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**Living on the Edge: along Tingalpa Creek
a history of Upper Tingalpa, Capalaba
and Thorneside**

**by
Mary Howells**

**A thesis submitted for the Master of Philosophy
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2001**

This thesis of approximately 47,000 words is my own work and has not been submitted in any other form for any other degree or diploma at any university or other institute of tertiary education. Information derived from published or unpublished works of others has been acknowledged in the text and a list of references is given.

I also declare that I am familiar with the rules of the University relating to the submission of this thesis.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mary Howells', written in a cursive style.

Mary Howells

Abstract

The Tingalpa creek catchment lies on the border between the Redland Shire and Brisbane City. A number of factors ensured the slow rate of development in the region. Geographic elements included isolation and poor soils. From a socio-economic perspective, an administrative decision to locate the local government boundaries on the creek and along the major roads that radiate from Capalaba ensured division in the resident communities. The population remained fringe dwellers and the constant marginalisation and isolation enhanced a frontier mentality, which carried through for decades. Not only were residents living on the edge of various local government authorities, but also the moderate success of agricultural pursuits meant many were living on the edge of poverty.

This study examines the changing nature of land use over time and the evolution of the region and its people. While this was initially slow, a major transformation has occurred more recently, particularly in Capalaba. This former frontier town defined by isolation and poverty is now a major business centre surrounded by supporting urban development. Thorneside's transition has been less dramatic in terms of change of land use. Different factors have transformed the sleepy settlement of seaside cottages into an exclusive waterside dormitory suburb. While Birkdale was historically more successful in agricultural pursuits, it has also changed dramatically with only one or two farms remaining hidden amongst the urban sprawl.

While this project devotes much attention to the analysis of external influences on the region, the strength of the study lies in its focus on the people. Insights into the endurance mechanisms utilised in this hostile environment assist in the provision of an overview of the character of the region. This has come about via the circular nature of the human ability to adapt to the environment and the environment 'selecting' those who could survive it. This region has produced unique characters defined by their adaptability, independence, and resourcefulness.

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Measurements, conversions and symbols

Metric Imperial conversions		Imperial units of Measurement	
£1 (pound)	= \$2.00	12 pence (d)	= 1 shilling
10 shillings(/-)	=\$1.00	20 shillings (/ -)	=£ 1
1 acre (a)	= 0.405 hectares (ha)	40 perches	= 1 rood
1 hectare	=2.47a= 0.004 miles²	4 roods	= 1 acre
1 square mile	=259ha=2.59km²	640 acres	= 1 mile
		4840 yards²	= 1 acre
1 yard	=0.914 metres (m)		
1 metre	=1.09 yards	22 yards	= 1 chain
1 mile	= 1.61 kilometres (k)	80 yards	= 1 mile
1 kilometre	= 0.621 miles	1.760 yards	= 1 mile

Preface and acknowledgments

The writing of this history was determined by the oral testimonies collected between 1994 and 1998 in the Capalaba and Thorneside areas. The first Capalaba interview I conducted with Iris Daley in 1994 sparked my interest in the area and the following year I was fortunate to meet Sarah Fredericks and her cousins Jean Rooney and Margaret Murray. They are all descendents of the Mussig family who settled on the creek in Camrose (formerly White) Street in the late 1860s. I must thank Ron and Margaret Flowers for instigating this meeting, because the information that these women imparted provided the foundations for the primary-source research. Their memories of people and events in the district led me to sources I could never have known about otherwise. This also demonstrated the need to document the history of the Tingalpa Creek catchment area.

Once I began researching Thorneside, it became apparent that this area could not be covered in isolation from Birkdale. Infrastructure in the district, such as the school, postal service, railway commuter service, churches and community halls, were all in Birkdale. Only in more recent years has Thorneside developed as a separate entity.

Some of the interviews in this project have already been published in part in *Passing the Time; Tales of the Redlands* in 1996. Their relevance to this project led to their inclusion in this thesis, and its predecessor *Living on the Edge, Along Tingalpa Creek* published by Redland Shire Council in 2000. The project was commissioned as a product of the Council's oral history project and includes more extensive oral and photographic sources than are utilised here. The thesis builds on the extensive research undertaken for the book, through a more detailed analysis of the region's social history.

I wish to thank all of those who graciously gave up their time and allowed me to interview them and to borrow some of their valuable personal photographs. Without their support this project would not have come to fruition. Sadly some of these people did not live to see the outcome of this long-term project; I hope their families will see this research as a memorial to their lives and the contribution they made to the collective history of the areas of the Redland Shire along Tingalpa Creek.

Capalaba

Iris Daley

Sarah Fredericks

Mary (Jean) Rooney

Tom Blunt

Viva Morrow

Winifred Taylor

Margaret Murray

Tom Dale

Olwen and Harry Owen

George and Bettie Neller

June Walker

Jack Waltishbuhl

Claude and John Stokes

Nellie Weaber

George Lyons

Joan Levey

Jozef and Hilda Wasiel

Daphne Wegener

Annie McIntosh

Ron and Margaret Flowers

Beryl Arrell

Birkdale and Thorneside

Gwyn Randall

Jack Finney

Jack Guy

Elaine Woodward

Isobel Munro

Laurie and Shirley Tighe

Vivian Slater

Mary Schmidt

Theo Stoodley

While this project had its origins in a range of oral history interviews, the expansion of the research over time was a natural progression, initially led by my personal curiosity. When the decision was made to produce a thesis, I had already gathered a wide range of material. I initially began this project under the guidance of Dr W Ross Johnston, while Dr Rod Fisher was on leave, and work commitments caused me to defer shortly after. Under Rod's supervision I returned to complete this thesis over the past year or so and wish to thank him for his patience and guidance.

Others who assisted in the research process include Bill Kitson from the Department of Natural Resources, Annabel Lloyd from the BCC Archives and staff of the Queensland State Archives. Many individuals also lent personal papers and shared family information, and they are acknowledged in the Bibliography.

In reference to the general text, many of the road names used in this thesis reflect common usage in the context of the era under discussion. Avalon Road was originally Sawmill Road, due to the fact that there were two sawmills situated along that road from 1876 until 1880. The Pittendreichs also had a mill there in the late 1940s. The name was not changed to Avalon Road until 1964. Therefore I have used the name Sawmill Road until 1964. Similarly, the road now known as Mount Cotton Road, which runs between Mount Petrie School and Upper Tingalpa Creek crossing, is colloquially known as Broadwater Road and I have used this name throughout the text. Mount Gravatt-Capalaba Road was not named the Old Ipswich Road until it was upgraded at the time of construction of the Leslie Harrison Dam. Again, this is referred to as Old Ipswich Road until the late 1960s.

The section of Mount Cotton Road between the Capalaba Hotel and the Broadwater Road intersection was always known as Capalaba School Road and the road, which is now School Road, was not built until the late 1940s. Redland Bay Road has been variously known as Boundary Road (because it formed the boundary between Tingalpa Divisional Board and Cleveland Divisional Board) and sometimes as the Capalaba-Victoria Point Road. I have used Birkdale Road to denote the entire road between Capalaba and Birkdale.

As a matter of interest, Coolnwynpin Creek was known by various names in the past. The first reference found referred to it as Waldocks' Creek in 1873; Tingalpa publican George Waldock owned the adjacent land at that time. It would seem that at the crossing in Redland Bay Road, the creek was known as Sandy Creek.

All the streets in the original Town of Tingalpa, on the Brisbane side of the Capalaba bridge, had their names changed in the late 1950s. The original names reflected some of the early landholders in the district, including Louis Hope, Thomas Lodge Murray Prior, William Duckett White and Francis Bigge. Louis Street became Torbay Street, Hope Street became Tinchborne Street, Lodge Street became Tollett Street, Prior Street became Tyberry Street, Bigge Street was changed to Caradoc Street, White Street became Camrose Street, Gray Street became Remington Street, Jones Street became Toronto Street and Lytton Road was changed to Sunnydene Road.

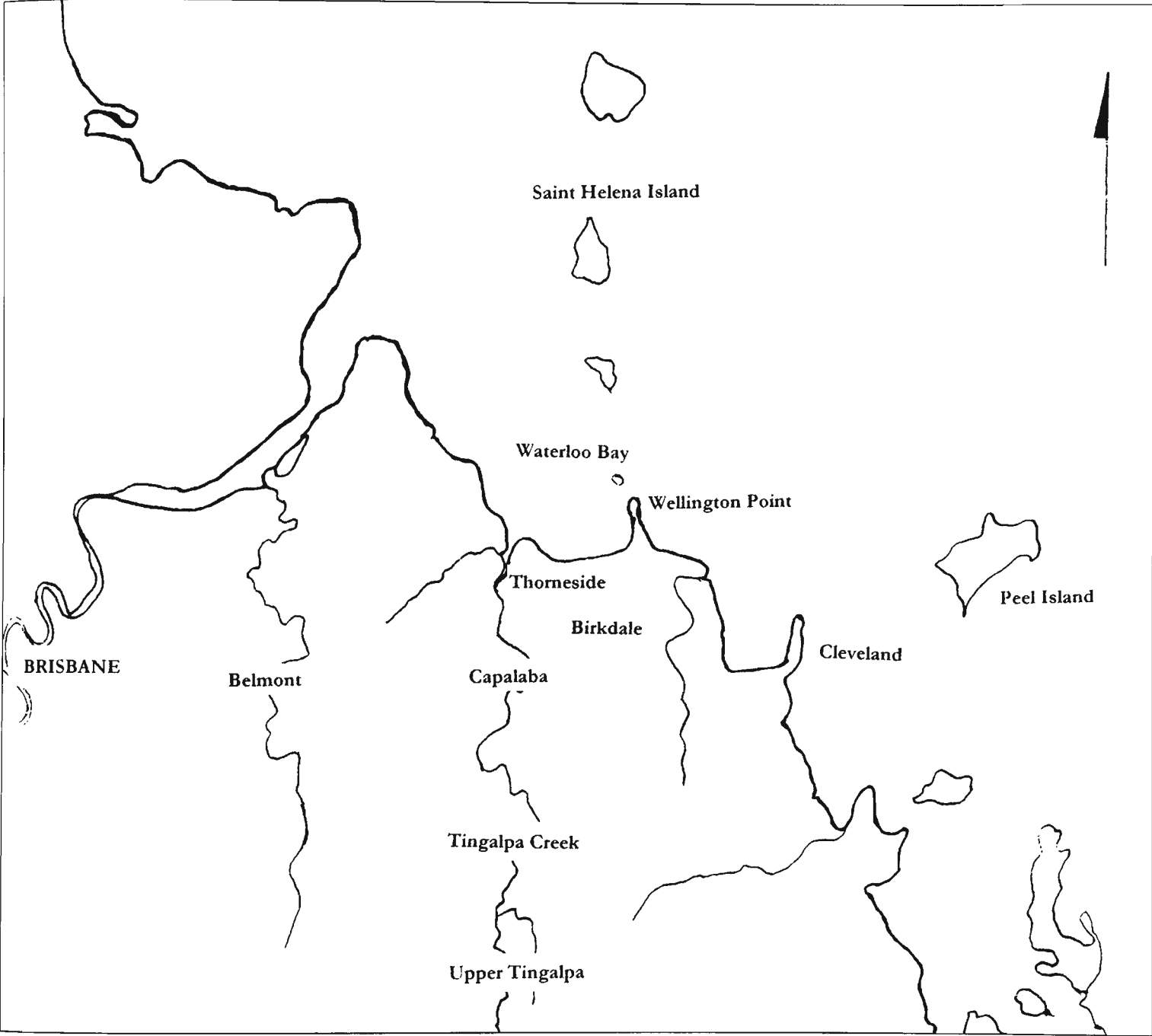


Figure 1. Locality Map

Introduction

Tingalpa Creek forms the boundary between the Redland Shire, one of Queensland's fastest growing regions, and the capital Brisbane to its north. This project explores the development of a sense of identity along the creek since European settlement, and examines the external influences, including landscape, local government, and the social mix of the people. Though centred on the township of Capalaba, smaller and less significant settlements exist near the mouth of the creek at Lota and Thorneside. Late last century another small settlement existed upstream from Capalaba known as Upper Tingalpa. The region is now called Sheldon on the Redlands side of the creek and Burbank in Brisbane city. Geographically, Tingalpa Creek is the link between these settlements, but the other common factor is that each of these places has a road or rail bridge linking the Redland Shire with Brisbane city. They will be covered in the context of development of the region as a whole.

This project is not the definitive history of the area, and Aboriginal history is only discussed in the context of placenames and interaction with the first settlers. My aim here is to ascertain whether these settlements along Tingalpa Creek developed a sense of identity or character that is particularly unique. I have applied the sequence occupance approach, which geographers often use in the study of settlement over time. Terry Kass utilised this approach in his regional history of the north coast of New South Wales, which has seen different waves of development since white settlement. Sequence occupance studies the impact of each industry on the landscape, the people and the marketing networks and relationships, which kept the region economically and socially viable.¹

Initial settlement from the 1860s along Tingalpa Creek revolved around timber-getting, cattle grazing and later dairying. Small crop farming around Capalaba was limited to fodder crops and subsistence plantings. The Birkdale area was more agriculturally productive. In tandem with early settlement was the establishment of public and private infrastructure including mail services, school, churches, a hotel and store.

¹ Terry Kass, *Regional History of the North Coast*, Grafton: NSW Department of Planning, 1989.

The 1890s and early 1900s were a time of relative stability. Although the construction of the Cleveland Railway in 1889 spelt economic decline in Capalaba, greater growth occurred in Thorneside and Birkdale. The second wave of settlement came during the depression when cheap land prices lured unemployed city workers to seek out a subsistence living on the land. The search for cheap living also spurred the third wave of settlement post-war. The fourth and most significant in terms of population numbers and momentous changes came after the construction of the Leslie Harrison Dam on Tingalpa Creek in Capalaba in 1968. The subsequent provision of reticulated water and sewerage led to extensive land subdivisions in the area. Improved road access to Brisbane was brought about by population pressures and the need to provide a dual carriageway on Old Cleveland Road to the Chandler sporting complex, in time for the Commonwealth Games of 1982. This duplication was extended to Capalaba by 1984 making it an easy commuting distance to Brisbane city. The train line, which had been decommissioned in 1960 between Lota and Cleveland, was gradually reinstated during the early 1980s. Further improvements in public transport during the 1990s included a major bus interchange in Capalaba.

The value of this type of study lies in drawing together the available sources, in order to present an in-depth analysis of development in the region. The low socio-economic level of many residents has tended to cause its omission from written histories of the area, which have generally been celebratory works marking milestones in the Redlands community generally. It would appear that early writers could find little to celebrate in the formation of the settlements along Tingalpa Creek.

To this end, I have undertaken extensive oral history interviews with local residents in order to discover more about a region virtually devoid of a written history. The only published works devoted to the area are the *Capalaba State School Centenary*,² which is not widely available and a short pamphlet titled *Capalaba '77*.³ Some information on Capalaba and Lota has been included in various short histories published over the past twenty

² Capalaba State School Centenary, 1880-1980, Capalaba: Centenary Committee, 1980.

³ James Stewart, Jennifer Stehr, Nikki Shrimpton, *Capalaba '77*, Redland Weekly Shopper supplement, 1977.

years by Wynnum/Manly resident Merv Beitz.⁴ The *Redlands Centenary Souvenir* has some brief and sometimes incorrect information on Capalaba⁵ and the commissioned history of the Redlands by Derek Townsend totally ignores the region.⁶ The local newspapers,⁷ have until recently, continued to reprint the same half-truths in the name of Capalaba history. Thorneside has been briefly covered in the Birkdale State School history, which was published to celebrate the school's seventy-fifth anniversary in 1991.⁸ Probably the best coverage of the region may be found in Marie Holland's contextual history of the Redlands, which was undertaken as part of the heritage survey commissioned in 1994.⁹ My approach, however, provides a more detailed analysis of this specific region.

The title of this project has dual meaning. Firstly, residents along Tingalpa Creek lived on the edge of many local government authorities. Currently they lie between Brisbane City and the Redland Shire. Examination of the history of the local government boundaries, which were constantly altered from the time of the instigation of the Local Government Act in 1878, partly explains the difficulties of the Capalaba community in maintaining a sense of cohesion. This tiny settlement was fractured by the various boundaries, which met at the Capalaba Bridge and suffered many alterations on the Brisbane side of the Creek.

The area along Tingalpa Creek has tended to be left out of most published histories of the Redlands region, which have generally focused on Cleveland. This is understandable given Cleveland's place in Queensland history as the proposed port for the settlement at Moreton Bay. That town was also more heavily populated and served as the administrative centre for local government. However, after interviewing a number of Capalaba and Thorneside residents, I sensed a different lifestyle, or culture, than was evident from interviews with residents from other parts of the Redlands. Those who lived in the rich volcanic soil along the coastal areas of the region could never be labelled

⁴ Merv Beitz, *The Cleveland Log*, Cleveland, Qld: Redland Printery, 1972, and *Mangroves to Moorings 1882-1982*, Wynnum: W Lockwood and Sons, 1982.

⁵ *Redlands Centenary Souvenir 1850-1950*, Fortitude Valley, Qld: Eager and Lamb printers 1950.

⁶ Derek Townsend, *Redlands, The Story of an Australian Shire*, Brisbane: Derek Townsend Production, 1996.

⁷ *Redland Times*, 12 December 1973 'Capalaba Supplement', published by Rural Press.

⁸ *Robana: Special Edition: 75th Anniversary of Birkdale State School, 1916-91*, John Bullion, compiler, 75th anniversary committee: 1991.

⁹ Marie Holland, *Contextual History of Redland Shire*, draft report 1995.

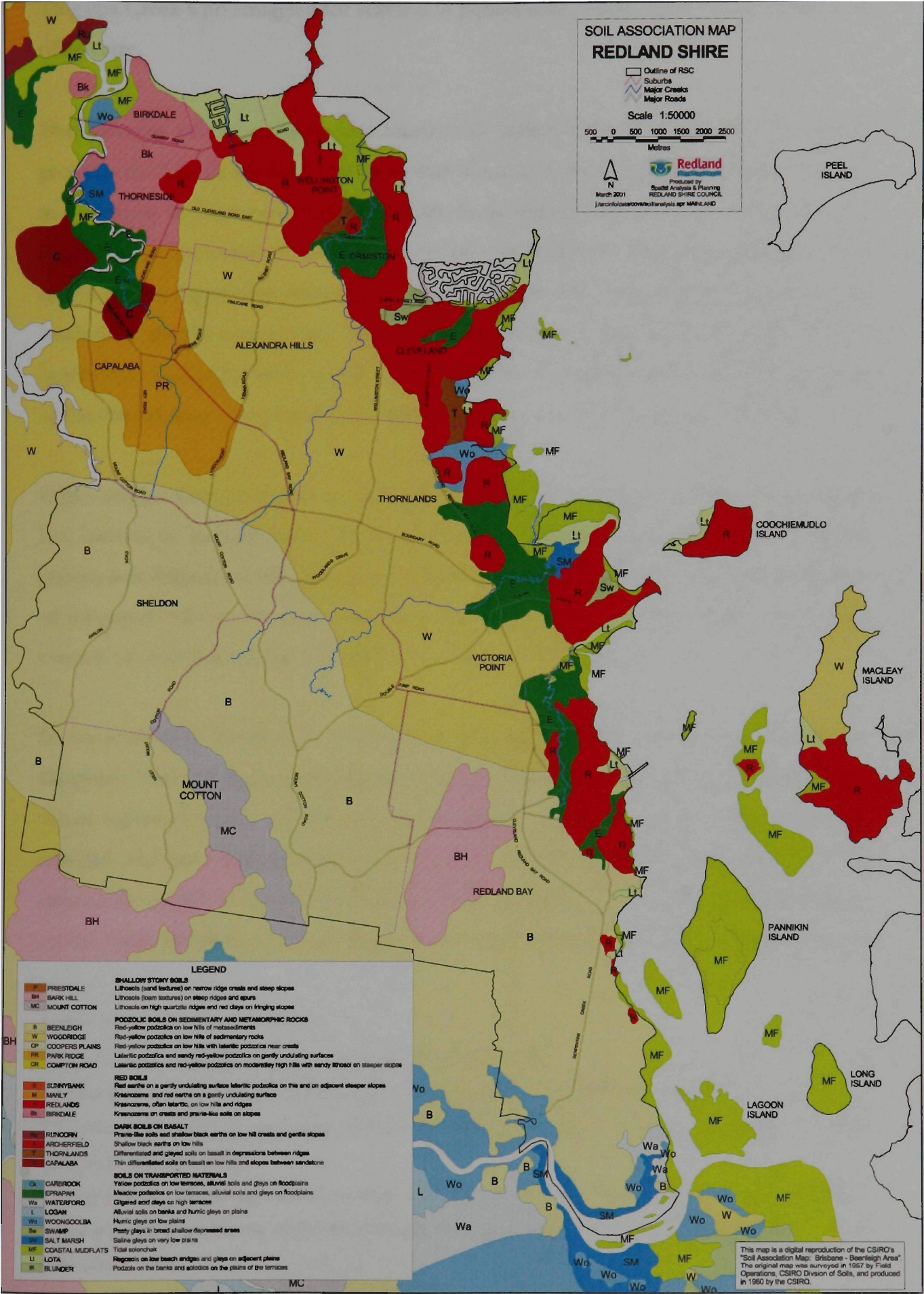


Figure 2. Soil Types

as wealthy, but they certainly had a greater chance of success than the farmers along Tingalpa Creek who struggled for survival in poorer soils. These people lived on the edge of poverty.

The lifestyles of the residents are inextricably linked with the landscape. The creek provides the life for the land and those that live and work it. As Bill Gammage asserted in his history of *Narrandera Shire*, 'Soils and the geological formations on which they rest begin Narrandera's story'¹⁰ While I will not be undertaking an extensive geological study of the region, Figure 2 provides a comparison of soil types between the Tingalpa Creek catchment and the coastal strip. The soils in the Birkdale/Thorneside areas are of better quality than that of Capalaba and the upper reaches of Tingalpa Creek, while the red soils of the coastal strip¹¹ have been agriculturally productive since European settlement.

Other studies have produced an in-depth environmental analysis as Diana Beale did in her history of Rosalie Shire. This was not the focus of my research and a recent publication *Tingalpa Creek, Know your Creek* adequately covers the environmental aspects of the region.¹² Beale's examination of cultural heritage of the settlers of Rosalie is in the context of their relationship with the fauna and flora of the area.¹³

In her analysis of the history of Mount Crosby, Judith Nissen has responded to Helen Gregory's 1987 call for more in-depth studies of outlying suburbs and their links to larger urban centres.¹⁴ Nissen and I have taken a different approach in our histories of outer suburbs. She has employed minimal use of oral sources, whereas I have relied on them extensively to give colour to the primary source research. Nissen and I are in agreement on the value of selection files in charting the successes and failures of the early residents

¹⁰ Bill Gammage, *Narrandera Shire*, Narrandera Shire Council, 1986.

¹¹ Redland Shire, Soil Association Map, originally produced by CSIRO Division of Soils, 1960.

¹² Healthy Waterways, in conjunction with Redland Shire, Logan and Brisbane City Councils, *Tingalpa Creek, know your creek*, 2001.

¹³ Diana J Beale, *The Making of Rosalie: a History of the Development of the Modern Landscape of the Darling Downs Portion of Rosalie Shire from the 1840s*, Toowoomba: Land Use Study Centre of the University of Southern Queensland, 1993.

¹⁴ Helen Gregory, 'Southwest Brisbane in the 1840s and 1850s: Land ownership usage patterns' in Rod Fisher (ed.), *Brisbane: People, Places, Pageantry*, Brisbane History Group Papers No. 6 Brisbane, 1987, p. 11.

of the region. Her final product is essentially from an environmental perspective, whereas mine is primarily social.¹⁵

Other local studies have taken slightly different approaches in analysing the essence of a place. Rosalind Butler studied the development of Hastings Street in Noosa within the context of the development of land-use policy aimed at preserving the natural beauty of the region while responding to the needs of the ever-hungry tourism industry.¹⁶ Rosemary Ahern used her insider's knowledge of the social structure of Moreton Island to paint a picture of the local lifestyle and antics that make isolated settlements of a generally transient population unique.¹⁷ My approach is closer to Joan Horsman's study of the patterns of settlement of the Currumbin Valley in that I examine the settlement patterns of a border area isolated by geography and lack of provision of infrastructure. Horsman also uses a similar range of sources focussing on socio-economic aspects and incorporating oral history.¹⁸ As John Tosh suggests, 'oral history allows the voice of ordinary people to be heard alongside the careful marshalling of social facts in the written record'.¹⁹ My research has been led by the local knowledge of the oral history informants, enabling the accessing of a wide range of resources. This has ensured a thorough analysis of the history of the region from both the administrative angle, through government generated archival resources, and especially personal perspectives.

At the same time I am interested in the concept of community. As Lois Bryson and Martin Mowbray suggest, community has 'become an aerosol word...because of the hopeful way it is sprayed over deteriorating institutions'.²⁰ This has never been so evident as in recent years when local councils have been busily trying to impose cultural and

¹⁵ Judith Nissen, *Creating the Landscape: a History of Settlement and Land Use in Mount Crosby*, MA Thesis, University of Queensland, 1999.

¹⁶ Rosalind Mary Butler, *Hastings Street, Village of Noosa: The Development of a Sand Spit*, PG Dip Thesis, University of Queensland, 1998.

¹⁷ Rosemary Ahern, *Moreton Island Community and Culture 1850-1995*, PG Dip Thesis, University of Queensland, 1996.

¹⁸ Margaret Joan Horsman, 'Patterns of Settlement. Development and Land Usage: Currumbin Valley 1852-1915,' MA Thesis, University of Queensland, 1995.

¹⁹ John Tosh, *The Pursuit of History*, London: Longman House, 1984, p. 210.

²⁰ Louis Bryson and Martin Mowbray, 'Community: a spray-on solution', *Australian Journal of Social Issues*, 1981, vol 16 no 4, pp.255-67.

community formations and values on groups of residents. The shortfall of one such process occurred in the Redland Shire Council's attempt to define the local community for the Capalaba Town Centre project. A lack of historical knowledge of the area led to the exclusion of an entire sector of the community from the consultation process. Residents from the Brisbane side of Tingalpa Creek were not invited to participate. They are at least emotionally and often economically tied to Capalaba, even though politically they are part of Greater Brisbane.

I am not suggesting that the Capalaba or Thorneside communities were particularly tight knit, nor am I endeavouring to paint a rosy picture of the past. Indeed the Department of Public Instruction inspector of 1879 described the Capalaba and Upper Tingalpa people as maintaining a kind of dog-in-the-manger attitude to life and to their neighbours, because of the friction he observed between the residents of the various settlements around Capalaba.²¹ However, in the years from the first white settlement until the introduction of the car and bitumen roads to the area, people were certainly restrained by geography. These communities existed and were interdependent in a region with little to define it, other than a creek and a pub in Capalaba and a creek and a railway siding in Thorneside. Travellers usually passed through on their way to somewhere else. Residents, however, have strong ties to the landscape generally as the environment affected their lives and their ability to live off the land.

The meaning of community that has evolved since the eighteenth century included notion of a group having something in common through sharing a locality, a cultural or historic heritage.²² This is only partially valid for these people. Early settlers were from both Germany and Britain and residents of this small settlement were under the jurisdiction of at least four different local authorities until the formation of the Greater Brisbane City Council in 1925, when this was reduced to three. The number was reduced to two in 1949 with the amalgamation of the Cleveland and Tingalpa Shires to form the Redland Shire. From that time, Tingalpa Creek has formed the boundary between Brisbane city and the Redland Shire and still divides the communities living on either side of the bridges over the creek.

²¹ EDU/Z508, Capalaba School File, Letter to the under secretary of the Department of Public Instruction, by Inspector Thomas McIntyre, 5 April 1879.

²² Raymond Williams, *Keywords: A vocabulary of culture and society*, London: Fontana Press, 1976, pp.75-76.

Sociologist George Hillery examined the many definitions of community in the 1960s, and concluded that the common thread included social interaction, territory and common ties between people, with people being the overriding factor.²³ Richard Broome suggested that it can be dangerous to look for that sense of community when writing local history because there can be a tendency to avoid examining any notions of conflict. This is one aspect of community that those commissioning histories usually do not want to delve into. Not surprisingly it is usually difficult to get people to discuss conflicts anyway and local feuds are rarely reported in the newspapers. Libel laws and potential character assassination generally prevent too much defamatory information being utilized in local histories. This study focuses on personal responses to environmental conflicts including battles with the landscape or the weather conditions. Nevertheless, I have looked briefly into a murder in 1881, which demonstrated the conflict in the Upper Tingalpa community. This was more of a personal conflict than any reflection on the region generally.

Hillery's concept of community is useful in examining local regions in that it includes territory, social interaction and common ties. Figure 3 depicts the patterns of settlement, which spread spider fashion along roads that radiate from the township of Capalaba. On the western side of Tingalpa Creek, the Old Ipswich Road (Mount Gravatt-Capalaba Road) is one of the earliest in Queensland, which linked the proposed capital of Ipswich with the proposed port of Cleveland. Old Cleveland Road links the township directly with Belmont, the centre of the former adjoining local government authority, and on to Brisbane. New Cleveland Road to Greencamp Road through Brandy Gully forms links with Wynnum and Manly, which were important business centres to the people of Capalaba. On the eastern side of the creek, roads stretch to Mount Cotton to the south, with an adjoining road linking through to Mount Gravatt, Eight Mile Plains and Rochedale. Redland Bay Road formed the boundary between the Tingalpa and Cleveland Shire until 1949, and part of that road is still called Boundary Road. Old Cleveland Road runs through the current township, becoming Finucane Road as it heads towards Cleveland. Old Cleveland Road East branches off towards Birkdale and Ormiston. Travellers had to pass through Capalaba on their way to somewhere else.

²³ George A Hillery, *Communal organisations, a study of local societies*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968, pp. 3-4.

Similarly, a railway siding and rail bridge from Lota initially defined Thorneside. This was an important economic and social link with the communities of Wynnum and Manly as well as Brisbane. Even though the train went south to Cleveland, the only reason for Thorneside people to travel there was to pay their rates to the Cleveland and later Redland Shire Council. Like Capalaba, Thorneside was an isolated settlement en route to elsewhere. The road bridge, which links the region with Brisbane City, was planned in the 1880s but not built until 1970.

The aspects of social interaction and common ties have been further developed in the sociological theories of Wellman and Weatherall who use a social network analysis.²⁴ This methodology allows for the documentation of the changing nature of communities over time, thereby complementing the geographical approach of studying sequence occupancy in writing local history. Social network analysis examines the various types of communities, which exist amongst a group of people or within the same group. There may be local or dispersed associations and issues such as social support both locally and over distance, social control, the changing composition of communities and the constraints of geographic isolation may be evident. These associations can be uncovered through the oral histories I have collected and through local newspapers stories. Genealogical sources assist in this process as much intermarrying occurred in these isolated communities last century and early this century. Post office directories and almanacs will also help in charting such issues as occupations and workplaces within this regional community.

Richard Broome referred to the need to use the flesh and bones together to write a well-rounded history. The bones in this case are the substructures of council minutes, rate books, survey plans and title searches that, used in isolation, would present a sterile version of the past. Thematic bones also assist in providing structure. Issues such as settlement patterns, local government, and provision of government infrastructure, occupations and lifestyles, and the influence of significant 'local characters' all assist in providing substructure. The oral histories, newspaper stories and personal photos of the

²⁴ Barry Wellman and Charles Weatherall, 'Social Network Analysis of Historical Communities: Some Questions from the Present for the Past', *The History of the Family*, vol 1 no 1, 1996, pp.97-121.

local people provide the flesh. These add life to the bones. This study uses both flesh and bones to produce a well rounded history of the region.

Despite the sources available to the historian, most residents of the Redland Shire do not believe that the region along Tingalpa Creek has a history because it is not linked to a specific historic event or home to a heritage-listed property or precinct. There are no obvious signs of a history apart from James Willard senior's farm in Capalaba, and James Willard junior's farm in Thorneside, which many drive past on a daily basis without thinking of their local significance. Though tangible remains may be valuable, to me local history is about the people. They give the area its character.

In the case of Capalaba it is the people who are the keepers of the history in that there are a few individuals who have an in-depth knowledge of the area, handed down from previous generations. To them it is important to have this at last recorded. As Ron Gibbs suggested in his presentation at the Terowie local history workshop in 1991: 'Local history...owns its people; the people are not owners but rather custodians of local history. They guard that history jealously, for it must not be diminished. They have the obligations of custodians. Their duty is to pass the property on to others'.²⁵

The starting point for this project was an interview with a descendant of one of the earliest settlers in Capalaba. She considers herself as the custodian of her family history and local history generally, although she has never proclaimed this fact. However, her remarkable memory allows her to repeat stories told to her by her grandmother who settled in the area in the late 1860s. Her ability to relate dates to family events has ensured accuracy, as I have generally been able to verify the information she has imparted. An individual such as this provides an invaluable embarkation point to writing about a region with 'no history'.

Other informants have been able to describe their experiences of battling against nature to make a living from the land. Most had to display the resourcefulness that Russell Ward

²⁵ R M Gibbs, 'The trouble with being a local historian,' in *Terowie Workshop, Exploring the History of South Australian Country Towns*, Adelaide: Adelaide University and the Community History Unit of the History Trust of South Australia, 1991, p.194.

attributed to the Australian bushmen of last century.²⁶ These people laid the foundations of the region as we know it today and, through oral history, are able to articulate their struggle for survival. To quote John Tosh again: 'Oral history promises a sense of place and community accessible to ordinary people, while at the same time illuminating broader features of social history'.²⁷

Few would deny that the only real wealth in Capalaba has come as a result of its new role as the business centre of the Redland Shire. Small acreage lots, which were once the province of dirt-poor farmers living in shacks made of kerosene tins, now boast imposing brick and granosite houses for a new generation of residents, many of whom commute to work in Brisbane. However, some of the small industrial businesses, which have sprung up along Redland Bay Road, are run by the children of the original farmers, who had better opportunities than their parents in the form of education and training.

Similarly, Thorneside has a well-developed light industrial base with extensive areas of high density housing within walking distance of the railway station. Elite housing exists along the waterfront, side by side with the original timber cottages that once were the holiday homes of some Brisbane residents. Both areas have prospered because of their close proximity to Brisbane and because of the provision of transport infrastructure. Land values now lie in the distance to Brisbane rather than the wealth the land can produce. Aesthetic or natural beauty adds value in the case of Capalaba bush acreage estates. Waterfront land in Thorneside is just as expensive as land in the artificial constructions of Aquatic Paradise and Raby Bay canal estates. Most recent statistics on growth in real estate prices in the twelve months to March 2001 indicate Thorneside as experiencing an above average growth of 10.5%.²⁸ Thorneside and Capalaba residents have again adapted to make the best of the economic climate of the day.

It is also interesting to look at an area in the context of development of national identity. This concept has been on and off the agenda many times including eras of economic downturn in the 1840s, the 1890s, and in the 1930s. Interest was re-ignited by the radical nationalist movement of the post-war era and the revelry of the Bicentenary of Captain

²⁶ Russell Ward, *The Australian Legend*, Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1958, p.2.

²⁷ John Tosh, *The Pursuit of History*, London: Longman House, 1984, p. 211.

²⁸ Lisa Gilby, 2001 'Through the Roof', *Courier-Mail*, 2 June, p. 29.

James Cook in 1970 and the Bicentenary of the First Fleet in 1988. It is again being discussed in the context of celebrations of the Centenary of Federation. Theories of national identity are as many and varied as the individuals, which comprise the Australian population. Writers and artists of the 1890s turned to the Australian bush as the unifying element in this country and argued that the bush ethos and subsequent national identity, signified by self reliance, egalitarianism, and mateship evolved from this distinctive environment.²⁹ Current analysts refute the bush legend as being too simplistic, particularly in the year 2000 when so many other influences have shaped the nation.³⁰ However, in the areas of Upper Tingalpa and Capalaba, the bush legend is probably the most appropriate model, particularly for the first 100 years of settlement when battling the landscape and adapting to live with it were the only means of survival. The bush theme was the dominant topic in the Capalaba Town Centre project, and many current residents are still searching for the ultimate bush acreage allotment in the region.

The distinction for residents along Tingalpa Creek was the fact that they were not administered exclusively by any local government authority, and it would seem that they were forgotten, or put in the 'too hard basket', when it came to decision-making on the provision of infrastructure. Perhaps this also suited them as it meant that there were few restrictions on how they lived their lives. The limited building regulations could be easily ignored when you lived so far away from the seat of government. The liquor regulations also seem to have been disregarded by many of the publicans and there was little influence of formal religion to shape social control mechanisms in the region. People in both Cleveland and Brisbane have generally regarded the area through Capalaba, and Thorneside, as well as Gumdale and Lota on the Brisbane side of the creek, as a frontier. The region certainly produced its share of unique individuals.

By these means this thesis assesses the conditions that shaped the identity of the communities living along Tingalpa Creek by examining the external influences, including landscape, local government, and the social mix of the people, through the study of

²⁹ David Carter and Gillian Whitlock, 'Institutions of Australian Literature,' in James Walter (ed) *Australian Studies, a Survey*, Melbourne: Oxford University Press 1989, p. 120.

³⁰ Richard Nile, (ed) *The Australian Legend and its Discontents*, Saint Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 2000.

sequential occupation of the land, enriched with the oral testimonies of the people who lived here.

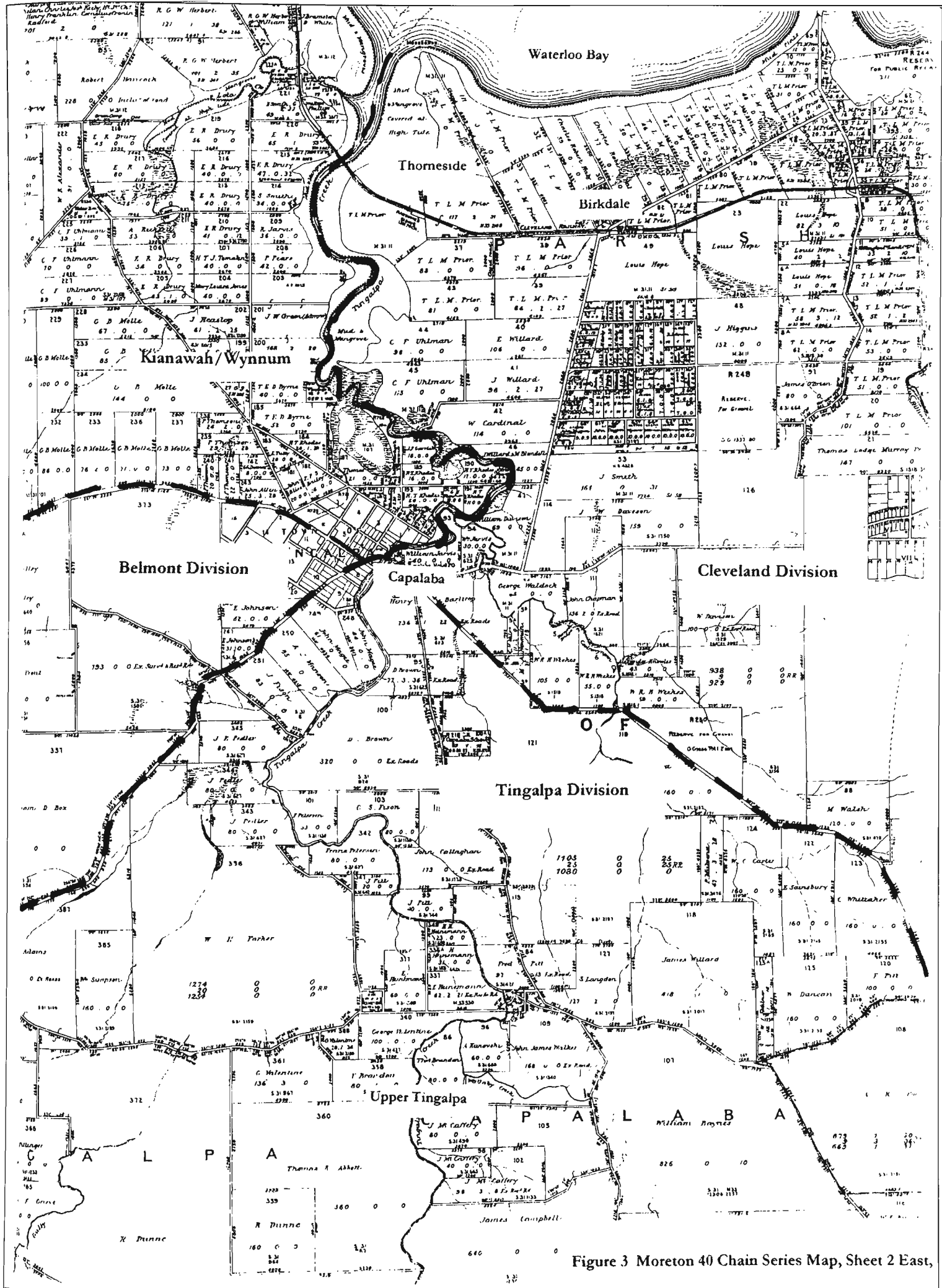


Figure 3 Moreton 40 Chain Series Map, Sheet 2 East,

Chapter 1

European Settlement to 1900

The first sales of land in the Capalaba and Thorneside regions from 1863 revolved around the cattle grazing industry. Once the land was surveyed for free settlement, development was steady but slow. Deriving an income from the timber, which needed to be cleared in order to commence either grazing or agriculture, was an obvious point of embarkation. Timber, however, was to become the staple industry for the next 90 years. Selection agreements required residents to build a house, fence some land and commence growing crops. The generally poor soils ensured that agricultural success was elusive and many simply forfeited their selections and moved on. Those who stayed had to be resourceful, and versatility was the key to making a living. It was man (and woman) against nature, with only the wily surviving.

This theme of moving in and out of the region carried on for over 100 years. The only families to stay held key properties, with fertile soils, reasonable road access or good access to Tingalpa Creek as both a transport route and water supply. There is no evidence of conflict with the local Aboriginal population, but plenty in relation to the establishment of the first government structure in the area – the school. The arguments over the siting of the Capalaba School revealed great rivalry between the various small settlements. These communities were further split when the Divisional Board boundaries were established in 1880. These residents remained fringe dwellers through to the 1960s.

The Birkdale/Thorneside area prospered with its more fertile soil. The construction of the Cleveland railway in 1889 ensured steady development of the region. The siting of the railway along the coast further isolated the Capalaba area and sealed its fate as a remote pocket with little supporting infrastructure. Despite these impediments, those who chose to stay were keen to succeed. This first chapter examines the settlement patterns and the establishment of infrastructure in the communities of Upper Tingalpa, Capalaba and Birkdale/Thorneside.

Aboriginal presence

Little tangible proof of Aboriginal occupation remains in this region. The scant oral evidence discusses arm's-length interaction, which presumably came to an end once the *Aboriginal Protection and Restriction of the Sale of Opium Act 1897* came into force. It is likely that most remaining inhabitants of the Tingalpa district were then sent to Myora and other missions. The only tangible reminders of Aboriginal presence are in the place names of the district. The creek itself has been known by various names since the first white explorers and surveyors started mapping and documenting the area. Surveyor Robert Dixon named the creek Turin in 1842, and Arrowsmith's map of 1855 shows it as Tangelba Creek. This was probably derived from the Tangel plant, which was used to stupefy fish.¹ Mooroondu may be a derivative of the Jandai word for nose² also meaning blunt and sloping downwards. Coolnwynpin means place of pigeons.³ Capalaba is thought to have come from the Yugarabul language and to mean place of ring tailed or scrub possum.⁴

More recent residents of the area have stories of interaction between the local Aboriginal population and the new European settlers. Many older residents had been told about Tommy Minnippi, (Minnippi Rawlins) who was the 'King' of the Tingalpa Tribe. F W Hinchcliffe of *Broomhill* near Waterford on the Logan River thought Minnippi to be a bit of rogue, but Capalaba residents spoke kindly of him. Hinchcliffe reported that Minnippi died at Waterford while visiting the area and was buried in that neighbourhood by Bilin Bilin.⁵

Oral evidence is the only available record of cross-cultural interaction. Cousins Sarah Fredericks and Jean Rooney recall their grandparents' stories of the local Aboriginal people:

¹ John Steele, *Aboriginal Pathways*, St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1983, p.114.

² Ibid., p.118.

³ Rod Milne, *Dahs and Bahs; Aboriginal Place Names of Southern Queensland*, 1993, self published.

⁴ F J Watson, *Vocabularies of Four Representative Tribes of South East Queensland* Royal Geographical Society of Australasia, journal supplement, no 34, vol 68.

⁵ F W Hinchcliffe, 1931, 'Jacky Jacky; King of the Logan and Pimpama', *Beaudesert Times*, 12 June.

My grandparents, John and Henrietta Mussig, lived in Capalaba from the late 1860s and the local Aboriginals used to get honey for my grandfather. They'd go out in the bush, and of course the bees used to build up in the hollow trees, and he'd take a cask out to them, and then when it was full they'd come in and tell him it was ready, and he'd go out and get it. He'd take them food and tobacco and all stuff like that. Aboriginal women would climb the tree with a vine. They'd sort of go round in a circle. They'd cut a nick in the trees with the tomahawk, and the vine would go round the tree with them, and I suppose it would sort of hold them as they climbed up. Tommy Minnippi was called the King of the Tribe, and he used to be the leader of them, and they'd all follow him. Tommy used to often help look after the children. He'd look in to see if they were all right when the parents were away in Brisbane doing the shopping.⁶

There were quite a few Aboriginals there when my father, Bill Mussig, was young. When I was a child he showed me the gum tree where the Aboriginals used to bury their dead, and to him that was a very sacred tree. It was right across the road from where Mussig's gate was. It was on the left hand side of Camrose Street just where there is a bend in the road. That tree was still there until well after my father died in 1949. The Aboriginal people did a little bit of work around the area. They'd do anything: housework, or a bit of gardening. They'd bring honey round, and exchange it so that they could get some tobacco, but they would do some work. When my mother first got married and went there, she was scared stiff of them, and they used to say, "We only want to help." They used to camp under the bridge leading to the creek. There was quite a big span where the water didn't go, and they were always camped there on the Brisbane side of the creek. The other side was more or less a steep bank and no good, but the Brisbane side had quite a big gap of land before you hit the water, and they used to camp under that, as far as I can remember.⁷

Capalaba residents of the 1950s, sisters Narelle and Ruth Dainty, recalled finding stone tools in the vicinity of Quentin Street. Joan King remembers finding large quantities of boomerangs in the vicinity of the Moreton Bay Road intersection with Old Cleveland Road towards Chandler.⁸ The only other formal mention of Aboriginal people in the area was in the role of police trackers when searching for evidence in a murder case in 1881 in the Upper Tingalpa region.⁹ As was common at the time, the European settlers were not

⁶ Sarah Fredericks interview with Mary Howells, 1995, Redland Shire Council Oral History Collection.

⁷ Mary (Jean) Rooney interview with Mary Howells, 1995, Redland Shire Council Oral History Collection.

⁸ Personal recollections, Narelle Renn and Ruth Huss (nee) Dainty, and Joan Levey.

⁹ *Brisbane Courier*, 26 November 1881, Trial of Michael Minnis for the murder of William Pillinger.

particularly concerned with the local indigenous people and there is no evidence as to their fate.

Early European Settlement

Earliest evidence of early European transport routes in this area may be found in James Warner's 1841 survey of Tingalpa and Hilliards Creek.¹⁰ He noted bridges and fords along the track between Cleveland and Cowpers Plains, where the Moreton Bay penal settlement's cattle station was situated. This included a ford on Tingalpa Creek, which is now under the Leslie Harrison Dam, but would have been in evidence at the end of Geldart Road and heading towards where Allambie Crescent is now. Warner later referred to this crossing as a dray ford. When he surveyed the road between Brisbane and Cleveland in 1850, Warner selected the ford to the north of the current Capalaba bridge as the most suitable for individual horses.¹¹ At this point in time Capalaba was a stop over en route to Cleveland.

When Portions 5, 6, 7, and 8 in Capalaba were surveyed in 1853, a bridge existed over Coolnwynpin Creek on Redland Bay Road near the current Windemere Road intersection.¹² Another bridge crossed Coolnwynpin Creek to the north of Portion 5, where the track headed north to stockyards on T L Murray Prior's land on the corner of Quarry Road and Birkdale Road.¹³ Ten years later, when 1000 acres of this land was offered for sale (Portions 31-39 and 45), it was promoted as first class pasture and agricultural land, and by that time held 150 head of cattle and 50 horses.¹⁴ T B Stevens, who later built a fellmongery on Hilliards Creek at Ormiston, made application to survey and purchase Portions 5, 6, 7, and 8.¹⁵ Robert Howe Weekes purchased portions 5, 6, and 7. Auctioneer Alexander Knowles purchased Portion 8.

¹⁰ Survey Plan M1076 46a, Department of Natural Resources.

¹¹ Michael Endicott, 'The origins of Old Cleveland Road', *Royal Queensland Historical Society Journal*, vol 10, no 2, 1976-7 p.69.

¹² Survey plan S 1518, Department of Natural Resources.

¹³ Survey plan M 31.11, Department of Natural Resources.

¹⁴ *Brisbane Courier*, 19 March, 1864, p.1.

¹⁵ Survey plan S1518, Department of Natural Resources.

Once the new colony of Queensland was proclaimed on 10 December 1859, the government was keen to attract settlers and employed various means to do so. The Tingalpa Creek region is a microcosm of Queensland immigration patterns generally, with a mixture of both British and German residents. The Agent-General for Queensland, Henry Jordan, offered English, Irish and Scottish people land orders of equivalent value to their passage fares if they would agree to come to Queensland and pay their own fares.¹⁶ Any immigrant who had lived there for over two years, regardless of whether they had paid their own passage, was also eligible for a land order to the value of £12.

Queensland already had a number of German colonists, and the new Parliament appointed John Heussler as Agent for Germany. Both German and British residents could introduce friends into the colony.¹⁷ Many of the early residents of the Tingalpa Creek catchment area were part of this immigration program or the pre-separation scheme operated by Rev Dr John Dunmore Lang.

Some of the pre-separation immigrants became landowners of this district. James Campbell, who established City Lime, Cement and Plaster on the corner of Queen and Charlotte Streets in Brisbane in 1854, later purchased Samuel Barnes' timber mill in Capalaba.¹⁸ George and Mercy Waldock, who arrived on the *Lima* and worked for David McConnel at Bulimba House,¹⁹ later owned land on the southern side of Old Cleveland Road at the Coolnwynpin Creek crossing. The Waldocks later ran the Royal Mail Hotel in Tingalpa.

James and Margaret Willard, married in Brisbane in 1861,²⁰ and settled to the north of the Davesons' land in Birkdale Road.²¹ The site of their home *The Pines* was registered to James Willard and Mark Blundell in December 1865.²² This home, which was probably

¹⁶ W Ross Johnston, (ed) *A Documentary History of Queensland*, St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1988: p.187.

¹⁷ Margaret Kleinschmidt, 'Government and Immigration, 1859-1866', *Royal Queensland Historical Society Journal*, vol 4, no 5 Dec 1952.

¹⁸ Alison and Morag Campbell, *The James Campbell Story*, Brisbane: Watson and Ferguson 1990.

¹⁹ William Johnston, 'Old Bulimba', *Historical Society of Queensland Journal*, Vol 1, No 5, Oct 1918, p.305.

²⁰ Queensland Pioneer Index, Registrar General's Office, compiled 1997.

²¹ *Brisbane Courier*, June 22, 1916, (Randall news clipping collection held in Cleveland Library).

²² Certificate of Title No 17039, Vol 96, Folio 59, Department of Natural Resources.

constructed shortly after this, is still standing and is the oldest surviving home in this part of the Redlands.

George and Naomi Randall arrived on the *Planet* in 1868 and settled in South Brisbane where they established a small business. George was later the Queensland Emigration agent in Great Britain. They purchased land in Birkdale in 1901 while George was on his fourth and last visit to England. Their Highgate Hill home, *Somersby Grange*, was moved to Birkdale at that time. George arrived home in Brisbane on Christmas day 1902.²³

Post-separation landowners included William Thorne, who travelled from London on the *Sunda* and arrived in Brisbane on 25 September 1863.²⁴ Franz Petersen, farmer, arrived from Hamburg on the *La Rochelle* on 7 August 1863; Heussler was the Brisbane agent for this ship.²⁵ Jacob Scheurer, tailor, with his wife Gertrude and daughters Elisabeth and Marie, travelled on the *Beausite* and arrived on 4 September 1863.²⁶ On 15 February 1864 the *Susanne Goddefroy* arrived from Hamburg. Local settlers from that group included Carl and Christine Palm, who settled initially at Beenleigh where Carl ran the hotel for some years. They moved to Birkdale in 1896. Also on the *Susanne Goddefroy* were Peter Binger, a tailor and cellarman who became a well-known vigneron and orchardist in Wellington Point, and cooper Carl Blum and his wife Mathilde and six children, who later settled on the Old Ipswich Road.²⁷ Johann Mussig arrived on 27 April 1864 aboard the *Johann Cesar*. His occupation was listed as a vine dresser.²⁸ His descendants still live in Capalaba on land he acquired in the original township of Tingalpa, which was surveyed in 1863. Speculators purchased most of the township. Mussig was able to purchase land in Camrose Street after the unfortunate death of the only resident owner, Henry Rhodes, who drowned in the creek in 1865.²⁹

²³ Information supplied by Jack Walton.

²⁴ John Bullion, (comp) *Rohana: Special Edition: 75th Anniversary of Birkdale State School, 1916-1991*, Birkdale School 75th Anniversary committee: 1991, p.3.

²⁵ Eric and Rosemary Kopittke, (comp) *Emigrants from Hamburg to Australia: 1863*, Brisbane: Queensland Family History Society, 1991, p.9.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, pp.25-6, 35.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, pp.60,71.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, pp.76, 82.

²⁹ JUS/N9 65/79 inquest, Thomas Rhodes, 5 March 1865, QSA.

Another settler William Daveson arrived in Australia in the *James Fernie* on 24 January 1856. He married Selina Randle in 1861 and lived at Bulimba for some time. He initially worked for George Waldock before acquiring land in Birkdale Road.³⁰ Following the birth of their daughter Emily on 10 December 1868,³¹ they moved to Capalaba.³² Grandson Tom Dale has vivid memories of the old slab hut:

*William Daveson came to Brisbane in the late 1850s and later settled on the road to Ormiston. He built a slab hut out of split timber. I lived in it myself when I was little and the slabs were going straight up and down and they had a log at the bottom that they were nailed to and they fitted into a log up at the top. All the cracks between the slabs were filled with mud. They had a mud floor, except in the bedrooms. There were two bedrooms. They had timber floors. All the timber was pit sawn in those days. You had to have a well. One man would be in the well and the saw would go up and down to cut the timber through. The slab hut was situated halfway between Jones Road and the corner of the Old Cleveland Road. Grandfather Daveson helped build the Willard home, 'The Pines'. Later there was another house on the opposite side where Daveson Road is now. That was Willy and Bridget Daveson's place. Willy was the son of William Daveson senior. Davesons had a big team of horses and they kept horses just for the coaches. They had a fresh team of horses for the Cleveland Coach, before it ran up to Brisbane and back. Then it used to go through from Capalaba to Cleveland and back. They kept the horses opposite the Capalaba pub, where the hall is. That corner block of land where the Mobil garage is.*³³

Oral evidence demonstrates the diversity of activities required to make a living in the area. New settlers had to construct basic housing, and then travel long distances to sell their limited range of produce. It would seem that few were able to continue with the occupations they had in their home country. While these skills were not lost, some continued them as part of their lifestyle. The ability to diversify was paramount. Johann Mussig, for example, worked as a vine dresser in Germany. He continued grape growing in Capalaba, but had to branch out into dairying and pork butchering, as well as working on the roads for the local Divisional Board. His wife Henrietta ran the family dairy and sold

³⁰ *Red Land Mercury and Wynnum and Manly News*, 'A Pioneer, late Mr W Daveson, Sixty-eight Years in Queensland', 28 June, 1924, p.1, and Winifred Davenport and Betty Mottram (compilers) *Early Shipping in Moreton Bay, June 1846-December 1859, Vol 1*, Brisbane: self published, 1998, p.179.

³¹ Queensland Register of Births, 1865-1869.

³² Information supplied by family members, Tom Dale and 'Snowy' Henry Daveson.

³³ Tom Dale interview with Mary Howells, 1998, Redland Shire Council Oral History Project.

her produce en route to South Brisbane for provisions. Granddaughter Sarah Fredericks recalls:

My grandfather John Mussig came to Australia and was living at the German settlement at Nundah. My grandmother, Henrietta Kohler, came out from Prussia soon after, and all the men from the German settlement came down to the boat to choose their brides. They picked out the girl that they wanted and they went away and got married. They lived in Brisbane for a while.³⁴ They built a slab hut for a start and then after some years they built a house. They lived in Camrose Street, but it was called White's Road then. Grandfather bought the place from the Rhodes family. Mr Rhodes got drowned trying to swim the creek in the flood. His two sisters lived here but didn't want to stop there so my grandfather bought it. He helped to build the first bridge in Capalaba in about 1874. My mother said she was a baby at the time.³⁵ Before the bridge was built, coaches used to go through when the tide was down. My mother told me that there used to be an old grog shanty on the corner of Old Ipswich Road. There was a school on the other corner. Later there was a blacksmith there too, near where the chicken sheds were just pulled down. [on the western corner of Camrose Street]

My grandfather used to drive his old horse and dray up that Old Ipswich Road to work on the roads. He'd be away working and the wife and family had to keep the farm going. They grew vegetables and cow feed. They had hens as well as dairy cows. Every week they would take a load of veal and pork and butter and eggs and vegetables up to the Mowbray Park area to sell. Grandmother made the butter and she put it in a zinc lined box, and they'd soak a corn bag and put that in and then put the butter on that, and that kept it cool. They used to do their shopping in South Brisbane while they were in the area. They used to grow grapes and make their own wine. Grandmother didn't approve of that. She used to take the bottles and hide them. One day she carted all the bottles to an old hollow tree and hid them. Grandfather was walking past one day and he thought he could smell wine. He had a look, and there were all the wine bottles broken! They got rid of the grapes after that.³⁶

Another German settler Jacob Scheurer also grew grapes on his property (Portion 107 between Avalon Road and Henderson Road). He had taken over grazier William Baynes' selection and had built a simple weatherboard house with a shingle roof by 1878. There

³⁴ They were married on September 24 1865. Their first child John Franz was born on 28 July 1866 and died on 22 September 1867. They moved to Capalaba after that.

³⁵ Emma Mussig born 31 August 1874.

³⁶ Sarah Fredericks interview.

was a separate kitchen made of slabs with a shingle roof and a piggery and stockyard. Apart from one acre of grapes, a further two acres was under cultivation and the property was partly fenced.³⁷

Not surprisingly settlement occurred along the watercourse of Tingalpa Creek. It was navigable as far upstream as Jones Road, but it was also salty up as far as the rocky crossing; more so in dry spells. This factor, along with the poor quality soils limited the agricultural development of the region. This made the viability of some selections tenuous and many changed hands a number of times during the original ten-year selection agreement. The property in Upper Tingalpa selected by sawyer John O’Hea (Potion 359 in Alperton Road) was taken over by Thomas Abbott in 1876. It would appear that Abbott did not inspect the property prior to taking up the lease because he complained bitterly about the poor state of the house, which had been charmingly described as a four-roomed weatherboard shingled-roof house with a front veranda and detached kitchen. The property had a well, fowl house and stockyard. When Abbot moved onto the selection, he found a humpy constructed on foundations of saplings and the outbuildings made of bark and in a state of deterioration. The well was only half the size it was claimed to be and only produced black sludge after extensive rain. The heavy shale was impossible to till and the remainder of the property was clay. Abbot soon passed the property on to Catholic Bishop James Quinn, and on his death it went to Bishop Robert Dunne.³⁸ In the early 1900s Dunne authorized coal exploration on this and neighbouring property he owned which was deemed uneconomical to mine. Dunne lost heavily on this project.³⁹

Many of the German settlers who started out in Upper Tingalpa from the early 1870s moved south east to Mount Cotton. This region proved to be far superior for farming, particularly sugar, which was an important cash crop of that time. Most farming occurred on the eastern side of the mountain. Presumably the mountain caught the prevailing south-east winds and accompanying showers, ensuring a higher rainfall than the undulating land along Tingalpa Creek. The other factor ensuring the success of Mount Cotton was the fact that a combination of the altitude and the position of the mountain provided shelter from

³⁷ LAN/AG 97-98 Selection 2431, 1876 QSA.

³⁸ LAN /AG 103 - 104 Selection 2677, 1876 QSA.

³⁹ Neil J Byrne, *Robert Dunne, Archbishop of Brisbane*, St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1991, pp. 231-2.

frosts. Upper Tingalpa, on the other hand, suffered from frosts. This limited the types of crops that could be grown.⁴⁰ Mount Cotton residents could also access the wharf on the Logan River at Skinners Road. This proved to be a useful link with the Brisbane markets, whereby produce and timber could be loaded onto riverboats, rather than travelling over the inadequate roads.

Timber-getting along Tingalpa Creek

Timber-getting proved to be the most lucrative industry around Capalaba and Upper Tingalpa and in the early 1860s licences were required. Locally, licences were issued to James and Edward Willard in 1865 and in 1866 to Jacob Scheurer and Carl Salm as well as the Willards. The Willards' bullock wagons took timber from Capalaba to the sawmill at Cleveland Point.⁴¹ This mill only operated for a few years between 1859 and the mid 1860s. As timber-getting was an important industry in the Capalaba area, once the Cleveland mill closed, timber was rafted down the creek and on to Brisbane.

Two mills were set up in Upper Tingalpa in the 1870s. During 1877-79, Samuel Barnes was operating a sawmill on his property of 640 acres (Portion 105).⁴² The road was known as Sawmill Road for almost a century, and in 1964 was changed to Avalon Road.⁴³ The sawmill, on Wallaby Creek,⁴⁴ provided employment in the district. In 1879 Barnes transferred his selection lease to James Campbell who paid out the existing lease and was issued with the deed of grant. At the time of purchase the property included two weatherboard houses with shingle roofs and a bark hut. The sawmill was housed in a large shed. It consisted of an engine, a vertical frame saw, circular saw bench and six circular saws. There was also a blacksmith shed and forge. The mill manager during 1879 was James Shakelton.⁴⁵ Timber milled at Campbell's was generally hardwood and the

⁴⁰ 'Enquiry into proposed extension of Belmont Tramway to Mount Cotton, or Railway from Sunnybank to Mount Cotton, Minutes of Evidence', Royal Commission on Public Works, Queensland Parliamentary Debates, 1922 pp. 38-43.

⁴¹ *Redlands Centenary Souvenir 1850-1950*, Fortitude Valley, Qld: Eager and Lamb printers, 1950.

⁴² LAN/AG 96-97 Selection 2425, 1875, QSA

⁴³ Redland Shire Council Minutes, Health and Building Committee Meeting, January 1964.

⁴⁴ Lithograph, Tingalpa Creek, Surveyor General's Office 1874, held in EDU/Z508, Capalaba School File, QSA.

⁴⁵ EDU/Z508, Capalaba School File, QSA.

sawn timber was taken by bullock wagon to the lower reaches of Tingalpa Creek where it was loaded into cutters for delivery. Some of the timber from Campbell's mill was used in the construction of the penal settlement at St Helena.⁴⁶

Another sawmill operated on the adjoining Portion 109 owned by J J Walker. He did not live on the property much of the time. Thomas Brandon and George Valentine operated the mill from 1876 until 1880. Both men had property adjoining to the west (Portions 86 and 340). Another neighbour August Kunovski lived on the property at one time and collected 6/- a week from Walker to maintain the agreement for the selection. Kunovski's wife and child lived on the adjoining property (Portion 96). A fire in 1880 burnt out Walker's property, including the slab hut, outhouse and mill.⁴⁷ Whether this fire affected Campbells is not known but, as Campbell moved all of his machinery to Coochin Creek near Bribie Island in 1881, it is likely that the fire affected the area generally.

During the 1890s it became apparent that the forests of Queensland were being rapidly depleted. Timber regulations aimed at managing the forests were gazetted under the Crown Lands Act of 1884, replacing the timber licensing process. This was in turn replaced by minimum auction prices for timber under the Crown Lands Act of 1897. By 1905, the licensing system was replaced by royalties and minimum girths were required. State forests were also proclaimed.⁴⁸ The only one proclaimed in the Tingalpa Creek catchment area was in the upper reaches of Buhot Creek, a tributary of Tingalpa Creek in the area now known as the Daisy Hill State Forest.⁴⁹ This was originally designated as a reserve for timber for railway purposes in 1874 and was proclaimed state forest in 1917.⁵⁰ During the 1870s, there was a timber reserve on the area near the intersection of Mount

⁴⁶ Alison and Morag Campbell, *The James Campbell Story*, Brisbane: Watson and Ferguson 1990.

⁴⁷ LAN/AG 103-104 Selection 2673, 1876, QSA.

⁴⁸ Rod Fisher and Ross Johnston, *South East Queensland 2001 Region Cultural Heritage Places Study*, Vol 2 Applied History Centre, University of Queensland, Dec 1995, pp. 66, 93.

⁴⁹ Judith Anderson et al, 'Cultural Heritage Study of Daisy Hill State Forest Park: A Report for the Queensland Department of Environment and Heritage', prepared by History Department, University of Queensland, group project report, HT419, 1995.

⁵⁰ Government Gazette 1917. 2 p 73, see also 20 Chain Series Map 2499, Department of Public Lands Brisbane Oct 1943.

Petrie Road and Mount Gravatt Capalaba Road.⁵¹ Many wharf reserves were proclaimed in the Township of Tingalpa during the late 1880s.⁵² These were used by timber-getters to send their logs to the mills in Brisbane.

Establishing Infrastructure

Services to the growing population were slow to develop. Mail to the Capalaba district was delivered as part of the Cleveland service. During the early 1860s the mail was carried between Brisbane and Cleveland once a week by horseback. Frederick Smith secured the first contract in 1861,⁵³ followed by Edward Clegg in 1865.⁵⁴ In 1867 tenders were called for a mail service twice a week by coach between Brisbane and Cleveland via Tingalpa. At that time, Tingalpa referred to the Royal Mail Hotel on Wynnum Road run by George Waldock. John Flitcroft of South Brisbane won the contract, and was paid £100 per annum.⁵⁵ He continued in the job until 1870, when Thomas Kerr of Fortitude Valley won the contract⁵⁶ and stayed on well into the 1880s.



Figure 4 Capalaba Hotel with the Cleveland Coach, 1884 (*Daphne Wegener*)

The Capalaba hotels were the post offices and Kerr briefly owned the second hotel and post office early in 1882.⁵⁷ It was then transferred to Robert Jarvis.⁵⁸ Oral evidence suggests that the paddock opposite the hotel was used as changing station for the mail coach horses. This sealed Capalaba's fate as a stopping off place.

⁵¹ Lithograph, Tingalpa Creek, Surveyor General's Office 1874, held in EDU/Z508, Capalaba School File, QSA.

⁵² Wharf Reserves 727, GG 1887.2.1033; R728, R729, GG1889. 1.617. see also Moreton 40 Chain Series, Department of Public Lands Brisbane, October 1912.

⁵³ GG, 1861 p.44.

⁵⁴ GG, 1865 p.1159.

⁵⁵ GG, 25 Oct 1867, p.951.

⁵⁶ GG, 1879, p.1463.

⁵⁷ Joan Frew, *Queensland Post Offices 1842-1980 and Receiving Offices 1869-1927*, Brisbane: Frew, 1981, p. 227.

⁵⁸ Queensland Land Purchase No 31791, Vol 280, Folio 51, Department of Natural Resources.

Concern for the poor state of the roads in the district led to the Department of Public Works' call for tenders to construct either a causeway⁵⁹ or a bridge⁶⁰ over Tingalpa Creek on the Cleveland Road in 1871. The Government accepted the tender of Walter and Weber in 1872.⁶¹ A newspaper report from March 1872 described the treacherous state of the creek crossing:

There is a bank of rocks straight across the creek at the ford, and in front of the rocks are detached boulders here and there, so that vehicles have to make a circuit in front of these rocks to get across safely. If they make too large or too small a circuit, they are equally in danger of an upset.⁶²

The bridge was reported to be under construction in March 1873, when a correspondent from Cleveland wrote of the anxiety the poor state of the roads and bridges caused to the local people waiting on the arrival of the mail coach:

On Saturday night there was about as much excitement as it is possible to get up in Cleveland. The Brisbane Coach did not come in. It ought to arrive here at 4.00 o'clock, and it has never missed before since the present coachman had had the mail contract. Everybody was on the lookout at 4 o'clock, and looking out until 5 and half past 5, but still no coach nor any tidings of it. At half past 5, Police Sergeant Canning, who is stationed here, saddled up and went out in search, it being the general conclusion that the coachman had met with a serious accident at some lonely part of the road. Ten o'clock and 11 o'clock came and went, but neither coachman nor police sergeant came, and we all went to bed expecting something very dreadful had happened. Shortly after 7 o'clock this morning the public anxiety was relieved by the appearance of constable and coachman. It seems that the coachman was stopped by a flood in Tingalpa Creek, and the constable, in trying to make his way to the creek from the Cleveland side, had to cross a long flat and low bridge covered with water – a villainous piece of road called Waldock's Creek [Coolnwynpin Creek] – and the horse stepped on one side of the bridge and

⁵⁹ GG, 5 Jan 1871, p.16.

⁶⁰ GG, Feb 1871, p. 257.

⁶¹ GG, 1872, p.1384.

⁶² *Brisbane Courier*, March 22, 1872, p.5.

lamed itself so the man had to make his way back to the nearest house and stay there until daylight this morning.

Waldock's Creek and the creek near the old fellmongery are far worse pieces of road in wet weather than Tingalpa Creek, as the water spreads all over the low bridges and flats adjacent, and there is not so much as a stake put down to show where the track is. The bridge over Tingalpa Creek has been commenced. It will cross at the 'rocks'; in fact, the rocks are the foundations of the piers, but until the road is improved at the two places I have mentioned, half a day's heavy rain will render it utterly impassable to all but experienced and plucky horsemen.⁶³

The completion of the bridge spurred on development in the area. An unlicensed hotel run by James Murray was operating from the western corner of the Old Ipswich Road and the Cleveland Road in 1874. The first post office for Capalaba operated from the hotel and was run by Mrs Murray.⁶⁴

It seems a primitive provisional school was in operation at that time also, although the exact location is unclear.⁶⁵ In 1875 William Jarvis was operating the post office from his land on the present hotel site.⁶⁶ Presumably he had built some sort of structure by that time, although he did not take out a mortgage on the site until June 1877.⁶⁷ He was issued with a publican's licence in July 1877.⁶⁸ The second Capalaba Hotel must have been built by 1877.

The hotel has often been confused with the Tingalpa Royal Mail Hotel because of the similarity in their design and because the village of Tingalpa was on the Brisbane side of the creek near Capalaba. The hotel represents the first business venture in central Capalaba, and was pivotal to the growth of the township, which would take a further 100 years to reach its commercial potential. The eventual growth of the township around this site

⁶³ *Queenslander*, March 5, 1873.

⁶⁴ Frew, p. 227.

⁶⁵ EDU/Z508, Capalaba School File, QSA.

⁶⁶ Frew p. 227.

⁶⁷ Queensland Land Purchase No 31791, Vol 280, Folio 51, Department of Natural Resources.

⁶⁸ GG 1877, p. 302.

occurred in spite of government planning for a settlement on the Brisbane side of the creek.

Education

The next major government infrastructure to be put in place was the Capalaba State School. Arguments over the siting of the school demonstrate the lack of co-operation amongst residents in the three local communities. Children living near 'The Rocks', as the Capalaba crossing of Tingalpa Creek was known, attended the provisional school, which existed during 1875 and possibly earlier. However, a growing population of farmers in the area of Upper Tingalpa along Broadwater Road, towards the area now known as Rochedale, was also lobbying for a school. A third settlement evolved around the sawmills, which were established in what is now Avalon Road from 1877.

In November 1875 these residents petitioned the Department of Public Instruction to locate a school in their area and offered a piece of unoccupied land on the south west corner of Mr Heinemann's land (Portion 337) as a building site. Signatories included James Pedler, Jacob Scheurer, Thomas Brandon, John McCaffrey, Edward Heinemann, William Olive, William Pillinger, Mary O'Shea, Franz Petersen, Frederick Pitt and Samuel Barnes. They had already approached a teacher, Frederick Barnes from the Mount Gravatt School, who had indicated his willingness to come and teach the 21 children in the area. The provisional school was shifted from 'The Rocks' to Upper Tingalpa in February 1876. This meant that it was geographically difficult for children from 'The Rocks' to attend at the new location. It would appear that Mr Barnes did not teach at Upper Tingalpa.

By April 1878 the teacher at Upper Tingalpa School, James Henning, was seeking a transfer to Mount Gravatt as the dwelling and the school were unfit for occupation.⁶⁹ In accordance with government policy a public meeting was held on 29 March 1879 to establish a committee and make application for a school at Tingalpa Creek or Capalaba. The secretary of the committee was responsible for submitting the appropriate paperwork and raising subscriptions from the local people. One-fifth of the costs of the school, residence, outbuildings and land had to be raised. A list of the children who

⁶⁹ EDU/Z508, Capalaba School File, QSA.

would attend the school and their addresses also needed to be compiled to enable the government to decide on the most suitable site.⁷⁰

School Inspector McIntyre had the unenviable task of choosing a location that would best serve the scattered population, which seemed intent on non co-operation. The initial site chosen was considered central, and was halfway between 'The Rocks' and the sawmills. However, residents of 'The Rocks' wanted the school closer to them, as sawmill workers had not subscribed to the building fund. Those who had subscribed included James Willard, William Daveson, Frederick Sinai, John Mussig, John Consedine, Robert Jarvis, William Jarvis, James O'Byrne, Robert Shrutchley and John McCann. Inspector McIntyre suggested that 'Everyone in the neighbourhood seems anxious to maintain a kind of dog in the manger life, and to satisfy some un-neighbourly grudge, would prevent their children from attending any school simply because Mr or Mrs so-and-so's children attended it'.⁷¹

The Department suggested that residents of Upper Tingalpa residing towards the Broadwater (Bulimba Creek) could just as easily attend the Eight Mile Plains School. Ultimately the site was moved closer to Capalaba. Oral evidence from Jean Rooney suggests some assistance from Belmont residents, although there is no documentary evidence to support this:

*Well, my grandparents the Stevensons collected money and got the Belmont school going, and the Capalaba people helped them to get their school going; and my father went to the Belmont school when it opened for a couple of years, I think. Then the Stevensons helped the Capalaba people. They put in pound for pound for the Capalaba people to get it, and they collected about £69 and they had to get £72, and they finally got that. That's how they got the school originally.*⁷²

Tenders were called for construction of the school and residence on 24 July 1879. Building contractor Ebenezer Chapman, who was living on Waldock's property at

⁷⁰ Archibald Meston, *Geographic History of Queensland*, Brisbane: Government Printer, 1895, p. 27.

⁷¹ EDU/Z508, Capalaba School File, Letter to the Under-Secretary of the Department of Public Instruction, by Inspector Thomas McIntyre, 5 April 1879.

⁷² Jean Rooney interview.

Coolnwynpin Creek, won the contract for construction.⁷³ The school opened in July 1880 with Frederick Baker as the first teacher. In 1881 Thomas Brandon, who lived at Upper Tingalpa Creek, was contracted to build a two-rail split fence around the school site.⁷⁴ During 1881, Campbell's sawmill was closed and the equipment moved to a new site at Coochin Creek near Bribie Island. Presumably the workers also moved away and the school enrolments would have reduced.

Children in the Upper Tingalpa area were able to attend the school run by Michael Minnis from late in 1880, presumably to cater for people too far from either the Capalaba or the Eight Mile Plains School. This school was run privately and lessons were held in the day and the night, with the teacher residing at the home of William Pillinger. It is likely that both children and adults were taught here. Minnis appears to have been a lay preacher for the Wesleyan Church also located in the area. The school was situated on Pillinger's property.⁷⁵ The location of the church at that time is unknown, but in later years it was located in the land resumed from Heinemanns for the Upper Tingalpa Provisional School.⁷⁶

Despite the initial conflict surrounding the establishment of the state school, it was to become the social hub of the Capalaba district. It was, after all, the only public building to which most residents had contributed. Social activities included the annual Arbour Day picnic and dances were held in the school until the mid 1930s.

Settlement of Birkdale

Further downstream William Thorne purchased much of Murray Prior's land on Mooroondu Point between 1880 and 1882.⁷⁷ Thorne had operated a printing business in Brisbane from the early 1870s⁷⁸ and he was also an alderman on the Brisbane Municipal Council from 1877-83, serving on various committees with the Council on and off until

⁷³ Helen Bennett, 'Building our Heritage' in *National Trust Journal*, October 1990, pp.13-14.

⁷⁴ EDU/Z508, Capalaba School File, QSA.

⁷⁵ Located in Pillinger Road Burbank.

⁷⁶ *Brisbane Courier*, 4 Oct, 25 Nov-3 Dec 1881, 23 Feb – 9 March 1882.

⁷⁷ Marie Holland, *Contextual History of the Redland Shire*, draft 1995, p.42.

⁷⁸ QPOD, 1874, 1876, 1878, 1883.

1904.⁷⁹ Thorne's house, *Mooroondu House*, was on the corner of Nora Street and Mooroondu Road facing the ocean.⁸⁰ It is unclear what use Thorne made of this land, at that time but in the early twentieth century he ran a Jersey stud on the property. While it has generally been thought that Thorne named Birkdale,⁸¹ it would appear more likely that the name came from later resident James Baron. The name was adopted as a place name when the railway was constructed in 1889, although the small township had been surveyed in 1886 including a reserve for a school.⁸²

The oldest surviving house in Birkdale is *Birkdale House*. The land (Portion 30) was originally owned by Charles Haly and was transferred to Gilbert Burnett in 1882. He immediately transferred the property to the engineer who worked on his Wellington Point sugar mill and sawmill, James Baron.⁸³ At that time Baron lived near the mill in what is now Station Street. In 1887 the Birkdale land was subdivided with Baron retaining 7½ acres. By 1888 the rate books list Baron as living at the Birkdale property. While it is not possible to pinpoint the exact date of construction, the style of the house is typical of the 1880s with a short-ridge pyramid iron roof and single-skin walls and wide chamferboards. Timber was most likely supplied from Burnett's mill. James Baron was listed as a vigneron from 1894 until 1907. Wine was an important industry at that time, and was subject to judging at the annual Wellington Point Agricultural Horticultural and Industrial (AH and I) shows.⁸⁴

Other early settlers in this part of Birkdale were the Woodgate family, who arrived in Australia on the *Mary Pleasants*⁸⁵ in about 1857.⁸⁶ They initially settled in Hemmant and

⁷⁹ John and Lyn Bullion (comp), *Robana: special edition: 75th anniversary of Birkdale State School, 1916-1991*, John Bullion compiler, 75th Anniversary committee: 1991, Draft.

⁸⁰ *Bayside Bulletin*, 9 March 1993, p.88.

⁸¹ Bullion p. 3.

⁸² Survey Plan N25 271 Department of Natural Resources.

⁸³ Certificate of Title No 63840, Vol 434, Folio 70, Department of Natural Resources. See also Mary Howells, *A History of Fernbourn Precinct, Wellington Point*, University of Queensland PG Dip Thesis, 1997, pp.38-9.

⁸⁴ *Brisbane Courier*, 17 February 1896, p.6.

⁸⁵ Spelt *Mary Pleasance*, QSA card index to shipping lists.

⁸⁶ History of John Woodgate, courtesy of Jack Guy, Winifred Davenport and Betty Mottram (comp) *Early Shipping in Moreton Bay, June 1846-December 1859, Vol 1*, Brisbane: self published, 1998, pp. 210-11.

John Woodgate senior was a member of the first Bulimba Divisional Board, which held its meeting at Cannon Hill on 21 February 1880.⁸⁷ The Woodgates later acquired Portion 29 from Charles Haly in 1882.⁸⁸ Three houses were built on the property and the family worked in partnership producing fruit and vegetables for the Brisbane market. Farmers in the Birkdale area had a greater success agriculturally than their neighbours to the south of Capalaba.

Divisional Boards Established

The ongoing settlement and development of Queensland generally revealed the need for better local government. The first local government legislation, the *Municipal Institutions Act*, was passed in 1864 and remained in force until the *Local Government Act* of 1878. At that time there were eighteen municipalities in Queensland. However, this Act proved to be inadequate for the sparsely populated rural areas of Queensland and the following year on November 11, the *Divisional Boards Act* of 1879 was passed by Parliament.

Initially the colony was divided into 72 divisions, rising to 122 by 1902.⁸⁹ The Bulimba Division covered much of the southern suburbs of Brisbane, as far as the Old Ipswich Road. The Tingalpa Divisional Board covered a large area, which incorporated the current Redland Shire and part of Logan City.

The administration of regions such as the Tingalpa Creek catchment area was made difficult because of geographic isolation and the huge land areas involved. Tingalpa Creek has been the border since the inception of Divisional Boards, initially from the mouth to the Capalaba Bridge, but with many changes over the years. Currently Tingalpa Creek forms the boundary between Brisbane City and the Redland Shire upstream to Buhot Creek. Indecision related to borders created further problems for both Board members and residents. The Home Secretary was usually called upon to adjudicate on matters relating to repairing border roads and bridges and generally advised cost sharing in these cases. The problem for border dwellers was the indecision related to provision of infrastructure because each request for assistance had to be assessed by two Boards,

⁸⁷ Bulimba Divisional Board Minutes, February 1880, BCC Archives.

⁸⁸ Certificate of Title No 5361 Vol 434, Folio 128, Department of Natural Resources.

and sometimes three, with either competition or reluctance to undertake the work involved. Capalaba residents were particularly vulnerable in this regard.

The first meeting of the Tingalpa Divisional Board was held at the home of Henri Heinemann at Mount Cotton on 5 February 1880. For administrative purposes the Division was divided into three subdivisions. Subdivision 1 was bounded by the Old Ipswich Road, and Tingalpa Creek to the Upper Tingalpa Creek crossing and along Redland Bay Road. It covered the current suburbs of Burbank, Rochedale, Sheldon, Redland Bay, Carbrook and Mount Cotton. Councillors for this division were Robert Grieve of the Rochedale area, and Henri Heinemann and August Von Senden of Mount Cotton.

Subdivision 2 extended from the mouth of Tingalpa Creek around the coastline to Redland Bay Plantation, west along Double Jump Road, through to Mount Cotton Road, then north west to the Upper Tingalpa bridge and back along the creek. The current areas of Capalaba, Thorneside, Birkdale, Wellington Point, Alexandra Hills, Ormiston, Cleveland, Thornlands, Victoria Point and part of Redland Bay were in this division. Gilbert Burnett of Wellington Point, Michael Ryan of Cleveland and James Willard of Capalaba represented this area.

Subdivision 3 covered Loganholme, Daisy Hill, Slacks Creek, Rochedale, Woodridge and Kingston and was represented by Andrew Bell of Mount Cotton, George Valentine from Upper Tingalpa and George Palk of Slacks Creek.⁹⁰

For the first Tingalpa Divisional Board the construction of an office was high on the agenda initially and tenders for the construction of the 'Board's House' at Mount Cotton were called. The contract was awarded to Thomas Brandon, who resided at Upper Tingalpa. He was paid £10.15/- for the job in October 1880, and in December was also contracted to paint the building. Other locals who gained employment from the Board in these early days included August Kunovski, who worked on the road to Redland Bay,

⁸⁹ C P Harris, *Local Government and Regionalism in Queensland 1859-1977*, Canberra: Centre for Research on Federal Financial Relations, ANU, 1978, pp. 13-17.

⁹⁰ Tingalpa Divisional Board Minutes, February 1880, Joan Starr, *Logan...the Man the River and the City*, Tenterfield: Southern Cross Press Services, 1988, p.40.

Jacob Scheurer who was paid for cartage, and William Willard who repaired the Rocky Crossing Bridge at Capalaba.

The foresight of the Board members can be seen in an 1882 proposal by Gilbert Burnett of Wellington Point to approach the Bulimba Divisional Board advocating the desirability of a bridge over Tingalpa Creek between Portion 36 on William Thorne's land and Lota. The Bulimba Board would be required to contribute to half the cost.⁹¹

The other major proposal at this time was the construction of a new direct road between Cleveland and Capalaba. New Cleveland Road was the main route to the Cleveland district. Travellers crossed the creeks at Capalaba and went via Old Cleveland Road East and the fellmonger's bridge over Hilliards Creek through Ormiston to Cleveland. Tingalpa Divisional Board member Michael Ryan proposed £80 be allocated for the new direct road and Gilbert Burnett suggested that a meeting of ratepayers be called to gauge public interest in such a road.⁹² William Finucane of Cleveland chaired the meeting and wrote to the Board in 1882, expressing the public support for the proposal.⁹³

In 1884 Finucane was lobbying the Bulimba Divisional Board to repair Old Cleveland Road through Grassdale (now known as Gumdale),⁹⁴ and in 1889 it was noted that Old Cleveland Road was impassable in places and in urgent need of attention. At that point, the Kianawah Board was trying to reallocate the area south of New Cleveland Road and return it to the jurisdiction of the Bulimba Board, which was keen to improve the upkeep on Old Cleveland Road.⁹⁵ A formal survey and subdivision along the route was carried out in 1888⁹⁶ and a military map produced in 1889 named it Finucane's Road.⁹⁷ If the improvements to Old Cleveland Road and the construction of this road had been undertaken, the route between Brisbane and Cleveland would have been substantially shortened.

⁹¹ Ibid., March 1882. (This project did not come to fruition until 1970)

⁹² Ibid., July 1882.

⁹³ Tingalpa Divisional Board Minutes October 1882.

⁹⁴ Bulimba Divisional Board Minutes, 26 November 1884, BCC Archives.

⁹⁵ COL/092, Kianawah/Wynnum Divisional Board, QSA.

⁹⁶ Survey Plan C6 25, 1888, Department of Natural Resources.

⁹⁷ Lt Owens map, Plan of Country West of Cleveland for Military Purposes, circa 1890, Department of Natural Resources.

When the short route between Capalaba and Cleveland was finally built in the 1950s, Finucane's eldest daughter Mary Crowle wrote to the Redland Shire Council explaining that she had assisted him in the original survey, and asked that the road be named after her father.⁹⁸ This road must have been used in its limited capacity during the 1890s. The McMillans, who lived near Hilliards Creek (where McMillan Road is now), complained to the Divisional Board in 1894 that the road known as the short cut to Capalaba was in a poor state of repair and access to their property was difficult.⁹⁹

As early as August 1881 it was evident to some Tingalpa Divisional Board members that its area of administration was cumbersome, and the needs of the different areas were diverse. Ultimately, on 30 April 1885, William Thorne wrote to the Colonial Secretary seeking a separate division from the Tingalpa Divisional Board. Thorne was the Divisional Board Chairman at the time.¹⁰⁰

The first meeting of the new Cleveland Divisional Board was held at William Ross's house in Cleveland on 17 July 1885. Gilbert Burnett was elected chairman and subsequent meetings were held at his property *Trafalgar Vale* in Wellington Point.¹⁰¹

The new boundaries of the two Divisional Boards caused some confusion and the dilemma facing Henry Barltrop best demonstrates the situation of Capalaba residents. Barltrop wrote to the Tingalpa Board inquiring which Division his property (Portion 92) was in. Unfortunately for Henry, he was under both the Tingalpa and the Cleveland Divisional Boards' jurisdiction, with the new boundary running along Redland Bay Road. Portion 92 is bisected by Redland Bay Road. This also meant that Henry was eligible to vote in both elections.¹⁰²

On the other side of Tingalpa Creek, the Kianawah Divisional Board was formed in 1888 as a breakaway from the Bulimba Divisional Board. Robert Jarvis of Capalaba was

⁹⁸ Redland Shire Council Minutes, October 1952.

⁹⁹ Ibid., September 1894.

¹⁰⁰ COL/020, Cleveland Divisional Board, QSA.

¹⁰¹ Cleveland Divisional Board Minutes, 1885.

¹⁰² Harris p.21.

elected as one of the first councillors to this Board. The southern portion of this division was transferred back to Bulimba in 1889 and the name was changed to Wynnum in 1892.¹⁰³ Communications amongst these Divisional Boards are full of consultation and confrontation, regarding repairs and maintenance of roads and bridges on the boundaries.

The bridge at Capalaba seems to have suffered most as it was on the boundary of three Divisions and funding was conditional. For example, the Kianawah Board wrote to the Tingalpa Board in April 1890, noting that it had agreed to pay 1/3 of the cost of repairs of the Capalaba bridge, provided they were done in a certain way.¹⁰⁴ The following year, the Bulimba Divisional Board was seeking some co-operation amongst the Boards in employing a competent engineer to advise on road and bridge construction. The Tingalpa Board declined the offer.¹⁰⁵

Professional employment

Although no professional engineer appears to have been employed in the region at that time, two surveyors were in the area. David Dietrichson, a Norwegian, conducted survey work for the Cleveland Divisional Board from July 1887.¹⁰⁶ He was living in Capalaba in 1888, and possibly earlier. He was a licensed surveyor and land agent.¹⁰⁷

Dietrichson boldly advertised his services with a sign on the front fence of his home in Capalaba and with regular advertising in newspapers such as *Southern World*.¹⁰⁸ He also worked for Wilcox and Kirk, contractors for the Cleveland railway construction. Dietrichson set up private practice in Brisbane in 1891 as Pike, Dietrichson and Co. He then moved to Townsville, Thursday Island and Sydney, before returning to Queensland.

¹⁰³ COL/092, Wynnum Divisional Board, QSA.

¹⁰⁴ Tingalpa Divisional Board Minutes, April 1890.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., March 1891.

¹⁰⁶ Cleveland Divisional Board, Leger, 1887-90, pp. 37, 38, 42.

¹⁰⁷ File 88-171, Reserve 244, County of Stanley, letter to the Secretary of Public Lands, Department of Natural Resources, Beenleigh.

¹⁰⁸ *Southern World* 20 Dec 1890, p. 1.

He spent from 1913 until 1918 as an inmate in the Dunwich Benevolent Asylum before returning to Norway.¹⁰⁹

The other surveyor in the area at this time was Alfred Harry Burbank. He was registered as a surveyor in Victoria in 1875. In 1886 he presented himself for examination to the Queensland Land Survey Board and after receiving his diploma was employed in central Queensland. In March 1890, he purchased Heinemann's old property at Upper Tingalpa.¹¹⁰

Burbank was then the Government Authorized Surveyor for the Brisbane District,¹¹¹ and in November 1890 he wrote to the Cleveland Divisional Board offering his services. At that time the Board was in conflict with David Dietrichson over his delay in surveying the extension of the Cleveland railway line from Cleveland Central to the Point,¹¹² so presumably they had no need for a second surveyor in the area at that time.

In February 1892 Burbank was elected to the Tingalpa Divisional Board as the member for Subdivision 1.¹¹³ By February 1893, he was elected chairman of the Divisional Board, a position he held until December of that year when he was forced to resign.¹¹⁴ He did ultimately get survey work with the Cleveland Divisional Board and some of the local jobs he completed included surveying the road to the reserve at Wellington Point in August 1894 and Nelson Road at Wellington Point.¹¹⁵ As funding for roads was limited to the budgets allocated by the Divisional Boards, road building was slow and limited. The Queensland Government was keen to improve transport at this time and the construction of railways throughout the state was the key to further development.

¹⁰⁹ David Dietrichson file, courtesy of Bill Kitson, Department of Natural Resources.

¹¹⁰ Certificate of Title 49784, Vol 378 Folio 88, Department of Natural Resources.

¹¹¹ Alfred Burbank file, courtesy of Bill Kitson, Department of Natural Resources.

¹¹² Cleveland Divisional Board Minutes, Nov 1890, pp.20-21.

¹¹³ Tingalpa Divisional Board Minutes, February 1892, p. 111.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 7 December 1893, p.152.

¹¹⁵ Cleveland Divisional Board Minutes, August 1894, May 1898.

Railway Construction

When it became known that the government was planning to build a railway between South Brisbane and Cleveland, public meetings were held requesting the commissioning of a survey to decide the best route. The Chief Engineer's Office of the Department of Public Works prepared maps of optional routes during 1886. The choice of routes depended on various government requirements, including economic viability, and the inclusion of access to the Fort at Lytton.

Residents who lived along Old Cleveland Road from Belmont to Capalaba petitioned the Minister for Works, William Miles, for a direct survey to Cleveland. On 30 July 1886 they met with him and argued that the direct route, roughly following Old Cleveland Road, would be the shortest distance to Cleveland and would serve an existing suburban population and provide for future development. As boats already serviced the coastal region, the residents between Belmont and Capalaba saw the location of a coastal rail service as duplication. They also argued that the coastal route would service an area unsuitable for residential development. These residents reminded the Minister that they had been the first to offer any land free of charge for the railway and mentioned the fact that there was coal on some of the properties, which the owners were keen to work.¹¹⁶ Unfortunately for them the Government was more interested in improving access to agricultural land.

In October 1886, Inspecting Surveyor Roger North was sent to evaluate the proposed route via Tingalpa and Capalaba. He would not recommend the route due to the poor nature of the country, which he deemed quite unsuitable for close settlement. The only land suitable for agriculture was the small patch close to Tingalpa Creek at Capalaba.¹¹⁷

In November 1886 a select committee inquiry was held to decide on the optimum route. Following testimony from Gilbert Burnett and others, the government chose the coastal route because it would open up valuable agricultural land by allowing easy access to markets. According to Burnett, only one quarter of the available land was under

¹¹⁶ A/8927, news cutting *Daily Observer-Brisbane*: July 30 1886, Cleveland Railway file, QSA.

¹¹⁷ A/8927, letter from Chief Engineer's Office, 11 Oct 1886, Cleveland Railway file QSA.

cultivation at that time.¹¹⁸ The railway to Cleveland via the coastal route was completed in late 1889. This decision spelt the end of growth in Capalaba for some time, as it was no longer a stopping off place between Brisbane and Cleveland.¹¹⁹ Ultimately, the post office was reduced to a receiving office in 1892.¹²⁰

For the residents of Birkdale, it was a different story. The railway eventually brought growth to the area, and a receiving office was established at the railway station in 1892. By 1896 it was upgraded to a post office, with local farmer John Donovan becoming both postmaster and stationmaster.¹²¹

Occupations and Lifestyle

By the 1880s, the region from Upper Tingalpa through Capalaba to Birkdale was well populated and supplied with basic services. In 1889 the Queensland Post Office directories listed Capalaba for the first time as a separate entity. The region boasted a Wesleyan church on the site of the old Upper Tingalpa provisional school, a school, and a post office located in the western section of the hotel. Louisa Hollyman was the hotel keeper, although it was owned by Joseph Baxter at the time.¹²² The hotel had a constant turnover of occupation and management. In Capalaba Henry Bagge and Robert Denner worked as local blacksmiths. John Williams was the saddler, and there seems to have been enough work in the district to occupy builder Edwin Sainsbury and painter James Whitaker. John Sinai was the storekeeper, although it is unknown whether he operated a store on or near the hotel site or from his property on Birkdale Road (Portion 40). Benjamin Markwell was the mailman. Most of the other residents were farmers, graziers and dairymen, with Andrew Rickertt operating a timber-getting business and William Willard listed as a teamster. David Dietrichson ran his surveying business from his home at Capalaba.

¹¹⁸ A/8927, Report of the Select Committee on the Proposal for the Cleveland Branch Railway, Cleveland Railway File, QSA.

¹¹⁹ *Capalaba State School Centenary, 1880-1980*, p.10.

¹²⁰ Frew p. 227.

¹²¹ Ibid, p.200 and QPOD 1897-99.

¹²² Certificate of Title No 31791, Vol 280 Folio 51, Department of Natural Resources.

Women could supplement the family income by undertaking domestic work like washing and ironing, taking in boarders or looking after orphaned children. Mrs Elizabeth Pillinger took in four orphans for Dr Challinor's orphanage, as well as raising thirteen children of her own.¹²³ Women with children who ran dairy farms were never idle. Hotel Keeper Louisa Hollyman was the only woman listed in her own right in the Post Office Directories of 1889.

Although William Jarvis was listed as a grazier, both he and his son Robert were acting as land agents locally. They advertised various land sales from Upper Tingalpa to Redland Bay in the *Southern World* newspaper, and further details were available from them at the Capalaba Post Office from 1890.¹²⁴ Robert was listed as postmaster from 1882-6 and as receiving office keeper from 1888-1892.¹²⁵ He was also listed as the Land Commission Agent for Capalaba in the Cleveland Shire rate books of 1891. The Crown Lands Act of 1891 introduced unconditional selection, which removed various disqualifications on landholders. This was thought to favour the part time farmers living close to townships, and it would appear that the settlers along Tingalpa Creek fitted that bill.¹²⁶ In the Birkdale area new subdivisions were undertaken after the construction of the railway, providing small acreage lots near the railway, allowing for easy commuting to other employment.

Establishment of Churches

The establishment of churches seems to have been more successful in the Birkdale area than in Capalaba where the influence of formal religious services was scant. The home of John Woodgate in Birkdale was used for the first Methodist Church services in the area from 1883. Ultimately a church was built near the hotel at Wellington Point, which was opened on Easter Sunday in 1888.

¹²³ *Brisbane Courier*, 25 Nov 1881.

¹²⁴ *Southern World*, 20 Dec 1890.

¹²⁵ Frew, p. 227.

¹²⁶ W Ross Johnston, Helen Gregory, Jennifer Harrison, *Managing the Land; an index to the Lands Department in Queensland Votes and Proceedings, 1830-1899*, Brisbane: University of Queensland Department of History, 1992, p. xi.

The need to provide places of worship around the district was recognised at the 1898 Methodist Conference, which resolved to form a home mission station incorporating the areas of Wellington Point, Manly, Wynnum, Upper Tingalpa and Cleveland.¹²⁷ The church at Upper Tingalpa was located on the corner of Wildsoet Street and Broadwater Road.¹²⁸ This is the same property on which the Upper Tingalpa provisional school was located. A ten-acre cemetery was gazetted nearby on the corner of Cherbon Street, in 1877.¹²⁹ This was known as Creek Vale Hill Cemetery. Local legend has suggested that Surveyor A H Burbank's first wife Henrietta is buried here. Local landowner and timber-splitter William Pillinger, who was murdered in 1881,¹³⁰ is registered as being buried here.¹³¹ The Wesleyan Church remained here for only about 10 years, but there was minimal input of formal religion and its accompanying social control mechanisms particularly in Capalaba.

General Business: Divisional Boards

The proposal to build a road bridge between Birkdale and Lota was raised again in December 1888, when a deputation led by John Buckland MLA and members of the Kianawah and Cleveland Divisional Boards met with the Minister for Works. At that time the Minister proposed £525 for the project and Buckland remarked that if the bridge were not started at once the Divisional Boards would have no excuse.¹³² The bridge was to be 260 feet long and was estimated to cost about £3000. Cleveland and Kianawah Divisional Boards had promised £1000 each and the State Government had promised the other third.¹³³

¹²⁷ R S C Dingle, (ed) *Annals of Achievement: a review of Queensland Methodism 1847-1947*, Brisbane: Queensland Book Depot, 1947, p. 233.

¹²⁸ Queensland Place Names, file QPN120, *Burbank*, Department of Natural Resources.

¹²⁹ GG 1877, 1, 865.

¹³⁰ *Brisbane Courier*, 4 Oct, 25 Nov-3 Dec 1881, 23 Feb – 9 March 1882. School teacher and preacher for the Wesleyan Church, Michael Minnis, was eventually charged with manslaughter, after the jury in the first trial was unable to reach a verdict. The argument, which sparked the feud between Pillinger and Minnis, was over Pillinger's ill treatment of his wife and his hypocritical efforts to portray himself as religious man to the community.

¹³¹ Queensland Death Certificate 76040, William Pillinger, timber splitter, died 20 Sept 1881 at Broadwater, Office of the Registrar General.

¹³² *Southern World*, 1 Dec 1888.

¹³³ *Southern World*, 15 Nov 1890.

In December 1890, the site, next to the Birkdale Railway bridge, was inspected by members of both Divisional Boards. Engineer Daniells was instructed to make borings to establish the depths of foundations required.¹³⁴ Plans for the bridge were submitted to the Kianawah Divisional Board.¹³⁵ By February 1891, Engineer A B Brady of the Department of Public Works reported that seven competitive designs had been submitted, and his preferred design could not be built for under £2980.¹³⁶ It is likely that the economic downturn of the early 1890s caused the postponement of the project, because the issue was not revisited until mid-1897.¹³⁷

Local Divisional Boards were dealing with more mundane issues at this time as well. The timber bridges that had been so sorely needed in the district could easily be destroyed by fire. While scrub around the Capalaba bridge was cleared in 1890 because of the threat of fire, four years later the Sandy Creek (Coolnwynpin) Bridge was burnt in a fire.¹³⁸

Residents along the Old Ipswich Road also constantly asked for clearing and improvements to the road. Mary Handlin of Portions 248-249 needed access to her property,¹³⁹ as did Barbara Blum, who lived further along on Portion 251. Blum requested clearing and a culvert. The Board would only allocate £5 for clearing and would not fund a culvert. There was a reluctance to spend too much money, as this was a boundary road with the Belmont Divisional Board.¹⁴⁰ New agreements were constantly signed through the Home Secretary concerning boundary roads, which was a matter of constant annoyance to the residents along these thoroughfares who simply needed to reach their properties.

¹³⁴ Cleveland Divisional Board Minutes, 31 Dec 1890.

¹³⁵ Plan for Bridge over Tingalpa Creek, submitted by 'Leanda' undated, presumed to be late 1880s, BCC Archives.

¹³⁶ COL/092, Wynnum Divisional Board, QSA.

¹³⁷ Cleveland Divisional Board Minutes, 10 April and 10 July 1897.

¹³⁸ Ibid., February 1894, QPOD 1894- 6.

¹³⁹ Tingalpa Divisional Board Minutes, June 1895.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., October, 1897, January 1898.

Conclusion

These first forty years of settlement laid the foundations for the future. From the 1880s it was obvious that the Capalaba region was not well suited to agriculture. Ingenuity, flexibility and the ability to diversify were necessary qualities to survive in this difficult terrain. Timber proved to be the staple industry here.

The first outward signs of community conflict came with founding of the Capalaba School. Jealousies over monetary commitments to the construction ensured that this issue caused great rivalry. Once the school was established, however, it provided a focus for community activities in the area for over 50 years.

Further divisiveness occurred with the establishment of Divisional Boards because of the location of the various boundaries radiating from the township of Capalaba and along the creek to Thorneside. Great frustration ensued when seeking a decision on the provision of infrastructure along a boundary. Local people were fringe dwellers on the edge of different administrative authorities.

Birkdale/Thorneside was more suited to agriculture and this area progressed, particularly after the construction of the railway in 1889. The railway secured the future of Birkdale and Thorneside. Many subdivisions were undertaken along its route in the hope of attracting commuters and small crop farmers. Most initial purchases were purely speculative, but the area slowly grew into the new century. Capalaba residents had hoped the railway would follow Old Cleveland Road and service their township. Its siting along the coastal route ensured the isolation of Capalaba for many more years. The economic downturn of the early 1890s and the severe drought at the turn of the century was the last straw for many residents who chose to move on.

Chapter 2

Federation and World War I to Depression

The economic hardship of the 1890s continued into the new century with residents living through a major drought to 1902. Attempts to revitalise the Capalaba region were implicit in the long-term planning of the Belmont Tramway. Completed in 1912, under the direction of Capalaba Publican and Belmont Shire Chairman, Henry Marsden, it was hoped that this transport link would be extended to Capalaba and Mount Cotton. This never eventuated and Capalaba continued to stagnate. Birkdale flourished, and a school was established there in 1916. William Thorne's land at Mooroondu was subdivided in 1913 and 1917, and the railway siding was given the name Thorneside.

New homes were built in the Birkdale and Thorneside areas and some people commuted to work outside the region, many operating small crop farms part-time. Thorneside was also a popular tourist destination. Holiday cottages sprang up on the new urban subdivisions. Capalaba remained a rural area with farming, dairying and timber-getting the main occupations. Times were hard and ingenuity was required to survive. Community spirit was strong in Birkdale and residents banded together to fund the Methodist Church, School of Arts Hall and the fundraising for St George's Church of England. Capalaba's smaller and more geographically dispersed community was less cohesive. The only obvious community facility was the school, which was about a kilometre from the hotel, and a small hall at the rear of the general store, which was constructed during World War I diagonally opposite the hotel.

Drought

The attendance records of the Capalaba School best indicate the effects of the drought that had plagued most of Queensland from the late 1890s, peaking in 1902. By 1905, attendance had fallen to such an extent that the school was closed from March to September.¹ The drought had so badly affected farming in the area many itinerant workers and their children left the district. Property owners had little choice but to stay.

¹ EDU/Z508 Capalaba School file, QSA.

A further catastrophe for the school occurred January 1912 when the teacher's residence burnt down. Blame was attributed to the travellers (swaggies) who often camped there. It was not possible to have the building replaced because of the poor attendance record.

Railways and the Belmont Tramway

Like the school, the provision of transport also mirrored the state of the local economy, with timber still the key industry. The Waterloo Railway Station (Thorneside) had been shut down in 1890 but by 1909 it was again in use, this time as a timber siding. CH Ransom of Woolloongabba requested permission from the Cleveland Shire Council to remove trees on the by-roads in 1909. Permission was refused.² He soon accessed timber from other sources and obtained permission for the trains to stop at the old siding to collect firewood and timber. It was renamed Ransom's siding, and in August 1912 was moved across the creek closer to Lota, remaining in use until 1931. Waterloo Station reopened in 1917 and was renamed Thorneside after William Thorne who had owned the land which had been originally subdivided in 1913 and was up for auction again at the time.³

The importance of rail transport to economic growth was not lost on residents from Belmont to Capalaba. In April 1909, 41 ratepayers from the Belmont area petitioned Councillor Prout, requesting an engineer's report on the construction of a tramline (light rail) from Stone's Corner to the Belmont School. In July the Belmont Tramway Committee was established under the Chairmanship of Henry Marsden. The Belmont Progress Association offered £10 towards the cost of an engineering report, and eventually it was decided to poll local residents to firmly establish public support for the proposal.⁴ In November 1909, Baynes Brothers, who operated the Belmont wool-scours and tannery, wrote to the Railway Department indicating their support, stating that rail transport would be preferable to the current road haulage. It was also suggested that the line should ultimately be extended through Capalaba to Mount Cotton and Redland Bay.⁵

² Cleveland Shire Council Minutes, 13 October 1909, p. 172.

³ Kerr and Armstrong, pp. 57-9.

⁴ Belmont Shire Council Minutes, April 1909-Sept 1910, BCC Archives.

The Belmont Tramway was opened on 25 May 1912.⁶ It was operated by the Belmont Shire Council with the Railway Department providing the crew.⁷ The line left the Cleveland line at Norman Park and came across Camp Hill and followed Old Cleveland Road to Baynes Siding (Carindale) and the Belmont School. It was designed to handle light traffic. Baynes Brothers wanted livestock trains, but railway officials insisted the trains be divided in two because bridges and steep grades made it difficult to carry the weights involved. By 1913 the bridges were strengthened, although two engines were needed for cattle trains. A firewood mill was established at the loop siding near the Belmont School and was run by Messrs Kirby and Hendry.⁸ The wool-scours also used firewood and wood for hanging out the skins to dry. Many Capalaba timber-getters supplied this industry. The Belmont Tramway was closed down in October 1926 after the Brisbane City Council was created. The line was uneconomic, and during the previous year had lost £3,800.⁹

Subdivisions

Development along the Cleveland rail line progressed with the first major subdivision occurring in Birkdale. William Thorne's land between the Esplanade and Mooroondu Road was subdivided into suburban lots and some small acreage lots. The first auction of the Thorne Estate was held on Monday 24 November 1913 in Brisbane. Farmers were still the main targets for marketing of the land, which was promoted as being small farms and seaside township blocks. Auctioneers Cameron Brothers noted the 'magnificent estate includes a large area of the very finest chocolate soil to be found near Brisbane. The land is of the same quality that had made Cleveland, Wellington Point, Ormiston and Birkdale famous as the finest districts for growing pine-apples strawberries, pawpaw, apples, and all tropical fruits, also for early crops of tomatoes, cucumbers, melons, beans etc. The products of these districts are always first in the market and secure the top prices.' (see Figure 5)

⁵ A/8928, Belmont Railway file, QSA.

⁶ *Brisbane Courier and The Observer*, 24 May 1912, p.5.

⁷ Kerr and Armstrong, p.81.

⁸ Belmont Shire Council Minutes, May 1913.

⁹ Brisbane City Council Minutes, No 2923/1926, p.542.



Figure 5 Thorne Estate Map, Cameron Brothers, 1913

William Thorne's home, *Mooroondu House*, still dominated the landscape at the end of the point.¹⁰ Thorne was no longer a resident in the shire as he had retired to his home *Thornleigh* at River Terrace, Kangaroo Point.¹¹ James¹² and Edith Willard and family moved to Thorneside in 1912 and lived in William Thorne's house. Thorne had established a jersey stud farm, which was managed by Willard.¹³ They had a house built by local builder Ernie Genn in 1916, which remains in John Street. Following the death of William Thorne in October 1915, the estate was further subdivided into urban lots. Cameron Brothers conducted the next auction in conjunction with Benjamin Cribb on New Years Day 1917. Thorne's subdivision plan indicated four existing houses in the area at that time, including *Mooroondu House*, Willard's home on the corner of John Street and Mooroondu Road, *Birkdale House* and Edgar McNeilley's home in Alma Street.¹⁴

Water Supply

Another factor in the success of Birkdale over Capalaba was the availability of water. Birkdale residents had access to a spring whereas the people of Capalaba relied on wells in the dry season. Tingalpa Creek was salty as far upstream as the Capalaba bridge.¹⁵ Water divining and well digging required specialist skills and a certain degree of bravado, as Jean Rooney recalls:

When we needed to dig a well, Dad used to divine it with a stick. If the stick turned, that's where he'd mark the spot. He was usually right too. Then he would dig as far as he could with the pick and crowbar. From there on, I'd say about eight feet down, it was solid rock. He had a jack, and he used to make this big hole down the centre, and then he'd put gelignite down it on a fuse. Then he'd light the fuse, and he'd tug on the rope. He had a windlass down there, and he'd go down in a bucket, and we had to wind him up. Mum was the main one. She'd wind so hard, when we were little, she used to lift us off our feet, but she got him out. Then when he got out, the charge would go off and you'd see the dirt flying sky high, and you'd think, 'Oh, I'm glad Dad wasn't in there in that!' That's how he dug the wells. It was all by hand, more or less, with the help of gelignite, of course. Nobody used to dig wells once Dad died.

¹⁰ Estate Map, *Thorne Estate*, 1913, Cleveland Library Map Collection.

¹¹ Cleveland Shire Council Rate Book, 1910-14.

¹² Son of James and Margaret Willard of Capalaba.

¹³ Bullion, p.31.

¹⁴ Estate Map, *Thorne Estate*, 1917, courtesy of Shirley Tighe and the Willard Family collection.

¹⁵ Survey Plan SL11085, Department of Natural Resources.

He had a big well well not actually a well, but an underground tank, designed and all pegged out on our house when he died. He put a big one down at my grandparents Stevensons at Belmont, near their cattle shed. The water was like ice. It was beautiful. You'd go over there in the middle of summer and it was really like getting water out of the frig.¹⁶

Birkdale residents were able to access a spring on William Thorne's property near the Birkdale Railway Station. In August 1913, the Cleveland Shire Council expressed interest in acquiring the spring. The Hydraulic Engineer's Department was called in to investigate the potential output, which was found to produce 1000 gallons in 24 hours and more in dry weather. It was recommended that a storage tank, pump, and troughs be provided at an estimated cost of £90.¹⁷ By February 1914, the land had not been handed over to the Council.¹⁸ William Thorne died in October 1915,¹⁹ and in December that year Councillor George Randall moved that the Council write to the Trustees of the estate in order to have the land containing the spring vested with the Council. By March 1920 the well was still not officially in Council's hands, although it appears that ownership did not deter the locals from utilising it.²⁰ Gwyn Randall's family used it regularly:

In those days we didn't have the water to use. Most people had a dish of water near the back door and you washed your hands as you came in. You couldn't just let the taps run because we only relied on tanks then. I can remember vividly about a water supply spring at Birkdale. It was just down the road a little way from the Church of England in Charles Street. I can remember as children if anybody was short of water they always went up to the spring and got this beautiful water. I don't know what happened, if they cut it off or what. The Willard family at Thorneside used to bring the cattle up to this spring in the dry spell and get the water, because all the water in Thorneside is brackish. You can't put a bore down, we tried at our place.²¹

¹⁶ Jean Rooney interview.

¹⁷ *Red Land Mercury*, Saturday 10 January 1914, Randall news clipping collection, Cleveland Library.

¹⁸ Cleveland Shire Council Minutes, April 1913-February 1914.

¹⁹ Bullion, p.3.

²⁰ Cleveland Shire Council Minutes, November 1915, March 1920.

²¹ Gwyn Randall interview with Mary Howells, 1994, Redland Shire Council Oral History Collection.

Schools

Attendance at the Capalaba School continued to be problematic. In 1912 locals who lived around the township were lobbying for its relocation to the town centre. Of course there would have been children living towards Upper Tingalpa who would have then been disadvantaged and this was an ongoing argument among the dispersed and unco-operative residents. The school was located on the boundary road between the Cleveland and Tingalpa Shires. The road was always in a very poor state, partly because of the sandy nature of the soil and partly due to the ongoing arguments over the maintenance costs. In May 1921 the Secretary of the School committee, Frank Burn, again suggested moving the school to central Capalaba. There was a small hall at the back of the store, which could easily house the students.²² Thomas Coghill had established the store in 1916.²³ This was tried for a short time but by November 1921, Tingalpa Shire Councillor and resident of Upper Tingalpa Frank Burbank, sent a petition to the Minister asking that the school be transferred back to its original site. In mid-1922 the Capalaba School was closed down as it had an enrolment of only eight pupils. It was suggested that the building be moved to Victoria Point. Following agitation from the people who originally subscribed to the construction of the school, it was reopened in 1923.²⁴

The uncertainty over the viability of the Capalaba School was not reflected in the Birkdale area, which was booming. In late 1913 the Railways Department introduced railmotors, or McKeen cars, on the Cleveland line between Manly and Cleveland, thus improving the local service.²⁵ Children from Birkdale were given free tickets to get to the school at Wellington Point. However, parents from Birkdale were not entirely happy with this service. In July 1914 they wrote to the Department of Public Instruction requesting a school at Birkdale. Many parents were concerned that the proposed one-teacher school at Birkdale would not provide as high a standard of education as was available at the two-teacher school at Wellington Point. Of course, the student numbers would have then dropped at Wellington Point, which might have then been downgraded.

²² EDU/Z508, Capalaba School File, QSA.

²³ Cleveland Shire Council Minutes, Oct 1916

²⁴ EDU/Z508, Capalaba School File, QSA.

²⁵ Kerr and Armstrong, p.57.

Ultimately a list of names was forwarded to the Department of Public Instruction, indicating the families in the district. These included Charles Springall and the McNeillys from the Thorne Estate, each with five children, and the Carlsons, Leslies and Bosanquets on Portion 49. The Dales from near Daveson Road and the Cullacs, whose home is now known as *Valentine House*, both indicated their intention to send their children, as did John Bailey from Old Cleveland Road East. The Woodgate, Purkiss, Thompson, Adamson, and Archer families also indicated their support, but the Randalls, Collins and Willards preferred to leave their children at Wellington Point School. By the time the school was built, the Willards had moved to Thorneside and their daughters did attend Birkdale School.

After much discussion and persuasion, the Birkdale School was ultimately established in November 1916, with the first classes held in a marquee borrowed from the YMCA. A coal strike, which forced the cancellation of the train service to Wellington Point School, had resulted in the school opening earlier than planned. The timber school building was completed by September 1917 and the first head teacher was Paul Rohan.²⁶

Agricultural Shows

Agricultural shows played an important part in community life. The Wellington Point Agricultural, Horticultural and Industrial Show was held annually from 1890 until 1939. Entries came from all over the district, from Cleveland to Wynnum. The events generally had vice-regal patronage and at the twelfth annual show of 1903, the Governor, Sir Herbert Chermeside, officiated.²⁷

²⁶ EDU/Z202, Birkdale School File, QSA; Bullion, pp. 4-9, 17, 26.

²⁷ *Redland Times*, 'Wellington Point Show, the way everything happened in 1903', 22 September 1976, reproduced from the *Courier Mail* of 1903: 'The Wellington Point railway station was prettily decorated with foliage, and the vice regal party were received by Messrs J Pink (president of the association), HJ Eichenloff (Chairman of the Show Committee), A Walter (president of Cleveland Shire) GI Mowart (vice president), Alderman W Thorne (vice-patron) WH Barnes (MLA for the district), T Matthews and P Hiley (members of the committee). At the showground an arch had been erected over the entrance, bearing the word "Welcome" and inside the school children were ranged waving flags, whilst the Wynnum Brass Band, under bandmaster A Whitlam, played the National Anthem. His Excellency ... had examined the very fine display of fruit, vegetables and flowers and on enquiry had learned that they were principally grown on small holdings ... He also noticed some excellent specimens of dairy produce in the show and trusted that as settlement went on, industry too would develop. A very interesting exhibit he had seen was that of Mr

The results from the 1912 show serve to indicate the sorts of activities that were undertaken and the crops grown in the district. Under the livestock category were horses of various sizes and abilities, poultry and dogs. Mrs Mussig won second prize for her blood mare. She also won the prize for fresh butter with hand-skimmed cream. Frank Burbank exhibited extracted honey, beeswax, homemade jams, orange wine, and pineapple wine. Mrs J Willard won third prize for the scones she baked with Sea Foam Flour and was awarded for her entry of an ironed shirt. J Bagnall of Capalaba won the woodchop event. Other agricultural products exhibited included cereals, chaff, oats and potatoes. Horticultural products included all manner of vegetables and citrus fruits, paw paws, pineapples and strawberries. School children also exhibited, with the girls focussing on sewing and handcraft and the boys on handwriting and mapping.²⁸

Other neighbouring districts had their annual agricultural shows including Cleveland, Beenleigh, Mount Gravatt (where Frank Burbank was on the committee for many years) and Belmont. The shows were key social events of the region as well as providing the opportunity for interaction and exchange of ideas among the farmers.

World War I

Military exercises had been undertaken in the Capalaba and Thorneside areas during Lord Kitchener's visit to Fort Lytton in 1910.²⁹ The training was soon put to the test with the onset of war in Europe. In October 1916 the Cleveland Shire Chairman, F C Woolsley, moved that the clerk keep a record of the men enlisting so that Roll of Honour may be prepared at a suitable time and hung in the Shire Hall. In 1914 the Queensland Patriotic Fund was set up in Birkdale and Wellington Point to raise money through concerts, sports days and fetes, with the proceeds forwarded to the Belgian Fund through the Queensland Patriotic Fund.³⁰

Barron, of the Birkdale Vineyard (applause) who had sent in samples of wine grown in the district. He had been surprised to learn that the vineyard was situated upon a flat.'

²⁸ *Telegraph*, 29 July 1912, Randall news clipping collection, Cleveland Library.

²⁹ Colin Austin, 'Early History of Wynnum Manly', copy of speech held in RHSQ files.

³⁰ *Redland Mercury*, 17 October 1914, 19 June 1915, Randall news clipping collection, Cleveland Library.

In 1916, following the defeat of the conscription referendum, the Defence Forces requested the Cleveland Shire Hall be made available on 14 October for their recruitment drive. As the hall was being used on that day, Englemann's butcher shop on the corner of Middle and Bloomfield Streets was offered instead.

The Railway Patriotic Fund wrote to the Cleveland Shire Council in November 1916 requesting that Portion 27V in Old Cleveland Road East be set aside for settlement of returned wounded soldiers. This land was allocated and was locally known as the patriotic farm for many years.

The only recorded occupation by troops in the region was at *Birkdale House*, which was occupied by officers during this time, while troops camped along the Thorneside foreshores.³¹ The end of the war was celebrated enthusiastically by locals and life resumed as normal.

Timber

The timber industry picked up again in the 1920s with many supplying wood to the various wool-scours and tanneries in Belmont. Bob Jarvis's timber-getting business operated from the late 1920s until about 1940. Sawyer Charles Lamb lived in the area in the early 1920s and then woodcutter William Slater moved to the area in 1926. Frank Burn was not listed as a fuel merchant until 1925,³² although other evidence suggests he was operating his timber business from at least 1920.³³

The extent of the timber reserves in the Capalaba district was revealed in the 1922 Royal Commission into the proposed railway to Mount Cotton. The Commission was considering three proposals at that time including the extension of the Belmont Tramway through Capalaba, the extension of the Cleveland line to Redland Bay and Mount Cotton, or a new line from Sunnybank through Rochedale to Mount Cotton. Perhaps the most succinct report on the history of timber-getting in the district came from A F Smith of Thornlands, who claimed to know the area from Capalaba through to Mount Cotton

³¹ Bullion p. 12

³² QPOD 1920-1930.

³³ EDU/Z508, Capalaba School file, QSA.

well. He stated: 'Thirty-five years ago there were a number of bullock teams, which scoured the area for all the mill timber and large piles etc. Then came the five horse teams, and for about ten years they too scoured the country for all piles, telegraph and tram poles, girders, sleepers and fencing material, palings...with the result that the whole of the area is thoroughly cleared out of anything useful in the line of timber'.³⁴

Frank Burbank, horse breeder, apiarist, contractor and renowned bushman, gave conflicting evidence. He assured the commission that timber was the only way to make decent living in the Capalaba area. Winter frosts and lack of transport infrastructure made farming difficult, but timber reserves were huge. He estimated that there were over 28,000 acres of timber country from the Capalaba School through Upper Tingalpa, Broadwater and Priest Gully areas, which could yield an estimated 2,819,500 super-feet of first-class timber and 225,560 tons of firewood. He advocated the retention of the forest reserve (now the Daisy Hill State Forest) because of the need to preserve and regenerate the first-class hardwood, which grew there. Varieties of first-class timber included red, white and yellow stringy bark, Grey gum, spotted gum, grey and red ironbark and some remaining tallowwood. Second-class timbers included white gum and bastard bloodwood.³⁵

Many small mills operated in the region, including Burn's mill in the old Tingalpa Township after World War 1. Frederick Kohler³⁶ started up a mill in Belmont in March 1915 and offered to supply the Cleveland Shire Council with bridge timber or white bloodwood.³⁷ Local residents are able to provide an insight into this important local industry. Jean Rooney's father Jack Mussig was a timber-getter and she has a great respect for his skills and ability:

My father was a timber man. He used to sap stumps and logs. He would ride his horse out and hobble him and let him go out there while he was working. Dad would have to walk from up Mount Cotton

³⁴ Queensland Parliamentary Debates; Royal Commission on Public Works 1922, 'Enquiry into proposed extension of Belmont Tramway to Mount Cotton, or Railway from Sunnybank to Mount Cotton, Minutes of Evidence', p. 24.

³⁵ Ibid., pp. 41-42.

³⁶ A relative of Sarah Fredericks

³⁷ Cleveland Shire Council Minutes, March 1915.

*home to our place in White Street [Camrose St]. He used to cart house stumps all round Wynnum and right out to Auchensflower. In fact there are a lot of places now, that you can pick the houses out with Jack Mussig's stumps under them. Nobody sank a stump like my father. They were beautifully dressed, beautifully sapped. You could run your hand up and down and you wouldn't get a splinter. He was absolutely an axe man. He used a broad axe. He'd bark it first with the back of an ordinary axe, and then he'd sap it with the broad axe right until they got down to the part of the hard heart of the timber and then he would dress it.*³⁸

Joan Levey's grandparents set up a sawmill after World War I:

*My grandparents, Frank and Annie Burn, came out from England about 1913 and settled originally at Wynnum. They then bought land on the corner of Hope and Louis Streets [now Tinchbourne and Torbay Streets] in the original town of Tingalpa. They lived in a little shack made of hessian covered over with tar to make it waterproof, until they built a settlers' slab hut to live in. During the First World War, my grandfather joined the army and became an ambulance bearer and went to Gallipoli. While he was away, grandmother had a bit of trouble with intruders, but she soon sent them packing. Most of the women knew how to handle a gun very well. Grandfather did some logging, house stumps, and firewood for baker's ovens. Everything was hand cut in the old days; chopped down, sizing them up properly, and they used to hammer them in with a mallet to split the logs. He finally set up a little sawmill years later that made everything much easier. He did some house timber as well. He had a team of horses and he hauled the timber up the bush track, which is now Old Cleveland Road, to Camp Hill, camped there overnight, dropped most of their stuff off at Coorparoo or Buranda. There was a place there called Robinsons which was taking all the house stumps and stuff like that. That's how Camp Hill got its name. Everybody from down this Redlands area, they all had to camp at Camp Hill.*³⁹

Descendant of the Woodgate family, Jack Guy, also recalls the activity at the Birkdale mills:

In the 1920s, Birkdale Station had a weighing area for goods and a storeroom where produce was stored. It also had a sawmill where timber was brought in; the sort of timber that was used for making pine cases for tomatoes. Different timber was used for pineapples. Just as you go around the corner into Collingwood Road, there was a sawmill on the right. That was Manitzky's sawmill when I was a boy. So the timber

³⁸ Jean Rooney interview.

³⁹ Joan Levey interview with Mary Howells, 1998, Redland Shire Council Oral History Collection.

*business was quite strong and that's one of the things that has faded out. In those days people bought pre-cut casing material. You had your bottoms and tops and sides and it was easy to nail them up, and there were people employed to nail up cases.*⁴⁰

Conservation

Timber-getting obviously had an impact on the wildlife habitats although local government played a minimal role in conservation. Despite declaring the Tingalpa Shire a reserve for black swans in December 1913 and a reserve for the preservation of native birds in September 1914, the management and policing of such proclamations was generally left to volunteer rangers.⁴¹

The koala, which now features on the Redland Shire Council's corporate logo, was especially at risk. While habitat destruction had some impact on koala numbers, the chief culprits in the near extinction of the species in the 1920s were shooters. An extensive export trade in marsupial skins operated at this time, providing a relatively easy income for the otherwise unemployed, as well as supplementing income for farmers. During 1926-7 it became apparent that the koala was an endangered species and a public outcry ensued in the Queensland press.⁴² Locally, in September 1928, the Nature Lovers' League wrote to the Tingalpa Shire and asked if it was desirable that the native bears in the shire should be totally protected. Councillor Burke of Mount Cotton replied that the bear was extremely scarce at that time and the Council moved that the bear should be totally protected.⁴³

⁴⁰ Jack Guy interview with Tracy Ryan, 1994, Redland Shire Council Oral History Collection.

⁴¹ Tingalpa Shire Council Minutes, 29 December 1913, September 1914.

⁴² Despite attempts by governments to slow the trade in native animal furs, including a closed season on the killing of koalas in 1909 in Queensland, the slaughter continued. During the 1920s it was customary for Queensland to export over 1,000,000 koala pelts per annum, as well as the skins of kangaroos, wallabies and possums. In August 1927, during a time of depressed rural prices and drought, the Queensland government of the day declared an open season on koalas in an attempt to relieve the rural crisis in the belief that the fur industry could prove to be more lucrative than mining. Despite calls from around the state to stop the slaughter because it was apparent that extinction was inevitable, the government did not heed the warning. They collected over £19,000 in royalties during August 1927. However, that government lost the next election (Mary Howells, *Report on Koala Distribution in the Redland Shire circa 1890-1949*, 1996, Cleveland Library Local History Collection.)

⁴³ Tingalpa Shire Council Minutes, 6 September 1928.

Capalaba resident Margaret Murray and her family often killed wildlife as did many others in the district:

I can remember that there were quite a few koalas around the area when I was a girl. People used to shoot them and make mats out of them. They made lovely mats, poor things. Also, there were plenty of ducks around on the swamps to shoot. They used to shoot them and bring them home and clean them, and have them dressed up for tea. There used to be the different kinds of ducks. There were wallabies and kangaroos, and they used to go out and shoot them and get the skins, and sell the skins. They used to peg them out and dry them, and sell them, wallaby and kangaroo skins. I remember one time I was out on the horse after the cows, and the kangaroo dog put one into the creek or the gully. I came back, and any rate, the sister-in-law went and shot it for me. My brother went and collected it and brought it home and skinned it, so that was a good day's work for the dog. We didn't make a lot of money out of them though.⁴⁴

Another environmental disaster, which plagued Queensland in the early 1920s, was the prickly pear. Upstream from Capalaba, well known butchering family the Uhlmanns ran cattle on land now part of the Howeston Golf Course at the end of Creek Road. Prickly pear had infested the land there and in 1914 new residents were reported to be clearing prickly pear from the land and throwing it into Tingalpa Creek. The plants were then floating downstream and out to sea, infecting other people's property along the way.⁴⁵ The pest was again reported on the Thorne estate in 1924. Arthur Ware offered to clear and bury all the prickly pear on the Thorneside Reserve in October 1928.⁴⁶ This would probably explain why prickly pear is still in evidence on King Island at Wellington Point and other bay islands. One plant remains on the goat farm on Old Cleveland Road East.

Occupations and Lifestyles

Apart from timber-getting and farming, other occupations in the Capalaba area included carrier Albert Anning,⁴⁷ pattern-maker Oliver Tomlinson and bootmaker William

⁴⁴ Margaret Murray interview with Mary Howells, 1996, Redland Shire Council Oral History Collection.

⁴⁵ Cleveland Shire Council Minutes, 2 June 1914.

⁴⁶ Ibid. April 1924, October 1928.

⁴⁷ JUS/N715, Inquest file, Susan Anning, 1920, QSA.

Tomlinson.⁴⁸ Anning worked in Wynnum, but the location of Tomlinson's place of employment is unknown. Capalaba farmer Arch Hansen preferred to combine farming with his blacksmithing skills. During the early 1920s he ran a blacksmith shop in Cleveland. The hotel continued to have a string of managers, including Henry Marsden until 1908,⁴⁹ and numerous others over the next 15 years. In May 1924 it was transferred to Henrietta Walker Scarfe. She married Lionel Aubrey Dollery in 1924 and they successfully ran the hotel together until 1936.⁵⁰ Their daughter Viva Morrow tells of the circumstances of her mother's arrival in Capalaba:

My mother had been in the Grand Hotel in Maryborough with her first husband, and he'd died in the influenza epidemic. Being widowed, she felt that she couldn't run that hotel on her own, and she sold it and came down to Brisbane and lived for a while at New Farm, because she had family down here. Then I think she thought she'd like something to do, and she bought the Capalaba Hotel when it came onto the market. It was with some hotel brokers, and they just brought her out to look at it, and she said, yes, she'd take it. She originally brought a girl here with her who had worked for her in Maryborough and worked for her at New Farm. I believe her name was Sis Reilly, and she brought her to the hotel with her, and she wouldn't stay. It was too lonely, and she left. Then she met my father, Lionel Aubrey Dollery, because he lived at Wynnum, and his family ran horses on a place they owned out on Redland Bay Road, and coming through he and his brothers used to stop at the hotel for a drink. Then they eventually married and lived on in the hotel until the mid-1930s.

The pub had been a bit of a wild place before my mother came into it. Apparently it had a reputation, which she knew nothing about when she bought it, so she soon learnt. I think it was with the help of a double-barrelled shotgun and a cattle dog, but she wouldn't answer the door at night to people that came down from Brisbane. It wasn't local people who made it wild; it was Brisbane people coming down. They'd been used to apparently coming down and having some wild old parties, and they didn't like the idea of getting down here and finding it had changed hands, and not being allowed to come in after hours. But she eventually sorted it out - she was a pretty good shot with that shotgun, and it was a good dog, too!⁵¹

⁴⁸ JUS/N754, Inquest file, Percy Neeves, 1923, QSA.

⁴⁹ QPOD 1900-1915.

⁵⁰ Certificate of Title No 212448 Vol 1246 Folio 188, Department of Natural Resources.

⁵¹ Viva Morrow interview with Mary Howells, 1995, Redland Shire Council Oral History Collection.

During the 1920s a few farmers moved into dairying, an industry that had been actively promoted by the Queensland government since the implementation of the travelling dairies by the Department of Agriculture in the late 1880s. Local dairymen included Raymond Rickertt,⁵² AM Reid, William Smith, Robert Hansen, Tom Brown and Fred Pitt. Rickertt owned what was probably the most fertile grazing land in Capalaba.⁵³ If farmers combined dairying with agriculture or horticulture, it was possible to make a reasonable living. Despite the establishment of Coghills Store in 1916,⁵⁴ residents made a weekly trek to Brisbane for supplies and Jean Rooney thought that the travelling salesmen were always reliable:

I can remember when Mum and Dad used to have to go into Woolloongabba to get the groceries and things. Every Saturday they used to go shopping and it was always to Woolloongabba. We seldom went because it was a long day, and a lot needed to be brought home. They bought flour by the sack and the sugar by the bag, things like that. Then the week's meat, if they had to buy meat, or tea, whatever. Then there was the horse to feed, the grain for the horses, if they didn't have enough grain on the farm. They'd bring home grain, and the same for the fowls. If they didn't have any, they would have to bring that as well, so you can imagine there wasn't much room in the cart for the two of them. If Mum wanted fabric, she bought dozens of yards at a time, mainly at Stewarts at Stone's Corner, I think. It was threepence or fourpence a yard in those days. We also had a travelling salesman who came around, Mr Debo. He had everything from a needle to an anchor on his little cart. He just kept on travelling as far as I know. He slept in his wagon; him and his dog. If there was something you specifically wanted, he could get it for you and bring it when he came back three or four months later.⁵⁵

Birkdale was an area of much closer settlement than Capalaba. With better soils, residents could make a living from smaller parcels of land than the farms in the Capalaba district. Many urban subdivisions were undertaken shortly after the construction of the railway in 1889, as well as small 'hobby' farms which allowed residents to combine farming with employment elsewhere. Farmers in the Birkdale area grew fruit as well as small crops, and

⁵² He married Sarah Fredericks mother, Emma Keylar nee Mussig

⁵³ This land was later purchased by his step-daughter Sarah Fredericks and her husband John and is now the Capalaba Soccer Club.

⁵⁴ Cleveland Shire Council Minutes, Oct 1916.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

strawberry growing was reported as being a major crop as early as 1914.⁵⁶ Retired Beenleigh publican Carl Palm turned to gardening and lived near the Birkdale Station. The station was obviously used by commuters to the city and other stations along the line. Charles Brown was a watchmaker and jeweller who lived at the end of Collingwood Road and commuted to his shop in Queen Street Brisbane, from about 1915 through to the early 1920s.

During the late 1920s the area was home to a variety of commuters and small business people, including journalist J Airey, plumber A Chiverall, motor salesman C Girdler, carpenter A Green, builder Ernie Genn, clerks A Wakefield and C Keyes, cab proprietor T Lan, plasterer A Martin, printer W Smith, bootmaker W Wiltshire, traveller William Cowley, engineer R Spiers, storekeeper R Fraser, well borer W Sainsbury, and local sawmill owner and blacksmith W Manitzky, who had his blacksmith shop on the corner of Collingwood Road.⁵⁷ The Under Secretary for Lands, A Melville, lived in Birkdale as did W Marshall, a member of the Cane Price Board who occupied the corner of Keppell Street. Railway employees also lived in the area, including fettler Charles Springall.⁵⁸ Some of these people lived in the Thorne estate once it had been subdivided, including James Willard, Charles Springall and Edgar McNeilly.⁵⁹ Others lived on the 4-6 acre properties along Byng and Clive Roads.

The Birkdale post office had been closed during the early 1910s until S Collins became receiving office keeper in 1914 and C Collins was lengthsman (appointed to look after a certain length of the railway line). It would appear that these jobs went hand in hand, with the railway station acting as receiving office or post office. Harriet Dixon was post-mistress from 1918 until 1926, when it was taken over by Mrs Bell. Victor Dixon was listed as a lengthsman in 1926, although oral evidence suggests that he probably was employed in this role at the same time as Harriet was post-mistress.⁶⁰ Their daughter Gwyn was enrolled for the first year of the Birkdale School in 1916.⁶¹ She has a vivid

⁵⁶ EDU/Z202 Birkdale School file, QSA.

⁵⁷ Cleveland Shire Council Minutes, 8 Nov 1921.

⁵⁸ QPOD 1915-1930.

⁵⁹ EDU/Z202 Birkdale School file, QSA.

⁶⁰ QPOD 1907-1927.

⁶¹ F Archer (ed), *Birkdale State School Golden Jubilee, 1916-1966*, Cleveland: Redland Printery, 1966, p.4.

memory of life in Birkdale during and after World War 1 and her story demonstrates the cohesion in the community in assisting a civilian widow in hard times:

We moved to Birkdale because my father, Victor Dixon, had suffered from rheumatic fever and was constantly sick. We decided to move down here and my mother found this piece of land at Thorneside. She bought it and it had this small house on it. Fortunately she did, because we were only in there a little while and my father died in 1926 after a long illness. He had a very bad heart and when they did the post mortem found that he shouldn't have been working at all.

My mother was left with four of us to bring up. One was a baby about 12 months old. There was no widow's pension, no anything. She had to call on the local community for help. It was a more friendly world years ago. We knew everyone and the people were always very kind. I know different ones used to send along vegetables, different things like that. I was very friendly with Jim Willard and his family. They had the dairy at Thorneside. He had two daughters, and I used to spend a lot of time there. I used to go over every afternoon to help them to milk and sometimes if they were short-handed I'd go over in the morning, we'd get up early and go in the morning. I got a little bit of pocket money for the milking and then Mr Willard would say, 'Oh, there's too much milk there, take that.' We always had our own cows anyhow, and we had our own fowls, and a vegetable garden so we never starved.

Establishing churches and Community Halls

Further evidence of the strength of the Birkdale/Thorneside community came with the establishment of the School of Arts, a Methodist Church and a Church of England. The School of Arts was established in the early 1920s and the women of Birkdale were instrumental in the establishment of the Birkdale Methodist Church in 1923. They were stirred into action when lightning struck and destroyed the Wellington Point Methodist Church in November 1920. The Birkdale Church was built following the fundraising activities of the Ladies Guild. Members included the two Emily Woodgates, Ada and Jessie Woodgate, Florence Javes, Mercy Manton, Isabel McNeilly, Beatrice Williams, Minnie Green, Selina Sturman, Jessie Ross, Mary Spiers and Isabella Girdler. The church was opened on 15 September 1923 on the corner of Napier Street and Birkdale Road,

next to the home of Ada (Woodgate) and Bill Guy.⁶² Ultimately a new church was established in Wellington Point near the railway crossing on Main Road.

The Anglican community in Birkdale had been trying to establish a church in the area since 1919, when they wrote to the Council asking if they could use the Council's shed near the railway station once or twice a month for church services. Although the Chairman wished to agree, the vote was lost because of the explosives that were stored in the shed.⁶³ However, it would seem that the shed was used at some stage, with or without permission. The first half of the church was built during 1934 and on Sunday 10 March 1935 it was opened and dedicated by Archbishop John William Wand.⁶⁴ The building was not completed until October 1969.⁶⁵ Gwyn Randall recalls the establishment of these facilities:

After we established the Birkdale School of Arts in the early 1920s, we were also working for the church because we were Anglican and there was no Anglican Church here. Cleveland had one, but in Birkdale, Mr John Woodgate the elder used to have little services on Sunday and various ones would go. We'd walk up to Woodgate's and we'd all sit round a room and he'd read passages out of the bible, sing some hymns, so that's the first I can remember of churches in the district.⁶⁶

Capalaba residents were not totally spiritually neglected, as Sunday School was held in Coghill's hall in Capalaba. Olive Dunlop (nee Girdler) recalls:

Mum was very involved in the Ladies Guild at the Birkdale Church, but after we moved to Capalaba, I went to Sunday School in Capalaba. A chap had a house on the other side of the creek and he had a big shed and we used to have Sunday School in that. I think that was Mr Coghill. When I got married to Les Davis, we were married in the Birkdale Methodist Church. It was the first wedding in the church and people came for miles, because they hadn't seen any weddings in the church before.⁶⁷

⁶² Jack Guy, 'Trinity Uniting Church – Wellington Point Project: Women of the Way the Birkdale Connection', undated typescript, Redland Shire Council Oral History Collection.

⁶³ Cleveland Shire Council Minutes, September 1919.

⁶⁴ *Redland Times*, 14 March 1935.

⁶⁵ *Redland Times*, 15 October 1969, p.1.

⁶⁶ Gwyn Randall interview.

⁶⁷ Olive Dunlop interview with Mary Howells, 1996, Redland Shire Council Oral History Collection.

Infrastructure

Efforts to open up the area to further development after the end of World War I included the renewed call for the construction of the bridge between Lota and Thorneside. The issue was debated regularly and a meeting with the Wynnum Town Council in June 1924 sought to establish a suitable site. However, the creation of the Greater Brisbane City Council in 1925 further delayed the project. By July 1926 the Mayor of Brisbane, William Jolly, saw the potential in the project and offered to get his officers to prepare cost estimates.⁶⁸ Again, as occurred in the 1890s, the general economic downturn ensured that this project remained on the back burner for a few more years.

The other key factor in local infrastructure development was the creation of the Main Roads Board by Premier EG Theodore in 1920, primarily to open up valuable farming lands throughout the state.⁶⁹ Local authorities saw it as an opportunity to defer financial responsibility of roads to the state government. The Belmont and Cleveland Shire Councils requested the Main Roads Board to gazette the Main Brisbane Road as a main road during the early 1920s. The Main Road Commission's eventual response was to declare the then unformed Finucane Road as part of the main road between Capalaba and Cleveland from August 1928. The Shire Council did not agree with this proposal.⁷⁰

The Cleveland Chamber of Commerce was in favour of the proposal, but farmers from Wellington Point and Birkdale presented a petition of 450 objections to the road. They had a vested interest in the route via Old Cleveland Road East remaining open. They argued that this would mean an extra road in need of maintenance, but agreed that the new route was of more benefit to the travelling public. In reality they were worried about the effect it would have on their businesses, and the viability of the settlements of Ormiston and Wellington Point. Most of these farmers had fruit stalls along the old route, which were quite lucrative money earners. Ultimately the Council agreed to inform

⁶⁸ Cleveland Shire Council Minutes, November 1919, February 1920, December 1922, December 1923, June 1924, July 1924, July 1926.

⁶⁹ Ross Fitzgerald, *From 1915 to the early 1980s*; St Lucia: Queensland University Press, 1984, p.62.

⁷⁰ Cleveland Shire Council Minutes, June 1923, July 1925, July 1926, July 1928.

the Main Roads Commissioner of their support for the gazettal of the direct route to Cleveland, but the road was not built for another 20 years.⁷¹

Conclusion

The chief differences between the settlements lay in their community structure. Capalaba remained a rural dispersed community with the school, and to a lesser degree the hotel, as the only public signifiers of the community. Birkdale/Thorneside grew rapidly, particularly after the subdivision of the Thorne estate in 1913 and 1917. Many commuters took advantage of the urban lots adjacent to the railway stations and many simply purchased land in Thorneside for holiday cottages. Other farmers then took up some of the small acreage lots, which had been divided at the time of the railway completion in 1889. These residents lobbied for the establishment of the school, and School of Arts Hall, and funded a Methodist Church and began fundraising for the Church of England. The road transport problems that plagued Capalaba residents were less significant to Birkdale/Thorneside people who had the luxury of the train service. The Birkdale School was central to all residents, enabling easy access either by road or rail, including the option to attend Wellington Point School. Lota children also attended Birkdale School. The railway offered these children the opportunity and access to post-primary education. In contrast, many Capalaba students had to walk miles to attend the primary school. The lack of public transport made accessing secondary education difficult, if not impossible. The only prospect of rail transport to Capalaba lay with the possibility of the rail extension from Belmont. When this line was decommissioned in 1926, Capalaba's isolation was ensured for many years to come.

⁷¹ Cleveland Shire Council Minutes, 7 March 1928.

Chapter 3

Depression through World War II

The Depression brought a new wave of settlers to the Capalaba area where the relatively low price of real estate lured people to seek out subsistence living on the land. Surprisingly, Thorneside continued to grow during this time, particularly as a holiday destination, with beach shacks evolving into cottages along the foreshores. Relief workers were employed improving the roads in the Capalaba area and improving the beach facilities in Birkdale and Thorneside. Tourism grew in importance generally, with Brisbane people taking Sunday drives to the 'salad bowl' district along Moreton Bay and accessing the beaches at Thorneside, Birkdale and Wellington Point and the swimming hole in Tingalpa Creek at the back of the Capalaba Hotel. A small zoo was established in Capalaba to capture the tourist trade. Capalaba residents demonstrated their desire to improve the township and they managed to finance a School of Arts Hall, despite the hardships of the Depression.

World War II saw locals endure the obvious cutbacks and sacrifices of war-time, but the influx of American servicemen in the region provided some excitement. The American presence brought locals in touch with a new outlook on life. Perhaps these years could be described as the adolescence of these local communities, which grew and consolidated and planned for a brighter future after the war.

Growth of Thorneside

Thorneside developed a sense of identity separate from Birkdale. A reporter for the *Redland Times* in January 1933 described Thorneside as a charming place, which had grown over the 11 years since the sale of the subdivisions in the Thorne estate. At that time there were only a few houses but in 1933 there were over 68 houses, many of which were weekenders for Brisbane families. A fine gravel road, which was popular with motorists and motorcycle clubs, had replaced the old cart track. Some telephones and electric lights had been installed and trees planted on the reserve.¹ In February 1933, Council approval was given for the construction of bathing sheds on the foreshore. In

¹ *Redland Times* 11 January 1933.

June 1934 the Cleveland Shire Council sent a letter of support to the Railway Commissioner for the installation of a platform at the Thorneside Station to cater for the growing tourism market. In December 1934, for example, the Waterside Workers held their Christmas picnic on the reserve, with over 600 people in attendance.²

Moves were again made to get funding for the proposed bridge between Lota and Thorneside. In November 1936 the Cleveland Shire and the Brisbane City Council lobbied the State Government to proceed with the project. However, they were informed that there was no demand for such a bridge. This rejection was met with a proposal to build an esplanade between Wellington Point and Thorneside. Councillor James Apps interviewed most of the residents whose properties would most likely be affected and none had any objections, provided their land was properly fenced and had road access. No further action on either proposal was taken at that time.

Road Construction, relief work and survival

The effects of the Great Depression of the late 1920s and early 1930s stalled a lot of major projects generally. The Forgan Smith Labor government which was elected in 1932 set about restoring confidence in the future by creating the Bureau of Industry, which initiated many construction projects. Some of the most notable in southeast Queensland were the construction of the Story Bridge, the Hornibrook Highway, Somerset Dam and the Queensland University.

The Queensland Government offered relief work to the unemployed at the same level of pay as the basic wage.³ This was financed by increasing taxes on companies and high-income earners. Relief work in the area was mainly labouring jobs, particularly on the roads, as well as the removal of mangroves and reclamation work on the Thorneside foreshores. In April 1935, Councillor Ziegenfusz put forward a proposal to employ 10 relief workers from each division to clear Finucane Road but this motion was defeated.⁴

² *Redland Times*, 13 December 1934.

³ Fitzgerald p. 171.

⁴ Cleveland Shire Council Minutes, April 1935.

In September 1938, the Government announced the winding down of the relief work system through to December.⁵

In Capalaba, tenders were called for the construction of the Capalaba to Cleveland (Finucane) Road in August 1930, but again the project did not proceed. In September 1931, John Wilson commenced work on the Capalaba to Birkdale road, and in January 1932 tenders were re-called for the construction of the Brisbane to Cleveland road. The bridge between Thorneside and Lota was again being planned, this time as a toll bridge. In 1935 tenders were called to construct new bridges over both Tingalpa and Coolnwynpin Creeks at Capalaba.⁶ Mr Blondell won the tender for both bridges in July with a quote of £2419 for the Capalaba bridge.⁷

Many people moved into the Capalaba region during the Depression when the jobs they had previously were no longer available. Land here was cheap and they could attempt a self-sufficient lifestyle on rural lots. Winifred Taylor recalls the circumstances that brought her family to Capalaba, and the way they went about establishing a simple dwelling:

Our family came from a little Welsh mining village where my father was the milkman. When the mines closed down there was no money. My eldest brother had come out to Australia 12 months previously and was working on a farm. The owner of that farm offered to nominate us to Australia. We first went to a dairy farm at Toogoolawah and then to a place at Enoggera. Then my dad saw an advertisement in the paper for a block of land in Capalaba. It was 127 acres and it was £5 down and 12/6d rent to pay it off. My other brother Frank was working at a dairy farm near Mount Gravatt and he gave us the money for the deposit, and then helped us pay the rent. That was in about 1932.

The land [Portion 127] had a frontage along Mount Cotton Road, opposite Sawmill Road, and went back as far as what is now Degen Road. There used to be a quarry there. Wildflower Street was part of our paddock. We only had a few possessions when we arrived. We had two stretcher beds, a small table and a meat safe that you could hang up. Of course, we had three wooden trunks that my father had built to hold our possessions when we came to Australia. That was our wardrobe. To boil the billy, we had a

⁵ Ibid., September 1938.

⁶ Cleveland Shire Council Minutes, 1930-32.

⁷ Tingalpa Shire Council Minutes, July 1935.

kerosene tin that you cut halfway down on one side and made a little fire underneath. We had a kettle that we could put on that, and then we had another piece of iron over the top of this kerosene tin to make toast.

We wanted to clear the ground and we had great ideas at that time about growing tobacco. It was all the rage at that time. There was a lot of money in it, but no one around here had success with it. It took us a long time to clear two acres. First of all we used to chop the trees down and burn them up and then dig out the stump. So we thought it would be better to dig round the roots of the trees and cut off all the runners so that the weight of the tree would bring the whole tree down. If it didn't bring it down, we helped it by using a 20 foot pole to push in under the runners and to pull down on it to help the tree to come out. We did all that clearing with just a grubber and an axe. We started to grow vegetables but we didn't have a fence to stop any stray stock from coming in, so we got a neighbour's cows in on agistment. He said that he would give us the fencing wire as payment. We had to cut all the posts to go round. We grew tomatoes, potatoes, lettuce and Chinese cabbage and all that sort of thing. We didn't plant strawberries until later.

My father was doing relief work when we came here. He was working at the quarry at Wellington Point. He got 27/6d a week for two days work⁸ and every Friday he had to go to Wynnum to collect his money. It seemed stupid to me to have to go all that way. He had a push bike, but when the tyres wore out he had to stuff them with grass to get there. Later we made some money selling wood for bakers' ovens. The bottom paddock was full of she oaks and we used to get 7/6d a cord. It had to be special length for the ovens. It was very easy to split. Then I used to cut loads of dry wood; five foot lengths of it. A chap with a utility came out to cart it. Mum had an arrangement with him that if he picked up our groceries at the local garage (there was only one local garage where the Capalaba Hall is) then she would let him have a load of wood for ninepence. So that went on and on and he just wouldn't pay, so Dad went to see his father in Wynnum to demand the money and he had to pay it off in instalments of 2/6d a fortnight.⁹

Housing

In the years from the Depression through World War II the building materials were expensive and very difficult to procure. The cost of new materials, where available, was prohibitive. Building regulations were minimal and not enforced. Families displayed

⁸ Winifred Taylor, hand written manuscript, held in Oral History collection, Cleveland Library.

⁹ Winifred Taylor interview with Mary Howells, 1995, Redland Shire Council Oral History Collection.

ingenuity in the way they went about building shelter in times of hardship. Winifred Taylor provides vivid descriptions of the housing types in the region:

The people that lived in Gumdale built humpies that were known as 'Hargraves Mansions'. When you sent strawberries or jam berries into Hargraves jam factory at Manly, they were put into kerosene tins. People built their shacks out of Hargraves kerosene tins by flattening them out and hammering them to saplings. We lived in our little tin shed for about six months before we built our humpy. We had cut down a lot of big white gums, sawed them and split them open ready to use in our humpy. Then Frank Burbank came round and told us that white gum was no good because it shrunk. He told us to use bloodwood. So we used bloodwood for the other slabs.

It took us three months to build the humpy. We didn't have any tools to dig holes with so we used a little pick head to dig down about two foot six inches on each corner for the corner posts. Then we put saplings all around. It was about 20 feet square. We divided the inside off with corn-bags sewn together and painted with a cement mix that made it very stiff and tough. For windows we got old car bonnets from the dump and they were attached to the top of the windows and we used a stick to prop them up. Dad got most of the stuff at the dump. We didn't have roofing nails, but he managed to find a lot of thick nails and all these bottle tops from the dump, and he drove the nail through the bottle top, which made a sort of roofing nail. For the floor we broke up the ant's nest from the bottom paddock. We carried it up in a wooden barrow. Then we smashed it up with the axe and mixed it into a sloppy mass and put it over the floor of the humpy. When it hardened, it was like cement. Some people used to come and buy the ant's nest from us for tennis courts.

We needed a stove and a chap named Brooks who lived down in Degen Road told us that he had a stove that he no longer wanted. It only cost half a crown so we wheeled the barrow down there and managed to put the stove on the barrow and wheeled it back home. Dad got an old stove recess that he cemented in place. We didn't have a bathroom. When we wanted to have a wash we had to warm up the water. We had a bowl that you could bring inside and when nobody else was around you could have a wash. We didn't have a lavatory for a very long time. We had a little digger we used to take down the paddock and dig a little hole. Later Dad knew a chap out at Mount Gravatt that had a toilet he wanted to sell and he only wanted 10 shillings for it. Somebody arranged to have it put on a truck and bring it down. We had to put in four stumps for it to sit on. Oh boy, it was wonderful having a toilet with a door on! We still had to empty the toilet when it was full. I was the one that had to go and take it down the paddock and dig a hole and bury it.

After we moved into the humpy Dad got three months work with the Main Roads at Beenleigh. It was £3.18/- a week then, I think. Then we could buy a tank. A new thousand gallon tank cost £5 and it was made by one of the local blokes by the name of Vic King.¹⁰

Vic King's daughter Joan Levey has similar memories of constructing a home from other people's discards:

My father was a plumber, and he had a business in Wynnum somewhere. When he married my mother he built us a hut. He just cut saplings out of the bush and put them in the ground for all the uprights and the rafters of the roof. He got loads of kerosene tins from Hargraves factory that was over at Green Camp Road, and brought them down and put them through his hand roller flattener. The walls, the windows, the doors and the roof were entirely flattened kerosene tins. Across the windows there was always little bits of things, branches or twigs out of the bush. The door was closed with a bit of harness leather. The floor was made out of ant-bed and some other mixture of stuff. It would set as hard as wet cement would today. Even the bed was just some bush timber put together and a bit of wire netting for the base. The mattress was out of coconut fibre, kapok, and the rest of the furniture was pine cases and kerosene tins cut on different angles with half cotton reel knobs on them.¹¹

In July 1944, many people were requesting permission to construct sleep-out shelters or to convert sheds into accommodation due to the housing shortages. The Thorneside Progress Association, which was established during World War II, wrote to the Council in September asking that the building regulations be strictly adhered to and policed.¹² However, the Council appears to have been lenient in this matter, allowing people to live in temporary structures while they built their homes, although some took longer than the prescribed six months to do so.

Schools and Community Groups

The new wave of residents during the Depression breathed life into the schools. Numbers increased, although not enough to warrant the construction of a new teacher's

¹⁰ Winifred Taylor interview.

¹¹ Joan Levey interview.

¹² Cleveland Shire Council Minutes, July- September 1944

residence in Capalaba, and headmaster Tom McGrath continued to commute from Brisbane. He saw the opportunity to improve the school by having relief workers clear some of the timber from the school property, and was able to sell the timber to purchase sporting equipment for the students. In January 1934 the school was vandalised. The isolation of the site, with no teacher's residence, made the school vulnerable. Eventually the Department repaired the school and upgraded it, and the structure remained for a further 40 years.¹³

The harsh times of the 1930s only served to strengthen the resolve of Capalaba residents to build a community hall. In 1933 the newly formed Capalaba School of Arts Committee requested one acre of the school reserve as a site for the construction of their hall. Tom McGrath was not in favour of this, but the Committee set about raising funds for the hall anyway. The first fundraising event was a Strawberry Fair held on 21 September 1933. Various competitions were held and strawberries and cream and tea were served. A dance was held in the evening. A profit of £5 9s was made from the day.¹⁴ In December 1933 a summer fair was held and was a success. Despite the inclement weather, a further £15 was collected. Dances continued to be held on a monthly basis to raise money for the hall and ultimately land was donated on Mount Cotton Road near the intersection with Redland Bay Road.¹⁵ Local Residents enthusiastically supported the construction of the hall as Jean Rooney remembers:

The money for the construction of the Capalaba Hall was all donated by the people. I got the first six shillings for that. We all had a little book and we walked around collecting money for that hall. I've still got the book somewhere. Maggie Willard gave me two shillings, Jim Willard gave me two and Bill Willard gave me two shillings. I walked all round Birkdale. One woman gave me a shilling for minding her children while she did her ironing. It took a good while before the hall was actually built, so you can understand why the people are upset about the hall being pulled down.¹⁶ The land was donated by the Davesons and the money was all collected by the local people.¹⁷

¹³ EDU/Z508, Capalaba School File, QSA.

¹⁴ *Redland Times*, September 21, 1933.

¹⁵ EDU/Z508, Capalaba School File, QSA, *Capalaba State School Centenary, 1880-1980*, p.11

¹⁶ The Capalaba Hall was demolished in 1996 and replaced by the new community hall in Capalaba Place. The land where the old hall was located was sold to BBC Hardware for a reported \$1 million.

¹⁷ Jean Rooney interview.

Local resident Mrs Hambrecht mortgaged her home to assist in the financing of the project. The original trustees were John Daveson, William Airey and Herman Schmidt.¹⁸ The opening ceremony was held on 8 December 1934 with a fete attended by the local member and the Shire Chairman. The hall had to be closed during WWII and social events resumed after the war enabling the mortgage to be paid out in 1948. Viva Morrow, who lived opposite the hall, has vivid memories of it from her early childhood, particularly the extent of patronage from outside the district:

I was only two or three years old when the hall was built. We were living in the house we built on the site of the Shell service station. I had two sisters who were much older than me. I can remember sitting on the bed watching them getting dressed in their long evening frocks, which my mother used to make, and off they'd go to the dance. I can remember lying in bed and listening to the music. It was a three-piece band with saxophone, drums and piano. It was very nice to listen to as you drifted off to sleep. I did go to some dances as a child. People took their children and put them to sleep underneath the seats. By the time I was old enough to go the War was on and the hall was closed and I missed out on that period. But it was a very popular dance hall. It was surprising the number of people that attended that dance They'd come from Mount Cotton and Camp Hill and Wynnum. A local bus used to bring people from Wynnum and bring them back afterwards.¹⁹

A further sign of the growing cohesion of the Capalaba community came with the formation of the Capalaba Progress Association in October 1933. David Bone was elected chairman and Frank Burbank was treasurer and secretary. Other locals involved included Messrs Howlett, Dollery, Langford, King, Brooks, Goodwin, Mussig, Jarvis and Lush. They resolved to invite the local member Mr Bayley to the next meeting and lobby for the connection of the telephone and a new bridge across the creek in Capalaba.

Postal Service, Electricity and Telephones

Following the construction of the Bulimba 'A' Power Station in 1926,²⁰ the City Electric Light Company announced its intention to extend a service to the Tingalpa Shire.²¹

¹⁸ Capalaba School of Arts documentation held by Nellie Weaber.

¹⁹ Viva Morrow interview with Mary Howells, 1995, Redland Shire Council Oral History Collection.

²⁰ Col Dunn *The History of Electricity in Queensland*, Bundaberg: self published, 1985, p.47.

Although street lighting was used in Capalaba in 1936, it was not until October 1943 that some of Lionel Dollery's land was resumed for power purposes. This land now contains a substation on the corner of Dollery Road and Redland Bay Road.²² Domestic supply was not connected until the late 1940s in the main township. Outer areas took a lot longer.

In the region of Upper Tingalpa, Frank Burbank had asked the Tingalpa Shire in June 1920 if the Council would clear the necessary trees along Broadwater Road for the erection of a telephone line.²³ It would appear that no action was taken at that time. In June 1935, at the monthly meeting of the Capalaba Progress Association held in Lionel Dollery's garage, it was resolved to seek the connection of the telephone to the region. The Post Master General's Department (PMG), Tingalpa Shire and the Main Roads Commission needed to be consulted in order to gain permission for the line to be strung on trees on the roadside.²⁴ In August 1938 Frank Burbank wrote to the Tingalpa Shire and to Brisbane City Council to seek permission for telephone party lines for residents in the Upper Tingalpa area. He erected the line himself. In July 1939 the PMG inspected the line. According to their inspectors it was inadequately strung in the treetops with limited insulators, poor joints and low hanging wires. By 1941 the PMG had taken over the maintenance of the line.²⁵ The postal service moved from Coghill's to Dollery's store during the war years, with locals having to go and collect their mail. Viva Morrow remembers the important role the post office and telephone service played in the district:

After my father opened up his store in 1936 we had the first post office. Prior to that Coghills ran it from their store. Then Coghills sold out and we had the post office and the first telephone exchange board in our shop opposite the hotel. There were only a few subscribers to start with. It was a party line up Mount Cotton Road with numbers like 2R or 2D. Cottons were Capalaba 3 and the hotel was Capalaba 6 or something like that. When someone wanted to make a call you took their number and then you had to ring Brisbane and give the number to the girl, and when you eventually got everybody together, you connected them. If there was an emergency, people would just ring and say 'We've had an

²¹ Tingalpa Shire Minutes, May 1928.

²² Cleveland Shire Minutes, September 1936, October 1943.

²³ Tingalpa Shire Minutes, June 1920.

²⁴ *Redland Times*, 13 June 1935.

²⁵ Burbank Letter Collection, courtesy of Daphne Wegener.

accident. Get the doctor and send him” Instead of them wasting time asking for a number, we would just pass on the message. It was a friendly arrangement. The party line up Mount Cotton Road had about six people connected to it. Everyone on that line said that you didn’t talk about anything on the party line because you’d hear all the different receivers going up and down. Everybody had different rings; someone would be two long and two short; someone else had three long rings. When you were putting the calls through, you could hear everyone picking up their receivers. You knew they were all listening. It was probably their only entertainment in the day.²⁶

Occupations and lifestyles

Families who moved to the Capalaba area from the 1930s included the Connollys, Blunts, Bones, Nellers, Hendersons and Schoecks. More families moved into dairying during the 1930s, including Camerons, Shearers, Costins, Hendersons, McIntoshs, and Lushs, who sold out to Jones around 1940. The poultry industry evolved during the 1930s and 1940s. Those farmers involved in the industry initially included H Boucher and H Schafer and later in the 1940s included W Bryant, A Clauson, P Hinchliff, V La Chere, L Smith and the Martin family. In the Birkdale/Thorneside area, the Sturman family’s chicken hatchery in Henry Street received media attention and was the subject of a feature article in the *Redland Times* on 15 March 1934. Sturmans had installed the latest incubators, which could hatch up to 6000 chicks at one time. Their property was close to the railway station and local farmers could rail their eggs to Sturmans for collection and incubation.

Vic King started his plumbing business from his home on Old Cleveland Road Capalaba West in the mid-1930s, and Lionel ‘Laddie’ Dollery started up a store after he transferred the lease on the hotel in 1936.²⁷ A new double-storey hotel was built on the site in 1936.²⁸ Daughter Viva Morrow recalls the family’s move:

My parents bought five acres opposite the hotel from Mr Coghill, where the Shell garage later was. They decided to get out of the hotel and build a service station. This was in the early days, when service stations were the coming thing. The motor car was king, and horses were disappearing. So they built the shop and

²⁶ Viva Morrow interview.

²⁷ QPOD 1925-1940, Certificate of Title No 212448 Vol 1246 Folio 188, lease No A291198, Department of Natural Resources.

dwelling opposite the hotel. Originally they put a service station in on the other corner where the Mobil service station was. There was a tin shed there belonging to a fellow named Clayton, which had originally been a blacksmith shop. Clayton was a mechanic and then he had a couple of petrol bowlers. They bought it and ran the garage from that side and the house and shop on the other corner until eventually they amalgamated them and built a little garage beside the shop. Eventually the tin shed on the corner of Mount Cotton Road was pulled down. We had eight petrol pumps, which were all different brands and they were pumped by hand. We were dependent on the tourists coming to the Redlands and the local farming community who ran their own trucks to market with their produce. There was a bit of tourist trade and people used to come down to the flat near the dog course and have picnics and swim in the creek. It was really busy down there.²⁹



Figure 6 Blunt family home, Prout Road, Capalaba, 1932
(Grace Jessen)

The Blunt family moved from Norman Park to live a subsistence life in the Capalaba bush in 1930. They eventually established a timber mill in Prout Road and Tom Blunt remembers his father's business:

My father, Reg Blunt, cut timber all in the Capalaba area up in Mount Petrie, and then just before the war he started to go out to West Mount Cotton and cut timber. That was for the wool scours. That was cordwood. He also used to supply house stumps, which were sapped house stumps, because everything was on wooden stumps, and that was one of the other areas of his business. He had about four guys working for him, but he'd be lucky, even during the war he earned £20 a week, which is £1000 a year. That was considered a lot of money then in those days. That was to run a truck and have three or four guys working for him, so there wasn't a lot of money in it. He used to cut the trees down, and sap them and deliver them for seven pence per foot, deliver them into town.

²⁸ Information supplied by Viva Morrow (*nee* Dollery)

²⁹ Viva Morrow interview.

He used to deliver them mainly up to the 'Gabba. There were timber yards up in the 'Gabba then. That's all he used to get. The firewood, he used to get 15 shillings a ton for block wood delivered into Brisbane, and seventeen and six a ton for split wood in bags - so you got two and sixpence a ton, and this was right up until the war, to split a ton of wood. So, I mean, you know, people think these days they're hard done by - and they were actual prices, they were.

There were three wool scourers at Carina. There was one situated on the land where the Carindale shopping centre is now, and there were two more right up the end of Scrub Road. They were Jones' and Knox's wool scourers, and Knox's were the ones my father used to cart to. They thrived before the war and during the war, and then after the war the buyers came in, and they wanted to buy greasy wool and process it overseas, because they'd missed on all the by-products, the lanoline and all that sort of thing out of the wool. So then the wool scourers actually closed down. They didn't last long after the war. Some of the tanneries lasted a bit longer because of the leather, but you know, the wool scourers have all gone. They would have been very important in terms of local employment, because Knox's would have had a couple of hundred men working for them. It was quite a labour-intensive sort of job, and they would have been one of the main industries around this area then, the wool scourers.³⁰

The Redlands region became known as the 'salad bowl' of Brisbane, because of the extensive market gardens. It grew in popularity as a destination for Sunday drivers during the 1930s. In December 1934 Mr C Christmas sought permission from the Council to erect a stall on the reserve between the Capalaba Hotel and the bridge. The Council set a fee of five shillings and Mr Christmas agreed to keep the area clean and clear. The following February, Mr T McKee was granted permission to hold a stall on the reserve on Sundays and public holidays.³¹ The recognition of the tourism potential of the district was taken a step further in 1935 with the construction of *Holliswood* on the land between Mount Cotton Road and Redland Bay Road (now occupied by Capalaba Park Shopping Centre). *Holliswood* was an avicultural farm, which held aviaries of numerous exotic birds, as well as two red kangaroos, and a number of koalas, including an albino. Shire Chairman GJ Walter conducted the official opening of this attraction in October 1935. The proprietor, R G Hollis, had arranged with the tourist bureau for all touring parties

³⁰ Tom Blunt interview with Mary Howells, 1996, Redland Shire Council Oral History Collection.

³¹ Cleveland Shire Council Minutes, December 1934-February 1935.

visiting the district to stop for an inspection and perhaps take advantage of the kiosk on site.³²

Other business initiatives during the Depression included an application to the Tingalpa Shire in 1934 from H Burgess on behalf of Brisbane Fertilisers for a licence to carry on a fertiliser works on Lush's dairy farm in Capalaba. The company stated that they already operated a similar business in the Pine Shire, which employed 30 people. The Tingalpa councillors inspected the site and stated that they did not approve of that site because the effluent would flow into Tingalpa Creek.³³ Lush's property was purchased by the Jones family, which continued dairying, as daughter Olwen Owen remembers:

We came down from Wootha near Maleny in about 1940 and bought a dairy farm from people by the name of Lush. The farm was situated roughly where Killarney Crescent is now. We leased some land down along the creek towards Old Cleveland Road from the Davesons. All the cows grazed along there because all the rest was bush. Capalaba was a very quiet place, with only Mr Dollery's store on the corner where the Shell garage was later. Our milk run extended from Capalaba to Wynnum and Manly, with customers scattered through the area. In the War the Government rezoned it because of the petrol shortages and we got from Ernest Street, Manly, down to Lota and we had every house in the area. We'd get up at about 12.00 o'clock of a night time and we'd milk the cows, then the ones that were taking it out on deliveries would go out around 3.00 or 4.00 o'clock in the morning. Then the same thing would happen again in the afternoon. We'd start milking about 10.00 o'clock and then they would start the afternoon run around 12.00. There were seven in our family, but one was married and two brothers were in the army, so my sister and I went with one brother to deliver the milk.³⁴

Wildlife

Dingoes lived in the bush from Capalaba through to Mount Cotton and preyed on the burgeoning poultry industry, which at that time was free range. In October 1934 a hunt was arranged after Frank Burbank discovered the dingoes' camp in the bush on the outskirts of Capalaba. Frank managed to shoot two pups and Frank Henderson bagged

³² *Redland Times* 10 October 1935.

³³ Tingalpa Shire Council Minutes, March - May 1934.

³⁴ Olwen Owen interview with Mary Howells, 1996, Redland Shire Council Oral History Collection.

three others. The adult dingoes escaped. Black snakes were reported to be plentiful at that time also.³⁵

Dangerous marine life also posed problems to the locals. In November 1936, a large blue nosed shark with two young ones was observed in Tingalpa Creek, in the swimming hole under the Capalaba Bridge.³⁶ Thorneside resident and keen fisherman Viv Slater has seen sharks on many occasions:

*In Tingalpa Creek, the sharks come up in March. They go into the deep holes upstream from Thorneside and have their young ones. They also come into the fresh water to get the lice off them. When the water is fresh in March after the rain, the lice drop off. When they have their young ones, they go in the deep holes so that there's nothing to molest them. They just sit on the bottom. Sometimes when I have been crabbing, I've seen the baby sharks splashing in the mangroves, and I've grabbed a couple of them by the tail and thrown them up on the bank. The mother shark would have been out in a deep hole somewhere. I've seen them jump out at night up there near Molle Road. They jump out and shake themselves and crash. They give you a fright!*³⁷

Generally the area around Capalaba remained as bushland. Timber-getter Tom Blunt and his sister Iris Daley reminisce about the amount of wildlife in the district in the 1930s and 40s:

*Our property near Prout Road was a lovely place, because Tingalpa Creek was at the bottom of our place. There was a patch of rainforest, and we never touched that, you know. We've always liked to conserve that sort of thing. Although we were timber-cutters, we tried to conserve. It was more like farming for us; and we tried to conserve for the future. Otherwise, if you just slaughtered all your timber, you've got nothing left. There were quite a lot of different pigeons, and when we first went there my father spoke of scrub turkeys, or brush turkeys, but they've disappeared. I just loved the bush and loved the birds, and loved everything else. I spent all my time, as soon as I came home from school, down the bush by myself. I took a keen interest in birds. We did keep birds in aviaries, you know, but I've always been a bird lover.*³⁸

³⁵ Redland Times, 11 October 1934.

³⁶ Redland Times, 19 November 1936.

³⁷ Viv Slater interview with Mary Howells, 1997, Redland Shire Council Oral History Collection.

³⁸ Tom Blunt interview.

Our property was like rainforest down the back. The creek was running over the rocks with little waterfalls with maidenhair fern on the banks of the creek, and carpets of wild violets. My daughter and I used to sit and watch the little birds. There were so many different kinds of wrens with their red chests, their yellow chests, and their beautiful blue and purple colours. The creek had mullet and perch in it as well as platypus.³⁹

We moved out to a property at West Mount Cotton in about 1942. The Schoeck family had owned it. They had about 50 or 60 acres cleared and it was all fenced with split palings to keep the wallabies out. They must have had a lot of trouble with wallabies in those days. There was a species called pretty faced wallabies and they must have given them so much trouble that they dug pits inside the fence. They left a paling off, and they had like a trapdoor in those pits, and these wallabies would come in and of course that was it. The Schoecks in those days, like a lot of people, ate everything they killed. If they killed a wallaby, they ate wallaby, and hares and scrub turkeys. That's how they lived. But it was a shame that the wallabies have died out, because when we first came there, there was one little colony left and they're not here any more.⁴⁰

World War II

The onset of the War led to the inevitable call to arms. Men were encouraged to join the Redlands Platoon of the Militia. A ladies welfare committee was also formed.⁴¹ Probably the greatest impact locally during the War years was the influx of American soldiers stationed in the area. A gunnery school for the US Navy was situated at Wellington Point during 1943 and 1944.⁴² In Capalaba, a radio station was set up on the Willards' old property, then owned by Rosemary Cotton.⁴³ During the War, the American soldiers were stationed in Capalaba on the flats behind the hotel and the hotel was commandeered. Viva Morrow thought that the arrival of the Americans was exciting:

³⁹ Iris Daley interview with Mary Howells, 1994, Redland Shire Council Oral History Collection.

⁴⁰ Tom Blunt interview.

⁴¹ *Redland Times*, 23 March 1939.

⁴² Cleveland Shire Minutes, November 1943, June 1944.

⁴³ Rosemary Cotton acquired the property in 1941 and lived there with her husband Doug until her death in 1979. After the War, the Commonwealth of Australia resumed 159 acres of the property for the purposes of the postal services.

The Americans arrived at 8.00 one night. They'd previously requisitioned the hotel and the licensee, Mrs Horden, had moved away. It was empty there for a couple of weeks. Then all of a sudden, one evening, along came all these big trucks in convoy, and they trundled down to the flat. They put up a lot of tents on the flat around the dog track. They took the land between the two bridges; the Tingalpa Creek bridge and the Coolnwynpin bridge. Although Fredericks had their dairy farm there they were still allowed to stay, but the Americans patrolled the whole area. There were about 300-400 men. The officers were billeted at the hotel. The men had their own catering facilities down on the flat, and I remember my mother was approached to see whether she could cater for the officers staying in the hotel. She reluctantly agreed to do so, and they used to come over to our place and eat in the big dining room in a couple of shifts – there were only 11 or 12 of them – and they'd eat in a couple of shifts for breakfast, lunch and dinner in the evening.

It was exciting, though. They had a big siren on a post, and they used to have air raid drill and it would go off every now and then. Familiarity breeds contempt, so you ignored it. I remember once, a Sergeant Gerrard came racing over one day when it had gone off, and he said to the boy Fredericks and I who were playing around the place, "This is not a drill. There is a Japanese plane coming around somewhere," and he said we all had to go up the paddock and stand the other side of trees. My mother said she had a roast pork and roast beef in the oven, and she wasn't going up the paddock and leaving the old wood stove for any Jap or anybody else. So she and Mrs Fredericks who was helping her, and a girl, Betty Routledge, who worked for us, they stayed on. But the boy Fredericks and I were sent up, and we sat behind trees, anxiously waiting for this Japanese plane. The sergeant said to stay behind the tree or it could strafe you with machine-gun bullets. But nothing happened, and then the all-clear went and we had to come home. So that was our War experience.⁴⁴

Tom Blunt was impressed with the no-nonsense way they got things done:

I remember the amount of equipment the Americans brought in. I was fascinated with all the gear that we'd never seen in Australia and how quickly they erected all the big poles with modern boring equipment. They got the phone lines in so quickly. They decided they wanted an overhead telephone line down from Brisbane. With all the red tape they were supposed to get permission from Canberra, but the Americans never waited. They just climbed the poles with spikes on their boots and had the thing down in a day and got permission later. That was typical of the way the Americans worked. But that was the

⁴⁴ Viva Morrow interview.

*way to work during the War. We found them very friendly people. They mixed well with the locals and went to their homes for dinner. I think when they left, everybody missed them, because they were such nice guys.*⁴⁵

The other impact locally was in the running of the farms while the men were away at War. Land Army Girls were stationed at the Birkdale School of Arts Hall during the last few years of the War. The hall was used as the cookhouse, dining and recreation hall. The girls stayed in tents in the yard, while the matron, who was assigned to look after the girls, generally slept in the hall. The close proximity to the railway station made this an ideal base for the girls, because they worked on farms all over the district and they were also able to visit the city on their days off.⁴⁶

Health and Welfare

The end of the War was in sight and the future health and welfare of the residents was implicit in the building regulations. Health services were scant and locals in Birkdale and Capalaba tended to go to Wynnum or Brisbane for medical attention, and sometimes to Cleveland. There was little assistance for mothers with young families and in December 1943, the Cleveland Shire Council decided to make representation to the Government for an extension of the Maternal and Child Welfare Service in the shire. The Department of Health and Home Affairs replied in February 1944, stating that the clinic service would be offered in Cleveland as soon as there were sufficient nurses available. The matter was still under consideration in June 1951.⁴⁷ Local residents had to make do and Winifred Taylor's mother resorted to horse liniment procured from a travelling salesman:

*Well, there weren't any doctors. We never went to doctors. We couldn't afford to go. My mother had home remedies. For diarrhoea, we used to take hot water, take a teaspoon of jelly crystals and mix that up. It used to be all right. Then, of course, there was a bloke used to come around, by the name of Rawleighs, and we bought some horse lineament. Well, Mum used that horse liniment on my back when I got a very bad cough. Boy, it beat all the other stuff. It was really good!*⁴⁸

⁴⁵ Tom Blunt interview.

⁴⁶ Mary Howells, *Redlands Remembers*, Cleveland: Redland Shire Council, 1996, pp. 714-5.

⁴⁷ Ibid. December 1943, Redland Shire Council Minutes, February 1951, June 1951.

Tom Blunt's mother suffered from isolation with her young family:

There was no help for mothers of young children, as far as medical help or relief from looking after the children. There was nothing back in those days. There may have been in Brisbane. Of course, Capalaba was quite remote. If the children were sick, she had to go to Coorparoo or Wynnum, and I think Coorparoo was where we would have gone. I know several times when my mother was ill, she went to Coorparoo Hospital opposite what is Myer's now. There was a private hospital there. Otherwise, it was the General Hospital out on the other side. There were no hospitals on the south side of Brisbane. So that was what it was all about, and it wasn't until later on that we started to go to Cleveland, when there was a doctor at Cleveland.⁴⁹

The Dollerys always had an income and so could afford to take advantage of the local services:

There was a doctor at Wynnum, and a doctor at Cleveland. Dr Poole at Cleveland was our doctor, and Doctor Middleton was at Wynnum when I was young. Well, they both came when needed. Dr Middleton was the doctor present when I was born in the old hotel. He came out for the birth; but then in later years when my father was ill, Dr Poole came up from Cleveland. I think Dr Middleton had retired or something by then. There was no baby clinic service until years later when a visiting clinic came to one of the shops.⁵⁰

Conclusion

While no one was immune to the effects of the Depression, it would appear that the new settlers in Capalaba who battled the landscape to carve out a subsistence living, had a tougher life than those in Birkdale and Thorneside. Despite all of the hardships, the Capalaba region was developing into a significant little township with a vibrant local community. Residents helped each other through the difficult times and worked together to procure the government services they required. The construction of the School of Arts Hall in Capalaba in the mid 1930s and the instigation of a Progress Association were tangible reminders of the growing community cohesion of the day. The survival

⁴⁸ Winifred Taylor interview.

⁴⁹ Tom Blunt interview.

⁵⁰ Viva Morrow interview.

techniques of the Capalaba newcomers and the ingenuity they displayed are what made that community different from their neighbouring communities.

Birkdale's success in the previous decade in the establishment of a hall and churches may be attributed to a larger population base of successful small crop farmers, with the support of significant wealthy families like the Randalls who gave the land for the Church of England. It would be fair to say that the impact of the Depression was minimal in Birkdale. Most people were farmers, either full time or part time, with a degree of self-sufficiency. This autonomy was tested during the War years when many men served in the armed forces. Wives and children ran the farms until the girls from the Australian Women's Land Army arrived to ease the burden.

Thorneside developed as a seaside resort. A Progress Association formed near the end of the War, comprising mostly weekend residents keen to improve their little slice of paradise.

Each location was now evolving separate identities linked by the roads, the railway and Tingalpa Creek. The landscape was gradually being changed with closer settlement, and new industries such as tourism and poultry brought opportunities for a brighter future. The War years allowed interaction with the Americans and a new outlook on life. Even before the end of the War, it was evident that locals were optimistic. The difficulties of the Depression and the War provided the foundations for strengthening the various communities and together they looked to the future.

Chapter 4

Post war reconstruction and development to 1968

The population along Tingalpa Creek continued to grow after the War, but a shortage of building materials meant that a lot of temporary structures were erected. Minimal building regulations ensured the continuation of the practice of constructing homes from recycled materials in both Capalaba and Thorneside. Many newcomers to the area were European migrants. Further subdivisions were undertaken to fulfil the demand for housing sites, although at that time there was little knowledge of town-planning principles and these new developments were lacking in the supporting infrastructure.

The amalgamation of the Tingalpa and Cleveland Shires in 1949 to form the Redland Shire was a turning point in the future planning and development of the region, particularly under the chairmanship of Norm Price. One major blow to the locals though, was the removal of the Lota to Cleveland rail line in November 1960. Bus services had to be improved dramatically and quickly. At the same time the Roma Street fruit and vegetable markets were moved to Rocklea. Roads to the markets had to be hurriedly upgraded to cope with increased traffic by produce carriers to Rocklea. Roads to the city needed improvement to cope with commuters using buses and cars to travel to work. As the lack of a reliable water supply was a major impediment to growth in the region, the council decided to construct a dam on Tingalpa Creek rather than have water piped from Brisbane City. This meant that many residents along Tingalpa Creek lost land and livelihoods to the dam construction. The Leslie Harrison Dam was completed in 1968. The subsequent provision of reticulated water heralded a new era of growth and prosperity for the Redland Shire.

Roads, Bridges, Water and Power Supply

After the War, the future growth of the region was of paramount importance. Again the bridge over the mouth of the creek was discussed and in 1946 Councillor Charles Toni of

Thorneside, was seeking the co-operation of the Brisbane City Council, the RACQ and local politicians to expedite the project.¹ Once again it did not proceed.

In July 1946 the council resolved to investigate the water supply possibilities for Cleveland, Wellington Point and Thorneside. During October 1947 six bores were dug in these regions with only one in Cleveland yielding water fit for human consumption. In 1947, when the Cleveland Shire Council was in the process of taking over the administration of North Stradbroke Island, the possibility of bringing water from the 18 Mile Swamp on Stradbroke was raised. The report tabled in December 1947 recommended the Government investigate the cost of piping water from Stradbroke and compare it with the cost of bringing water from Manly.²

The power supply was expanded for street lighting purposes immediately post-war, with the City Electric Light Co extending Thorneside's supply along Mooroondu Road to Lucy Street.³ By July 1947 the Cleveland Shire Council requested the Company make domestic supply available to Thorneside, Birkdale and Capalaba, with additional street lighting to be installed.⁴ In November 1947 Thorneside representative Cr Toni arranged for a meeting between locals and the City Electric Light Co. The locals promised a guarantee of £90 to £100 for domestic supply, but the Company would only agree to provide street lighting at that time.⁵ This meant that local people had to keep using combustion stoves and kerosene lighting.

Shire Amalgamation

The 1928 Royal Commission enquiry into the size and distribution of local government in Queensland recommended a substantial reduction in the number of local authorities. Cleveland Shire Councillor Bill Ziegenfusz was keen to follow this through. In 1932 he received support for a proposed a merger with part of the Tingalpa Shire.⁶ In May 1943

¹ Cleveland Shire Council Minutes, November 1946, February, July, September 1947.

² Ibid., May 1946, November 1947, March 1949.

³ Ibid., September 1946.

⁴ Ibid., July 1947.

⁵ Ibid., November 1947.

⁶ *Redland Times*, 10 February 1932, p. 7.

the Cleveland Shire wrote to the Tingalpa Shire proposing a merger but it was decided to wait until the end of the War to proceed with this matter.

Ultimately the State Government orchestrated a substantial reorganisation of local government in south-east Queensland in the late 1940s. Thirteen local authorities were abolished and replaced by three new enlarged authorities; these included the amalgamation of Cleveland with part of Tingalpa Shire to form the greater Shire of Redland.⁷ This was declared on 11 December 1948. The official designation of the original Town of Tingalpa was rescinded at the time,⁸ and shortly after that all of the street names in the township were changed. The last meeting of the Cleveland Shire Council was held on Thursday 12 May 1949, followed by the first meeting of the Redland Shire Council on 9 June.

Subdivisions

During the early 1950s many subdivisions were taking place in the Capalaba area to cater for the post-war housing demands. The Davesons subdivided Portion 47 along Birkdale Road in 1949.⁹ Portions 95 and 100 on Mount Cotton Road opposite Capalaba School were subdivided and School Road was constructed in 1951.¹⁰ Mr Valentine and Mr A Young were subdividing Daveson Road and Willard Road estates at the same time.¹¹ Chairman Norm Price's report handed down in July 1955 articulated the state of play in terms of development and the future of the Redland Shire. While he was proud of the development that was taking place, he was concerned about the future economic viability of the traditional rural-based industries. The subdivision of the rich red soil was of concern to him, as it would cause an economic loss to the area, to be replaced by cheap dormitory accommodation for Brisbane workers.¹² In June 1956 Clem Jones was appointed consultant surveyor to develop new by-laws in relation to subdivision and planning.¹³ In his 1957 report, Norm Price argued for the need to encourage settlement

⁷ Harris, *op. cit.* p.27.

⁸ GG; 11 December 1948, pp.3020-1.

⁹ Cleveland Shire Council Minutes, May 1949.

¹⁰ Redland Shire Council Minutes, March 1951.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, July 1951.

¹² *Ibid.*, Chairman's Report, July 1955.

¹³ *Ibid.*, Chairman's Report, June 1956.

in the poorer soils, in order to protect the productive soils. Policy guidelines were in place to achieve that. He recognised the need for town planning to 'protect the land of the primary producer and permanent resident from the evil consequences of the unscrupulous speculator's activities'.¹⁴

Transport was a problem at that time because the Transport Minister would only allow feeder bus services between Thornlands and the Belmont tram terminus. The Capalaba Progress Association was lobbying the Minister for improved bus service.¹⁵ Chairman Price lamented the 'dead hand of bureaucracy', which was stalling the development of a fast bus service to and from Brisbane, with feeder services within the shire. Primary producers were still given priority in the construction of roads because they were necessary for the delivery of goods to market. Price was also concerned that the areas of poorer soils were being subdivided into non-viable semi-rural properties, promoted by deceitful developers as having the ability to yield as much as the red soil areas. The inability of these small landholders to produce viable crops was resulting in the district getting a 'black eye' from the poverty perpetuated here.¹⁶

One of the less accountable organisations, the Greenbelt Development Company, proposed to subdivide 350 hectares in Sawmill Road in September 1952. This was in the area between Summit Street, Pioneer Road and Campbell Road. However, this developer was in constant conflict with the Council during the ensuing years because of the failure to comply with basic planning requirements, including drainage and road access. In September 1957 a report from consulting engineers John Wilson and Partners stated that in not one case did the figures on the plans indicating the drainage easements agree with what was on the ground.¹⁷ By April the company director was complaining that the Council surveyor was being unreasonable and that the Council should approve his plans immediately. Council, however, deferred a decision on the matter while seeking further advice. Meanwhile people continued to buy this land and be 'stung' in the process. In November 1961 the developer still sought approval for further subdivisions in the area because he believed the construction of a track and the placing of drainage pipes were

¹⁴ Ibid., Chairman's Report, August 1957.

¹⁵ *Redlands News*, 19 November 1954.

¹⁶ Redland Shire Council Minutes, Chairman's Report, July 1955.

¹⁷ Ibid., September 1957.

sufficient. Council continued to insist that the conditions laid down in earlier correspondence be adhered to, and eventually the whole issue of subdivision in this estate was referred on to the Solicitor General. It was suggested that grave hardship might be incurred by persons buying this land and the Shire Chairman and Clerk were to withdraw it from sales lists providing that all the expenses are paid in full, including not less than 50% of the arrears of rates.¹⁸

Grave hardship did ensue for the purchasers. June and Johnny Walker were among the first to take up residence and June fought an uphill battle of survival on this isolated estate:

We read in the paper about the Greenbelt Development Company, which was selling blocks of land for 10 shillings a week each. So we went to see about it and decided to buy first one block, then later we finished up with three blocks up in Pioneer Street in 1953. The person selling the land made out that this was good farming land. He said; 'chocolate soil', as he rubbed it with the heel of his shoe. It had been raining and naturally it was a brownish colour, but in actual fact it dries to a powdery surface. But then there was clay and then there was shale and to put fence posts in we had to use a crow bar. We thought we'd have a vegetable patch, but the most we ever grew was a couple of banana bushes, and from our washing up water we managed to grow a row of silverbeet, a patch of sweet potatoes, patch of pumpkins and that's about it. Not much else. We did not have enough water in the creek to keep a farm going. Sometimes it was dry and we'd have to dig a small well in the bed of one of the waterholes. If we wanted drinking water we used to go to the other creek over yonder, because it was clearer. We'd carry some over in a bucket. Eventually we got an old Studebaker and we'd go to Belmont or to Gumdale where there were fire hydrants to get water. You didn't use water and throw it out. You used it many times over and then it went on to the floors because we had dirt floors and we had to keep the dust down.¹⁹

Local people were intent on making the best of their situation however, and in January 1954 the Wattle Park Progress Association was formed amongst the residents in the Sawmill Road area. They wanted to change the name of the region to Wattle Park and had requested the Post Master General to agree to this. They were also busy lobbying Council for improvements in the roads, particularly Sawmill Road, and the alleviation of

¹⁸ Ibid., March 1962.

¹⁹ June Walker interview with Mary Howells, 1997, Redland Shire Council Oral History Collection.

the flooding problems there.²⁰ By October 1959 the road was being upgraded along to the Wallaby Creek crossing in preparation for the wet season. However, in June 1960 Council insisted it had no intention of further extensions to the roadworks on Sawmill Road.

Housing

The Cleveland, Tingalpa and subsequent Redland Shire, like other areas of Australia, suffered an acute housing shortage after the War. Conditions of the Depression continued for some time. Council's policy allowed new settlers to take up land with temporary buildings while fencing, clearing and cultivating were carried out as a spare time occupation, provided they were planning to build a home and permanently occupy the property.²¹ It was this policy that perpetuated the inferior housing standards, which typified the region from the Depression through to the 1960s. The Council Minutes noted many illegal additions to homes in the region during this time. One home in Finucane Road was condemned and earmarked for demolition. It housed a family with three children in a structure made of pieces of fibro and old iron with no washing or bathing facilities and an inadequate toilet.²²

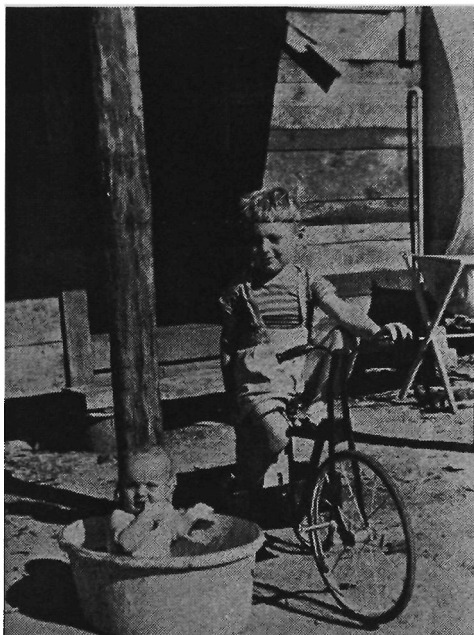


Figure 7 Raymond and Bruce Neller outside the family home in Capalaba, 1952 (*George and Bettie Neller*)

On the other side of the coin, it was the inventiveness of the residents and their desire to make the best of their situation that gave the area its character. Bank loans were not available to people with irregular incomes, and many families started with a basic four walls and added to their homes as they could afford to.

Later in the 1950s, materials were more readily available, and some could afford to build substantial homes or to renovate old ones. George and Bettie Neller started their married life in the

²⁰ Redland Shire Council Minutes, January 1954, February 1954, August 1954.

²¹ *Ibid.*, Chairman's Report July 1958.

²² Redland Shire Council Minutes, August 1957.

bush in Sawmill Road where George worked in the timber industry. They later moved to the luxury of a caravan, which grew to house their young family: Bettie describes the family's living conditions in the late 1950s:

When we moved down to School Road in Capalaba we lived in a caravan. Then we added a big kitchen, because I had to have a wood stove. The kitchen was built with car cases. The draught used to come through the walls. Then we added another bedroom for ourselves. The children had the caravan and we had a bedroom on the side for ourselves and the baby. It had a proper floor. We had a water tank outside and under the tank we had a tin bath with a wood copper beside it. That's where I boiled up the water for the washing.²³

June and Johnny Walker set up house in Pioneer Street, and Johnny's intermittent work ensured the poverty of the family for many years:

We moved up to Sawmill Road during the Easter weekend in 1953. Our house was just high fence posts with galvanised iron on top and whatever boards you could get hold of, you'd nail on the sides. We didn't have walls but we had partitions. Because of the shortage of building materials, they began about a foot up off the floor and they finished where you couldn't see across. Snakes would come in. It was quite frightening at night time. For building materials we used packing cases. We got some glass delivered from the NACO factory at Northgate and we used the timber cases. We stood them on end and put anything over them to keep the weather off until we had time to pull them apart. Even the nails were re-used. It was my job to hammer the nails straight again. You daren't throw away a bent nail. You had to be very frugal and I'm still that way! It was freezing in the winter. Your bones hurt! And of course the wind came in under the roofing iron. You'd light a stove and the stove went up along the roof. In the cold there was the condensation and in the summer there would be a few drips that would be the colour of tea, because of the smoke. We made rugs to keep warm. They were called Wagga rugs. They were made from potato sacks. We opened them out and stitched them together. In our first hut we used the potato sacks as doors and windows.²⁴

Kev and Elaine Woodward were luckier than some because Kev had a secure job and they could save money to buy new materials, as Elaine recalls:

²³ Bettie Neller interview with Mary Howells, 1997, Redland Shire Council Oral History Collection.

²⁴ June Walker interview.

We purchased three acres of land from Mr Valentine in 1953 for £110 an acre in Daveson Road. We were married in April and we got straight into clearing the land. It took a long time. We did it in stages. First we cleared enough to build this house. We cut the trees with a big long two-man saw and wedges and we burnt off the stumps with the trees that we felled. We used a lot of the timber for fence posts.

After we bought the land, we didn't have much money left. So every week we used to save up enough out of hubby's wages to buy materials and each weekend we'd come down and use those materials. We didn't have loans. You couldn't get loans. We had no collateral in those days. We first used to travel down in the motorbike and sidecar. We moved into the house in 1957, although it wasn't finished then. We had three rooms lined and all the rest was just framework and no floor in any other rooms. There were only three rooms that you could really use. We had to keep the area barricaded because we had a two-year-old daughter by then. We would build at night and I used to hold the broom up to hold the sheets of fibro while Kev nailed them. We had a bucket under the sink for the water and an old copper boiler outside which we stoked up with the wood from the property to do the washing. The bath water was kept for the garden. We did have electricity of course, so that was another comfort. Looking back, we had a lot of fun really. We were so glad to have our own place. Not many of our friends could afford their own home. Some people could get a War service loan, but others had to make their own way.²⁵

Post-war migrants

Subdivisions in the Capalaba area attracted new settlers, many of whom were migrants escaping War-torn Europe. Polish and Dutch families were amongst the newcomers. The policy that allowed housing to be built in stages was ideal for these newcomers who were willing to take on any work available to provide a future for their families in their new homeland. Building applications in the early 1950s were overwhelmingly from these migrant populations. Jozef Wasiel explains the circumstances that brought him to Capalaba and his role in encouraging others to join him in building this significant Polish Community.

I had been a prisoner of war in a concentration camp in Germany and at the end of the War; Poland was free of Nazi occupation but fell under the Soviet Communist Regime occupation. We decided not to return to Poland, but to stay outside the border and continue to fight for the freedom of Poland. Then we decided to come to Australia. My wife Hilda and I had two daughters, Renate aged three and Barbara

²⁵ Elaine Woodward interview with Mary Howells, 1996, Redland Shire Council Oral History Collection.

aged one and half. We were sent to Greta migrant camp near Maitland in New South Wales. I was sent to Queensland on a two-year contract and Hilda and the children had to stay behind. My first job was with the gas company, digging trenches and laying gas pipes, and I lived in the Colmslie Hotel. I wanted to buy some land for my family and the area around Capalaba was beautiful and it was close to the sea and the land was cheap. I told many of my Polish friends about the area and I even went down and bought some land for them. I had a pushbike so I could get around. I just told them about the land and I bought some for them as well. There were other nationalities as well. There were Dutch people, English, Yugoslavs and some Italians. Some of the Dutch came from Indonesia. There were about 20 families that settled here.

When we first came here we rented the old garage at Mr Girdler's honey house. It had no windows or doors, but we fixed it up and lived in it. Then I started building my little dream house on my land just around the corner in Old Cleveland Road East, heading towards Birkdale. For the main timber base I used my own round timber. It was about 20 foot by 15 foot. Then I used any material I could find; tin, old boards, even bark for guttering to catch rainwater. I put a couple of windows and doors, second hand of course, and the

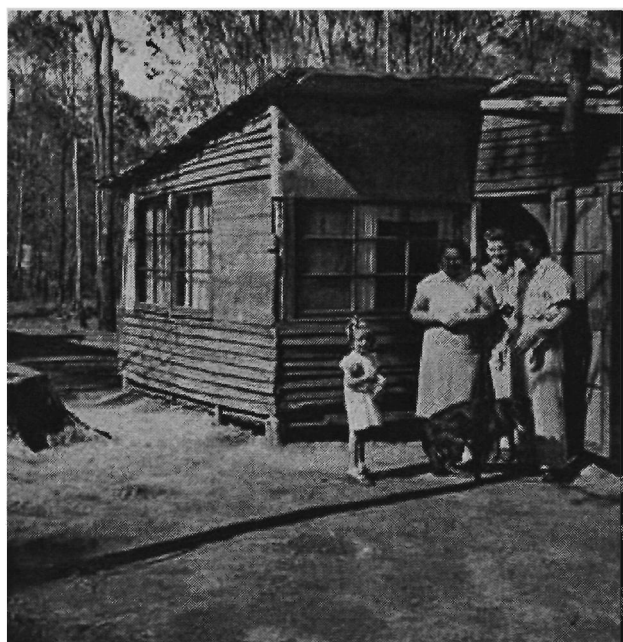


Figure 8 Wasiel family outside their 'dream home', 248 Old Cleveland Road East, 1951 (Jozef Wasiel)

roof was covered with roofing tar paper. It took me about three months to build. We had a water tank, but we were still buying about 1000 gallons every second month, which cost us about two or three pounds a time. For about six months we cooked on bricks with tin on top. Then we bought a stove and copper to boil water for washing and bathing, and that was about Christmas 1951. We had a second-hand table, double bed and three-quarter bed and a couple of chairs we bought second-hand. Right from the beginning we used some fruit cases to sit on. Our first house was much like all the others in the area.

Eventually we built another house. It was built of fibro and was about 30 x 12 foot and then every second year we built on the kitchen, the bathroom, the veranda and last we built on another two bedrooms because the kids were growing up. It was accepted by the Shire Council. You had to report to them and they would call every time to inspect the work. The inspector was happy as long as you had a hygienic toilet. We had an outhouse out the back. We had a night soil man but some people still had to bury their own.

Timber and quarrying

In an effort to alleviate the shortage of building materials immediately after the War, the Government decided to allow sawmill licences, without investigation, to any applicant who stated that timber supplies were readily available. Many were allowed to cut timber from private sources.²⁶ Timber supplies were plentiful and continued to be an important industry in the Capalaba region with sawmills operating in various locations, including Pittendreigh's in Sawmill Road, which ran during the late 1940s and early 1950s.

Jack Gannon initially established an engineering workshop in Capalaba in 1953, which later evolved into a sawmill. George Turner bought the mill in the early 1960s and ran it for about six years.²⁷ A case mill was built on Finucane Road in June 1956. Blunts started a mill in West Mount Cotton Road in 1948 which was ultimately replaced by a quarry and sold to Karremans in 1975. Tom Blunt followed his father into the timber industry and he recalls the state of play of that time:

We started off our sawmill on West Mount Cotton Road in about 1948, and it ran right through until 1970 when I closed it down. I had the quarry running by then so I closed the sawmill down. Karremans own the quarry now. But during the milling days we had timber trucks of our own to transport the timber. Most people wanted it transported, particularly if it was a long length and they didn't have the trucks to transport them. Most of the farmers had small trucks. We used to deliver house timber to quite a lot of farmers. We provided a lot of the posts and stakes and that sort of thing for the farmer. We eventually stopped going into Brisbane and we just sold firewood, fence posts, split fence posts, house stumps, just to the local area.

I got into quarrying after the Main Roads started quarrying the site. They used to come around looking for gravel and they'd offer you three or four shillings a metre. They came and dug it up for the roads. There were a lot of hills round the area up Avalon Road and everywhere. We just carried on years later and it turned into a good business for me. I sold out to Karremans in 1975, and now its one of the biggest quarries in the area.²⁸

²⁶ Fisher and Johnston, p.139.

²⁷ Redland Shire Council Minutes, June 1953.

²⁸ Tom Blunt interview.

Conservation and Wildlife

Though ongoing development had an impact on the local wildlife, koalas surprisingly began to return to the region. Local residents had not seen koalas since the 1930s. They were close to extinction following the final open shooting season in 1927. However, there is no doubt that koalas are native to the area as many older residents have memories of their existence earlier this century.²⁹

Apart from shooting, habitat destruction was the major cause of the reduction in numbers of many varieties of wildlife. This included the obvious tree felling and less obvious causes such as the filling in of local waterholes. The Sawmill Road area became locally known as ‘wild horse mountain’ because of the numbers of horses dumped there after the introduction of the motorcar. They had a destructive impact on the region. Other wildlife was still plentiful.

Timber man Tom Blunt provides a good overview of the re-emergence of the koala to the region:

Well, as long back as I can remember at Capalaba, I'd never ever heard or seen a koala. I lived in the bush virtually all the time from the 1930s. My home was in the bush. You would have heard koalas at night time if they'd been there. My father cut timber in every paddock, and the only thing I can remember is him talking about koalas at Belmont when he was a boy, and it would have been round the turn of the century, you know, 1918 or something like that. Then we moved from there to West Mount Cotton, which is an absolute paradise for koalas. It has the right timber growing on it. But we never saw a koala until the early '60s, and then some of the locals at West Mount Cotton saw the odd ones cross the road, and it was a wonderful thing. It was something that everybody spoke about. It wasn't like it is now. If you saw a koala now you probably wouldn't even mention it to somebody.

Capalaba School

The siting of Capalaba School continued to be a problem, which resurfaced numerous times since the initial arguments over its location in 1879. In February 1947, Noel

²⁹ Mary Howells, ‘Report on Koala Distribution in the Redland Shire circa 1890-1949’, 1996, Cleveland Library Local History Collection.

McEniery of Lytton Street, Capalaba, wrote to the Education Department requesting that the Capalaba School be moved to a site in the central township of Capalaba on the intersection of Redland Bay and Mount Cotton Roads. Fourteen families living along Old Cleveland Road, New Cleveland Road, Old Ipswich Road or in Redland Bay Road favoured the move. Again the rivalry between the town residents and the Upper Tingalpa folk was apparent. Frank Burbank mounted a petition of people living along Mount Cotton, Sawmill and Broadwater Roads and collected 26 signatures. The response of the Education Department was to leave well enough alone.³⁰

Post Offices

Postal services to the region in the post-war years were enhanced with the construction of three new post offices. James Willard junior had been operating the Thorneside post office from his house since July 1938. This enabled people to collect their mail locally, rather than having to walk down to Birkdale railway station.³¹ The Birkdale post office was located in Patrick Dempsey's store from 1 April 1947.³² In September 1948 Jim Willard's daughter, Grace Weber, sought approval to build and operate the Thorneside post office in Mooroondu Road. Upper Tingalpa residents received their mail via the Mount Gravatt post office.³³ In Capalaba LC Haines in March erected a post office and store in Mount Cotton Road in 1948.³⁴ In 1954 the district postal inspector gave approval for the extension of the south Capalaba mail service to three times a week in the Sawmill Road area.³⁵ By September 1954 a new post office was constructed in Birkdale Road, Birkdale.³⁶

Community Halls, Community Groups and Churches

The Thorneside community, many of whom were only weekend residents, formed a Progress Association after the War. They saw the need for a local hall and in February

³⁰ EDU/Z508, Capalaba School File, QSA.

³¹ Frew, p.431; oral history interviews with Shirley Tighe and Gwyn Randall, Redland Shire Council Oral History Collection.

³² Frew, p.200.

³³ George Lyons interview with Mary Howells, 1998, Redland Shire Council Oral History Collection.

³⁴ Cleveland Shire Council Minutes, March 1948.

³⁵ *Redland News*, 11 August 1954.

³⁶ Redland Shire Council Minutes, December 1954.

1946 lobbied for Council assistance in building one. They initially sought permission to use land on the reserve, but were informed that the reserve was for camping and recreation. In October 1946 Cr Toni reported that Jim Willard had agreed to sell five acres in Mooroondu Road. Eventually the Council agreed to buy Willard's land (Subs 136/137) as well as adjoining land offered by Mr Roger (Subs 149/150) for the Progress Association.³⁷

It took many years to raise the funds needed for the hall. Thorneside architecture student Jim Wright designed the building during 1953, and the locals were impressed with the design features he was able to incorporate within their limited budget.³⁸ Fundraising was ongoing and the official opening was held on 6 July 1962. Council had contributed £625 and the locals had raised £1512. The region then boasted an asset valued at £6000, thanks to the hard-working volunteers of the Thorneside community.³⁹

The growing population of these settlements also looked for spiritual guidance. The Presbyterian Church in Old Cleveland Road Capalaba West began during 1944 when members of the Manly/Lota congregation interviewed families in Capalaba. There was concern that the children in the area were receiving no religious instruction. They interviewed local families and found that there were 25 children who would attend Sunday school if it were available. Mrs Jane Blunt donated the use of a small vacant building for 1/- week rental. The first meeting was held in April 1944. Eventually a small wooden church building was placed on the site and remained until the late 1990s.⁴⁰ In Thorneside, the Methodist Church bought land opposite Willards in 1948 and the Catholic Archdiocese had also purchased land in the vicinity of Roy Street in 1946.⁴¹ The Salvation Army received permission to erect their hall on the corner of Pittwin Road and Mount Cotton Road in December 1960.⁴² The Polish community built their hall in

³⁷ Cleveland Shire Council Minutes, January 1947.

³⁸ *Redland Times*, 26 June 1953.

³⁹ Redland Shire Council Minutes, July 1962.

⁴⁰ 'Manly-Lota Presbyterian Church, 50 Years, Jubilee souvenir book with 1983 supplement', typescript, courtesy Les Callaghan.

⁴¹ Redland Shire Council Rate Book 1946-49.

⁴² *Ibid.*, Minutes, December 1960.

Holland Crescent in May 1965, which had multiple uses in the district.⁴³ Jozef Wasiel was involved in the establishment of the hall:

I was involved with the Polish Ex-serviceman's Association, which started in Brisbane in 1954. It moved to Capalaba in 1964, and through Father Wacław Czapla, we took over property in Holland Crescent from the Sisters of Nazareth who had bought it in 1951.⁴⁴ Father Czapla also bought a 60 x 20 foot army barracks for the Polish community. We had to dismantle it in Chermside and bring it here by truck and assemble it again. First we cleared the bush and put some stumps for the base of the barracks. Then it was lined inside and painted. The whole community worked on it. It was used for church services as well as social events. It was also used for school, to teach our children the Polish language and culture and for scouts and for all sorts of celebrations and functions. Australians, Dutch and all nationalities came to the church which was Catholic. The only other Catholic Church in the area was in Cleveland. Mass was in Latin, but we sang in Polish. The priest came from Brisbane every Sunday morning.⁴⁵

The Capalaba School of Arts Hall continued to be run by the board of trustees. Many of the original trustees died or moved on and in 1975 the hall was vested with the Redland Shire for community purposes.⁴⁶ Nellie Weaber recalls the amount of work her father put into the hall:

My father, George Turner, was involved with the Capalaba School of Arts Hall and he was always busy getting the hall ready for dances on a Saturday night. On Saturday mornings he would go out into the bush and cut down a lot of oak trees and he would put them at the front door and around inside the hall between the windows to make it look bushified. Then he would decorate it with balloons and streamers. To keep the floor nice we'd put down a bag of ice-cream cones and soak it in kerosene and us kids would get on a bag and drag each other around the hall. The kerosene soaked into the ice cream cones and that helped clean the floor. Then we'd put 'Pops' on the floor. It would keep the floor really nice. Then on Sunday morning we'd have to go and clean the hall out.

The hall was the heart of Capalaba. There was euchre every Wednesday night. We had Sunday School there and in later years the Maternal and Child Welfare nurse came there. We had a National Bank

⁴³Ibid., May 1965.

⁴⁴ Redland Shire Rate Book, 1950-55.

⁴⁵ Jozef Wasiel interview.

⁴⁶ Information supplied by Nellie Weaber.

*and a library in there. Ken Winter donated a lot of the books for that library and Mrs Fredericks was always a good librarian. The school had all their functions in the hall and there were weddings and 21st parties. When you have a party in a small community, everyone is invited. Dad was one of the trustees of the hall from 1963 and he was eventually given life membership.*⁴⁷

Recreation

Organised recreation generally tended to revolve around the community halls that were already established and sporting clubs grew in the 1950s and 1960s. In 1963 the Capalaba Sporting Club formed and met regularly in the school grounds.⁴⁸ Tennis and cricket were played in Thorneside and Birkdale as Jack Finney recalls:

*When we first moved to Thorneside after the War, we were looking for some recreation, although there wasn't much time by the time you worked till 12.00 o'clock on Saturday and caught the train home. But after we'd been here about two years, we started to play tennis at Sturman's place. They had a poultry and small crops farm and a tennis court. They lived up where Railway Parade meets Henry Street. It was an antbed court and you had to water and roll it before you played. My wife played tennis initially and I used to play cricket. The cricket pitch was where the Uniting Church is now in John Street. It belonged to Mr Willard. We used to have a place marked down there and we used to put a mat down there and play cricket. We used to have fixtures and play Gumdale and Runcorn and other farming places on our home-made pitch. We also played rugby league there. My wife used to make sandwiches and custard tarts and things and make a picnic day out of it. We only played tennis in the winter. Most of the men who played tennis, played cricket in the summer and it was years before we had summer and winter tennis fixtures.*⁴⁹

A lack of activities for young people prompted the Capalaba School of Arts Committee to form a youth group in 1957.⁵⁰ The Capalaba Scout Troop was founded in 1959 and the first meeting was held in the hall in March.⁵¹ Later that year there was a new impetus to the development of recreational facilities in the area following the donation of 1¼ acres of land in Mount Cotton Road by Ken Winter for the development of a Capalaba

⁴⁷ Nellie Weaber interview.

⁴⁸ *Redlands News*, 4 October 1963.

⁴⁹ Jack Finney interviewed by Tracy Ryan, 1994, Redland Shire Council Oral History Collection.

⁵⁰ Redland Shire Council Minutes September 1957.

⁵¹ *Redlands News*, 28 February 1958.

Civic Centre. By March 1960, Winter had employed an architect to draw up a planning proposal for the site, which would include tennis and basketball courts, bowling greens etc. Council's only commitment to the project was to indicate its non-financial support for the committee, and the project failed to proceed.⁵²

One of the most successful recreational facilities in Capalaba was the Greyhound Club, which had a humble beginning on a track behind the hotel in October 1948.⁵³ A rival club operated during 1951 in Redland Bay Road, but the National Coursing Association objected and the second track eventually closed.⁵⁴ Meanwhile, the original track continued to prosper and in 1951 held a fundraising event in aid of the Redlands Ambulance. A new electric eye was installed at the finishing line at that time.⁵⁵

Capalaba Drive-in Theatre

During the mid 1950s the first major business investment in Capalaba took place and this was pivotal in the development of the region.⁵⁶ The construction of the Capalaba Drive-in Theatre put the township 'on the map' because of the crowds it drew from all over the south side of Brisbane. The official opening was held on 22 December 1955, with two sessions run nightly at 7.15 and 9.15. The opening night film was *Has anybody seen my girl?* This was the first drive-in theatre in Queensland, closely followed by Mount Isa and Boondall.⁵⁷

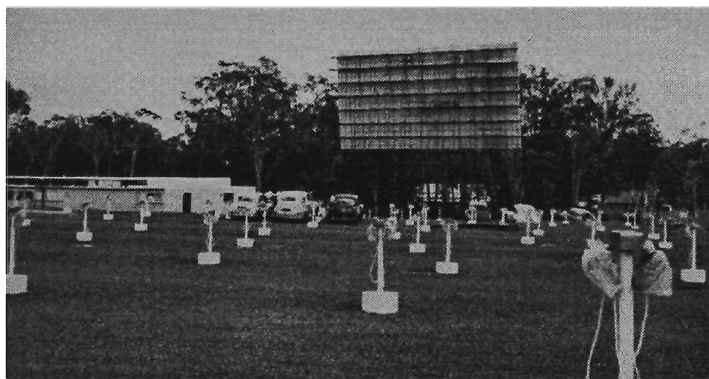


Figure 9 Capalaba Drive-in, near completion, 1955
(Queensland Newspapers)

The drive-in was a further catalyst to development in the region, with many small businesses remaining open to cater for drive-in patrons. Of course, there were some people who managed to

⁵² Redland Shire Council Minutes March 1960.

⁵³ Cleveland Shire Council Minutes October, December 1948, March 1949.

⁵⁴ Redland Shire Council Minutes, May, June 1951.

⁵⁵ *Redlands News*, 23 November 1951 p.3.

⁵⁶ Capalaba Pictures Pty Ltd registered as a company on 25 August 1953. It secured a capital investment of £100,000 and offered 30,000 shares to investors. (Register of Companies, A/18957 – M2813, QSA)

⁵⁷ *Courier-Mail*, 19 December 1955 p.5.

view the films without paying, simply by parking outside the fence and asking a patron to point a speaker in their direction. An area of high land along the road became known locally as 'Scotchman's Hill'. The success of the drive-in was such that extensions were approved in May 1964.⁵⁸ The drive-in provided local employment and entertainment as George Lyons recalls:

*Everyone who was anyone around Capalaba got a job of some kind there. The ushers were all dressed up in uniforms with berets and they used to meet the cars at the gates. They all carried torches and they flicked their torches in the direction you had to go with your car. It was a real military turnout. They had two shows on a Saturday night and the second show would start around 9.00 or 9.30 and the cars would be lined up all the way to the Wynnum turnoff. My father got a job as a cleaner and night watchman. He would start work at 11.00pm and finish at 7.00am.*⁵⁹

Viva Morrow took her family along regularly:

*When I was a young married person with young children, we went every Thursday night to the drive-in. You bathed the kids and put them in their pyjamas and dressing gowns and you went over and had dinner. There was a nice little restaurant in there. It was the first restaurant type thing in Capalaba. After dinner you'd go over and watch. You'd put the kiddies down to sleep in the back of the car and they went off to sleep. It was good.*⁶⁰

During the late 1950s the Capalaba drive-in became the focal point of entertainment in the area, although there was still competition from Wynnum theatres, the *Revue* theatre in Cleveland and the Wellington Point Hall. During 1957 the drive-in began showing foreign films and continental programs became a regular occurrence. Following their success the Wellington Point cinema fought back with a half-page advertisement in *The Redlands News* promoting their varied program with Monday night as Continental Night. Apparently the Wellington Point cinema was 'the home of good pictures, good sound, no worries with the weather, at the people's prices'.⁶¹ The Capalaba drive-in continued to stage special events to draw the crowds with Ranch Nights a regular occurrence as well as

⁵⁸ Redland Shire Council Minutes, finance and works committee, May 1964.

⁵⁹ George Lyons interview with Mary Howells, 1998, Redland Shire Council Oral History Collection.

⁶⁰ Viva Morrow interview.

⁶¹ *Redlands News*, 10 May 1957.

the Coca Cola Yo Yo Championships.⁶² By 1974 the drive-in had become so popular that it was allowed to open earlier to sell tickets to alleviate the traffic problems.⁶³ In later years a neon sign was erected on top of the screen, indicating 'full' to patrons lined up along Old Cleveland Road waiting to enter.

Occupations and Lifestyles

Several new small businesses began to develop in the Thorneside area post-war. In November 1946 Mr Newbury sought a permit to build a butcher's shop and in October 1947 Frank Medhurst was granted approval for a shop in Mooroodu Road.⁶⁴ In March 1953, Cr Charles Toni applied to build a general store,⁶⁵ and Mr and Mrs Phillipoon ran a haberdashery shop from October 1958.⁶⁶

Dairies still operating in the 1950s included Meggs at the end of Creek Road Birkdale, Roberts and Schmidts in Thorneside, Woodgates in Birkdale, Fredericks and Jones in Capalaba. During the 1960s the Federal Government was encouraging the rationalisation of industries, particularly dairying. Farmers began to get lower prices for their cream and eventually production costs began to outstrip profits. Good land prices for urban subdivisions coupled with a lack of interest from their better-educated children led many farmers to abandon dairying.⁶⁷ Other families diversified.

Shirley Tighe was impressed with the Roberts family who ran a dairy and a clothing factory from their property in Thorneside:

*In the '50s Hughie Roberts had a clothing factory. Mrs Roberts ran the factory. Hughie was a brainy man. He was a draftsman by trade and he used to draft all the clothing. They employed about 30 or 40 girls. They would come from Lota, Wynnum, Cleveland and around here. Hughie Roberts lived opposite where the service station is now.*⁶⁸

⁶² Ibid., 6 June, 19 December 1958.

⁶³ *Redland Times*, 12 June 1974.

⁶⁴ Cleveland Shire Council Minutes, November 1946, May, October 1947, September 1948.

⁶⁵ Ibid., March 1953.

⁶⁶ Redland Shire Council Minutes, April 1954, October 1958.

⁶⁷ Fisher and Johnston, p. 133.

⁶⁸ Shirley Tighe interview with Mary Howells, 1997, Redland Shire Council Oral History Collection.

Mary Schmidt and her husband bought Roberts' property in 1955 and continued to run the dairy. She recalls the kindness of the Thorneside locals who helped her out when her husband was ill:

Roberts moved their clothing factory to Manly and sold us part of the property. It was 94 acres and was run as a dairy farm supplying cream to the Kingston Butter Factory. Our house was opposite where the service station is now. My husband was interested in trotting and then had had an accident and I had to manage the dairy. It was jolly terrible! We had 35 or 40 cows. It was all milking machines, but you had to organise everything and feed them. I used to have an electric chaff cutter and had to chaff up the lucerne and do everything. My eldest son was 15 and the youngest was three. Arthur was in hospital for almost a year and when he came home he wasn't very mobile. We hadn't been in the area long, but Jack Finney came up one day and offered to help. I couldn't believe that a total stranger would come and help with the milking. We sold cream to the Kingston butter factory and milk to Pauls. We also sold milk to the Capalaba drive-in. Our old property is now the St James's Park estate.⁶⁹

While Thorneside remained a small and relatively isolated community, Capalaba began to boom. In 1951 Tom Petersen built a butcher's shop in Capalaba, Don Pittendreigh applied to establish a bakery and Mrs Dollery wanted to build a shop and dwelling.⁷⁰ Mrs Lutton took over the Toffee Apple Shop, which was operating opposite the Presbyterian Church. She sold scones, biscuits and dressed poultry.⁷¹ Jack Gannon applied to operate an engineering workshop in Capalaba in 1953 and to construct a bank in 1954.⁷²

Timber was still readily available and, during 1954, H Corbett was advertising his services as a fuel merchant in the local newspaper.⁷³ A case mill was built in Finucane Road in June 1956 and the Capalaba Hotel was extended later that year.⁷⁴ Further extensions to the hotel in 1959 included a beer garden. In April 1955 the Skinner brothers sought

⁶⁹ Mary Schmidt interview with Mary Howells, 1997, Redland Shire Council Oral History Collection.

⁷⁰ Cleveland Shire Council Minutes, March 1948, Redland Shire Council Minutes April, August 1951, November 1951, July 1952.

⁷¹ *Redland News*, 9 November 1951, p.5.

⁷² Redland Shire Council Minutes, June 1953.

⁷³ *Redlands News*, 12 June 1954.

⁷⁴ Redland Shire Council Minutes, June, August 1956.

approval for a horse abattoir on Mount Cotton Road. In 1958 Hookways built a shop and dwelling in Finucane Road, at the intersection with Birkdale Road.⁷⁵



Figure 10 Capalaba store, post office, and service station, circa 1950 (*Narelle Renn*)

The other major service industry, which emerged in these post-war years, was the petrol station. Ampol Petroleum built a service station next to the Capalaba Hotel in November 1952 and both Jack Gannon and Henrietta Dollery applied to build service stations at the same time.⁷⁶ In August 1953, the Shell company was planning a new garage in Capalaba, costing £3000.⁷⁷ Caltex built a garage on the Capalaba School Road in September 1954 and an application to construct a service station on the corner of Finucane Road and Birkdale Road was deferred pending the solving of drainage problems associated with the site whilst road construction was underway. In 1955 Ampol applied to install workshops at their Capalaba garage, and the Shell service station was extended in 1958.⁷⁸

⁷⁵ Redland Shire Council Minutes, October 1958.

⁷⁶ Ibid., October-December 1952.

⁷⁷ Ibid., June 1953.

⁷⁸ Ibid., September 1954, April 1955, September 1958.

During December 1959 the Union Jack service station and sawmill were up for auction. The sale included 700m² of land as well as plant and outbuildings.⁷⁹ George Turner purchased the property and sold sawn timber, split posts, house stumps and round posts.⁸⁰ In 1963 petrol bowzers were erected outside Medhurst's shop in Thorneside.⁸¹ This had become common in small shops in the outer areas of the shire.

Harry Owen established his garage in the old Tingalpa township on the Brisbane side of the creek. It was the development of small businesses that sowed the seeds of Capalaba's industrial base. Harry recalls the evolution of his produce store and neighbouring businesses:

We bought the Toffee Apple Shop in the early 1950s from the Osbornes. It was on the Brisbane Road after Tingalpa Creek about five or six hundred yards past on the left hand side. It was only open on weekends to cater for the tourists. They sold mostly toffee apples and they made croquettes and rissoles as well. We bought it with my brother Don and we kept adding little bits and pieces of groceries and smallgoods and things. Later on after the drive-in opened, we used to stay open late at night to catch the passing trade.

The Courier-Mail had approached us about a paper franchise and we took on any thing that had a shilling in it. We had to go as far as Thornlands but we took groceries and produce along as well so the paper did boost the business. The poultry business had been in the area for a while. The usual farm had about 600 head of layers and there were quite a few of them because the land around Capalaba was really too poor to grow anything, so that was all they could do for a living. Eventually we moved into selling produce. It came out of the mixed business and the paper run.

My brother Don decided to start a car repair business under the house. Soon he was doing well enough to think about having a garage, which was eventually built. It was a Mobil service station and it was built adjoining our shop. It was burnt down in June 1958⁸² by someone who was trying to milk it of petrol. They were very hard times. He was under insured and he had to start again. However, he built it up again and it's been a boom business. It's now the Matilda service station. In the early '60s a chap named

⁷⁹ *Redlands News*, 18 December 1959.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 2 June 1961.

⁸¹ Redland Shire Council Minutes, April 1963.

⁸² Information supplied by Don Owen.

*Bert Vidler bought a block of land from us and put in a hardware store. He originally started under our shop too. Other businesses along the Old Cleveland Road included George Randall's garage alongside our produce store, a fruit shop and a boat yard opposite. Then the Brisbane City Council rezoned all the land as residential and there are no new businesses along there.*⁸³

The major animal husbandry industries operating during the 1950s and 1960s included poultry and pigs, with Turners establishing their piggery towards the end of the War on the dirt track that was Finucane Road at that time. Carsons bought land further up the hill in 1949 and also established a piggery. Poultry was a bigger industry and this was the first successful agribusiness on the poor soils of Capalaba. Claude Stokes was one of the many poultry farmers in the area:

We bought land on Broadwater Road between Marawah and Boralee Streets in 1948 and set up a poultry farm. That area used to be called snake gully. We sold that property and moved back to Victoria for a while and then came back at the end of 1950 and started another poultry farm in Gumdale on New Cleveland Road. In those days poultry was hard work. We got out of bed early to open up the cages and let the birds out so you could collect the eggs and clean out the cages. We had to grow and cut green feed because there were no vitamin A supplements in those days. There was a carrier who was supposed to collect the eggs, but he was unreliable, so we bought a bigger truck and carted our own eggs.

*In 1960 we bought a property in Mount Cotton Road and we got into chickens again, but this time we had a cage plant, which meant a lot less work. There were a few chicken sheds on the property and my son John and I worked on building up the business together. We demolished all the old sheds and built new ones. The broiler industry became very important locally. The other problem was the disposal of the manure. At one time you'd sell all you had. Once the broiler industry started there was so much fowl manure around you couldn't dispose of it and you had to give it away. These days it is sold again.*⁸⁴

In July 1960 Danny Holzapfel opened a car showroom and vegetable shop adjacent to the service station on Old Cleveland Road Capalaba. At that time he was calling his business Salad Bowl Motors. It included a Ford dealership and an A-grade mechanic, and orders could be made for sand, gravel and ash delivery. Other businesses established during 1962 included Viva Egan's shops, which included a newsagency and drapery and

⁸³ Harry Owen interview with Mary Howells, 1996, Redland Shire Council Oral History Collection.

⁸⁴ Claude Stokes interview with Mary Howells, 1997, Redland Shire Council Oral History Collection.

John Ramsay's plumbing shop in Redland Bay Road. Craig Brown built his furniture showroom and offices in 1965. During 1965 and 1966 alterations were made to nearly all of the local service stations.

New roads and new suburbs

Future development hinged on the provision of local infrastructure. Finucane Road had originally been surveyed in the 1880s but remained a rough dirt track locally known as the short-cut to Cleveland. Although approval for its gazettal as main road was given in 1928, tenders were not called for its construction until the 1952/53 financial year. It was during this planning process in 1952 that Mary Crowle, the daughter of William Finucane who had conducted an unofficial survey of the road in the 1880s, wrote to the Council suggesting the name of Finucane for the new road.⁸⁵ Construction and formation began in 1954⁸⁶ and the bitumening process began in January 1957.⁸⁷

The completion of the road led to further subdivisional proposals and in June 1961 an application to develop a satellite town on Portions 126 and 110 along both sides of Finucane Road was made to the Redland Shire Council. At that time Council was in the process of completing the town plan. Consultant surveyors Jones, Follet and Pike were finalising a detailed plan when one of the partners, Clem Jones, was elected Lord Mayor of Brisbane. John Wilson and Partners were then requested to confer with Jones to take over this task. It was not until July 1963 that Aspley Homes Pty Ltd suggested to the Place Names Board that Alexandra be the name of the new township.⁸⁸ Presumably this was in honour of Princess Alexandra whose tour of Queensland for its centenary celebrations in 1959 was very successful. The first mention of the name of Alexandra Hills was in the Subdivisional Committee meeting of 23 March 1964, where the Alexandra Hills Development Corporation tabled its plan of subdivisions for the area. The name of Alexandra Hills was registered with the Place Names Board in September 1965.

⁸⁵ Redland Shire Council Minutes, October 1952.

⁸⁶ Redland Shire Council Minutes, October 1951, May 1954, September 1954, report J Wilson and Partners June 1953.

⁸⁷ *Redlands News*, 18 January 1957.

⁸⁸ Redland Shire Council Minutes, subdivisional committee meetings June 1961, July 1963.

During the 1960s more urban subdivisions were taking place. Capalaba Heights was completed in June 1960, as was the estate along Stanley Street, Capalaba. Sawmill Road was renamed Avalon Road in January 1964. Campbell Road was also named at that time.⁸⁹ Pittwin Road was formed in February 1963 and was named from an amalgamation of the names of local families Pittendreigh and Winter.⁹⁰ In November 1964 Viva Egan suggested that the new road between Old Cleveland Road and Redland Bay Road be named Dollery Road after her parents.⁹¹ Other roads to be formed during the early '60s included Larbonya Crescent and Allenby Road.⁹² Ney Road was not formed until October 1966.⁹³

Railway Closure

One of the most significant events that occurred in 1960 with little warning was the closure of the Lota to Cleveland section of the Cleveland rail line. In mid-1960 the line was losing over £130,000 per year. The Railway Department had set down 1 November 1960 as the date of closure, despite the fact that they had just invested in a new road bridge over the railway line in Wellington Point. Redland Shire councillors were strongly opposed to the closure. The shire was in the midst of increasing subdivisional development and primary producers, who still formed the backbone of the local economy, needed rail transport. Many local children travelled to Wynnum High School and to other schools along the line. Newspaper reports suggested that population increases in the Thorneside area had led to increases in commuters, who then numbered about 200 people daily. Councillors were also concerned that primary producers would lose preferential freight rates that had been organised by COD. The Shire Chairman, Norm Price, reminded them that only interstate produce was railed at that time and the Government could not be expected to continue funding an uneconomic service. However, the Council did strongly condemn the fact that the decision was made with no consultation. It was also concerned that closure of the railway would mean that bus

⁸⁹ Ibid., December 1963, January 1964.

⁹⁰ Ibid., February 1963, see interviews with Beryl Arrell and George Lyons, RSC Oral History Collection.

⁹¹ Redland Shire Council Minutes, November 1964.

⁹² Ibid., May, August 1964.

⁹³ Ibid., October 1966.

services would have to be upgraded, so that the Council would face increasing expenses in upgrading roads to cope with the increased heavy traffic.⁹⁴

The Education Department agreed to arrange temporary transport to the Wynnum schools in the short term.⁹⁵ Despite protests and public meetings the closure went ahead and the last train ran on Monday 31 October 1960.⁹⁶ By January 1961 a conference was held to investigate improvements to the local bus service, which seemed to face the same problems as the rail service in terms of lack of support, apart from the school buses, which were overcrowded.⁹⁷ Cleveland High School did not open and offer senior classes until April 1962,⁹⁸ although a secondary department had been operating at the primary school since 1956.⁹⁹ Capalaba students were already being bussed to Camp Hill High School.¹⁰⁰

During May 1961 the rails were pulled up and some bridges were dismantled. Station buildings were sold and many remained in the area. The Cleveland Central goods shed became a workshop at Capalaba and the station building was converted into a group of shops at Capalaba. This was later the second-hand store situated at the 'Black Stump' on the corner of Birkdale Road. The Raby Bay Station was moved to Birkdale and was used as a shop for many years opposite the Birkdale State School,¹⁰¹ before being removed to make way for the Shell service station. It is now part of the Old Schoolhouse Gallery complex in Shore Street North, Cleveland.

New Fruit and Vegetable Markets for Brisbane

The next event to impact on local people was the relocation of the Brisbane Markets from Roma Street to Rocklea (or Sherwood as the area was referred to then). Again this

⁹⁴ Ibid., September 1960, *The Redland News*, 16 September 1960.

⁹⁵ *Redlands News*, 21 October 1960.

⁹⁶ Kerr and Armstrong, p.91.

⁹⁷ Redland Shire Council Minutes, minutes of the conference re bus service improvements 10 January 1961.

⁹⁸ *Redlands News*, 19 January 1962.

⁹⁹ Cleveland High School Silver Jubilee Festival, October 1981, (brochure).

¹⁰⁰ Land was resumed for a high school in Capalaba in 1969 but the school was not built until 1978.

¹⁰¹ Alan Arundell, 'Sunshine Express' *Australian Railways Historical Society Journal* Vol 27, October 1967, pp.10-12.

would mean the upgrading of local roads leading to the markets. The first reference to this proposal was made in mid-1961, and the following year negotiations were made with Brisbane City Council regarding the most suitable route. All agreed that the upgrading of Duncan, Mount Cotton, and Mount Gravatt Roads over the Broadwater Bridge would best serve the shire. The effect of the proposed dam in Tingalpa Creek was also taken into consideration in this process. Duncan and Broadwater Roads were ultimately declared main roads as part of the new markets road, thus deferring responsibility to the Main Roads Department.¹⁰²

Planning and Resumptions for the Tingalpa Creek Dam

The provision of reticulated water to this growing region had been on the agenda for years. In the early 1960s the possibility of buying water from Brisbane was discussed but locals were of the opinion that independence was preferable. During October 1960 the Water Supply Branch of the Department of Local Government was consulted to investigate the possibility of a dam near Capalaba, across Tingalpa Creek. John Wilson and Partners was involved in the planning for the new Markets road as well as the proposed Tingalpa Creek Water Scheme.

A loan was made available from Treasury to carry out a thorough investigation,¹⁰³ and by July 1963 the consultant engineer's report was tabled. This report discussed the diamond drilling that had taken place to investigate the depth of rock at the point of the proposed dam wall and to show the optimum site for the spillway. At that time it was not possible to give a firm indication as to the degree of property resumptions necessary,¹⁰⁴ but once the height of the dam wall had been established, resumptions could proceed.

In October 1965 the contract for the dam was given to Hickey Constructions.¹⁰⁵ Other contracts for various aspects of the dam construction were given in February 1966 and on 26 February there was formal gazettal of Government consent to take water from Tingalpa Creek at a maximum of 16 million gallons a day.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰² Redland Shire Council Minutes, 8 February 1962.

¹⁰³ Ibid., 26 October 1960.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., report from John Wilson and Partners, 31 July 1963.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., October 1965.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., special meeting 25 February 1966.

The ceremony to commence work on the project was held on 19 April 1966, when Councillor Wood knocked down the first tree on the site. The tree had held a sign, which indicated the proposed height of the dam wall.¹⁰⁷ The concrete spillway and clear water storage tank were completed by August 1967.¹⁰⁸ In May 1966 Deputy Shire Chairman Jack Gordon moved that the dam be named the Leslie Harrison Dam in honour of the work the local MLA had done for the electorate, which at that time covered Beaudesert, Boonah, Logan and Redlands.¹⁰⁹ In June 1968 the construction of the Brisbane side of the dam wall was nearing completion and the access road was to be bitumened. The visitors' area was fenced to control the level of access.¹¹⁰

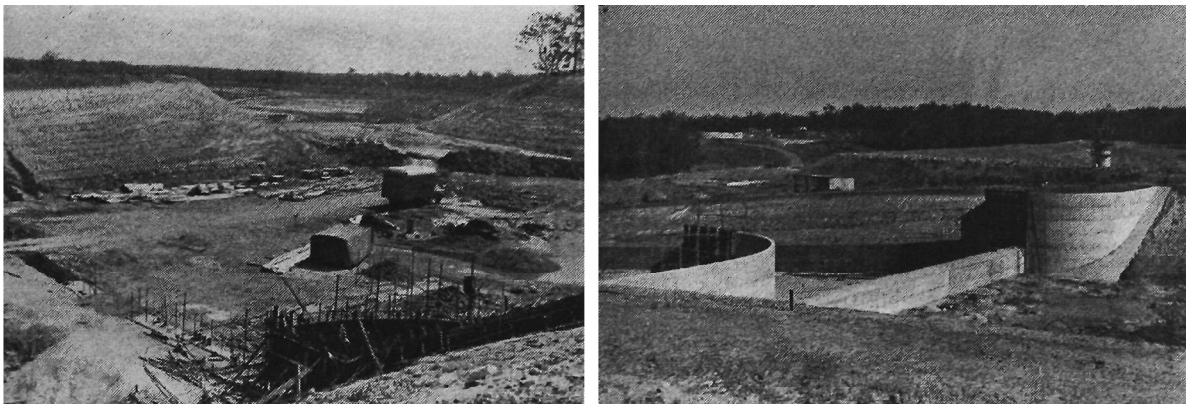


Figure 11 Leslie Harrison Dam under construction, 1967 (*John Stokes*)

Contracts for water reticulation in Birkdale and Wellington Point were let in May 1968 and plans were drawn up for water supply in Thorneside and parts of Wellington Point. Preliminary plans for sewerage in Cleveland were also being considered in June 1968. The major impact on people living nearby was the resumption of their properties. The level of compensation received and the limited usage of land in the catchment area began to rule their lives. Surprisingly, many people living on the Brisbane side of Tingalpa Creek and the dam still do not have town water. Jack Waltishbuhl had most of his property resumed and he explains the impact of this decision on his livelihood:

¹⁰⁷ *Redlands News*, 29 April 1966.

¹⁰⁸ Redland Shire Council Minutes, August 1967.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, May 1966, Bicentennial Local History Activity 1987, *Being Australian, biographies*, Brisbane: Brisbane South Education Region pp. 30-31.

¹¹⁰ Redland Shire Council Minutes, June 1968.

I owned 160 acres of land at the end of Prout Road, which had belonged to the Blunts. It was mostly creek flats with some barren ridges and where the creeks joined up there was a horseshoe lagoon. There were 50 foot high sandstone cliffs that we used to dive off. There was a coal seam all through the area, but nobody worried about that. When the dam was first built the water level was 51 feet, which just covered the cliffs, but later they added another 12 feet. The first I heard about a weir in about 1963 and then in 1964, I got a note to say they were going to build a dam and they were going to resume 30% of one block and 70% of the other. I immediately told them that the one that they intended to take 70% of, they may as well take it all because there would be half a mile of water between me and the other side. Later they ended up taking 70% of the other block so out of 160 acres I finished up with just under 16 acres.

I was keeping pigs and I had about 80 running here. They had to go. They would not consider me having pigs or poultry or feedlot cattle or anything. Eventually the cattle had to go too because the country here is pretty poor unless it's improved. Before they resumed for the dam they just put two bulldozers through the place and pulled all the fences down and didn't give a damn about who was what and what was who. The pigs had gone by then but the cattle hadn't so I mustered the cattle and put them in the four acres of fenced paddock I had left. I had to sell them very quickly.

I feel that I was not adequately compensated for the loss of land, improvements and income. I also mentioned at the public meeting that there was a huge amount of topsoil and gravel on the flats that I could market and get two bob (20c) a yard for. They hoo haa'd me and argued that I wouldn't be able to sell it. I was trying to argue for the potential of the place, but they wouldn't accept this as an argument at all. They were only offering me £22.10 an acre and a neighbour over the road was getting £60 an acre. They argued that he was closer to Capalaba. I seriously considered going to the land court but my solicitor said it would cost me a minimum of £4000 to fight and even if I won I would have to pay costs, so I had to give up.

They settled very quickly and immediately they were in here with bulldozers and trucks stockpiling the topsoil, sand and gravel. Then they sold it. The valuations here have risen dramatically even though I can't grow crops, I can't subdivide it, and I can't use anything that might leach into the dam. People have got to drink that water. You can't swim in it, you can't fish in it, you can't boat in it; it's just there. It's just a big puddlehole that's no use to me whatsoever. I am allowed to pump water for the cattle and to

*irrigate five acres though. This land was to be for my retirement, but now I can't use it and I can't get the aged pension because I've got too much assets in property.*¹¹¹

The next issue to be resolved was the usage of the dam; many community groups were lobbying Council for water sports, including water skiing, sailing and general boating and fishing. Initially Councillor Close moved that arrangements be made to allow for these pursuits. In April 1968 the Cleveland Yacht Club sought allocation of land adjoining the dam.¹¹² George Lyons remembers the arguments over the use of the dam:

*When they were building the dam there were plans for all sorts of water sports there. They were going to have canoes and water skiing. The Council put in a concrete boat ramp at the end of Larbonya Crescent right down at the end. It was built before the water came up. It's long gone now because they raised the dam wall another 12 feet after that. There was so much bickering between water skiing people and sailing people and everybody else that the Council scrubbed them all off and said, 'That's it!' It's a terrible shame because they could have had beautiful little picnic areas around that place. They had a viewing area up on top. You used to be able to drive up there and have a look while it was being built, and when it was built. But there must have been vandalism up there, because they closed the gate and padlocked it and that was the end of that.*¹¹³

Rickertt Road Bridge Proposal

In conjunction with the proposal to remove the rail service between Lota and Cleveland came yet another push to build a road bridge between Thorneside and Lota. In October 1960 there were proposals to build either a toll bridge from Lota to Mooroondu Road, which was favoured by the Wynnum Manly business community, or a bridge sited nearer the railway bridge to join Rickertt Road and Quarry Road. This route was favoured by Brisbane City Council and would have required major road works commitment by both Councils.¹¹⁴ When the railway closed, the impetus grew. The coastal route was still favoured by Redland Shire Council, although it was now suggesting linking Chelsea Road with White's Road. The value in this link lay in the accessibility to the Lota Railway Station, although this route would have required another bridge over Lota Creek.

¹¹¹ Jack Waltishbuhl interview with Mary Howells, 1997, Redland Shire Council Oral History Collection.

¹¹² Redland Shire Council Minutes, February, April 1968.

¹¹³ George Lyons interview.

At that time Clem Jones was the new Lord Mayor of Brisbane and he appeared to favour the Rickertt Road option as part of the transit link to Brisbane City. It also appeared that the Rickertt Road bridge site would be a cheaper proposition.¹¹⁵ By December 1961 the Brisbane City Council had finalised their town plan and had recommended the Rickertt Road site. A meeting of fringe shires was set down for December 15 and Redland Shire delegates were directed not to oppose the Rickertt Road Bridge.¹¹⁶ In July 1965 John Wilson and Partners was asked to investigate bridge designs for the Tingalpa Creek Bridge on two alternate sites, one joining Quarry Road and Rickertt Road and the other a diagonal line from Quarry Road to Molle Road. No money was available for the bridge in 1967, but in 1968 the Main Roads Department called for tenders for construction.¹¹⁷

Conclusion

Both Capalaba and Thorneside had changed dramatically in the post-war era. The makeshift shacks which had typified these regions since the Depression were giving way to properly constructed housing. Small businesses sprang up to service the growing population and the era of the service station had begun, particularly in Capalaba. Poultry, together with established small crop farming and some dairying were dominant rural industries, but the growth of urban developments would soon see these phased out. Community ties remained strong and were reinforced by the social and sporting activities, which tended to revolve around the community halls and churches. Probably the major change in the social structure came with the influx of European migrants. The Polish community in Capalaba was keen to integrate with the locals while ensuring that their children had an appreciation of their native culture.

The formation of the Redland Shire Council in 1949 marked a new era in local government with a greater emphasis on planning for the future, which at that time appeared to lie with a rural-based economy. The council deliberately set about preserving the fertile soil while allowing subdivision on the poorer soils, which is why Capalaba and the new satellite town of Alexandra Hills evolved as they did. The pressure for more

¹¹⁴ Redland Shire Council Minutes, 26 October 1960.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., Special Meeting, 30 October 1961.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., December 1961.

urban development in the mid 1960s then led the council to seek a solution to the problem of supplying water to the residents and they went about this in an independent manner.

The Capalaba Drive-in theatre brought more people into the area and the flow-on to other small businesses was significant. A reversal of fortune came with the decommissioning of the Lota to Cleveland rail line. Capalaba had suffered when this line was built in 1889, while Thorneside and Birkdale prospered. In 1960 Capalaba was booming. Commuters in Birkdale, Thorneside and down the line suffered most when the train was discontinued. They had been able to easily access shops, schools and medical facilities in Wynnum or Cleveland. Thorneside became a very isolated pocket for the ten years it took to bridge the creek in that vicinity.

By the late 1960s the future of the area looked bright, with many major projects completed and more in the pipeline. Projected growth needed more infrastructure, and planning for this was under way. Water reticulation was the pivotal point in the growth of urban subdivisions, and the planned Rickertt Road Bridge would alleviate traffic congestion on Old Cleveland Road and open up Thorneside again.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., report from John Wilson and Partners, October 1968.

Chapter 5

Post-dam Prosperity

Now that the provision of town water was imminent, development proceeded at a great pace. The late 1960s and early 1970s saw the most dramatic changes ever in this previously isolated region. The Capalaba township blossomed around the hotel site which had been established 100 years previously. The road bridge between Lota and Thorneside was finally built despite having been planned in the 1880s. The rail line was reinstated between Lota and Cleveland in the 1980s and bus services were improved. Old Cleveland Road was upgraded to a four-lane highway to cope with the volume of traffic to and from Brisbane.

Despite the fact that most people commuted to work outside the Redland Shire, there was an increasing need for industries to service the growing population. Capalaba, and to a lesser extent Thorneside, became the industrial and service industry base, with Birkdale only recently developing urban shopping centres to cater for the local residents. The downside of this rapid expansion was the demolition of the old shacks, which typified Capalaba, and the absorption of the original settlers and their descendants into the maze of new housing estates, thereby losing much of the character of the region. Thorneside and Birkdale retained most of their original farmhouses and holiday cottages, with new infill housing around them.

Leslie Harrison Dam

The construction of the Leslie Harrison Dam brought a promise of new prosperity in the district. The dam took quite some time to fill due to a prolonged dry spell; however, welcome rains in October 1969 began to fill the site and water flowed over the spillway for the first time in December 1970.¹ In March 1972 the dam was credited with preventing flooding following Cyclone Daisy.² During mid-1970 plans were made to beautify the dam surrounds and the possibility of building a waterside restaurant was considered. The dam was stocked with mullet at the time and barramundi was thought to

¹ *Redland Times*, 15 October 1969, 16 December 1970.

² *Ibid.*, 1 March 1972.

be desirable.³ However, local councillor Dan Holzapfel warned that a ranger was needed to patrol the area as the mullet were being netted and the wildlife was being shot.⁴ In August 1970 the decision was made to ban boating, swimming and picnicking on the dam site to protect the water quality.⁵ By 1981 plans were drawn up to raise the height of the dam wall to increase the capacity. Cost estimates were \$2,162,000.⁶ This also entailed further road works along Mount Gravatt-Capalaba Road.

Rickertt Road Bridge

In March 1969 land was resumed from Arthur and Mary Schmidt and Mrs Neville of Thorneside for the construction of the new road joining Quarry Road with the Rickertt Road Bridge.⁷ Construction began on the road in June and in January 1970 it was decided that the bridge be named the EGW Wood Bridge, after the Shire Chairman.⁸ The official opening was held in March 1970. Brisbane Lord Mayor Alderman Clem Jones officiated. The bridge cost \$280,000. Unfortunately the road on the Brisbane side had not been completed at that time.⁹

Subdivisions

During the late 1960s and early 1970s, many new subdivisions were under way, including part of Claude Stoke's land into the Calbar Heights Estate in March 1973.¹⁰ By May 1973 the Council had decided that it needed to increase its staff to cope with the number of building applications before it. During the 1972-3 financial year up until April, approvals had been given for 1040 buildings valued at over \$10,550,000. Private developments included Vienna Woods and other estates along Finucane Road, Valentine's Estate, Birkdale Heights and the Woodgate Park Canal Estate in Birkdale.¹¹

³ Ibid., 10 June 1970.

⁴ Ibid., 17 June 1970.

⁵ Ibid., 19 August 1970.

⁶ Ibid., 4 February 1981.

⁷ Redland Shire Council Minutes, March 1969.

⁸ *Redland Times*, 11 June 1969, January 1970.

⁹ Ibid., 8 March 1970.

¹⁰ Redland Shire Council Minutes, March 1973.

¹¹ *Redland Times*, 30 May 1973.

Sporting clubs

During 1968 the Council's Parks and Recreation department arranged to purchase part of Sarah Frederick's land between Coolnwynpin Creek and the Greyhound Club, while allowing her grazing rights for a further five years. This land was used as landfill for the Shire's garbage and subsequently as a soccer field. Councillor Holzapfel suggested naming the area John Fredericks Park.¹² The land was formally acquired in May 1969. By 1971 a sporting complex was being planned for the landfill site at the time, although Councillor June Birch noted that more care needed to be taken of exactly what was being dumped on the site if it was to have later community use.¹³ The Capalaba sporting park was planned during 1972 to include an Olympic pool, bowling greens, tennis courts, a new greyhound track, public hall and amenities block.¹⁴ None of these plans ever came to fruition. The Soccer Club, which now uses the site, did not build its clubhouse until 1980.¹⁵

Lions Club of Redlands opened the William Taylor Park adjoining the Thorneside Hall in December 1971.¹⁶ It was named after the former councillor for the area. Tennis courts on the site had been opened the previous year on land donated by the Thorneside Soccer Club, which had ceased operation at that time.¹⁷

In Birkdale, private interests established a golf course. 'Howeston' evolved through the efforts of the Howards who owned Meggs' old dairy farm, and their relatives the Westons. The new course was launched as a nine-hole course in June 1972 and it expanded to 18 holes in 1979.¹⁸ The first Pro-Am event at 'Royal Birkdale' was held in November 1976.¹⁹

¹² Redland Shire Council Minutes, July, October, December 1968.

¹³ *Redland Times*, 24 November 1971.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 5 April 1972.

¹⁵ *Redland Times*, 26 February 1980.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 15 December 1971.

¹⁷ Information supplied by Jack Finney.

¹⁸ Information supplied by Mrs Lynn Weston.

¹⁹ *Redland Times*, 10 November 1976.

Shopping centres

In 1973 consultant town planner Michael Challoner urged Council to develop an overall plan for the future incorporating arterial roads, business centres, recreation, industry and rural pursuits.²⁰ During a hearing in the Local Government Court in which a proposed shopping centre in Cleveland was rejected, Challoner affirmed his opinion that Capalaba would play the dominant role in shopping in the shire.²¹

Many new shops were being built in Capalaba. In June 1969 the first block of shops opposite John Fredericks Park was built and tenants included the Cut Price Store, fruit shop, TAB, August Moon Tea Bar and a hardware shop. An adjoining block of shops was planned in April 1976 and the Cut Price store would move into larger premises with

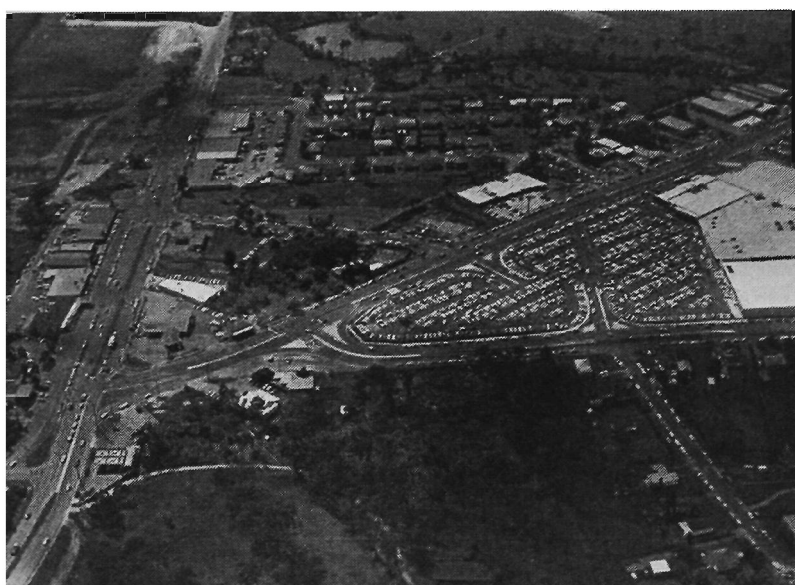


Figure 12 Capalaba Park Shopping Centre opening day, 17 March 1981 (*Bayside Bulletin*)

parking provided behind the shops. At the time it was suggested that the shopping available in Capalaba was set to challenge Cleveland as the business centre of the shire.²² Another strip of shops opened in April 1977 west of Raymond Street.²³ In May 1978 a redevelopment proposal was put forward for the drive-in theatre site, which

included the relocation of the drive-in. Birch Carroll and Coyle applied to construct the new drive-in at 216 Redland Bay Road on a 22.6 hectare site.²⁴ This was ultimately approved as a twin drive-in.²⁵ The final showing at the old drive-in was held on 18

²⁰ Redland Shire Council Minutes, planning steering committee, 25 June 1973.

²¹ *Redland Times*, 5 December 1979.

²² *Ibid.*, 7 April, 22 September 1976.

²³ *Ibid.*, 27 April 1977.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 17 May 1978.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 26 July 1978.

December 1979. The new theatre in Redland Bay Road cost \$1.24 million, including land content.²⁶ Construction then began on Capalaba Park Shopping Centre on the old site.

The Alexandra Hills shopping centre opened in November 1979,²⁷ with the Jack the Slasher supermarket as the major tenant. Capalaba Park Shopping Centre opened on 17 March 1981, with Coles and K-Mart as major tenants. The opening day was so successful that the 1250 car parking spaces were full before the doors opened.²⁸ This shopping centre was extended many times over the years and its first real competition came in the form of Capalaba Central Shopping Centre, which opened in November 1994.²⁹ This shopping centre was altered during 1996 to accommodate eight new cinemas and subsequently the Capalaba Twin drive-in theatre held its final screening on 26 January 1997.³⁰

Road and Railway construction

Plans were drawn up for a four-lane highway between Belmont and Capalaba in the late 1970s and this was constructed as far as Chandler in time for the Commonwealth Games in October 1982. As part of this project, the construction of a new bridge over Tingalpa Creek at Capalaba began in 1979.³¹ The four-lane road was completed to Capalaba in 1984.

Along with the construction of Capalaba Central shopping centre in 1994 was a major alteration to road traffic with the construction of the Capalaba by-pass road, now called Moreton Bay Road. This road incorporated a new bridge over Tingalpa Creek near Pittwin Road, which eased the traffic congestion along Old Cleveland Road through Capalaba Township. One downside to this construction was the loss of passing trade to the original strip shopping along Old Cleveland Road.

²⁶ Ibid., 28 November 1979, 19 December 1979.

²⁷ Ibid., 21 November 1979.

²⁸ Ibid., 18 March 1981.

²⁹ *Bayside Bulletin*, 29 November 1994.

³⁰ *Redland Times*, 17 January 1997.

³¹ *Redland Times*, 4 April 1979, 16 May 1979.

Planning was underway for the re-opening of the rail link between Thorneside and Lota, and the Redland Shire Council made the decision to borrow \$1 million towards the cost of the project.³² Tenders were called for construction of the bridges over Lota and Tingalpa Creeks and the associated earthworks for the railway construction in October 1980.³³ The line was re-opened on Saturday 25 September 1982. At that time the electrification of the line was not yet complete and the first electric train ran in October 1983.³⁴ The line was extended through Birkdale to Wellington Point on 26 July 1986,³⁵ and the route to Cleveland was finally opened in 24 October 1987.³⁶

Community facilities, churches, schools

An expansion of community facilities and services was happening as well. St George's Church at Birkdale was completed and its dedication service was held on 19 October 1969.³⁷ The growing need for child care facilities was recognised by the Council and, in July 1976, tenders were called for construction of a child care centre at Alexandra Hills,³⁸ which was later built in Oaklands Street. Capalaba Girl Guides celebrated their first birthday in August that year and land was allocated in Holland Crescent for them.³⁹ The Capalaba Meals on Wheels was established in December 1975 and the Council earmarked land for that organisation in Holland Crescent in 1976 also. At that time meals were being prepared in private homes on a roster basis until funds could be raised for a kitchen to be built.⁴⁰ In March 1975 the School of Arts Hall was vested with the Redland Shire for community purposes, and in November 1976 an architect was commissioned to prepare preliminary plans for improvements to the hall.⁴¹ During 1975 the Capalaba Uniting Church community were busy building their first hall, which would supplement the steel garage, which was being used for Sunday school. The group had formed in

³² Ibid., 26 September 1979.

³³ Ibid., 1 October 1980.

³⁴ Ibid., 19 October 1983.

³⁵ *Courier-Mail*, 5 May 1986.

³⁶ 'Cleveland, Back on the Rails' supplement to the *Redland Times and Bayside Bulletin*, 21 October 1987.

³⁷ *Redland Times*, 15 October 1969.

³⁸ Ibid., 21 July 1976.

³⁹ Ibid., 11 August 1976.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 18 August 1976.

⁴¹ Ibid., 10 November 1976.

March 1974 and the first worship services were held on their land in Ney Road.⁴² The Capalaba Progress Association re-formed in October 1976 with Alex McConnell as president.⁴³

The Alexandra Hills Primary School commenced teaching in January 1975⁴⁴ and construction commenced on the Capalaba High School in April 1978. Its design was a prototype for new State Schools in Queensland.⁴⁵ It was opened in January 1978 and the first principal was Tony Marsland.⁴⁶ The Capalaba State School celebrated its centenary during 1980 with a parade through the township on 28 June.⁴⁷ St Anthony's Catholic Primary School began classes one to five in January 1980 with years six and seven starting progressively over the next two years.⁴⁸ Vienna Woods Primary School opened its doors in January 1985.⁴⁹ Alexandra Hills High School opened in 1987 under the direction of Lyn Bishop, who later established Sheldon College.⁵⁰

In 1996 the Redland Shire Council built Capalaba Place, which incorporated a library, customer service centre, community hall, art space and meeting rooms. This was strategically located between the two major shopping centres, and the council had purchased 16 hectares to redevelop a town centre for Capalaba. Up until that time the planning had been haphazard. With the implementation of a development control plan, Capalaba could be given a new focus. Council also made a series of trade-offs with the owners of Capalaba Central to reconfigure the design so that one of the entrances faced Capalaba Place. This then created a flow between the shopping centre and the library building, which is now an attractive landscaped garden. The garden and the building are filled with artworks created through a community arts project in an effort to foster community pride and develop an identity.⁵¹ A lack of knowledge of the history of the

⁴² Ibid., 3 September 1975.

⁴³ Ibid., 6 October 1976.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 22 January 1975.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 20 April 1977.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 25 January 1978.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 2 July 1980.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 6 February 1980.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 23 January 1985.

⁵⁰ *The Hourglass*, (first edition), Alexandra Hills State High School 1987.

⁵¹ Redland Shire Council, 'Capalaba town centre revitalisation; an overview' 1997.

area led to the exclusion of residents on the Brisbane side of the creek from this project. This was an unfortunate omission, not deliberately undertaken. The intent was to foster community identity based on the social history of the region, within current Redland Shire boundaries.

The Redland Shire Council's demolition of the old School of Arts Hall, which the trustees had left in the care of the council, has caused great resentment from the older members of the community and the loss of a historic building. It was sold for a reported \$1 million to BBC Hardware for the construction of 'Hardwarehouse'. This money then funded the acquisition of land for Capalaba Place. While the council was of the opinion that they were doing the residents a favour with the construction of a new hall and library, the lack of consultation and disregard for the trust agreement infuriated many residents. Several community groups who utilised the old hall cannot afford the higher rental of the new facility.

Capalaba in the late twentieth century had been the focus of industrial development and jobs growth in the region. During the implementation of Integrated Employment Areas as part of community planning and economic development policy of the Redland Shire Council in 2000, further areas within the shire were touted as being suitable for more economic development. Councillor for Capalaba Ray Bucknall, argued that 'Capalaba had taken its fair share of the burden of industry and it was time other parts of the Redlands took some of the burden.'⁵² Perhaps Capalaba has been sacrificed one too many times for the good of the remainder of the shire.

Conclusion

The rapid development from the late 1960s onwards was inevitable. The location of Capalaba, Birkdale and Thorneside on the edge of Redland Shire and Brisbane city ensured their urban and industrial development at that time. While the dam construction was the essential catalyst it would have occurred anyway. If the Redland Shire had opted to pipe water from Somerset and the subsequent Wivenhoe Dam, it would have made no difference to the level of development. The fact that Redland Shire chose to build its

⁵² *Redland Times*, 10 Nov 2000 pp. 1-2

own dam demonstrates the desire to remain distinct and detached from Brisbane city. To a large extent this separateness has been achieved.

Capalaba, as it once was, is unrecognisable in its modern format. The only tangible reminder of its past is the old Willard farmhouse, *The Pines*, on Old Cleveland Road East. Capalaba's new-found identity as the business centre of the Redland Shire has been at the expense of the loss of its origins. Birkdale and Thorneside have been luckier, in that many original homes remain amongst the new subdivisions. Newcomers to Thorneside, which was divided into urban lots in the 1910s, are keen to maintain the character of the area. Many of the little seaside cottages have been lovingly refurbished and sit proudly alongside the new urban architecture of the 1990s.

Conclusion

This project set out to reveal the changing nature of the identity of the resident communities of a region that forms the border between the Redland Shire and Brisbane city, using a sequence occupance approach.

Capalaba and Upper Tingalpa evolved from isolated properties occupied by timbergetters, with some subsistence farming undertaken. There was minimal integration amongst the residents of the two settlements and the search for a site for a school brought out the worst in them. Petty jealousies and arguments over subscriptions to the school, led the departmental inspector to malign the community attitude. However, a closer examination of this issue suggests a rivalry between those with a long-term commitment to the region, and those trying to make a quick return from timber and moving on. Despite repetitive hardship, isolation and sometimes denigration, the Capalaba community did achieve everything it set out to, within the confines of its financial situation. This has essentially been a struggling working class community until relatively recent years.

Thorneside at the mouth of Tingalpa Creek evolved as a seaside township surrounded by dairy and small crop farms. Thorneside was supported by the Birkdale community, which tended to comprise families with a sound economic base. The Thorneside community included small crop farmers, weekend residents, and a variety of commuters. While this community comprised a greater diversity than Capalaba, it could never have been described as middle class, and up until quite recently Thorneside has maintained a unique atmosphere of the 'working man's' seaside retreat.

By examining the influences on the development of these communities and the individuals that comprise them, this project defines the characteristics of the evolution of these settlements through each significant wave of development, thereby tracking the historic path that leads to the current reality. Capalaba's character of a frontier society has been enshrined by numerous waves of settlement, which repeatedly drew people of limited means. Thorneside, while still defined as working class, comprised a greater variety of people who could be more outgoing because of the availability of transport.

The first chapter discussed the establishment of habitation in the 1860s, and the growth of industry and local government in the region up until the end of the nineteenth century. Capalaba was marginalised by the decision to locate the boundaries of the various local government authorities through the township in 1880. This was further exacerbated in 1889, when the Brisbane to Cleveland railway was situated along the coastal strip, rather than through Capalaba as the locals had hoped for. The location of the railway cemented Capalaba's position of alienation in the region. Poor roads and poor soils ensured the isolation of the settlements of the region, but also allowed the inhabitants' independent nature to shine through. Remoteness ensured intermarrying, which may have strengthened the community, but ensured introspection.

On the other hand, the Birkdale/Thorneside area developed steadily after the railway construction. Although remote from Brisbane, the railway ensured that the region was less isolated than Capalaba and Upper Tingalpa. More fertile soil provided the basis for successful small crop production and this area attracted many new settlers as the land was subdivided along the rail line. Up until about 1913, Thorneside did not have an identity separate from Birkdale in terms of placename, and the provision of infrastructure, such as mail delivery, railway station and the nascent Anglican community.

Meanwhile, the Upper Tingalpa community virtually devolved once the sawmills closed in the early 1880s. Landholders who chose to stay, turned to farming and utilised the services available in Capalaba, effectively linking them with the Capalaba community.

Covering the early years of the twentieth century, chapter two explored renewed efforts to provide a rail link to Capalaba through the construction of the Belmont tramway in 1912. Again this project was thwarted, ensuring the Capalaba remained a backwater.

Capalaba's community suffered the effects of the drought, which peaked in 1902. The community was less unified and more geographically diverse. While the school continued to be the venue for community activities, the Upper Tingalpa residents were able to participate, because the school was located equidistant from the two locations. The only community structure built at this time in Capalaba was a small private hall at the back of the general store. In some respects this structure played a role in the isolation of the Upper Tingalpa residents.

The suburb of Thorneside evolved as a separate identity from Birkdale when William Thorne's land was extensively subdivided into small farms and urban lots between 1913 and 1917. The railway allowed many residents to commute to jobs outside the district, while maintaining small hobby farms. This ensured the economic viability of the community and diminished the importance of the effects of the weather, which could devastate those entirely dependent on the land. The area became a popular holiday destination with cottages being built on the urban lots overlooking the sea. This new community was vibrant and proactive.

Supported by some of the original farming families, a school, two churches and a School of Arts Hall were established in Birkdale during the early twentieth century, servicing both Birkdale and Thorneside.

The third chapter examined the conditions of the Depression and World War II. A new wave of settlers was lured to the Capalaba area during the 1930s when the relatively low price of real estate allowed people to seek out subsistence living on the land. These people settled between Capalaba and Upper Tingalpa. Makeshift shacks built of recycled materials came to typify the region for the following thirty years. Despite the hardships, the community seems to have been strengthened by the Depression and new lifelong friendships were formed. Oral evidence supports these claims and graphically illustrates the living conditions, which have rarely been photographed.

Thorneside continued to grow, particularly as a holiday destination, although the standard of housing here was not a lot better than the Capalaba shacks initially. Birkdale remained a consistent small-crop producer, with some dairy farms.

Tourism, surprisingly, became an important industry during the 1930s, with Brisbane people taking Sunday drives to the 'salad bowl' district along Moreton Bay to access the beaches at Thorneside, Birkdale and Wellington Point and the swimming hole in Tingalpa Creek at the back of the Capalaba Hotel. A small zoo was established in Capalaba to capture the tourist trade. Despite the hardships of the Depression, Capalaba residents demonstrated their desire to improve the township and they managed to finance a School of Arts Hall and form a progress association aimed at local development.

While social activities in the local halls had to be mothballed during World War II, the era allowed time for reflection. Interaction with American troops stationed in the area provided these isolated residents with a window to the outside world. It enabled them to consolidate and plan for a brighter future after the war.

Chapter four examined the post-war era, which provided a newfound optimism. For families trying to establish homes, minimal building regulations and the shortage of new building materials ensured the continuation of the practice of constructing homes from recycled materials in both Capalaba and Thorneside. Building standards defined the public perception of these regions, as frontiers. Further subdivisions were undertaken to fulfil the demand for housing sites from locals and from the influx of European migrants. At that time there was little knowledge of town-planning principles and these new developments were poorly planned with no overall thought for the future.

The first evidence of planning came after the amalgamation of the Tingalpa and Cleveland Shires in 1949 to form the Redland Shire. Chairman Norm Price specifically set out to preserve the rich farmlands along the coastal strip at the expense of the areas of poor soil such as Capalaba. This policy led to slipshod development around Capalaba before any real regulations on subdivisions had been introduced. Again, Capalaba became home to all who could afford nothing else, thus perpetuating the frontier image. Poverty did not breed complacency though, and the community developed in a positive manner. Poultry became an important new industry, as success was not dependent on soil quality. Poultry offered the first hope of a secure income to these residents. The first major business investment in the form of the drive-in theatre marked the tide of change. New businesses evolved to service this one, and the crowds it drew to Capalaba.

Thorneside and Birkdale suffered a hiatus during the 1960s with the removal of the Lota to Cleveland rail line. Thorneside, particularly, was very isolated for the ten years it took to build a road bridge in the area.

Further evidence of the pro-activeness of the new Redland Shire was the decision to build a dam on Tingalpa Creek in Capalaba. The council was keen for the shire to prosper without being 'tied to the apron strings' of Brisbane city. Again, Capalaba was to

be sacrificed for the good of the shire generally. Many residents along Tingalpa Creek lost land and livelihoods to the dam construction, which was completed in 1968. The Leslie Harrison Dam represents the ultimate in reshaping the landscape to overcome past difficulties. The subsequent provision of reticulated water heralded a new era of growth and prosperity for the Redland Shire.

The construction of the dam has brought about a complete reversal of fortune for Capalaba. The impetus to Capalaba's transformation was the antithesis to its failure to thrive. The poor quality soils of Capalaba were surrendered to the developer's bulldozers. Initial haphazard development has given way to a comprehensive approach to town planning, transforming the tradesman's entrance into a vibrant gateway to the Redland Shire.

Capalaba has transformed itself from an isolated border town into a major small industrial and business centre. The children of the farmers, who struggled to make a living off the land, now run many of these businesses. Their lives have been made easier through the provision of better government infrastructure than was available to their parents, including education, transport and communications. The character has changed dramatically, as have the demographics of the residents.

This metamorphosis has occurred at the expense of any sense of the past, with only one historic home remaining in Capalaba. Few current residents have any notion of the struggles of their predecessors, which was the impetus for the initial oral history project that led to this body of research. This project has given a voice to the early settlers enabling them to pass this history on to the new generation of residents. Present communities, while more dispersed, still have a sense of place and gravitate to local schools, halls, shops and places of entertainment.

Similarly, Upper Tingalpa retains little evidence of its ramshackle existence of the 1960s. It is now home to the wealthier sector of the population, which lives on well kept acreage lots, boasting substantial houses with tennis courts, swimming pools and other trappings of success.

Most Birkdale farms are now urban estates, although many original farmhouses have been preserved in the process, thus retaining the essence of the farming community.

Currently Thorneside maintains its holiday atmosphere. The strip along Mooroondu Point has grown into an exclusive marine residential estate with new houses sited adjacent to the original seaside cottages. People still come to the area for its natural beauty and its location overlooking the sea. Closer to the railway station, high density housing provides homes to a new generation of commuters and a small industrial estate extends along the rail line to the east. Although moving with the times, the essence of Thorneside has not changed.

The natural beauty of the bush, in the case of the Capalaba outskirts and Upper Tingalpa, and the sea, in the case of Thorneside, still draws people to the area and binds them to it. The services provided in the business centre of Capalaba, and the industrial services offered in Capalaba and Thorneside, serve to make the area quite self-sufficient. Given that self-sufficiency was the key indicator of survival for early settlers, the communities' transformation may merely be part of an ongoing cycle.

Chronology

- 1842: Warner's survey showed Cleveland Point connected with Ipswich via Cowper's Plains
- 1853: Land at Capalaba purchased at auction
- 1853: bridge in existence at Coolnwynpin Creek, near Windemere Road
- 1859: First mail contract to Frederick Smith who delivered on horseback from Brisbane to Cleveland once a week
- 1863: Township of Tingalpa surveyed on the Brisbane side of Tingalpa Creek
- 1863: William Thorne arrived on the *Sunda* from London on Sept 25
- 1863: German settlers arrived on *La Rochelle*, including Franz Petersen, Jacob Scheur
- 1864: German settlers arrived on *Susanne Godfrey*, including Carl and Mathilde Blum and 6 children, Peter Binger and Carl and Christine Palm
- 1864: German settlers arrive on *Johann Ceasar* including Johann Mussig and Christian Volker
- 1864: TL Murray-Prior had 100 acres in the Birkdale/Thorneside area on which he was running 150 head of cattle.
- 1865: James Willard selected land in Capalaba and was granted a timber licence
- 1868: George Randall arrived on the *Planet*, started a small business in South Brisbane, later immigration agent in Great Britain
- 1871: Tenders called for construction of a bridge at Tingalpa Creek.
- 1872: Tenders of Walter and Weber accepted for bridge
- 1874: Provisional School opened at Tingalpa bridge, Mrs Murray was postmistress at Tingalpa, (name was later changed to Capalaba), James Murray was listed as publican at Tingalpa creek and George Waldock at Tingalpa Royal Mail Hotel
- 1874: William Jarvis built the second hotel
- 1875: Post office name changed to Capalaba
- 1875: Provisional school removed from Tingalpa Creek and set up on Heinemann's property at Upper Tingalpa
- 1877: Sawmill established by Samuel Barnes on Portion 109, taken over by James Campbell in 1879
- 1877: William Jarvis listed as publican, Robert Jarvis listed as auctioneer
- 1879: Public meeting held to make application for a school in Capalaba
- 1879: Capalaba school built by Ebenezer Chapman

1880-2: William Thorne purchased land from Murray Prior on Mooroondu Point

1882: John Woodgate the elder, John Woodgate the younger and William Woodgate purchase Portion 23 at Birkdale

1880: Tingalpa Divisional Board established

1882: Gilbert Burnett proposed the construction of a bridge between Mooroondu Point and Lota.

1882: William Finucane chairs a public meeting looking into the construction of a new road between Capalaba and Cleveland

1885: William Thorne and Gilbert Burnett engineer the breakaway and formation of the Cleveland Divisional Board

1889: Opening of the Cleveland railway

1891: Designs submitted for the bridge over Tingalpa Creek at Mooroondu Point

1896: Birkdale post office established at the railway station

1902: Divisional Boards are now known as Shire Councils

1912: Capalaba School residence burnt down

1912: Belmont Railway opening

1913: McKeen rail cars introduced to transport children from Birkdale to Wellington Point School.

1913: Thorne Estate first subdivided and auctioned

1916: Birkdale School established, and Tom Goghill opens his general store in Capalaba

1917: Thorne estate further subdivided and auctioned and railway siding named Thorneside

1919: Influenza epidemic and local halls used as makeshift hospitals

1923: Birkdale Methodist Church established

1926: Belmont Railway closed down

1926: Mayor of Brisbane instructs his officers to prepare estimates for a bridge over Tingalpa Creek at Thorneside

1927: Shortcut between Capalaba and Cleveland declared a main road (later Finucane Road)

1932: Capalaba School of Arts Committee formed and members began fundraising for a hall

1934: Capalaba School of Arts Hall opened

1934: First Half of St George's Church of England at Birkdale opened

1935: New bridges constructed over Coolnwynpin and Tingalpa Creeks at Capalaba

1943: American servicemen camped on the flats behind the Capalaba Hotel

1944: Thorneside Progress Association formed, Capalaba Presbyterian Church founded

1948: Declaration of the formation of the Redland Shire, Methodist Church established in Thorneside, Thorneside post office established, Capalaba Greyhound Club established

1949: First meeting of the Redland Shire Council

1951: Construction of Finucane Road commenced

1955: Capalaba Drive-in Theatre established

1959: Floor of the Thorneside Hall laid by Councillor Charles Toni, Danny Holzapfel establishes the first major shopping centre in Capalaba

1960: Lota to Cleveland rail line decommissioned, investigations underway into the construction of a dam on Tingalpa Creek in Capalaba

1961: Proposal to build the satellite town of Alexandra on the newly constructed Finucane Road and local roads upgraded to access the new fruit and vegetable markets at Rocklea

1965: Polish Community Hall established in Holland Crescent, Capalaba

1968: Leslie Harrison Dam completed, tenders called for the construction of the Rickerrt Road Bridge

1969: Land resumed from John and Sarah Fredericks for land-fill and sporting fields, St George's Church of England completed

1970: Water flowed over the spillway of the dam for the first time, Rickerrt Road Bridge opened

1971: William Taylor Sportsground opened in Thorneside

1973: New tavern opened at Capalaba

1979: Alexandra Hills Shopping Centre opened; Capalaba Drive-in theatre relocated to make way for Capalaba Park Shopping Centre

1982: Railway between Lota and Thorneside re-opened

1983: First electric train to Thorneside

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