australian public. Win Vears remembers the excitement was intense. The Chapel Street Royal Visit Decorations Committee, run by the local traders, put up 2.5 miles of festoon lighting. The Town Hall was painted pastel green, floodlit and strung with flags and bunting, and all this so that Her Majesty should feel welcome whilst driving through Prahran on her way from Government House to St Kilda.¹

The following day, the Duke of Edinburgh did actually set foot in Prahran when he boarded a train at South Yarra Station on his way to the Flinders Naval Depot. At least 6000 people turned up at the station to catch a glimpse of him crossing the red carpet from the car to the station. Police lifted children over the heads of the crowd and placed them in front of the barriers so that they could see the Duke in the gold-braided uniform of an Admiral of the Fleet. The Duke was met by the Chairman of the Railway Commission, the Minister for Transport, the Mayor of Prahran, Cr Gawith, the acting Town Clerk, Mr H. Jones, and the Station Master, Mr T. Tovey. On duty was Miss Pat Kingwell, porter: 'Miss Kingwell had the thrill of her life when, in the morning, as the Duke passed through the barrier, he held out his empty hands and said to her: "Good morning! I'm sorry I haven't a ticket"'.²



THE QUEEN AND THE DUKE OF EDINBURGH ON ST KILDA ROAD,
24 FEBRUARY 1954

The 1950s was a good decade for celebrations. In 1955 Prahran celebrated its centenary with an exhibition, a grand parade on Chapel Street and a Centenary Ball. Thousands of people turned out in the rain to watch the procession on 2 May. Pam Irving, an 18-year-old model, was chosen as the Centenary Queen of Prahran, Sir Edmund Herring addressed a special centenary meeting of Council and the Governor, Sir Dallas Brooks, was among 450 guests at the Centenary Ball.³

CHILDREN

In 1956 the Olympic Games came to Melbourne, and with the games came television. Philippe Batters remembers the arrival of television in Murphy Street, South Yarra. The Gourlay family bought a set in 1956:

This television set dominated their huge living room and each afternoon the neighbourhood children would filter in under command of Mr Gourlay to watch 'The Mouseketeers', 'The Happy Show', and 'Zorro'. We were warned that television affected your eyes so Mr Gourlay would bark out commands such as 'eyes left' and we would all have to look at the wall for a minute to avoid the rays he thought the TV set emitted.⁴



THE DUKE OF EDINBURGH AT SOUTH YARRA STATION WITH STATION MASTER TOVEY AND PORTER PAT KINGWELL, 25 FEBRUARY 1954

With television came a spate of complaints that it was killing the art of conversation, besides doing untold damage to young minds, but people watched it anyway, although many families maintained their own versions of censorship as to who was allowed to watch what. During the 1960s the only programmes that young Hugh Batters was not allowed to watch were 'The Three Stooges' and 'World Championship Wrestling', so he went down the road to a friend's house and watched the programmes there.⁵

Children, of course, did not spend all their time watching television. Lindy Cox remembers the wonderful diversity of childhood games with her friends in East Prahran. Many of them were the children of refugees from Europe:

They've all said that they just had the most wonderful childhood . . . There were so many of us . . . the refugees that came out had probably done fairly well in their own countries before the war, had had shocking, horrific experiences during the war—came out here, made a fresh start—they put everything into those kids . . .

There didn't seem to be a lot of racial prejudice in our school or in our backyard. There were so many kids from so many places. That was the norm . . . It didn't take long to make friends . . . I think school must have introduced me to many of those kids . . .

There were garages at the back of the flats. Not everybody had cars so they were used, I suppose for junk. [The bigger children] used to put on plays there and the whole neighbourhood would go—thirty kids squashed in, paying a penny each . . . To me [the plays] were wonderful. They had props and they dressed up and they had to learn their lines. They had lighting cords everywhere. I remember a couple of times my mum came and watched and she said they were good too . . .

Those kids were bright cookies. All of us used to play in different areas of the tennis court and there were a couple of garages there . . . got in the garages and dressed up in rags . . . There were grassy, reedy plants growing and you used to be able to pick the stalks and if you had string you could make a terrific flexible bow. We'd shoot the arrows—we'd use them as arrows as well. . . and they were fantastic and we'd have wonderful play fights.

On bonfire nights they used to get all the junk and wood and stuff and build a huge bonfire there and all the families would come. All of them would bring fireworks. So that was twice a year, Queen's Birthday and Guy Fawkes . . . It was a wonderful feeling with everybody's parents there and all the kids . . .

The children seem to have been roughly divided into three groups on the basis of age. The oldest children still 'playing' rather than 'going out' would have been in the late primary and early secondary years. They didn't like the younger children getting in their way, and similarly the 8- and 9-year-olds didn't like the even smaller children tagging along behind them. But all of them united in the face of invading children from any other area:

I can remember a group of children coming up the street . . . I can remember we were making wonderful mud—no—sand balls and they were hard . . . and we were nasty, we put a yonnie, a piece of stone inside. And this invading troop came up our back lane. Well, it was on for young and old. How we didn't hurt someone or get hurt I don't know, but we thought it was marvellous . . .

I remember going home and I had this mud all over me from top to toe and my mother was horrified to think that I'd been in a fight and we thought it was exhilarating . . . There were these kids and it was like war and we knew all the hidey holes . . . we could hide behind walls and ambush those kids . . . They went and got lemons off somebody's tree and threw those at us.⁶

Other children spent at least part of their Sundays singing in the various church choirs. It was a paid occupation. Philippe Batters sang in the choir at St John's, Toorak, because the money was better than at Christ Church:

If my memory is correct we used to get thirty shillings a month plus six bob a wedding. We all developed the technique of holding out our hands and the bridegroom would walk past and he would give us three two-bob bits a piece. We would always wait until the third two-bob bit was put into our palm and then we would raise our angelic faces to smile at the bridegroom and invariably get another two bob.

Children were also still involved in collecting for charity:

I remember at Christ Church we used to have an *egg* collecting competition every year for charities. We would have to wander round the streets with *egg* cartons and ask people to donate eggs. This became quite normal and people did not look at us strangely when we appeared. The world champion egg collector from Christ Church was Geoffrey Cleaver who lived in Caroline Street.⁷

The South Yarra corner seems to have offered even more scope for children to play than East Prahran. Hugh Batters grew up on Murphy Street:

South Yarra was, quite simply, a magical area to grow up in. We had the river, the Botanic Gardens, Fawkner Park right on our doorstep.

The other great playground was Tolly's Park', named by my mother after an old dog (before my time) that used to run there. Eventually the name stuck—even strangers referred to it by that name—so it was a bit of a blow in the mid-seventies when a sign was erected giving the park the unimaginative title of 'Darling Gardens'.

'Polly's' was great with its steep grassy banks. The ideal place to test your skills on a makeshift sled made out of an old piece of cardboard.

But the real action was on the river.

After a preliminary jaunt around the railway bridge placing pennies on the track or crossing the imaginary state border over to Richmond, we were off over the road.

In those days the river was a flotilla of flotsam—a constant stream of garbage that flowed past, including, to our delight, the occasional dead, bloated animal that we would attempt to fish out with sticks.

And under the bridge, a wealth of information inscribed on walls by older people allowed out after five o'clock.



PRAHRAN TECHNICAL SCHOOL BOYS WITH THEIR COLLECTION OF EGGS FOR THE ALFRED HOSPITAL, OCTOBER 1952

The river then wasn't the neatly mown area that it is today. The bank to the left of the bridge towards the city was a constant cluster of thick bushes which hid a myriad of surprises: young couples kissing and even better, the occasional bed of rags or newspapers surrounded by empty flagons that occasionally a drunk person still occupied.

We would go up close, but not too close, to spy on them before they ordered us away in thickened accents. Fortunately we were too scared to do anything more to add to their misery.

The drunks were harmless and strangely, seemed to live forever. One particular river-dweller was the silent hunchback with stringy hair who had a daily route along the river on a mission of purpose with a bundle of newspapers neatly tucked under one arm.

He was there when we were young and I last saw him around 1985 when I moved on. He may very well still be there.

To the right of the railway bridge was the dip that took you down to river level. Today it's a favourite fishing spot. In my day there were no fish and most of the bank was covered in chest-high wild-grass.

It was home to rats. The biggest, meanest water rats God ever put breath into.

The word was out amongst the kids that one bite would kill you within seconds so it became the perfect place to play White Hunter and test the numerous weapons designed and manufactured by my friend . . . He was a year older and in an afternoon we could whip up a formidable arsenal of weapons in his cellar that today would get you arrested.

These included shanghais (or 'gings' as we knew them) that could float a 'yonnie' or 'brinnie' right across the water into Richmond.

He made nail guns that would send a 3-inch nail spiralling with a thud into tree trunks.

And best of all were the cracker guns propelled by 'penny bangers' saved from Guy Fawkes nights when the whole street was lit up by crackers, rockets and Roman Candles. A simple tube of steel pipe was jabbed into the stomach, loaded with a lit penny banger and quickly followed by a marble that would shoot out as fast as any bullet.

We never killed any rats. I'm surprised we didn't kill each other.⁸

Prahran was changing rapidly at the time, as old houses were demolished and replaced by flats. South Yarra had more than its fair share of these and they were not popular with the resident children, who waged their own little war against the builders of flats:

The owners of the flats hated us. The dwellers wanted to kill us.

A building site to a child of ten is a magnet no mum, dad or developer could change the poles of. They dug trenches, tore down buildings and laid the foundations for mischief.

They had bobcats. We had skateboards. The skateboards won.

Look around Avoca, Caroline, Murphy Street and Domain Road. You'll see our imprints in every piece of concrete. (You'll even see our dog 'Friday's' paws outside No 47.) Search for P McL's, HB's, SF's, G McD's and you'll find them at every site.

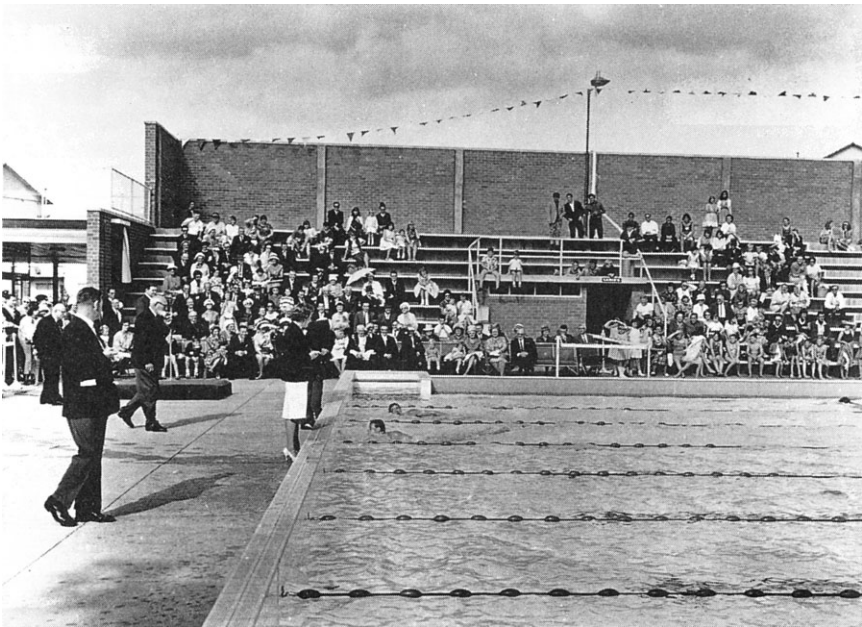
They called us vandals. It was the pot calling the kettle black.⁹

All over Prahran, building sites were a magnet for children. They didn't always 'vandalise' them. Sometimes they just 'borrowed' things to make cubbies. But it is in the nature of building sites to be fleeting playgrounds. A more long-lasting meeting place for local children was the swimming pool in the Princes Gardens on Malvern Road. The foundation stone was laid in May 1963 by the Mayor, Cr Charles Carty-Salmon.¹⁰ 'We went to Prahran pool a lot in summer . . . and the beach sometimes . . . one-piece bathing costume. Bikinis were tarty, not allowed'.¹¹

In Toorak, some of the girls were still managing to find places to ride horses. Jane Moffat remembers that during the 1960s several people kept horses on the Palfreyman's land, before it was purchased by St Kevin's. She used to go there after school and they would ride along the river and over the bridge to Burnley. There was even a cross-country course with several jumps.¹²

TEENAGERS

The long boom of the 1950s and 1960s was a time of generally rising affluence. More people began to have sufficient money for luxuries such as holidays and evenings out. In Prahran, coffee lounges were becoming



THE PRAHRAN POOL, OPENED IN 1963

popular, especially with young people. The young people themselves were not always popular with nearby residents: 'At Prahran wild gangs of bodgies and "beatnik" types were turning High Street, Armadale, into a nightmare area, residents claimed . . .' Drunken youths were reported urinating in doorways and shouting at passers by. Local residents petitioned the Council. Two weeks later, police were still keeping an eye on the coffee lounge, the 'nerve centre of bodgie-widgie activities'. The police were not, however, as concerned as some local residents. They admitted the area got a bit boisterous on Thursday nights, but those involved were 'normal high-spirited youngsters'.¹³

Jocelyn Newman, who lived in Trinian Street at the time, remembered the bodgies and widgies:

They were slightly older than I was, like my brother who was seven years older. I called him a bodgie. I always thought of them as being rough, especially the widgies . . . they all left school early, all went to Prahran Tech . . . a slightly criminal element—some sort of seedy stuff, but I don't know exactly what.¹⁴

The disapproval from the community seems mainly to have been of young men who looked different. Bodgies wore tight-fitting black slacks, brightly coloured socks and black shoes with pointed toes. They put various preparations on their hair that allowed them to coax it into a carefully nurtured curl at the front. At the time their fathers were generally still wearing three-piece suits and even hats.¹⁵

During the 1960s there was a series of arguments between the young and the old, particularly about what to wear. Different clothes made a statement about what kind of a person you wanted to be, and the 1960s was a decade when many young people around the world said very loudly that they did not want to be like their parents. Young men's hair got longer. Young women's skirts got shorter. 'Teenagers' had money to spend on clothes and records and vast industries grew up around their changing tastes.

Vincent Rosales, proprietor of Maxim's Restaurant in South Yarra, remembers the arrival of trouser suits for women. Many of the venues where men were expected to wear tuxedos refused to admit women wearing trousers. So women would ring Maxim's in advance to check whether trouser suits were acceptable: 'I let them in, and welcome—it is a fashion and I had nothing against fashion—You are welcome at Maxim's I would say . . . you must have an open mind in this business . . .',¹⁶ But you would be unlikely to be admitted to Maxim's in jeans, even in the 1990s. Mr Rosales argues it would be inappropriate, like going to the beach wearing a morning suit.

Win Vears spent some years overseas in the late 1950s, and when she returned the changes were noticeable. Before she left Australia:

We were Anglo-Celtic . . . had the odd Chinese laundry or Italian fruit shop or Greek café, but you really didn't deal with anyone outside this Anglo-Saxon background. We didn't know about the Koori people.

When we came back [from Europe] there were different types of food; you saw different types of people in the street. It altered the whole outlook. Meals were far more relaxed. You ate different things. Your children brought home different ideas. Music became very strident. Younger people were driving cars . . .

As my children were growing up you had Vietnam. My eldest son went and marched and did all sorts of things. That divided the community.¹⁷

Music became very important, particularly to teenagers, around whom a great deal of television culture was focused. Jocelyn Newman remembers going to the local jazz clubs:

We would go to Memphis or the Power House . . . They would drape the place with fish nets or dark cloths and have jazz bands like Judy Jacques. It was sort of beatnik stuff. We wore tight shirts, turtle neck jumpers, lots of eye make-up and very pale lipstick, black stockings. The boys wore a shirt or a black skivvy, trousers—a lot had beards and duffle coats. We went by tram and we'd come home by taxi . . . Friday night was jazz club night.

[One of my friends] all her life she was trying to meet a gentleman, trying to meet a guy, someone who was actually nice enough to allow them to escort you home in a taxi and meet there the next week . . . Neither of us actually did that.¹⁸

Lindy Cox went to the same dances in the same era:

Jazz dances were the big thing—Memphis, in a church hall next to the Malvern Town Hall. The less rough kids were jazzers. The rockers went to the Malvern Town Hall next door. I had to be home before midnight, no grog . . . there was a particular public transport route we had to take to avoid fights between jazzers and rockers . . . The Boston was on the corner of Punt and Toorak Roads, a Friday night club in the Christ Church Hall . . . The Power House was at Albert Park.¹⁹

Among the bands playing at such venues were Judy Jacques, the Yarra Yarra Jazz Band and The Seekers. The latter group began playing in the Treble Cleff coffee shop at the bottom of Tivoli Road. The Treble Cleff stayed open very late and became a popular meeting place.²⁰

The arrangements for ensuring that boys met the right girls and girls met the right boys were not quite as strict as in the inter-war years, but were still very important. Lindy Cox went to Toorak Central School and then to MacRobertson Girls' High School. Girls might have 'boyfriends' at Toorak Central, but they were unlikely to go out with them in the evening on a structured basis:

Then going out with them, I suppose the very first time would have been at the end of third form at MacRob. One of the boys . . . who'd been in my year at Toorak . . . once I moved to South Yarra he lived in the next street . . . another girl and I were walking down the street. . . and he was coming up and he talked and I can remember flirting with him a bit then, which I would probably never have done if I'd been by myself. . . Then he came around and hung around the front gate a couple of times after that and asked me to the Melbourne High Social . . .

So I can remember coming home and asking my mother. Now he was Greek and my mother was horrified when she met him because he was very dark, and she said 'Oh, if you marry him you'll have black babies'. And there was this huge fight that mum and I had because all I wanted to do was go to the Melbourne High Social—not have black babies, or any sort of babies.

Mother was terribly prejudiced, even though she'd lived . . . with that big multicultural group . . . They were . . . different. Dad was very open and everybody was equal according to Dad so later that night I remember asking him and he said 'Well I want to see the boy'. So poor George had to come up and ask . . . So I was allowed to go and we had a wonderful time.

I knew a lot of the boys at Melbourne High and I knew a lot of the MacRob. girls. I mean, that was big prestige getting asked to go, so a lot of my friends went as well . . . MacRob. and Melbourne High did musicals together and although I wasn't ever in it, that was a big social thing. I think a few marriages actually started from meeting each other at the musicals . . .²¹

New Australians were as likely as the old to be concerned about who their children met and married. Peter and Alceste Casalaz arrived in Melbourne from Italy in 1951. Their Australian-born children were brought up in Armadale:

They never went out, my daughter and my son. One day I said 'Why don't you go to the Italian Club in Carlton?' . . . I said 'Come on, go'. I said 'Daddy's going to take you in the car and when you've finished you get a taxi and come home in the taxi'. So they went . . . Tony was on the other side [of the room] . . . he saw my daughter . . . and that was it.

If they meet somebody, we like to know who they are. When Morena met Tony we were not happy because we didn't know who he was, he had nobody here. He was young. He had no money. He bought a car to go to work—he has the car to pay and things and he said he's going to marry Morena. I said 'You're kidding'. He said 'Me and Morena are getting married'. I looked at him and I said 'T beg your pardon? You just met my daughter, you want to marry her . . .

Then Peter said to him 'Look, I don't mind you going out with my daughter some times. I don't mind you coming here, but don't rush because she's not finished her training'. She was at Toorak Teacher's College. And Peter said 'I'm very sorry. You've got no money, she's got no money—at least give her time to know each other'. . . . [He] said 'If you're not happy, then you go and my daughter stays here' and [Tony]

said 'No. If I'm going, I take Morena with me'. Morena looked at him and she said 'No Tony, sorry. I'm going to marry you one day but I never leave my home till the day I marry'. That was nice.²²

SPORT AND CLUBS

The general trend over the last forty years has been for a proliferation of sporting clubs. The old, established clubs like the Melbourne Bowling Club, Windsor, founded in 1864, or the Prahran Cricket Club, founded in 1879, have been joined by soccer and squash clubs. Hockey and tennis are also popular, with several clubs in the area. Increased leisure time, rising standards of living and the popularity of Prahran with those who have retired, have all contributed to the number and diversity of sporting activities.

Many of the sports that were traditionally confined to men are now also played by women. In 1962, for instance, the Armadale Bowling Club first admitted women to greens that had been for men only since 1888. The Victorian Ladies' Bowling Association has its headquarters in Commercial Road, the Victorian Ladies' Golf Union is in Malvern Road and the recent craze for aerobics mainly involves women. But soccer and football and rugby remain predominantly men's games.

The Prahran Football Club has had varied success over the years and last won a Victorian Football Association premiership in 1978. It is typical of changes in Melbourne in general and Prahran in particular that nobody is surprised any more at the multicultural backgrounds of the players, even if the Committee of Management remains substantially Anglo-Celtic.²³



THE ARMADALE BOWLING CLUB IN 1949



THE GOVERNOR, SIR DALLAS BROOKS, MEETING PLAYERS AT A SOCCER MATCH BETWEEN VICTORIA AND QUEENSLAND, HELD IN TOORAK PARK, JUNE 1952

As Prahran's population aged, the enormous variety of ethnic clubs and societies made a significant contribution to the social life of the area. Groups as diverse as the South Yarra Indo Chinese Association, the Prahran Latin American Groups and the Australian German Welfare Society provided activities and support for large numbers of people.

Mrs Requini arrived in Australia in 1957 and has spent most of the time since then in the Malvern/Caulfield/Prahran area. In the late 1980s she moved to Surrey Road because it is close to shops, public transport and the doctor and because the Council's home help and meals on wheels services are so good: 'Everybody is so nice and friendly . . . people help me in the street, young people . . .' Her flat is also close to the Hungarian Club where she goes 'every Friday. We love that very much . . . We sing and we play; talking; we have a lovely meal, Hungarian food. Every week three women cook . . .'²⁴

In 1952 Mr Athanasiou arrived in Australia from Cyprus. By 1955 he had settled in Armadale and in 1956 he was married by proxy to a fellow Greek Cypriot. His wife then joined him in Melbourne and they raised a family of two boys and two girls in Armadale. While the children were at Armadale State school, Mr Athanasiou used to get involved in fund-raising activities, cooking lamb on a spit, for instance. He believes that the Greek Cypriot community in Melbourne is close-knit and has maintained its ethics and traditions, perhaps more than Greeks in Greece or Cyprus. Besides spending time gardening and with his six grandchildren, Mr Athanasiou has been an active member of the Cyprus Club and the Greek Elderly Group.

Mr Tahmazis arrived in Prahran in 1968 from Greece. His two daughters live in Greece and his two sons in Australia. Mr Tahmazis originally settled in Prahran because a nephew lived in the area, but he stayed because of the good transport, shops and the Greek community, including the church and Greek Elderly Group.²⁵

Although many members of the Greek community left Prahran as house prices rose in the 1970s, many more remained. Family life—grandchildren, gardening—is clearly important for many of Prahran's older residents. Despite the enormous changes in the area, there are still large numbers of people living in Prahran who have lived there most of their lives and have seen their children grow up and move elsewhere, while Prahran remains the home base for the family:

One of the traditions of the people in Prahran that were predominantly working-class families was probably Sunday lunch and the unity that existed between all people sitting round the table and that special occasion of the week, which was the roast on Sunday, followed by either rice custard or apple . . . pie . . .²⁶

Such simple pleasures have not entirely disappeared. However, particularly since the 1950s, Prahran has become better known as a centre for a rather less private sort of social life—as the place to go for restaurants and night clubs and a centre for night life for people from all over Melbourne.

NIGHT LIFE

During World War I six o'clock closing for hotels was introduced, supposedly as a temporary measure. In fact it was 1966 before Victorian hotels were able to stay open until 10 p.m. Until then 'night life' was severely restricted. Dance halls could stay open late but no alcohol was allowed. Those who hankered for night clubs on the European model had to smuggle their alcohol into the club.

Mary and Walter Ebstein ran Claridges night club on Toorak Road. It was not very big, and laid out with dim lights, mirrors and discreet alcoves. Music was provided by Beryl and Charles White and a piano. The food was good, Claridges stayed open late and guests brought their own alcohol hidden about them somewhere. It became *the* place to go and thrived until restaurants began to be given licences and could openly serve wine with the food.²⁷

Maxim's restaurant on Toorak Road opened at the beginning of 1957 and Vincent Rosales bought the business in April: 'It was a mediocre restaurant then . . . there was not one first-class restaurant out of the city . . . I thought to convert it to a high class restaurant . . . Toorak and South Yarra was where the money was. I took the risk and it worked out perfect'.²⁸ Mr Rosales employed a Swiss chef and placed the emphasis on service, on giving people whatever they wanted, however they wanted it. 'This business can't be run by an accountant . . . [the customers] were willing to pay'. He was only allowed to serve Australian wine, but as other migrant restaurateurs quickly learned, this was hardly a handicap.

The other society restaurant in Prahran in this era was Two Faces. Hermann Schneider, a chef, came to Melbourne in 1956 for the Olympic Games and stayed to run the restaurant on Darling Street, South Yarra. Upstairs was 'Tu', a society dressmaker, and across the road was 9 Darling Street, the fashionable venue for those unable to hold balls, weddings or parties in their own home.²⁹

Whether at home or at 9 Darling Street, fashionable functions were generally catered for by members of the Lynch family. P. B. Lynch and Co. Ltd was a catering business based in Commercial Road and the main customers were organisers of country race meetings and shows. In about 1954 Paul Lynch took over from his father and continued to run a similar business, until one day the established society caterers were too busy and asked him to cater for a Toorak job. 'All I needed was one', he said. After that, Paul Lynch 'married' the rich and famous:

They were married at St Johns . . . at the home there would be big marquees . . . everybody wanted something different... I did everything—the band, car parking, guards, flowers, hiring, tents, decor, colour schemes

... everything was made specially for the party ... I—we—did Swedish weddings, Japanese weddings—for 200 or 300 people ...

Then the Western District were huge players of weddings ... big farms with plenty of room—500 to 600 at a wedding ... we'd transport all the food up and build cool stores out of hay bales ... all the staff stayed in the local town—it was a two-day operation ... in the same era my brother [Peter] was running 9 Darling Street ...

The fifties were fantastic here ... All the Royals started coming out after the Olympic Games ... the real entertaining side started in 1956 ... at the Exhibition Buildings Liz Taylor and Mike Todd did a party with live leopards and tigers ...

Everyone wanted to dress up and have a ball ... established money, wealthier people ... no booze buses, lots of money ...³⁰

Meanwhile, the licensing laws were changing. By the late 1960s the place that had once been Claridges had become Winston Charles: 'alcohol was quite legal ... there was a discotheque ... girls used to dance in cages ... strobe lighting ...'³¹

At the same time, the pubs were becoming more sophisticated. In her history of Prahran's pubs, Betty Malone has shown how more and more of them began to offer food in the 1950s and 1960s, and by the 1970s many had been transformed from pubs into taverns, with new decor, a welcome for women as well as men and quite sophisticated meals. After 1966, with extended opening, pubs could serve evening as well as lunch



A NIGHT OUT AT THE WINSTON CHARLES IN 1968

time food and were not slow to take advantage of the opportunity to compete with the increasing number and diversity of restaurants.³²

Besides food and drink, the third ingredient in Prahran's thriving night life has been music, whether in the hotels or the clubs. The discotheque craze for recorded music in the 1960s did not completely eclipse live music, and those venues with sufficient space continued to provide work for local musicians, for at least part of the evening.

More liberal licensing laws since the 1970s brought a new type of night club to Melbourne, catering to the young and single and offering the opportunity to dance most of the night under dim lights to recorded music with a beat designed especially for the purpose. The clientele consisted of an almost continually changing set of cultural sub-groups. Staff at the door decided who would be admitted and who would not, mainly on the basis of clothes. At clubs like Chasers in Chapel Street, which opened in 1979, the sub-groups varied according to the night of the week. Clothes that would get you admitted one night would not necessarily get you admitted twenty-four hours later. In 1992, for instance, Wednesday was 'rock music', Thursday 'house music' and Friday 'funk', with the customers dressed accordingly. It was a world of fashion, with friendly links between the club and the designer clothes shops on Chapel Street. Like the music, the popularity of individual clubs could be shortlived and Chasers survived longer than most by adapting to the rapid changes in fashion.³³

Restaurants and clubs come and go, but the industry as a whole grew strongly in the 1980s. As Cr Sandra Gatehouse pointed out, this raised a number of arguments about the potential conflict between local residents and Prahran's night life:

There is a real conflict between the fact that a lot of licensed premises were built under the six o'clock closing rules for local pubs . . . now they are applying for 3 a.m. closing and twenty-four hour licences—in residential streets . . . Even with 10 p.m. closing there was not the same conflict . . . It's the venues you go to after you've been out to dinner that cause the problem . . .³⁴

This sort of conflict is particularly noticeable in South Yarra. According to Cr Sandra Makris: 'Windsor doesn't have the problem with the licensed premises that South Yarra does. But there are still hotels right next to residential properties. You've got your local pubs that are still there, but not nearly as many as South Yarra . . .'³⁵

While residents and councillors continued to worry about anti-social behaviour from people wending their way through residential areas in the wee small hours, drunkenly trying to remember where they had parked their cars, Prahran's night life remained a focus for people from all over greater Melbourne.

PRAHRAN IN THE 1990s

During the 1970s Roger and Mary Brown lived in Mt Waverley. It was convenient to Monash University, where Roger Brown teaches, but when their children finished school they decided they wanted to move somewhere more interesting. 'You couldn't buy a cup of coffee in Mt Waverley shopping centre'. Prahran drew them because it was so convenient. They chose a house in a little street near the Victoria Gardens and found themselves able to enjoy a whole new social life:

Going to the market on a Saturday is a positive pleasure . . . we're nearer the centre of town for the theatre . . . Prahran is more like an English village high street . . . There are good butchers at the Windsor end of Chapel Street. . . Rubenstein's supermarket. . . Safeways, Coles, the place is more or less saturated with shops . . . We also eat a fair amount on Chapel Street . . .

We could afford to go to restaurants and theatres more, but from Mt Waverley it was a fag to drive in . . . We're not great car people . . . tend to use public transport . . . anyway, you can't be a two-car family in this street—there's no parking. We enjoy being able to walk around instead of using a car . . . have weekends when we don't use the car at all . . .

It's nice to be close to cinemas . . . the Astor . . . plenty of book shops . . . [Prahran is also handy for] South Melbourne beach . . . Fawkner Park and the Botanic Gardens . . . Can't imagine really wanting to live anywhere else at the moment . . .³⁶

The victory of residents' groups over developers in the 1970s has produced a suburb which does not like to be called a suburb, a place where residents enjoy all the benefits of inner-city living and are prepared to pay to minimise the disadvantages. However, the tension between the interests of residents and those of retailers and other businesses remains. Prahran has become a centre for fashion and night life for the whole of Melbourne, but this development is restrained by the representatives of those who object to the side-effects of revelry in residential streets.

Prahran in the 1990s is a very pleasant place to live, but it is also a part of greater Melbourne, and in the future as in the past, there are likely to be people who will argue that what is in the interests of the residents of Prahran is not necessarily in the interests of Melbourne as a whole. As has happened with the City of Melbourne, Prahran remains at risk from State government intervention in the planning process. Residents will continue to hope that successive State governments will remember the lessons of Como, where State intervention in planning Prahran was not a success. In the early years of the nineties plans for the undeveloped parts of the site were returning to something not too far removed from the Council's original guidelines.

Appendix: Councillors of the City of Prahran, 1925-1990

Note: As John Butler Cooper's *The History of Prahran from its First Settlement to a City* contains an appendix on Councillors up to the year 1923/24, this appendix commences with the year 1924/25.

Councillors are elected in the first week of August and serve for three years. One seat from each of the four wards is subject to an election each year. The Mayor is elected at the first Council meeting following the annual elections.

1924/25

South Yarra: W. G. Minchinton; J.J. W. Flintoft; E.J. Owen

Toorak: A. R. Jackson; A. A. Holdsworth; H. A. A. Embling

Prahran: J. C. Pickford [Mayor]; F. Harvey; A. H. Woodfull

Windsor: W. M. Mellwrick; R.J. Grant; W. B. Lumley

1925/26

South Yarra: W. G. Minchinton; J.J. W. Flintoft; E.J. Owen

Toorak: A. E. Cole; A. A. Holdsworth [Mayor]; H. A. A. Embling

Prahran: J. C. Pickford; F. Harvey; A. H. Woodfull

Windsor: W. M. Mellwrick; R.J. Grant; W. B. Lumley

1926/27

South Yarra: J. M. Ellis; J.J. W. Flintoft [Mayor]; T. S. Gill

Toorak: A. E. Cole; A. A. Holdsworth; H. Landen

Appendix

Prahram A. W. Sterck; F. Harvey; A. H. Woodfull
Windsor. W. M. McIlwrick; R.J. Grant; W. B. Lumley

1927/28

South Yarra: J. M. Ellis; J.J. W. Flintoft; T. S. Gill
Toorak A. E. Cole; A. A. Holdsworth; H. Landen
Prahram A. W. Sterck; F. Harvey [Mayor]; A. H. Woodfull
Windsor. W. M. McIlwrick; R.J. Grant; W. B. Lumley

1928/29

South Yarra: J. M. Ellis; H. A. A. Embling; T. S. Gill
Toorak. A. E. Cole; A. A. Holdsworth; H. Landen
Prahram A. W. Sterck; F. Harvey; A. H. Woodfull [Mayor]
Windsor. W. M. McIlwrick; R.J. Grant; W. B. Lumley

1929/30

South Yarra: J. M. Ellis; H. A. A. Embling; T. S. Gill
Toorak A. E. Cole; A. A. Holdsworth; P. W. Ettelson
Prahram A. W. Sterck; F. Harvey; A. H. Woodfull
Windsor. W. M. McIlwrick [Mayor]; R. J. Grant; W. B. Lumley

1930/31

South Yarra: J. M. Ellis [Mayor]; R. B. Hamilton; L. T. Wilson
Toorak A. E. Cole; A. A. Holdsworth; P. W. Ettelson
Prahram A. W. Sterck; F. Harvey; A. H. Woodfull
Windsor. W. M. McIlwrick; R.J. Grant; W. B. Lumley

1931/32

South Yarra: J. M. Ellis [Mayor]; R. B. Hamilton; L. T. Wilson
Toorak. A. E. Cole; W. M. Flintoft; P. W. Ettelson
Prahram A. W. Sterck; F. Harvey; A. H. Woodfull
Windsor. W. M. McIlwrick; R.J. Grant; W. B. Lumley

1932/33

South Yarra: J. M. Ellis; R. B. Hamilton; L. T. Wilson
Toorak A. E. Cole [Mayor]; W. M. Flintoft; P. W. Ettelson
Prahram A. W. Sterck; F. Harvey; A. H. Woodfull
Windsor. W. M. McIlwrick; R.J. Grant; W. B. Lumley

1933/34

South Yarra: J. M. Ellis; R. B. Hamilton; L. T. Wilson
Toorak. A. E. Cole [Mayor]; W. M. Flintoft; M. G. Sloman

Prahran: A. W. Sterck; F. Harvey; A. H. Woodfull
Windsor. W. M. McIlwrick; R.J. Grant; H. R. David

1934/35

South Yarra: J. M. Ellis; R. B. Hamilton; L. T. Wilson
Toorak A. E. Cole; W. M. Flintoft [Mayor]; M. G. Sloman
Prahran: A. W. Sterck; F. Harvey; A. H. Woodfull
Windsor. W. M. McIlwrick; R.J. Grant; H. R. David

1935/36

South Yarra: J. M. Ellis; R. B. Hamilton; L. T. Wilson
Toorak. A. E. Cole; W. M. Flintoft; M. G. Sloman
Prahran: A. W. Sterck; F. Harvey; A. H. Woodfull
Windsor. W. M. McIlwrick; R.J. Grant [Mayor]; H. R. David

1936/37

South Yarra: J. M. Ellis; H. Landen; N. M. McFarlan
Toorak. A. E. Cole; W. M. Flintoft; M. G. Sloman
Prahran: A. W. Sterck [Mayor]; F. Harvey; A. H. Woodfull
Windsor. W. M. McIlwrick; R.J. Grant; H. R. David

1937/38

South Yarra: J. M. Ellis; H. Landen; N. M. Macfarlan
Toorak. A. E. Cole; W. M. Flintoft; M. G. Sloman
Prahran: A. W. Sterck; F. Harvey; A. H. Woodfull
Windsor. W. M. McIlwrick; R.J. Grant; H. R. David [Mayor]

1938/39

South Yarra: J. M. Ellis; H. Landen [Mayor]; N. M. Macfarlan
Toorak. A. E. Cole; W. M. Flintoft; M. G. Sloman
Prahran: A. W. Sterck; F. Harvey; A. H. Woodfull
Windsor. W. M. McIlwrick; R.J. Grant; H. R. David

1939/40

South Yarra: J. M. Ellis; H. Landen; N. M. Macfarlan
Toorak. A. E. Cole; W. M. Flintoft; M. G. Sloman [Mayor]
Prahran: A. W. Sterck; F. Harvey; A. H. Woodfull
Windsor. W. M. McIlwrick; R.J. Grant; H. R. David

1940/41

South Yarra: J. M. Ellis; H. Landen; N. M. Macfarlan
Toorak A. E. Cole; W. M. Flintoft; M. G. Sloman

Prahrarv. A. W. Sterck; F. Harvey; A. H. Woodfull [Mayor]
Windsor. W. M. Mcllwrick; R.J. Grant; H. R. David

1941/42

South Yarra: J. M. Ellis; H. Landen; N. M. Macfarlan
Toorak A. E. Cole; W. M. Flintoft; R. B. Hamilton
Prahran: A. W. Sterck; F. Harvey; A. H. Woodfull
Windsor.: W. M. Mcllwrick [Mayor]; R.J. Grant; H. R. David

1942/43

South Yarra: J. M. Ellis; H. Landen; N. M. Macfarlan
Toorak. A. E. Cole; W. M. Flintoft; R. B. Hamilton
Prahran: A. W. Sterck; F. Harvey; A. H. Woodfull
Windsor. W. M. Mcllwrick [Mayor]; R. J. Grant; H. R. David

1943/44

South Yarra:. J. M. Ellis [Mayor]; H. Landen; N. M. Macfarlan
Toorak. A. E. Cole; W. M. Flintoft; R. B. Hamilton
Prahran: A. W. Sterck; F. Harvey; A. H. Woodfull
Windsor. W. M. Mcllwrick; R.J. Grant; M. P. Smith

1944/45

South Yarra: J. M. Ellis [Mayor]; H. Landen; N. M. Macfarlan
Toorak. A. E. Cole; W. M. Flintoft; R. B. Hamilton
Prahran: A. W. Sterck; F. Harvey; A. H. Woodfull
Windsor. E. L. Jones; E. M. McMaster; M. P. Smith

1945/46

South Yarra: G. E. Furnell; H. Landen; N. M. Macfarlan
Toorak. A. E. Cole [Mayor]; W. M. Flintoft; R. B. Hamilton
Prahran: T. A. Thomas; F. Harvey; A. H. Woodfull
Windsor. E. L. Jones; E. M. McMaster; M. P. Smith

1946/47

South Yarra: G. E. Furnell; H. Landen; N. M. Macfarlan
Toorak. A. E. Cole; W. M. Flintoft; R. B. Hamilton
Prahran: T. A. Thomas; F. Harvey; A. H. Woodfull
Windsor. E. L. Jones; E. M. McMaster; M. P. Smith [Mayor]

1947/48

South Yarra: G. E. Furnell; H. Landen; N. M. Macfarlan
Toorak A. E. Cole; W. M. Flintoft; S. R. Sellick

Prahran: T. A. Thomas; F. Harvey; A. H. Woodfull

Windsor.: E. L. Jones; E. M. McMaster [Mayor]; M. P. Smith

1948/49

South Yarra: G. E. Furnell [Mayor]; H. Landen; N. M. Macfarlan

Toorak A. E. Cole; W. M. Flintoft; S. R. Sellick

Prahran: T. A. Thomas; F. Harvey; A. H. Woodfull

Windsor. E. L. Jones; E. M. McMaster; M. P. Smith

1949/50

South Yarra: G. E. Furnell; M. S. Peden; N. M. Macfarlan

Toorak. H. R. Petty; W. M. Flintoft; L.J. H. Buddie

Prahran: T. A. Thomas; F. Harvey; C. S. Gawith

Windsor. E. L. Jones [Mayor]; E. M. McMaster; M. P. Smith

1950/51

South Yarra: G. E. Furnell; M. S. Peden; N. M. Macfarlan

Toorak: H. R. Petty; S. T. Harper; L.J. H. Buddie

Prahran: T. A. Thomas [Mayor]; F. Harvey; C. S. Gawith

Windsor. E. L. Jones; E. M. McMaster; M. P. Smith

1951/52

South Yarra: G. E. Furnell; M. S. Peden; N. M. Macfarlan

Toorak. H. R. Petty [Mayor]; S. T. Harper; L.J. H. Buddie

Prahran: T. A. Thomas; F. Harvey; C. S. Gawith

Windsor. E. L. Jones; E. M. McMaster; M. P. Smith

1952/53

South Yarra: G. E. Furnell; M. S. Peden; T. M. Walsh

Toorak. H. R. Petty; S. T. Harper; L.J. H. Buddie [Mayor]

Prahran: T. A. Thomas; F. Harvey; C. S. Gawith

Windsor. E. L. Jones; E. M. McMaster; M. P. Smith

1953/54

South Yarra: G. E. Furnell; M. S. Peden; T. M. Walsh

Toorak H. R. Petty; S. T. Harper; L.J. H. Buddie

Prahran: T. A. Thomas; F. Harvey; C. S. Gawith [Mayor]

Windsor. E. L. Jones; E. M. McMaster; M. P. Smith

1954/55

South Yarra: G. E. Furnell; M. S. Peden; T. M. Walsh

Toorak. H. R. Petty; S. T. Harper [Mayor]; C. H. A. Carty-Salmon

Appendix

Prahram T. A. Thomas; F. Harvey; C. S. Gawith
Windsor E. L. Jones; E. M. McMaster; M. P. Smith

1955/56

South Yarra: G. E. Furnell; M. S. Peden; T. M. Walsh
Toorak H. R. Petty; S. T. Harper [Mayor]; C. H. A. Carty-Salmon
Prahram T. A. Thomas; F. Harvey; C. S. Gawith
Windsor E. L. Jones; E. M. McMaster; M. P. Smith

1956/57

South Yarra: G. E. Furnell; M. S. Peden; T. M. Welsh
Toorak H. R. Petty; S. T. Harper; C. H. A. Carty-Salmon
Prahram T. A. Thomas; F. Harvey; C. S. Gawith
Windsor E. L. Jones; E. M. McMaster; M. P. Smith [Mayor]

1957/58

South Yarra: E. B. Stockdale; M. S. Peden; T. M. Walsh
Toorak H. R. Petty; S. T. Harper; C. H. A. Carty-Salmon [Mayor]
Prahram T. A. Thomas; F. Harvey; C. S. Gawith
Windsor E. L. Jones; E. M. McMaster; M. P. Smith

1958/59

South Yarra: E. B. Stockdale; M. S. Peden [Mayor]; G. T. Gahan
Toorak H. R. Petty; S. T. Harper; C. H. A. Carty-Salmon
Prahram T. A. Thomas; F. Harvey; C. S. Gawith
Windsor E. L. Jones; E. M. McMaster; M. P. Smith

1959/60

South Yarra: E. B. Stockdale; P. Thompson; G. T. Gahan
Toorak H. R. Petty; S. T. Harper; C. H. A. Carty-Salmon
Prahram T. A. Thomas [Mayor]; N. D. R. Maxwell; C. S. Gawith
Windsor E. L. Jones; F. I. Smyth; M. P. Smith

1960/61

South Yarra: E. B. Stockdale; P. Thompson; G. T. Gahan
Toorak H. R. Petty; S. T. Harper; C. H. A. Carty-Salmon
Prahram J. F. Pilbeam; N. D. R. Maxwell; C. S. Gawith [Mayor]
Windsor E. L. Jones; F. I. Smyth; M. P. Smith

1961/62

South Yarra: E. B. Stockdale; P. Thompson; G. T. Gahan
Toorak H. R. Petty; S. T. Harper; C. H. A. Carty-Salmon

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Prahram J. F. Pilbeam; N. D. R. Maxwell; C. S. Gawith
Windsor. E. L. Jones [Mayor]; F. I. Smyth; M. P. Smith

1962/63

South Yarra: E. B. Stockdale; K. Bradshaw; G. T. Gahan
Toorak H. R. Petty; S. T. Harper; C. H. A. Carty-Salmon [Mayor]
Prahram J. F. Pilbeam; N. D. R. Maxwell; C. S. Gawith
Windsor. E. L. Jones; F. I. Smyth; M. P. Smith

1963/64

South Yarra: E. B. Stockdale; K. Bradshaw; G. T. Gahan
Toorak H. R. Petty; S. T. Harper; C. H. A. Carty-Salmon
Prahram J. F. Pilbeam; N. D. R. Maxwell; C. S. Gawith
Windsor. E. L. Jones; F. I. Smyth [Mayor]; M. P. Smith

1964/65

South Yarra: E. B. Stockdale; K. Bradshaw; G. T. Gahan
Toorak R. H. Matthews; S. T. Harper; C. H. A. Carty-Salmon
Prahram J. F. Pilbeam; N. D. R. Maxwell [Mayor]; C. Lux
Windsor. E. L. Jones; F. I. Smyth; M. P. Smith

1965/66

South Yarra: E. B. Stockdale; G. F. Reed; G. T. Gahan [Mayor]
Toorak R. H. Matthews; S. T. Harper; C. H. A. Carty-Salmon
Prahram J. F. Pilbeam; N. D. R. Maxwell; C. Lux
Windsor. E. L. Jones; F. I. Smyth; M. P. Smith

1966/67

South Yarra: C. C. E. Gahan; G. F. Reed; G. T. Gahan
Toorak R. H. Matthews; J. J. Doyle; C. H. A. Carty-Salmon
Prahram. G. J. Hickey; N. D. R. Maxwell; C. Lux
Windsor. E. L. Jones; F. I. Smyth; M. P. Smith [Mayor]

1967/68

South Yarra: C. C. E. Gahan; G. F. Reed; G. T. Gahan
Toorak R. H. Matthews [Mayor]; J. J. Doyle; S. J. Custance
Prahram. G. J. Hickey; N. D. R. Maxwell; C. Lux
Windsor. E. L. Jones; F. I. Smyth; M. P. Smith

1968/69

South Yarra: C. C. E. Gahan; G. Giasoumi; G. T. Gahan
Toorak R. M. Matthews; W. M. Dane; S. J. Custance

Prahram G.J. Hickey; N. D. R. Maxwell; C. Lux [Mayor]
Windsor. E. L. Jones; F. Farrall; M. P. Smith

1969/70

South Yarra: C. C. E. Gahan [Mayor]; G. Giasoumi; G. T. Gahan
Toorak J. D. Fisher; W. M. Dane; P. G. Watts
Prahram J. Hartley; J. R. Holdsworth; C. Lux
Windsor. M. F. Bulbick; F. Farrall; M. P. Smith

1970/71

South Yarra: C. C. E. Gahan; G. Giasoumi; G. T. Gahan [Mayor]
Toorak J. D. Fisher; W. M. Dane; P. G. Watts
Prahram J. Hartley; J. R. Holdsworth; C. Lux
Windsor. M. F. Bulbick; F. Farrall; G. A. Wilson

1971/72

South Yarra: C. C. E. Gahan; M. Gordon; G. T. Gahan
Toorak J. D. Fisher; W. M. Dane [Mayor]; P. G. Watts
Prahram K. V. Nicholls; J. R. Holdsworth; C. Lux
Windsor. M. F. Bulbick; F. Farrall; G. A. Wilson

1972/73

South Yarra: C.J. Bell; M. Gordon; G. T. Gahan
Toorak J. D. Fisher; W. M. Dane [Mayor]; P. Lynch
Prahram K. V. Nicholls; J. R. Holdsworth; C. Lux
Windsor. M. Wallace; F. Farrall; G. A. Wilson

1973/74

South Yarra: C.J. Bell; M. Gordon; P.J. Hegarty
Toorak J. D. Fisher; W. M. Dane; P. Lynch
Prahram K. V. Nicholls; J. R. Holdsworth; A. Dowling
Windsor. M. Wallace; F. Farrall [Mayor]; A. McIver

1974/75

South Yarra: C.J. Bell [Mayor]; S. Liolios; P.J. Hegarty
Toorak J. D. Fisher; W. M. Dane; P. Lynch
Prahram K. V. Nicholls; R. Wilson-Reid; A. Dowling
Windsor. M. Wallace; F. Farrall; A. McIver

1975/76

South Yarra: F.J. Ricco; S. Liolios; P.J. Hegarty [Mayor]
Toorak J. D. Fisher; W. M. Dane; W. Drever

Prahran: K. V. Nicholls; R. Wilson-Reid; A. Dowling
Windsor: M. Wallace; F. Farrall; A. McIver

1976/77

South Yarra: F.J. Ricco; S. Liolios; P. S. A. Gahan;
Toorak P. Rayson; W. M. Dane; W. Drever
Prahran: K. V. Nicholls [Mayor]; R. Wilson-Reid; C. J. Brearley
Windsor: M. Wallace; F. Farrall; H. Gregory

1977/78

South Yarra F.J. Ricco; N. W. Baird; P. S. A. Gahan;
Toorak P. Rayson; W. M. Dane; W. Drever [Mayor]
Prahran: K. V. Nicholls; R. Wilson-Reid; C. J. Brearley
Windsor: M. Wallace; D. Cran; H. Gregory

1978/79

South Yarra: F.J. Ricco; N. W. Baird; P. S. A. Gahan;
Toorak P. Rayson; W. M. Dane; W. Drever [Mayor]
Prahran: S. Liolios; R. Wilson-Reid; C.J. Brearley
Windsor: B. Theophilos; D. Cran; H. Gregory

1979/80

South Yarra: D. Habicht; N. W. Baird; C. C. E. Gahan
Toorak M. Duffy; W. M. Dane; W. Drever
Prahran: N. G. Barker; R. Wilson-Reid [Mayor]; C. J. Brearley
Windsor: B. Theophilos; D. Cran; H. Gregory

1980/81

South Yarra: D. Habicht; N. Long; C. C. E. Gahan
Toorak M. Duffy; W. M. Dane; W. Drever
Prahran: N. G. Barker; R. Wilson-Reid; C.J. Brearley
Windsor: B. Theophilos; D. Cran; H. Gregory [Mayor]

1981/82

South Yarra: D. Habicht; N. Long; C. C. E. Gahan [Mayor]
Toorak M. Duffy; W. M. Dane; W. Drever
Prahran: N. G. Barker; J. E. Marsh; C. J. Brearley
Windsor: B. Theophilos; D. Cran; H. Gregory

1982/83

South Yarra: D. Habicht; N. Long; C. C. E. Gahan
Toorak M. Duffy; W. M. Dane; W. Drever

Appendix

Prahran N. G. Barker; J. E. Marsh; J. V. Chandler
Windsor. B. Theophilos; D. Cran [Mayor]; J. Velos

1983/84

South Yarra: D. Habicht; N. Long; C. C. E. Gahan
Toorak M. Duffy; W. M. Dane; W. Drever
Prahran N. G. Barker; R. W. Gill; J. V. Chandler
Windsor. B. Theophilos [Mayor]; D. Cran; J. Velos

1984/85

South Yarra: D. Habicht; N. Long; C. C. E. Gahan
Toorak M. Duffy [Mayor]; W. M. Dane; G.J. Rice
Prahran: N. G. Barker; R. W. Gill; J. V. Chandler
Windsor. B. Theophilos; D. Cran; J. Velos

1985/86

South Yarra: D. Habicht [Mayor]; N. Long; C. C. E. Gahan
Toorak W. A. Spry; W. M. Dane; G.J. Rice
Prahran: N. G. Barker; R. W. Gill; J. V. Chandler
Windsor. B. Theophilos; D. Cran; J. Velos

1986/87

South Yarra: D. Habicht; S. Gatehouse; C. C. E. Gahan
Toorak W. A. Spry; W. M. Dane; G.J. Rice
Prahran: N. G. Barker [Mayor]; L. T. Burke; J. V. Chandler
Windsor. B. Theophilos; P. Moon; J. Velos

1987/88

South Yarra: R. W. Gill; S. Gatehouse; C. C. E. Gahan
Toorak W. A. Spry [Mayor]; W. M. Dane; J. H. Moffat
Prahran: N. G. Barker; L. T. Burke; J. V. Chandler
Windsor. S. Makris; P. Moon; J. Velos

1988/89

South Yarra: R. W. Gill; S. Gatehouse; C. C. E. Gahan
Toorak W. A. Spry; W. M. Dane; J. H. Moffat
Prahran: N. G. Barker; L. T. Burke; J. V. Chandler [Mayor]
Windsor. S. Makris; P. Moon; J. Velos

1989/90

South Yarra: R. W. Gill; S. Gatehouse; C. C. E. Gahan
Toorak W. A. Spry; W. M. Dane; J. H. Moffat

Prahran: N. G. Barker; L. T. Burke; J. V. Chandler

Windsor. S. Makris; B. Muller; J. Velos [Mayor]

1990/91

South Yarra. R. W. Gill; S. Gatehouse; C. C. E. Gahan

Toorak W. A. Spry; W. M. Dane; J. H. Moffat

Prahran: N. G. Barker; L. T. Burke [Mayor]; J. V. Chandler

Windsor. S. Makris; B. Muller; J. Velos

Notes

INTRODUCTION

¹ John Butler Cooper, *The History of Prahran from its First Settlement to a City*, Prahran Council, Melbourne, 1924, p. ix.

² Cooper, *The History of Prahran*, p. ix.

³ Cooper, *The History of Prahran*, p. ix.

⁴ Among the books published on the latter years of 19th-century history, the following are important: Bernard Barrett, *The Civic Frontier*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1979; Geoffrey Serle, *The Rush to be Rich*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1971; Graeme Davison, *The Rise and Fall of Marvellous Melbourne*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1979; Michael Cannon, *The Land Boomers*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1966; Paul De Serville, *Port Phillip Gentleman*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1980; Paul De Serville, *Pounds and Pedigrees*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1991; Michael Cannon, *Old Melbourne Town*, Loch Haven Books, Main Ridge, Victoria, 1991. Though dealing only with the first fifteen years of the growth of Melbourne, this also throws light on later history.

⁵ This series of books, covers Prahran Historical Series, Nos 1 to 12 and Prahran Heritage Series, nos 1 to 8.

⁶ A detailed account of the history of the Prahran Municipality 1850 to 1863 is to be found in B. Malone, *State and Local Government Relations—Prahran 1850-1863*, (MA, University of Melbourne, 1955

⁷ Cooper, *The History of Prahran*, p. 5.

⁸ Cooper, *The History of Prahran*, p. 53.

A good description is given here of the Tivoli estate when it was occupied by the Bell family.

⁹ The following estates were settled:

Yarra Bank on Lot 1, Punt Road Boundary; Avoca, Lot 2; Waterloo Cottage and later The Hermitage, Lot 6; Blairgowrie and Rosemount, Lot 7, east of Chapel Street. This area was originally a pleasant slope and became a small colony of houses in the 1860s and 1870s

but the hill was gradually levelled by the brickmakers and today is non-existent. Tivoli, Lot 8; Little Rockley, Lot 9; Buona Vista, Lot 10; Como, Lots 11 and 12; Mount Verdant, Lot 13; Balmerino, Lot 14; Toorak House, Lots 16 and 17. Several of these early homes, as well as others built in the later 19th century, are pictured and described in E. M. Robb, *Early Toorak and District*, Robertson & Mullen, Melbourne, 1934.

- ¹⁰ See E. M. Robb, *Early Toorak and District*, for several of the old houses in the south-east of Prahran. Others were built in Armadale and East Prahran, for example, Larnook, Sebrof, Redcourt, Kamarong, Duncraig and Elgin, all of which are extant.
- ¹¹ Prahran Heritage Series, Nos 2 and 4. Among those who prospered were James Chambers, nightsoil contractor to the Melbourne and later the Prahran Councils, who built the New Bridge Hotel, and Enoch Chambers, iron foundry owner, who contracted to supply the trestles and sleepers for the loop line from St Kilda to Windsor railway station. The two men were not related.
- ¹² Mayor Davidson arrived from India with an entourage of fourteen coolies and set up a life style similar to that he had practised in his army days in Burma. His daughter Caroline, who gave her name to Caroline Street, South Yarra, later wrote an account of the family's life in India and Victoria. The manuscript is held by the Royal Historical Society of Victoria. 'Squint' was the pseudonym of an old Prahran pioneer who recorded his experiences as a boy in Prahran in a series of articles in 1906 in a short-lived local paper. His family was not a rich one and they lived close to Chapel Street in South Yarra. These articles are also to be found in the Archives of the Royal Historic Society of Victoria.
- ¹³ B. Malone, MA thesis, for details of the moves for and against Local Government. The original petitions for and against a municipality are to be found in the Chief Secretary's papers, now housed at Laverton with State Records.
- ¹⁴ James Paxton, *Toorak as I Knew It*, Prahran Historical Series, no. 2 has descriptions and maps of these large houses and estates. See also Jill McDougall, *Church, Community and Change*, Prahran Heritage Series, no. 6.
- ¹⁵ Cooper, *The History of Prahran*, pp. 239-45, 247-51, 290-6.
- ¹⁶ *The Jubilee Book*, now a rare collectors' item, is a valuable reference book of photographs taken at the time.
- ¹⁷ See also Prahran Historical Series, no. 3.
- ¹⁸ Cooper, *The History of Prahran*, pp. 279-81.
- ¹⁹ Prahran Museum Archives contains a comprehensive file on the deliberations and decisions made on the main drain in the late 19th century and particularly after 1891.
- ²⁰ Prahran Historical Series, no. 4, gives a comprehensive history of the Jam Factory and of the Australasian Jam Company.
- ²¹ Cooper, *The History of Prahran*, pp. 359-67 contains lists of all Councillors from 1856 to 1925.
- ²² Prahran Historical Series, nos. 4 and 5, *Chapel Street Parts 1 and 2*.
- ²³ Prahran Museum Archives. Dr R. H. Fetherston and his father Dr G. Fetherston were leading figures in both Prahran and Victoria and led the fight for better health practices and cleaner food and housing. See also *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Volume 8 and Prahran Heritage Series, no. 8, *The Milky Way*.

CHAPTER 1 LINES ON THE MAP

- ¹ This introduction relies heavily on three published works on the early history of Prahran: John Butler Cooper, *The History of Prahran from its First Settlement to a City*, Prahran Council 1912 and 1924 (revised); Betty Malone, *Early Prahran 1850-1863*, Prahran Historical Series, no. 1, 1982, Prahran Historical and Arts Society in conjunction with Prahran Mechanics' Institute; George Tibbits, *History of Prahran*, Prahran Conservation Study, Nigel Lewis & Associates, Architects and Conservation Planners City of Prahran, 1982. This last work has

particularly detailed information on the early Crown Land sales, including maps derived from those drawn by surveyor Hoddle in the 1830s and 1840s.

² T. L. Mitchell, *Three Expeditions into the Interior of Eastern Australia*, 2nd edn, vol. 2, Boone, London, 1839, p. 333, quoted in J. M. Powell, 'The cabbage garden and the fair blank sheet: an historical review of environment and planning', in A. G. L. Shaw (ed.), *Victorias Heritage*, Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1986.

³ Tibbits, *History of Prahran*, especially pp. 25-33.

⁴ Margaret and John Parker, interview, 19 June 1991.

⁵ There are many works covering the history of the Victorian gold rushes. This is not the place to cite them all, but among the best is Geoffrey Serle's *The Golden Age, A History of the Colony of Victoria 1851-1861*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1977.

⁶ Again, there is a considerable volume of literature covering the 19th century development of Victoria. The following two works are particularly valuable: Tony Dingle, *The Victorians: Settling*, Fairfax, Syme and Weldon Associates, McMahon's Point, NSW, 1984; W. A. Sinclair, *The Process of Economic Development in Australia*, Cheshire, Melbourne, 1976.

⁷ Cooper, *The History of Prahran*, 1924 pp. 179-84, 305-7.

⁸ Cooper, *The History of Prahran*, p. 180.

⁹ Samuel Brimson, *The Tramways of Australia*, Dreamweaver Books, Sydney, 1983; John D. Keating, *Mind the Curve: A History of the Cable Trams*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1970; John Larkins and Bruce Howard, *Romance of Australian Trams*, Rigby, Adelaide, 1978.

¹⁰ Valentine Leeper, interview, 31 May 1991.

¹¹ Betty Malone, *Chapel Street Prahran, Part One 1834-1918; Chapel Street Prahran, Part Two 1919-1984*, Prahran Historical Series, nos 4 and 5, Prahran Historical and Arts Society in conjunction with Prahran Mechanics' Institute, 1983 and 1984.

¹² Susan Priestley, *The Victorians: Making Their Mark*, Fairfax, Syme and Weldon Associates, McMahon's Point, NSW, 1984, p. 156.

¹³ S. E. Dornan and R. G. Henderson, *The Electric Railways of Victoria*, Australian Electric Traction Association, Sydney, 1979, p. 12.

¹⁴ Brimson, *The Tramways*, pp. 115-18.

¹⁵ Graeme Breydon, *Feeding and Filling. The Story of the Prahran and Malvern Tramways Trust*, Tramway Museum Society of Victoria, Malvern, 1991, p. 1.

¹⁶ City of Prahran, *Annual Report* (hereafter C of P, AR) 1925/26, p. 19.

¹⁷ 1990/10—all years expressed in this way with an oblique derive from the City of Prahran Annual Reports which express years in this manner. Councillors were elected in the first week in August, and the Mayor about a week later. The Council's financial year runs from 1 October to 30 September. The Annual Reports were produced at the end of the Council's financial year. The officers, therefore, mainly talked about the second of the pair of years in their reports. For instance in their report of 1909/10, officers are talking about nine months of 1910 and only three months of 1909. The Mayor, however, in his report, talked about his term of office, in this instance five months of 1909 and seven months of 1910.

¹⁸ C of P, ARs, 1909/10-1911/12.

¹⁹ C of P, AR, 1918/19, p. 15.

²⁰ Cooper, *The History of Prahran*, pp. 298-300.

²¹ Arthur Streeton in the *Argus*, 8 April 1933.

²² City of Prahran, press cuttings.

²³ C of P, AR, 1920/21, p. 13.

²⁴ *Age*, 7 January 1911.

²⁵ C of P, AR, 1925/26, pp. 28-9.

²⁶ C of P, AR, 1918/19, pp. 33-4; 1919/20, p. 6; 1920/21, pp. 24,34; 1921/22, pp. 5,6,46; 1922/23, p. 14; 1923/24, pp. 6,16; 1924/25, pp. 5,14; G. Whitehead, *Victoria Gardens Conservation Study and Master Plan*, City of Prahran, Prahran, 1989.

²⁷ Cooper, *The History of Prahran*, pp. 54-6; City of Prahran, Public Works Committee, Minutes, Public Records Office, 8037/P 1/3, 1924-30.

- ²⁸ Powell, 'The cabbage garden', p. 69.
- ²⁹ C of P, *AR*, 1911/12, p. 49.
- ³⁰ C of P, *AR*, 1918/19, p. 18.
- ³¹ Country Roads Board, *First Annual Report*, 1914, p. 60.
- ³² Cooper, *The History of Prahran*, pp. 162-78.
- ³³ Leeper, interview, 31 May 1991.
- ³⁴ C of P, *AR*, 1928/9, p. 16.
- ³⁵ *Melbourne: First Report of the Metropolitan Town Planning Commission*, 1925.
- ³⁶ *Melbourne: First Report*, p. 27.
- ³⁷ *Melbourne: First Report*, p. 27.
- ³⁸ *Plan of General Development—Melbourne. Report of the Metropolitan Town Planning Commission*, 1929, p. 84.
- ³⁹ C of P, *AR*, 1930/31, p. 5.
- ⁴⁰ C of P, *AR*, 1924/25, p. 15.
- ⁴¹ Public Works Committee, Minutes, 6 July and 20 July 1925.
- ⁴² C of P, *AR*, 1930/31, p. 15.
- ⁴³ C of P, *AR*, 1930/31, p. 43.
- ⁴⁴ C of P, *AR*, 1931/32, p. 6.
- ⁴⁵ C of P, *AR*, 1932/33, p. 35.
- ⁴⁶ C of P, *AR*, 1931/32, pp. 7-8.
- ⁴⁷ C of P, *AR*, 1931/32, p. 21.
- ⁴⁸ Special Meeting, sub-committee, Public Works, 14 November 1932.
- ⁴⁹ C of P, *AR*, 1933/34, p. 6.
- ⁵⁰ C of P, *AR*, 1932/33, p. 30.
- ⁵¹ C of P, *AR*, 1932/33, p. 30.
- ⁵² C of P, *AR*, 1932/33, p. 31.
- ⁵³ C of P, *AR*, 1932/33, p. 57.
- ⁵⁴ C of P, *AR*, 1937/38, p. 18.
- ⁵⁵ Colin Jones, *Ferries on the Yarra*, Greenhouse Publications, Collingwood, 1981, p. 57.
- ⁵⁶ Margaret and John Parker, interview, 19 June 1991.
- ⁵⁷ Margaret and John Parker, interview, 19 June 1991.
- ⁵⁸ Leeper, interview, 31 May 1991.
- ⁵⁹ C of P, *AR*, 1943/44, p. 32.
- ⁶⁰ C of P, *AR*, 1940/41, p. 10.
- ⁶¹ Jones, *Ferries on the Yarra*, p. 62. The identity of the ferryman at Williams Road was a particular bone of contention between the Prahran and Richmond Councils. When the ferryman resigned in September 1932 a bridge was already under consideration. Prahran and Richmond each had candidates they wished to see in the job and in November Prahran's man was appointed amidst some lingering acrimony: Public Works Committee, Minutes, 12 September and 21 November 1932.
- ⁶² Public Works Committee, Minutes, 23 May and 7 June 1932.
- ⁶³ Public Works Committee, Minutes, February 1928.
- ⁶⁴ Public Works Committee, Minutes, 27 March 1928; 22 May 1933.
- ⁶⁵ Public Works Committee, Minutes, 24 November 1924; 10 October 1932; *passim*.
- ⁶⁶ C of P, *AR*, 1941/42, p. 55.
- ⁶⁷ C of P, *AR*, 1942/43, p. 39.
- ⁶⁸ Kate Darian-Smith, *On the Home Front. Melbourne in Wartime 1939-1945*, Oxford University Press, Port Melbourne, 1990, p. 17.
- ⁶⁹ C of P, *AR*, 1943/44, p. 47.
- ⁷⁰ C of P, *AR*, 1945/46, p. 44; G. Whitehead, *Victoria Gardens*, pp. 24-30.
- ⁷¹ Ian MacDonald, interview, 7 March 1991.
- ⁷² C of P, *AR*, 1939/40, p. 5.
- ⁷³ C of P, *AR*, 1940/41, p. 48.

⁷⁴ C of P, *AR*, 1942/43, p. 27.

⁷⁵ Darian-Smith, *On the Home Front*, pp. 20-1; 45.

⁷⁶ C of P, *AR*, 1942/43, p. 45.

⁷⁷ C of P, *AR*, 1945/46, p. 42.

⁷⁸ MacDonald, interview, 7 March 1991.

CHAPTER 2 HOUSING HIGH AND LOW IN PRAHRAN, 1920-1950

¹ *Picturesque Atlas of Australasia*, 1888; reprinted, Ure Smith, *Australia, the First Hundred Years*, Sydney, 1974, vol. 1, p. 246.

² *Census of the Commonwealth of Australia, 1921.—State of Victoria.—Dwellings*, 'Victoria—occupied private dwellings, tenements and flats classified according to number of rooms, Census of the 4th April, 1921, by Local Government Area'.

³ Norman Wettenhall, interview, 14 June 1991. Much of the information on mansions in Toorak was generously provided by Betty Malone from her unpublished notes on the area.

⁴ See, for example, *Evidence taken by the Royal Commission on the Housing of the People in the Metropolis and in the Populous Centres of the State*, Victorian Parliamentary Papers, vol. 2, 1917; the Housing Investigation and Slum Abolition Board included most of Prahran west of Williams Road in its survey of poor housing in 1936/37; see Renate Howe (ed.), *New Houses for Old: Fifty Years of Public Housing in Victoria 1938-1988*, Ministry of Housing and Construction, Melbourne, 1988, p. 28.

⁵ *Census 1921—Victoria*, 'Occupied Private Dwellings, Tenements, and Flats, classified according to number of rooms by Local Government Area'.

⁶ *Census 1921—Victoria*, 'Private Dwellings, Tenements, and Flats classified according to the number of inmates'.

⁷ *1986 Census of Population and Housing*, 'Small Area Data—Legal Local Government Areas', microfiche.

⁸ Evidence of Richard Irwin Halpin, plain clothes constable stationed at Prahran, *Evidence taken by the Royal Commission on the Housing Conditions of the People in the Metropolis and in the Populous Centres of the State*, Victorian Parliamentary Papers (VPP), vol. 2, 1917, pp. 250-1.

⁹ Malone, unpublished notes, section 13, pp. 3,4,7.

¹⁰ Mick Keane, interview, 22 January 1991.

¹¹ Valentine Leeper, interview, 31 May 1991.

¹² Leeper, interview, 31 May 1991.

¹³ Freda Harridane, interview, 11 June 1991.

¹⁴ Harridane, interviews, 11 June 1991 and 1 June 1992.

¹⁵ Ann Clemens, interview, 2 June 1992.

¹⁶ Shirley Paine, interview, 2 May 1991.

¹⁷ Wettenhall, interview, 20 June 1991.

¹⁸ Wettenhall, interview, 14 June 1991.

¹⁹ Wettenhall, interviews, 14 June and 20 June 1991.

²⁰ *Victorian Year Book 1920-21*, Government Printer, Melbourne, pp. 222, 223, 317.

²¹ C of P, *AR*, 1925/26, p. 57.

²² Evidence of Constable Halpin, VPP, vol. 2, 1917, p. 250.

²³ Constable Halpin, VPP, vol. 2, 1917, p. 251.

²⁴ Constable Halpin, VPP, vol. 2, 1917, p. 251.

²⁵ C of P, *AR*, 1909/10, pp. 9; 31; 65-6.

²⁶ C of P, *AR*, 1921/22, p. 43.

²⁷ C of P, *AR*, 1921/22, p. 44.

²⁸ C of P, *AR*, 1921/23, p. 53.

²⁹ C of P, *AR*, 1929/30, p. 60.

³⁰ C of P, *AR*, 1930/31, p. 68.

- ³¹ Reg Rogers, interview, 30 April 1991.
- ³² C of P, *AR*, 1931/32, p. 69.
- ³³ Howe, *New Houses for Old*, see especially ch. 2.
- ³⁴ C of P, *AR*, 1936/37, p. 65-6.
- ³⁵ Rogers, interview, 30 April 1991.
- ³⁶ C of P, *AR*, 1937/38, p. 70.
- ³⁷ Jean Taylor, interview, 11 June 1991.
- ³⁸ Prahran Historical Society Archives (hereafter PHSA), S2B 442.
- ³⁹ PHSA, S2B 443, letter to the Town Clerk, 28 February 1920.
- ⁴⁰ Betty Malone, interview, 4 June 1991.
- ⁴¹ Malone, unpublished notes, section 13, p. 7.
- ⁴² James Paxton, *Toorak As I Knew It (1900-1930)*, Prahran Historical and Arts Society, Historical Series, no. 2, 1983, pp. 19-20.
- ⁴³ Malone, interview, 4 June 1991.
- ⁴⁴ Margaret and John Parker, interview, 19 June 1991.
- ⁴⁵ Margaret and John Parker, interview, 31 May 1992.
- ⁴⁶ Ann Longmire, *St Kilda, The Show Goes On, The History of St Kilda*, vol. HI, 1930-1983, Hudson, Hawthorn, 1989, p. xi.
- ⁴⁷ Constable Halpin, VPP, vol. 2, 1917, p. 251.
- ⁴⁸ *Prahran Telegraph*, 18 October 1919, p. 4.
- ⁴⁹ C of P, AT?, 1921/22, p. 35.
- ⁵⁰ Betty Malone and L. Oscar Slater, *Walking Tour of South Yarra Central*, Prendergast Publishers, South Yarra, 1988, pp. 6, 29, 60.
- ⁵¹ George Tibbits, *History of Prahran*, Prahran Conservation Study, Nigel Lewis and Associates, Architects and Conservation Planners, City of Prahran, 1982, p. 56.
- ⁵² Tibbits, *History of Prahran*, p. 57.
- ⁵³ Tibbits, *History of Prahran*, p. 57.
- ⁵⁴ Malone, unpublished notes, section 13, pp. 5, 8.
- ⁵⁵ Malone, unpublished notes, section 13, p. 1.
- ⁵⁶ C of P, *AR*, 1931/32, p. 30.
- ⁵⁷ Paxton, *Toorak As I Knew It*, p. 25.
- ⁵⁸ *Argus*, 18 January 1934.
- ⁵⁹ C of P, *AR*, 1935/36, p. 61.
- ⁶⁰ *Argus*, 16 October 1934.

CHAPTER 3 HOUSES AND FLATS, 1950-1970

- ¹ See *Census of Victoria, 1954 and 1966*; also *Victorian Year Book, 1945-46*.
- ² Richard Broome, *The Victorians: Arriving*, Fairfax, Syme & Weldon Associates, McMahons Point, NSW, 1984, especially chapters 7 and 8.
- ³ Jocelyn Newman, interview, 19 September 1991.
- ⁴ Lindy Cox, interview, 8 June 1991.
- ⁵ Broome, *The Victorians*, p. 178.
- ⁶ Broome, *The Victorians*, pp. 192-3.
- ⁷ Mrs Helene Requirini, interview, 24 June 1991.
- ⁸ Requirini, interview, 24 June 1991.
- ⁹ C of P, *AR*, 1940/41, p. 9.
- ¹⁰ John Velos, interview, 24 July 1991.
- ¹¹ Broome, *The Victorians*, p. 203.
- ¹² Renate Howe (ed.), *New Houses for Old: Fifty Years of Public Housing in Victoria 1938-1988*, Ministry of Housing and Construction, Melbourne, 1988, pp. 42, 58, 125.
- ¹³ C of P, *AR*, 1943/44, p. 42.

- ¹⁴ C of P, *AR*, 1943/44, quoted p. 60.
- ¹⁵ M. A. Jones, *Housing and Poverty in Australia*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1972, p. 72.
- ¹⁶ Jones, *Housing and Poverty*, pp. 72, 75.
- ¹⁷ Public Works Committee Minutes, 10 November 1958.
- ¹⁸ See Jones, *Housing and Poverty*, for a full discussion of these problems.
- ¹⁹ Howe, *New Houses for Old*, p. 154.
- ²⁰ *Annual Report of the Housing Commission of Victoria*, 1960, p. 15.
- ²¹ Jones, *Housing and Poverty*, p. 79.
- ²² Hon. H. R. Petty, MLA, Victorian Minister of Housing, 'Slum Reclamation and Urban Redevelopment of Melbourne Inner Suburban Areas', submitted to Cabinet and noted, 4 July 1960, 20 pages, including attached letter to R. H. Petty from Grahame Shaw and J. H. Davey, known as the Shaw/Davey Report, dated 24 June 1960, (copy courtesy of Janet Cram, Librarian, Housing and Construction Victoria, Department of Planning and Housing).
- ²³ Petty, 'Slum Reclamation', p. 4.
- ²⁴ Ibid, p. 9 of Shaw/Davey Report.
- ²⁵ Reg Rogers, interview 30 April 1991.
- ²⁶ *Annual Reports of the Housing Commission of Victoria 1960-1970*.
- ²⁷ Howe, *New Houses for Old*, p. 154.
- ²⁸ *Sun*, 16 November 1954; *Argus*, 16, 17 and 30 November 1954.
- ²⁹ Howe, *New Houses for Old*, p. 142.
- ³⁰ *Southern News*, 26 April 1960, p. 11.
- ³¹ William Dane, interview, 8 April 1991.
- ³² Mrs Lola Jones, interview, 12 June 1991.
- ³³ Dane, interview, 8 April 1991.
- ³⁴ *Southern Advertiser*, 13 October 1959, p. 22.
- ³⁵ Ibid, 19.4.60. *Southern Advertiser*, 19 and 26 April, 12 July, 18 October and 22 November 1960.
- ³⁶ Tony Dingle and Carolyn Rasmussen, *Vital Connection, Melbourne and its Board of Works 1891-1991*, McPhee Gribble, Ringwood, 1991, pp. 242-4, 313-14.
- ³⁷ *Southern Cross*, 20 November 1968.
- ³⁸ *Southern Cross*, 11 June 1969.
- ³⁹ C of P, Public Works Committee Minutes, PRO files 8037/P1/5 13 April 1953, 2 August 1954.
- ⁴⁰ C of P, Public Works Committee Minutes, PRO files 8037/P1/5, 27 April 1959.
- ⁴¹ *Southern News*, 16 August 1960.
- ⁴² Chris Gahan, interview, 12 August 1992.
- ⁴³ Keith Nicholls, interview, 16 December 1991.
- ⁴⁴ *Southern News*, 1 March 1960, 6 December 1960
- ⁴⁵ *Southern News*, 18 October 1960
- ⁴⁶ *Southern News*, 15 November 1960
- ⁴⁷ Chris Gahan, interview, 23 July 1991.

CHAPTER 4 FROM PERROTT PLAN TO STRATEGY PLAN—HOUSING, 1970-1990

- ¹ Perrott, Lyon, Timlock & Kesa, Architects and Town Planners, *City of Prahran Town Planning Report 1971*, (hereafter Perrott Plan) p. 3.
- ² Perrott Plan, p. 36.
- ³ *Herald*, Letter to the editor, 12 October 1970. Much of the information used in this section was kindly provided by Mrs Pat Rayson, including minutes of the South Yarra Anti-High Rise Group, copies of Council planning documents, correspondence of the South Yarra

Anti-High Rise Group, copies of the original Council briefs for the South Yarra development sites, correspondence and documents produced by the Prahran South Yarra Group, reports and publicity material produced by the Chia group of companies, documents relating to the panel hearings over Amendment 185, and an extensive collection of press cuttings, including several from Singapore.

⁴ For example *Age*, 27 May, 3 and 4 October 1970

⁵ Perrott Plan, p. 37.

⁶ Margot Oskarsson, interview, 18 April 1991. In the 1970s Mrs Oskarsson was Mrs Nicholls, President of the Town and Country Planning Association.

⁷ Margot Oskarsson, interview, 14 August 1992.

⁸ *Herald*, 8 October 1970.

⁹ *Herald*, 9 October 1970.

¹⁰ Pat Rayson, interview, 9 May 1991.

¹¹ Minutes of the South Yarra Anti-High Rise Group, 19 October 1970, 15 March and 3 May 1971.

¹² Minutes of the South Yarra Anti-High Rise Group, *passim*; *Melbourne Times*, 14 June 1972.

¹³ *Southern Cross*, 18 November and 25 November 1970.

¹⁴ Perrott Plan, p. 40.

¹⁵ *Southern Cross*, 2 June 1971.

¹⁶ *Southern Cross*, 9 June 1971.

¹⁷ Keith Nicholls, quoted in *Southern Cross*, 9 February 1972.

¹⁸ *Southern Cross*, 28 July and 25 August 1971.

¹⁹ *Southern Cross*, 11 and 25 August, 1 September 1971.

²⁰ Chris Gahan, interview, 23 July 1991.

²¹ *Sun*, Rayson collection, no date, but clearly c. September 1971. The resolution to put the plan on display was passed 13 September 1971; *Southern Cross*, 9 February 1972.

²² *Southern Cross*, 17 May 1972.

²³ Prahran City Council Planning Code, adopted by the Council on 22 May 1972, included in revised Perrott Plan, Rayson collection.

²⁴ William Dane, interview, 8 April 1991.

²⁵ Tony Dingle and Carolyn Rasmussen, *Vital Connections. Melbourne and its Board of Works 1891-1991*, McPhee Gribble, Ringwood, 1991, p. 246.

²⁶ Chris Maher, 'Process and Response in Contemporary Urban Development: Melbourne in the 1980s', *Australian Geographer*, 19 (1), May 1988, p. 163.

²⁷ Bernard Smith, 'On Perceiving the Australian Suburb', in George Seddon and Mari Davis (eds) *Man and Landscape in Australia: Towards an Ecological Vision*, Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1976, p. 298.

²⁸ MMBW, *Planning Policies for the Melbourne Metropolitan Region*, Government Printer, Melbourne, November 1971, p. 13.

²⁹ MMBW, *Planning Policies*, p. 16.

³⁰ MMBW, *Report on General Concept Objections*, February 1974, p. 9.

³¹ MMBW, *Report* p. 10.

³² J. Holmes, 'Victoria IF, in *Urban Management Processes*, Proceedings of the Seminar held in Adelaide 22-25 August 1977, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1978, pp. 105-6.

³³ Dingle and Rasmussen, *Vital Connections*, pp. 354-6.

³⁴ Margot Nicholls, 'The case of the Mulgrave Freeway', *The Green Place*, 15-29 March 1973, p. 7.

³⁵ *Herald*, 28 March 1973.

³⁶ John Velos, interview, 24 July 1991.

³⁷ Keith Nicholls, interview, 16 December 1991.

³⁸ Ian MacDonald, interview, 7 March 1991.

³⁹ Fred Farrall, notes on Canterbury Road closure, Fred Farrall collection.

- ⁴⁰ Chris Gahan, interview, 23 July 1991.
- ⁴¹ Nicholls, interview, 16 December 1991.
- ⁴² Oskarsson, interview, 18 April 1991.
- ⁴³ MacDonald, interview, 7 March 1991.
- ⁴⁴ Alan M. Voorhees Partners Pty Ltd, *A Traffic and Parking Strategy for Prahran*, July 1976, pp. 75-6.
- ⁴⁵ Reports of residential precinct study committees, City of Prahran, Planning Department. Reports include Hawksburn North, September 1980; Prahran West, November 1980; Argo/Osborne Street, November 1981; Windsor East, April 1983; South Yarra Precinct, November 1983; Windsor West, July 1984; Surrey/Cromwell, 1984; Tivoli Road, 1985; Toorak Village, November 1985; Prahran East, November 1986; South Yarra Residential, August 1987; Armadale West, September 1988; and Murray/York, November 1990.
- ⁴⁶ Leonie Burke, interview, 21 August 1991.
- ⁴⁷ Burke, 21 August 1991.
- ⁴⁸ Ken Chalmers, Director of Parks and Recreation, Prahran City Council, interview, 11 April 1991.
- ⁴⁹ Chalmers, interview, 11 April 1991.
- ⁵⁰ Tony Dingle, *The Victorians: Settling*, Fairfax, Syme and Weldon Associates, McMahon's Point, NSW, 1984, p. 221.
- ⁵¹ Dingle, *The Victorians*, p. 241.
- ⁵² *Age*, 25 May 1970.
- ⁵³ *Herald*, 22 November 1975.
- ⁵⁴ *Age*, 4 September 1976.
- ⁵⁵ *Southern Cross*, 14 July 1976.
- ⁵⁶ *Melbourne Times*, Rayson collection, no date but Keith Nicholls was Mayor, i.e. 1976/77.
- ⁵⁷ Kevin Biggin of Biggin & Scott, estate agents, quoted in the *Southern Cross*, Rayson collection (undated).
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- ⁵⁹ Chris Maher, 'Process and Response in Contemporary Urban Development: Melbourne in the 1980s', *Australian Geographer*, 19 (1), May 1988, p. 171.
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CHAPTER 6 VOLUNTEERS, PROFESSIONALS, AND THE RISE OF THE EXPERT

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