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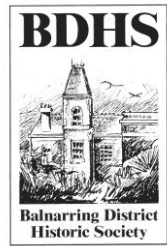
Balnarring and District Historical Society Inc.

® A002.25691B

P O Box 183 Balnarring 3926

August 2025

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Living in the '70's

By Wendy Doube

Wendy Doube and her husband, Jeff, bought their house in Merricks North in 1976. Here Wendy tells of how she came to live at 'Nonda-Wonda'.

My earliest connection with the area was in the early 1960s when I attended a school camp at Somers. A bus tour of the hinterland convinced me that I wanted to live near Red Hill when I grew up because it was so beautiful and hilly yet near the beach and within an hour or so of Melbourne.

In the summer of 1965, when my family rented a holiday house in Shoreham, I met my future husband at a New Year's Eve dance at the Pt Leo life-saving club where he was a life saver. The evening had a Roman theme and we wore sheets draped to look like togas. He was staying in a very basic hut in the sand-dunes with the other life savers, all of whom were known by semi-derogatory nicknames.

We were very familiar with the area because my parents-in-law owned a holiday cottage at Fisherman's Beach in Mornington and my husband surfed at spots around the peninsula. They sold this cottage when Mornington lost its beachside atmosphere and became suburban in nature. In 1976 we started searching for a beach house in bushland for ourselves. We met an acquaintance of Bill Huntley's children who told us about a farmhouse which Bill was selling. This was *Nonda Wonda* in Merricks North. We fell in love with the house immediately although it wasn't on the beach or in bushland. It was a romantic, decaying, Edwardian, weatherboard building with bay windows and generously proportioned rooms. The house was framed by giant cypress and date palm trees. We were living in Kew where we stayed until 1978 when our first child was born. We then made *Nonda Wonda* our main residence and maintained a small apartment above my husband's legal office in South Melbourne. Our house had terrible plumbing and was freezing in winter. The wood stove was also the water heater and once the water started to get hot, the pipes blocked so we rarely had hot water on tap. I ran from room to room, with my breath misting up, keeping the fires going in the fireplaces.

When *Nonda Wonda* became our principal home, my husband commuted to South Melbourne to work and sometimes remained there overnight. I was lucky enough to be an at-home mum in Merricks North for ten years so I could participate on Red Hill pre-school and school committees and become involved in environmental organisations. I discovered that the local community was the highlight of living here – such great people!

In 1988 distance education enabled me to retrain in my original career in IT and in 1992 my university offered me a job as a university lecturer. I retired from academia in 2020.

My earliest impressions of Merricks North were the apple and cherry orchards in bloom against a background of cypress and pine windbreaks. That was one of the prettiest sights I have ever viewed.



Orchard in blossom

We could wander through Bill Huntley's orchards and paddocks and pick mushrooms and fruit, accompanied by a very friendly sheep called Dolly. A lone wombat survived in the locality and once got trapped in our laundry which had an open external door.

The area was so beautiful and we regularly swam at nearby beaches. Our friends in Melbourne loved to visit us. We held an immensely popular annual round robin tennis party with a silver Nonda Wonda Cup, sourced from an Op-Shop. After morning tea and lunch the finalists were considerably worse for wear. Sometimes our friends produced a band to accompany the festivities. As the children grew, we joined a large group camping at Pt Leo in the summer. Other young families lived in most of the properties. Our fences had gates which enabled the children to run free between our properties without venturing onto the main roads. They wore a track through the properties. They would swim in Bill's dam and swing out over it on a rope attached to a tree. They climbed dangerously high in our cypress trees. I would say they had an idyllic childhood.

In those days the food shopping wasn't great. The nearest venue was the general store at Balnarring. At one point the store had a machine that made fresh bread and Mrs Pichler produced great cooked chickens but otherwise I shopped in Melbourne. We always had poultry which free-ranged and kept us in eggs. Notably we were given a small bantam rooster, Reg, who ruled over a large, kindergarten-raised duck, Jack, and a white hen, Whitey, that just strayed in off the road. The gang of three would sometimes

march in, single file through the house, led by Reg. A fox came visiting and we lost Jack – except we found him the next day. He had flown over the swimming pool fence and was swimming in the pool. I now have a family of ducks which breeds in the pool every spring and their poo really clogs up the pool filter. Our pool was salt-chlorinated. A neighbour managed a wildlife rescue in her home and occasionally she received penguins covered in oil from spills. She cleaned them up and kept them warm until their natural oils could protect their feathers again. But they couldn't be returned to the ocean successfully because without exercise they were not fit enough to survive. She brought them to train up in our pool. They looked so adorable swimming there and it proved so successful the Phillip Island Penguin Authority adopted the idea.

The Red Hill Memorial Pre-school educators, Pam and Pat, were so funny and wise. They prepared generations of children for life and education. The Nativity Plays and visits from a wise-cracking Santa were legendary. At school age our children travelled to the Red Hill Consolidated School on a bus. Every school day for years children lined up and filed onto the bus in an orderly fashion with no supervision. Our neighbour, Syd, who had attended the school himself, told me that the bus and playground provided the children's main education. The school had a wonderful community which came together for fundraising, in particular their annual art show. Grade 6 commenced with a camping trip to Point Leo and ended with a fabulous musical. Children and parents made lifelong friends at the pre-school and school.

Our children also had plenty of after-school activities, mainly sport. Clare Major's ballet school at Fenton Hall was pivotal. Now in her 40s, my daughter still dances and the discipline she learned set her up for life. Syd organised a Suzuki violin teacher to come to the school and recruited my sons for group lessons. They continued playing until year 12.

The area has changed over time; it has become gentrified. The young families have been replaced by wealthy, part-time weekenders and only a few aging original residents remain. Community is disappearing. Very sad to see not even a sausage sizzle at the 2025 RHCS voting booth. However, on the positive side, the shopping and restaurant offerings are fantastic now.

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NONDA-WONDA / KENTUCKY

[Information from Wendy Doube and from Mary Karney's books: The Diaries of Georgina Oswin and No Rugged Landscape.]

It would appear that the house bought by Wendy and Jeff Doube had originally been named *Kentucky*. It had been built by Jack Shand sixteen years after his marriage to Mary Huntley, a widow with five daughters and two sons who had owned *Hillside* orchard in Red Hill South. Shand, also known as Peter, was a son of the Shand family who operated the saw mill at Red Hill. He and Mary Huntley married in 1900 and at first lived at *Hillside*. However fire destroyed *Hillside* c.1905 and they moved to *Kent Orchard* which had been bought by Shand in 1901.



Old Kent
Orchard,

Merricks
North

In 1912 and 1913 Shand and his stepson, Perce Huntley each bought 60 acres of lot number 14A in Merricks North. Shand planted an orchard and built *Kentucky* on his share of the land in 1916. By then most of the Huntley children (his step children) had travelled away from the Peninsula or married and had homes of their own. The following year Perce Huntley married and Jack built the house, *Rosslyn*, on the adjoining land for Perce and his bride, Nell Mulready.

In 1923-4 the properties changed hands when Jeff Brown and his brother-in-law, Murray-Jones bought up the orchard land between *Craig Avon* and *Kentucky*. Murray-Jones lived at *Craig Avon* while Brown, who would later become an M.L.A., lived at *Kentucky*.

Perce and Nell Huntley after they sold *Rosslyn* bought another neighbouring property, *Pembroke* that had been belonged to Robert Morris.

Perce and Nell Huntley's son, Bill, would later buy back much of this orchard land. It was Bill who sold it to the Doube family. By then the orchard had become *Nonda-Wonda*

Wendy describes 'Nonda Wonda' when they bought it as "a gentleman's residence with only two bedrooms, a bathroom, dining room, a living room and a billiard room both with bay windows and marble fireplaces. There was a maid's room that was entered from the back verandah and a laundry whose entrance was from the opposite end."

The name 'Kentucky' was no longer in use. In the shed was an apple-case stencil of the name 'Nonda-Wonda' for marking the boxes of fruit coming from the property's orchards.

Wendy's husband gave away the sign. On one occasion visitors from overseas stopped by their house. They were from the Netherlands and were related to the Dutch family named Sleeman who had once rented the house from Bill Huntley. Jeff gave the sign to them. A spontaneous gesture.

Carisbrooke Street

The story behind the name

Carisbrooke Street in Balnarring Beach is another street in that area whose name evokes English history. There is a Carisbrooke Castle on the Isle of Wight, an old fortress site on a prominent hilltop with a history dating back to pre-Roman times.

In the 8th century the Anglo Saxons built a refuge against Viking invaders, an earthwork defence that stood until the Normans reached England in the 11th century. The castle then became the property of Richard de Redvers whose family held it until the 13th century when it was sold to Edward 1. The de Redvers built a castle with stone walls, towers and a keep to replace the original fortress and the Contessa Isabella, the last of the de Redvers family, had a great hall built. Edward 1 placed it in the care of wardens and it was again re-modelled during the reign of Elizabeth 1 to further protect the island from the Spanish who sent a powerful armada across the Channel to take England. Further earthworks were designed by an Italian designer at the time, a rampart, ditch and bastions to encircle the castle. During the Civil War, Charles I sought refuge in the castle but was captured and it became his prison for fourteen months before his execution. He attempted an escape but that failed when he was unable to squeeze through the bars on the window of his room. His two youngest children were also confined there and the fourteen -year-old, his daughter, died in captivity.

During the reign of Queen Victoria, her youngest daughter, Princess Beatrice, made the castle her summer home. She created a garden which is still a major attraction of the island. Beatrice held the position of Warden of the castle. Queen Victoria had Osborne House built on the Isle of Wight as a holiday residence.

There is also a Carisbrooke Estate in New Zealand, in Dunedin the home of James MacAndrew the founder of the city. It was named after Carisbrooke Castle on the Isle of Wight. It also gave its name to a sporting venue in Dunedin.

What is its link to Balnarring Beach?

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Merricks Beach Yacht Club

The collection of copies of 'Merricks Moments', the newsletter of the Merricks Beach Yacht Club has recently been handed over to BDHS for safe keeping. Volume 1 of the first issue appeared in September, 1997, an evolution of the earlier newsletters first circulated on the 1970s. This, in turn had replaced notices sent to members during the 1960s to inform them of matters of interest and importance concerning the club, its members and sailing. The collection is a valuable record of the club's history.

The Merricks Beach Yacht Club was founded in 1964 "to encourage yachting, boating and tennis" among the beach residents. It grew beyond that to become a multi-purpose social group, a focus for the community as a whole. A Younger Set was established in 1967 with programs and activities designed to meet the interests of those under the age of 21 years. In 1968 a club house was erected and over time this has become the social hub for the residents of Merricks Beach.

From the April 1992 news sheet:

THE ORIGIN OF THE WORD “YACHT”.

DID YOU KNOW?

During the sixteenth century the inhabitants of the Netherlands, across the North Sea from England, were in revolt against their ruler, King Philip II of Spain. Their low-lying country which was split by rivers and canals, demanded that their rebellion be waged in small boats. For this purpose, fast sailing vessels, armed and highly manoeuvrable, were developed. These boats were called “jachts” [jachtschieff] from the Dutch word for “hunt” or “chase”. They were small, lightweight and fast, quite distinct from the conventional warship of the time.

As the Netherlands gradually won its independence, it also became Europe’s premier maritime nation. The jachts were adapted for communication and commercial work [and became favoured by pirates].

They were also used by the upper class and prosperous merchants who moved around the country by water as an alternative to the horse and coach in less aquatic countries. By the middle of the seventeenth century the jachts were a common sight all over Holland and the occasional racing that took place between friends and associates who encountered one another on the waterways became formalized into “jacht racing” as a recognized sporting activity. The sport became known as “Yachting” (i.e. hunting or chasing on the water).

However, Yachting did not spread to other countries in Europe until the restoration of Charles II of England in 1660 when the Dutch East India Company presented the King with the yacht *Mary*. She cost £1,300 to build – a small fortune in those days. King Charles had spent much of his exile in Holland and was an enthusiast of the new sport of Yachting.

Mary was more like a miniature man-of-war with eight guns and a crew of thirty. Several more of these ‘yachts’ were built soon after by the king and other members of the royal family. It was said that Charles owned, at various times, a total of twenty-eight such vessels.

The earliest recorded yacht race in England was on October 1st, 1661 between King Charles II and his brother, James, Duke of York, from Greenwich to Gravesend and back. The Duke won the outer leg and the King the return.

Yachting had come to England to stay.

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MEYRICK v, BARKER

-A Contemporary ACCOUNT OF THE (IN)FAMOUS DUEL

[from The Children of the Port Phillip Aboriginal Protectorate

edited by Ian D. Clark and Fred Cahir

The reason behind the duel that took place on the peninsula between Dr Barker and Maurice Meyrick during the days of early white settlement has been attributed to a number of different things. The following is a contemporary account, written by William

Thomas, son of the Assistant Aboriginal Protector who had taken up the run 'Tuerong' in 1840 and was a neighbour of those involved.

William Jnr wrote of the early colonists, "We were all good friends, visited each other, and exchanged many little neighbourly services" before he describes the incident.

. . . "about this time our mutual harmony was somewhat disturbed for Dr Barker and Mr Meyrick his neighbour came to loggerheads . . . The boundary between the runs of Barker and Meyrick was a blind Creek with no water. In the middle stood a magnificent She Oak tree, the finest in all the district. Meyrick claimed it and highly valued it for its beauty; he made a painting of it which he sent home; all this Dr Barker knew – However for some reason Dr Barker had the tree cut down – This very soon came to Meyrick's ears – He at once wrote to Dr Barker a stinging letter – and he could write for he had taken his degree at Oxford – At that time some young bloods from Melbourne were receiving the hospitality of Dr Barker – They with one voice proclaimed the letter a gross insult – and kidded Barker on to go and horsewhip Meyrick – Accompanied with three others all on horseback they rode to Meyrick's station. Meyrick was at the time with a pair of horses plowing in Potatoes – They rode into the field Dr Barker going up to Meyrick. It must be remembered that Barker when excited stuttered horribly – He said "di di di did you ri ri write this bl bl bl blackguard letter to me" holding Meyrick's letter in his hand. Meyrick quietly leaving the handles of the plow, said If it is a blackguard letter it was written to a Blackguard – Barker then struck Meyrick a savage cut with whip. – In an instant Meyrick had him by the leg tilted to the ground took his whip from him and broke it about his head. Barkers friends interfered got Barker on horseback and away home.

Meyrick and his cousin Alfred then posted away to consult Capt Reid an old army officer – Capt Reid said did he strike you first, never mind the hammering you gave him afterwards – You must then as a Gentleman at once challenge him – quite agreeable said Meyrick – A Challenge was written and Alfred Meyrick at once despatched with it to Dr Barker's Station – Dr Barker seeing him coming rushed out exclaiming I won't receive any ap ap apology. Don't distress yourself Dr I come on quite a different errand. This is a Challenge so be kind enough to refer me to your friend that we may arrange preliminaries – A friend appointed and a meeting arranged for the following morning on the hills of Point Nepean known as the Cups and Saucers – They met with some half dozen spectators Capt Reid having provided a brace of Duelling pistols – distance measured, position taken handkerchief dropped Dr Barker fired in the air – Meyrick at him, the bullet passed through the peak of Dr Barkers cap – It was fortunate that Meyrick's bullet did not go two inches to the left, as then Melbourne would have lost a popular medico and Meyrick would have found himself in very disagreeable circumstances.

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BROOKSBY SQUARE

Brooksby Square is one of the most recent subdivisions in Balnarring. A small residential area, tucked away behind the Anglican Church, it occupies land between Stumpy Gully Road and Balnarring Road. The street through the subdivision comes in from Balnarring Road and loops back after forming the sides of a square. Each lot has

car access to the street. There is also a pedestrian way from the Square through to Stumpy Gully Road.

Thirty-six lots make up the subdivision. Three, at its main entrance, are larger than the remaining lots, being over 1000 square metres in size. The remaining lots average between 550 and 650 square metres. It is a pleasant subdivision, well within walking distance of most of the amenities of Balnarring.

The Square takes its name from the Brooksby family whose farm once included the area where the houses now stand. Joe Brooksby and his wife, Irene bought thirty acres behind St Mark's at Balnarring in 1948. Brooksby also bought ten acres on Balnarring Road, land known as "the mushroom paddocks", which he used for grazing. The land closest to the church was an orchard where apple, pear, quince and plum trees grew. The rest of the acreage was used for dairy cattle, poultry and a few sheep. Three of the Brooksby children had come with their parents to live at Balnarring: the other two daughters had already married.

Brooksby later sold the mushroom paddocks to his eldest daughter, Joan and her husband, Norm Freestone, when they, too, moved to Balnarring. Their house on the ten acres was named *Kildare*.



Both Joe and Irene Brooksby were involved in community groups as well as the work required on the farm. During his later years Joe sold most of his land but retained seven acres and the house. The seven acres of former orchard is the land that would become Brooksby Square.

Application for subdivision was made in 2004; and registered in 2006

***B.D.H.S. has recently received a donation of \$100 from the
Merricks Beach Yacht Club. Our sincerest thanks to the yacht
club for this very generous gift.***

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