

An account from Hans and Ineke Mulder

What was the situation before we had the Centre?

All activities were taking place at Taruna. That is where Miss Nelson and Miss Burberry lived.

On Monday evening the study group would meet, the Class lessons were held in the big room at Taruna.

During the Holy nights there was a conference at Taruna for many years.

In Hastings was a study group, among the members Mrs Dora Bird. When she died in 1966, she left her estate to the Anthroposophical Society. As her flat would not be suitable for a Centre, which was her expressed wish, the flat was sold and managed by the Society till such a time that a suitable property could be bought.

In the early 1970's, there was an influx of pupils and young teachers in the then Queenswood school. Also, among the parents there was a real wish to deepen their understanding of Anthroposophy.

And the dairy across the road from the school came up for sale. It was decided that this would be an ideal location for a Centre and the property was bought. Partly with the money from the estate, partly from funds raised by the national members and partly by a borrowing community at Prometheus of 8 people.

The little shop in front of the house was demolished, internal walls were removed and under the guidance of John Stevens the walls were veil painted. Many years later, Norbert Mulholland painted the murals.

As money was short, the first chairs were the wooden chairs, now in the art room. Shirley Hamer made the hand-woven cushions to provide some comfort. The cushions are still there.

In those days the school still had schoolhouses for teachers. Many teachers had lived there, the most notable Lawrence Edwards, when he came for a year to help the science teachers of the newly formed Upper school. This house had to be removed to make space for more playing grounds for the students and the decision was made to buy the house so it could enlarge the Centre.

It was transported to the new site and added to the Centre. The foyer is the space created between the two houses. The steps and roof over the entrance were also added at that time.

Now there could be a proper library and Shirley Wall took charge of that, for many years. She also painted the walls of the library and the mural.

The room, which is now the art room, was in the beginning the dining room and was used as such during conferences and AGMs of the National society.

Julian Pook organised the pianos as there were after school music lessons in the Centre. He also held many concerts to raise money to pay for these pianos.

When resource consent was given to change the use of the building from dairy and house to the use of the house as a centre, we had to provide 6 parking spaces on site. That is the origin of the grass area to the side of the house. Cars must have been smaller back then; the space was approved as adequate.