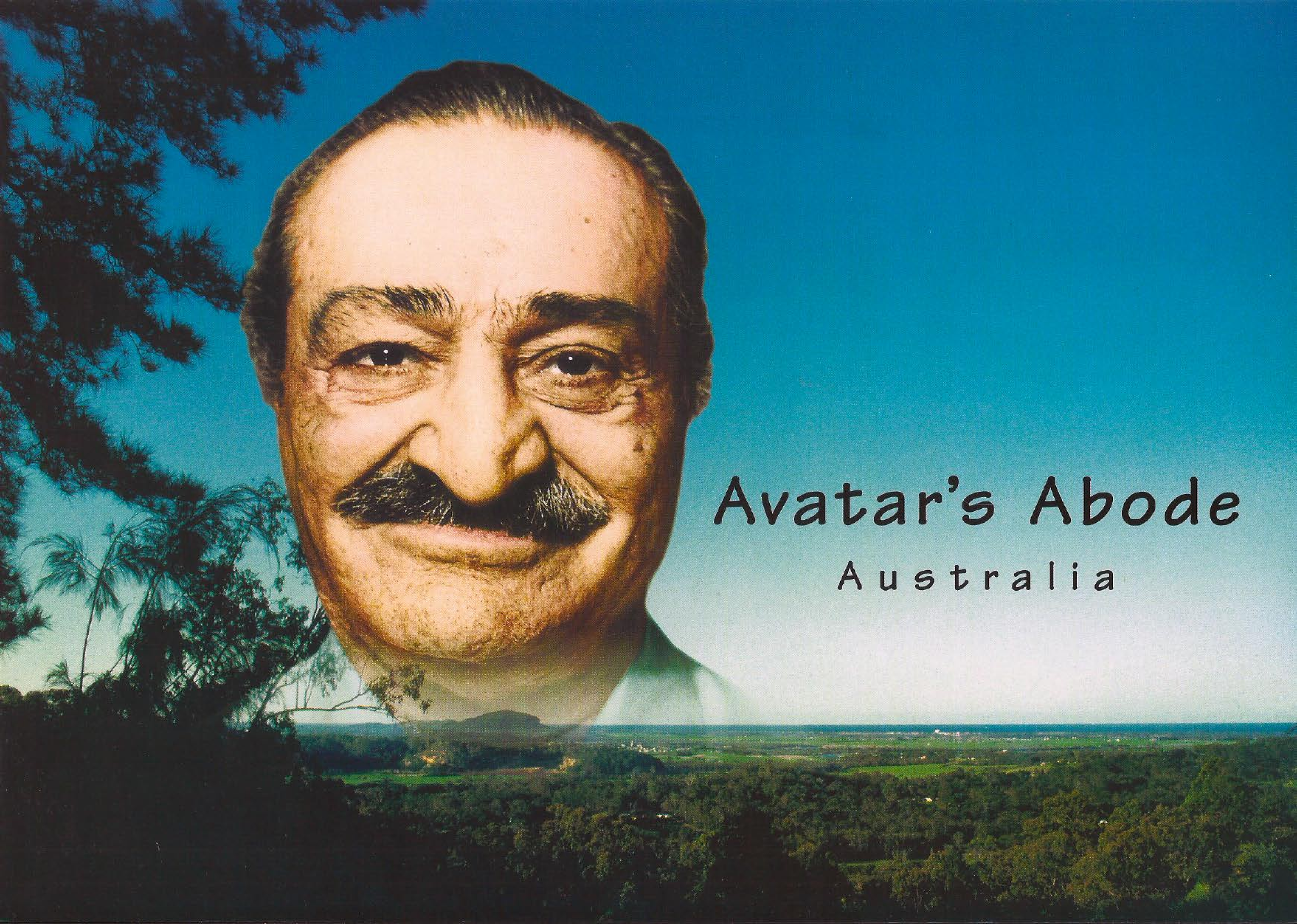

Avatar's Abode
Australia

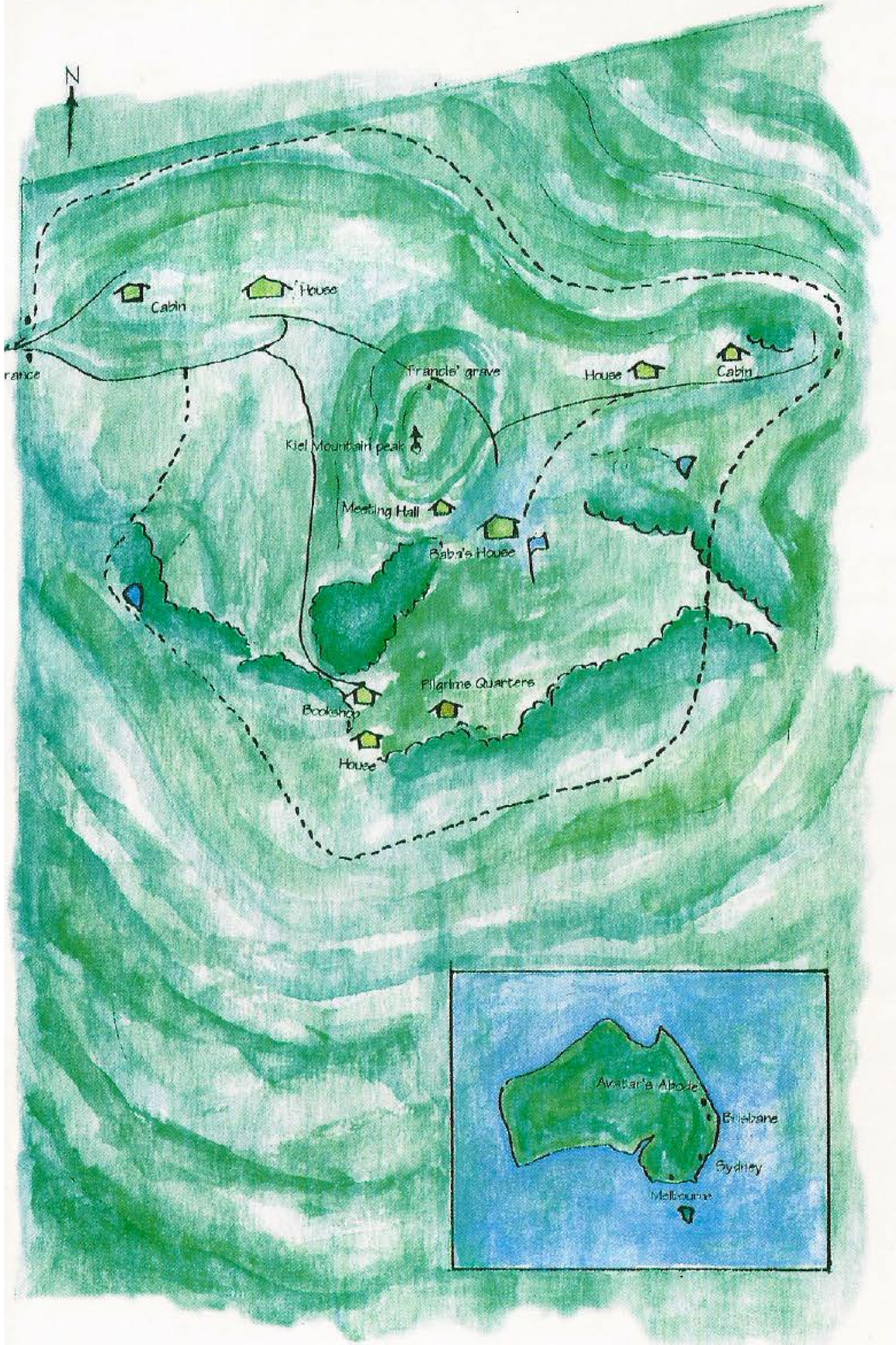
Colour photography of Avatar's Abode by Peg Love 1993

Front cover: view of coastline from Avatar's Abode

"Avatar's Abode is a stopping place on the road to the Beloved, for He stopped here on the road to our hearts and took over the lives of those who came and gave themselves to Him. The place was acquired at His request and He gave it the name it bears. No stopping place can be a destination except that place where mind stops forever and one knows that one is God. Your destination is your own heart in which the Eternal Ancient One eternally lives, but because Avatar Meher Baba the all-loving one stayed here, the perfume of His Love may refresh and strengthen you on the way to His feet."

Francis Brabazon

View of Baba's House from the peak



THE PROPERTY

Avatar's Abode is a 99 acre property of great natural beauty, on the summit of Kiel Mountain near Woombye on Queensland's Sunshine Coast. It has a panoramic view of the ocean to the east and over valleys, farmlands and rolling blue hills to the west. The moderate, sub tropical climate favours lush plant growth. There are cleared grassy areas and flower gardens around and near Baba's House, the lovely old frangipani tree being a particular landmark.

Along walks below Baba's House there are tall eucalypts; at a further distance there are groves of casuarina, and in the creek gullies rainforest plants predominate. The property is the home of hundreds of species of Australian plants and much of Avatar's Abode remains natural bushland. It is the habitat for many native birds and animals including wallabies, kookaburras, lorikeets, magpies, koalas, and bush turkeys.

By Meher Baba's wish, and in accordance with the Trust Deed, Avatar's Abode can never be sold, but must be kept as a place of pilgrimage, a priceless treasure for generations to come.

View of Baba's House, the frangipani tree and flagpole

PREPARING FOR BABA

In 1956 Meher Baba visited Australia for the first time, staying in Sydney and Melbourne. In January 1958 a letter was received from Meher Baba's sister Mani addressed to Francis Brabazon and the Australian group.

Unexpectedly Meher Baba nominated Queensland as His first choice for the Sahavas to be held in June. (Sahavas is the intimate sharing of company between a Master and His lovers, like the mingling together of members of one family).

"Baba gives first preference to Queensland and second to Beacon Hill. Baba would like Queensland if the climate is good there during June, and if the Australian group can afford to assemble there and if the place is practical, then it would be ideal - for Baba would be blessing with His Presence yet another part of Australia."

It was decided that Francis Brabazon would drive to Queensland to find a suitable place.

He travelled up the coast to Brisbane and then on to the Buderim district. After looking at many properties around the area, Francis was told of a pineapple farm on top of Kiel Mountain, Woombye. As soon as Francis saw the place he felt "this is it."

He sent a lengthy cable to Baba with a full description of the property. Baba cabled back saying that it was "excellently suitable."

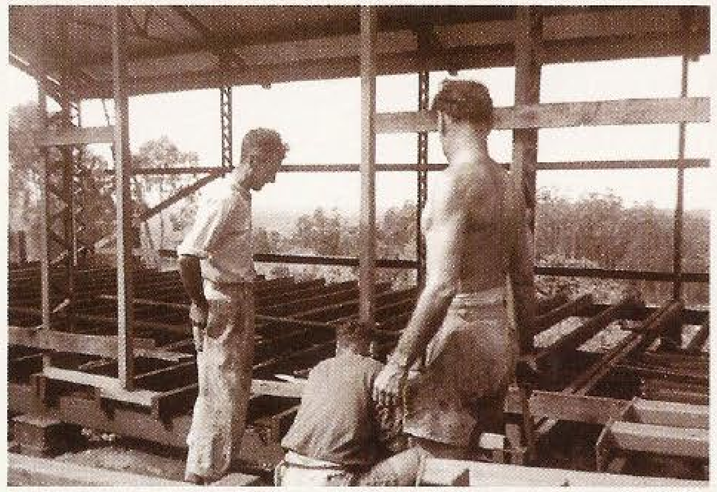
The challenge now was to prepare the place for Baba's visit. Firstly there had to be a room for Baba to live, work and sleep in. Francis planned a very special structure. Baba's Room was to be a unit complete in itself, able to be removed if required at some future date. It was to be made entirely of best quality Australian hardwood timber so it would last for hundreds and preferably thousands of years. In addition, the group had to enclose Baba's Room in a larger, temporary structure (the present day Baba's House). They had to build a meeting hall and a toilet block; they needed to relocate the existing farm house, bring in new water tanks and construct new roads. They had three months to complete the work. The weather didn't help. From the end of March until the end of May it rained constantly. The small band of volunteers under the direction of Francis had to work long and hard. They were very conscious of the short time available before Baba's visit and wanted to have the property ready for His arrival.

All concerned remember it as a happy, hectic time. In spite of many difficulties and setbacks, there was a wonderful team spirit, and the satisfaction of being able to do something worthwhile that would please Baba.

"Do your best -
then don't worry, be happy.
I will help you."

Meher Baba

Construction of Baba's House 1958. From left, Bill Le Page, Reg Paffle and Francis Brabazon. Joanna Bruford's dog Prince in foreground. Original farm house on far right (later relocated)



Working on Baba's House. From left, Bill Le Page, Roy Baulch and Reg Paffle

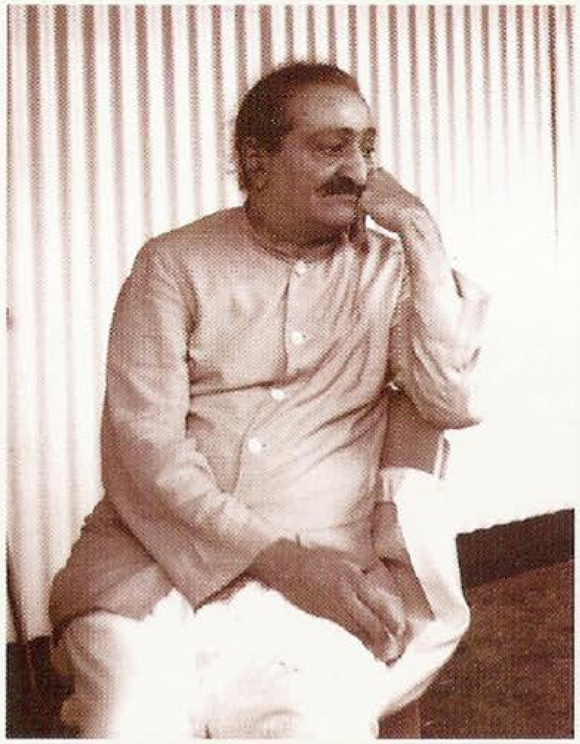
Baba's House early morning

MEHER BABA'S VISIT

Meher Baba arrived by car from Brisbane on Tuesday morning 3rd June 1958 with four of His mandali. He was cheerful and radiated love, although He was suffering from the effects of the car accident in India eighteen months earlier. The injuries sustained at that time were serious and permanent. Baba could not walk properly, His physical movements were restricted and painful and He had to be carried between Baba's House and the Meeting Hall.

On the first day of the visit Francis handed over the property to Baba who accepted it and then returned it to Francis to keep for Him. He asked Francis to name all the people who had helped with the preparations for His visit. The following afternoon Baba named the property Avatar's Abode. During the three days of the Australian Sahavas Baba shared His presence in an informal and intimate way with the fifty seven adults and children gathered to be with Him. He gave discourses and had private interviews with families and individuals. He spent time viewing the property and admiring its beauty, visited the accommodation of His lovers and was entertained by them with jokes, stories and songs. Baba came to Avatar's Abode to be with those who wanted to love Him and be obedient to Him. He specified that there was to be no publicity, no professional films or photographs and no meetings with people who were merely interested in Him.

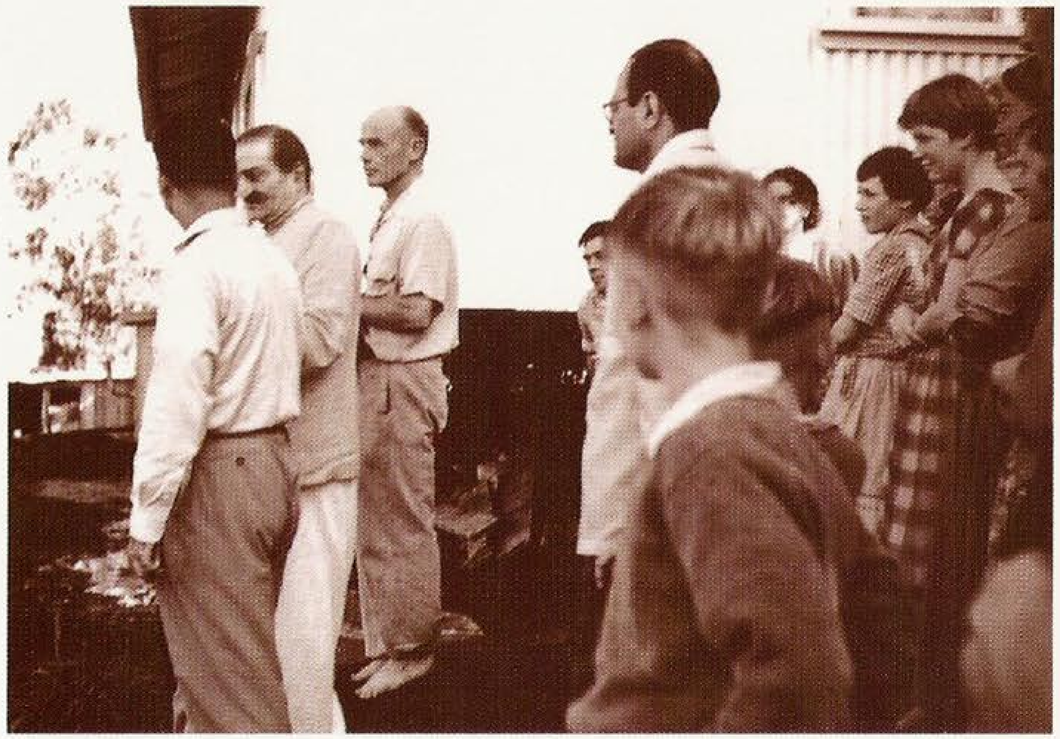
Meher Baba at Avatar's Abode



Baba outside His House

" I am coming to Australia solely to give My Sahavas to My lovers and I want each of you to come with the longing to receive just that. I want this Sahavas to be above all a close companionship between your Beloved and His lovers; and if you wish to maintain this unique relationship, then do not come with the question or the desire to seek discourses or explanations. Come with the preparedness to receive fully whatever I may give you, with the thought of being completely resigned to My Will."

Letter from Meher Baba 1958

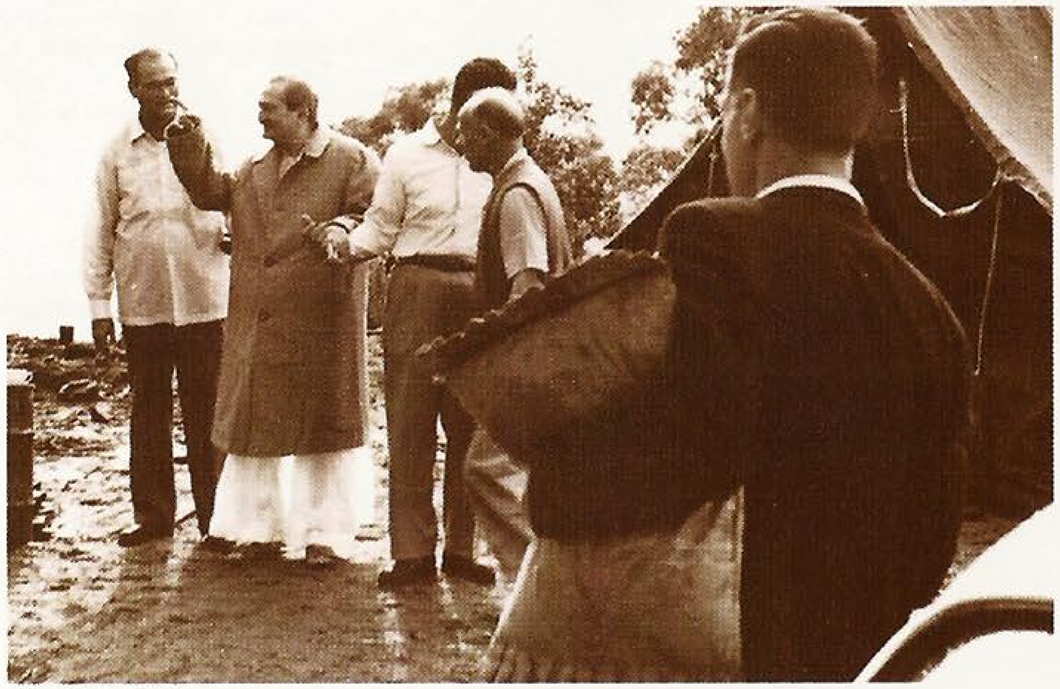


Baba with members of His mandali and Australian Baba lovers outside Baba's Room

Baba with Nariman Dadachanji (on left) and Eruch Jessawala

"I have come to sow the seed of Love in your hearts so that, in spite of all superficial diversity which your life in illusion must experience and endure, the feeling of Oneness, through Love, is brought about amongst all nations, creeds, sects, and castes of the world."

Meher Baba



Baba outside the men's tents with Nariman Dadachanji (on left), Eruch Jessawala (obscured) and Francis Brabazon; Stan Adams holding pillow with back to camera

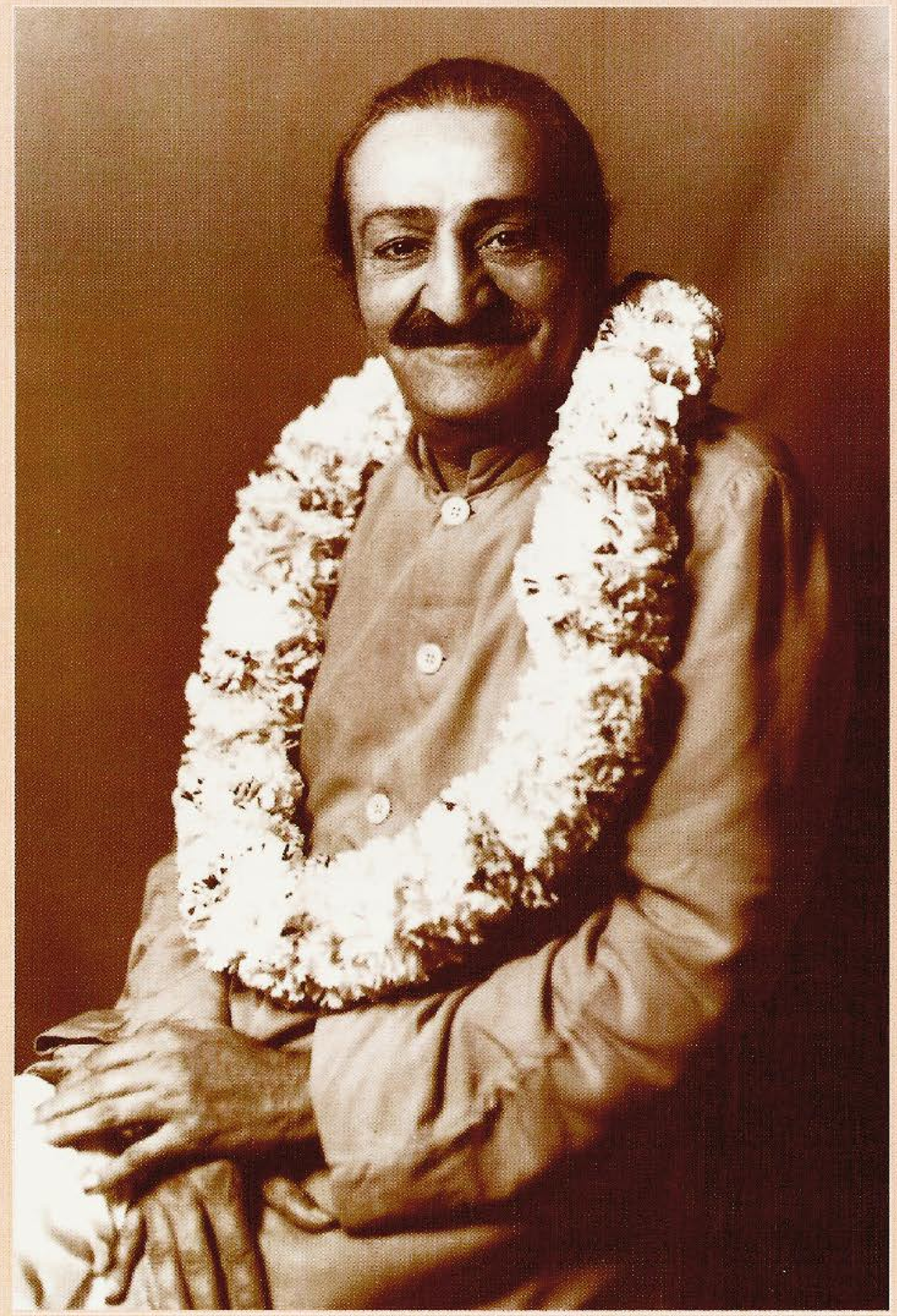
Meher Baba visiting the men's tents, Nariman Dadachanji (left) and Eruch Jessawala are assisting Him; Stan Adams (left) and Reg Paffle (behind Eruch) look on

Interior of Baba's House

BABA'S ROOM

The heart of Avatar's Abode is the beautiful timber room known as Baba's Room. It is simply furnished with items used by Baba during His stay – a bed with pillows and bedding, two chairs, a rustic table and floor mat. A photograph of Baba is above the entry outside the room and another is above the door inside the room. Both were brought by Baba to Avatar's Abode from India and He was most particular about where and how they should be placed. On the bed is a small glass and timber case which contains a pair of Meher Baba's sandals. The room is open to pilgrims. It is here that Beloved Baba's presence is felt most strongly.

Baba's sandals



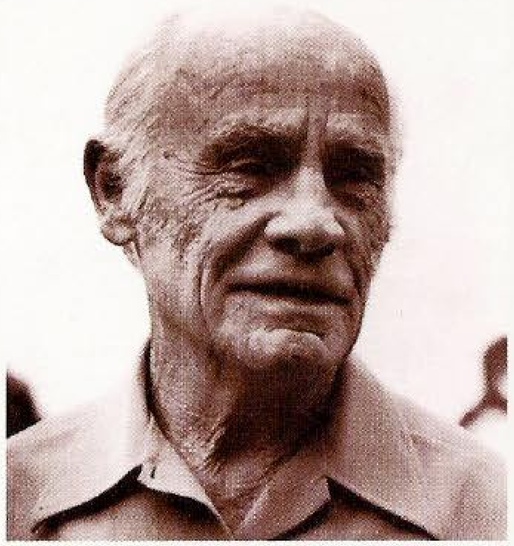
" The only place that can hold Me is
the heart. Keep Me close with you
- I am always there."

Meher Baba

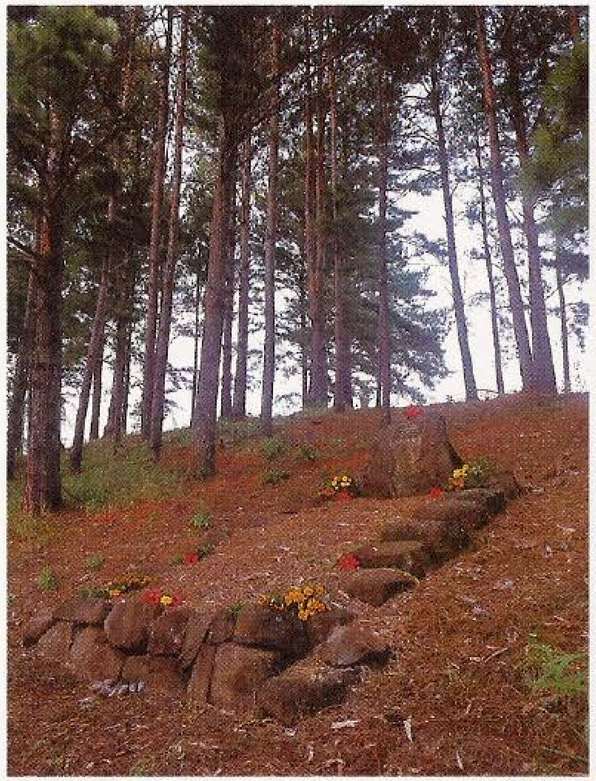
THE PEOPLE OF AVATAR'S ABODE

Baba's poet

Francis Brabazon, who chose and purchased the property on Kiel Mountain, had an eye for farms having spent his teenage years behind a horse drawn plough in Northern Victoria. It was here that he developed a keen awareness of the beauty of the Australian bush and started to express his thoughts and feelings in verse. At the time of the great depression Francis, aged twenty one, moved to Melbourne. He survived, like many others, by picking up odd jobs and living frugally. During this time he discovered the world of art. He set himself the task of finding out all he could: he attended painting classes, took piano lessons and continued to write poetry. The quest to discover the relationship between beauty and existence became Francis' central driving endeavour. This quest lead him to Meher Baba whom he described as "the very personification of truth and the very embodiment of beauty" after meeting Him in America in 1952. This meeting marked the end of one journey and the beginning of another. His preoccupation became how to obey and serve his Master, Meher Baba. On his return to Australia, Francis concentrated on building a house of sandstone at Beacon Hill in Sydney, to be a centre for Baba. He devoted his evenings to writing poems and plays. In 1954, he had two separate opportunities to be with Baba in India. Again in 1955, he returned to India at Baba's invitation and was told by Him to write a book titled, *Stay with God*. Returning to Australia, Francis and a party of helpers managed to complete the Beacon Hill house in time for Baba's first visit in August 1956. In December 1957 Baba again expressed a desire to visit Australia and cabled Francis of His preference for Queensland. Although Francis had no idea of what to expect in Queensland and had already put so much effort into building Meher House, he decided to try and please Baba to the utmost and was on the road heading north before the end of January 1958. Francis spearheaded the rapid development of Avatar's Abode in preparation for Baba's visit in June. Following His visit, in November of the same year Francis received the following cable from Baba in India, "Come prepared to stay at least six months and come prepared to obey Baba during this period."



Francis Brabazon (1907-1984)



Francis Brabazon's grave at Avatar's Abode

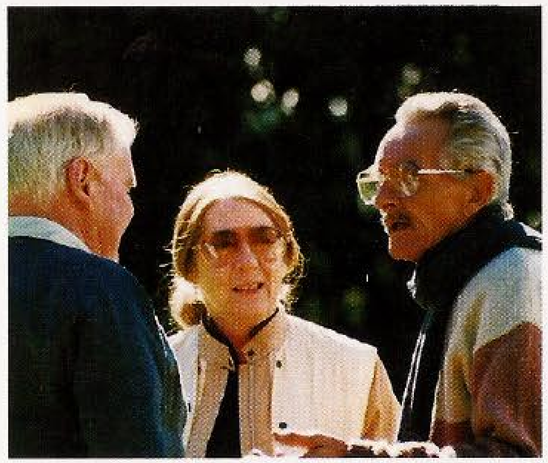
That stay extended for ten years during which time Francis became Baba's poet and wrote to please and entertain Him. In 1969 after Baba "dropped His physical body" Francis returned to Australia and took up residence at Avatar's Abode. He continued to write, and through his manner and deep conviction in Meher Baba became, for many young people, a measure of a life of simplicity and honesty lived in loving service of the God Man.

The Original Residents

During the 1958 Sahavas, Baba asked Robert and Lorna Rouse and John and Joan Bruford if they would move from Sydney and Melbourne respectively to live on Avatar's Abode. Both couples agreed and Baba later gave them detailed instructions regarding their work and responsibilities. Baba asked Bernard and Joanna, the Bruford teenage children, if they were willing to move with their parents. They also said yes. Baby Radha Rouse accompanied her parents. Since that time members of these two families have lived on Avatar's Abode and have helped care for the property and visiting pilgrims.

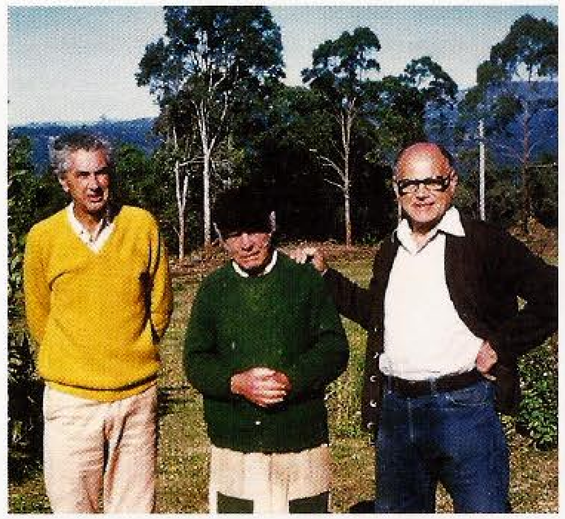
Bill Le Page and Meher Baba Foundation

Bill Le Page, one of the early Australian Baba lovers, was instructed by Baba in 1967 to form a Trust which would hold Avatar's Abode. In 1976, after having worked closely with Francis Brabazon for several years to find a suitable legal structure, he formed a private trust, acceptable to the government, called Meher Baba Foundation Australia.



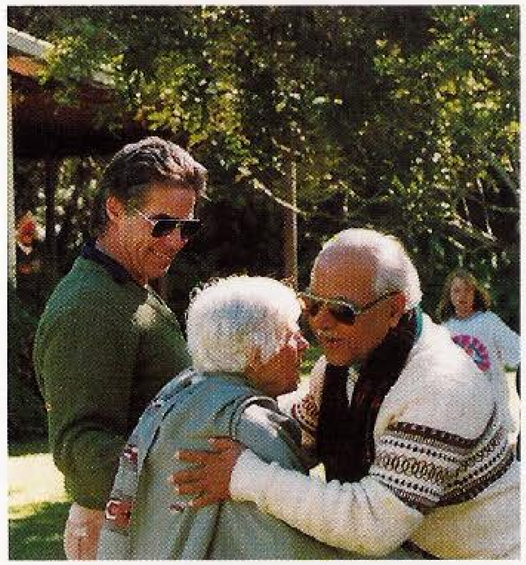
John Grant (left) with Lorna & Robert Rouse
Avatar's Abode 1989

In 1979 he built a home on Avatar's Abode and continued to maintain and develop the property through this trust. Some of the work done included renovation of Baba's House and extension of the Meeting Hall.



L to R. Bill Le Page, Francis Brabazon & Reg Paffle
Avatar's Abode early 1980's

A new entry road was built and many other projects including construction of residents' cottages and pilgrims' quarters were completed during the following years. Meher Baba Foundation held Avatar's Abode until 1984 when a new body, the Avatar's Abode Trust, was formed with Bill Le Page as chairman. Bill still retained the earlier Trust and it is through Meher Baba Foundation that he has continued to finance the distribution of Baba books throughout Australia and to contribute to various Baba projects around the world. He is the author of several books including *The Turning of the Key – Meher Baba in Australia.*



Bhau Kalchuri greeting Joan and Bernard Bruford
Avatar's Abode 1989

"Those who truly love me are my centres in the world. Let each 'Baba lover', wherever he or she may be, be a Baba's Centre personified, radiating the eternal message of love divine, living a life of love, sacrifice, and honesty."

Meher Baba

Meheru Irani (left) with Judith Garbett
Avatar's Abode, 1993

The lowering of Baba's flag at the end of the Anniversary, June 1992

Sunrise at Avatar's Abode