



Boonong Boy*

Shaun Carney's *Press Escape*, Melbourne University Press, 2016

* Neil Hilton, Shaun Carney, Neil Walters, Kananook Primary School, No. 4783, Photograph by Peter Botsman, 1966

Little dots of white on each ripple
Dark in the hollows
Shades and shallows
Painting the wind
Is this what happens when you become old and grey?
Seeing, at last, with a painters eye.

Maxim Gorky's *My Childhood* is the memorable account of the searing poverty that led to the 1917 Russian Revolution. Marcel Proust's *Remembrance of Things Past*, the broken slumbering memories of an old man, the stupid, dandy pursuit of sex laid out like a coffin, A.B. Facey's *A Fortunate Life* is the haunting spare memoir of pre-WW1 white rural Australia, *Shaun Carney's Press Escape* is a haunting allegory of Melbourne's outer suburbs. It is a story of childhood in the 1960s, adolescence in the 1970s, adulthood in the 1980s, middle age in the 1990s, maturity in the 2000s - and the weary journey from the outer suburbs of the 'worlds most liveable city' to life and the world. Carney has written millions of words for the grand *Herald*, then *The Age* and now the *Herald Sun* and has a beautiful understated style. At his best, like so many others, Alan Ramsey comes to mind, he has taken 'voluntary redundancy' and is no longer writing full time for the train wrecks we call newspapers in the age of on-line opinion. But his story is about much more than that. In between the lines is an allegory about death, deception, lies, fear and living. I think a growing readership will warm to this book. Shaun found his way to writing by imagining that he was writing for his father - a welder and small business man, who would scan the by-lines in his lounge chair with smokers table nearby, in a house that stayed with Shaun most of his life and was a replica of one hundred thousand others in suburban Australia. When his father died Shaun lost his enthusiasm for writing. But it was also the end of the newspaper as an institution which could pay for a salaried workforce tuned to the standards of pay that had been established by Justice Higgins in the early 20th century. In this sense newspaper writers, opinion-makers and illustrators encountered what the rest of the Australian workforce had been dealing with since the 1970s. But there is still so much change to come for this land which creates terrible barriers against the rest of the world that lives on so much less than the average Australian wage. We preserve our own enclave and most of us have no idea of the foundations the whole facade is built upon. This is perhaps the real ugliness of Pauline Hanson and her thousands of followers. It is an ignorance that is now less about racism than it is about our own privi-leged white and now multi-cultural life. This is also why the non-recognition of Indigenous land and value is so hypocritical. Unless we do this we are nothing less than the equivalent of privileged nobles in another world. The time for our own accountability will surely come. In this context what is so important about *Press Escape* is that it allows us to think about the values that gave suburban boys and girls of my era such an amazing run at life. We have to ask ourselves: how did this cosmos come about? My review of *Press Escape* is necessarily personal for I was one of the boys, yes boys, running around the Boonong Ave precinct where he grew up in the 1960s. Of course there were girls that were very important to us, but as I get older, I see that Shaun's and my own recollections are very much boys own stories. There are always however in every boy's story, powerful women, often in the shadows, and in Shaun's story the strength of his Mum is there through everything. I see her influence in the picture above of these immacuately presented boys, fawned over with a moist cloth and brush, well fitted with warm clothes for the Melbourne winter, clean, healthy, shining. And there, in the centre, Shaun waiting too, to fly to where-ever life might lead him.

“...so in that moment all the flowers in our garden and in M. Swann’s park, and the water-lilies on the Vivonne and the good folk of the village and their little dwellings and the parish church and the whole of Combray and of its surroundings, taking their proper shapes and growing solid, sprang into being, town and gardens alike, all from my cup of tea.” M. Proust, *À la recherche du temps perdu*

There was a day in my lost middle age around 1990 when I became suddenly transfixed by a photo in the *Sydney Morning Herald* “Good Weekend” magazine. I cannot adequately describe the effect it had on me.

I recognised the classic Melbourne suburban architecture but there was something hauntingly familiar about the picture. It was a house like so many other Victorian houses in a street laid out like thousands of Victorian streets. I could see it completely: the concrete pavement and the ‘nature strip’ and the road all carefully measured and engineered. Its one of the things that strikes you when you come across the border from New South Wales whether at Wodonga, Mildura or Bairnsdale. Suddenly you are back in some local government engineers world where everything is the same. I hope in the coming generations someone destroys that symmetry of suburbia. It kind of makes you want to retch and yet it is so secure and familiar and affluent and protected.

As I read the words below the photograph something in me woke up. For this house was more than just a house. It was a place I knew so well from a lost age. The author’s name suddenly burned through all my dead memory cells. Shaun Carney!

Shaun Carney from my lost childhood at Seaford/Frankston. This was Shaun’s house on Boonong Avenue which was opposite to our school yard. It was across the way from Paul Goldman’s house. It was diagonally across the school from my childhood house on Kirkwood Avenue.

When I saw the picture of Shaun’s house something made me feel sick in the stomach, it was like time did a back flip and then when I read Shaun’s descriptions of his house and his life and his parents it made me feel overwhelmingly sad and nostalgic and incredulous all at the same time.

This was a short article and a taste of Shaun’s book *Press Escape* published last year in 2016. Shaun’s story is about how journalism and writing for **The Herald/Sun** and **The Age** allowed him to escape the life, in Dave Warners phrase, of ‘just a suburban boy’, just a Boonong boy.

I too started my life in the outer suburbs. It is a remarkable thing to be able to recall childhood events of fifty years ago. It is even more remarkable to be able to think back through another man’s lens.

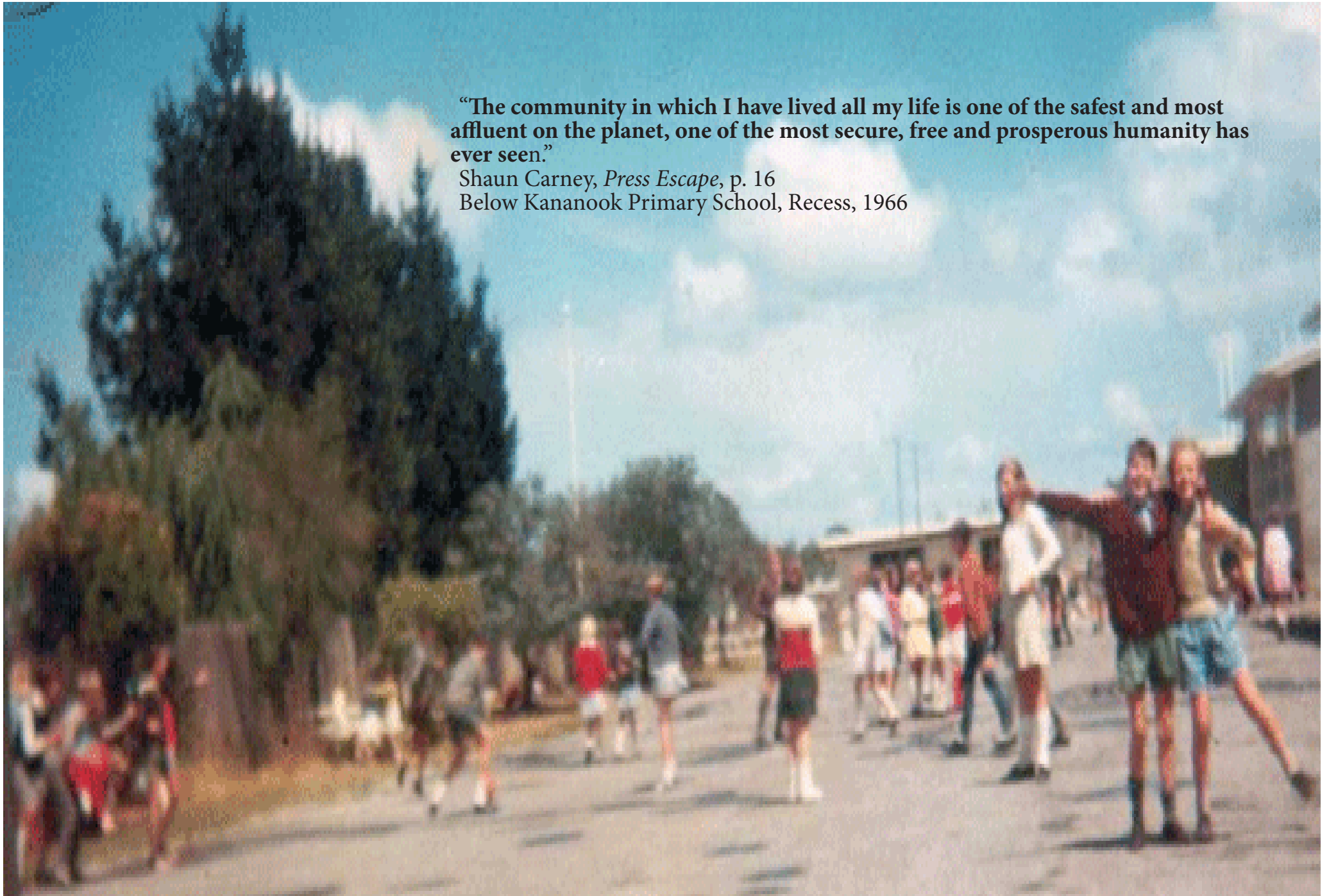
For the first five years of primary school Shaun and I would have spent almost every day in the same class. Our trajectories in life were so different and yet our paths would criss-cross in the most unusual and interesting ways. Yet I cannot help feeling that the quiet compassion that *Press Escape* exudes comes from the air we breathed when were young.

I think one of the reasons I felt so strange when I read Shaun’s *Good Weekend* article was that that time in my life was a very stable and happy time before a series of changes. For me it was like my spirit was chasing its tail all my life trying to find its way back to the stability of Kananook and the deep mysteries there.

“The community in which I have lived all my life is one of the safest and most affluent on the planet, one of the most secure, free and prosperous humanity has ever seen.”

Shaun Carney, *Press Escape*, p. 16

Below Kananook Primary School, Recess, 1966



My mother and father were professionals, teachers, far more upwardly mobile than Shaun's sole income earning. welder father and loving, devoted, nurturing mother. The funny thing is at a certain point in time I think Shaun and I might have willingly swapped lives. It is not just an idealistic fantasy. For many nights in the cruel Lord of the Flies like, upper class boarding house, I came to live in for four long years as an adolescent, I yearned for Kananook.

My father was a scholarship boy from a working class family. He and his brothers and sisters were the first of five generations of his mothers family line to complete secondary school. He not only completed school, he excelled in everything he did, and won a scholarship to Trinity Grammar School. He then finished his teaching degree and a Commerce degree at University of Melbourne. In those days dad was the teacher at the then one-teacher school at Cranbourne South. But he was something of a hero. He worked on the roads in his holidays. He worked in the local nursery. He coached football teams. He would go on to become the vice chancellor of Queensland University of Technology. After Cranbourne he became a lecturer at Frankston, then Toorak Teachers College and his star was on the rise. Our family would follow his star. My mother was also a trained teacher and had been the local kindergarten teacher for me, my sister and most of my friends. She was a member of Harry Hopman's elite tennis team at Kooyong, however, all that changed when I came along. A promising tennis career was given up for the all important job of bringing up children. This was a time when education and the nurturing of the young was a priority after the tumultuous 1940s. It was truly a time for children.

Seaford and Kananook were not going to hold my family long. But as a child and even now I felt I truly belonged to that suburb. the people around me, who were true and authentic and real, and beyond that, to the place. It was the most stable place I lived through most of my life and now in old age I have settled for the longest period in a place that has similar feelings for me.

I had a magical early childhood at 115 Kananook Ave. It was my mother's mothers land she had inherited a bit of money from her father. My mothers family had lived all around Victoria following my grandfathers postings as a primary school principal. They ended up in Glenroy. Yearning for the bush my grandmother would create great natural gardens wherever she went. She purchased a big double block on the Seaford foreshore untouched by development. She guarded every tree which no doubt drove my modernist parents a bit crazy. In an Aboriginal destiny the land would have been my land to look after when she died. I have written about the deep feelings that came to me there from Aboriginal spirits¹. No doubt aided by my mother's careful early childhood nurturing which was fuelled by her kindergarten and primary school training I felt something deeply about the place. Mum put all her energy into me and my sister. My younger sister and I were very nurtured children. The block on Kananook Ave like all my grandmothers gardens was very special. There was something about Grandma. Her father Tommy Warne had virtually created Shaun's much loved home of the Carlton Blues, Princes Park, from an old rubbish dump and the family lived there in the grounds until the 1960s and Doug Nicholls lived there with them for a time. Grandma's Kananook block was full of tea tree, great old eucalyptus species and old man banksias. In the Aboriginal world such trees are routinely places to contemplate and talk to generations past. For me it was like spirits had accumulated there and found me as their last hope in the suburban wasteland. I hope I have not let them down. For many years this was just a child's imaginary.

1 <https://www.workingpapers.com.au/papers/kananook-sweet-water>

In my later life the great Djalu Gurruwiwi, a man who possesses the power to sweep you up into a dream of your life, took me back to the Kananook foreshore and showed me the paradise that had existed there before. The Carrum Carrum swamp had filtered fresh water right along the foreshore for twenty miles to Frankston and in the Kananook “Sweet Water” creek fresh-water mussels, yabbies, were there in abundance. There were eel traps along the water course and people lived happily along the banks of the rivulet for thousands of years. This was a paradise that we so badly polluted and spoiled. For me it has become a metaphor for Australia and our lack of recognition of Aboriginal nations and knowledge. William Buckley, the escaped convict had wandered these places starving and was flukily saved by Wathaurung women. He too had sensed something of the sacred world so foreign to his native Englishmen.

I had known all this as a small child. No-one knew these things then. As Shaun writes: “There is no clarity about the Indigenous meanings of Boonong and Kananook, although there is speculation that Boonong means ‘resting place’ and Kananook relates to either ‘fishing place’ or, hilariously, ‘sweet water’. If anyone in my family or the numerous neighbours who helped us transform this wild hinterland into a predictable, ordered, proudly unremarkable piece of industrialised Australian domesticity ever gave a thought to the people who camped here for thousands of years before we arrived, I’m unaware of it. But we uttered bits of their language every day. Kananook was the name the Bolte government gave to my primary school when it was built in the late 1950s”. p.29

My father and his father built the house on Kananook Avenue that was to become the early childhood home for my sister and me. Five years later my parents both teachers had earned enough to build their own home at 83 Kirkwood Avenue a short distance from Kananook Primary School. I am not sure I ever recovered from leaving my grandmothers block. Later all of the beautiful trees and feeling of the land were bulldozed and the inevitable sub-divide and block of flats was built. I found something there and it has followed me all my life.

Shaun’s father had built their family home too but he was struggling with his business and his mother had a whole different perspective on the world. As Shaun writes: “Surviving was the goal in our home in Boonong Avenue as the scrub and dirt roads yielded to modernity and the bitumen arrived, and brick veneer and weatherboard homes and blocks of flats populated the neighbourhood throughout the 1960s”. p. 71

Despite our relative disparities in life I do not remember feeling as if there was any great divide between us kids. There was a bit of “stirring” different kids but it was nothing like the cruel bullying I was to encounter in the dark years of boarding school at Peninsula Grammar in the 1970s when our class lines would fracture completely. I remember longing for the halycon years of Kananook, with my own room, my parents and family around me. Life seemed good then and remained something I would think about in the turmoil of changes that were to confront me in the years ahead.

For the children in this suburban cosmos there was no war, no danger and the relative protection of a working man’s welfare state which guaranteed an education and a small bottle of milk at the beginning of every school day.

Our lives as children seemed incredibly close, inter-twined and happy.

Our houses were not terrace houses, all had yards. The quiet avenues were our football grounds.

The bush was still there to explore, at least for a moment in time.

Everyone knew each others houses. If we hadn't been inside we knew where to knock on doors or, more than likely, where to just yell from the drive way. "Can Shaun come out?"

I remember the bitumen melting on summer hot days, walking to the beach. There was the wobbly foot bridge across Kananook Creek then the short trek over the busy Nepean highway, then a run over the hot sand to the water, stopping to stand on a towel or a clump of grass when it was unbearable.

There were the cracks on the pavement, which you had to scrupulously avoid stepping on, in order to preserve your mother's back.

There were the football games at Seaford Oval which started just after kindergarten and where the players seemed so big and where for years you had to sit on the reserve bench because you were under age. Then when you got a run, if you took a mark or got a kick you were in heaven for a week. I remember my first mark. I remember being winded in my first game and thinking that the world had ended.

But all of this made our little State School side a formidable football group. We never lost a game and won the premiership. Something three time winning AFL Premiership player Russell Greene was quick to remind me after we talked for the first time in fifty years. I was disappointed that Shaun left that very important and pertinent fact in our lives out of his book. It was too subjective I think for the ever modest and journalistically objective Shaun Carney to include, no doubt.

Football, as Shaun writes, was our boy passion. 50 years later I still remember most boys in the class by their football team. I would come to school in an Essendon jumper with Jack Clarke, Ken Fraser and Ted Fordham transfers on my sleeves. Shaun barracked for Carlton, Russell and Malcolm Beaman for Collingwood. Kenny Staggard went for Richmond. He would have had a good year this year wherever he may be. Our discussions of the players was in depth and we delighted in the radio coverage and the Saturday night replays. Lou Richards, Jack Dyer, Bob Skilton, Polly Farmer, the very fair Ken Fraser, Royce Hart, Daryl Baldock and our own Russell Greene as the years went on. Russell reckoned Malcolm should have played AFL I reckon the whole Kananook team should have. But Russell was certainly a cut above even then.

I felt so attached to the kids that it was a huge upheaval for me to leave the school in Grade Five to go to Papua New Guinea where my father's career beckoned. I took my passion for football there but it was never the same, even when two years later I found myself at posh Peninsula Grammar school in Mt Eliza as a boarder reunited again with Paul Goldman who was a day boy but without the unconquerable footy gang of Kananook. There was something artificial at Peninsula. I lived to play football but the boarding house was a very cruel environment and I longed for the comradery of Kananook. Funnily enough I would have traded class positions with Shaun at Monterey High School or the others who went on to Karingal High in the wink of an eye.

Whereas Shaun stayed in his Boonong Avenue house until his university days, my destiny was to leave Seaford in Grade 5 for Papua New Guinea, back to Mt Eliza's Peninsula from Form One to Four where I was in constant trouble. I was saved again by my father's decision to enrol himself at Cornell University and I finished my schooling in Upstate New York when I was barely seventeen. There I found nothing at all to rebel against. Cars, long hair, pot and alcohol, girls and music were in abundance. But I lost my precious football connection forever in the United States although I did make a brief return in my thirties to play with Phil

Manassa's Balmain side in the then just emerging Sydney AFL competition.

For me Seaford and Kananook were my longed for childhood cosmos. Yet it was not all safe and idyllic. The economy was changing. There were moments of tragedy. One of the girls in our class Anne Craddock had lost her mother and father and was cared for by her grandmother. The policeman across the road drowned his wife. Our neighbour had a backyard abortion and was unable to have children. She adopted two girls but was plagued by depression all her life. I had been hit by a truck on Kananook Avenue when I was very young and this probably traumatised my little sister for much of her life. It had no long time consequences for me it only enhanced a sort of devil may care recklessness and feeling that I was invincible somehow.

In the safety of the suburbs there were shadows and troubles coming. Shaun had his shadows. As I was leaving Kananook I felt the changes coming too. One summer I learned to drink, smoke and steal and there was learning about sex in the sand dunes in a kind of pecking order of ordinariness. I remember the tensions arising when Italian and Greek immigrants came into the suburbs as willing and creative workers in the Dandenong factories taking on Australian born tradies who were moulded into trades and working hours and strict leisure time.

"I should have got more for the house".

Katrina Skinner, *Suburban Mayhem*

Death in suburbia has a special ambiance. Even when it is coming fifty years ahead you somehow feel its presence. The long suburban apprehension and fear of death has something to do with a feeling that something might change to the comfortable life.

The relative unity of Seafood and Kananook, as Shaun and I knew it, was wrecked by the changes to the nature of work in Australia that began in the 1970s. Our childhood in the 1960s was a period when fathers had time. The gap between rich and poor was smaller. The ability to build or buy your own house was a common expectation. You had your pick of jobs.

Shaun's Dad and family felt it first and my family flew away from our childhood cosmos. The changes to the stability of the suburbs were nevertheless coming. Shaun's Dad was, like my father's father, declared bankrupt. It took a war to bring my grandfather back into the black - a long service through the New Guinea rewarded him with a discharge but the long term psychological effects of failing go on. *The Argus* showed grandfather was in the red for 393 pounds on 21 July 1937 and was discharged from debt on 29 May 1945. But in my house, father, the golden scholarship boy, still had a horror of money. I remember Dad reacting strangely one day when Malcolm Beaman and I went knocking on doors asking for work. He told me off quite severely and made me cry and I always wondered why. It had to do, I think, with his own childhood vulnerability. Mal and I were just trying to make some extra pocket money. My mother was the better with the finances though I doubt Dad would have admitted it. Bankruptcy brings a special life long gloom and sense of failure that so often tests families. The 1961 credit squeeze and the fifteen year struggle out of debt created a sort of apprehension in the Carney household. It was this and his father's deception of his mother that probably led to a caution and fear of the unknown in the young Shaun.

The way in which Shaun describes how his perception of his father changes is one of the great things about his book. There is a tension between love and distrust but Shaun finds inspiration in the great Zig and Zag, the amazing era of black and white television and the

shows that ran from the end of school until dinner time, Marvel comics all this and a love of words were his pathway to journalism.

The fabric of the suburbs was becoming frayed. In my holidays it was easy for me to get work in the boom bust Frankston building industry. Fortunes would be made and lost. Tradies and builders could easily become millionaires with houses and jet skis and lose them all in a year. There was also some kind of gap in the stable education and training and employment prospects that were available. Most of all there was a definite change in the work ethic. It was a no-no to accept welfare without good reason in our childhood days. By the time our secondary studies were completed it was becoming an accepted norm. The single income household and the working man's wage that was enough to allow a family to live a relatively good life was breaking down. Ghettos of welfare were forming in and around Frankston and Seaford in places like the Pines Estates and Seaford.

In a strange way Shaun and my life was an interesting comparison. For both of us it was imperative to escape death in the cultural desert. Our Kananook class mate Paul Goldman made a great 2006 movie about the backdrop of desperate humanity that was starting to emerge in the suburbs. *Suburban Mayhem*, written by Alice Bell, directed by Paul is a saga in which Lady Macbeth in a short dress, with an eye for real estate, plays the lead. Complete with a sound track by Mick Taylor and the Birthday Party and shades of Pulp Fiction, I found it, like Shaun's house, a sort of Proustian *madeleine*, I remembered so many ways that my imaginary perfect life was disintegrating on foundations of concrete and bitumen and brick veneer houses. It brought back to me a feeling of desolation on Glenroy Railway Station flying home from the United States with no money in my pocket. I sat there looking out at the suburbs thinking what had I done to come back. I remembered the era of tension between Anglo Australians and Greek and Italian immigrants that was extremely ugly. The truth is the new workers were hungry and eager and many Australian workers were spoilt by the stability of work and pay and conditions and working hours. The frog was slowly boiled in the pot. I remember the Frankston Riots, which I also witnessed first hand. At a certain period in my life I seemed to have a knack at being in these places of crisis. Travelling down from Brisbane to Melbourne I witnessed Newcastle's Star Hotel riots in 1979, like Frankston, it was a tangible reflection of major changes in our world. A large youth population with little interest in their work were manifesting their desires, fears and pain. Then there were the Brisbane street marches and nights in Boggo Road jail but that is another story.

In Form Four I remember looking across from my desk at Paul with Thomas More's *Utopia* on his desk and knowing then that he too was on some wild path out of the cultural desert and the great sham of Peninsula Grammar school. Yet we were all a part of this suburbia of Australia. I began reading Eldridge Cleaver, Julius Nyerere and Karl Marx. Shaun's life changed when he read very intently these words: "THEN, AT A GESTURE FROM ASGARD'S HAND, THE VERY FABRIC OF TIME ITSELF STANDS STILL, AS THE ENTIRE HUMAN RACE, UNDER AN IRRESISTIBLE SPELL, IS INSTANTLY TRANSPORTED TO A DIMENSION BEYOND THE KEN OF THE HUMAN MIND!"

The subtleties of *Press Escape* are what makes it a special book. Shaun's self doubt, his mother's death, his young six year old daughter's battle with acute lymphoblastic leukaemia and finally his father's brave death, with the conversation about why he had led a double life for 30 years unsaid, are all beautifully discussed. The reader moves through these chapters and passages and stares into space. *Press Escape*, ostensibly about the profession that gave

Shaun his escape to life and the world, is a story of a journey to manhood through the 1980s, 1990s and 2000s. I could easily stop writing any further at this point but there is much to reflect on beyond Shaun's immediate story and this is of course the measure of a great book. You start asking questions and making comparisons.

When Shaun completed his interview with Bill Hoey at Melbourne's *Herald* and was handed his style sheet, he entered a profession that was quite uniquely stable. He spent 33 fortunate years in journalism. My friend Michael Stutchbury armed with an economics degree from the University of Adelaide has had an even longer run. Michael has never lost his passion for his job and I think even his closest friends are lucky to see him outside of a Swans game, a wedding or an anniversary. In a way this was the destiny of our generation. We avoided being called up for Vietnam. We benefited from an abundance of jobs that were relatively secure for life. Lots of our generation are now happily retired with a strong superannuation package to keep us comfortable to do death do us part. But this model of life is clearly not sustainable any longer.

So what was happening through all of this period? Is the change that is occurring all around us positive? I cannot look with anything but gloom at the fate of Kananook and Seaford although I note that the black water and sewerage laden Kananook Creek has been remarkably cleaned up. Its just that it seems as if the relentless population drive and suburbanisation is burying all trace of the paradise that we were lucky enough to inherit and sense for a short period of time. It is imperative that we recognise first nations in all their diversity if we are to have any hope at all. Of course that is not all there is to it but it brings a whole new set of values into the picture, There has to be an active understanding of Indigenous values about water, land and life not just constitutional recognition.

The other question that concerns me is about the nature of life long employment and the affluence that comes with it, I think there is an argument that says the American/Australian dream is dead and good riddance, not just from an environmental perspective, but from the perspective of life. There is no way that our children will have the ease of economic life and choice that we had, But maybe there is a richer experience ahead for them. I dont want to gloss too much over this because there is no doubting the importance of security for happiness. It is something we all crave. In some ways I think I have spent my whole life wanting to go back to Kananook.

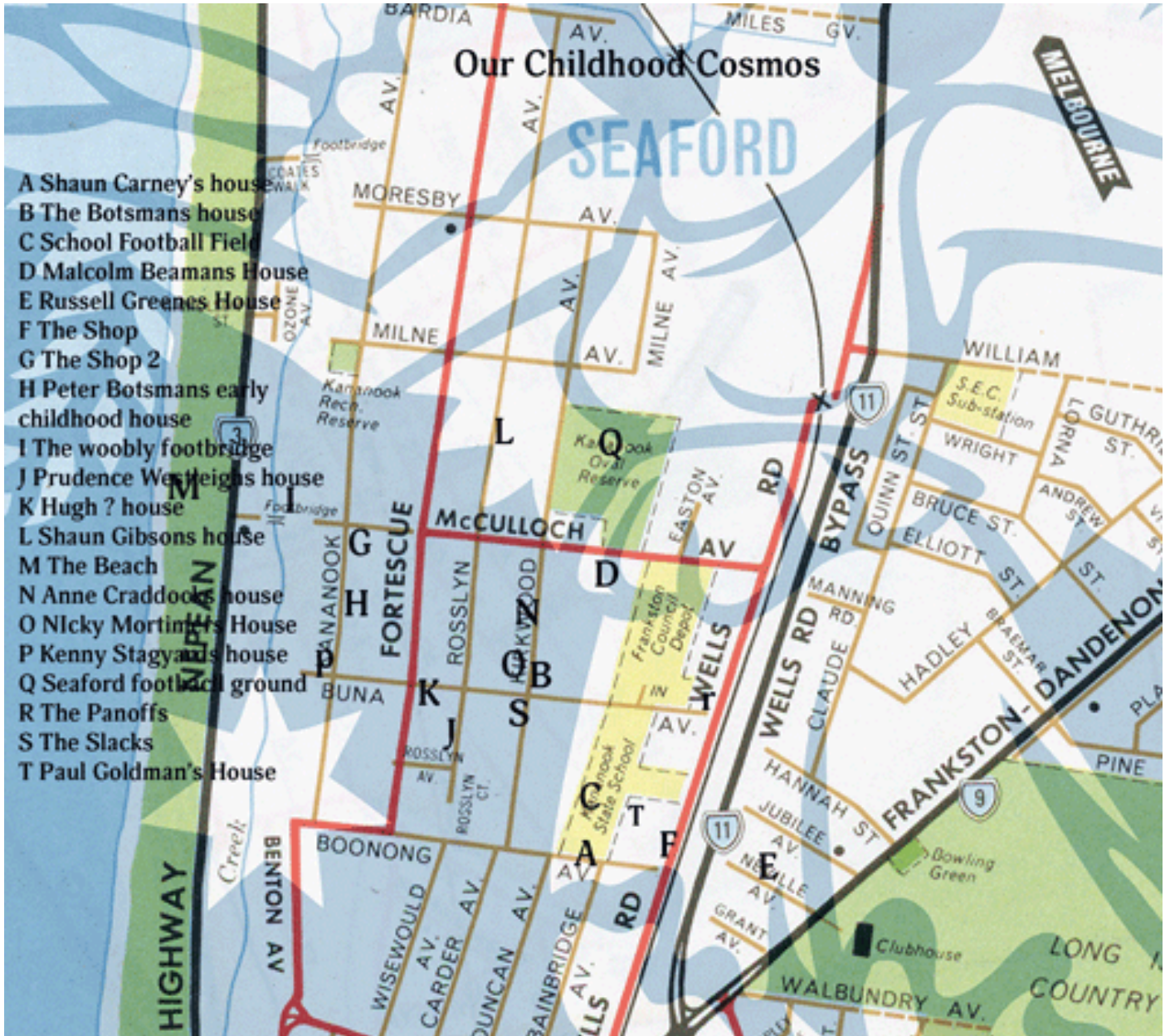
When I compare the different paths that Shaun and I have taken in our lives they could not be more different. Shaun lived in the same city and state and profession for most of his life. I changed cities at least 10 times, jobs 14 times, countries three times. I can see that there are many, many benefits of the world's most liveable city where you now live longer than most other places in the world, But as I always thought, you could go to sleep in Melbourne and wake up dead. I am not talking about cosmopolitan cultural dimensions of Sydney v Melbourne but I am thinking about a certain open-ness. I like the idea of world citizenship. That means, and I never thought that I would ever write this, a degree of freedom of trade and movement that would allow citizens of the Phillipines and Indonesia to come and work here with at least as much likelihood as someone from the United States or the European union. Could we imagine a future in which our institutions of work and industry and government actively worked towards sharing our wealth and security around? For my part I think that is the key to our future prosperity and happiness.

What I like so much about Shaun's book is its humility and honesty. Shaun's writing has got something of the features of the late great Jimmy Little. When Jimmy talked to you he was

talking to you. He was genuinely interested in you. He wanted to know what you thought. When he sang he gave his best whether there was one or one hundred thousand in the audience. There was something intrinsically good about the man and what he did. I happen to think *Press Escape* is a book that transcends its subject and makes us think about the nature of life itself. *There is a deep message in these poignant memoirs: generosity matters, words matter, thought matters, place matters, people matter.*

Photographs

The photos below of my friends and playmates at Kananook Primary School, many of which include Shaun Carney, were taken by me with a box brownie camera. I took the photos on a bright school day in 1966 because I was going away and I wanted to remember the school and the children and the life I had lived there. Little did I know how useful they would be fifty years into the future or how they might focus the remembrances of old men and women.





Bertie Kokenberg, Kelly Ayres, Russell Greene, Shaun Carney, David Blencowe, Prudence Westley in the distance, Kananook Primary School, No 4783, 1966

“I became a captain of one of the two pick-up sides that fought it out on the oval each lunch time. The other captain was Russell Greene, whose talent was stratospheric compared with the rest of us. Russell went on to play his first game with St Kilda at sixteen. He was later traded to Hawthorn, where he capped off his 304 game career by playing in three premiership sides. Other thoroughly committed players running around during those lunch-times included my friends Paul Goldman – who became a film maker and the director of the feature film *The Night We Called It A Day* about Frank Sinatra’s controversial Australian tour of 1975, and a film about growing up in an isolated part of modern Australia, *Australian Rules* – and Peter Botsman, an activist academic, who at different times ran the Evatt Foundation, the Brisbane Insitute and the Whitlam Institute. And John Middleton, whom my mother had drier to draw my attention on my first day at school”. *Press Escape*, pp. 64-5



Nicky Mortimer, Deavid Blencowe, Peter Purcell, Prudence Westley, Shaun Carney, Susan
Hamilton
Kananook Primary School, No 4783, 1966



Grade 4 assembly, Kananook Primary School, 1966: Ken Staggard, Stephen Gibson, Nicky Mortimer, John Beattie, Lachie Audas, Bertie Kokenberg, Russell Greene, Paul Goldman, David Sly, Shaun Carney, Malcolm Beaman, Neil Walters, Neil Hilton, Nola McLeod, Kelly Ayres, Grade Four teacher Ted Hughes in background.

“The process of regimentation began in the first moments of school. Marching music would play over the school PA and teachers stood next to the lines to ensure that the children walked in lock step into the classrooms. Once seated, students were required to clasp their hands on the table or desk in front of them and to sit up, with backs straightened. Only on the command from the teacher was the pose allowed to be abandoned. On Monday mornings, before the marching, a flag monitor – always a boy at my primary school, perhaps on an assumption that jingoistic duties should not be entrusted to muddle-headed girls – would raise the Australian flag. The assembled school body would turn to face it and sing ‘God Save the Queen’ before reciting: ‘I love God and my country, I will honour the flag, I will serve the Queen, and cheerfully obey my parents, teachers and the laws’.”
Press Escape, p. 62-3



Grade 5 Boys Horsing Around 1966, Kananook Primary School, David Blencowe, Neil Walters, Nicky Webber, Shaun Carney, Stephen Gibson, Malcolm Beaman, unidentified, Paul Goldman



Russell Greene, Paul Goldman (and I suspect a hidden Shaun Carney) 1966, Kananook Primary School.



Our Grade 5 heart throb, Susan Hamilton, and Grade 5 boys performing, the "Shelter Shed", Kangaroo Primary School, 1966 Boy facing the camera Michael Todd



“I have not yet stated baldly that I was a weird kid. I did not think it necessary to point out the obvious”. p.37

Shaun Carney, John Beatie, Bertie Kokenberg, Kananook Primary School, 1966