

FOREST HILL Residential Kindergarten



1926 - 1976

FOREST HILL
Residential
Kindergarten

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FOREWORD

Christine Heinig; Ph.D., M.A. (Columb.),
Principal, Kindergarten Training College, 1938-9

The Forest Hill Holiday Home is, in effect, the Perfect Blossom of a Hybrid — a social-educational ideal, conceived as a charity sponsored by the early graduates of the Melbourne Kindergarten Training College as an extension of the "growth-in-a-garden" philosophy of the Kindergarten.

Forest Hill provides a home in the country for a few weeks for kindergarten children who need special nurture, and provides opportunity for the parents of these children to gain perhaps a new perspective on their job as parents, and time to "rehabilitate" to some extent the home. This is a constructive continuation of the service of a kindergarten, and a program which could only be conceived by dedicated teachers who saw the needs.

It was not an easy task to raise the funds for grounds, building and upkeep, but the "grads" did it. Moreover, down the years, with a deep sense of devotion and service the Forest Hill Holiday Home has been supported by the efforts and devotion of the graduates, and has been an outstanding example not only for Australia but world-wide.

Long may it continue to serve its constructive, positive, necessary and personalised role in society.

Magnolia Springs,
Alabama, U.S.A.
February 1976

Little boy, on a windy day,
looking up at the tall
gum trees:
"I know what makes the wind,
it's all the trees waving
their arms."

#

Little girl picking wild
flowers, looked up and said:
"I like it up here — its
quiet and you can think."

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND TRIBUTES

We pay tribute to:

Dr Mary Gutteridge for the inspiration out of which grew the whole project of Forest Hill.

Miss Dorothy Rosner for her part in developing the scheme, and to whom the playroom is dedicated.

Mrs M. Phillips who opened the first Opportunity Shop to raise funds.

Mrs S. White who has been the Free Kindergarten Union representative on the Forest Hill Committee for several decades.

Miss Mary Salmon, committee secretary, who died from poliomyelitis in 1937. The log cabin was built in her memory.

Mr Picken for many years of generosity involving printing and stationery.

Rodda Ballard and Vroland for honorary legal services.

Contributors:

Brenda Cooke, Ruth Drake, Anne Dreyer, Maie Gregory, Christine Heinig, Audrey Holder, Joan Hornabrook, Wendy Hunter, Esma Kelso, Madge Ogilvy, Helen Sage, Patsy Walford.

Auxiliaries:

Blackburn Ladies, Boynde Guild, Leisure Craft, Senior Golfers Association of Victoria (through Mrs Ellie Hinton).

History Committee:

Anne Dreyer, Margaret Gowans, Maie Gregory, Joan Hornabrook, Esma Kelso, Sheila Macneil, Madge Ogilvy, Isabel Strahan, Patsy Walford.

Production and Design:

Thanks are due to Pauline Rivington (Rogers) for the cover design; to Mr Hedley Ham of Tudor Printery Pty Ltd for his assistance in producing the book; and to Jim Ellis for editorial assistance.

PERSONAL PARAGRAPHS

Hilda Forster

It was to a small weatherboard cottage overlooking Canterbury Road, Forest Hill, that Hilda Forster came as Director, soon after it opened in 1926 as a Holiday Home for children from the Free Kindergartens. Many were the stories that Hilda had to tell of those first years, and the teething problems that were met — even to the hole in the staff living-room floor and the careful moving of the table to cover it. But problems have their funny side, and Hilda Forster was quick to appreciate it.

Ten years later a new Home was built, and, from the smaller Home with its fifteen children and small staff, Hilda and her staff had to adjust to a brand new building. There were other changes too. Because of a poliomyelitis epidemic that hit Melbourne in 1936, Hilda Forster now had the care of thirty-five children, and a large resident and visiting staff, in what was then an After Care Home.

There could not have been a more able and suitable person to cope with so great a change. Hilda had a real love and patient understanding of people, coupled with a delightful sense of humour. She made a very real and happy home for staff and children. One of many little things that helped towards this feeling was her placing of flowers in the staff bedrooms. How Hilda achieved all she did is amazing. She found time to be with the children, and to help here, there and everywhere, be it making soap jelly for the very large laundry, helping towards the excellent meals, making butter (from the Home cows) and having an occasional spell in the garden. Arranging meals for so many was a mammoth task in itself. Hilda's ready wit and sense of humour kept things in a proper perspective.

Through all the years Hilda Forster was at the Holiday Home, her staff's welfare was only just second to that of the children. Those who were privileged to work with her felt that she had complete trust and confidence in them, and they gave of their best and were a happy team.

Watching Hilda with the children one learned a lot. To be near when she was telling them a story or, better still, some of A.A. Milne's verses, was a never-to-be-forgotten experience. On other occasions she shared happily with the children the fun of raking up the mown grass, rides in the cart, milking the cows or the making of butter. They were happy days.

When Hilda Forster retired in 1941 she was very greatly missed. She had given so much to all who knew her. Later, when she died after a long illness, her many relations, friends and fellow-workers built an equipment and play shed in her memory.

* * * * *

Mary Butler retired from the Holiday Home in 1963. She gave voluntary service for nearly forty years — a record that few can equal. Hers was a full-time interest. Mary was resident at the Home and her days were long and busy. She worked mainly with the children and they delighted in her games and stories. These latter she usually made up as she went along; some even became serials. If only there had been a tape recorder others could enjoy them too.

Mary had a great love of, and understanding with, children. Being quietly spoken she did not excite them. But besides her work with the children, she was always willing to help in other ways. She spent many hours patiently mending the children's books, and the finess of her work with her needle as she carefully mended socks, coats and other clothing must have added years to their wear.

Since her retirement Mary Butler has continued to be interested in the Holiday Home — now the Forest Hill Residential Kindergarten for Emergency Care — and makes reins and other equipment for the children.

* * * * *

Maie Gregory

(Material supplied in support of Miss Gregory's citation, 1974.)

Kindergartens affiliated with the Free Kindergarten Union of Victoria were mainly situated in the industrial suburbs, during the 1920's when the depression was at its height. Many children attending these kindergartens were suffering from malnutrition, and the results of a depressed family life. Fathers were unemployed; families were existing on sustenance, and the children shared their parents anxieties.

The inspiration of Miss Mary Gutteridge, then principal of the Kindergarten Training College, influenced the Graduates of this College to establish a Holiday Home, where these children could be rehabilitated.

Later when times became more affluent and living conditions improved the Graduates' Association undertook a survey to find out if there were a need for emergency care for pre-school children. There proved to be an urgent need for such a service and the Forest Hill Committee undertook to provide it.

During the poliomyelitis epedemic in 1937 Forest Hill was handed over for after care and Kindergarteners remained on the staff and helped with this programme.

Miss Gregory has been on the staff for forty-seven years, first as Assistant and then Director, and has contributed towards all these ventures. She has the unique gift of providing security for children from families in stress, and is able to guide parents and children. Many children have received loving and understanding care under her guidance, and many families have been rehabilitated. Miss Gregory has been identified with Forest Hill since its inception and has given selfless and devoted service, often relinquishing free time to meet emergencies.

Her contribution towards this community service has been far beyond the bounds of duty. In 1970 she received the Social Service Honour award for outstanding service. In the 1974 New Year Honours, Miss Gregory was honoured by the Queen with an M.B.E. In the same year she retired after forty-five years' service to Forest Hill.

* * * * *



Hilda Forster bringing in the hay



Maie Gregory

Carmel Curtain

Finding a replacement for Miss Gregory proved even harder than we had feared. Despite six months of advertising locally, nationally and overseas we were unable to find one suitable applicant.

Time was running out when, by chance, the committee heard of an experienced mothercraft nurse who had recently returned from Vietnam. In Saigon Miss Curtain had been in charge of a babies' home, and had previous experience at "Allambie" Children's Reception Centre, Burwood. One of the Vietnamese waifs in her care is now very much part of the Forest Hill scene, an energetic and captivating six-year-old named Joanna. She has recently acquired a baby brother from Thailand.

Carmel's compassion and empathy with the families who come to Forest Hill have won her high regard from all our referral agencies, and she is a worthy successor to Miss Gregory.

* * * * *

Mary, who had seen a cow milked for the first time rejected her evening glass of milk —

"I don't want milk out of the cow's belly. I want a cup of the milk out of a tin."

* * * * *

Ken discovered seven ducks' eggs in a nest behind a bush in the garden. As he walked after her waddling across the lawn, he asked: "Why didn't they crack inside when she walked?"

By Anne Dreyer, Maie Gregory, Helen Sage.

In 1922 the Free Kindergarten Union established the first Kindergarten Training College at Kew, Victoria. From this beginning a small number of kindergarten teachers had emerged and in 1924 formed themselves into The Past Student's Association of the Kindergarten Training College. Most of these young teachers found themselves on the staff of kindergartens in the inner industrial suburbs of Melbourne. This of course was before the days of child endowment, and unemployment handouts.

These young teachers were appalled and concerned at the poverty and distress they met during their teaching experience as assistants to their untiring directors. It was often necessary to bath and put fresh clothing on some children before they could take their place in the group. One of the pioneer directors told of speaking to a mother about the hygiene of her child. The reply came, "larn 'im, don't smell 'im." Many of the children had bad sores and head lice, and suffered from malnutrition. A district nurse attended these kindergartens once a week to cope with these situations.

The teachers became more and more aware of the deprivation of their children: these city children of the slums. Few people owned cars in those days, and many of these children knew nothing beyond their back yards or the street. Animals, flowers, birds and trees were well beyond their comprehension. Several of these teachers took one or two of their little pupils home for the weekend. These children came back starry eyed to kindergarten to tell of their adventures. At a Past Students' Association meeting held in the gracious old hall of Mooroolbeek one evening, Mary Gutteridge, the then Principal of the College told how she had taken a group of London children for a holiday in the English country, with delightful results. It was she who inspired us with her vision of giving city children a holiday in the country.

AND SO THE SEED WAS SOWN.

In 1924, a land and estate agent, Mr Weller, presented us with a block of land at Boronia. We were delighted, for this was a beginning, and we began to dream of our children's holiday home in the country, even when we discovered there was a large quarry on the land, and that the title deeds were lost. We began to work towards this end. However, in 1926 Mr E. Burke (father of our Honorary Secretary Constance) directed our attention to a fourteen-acre property at Forest Hill. There was a small farm house on the property, built some sixty years ago and worthy of repairs and extension, and the property was selling at £100 an acre. This seemed a much more viable proposition, and with the help of many friends we were able to raise the £1400 (\$2800), which left us with a bank balance of two shillings and eleven pence.

Now we were property owners, and we realised we could not leave the house standing empty while we furthered our plans. So we decided to let it to suitable tenants. It was quite devoid of furniture, so we put out an appeal. The press was very good to us in those days, and lo and behold a Footscray dealer sent us a wagon-load of marble-topped washstands, kapock mattresses, and the beautiful cedar table which is still in use at Forest Hill. The problem was, who could be at the cottage on the Saturday morning to receive this furniture? At that time it seemed far out in the country, and not easy to get to by public transport. However three of us went up on Friday evening ready to receive the furniture early next morning. What a strange experience for city dwellers: no electricity or gas, and a well with a pump outside for water. We did what cleaning up we could, had a meal, then lit the copper which was also outside, ready for our baths. It was only then we realised there were no blinds or curtains on the windows. A wierd feeling indeed, as though we were far out in the bush. What it is to be young — but that was fifty years ago.

So the farmhouse was furnished and let for one year. The original cottage consisted of two rooms with a lean-to storeroom and bathroom. This was connected to the kitchen, bedroom and dairy by a brick verandah. Twelve years previously, two good front rooms and a verandah had been added, and were connected to the main house by a narrow passage. This then, was what we had to work on in order to make a suitable holiday home for ten pre-school children. This was the result.

Now we had to consider the financing of the alterations and furnishing of our home. The Past Students' Associations special effort was to set aside one Saturday, when we were all asked to hire ourselves out for various jobs. We undertook child minding, cleaning silver and cars, painting kitchen furniture, gardening, and in fact anything that was offering. Our employers were more than generous, but history does not record how much was raised on that day. Once again our many good friends rallied round us to help meet this big expense. Mrs M.M. Phillips organized an Opportunity Shop which raised £1000 (\$2000) towards this end. When our venture became a reality in February 1927 we appointed our first Director, Miss Liliias Lothian at the rate of £150, (no not a week, a year,) and Maie Gregory at the rate of £100 per year. As Maie remarks: "Money didn't seem to matter."

But let her continue the story:
"That first night in February 1927, as we sat by the light of a candle in the old farm kitchen, with its black wood stove, and wire safe, a little mouse scuttled across the sloping floor. The cocks on a neighbouring hill crowed so loudly that I thought we would not get to sleep. Three-foot high snap-dragons lining the brick path glowed in the moonlight.

"Miss Lothian had the only bedroom. It had a sloping floor with the door cut at the lower edge, to clear the floor when opened. I had a little dressing room which could only be entered by shutting the back door, and was kept open by a covered brick. I either slept on a closed verandah with four children, or in Miss Lothian's room when she slept with the children.

"Half the cottage was very old. The boards in the staff sitting-room were nine inches wide, and similar ones had not been made for sixty years. The two large front rooms that had been added recently were converted to a bedroom for six children and a playroom. There was a gap between these two rooms and the staff sitting-room, and this was filled by a tiny childrens' bathroom, containing a chip heater and a high bath set in a wooden draining board. On the other side was a small linen room. A ramp replaced the steps down to the staff sitting-room. Detached from the main building were two rows of sheds. One row contained a harness room, stable, double cowbale and tiny laundry, so small that the laundress had to sort the clothes on the grass outside. Later this was enlarged to house a "Stampco" washing machine and the harness room was made into a drying room. The stable became a "man's" room, and the cowbales, floored and white washed, made an afternoon rest room for the children. The long rows of fowl pens had many uses; homes for pets and fowls and their food. I vividly remember a small boy with a helper trying to recapture a large black orpington rooster he had let loose."

It was agreed that the first ten children would all come from the same kindergarten so as to help them adapt more easily to the new situation. Also the director from their kindergarten would bring them. They would say goodbye to their parents at home. Those suffering most from malnutrition would be selected first by the kindergarten doctor. After weeks of frantic preparation all was set for the first glorious two weeks' holiday in the country for ten of our most needy little children. Our dream had indeed come true.

Maie remembers,

"On March 28th, 1927, the first group of ten children arrived from Brunswick Free Kindergarten with the director and assistant of that kindergarten. The ten little beds were made up with their attractive bed covers, the playroom was set up to delight the heart of any little child, the cook was installed, but alas! the

alterations were not finished. The water was not connected so we couldn't use the toilets, or the chip heater and the children's bath had no pipes for an outlet. Nothing daunted, while Miss Lothian was with the children in the playroom I filled two black kettles from the pump outside and set them to heat on the open fire in the sitting-room. I filled the bath, undressed my first recruit, Jacky L. (known later as our holy terror) and put his clothes in a fishing net bag on his own particular hook. I then lifted him into the high bath. He promptly pulled the plug out and the water missed the bucket below. When I went into the sitting-room for more water the other black kettle had spat out water on to our new carpet. Not a very auspicious beginning perhaps, but a lot of fun.

"The children ate their meals from low tables on the back verandah near the kitchen door. On a post nearby hung a large dilly bag which we always took on our rambles in the bush in which to put our many treasures. The excitement and awe of these little children as Miss Lothian would delve into it producing perhaps a bird's nest, a butterfly's wing, a furry caterpillar, a coloured stone or maybe a piece of string. She had a wonderful way with children and made relationships easily. I can see her now sitting under a gum tree with her little friends around her saying poetry and telling stories while we rested. Unfortunately she was forced to retire in July of that year. Freda Goldenberg came to the rescue and helped out until October when Hilda Forster was appointed our new director.

"She was little and wiry (she needed to be) with a tremendous sense of humour. She was the thirteenth child of William Forster of "Try Boy Society" fame. I remember in the evenings our children used to sing "All things bright and beautiful", and our somewhat awesome cook joined in with "All teachers large and small". In 1928, another kindergartener Ida Liddle, joined our staff, and we three took turns in cooking, housekeeping, and taking charge of the children. It worked well. Guides and other friends helped us during weekends. Voluntary help came from many sources. Alice Broadhurst came four mornings a week to make the childrens beds. Mary Butler, another kindergartener, joined us in 1928 and stayed with us till 1961 when she retired, a purely voluntary helper. Her soft voice and soothing manner, her fund of "made up" stories, and her great love of little children soon won their trust and affection.

Joan Hornabrooke, too, has proved a valuable and stalwart friend particularly in the outdoors. She visited us first in 1929 as a student of Burnley Agricultural College. She arrived with Helen Carnegie, both clad in jodhpurs and shirts. One child gazed at them intently and asked: "Are they ladies or men?" Our helpers are too numerous to mention here, but our gratitude covers them all.

In 1929 Ida Liddle left to be married, and Eleanor Beard replaced her. By this time we had added a large playroom adjacent to the kitchen, and turned the front playroom into a bedroom for an extra five children. Having children sleeping in three different rooms made night duty more difficult. One frosty night a voice called from the far room. I replied "Who's calling?" The reply came "me." I said "who's me?" The voice replied "Miss Gregory."

Charlie Harley was our first handy man. At the beginning he came daily from the Salvation Army Home, but later moved into our converted stable. He talked to himself as he gardened, and occasionally removed his troublesome false teeth and placed them in the top of his hat, to be found by the children. The committee then decided it would be cheaper to own our own cows now that we had Harley and a cow bail was erected across the paddock. "Star" our first, was a placid Ayreshire, and could be milked anywhere. Later, Mrs A'Beckett, then President of the Free Kindergarten Union, persuaded a group in Ballarat to donate the money to buy a huge Freesian. We called her "Ada Mary". She gave us gallons of milk, but was I scared of milking her on Harley's day off. The problems of getting the cows into calf provided much merriment at the monthly Committee meetings.

The years passed swiftly and happily with Hilda at the helm. In September 1929 she asked for well-earned leave and went overseas, returning in December 1930. During that period I was the acting Director. We continued in the old home, taking groups of children fifteen at a time from the city kindergartens in turn, until late in 1936, when IT happened. The blue couch given us by Myer's fell through the wide boards of our little sitting-room floor. It was unanimously decided that a new building was necessary. A public appeal was launched with Helen Sage, also a kindergartener as the Appeal Honorary Secretary, but this is her story.

* * * * *

THE APPEAL

By Helen Sage

Some time before 1935, the Graduates of the Kindergarten Training College (as it was then called) realized that a new building must be erected for the children of the Melbourne Free Kindergartens, who needed holidays, rest, proper feeding and complete understanding.

The little old cottage was feeling the strain after ten years. Time after time the legs of the chairs, sofas and even the bath kept falling through the rotting timber.

But how could we raise the necessary money? Four thousand pounds (\$8,000) were needed. Not very much by present day standards, but then it was a huge amount.

The Charities Board came to our rescue and gave us the month of May 1937 for an Appeal, and the Herald newspaper very generously accepted the responsibility of collecting the donations, giving a coverage every evening of the activities, printing pictures, and faithfully reporting all interesting events. The Herald also ran a "Fireside Competition". One had to guess what Ben Bowyang said to Bill Smith!

Lady Isaacs, wife of the Governor General, graciously consented to become the President of the Appeal Committee and Mrs Ada Mary A'Beckett, President of the Free Kindergarten Union, and Mrs M.M. Phillips worked untiringly.

A room in Nicholas Building was loaned by Mr. Fred Davey. A table, a chair and a telephone — and I was installed, not knowing what the next move was to be.

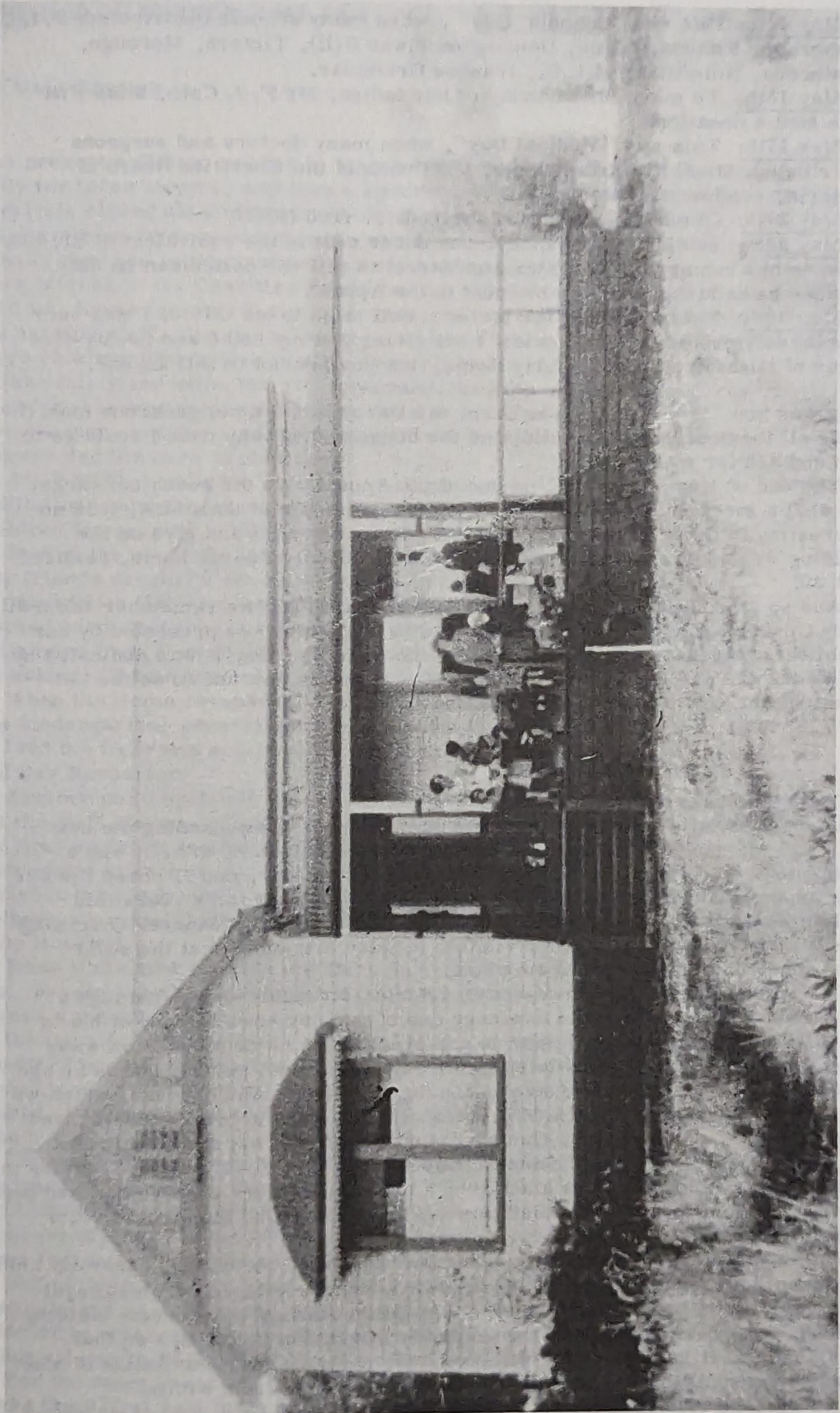
In recommending the Appeal, Dr Kincaid, the Medical Officer for Child Welfare in the City of Melbourne, stated that in her examinations, she was shocked at the number of children suffering from malnutrition and underweight in consequence.

Mr William Morris Hughes, the National Member for Health, said; "The first objective is to raise the standard of health in the Community."

It is interesting to note that £1 (\$2) kept a child for one week!

We had the interest, support and help of many prominent citizens. Lady Somers, Patroness of the Free Kindergarten Union sent her cheque, and Lady Huntingfield, who was in London for the Coronation, wrote and gave her support.

The Australian Natives' Association arranged a "Coronation Pageant" at Olympic Park, while the Surrey Hills Dramatic Society arranged a production of "The Geisha Girl". So many groups and individuals helped.



The original Holiday Home

May 11th: This was "Schools' Day", when many schools contributed: P.L.C., Rosbercon, Fintona, Clyde, Donnington (Swan Hill), Tintern, Morongo, Strathcona, Holmbush, M.L.C., Ivanhoe Grammar.

May 15th: To mark the birthday of her father, Mr F. J. Cato, Miss Una Cato sent a donation.

May 17th: This was "Medical Day", when many doctors and surgeons contributed. Dr J. Newman Morris, Chairman of the Charities Board of Victoria, commended the Appeal.

May 24th: Our largest donation arrived ... £100 (\$200)

May 28th: Jubilation. An anonymous donor sent in the equivalent of \$1,000. I remember running out into Swanston Street to tell the policeman on duty, because he had taken such an interest in the Appeal.

May 30th: Mr Davey sent for me — a call to go to his office. I was very apprehensive, but he quietly said: "I am giving you my home and twenty-five acres of land for another Holiday Home, but you are not to tell anyone."

This was how "Warrawong" was born. Mr Davey was a most generous man. He made all the necessary alterations to the house and, at any time I could go to him and ask for a cheque.

The end of May came, and the end of the Appeal. We did reach our target but what a struggle. In reading today the complete list of donations, it is so interesting to think that such very small gifts could grow and give us the building we now proudly own. A dance held in a lovely Toorak home, realized \$30.30!

And so on June 12th 1937, thanks to all our friends, (we remember them all), Lady Gowrie came from Canberra, and with the golden key presented by our architect, Marcus Martin, she declared the building open. It was dedicated by the Padre of Toc H, the Reverend A.E. Giles, and is now known as the "Residential Kindergarten for Emergency Care."

* * * * *

Maie continues:

"Our nine years in the old cottage proved invaluable when planning the new building. Marcus Martin was a wonderful architect to work with. It was a momentous morning when he, Mr Totterdale the builder, and I, chose the site and aspect of the new building on the top of a hill. After forty years this building is still very functional, and has needed little maintenance. Originally it only cost £4700 and craftsmen visiting it today are amazed at the solid hand-made doors and general finishing.

"We acquired our first horse-drawn vehicle, strangely enough through a court case. A man offered to exchange one of our dry cows for one of his in calf. He left his horse and jinker on our property as he drove the cow away promising to return with his later in the day. He did not return, but as he had sold our cow the magistrate gave us the horse, jinker, and harness, which we felt was fair enough. It was in this vehicle that I drove to meet our first land army girl, Roma Thompson. Our next more practical cart was a milk float drawn by a sturdier horse, "Socks". How our little city visitors loved riding in this, ten at a time. We were also given a beautiful hickory phaeton that had been stored in the loft of a farmhouse. How we spanked around the street in this until it was stolen!

"Annual meetings and gift days were always notable occasions, generally held under our lovely gum trees. We have always been privileged by Vice-Regal patronage. Lady Huntingfield laid the foundation stone of our present building in 1937. I have the memory of the golden key breaking in the lock on that occasion, and Hilda, complete with two little children carrying posies of blue pincushions scuttling around the back to open the door from within.

"In 1937 we sold the best part of the old home for £148."

A PERIOD OF CHANGE: 1937-1959

By Maie Gregory

The present building, opened in March 1937, was invaded with visitors daily for three months, and then a severe epidemic of infantile paralysis closed all Melbourne kindergartens. A group of fifteen children from Fitzroy remained in residence from August to November. Finally they had to be returned to their homes and the building and staff were offered to the Charities Board for the after-care treatment of polio victims. Seven temporary bungalows were erected in the garden to house the nursing staff. The day nursery was turned into a ward for fifteen more children (thirty-five in all). The children's bathroom was altered to take full-sized baths for salt treatment, and the isolation room was used for massage treatment. Miss Forster became managing housekeeper, and the kindergarten staff and helpers assisted with play therapy and the care of children.

After eight months the children were sent home or transferred to institutions, and the Home was restored and re-opened to kindergarten children for country holidays on October 1st, 1938.

During the epidemic Mary Salmon, our secretary, died from polio. Her friends erected a charming log cabin playhouse in her memory.

Miss Olive Mellor designed the garden, and the staff and children worked hard to carry out her plan. One particular group of sixteen little boys from Port Melbourne, revelling in the activities, would ask on waking, "Are we going to do hard work today?"

When the Home re-opened, instead of taking twenty children from one kindergarten, several combined to send their most needy ones, and in 1955 the field was enlarged to take children from all kindergartens and Day Nurseries.

Another polio epidemic closed the Home for a short period in 1949, but the staff stayed on to repair equipment and tend the garden. After the first epidemic the bungalows were demolished, and new bedrooms were added to provide for the Land Army girl (who during the War replaced the handyman), students from the Kindergarten Training College, an extra kindergarten teacher and, later, trainees from Tweddle Baby Hospital.

When white ants invaded the Mary Salmon playhouse and shoe-room, a new rest shed and outdoor toilet block were erected — thus saving a dash across a wet playground!

During all the years much practical help has been given by many groups of people: the Boynde Guild, the Blackburn Sewing Group, Lions, Lady Lions, Apex, Rotary, Rotoract, Toc H, the Leisure Group, Girl Guides, Boy Scouts, churches and local orchardists, the Commission Shop and many others.

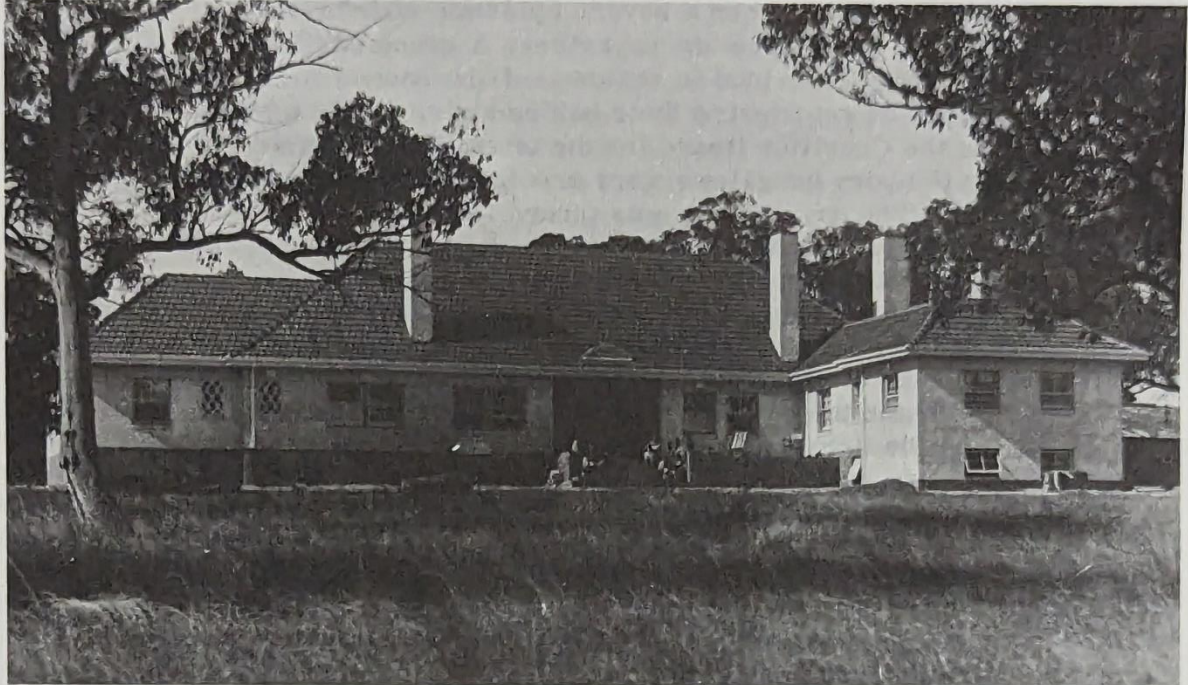
Three Blackburn doctors, May, Fargie and Birrell, have been generous with medical care of children.

Outstanding among all the services has been the long dedication of the members of the management committee, among them Miss Ruth Drake who was a foundation member and still actively promotes Forest Hill's ideals.

During 1959 children were admitted through Social Workers of Public Hospitals and various social welfare agencies. In February 1960 the Home switched to emergency care, the name subsequently being changed from Holiday Home to Residential Kindergarten for Emergency Care.

For the many hundreds of children who spent holidays at Forest Hill, it was their first real taste of the wonders of nature and the joys of country

life. Forty years afterwards a man now holding a responsible position, called voluntarily to tell of the wonderful difference the holiday had made to his life, and vividly recalled many of those early experiences.



The new building

The courtyard



NEW DIRECTIONS: 1959-1967

By Audrey Holder, Patsy Walford

In September 1959 the finances and prospects of Forest Hill had reached such a low ebb that the problems of the past seemed insignificant. A meeting of the Graduates Association was called in the Assembly Hall, Collins Street, and the motion put that Forest Hill should be sold and the proceeds devoted to maintaining Warrawong, linked as the situation was then to J. B. Were and Co. and their investment as a commemoration of war service by their employees.

This was a stormy meeting; the personal involvement of many graduates is reflected even today. Those who had given loyal service to Forest Hill for over thirty years were not prepared to see it disposed of lightly. Others felt that any solution to the money problem was better than going further downhill.

The result was a decision to continue to find other sources of finance for Forest Hill. Miss Helen Sage stepped into the breach by opening an Opportunity Shop in Nicholson Street, North Carlton, and to this day Forest Hill benefits enormously from the profits, thanks to Miss Sage's tireless efforts, aided by goods and services provided by friends and committee of Forest Hill. The vision of Miss Sage, and the personal contribution she makes cannot be underestimated. She bridged a turning-point in our history, one which could so well have taken another course. Rent of the shop is paid monthly by a group of generous supporters.

At this point Forest Hill was also beginning to review its services. The need for country holidays was becoming diminished by changes in the inner suburban areas, by increasing urban expansion in the Forest Hill district, by the growth of needs other than deprivation and disadvantage which had hitherto been the chief concern.

Members of the committee conducted a comprehensive survey among public hospitals, welfare agencies, children's organizations and charitable foundations, to discover the need and demand for short-term emergency care in families with pre-school children. The response was sufficiently overwhelming to be convincing, despite the contemporary publication of Dr John Bowlby's findings on the effects of maternal deprivation. The judgement of many people was clouded in principle by this philosophy, but those who worked from day to day in the area believed strongly that if in fact family support were not available the best possible substitute was the type of care provided by highly qualified and concerned people such as the staff at Forest Hill. Even now, fifteen years later, this philosophical division over principle and practice is not entirely resolved.

During 1966 when it appeared that there was scope for widening our sphere of child care, contact was made with the Family Welfare Bureau of the Children's Welfare Association to discover whether there was an area in which we might co-operate with them. However, it was discovered that, whereas we would receive from the Social Welfare Department a reasonable subsidy for accommodating State Wards, we should be required to accept them for indeterminate periods of time. This, we agreed, would counteract our policy of being available for emergency care, and despite several renewals of discussion over the years, we have declined to become involved. A further reason for deciding to remain independent was that we should have been required to take in babies and toddlers. The cost of staffing and of building alterations ruled out this consideration.

This period of Forest Hill's story saw the consolidation, and unmistakeable value of the emergency care service. In June 1964 the new

name of Residential Kindergarten for Emergency Care was finally decided upon and adopted by the Graduates' Council in October of that year. Although the name and the style of Forest Hill were changed, the spirit remained unaltered and the committee operation remained virtually unchanged.

Despite approaches from the Family Welfare Council in 1962 and 1966 the decision to remain autonomous was held. This was to influence our thinking in even more ways than we then realized. We experimented in collaboration with "Warrawong" Emergency Kindergarten in East Ringwood (likewise an enterprise of the Kindergarten Training College Graduates' Association) to provide services for school and Christmas holidays. This was not entirely successful, and was not to achieve full application until 1975 when government help made the idea economically feasible.

As it became more difficult and expensive to obtain domestic staff, labour-saving equipment was installed; central heating and the Aga stove were converted to oil, and a large refrigerator with freezer as well as a heavy-duty washing machine were acquired.

Because of the encroaching suburban roads and housing development, Forest Hill was losing some of its early rustic charm. A new entrance and drive from Lake Road replaced the "switch-back" approach from Canterbury Road and new sign-boards were erected.

In May 1963 the handy-man's hut, the cow-bail and old cable tram dummy were removed. The tram had been in the grounds since 1927, and it was acquired by an Historical Society for preservation.

When the Dorothy Rosner playroom and the night nursery were painted in 1963 it appeared likely that this was the first occasion since the building went up. Recognition was given to the quality and craftsmanship of the materials and paint used in the house's construction.

* * * * *

Creation:

"Who made the world?" "God did."

"Who made the trees?" "God did."

"Who made the world?" "God did."

"What did he stand on to make it?"

* * * * *

A small boy was discovered walking over the vegetables. I explained to him: "This is a cabbage, these are carrots, etc." He asked: "Don't you grow sweets?"

* * * * *

We were having tripe for lunch. Jane said: "I don't like this stuff like elastic."

ADAPTING TO THE SEVENTIES: 1968-1975

By Brenda Cooke

During this period the chief sources of finance were donations and fundraising activities, although the pattern was to change very soon. One memorable occasion was a harpsichord recital by Max Cooke at which Miss Christine Heinig, formerly principal of the Kindergarten Training College, and on a visit from the United States of America, was present.

At the final meeting for 1970 a request came from the Children's Welfare Association suggesting that Forest Hill register as a Children's Home. Because we were endeavouring to prevent children from becoming Wards of State, this was decided against on principle despite the financial advantages which would have followed registration.

This year Miss Ruth Drake stepped down as president of committee after many years of service to Forest Hill since its beginning and having held office in many capacities.

In 1973 Mrs P. Walford resigned as correspondence secretary after twenty years in office.

The resignation of Miss Maie Gregory was received in this year, after forty-five years as director. To replace someone who had dedicated so much of her life to Forest Hill was to prove very difficult in the months that followed. We were forced to consider the possibility that Forest Hill might have to change its form of service in emergency care.

Miss Bennett, director of the Social Welfare Department, was approached for discussion as to the advantages of becoming an Approved Children's Home, but again it was found impracticable because of the flexibility required for emergency care.

Open Day in November took the form of a farewell to Miss Gregory, and it was warming to see the numbers of visitors; some of them were former Kindergarten children and teachers from forty years before; families with long associations over the years; successful adults who remembered their visit to Forest Hill from an inner city kindergarten years earlier; former staff members, committee members, and College students who had spent some of their training days there.

On 14th February 1974 a Farewell Dinner was held at St Faith's Church Hall, Burwood; again a reunion and a testimonial to Miss Gregory. She was presented with a television set and a wheelbarrow!

She was succeeded by Miss Carmel Curtain. (see page 12)

In 1974 the Minister for Health (Mr Scanlan) was invited to Forest Hill, and from his visit came government subsidy towards child care staff salaries. This was augmented again in 1975 without any loss of autonomy. In this year a submission was made to the Consultative Council on Pre-School Child Development, from which, in return for remaining open for forty-eight weeks of each year, a grant is made towards salaries of staff.

It will be seen that in this span of seven years great changes occurred in the financing of Forest Hill, and with the gradual swing in the philosophy of child care away from institutional and inflexible provisions, some of Forest Hill's principles and standards were becoming recognized and rewarded.



Washing day



Bringing in the Christmas Tree



The Mary Salmon playhouse

THE LAND SALES

By Wendy Hunter

In February 1961 Forest Hill was faced with a bill for £9,286/16/10 for the making of Lake Road (later renamed Forest Road) which is the west boundary of the property. This, of course, was an enormous sum of money to be found, so a General Meeting of the Graduates Association was called for the 11th July 1961 to consider sub-dividing land fronting Lake Road for home sites. It was agreed at this meeting that this was the only way in which the cost of the road making could be met immediately, providing that the open space surrounding the Home was affected as little as possible by the sub-division.

A public auction of fifteen home sites, each 55' x 106', was held on Saturday 13th October 1962. Three blocks were sold at the auction, and five more were sold soon after, realizing the sum of £10,650. Five more lots were sold in 1963, and by the end of 1964 all the lots were sold at an average price of £1,350 for each block. The highest price paid was £1,500.

In February 1965 a representative of the Burwood Real Estate Agency approached the Graduates' Council on behalf of a client with an offer of £7,000 for a piece of the land fronting Canterbury Road to a depth of seventy feet in Forest Road. After due consideration the Council refused this offer.

Soon after a further offer of £20,000 was made on behalf of Amoco Oil Company for the whole frontage to Canterbury Road, including the land that the Country Roads Board was negotiating for at the time to carry out road-widening operations.

An Extraordinary General Meeting of the Graduates Association was called for Saturday 24th April 1965 to vote on the following motion:

"That the whole of the land fronting Canterbury Road, varying to a maximum depth of 122' of the Graduates' property at Forest Hill be sold and out of the sum realized by this sale £20,000 be invested for the benefit of Forest Hill Residential Kindergarten for Emergency Care." This motion was carried.

The Graduates Council and Forest Hill Committee were advised by their solicitors, Rodda Ballard and Vroland, J.B. Were representatives, and other business men that this was an excellent offer, and that this sale would help to assure the financial security of Forest Hill.

Advice was received on 1st November 1965 that Amoco had exercised its option to purchase the land. All expenses in connection with the sub-division were paid by the Company.

The Graduates' Association was involved in another land sale in 1969 when three blocks at Forest Road Boronia were sub-divided. This land was originally given to the Graduates by Mr Duncan of Duncan and Weller at the time when Dr Gutheridge was talking about establishing a holiday home similar to the one she had seen in England. There was some doubt, however, as to its suitability for the purpose.

The gift was a word of mouth agreement without the possession of a title, as it had come to the agents as a bad debt, and no one had acquired the title from the original owners, Hansen and Treloar, who had since died.

The land was re-fenced on 7th August 1959, according to specifications laid down by the Titles Office, at a cost of £20, and an application for a title was to be made at the end of fifteen years. The fences had to be repaired in 1965 at a cost of £50 and Mr Stirling was advised of this, also that the rates had been paid by the Association on this land for the previous thirty-nine years.

In July 1968 an application was made for adverse possession. This required that an advertisement be placed in the daily papers and a copy posted on the land in such a position as to be easily read. A person living in the vicinity was required to sign a statutory declaration to state who, in his opinion, had been the

owner of the land during the past thirty years, that it had been fenced, and as to how the land had been used during that time. Mrs Hilda White who lived nearby for many years was prepared to sign the declaration, and a Graduate reported that in the early days groups of students and members of the Association attended on various occasions to plant trees and clear away undergrowth. Later, only spasmodic inspections took place.

In February 1969 the Title finally came through, and in November 1969 three lots that had been subdivided were sold for a total of \$14,000. After expenses were paid \$13,000 was invested.

* * * * *

Mother was out shopping with Bryan aged three and Susan aged two. Bryan strolled into the milk bar saying: "Mummy will be here in a minute, Susan's having a temper tantrum in the chemist shop."

* * * * *

Evelyn, after her little sister had been christened, remarked:
"Now she has been vaccinated, christened, and has only to be married, then she will be finished."

* * * * *

"I can hear the wind moving and the trees are waving."

THE SEARCH FOR FINANCE.

By Esma Kelso

The early seventies were difficult and depressing times financially. Each month seemed to bring increased expenditure with an ever-decreasing income. There were many times when it seemed that Forest Hill was reaching the end of its functional life. We dared not plan too far ahead, as it seemed that there was no way in which we could continue to provide quality emergency care. The constant dilemma facing the management committee was: "should we adhere to a tight economy, restricting our service wherever possible, or should we continue as we had done", trusting that something would turn up as it always had in the past. (Carmel Curtain frequently remarks that Miss Gregory's guardian angel keeps a watchful eye on Forest Hill — how else can you explain that the unexpected so often happens?) In this instance the guardian angel appeared in the twin disguises of the Victorian Government's Consultative Council for Pre-School Child Development, and a hitherto untapped unknown and unexpected friend — the local community of Nunawading and Forest Hill.

This is how it happened:

We had long realized that the days of depending upon voluntary donations were over, and our only reasonable hope for the future lay in increased government support. The difficulty here was in accepting government funding which would not inhibit and restrict our independence, and which would allow us to keep our own identity and standard of care. Numerous submissions were made to many government committees and commissions: State and Federal Government bodies involved in child care. Always the same reply came back: "Yes, without doubt Forest Hill provides an essential excellent service but regrettably does not fit into any existing category for government funding".

Then, in 1971 as a result of desperate appeals from the whole pre-school movement the Victorian Government appointed a Consultative Council to investigate the present and future needs of the pre-school child in Victoria. Its report was released in May 1974, and to the joy of everyone concerned with Forest Hill one of the Council's recommendations was "that a grant be made to Forest Hill Emergency Residential Kindergarten".

About the same time, the Children's Welfare Association set up a "Survival Committee", and this move received considerable press coverage. Forest Hill Committee wrote a letter to "The Age" newspaper supporting the Children's Welfare Association, and explaining our own plight. The result was astonishing! Offers of help, encouragement and practical concern snowballed from the local community, to the extent that in August 1974 a public meeting was held to form a local auxiliary. Over eighty people, of all shades of political opinion, were present with representation from local, State and Federal governments. All were united in determination to save Forest Hill.

From this enthusiastic beginning the local auxiliary has grown in strength and responsibility, and its achievements make impressive reading. But just as valuable as the financial support is the neighbourly advice and friendship which the members give to Miss Curtain and the committee.

Meanwhile, nothing more had been heard of the Consultative Council's recommendation. At last the Free Kindergarten Union, with which Forest Hill is affiliated, stepped in and the President (Miss Helen Paul) approached the Minister for Health (Mr Alan Scanlan) and on our behalf invited him to Forest Hill. This was in October, 1974. Mr Scanlan promised help, and at the final committee meeting for the year we were able to announce that the State Government agreed to pay fifty per cent of the award salaries to mothercraft

nurses in addition to kindergarten teachers and assistants. This grant was reviewed and increased in December 1975 to give further help with salaries for the junior child care officers, the domestic staff and the handyman. An intolerable burden has been lifted from the committee's shoulders.

The future looks bright!

* * * * *



Fishing

OVERVIEW

By Patsy Walford

Those of us who have volunteered for, or been drawn into, the preparation of this booklet of history realize that it will be of interest chiefly to people who have been involved with Forest Hill itself, or in ventures of a similar nature. Nevertheless, in setting down this record we have not only paid tribute to the protagonists; at the same time we have attempted to outline a pattern of growth and development which can only be seen by recording the impressions of half a century.

Reading through this history one is conscious of certain threads. Chiefly there is the realization that it is indeed possible to develop a sound practical exercise from something which stems from a personal observation, an idea, a remark, a meeting, a suggestion, an inspiration. Out of these has emerged, in this instance, an immense quality of energy, drive, leadership, common activity and the interminable minutiae of management and public presentation.

However, only people can supply this impulse; people with personality, intelligence, drive and common sense, deep humanity and concern have fashioned the service which Forest Hill supplies today.

Great flexibility has been required over a span of fifty years in order to remain of value to the current needs. We have covered the years of depression, epidemic, war and the year of invasion, the post-war period and the rapidly-changing concepts of three subsequent decades. We have concerned ourselves with new thinking in the fields of child care and development, separation, intellectual stimulation, family life, the place of pre-school education in the community, and in departmental administration. We have tried to be consistently adaptable, while keeping in front of us always the needs of the child and his family — regardless of trends, fashions, and intellectual and academic "about-turns", unless they applied to our basic resolution.

We have seen the change from an attitude of welfare-oriented, inner suburban, sometimes intrusive concern for pre-school children. As the so-called Affluent Society has grown we have looked at the need for emergency care and the tiding-over of families in stress. The need in society today is not so much for three meals a day, as for meeting other problems related to: the nuclear rather than the extended family, greater mobility, child abuse, isolation, migration, language and culture, alcohol and drugs, crime and infidelity, and the instability of marriage and parenthood. All these problems we try to meet by the giving of skilled temporary care. By moving with the times we may have helped to avert countless cases of family break-down, committal to State Wardship, and other factors of psychological damage to small children.

So we hope that we have grown in sophistication along with the current demands; that we have found and developed the expertise which applies at the given moment; that we may go on to move with the times and with the families who are our paramount concern.



The bathroom



The playground

Fund raising activities of friends, supporters and committee over the years have been original and varied.

They have included:

Rose Day stalls, amateur theatricals, a Spanish Fiesta, progressive dinners, sale of egg cartons and rolled newspapers, specially designed tea towels which realized \$750, barbecues and fetes, open days and gift days, concerts and musical evenings, a Batik display, the Opportunity Shop in North Carlton, theatre nights, the Christmas card shop, street collections, Birthday League, bridge parties, Trash'n Treasure sales.

* * * * *

Marjorie said, "My legs always ache at school when we do sums."

* * * * *

Jane, singing in the bath:

"I'm going to grow up a great big mummy, and then I'll have to find a husband, and then I'll have to find a house."