

## The First Bus Shelter

Bill Shelley

For some time soon after the Second World War the residents of Taroona asked for a bus shelter to be erected on the Channel Highway. However these requests fell on deaf ears and so some residents decided to take matters into their own hands.

A tram stop formerly located near Heathorn Avenue in Sandy Bay had been moved, but the shelter was left in its original position. Four Ex-servicemen, armed with saws drove to Sandy Bay, sawed the shelter's legs and loaded it onto Harold Suckling's truck. Triumphant, the raiding party returned to erect their prize opposite Seaview Avenue. Here the shelter remained for nearly thirty years.



*The Bus Shelter in the centre left of the photograph, with the Coolamon Road State School on the right, 1946.*

PHOTO GRACE DIXON.

## Childhood Reminiscences

1947-1959

Dianne Allen

Driving past the corner of Coolamon Road and the Channel Highway, where the State School once stood and seeing new buildings going up, brought back to me many fond memories of the original, old Taroona school. I can still remember the excitement that I felt when I turned five and went to school for the first time. All the classes from grades 1a and 1b to grade 4 were held in the same room. Our head teacher's name was Mrs Kenna. To me she appeared tall, thin and very strict, but what a marvellous teacher. Her sister, Mrs Leslie was an assistant teacher and was very quiet and mild mannered in comparison.

Outside the classroom was a lobby which held the boys' bags at one end and the girls' bags at the other. Boys and girls entered by separate doors. I remember cleaning blackboards, boys mixing the ink and filling inkwells, dirty fingers, finger nail inspections, making tea for the teachers when we were in the oldest age group, lessons in manners, boys politely lifting their caps to the girls and holding doors open for them. Concerts and plays were performed. Multiplication tables and the three R's were all drummed into the various levels around the room at the same time. However we all survived and went off to the larger schools well founded in the basics, to learn to compete against many more children. Going from a small, 40-children school to a class of over 50 was quite a shock.

Happenings at the Old Public Hall live on in the memories of those people who played, prayed and laughed there. I remember the Sunday School run by old Mr Escott, church, dances both old time and square dances, the Hall decked out in gum boughs and bales of hay, "ladies please bring a plate along with your partner". I recall bands, children dancing, both with each other and with their parents, getting under everyone's feet, playing the drums at supper time, eating lush cream cakes and drinking tea, the stage where so many trod the boards, Country Women's Association concerts, Christmas concerts, film nights when everyone came-such fun!

Behind the hall, now the site of a car park, was a creek. This was very muddy and ran

## *Twentieth Century*

down behind the houses to the left of Tarooma Crescent. Lined with willows, it was a veritable haven for young adventurers of the time. In the paddock behind the James' old home 'Kendalville' on the main road were a couple of old barns which gradually fell down, not without the help of the many children who played in them. The Quarantine Station was another forbidden playground, but we dared to walk the fences and some of us dared to tease the latest bull in residence, from a relatively safe distance.

Down along the beach were many boat-sheds, from the roofs of which we regularly jumped. An old gum tree on the bank high above the largest boat shed had a rope. If one was game enough, one could swing out on the rope over the sand dunes and path, to be caught back by the stronger and older children. This rope hung there for years, swung on by Suckling, Champion, Williams children and many, many more. This tree still stands tall in the area which is now Ashton's Lookout. Further, towards the Harris's home, between the second and third beaches as we called them, we found shells along the beach edge behind the shelter of a reef of rocks. These we believed to be the remains of Aboriginal middens.

Continuing across the creek which runs down from Churchill Road we came to the Alum cliffs where we often played, climbed rocks and rescued trapped dogs on cliff ledges. We played on the rock shelves where boys went spear fishing for crays and all sorts of fish, lit fires on the sand to cook fish and to boil mussels in tins. We climbed and ran along the cliffs, unheeding of the terrible drop below, up towards the old mausoleum on the tallest cliff. Here the three lead-lined coffins of members of the Moir family had lain upon benches of blackwood until they were removed to Queenborough Cemetery in 1901. Walking on the cliff tops was quite spooky as one could feel a presence of those others who went before: convicts, soldiers and unhappy people. The sheer drop from the highest point was enough to give me goose bumps.

We often crept from the cliff edge back towards the Shot Tower to follow the outline

of the old Moir's garden built up from rocks and earth, and down the cliff side to the small cove at the base of the cliff where stores must have once been rowed ashore to the Brown's River Probation Station.

I remember when the Shot Tower was reopened in 1952 after repairs. There were ladies dressed in period costume and somehow I managed to be part of the scene, and was also dressed up in period clothes.

A few years later, along with a group of others, we used to walk to the Tower. I can remember one of the boys walking around the wire and wood railing on the top, much to the horror and discomfort of those watching. However he has survived to be a respectable citizen.

We had picnics in the bush with walks up the creeks. We often started on the bottom side of the main road so that we could walk through the stone tunnel which carried the water under the main road, and then we continued on up Churchill Road. We wandered in the hills towards the old deserted farmhouses in which families lived when we first came to Tarooma. These two old farmhouses were interesting for children to potter around. Being empty, they unlocked the doors of childrens' dreams of clubs and living away from the adult world. The second farm, which was burnt down in an early bushfire, had a magnificent view over the mouth of the river from Bruny Island to Lower Sandy Bay. I have memories of wild horses in the bush, cattle, and bushfires which set the hills aflame.

I remember the Jenkin's dairy, the remains of farm orchards which we raided for fruit and the Hinsby house.

The youth groups were run by the Baptist church for children of all denominations. Much of the church work was instigated by Mr Escott.

After the 2nd World War many men and women moved into the area to build their new homes and to bring up families. I recall so many personalities: old Mr Bower the postman, Captain Ford the ships' pilot, and the old families: the Charltons, James, Hinsbys, Sucklings and Williams, to name only a few. All of these made Tarooma, for me, the best place in which to grow up.