

Waimāero
Fendalton-Waimairi-Harewood Community Board
MINUTES ATTACHMENTS

Date: Monday 29 March 2021
Time: 4.30pm
Venue: Boardroom, Fendalton Service Centre,
Corner Jeffreys and Clyde Roads, Fendalton

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History of 30 Merrin Street and some of the Surrounding Properties.

In 1948, our father, Graeme Cooper, bought a four acre block with its frontage along Merrin Street (which was formerly part of Hawthorden Road). The hunt for a piece of land involved taking a shovel everywhere he went and digging to test the earth was suitable for growing. The soil here is very good quality Waimakariri silt loam. Merrin Street was a shingle road and the land was part of a farm. We don't know who sold him the block of land. Photos show both the Southern Alps and the Port Hills in the background, such was the lack of development.

The Gould family owned 5 acres of land through to Burnside Park. Pyne Gould Guinness Corporation owned a large area where the Burnside Bowling Club is now situated. The Haughley's owned what is now Dunrobin Place and ran a market garden. The land east from our parent's property to Avonhead Road was divided between a barracks for Returned Servicemen learning chicken farming, and the Conniston homestead and grounds. There was a large grove of mature oak trees on Conniston in those days.

Our father subdivided the 4 acre block into two and his cousin, Ken Allen, took the 2 acres to the west and built his house there. The two families were very close and we grew up together as children. Ken planted many native trees and had a copse of beech trees along with many rock walls, paths and an entrance way made from Halswell Quarry basalt. He had a rock cutting shed and did all the stone masonry. Ken and his wife Mary were keen rock hounds and were both Presidents of the Canterbury Minerals and Lapidary Club. The Allen's property encompassed the current houses from 36 to 42, 42D and 42E. The block where their house was is now the block of townhouses at 40-40A Merrin Street.

Our father built his house in 1951. A well had to be sunk for water – 30 feet deep to good water was all that was required in those days - and a pump house installed. The well was in use until the late 1960's. A large veg garden followed, a chook run, and the orchard was planted with nectarine, peach, granny smith apple, cox's orange apple, crab apple, quince, pear and blue diamond plum trees. The orchard was severely damaged in the 1971 Wahine storm, which also saw a number of large gums blown over.

Our father planted many trees on the property over the years, many specially ordered from North Island nursery Duncan & Davies. My sister remembers them arriving wrapped up in hessian sacking. They were a combination of shelter belt trees and ornamental exotics: wellingtonians, a giant sequoia, copper beech, gum, golden totara, yew, monkey puzzle, elm, blue cedars, canary pine, and macrocarpa and conifers for the hedges. In 1948 the only trees on the property were a red gum, now quite a magnificent tree, and 2 macrocarpas in the northeast corner by the creek. Even then a huge black poplar also grew on the other side of the creek, and in later years it would shower the neighbours with kapok, and generated much suburban disapproval. It must've dated back to the first trees planted on the plains. The front paddock was baled for hay for many years, and the haystack stood in the paddock. The rest of the grass was cut using a large, belt-driven Hayter mower. Children were ordered well away when this piece of machinery was in use.

In the 1950's David Penney bought Conniston. The boundary between Conniston and 30 Merrin Street was a row of huge pine trees, and a double row of Lombardy poplars. The Pyne Gould creek was still flowing in the 1960's and flowed through the northeast corner at 30 Merrin Street. The creek bank is still there today and is the only remnant of the former creek loop. The creek meandered south along the boundary for about 40 metres and then did a big loop back around to flow east in front of Conniston house, at 291 Avonhead Road.

My sister and I grew up in what was then still a semi-rural suburb. My sister started school at Burnside Primary, and moved to Westburn Primary when it opened in 1962. I was lucky to have Merrin Primary School built across the road and I started there as a foundation pupil in 1966. We have seen the Avonhead suburb change and expand over the years. The shingle road was tar-sealed, a footpath was made and the sewage scheme was put in in 1974. The corner shops were replaced by Avonhead Mall, and Harrow's raspberry gardens on Withells Road were rezoned to residential housing. Hyde Park was a big residential development in the mid 1990's.

Our father lived at 30 Merrin Street until his death in 2004. He spent his working life in the Public Service for the NZ Broadcasting Corporation at Armagh Street, where he produced the Concert Programme and did technical live recordings and broadcasts. He was a very good pianist who studied under Alfred Bunz, a very influential conductor and musician in the early Christchurch Orchestral scene.

After our father died, our mother, Carena Rosanowski, continued to live on at 30 Merrin Street until her death in 2016. The property was then sold as an Estate in 2019 to its current owners.

My sister and I requested naming rights for any access way in the sale documents for 30 Merrin Street. We wish to remember our family's association with this unique property and give a nod to the history of the area by naming it after our father and family surname.

Graeme Thomas Haig Cooper, 1918-2004;)	Joint property
Carena Hyde Cooper (nee Rosanowski), 1920-2016;)	owners from 1948 -2016

Our choices are as follows:

1. Graeme Cooper Lane;
2. Cooper Lane;
3. Cooper Rosanowski Lane.

Thank You,

Kind Regards

Kay











