



Local History Factsheet:

A brief history of the suburb Hendon

Hendon was originally a part of the suburb Albert Park. For many years, much of it was vacant land, with a number of large stock and slaughter yards.

In late 1920s, aviator Harry Butler purchased 60 acres of land and established an aerodrome. The aerodrome was named 'Hendon' after the Hendon Aerodrome in England. Captain Butler and his small red monoplane the 'Red Devil' became a familiar sight flying low over the jetties along the coast, sowing advertising leaflets and pamphlets in the air, and giving sight-seeing flights. Butler was injured in a crash in 1922 and died as a result of the injuries he sustained 18 months later.

The first subdivision sale of 'Hendon' was held in 1921. The suburb of Hendon commemorates the aerodrome with many streets named after famous aircraft manufacturers for example Farman, Sopwith, Dehaviland, Spad.

The aerodrome was purchased by the Department of Defence in 1922 to enable the start of aerial mail services. During this time a nearby dairy farmer was allowed to graze his cows on the aerodrome site. The Hendon aerodrome site continued to be used until 1927, when landing began to be considered precarious due to the development of the surrounding area. At that time, the aerodrome moved to Parafield.

The aerodrome site remained an empty paddock until shortly after WW2 was declared when government construction of the Hendon Munitions works commenced. The workshops were built in solid brick on concrete, low set and scattered over the site, to withstand air attack. Many of the buildings remain today as part of the Hendon Industrial Park. At the height of the war, 2000 women and 300 men worked on the production line. At full production the works produced 3 million .303 bullets a week.

In 1947, Philips Electrical Industries opened their Australian headquarters at the former munitions works. At the peak of production at the end of the 1950s, 3,500 workers were employed at Philips. The presence of the factory also stimulated the development of Housing Trust homes in Hendon and nearby suburbs. Philips scaled back their production at Hendon in the 1970s. In 1980, the Hendon munitions site was purchased and rebadged the Hendon Industrial Park. SA Film Corp opened Hendon premises July 1981.

The Hendon migrant hostel opened following WW2 for 170 men working for the E&WS. Church services for Latvians and Estonians were started at the hostel in 1949. Acacia Court aged care facility opened on the site of the former hostel 1983.

Sources

'A History of Woodville' by Susan Marsden, Corporation of the City of Woodville, 1977 & 'A History of Woodville – update' by Susan Marsden 1987 (not published).

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