

Kennon Family (1908-1938)

Mr Squire Kennon

The Chestnut Hill property was first recorded as part of a subdivision of "South Sassafras" in 1890. In 1908 the property was purchased by Mr Squire and Mrs Elizabeth Kennon. They were a wealthy family who lived in Collingwood. The property was reduced in size when the shire compulsorily acquired 3 acres to construct the current "Monbulk Road" arterial and with that the avenue of chestnut and walnut trees, from which the property got its name, was removed and lost forever. One sentinel chestnut remains at the property entrance, now over 100 years old.

Mrs Elizabeth Kennon

In 1923 Elizabeth Kennon had built a double-storey Californian bungalow as her "country residence" (the current Chestnut Hill House and DownUnder Unit). Mr Squire Kennon had passed away from a debilitating stroke in 1920. The interior of the House is largely intact and boasts a number of original features. The Kennons were a generous family to the local and wider community and hosted many charitable functions in Kallista.

Tannery hides

Squire, with his brother Thomas, owned a tannery in River Street, Richmond. They supplied leather boots for soldiers during the Boer War and had interstate offices. Squire was, for a time, President of the Master Tanners and Leather Manufacturers. He travelled with James Hardy in Europe, seeking improved machinery and methods to encourage industry in Australia.