

# **A Pioneer Schoolteacher**

**Margaret Francis Coutts nee Ebbott b: 1906 – d: 1993**

The school at Sandy Point was sent a new recruit by the Education Department in 1925 which, coincidentally, was the final year of the Sandy Point school that was located in what is now the north central section of Ash Avenue. There are still some remaining large pine trees and a plaque marking the school site erected by the community in recent times. Nearby at No 41 Ash Ave was a dam where children found time to get up to mischief.

Margaret was 19 years of age and it was her first teaching assignment. She was to teach Keane Pilkington and others how to read and write and became a long time friend and correspondent to Vi Pilkington, right up until the final years of her life. Vi Pilkington often visited us at our holiday home for a chat and a cup of tea and remembered Margaret as having a wise and pleasant nature.

She was a long time border at “ENNISVALE” the homestead that no longer exists, just north of the intersection of Sandy Point Road and Ennisvale Avenue. She would walk across the paddock toward the school each day for lessons.

Margaret was a distant cousin of mine and I spent time talking with her about those early days in her Alphington home, where she spent her later years living alone. She did marry but had no offspring.

I recall her telling fondly about reaching Fish Creek from the City, and being met by horse and buggy and driven to Sandy Point and seeing ALL the ferns and wildlife along the journey. What a first trip that must have been. She also enjoyed the musical evenings provided on a regular basis by the large assembly of Pilkingtons living in the area.

After the school was closed down she returned to Melbourne and never again visited the area.

*Notes compiled by Lorna Plaw 43 Ash Avenue.*