

Norwood

It is assumed that, after six years, Moss was no longer satisfied with his pise-built *Merriang Cottage*, for in 1882 he bought the vacant land between the cottage and the railway line. This is the first indication that Moss had grander ideas for his Brighton property. The following year the property on the south boundary became available. This was on Hawdon's original allotment and had a frontage to Hawdon's Road and a spacious home of ten rooms. The property was called *Ensleigh*. Moss bought it from Dr Edward Boyd Adams, who was a prominent citizen of Brighton at the time and had bought the property from John Hawdon in 1849. Judging by its style, *Ensleigh* was probably built by Adams in the 1860s or early '70s. Moss now had all he would want – an impressive home conveniently located in East Melbourne and a presentable and comfortable home of eight or ten rooms on the spacious Brighton property with a sea frontage. But now he had plans for a grander house; following the craze for spectacular mansions to demonstrate the apparent wealth of their builders, his would be more opulent, although smaller, than most of the others.

Prior to a pleasure tour of Europe in February 1888, with his wife, Moss was provided with a banquet by the Corporations of Melbourne, South Melbourne, Prahran and Fitzroy. It is possible that, on this 'grand tour', he got ideas for *Norwood* and that he purchased many of the ornaments and furniture.

To give his dream an appropriate setting, Moss arranged to buy the remaining section of Foot's allotment on the northern boundary. This was the part of the land that Foot had sold to William Andrew back in 1843. The land was now owned by a local market gardener and his agent. It had been subdivided into three allotments with a public right of way (ROW), we will call A, B, C and D (see plan at left). On 13th July 1883, Moss found that the property had been sold to Thomas Bent, recorded on the back of the title at eight minutes past midday on that day. Bent sold Moss sections A and C, recorded at nine minutes past twelve. Bent then sold section B, which was between A and C, to an Alexander Oliver at ten past twelve. He did not, or would not, sell section D, the ROW. Moss bought section B from Oliver a month later at, no doubt, an inflated price. It would seem that it was Bent's way of paying a bribe (which could not be proven). With the ROW in his hands, Bent (or anyone else) was able to walk right into the middle of Moss' back garden. Today, the land Bent sold is basically Norwood Avenue and most of the properties facing it. Moss had to wait a few years before he found how he was gazumped.

With Bent elected Mayor of Brighton in the following two years, the council decided to assume, form and pave the private Hawdon's Road. It was then gazetted as Kinane Street, the name of the market gardener who had sold his land to Bent. Moss used *Ensleigh* as his beach home for a number of years, so he was always reminded, by the name of the street it fronted, of the unpleasant happenings of 13th July 1883. As Kinane Street got its name in very dubious circumstances, it would be appropriate to have it reinstated as Hawdon Drive, the name of the pioneer who created Brighton's historic street.