

## ***10.0 1945- 1975 Post War Optimism***

### **10.1 Demographic Settlement**

The post World War II period was characterized by increased settlement in the Shire of Manjimup owing to the prosperity of the rural sector and to the government assisted migration programs from Britain and post war resettlement from Europe. European migrants were attracted to the area because of the existing migrant community and familiar languages. British migrants were attracted to the temperate climate of the south-west and the opportunities in the local industries. Some of the migrants arrived in the area as displaced persons from the European war zone. They were allocated work and accommodation under Government schemes in the Manjimup district.

Unsurprisingly the majority of the residential buildings in the Shire of Manjimup from early settlement through to the 1960s were made from timber. Therefore, scattered throughout the district there are a number of cottages and houses remaining that reflect the importance of the timber industry. In Pemberton, Jardee, Palgarup, Deanmill and Quinninup there are whole rows of mill houses that provide high streetscape value and have significant heritage value.

In 1945 the War Service Land Settlement Scheme was established to enable the resettlement of ex-servicemen displaced by war. Settlers in some cases took up farms abandoned by the earlier group settlers (though the size of their land grants was increased from the 140 acres of the Group Settler to at least 300 acres<sup>1</sup>). Dairying was the main industry that employed the new settlers. Tobacco growing continued but with little success.

### **10.2 Transport and Communication**

A radical change in education came with the introduction of the school bus system. At the end of World War Two many single teacher schools in remote areas were closed and the students were bussed to larger centres.

Railways continued to be important both for passengers and for the conveyance of produce. Manjimup Railway Station was enlarged in 1957. However, during this period motor transport became increasingly important leading to an improvement in roads and a large increase in car ownership. Eventually road transport took over and buses carried the passengers while trucks carried goods and timber.

### **10.3 Occupations**

Tobacco farming had grown to the extent of about 60 growers in the Manjimup district. Michellides was the largest grower with twelve plantations in the district.

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid p62

His empire, along with others, came to an end in 1966 when buyers from the Eastern States decided to establish their own plantations and the need for WA tobacco died (though the excuse given for the lack of demand was a poor quality leaf that was grown in the West). Unfortunately, owing to a fire in the 1960s, there is no built evidence of the drying sheds that had existed on Michellides' farm.<sup>2</sup> The plantations were sold mainly to vegetable growers.

In the 1950s dairying was the main industry in the district although fruit and vegetable production were also important with an expansion of orchards throughout the south-west. In the 1960s potatoes became an important industry often grown in areas in conjunction with a small dairy or cattle herd or orchard.<sup>3</sup>

In Pemberton forestry, mill work, mixed farming and honey production (associated with the karri) kept people employed. Timber remained important with the construction of new mills at Donnelly (just outside the boundaries of the Shire of Manjimup), Northcliffe, Shannon and Tone River. In January 1962 a fire destroyed the Quinninup saw mill. This could have led to the end of the small settlement but a decision was made to rebuild the mill using new and greatly improved technology.

Owing to the importance of the timber industry to the south-west and the life and job threatening effects of fire, a number of tree top fire lookouts were established throughout the forested areas. The Diamond Tree (first used 1940<sup>4</sup>) and the Gloucester Tree are two of the tree top lookouts that remain out of a network that at one time numbered 100. Interestingly the Diamond tree is still actively used as a fire lookout as in some windy conditions fire spotter planes are grounded.<sup>5</sup>

The Muir family continued to take their cattle to the coast for grazing until the last roundup in the 1980s. Since then most of the land has been reverted to the D'Entrecasteaux National Park.<sup>6</sup> Another family with long term interests in the district is the Swarbricks who started Rest Point Guest House. After World War Two they decided use the timber around them to develop a saw mill.

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<sup>2</sup> Shire of Manjimup Municipal Heritage Inventory Heritage and Conservation Professionals 1995.

<sup>3</sup> Historical notes contributed by Doreen Owens Op.Cit.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid

<sup>5</sup> Diamond Tree Information Shelter.

<sup>6</sup> Northcliffe Remembers Op. Cit. page 13



**The cliffs at Windy Harbour part of D'Entrecasteaux National Park.  
*Heritage TODAY 2004***

## **10.4 Social and Civic Life**

The influx of new arrivals to the district joined an established community with a strong sense of identity. Many of the newcomers came from a range of different cultural backgrounds. Over time this cultural diversity enriched the community with the introduction of new skills, sporting and cultural activities. In common with the past arrivals, self-help community co-operation were features of the newcomers efforts to establish themselves. In this period a soccer club was started and well supported by European and British migrants.

The town of Manjimup expanded during the late 1940s and 1950s: Manjimup Infant Health Clinic was opened in 1946; St Joseph's Catholic Church was opened in 1955; Manjimup High School in 1957; the Agricultural Society grounds in 1959; and the Police Station, Law Courts and Telephone Exchange in 1961.<sup>7</sup>

The building dates for the social centres of Northcliffe also show an increasing social and civic life after World War Two. The Anglican, Catholic and Uniting Churches were all built in the 1950s as was the CWA Hall. Northcliffe also had an RSL sub branch Hall (now the Red Cross Hall) in Wheatley Coast Rd.

## **10.5 Outside Influences**

After World War II the Australia government's immigration policy led to a large influx of migrants from the United Kingdom and Europe. Programs to assist the resettlement of returned servicemen and the new immigrant population therefore characterized the post-war period. Though making only a small impact, an interesting

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<sup>7</sup> Berry Ibid

development from World War Two was the presence of a camp in Northcliffe for 200 Italian Prisoners of War. It lasted from December 1945 until May 1946.<sup>8</sup>

Immigration combined with the natural increase in population led to a need for housing and the 1950s and 1960s was a period of activity in the housing market with the State Housing Commission playing a prominent role.

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<sup>8</sup> *Northcliffe Remembers* Op.Cit. page 68