

IMAGES OF ST ALBANS

MARY & TAFFY HOWELLS COLLECTION

From the 1950s



This booklet of images of St Albans has been reproduced from Mary and Taffy Howells' albums of photographs from the 1950s and 1960s.

Mary and Taffy Howells came to St Albans in 1955 as the small, semi-rural village was starting to change in response to the population boom occasioned by post-war industrial growth and European migration. From a village of 900 people in 1950, St Albans grew to 7,000 by 1960. The images in this document are from that period and show glimpses of the iconic village buildings, the home building that that was a feature of the decade, and the establishment of the Sacred Heart Catholic church and primary school.

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Mary and Taffy Howells of St Albans in the 1950s



My mother was Mary Catherine Dodd who was born in Nyngan, New South Wales, in June 1927 and grew up around Carrathool. During the war she was working in the Sydney Ladies' Club in Hyde Park, Sydney. She was a waitress and made some very good friends there. She said the club was popular with the ladies from the properties who used to come in and have afternoon tea. When she left to get married, one of the ladies even gave her a wedding present, a set of silver napkin holders that I still have.

My mother met my father Ron Howells in front of Luna Park in Sydney. Apparently she was waiting for the gates to open and this sailor came wandering up and started speaking to her. That's how they met. They were married for 52 years. I never heard them argue. They never had a fight.



My father was Ronald "Taffy" Howells from Wales in the United Kingdom. He was always known as Taffy – no one ever knew him as Ron. He was from Hirwaun in South Wales, which was a coal mining area. Apparently he and his father were working in Coventry during the war and when he turned nineteen my father enlisted and ended up in Sydney with the British Navy. Mary and Ronald met in Sydney in 1945 during the war and he proposed to her. She said Yes, so when he was released they decided to come down to Melbourne and get married. I think they chose to settle down in Melbourne because of work possibilities.

When my parents saved enough money and were looking to buy a block of land somewhere, St Albans came up as a possibility. I presume land was advertised for sale and that's why they came to St Albans. I don't think they knew anyone here. They had lived in Altona for seven years and moved here in Christmas 1955. Everyone in our little block in Theodore Street moved in about the same time.

Gwynneth Vyner nee Howells, 2019.







































