Doncaster in 1900

Sourced from

Buildings along the Main Doncaster Road in the Year 1900

a thesis by
(Alice Clague 1972)

With additional material added and edited by

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Alice Clague to the history of Doncaster in 1900

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Doncaster Road c.1880 - Church of Christ building centre right - formerly —Grant's chapel"

During 1864 and completed in August, "Grant's Chapel" was relocated from across the road (where the Shire Hall was later built) to create a small chapel 22'x18' on Lot.44, a block of land measuring 88'x50' donated by Robert Williamson. Four years later, in 1868, the chapel was extended to 30'x26', accommodating 100 people. In 1886, additional land was purchased, adding 10' x 130' on the east side and an additional 50' across the rear. This wooden building had been enlarged over the years, and in 1888, it was repositioned on the site to accommodate the construction of a new brick chapel in 1889. Ref: Lynton - Doncaster Church of Christ

Background

In 1839, the first survey of the area now occupied by the City of Doncaster and Templestowe was made by T.R. Nutt. In 1843, another survey was completed by W. Darke. Both men were mainly concerned with exploring and roughly mapping the country rather than with the definition of property boundaries.

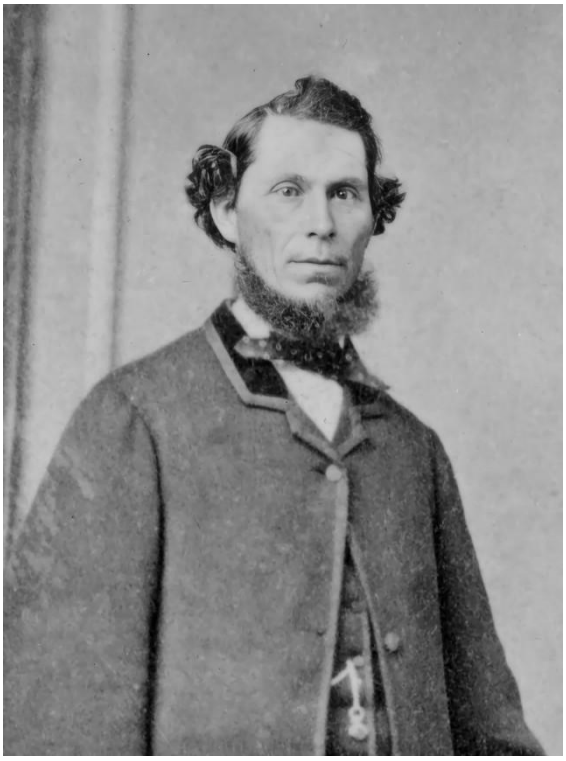
In 1840, the Victorian Government decreed that any approved person could buy eight square miles of Crown Land provided the block was at least five miles from a surveyed township. A Sydney solicitor named F.W. Unwin purchased the title of 5,120 acres between Koonung Creek and Templestowe.

South of the creek a West Indies merchant, Henry Elgar, made a similar deal. Many men who were given land, or who bought it, never stepped upon it themselves. They paid others to do their work or divided it into smaller blocks selling it at a profit. Not all who came to Australia came to build a new country, many came to buy it and sell it returning hurriedly, with their profits, to England. But a young country needed men who were not afraid to roll up their sleeves and do an honest day's work. It needed women who were not afraid to bear their children alone and who would stand behind their men in hardship and suffering.

Such were those who came to Doncaster. Their possessions, and often their wives, loaded in a dray. They faced the problem of a Roadless land, making their way through a virgin country, across rivers and creeks, through scrubby gullies and over timbered ridges. They all had to build their first home from the materials at hand: bricks hand made from local clay – as did the Hislops; wattle and daub – as did Carl Aumann or stone quarried from locally – as did Max Von Schramm.

The reconnaissance surveys made by Nutt and Darke showed that the high ground from Doncaster through East Doncaster to South Warrandyte was heavily timbered with stringybark, messmate, peppermint and wattle and earned a low official rating.

The installation of a flat bottomed punt at Hawthorn opened up a new route through Kew to the Bulleen and Templestowe areas. But the punt over the river at Heidelberg offered the favoured route to this area as the Heidelberg road was the best country road around Melbourne. These lines of communication greatly influenced the development in the district and the early land seeker naturally settled the rich river flats rather than pushing on to the higher, heavily timbered country.



William Burnley

The opening of the high ground owes much to William Burnley, a Richmond landowner and speculator who in 1847 bought land along the south side of Doncaster Road. Through energetic salesmanship, he drew public attention to the district then named Vermont, but in 1852, we are told, Burnley suggested the name "Doncaster" after the town in England where his family had lived. However, another story is that John Robert Wilson, who settled in the district in 1852, and who built the Doncaster Arms Hotel in 1854, named the district "Doncaster" after his home town.

It is difficult to say who settled first on the high ground along the general line of Doncaster Road. Joseph Pickering is thought to have been living near Blackburn Road by 1851 and John Robert Wilson bought land in the district in 1852, later building the "Doncaster Inn".

During 1853, several families accepted the challenge of this timbered area north-east of Melbourne. Migrants from the British Isles marched parallel with those from Germany. Which of them first toiled up the long hill from Koonung Creek does not matter very much. They were all founding fathers of a community which learned to work and mingle in harmony. From its beginning, Doncaster owed its existence to these men who cleared the land, carted firewood and grew fruit.

The building of a home meant the carving of a space in the natural bushland where good timber, abounded. Wood carting thus became the first general industry, much of the timber being taken to Fitzroy Wood Market.

From these beginnings, Doncaster became Victoria's first, most vital and largest fruit growing district, for with the clearing of the land, berry fruits and vegetables were planted. These found a ready market in the fruit starved colony.

Whilst these provided an immediate cash crop, fruit trees were planted. Most of the early settlers in Doncaster had no previous experience in growing fruit on a commercial basis. For them it was a new venture fraught with many problems. The Victorian fruit growing industry owes much to these pioneer fruit growers. By the early seventies, plantings had become quite extensive and the pioneers battled against the problems of drought, crop failure, disease, and wind damage. Water supply, when most needed in the dry summer months, was scanty, so the growers constructed dams on the hillsides and irrigated the trees with the collected water.

Jack Russell —Bove-u" spray pump

In 1882, Thomas Petty (snr), Richard Serpell and Alfred Thiele became the first men in Australia to successfully export pears to England. About ten years later, the first motor spray pump was invented by Jack Russell and his father-in-law, Tom Petty

(John "Jack" Edward Russell married [Tom's daughter] Ruby Isabel Petty)

Family land holdings remained relatively unaltered until the 1880's when the sons of settlers began wanting land to establish their own orchards. While the area under orchard cultivation was increasing, so the "Land Boom" (Melbourne (1850s–1880s Victorian Gold Rush and associated speculative "land boom" was gaining momentum and several companies were formed with the purpose of buying and subdividing land at Doncaster.

With the collapse of the "Land Boom" due to the "Depression of 1893", orchardists saw the price of their produce fall to a low level. Speculators found that after having bought land at high prices and subdividing it, they could neither sell nor let the properties. However, Doncaster came through the "Land Boom" and depression years still retaining its rural loveliness.

The close of the year 1899 and the end of the "19th Century" in Doncaster saw the Doncaster Brass Band playing selections at Holy Trinity, Church of England gate until 11.30 p.m. This was followed by a special service, conducted by the Rev. George Hollow, to mark the dawn of a new century

At 1900, Australia had a population of four million scattered mainly along the seaboard. The wealth of the country came basically from primary industry, but secondary industries were beginning to supply goods for export, as well as the home market

The "Land Boom" of the 1880's was followed by the depression of the nineties, when banks closed, investors lost their money, wages dropped, and a series of strikes eventuated. This had a sobering effect on the population.

At the dawn of the century, public opinion was in favour of federation and people all over Australia, began the task of building a new nation from six colonies. The people of Doncaster too, over one thousand now, were prepared to build on the foundations laid by the early settlers in helping to forge this new nation

The quandaries of the time were faced by the citizens of Doncaster much as they were in other places. The subjects of Universal and Women's Suffrage and the Boer War were topics of the day. The full implications of the Boer War were not generally understood, and many thought only of the honour of fighting for the Queen and Country. Functions were frequently held to raise money for the Patriotic Fund

Another issue, a very real concern for many, was whether or not to have their children vaccinated. Some babies died as a result of this "protection" against smallpox and new parents paid a fine rather than risk the vaccination

Now what of the development of the main Doncaster Road itself?

Possibly the earliest mention is in the survey by W. Darke in 1843, a dotted line coming in from the south-west near the Junction of Elgar and Doncaster Roads, is marked "Best line of road from Melbourne". The roads in these early days were for the most part merely tracks through the bush, with "corduroy" (branches, logs etc. placed across the road or in pot holes) across the wet places. They were dusty in summer and, in winter; the mud often reached the horses girths. But there was no central authority to formulate policy or provide finance to improve these rough tracks. Widespread agitation, strongly supported by commercial interests moved the Parliament to pass in 1853 "An Act for the Making and Improving Roads in the Colony of Victoria". The Act provided for the establishment of a Central Roads Board to build and maintain the main roads throughout the Colony, and for the setting up of District Roads Boards

On 19 September 1856, a Proclamation published in the Victorian Government Gazette notified of the establishment of the "Templestowe Road District". Lack of finance hampered the Board from its beginning. It was one of the poorest around Melbourne having a large area to cover. The Government subsidy based on the rateable value of the property in the Boards area was almost non-existent in comparison with other places.

At first, practically all revenue was spent on the Templestowe Road and it was well into the sixties before any appreciable amount was spent on the Doncaster Road.

Relevant entries in the Templestowe Roads:

Board records are as follows:

- 1857 Work on Doncaster Road
- 18 chains forming £32. 8. 0.
- 100 cubic. yards earthwork £11. 5. 0.
- Outlet drains 10. 0.
- 23 rods fencing removed £1.12. 7.
- Expenditure 1858
- Wheelbarrow and pick £2. 0. O.
- 2 loads tea-tree brush £1. 0. 0.
- Total (approx.) contract work £19. 0. 0.
- December 1859 to Dec 1860
- Contract No 3 metalling at Kennedy's Creek Bridge - Doncaster Road £56.10. 6.
- Contract No 4 clearing and forming Doncaster Road £34. 6. 0.
- Contract No 8 mending part Doncaster Road £15. 0. 0.

During the 1860's, an attempt was made to raise revenue by the erection of toll gates. At this time, the formed section of Doncaster Road extended eastward as far as Church Road. Beyond that it was a boggy track, virtually impassable in wet number.

In 1875, the Templestowe Roads District became the Shire of Bulleen. The new Shire began with a bank credit of £69. 10. 0 with a chorus of demands for new roads and improvements to existing ones. Soon after, the Government dealt a blow to the finances by abolishing all tolls as from 31 December 1877. During the next four years, the Council was slowly but surely winning the battle to improve the roads. However, the occupants of a buggy which had capsized in Doncaster Road sued the Council for damages on the grounds that the accident was caused by the bad state of the road. After protracted legal proceedings, the total costs amounted to nearly £2,000, a disaster which compelled the Council to raise a special loan in order to carry on with essential works. As a precaution against further incidents of this nature, the Council hastily erected fences across the worst sections of many of the side roads

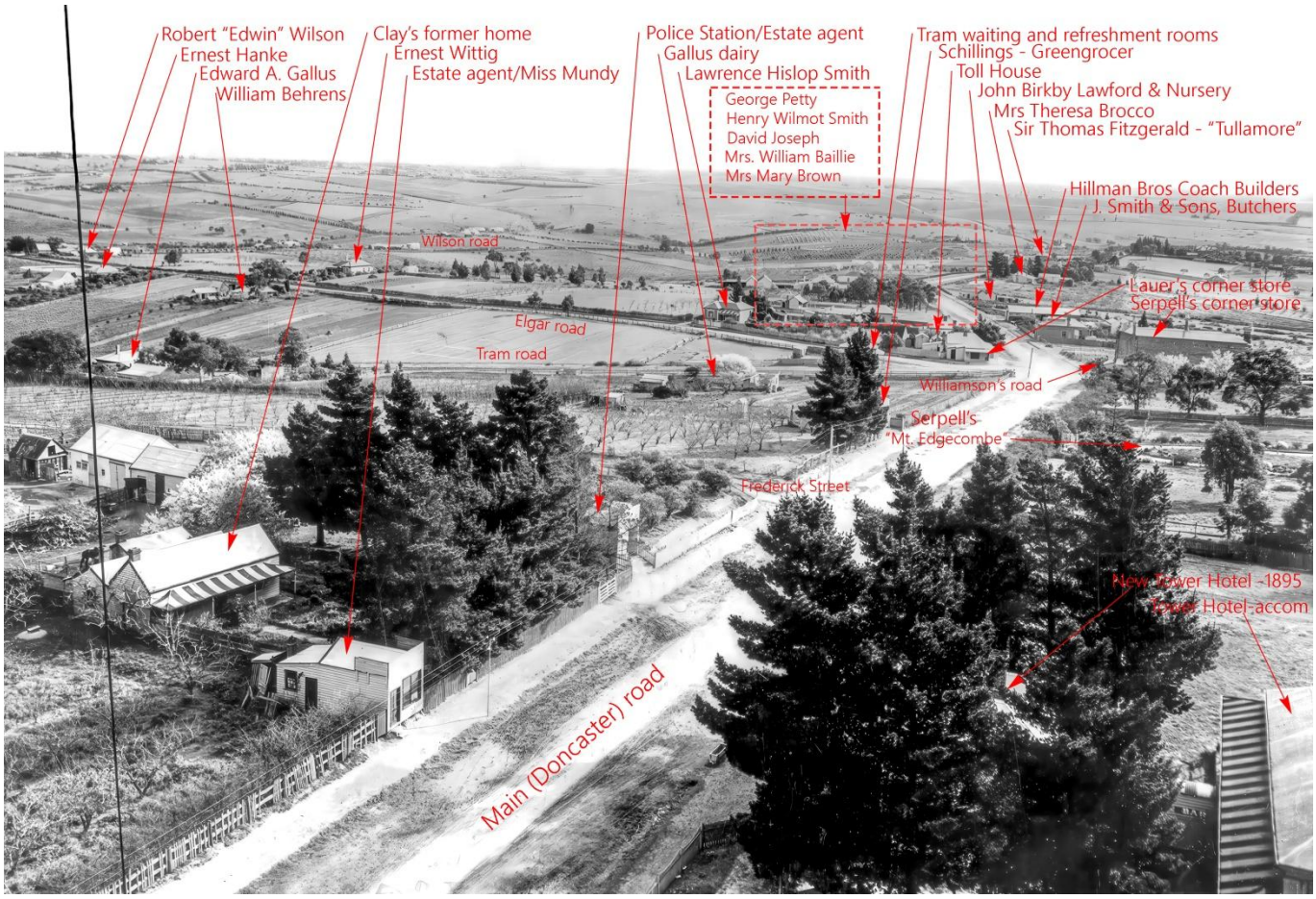
In 1890, the Doncaster Riding of the Shire of Bulleen secured government consent to form its own shire, and the Doncaster Council began meeting in the Athenaeum Hall. A sharp division of opinion then arose as to where the new Shire Hall should be built, while others thought that the building should not be undertaken at all until more urgent matters were attended to. However, the hall designed by Mr Anderson, and still standing in Council St, was erected and business conducted in it for the first time in June 1892.

The Council made steady progress with road construction in the years that followed. By 1900, Doncaster Road was a broad strip of well-formed metal, along which travelled market wagons in the early hours of the morning, followed later by a steady parade of gigs, phaetons, wagonettes, "jingles", bicycles and pedestrians.

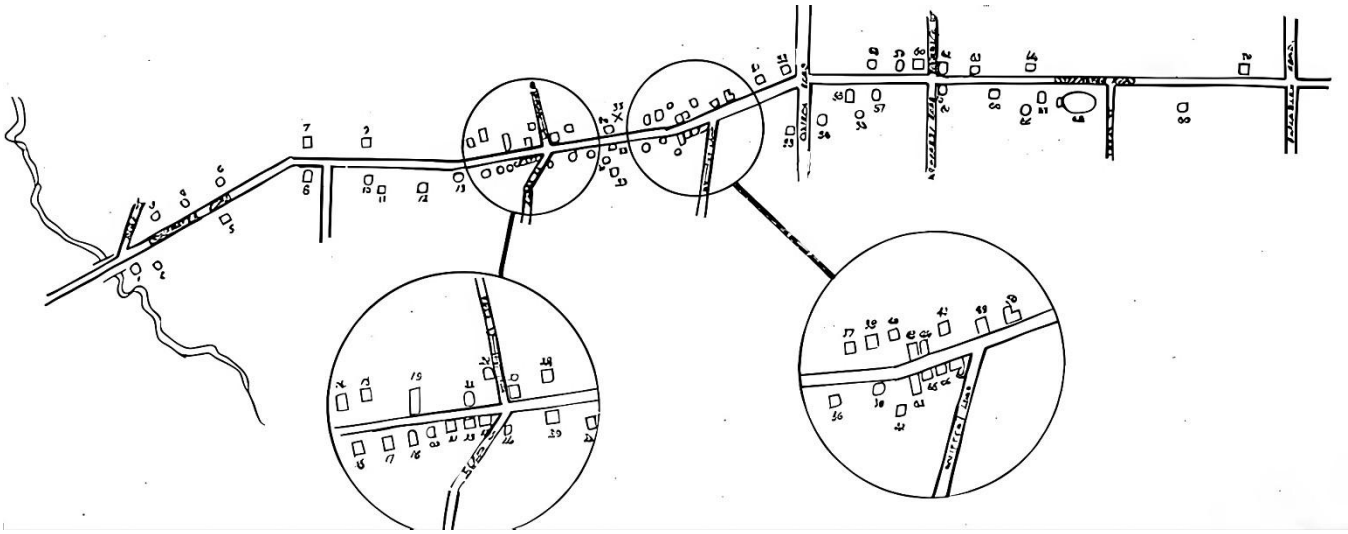
For the life of the community centred along the main road, the school was there, the shops, churches, hotels, the Athenaeum Hall and the library.

Opening of the Doncaster Shire Hall on 3rd June 1892, thwarted after being locked out

An impressive opening ceremony was arranged, but the key produced failed to open the lock! When, the builder had refused to hand over the key due to an error in the accounts.



View from the Doncaster Tower, looking west along Doncaster Road towards the intersection of Elgar Road, Tram Road and Williamsons Road. c.1900

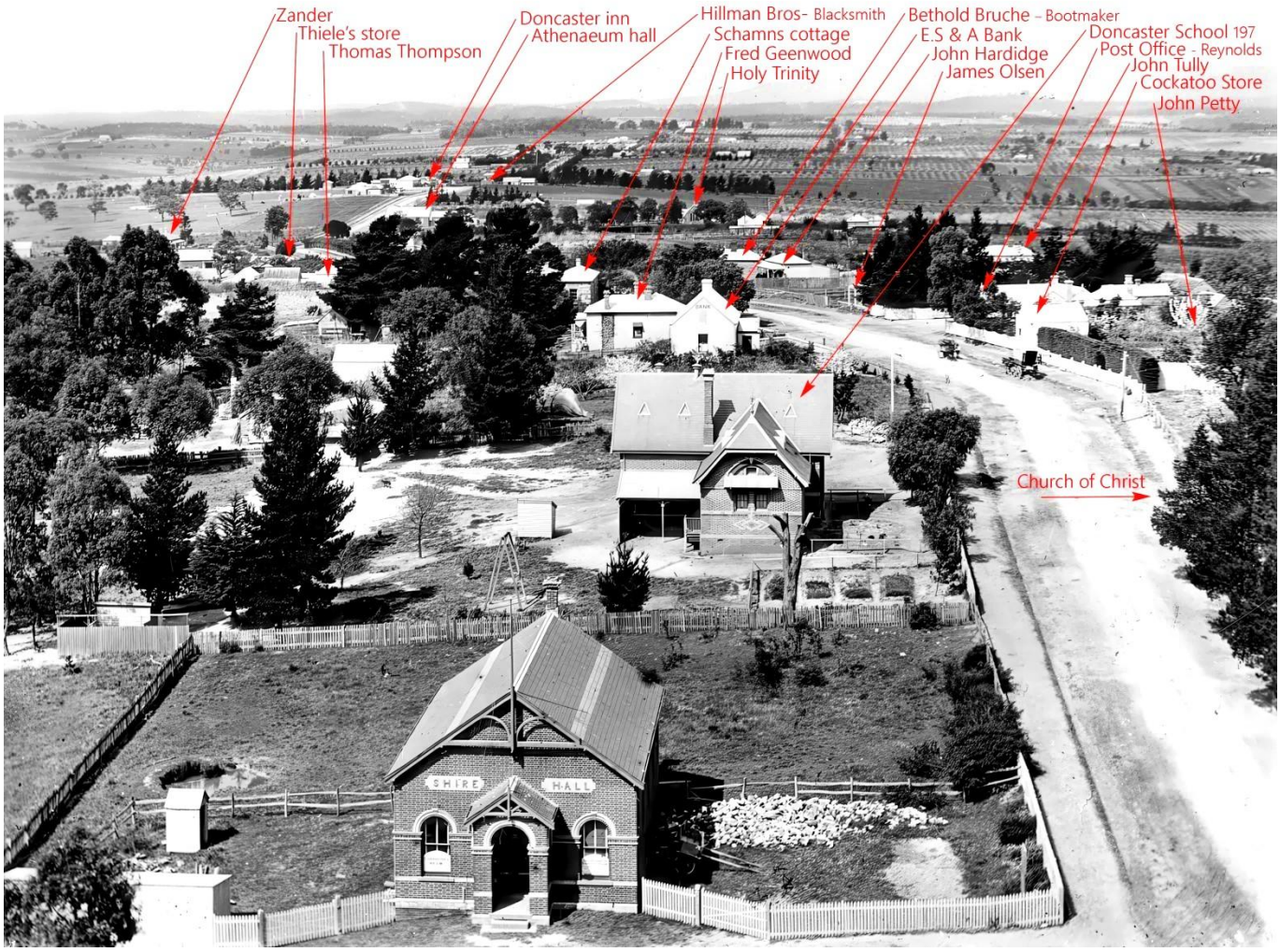


Houses in Doncaster Road around 1900

Map legend:

1. Morning Star Hotel
2. Mrs Bridget Noonan
3. George Mitchell- "Journey's End"
4. Henry Clay "Tiny Farm"
5. Jacob Schmidt
6. William S. Williams Jnr
7. Robert B Whitaker - "Tullamore"
8. Otto Bloom
9. Mrs Theresa Brocco
10. Mrs Baillie
11. Vacant
12. David J Corbett
13. David Corbett
14. Lawford Bros Nursery
15. John Birkby Lawford
16. George Petty
17. Henry W. Smith
18. Henry Brown
19. Hillman Bros Coach Builders
20. Mrs Mary Brown
21. Lawrence H Smith
22. Vacant
23. J Smith and Sons Butchers
24. James hillhouse
25. August Lauer
26. Tea Rooms
27. Serpell's Corner Store (vacant)
28. Mrs Jane Serpell - "Mt Edgecombe"
29. Schillings Greengrocer
30. Police Station – Frank L Heaney
31. Clay's early home
32. Miss Mundy – Costumiere
33. William A Webb
34. Tower Hotel – Mrs M O'Riordan
35. The Doncaster Tower
36. Thomas Petty – "Bayview"
37. Doncaster Shire Hall
38. Church of Christ
39. State School No 197
40. Small dwelling
41. John Petty
42. Post Office & Store - H G Reynolds
43. E.S. & A. bank – Wm Meader
44. Fred W Greenwood
45. James Olsen
46. John Hardidge
47. Max Schramm - Reg Births, Deaths
48. Bethold Bruche – Bootmaker
49. Thomas Thompson
50. Henry Thiele – General Store
51. Carl Aumann
52. Zander Bros, Gardeners
53. Patrick L d'Arcy Jnr
54. Holy Trinity Church of England
55. Athenaeum Hall
56. Wm Thomsen – Hall caretaker
57. Patrick L D'Arcy Snr
58. William Craig
59. Doncaster Hall – Wm Stutt proprietor
60. Doncaster Hotel – Wm Stutt proprietor
61. Hillman Bros – Coachsmiths
62. August Lauer – Baker
63. Charles Crossman
64. Mrs Mary Hislop – "The Grange"
65. George Hislop
66. Martin Zelius
67. George Bullen
68. Recreation Ground
69. Richard Clay
70. Henry Reynolds Jnr

Doncaster Shire Hall



View of the Shire Hall and Doncaster, looking east, taken from the Tower. c.1905

SHIRE OF DONCASTER.

ANNUAL ELECTION.

I hereby give notice that the number of votes polled for each Candidate at the Annual Election held before me at the Shire Hall, Doncaster, on the 23rd day of August, 1900, is as follows:—

HENRY CROUCH	..	185 Votes
FERDINAND FINGER	..	215 Votes
MAURICE FITZGERALD		134 Votes
JAMES KENT	.. ..	193 Votes

I therefore declare

FERDINAND FINGER and
JAMES KENT

Duly Elected Councillors for the Shire of Doncaster, they having received the highest number of votes.

EDWIN LAWFORD,
Returning Officer.

August 1900 - Shire of Doncaster - Annual Election Results:

I hereby give notice that the number of votes polled for each Candidate at the annual Election held before me at the Shire Hall, Doncaster, on the 23rd day of August, 1900 is as follows: Henry Crouch 185 votes; Ferdinand Finger 215 Votes; Maurice Fitzgerald 134 Votes; James Kent 193 Votes. I therefore declare Ferdinand Finger and James Kent Duly elected Councillors for the Shire of Doncaster, they having received the highest number of votes. Edwin Lawford, Returning Officer

THE ENCUMBRANCE ON THE SHIRE HALL.

Cr Kent, in introducing the matter, said that there was an undecided motion from the previous meeting. It had to be dealt with, and the sooner it was off their hands the better. Cr Lawford said that Cr Kent was not entitled to re-open the matter, but he would not object. There being no objections, Cr Kent 'proceeded. He said the encumbrance was an old grievance, and rendered the property valueless if ever they wanted to dispose of it. Cr Lawford said they did not want I last meeting's debate all over again! Cr Kent said they might -see it someday to join some other body. Even Cr Lawford, with all his sage wisdom, could not predict what might happen. The president requested Cr Kent to refrain from personalities. Cr Kent said that if the council changed their place of meeting they would hate to forfeit £500 for breach of agreement under the present conditions. This was a hardship that should not be inflicted on this or a future generation. He moved that steps be taken to have the encumbrance removed.

Cr Stutt seconded the motion. He agreed with Cr Kent. When he joined the council no one seemed to know what the conditions on the title were. He asked where and what were the conditions, and not a councillor knew. The way the hall was built was very funny, with its front to a private road. The men who sat at the council table when the hall was built should be called to account by the ratepayers. It was said that it was the intention of the mover to get the hall shifted to another part of the district, but that was untrue. He thought if Mr Serpell were properly approached he would withdraw tile condition. Cr Lawford wished to refer to the block at last meeting of the council. The president: You must keep to the motion. Cr Lawford was going to keep cool, and asked the president to be lenient with him. He would sit down if he were not going to be allowed to speak. He would stick to the motion as close as he could, and was sorry he got over-heated last council night. \When the ground was given for the hall to be built on, there were no conditions attached to it; but several people started an agitation, and a public meeting was held. As a result of this meeting a petition was sent round against the proposal to build a shire hall. The reason given for the petition was that their money should not be squandered on a hall when there were so many bad roads in the shire. The outcome was that the council deferred action, and asked for offers of land. They got two offers, one of which was thrown out as unsuitable. The council agreed to let the electors decide at the next election, and this was done, and as soon as the figures were up. Cr Stutt interjected, and was called to order by the president. Cr Lawford said that gentlemen were not going to give land for a hall and have it removed at the pleasure of one man. Mr Kent went so far as to send a letter to a lawyer. The result was that the encumbrance of £500 was placed on the title for the land, and the council did not object at the time. Mr Serpell handed over to the council land worth £500; in fact, he could have got £600 for it, and if Cr Kent doubted it he might just as well call Mr Serpell a liar. Cr Stutt thought the front of the hall faced a private road, but this was only a temporary hall, and the plans drawn up at the time made provision for a permanent hall, with its front to the main road. They were not going to meet in this morgue all their lives. Cr Stutt: I think before we remove from this hall I will be dead. Cr Lawford remarked that the council offered Mr Serpell £100 and this block for the corner block. In that exchange Mr Serpell made a sacrifice of at least £150, which made him lose £750 over the whole transaction. Cr Kent had made some remarks he thought unmanly. If Mr Serpell could have held out his hand and got this amount for the land, how could any sane man make the remarks Cr Kent had? The president: Oh, draw it mild, Cr Lawford ! Cr Lawford said he had the reputation of the councillors then in office to defend from the charge of under-hand work. If they wanted to see the title, they could for the modest sum of 5s see it at the titles office. The president: Oh, you are right away from the motion ! Cr Lawford thought that the mouth-ful that was being made of the matter was all sham. Cr Stutt: Ha I Ha ! Ha ! Cr Lawford (mockingly): Ha Ha ! Ha! (Laughter). There were dozens of documents that could not be found. Where was the petition that was got up against the hall being built? Why was all this agitation got up ? There was not reason in it; it was a mere election dodge. The president; Cr Lawford, you will have to withdraw that remark ! Cr Lawford: Oh, alright. It had been stated that 190 ratepayers had signed the petition against the hall being built. He had a copy of the roll for that year, and there were only 197 names on it. The building committee must I have signed it too; and what about absentees? Cr Stutt had looked up innocently into Cr Kent's face at last meeting when it was stated 196 ratepayers had signed the petition, and had said "Wihy, that's half the rate-payers." If he were guilty of that deception he would not sit at the council table. Cr Kent had a better memory than that. Cr Zerbe said he was going to right some of the statements that had been made, as he could not let them go forth to the ratepayers. Some of Cr Lawford's statements were not correct. While some of the councillors were willing to take the land

offered at the time by Mr Serpell, it was thought that a poll should be taken. It was said that the council had stayed its hand until a poll had been taken. As a matter of fact no such poll had been taken as to whether a hall should be built or not. He did not think he need go any further; as he had made Cr Lawford back down. There was a building committee appointed in the council, and they hail brought up a host of recommendations, one of which was that the land was unsuitable. It had been decided at last that Mr Serpell be paid £100 down, and £500 if ever the land was relinquished for municipal purposes. Cr Stutt said l he had asked from a public platform if any councillor knew of any condition attached to the title, and he could not get to know of any. No councillor seemed then to know anything about it. For a few minutes confusion reigned supreme. Crs Lawford and Stutt endeavouring to make their voices heard at once. Cr Stutt: If any councillors knew anything they would not tell him. The man that knew, and would not tell a thing like that, was not fit to be in a public position. Cr Pickering asked what action was going to be taken to have the encumbrance removed. The president did not know. He did not pledge himself to any proposal. He was in favour of the motion, and could not understand why an encumbered bit of land was chosen, when there were three pieces of land without any encumbrances. Mr Kent said it was a poor, lame excuse that the conditions were put in on account of one man. They were not going to give away money Iike it had been before. They wanted to hand down a clear title to future generations. They ought to go, in a quiet way to Mr Serpell.

Cr Lawford : A very quiet way. Cr Kent: Cr Lawford was the king of quibblers. (Laughter.) He had imputed dirty motives to him (Cr Kent). Cr Lawford (to Cr Stutt) : You have a man to do your dirty work. Cr Kent was going to have the encumbrances removed whether it was dirty work or not. Cr Lawford might as well call him a liar at once. He had made a dozen charges and had not proved one. Cr Lawford said Mr Serpell had given them £600 or £700 in hard cash. Well, more shame to the council for depriving Mr Serpell of so much, and he blamed Cr Lawford for being one of them. Sereral councillors here attempted to speak at once and for a little while there was considerable confusion. Cr Lawford and Mr Kent had made use of personal statements Cr Kent (ironically) : I apologise for any statement I may have made which has hurt Cr Lawford's feelings. (Laughter). Cr Lawford had made statements which he said would be remembered, and he meant to reply to them. One of the faults of the present age was youthful irreverence, and this young man was a criterion. He would ask councillors if he had ever said anything wrong about Mr. Serpell. One of the things Cr Lawford wanted to jog their memory on was meanness. " Why,' exclaimed Cr Kent, in righteous indignation, "Before Cr Lawford was known in the district my teams were carting metal free for the council. I have spent more pounds than you have pence. He would tell them a little story illustrative of Cr Lawford. There was a certain ship's carpenter who had lost a saw, and as usual when niggers are about, Sambo was blamed for it. But, despite the most rigid search, it could not be found. One day Sambo was met by the carpenter. who said, "Sambo. I can't get that saw out of my gizzard." Whereupon Sambo ran along to the captain and said, "De carpenter had found him saw. It am stuck in him gizzard." That was the case of Cr Lawford. He had stone in his gizzard -(laughter)- and he was afraid he would die of it. (Laughter). Cr Lawford : I could eat all the stones ever you gave the council. Cr Kent : O, no you could not. For a little while Cr Kent and Cr Lawford both tried to speak at once, accusing each other of telling untruths. Cr Kent : I cannot satisfy Cr Lawford, so I will leave him with a stone in his gizzard. The motion was then put and carried, Cr Lawford being the only dissentient. Cr Kent moved that the president depute several of the councillors amid any other influential gentlemen to inter-view Mr. Serpell. Cr Stutt seconded the motion, which was carried unanimously. The president thought it was right that the whole council should interview Mr Serpell. It was their duty, as they were elected by the ratepayers to represent their interests. This closed a somewhat rowdy debate, but later on the subject was again touched upon when the president moved that the 11th section of the 13th schedule be applied to their bye-laws. Under the present he found he had no authority whatever and after the rowdy meetings lately, during which his authority had several times been defied, he thought they ought to do something and not leave it in the power of councillors to insult him, without giving him the right to say anything. He asked that it be put in the hands of their solicitors to have applied to the bye-laws. Seconded by Cr Lawford, and carried unanimously.

1900 'THE ENCUMBRANCE ON THE SHIRE HALL.', Reporter (Box Hill, Vic. : 1889 - 1925), 26 October, p. 3. , viewed 06 May 2020,

Death of Mr Frank H. Thomas.

The Doncaster district has suffered a heavy loss through the untimely death Of Mr Frank H. Thomas J. P. which sad event took place at his parents' residence at 6 am on Thursday, November 15. 1900 For some time Mr Thomas had been suffering from chest complaint, but had been able to attend to his duties as Secretary of the Shire Council, until the last few weeks. Since the formation of the Shire of Doncaster, no one had exercised so much influence for good in the fortunes of the council as Mr Thomas. For eight years he has filled the position of Shire secretary, with great benefit to the district, and credited himself. In an early stage of the history of the council, a change was made in the secretaryship, an alteration which turned out most disastrously for the council, but fortunately the valuable services of Mr Thomas were is secured and difficulties were overcome, and the fortunes of the shire placed on a firm footing. Mr Thomas was an excellent accountant, and had a thorough knowledge of the local government Act. Before going in for municipal work. Mr Thomas, who was an accomplished musician, held an appointment under the education act as a teacher of singing. For the past couple of years, until his health gave way, Mr Thomas acted very efficiently as bandmaster of the Doncaster brass band, and upon retiring lately from his temporary position, he was presented with a cornet, handsomely mounted and suitably inscribed. For some years, he was honorary Secretary to the Doncaster fruit growers association, for which body he did valuable work, but failing health forced him to retire from the position. He always took a great interest in cricket, and played regularly until a couple of seasons ago. No one was better known nor more highly respected than Frank Thomas, who always evinced a most commendable willingness to assist heartily in every movement for the good of the place. He was of a most genial, obliging and unassuming disposition, and was also admired for his manly qualities and his street for witness. In short, he was a thorough "white man" and Doncaster has not too many of his sort to spare. The funeral took place on Friday afternoon at the box Hill Cemetery, a very large number of friends attending to pay the last tribute of respect to the memory of a worthy citizen, a dutiful son and brother, and that "noblest work of God" - an honest man.

Source: 1900 'Death of Mr F. H. Thomas.', The Reporter (Box Hill, Vic. : 1889 - 1925), 23 November

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THE LATE SECRETARY. *The president said it was his sad duty to report that they had lost by death their secretary, Mr F. H. Thomas. They had lost a valuable servant. Mr Thomas was a thorough gentleman, and was respected by everybody in the shire. He moved that a letter of condolence be sent to the parents in their sad bereavement. Cr Zerbe, in seconding the motion, said that Mr Thomas had been of invaluable assistance to the shire. He (the speaker) had known Mr Thomas for many years, and knew how much the council was indebted to him for straightening the shire affairs after they had been muddled up by another. He regretted exceedingly that they had lost such a splendid secretary.*

Cr Pickering said he had the greatest respect for Mr Thomas personally, and was very sorry indeed that he had been called away. Cr Stutt endorsed all that had been said. The council had lost a good man and the community a good citizen. Mr Thomas was most deservedly respected by everyone, and there were very few left in the district equal to him. The motion was carried.

CORRESPONDENCE. *From W. Craig, head teacher, Doncaster East State school, reporting three cases of measles in the family of G. H. Mays.—Received. From Warrnambool shire council, asking the council to co-operate in taking action to secure the amendment of the health act by which the registration fee for dairies can be fixed on a sliding scale according to the number of dairy herds.--Request granted, on the motion of Crs Zerbe and Stutt. From City of Hawthorn, asking representatives to attend conference on Nov 20, to consider what action shall be taken to bring before parliament the wishes of the councils in regard to the proposal to lay additional and larger mains for fire extinction purposes.-Referred to the president From Shire of Boroondara, stating that Cr McBeath had been nominated for the position of representative on the fire brigades board.-Received. From Prahran city council, nominating Cr Naylor*

for position on fire brigades board.-Received. From Kew borough council, nominating Cr Kellett as a representative for fire brigades board.- Received.

From Cr Kellett, trusting that Iis actions in the past merit a continuance of the confidence hitherto reposed in him, and that he will have the council's support in the coining election of a representative on the fire brigades board.-Received.-Cr Cr Kellett's candidature.- Cr Stutt seconded.-Carried unanimously. From Chief Secretary, stating that nominations for a representative on the fire brigades beard must be sent in by Nov 21.-Received. From A. E. Clegg. drawing attention to dangerous place on road between Smedley's and his place. Received.-Cr Pickering said the place was in a bad state, and something should be done. He moved that the matter be attended to by the public works committee as soon as possible.- Cr Zerbe seconded. -Carried.

COMMITTEE'S REPORT. *The president, on behalf of the public works committee, reported: 1. The water table along Mr Webb's has been attended to, also the entrance to Tunstall road.-Adopted. 2. The furze on the recreation reserve has been grabbed out and burnt.--Adopted. 3. The day-men have been engaged on Park road for a fortnight and have it lot more to do there yet.--Adopted.*

THAT ENCUMBRANCE. *The president reported that the councillors had waited upon Mr R. Serpell, as they had agreed to do, to ask him to remove the encumbrance on the shire hall. Mr Serpell said that it had been remarked that there had been some shady work over the matter and lie would like that cleared up before he could do anything. He also stated that he would like to have the matter threshed out between the party that transacted the business, and the councillors who were now in Office; the former to state their reasons for agreeing to tile encumbrance, and the latter to give their reasons for wanting to have it removed. It was suggested that the best place to argue this out would be at a public meeting.-Report adopted.-Later on Cr Pickering moved that the public meeting be held at 7 o'clock on Wednesday evening, Nov 28.-Cr Stutt seconded.-- Cr Lawford moved as an amendment that" the meeting be held on Saturday, Dec 1, at 7 p.m. The amendment was carried, on the casting vote of the chairman.*

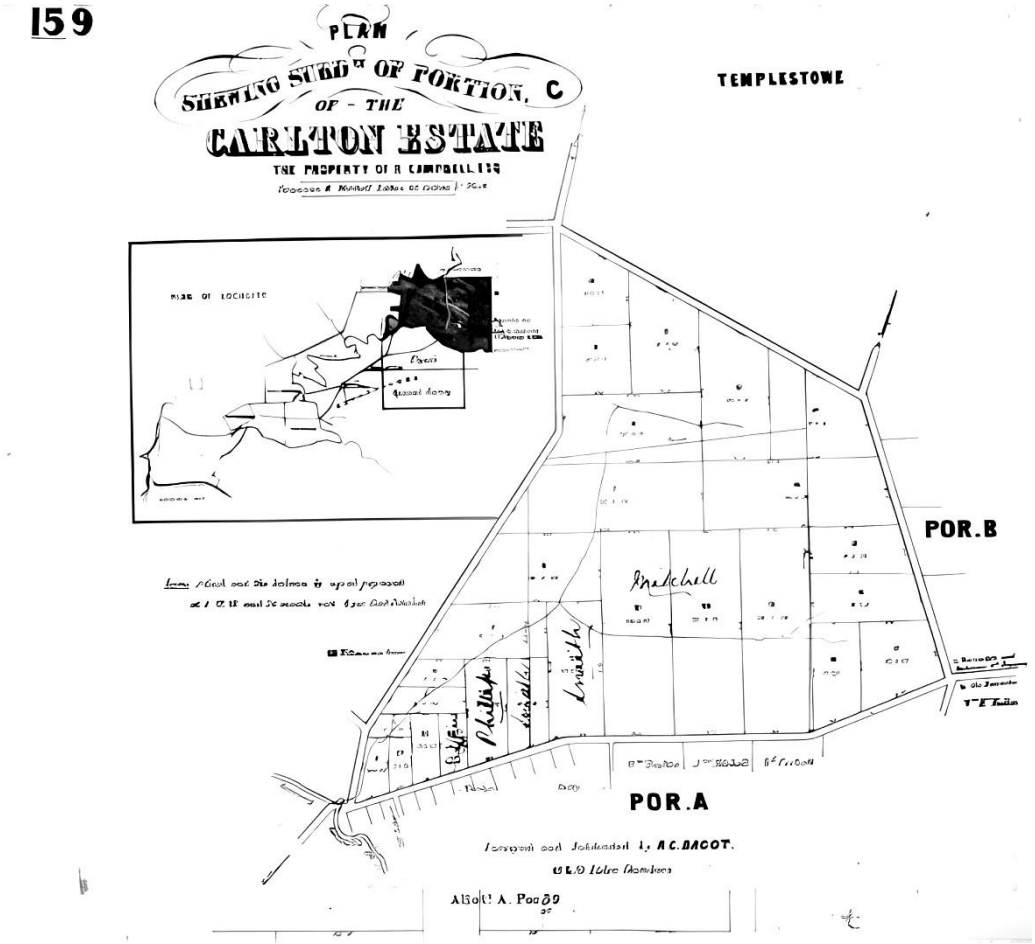
JOINT WORK. *The president reported that councillors had had a conference with members of the Templestowe council and the engineer, and had made a general inspection of boundary roads. It was decided to do up Serpell's road, re-form part of it, and put in a pipe culvert. On Manningham road they agreed to do 15 chains, up to £50 to be spent altogether on the road, the metal to come from the mines, and the work to be done by the Templestowe council.-Cr Kent moved that the Templestowe council be informed that the Doncaster council was willing to contribute up to £25 towards the making of Manningham road.-Cr Pickering seconded.-Carried unanimously, GENERAL. CF Pickering drew attention to the danger from fire arising from the scrub cut on Anderson's creek road and other places, and lie moved that the public works committee have the matter attended to at once.-Cr Zerbe seconded.-Carried, Cr Lawford stated that Church road was overgrown with blackberries, and he moved that the public works committee inspect with power to act. Cr Pickering seconded.-Carried. Cr Zerbe drew the public works committee's attention to dangerous holes on Anderson's creek road. The president said that the council had got £20 from Mr Petty for fixing up Park road, and had agreed to spend £1 for £1. The job was a large one, and he thought the rest should be let by contract, as it was taking up too much of the time of the daymen, whose services were badly needed in other places. An additional £7 10/ had been offered to the council, and he would like to know what was to be done.-Cr Zerbe moved that the matter of letting the work by contract be held over until the estimates were being considered.-Cr Kent seconded. -Carried.-Cr Lawford moved that the offer of the £7 10/ be accepted, and that the council contribute £1 for £1.-Cr Stutt seconded.-Carried. The president moved that applications be called for the position of shire secretary, rate collector, &c. (rendered vacant by the lamented death of Mr F. II. Thomas) at a salary of £100.-Cr Kent seconded. Cr Lawford moved that the salary be £70, with a rise of £10 each year till a maximum of £100 was reached. Cr Pickering seconded.--The amendment was lost and the motion carried, on the casting vote of the chairman. -On the motion of Crs Pickering and Lawford it was agreed that the applications be called through the "Reporter" and "Age" applications to be in by Dec 3. On the motion of the president and Cr Zerbe, it was decided that Mr W. Thomas be acting secretary in the meantime.-It was also decided that a special meeting to deal with applications for the secretaryship be held on Dec 3.*

MOTION UNDER NOTICE *In accordance with notice given, the president moved that the motion fixing the rate of pay for the man with horse and dray at 9/ per day be rescinded, with a view of increasing the pay to 9/6 per day. He pointed out that as the laymen had got a rise of 6d per day he thought it only fair that the drayman should also get a similar increase, and therefore he moved the resolution. Cr Stutt seconded. Cr Pickering opposed the motion, on the ground that it was irregular. The drayman had agreed to take up the contract for a year at a certain rate, and the council could not alter it. He thought tenders should have been called, so as to give other carters a chance of competing. Some of them had to go in for wood carting, and they could not make 9/ a day at it. Cr Lawford also opposed the motion, not out of any objection to the present contractor, who had done his work well. It was only fair, however, that tenders should have been called, and he contended that the council had no right to alter the price in a contract. The president said that as the motion was scarcely in order, lie would withdraw it.*

THE TRAM ROAD. *Mr Tom Petty drew the council's attention to a very dangerous place on the tram road near the Koonung creek. The council had made a splendid job of Whitten's road, but further along the tram track the embankment was being washed away. Some years ago a lot of money had been spent by Mr Serpell land others in building up the embankment and making a culvert, and it was a great pity to see them being washed away, when they might be saved at a little expense. The land belonged to Mr Gallus, who, he believed, had offered it to the council. The Box Hill people intended to fix up the road the other side of the creek, and the Doncaster council should do some. thing to make the road passable this side, If the road were fixed up it would be a great boon to the people of Doncaster East, as it would save them 2A miles in the journey back-wards and forwards to the railway station. Mr Gallus: I am willing to give a strip of land providing the road is carried through to Serpell's corner, Doncaster, but otherwise I would want compensation.*

1900 'DONCASTER SHIRE COUNCIL.', Reporter (Box Hill, Vic. : 1889 - 1925), 23 November, p. 2.

Shire Hall in Council Street.
The Hall, built in 1892 for the Shire of Doncaster, flanked by a picket fence.



Plan Showing Subdvn of Portion, C of the Carlton Estate, the property of R Campbell, Esq. Ferguson & Mitchell Lithrs, 63 Collins St, West

Morning Star Hotel

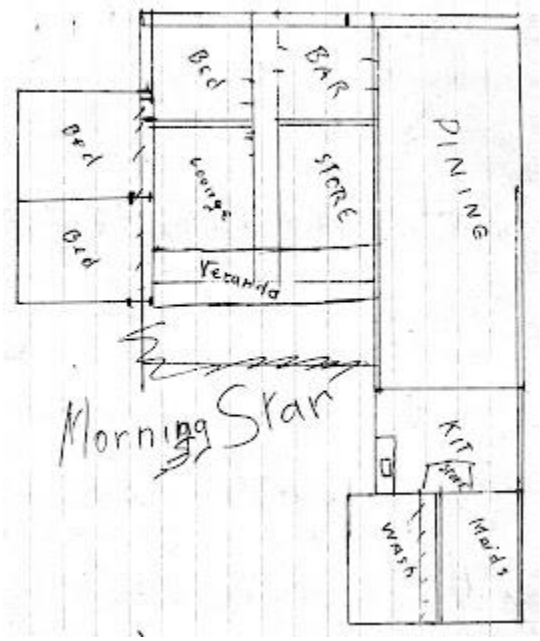
Morning Star Hotel near Koonung [Kennedey's] Creek, Doncaster Road c.1886.
Victorian Railways horse-drawn coach resting outside the Hotel while on its run from the Kew Post Office to the Doncaster Inn on the corner of Main [Doncaster] Road and Bismark [Victoria] Street.

This hotel was built during the 1870's, but it is not certain by whom:

"When Miss Mary Meagher applied for a new licence to build the Morning Star Hotel in the outer metropolitan district or Doncaster in 1872, she found Mary Ogilvie, licensee of the Long Hill Hotel, had lodged an objection. The proposed licensed premises were to be built 'a few yards from the Toll gate at which Miss Meagher helps her father collect the tolls'. Evidently, Mary Ogilvie was anxious that her own business would be affected by the competition." - Petticoats in the Orchard (Green 1987)

It was built on one acre of land formerly part of the Carlton Estate (formerly Unwins Special Survey). This Estate was laid out as a small township surrounded by farms and was described about 1863 as a small hamlet known as Kennedy's creek situated on the Koonung Creek with communication to Templestowe by dray track. An early account in the Box Hill Reporter in 1875, states that during the epidemic of that year, a case of scarlet fever was reported at the Morning Star Hotel.

Morning Star Hotel c.1900 View of the Morning Star Hotel taken from near the bridge over the Koonung Creek. This hotel was situated in Doncaster Road near where the Eastern Freeway now passes under Doncaster Road



Morning Star Hotel Plan drawn by the demolisher in 1959

The hotel was built very close to the Koonung Creek, and this gave it a ready supply of water when it was flowing. Because of this they were able to sell water to the residents. The water stand, which stood outside the building, gave witness to this.

At times, this close proximity to the creek proved a drawback because the hotel flooded whenever the creek overran its banks. When this happened, guests were reputed to have slept on the tables. The hotel was demolished in 1939 and the rough sketch plan shown was drawn by the demolisher at that time.

Mrs. Bridget Noonan

Mrs. Bridget Noonan's House

Noonan's hut c.1958 Noonan's hut was built by William Williams in the 1850s for use as a store, and was situated on the south side of Doncaster Road slightly west of Hender Street. It was later owned by Edward Noonan, then Bridget Noonan, and later by Dennis (Dinny) Noonan.

This tiny timber dwelling, built in the area laid out for a small township in the Carlton Estate, was known as "Noonan's Hut", the year of construction is unknown. Information about this building has been scarce; however, Miss Selina Serpell did refer to it in her notes about the early days in Doncaster.

It reads, "*a man named Williams built the Koonung Creek Bridge and also a house not far from the Morning Star Hotel. He kept a store there by the house which was later occupied by Mr & Mrs Noonan*".

Williams left for New Zealand after his venture at storekeeping in Doncaster. Rough sawn weatherboards were used as the cladding on this dwelling, the roof was of iron. The original roof had been of shingles. The two Lombardy poplars shown in the early photograph are still standing, but the hut has long since gone.

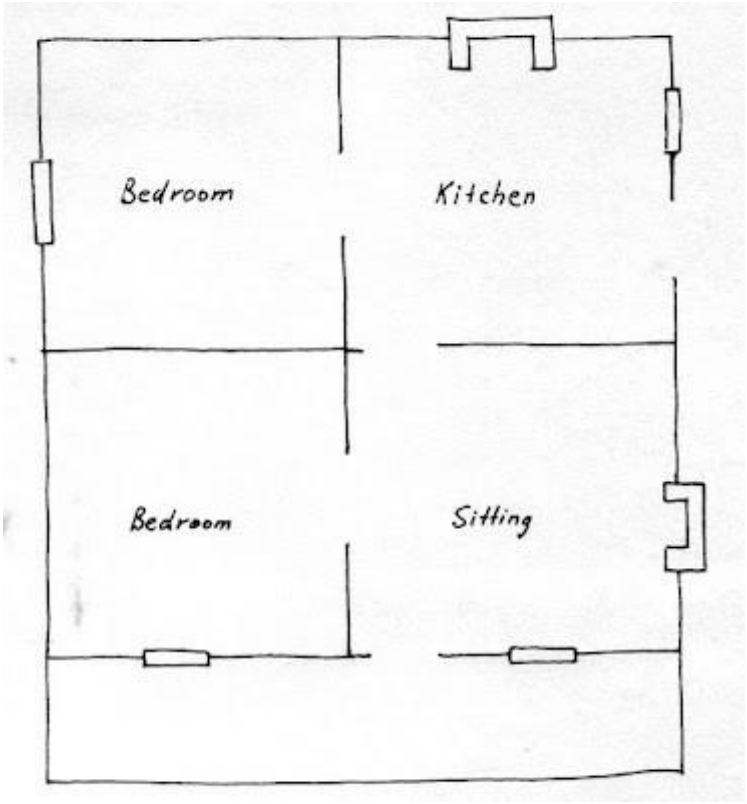
The Cole Collection of Manuscripts, La Trobe Library, lists Edward Noonan as licensee of the Morning Star Hotel in 1873 and 1874. Also, the Shire of Bulleen Rate book shows that Edward Noonan, carter, occupied this house as early as 1877.In 1900, the road here had a great deal of furze/gorse (a spiny yellow-flowered evergreen shrub introduced from Europe) and scrub growing on it. The Council gave day-man Hardidge the task of clearing it.

George Mitchell "Journey's End"

George Mitchell "Journey's End"

George Mitchell "Journey's End"

Smedley's forge c1958 Old weather-boarded building in Doncaster Road near High Street, on the site of Doncaster Park Primary School [now demolished], once John Smedley's blacksmith shop. The property was later owned for many years by Dennis ('Dinny') Noonan.



George Mitchell "Journey's End"

George Mitchell lived on the north of the road in a house built by Mr John Smedley at the foot of Smedley's Hill. Mr Smedley noted on his arrival in 1858 "that earlier settlers built their huts close to creeks" ("Doncaster, Templestowe and Warrandyte since 1837". Compiled by Doncaster-Templestowe Historical Society) He did likewise and had soon established a blacksmith's shop at the side of the road, just before the long climb up the hill. The cutting, to become known as "Smedley's cutting" was constructed in 1878. Mr Devron was contracted to build a cutting on Smedley's Hill from the Morning Star Hotel, cutting to a depth of four feet and a little wider than the average vehicle. The contract was worth £236. The roadway was widened and deepened again in 1886.

John Smedley used as his trade symbol, a large horseshoe encircling a smaller one. This was nailed to the door of the blacksmith's shop. The oak trees (one of which still stands in the grounds of Doncaster Park Primary School) were planted by Mr Smedley. The house was known as "Journey's End"

By 1880, John Snr. had shifted to May's Road (Blackburn Road) leaving John Jnr. and William living at Kennedy's Creek. John Jnr. is listed as a blacksmith with house and garden and William as a carpenter with house and shop (Voters' Rolls, Shire of Bulleen, 1880. Note in early maps the creek is named 'Kennedy's Creek or Koonung Creek. The house and blacksmith's shop are now both demolished.

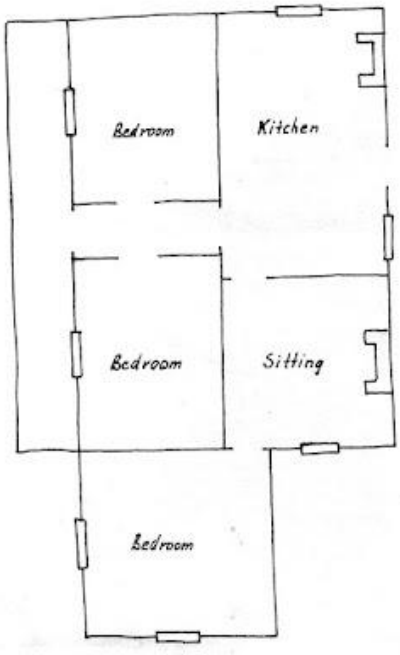
George Mitchell settled in Doncaster in 1892. The Shire of Doncaster Rate Book for 1893 shows him as having "two weatherboard houses, 6 ½ acres of land, (late Smedley)". The house and 6 acres of land, plus another 14 acres of land in 1900, was owned by Blake and Riggall. Mitchell was the tenant. The house has been described to me as a pioneer's home. The original section (northern parts) was built of rough weatherboards. These were kept whitewashed. The back section was built into the side of the hill. The floor was earthen and steps led from the back door down into the kitchen. The front part was of weatherboard and had a wooden floor. Descriptions of the veranda vary, some say it was at the front only (south side). Others say the veranda was on three sides (west, south and east).

Of historic interest is an extract from a letter written in 1931 by Mr Frank Smedley Snr. (John senior's son).

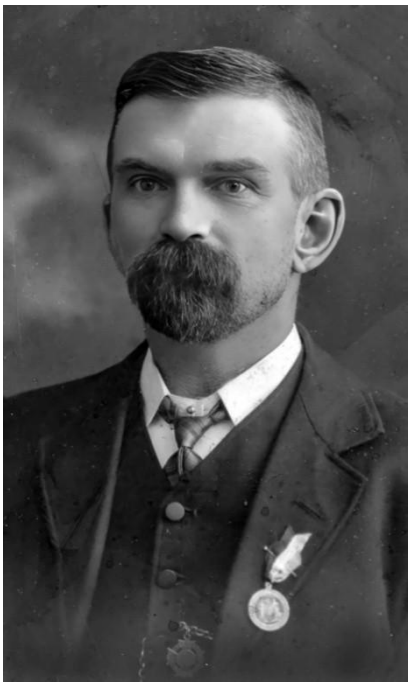
It reads: *"My Father and Mother and family, 5 sons and 2 daughters come to Australia in the ship Altonvor (Adelaide?) in the year 1855. This was a sailing vessel and my Father told me she used to creak and groan to such an extent that he could not sleep at night for fear of her going to pieces, and it used to be a great relief to him to hear the sailors come on deck and haul in sails singing such songs as "Pretty is My Darling..... This Ship went down on the return voyage and was never heard of again..... When we came, my Father took lodgings in Melbourne and then came to Richmond and set up a Wheelwright and Blacksmith business. He remained in Richmond three years and then came to Doncaster*". Frank Smedley snr was 4 years old when the Smedley family journeyed to Australia. The name "Journey's End", given to their home by his father would seem most apt after such a trip.

Henry Clay - "Tiny Farm"

Henry Clay - "Tiny Farm"



Henry Clay - "Tiny Farm"



Cr. Henry John Crossman Clay
Doncaster Councillor 1909-1924 & President 1913/14; 1917/18; 1921/22

A little way up the hill from "Journey's End" and hidden from sight because of the depth of the cutting was "Tiny Farm", the home of Henry John Crossman Clay and Elizabeth Clay (Taylor)

.

This house was built by Broadbent, a boot maker, and bought from him by Smedleys. In 1875, William Smedley was living here (Shire of Bulleen Rate Book 1875). Then, in 1878, John Smedley jnr. became the occupant until 1885. After that date, only one Smedley remains at the western end of Doncaster - William at "Journey's End", possibly still owned by John jnr. It is not clear who lived, if anyone, at "Tiny Farm" during the next eight years. In 1893, George Mitchell is listed as owning two weatherboard houses and 6 1/2 acres of land (late J. Smedley) (Shire of Doncaster Rate Book 1893).

The 1900 and "Tiny Farm" was now owned by J. Whitten and leased to Henry Clay.
The house one built in three stages. The first, which later formed the kitchen, was of wattle and daub. Added to this, in weatherboard, were two bedrooms and a sitting room, also a veranda facing the west. The third addition was the bedroom on the south side, again built of weatherboard. Baltic floorboards were throughout the house. The fireplace in the kitchen was of handmade bricks and had very high hobbs, characteristic of Doncaster's earliest homes. Henry John Crossman Clay was a grandson of John and Agnes Clay amongst Doncaster's earliest settlers.

Notes: (Henry John Crossman Clay 1870 -1958 [m 1897] Elizabeth Jane Taylor 1869 -1942)

William S. Williams Jnr.

William S. Williams Jnr.

The ivy covered cottage in which William Sydenham "Billy" Williams (his father was William Sydney Williams) lived in 1900 was demolished in 1962. When and by whom it was built is unknown. However, it must have been one of Doncaster's early homes because a Mr and Mrs Johnson (great grandparents of Mrs J. Sell) lived here and were neighbours of Thomas and Jane Petty. It has been described as a small timber home, having a suggestion of a porch and very small windows. It was built quite close to the road facing south; the roof a simple gable. In later years could be seen remnants of an "old world" garden with climbing roses, springtime bulbs and ivy creeper almost covering the house. The last occupant was a Miss Blaxland, a descendant of William Blaxland, the explorer.

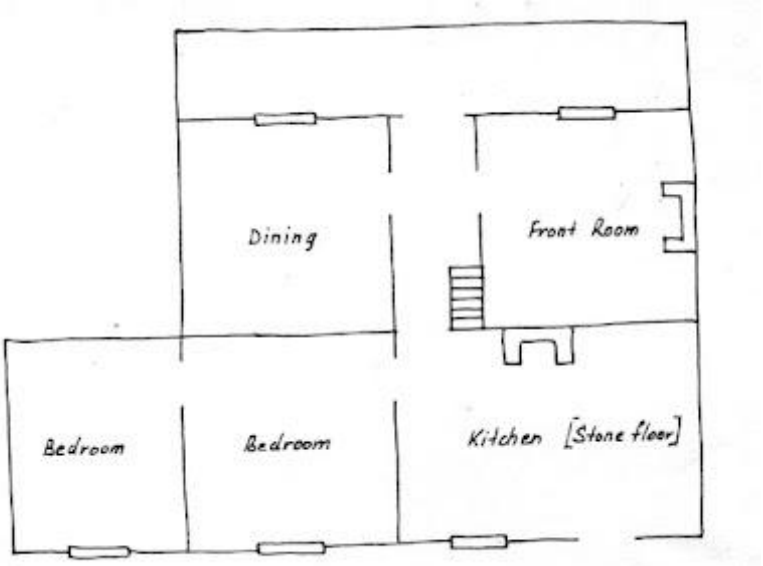
William Sydney Williams came to Victoria in 1853, he married a Miss Toogood from Box Hill and they had two sons (Billy being the younger son) and four daughters. The book, Victoria and its Metropolis, Vol. 2. published in 1888 gives an account of Billy's father, it reads: "W. S. Williams, Doncaster, is a native of Pembroke shire, South Wales who came to this colony in 1853. Sometime afterwards he purchased land in the Parish of Bulleen, and commenced gardening and fruit-growing being the first to grow lemons and oranges in the Doncaster district. He has 200 acres of land, of which 35 acres are planted with fruit trees. His garden won the first Leader Prize Cup in 1885 as the best fruit garden in the Melbourne District.

When he landed in Victoria, his sole capital amounted to the sum of 4/6d. Mr Williams was elected a member of the Shire Council of Bulleen in 1884, and remained in office three years. He was appointed correspondent to the board of advice when the Education Act came into force, which office he holds to the present". Miss Selina Serpell in her notes wrote, "to Mr Sydney Williams must be given the credit of introducing into Doncaster both the citrus fruit and the Cootamundra Wattle, and visitors to Doncaster seldom missed seeing his orchard and dam." With the help of local orchardists, Wm. Sydney Williams sunk Doncaster's largest dam. It was 11 chains long and three chains wide and had a depth of 22 feet. It was situated on his Leeds St. property and the perimeter of the dam can still be traced by the Cootamundra Wattles growing in the vicinity of Renshaw St., East Doncaster.

In 1900, Dr T. N. Fitzgerald was the owner of this house and 20 acres of orchard and land. Billie Williams was his tenant, living in the house and working the orchard.

Jacob Schmidt

Mrs Schmit and son Jimmy in 1900.
Photograph of the original home of the Petty family, Doncaster Road, now the site of Harcourt Street. It was built by Thomas Petty c.1856 in 'flemish bond' brickwork.



A little way up the hill from the Koonung Creek was the home of Thomas Petty, who was amongst the earliest to accept the challenge of the timbered highlands. Jacob Schmidt lived here in 1900, the owner at that time being John Petty (one of Thomas' sons). Jacob worked for many years for the Petty family, his task draining the orchards. Rows of clay agricultural pipes were laid in the orchards, the deep and narrow trenches being dug with a draining spade or "crumber". Jacob's wife is reputed to have rustled when she walked; she was so clean and starched.

The story of this brick house built by Thomas Petty is a most fascinating one. On arriving, "Tom (Ed: Should read as Thomas, Tom was his son) Petty did not go all the way to the crest. Soon after crossing, Koonung Creek, he turned wide, pitched a tent, took a long hard look at his forested land and got out the axe. If the

axe was an unfamiliar implement to a man who had been a weaver in his native land, he made such good use of it that he soon had a vegetable garden and the beginnings of an orchard under cultivation. But the wattle and daub hut he had built by the creek was hardly roomy enough for his wife and children. So he built a stone cottage (Ed: The cottage was built of brick, the kitchen floor was of stone. The brick work in later years - after 1900 - was cement rendered to simulate stone) further up the hill, and wrote for Jane and the children to come out to the two storeyed house he had built for them. Jane buoyed up with the vision of a commodious English house, walked all the way from Port Melbourne to find that the only means of access to the top storey of her new abode was a rope ladder. If the strangeness and the discomfort and the toil bothered her at first, she did not let that stand in the way of caring for a family whose inventiveness and ingenuity did much for the district and for Victorian horticulture." (Ed: E. G. Keogh script for "A History of Doncaster and Templestowe") This house built in the 1850's had a pattern picked out in the hand-made bricks. Jane Petty was proud of this. The house had two small front rooms with a very wide passageway allowing room for the staircase which was built soon after Jane's arrival. There were two attic bedrooms and two more downstairs. The large kitchen had a stone floor, and the wooden floors in the other rooms, which replaced the earthen ones were reputed to be the first wooden floors in the district. A large Cyprus tree still stands not far from Harcourt St, marking the location of the Petty home.

An important feature was the enormous underground well. Earlier, Jane Petty did her washing in the creek and household water was carted from the Yarra River. Mrs R. Moffat and Mrs A. Tully (daughters of John Petty) said, "Dad had memories of his father saying they would have to refuse water to neighbours during a very dry year when the well was almost dry. Mother pleaded with him to refuse water to no-one in need of it and it rained just a few days after this."

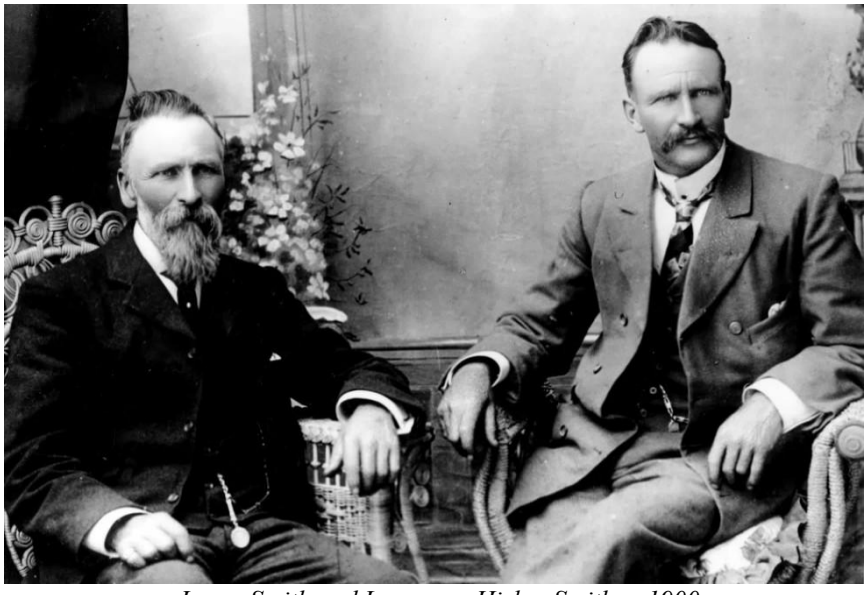
The styling of this house with its simple façade, rule of symmetry, and no protection from the sun, fits easily into that of Georgian Primitive (Ed: Refer "Australia's Home," by Robin Boyd). Houses such as this were built in the pioneering days of all the colonies. The only conscious decoration here appeared in the patterned brick-work.

Thomas Petty snr

Thomas Petty (snr) came to Australia in Aug 1853 to establish a new life for his family, purchasing 47 acres of bush land along Koonung creek in west Doncaster. Five years later, he wrote to his wife asking her to come out and bring the family to a two-storey house he had built on this land. Jane Petty (Thompson) with her children, Thomas aged 13, George 8, and John 6, left Liverpool on the ship "Red Jacket" on 20th July 1858 and arrived in Melbourne on 13th October. (Elizabeth 11, stayed in England – Later came on the "Red Jacket" in Nov 1866) - Lynton's genealogy Petty

Jane Thompson

Tullamore



James Smith and Lawrence Hislop Smith c.1900

James Smith (1824-1904) was an engineer and worked for David Mitchell the builder of the Exhibition Buildings in Melbourne. James Smith owned property in Doncaster Road, now part of the Eastern Golf Links.
His son, Lawrence Hislop ('Laurie') Smith(1860-1922), was a boot maker and talented artist and established the Doncaster School of Art and Design in 1900

Lawrence Hislop —Lawrie" Smith (1860-1922) – in photo centre.
at a family gathering for Lawrie's 60th Birthday at Tullamore 1920
—At the age of twenty eight, Lawrence Smith married Elizabeth Witchell.

"Tullamore", now part of the Club house at the Eastern Golf Club, was, in 1900, owned by Sir Thomas Naughten Fitzgerald, a noted Melbourne surgeon, of world-wide repute, who, in that same year went to South Africa under the appointment of the British Government as consultant Surgeon, to the Imperial forces. Robert Whitaker, Gentleman, leased the house and 76 acres of land from Fitzgerald who had used it as a holiday and week-end residence. Part of this land was originally owned by David Mitchell, Dame Nellie Melba's father, whose house was situated on the Main Road in front of where the Tullamore stables are situated. Fitzgerald, however, purchased the land from Frederick Burkamp in 1886.

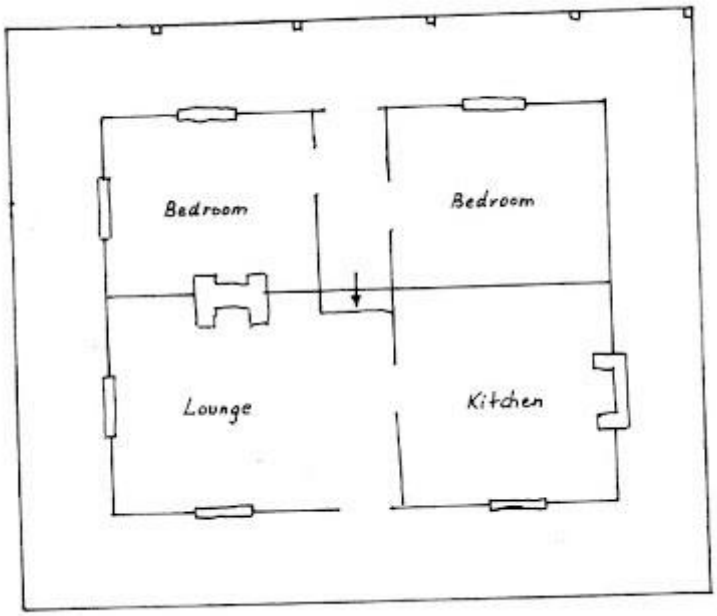
As for as can be ascertained it was Fitzgerald who built the house, the largest along the road, in 1887. There is reference in the Shire of Doncaster Rate Book for 1890 to Dr. Fitzgerald's twelve roomed brick house, so the house was certainly completed by that year. It was made of red brick (now painted White) and combined features of both the Classical (decorative cement quoints, columns) and Gothic (pointed windows, stained glass) which had run parallel as influences for many years, but it didn't have the extravagances of the "Land Boom" buildings which were coming into style. The roof was of slate and on the west side at least was a veranda supported by timber posts with a decorative timber balustrade.

Internally, the main feature is the timber staircase with a large stained glass window dominating the south wall of the stair well. The staircase features posts and geometric decoration on the stringboard; quarter spaced landings are used. The stained glass windows utilizes a geometric pattern and soft toning's of green, aqua, pink, blue, purple, red and gold.

Sir Thomas Naughten Fitzgerald was born at Tullamore, Ireland, the township after which his house was named. After studying medicine at Dublin University he came to Melbourne and was house surgeon to Melbourne Hospital prior to commencing private practice. In 1860, he was appointed full surgeon to Melbourne Hospital, a position he held for 40 years. He was knighted in 1897. A good judge of a horse, he, at one time, owned several horses which he raced under the name of Mr. T. Naughten. Evidence of this interest is found in the stables situated a short distance to the east of "Tullamore".

Otto Bloom

Otto Bloom



Otto Bloom was born at Waldau (the name given to the German settlement in Doncaster) in 1866. In 1900, he lived in the house which had been built for Tom Petty and his wife Eliza in the late 1870's. The house constructed of timber, had internal walls and ceilings of lath and plaster. The original roof was blackwood shingles which shrank in the sun and expanded in the rain, thus having, a tendency to leak when rain came after a sunny period. The roof was later covered with corrugated iron sheets placed directly over the shingles, which were left as heat insulation. Mrs R. Moffat, who lived in this house when first married, said it was an

extremely cool place to live in. Because the house was on a sloping site, the sitting room and kitchen were built on a lower level for ease of construction.

The rolling mills of England in the seventies discovered how to produce sheets of iron other than flat. Before long these were imported to Australia. The veranda of this house was covered with arced sheets of iron, supported by squared wooden posts with little decoration. The gable roof had a trim of simple fretwork.

Mrs Therese Brocco

Although the Melbourne Directory lists Mrs Theresa Brocco as living in Doncaster Road to the east of "Tullamore", descriptions of her house have been unobtainable. None of the Doncaster residents who can remember the district at the turn of the century can recall a Mrs Brocco.

A house remembered in this area was the one built for David Mitchell (Dame Nellie Melba's father). It was a weatherboard dwelling, in front of the stables built at a later date for Dr Fitzgerald. Here a tall Bunya pine and a break in the hawthorn hedge mark the spot where this house once stood. Mrs Brocco may have lived here.

There is also a possibility that part of the small timber dwelling on the southern boundary of the Eastern Golf Links (Opposite Petty's Lane) could have been Mrs Brocco's house.
The following are extracts from the Shire of Doncaster Rate Book for Mrs Brocco:

Year - Description & Situation - Land Area - Net Annual Value - Current Rate -Postal Address
1890 - Canvas House, Main Road. - 2 acres 5 rods 9 perches - £5 - 3/4
1891 - Ditto
1892 - York Street - 2 acres - £6 - 6/-
1893 - Wooden House, York Street - " - £6. - 6/- - Doncaster East
1894 - York Street - " – £5 1/2 (unpaid) - York Street
1897 - York Street - " - £5 ½ - 6/10
1899 - York Street - " - " – "

In 1900, the Rate Book's entry is as follows - Mrs Theresa Brocco, gentlewoman, address Mitcham, House and 1/2 acre Main Road Doncaster, N.A.V. £5, Current Rate 6/3.
From this it can be seen Mrs Brocco for only three years had a house in Doncaster Road, a canvas, with two acres of land in 1890 and 1891, and in 1900 owning a house and ½ an acre of land. In the intervening years, her address and property is at York St, (Springvale Road) Doncaster East.

Mrs. Baillie

Mrs Baillie house

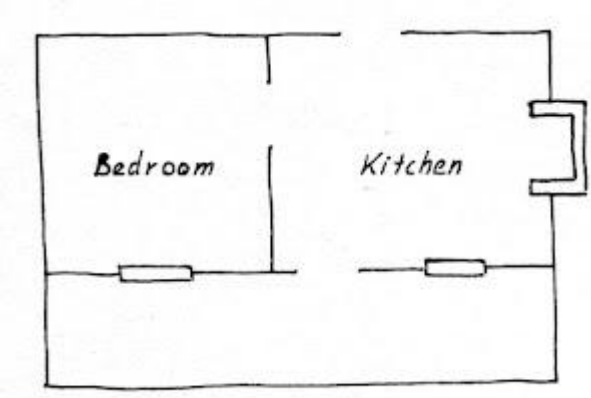
This is one of the few houses of 1900 still remaining. It is now the home of Mr and Mrs A. E. Tully. The Baillie's were amongst the earliest settlers in Doncaster, but because none of their descendants still live in the district, information has been hard to obtain. The family were here in 1857 when William Baillie is listed as owning 260 acres of pasture (Records of the Templestowe District Roads Board). Mr Baillie ran the post office business in conjunction with Joseph Pickering about 1860.

At the turn of the century, it would appear the Baillie's had hit upon hard times and were experiencing difficulty in paying their rates. For some years, house and property is alternately entered under John Baillie (William's son) and Richard Crook, or Crookes, (a relative of the Baillie's) until Mr John Petty purchased the property about 1910.

The house at first was built to a four roomed veranda-less plan. A veranda was added to the northern side about 1903 when a Mr Simons lived here. He also added a skillion at the rear. Further alterations were made after 1910 when Mr and Mrs A. Tully came to live here. They removed the skillion at the back and added other rooms, the veranda was extended to the east, and a sleep-out incorporated on that side. Mrs Tully can remember the builder, a Mr Hunter, taking a section of the cast-iron and having it matched successfully.

The house has a very beautiful band of iron lace on the slightly "bull-nosed" veranda. The front is faced with wooden blocks in imitation of stone. Other decorative features are to be found in the polychromatic brickwork of the chimneys and the brackets, grouped in pairs, beneath the eaves.

Original Baillie house - vacant in 1900



Vacant

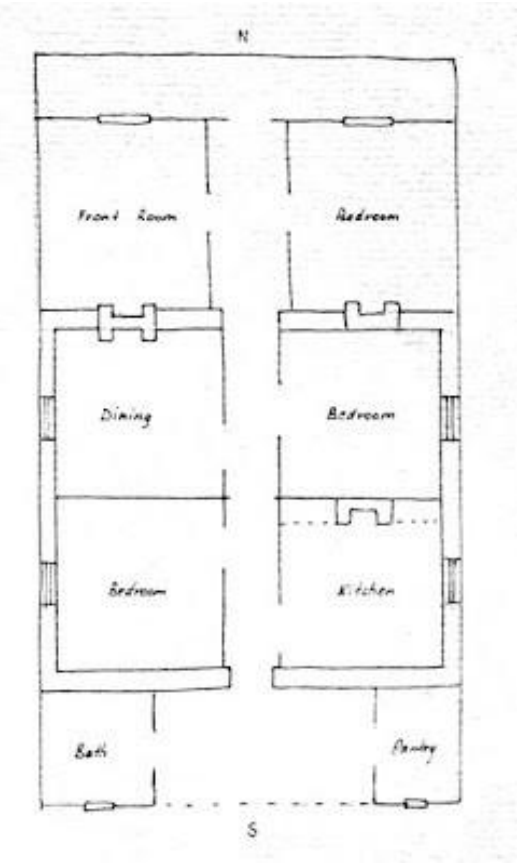
On the same 10 1/2 acre block of land as the other Baillie home, situated further eastwards, and placed well back from the road, stood a tiny weatherboard house. This was the original home in which Mr and Mrs William Baillie lived on arrival in Doncaster (Listed in the Templestowe District Roads Board records, William Baillie, 260 acres pasture, 1857).

Mrs William Baillie was to return here to live in her old age, after 1900. Every Sunday, she would leave her home and walk to the Heidelberg Catholic Church. Over her shoulder hung a black bag tied with a purple handkerchief, in which all her possessions were safely tucked.

The house, now demolished, has been described as a tiny old weather-board place; two roomed with a stone chimney. Some can remember Mrs Baillie bending over the open fire cooking. The large fireplace had no hobbs, neither was it built up above the floor level. It could be described as a real pioneer's home, containing only the bare essentials for living.

David Joseph Corbett "Earlsdon"

David Joseph Corbett



This is one of the few homes of 1900 still standing. It is placed about 60 ft. back from the road facing north and was built in three stages. The first, consisting of four rooms was built about 1857. The second stage, the two front rooms and back veranda were added about 1890 and were built of brick. Later (after 1900) one of the front rooms was extended westwards and a veranda added to that side giving it the asymmetrical look it has today.

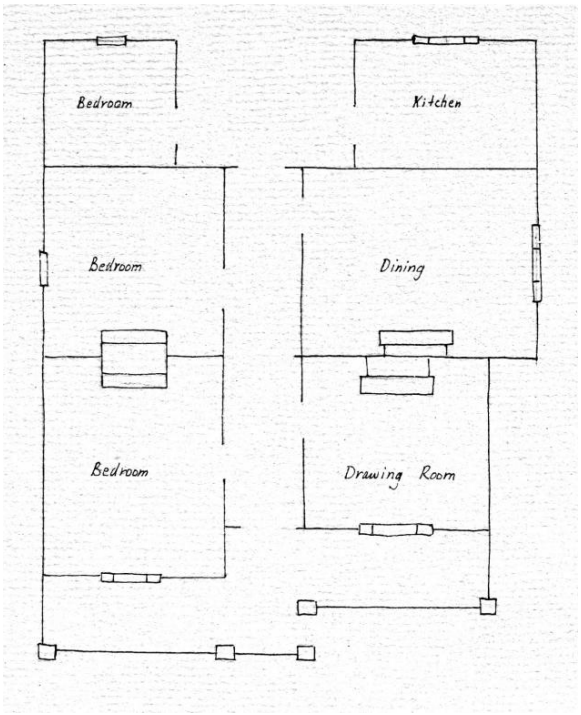
Mr & Mrs D. Joseph Corbett had nine children David, Rhoda, Ida, Adeline, Frederick (now deceased), Horace, Ralph, Frank and Linda. One of them, Mrs J. Sell (Rhoda) gave me an excellent description of the house and contents as they were around 1900.

Her description is as follows:
"Grandfather built this place himself, it was built of local stone with walls 14 inches thick. He had no trowel so the plastering on the interior walls was done with his bare hands. Patterned tiles were on the floor of all four rooms. The two front rooms were added about 1890 and built of brick. Because of this, the walls were not as thick, thus enabling the passage to be wider than that in the original home, whilst the exterior walls remained level. A back veranda (skillion), incorporating a bathroom and pantry, was also built at this stage. The exterior walls were cement rendered giving a uniform appearance. The front veranda was decorated with a narrow band of cast-iron, and fuchsia patterned glass surrounds the front door. The builder made the mould for the quoins (cornerstones), and for the little roses that appear on the chimneys and beneath the eaves. He was so very proud of the roses. The first stove I can remember was a colonial oven, with smoke wafting all round it before it made its way up the chimney. Then we got a one-fire stove, a Pivot, about 1896. This was a real novelty! We had a tank for drinking water and an underground well. When the top tank became empty we pumped from the well. In the bathroom, we had a galvanised iron bath and a basin, the cold water was laid on but we had to carry hot water from the copper in the wash house. We ironed with a box iron with a chimney on it, the hot coals from the fire were used to fill it and smoke came from the small chimney. Later, we used a flat iron, possibly after 1900, a one fire stove being suited for this type of iron. The two front rooms had marble fireplace surrounds and mantelpieces, one black, one grey. For lighting we used kerosene lamps, the front room had a hanging lamp with a hand painted shade. The lamps which we carried from room to room were made of glass, these had shades also. Candles were used for lighting too."

The Corbett's first settled near Wilson's Lane where they had a small home, named after an avenue in England. The Corbett home, after the additions made about 1890 to the original colonial veranda less four rooms, had many of the features of High Victorian architecture. Applied ornament is seen in the cement roses on the chimneys and beneath the eaves; also the cast-iron trim on the veranda. The whole was cement rendered in imitation of stone, with a feature made of the textured cornerstones. "*The front door had a stained glass surround. The central passage was some eight feet in width for the depth of the two front rooms, then narrowed at an ornamental archway*" (Australia's Home by Robin Boyd).

David Corbett

David Corbett



David Corbett

After selling their new home to George Petty during the "Land Boom", the Corbett's built yet again. At the same time as this house was being built two rooms were added to the other home (D. Joseph Corbett's). Just prior to the builder commencing work on this house, the Corbett's changed the plan slightly. By extending the front bedroom out about four feet the plan was changed from a symmetrical to an asymmetrical one. Two extra rooms were added to the back also, making it a six roomed house instead of four. This house is still standing, looking much as it did in 1900. But gone is the orchard around it, replaced by asphalt and a Service Station. The solid brick construction was cement rendered to simulate stone with moulded cement quoins a decorative feature. The original veranda had cast-iron pillars supporting the roof and decorated with a band of floral, iron lace. Three of the four marble fireplaces remain. The two in front rooms were of white marble, the one in the Drawing room is a particularly beautiful one, with white columns supporting the mantelpiece. Around the grate are nasturtium patterned tiles in autumn toning. The one remaining black marble fireplace still looks as elegant today as it did in 1900.

Notes:
First four rooms built by David Corbett in 1857? It was later passed to David & Catherine's son David Joseph Corbett. Catherine Corbett (nee Perkins) . Mrs Isabella Corbett (nee Rhodes).

Lawford Bros Nursery

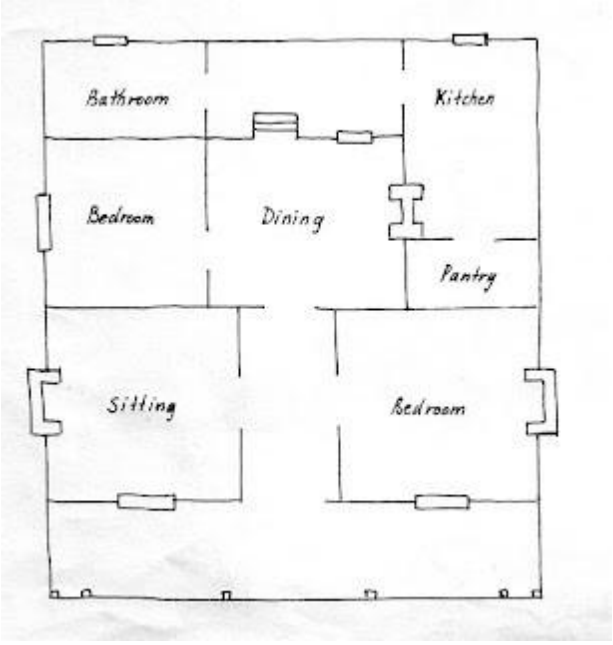
After the death of their father Mr Edwin Lawford. Edwin Jnr [who had been teaching for six years at the Melbourne Deaf and Dumb Institution] and his brother, John Birkby joined forces. With the assistance of their mother, they bought 20 acres at Doncaster and started an orchard and plant nursery. After some successful years, the partnership dissolved, and Edwin retained 11 acres, adding to this by purchasing 27 more acres. Edwin was to become a recognised authority on pear culture and, in 1905, built the first private cool store in the Doncaster district.
John Birkby Lawford retained the nursery which dealt mainly in the fruit trees. The pine trees planted on the west side of the Athenaeum in 1901 were donated by Mr. Lawford, pines being propagated for orchard wind breaks.

The building concerned with the nursery consisted of a barn with stable attached. Persimmon trees were planted around this, only one of these trees remains today.

Edwin Lawford's house and sheds, Williamsons Road. c.1910

John Birkby Lawford

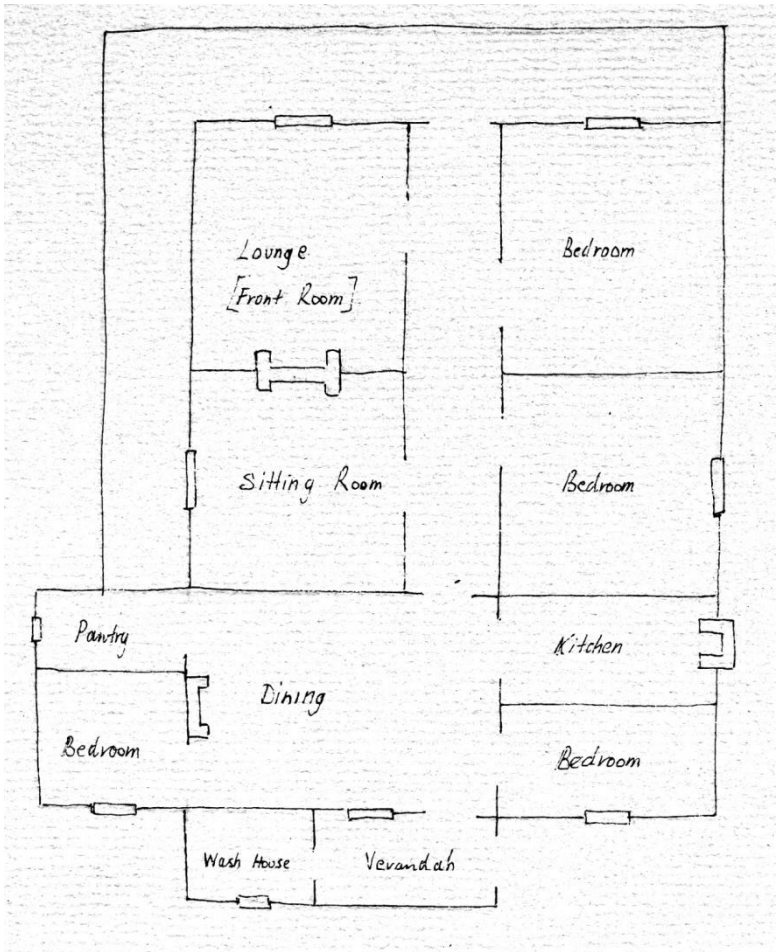
John Birkby Lawford



An unusual feature of this house which Birkby Lawford built in the 1880's, was the very large front windows which reached to the floor level. The front of the weatherboard house was faced with wooden slabs in imitation of stone. Decoration was added beneath the eave, and an insert of cast iron was added at the head of the veranda posts.

This house is now demolished.

George Petty



This house, (now demolished) built in 1886 expressed the home of the eighties in its iron work. *"The cast iron was deeper and thicker than ever. The brackets became larger and sprang from the posts at head height to sweep continuously up and down to the next post and form an arch*" (Freeland, J.M. "Architecture in Australia, a history")

The deep band of cast iron is the only form of decoration on the exterior of this otherwise "colonial flavoured" home.

This house was built for D. Joseph Corbett just prior to the "Land Boom" in Doncaster. Mrs J. Sell (nee Corbett) said, *"When my father married, he took on the orchard and built this house. He lived there for only a short time because during the "Land Boom". He sold the orchard to George Petty and Edwin Wilson. Mr George Petty subdivided the Land but then the "Land Boom" broke and the blocks didn't sell. George Petty made this his home, selling one block of land to Henry W. Smith".*

George Petty, one of the sons of Thomas Petty, was an inventive man. He thought of many ways in which he could make life easier for the women of the household. One such idea was a copper punched through with holes and suspended by a pulley. This was lowered into the other copper and filled with the dirty washing. When the clothes had boiled for long enough, the strainer copper was raised allowing the hot water to drain from it. Another idea was copied from one seen at the Annual Show. It was a washing machine bearing a strong resemblance to a cradle, with corrugated wood on the inside (probably adapted from wash-boards). This was rocked backwards and forwards by the handles which were on either side of the cradle.

Household knives were not made of stainless steel at that time and the Petty's had a large revolving knife cleaner. Many people remember this so it must have been an exceptionally large one."

The fruit from the orchard was kept in a large cellar built beneath the fruit house. Cool Storage was to come to Doncaster after the turn of the century, (refer Lawford Bros.).

The house has been described as large but with a small, dark kitchen. The wide band of lacy iron work contrasts with the solidity of the whole. Mrs A. Miller (one of George Petty's daughters) said that her father enlisted the services of Mr Stringer to put two windows in the chimney behind the stove. This was to allow more light into the kitchen. However, it was built too solidly to allow this to be done so the kitchen remained poorly lit.

Henry Wilmot Smith

Henry Wilmot Smith

In the late 1880's, with the new mechanized brick making processes it was found possible to obtain bricks with a range of colours from the same pug by varying the pressing and the burning. The year 1892 marked the popular return of polychromatic brick-work for the first time since the gold rush. The common red bricks were interspersed with bands of brown and cream. As well as the polychromatic brickwork, this house built for H.W. Smith around 1890 had many other features found in the High Victorian Architecture. (Freeland, J.M. "Architecture in Australia, a history") Such features were the L shaped asymmetrical plan, with a veranda stretched along the recessed part of the L and trimmed with cast-iron. Also the windows glazed with single sheets of glass, and the chimneys of elaborate complicated brickwork. The roof was of slate with pressed metal capping marking out the ridges, "while at the eaves the overhang was supported on small decorative scroll brackets often arranged in pairs for mutual support." (Freeland, J.M. Architecture in Australia, a history") It is interesting to note that Mr Smith had gas pipes installed when the house was built in anticipation of gas coming to Doncaster. Over half a century passed before this was to become a reality.

This house is now demolished.

Lawrence Hislop Smith

The Melbourne Directory 1900 lists this property, a shop and residence, near the Elgar Road comer as belonging to H.W. Smith. Descendants of H.W. Smith say this is incorrect and the Shire of Bulleen Rate Book for 1900 verifies this.

Lawrence Hislop Smith (often referred to as Mr. Boot maker Smith) lived here until 1899 carrying on his business as a boot maker. During that year, the Smith family moved to their home in Elgar Road and let the shop and residence to Walter Heal - also a boot maker.

Mr Neal, later established his own shop and dwelling on the opposite side of Doncaster Road. Laurie Smith's talents and popularity as a drawing teacher made boot making, for him, redundant. He taught drawing at the local schools, each child paying one penny for the lesson. He also conducted an evening class in pencil and crayon drawing and a day time class in painting.

Isabella & Walter Neal' - shop and residence, Doncaster Road.c.1919

Laurie Smith who came to Doncaster about 1887 was one of the first members of the "Star of Doncaster Brass Band". The band dressed in navy uniform with silver buttons and peaked navy hat decorated with a silver star, played on Hospital Sunday and other occasions in Serpell's paddock. They drew large crowds and collected sizeable sums for charity.

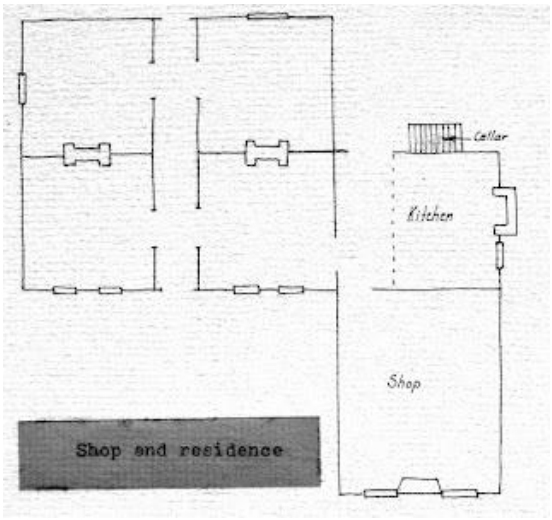
Mr Smith was a foundation member of the Dramatic Society, painting the scenery for their productions. The backdrop for the stage of the Athenaeum was painted by him, for this he was paid £2.

The Rechabites held an Annual Tea Meeting to celebrate their anniversary. These were to become quite famous. Mr and Mrs Smith spent much of their time in preparing a new setting for each tea. Mr Smith painted the scenery for the stage effects.

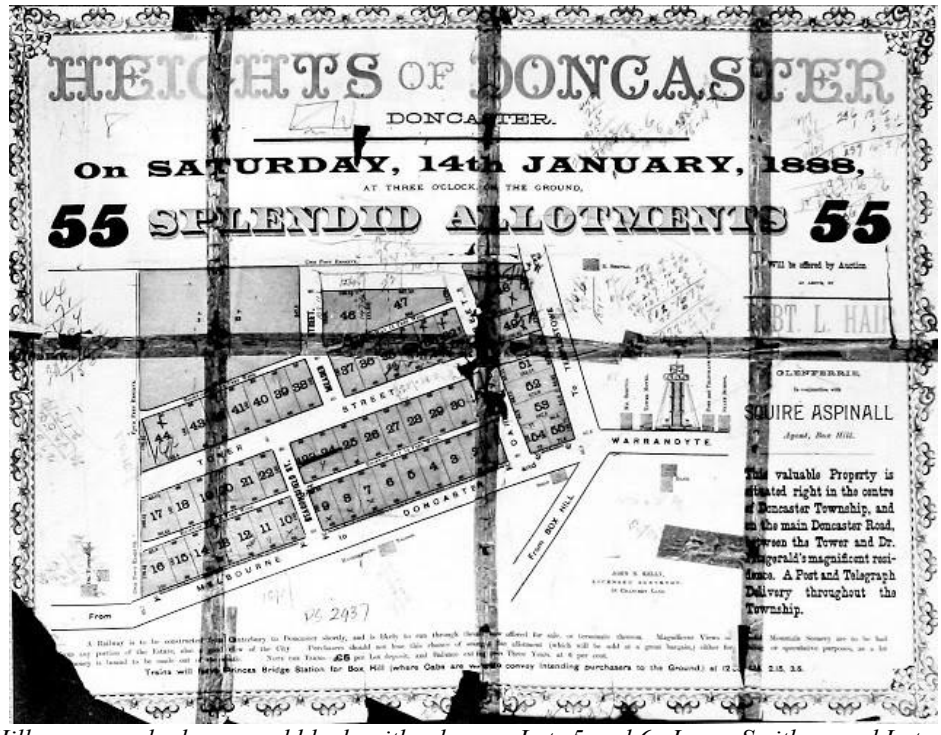
The polychromatic paint work, the brackets arranged in pairs beneath the eaves and the cast-iron decorative treatment classify this shop and residence as a product of the late 1880's.

The building is no longer standing.

Hillman Bros (Coach Builders)



Hillman Bros (Coach Builders) - Shop & Residence Lots 1,2,3,



Charles Hillman owned a house and blacksmiths shop on Lots 5 and 6; James Smith owned Lots 1, 2 and 3.

Hillman Bros. former blacksmiths shop. c.1930

Charles Hillman, in 1900, owned a house and blacksmiths shop situated on Lots 5 and 6 of the Doncaster Heights Estate. Previously, Charles had lived in August Lauer's house each day crossing the road to work in his blacksmith's shop. During 1900 he bought a house and had it moved into place behind the blacksmiths shop.

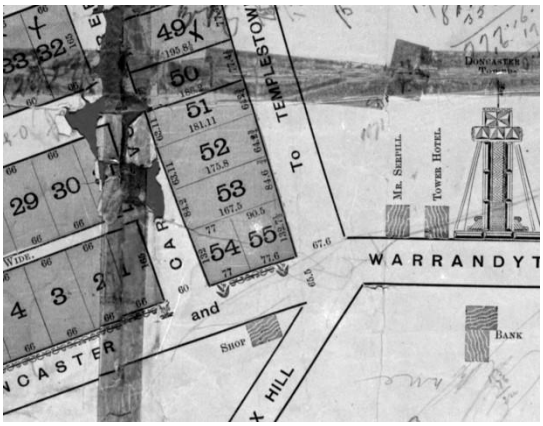
The name "blacksmith" covers a wide range of skills. In fact some considered a blacksmith capable of any job. Mrs Tucheband, an old German lady who lived at the comer of Tram and Doncaster Roads, went to Charlie Hillman's to have a tooth pulled out. She thought a blacksmith's would have the necessary tongs. A farrier's job was to shoe horses. The shoe was forged by heating a length of iron bar in the forge fire. A blast of air from the huge bellows into the charcoal fire would generate enough heat to make the iron red hot. Using tongs the farrier lifted the bar from the fire, and then hammered the shoe into shape on the conical end of the anvil. A clip at the top of the shoe which held it in place was then formed. Eight nail holes were punched in the shoe and a groove formed to prevent the nail heads projecting. The hot shoe was then quenched in a barrel of cold water to harden the iron and cool the tongs. A farrier, who of necessity knew how to handle a horse, stood with his back to the horse, drawing the horse’s foreleg up between his thighs. With the old shoes removed, the hoof was trimmed with a paring knife. The hot shoe was pressed into the horn of the hoof, burning itself into place, then nailed in position. Blacksmiths made their own nails. They would cut off a length of square rod then hammer it into shape in a jig. Horse shoes were made in assorted sizes and hung on battens ready for use. Implement makers were in demand in the fruit growing Doncaster district. Parts for ploughs cultivators and "jingles" (the local name for a heavy two wheeled cart) were made and kept ready for repairs. Picks and shovels sometimes required repairs too. Charlie Hillman made the first hand spray pump with a movable fulcrum producing an easy and even pressure. Wheelwrights were an important part of the coach building shop. Iron tyres wore through, or wheels broke on the rough roads. The iron rim or tyre was curved to the correct diameter on a tyre bending machine, the ends were then welded together. The lyre, which was made a fraction smaller than the wooden rim of the wheel, was heated until it expanded enough to fit over the rim. A tight fit resulted when it had cooled. The assistant was called the striker. He hammered the iron held in position by the blacksmith. There were also coach and body builders, painters and sign writers. Charles Hillman's blacksmith's shop (now demolished) was a very long narrow timber building reaching right to the line of the footpath.

J. Smith & Sons, Butchers

J. Smith & Sons, Butchers Lot 3

This building, recently demolished, has served as a butchers Shop, a bakers shop and as a milk bar. It had two features: one was the high clerestory ventilators, the other the concrete cow's head which hung outside the shop around 1900. The construction was of solid brick. A brick cellar with external entrance was beneath the kitchen. This was used as storage for the meat before refrigeration was introduced. The rear door was four feet wide to allow for easy entry of the carcasses into the shop. James Smith owned Lots 1, 2 and 3 of Doncaster Heights Estate in 1900. This shop and dwelling being built on Lot 3.

James Hillhouse



This tiny house, appears to have been let to various people during its life time. In 1900, it was owned by Richard Serpell, Hillhouse being the tenant. It was situated at Lot 53 of Doncaster Heights Estate, so was not really in Doncaster Road. as the Melbourne Directory would indicate. The house, now demolished, faced Carnavon St., with its back to Williamson's Road. It consisted of a gable with veranda on the west side and a skillion on the east. The whole was constructed of timber. It is interesting to note the revaluation of the property in 1900. The original Net Annual Value was £18.10.- reduced to £5.-.- whilst the Current Rate fell from £1.3.1 1/2 to 6s/3d.

Henry Brown

Henry Brown is listed In the Melbourne Directory of 1900 as living between H.W. Smith and the Elgar/ Doncaster Road corner. Of the people interviewed who were residing in Doncaster in 1900, not one can remember a Henry Brown. The Rate Book, Shire of Doncaster 1900 refers only to the Executors of Henry Brown, but this was for 39 acres of land at Warrandyte.

Mrs Mary Brown

Likewise, Mrs Mary Brown is not remembered by the residents of 1900 so a description of the house in which she lived has not be possible. However, her name is listed in the 1900 Rate Book as owning a house and 14 acres of land in Doncaster Road

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August Lauer

Lauer's Corner Store 1960s

Lauer's built their store in front of Spencer's old Blacksmith forge building in 1885

The junction of Elgar and Doncaster Roads, where August Lauer built his store in 1885, had a place in Doncaster's history from its earliest days when people came for miles around to get pipe clay from here to whiten their fireplaces.

The Toll House

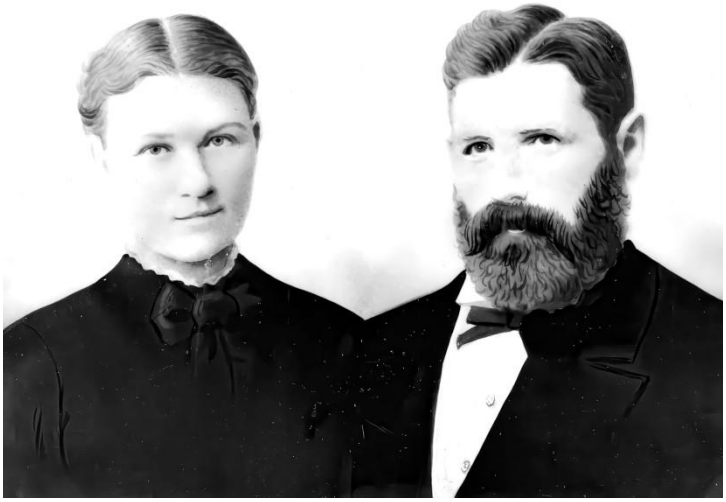
After protracted negotiations between the Templestowe, and Boroondara Roads Boards it was decided in 1865 to erect a Toll Gate on this comer. An earlier suggestion had been to place the toll gate on the Doncaster Road close to Kennedy's Creek (Koonung Creek) but by choosing this site on Doncaster Road it was hoped to prevent evasion by the Carlton Estate Roads. The tender of £9- from Mr. Sutton for the erection of the Toll Gate was accepted. The Toll Gate was opened for traffic on 1 January 1866, Mr Colin Phillips being the Toll Keeper Charges were fixed at:

- Every eight head of sheep, lambs, pigs or goats - 1 pence
- Every ox or head of beef cattle - 1/2 pence
- Every horse, mare ass or mule- 1 1/2 pence
- Every gig, chaise, coach, chariot or other such carriage constructed on springs - if
- drawn by one horse or other animal - 3 pence
- -if drawn by two horses or other animal - 6 pence
- -if drawn by three horses or other animal - 9 pence
- and 3d. for each additional horse or animal drawing.

There were certain exemptions - persons in Government service, ministers of religion, and people going to or from a place of worship. But if you were being taken to hospital or the cemetery, the charges were enforced. Toll keepers who had to open the gates at any hour of the day or night seldom remained at this job for long. Many otherwise honest people regarded the evasion of the toll as good fun. Vehicles often travelled in convoy and whilst the leader prolonged the time the gate was kept open, the others would storm through. Early in 1867, the lessee of the Doncaster to ll gate requested release from his contract as he was operating at a loss. Failure to persuade adjacent land owners to erect fences at their own expense to prevent stock from being driven across country, led to the removal of the toll gate to Koonung Creek Bridge. This Elgar Road corner was also the site for Mr. Spencers blacksmiths shop', around 1880.

Heinrich Christian "August" Lauer

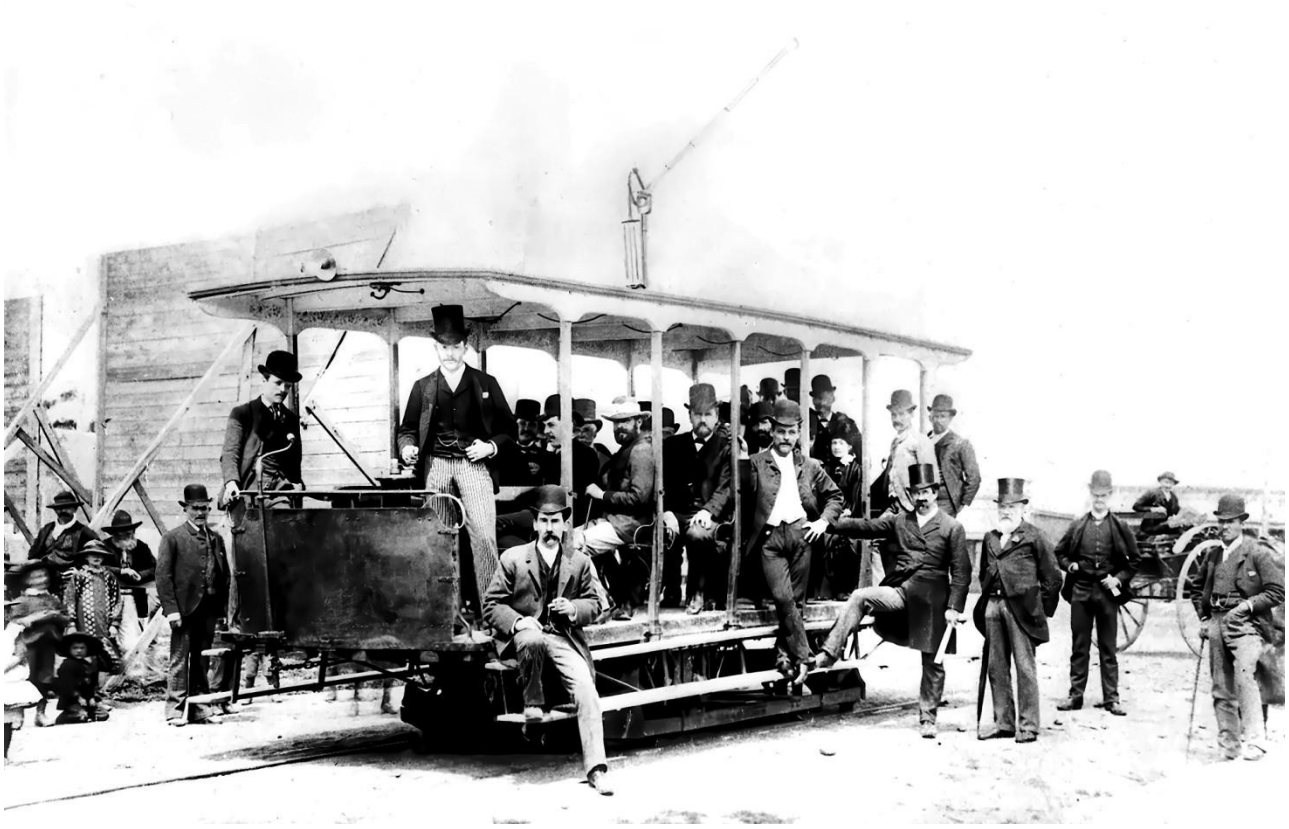
Heinrich Christian Lauer was born in 1851 at Aulebeu Saxony. After receiving his education locally he was apprenticed to the baking trade, later working six years in Hamburg. In 1878, he decided to come to Australia, disembarking in Adelaide and working at his trade there for 12 months. After working for some time in Sale he came to Doncaster and started a business, baking first at Reynolds Store.



Ida Witting and Heinrich Christian "August" Lauer

In 1881, he married Miss Ida Wittig, daughter of one of Doncaster's German settlers. They lived first at Mrs Tuchebands (on the corner of Tram and Doncaster Roads.) where Mrs Lauer ran the store until they built their own business on the Elgar Road corner some four years later. Mrs G. Sell (nee Ida Lauer) recalls how her mother ran the General Store which sold anything from Shovels to ribbons, or bonnets to chaff. She also remembers her grandfather Wittig, who carted wood, complaining every time he had to pay 6d. to go through the toll gate. He went as far as Springvale Road for his wood, it was a forest then. She can also remember her grandmother walking to Hawthorn to catch the train or to sell her lovely butter there. The store took up a good third of this unpretentious building. The residence behind the store consisted of a workroom, kitchen, bedroom and girl's bedroom. The boys slept in the former toll house residence. In the early hours, August Lauer daily left his home and walked to the bakehouse he had built about one mile distance on the main road. He was to return later, his baking completed, carrying on his head a tray of his famous "German Cookin".

The Tram



Tram at the Box Hill terminus on opening day 14th October 1889

The first electric tram in the Southern Hemisphere ran between Box Hill and Doncaster. In October 1888, the Box Hill and Doncaster Tramway Co. Ltd was formed to buy one of two trams exhibited at the Centennial International Exhibition. The Company planned to take advantage of the railway to Box Hill.

The tram was designed to link up with the railway, thus opening up the land between Whitehorse Road and the Doncaster Tower and giving the land speculator a chance to make some money. After negotiations with land owners and the Council of the Shires of Nunawading and Bulleen, a track was laid through orchards and paddocks from the Box Hill Post Office to the Elgar Road and Doncaster Road intersection.

The first tram was described as an open six-bench car, having wooden framing, running boards on both sides and backs of the seats reversible. It weighed six tons when loaded and was driven by a 15 horsepower motor. The electricity for it was generated at a powerhouse situated on the banks of Bushy Creek about halfway along the route. An American ball type engine of 50hp. drove the dynamo to produce the current which was carried to the tram by way of a heavy copper overhead cable 17 ft. above ground level. A long arm stretching upward from the tram made contact with the power source.

The company met with a great deal of opposition. Some residents, who appreciated the open spaces in which they lived, resented the intrusion of sightseers and feared vandalism in the orchards. Others argued that the application for a railway to Doncaster would be prejudiced. Several attempts were made to tear up the tracks causing delay and additional expense.

The formal opening on 14 October 1889 was an impressive event, all unpleasantness apparently forgotten. A banquet at the Tower Hotel celebrated the event, with tributes paid to the enterprise of the Company, for Doncaster still had no direct railway service.

The train and tram time table from 1890s - Prince's Bridge Station to Box Hill and thence by tram to Doncaster.

"To Doncaster Tower by electric tram is a novel and one of the most pleasant, cheapest of outings with magnificent views from the tower. Book Princes Bridge Station to Doncaster via Box Hill, Return Fare 1/6. Trams meet every train up to 6 o/clock PM. Tram and Rail Return 1/6. Timetable in conjunction with Victorian railways. (Timetable Details) Special trips by Arrangement. Apply to H.J.Hilton, Box Hill"

Printed at the "Reporter" Office, Box Hill".

According to the timetables, the trip took 15 minutes, the first tram leaving Doncaster at 8.20 a.m. on weekdays and the last tram arriving at Doncaster at 6.20 p.m. A service was provided on afternoons only at the week-end. Speeds of 12 to 14 miles an hour were attained, dropping to five miles per hour on the steepest grades.

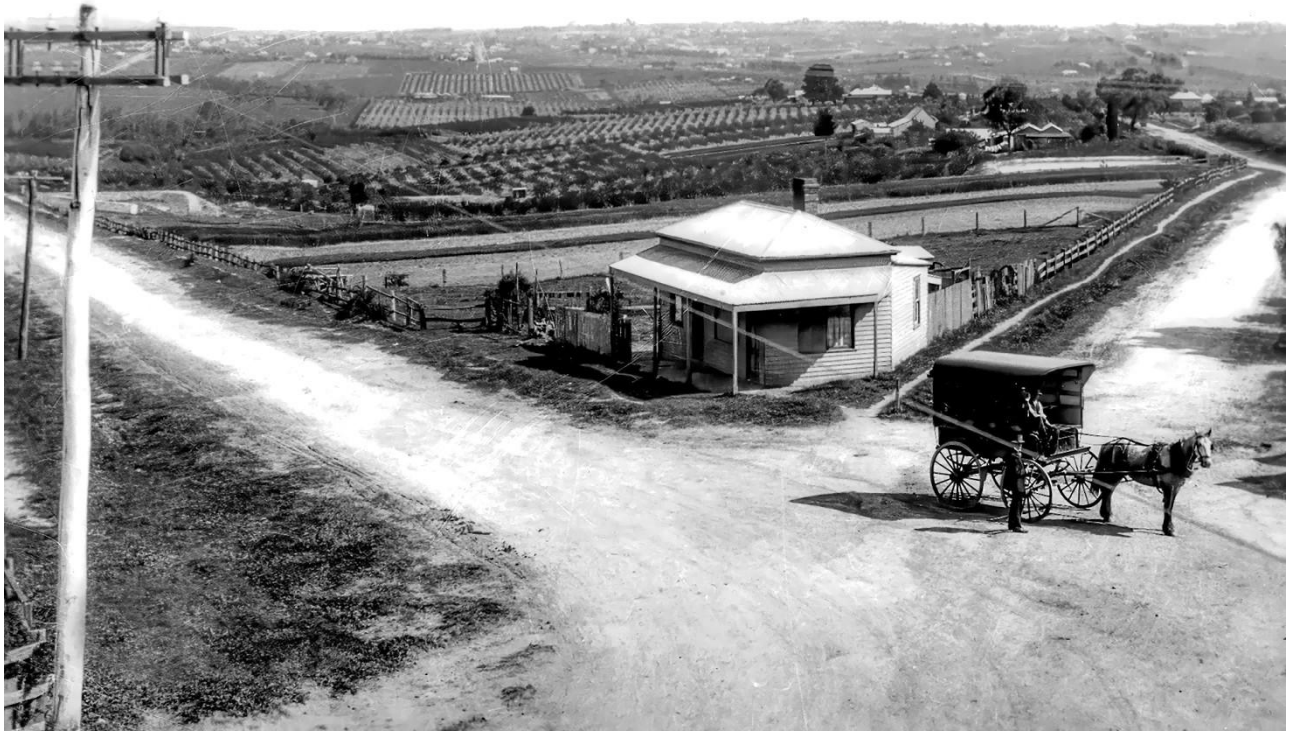
For a while, the little tram met every train, day in, day out. But sabotage, as irresponsible as the vandalism the land-owners deplored, was resumed. Rails were pulled up and two fences erected across the line in June 1891.

The tram was well patronised, but maintenance costs were higher than expected. The first year showed a profit of £58. Costly breakdowns caused a crisis and the Company went into liquidation. However, a new Company was soon formed, the Doncaster and Box Hill Electric Road Co. Ltd. The new Company appointed Mr H.J. Hilton engineer and the tram commenced running again in March 1893 with plans to extend the service to the Junction of Heidelberg and Templestowe Roads.

The tram was run by this second company with many changes of fortune until 1894. The closing of many banks, during the 1893 depression including the Company's own bank, did not help matters.

In 1894, the directors made a proposition to Mr Hilton. They agreed to let the tramway machinery and sheds for a weekly rent of 1/-. Mr Hilton to be held liable for all expenses. Mr Hilton's lone struggle lasted for two years. He was manager, stoker, engine driver, dynamo attendant and armature winder. He also printed posters, but the difficult times were too much for him and the tram ran its last trip on the 6th January 1896.

Evidence of Doncaster's tram could be seen in 1900 as the rails had not yet been removed from Tram Road. The little refreshment and waiting room at the junction of Tram and Elgar Roads was also there, bearing witness to more glorious days, but now altered slightly by the owner Mr Gallus, so it could be used as a residence.

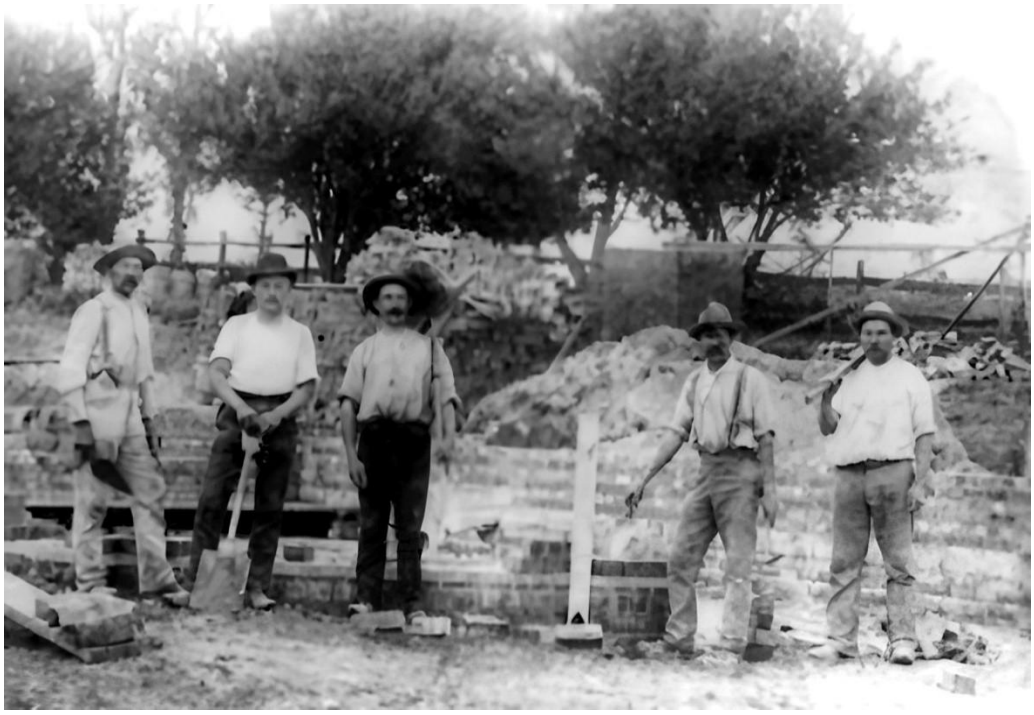


A view of Elgar and Tram Roads Doncaster, looking towards Box Hill, showing the former tram shelter and refreshment room used as a private dwelling. c.1920

Serpell's Store

Serpell's Store: Mark Miles Chaff & Grain Merchant, Wholesale and retail Supply Store

In 1890 at the height of the "Land Boom" Richard Serpell planned a row of two-storey brick shops for Doncaster, It was to be a grand shopping centre, a speculative venture by which Mr Serpell hoped to profit from the expected influx of residents. The first store was built at the corner of Doncaster and Williamson's Road, but the depression of 1893 put an end to the rest of the project.



Laying the foundations of Serpell's store 1890

The first tenants were Messrs' Watkins and Collyer. A glance at an early invoice shows accounts owing from one year to the next as a result of the depression. The store was vacant from the years 1898 to 1905 owing to a lack of business.

After being a land mark for 78 years the store was demolished in September 1968 to make way for Shopping-town, a centre larger and grander than Mr Serpell could have ever imagined.

The building, consisting of bedrooms and bathroom upstairs, with kitchen, living room and store downstairs was very much a product of the "Land Boom" period. The mixed coloured bricks were laid in decorative patterns, and the roof was hidden by a parapet crowded with urns.

Richard Serpell (snr), with his wife Jane Moon, four sons and a daughter, Thomas, Alfred, Richard (jnr), Henry and Jane came from England in 1850 and settled in Glenferrie. In 1853, they purchased 40 acres from Mr Collins, the proprietor of the Highland Estate, at £8. an acre. Richard and his elder sons Thomas & Alfred took turns at camping out in their two roomed bark hut, carrying from Glenferrie the currants, gooseberries and grape vines to plant in their orchard

"*To show that we did not starve in the bush, we had a fowl and a parrot pie, turnips, pudding etc. There was also hanging up at the same time, a leg of mutton, a duck and also a piece of beef*" (From a diary kept by Thomas Serpell, son of Richard (snr) – 13 June 1854.

Richard Serpell (snr) b.1804 d.1863 [m 1833] Jane Moon b.1812 d.1901
- Thomas Edward Serpell b.1834 d.1912
- Alfred Serpell b.1837 d.1906
- Richard Serpell b.1838 d.1918
- Henry Serpell b.1842 d.1882
- Jane Serpell b.1844 d.1891

Edward Beeston b.1816 d.1855 [m1840-45] Selina Moon b.1809 d.1883 (Henry and Jane are Selina's only other siblings)
- Anne Selina Beeston b.1846 d.1876 [m 1875] Richard Serpell b.1838 d.1918

Richard Serpell b.1838 d.1918 [m 1875] Anne Selina Beeston b.1846 d.1876 (died seven days after giving birth to Annie)
- Annie Alice b.1876 d.1965 [m 1906] William Goodson b.1863 d.1944 (no children)

[m2 1879] Alice Jane Reid b.1858 d.1939
- Ellen b.1879 d.1881
- Walter b.1886 d.1966
- David Reid b.1888 d.1923
- Florence b.1890 d.1960
- Hilda b.1894 d.1953

Notes:

"Miss Selina Serpell" is Annie "Selina" Serpell, the daughter of Alfred Serpell, brother of Richard Serpell (jnr)

In 1900 the store was leased by Miles and ten years later was known as Beers Store.

The Serpell family sailed from Plymouth in the sailing ship "Aaronache", taking six months for the trip; they arrived at Williamstown on 10th March 1851 and went straight to the Beestons house in Collingwood. Ref: petticoats

Anne Selina Beeston

Richard Snr., the father of Thomas, was accidentally killed when he visited England in 1853. His son Richard built the store.)

Despite the interruption of trying their luck at the Anderson's Creek Goldfields, and a bushfire in February 1858 which burnt 20 acres of paddock and destroyed fencing, the Serpells had a small orchard well established by 1860.

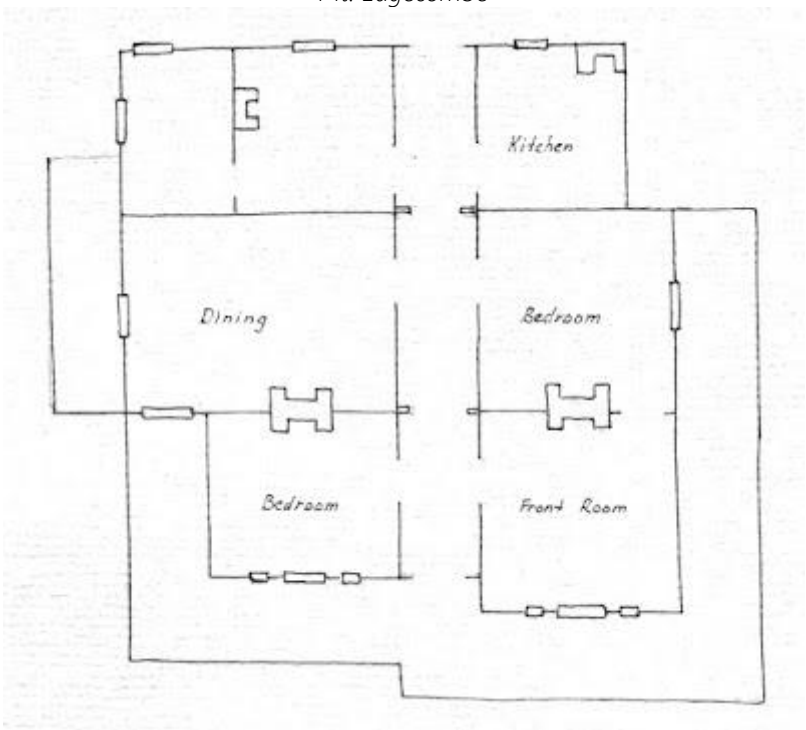
Mrs Richard Serpell (Richard's first wife - Anne Beeston) was born in 1846 and arrived in Melbourne with her parents about 1850.

Anne Selina Beeston b.1846 d.1876 (died from scarlet fever a week after the birth of Annie Alice)

Serpell's store at the north-east corner of Doncaster and Williamsons Roads. c.1912 Beers store

Serpell's - "Mt. Edgecombe"

"Mt. Edgecombe"



"Mt. Edgecombe"

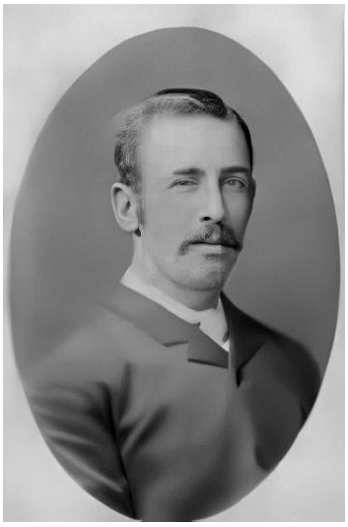
Incongruously shoulder to shoulder with Doncaster Shoppingtown, a symbol of today is a house of the past hidden behind hedges and sheltering trees. It is the house built in 1883 for Mrs Jane Serpell [Moon], mother of Richard who built the Corner Store. Jane had come to Australia in 1850 with her family and in 1854 settled in Doncaster

14 April 1854: *"Being Good Friday we went to see our land in the bush. Was so much pleased with it that we long to be living there"*

April 1855 *"All hands once more together, well and happy, though rather hard times of it, in our bark two-roomed hut. But we are used to hardships"* (Extracts from Thomas Serpell's diary).

When this house was built in 1883, Jane moved here with her unmarried son and daughter, Henry and Jane, and her grand-daughter Annie (Richard's daughter by his first marriage). Annie's mother had died of scarlet fever when she was still a baby, so she was bought up by her grandmother and became devoted to here. This affection had a great influence on events affecting the future of the house.

Jane's husband (also Richard) had been a member of the Queen's Life Guard and was also a coast guardsman. He was accidentally killed in England. The house was named "Mt Edgecombe" after a castle in Cornwall where Richard had once been stationed.



William Edward Goodson
1863-1944

A new Head Teacher came to Doncaster State School in 1896. He was William Goodson. He stabled his horse at "Mt. Edgecombe" and before long a romance had blossomed between he and Annie. They were married in the Baptist Chapel in Gore St, Fitzroy and after their marriage lived at "Mt. Edgecombe".

William was a progressive teacher and introduced many innovations to the curriculum. Swimming, not the popular sport then that it is now, was taught to pupils in a dam behind the school. In many ways he was the forerunner of the modem physical education teacher.

Annie Alice Goodson (Serpell)
1876-1965

Annie learnt painting from Laurie Smith and today her paintings hang two, three and four deep on the walls. To walk into this house is like walking into the nineteenth century. Annie had kept everything the way it was at the time of her grandmother's death in 1901, until her own death in 1965. The rooms, still furnished with pieces of Victorians - a four poster bed with hand painted sprays of roses on it, and cupboards packed with shells (beautifully preserved and catalogued), wild flower collections, photographs, stuffed birds and a bird's egg collection On the seats are velvet cushions and the piano has a cover with a "scalloped" edge, around this are sewn scallop shells of varying sizes. The exterior walls are of timber, faced with wooden blocks imitating stone. The ornate front windows have "barley sugar" columns dividing the three sections. The veranda with its roof of arced iron stretches along the south and west sides of this asymmetrical house. The eaves are very much ornamented. The brackets grouped in pairs, have applied wooden "daisies" between, and above each of these "on the lining beneath the eave is a cut-out daisy". This gives the Impression that the flower shape cut-out from the eave has been applied on the vertical wall face below. Beneath the spouting is a decorative edge made up of almost square wooden blocks. The veranda is edged with a light band of cast iron ending in a delicate line of daisies. The solid chimneys, each with a black and white marble fireplace beneath, feature decorative cement work. A lovely stained glass door, in a red and white rectangular pattern, separates the front room and bedroom. Stained glass also surrounds the front door, again repeating the daisy shapes in blue, orange, frosted and clear glass.

The house, on a valuable site next to Shoppingtown, will soon be demolished. The property was recently auctioned and the 3 1/4 acre property fetched £330,000. Thomas Serpell in his diary wrote

"In May 1853, we bought 20 acres of land from Mr Collins, a neighbour of ours. It is 8 miles from here, 12 miles from Melbourne, 4 miles from Heidelberg and 2 miles from the Yarra. Bulleen, in which Parish it is, the land lies high and is thickly timbered with stringy bark and other sorts of trees. We gave £8 an acre for it".

The land on which "Mt Edgecombe" was built would have had a value of about £12 an acre in the early 1880's.

Notes:
Anne Selina Beeston b.1846 d.1876 (died a week after the birth of Annie Alice [from scarlet fever?])

Anne's mother is Selina Beeston (Moon), [Jane snr's older sister] - Selina spent her final years living with her sister at "Mt.Edgecombe", eventually passed away in February 1883

The Serpell family [Richard Serpell (snr) b.1804 d.1863 [m 1833] Jane Moon b.1812 d.1901] sailed from Plymouth in the sailing ship "Aaronache", taking six months for the trip, they arrived at Williamstown on 10th March 1851 and went straight to Selina Beeston's house in Collingwood.

"Miss Selina Serpell" is Annie Selina Serpell, the daughter of Alfred Serpell, brother of Richard Serpell (jnr)

Schillings - Greengrocer

Schillings – Greengrocer

Half way between the tram stop and the tower (The Shire of Doncaster Rate Book for 1893 shows Hannan as owning Lot 113, Clay' s Orchard Estate. The block had a 32 foot frontage) a man named Alexander Hannan built this small shop and residence in 1895. He built it himself and with the help of his father transporting all the building materials by hand-cart from South Melbourne. Hannan made delectable pies and sold these from house to house, his sales pitch being “there’s a run on pies today!”

One room was set aside for refreshments and afternoon teas were served there. Hannan is reputed to have been a wealthy man, but spent most of his money in a vain attempt to claim an inheritance. He sold the shop and residence in 1899 for £150 and £5 for extras to Edward Gallus, who leased it to George Schilling (In some records the name is spelt Schelling).

Mr Schilling was a huge man, his wife small and lame. Mrs Schilling made beautiful toffee, so beautiful in fact that little Freda Lauer (Mrs S. Crouch) would run up to buy toffee there even though her parents sold sweets at their Corner Store. Mrs Schilling displayed her toffees through the east window and the quaint sign in English, written by this German lady said "2 a penny each”.

Another delightful story concerning Mrs Schilling goes like this: Young Don Petty (the son of John) was walking along the road with Mr Gifford Gordon, the Church of Christ minister. After they had passed Mrs Schilling, Don asked Mr Gifford why he lifted his hat, to which the minister replied, “Why, that's just common courtesy!" Puzzled, Don answered, "No it's not, it's old Mrs Schilling!”

As well as toffee, Schilling sold vegetables, fruit, groceries and exercise books. This shop and residence is now demolished.

Police Station - Frank L. Heaney. Constable

In January 1862, the Rev. Max von Schramm led a deputation to the Council seeking their assistance in obtaining police protection for the peaceable citizens of Doncaster. With the opening of the tower, Doncaster had become a popular tourist resort, and followed much trespassing and damage to orchards. Also measures were sought to prevent suburban contractors from dumping night soil in the district.

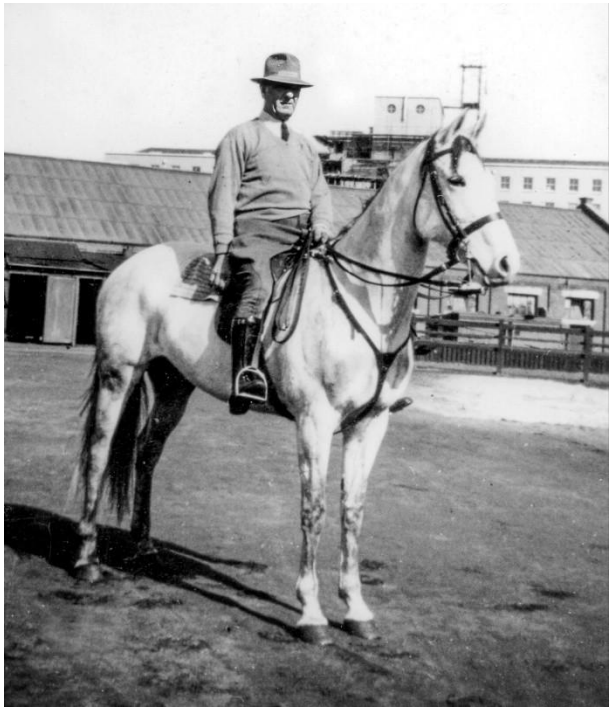
A police station was established in 1882 with Mounted Constable M. Gleeson in charge. Doncaster's Police Station has been sited in many different places. In 1900 it was placed behind a disused Estate Agents Office nestling amongst many pine trees. This is probably the reason why information concerning the building has been difficult to obtain. The wooden lock-up was placed behind the agents' office. This office, a relic of the “Land Boom” in Doncaster, had a faded R.G. Cameron painted on the fascia board and an imposing approach up wide steps.

Clay's Home

Nestling between the Police Station and Miss Mundy's shop was the home which John Clay and his wife Agnes built on arrival here. They had set off from Hull Farm, Petrockstow, Devonshire to establish a family home and orchard on high ground in Doncaster later to become known as Clay's Hill.

In 1858, John Clay paid 10/- In rates to the Templestowe District Roads Board. As the family grew, so too did the house. The single gable eventually became a series of three gables and, expanded from two rooms to five. When the house was moved to Beaconsfield St, Doncaster, shingles were found beneath the corrugated iron.

Even though this home was not listed in the Melbourne Directory in 1900 it was definitely there. The striped roof of the front veranda can be clearly seen in the photograph taken from the tower just after the turn of the century.



Murray Doherty on his "Jill"

The house has been used as a Police station and in 1927 the constable in charge rented the house from Mr Moffet and used a room at the back as an office. In 1934 Mr Murray Doherty became the resident mounted constable. He and his horse, Jill, became well-known figures in the area. In 1945 the Police Department bought the house and when the population of the district grew, requiring more police, a temporary prefabricated building was added at the rear.

Miss Mundy - Costumiere

The time of the "Land Boom" in Doncaster was a very exciting one. Many orchardists on "catching the fever", began cutting down their trees and placing their holdings on the market. Estate Agent's Offices began to spring up like mushrooms. This building, in which Mss Mundy worked at her dressmaking in 1900, was one of them. Miss Mundy boarded with Mrs Jane Serpell, just across the road.

William A. Webb

This house belonged to Mrs Webb's father, Tom Petty. It was situated on Lot 53 of Clay's Orchard Estate, (accessed from Station Street) which means it was probably built after the "Land Boom" of 1888. Little is known of this house, set well back from the road, except that the front was of red brick, timber additions had been built at the back and a detached kitchen was here also. The Webb family were early settlers in East Doncaster. John Webb is listed in the Templestowe Roads Board Records for 1858.

The Tower Hotel

Tower Hotel 1890-1895

The popularity of the tower induced Alfred Hummel to build a hall and later the Tower Hotel. Mr Hummel who took great interest in the Band of Hope and Temperance cause for many years (refer to notes on Athenaeum Hall) is said to have abandoned his ideals when he built the hotel. However, it is interesting to note that in the "Australian Sketcher" 1880 the hotel is referred to as a temperance hotel. The etching, from the sane publication, shows the residential section of the hotel, at this stage veranda less. At some later stage a veranda and the gable-roofed hall were added

The Shire of Bulleen Rate Book for 1880 has the first entry concerning the hotel. It reads: "Blackburn, owner A. Hummel, Hotel, Doncaster", but it does not state whether Mr Blackburn is the manager or licensee. The last entry for Mr Hummel in connection with the hotel is for 1881 when he is listed as having a farm in Doncaster Road, a Hotel, and land at Deep Creek. Perhaps the licensed section of the Hotel was built after this, and Hummel did not forsake the temperance cause after all!

The photograph taken between the years 1890 and 1895 shows the Hotel set well back from the road allowing for a large "coaching approach". The roof on the lower level of the building appears to be constructed of shingles. The proprietor at this time was J. Pasmore. This quaint, two-storeyed licensed section of the hotel was burnt in a spectacular fire in January 1895.

Tower Hotel accommodation

The Box Hill Reporter for 4 January 1895 gives an account of the destruction of the tower hotel:

"Fire At Doncaster"

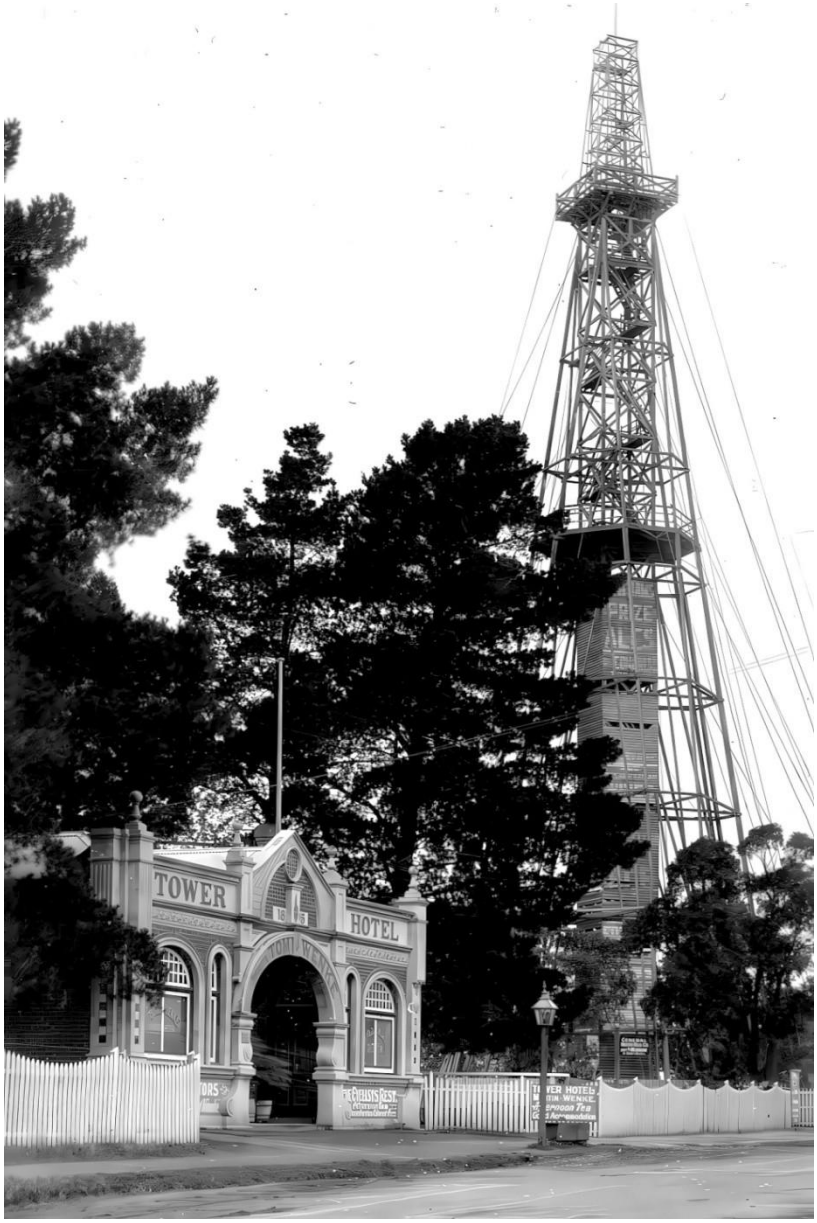
A disastrous fire resulting in the total destruction of the Tower Hotel, Doncaster occurred at about 6.15 on the evening of Wednesday 2nd January. The great volume of smoke seen arising in that vicinity indicated that it was no mere bush fire, but that a building of some kind or other was burning.

The Box Hill fire bell gave warning, and the men turned up to about the number of nine, and after a hard struggle succeeded in reaching the spot. When they had arrived however, the whole of the building was down, and merely the debris was burning. On to this they got the water at once, and after a time extinguished the flames.

Three other brigades made their appearance, namely, Hawthorn, Kew and Surrey Hills, but there was very little they could do. Previous to the arrival of the firemen the men of the district, young and old, worked most bravely endeavouring to save some of the valuables. A partition joining the hotel to a large wooden building was pulled down in quick time, and water was passed from one to another in order to keep the flames down at this particular point. The origin of the fire remains a mystery.

The barman had just left the lounge room to serve some customers when they noticed the smell of fire and immediately the fire was seen to be issuing from that room. Up to this time there had been no one in the hotel. As far as we can ascertain, the building (which was a large wooden structure) was insured, but not the stock, and as there was a very large stock on the premises the loss will be considerable.

Several accidents which might have terminated seriously were narrowly averted, for instance, the licensee, Mr, Nisson, became overpowered with the smoke and it was with considerable difficulty that he was rescued from his very perilous and unenviable position. One of the chimneys fell and several men who were working the pump narrowly escaped being struck by the scattering of bricks. Most credit is due to all who assisted in any way, for although they could not save the hotel, it is mainly due to their vigorous defence that the other building escaped as it did".

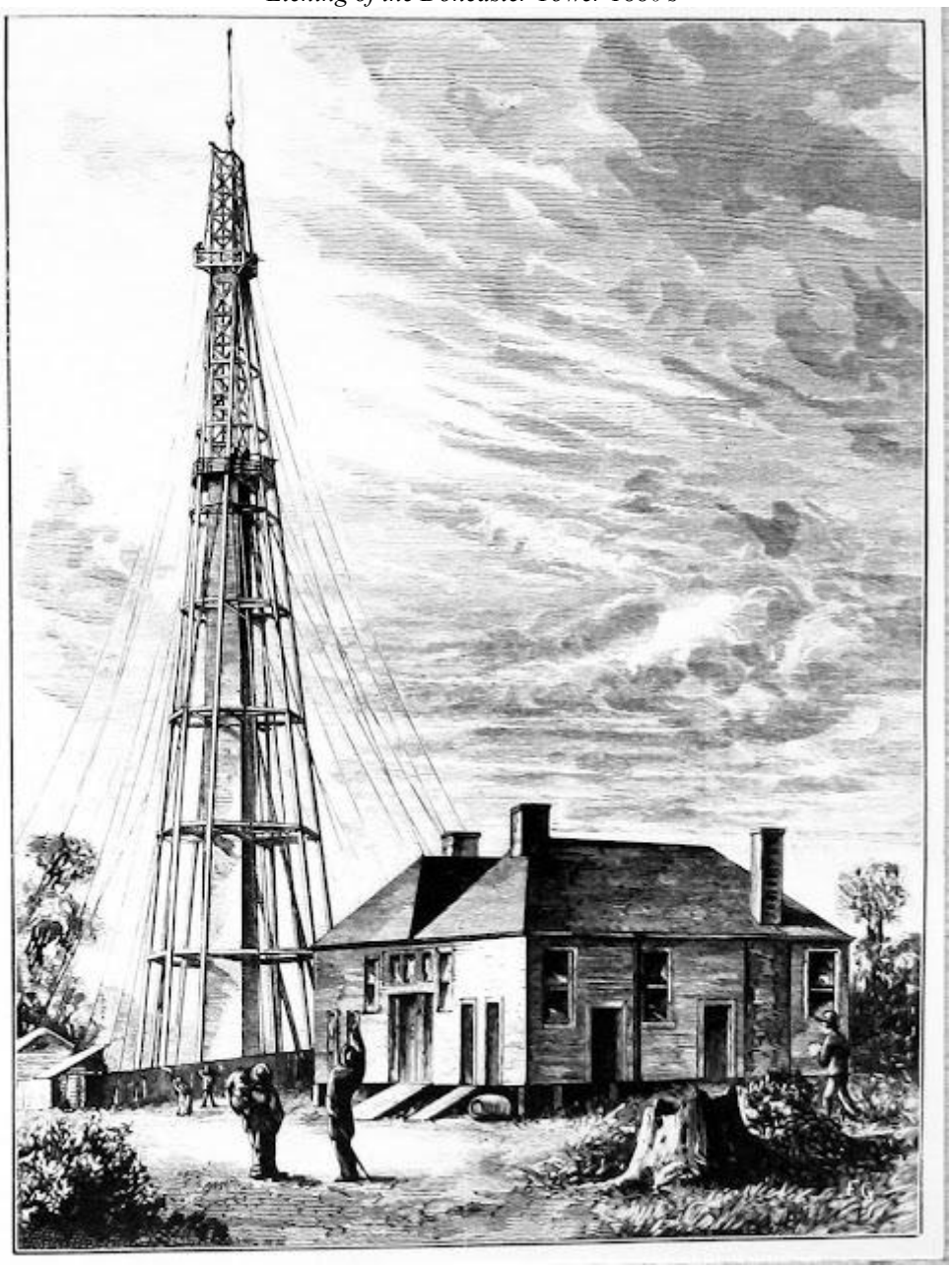


Tower Hotel rebuilt after the fire of 1895

After the destructive fire, a new hotel was built in front of the residential quarters. This was of brick and elaborately ornamented with cement mouldings, brightly coloured ceramic tiles, and a pediment surmounted with decorative knobs. The hotel was symmetrical and was entered through a large archway. On either side were round arched windows of quite differing proportions. On the footpath stood a kerosene light, compulsory for hotels, and beside it as can be seen in the photograph, taken just after 1900, a horse trough. On the advice of the Shire engineer the horse-trough from the Tower Hotel was shifted to the Shire Hall yard in 1895. In August of that year, the Council received a letter from the Commercial Bank "asking by whose authority the trough was removed from the Tower Hotel" Is the trough seen in the photograph taken about 1910 a new one, or has the old one been restored? The hotel was delicensed some years later; it then became a grocer's shop.

The Doncaster Tower

Etching of the Doncaster Tower 1880's



Etching of the Doncaster Tower 1880's

For over 30 years the tower dominated the Doncaster Skyline. This was the third tower which Alfred Hummel built in Doncaster. The first built in 1878 was a 100 ft. lookout beside his new home "Bayview". This blew down a few weeks later. Hummel, not one to be beaten, erected a second tower, this time near the Church of Christ. A few months later this also blew down.

Alfred O. Hummel and his wife Jane Lawford

Hummel, who had received training as an engineer, immediately made plans for a new tower. This time he took precautions against the wind by using guy wires to support the 285 Ft. high tower built on a larger site, on the north side of Doncaster Road.

This was a magnificent tower, commanding views of Port Phillip Bay to the south and Mount Macedon to the north. The tower built of oregon with thick logs as foundations, had two observation platforms. The first was reached by way of an enclosed staircase, the second by a winding wooden staircase. To reach the top one had to brave a climb up an almost perpendicular ladder. Here the tower was topped by a flagpole (now in the possession of the Doncaster and Templestowe Historical Society).

At the base of the tower a man in frockcoat and top hat collected the fee of l/-, for the experience of climbing the tower. This was later reduced to 6 pence. The wooded paddock, in which the tower stood, served as an ideal picnic spot. Mrs Fred Petty (nee Lillian Hislop) can remember theatrical groups coming out from Melbourne, seated in four-horse drags. They would climb the tower playing and singing, making the countryside ring to their music. A popular outing for city folk was by way of train to Box Hill before catching the tram to Doncaster.

On Easter Monday 1892, the tram carried 1,500 passengers for the day. Many of these would have made a climb up the Doncaster tower the highlight of their day.

The tower was sold by auction in 1914 because it was thought to be unsafe. However, whilst the demolition was in progress, it was discovered to be quite a sturdy structure still.

The following passage appeared in the "Australian Sketcher" for Saturday 14 August 1880:
"Beaconsfield Tower, Doncaster Hill. This tower is an immense wood construction, 200 feet high, and was erected by its proprietor, Mr Hummel, for the sole purpose of obtaining the extensive and magnificent view which it commands. Situated on the top of Doncaster Hill, from its upper gallery, the visitor obtains a grand panoramic view of the Dandenongs, the Plenty ranges, Kew, Melbourne, Mount Macedon, Keilor Plains, Port Phillip Bay, and on a clear day, Port Phillip Heads. From the ground floor to the first gallery, (height 100 ft.) the sides of the tower are enclosed, and one has the feeling of starting up a shaft instead of down one; from the first to the second gallery the height is 60 ft., and for this distance, as well as the remaining 40 feet, the tower is open to all the winds of heaven. The ascent so far is achieved by means of a strong, winding wooden staircase, but after the second gallery is reached, the enterprising excursionist must trust the safety of his neck to a nearly perpendicular

ladder. We need not remark that the majority of visitors, having achieved the upper gallery, content themselves with the view it offers, and take the rest for granted.

This is the third tower erected on this spot by Mr Hummel, the two former ones having blown down; the present structure cost £1,000. It is a place of resort on high days and holidays, the public being privileged to toil up its innumerable stairs at the rate of 1/-. a head. There is a temperance hotel attached to the tower, and there are some pleasant paddocks about for the use of picnic parties. Cabs run from Kew to Doncaster two or three times a day in the season, but good pedestrians will find the distance (five or six miles) a pleasant and exhilarating walk through the grassy, undulating country about."

Tom Petty "Bayview"

Bayview from Doncaster Tower

With the arrival about 1870 of Alfred Hummel, a tall handsome Englishman with a considerable fortune, Doncaster's social life found an exciting leader. Alfred married Jane, the elder sister of Edwin and John Birkby Lawford, and made the centre of Doncaster his home.

In 1875, Hummel owned a house and land as well as a blacksmith's shop in Doncaster, also land on the Carlton Estate and at Deep Creek. Hummel had bought a two-roomed weatherboard cottage on ninety acres of land from Sylvester Bowers and in 1877 built "Bayview" around this. The original cottage with its veranda now forms the front, centre section of the building. Behind this, a later portion was added, with a higher gable. This shows over the top of the original cottage. On either side, steeply pitched gabled sections were added; these were edged with intricately fretted barge boards. The veranda, edged with delicately patterned cast-iron, and the shuttered windows lend character to this unusual building.

In 1886, the E.S.& A. Bank opened its first Doncaster agency in one room of the house.

On the east side, divided by a passage-way and lattice work, Hummel erected a separate building. This served as a coach house and servant's quarters. This section was demolished soon after 1900. It was alongside this that Hummel built the first of his three towers, 100 ft. high, to command a view of the surrounding countryside. Alfred Hummel was a generous host, giving dinners and elegant parties for the elite of Doncaster and visitors, at "Bayview". He also organised delightful picnics into the Dandenong Ranges.

In 1885, Hummel left for Tasmania and Tom Petty bought the property. In 1886, the E.S.& A. Bank opened its first Doncaster Agency in one room of the house. Life at "Bayview" lost none of its vitality with Tam Petty. His inventive brain and energy made the house a centre of activity. Today "Bayview" in its garden of trees is almost hidden from view. We owe much to the occupants of this house who have so carefully preserved it over the past century. The present owner is Mrs F. Petty.

Church Of Christ

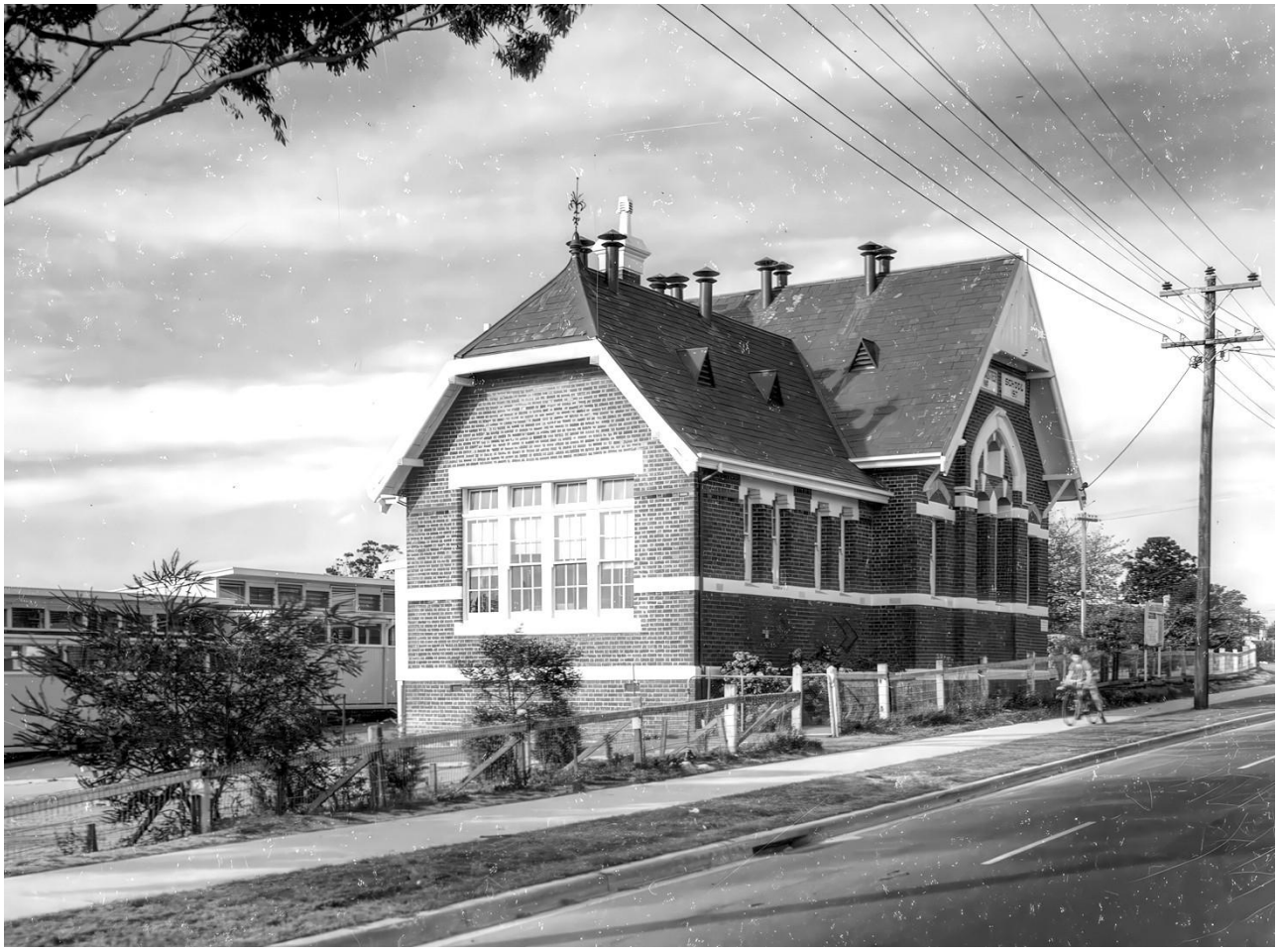
Doncaster Church of Christ built 1889, with the original 1864 timber church at the rear. c.1913

In the year 1863, Mr Henry William Crouch of the Carlton Church came into the district. He had been supplied with the names of several Baptists who lived in Doncaster. After making their acquaintance, several meetings were held at which there was much discussion as to the advisability of starting a Church of Christ.

On 30 August 1863, the first service was held in the stone cottage belonging to Mr Porter (snr), in Whitten's Lane (originally Porter's Lane). The number present at that first service was eight. The distribution of pamphlets played an important part in the establishment of the church. Mr H.W. Crouch obtained a supply of the tract "Sincerity Seeking the Way to Heaven", and distributed them in the district. The tract distribution proved to be an effective means of reaching the people and the congregation soon increased in numbers. The first gospel service was conducted by Brother C.G. Lawson in the Baptist Chapel, then on Doncaster Road., afterwards services were held under the peppermint trees at Lauer's Corner.

The growing and vigorous church soon found it necessary to establish a permanent meeting place. A weatherboard building 22 ft. x 18 ft. was erected in 1864 on land donated by Mr R. Williamson. In their new home, the church made substantial progress. (Some Doncaster residents claim that the snail wooden chapel, which the Baptists built near the Shire Hall, was purchased and moved to the Church of Christ site) In 1881, a new era in the history of the church began, when a resident evangelist was appointed. During the previous five years visiting preachers had come from Melbourne. The year 1888 saw another step forward, when the old weather-board building, which had been enlarged some tine earlier, was moved further back, to be used as a Sunday school hall, and a neat brick building erected. This church was constructed of dark red brick, roofed with slate and unadorned except for the barge boards, the thin bands of decorative fretwork around the roof line.

State School No. 197 Doncaster - William E. Goodson, Head Teacher



Doncaster Primary School in 1972, showing the 1950-60s additions at the rear

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State School No 197 Doncaster was originally a denominational school (1860 to 1863) and later from 1864 to 1874 was Common School No 197. It was constituted a State School on the 1st January 1875. From 1864 until 1886 the school was conducted on the property originally belonging to Max Schramm.

The story of this school building is best told in the correspondence which passed to and from the Education Department.

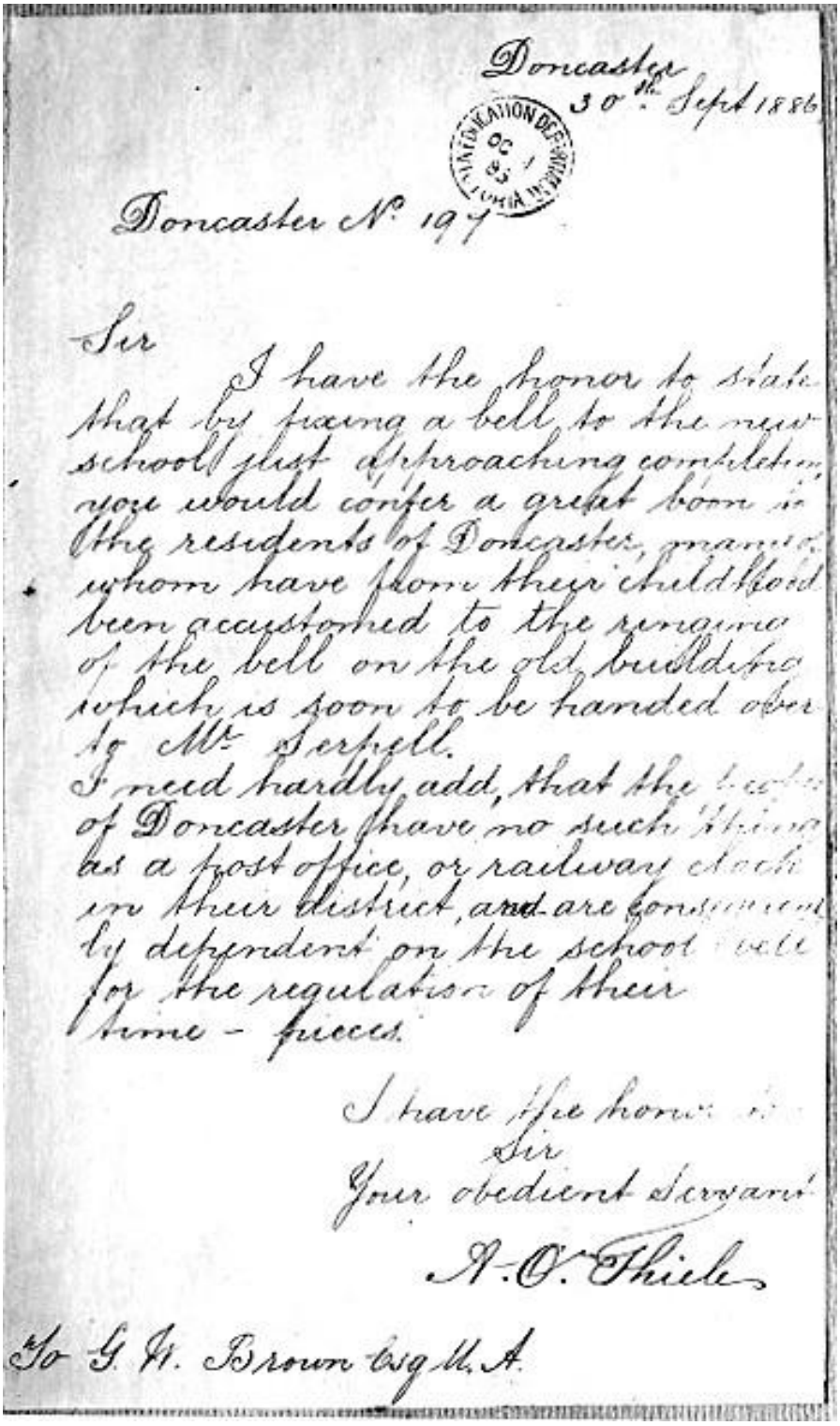
- 23 September 1885: W.S. Williams, Correspondent to John Keys Esq. M.P. stating that the Board of Advice and parents had formed a deputation to wait on the minister to ask for a new school at Doncaster.
- 29 September 1885: John Keys M.P. to the Hon. D. Gillies, Minister for Education, requesting appointment for the deputation from Doncaster.
- 13 October 1885: Proposition put forward to exchange four acres near the tower (Serpell's land) for the present school site (one acre) and buildings. If the Education Dept., would put up a suitable building the parents would fence and improve the grounds.
- 18 November 1885: John Keys M.P. to the Minister of Education "Mr Serpell's offer to give the Dept. 4 acres of land having a frontage to Doncaster Main Road of about 3 chain 20 by a depth of about 12 chain 50 links for the present school site and buildings on condition that the Dept., put up a close paled fence from A to B distance 12 – 50. I think the inhabitants might fairly be asked to do this work and the Dept., the front fence. Kindly inform us as to whether you accept offer and when you hope to commence the new

building". Education Dept. noted that a Survey was required and the Crown Solicitor was looking at the plan.

- 1 December 1885: Board of Advice notified the Dept. that at a meeting of residents it was decided to fence the site as soon as the ground is properly surveyed.
- January 1886: Mr Schramm agreed to a renewal of the lease for school premises for a further six months.
- 18 February 1886: Crown Solicitor to Secretary for Education. Memo re Exchange of titles R. Serpell and the Minister. The Dept. noted that the property site, school and residence were valued at £650. The new building should be ready in twelve months.
- 19 March 1886:

a. The Dept. estimates a building to accommodate 150 would be required.
b. Make provision for future extensions.
c. Maximum monthly average attendance last year was 133.
d. Considerable increase in population shortly anticipated.
e. Appear to be about 200 individual school children in neighbourhood

- 30 March 1886: Exchange of titles completed and the renting of present State School from Mr Serpell was duly executed.
- 1 July 1886: A contract was let for erection of a new school with accommodation for 138 pupils (1537 sq. ft.) and the estimated date of completion was 11 October 1886.
- 10 July 1886: Contract entered into for construction of an underground tank 8′ x 10′ for £30. The Dept. at first proposed to use two 400 gallon ships tanks but then decided to accept Board of Advice's offer and contribute £15 towards construction of the underground tank.
- 30 September 1886: The Head Teacher, Mr A.O. Thiele requested the Education Dept. to transfer the bell from the old building to the new school. Habits die hard "The residents of Doncaster have from their childhood been accustomed to the ringing of the bell on the old building. The people of Doncaster have no such thing as a post office, or a railway clock in their district end are consequently dependent on the school bell for the regulation of their time pieces. To this the Education Dept. replied that no turret had been erected and it would be on expensive matter to erect one now. A bell in a post would be provided for £5 or £6. This was duly done at a total cost of £8.11.9.



Doncaster
30th Sept 1886

Doncaster No 197

Sir

I have the honor to state that by fixing a bell to the new school just approaching completion you would confer a great boon in the residents of Doncaster, many of whom have from their childhood been accustomed to the ringing of the bell on the old building which is soon to be handed over to Mr Serpell.
I need hardly add, that the [illegible] of Doncaster have no such thing as a post office, or railway clock in their district, and are consequently dependent on the school bell for the regulation of their time-pieces.

I have the honor to be
Sir
Your obedient Servant
A.O. Thiele

To G. H. Brown Esq M.A.

30 September 1886 re school Bell from A.O. Thiele: Doncaster 30th Sept 1886 Doncaster No 197: Sir, I have the honour to state that by fixing a bell to the new school just approaching completion you would confer a great boon in the students of Doncaster, many of whom have from their childhood been accustomed to the ringing of the bell on the old building which is soon to be handed over to Mr Serpell. I need hardly add, that the people of Doncaster have no such thing as a post office or railway clock in their district and are consequently dependent on the school bell for regulation of their time-pieces. I have the honour, Sir, Your obedient servant, A.O. Thiele. To G. H. Brown Esq. M.A.

• 12 October 1886: Board of Advice to Education Dept, pointing out that school furniture had been in use for 25 years and had been nailed and re-nailed and was quite unsuitable. They therefore requested new furniture. The Education Dept replied stating new furniture would be supplied and the new school would

be ready on 1 November 1886. Classes were conducted in the new school from that date and have been ever since. After two years the down pipes presented a problem to Mr Thiele who was finding difficulty in clearing them. The walls were being damaged by the constant overflow. Eventually wire netting was provided for the spouting to prevent it from becoming clogged with leaves.

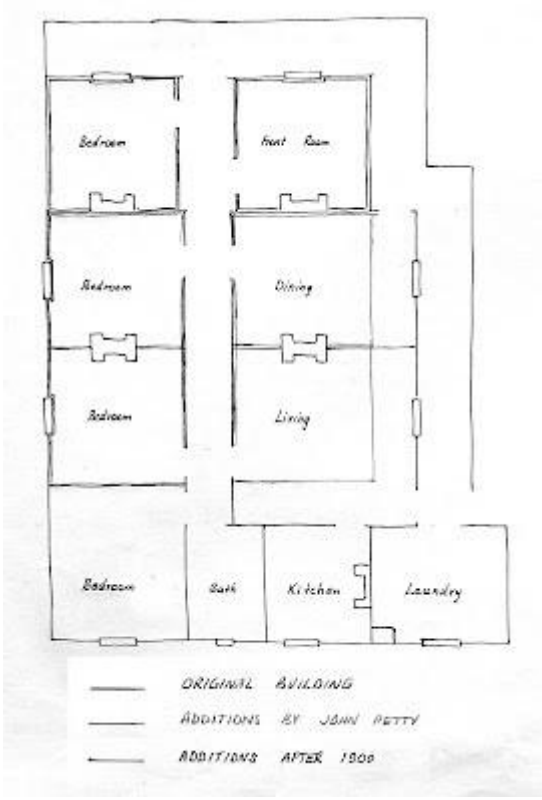
- 27 September 1892: A.O. Thiele advised the Education Dept, that "the woodwork is in need of paint, the walls require recolouring and the white ants are at work in one of the W.C." A tender for £46 was accepted for the painting.
- 7 December 1893: "It was discovered in the Office of Titles that the Title of this School site was inaccurate, and the title as therefore been amended, Hereunder is given a copy of the description and plan as shown in title".
- February 1897: Mr Goodson reported to the Education Dept that the gymnastic equipment installed in 1895 was now in a dangerous condition as it was "decayed and worn out". In November of that year new equipment was installed.
- 21 December 1899: Mr. W. Goodson to Education Dept stating the pump to be out of order. Complained about having to draw water for 100 children by means of a rope and bucket. He requested either a new pump or to fix a pipe and tap to the two inch Yan Yean water pipe which passes along the road within six feet of the school gate.
- October 2nd 1900: Wm. Goodson to Education Dept. He requested painting and repairs to the school the tender already having been let, to be done whilst the school was closed because of measles. District Health Officer Dr. Vaughan thought it wise to close the school. The Education Dept complied with Mr. Goodson's request.

The substantial, solid red brick school building which now forms part of State School No 197 is much as it was in 1900, except for one room added to the east side. This had been allowed the original planning and building, even to having a bricked in doorway ready, and was built in matching brick. The school has very decorative polychromatic brick work and also bands of cement rendering. The multi-paned windows at the back of the school are framed in a decorative way, yet are treated more simply than the front windows. The line of the slate roof is broken by many ventilators, and, elaborate chimney and a wrought iron finial. In 1900 the infant's room had a gallery. This raised platform provided storage beneath. Little Myrtle Petty (now Mrs. R. Moffat) thought she would be locked in this "Black Hole of Calcutta" if she was ever naughty!

Information from original correspondence files for Doncaster State School, Latrobe Library Archives.

John Petty

John Petty's house taken about 1879 with the Church of Christ in foreground



John Petty's house

John Petty bought this house from Mrs Joseph Pickering about 1891. After the death of her husband in 1870, Mrs Pickering had this house built. Hummell built his second tower alongside this house. One morning, Mrs Pickering (who was rather deaf) found that her door would not open. During the night the tower had blown down, missing her by inches. The original four roomed cottage was added to by John Petty. He added two rooms to the front, building these of timber blocks in imitation of stone. The cast-iron trimmed veranda was supported by decorative wooden posts. Extensions were built at the back of the house when Mr Don Petty (John's younger son) lived there.

In one corner of John Petty's front garden, protruding from the hedge, was a small building known as "Cockatoo Store", a disused Estate Agents Office, and yet another reminder of the "Land Boom" in Doncaster.

Eliza Charlotte Pickering (Hill) and daughter Kate