

## HISTORY

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The area bounded by Burke Road, High Street, Malvern Road and Wattletree Road includes three prominent schools; the Malvern Campus of Caulfield Grammar School, Korowa Anglican Girls School and Sacre Coeur Catholic Girls School. The development of this area is directly linked to the history of these schools and the associated mansion estates.

### EARLY SETTLEMENT

The first sales of Crown Land in the area that was to become the City of Malvern, took place on the 10th June 1840. The area had previously been surveyed and divided into large allotments within a framework of main roads. Pastoralists had previously moved into the area, but the first sales of land in the north west of the district, initiated the beginnings of permanent settlement.

Allotments were quickly sold and by 1856, land east of Burke Road overlooking Gardiners Creek Valley, had attracted purchasers. High Street, Malvern Road, Wattletree Road and Burke Road had been surveyed in 1854 but Burke Road, originally named Charleville Road, was re-named to commemorate the explorer Burke, of Burke and Wills.

The area bounded by Burke Road, High Street, Malvern Road and Wattletree Road includes Crown Allotments 117 - 124. Lot 118, at the south east corner of Burke Road and High Street was sold to Henry Lynch in 1856. The same year, the four allotments north of Wattletree Road were sold to solicitor and land speculator Peter Andrew Charles O'Farrell. In 1857 William Fawcett purchased lots 117 and 120 at the intersection of High Street and Malvern Road.<sup>1</sup>

### BRYNMAWR

In September 1857, Michael Keeley purchased Crown Allotment 119,<sup>2</sup> consisting of more than nine acres of uncleared bushland on high ground. Within two years Keeley had built a two storied eight-roomed house facing Burke Road. From 1860 to 1865, during the time he lived at Gardiner, Keeley kept a diary detailing the work required to clear and farm the land.<sup>3</sup> According to his diary, the plans for the house were provided by architect George Wharton.<sup>4</sup>

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1 P.A.C. O'Farrell was the brother of Henry James O'Farrell who was hanged for the attempted assassination of Prince Alfred. P.A.C. O'Farrell was later expelled from the Law Institute following a libel case associated with St Patricks College. He was later charged with the attempted murder of Archbishop Goold. Joan Kenny *Prologue to the future, Christ College*, (Melbourne, 1996), p.168.

2 Rob Bower, 'Malvern 1840-1989, A history of the subdivision, plan 8, unpublished manuscript, held in Malvern Archives.

3 Clare Percy-Dove, 'Brynmawr the high hill'. (Melb. 1976), p.20.

4 Brynmawr - The 'high hill' history notes - undated.

Keeley, was born in Ireland in 1831 and became the licensee of the Parliamentary Hotel. He was a member of the Gardiner Road Board and an Alderman for Gipps Ward.<sup>5</sup>

In 1867, two years after Keeley's death, the property was sold to Waldron Johnston. Johnston also held the adjoining allotments with frontages to Wattletree Road and Malvern Road. The following year Robert Morgan became the owner of lot 119 and lots 121 -124.<sup>6</sup> It has been suggested that Morgan, who came from a Welsh family, gave the house its name, Brynmawr, meaning the 'high hill'.<sup>7</sup>

In 1881 Frederick Roberts, a partner in a firm of ironmongers, purchased lot 119 which included Brynmawr.<sup>8</sup> Various additions were made to the house before it was sold to Frederick Throssell in 1887.<sup>9</sup> Six months later the property was purchased by Frederick Illingworth. Illingworth was a Member of the Legislative Council and a founding partner of the Centennial Land Bank, one of the many banks and land companies that collapsed following the land boom of the 1880s.<sup>10</sup>



*Illustration 2*      *Brynmawr, Convent of the Sacred Heart, c. 1970.*

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5      Clare Percy-Dove, 'Brynmawr the high hill'. Melb. 1976, p.21.  
6      R.Bower, loc cit.  
7      Percy-Dove, p.41.  
8      Shire of Malvern Rate Books 1882, No. 601.  
9      Percy-Dove, p.44.  
10     Ibid.

Brynmawr changed ownership almost immediately. In 1888, the Sisters of the Sacred Heart are listed in the Malvern Rate Book as the owners of allotment 119 'with house etc.' on ten acres of land.<sup>11</sup> The school, having moved from Balaclava, opened at Burke Road on the 9th August 1888. J. B. Cooper writes that,

*The property the nuns bought in Burke Road was a very costly one, consisting of several acres of well laid out grounds and a commodious house. The house after two years' occupation, was found by the nuns to be too small for their requirements, and it was decided to build a large convent.*<sup>12</sup>

In 1890 workman began digging foundations for the main convent building. The red brick, L-shaped complex, comprises the three storey with attic wing (1890) and the chapel wing (1904), built to the designs of Tappin Gilbert and Dennehy. The National Trust citation describes the convent buildings as a local landmark, typifying late 19th century convent school buildings.<sup>13</sup>

In 1988 Sacre Coeur School celebrated its centenary.

## VALENTINES

Land titles show that Robert Morgan purchased lots 121 to 124 in 1868 and held the title to this land until 1911.<sup>14</sup> In 1892, however, the Hon. John Mark Davies, was rated as the owner of allotments 121-124, where he built a 40 roomed mansion with a frontage to Burke Road.<sup>15</sup>

The site for Davies' new home was carefully selected, consisting of 25 acres at the corner of Burke and Wattletree Roads. The mansion was built in 1891-2 to the design of Thomas Watts and is described by the National Trust as 'an ornate two storey stucco rendered brick mansion.'<sup>16</sup> Davies named the house Valentines, the name of his former home in Toorak.

John Mark Davies was a Member of the Legislative Council and served as Minister of Justice in 1890, and Solicitor General and Attorney General in 1891. Davies was mainly responsible for the Voluntary Liquidation Act 1891, which became significant in the depression.<sup>17</sup>

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11 Shire of Malvern Rate Book, 1888, no. 3052.

12 J. B. Cooper, *The history of Malvern*, (Melb. 1935), p.178.

13 School buildings, Sacred Heart, National Trust building citation.

14 R.Bower, loc cit.

15 Shire of Malvern Rate Books, Eastern Riding, 1892, No. 5521. Building in progress.

16 National Trust Building citation Valentines 5-15 Willoby Ave.

17 John Mark Davies, *Australian dictionary of biography* 1851-1890.