

Sunnybanks (Oakleigh) Estate

Félicienne A. Marsland

Bertrand Lancelot Rumney sold the "Oakleigh" property to Alan James Young, a company director, on the 22nd January 1945. Mr Young told him that he intended to subdivide and sell the land into many building lots. He hoped these lots would be "snapped up" by the servicemen returning from the war.

Mr Rumney did not like the inference that the whole property would be cut into small areas, so he saw his solicitors about what could be done after the land was surveyed. The outcome of this was a caveat on all titles that only one dwelling could be built on each lot, and no other buildings, except garages, on any such lot. He also made sure that the lots were considerably larger than Mr Young had originally intended. Mr Rumney stated that although the subdivision had been called "Sunnybanks", he would like the main street through the subdivision to be called Oakleigh Avenue.

On the 9th July 1946 Mr B.L. Rumney and Mr A. Young signed a mutual agreement that there would be eighty seven allotments on the land. All were a very good size and all had an excellent water view.

A large portion of land running adjacent to Cartwright Creek and right to Mount Nelson was taken over by the Kingborough Council. This was agisted out to various owners of cattle and horses for many years. Later this land was declared a reserve.

Another large parcel on the Taroon side was bought by George Jackson and, I believe, is now being divided.

The top area of Oakleigh Avenue abutting Mount Nelson reserve was bought by R. Nute. Although it was subdivided, this land had not been passed for building due to the lack of water. Therefore only the lower blocks were built on for many years, until finally the Council built a reservoir at the very top of Oakleigh Avenue. This enabled Oakleigh Avenue and the side streets to have a permanent water supply.

The land on which the house of "Oakleigh" was situated was divided into three lots. These were bought back by Mr Rumney after the subdivision was approved. Just before his death he saw his beautiful green pasture "gone

to seed" and the old drive lined with oak trees turned into a muddy street by tractors and bulldozers.

His nephew, Laurence Rumney, and I bought the land on which the old stables stood. My children were covered with mud up to their waists coming home from school, as there were no kerbs or gutters. Eventually the Council sealed a proper road and put in driveways, kerbs and gutters, but it was very primitive in 1946.

There are still some reminders of the old farm despite the 1967 fires. The wild violets still grow in Cartwright Creek. The old orchard at the creek is still partly intact and bearing fruit. The pear trees would be almost one hundred years old; they were never pruned and have weathered fires.

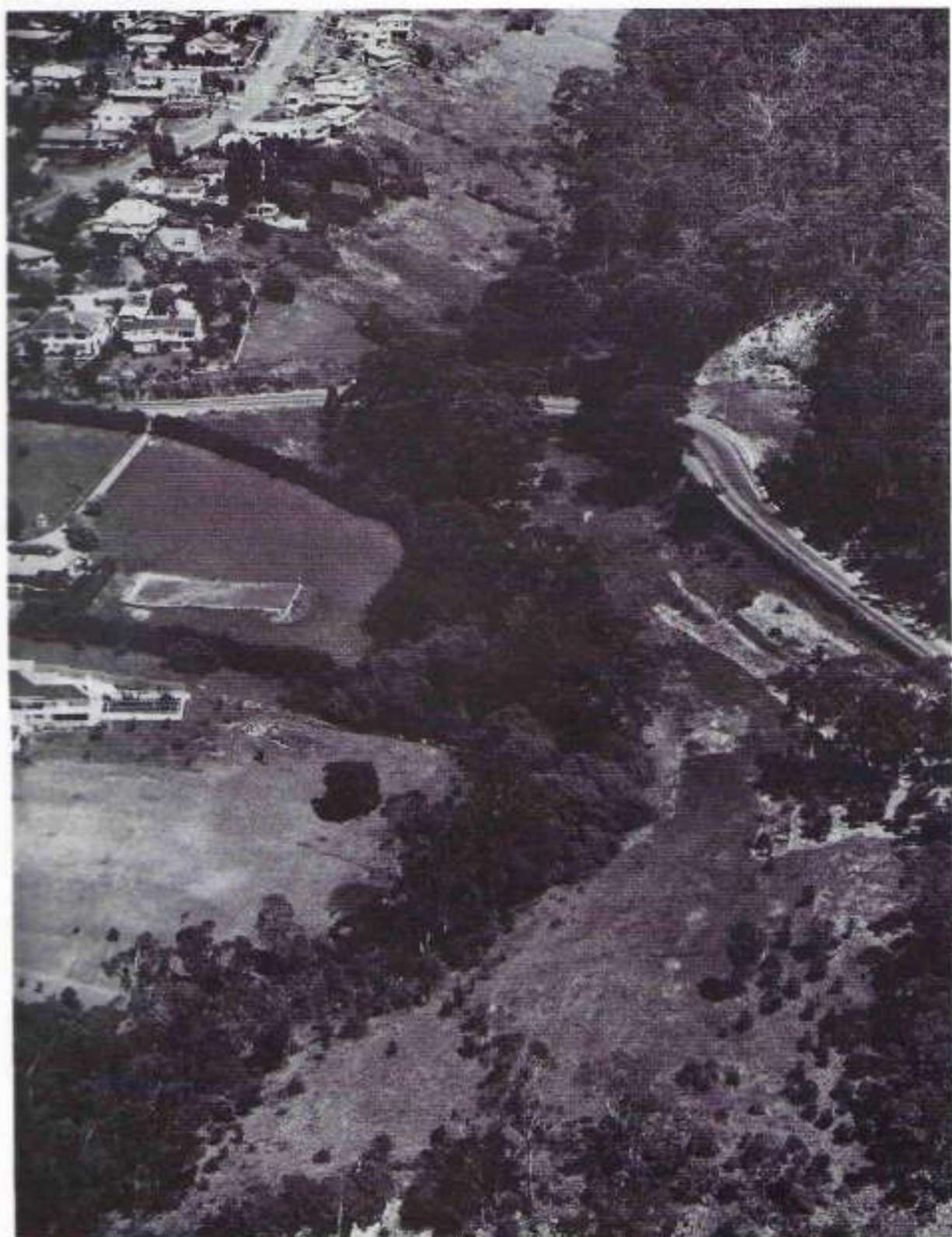
We are always coming across the miles of french drains that were dug, various skeletons of cows and horses and thousands of horse shoes. There was an old bull shed on this lot for many years, but the fire destroyed that too.

It is still a lovely tree lined street, but when one looks up the valley from the main road the backs of the blocks look very untidy. The Council does its best by keeping down the long grass, but unfortunately blackberries have now taken over.

To those who bought and built on the creek side of the estate, to the north is a delightful curtain of green. The northern side of the creek belongs to the Hobart City Council and forms part of Truganini Park.

I think Mr B. Rumney would have been very pleased to see the gardens and buildings established in this pleasant street and its adjacent avenues. Unfortunately that was not to be.





Cartwright Creek, the boundary of the North Ward of Kingborough, with Oakleigh Avenue in the top left corner, December 1966.

PHOTO VERN REID