Images from top:

Postcard featuring Barracluff's Ostrich Farm, South Head, ca. 1910-1920. Image courtesy of the Powerhouse Museum.

Diamond Bay Road, Vaucluse, with Rosa Gully on the left at the oceanline. 1935, image courtesy of the Historic Houses Trust.

WAVERLEY COUNCIL

LIVING IN WAVERLEY

By Brenda Liley

Waverley Council held a Seniors' Storytelling Workshop at Waverley Library in 2009 to collect and celebrate the memories of Waverley's seniors.

I came to live on Old South Head Road in the Waverley area with my parents and brother in 1942. We were told our residence, a duplex, was built on land which used to be Barracluff's Ostrich Farm.

In those days there were wide open spaces especially vacant land along the cliff edges and of course very few cars were on the road as it was still wartime and food, clothing and petrol rationing were in place.

Our arrival was just after the shelling from the Japanese submarines which had caused a large number of people to leave the coast for the safety of the Blue Mountains and other inland places.

Further along the road and opposite was Peel's Dairy with Rosa Gully falling away to the sea behind the Dairy.

We soon made lots of friends and it was wonderful to have the freedom to roam and explore the area. One day one of my bother's friends, Stan, came in and asked if we had explored the area around Rosa Gully.

"No" we said, "where is that?" "It's just across the road" came the reply "Just behind Peel's Dairy. Come I will take you there."

After collecting more friends (we always went out in a group) we headed down Kimberley Street (now Military Road) from Old South Head Road. No cows were kept at the Dairy but they had horses and milk carts to do the daily milk delivery. Our friends told us that the horses roamed the streets at night. We followed the Dairy fence, and then cut across vacant land until we came to a

Images from top:

Cliff ladder at Rosa Gully, 1900.

Rosa Gully at Diamond Bay, 1987.

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great mass of boulders and rocks. Stan said, “You know they used gelignite to blast these rocks. They did this to make this mountain of rocks and rubble. They said, by doing this, it would make it very difficult for any enemy landings to be made.”

It was not easy for us to climb over these rocks but we managed to get as close as possible to the water and sit atop a rock, out of harms way, to watch the beauty of the pounding and crashing waves.

The thrill of it all was just magical. All around the Gully precautions had been made to prevent enemy landings. There was a cottage standing on a block of land on the southern side with a stone fence along the cliff edge. One could see where stone steps and a landing to the water’s edge had once been and that also had been turned into rubble. On that land now stands a huge block of units called “Kimberley Towers.” We were absolutely elated and shared the secret of our visits to Rosa Gully with our friends, but of course this was a secret not shared with our parents. They would have been far from pleased if they had known at the time that was where we spent many a Saturday afternoon exploring and playing.

It was not long after our first visit to Rosa Gully, on a hot summer’s night with a full moon and a gentle nor’easter blowing. I lay in bed listening to the sounds of the night and waiting to drift off to sleep when I heard “clip clop, clip clop”. I leapt out of bed and looked through the open window and there they were, several horses passing by, pausing now and again, to nibble on the grass verge. Being such a still night their hooves seemed to make such a loud noise on the concrete road.In this area of Old South Head Road it is still the original concrete road. When they were out of sight I hopped back into bed but it was not long before they returned as they had a very important task to do in the morning, delivering the milk.

Peel’s Dairy was a milk depot in those days and from there the

Peel's Dairy Vaucluse milk bottle.

WAVERLEY COUNCIL

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milk was delivered all around Vaucluse and parts of Rose Bay. We had a servery into the laundry and the milkman used to open the front gate, run around to the back of the building, up the stairs to the top Unit and transfer the 2 or 3 pints of milk into our billy can. The first one up in the morning would open the little door on our side of the servery and take out the milk ready for our daily use. The Dairy closed in 1958. The Milko then had a converted truck to deliver the milk. I remember my mother was delighted because the Milko now delivered fresh eggs when he came weekly to settle the account.

On the corner of Kimberley Street, diagonally across the road, was a cream coloured weatherboard shop – it was the paper shop. When I became a working girl I would dash in and pick up a copy of my favourite weekly magazine, the Australian Women's Weekly, before catching the 331 bus from SouthHead Cemetery to Circular Quay. My father would collect our daily paper from there and over the years he and the shopkeeper, Mr Watson, became very good friends. They were also bowlers at the Vaucluse Bowling Club.

When Peel's Dairy closed and the land stood vacant, these two friends talked and dreamed about a bowling club being built on that site. And so the seeds were sown and later a steering committee was formed and today there stands the Diamond Bay Bowling Club and Greens. The cream weatherboard newsagency has long since gone and in its place is now a cream coloured block of Units.

Looking back they were carefree days for us and our friends. There was so much to occupy us with so much vacant land and wide open spaces to explore and roam around at Rosa Gully, Peel's Dairy and the cliff tops.

As the years passed and we all went our separate ways Rosa Gully was fenced off and made difficult to access. New roads crisscrossed our playground to service the new building blocks which were being pegged out

Images from top:

Diamond Bay Bowling Club.
Image courtesy of the Diamond Bay Bowling Club.

Diamond Bay, 2007.

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and very soon people started moving into their new houses and the now densely populated area, known today as Diamond Bay.

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