

THE GARTSIDE FAMILY IN DINGLEY VILLAGE

Gartside Bros. Pty Ltd was particularly large employer of labour in the Dingley area, especially in the canning season, when about fifty people had jobs. Charles Gartside had gone to America in 1928 to look at canning methods there, but was only able to import a small amount of machinery. However, he had picked up a number of ideas which his brothers were busy putting into operations. A huge boiler, fired by oil, provided steam for cooking the vegetables, and the plant was driven by electricity. The factory turned out canned carrots, parsnips, beetroot, turnips, cabbage, potatoes, peas, cauliflowers, spinach, beans, celery, onions, mushrooms and sweet corn. The brothers grew some of the pea's and sweet corn at Dingley and in 1933 they planted asparagus. But before that they cultivated mushrooms in dark, moist tunnels underground, and claimed to be the only mushroom canners in the world. Allegedly during the thirties the Gartsides with Edgells in Bathurst were the only straight vegetable canners in Australia.

Most of the work involved preparing the vegetables -tipping and tailing beans, podding peas, taking the eyes out of potatoes which were machine peeled, and most loathed, peeling mushrooms. Sometimes bags of vegetables were run to homes around Dingley and the prepared vegetables collected later in the day. It was a forty- eight week at the factory but one advantage of knowing the boss was that you could take time off if you made it up later.

The Kingswood Golf Club which had been seeking an alternative to its creek-divided course cum cow pasture at Dandenong, accepted a very tempting offer. The Gartside Brothers, all keen golfers, leased 126 acres at Dingley, at 4% of the annual council valuation, then about 100 pounds per acre, to the club. Two of the locals collected couch grass runners from the headlands of the market gardeners round about and slowly the fairways were sown. Jack Gartside moved his house across the road and the club built a club house. Les Leunig became manager and the first official games were played in March 1937.

Gartsides found vegie gold

A DINGLEY patch's connection with the area's earliest settlers will be broken when the property is auctioned next month.

The 1807sq m parcel in Centre Dandenong Rd is the last stretch of land owned by the **Gartside** family.

The house was lived in by **Muriel Peterson**, who died recently aged 83. A member of the Gartside family, she was raised on the property, which was originally owned by her uncle **Gerald Gartside**.

The family has owned property in the south-east since the late 1800s and Gerald and his brothers even went looking for gold in Cheltenham



in 1896, according to the City of Kingston historical website.

They later established a market garden in the area and set up one of the first straight vegetable canning factories in Australia in 1916.

The Gartsides' original house at Centre Dandenong Rd was demolished in 1968 to allow for a roundabout at Tootal Rd.

The house, which is up for auction, was built in the old back yard.

Century 21 Dingley agent **David Priest** says the property will probably be sold to developers.

"We've had offers of about \$600,000 already," he says.

Muriel Peterson's daughter **Lindy Mackey** says: "Mum would be sad to see it re-developed but she would understand progress and how much the land has appreciated.

"She enjoyed the gardens. They were always manicured and had a feeling of space and serenity."

The property goes to auction on May 5.

THE GARTSIDE STORY

"Weaver.....to be or not to be?"



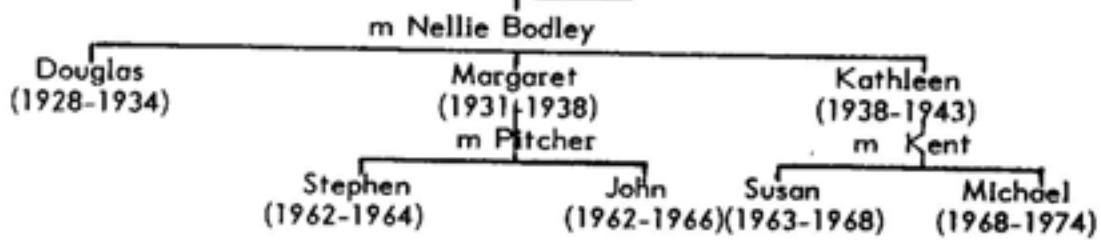
1650 to 1974

until the last great grandchild Kim left in 1959.

Alma attended the school committee meetings and although she was not a member showed a keen interest in pro-

ceedings. She nominated her brothers Jack and Charles into committee positions at the Inaugural meeting held on the 7th October, 1925.

JACK GARTSIDE



Jack Gartside, who fought hard for the school to be built, spent the longest time served by any member on the school committee, from 1925 to 1948.

Jack married Nellie Bodley and their children Douglas, Margaret (Pitcher) and Kathleen (Kent) attended between the

years to 1943. Both Jack and Nellie were vitally involved in the Dingley Community during their lives.

Before her involvement as a parent Kath sang at several Mothers' Club birthday celebrations from 1952 onwards.



Kath Gartside (Kent) with a cabbage grown by Jack Gartside, July, 1939



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The Gartside Family

James Gartside was born on April 8, 1838 and was the last recorded child of Jonathan and Ann Gartside of Oldham, United Kingdom. The family was involved in the cotton industry and it would be imagined that James would have had training in this field. However, there is no mention anywhere, (in particular the 1861 Voter's List) of his occupation.

James arrived in Melbourne aboard the Great Britain which left Liverpool on January 22, 1863, arriving in Australia 90 days later. He was 25 years of age at this time. The lure of easy wealth and the success of an uncle in the gold industry must have convinced him to travel to Australia. James spent some time in Bendigo with his relations before leaving for Melbourne to follow his own interests. He joined John Bundle & Son before transferring to Cliff & Bunting, Agricultural Engineers, where he worked for many years as a specialist in chaff cutters.

James, at the age of 32 years, married Georgiana Elizabeth Edgley at her father's residence in Emerald Hill (South Melbourne) on March 2, 1871. They produced a family of twelve children as follows:

Ann Alfreda - born 1872 (died in infancy)
 Alfred James - born 1874
 Alma Florence - born 1875
 Gerald Spencer - born 1877
 Elsie Melita - born 1879
 Georgiana Isobel - born 1881
 Henry Jonathon - born 1884
 William Albert - born 1885
 Charles Percival - born 1887
 Ada - born 1889 (died in infancy)
 Hilda May - born 1891



Charles, Jack, Alf and Bill Gartside in their International Harvester Car outside Christ Church, Dingley. Photograph courtesy of Kath Kent.

The property the family leased from 1902 to 1914 for use as a market garden was owned by Christ Church, Dingley and was situated on the intersection of Old Dandenong Road and Tootals Road. The produce from



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Recollections of Childhood in Dingley



Dingley from Christ Church tower. c1940. Courtesy Dingley and District Historical Society.

In 1926 my family, the Gartsides, were living where the present club house of Kingswood Golf Club is situated. My brother Douglas remembers koalas being in the trees outside the backdoor also a wide range of native plants - including orchards - in the scrub at the back of the house. One of his earliest memories is of our home tennis court being covered with sawdust and lights hung so that dances could be held to make money towards the formation of the local tennis courts which were to be situated in Marcus Road. My mother and father were enthusiastic members of the founding committee of that Club. He also remembers the seven passenger Ventura Bus which travelled between Cheltenham and Dandenong, taking local children to the Dandenong High School. This service was taken over by Grenda's and during my years at Dandenong High School the bus was driven by Jack Grigg whose father owned the small general store situated at the Five Ways intersection of Centre Dandenong Road, Lower Dandenong and Springvale Roads. Tuesday was always a busy and crowded day for the bus as people all along the route went to Dandenong to attend Market Day. We always hated it when Mr Crochrane got on because he smoked cigars.



Grenda bus Courtesy Dingley & District Historical Society.

In approximately 1937 our family home was moved across from the Golf Course site to the opposite side of Centre Dandenong Road where it