

This is Mrs. Elsa Ford, No. 3 The Esplanade, Alphington.

We came here in 1947 to live but we'd been associated with the house because our very close friends owned it and they bought it about 1942 and we spent several Christmas's here with them and we use to come out to parties and so forth before we came here. They bought the property without almost looking at the house. Fell in love with the back garden and we've loved it ever since. I think it's most interesting because down below it was built first by English people in the early 1920's and the husband and the friend of his, who later became a border here, they built the house and they planted an Oak tree. Now that Oak spans the property and would be one of the biggest Oaks around Melbourne. Down on the river bank is an Aboriginal's Canoe Tree, unfortunately there is only the shell remaining because it crashed into the river one night. My husband doctored that tree and kept it alive for years but eventually of course age won out and the tree was lost.

The people also planted a lot of English herbs and plants and there are still remains of them around, the various mints and all the rest of it. You could that it was a way of having a bit of England in the back garden.

Campbell Hewston was an Engineer with the State Electricity Commission and he was the engineer that went on to build Hazelwood Power Station. When they were here we use to come over and spend a lot of time with them and really fell in love with the place. It suited Edith Hewston very well because she was a Sculpturess. She'd studied under Henry Moore in England and the old garage, which was big, it was a great place for her to work in, and also under the Oak Tree there's a huge stone sculptured of a mother and child. It's too large to move really, it should be in a better place. This was a wonderful setting for people who love nature and the arts and I think that could make a History in itself - the history of all the artists and people interested in art and nature who live around here.

Huckleberry Finn country because when we came here you'd see lots of children coming down with their fishing rods and their togs and in summer time it was alive with children swimming and family parties in the river and I hope one day that the powers that be will restore that.

When we came to The Esplanade there were only 3 or 4 houses in the street, opposite was a very lovely hill with just one lovely old apple tree in blossom in the spring time. And the other people who were here, there were Nankervis's down at the end of the road, Grays who lived opposite at No. 4, Hanlans at No. 2 and of course the old canoe club.

One thing we didn't appreciate was the fact that the place was sewerred. We just accepted it, having come from an all sewerred place. They say that it must have cost the people that built the house almost as much to have the sewerage put in as it was to build the house because this was a pan service area, so later we appreciated it very much.

It's a pity that Jack McKenna is not still with us. He died a few years back and he knew all the history of the area and in the home where he lived in Park Crescent his father planted a big plain tree that you see in the side street on the night that Jack was born and of course it's still there, a beautiful big tree now.