

The Basin as I saw it, from the early 1920's .

by Eddie Williams.

My parents, James and Ethel Williams, purchased land in Augusta Road, in the early 1920's. The road was just a semi-formed dirt lane, almost impossible to get through in the winter, there were only a few houses in the road, and right opposite our land was a hut that had been built out of saplings and mud, with a tin roof, and a tank at the back. When it had been built, I do not know.

Some of the male members of our family camped on the land after my parents had bought it. I was the youngest one among them. Having arrived late, they just pitched the tent, and the next thought was sleep. Next morning, breakfast was the main thought, but having few provisions we all headed for the local store. We turned out of Mountain Highway- which was still the cobblestone road laid down for horse traffic, and set off to the right. Two or three hundred yards up the road - there was Smith's Store, which later I was to know very well. Smoke was coming out of the chimney and the smell of bacon and eggs made us quicken our paces.

As it was still very early, we had to knock on the door, and explain our plight. Mr. Smith was only too willing to oblige, and before we knew it ,we had our arms full of goods and were on our way home. We had now met Mr. Smith or Smithy as he was affectionately known by all. That's the way I always saw him, ever ready to oblige.

When the house was built and we came to live in The Basin, the most important people from my young point of view were : Mr. Smith, Storekeeper, Mr. Clarke, Butcher, Mrs. Dickson, Post-Mistress, Dick and Alf Thompson, Coach-Drivers, and Myra Collier, assistant at the store. I believe Mr. Clarke was the Fire Brigade Captain at the time , and Mrs. Dickson also sold milk from a big can, (those days you had to take a billy and milk was ladled into it). The Thompson's drove the horse coaches from The Basin to Boronia Railway station before they had the hire car. All of these people were known to every resident of the district.

When I started at the local school, in 1928, Mr. Brady was the Headmaster- I think the Education Dept. used to send men on the verge of retirement (such as Brady and Elliott ) to places like The Basin. Mr. Brady and his wife owned a newspaper shop opposite the Victoria Market, and he travelled from there to The Basin School each day. Elliott came from Ringwood

I think that he came by train and coach, I can't remember a car. By the time he got there he was already tired, and it was quite common to see him nod off during the course of the day. I remember one day, it came lunch-time after the break he would come to the door and blow the whistle, but this day he stayed sound asleep. Ivy Goodwin was the junior teacher at that time, and she didn't feel inclined to go in and wake him up, so we stayed outside. As time went on and there was no movement, someone got the idea that we would have a paperchase, so we got a couple of over the shoulder school-bags collected all the papers we could, ripped them up, gave the bags to the older girls, and off they went over the Sugarleaf Hill with a five minute start. The boys did not catch them, but when we got back he was still asleep. As it was getting near 3.30, the time that school finished, we all crept back into the class-room and started to make a bit of a noise. Mr. Brady woke up with a start and said "The lesson for this afternoon is..." but someone said it was time to go home, he looked at his watch and dismissed the class. When Mr. Elliott came, it was a different thing altogether, I don't think he ever slept, and everyone was on their toes.

On the way to school, after I turned out of Augusta Road into Mountain Highway, in the middle of where St. Bernadette's is now, was a stationary steam engine with a saw-bench attached. As it was on the land that Thompson's were living on, they used to start it up from time to time and cut some building timber. Further down this paddock, behind the engine, was the start of the 'Trotting Track' and what looked like the ruins of an old house, although the blackberries had overgrown everything, you could see the remains of old wooden wash troughs. I never knew what it had been.

The next place on the way to school was Thompson's, they ran the coach to Boronia. This was just before Goodwin Street.

The furthest that I knew of anyone walking to the school was Vinney Price and Frank Charlton, from Hazel Dell, Lily Bostock from Forest Road past Davey's (Wright's) Store, and Joan Burden from Dorset Road. You may wonder why the school was down where it is, and not in the main part of the township. In 1901 the road to the right of the Progress Hall did not exist, and the school was put where the centre of settlement was expected. Presumably, Forest Road had been put in when Mr. Smith built his shop in 1924. In 1901, when the school was opened on Liverpool Road, all the surrounding land was owned by owned by three people and was not released for many years.

In the early days in The Basin, we had card nights and church meetings, etc, but no place to get together at the one time and enjoy ourselves. I don't know whose idea it was to have the dances in the barn at the back of Mr. Smith's Store, but it was a great brainwave. Being only a youngster, I can only remember the most ardent workers at that time. Mr. Smith the storekeeper, supplied the barn...Reg Kirkman, the local plumber, and Jack Kowal.

Reg built the house in Forest Road that Greenwell's lived in. Anything that Reg Kirkman put his mind to was all or bust, Jack Kowal was just the opposite, a quiet fellow, but very determined, looking back, it was like the hare and the tortoise but they worked well together. Jack was not a Basin resident, he came from Coburg to a weekend house they had on the corner of Augusta Road and Norman Street. Jack never missed coming up every weekend and holidays. I understand these three were members of the Progress Association, and they seemed to be in any action in The Basin, I can't remember names of any others.

When Mr. Smith decided to let them use the barn, and the dance floor was put in, music was needed, so they got a pianola, everyone wanted to have a pedal at it, anyway it was an outstanding success, the first dance proved that. Seeing the barn was not large, I can remember couples standing outside waiting their turn to have a dance, especially during the Xmas holidays. I think the lighting was by pressure lamps hung from the ceiling. Chaff, wheat, bran, etc, were cleared out of the barn, and put back, for each dance.

To me, these 3 men, Smith, Kirkman, Kowal had achieved what the district needed - they had got the local people together. This was the position in the late 1920's.

1962 BUSHFIRES.

*Ed. Williams*

I was at work when I heard that The Basin was in danger and I left for home at once. My father was deceased, and my mother was living on her own, so I was very concerned. When I got near the Dandenongs, I found all the roads blocked by the Police to keep sight-seers away. I didn't try to talk my way through, but as I knew all the back-roads I was soon at my mother's house in Forest Road near Stuart Street. I ran up the driveway and called to my mother 'The fire is coming- let's get out of here quick !' She said 'Yes, I suppose we must go, but before we go I'll put the kettle on and have a nice cup of tea .' 'You do that , I'll go out and watch.' The fire did not cross the road and it was soon impossible to drive away because of the number of water tankers that came from everywhere.

## CHRISTMAS CAROLS IN THE EARLY DAYS.

By Ed. Williams.

My parents, James and Ethel Williams, were dedicated Church of England, and did everything possible to help establish the church in The Basin. He was treasurer, organist and cleaner. The history of the church has been written, but my father's enthusiasm warrants the telling of this story.

I recall one Christmas my father said 'I think the residents of The Basin should have some Carols this year'. He had got a small organ from somewhere, it was so small that a man could carry it on a strap over the shoulder. With my father as organist, brother-in-law Charles, a good singer, brother-in-law Arthur, trumpet player in the A.B.C. Band, and of course myself, singer and money collector. On Christmas Eve, as soon as it was dusk, we set off from my parents home in Augusta Road, one of the houses we sang in front of, in Stuart Street, a lady was standing. When we had finished the first carol, we asked would she like another, she just smiled, so on we went. As we were about to start a third, the lady from next door came out and told us she was stone deaf. We collected very well in that area, the trumpet was a great help, it echoed all around the hills.

We worked our way over as far as Maguire's at the top of Mount View Road, and then along Forest Road towards The Basin, along Church Street and up the 1 in 20 Road. My father, who was of Welsh descent, was enjoying himself immensely, as were the people we were singing to, and they were very generous. Up the highway, where the houses finished at that time, we had just finished a carol when someone on one of the high verandahs called out to us 'Over here'. Of course, I ran in that direction, and in the dark, fell into a small gully and disappeared from sight. The others rushed over to see what had happened, but I came out with only a few scratches.

A few more carols and we were on our way homewards, tired but happy that we had put a bit of Christmas spirit into The Basin, and made some money for the Church of England. My father in his day was considered a good singer, and when my wife and I were married in St Andrews Church of England, Brighton he sang at the service. When with the Permanent British Army in Africa, he often sang solo in the Bloemfontein Cathedral. He had four years service in Africa including the Boer War, service in the 1914-18 War, service in the 1939-45 War, lived a lot of his life in The Basin, and died there.

## THE DEPRESSION OF THE 1930'S

Ed. Williams.

During the depression many people lost their jobs, some even had to let their houses go , and come to live in their weekend places. Many had to go on what was called 'Sustenance', something like the unemployment relief of today, the only difference was that the men on this 'dole' had to work for it, mainly on the roads. It certainly brought a lot of the local roads and gutters to a much better condition than before. The stone wall up the Mountain Hway was built by local sustenance men , and has been there 60 years.

A committee was formed in The Basin during the depression to help those in dire need, they held card nights etc to raise money, their meeting place was in a room at the Glideaway Hall.

A farmer at Bayswater had put in a lot of swedes and turnips and found there was no sale for them at the Melbourne Market, so he let the Committee know that they could come and get them. Three of us got a horse and cart to go down and get them for the unemployed. The three were Ernie Bush, of Conyers Street, Bill Kirkman, and myself- Eddie Williams. Bill was later killed on Ambon Island in 1939-45 War.

We brought back a load of vegetables that was distributed among the needy. There were lots of things like this, people really helped one another as much as they could.

Two people I recall who regularly attended the card nights at the Glideaway were Mr. and Mrs. Charlie Holdey, a middle-aged English couple who lived in the Ravine, they never missed their game of cards. Mrs. Holdey had a chest complaint for which she used a mustard ointment, and Charlie had piles for which he had been prescribed salve. One night, after they had got into bed and turned the kerosene lamp out, Charlie asked his wife to pass his salve to him. Next thing there was a yell and Charlie sprang out of bed like a rocket. His wife then lit the lamp and saw that she had passed him the mustard ointment in error. Charlie was doing a war-dance around the room and all she could do was go into fits of laughter.

1929 EARTHQUAKE.

*Ed. Williams*

I remember the earthquake of 1929, I was living in Augusta Road, I was about 13 years old, sleeping in a closed-in verandah on the side of the house. Early in the morning, possibly 2-3 am, something woke me up, and I could hear this rumbling coming through the Dandenongs, although everything seemed to be completely still. The rumbling got closer, shook the house for a few seconds, then it went off in the other direction. It was an eerie sort of sensation, I've not had since then. It went from north to the south.

Then came the Progress Hall in 1931, I remember the first dance that was held in it. There was great excitement among the local people, everyone had waited a long time for this, so had I, and having been taught a few dance steps by the older members of my family, I considered I was old enough to put them into practise, and the opening of the hall fitted in just fine.

The first dance was held before the hall was lined, I remember that we went up the 1 in 20 road to the Ravine, and got loads of fern fronds to decorate the insides of the hall, a few streamers across the top, away from the pressure lights, and it looked pretty good. These were the same type of pressure lights that Mr. Smith had used in his store for years, I always understood that they were petrol. Anyway a tank was placed outside the hall at the back, the cylinder was not unlike the L.P.G. cylinders that they have nowadays, the tank was nearly filled with petrol and the pressure was put into it with a tyre pump. A fine copper tube went to each light - I think there were three in the main hall- and once the pressure was on all you did was slowly turn the valve at the light while holding a lighted taper under the mantle, and you had a light almost as good as electricity. It had a small glass bowl around it, with a hole in the bottom that the taper was put in. I watched Mr. Smith light his in the store many times. When everyone got dancing sometimes the pressure was forgotten, and the light was start to dim, a shout would go up and it was soon rectified.

The dances became so popular that everyone from 8 to 80 used to turn up, lots of the older residents who couldn't dance, just came to have a chat, watch, and for the ladies- to look at the frocks of the girls. To make the evening a complete success, Ruby McIntosh's Band from Beronia was a must. I think that the band consisted of saxophone, fiddle, piano and drums, anyway it was good and everyone liked them. Holiday times, such as Xmas and Easter, the hall was packed. The 'Lucky Spot' was always a highlight and cutting the cards for corners called 'Monte Carlo'. When supper-time came no one left the hall, a few might go to Smithy's for a soft drink but the majority stayed put, and if there wasn't room to sit on the seats around the hall, then they sat on the floor.

Respect for all was shared by all, the best way to sum it up was everyone was one big happy family, I can't remember anyone getting into an argument or a fight, it was just not on.



One night I was sitting in the hall between dances, when in came Digger - that was Mr. Clarke's the butcher's dog- it was a Queensland heeler. Digger went under the seats on the far side of the hall and began nibbling at something on the underneath of the seat. Eventually, I realized what he was up to.

In those days, P.K. chewing gum was in full swing, everyone chewed it, both boys and girls, but not while dancing. Before getting up to dance, the 'chewy' would be stuck under the seat of the chair. Digger must have liked the taste of this, so he kept going round under the seats. As I said, he was a Heeler with a tail that stuck up in the air, and as he went along with his nibbling, his tail went up between the ladies' legs, it was funny to see the ladies all chatting merrily away, then suddenly give a giggle and jump up in surprise.

A look under the seat soon solved the mystery, but I often wondered how the dog digested all that gum.

The older men liked to sit outside the hall, under the gum trees on the log seats, swap yarns or chew over the local happenings, at the same time having a few drinks. I suppose it was like a little club to them.

One person I remember in particular was Bobbie Truswell, he lived on the land where Glaxo Factory now stands. Bobbie never missed getting to The Basin when the dance was on, and just sit and yarn. Bob had lived on very good pasture, and was of ample proportions, and when he got into his horse-and-cart to head for the hall, up would go the shafts in the cart, and the horse seemed to be struggling to keep its feet on the ground- maybe it had magnetic shoes ! I used to think that one day he would eat that extra piece of pie and upset the balance, but he was a jolly, nice fellow and liked by all.

Ron Jones worked for Mr. Butts, a farmer in Pig Lane, and to get to the dances he had to walk along Pig Lane, Liverpool Road and Mountain Hwy, three sides of a square. One night, after the dance, he thought he would try a short cut, straight across the S/Army paddocks. He had no light but set a course and set off in the dark. However, he fell over a cow that was laying down, and it sprang to its feet with Ron sprawled across its back. After a bit of a gallop, Ron fell off, completely without a clue as to which way to go home - he never tried a short-cut again.

I was at the hall when Eileen Clarke was Crowned 'Queen of The Basin' after a lot of fund-raising had been going on - including a Gymkhana held in Augusta Road, on the right hand side, facing south, this being the only flat ground available. It was well attended, and a great success.

When I pass the hall now, and look at it, the hall hasn't changed very much, except the colour, a bit added here and there, but basically the same. The land and the trees that used to be in front of it have been chopped away for the road, but this has happened in many places.

To me Mr. Smith was the unofficial Mayor of The Basin, he always seemed to be in the middle of things, plus running his store. If there were any meetings or dances he was there, or being the M.C.

New Year's Eve Dance would go to about 12.30., and Mr. Smith would get up on the stage, and say, 'Well that's it! Do you want to keep going or go home?' 'Keep going' the crowd would sing out, and Mr. Smith would say 'Righto then, we'll pass the hat around, and see how we go'. A quick count and Smithy would announce 'We have enough for another two hours' and on the dance would go. One time, Smithy got up on the stage to make an announcement, and someone went 'Baaa Baaa' and without blinking an eye he said 'One goat at a time please'.

If any girl at the dance in the hall tore her frock, or lost a button, or such, it was over to Smithy's, and into the bed-room to fix it, with his needle and cotton. He was glad to help in any way.

In the 1930's Ball-room Dancing was the most popular activity among the teenagers, and if there was no dance at The Basin on Saturday night, then a party of us would walk to Bayswater (and home again afterwards). There was usually a dance at one of the local halls.

MYRA COLLIER

Assistant in Smith's Store.

Ed. Williams.

Myra lived in Mountain Hway near Colchester Road, and for a time she rode a horse up to the shop. It spent the day in a paddock behind the shop that was later used for the tennis courts.

She left the shop before 1940 when she was in a haberdashery shop in Boronia Rd. near the Falconer Store.

I was very young when I first came to The Basin, and the rest of my family played a trick on me. They sent me up to Smith's Store to buy a tin of red and white paint, so they could paint some poles to mark the boundaries of our land. Myra was serving and she asked what I wanted. I said 'I would like a tin of red and white striped paint please.' Myra knew that I was being taken for a ride so she said 'We are out of it at the moment, but it will be in next week.'

And off I went. Years later, at the dances in the hall, if I had a dance with Myra, she would whisper in my ear 'Red and White striped paint.'

It was a standing joke between us.

THE OLD OAK TREE.

CHANDLERS OAK

Ed. Williams.

When I first saw this tree about 60 years ago, it had the remnants of a picket fence around it. One iron band that had held the pickets was still there, it looked like it had been an iron rim of a small cart wheel, but the tree had almost filled the circle. Whether someone cut it off, or whether the tree burst it, I do not know. I do know that this tree has seen a lot of Basin history and has stood the test of time.

When I got my first car, A Imp Ford, I used to take it down under the oak tree, dip a bucket of water out of the creek, and wash the car. As water was not laid on to the houses then, everyone had to rely on water caught in rain-water tanks and none of that could be wasted on washing a car.

Occasionally, I would go driving further along towards Doongalla- but like the Army Home, Doongalla was not a popular place to go. The Army Home was regarded as a Probationary Prison full of evil-intending young men, and was run along those lines. Doongalla was very private, and visitors weren't encouraged. I went there once with Geoff Chandler, he had a message for the owner. He showed me where Mr. Burke had his nine hole golf course, but not much was to be seen except an overgrown strip of cleared bush. He said it had not been used vry much.

Nowadays, Doongalla is a quiet spot to visit and I hope that it stays that way. I hope the Salvation Army property is retained like Doongalla, because if it is sold, it will be covered in houses, then very little could be done about it.

On the other hand, it could be turned into a recreational area, and used for equestrian events, a golf course, sports ovals, tennis courts, foot running, lawn bowls etc. If the project is too big for the Knox Council, then the State Government should be asked to take over the whole area. Let's hope the Salvation Army remains as we know it.

The Fire in the Ravine. Going down into the Ravine the next morning, after one of the early fires, branches dropping everywhere, sparks still flying, some of the fire-fighters had sheltered in the creek. One of the houses, a place called 'Rangoon' the Captain of the Brigade told his men not to try to save it, long grass up to the walls, only a weekender, let it burn.

Next day, it was one of the few houses still standing.

*Ed Williams*

Reg Kirkman.....Plumber.....Forest Road....The Basin.  
Tank Maker.....Tin Chimney maker.

The chimneys were made out of flat galvanised iron,same thickness as what was in the tanks. There were 4 types.

No 1. Just big enough to take a fire stove,with one liner of bricks at the back,and a line of bricks either side as a hob.(Cheapest)

No 2 .Same as No 1,only this had 2 rows of bricks either side as a hob.

No 3. was the deluxe model,this had all the brick-work of No 2, but let into the side,or at the back,was 2 little windows to let the light in across the stove.

no 4. This was the open fire-place model,in this you put a liner of bricks up so high to take the heat of the fire,then bricks were placed on the bottom of the opening,with raised hobs either side.

My parents had no 3 in the kitchen,and No 4 in the living room.

All 4 came in regular sizes,so when the house was built,an opening was left for it to fit in,3 stumps,and a platform for it to sit on outside the house,thats all that was required.

It had two lengths of pipe for the flue,and on top was a cowl,this was optional,whether you wanted to put it on,or not.There were reasons for,and against.

Once you had every thing ready,these chimneys,plus the stove,and the brick-work could be put together in a few hours.

They were very popular with the people who built their own week-end houses,and there was plenty of those in The Basin,in the early days.

Then came the 'Pickering Chimney' made out of concrete in sections that fitted together...These were made in Dandenong.

*Eddie Williams*

*Ed. Williams - approx 1930 -*

I went to the Methodist Sunday School, alongside the State School in Liverpool Road. Our family is really C of E but that didn't make any difference, as it was the only church in The Basin. Kate Stephen, daughter of Brigadier Stephen ( who was Superintendent of the Salvation Army Homes at that time ) was a tireless worker for the church, and anything to do with the Sunday School had her special attention. Picnic trips, socials, etc., and Xmas time when they put on a special treat for the children, with cakes, cream sponges, of all shapes and sizes, and lollies. Anyone who went away hungry- it was their own fault. I think those Army Kitchens across the road worked hard to make sure it was a big success.

Jim Dobson.....he was our Sunday school teacher at the Methodist Church Liverpool Road, the Basin, he was a very tolerant man. Jim always the old style lace up boots, well polished, and when he sat down he didn't move his feet much, one Sunday when we were having class, someone crept behind him, and under the seat, undid his laces, then tied both together. As it was near the end of the class we all had to stand up, when Jim stood up he couldn't move his feet, he put his hand out to save himself, and couldn't, we were sitting 4-5 seats from the front, the one he pushed against, pushed the next so they all went down. Bit of noise but no damage done. when he got his new bike, we all had to have a ride on it, up and down the road before he could go home. Jim took this all in his stride, we all had great respect for him, and I think he considered us a good class.

I was very sorry to hear of his passing.

*Ed. Williams*

## THE BASIN STATE SCHOOL

Ed. Williams.

Early Toilet System. In the 1930's there were only pans in the toilets and they needed to be emptied about once a week. The Headmaster would detail two of the older boys to bury the contents. For this the boys were paid a shilling (ten cents) each. Some of the boys didn't dig the holes too deep, and there would be just a thin layer of earth on top of the waste. You had to remember not to go running around the toilets while you were at play - the results could be disastrous.

The Salvation Army Special School , which was next door to our school, frequently played football or cricket against us. They were a lot of tough and rough lads, and loved to bowl bodyline when playing our smaller players. The size of some of those Army boys supposed to be under 14 years, I reckon they had put their ages down a few years. In one game that I played, I had just done something that pleased Mr. Elliott the headmaster, who called out 'Good on you Williams ! ' The next thing I was given a sandwich between two of the biggest of their team. That sort of smartened me up, and also slowed me down for a while. If you were big enough it was O.K. but some of the smaller of us did not look forward to those games.



SCOUTING IN THE EARLY DAYS.

Ed. Williams.

There were no scouts in either The Basin or Boronia until Eric Sell decided to start the 1st. Boronia Group in 1929. When he did, three lads from The Basin joined up too. They were Clyde Kirkman, Harold Gillespie, and Edmund Williams (myself). We all walked from The Basin to Boronia and back (About 3 km. each way). There were no street lights in those days (there was no electricity at all) so you either walked in the dark, which we usually did, or you carried a hurricane lantern.

Early in 1991 the 1st. Boronia Scout Group decided they would name the scout hall after the original scoutmaster, Eric C. Sell in a token of gratitude for getting the group under way in difficult times as it was then the depression.

The dedication took place on 18 March 1991, and a plaque was placed on the wall inside the building worded :

Eric C. Sell Hall

In Honour of the Founder of Scouting in Boronia.

18 March 1991.

Unfortunately , Scoutmaster Eric Sell was unable to attend owing to ill health and being unable to travel from his home in N.S.W.

I was privileged to represent him on this occasion.

Eric Sell is a thorough gentleman, and I am proud to be associated with him.

SNIPPETS FROM EDDIE WILLIAMS.

Do you remember ?

Mrs. Ada Dickson .. in the tiny Post Office in the front yard of her home in Mountain Hwy...furiously cranking the handle of the wall phone... trying to raise the manual exchange at Bayswater. After 5 or 6 attempts, she would hang up in disgust and say 'DRAT' That was her worst swear-word. I remember standing on the verandah of Miller's Homestead and looking over the orchards- Henderson's, Goodwin's and the Salvation Army. Nowadays it is a sea of rooftops.

Across the road, where the sports oval is now, was a place where the wild orchids grew profusely, this was also home to the Red-browed Finch -also known as the Wax-bill . This bird built an unusual bottle-shaped nest with a tunnel about a foot long leading to it, this was to stop cuckoos and other predators getting into the nest. All this has now gone.

I once won a raffle at The Basin. Bert Gretton had made a Crystal Set -that is a very early type of radio- and it was raffled to raise funds for the unemployment relief. For many I had it beside my bed, I would get into bed of a night, put on the ear-phones and listen. A long aerial out through the window was needed, and even then you only got the A.B.C. stations. It was a fantastic thing for a teenager in the bush to possess.

I remember walking to the Boronia Progress Hall to see a film in 1925.. The Kirkman boys went with me, the picture was called 'Wings' and it had an actor called Buddy Rogers in it. Pictures were very new .. and so was the Progress Hall.

In 1956 when T.V. first came to Melbourne, the first thing to be done was to erect the transmitting towers on the mountain above The Basin.

I remember when that was done, and when transmission began, there needed to be a relay to reach the towers while the landline was put up the side of the mountain. A large truck filled with gear was parked at the oval of Batterham Park to relay the signals to the towers.

When I was a boy, wild Boronia grew on the slopes around The Basin. It was a pinky-mauve flower that covered the whole bush, growing about a foot high. Its downfall was that people used to pull up the whole bush, roots and all, and put it in a vase, making an instant vase full of flowers. It has disappeared from here, the last plant I saw was out past Healesville.

## SNIPPETS FROM EDDIE WILLIAMS.

The weekend house up the 1 in 20 called 'Tonic'? owned by a Mr. Clements, the same name as a popular pick-me-up CLEMENTS TONIC. This was very common, being stocked in all the shops.

In my day there were Glider Possums in the pine trees at The Basin School, you could see them glide from tree to tree.

Snow on the ground ? I once made a big snowball up the 1 in 20 road, which was still a dirt road, and rolling it downhill towards The Basin till it was an enormous affair.

Southern Cloud Aircraft .. It disappeared for many years. At first it was thought it may have come down in the Dandenongs. I remember the searcher aircraft flying over the ranges many, many times.

Salvation Army Home - Boys escaping and breaking into the weekend cottages, although most times they headed towards Melbourne. One house they broke into, and were later located by the police, the owner came up, had a look round, and except for food eaten, beds slept in, everything looked fine. Weeks later, tried to play the piano....Glump...Glump..The boys had lifted the lid, and poured in a tin of molasses. My father helped capture some of the escapees on a couple of occasions.

Aboriginal Stone Axes and Spearheads. Off the slopes of One Tree Hill. The kids several times brought these to school.

I remember when...

At the corner of Mountain Hway and Albert Ave, was a large cabbage farm, covering several acres, where the Alchester Shops now stand . Owned by the Pope Brothers, it grew cabbages by the thousands for many years. The brothers have had Pope Ave named after them.

Boronia Railway Crossing... Over the years there have been some horrific accidents at this crossing. My sister Mrs. Ann Rothwell and Mrs Jean Harrison, wife of Bob Harrison, owner of Locksley Textile Mill, were both very nearly killed there. The car in which they were travelling , had not quite reached the centre of the tracks when the train hit it, the car was hurled aside, they were both very badly bruised and shaken and the car was wrecked.

Later, after the Harrison's had sold the Mill, and had moved to the country, their son Robert, who was still living here, was killed when his car was hit by a train on the crossing. He was aged 21 years. There were no boom-gates in those days, or traffic lights either.

Ration Books.... I remember helping my father distribute these to the people of The Basin during the 1939-45 war. It is hard to believe that such things as tea, butter, sugar, meat and clothing could not be purchased without passing over some coupons as well as the money.

The Clock Tower at the No 1 Boys Home .. On a still night, this could be heard striking the hours ... even from my home in Augusta Road.

The Army had two large automatic water pumps in the creek, that worked all day and night, pumping water to both homes through a system of tanks and pipes, these could be heard Clunk..Clunk.. Clunk.. from The Basin shops.

A young boy was adjusting the saddle on his horse outside the Post Office, when the horse turned round and grabbed the boy by the hair and wouldn't let him go. I heard him yelling, and ran over and hit the horse with a stick to make the horse release the boy. Luckily, he wasn't hurt badly.

At the end of the war, my father was Returning Officer at The Basin and I would help him when the polls closed at 8 pm to get the voting papers into the locked box and rush them in my car over to Fern Tree Gully where the counting was done. This was done for several years about 1945-48.

THOMPSON'S GARAGE.  
Forest Road opp. Church St.

According to Ed. Williams.

Before the garage was built, they had a small shop on the site, it was only about 8 feet square, which was an estate agents with details of land for sale, etc, in the window.

Q - Was this Alf's first try at being an Agent ?

The stumps for the house on the adjoining block, were pvt in the ground for several years before the house was built on it.

After the estate agent closed, a Mr. Hall rented it , and had a shoe repair business, he built and lived in a house in Francis St off Stuart St. and sold this house to Matheson's.

This house was unusual in that the cement-sheet cladding was put on the inside of the uprights, and was a curious sight that people came to see the house that was built inside-out. Later, it was clad on the outside as well and the appearance became normal.

Eddie says that Thompson's built the Junction Store for his daughters to run, but Edith and Mary were not good shopkeepers and very soon sold out

(To Felder ?)

## The Saga of the Wild Billy Goat

Ed. Williams.

While we had the store, a fellow by the name of Norman Ralph came into the shop and said 'You know that goat that's tethered on the side of the road, well, it has broken its chain.' I had passed this big buck goat many times, but never taken much notice of it. Norm said that when he passed in his car, the goat came charging out of the bushes on the opposite side of the road to where it was usually tethered, and if he hadn't speeded up, it would have rammed into the side of his car. I got some ropes and said 'We'll see if we can throw these over its horns and tie it to a tree.' Norm said he wouldn't take his car down there nor would he walk down the road, so we walked down through the bush to about 75 yards past Liverpool Road, where we came upon this big goat with a large set of horns. Norm got one side, with me on the other and we began to throw the ropes across. Just when we thought we had him, he would shake his head, and we would start all over again.

We didn't notice a lady riding a push bike along the highway until she was quite close. Keeping one eye on the goat, we called out to her to go back. I expect she wondered what we were on about, but when the goat saw her, it charged at her. She saw it and stood on the pedals and the goat missed her by a whisker. The woman went over the hill as though it wasn't there.

It was now about 3.30 and school would soon be out, and the children would come running out onto the road- at the mercy of a berserk goat. We were trapped, unable to get across the road to warn them, but a car came along, heading to Bayswater, I remember it was a Vauxhall Wyvern. When it got close, the goat saw it and charged at it, straight into the front of it. The headlights were broken, the radiator grille smashed and the mud-guards dented, but the bumper bar had broken both front legs of the goat. The car was driven by a young lady who was considerably shaken up, but unhurt. Norm went home, got a rifle and shot the goat, which was the only humane thing to do. As the car was driveable, the lady was able to continue, and we had to inform Horace Collier- the goat's owner- of the facts.

Norm and I often went over all the IFS of the story... if he hadn't come home when he did... If school had come out early if....if.. Thank God it came out the way that it did, with no one hurt.