

Blackwood
27th Sept 1932.

The Clerk
Mitcham District Council,
Mitcham.

Sir,
I wish to make an offer of One Pound
(\$1) for right to get Wattle Bark on District
Roads. If my offer is accepted it would
enable me to pay my rates, as I have
very little work at present.
Yours Faithfully

To Mitcham Town Clerk

Dear Sir

Dec 18 1933

this liberty to write to you to see if it is possible
for your committee to help me in the way with
some baby's cloths, and also some for my self
I am expecting in about three weeks time, and
I find it impossible to get what is wanted at
this time. I will be pleased if you can help in
any way.

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GLIMPSES OF BLACKWOOD

A Journey Through Time 1880 - 1980

INTRODUCTION

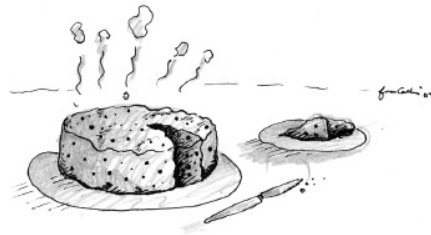
This is not an academic account, but rather an attempt to create an impression of some aspects of life in Blackwood in days gone by.

END NOTES

- ¹ Auckens, A. p.42
- ² W M Cummings, Licensed Surveyor and Land Broker, Currie St, Friday 28 October 1881, Mitcham Local History Collection
- ³ Blackwood Magazine p.14
- ⁴ Mitcham Local History Collection
- ⁵ W M Cummings
- ⁶ Blackwood Magazine August 1914
- ⁷ Blackwood Magazine August 1914
- ⁸ Blackwood Magazine p.189
- ⁹ Blackwood Magazine p.50
- ¹⁰ Blackwood Magazine p.9
- ¹¹ Blackwood Magazine p.9
- ¹² Hills and Valley Messenger Millenium Series 1 December 1999
- ¹³ Mitcham City Council Letter Box 3, rate payers letters 1929-34 No.78
- ¹⁴ Letter Box 3 No.177
- ¹⁵ Letter Box 3 No.152
- ¹⁶ Letter Box 3 No.41
- ¹⁷ Letter Box 3 No.143
- ¹⁸ Gibbs, R M. p.203
- ¹⁹ Mitcham Local History Collection
- ²⁰ The Coromandel 24 October 1952
- ²¹ Blackwood Magazine p.195
- ²² Letter Box 3 No.14
- ²³ Letter Box 3 No.107
- ²⁴ Letter Box 3 No.108
- ²⁵ Letter Box 3 No. 93
- ²⁶ Letter Box 3 No. 135

SISTER EDITH A GRIEG'S CURRANT CAKE

Ingredients: half a pound of butter, one cup sugar, three eggs lightly beaten, one cup currants, one cup milk, three cups SR flour. Instructions: Cream butter and sugar. Add beaten eggs then flour and milk alternately. Add currants and stir in lightly. I also add a splash of vanilla. Sprinkle top with a little caster sugar and spice before cooking. Cook in moderate oven for about thirty minutes depending on size of cake tin. I use a lamington tin so only needs thirty minutes.



Sources

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Mitcham Local History Collection.

Early Days

The area now known as Blackwood was formally surveyed in the early 1880s in anticipation of the opening of the railway line between Adelaide and Melbourne. Land was obtained by three syndicates from Mr Daniel Johnson, who had acquired property for grazing since 1852. The syndicates were represented by Mr Doolette, Mr Searle, and the Hills Land and Investment Co. represented by the Honourable John Carr.

The Hills Land and Investment Company advertised blocks along Coromandel Parade at £1 per foot. They were -

"within half an hour's train ride from Adelaide, possessing a most salubrious climate, with delightful scenery, and excellent conveniences of communication."¹

To stimulate building the company offered a free first class rail pass for three years if a home valued at £1000 was built within twelve months. A free second class pass was offered if a home valued at £500 was built.

To augment their sales auctioneers Ferry, Moore, and Wilkinson described the climate in glowing terms. Here the buyer would find "no mosquitoes to sing sanguinary war songs; no simmering summer nights that make the tired householder take up his bed and walk round the premises in search of a cool place." He would find air "filled with sweet scents and resounding with the rich melody of many birds."²

Mr Daniel Hewett, who built many of Blackwood's first homes, moved from Clarendon to his home on Main Rd, naming it "Buffalo" after the ship on which his father arrived in South Australia. Building in the district was restricted by the lack of a water supply and Daniel established a tank near the corner of Keith Rd, with a pumping system, enabling builders to fill barrels and cart water to building sites. Daniel commented that movement along Coromandel Parade was restricted by the "sea of mud," caused by carting operations involved in the construction of the railway. This carting "rendered the road impassable for walking and tracks had to be made through the scrub."³



"Buffalo" built by Daniel Hewett in 1882. *Photo taken 1983.*

The workers constructing the railway between Adelaide and Nairne lived in camps along the line. These were several miles apart, the Six Mile Camp being at the quarry near Mitcham, the Nine Mile Camp at Brick Siding, near the current Eden Hills tunnel, and the Eleven Mile Camp at Blackwood. This camp extended as a tangle of tents west of the railway up to the current Bank SA, and along to Young Street.

Bricks for the tunnels were manufactured at small brickworks established along the line. At Blackwood there was a brick works near Brigalow Ave.

Life in the camps was rough, and sly grog shops relieved the tedium after a hard day's labour. The murder of William Bell, at Seventeen Mile Camp is described in Frearson's Weekly, 6 November, 1880:

"Two navvies, the one named William Bell and the other William Walsh, having been drinking, an argument on religion was begun in a tent, during which blows were struck and Bell was stabbed fatally with a butcher's knife."⁴

Walsh was subsequently tried for murder.

Favourite Recipes

RABBIT AND HOW TO COOK

Place rabbit in cold water and salt for an hour, dry well, have ready a cup of bread crumbs, two slices bacon, one onion well chopped, thyme and sage, pepper and salt to taste; mix together and stuff rabbit, sew up well, place neck between hind legs and tie, roll well in flour. Have ready saucepan with hot fat, place in, turn quickly, move to one side of stove and roast slowly for three hours. Potatoes can be placed around this.



BREAD FRITTERS



One cup stale bread (crusts can be used), cover with milk, soak for one hour, put into basin, mash well with fork, add one egg, one tablespoon flour, half a teaspoon salt, grated nutmeg. Fry spoonfuls of mixture in boiling fat. Serve hot with sugar and slices lemon.

RASPBERRY PATTIES

Three ounces butter, four ounces flour, three eggs, one pint milk. Butter saucers, pour a little batter in each and bake in hot oven till crisp; when cooked turn out, spread with raspberry jam, fold over, and serve hot. (Recipes from the "Kan-Doo Cookery Book," issued by Eden Hills Parish Hall Committee in aid of its Funds, late 1920s)



The Bradey family claim to have brought in most of Blackwood with their carrier business, up to the 1970s. Other deliveries to the area came on Dunn's two horse trolley, or on Jack Meech's horse and cart. Residents remember being taken in Brady's truck to Sunday School picnics. Bert Baker also took passengers to picnics using a horse drawn wagon. Bill Moulden later used a truck with seats put across the top, known to the children as the "charibong," otherwise charabanc.

Residents recall a circus camped next to the E S and A Bank on the corner of Young St and Main Rd, in the 1930s.

Hawkers used to call in the Depression years, hoping to sell even a reel of cotton or a needle in those difficult days. They were succeeded in the 1940s by the "Rawleights and Watkins men" who came round at regular intervals in their vans, and brought great bolts of cloth and linen into the house, as well as spices, ointments, and home cures. It was an exciting household event when transport to the shops was not easy.

During the Depression it was a common sight to see two local boys with pairs of dead rabbits hanging from the handle bars of their bikes. These they sold for 6d a pair and returned home to Eden Hills with the money.

Roads were unsealed. Families went to the train track to collect cinders to put in the puddles on the road near their houses to sop up the mud.

Residents recall the beautiful murals of Mr Bruce Deering, a local sign writer, on the side of Jackson's shop at Christmas, and Easter.

And last of all Mr Wardby is recalled as being the one and only undertaker in Blackwood. Mr Warby drove a 1926 Essex Super Six, and made the coffins at his premises on the corner of Gulf View Road and Waite St.

Another source of drink was the Blackwood Inn, established by Robert Burfield on the corner of his property, known as "Blackwood Vale Farm." The wooden shanty and the farm are believed to have been named because of the black trunked trees in the area. Burfield extended his shanty when the road through the hills was opened in 1868. The hotel, renamed the Belair Hotel, provided refreshment for many a horse and traveller over the years. A drinking trough was installed outside in the 1930s, bearing the inscription "Give your horse a drink and have tea yourself."



The Temperance Hotel (also Magarey home and later "Blackwood House")
Photo courtesy R Sabine.

To counter the effects of alcohol in 1881 the Honourable John Carr worked to establish a Methodist Chapel in Young St, opposite the railway camp. Missioner Broadbent was appointed as first preacher, living in the current No.20 Coromandel Pde. A Temperance Hotel was set up on Main Rd and Band of Hope marches became a feature of Blackwood life.



Home of the Honourable John Carr, now No 16 Coromandel Pde.
Photo courtesy R Sabine.

The railway line as far as Nairne was finally opened in 1883. A Post Office operated from the station in the 1880s and there was a mail service from 1895. Deliveries were possible as far afield as Ashbourne. Mr C Shilton kept fifteen horses in stables near the entrance to the Blackwood Station, the horse run stretching as far as the present day Masonic Hall. Six more horses were kept at the changing post at Kangarilla. Mr Shilton paid his sons thirty five shillings weekly to assist him as drivers, warning them not to exceed the official speed limit of ten miles per hour.



Blackwood Mail Coach in front of Coromandel Valley Institute. *Photo courtesy R Sabine.*

We left our doors unlocked, and our cars unlocked. There were dirt roads. The milkman delivered milk in tins and we could smell the bread baking from Stratfold's Bakery. As kids we used to run to the train line to smell the fumes. We loved that smell, the steam engines. I can remember Ashton's Circus performing on the Blackwood Oval(now Hewett Sports Grounds) in the 1950s."

Graham's father, Roy, made beds and mattresses on his premises on the corner of Simla Parade and Adey Rd. Materials were stored in a neighbour's shed. People in the district were employed sewing mattress covers and Roy's mother worked on these at home. The covers were collected in the Ford Prefect Truck, and deliveries were made to John Martins in the city. This business has grown to become Sleep Haven, in Edwardstown.

During the war there was a shortage of school teachers, and the teacher you were accustomed to may be replaced by someone quite different---

Games in the schoolyard included skippy, in time to skipping jingles. But who would skip and who would turn the rope? The girls chanted "Ink, pink, pen and ink, I can smell a great big stink, and it comes from Y-O-U!" tapping each girl on the hand in turn. A favourite jingle was "Old Mother Stinkpot, lived in the ink pot, how many times did she die?" Another was "Salt, mustard, vinegar, pepper!" with the skipper getting faster and faster until she trod on the rope. Then she was "out." The girls did handstands against the wall, tucking in their dresses to avoid showing their pants. The boys played "allies," or marbles, making tracks for the marbles in the dirt. They played football in the nearby paddock, behind the current Woolworths. It was possible to cut up to Dunns Delicatessen from Blackwood School and to add water to a certain rain guage on the way. This would cause interesting confusion. There was the annual school pet show in May, when the Drum and Fife Band proudly marched round the yard to their own accompaniment, and the girls danced round the Maypole, expertly plaiting the ribbons.

Blackouts were a feature of life during World War 11. The ARP (Air Raid Precautions) group practised indoor manouevres at "Blackwood House" going up and down stairs. On one endeavour to take a loaded stretcher down the stairs the steep angle caused the "body" to slide off head first to the bottom of the stairs, and to require genuine medical attention.

Residents remember chilblains on the fingers, toes, and ears, and the ice on the railway station platform on wintery mornings. Summer days waiting for the steam train bring memories of the canvas water bag and enamel cup, hanging at the station. The water always tasted of mould. Mothers near the line made sure of bringing in the washing before the school train arrived as this was the worst train for billowing clouds of black smoke. It was hectic on this school train, girls had to hang on to their hats in the tunnel, in case a certain resident grabbed the hat and fitted it over the carriage light to plunge everyone into darkness, then he could kiss a certain girl---

Graham Blythman recalls bringing draught horses from Cherry Gardens to be shod at Morrie Pelling's Forge on Main Rd, near the train line.

A resident remembers the days when everyone walked. She remembers noticing the corrugated iron fences near Jones Corner. The blocks were much bigger. It was before regular rubbish collections and there was often a haze of smoke over Blackwood if people were burning rubbish. When she began working at Blythman's Fish Cafe the only delis were Dunns and the Five Ways Cafe. She recalls the fish and chips being cooked in the kitchen through the back of the shop, to create space for a delicatessen at the front. The customers were easily visible, sitting at the three or four tables eating fish and chips.

Betty Marsland recalls opening Marsland's Hardware Store in the mid winter in 1955:

" Blackwood was a much more friendly place. We had lovely customers. We knew them all by face if not by name. Next to us was Blythmans. They had the best Fish and Chips for miles around unless West Torrens had lost the Football. Then the Fish and Chips were awful. Blythmans stocked lollies and pasties made by a local lady, Mrs Beasley, who lived next door. From our shop we could see the school children lined up at lunch time at the back of Blythmans for their lunches. The pasties were 6d, and because the mums paid before school some children assumed these pasties were free. So the queue got longer. Everyone knew everyone and their mums always paid up later."

Ken Prime recalls fifty years of trading in Blackwood, selling sports equipment, mowers, and television, as well as paint. He recalls selling fireworks for the annual Guy Fawkes Night on 5 November. There was a time when a jumping jack landed in a box of fire works---In the early days of T V crowds gathered outside his shop in the evenings to see the set showing through his shop window. Even more people clustered inside during the day time. Ken recalls being involved in the early days of Badminton, a Model Aero Club, the Blackwood Angling Club, and Table Tennis Club. He planned a Skidder Club for bicycles, and supplied sports equipment to the new Blackwood High School.

Roy Moritz built his family home in Simla Parade in the 1950s. His son, Graham, recalls the sense of community in Blackwood in those days, with the Station Master supplying some rails as building material for the new house. Everyone was prepared to give each other a hand:

"It was much more of a community then. Blackwood, Eden Hills, Belair, and even Upper Sturt were really one and every body knew each other. Everyone helped each other. It was, if I help you, you will help me. Everyone went to the dances at Belair, Blackwood, and Upper Sturt. Everyone went to the Guy Fawkes Night.

With the convenience of rail communication, and with panoramas of

"swelling verdure crowned uplands, dimpling tree decked dells, vine clad rises and acres upon acres of orchard, lawn, and park, and with first class building stone to be found within a short distance,"⁵

it is no wonder that some affluent dwellings appeared along Coromandel Pde. Close to the Carr residence was the mansion of Mr William Townsend, MP, who had his home built in 1882. This passed to Mr Alexander Downer, Solicitor, in 1889 and later to the Campbells. In the 1920s it was the Dall family home.



Mr Townsend's Mansion, now No. 22 Coromandel Pde.
Photo Courtesy R Sabine.

Mr Alexander McDonald MP also lived on Coromandel Pde. This house was built in 1880. Mr McDonald opened the first post office and store in Blackwood. He served in Parliament 1887-1915.



Home built 1880 for Alexander McDonald M P, now No. 18 Coromandel Pde.
Photo R Sabine 2003.

No. 81 Coromandel Parade was built in 1898 by the owner builder Mr Richard Bray. The tower was added in 1919. When Dr A B Russell lived there in the 1930s and 40s it became known as the "Doctor's House."

On Coromandel Pde was Mr Hill's bakery. Mr Hill and his sons began work before day break, by the light of kerosene lamps, firing wood ovens and making dough. Bread was delivered later in the day. This bakery was later run by the Grimwoods and then the Stratfolds, who operated 1937-1973, the latter years selling from a shop on the site of Baker's Delight.



Stratfolds' Bakery 1937-73, now No. 63 Coromandel Pde. *Photo taken 1983.*

In the Depression the roads were unsealed. Eva remembers bare footed children, their parents unable to afford shoes for them, negotiating the cold mud and frozen puddles along Carr St. Summers could be so hot that to sleep you placed your mattress by the screen door in the passage to get a breath of wind. In case of bush fire the church bells would ring.

Eva's mother, Mrs Annie Dunn, ran a boarding house behind the Masonic Hall, accommodating men working on the railway line when the line was doubled. Eva recalls cutting sandwiches at her mother's delicatessen for fire fighters during bushfires.

On the evening that the Cold Stores caught fire residents assembled to watch the spectacle. Tins of jam and fruit were exploding. People returned the next day to scavenge among the debris for undamaged tins of fruit.

The Brownie Pack met in the Methodist Hall. One of the highlights when Brown Owl and Tawny Owl were not looking was

"to swing by the legs on the church fence, with your skirt tucked in to hide your pants of course, and go across the road to the Five Ways for the half penny or the penny trays of sweets. In those days it was a real treat to have a penny to spend as it was during the Depression and money was short."

This resident also remembers the dreadful, sad, and particularly hot summer of 1934 when bush fires raged through the hills. Her father returned from fighting the fire greatly distressed because a local resident had been burnt to death. The heat was so great that people slept on their lawns or on the bare linoleum in the passage to get a breath of air.

Mr Huxley, the first policeman, reflected on the occasion when, during the Depression, four hundred workers queued up to fill one job on the railway line. There were tent dwellers and one woman lived in a tent on the site of the current Chinese Restaurant on Main Rd, for three years. Mr Huxley had a huge dalmation which inspired so much fear into little children that they forced their mothers to walk on the other side of the road when passing the police station.

Laurie Brumby came daily to Blackwood by push bike from Clarendon. This was in the first year of his apprenticeship with Hector Winn, Carpenter and Joiner. Later he bought a motor bike.

He too recalls the milkshakes at Five Ways Cafe after the "pictures" at the Boys Club Hall.

When the renovations were carried out on "Caithness" the floor was replaced. Laurie recalls the astonishment of all concerned when a huge underground water tank was revealed under the kitchen. To put in the new floor they were balancing on joists over the water. This building, demolished in 1972, was right in the centre of Woolworths Car Park.

Memory Lane

Jim Scroop's family have been butchers in the district since 1936. He remembers, as an eight or nine year old boy, driving his father's horse drawn cart from Jones' slaughter yard where Blackwood Football Club is now, to the butcher's shop on Jones Corner, where his father worked. Later he pedalled three times a week to the Belair Triangle from Scroop's slaughter yard in Coromandel Valley. The meat, strapped onto the back of the bicycle, was delivered to Mrs Burford, who ran a canteen to feed the wharfies working at Port Adelaide.

He remembers dances at the Boys' Club Hall, the floor made slippery with candle grease, and the "picture" shows. There were milk shakes at the Five Ways Cafe after the evening's entertainment, and sometimes after the train trip from the Vogue Cinema on Unley Rd.

Residents clearly recall Miss Plaice riding her three wheel bicycle round Blackwood, with a basket on the front. Fascinating too was Ruben Easton in his horse drawn wagon, sounding his bell and calling out "Bottle ho!" as he did his rounds of the streets. At one stage, too, betting went on in the small shed on Main Rd near the Chaff and Grain Store.

Residents recall also that, in the days before the automatic telephone exchange there was a chance that the girl on the switch would know you, and that a conversation would ensue before the connection was made! Blackwood had two digit telephone numbers up to the 1950s.

Sid Foster lived, and kept his draught horses, behind Darwin's Garage. He delivered wood from National Park to householders. Sid was in great demand for playing his piano accordion at parties.

The Axford boys were a familiar sight in the district driving a horse and cart, delivering groceries from Axford's Home Service Stores on Main Rd. Residents recall the interesting smells on entering a grocer's shop, a mixture of spice, coffee and tea, biscuits, and sugar. The bins at the back of the counter had hinged lids, and it was possible to buy a paper bag of broken biscuits. Biscuits were stored in square silver tins and weighed out into paper bags. It was the same for flour and sugar. There was always the wooden chair, for the weary customer to "take the weight off their feet," and a jar of boiled sweets on the counter, to be distributed gratis to young customers.

Eva McDonald recalls childhood days yabbing in Sturt Creek, and collecting mushrooms by the Coromandel Cemetery. There were blackberries to be gathered, and walks up Acklands Hill Rd to gather wild flowers. Mulberries were picked off MacNamara's mulberry tree on Red Road. After Sunday School it was usual to walk into the National Park. Roller skating on a tennis court in Hawthorndene was another pass time. Young people rode their bikes to Clarendon, and to Brighton for a swim, puffing back up the hill as hot as they were before.

McNamara's dairy property was on the nearby corner of Red Road. It provided a thoroughfare for children, over the stile, through the paddocks, past the mulberry tree, and down the hill to the Coromandel Valley School. This had opened in the current old building in 1877. Catholic worshippers, too, passed over the stile to hold services in McNamara's kitchen until the Boys' Club Hall became available.

Mr W J Dunstan ran a General Store near the railway tunnel under Coromandel Pde in the 1890s, later moving his business to the other side of the railway.



Dunstan's Store c 1920. Photo courtesy Mitcham Local History Collection.



Blackwood, a Community

The Boys Club Hall, adjacent to the Hewett Sports Ground, was built in 1903 to cater for the needs of youths in the district. The climate and fresh air of Blackwood seemed to -

"supply an extra surplus of energy and the need was felt for a channel where this energy could be expressed rather than by little acts of mischief---It was suggested that a room should be obtained for the purpose of forming a Boys Club and the idea was so enthusiastically taken up that a meeting was called for the following week---A committee was formed to carry the idea into effect. The difficulty of finding sufficient money to build a hall was carefully considered and trustees were in readiness to guarantee the finance. Mr H Phillips was appointed the first president and Mr R H Hewett the first secretary. The latter approached Mr A G Downer---who generously agreed to build suitable premises on the land acquired by the committee, allowing the club the use of the same free of any rent. Too much praise cannot be given to Mr R H Hewett and it is recognised that for years the success of the club was due ---very largely to his personal influence."⁶



Boys' Club Hall built 1903, near site of Hewett Sports Grounds.
Photo courtesy R Sabine.

Cliff St became part of Shepherds Hill Rd. Several large homes were demolished to make way for the Shepherds Court shopping centre.

Demolition of buildings along the Main Rd continued. Residents recall seeing long time land marks and well known houses disappearing in a cloud of dust.



Widening of Main Rd. 1970s. *Photo courtesy R Sabine.*

During the 1970s residents were informed that a third commercial giant was on its way. In spite of some protest this occurred and Coles opened 31 May 1982.

Gone was life in the close knit community as many knew it. The trade off was that Blackwood was now part of a modern metropolis with all its conveniences and facilities.



Opening of Coles 31 May 1982. *Photo courtesy R Sabine.*

Demolition of old buildings was a feature of this time. Blackwood homes and cottages began to fall to make way for the Magnet Shopping Centre and Woolworths Supermarket. The grand opening of Woolworths was held in April 1964.



The second of the commercial giants rose in the form of the Foodland Supermarket, which opened in 1968, followed by the small shops surrounding the car park.



Demolition of homes along Main Rd. 1970s. Photo courtesy R Sabine.

The Coromandel Cricket Club provided another outlet for youth. Land near the Boys' Club Hall was bought from Mr Bath and when, in 1905, the McTaggart family donated more land a club house was built.

By 1914 the hall was open every night of the week, and activities included the Billiard Club, the Gymnastics Club, the Girls Club, the Dramatic Society, foreshadowing the Blackwood Players, and the Male Voice Choir with Mr Wickens as conductor. A Brass Band was formed in 1911, Mr Downer generously contributing to the cost of the instruments. As a gesture of appreciation the band played a bracket of his favourite songs to him on his 78th birthday in 1914.

The Literary Society met monthly, holding discussions on subjects which "commanded the attention of the Western world." One such topic was entitled "The Revolt of Woman." The speaker explained that

"in the world of scholarship woman's progress has been extraordinary. Abundant evidence has been furnished that feminine grey matter is by no means of inferior quality."

He considered that our grandmothers

"passed straight from girlhood into the responsibilities of married life, foregoing the years of independent young womanhood which do much to build the character and personality of present day girls."⁷

There was a Mutual Improvement Society, and for the more physical there was skating which continued "to be a popular amusement on Saturday and Wednesday evenings."

The Floral Show was held annually in the hall. As well as for floral items prizes were offered for needlework, household stove cookery, the best ironed muslin blouse, the best ironed collar, and the best polished black boots.

1914 was a year of severe drought, and gardeners were advised in an article in the Blackwood Magazine to widen paths to save on water.

"One of the most important parts of the garden from the point of view of general effect is the path---the appearance of the garden is spoilt by too narrow paths; these are objectionable too in that they do not allow sufficient room for visitors."⁸

The garden at Gamble Cottage, maintained by the Gamble family from 1902, and donated to the Mitcham Council in the 1980s, serves as a reminder of the gardens of this era.

The drought prompted a proposal to dam the Sturt River.

"The proposal is to dam the Sturt in one of the rough gorges, preferably to the east, if a suitable location can be found. If this can be done the elevation should be sufficient to dispense with any necessity for pumping. ---Up to the present the conservation of flood waters has always been turned down in this State---It certainly seems ridiculous to allow the many millions of gallons which flow down the Sturt every winter to go to waste when such an important district is thirsting for the precious fluid."⁹

In October 1914 1000 soldiers were camped at Coromandel Valley Reserve, and there was a Military Camp in the National Park. The War Memorial, established after World War One, is a reminder of the effect of this war on the district.



War Memorial Blackwood. *Photo courtesy R Sabine.*

The End of an Era

In the 1960s the transition of Blackwood from a hills community into a suburb of Adelaide accelerated. Traffic congestion where the roads met at the Five Ways Intersection was becoming a problem, with prams and pedestrians, bicycles and cars, all trying to cross at once. Discussions concerning the installation of a roundabout, or perhaps even traffic lights, had been going on for some time. Blackwood's first roundabout was installed in 1958.



Blackwood's first roundabout 1958. *Photo courtesy R Sabine.*

There was strong Community support for a library. Ivor Simons supported the proposal in Council and plans were drawn up. The first library opened on the corner of Brighton Pde and Cliff St in the late 1960s. In 1981 the library moved to its present premises at the corner of Carr St and Main Rd, occupying a building previously built as a furniture store.

Fund raising in aid of the Community Hospital was a feature of life in the 1950s, both before and after the opening. There was the annual Floral Fair, the baby competition, the wheelbarrow race along Main Rd, balls, barn dances, bridge afternoons, jumble sales, and cake stalls. In 1953 the property was obtained and Blackwood Community Hospital was opened 6 March 1954 at 3 pm.

BARBECUE AND BARN DANCE

SATURDAY, AUGUST 15th, 1953

At the R.S.L. Premises, CLIFF ST., BLACKWOOD

Proceeds, Blackwood Hospital Appeal

Admission 5/- includes Barbecue Supper

W. LAVERY, Sec. R.S.L.

Blackwood was connected to the outside world by telegraph from January 1914, and messenger boys, delivering messages from house to house for pocket money, became a thing of the past. Yet progress brought disadvantages. The population, disturbed at the "reckless way in which telephone gangs were cutting down roadside trees," organised an Arbor Day and in April 1914 planted ash trees along Coromandel Parade.

Church played a big part in the social life of the community. In 1914 a large crowd watched the Church of England, established in Cliff St in the 1890s, being moved by a team of bullocks to the current site of All Hallows. The land had been donated by Mrs Davies Thomas, who later donated land for the Blackwood Scout Hall, and the nature reserve in Edgcumbe Pde. The current church building, built by Mr J H Hewett in 1936, replaced the wooden building when it was burnt down in 1934.



Church of England moved by bullock team 1914. *Photo courtesy R Sabine.*

In 1917 the Methodist Chapel was moved by the same method from Young St to the site of the Uniting Church, and fund raising began, to enable the construction of the stone building. There were teas, craft stalls, and concerts, and in 1921 building commenced. The opening of the church, built by Mr A E Hewett, was celebrated in April 1922.

The Church of Christ members constructed a building in Cliff St in 1915, replaced by a new building in 1984.

An Army hut was used by the Catholics after World War I. It was on the site of St Paul of the Cross, on Coromandel Parade. The stone building, built by Mr J H Hewett, was completed in 1936.



Methodist Chapel. Photo 1950s courtesy R Sabine.

Blackwood Station Yard was a busy one, the station being the first country station on the line. Stock yards were at the northern end of the area and a new goods shed was built in 1911. The water tank meant that steam engines shunted back and forth to fill their boilers and in 1914 a three ton crane was erected for loading trucks. By the 1920s there were twenty four passenger trains to and from Adelaide daily. These were well filled with commuters during the week and with visitors to the National Park at weekends. However it was not always easy to get across the paddocks to the station.

"The road leading to the Blackwood Station is in almost every respect an excellent one. The railings are ornamental, the gum trees a delight, and the drainage, no doubt, is as good as we can expect. We hope the Railways Commissioner will not think us hypercritical if we suggest it lacks one very necessary attribute, in as much as both foot and vehicular traffic find it almost impassable."¹¹

Sister Grieg and Dr A B Russell opened a hospital in the house which is currently No.9 Murray St. and many local residents were born there. The hospital entrance was on Coromandel Pde.

"Blackwood House," remembered as an elite guest house in the 1940s, became a hospital for the second time after World War II, under the care of Sisters Bailey and Dunn. It closed in the 1950s. It was then renovated by Mr Gunn who let out rooms, and named it "Caithness." The building was taken over by the Methodist Church in 1957, to create more room for Sunday School classes, and reopened as "Aldersgate." It was demolished in 1972.

With the increase in population in the 1950s there was a pressing need for a community hospital. A public meeting was held in the Masonic Hall and the one hundred and sixty people present decided to purchase the property "Cherington," situated between Blackwood and Belair. This property had originally been built in 1863 for Richard Bullock Andrews, Crown Solicitor, and in 1887 was bought by Alexander George Downer. In 1926 it became a private boys school, "Wykeham." The Blades family, from whom it was purchased by the Blackwood Community, had owned it since 1939.



"Wykeham School," 1931. Later "Cherington." Bought for Blackwood Community Hospital 1953. Photo courtesy Blackwood Hospital.

Doctors recall the dangers associated with delivering babies and taking out tonsils on kitchen tables during the 1930s. Many of the homes were without running water and with the outside lavatory close by. Houses were sought in which to establish small private hospitals. The difficulties associated with finding suitable premises are reflected in the following letters;

Blackwood 19.6.30

Mr Boorman

Secretary of Mitcham District Council

Dear Sir,

I am making an application to your Board re an inspection of Blackwood House, Blackwood for the use of the same premises as a Hospital. Would it be possible for your Health inspector to inspect the premises at an early date.

I am Yours Faithfully,

Edith A Grieg ²⁴

Blackwood, March 6th 1933

The Board of Health, Mitcham

Dear Sirs,

I hereby apply for registration of my premises situated Coromandel Parade Blackwood. --- It is a stone and brick residence with electric light and supplied with reservoir water. A septic tank is to be installed immediately.

I intend using the above premises for a Hospital and wish to be able to take Surgical, Medical, and Midwifery work. Trusting that you will deal with this matter immediately as I have cases waiting.

Yours faithfully,

Edith A Grieg. ²⁵

Blackwood, February 17th 1934

The Board of Health, Mitcham

Dear Sirs,

I hereby apply for inspection of ---residence on Brighton Parade. It is a stone and brick residence with electric light, supplied with reservoir water, a septic tank is now being installed. --- I intend using the above residence as a hospital and wish to take medical, surgical, and midwifery work. Trusting you will deal with the matter immediately, as I wish to take up residence there on the termination of my lease of the house now rented by me and used as a hospital.

Yours faithfully,

Edith A Grieg²⁶



Blackwood Station c 1910. *Photographer C A Petts, courtesy Mitcham Local History Collection.*

Small Advertisements.

LOST.--A coloured SILK BAG between Eden Hills and Brighton-road. Return Post Office, Blackwood.

--GOLD BANGLE near Parish Hall; reward. Return Post Office, Blackwood.

--BLACK PURSE containing money, lost between Blackwood Post Office and Mason's. Return to Mrs. L. Hall, Blackwood.

Small Brown Leather HAND BAG containing books, &c.; lost between East View and St. John's Church. Reward on return to Mrs. Davies Thomas, East View.

FOR SALE.--Wheeler & Wilson SEWING MACHINE in good working order; price 25/- Good home essential.--Apply Mrs. Coleman, Blackwood.

STOVE, Metter's No. 1, practically new (only used twice); also about 10 feet stove piping. M. K. Muller, Blackwood.

The Depression Years

For many years the railway remained the main source of transport in Blackwood. In 1928 under Railways Commissioner W A Webb, there were sweeping changes to the State's system. The line to Blackwood was doubled, and the tunnel under Coromandel Parade was dismantled, and replaced by a bridge, to allow the new Mountain Type engines to fit underneath. The railways provided much needed work during the Depression.



Doubling of the line near the old Coromandel Pde Tunnel 1928.

Photo courtesy R Sabine.

In 1928 Daniel Hewett, who had acquired land in Hawthorndene in 1896, subdivided his property, "Watahuna."

The Railways again offered passes to residents. This time the free first class pass, lasting for three years, was for the owner of a dwelling worth over £900.

Mr Len Wilson was interested in this subdivision. He described the scene in 1929;

"There were no facilities available, no roads, water, electricity, gas, sewerage or whatever, except the train service from Blackwood---the estate was covered with peppermint gums and briars---The agent Mr Watson brought us by way of Upper Sturt Rd then along a rough cart track."¹²

Health and Hospitals

Infectious diseases and epidemics were an ever present threat in the community before the days of antibiotics. "Kalyra" had opened as a Consumptive Home in 1894 due to a bequest of the Brown family. By 1914 it had been extended so that there were four separate wings, and a new kitchen range was donated by Simpsons. There were "18 acres suitably provided with graded walks and rest arbors, and land for depasturing cows belonging to the establishment."²¹ Nearby, "Nunyara" was opened as a T B Sanitarium by Dr Gault in 1902. The disease remained a scourge for over forty more years.

Fear of TB is expressed in this letter written during the Depression.

30-11-30

Dr Gault,

Dear Sir,

Am writing to you on behalf of my mother-in-law---According to reports a female living at (her) house is in advanced stages of consumption, as you know, Doctor, my mother-in-law does not enjoy the best of health, I am much concerned, and trust you will investigate this case, with a view to having this person removed to a suitable Home.

Yours respectfully---²²

Childhood infectious diseases were also a great source of anxiety. The Nurse Inspector was consulted by a concerned parent during an outbreak of measles in 1933.

3rd August 1933

Dear Sir,

With reference to your telephone conversation of even date, concerning a case of Measles at your residence at Eden Hills, I beg to advise that if your child has a cough, the eyes appear watery and weak, the glands in the neck are painful and the rash appeared a few days after the other symptoms, then your child is suffering from Measles.

I am enclosing herewith a circular on this disease for your guidance. On recovery of the patient (three weeks after the rash appeared) you are required to fumigate the room with a sulphur candle, which may be procured from any chemist.

Yours faithfully--²³



Deep drainage, Blackwood, 1970s. *Photo courtesy R Sabine.*



Len subsequently bought a block for £60 and built one of the first homes in Hawthorndene, on the corner of Forest Ave and Watahuna Ave.

At this time Mr Dunstan moved his grocery store from the southern side to the northern side of the railway bridge and Mr Alf Hewett operated from Dunstan's former premises, cycling far and wide with his deliveries. These shops still stand and are now Nos. 28 and 34 Coromandel Parade. Mr Mackereth also sold green groceries from his nearby store.



No. 40 Coromandel Pde, formerly Mackereth's Greengrocery. *Photo 1983.*

Miss Cameron had a drapery shop next door, with her stock heavily protected by naphthalene. She sold needles, threads, buttons, and hooks, to the women of Blackwood, at a time when sewing was much more of a necessity than it is today.

In the 1920s the Sturt Producers set up the Cold Stores near Blackwood Station to enable the distribution by rail of the fruit from local orchards. One such orchard was that of Edwin Ashby, who established his apple and pear orchard at Wittunga, in 1901.

Ice for ice chests could also be obtained from the Cold Stores. Children living nearby sometimes collected this in hand drawn carts.



Workmen at the Cold Stores 1920s. *Photo courtesy R Sabine.*

For some years a Post Office had operated from the back of a private house on Coromandel Pde. Children who paddled through the puddles along a lane at the side of the house to collect letters were rewarded with home made sweets. An up to date post office opened in 1928, built on the area which had been Paddick's Forge. Here Morrie Pelling had worked shoeing horses, under the awed gaze of young boys who were convinced he could lift the horse.



Post Office built 1928, on site of current Post Office. *Photo 1950's courtesy R Sabine.*

Residents were advised to get septic tanks. Householders were instructed in the local paper about the DISPOSAL of LIQUID WASTES;

"Most of the disposal of liquid waste in unsewered areas of Mitcham presents a problem by reason of the clay nature of the soil. This prevents a ready dispersal of the fluids by soakage. Evaporation remains the most important medium of disposal---"²⁰

SEPTIC TANK OWNERS

For all Septic Tank problems
contact—

CLEANA TANKS LTD.

**Specialists in pumping and
cleaning all septic tank
systems.**

ALSO INQUIRE ABOUT OUR YEARLY
SERVICE PLAN.
ALL INQUIRIES.

PHONE: 45 2778

Long and hard were the discussions over the installation of septic tanks. Many still recall the problems associated with sewage flowing down gutters on the down hill side of the street, and neighbourhood disputes with effluent collecting in pools at the bottom of the garden. The blocks in the new subdivisions were far too small to soak away the fluid from a septic tank and although it was treated it still had a powerful odour. In the article quoted above people were rebuked for lack of effort:

"A dogmatic statement so often made to cover lack of effort to get rid of these wastes is that they cannot be disposed of other than in the street water table or adjoining allotment. Many successful installations have been made throughout the district and it is hoped that these will act as an incentive to others to perform the duty which is undeniably theirs."

There were problems until, at great expense, deep drainage came to the area in the 1970s.

With all these changes Blackwood was losing its identity as a country village. The following article appeared in The Coromandel on April 10 1953:

"Are we in the metropolitan area? ---If and when that is duly gazetted, from July following no meat from local abattoirs, or from Coromandel Valley, or from Noarlunga, will be allowed into the area---Mr Scroop will not be allowed to deliver in the district and Mr Jones will not be allowed to kill locally---Being within the Abattoirs Board area affects several other things besides our butchers. It radically effects our keeping of animals within a certain distance of houses and removes our right to kill for our own or our neighbour's benefit, as we can do now--"

This change had far reaching effects. Sheep and cattle were no longer seen on Blackwood streets, being taken to the fattening paddocks. There was less shunting of railway trucks and gradually the railway stock yards became disused. The backyard cow disappeared, and children began to assume that milk came out of bottles.

The backyard lavatory with the night cart man coming to collect the waste, was becoming a thing of the past.



Backyard lavatory, Blackwood. *Photo courtesy R Sabine.*

Mr Pelling opened his own forge near the train line, in the vicinity of the present day Bridgestone Tyre Service at No. 255 Main Rd. It was a common sight on Tuesdays and Fridays to see horses from Cherry Gardens being shod when their owners came down to do the shopping.

Joe Fairley began his long association with Blackwood in the 1920s. During the Depression he pedalled his bicycle around the district picking up shoe repairs, then operated from a small shed on Station Rd. The business expanded and was moved to a shop on Jones Corner. George Fairley joined his brother after World War 11.

Reid's Carpenters and Joiners Shop stood behind the Reid home on Reids Corner. Mr R B Reid, Carpenter and Contractor, moved into Blackwood in 1910 and built his home near the current Bank SA. This house is now incorporated in shops but the roof line remains visible. Further down Station Rd were Simpson's Bike Shop, later to become Light's Paint Store, and Sally Walker's Tea Shop. Heather McCann's small millinery shop was also in this vicinity.

Mr Clarrie Jackson took over a newly built brick butcher's shop on Main Rd, from Mr Critchley, in 1927. This shop operated until 1968. Mr Jackson, on horseback, moved his cattle and sheep from the Blackwood Station stock yards, along Coromandel Pde. Stock was fattened up in his holding paddocks opposite "Craigburn." His wife regularly stuffed up to three hundred ducks and fowls at Christmas time.



Sheep on Main Rd 1929. *Photo courtesy R Sabine.*

Constant problems were caused by animals straying along the rough and ill lit roads. One incident is outlined in the following letter:

"To the Mitcham District Council

Glen Ave,
Blackwood
July 1931

Dear Sirs,

On more than one occasion I have phoned the ranger at Mitcham in regard to cattle straying on Carr St and Glen Rd. These stray cattle in the past have done much damage to my garden---Another matter I wish to draw your attention to is the state of Glen Rd---it is not safe to venture out at night without a lantern. I think it is a shocking state of affairs that we should have to carry a light to find our way to the other side of town. I don't think you know the state of the road or you would have done something before this.

I am yours hoping for a better road---"13

Next to Mr Jackson's was Mrs Annie Dunn's Delicatessen, taken over from Miss Stone. Mrs Dunn supplied drinks, pies, cakes, sandwiches, and pastries. Local traders met there in summer over a Stonie's ginger beer, and school children could order hot pasty lunches during the Depression. On Friday evenings during World War Two card evenings were held in the front of the shop to support of the war effort. This delicatessen closed in 1967.



Dunn's Delicatessen and Jackson's Butchers. Photo courtesy R Sabine.

Blackwood Memorial Players staged their first production under that name, in 1951. The comedy "George and Margaret," by Gerald Savory, was put on in the Boys Club Hall. This hall was by now becoming inadequate.

Plans were being made for a Memorial Hall and fund raising began. The fund raising committee donated £10 and contributions were made from the annual Floral Fairs held on the Blackwood Oval. Proceeds from jumble sales, bridge afternoons, films, and balls held at the Boys Club Hall went towards the project and cotton reels, lace, and buttons could be left at Blythmans for use in constructing items for craft stalls. A fund raising musical, the "Floral Queen," produced by Miss D H Hewett, involved many residents, both young and old. Plans for the hall were submitted in 1952, and building began on land donated by the Council. The hall was built by Mr J H Hewett, using large concrete slabs which required a crane to lift them. This was a new building technique in South Australia at this time. The foundation stone of the hall was placed by Robin Millhouse on 26 March 1956.

TWO BIG NIGHTS
EASTER SATURDAY AND
EASTER MONDAY AT
7.30 p.m.

Bookings Must be collected by 7 p.m.

Supporting features will be:
"The Life Story of Prince Phillip"
and
"Rocket"
showing the development and trial of Guided Missiles

Plus: TOM AND JERRY CARTOON and NEWSREEL

=====

ADMISSION PRICES

Sunday Matinee—Adults 3/6, Children 1/6
Saturday Nights—
Lounge: Adults and Children 4/6
Stalls: Adults 3/6, Children 2/6
Wednesday Nights—
Lounge: 4/6 Stalls: 3/6
Children (everywhere) 1/6

Subdivision in the area began in earnest. Land agents such as Maddern and Frith began business and suburbs like Glenalta and Bellevue Heights came into being. Roads were sealed, and new motor garages opened. Callarys settled in the area and in 1954 the Darwin family set up a motor garage on the corner of Main Rd and Stirling St.

It was the early days of fast food. Blythman's Fish Cafe operated from Cliff St, with the catch cry "On Everyone's Lips, Blythmans Fish and Chips." The chips had the reputation of being the best for miles around. Local tennis players congregated in the shop after their matches to finish the day with fish and chips. Theatre tickets for productions of the Blackwood Memorial Players were sold from this shop.

Blythman's
Blackwood Fish and Grill
Cafe
Telephone - - 78 1574



Blythmans' Fish Cafe closing, 1971. *Photo courtesy R Sabine.*

The advent of the motor car ushered in a new life style. Mr A H Wilkins, Mr Hunt, and Mr Bert Armstrong were early garage proprietors in Blackwood.



A H Wilkins' Garage, later Hunt's, site of Edenwood Motors, Main Road.
Photo courtesy R Sabine.

Penno's Chaff and Grain Store had operated since 1910, when Arthur Penno opened the fodder store. John Penno took over from his father, Gill, in 1957 and gradually began to stock gardening products, as motor traffic had almost taken over from horse drawn vehicles. Skinner's stands on this site today.



Penno's Chaff and Grain Store 1960s. *Photo Courtesy R Sabine.*

Mr Matthews' leafy little General Store operated from the Main Rd near Chapman St, the Matthews family living at the back of the shop.

The E S and A Bank opened a branch, managed by Mr R C Gribble, in 1926. New banking chambers and offices were added to these premises near the corner of Main Rd and Young St. Currently the ANZ Bank is on this site.



ES and A Bank opened 1926, Main Road near corner of Young Street.
Photo R Sabine, Courtesy Belair Hotel.

The Blackwood community was saddened in 1927 when Rodney Saint was drowned in the Sturt River. Frank Collins was also drowned attempting to rescue his friend. The tragedy is commemorated on the drinking fountain near the roundabout. The Saint family ran a boarding house in "Blackwood House," the building which had formerly been the Temperance Hotel.

Blackwood School was opened in 1929. In this year the attendance at Coromandel Valley School dropped from 128 to 60, and 124 students were enrolled at Blackwood.

At this time the pair of local dentists were Mr Moore, and Mr Mount, who lived near each other on Sandison Ave.



Bank of Adelaide 1958, site now National Pharmacies. *Photo courtesy R Sabine.*

The Bradey family operated as carriers in Blackwood from the 1920s, and delivered goods to local stores. They regularly delivered to Marslands Hardware Store.

Marslands' Hardware opened on Cliff St in the winter of 1955 and later extended into the next door premises before moving to the site of Mitre 10. Marslands had taken over the hardware store of Mr John Farmer, which had operated from a small shop at the end of Chapman St. during the 1940s. Close to Marslands in Cliff St was the small drapery of the Schahingers.

It was the era of 11.30am Saturday closing, and the Saturday morning rush was part of the shopping scenario of the 1950s.

The Coromandel was established after World War 11 as a community newspaper. It was distributed first from a private house, then from an office in Cliff St. This office was an asbestos construction which had been transported from Stirling by the Maddern family for use as a real estate office. When Madderns put up a new stone building combining a grocery store and a real estate agency, the asbestos office was moved by community effort to Young St. The editor of the paper spoke of post war progress in the early 1950s:

"The horse and buggy days are over, motor cars need bituminised roads. We are living in a residential area, not a farming community. We now have a population of 6000---and we can expect 10,000 extra population within the next 10 years."

MARSLANDS HARDWARE

for
TOOLS — PAINTS
GENERAL HARDWARE
GIFTS AND KITCHEN WARE
Ring UW 2171
CLIFF STREET, BLACKWOOD

A cordial invitation to inspect

THE NEW BLACKWOOD PAINT & SPORTS CENTRE

(Next to Savings Bank)

Phone 78 2115

INTRODUCING A MODERN PAINT AND COLOUR CENTRE

*Free Colour Advisory Service to all
Hills Residents*

★ Sporting Goods, Fishing Tackle, Rifles,
and Ammunition.

★ Model Aero and Dinky Toy Hobbies.

★ Cycles and Accessories.

★ Luxaflex and Canvas Blinds.

Incorp. PRIME TV SALES

(K. G. & M. E. PRIME, props.)

"For a Better Deal in Television"

(Next to Savings Bank) - Phone 78 2115

The Edge family had worked in the district for some years and opened a new Electrical House on Main Rd in 1955. Television, power tools, and refrigerators were stocked and electrical work carried out. Edges Electrical, Television, and Appliance Services still operate from Shop 4/26 Coromandel Pde. The Adelaide Bank operated a branch from Edges for a short period.

The harshness of the Depression years is reflected in this sample of letters to the Mitcham Council:

Blackwood, Wolsely Rd
Feb 24 1931

Dear Sir,

I am writing to you about my Rates. Well, I am out of work, and I am unable to pay, my rates at present, Hoping this will meet with your Approval.

Yours Faithfully (sic)¹⁴

Blackwood
27th September 1932

The Clerk

Mitcham District Council,

Sir,

I wish to make an offer of One Pound (£1) for right to get Wattle Bark on District Roads. If my offer is accepted it would enable me to pay my rates, as I have very little work at present.

Yours Faithfully---

Blackwood¹⁵

This offer was refused.

Dec 18th, 1933

To Mitcham Town Clerk,

Dear Sir,

I would like to take this liberty to write to you to see if it is possible for you to help me with some babies' clothes, and also some for my self. I am expecting in about three weeks time, and I find it impossible to get what is wanted at this time. I will be pleased if you can help in any way. It is only bad luck that has made it impossible for me to buy what is required---

Yours sincerely---¹⁶

Blackwood
South Australia 19/5/39

Dear Sir,

Yesterday I received my form re working for clothing. At the police station. I was told to see you about it. I am unable to do so. So I am asking you to let me work for clothes as soon as possible.

Faithfully---¹⁷

Many of these issues were dealt with by Blackwood's first police man, Mr Huxley. The police station, with a holding cell behind, was built in 1933 by Mr Tapp and the police horse was paddocked at the side. The police station was where everyone came, for employment, for forms, for rations, for clothes, and with reports of pilfering. Tent dwellers were camped in National Park and shacks of various kinds sheltered the unemployed in Hawthorndene. There were some tent dwellers along the Main Rd in Blackwood.



Blackwood Police Station. *Photo courtesy R Sabine.*

This shop was passed on to Ken Prime when he came to Blackwood from Unley in the 1950s, to open his Sports Store. Mr Prime began trading in Blackwood at the annual Floral Fair on the Blackwood Oval. From his stall he sold lawn mowers, incinerators, toys, and fishing tackle. The colourful shop on Main Rd was "full of goods ranging from the wants of the small boy or girl, to the needs of the home painter or the sporting enthusiast," according to *The Coromandel* of 18 March 1960. He had the latest black and white TV sets, which could be viewed in his shop by day, and through the window, at night. Ken stocked fireworks such as "Roman candles," "Catherine wheels," "squibs," and "flower pots" for the annual Guy Fawkes night. Ken later stocked paints, and wall papers. He stocked incinerators with spark arrestors in 1955, after a bushfire raged as far up the gullies as Gulfview Rd.



Ken Prime's shop on Main Rd, 1950s, formerly Maags.' *Photo courtesy K Prime.*



Main Rd looking North, 1940s. Jackson's, Dunn's, Murphey's Chemist, surgery, Axfor's Home Service Stores. *Photo courtesy R Sabine.*

The smoke from steam trains was part of life, billowing out from the station, and annoying those with washing on the line. As well, for those further from the line, the smell of smoke hanging in the air was a sign of rain. Secondary school children had to rise early to travel by train to Mitcham or beyond. The Country Lending Service, a branch of the Public Library, used to send library books by train to country readers. Blackwood Station was the first country station on the line, so readers could chat in the waiting room when collecting their books, and they returned them after one month, with orders for the next month's reading material. Station Master Mr. V. Sampson, who took over from Mr. Peake in 1951, recalled those busy days:

"In those days the station was a busy place. Most people used the train because of petrol rationing and steam engines hauling freight stopped to take in water. Mountain Type 500 class steam trains capable of hauling 540 tons were shunted off the main line to allow passenger trains to pass. It took two men to operate a signal box on a shift basis and I had an assistant Station Master to help cope with the busy station life." ¹⁹

During and after World War II Sydney Maag and his sister sold vegetables and flowers from their store on Main Rd opposite the E S and A Bank. The produce was grown on their land in Coromandel Valley and was often freshly picked according to customers' requirements. The beautiful garden at the shop was a feature of Main Rd, and customers were sometimes supplied with cuttings and flowers direct from the garden. During the war dress making was taken in by the female members of the family, using parts of table cloths, tea towels, flour bags, and any material customers could produce during war time shortages.



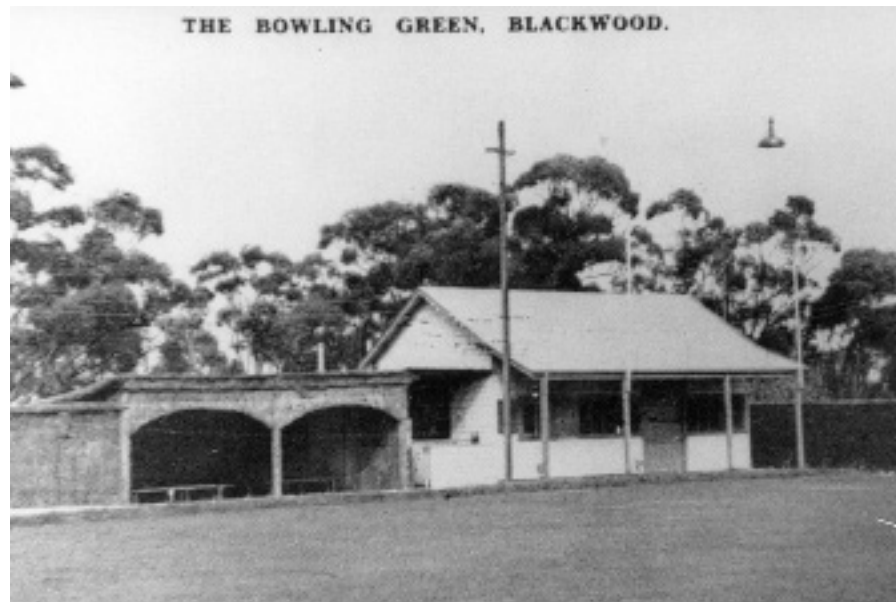
Holding Cell behind Blackwood Police Station. *Photo courtesy R Sabine.*

Those in dire need were issued with food coupons from the Government, which allowed them to receive weekly four two pound loaves of bread, three and a half pounds beef or mutton, sugar, jam or honey, rice or sago, oatmeal, tea, raisins, and soap.¹⁸ Some people were embarrassed about this situation, and would only go into Hewett's Grocery when there were no customers there.

In 1935 Messrs A E Hewett, H S Mount, and E C Read met in the Boys Club Hall to discuss the formation of a bowling club. Land was acquired on Simla Pde with the help of the land owner, Mr McTaggart. Mr A W Jones, Mr Gearing, and Mr Mackereth were appointed as Grounds Committee, and began in wintery weather to clear the land. It was then ploughed and harrowed. Mitcham Council helped establish the levels on the rough ground and fill was brought from the National Park. In September 1935 the area was ready for planting.

Opening Day was 27 January 1936. Dr A B Russell was elected first President, and membership was boosted by many of his patients, convinced by their doctor of the therapeutic advantages of playing bowls. Mr E C Read was first secretary, and Mr Fred Mackereth first green keeper. Annual fees then were £3. Among the foundation members were Joe Fairley, Clarrie Jackson, Bob Winn, Eddie Read, and Mr A E Hewett.

A brush shelter was soon added for the purposes of afternoon tea. The Club rooms were extended in 1959, and the £8 subscription then covered Saturday and Wednesday matches, indoor bowls, and weekly bridge evenings.



Bowling Club, Club House built 1935. Photo R Sabine Collection.

Further south along Coromandel Pde negotiations were afoot for the Minda Farm site. It was felt that farming was a healthy occupation for the mentally weak, and that it was no longer right to isolate such people. The Brighton premises had become inadequate and the land was purchased in 1923 for £14000. By 1936 there was accommodation for forty residents.

Commonwealth of Australia

RATIONING COMMISSION

NEW RATION CARD ISSUE

(TEA AND BUTTER)

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 27, 1948

WHERE? The issuing centres will be the same as last year, wherever practicable. The exact locations of the centres are shown below.

WHEN? Between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., continuously on Saturday, November 27th.

NOTE—Centres will NOT BE OPEN on Sunday, Nov. 28th

***BRING THE NAME PANEL OF YOUR OLD 1948 TEA AND BUTTER RATION CARD**

and in the case of children under 7 years, bring the name panel of their old 1948 Butter Cards.

To obtain new Tea and Butter Coupons at any Issuing Centre each person **MUST PRODUCE THE NAME PANEL OF THE OLD 1948 TEA AND BUTTER RATION CARD**, and the name panel of the old 1948 Butter Ration Card in the case of a child under 7 years

The old card may be produced either in person or by an agent (see below if unable to produce the name panel of the old Ration Card). The old Meat or Clothing Ration Card will not be accepted.

CHILDREN: New Ration Cards for children will be obtained by the surrender of the name panel of the child's old Tea and Butter Ration Card.

Wherever practicable, Ration Cards of children should be collected by their parents or guardians.

Where this is impracticable, (e.g., children in institutions, etc.) the new Ration Card may be obtained by the head of the institution, etc., upon production of the name panel of the child's old Tea and Butter Ration Card.

BABIES: If a 1948 Butter Ration Card is held for a baby, the same procedure should be followed as stated above for children. In the case of a baby for whom an application for an ordinary 1948 Butter Ration Card has not been made, the parent or guardian should apply on Form Rg. 1 (obtainable at post offices) to the Deputy-Director of Rationing for the new 1949 Ration Card. Any parent or guardian who has already been advised by the Deputy-Director that a new 1949 Ration Card will be forwarded, need not make further application.

COLLECTION (By agent): Where it is inconvenient to attend personally at an Issuing Centre, a Ration Card may be collected by agent. An agent must produce the name panel of the old (1948) Tea and Butter Ration Card of the person for whom he or she is acting.

No form of authority for agent is necessary. The new 1949 Ration Card must be handed by the agent to the owner as early as possible.

COLLECTION (By post): If you are an invalid, or seriously ill, or approaching maternity, or living more than 5 miles from the nearest Issuing Centre, and you are unable to personally attend an Issuing Centre and are unable to arrange for collection of your Ration Card by agent, you may apply by post to your Divisional Returning Officer for your Ration Card.

Application must be made on Form Rg. 6 which is obtainable at post offices, and the application must be accompanied by the name panel of your old (1948) Tea and Butter Ration Card.

IF YOU CANNOT PRODUCE THE NAME PANEL OF YOUR OLD TEA AND BUTTER RATION CARD

you must complete a Card Rg. 5 (obtainable at Issuing Centre), to be signed before a Justice of the Peace or Commissioner for taking Affidavits or for Declarations and forward same to the Deputy-Director of Rationing.

The Deputy-Director of Rationing, on receipt of your Rg. 5 card (filled in) will forward you the new 1949 RATION CARD or a temporary issue of Food coupons pending further check of your application.

Petrol rationing meant that deliveries by truck were curtailed. So Mr Read, from Reads' Dairy on Main Rd, delivered newspapers as well as the milk. Ice could be heard rattling against the milk cans, the blocks being delivered for residents' ice chests. These premises near Chapman Rd became the Lion's mart, and are now a car park.

Another venue for concerts was at the Masonic Hall, built in 1933, and designed by Mr Culley. This building was used for some years by the Hills Choral Society, and one room was used as a kindergarten run for a time by Miss Shiela Martin.

Street numbering was introduced to Blackwood in 1941. Aluminium numbers could be obtained for 1 shilling each. Advertisers, though, accustomed to the old ways, continued to direct customers to shops "two down from Jones Corner," or, "opposite the Church of England", or "opposite the Post Office."

MENS & BOYS WEAR
Manchester, Hosiery, Infants'
Wear, General Drapery
At City Prices
JOHNSONS
Opp. Post Office - Blackwood
Phone UW 1261

World War II was brought into the district when in November 1940 the 27th Scottish Battalion camped overnight at Hawthorndene Reserve on a march from Woodside to Warradale.

Ration tickets to cope with war time shortages were a feature of life. Families with a back yard cow were able to hand their butter coupons to others. Axford's Home Service Stores on Main Rd was one shop which handled grocery coupons. When one hundred coupons had been collected a box of butter, containing one hundred half pound packs, would be made available from the ware house. Sugar and tea rationing worked on the same principle. This shop later became Irwin's Four Square Store.



Axfords' Home Service Stores. Photo courtesy R Sabine.

A Community Grows

The corner diagonally opposite Reids Corner, where Mr Fred Jones and his son Percy ran their butcher's shop, was known as Jones Corner.

In 1919 the Jones family had purchased the butchery from Mr Brooks, who had taken over from Blackwood's first butcher, Mr Mason. Slaughtering was done locally, Mr Jones' slaughter yard being where the Blackwood Football Club now stands on Trevor Tee. For some time a horse drawn cart was driven from house to house for customers to purchase direct from the cart. Many householders kept a pig, which could be slaughtered for a fee by the butcher as long as a copper of boiling water was on hand. Mr Jones kept his horses behind an iron fence in a paddock where Woolworths now stands. Mr Scroop, who for many years lived and had his shop at Coromandel Valley, also used to work for Mr Jones. Because of the long hours involved in slaughtering and deliveries, outside of shopping hours, it was customary for butchers to close on Wednesday afternoons.

Quality at Moderate Prices
"Where?"
W. A. JONES
Blackwood Meat Store.

In the 1940s Harry Parkin took over the family barber's shop on the corner and Fairley's Shoe Store moved next to Jones' Butchers. Johnson's Drapery opened on the corner in 1956, later moving round the corner to 378 Shepherds Hill Rd. Blackwood Sound now occupies the corner site.

Shop this Christmas at
FAIRLEY'S
SHOE STORE
CLIFF STREET, BLACKWOOD PHONE: 78 1339

For friendly service and most important of all expert attention available at all times to help you and your family.

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The mightiest shoe ever... built and styled with all the majestic sweep of the mighty 727 aircraft. Handcrafted in supple, mellow, black calf.
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LANCET PALEMBRO

Remember, you get the best by shopping locally — Cash
Monthly Account Lay-by Budget Shopping

A popular meeting place in the 1940s and 50s was the Five Ways Cafe, named because of its position near the junction of Station Rd, the bend on Main Rd, Coromandel Pde, and Cliff St (now Shepherds Hill Rd). The Kellys, Miss Plaise, the Butterfields, Greens, Allens, and Rouses ran this cafe at various times, selling cakes and buns, icecreams, and milk shakes. It was well patronised by those who had been to the "pictures" and other activities at the Boys Club Hall. On a Saturday evening it was common to pick up a strawberry milkshake on the way home from the station after a day at the Footie.



Miss Ivy Jones's shoe store operated in the 1930s and 40s, next door to Mackereth's Green Grocery with its huge stone cellar used for storing the vegetables. Fred Mackereth used to take orders and deliver on his bicycle. Later on Cliff Mackereth did the deliveries with a van.



No.38 Coromandel Pde, formerly Miss Ivy Jones' Shoe Store. *Photo 1983.*

Miss Thorpe operated a Drapery in the former Dunstan's store on Coromandel Pde. Residents recall ribbons and laces daintily spread on the counter, and a strong smell of moth balls.



No.28 Coromandel Pde, formerly Miss Thorpe's Drapery. *Photo 1983.*

There was Eimes' Drapery, previously Miss Cameron's, east of the current Save the Children's Shop on Main Rd. Nearby, at No 253 Main Rd was Sendy's Grocery, which became James' Serv Wel Store, and is now used by estate agents. Mr James, one time Mayor of Mitcham, was followed in the store by Mr Evans.

The bandstand, demolished after the earthquake of 1954, for many years was the venue for the rousing concerts of the Blackwood Brass Band. Adults listened on Sunday afternoons while the children played on the grass nearby.



Blackwood Bandstand, corner Station Rd and Main Rd. *Photo courtesy R Sabine.*