

## Joyce Overton

### Memories of My Time At Canterbury

My name is Joyce Overton and I attended Canterbury School from the beginning of 1941 to the end of 1943. I was then Joyce Hanlon. The school was known as Canterbury Domestic Science School and during the period I was enrolled there, Australia was at war. First with Germany and then at the end of 1941, with Japan.

There were many changes because of this situation. First trenches were dug in the playground and we had air raid drills once a week. A loud bell was rung and we had to proceed to our individual tranches by different routes that had been allocated to us. This proved the best time waster we had ever had. We had to get into the tranches quickly but when the "all clear" was sounded we all took a great amount of time to return to lessons.

We had to carry a first aid kit which was made from navy material similar to our tunic and was worn on our side with a long strap across our shoulder. In this bag as small containers with Iodine, sal velate, bandages and a clothes peg – to be placed in our mouth if bombs were dropped and it would prevent lock jaw. We also had to cut a tennis ball in half with an elastic between the two halves. Again if there was bombing we were to put them over our ears to protect them from the noise.

We didn't have large assemblies as crowds in one area were not allowed. We had no school photos taken as film was very scarce because the forces took all the available film.

One concession we got was that we were allowed to leave our black stockings off and wear short white socks, because we had clothes rations and there were coupons on stockings but not on socks. Also there were less coupons on boys shirts than girls blouses so most of us work boys shirts with the tail cut off.

We had an evacuee from Great Briton – her name was Cynthia White and she would not leave her gas mask at home although the teachers tried to tell her it was not necessary. Of course this created a bit of amusement for us especially as poor Cynthia had a strong English accent.

Other effects were felt when casualties were experienced. I remember when HMAS Sydney was lost; there were a couple of girls whose fathers were on this ship. The casualty lists were very distressing if anyone connected with the school was involved. These were acknowledged by moments of silence. When Singapore fell in February 1942 things got more serious and there was a threat of invasion from Japan. We also wore an identification disc on a chain around our neck with name, address, date of birth and religion.

Every window and glass door was strapped with sticking plaster so if they were shattered by a bomb they would hang together. All the station signs and locality signs were removed to confuse the Japanese when they came.

Then in May 1942 three Japanese submarines entered Sydney Harbour and I remember waking up at night and hearing the alert being sounded and the warden was knocking on every door. Each street has a warden. My mother and father and brother sheltered under the kitchen table until the "all clear". I remember my mother getting angry with dad for not building an air raid shelter and saying "see the Japanese are here and we have nowhere to go".

All jokes aside, I loved my years at Canterbury, and made friends I still have today and look back on it as a great three years in my life.

## **The Hanlon's of "Jessamine"**

### **Jeston William Hanlon**

My father Jeston Will Hanlon was born on 28<sup>th</sup> October 1899. He lived at Arncliffe with his parents George Patrick and Elizabeth Hanlon and his brothers Eric and Thomas but at the age of 13, he lost his mother in childbirth. His father was a baker and pastry cook employed by Dibble Bros in Newtown and as he worked at night and slept during the day, he had no alternative but to take his young family (Eric being 8 and Tom was 3) back to his mother, Hannah Hanlon and his unmarried sister, Mabel Hanlon who lived in Enmore.

### **Move to "Jessamine"**

Sometime later the family went to live at 20 Garnet Street, Hurlstone Park. My grandfather George Patrick Hanlon had remarried and his sister Mabel purchased the property and my father Jeston lent her some money towards it (I don't know how much). Mabel called the house "Jessamine (Jess and mine) showing the connection to Jeston who was always called Jess. My grandfather paid board for his family. Dad was 17 when his father remarried and grandfather commenced in producing another eight children namely Lawrence, Ernest, Beryl, Patricia, Ray, Ted, Kyra and Flora.

As the family increased, George bought a bakehouse at Thornleigh and the majority of the family moved up there leaving grandma, Aunt Mabel, Jeston, Eric and Tom who were all working by then and Raymond from George's second family who was only a little boy. Raymond was born in 1918 and started school at Yeo Park when he was five.

Mabel married a Samuel Taylor in 1931. When the Second World War commenced Tom and Ray were called up and they served in New Guinea and Darwin. Unfortunately Tom was killed in New Guinea and is buried in Lae Cemetery. Ray survived and will be 91 in September 2009. Ray married a Melbourne girl call Rita and with their daughter Marion came to live at "Jessamine". The grandmother died in 1926 and Jeston and Eric married in 1926 and 1929. Auntie May made some of the rooms into a small flat and Ray and his family lived there until he built a home at Herne Bay (now called Riverwood).

My husband and I and my son Peter took over the float when Ray moved out and we lived there for almost five years. Ray returned to Melbourne with his now three children.

### **Restoration of "Jessamine"**

Mabel's husband Samuel died in about 1950 and when Mabel passed away in 1960, the family sold the house to a man called Rees. On his death, his son restored the house. It was a magnificent home in its day. In the late 1920's the Moss family purchased the carriage way of "Jessamine" and built their home on that land. There grandson Kevin Moss, was a Mayor of Canterbury from 1980 to 1987. "Jessamine" had beautiful marble fireplaces and very high ceilings complete with mouldings and frieze. The gardens were very neatly kept and Jeston Hanlon as a boy kept goldfish in the pond in the front garden.

When I attended one of my first meetings of the Historical Society, a letter was read out asking if anyone knew the history and colour scheme of the house. I contacted Mr Rees' son and together with my Uncle Eric and his wife Alice we visited the home. My uncle provided quite a lot of information to the owner particularly the colour scheme. We saw quite a lot of restoration work had already been done and it was wonderful to see the old home restored.

**The Hanlon's of "Jessamine"** - Written and submitted by Joyce Overton