

Early Hawthorn Memories

MEN AND WOMEN OF THE 'SEVENTIES

By HUGH COPELAND

A peppery physician who wore Dundreary whiskers, a weekly boarder who drove to his lodgings behind a spanking four-in-hand, and a boy who hanged himself in a shop are some of the interesting characters recalled by Mr. Copeland in this account of Hawthorn in the 'seventies.

IN the 'seventies the railway line from Flinders street ended at the Hawthorn station. As a youngster attending a little dame's school near the railway terminus, I can recollect the "Prince Albert" car that used to carry passengers each morning from the intersection of Burke and Burwood roads to the Hawthorn station. The car had two wheels and a hood, and held five people, besides the driver, sitting back to back. Ben Cote was the driver, and the passengers were usually regular fares going into their business places in the city. One was Mr. Stacpoole, who lived along Burke road, a little to the north of Burwood road; and another was a Mr. Wildridge, and there were also my father, Mr. James Copeland, and sometimes his neighbour, Sir John O'Shanassy, well known in political circles at the time. The space I occupied was small, and I was usually included in the passenger list, the daily journey being impressed on my mind as a very early recollection.

A little later the march of progress brought two omnibuses to cater for the growing traffic between the terminus at Hawthorn and the little centres of Kew and Camberwell. Each bus had an enthusiastic conductor, who rode on the step and collected the fares, and clamorously directed attention to his destination by waving his arms and pointing to the conveyance as the passengers stepped out of the trains thoughtfully provided by The Melbourne and Hobson's Bay United Railway Co. The Camberwell bus ended its journey at Camberwell Junction and avoided the steep hill on Burwood road, between where the Tower Hotel now stands and Burke road.

Mention of the Tower Hotel brings to mind the indignation that was expressed in some quarters when the proposal to build it became known. I remember that a petition was circulated to oppose such an enormity being inflicted on the residents of so peaceful a hamlet. However, the petition was futile, and the hotel was duly built, with a notification over its entrance, when completed, that Ann Hurley was the licensee. Some people, as they passed it, used to shudder with anger; others used to go into it.

A little farther on there were some nice cottages in Burwood road, on the north side, owned by Mr. Biggs, known as "Gentleman Biggs" to distinguish him from his brother who was a carpenter.

from his brother who was a carpenter. As a boy, I used to be interested in watching him each morning milk two goats, which he kept on the premises to supply his household with a commodity, in those arcadian days, which is now controlled and tabulated by a board.

One of these cottages was occupied by Mr. Mark Gardiner, who was, if I remember rightly, the contractor for the construction of the first cable tramline in Melbourne, from Spencer street to the Hawthorn Bridge. He lost his life in the wreck of the Ly-ee-Moon at Green Cape in 1886. Farther up Burwood road an old woman, who lived in a small cottage, kept two cows and sold butter. Her customers were few, and became fewer when one of them learned that the milk was

kept under the old dame's bed. Even in those times it seems that some people were inclined to be pernickety.

Lower down Burwood road was a little shop between Auburn road and Glenferrie road kept by a widow with one son. We boys used to buy tops and marbles there, and sometimes got a cheap variety of cigarettes that were discreetly smoked during the school dinner hour. A sensational disappearance of the widow's son caused some stir. Later it was found that he had climbed between the ceiling and the roof and hanged himself. For a long time after we used to be afraid to pass the shop and always walked on the other side of the street. Dr. Bragg was one of the earliest physicians in Hawthorn. He lived in Burwood road near where the town hall stands. He was a peppery little man, with Dundreary whiskers, who was regularly called in when our youthful ailments baffled the maternal skill. Close by Dr. Bragg's surgery a chemist named Kruse carried on his business. He was thought highly of, and his name is still associated with a proprietary medicine which he put on the market years ago. Another family connected with the early days of Hawthorn was that of a Wesleyan minister, the Rev. Mr. Higgins, who had come from Ireland with letters of introduction, hoping to continue in the work to which he had been accustomed. Unfortunately there was no opening for his services and he was a disappointed man. However, his wife was a most capable woman, and the children were brought up to be self-reliant and industrious, with the result that they became highly respected and eventually made their names

up to be well-remembered with admiration, with the result that they became highly respected and eventually made their name famous through one of the son's legal attainments and the honoured position he attained in the judiciary of the State.

Some residents may remember the name of Bonwick in connection with a boys' school in Oxley road, Hawthorn, where Mrs. Bonwick was also the principal of a girls' school. Mr. Bonwick used to take the pupils on visits of inspection to various factories and engineering works around Melbourne, with a view to adding to our knowledge. Pleasant recollections remain of a biscuit factory being visited one day with satisfactory results as far as the youthful students were concerned.

The Hawthorn Grammar School, in the midst of spacious grounds facing Power street, with that fine scholarly gentleman Professor Irving as its principal, claimed my attention for a time. A number of pupils became well-known men in later years. Sir Rupert Clarke was a weekly boarder who was driven home behind a spanking four-in-hand team every Friday afternoon. Bob Nicholson, whose father was a well-known police magistrate, became a champion interstate sculler, and later manager of the famous Ivanhoe Gold Mine near the Great Boulder, in Western Australia. The professor's sons were part of the school. One was State Commandant of the military forces; another I met in Kalgoorlie, where he was editor of the "Kalgoorlie Miner." Both were fine men, carrying on the family traditions. The boarders included a number of Western district boys whose names are familiar still. For a school that was once so popular, with a good scholastic and athletic record, it seems strange that a reunion of the old boys never appears to have been held.
