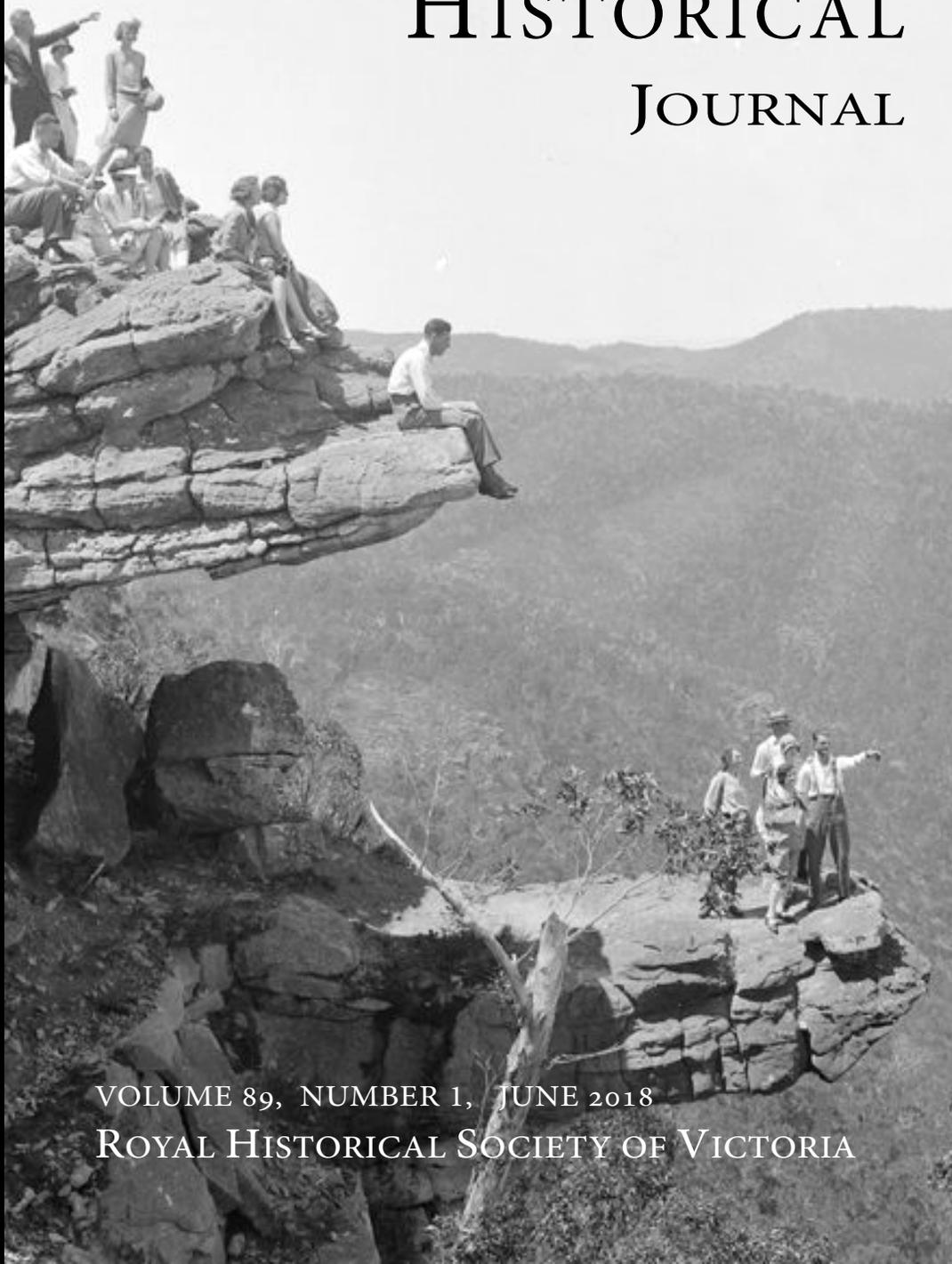


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ROYAL HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF VICTORIA

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ROYAL HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF VICTORIA

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**CREATIVE
VICTORIA**



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The following terms apply to the prize:

- This biennial prize will be awarded for the best article or historical note on Victorian history in the four *VHJ* issues over two calendar years, beginning 2017–18.
- The prize be awarded for an article or historical note that illuminates a significant element of Victoria’s history, is clearly and succinctly written, and is researched from original material.
- The prize offered from the Adams bequest is \$300 and three years’ free membership of the RHSV, which includes hard copies of the *VHJ*.
- A short list of five articles will be compiled by the *VHJ* editors active in the prize period.
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- Members of the RHSV Publications Committee are ineligible for the award.
- Two judges will be chosen by the Publications Committee from academic and community historians and will report to the April meeting of the Publications Committee.
- The John Adams Prize will be presented biennially at the RHSV AGM following its judging and will be announced in the June issues of the *VHJ* and *History News* following the AGM.

Richard Broome, Chair, RHSV Publications Committee

Introduction

Judith Smart and Richard Broome

The lengthy period spanned by this issue of the *Victorian Historical Journal*, 1770 to the early 2000s, indicates the breadth of research and interest in our state's history. In the article section, the dominant themes are, first, drivers of social reform and political change in the rapidly growing city of Melbourne during the nineteenth century and, second, factors that have influenced the relations between land and people from the 1850s to the early 21st century. The historical notes focus on early European exploration and naming, both coastal and around Melbourne, and on the provenance of an early photographic panorama.

David Dunstan's article, 'Twists and Turns: The Origins and Transformations of Melbourne's Metropolitan Press in the Nineteenth Century', traces the emergence of the city's newspapers from humble and disparate beginnings as critics of colonial authority to key agents of political, social and commercial development, and cultural modernisation. Dunstan examines the contributions of individuals such as John Pascoe Fawcner, George Arden, George Cavanagh, William Kerr, Edward Wilson, Lauchlan Mackinnon, G.C. Levey, and the Syme brothers (Ebenezer and David). He also relates newspaper fortunes to dramatic circulation increases accompanying the population growth and economic boom following the gold-rush years, and to the ensuing challenges of the 1890s depression. The article concludes that: 'From being the risky plaything of radical colonial hacks, the modern newspaper emerges as one of the key transformative elements of our urbanising world'.

Melbourne is viewed from a different perspective in Elizabeth Offer's 'Police Use or Misuse? Police Agency and *The Neglected and Criminal Children's Act 1864*'. Offer won the RHSV prize in Australian History in 2015 awarded to the La Trobe University student 'who received the highest mark in the subject Australian History'. This article, based on her honours thesis, looks at city life from below. It argues that police officers made decisions over which children to bring before a court, and often worked with and gave key evidence about parents. Offer concludes that police exercised a level of agency in the name of the Act

to fulfil welfare functions never intended by those who legislated it for purposes of social control.

‘McKay’s 1891 Journey: A Window into the Victorian Mallee Back Country’, by 2017 Victorian Premiers’ History Award winner John Burch, uses Nathaniel McKay’s report of his 1891 trek from Mildura to Yellumjip to provide a rare description not only of the land itself but also of colonial and Aboriginal use of that land. Burch argues a close relationship between earlier Aboriginal land use and the behaviour of squatters when they took up their runs in the 1850s and 60s, concluding that: ‘The tracks they left may mark earlier Aboriginal pathways’.

The relationship between sanatorium placement to the north of Melbourne and the preservation today of the grassy eucalypt woodlands in which they were located is the focus of Rebecca Le Get’s article, ‘More than just “Peaceful and Picturesque”: How Tuberculosis Control Measures Have Preserved Ecologically Significant Land in Melbourne’. The conclusion reached is that, while the sites were selected for reasons of appropriate distance combined with accessibility for city dwellers, they were not chosen for a specific ecology. Nevertheless, the survival and preservation of these woodlands was a direct result of public health planning decisions.

Cheryl Glowrey’s article discusses a case of ecological destruction rather than preservation. In ‘Soldier Settlement at Yanakie: The Making of a Model Post-war Rural Community’, Glowrey examines the use of planning and post-war technology to transform a swampy heath and scrub environment into productive dairy farms for soldier settlers who took up land on the Yanakie isthmus in the 1950s and 60s. However, she also uses oral histories to trace the creation of a community by the 46 original soldier and land settlement families, making the story much richer than one about ‘a model of the application of modernist thinking to the environment’.

Ben Wilkie, in ‘Rights, Reconciliation, and the Restoration of Djabwurrung and Jardwadjali Names to Grampians–Gariwerd’, is, like John Burch, concerned to emphasise the potential of his research as a pathway to ‘recognition of Aboriginal history, heritage, and culture’. In examining controversies since the 1980s over the placement of Indigenous names on this western Victorian landscape, he argues that ‘the recent history of Grampians–Gariwerd shows how understandings of the park have been in a complex relationship with not only local

and regional concerns but also issues and movements of national significance’, and ‘have reflected national debates around Aboriginal rights, reconciliation and recognition.’

The ‘Historical Notes’ section of the journal begins with Trevor Lipscombe’s ‘Lt James Cook on the Coast of Victoria 1770’, which discusses the naming of three land features on the coast of today’s Victoria recorded in Cook’s journal. Lipscombe argues that ‘Point Hicks and Ram Head do not appear on today’s maps and charts where Cook intended, and Cape Howe appears in the correct place but the recent historical record generally puts it elsewhere.’ He traces the genealogy of the mistakes to the failure of historians and governments to take sufficient notice of the ‘findings of surveyors, on land and at sea’—that is, those best qualified to assess Cook’s intentions.

John Daniels’ piece, ‘J.T. Gellibrand and the Naming of Gellibrand Hill’, also focuses on European toponyms, in this case the origin of the name Gellibrand Hill. First Daniels identifies the route John Tice Gellibrand took over the Port Phillip Association’s claimed territory in February 1836, before concluding that Gellibrand did not mention or name the hill himself. Rather, the name seems to have come about because Gellibrand ran sheep on a section of the claim near this rocky granite outcrop on what is now the upper Moonee Ponds Creek.

The final historical note in this issue is ‘The Maldon Panorama’ by David Oldfield and Peter Cuffley. Both volunteer at the Maldon Museum and have brought their professional expertise to this detailed research, which establishes the provenance of the three carefully joined albumen prints that make up the panorama including the date the photographs were taken and the identity of the travelling photographer responsible. Images of the panorama reproduced here show the commercial centre of Maldon at the height of the town’s mining boom in 1867.

In this issue of the journal we are also delighted to announce the inauguration of the John Adams Prize for the best article or historical note in the journal over a two-year period, commencing with Issues 287–290 (2017 and 2018). We hope this encourages a growing number of contributions to build on the significant influence this journal has had on published research about Victoria’s history.

Twists and Turns: The Origins and Transformations of Melbourne's Metropolitan Press in the Nineteenth Century

David Dunstan

Abstract

From humble and disparate beginnings, newspapers emerged as key political, social and commercial agents in dynamic urban-based colonial societies such as Victoria's was in the nineteenth century. With its anti-colonial authority and identity-forming character, the newspaper press had much in common with the British radical press of the period. Growing professionalism, together with rapid community and metropolitan growth, saw dramatic circulation increases in the gold-rush years but also intense competition, a reduction in mastheads and consolidation as the newspaper press came to serve increasingly dominant commercial and mercantile interests while remaining an important and evolving industrial and hegemonic power in its own right.

There is no shortage of claims for the importance of the newspaper press in colonial Australia.¹ The former newspaperman of the 1840s, Thomas McCombie, put it succinctly in his *History of the Colony of Victoria* (1858):

the newspaper press constitutes nearly the only literature published in the Australian colonies. It monopolises the greater part of the thought. The newspapers occupy the space of all literature, and stop the channels of information from all other sources; by far the largest class derive no information from any other quarter ...²

Newspapers were among the early products of the commercial cities and towns of colonial Australia. They extended the urban areas' influence to their hinterlands and were a public resource. Any new community of note spawned a newspaper. Newspapers articulated a voice for communities as distinct from, and sometimes in opposition to, colonial authority. They met the appetite for 'fresh news', according to historian Geoffrey Blainey, news of opportunities to take up land or to find gold,

craved by a mobile society.³ They were much more important than other printed sources of information, such as books.

Early newspapers competed with each other for local advertising and to provide digests of news from other centres, such as Sydney, or from Europe, or that which came by mail on ships from Britain by sea until the overseas telegraph was completed in 1872. Even when the telegraph and cable took over, the 'news' still had to be conveyed locally by newspapers. By 1883, R.E.N. Twopeny could write in *Town Life in Australia*:

This is essentially the land of newspapers. Nearly everybody can read, and nearly everybody has the leisure to do so ... the proportion of the population who can afford to purchase and subscribe to newspapers is ten times as large as in England; hence the number of sheets issued is comparatively much greater.⁴

From 1700 virtually all men and women of the upper middling ranks of European society could read and write. Mass literacy gave rise to new attitudes, in 'geography, the limits of community, government and common rights, and ... the sense of self', according to the historian Alan Atkinson: 'Within the English empire these attitudes transformed the use of power, especially as it was exercised from the centre'. Extraordinary expeditions 'beyond the seas' were a consequence, 'including, eventually, the expedition which first brought Europeans to Australia'.⁵ Newspapers, while seemingly parochial and narrow in many of their concerns, reflected and contributed to the globalising trend in more direct ways as well. The New Zealand historian, James Belich, has argued persuasively that newspapers were contributors to and products of the new ideology of settlerism that manifested itself in 'booster' or 'emigration literature' in the middle decades of the nineteenth century.⁶ Along with tracts, 'journals', emigrant guides and 'histories' of new communities, they formed a body of literature—one that helped not just to inform and entertain but, in the context of the British world, to reimagine emigration as something other than necessarily shameful and forced, as it had been before 1820. This new ideology of settlerism in turn encouraged the free movement of people from the old world to the new in the decades after the defeat of Napoleon at Waterloo in 1815. Places such as Port Phillip, or 'Australia Felix' as it was known,

were opened up by the increased numbers of free settlers in the 1830s and 1840s.

Successful communities bred successful newspapers and the reverse may also have been true. The booster role associated typically with the newspapers and antics of business magnates of the emerging cities of the American Midwest was integral to the confidence building involved in making money and communities in other remote parts as well.⁷ Melbourne's first book, George Arden's *Latest Information with Regard to Australia Felix* (1840), was an information-laden booster tract produced by the town's second newspaper, the *Port Phillip Gazette*, and written by its editor. In it Arden complained of the neglect of Port Phillip by the British press in favour of the rival colony of South Australia.⁸ In time, with the development brought about first by pastoralism and then even more rapidly in the 1850s by the gold discoveries, Melburnians would cease to be envious of South Australians. Boosterism would become a consuming habit, however, and three decades later the visiting English celebrity author, Anthony Trollope, would remark famously upon the tendency of its citizens to 'blow'.⁹

One of the booster's characteristic ploys is to depict the new settlement as it was, in a state of nature, if only to emphasise the contrast brought about by rapid development. Melbourne had, been 'one of the most orderly and tranquil of cities,' according to Thomas McCombie. Except for a few brief weeks in midsummer when the squatters arrived in town to unload the proceeds of their endeavours in exchange for fresh supplies, its inhabitants 'more or less characterised by provincialism ... made the most of the little business they had to transact'. The remembered smaller scale and face-to-face culture contributed to this image. 'An election of municipal officers, the arrival of a steamer from any of the neighbouring colonies, the arrangement of the jury lists, a newspaper squabble between two local publications, an important trial—any one of these would excite a commotion in the city.'¹⁰ They would be the subjects of news, much of it mundane. But these were crucial years that saw also the expansion of European capitalism into the region, including Melbourne's first land boom and its first economic depression.

Port Phillip gained an identity and imperial authority in the form of Superintendent (later Lieutenant-Governor) Charles Joseph La Trobe, a system of courts and public works. Melbourne and Geelong

gained town councils and an active commercial life undertaken by an improving class of merchants. One of them, William Westgarth, became an important and sympathetic public and political figure, a spruiker for Victoria in print and another early 'historian'. Westgarth was an active proponent of the political separation of Victoria from New South Wales, an achievement in which the newspaper press played a major role, this being a desideratum editorialised in chorus and virtually from inception. Benedict Anderson's famous observation of how 'print capitalism' in its immediacy furthered understandings of common purpose in new communities is well known as one explanation of the origins of national sentiment.¹¹ What was this print capitalism other than newspapers? They were, after all, often little more than lists of items to be bought and sold, digests of a commercial passing show. But, although they were instruments for making money, they also bound people together in ideas and with a rationale and motivation couched in language that was often eloquent and surprising. The free-enterprise values many consider part of Melbourne's continuing ethos found early expression in its newspapers and were carried on with gusto and an anti-establishment rhetoric that was, despite the contradictions involved, inherently radical. Port Phillip, for all its successes in this period, remained an outpost of empire and subject to authority based in Sydney. This in itself gave an easy target to oppositionists.

Enterprising printers, journalists, storekeepers and others initiated the first newspapers.¹² Melbourne's was issued on the first day of January 1838, when the town was not yet three years old. NSW Governor Richard Bourke had visited the year before, named the fledgling settlement and sanctioned its development and the occupation of its rich pastoral hinterland. The hand-written 'humble effort' that issued from the hands of Melbourne's putative founder, John Pascoe Fawkner, consisted 'only of a sheet of foolscap, in manuscript'. The contents were a short leading article, a few items of shipping and local news, and a quantity of advertisements. The sheet continued for nine weeks with 32 issues.¹³ Fawkner's efforts resemble the rudimentary character of the very first newspapers published some two centuries before. However, he soon had printing technology shipped from Tasmania and by March he was setting type and issuing his *Melbourne Advertiser* in letterpress. This was the Port Phillip version of the *Launceston Advertiser* that Fawkner had conducted for three years from 1828, demonstrating the linkages

town newspapers developed with each other for printing technology, personnel and even shared copy.

Fawkner's motivation was typically mixed. The paper provided support for his different business interests as well as his vanity—it could be read for free in his hotel, but otherwise cost a shilling.¹⁴ Already he had begun to express the views of urban dwellers as opposed to the squatters. The cranky and ambitious son of a convict, the townsman Fawkner was a social outsider who, nevertheless, identified strongly with the infant settlement and its fortunes. What better vehicle to underscore this than a newspaper? Fawkner was an activist rather than a professional, and he opposed colonial autocracy, established religion and privileged landholders. His newspaper shared much with the radical newspapers of London of the same period.¹⁵ Like them he traded informally and, when found out, had to suspend operations for six months owing to his failure to obtain a licence to publish from Sydney.¹⁶ Notwithstanding the licensing requirements, which reflected authoritarian concerns with what newspapers might print, colonial newspapers exercised remarkable freedom in their criticism of colonial authority and policy. They were, as their editors discovered to their cost, more likely to suffer in matters of personal libel than in criticism of government policies.

Fawkner's front-running effort lapsed, and his paper's successor was provided from Sydney, by way of an initially well-respected youthful editor, George Arden, and established printer-owner, Thomas Strode, who began publishing the *Port Phillip Gazette* in October 1838. Fawkner made a come back on 6 February 1839 with his *Port Phillip Patriot and Melbourne Advertiser* after he had complied with the necessary legal forms in the capital, Sydney. The third newspaper of note, the *Port Phillip Herald*, was launched on 3 January 1840 by George Cavanagh with William Kerr, until Kerr joined forces with Fawkner in 1841. An Irish Protestant, Cavanagh, like Arden, was from a once well-to-do Anglo-Indian family. He had been involved for five years in the 1830s with Australia's first newspaper, the *Sydney Gazette*, which dated back to 1803. Frustrated in his employment and sensing opportunities for his skills in the new settlement, Cavanagh bravely announced his intentions and packed his family south. He timed his move well, coinciding with a boom. The *Herald* had a good start, Cavanagh soon afterwards gaining the contract for government notices.¹⁷ He worked hard to secure additional advertisements and his first issue contained 91.

A quarterly subscription of ten shillings was common to all three papers, this remaining an important support for organs of the period. All were bi-weeklies, the *Gazette* appearing on Wednesdays and Saturdays, the *Patriot* on Mondays and Thursdays, and the *Herald* on Tuesdays and Fridays. Edmund Finn recalled that by 1841 each Melbourne paper had roughly the same circulation—from 600 to 700 copies—although R.M. Younger has claimed that the *Herald* circulated in excess of 700 copies an issue, a lead of 10 per cent over its rivals.¹⁸ These figures may seem small but, as James Curran has pointed out in the context of the British radical press of the period, an individual printed edition could reach upwards of twenty readers and potentially more listeners, thus minimising the cost and making the press much more of a mass phenomenon than these circulation figures would otherwise indicate. At even half this rate, these papers were more successful in extending their readership than those of today, which are estimated to reach one, two or at the most three individuals.¹⁹ Among the interesting twists and turns of this early period of Melbourne's newspaper history was the changing nomenclature and ownership. The failure of individual mastheads is, undoubtedly, one reason for posterity's neglect. The *Patriot* had been the voice of the early settlers and landholders but its quarrelsome editor, Kerr, soon fell out with its equally quarrelsome proprietor, Fawkner. The same cannot be said of the *Herald*. It was the paper of good society, according to Paul de Serville, or 'the clubman's paper' as its rivals called it.²⁰ Such assessments could, however, be invalidated within a generation.

It is surprising how many professionals were active early in the field. Pressmen—printers and journalists both—were active in Sydney from the 1830s and in Melbourne from 1840, with Melbourne benefitting from the reserves of skill in the older settlement. Two of Melbourne's leading papers of the 1840s, the *Port Phillip Gazette* and the *Port Phillip Herald*, were initiated from Sydney, and skilled staff in the form of printers and compositors were recruited from there as well. For a contemporary history of the newspaper press of the period we have the accounts of the early newspapermen, Thomas McCombie and Edmund Finn, and important figures like the merchant William Westgarth. Their recollections dwell inevitably on the success or failure of those individuals who ran the early newspapers and their more political and partisan campaigns and allegiances. But we gain from them also an appreciation of the competitive environment. To McCombie, the editor

of the *Gazette*, George Arden, was ‘a young man of considerable promise [who] possessed natural abilities of a high order, and was a very tolerable writer and speaker’. De Serville identifies him in terms of class, as ‘a cadet of an ancient family’.²¹ Only eighteen when he launched the *Port Phillip Gazette*, Arden became embroiled with the tempestuous resident judge, John Walpole Willis, in a libel case that saw him imprisoned and his newspaper sold in 1842. All three editors made common cause in 1841 when the unpopular Willis sought to implement restrictions on their conduct imposed by the NSW Legislative Council. Arden might have recovered his position but for his intemperate personal habits. He left and subsequently returned to Melbourne and again contributed to its newspapers but could not hold down employment let alone an editorial or managing editor’s chair. His career ended on the goldfields where he was found dead in a ditch in 1854, having fallen drunk there the night before.²² McCombie’s sympathy for Arden is influenced by the fact that from 1843 to 1851, save for a brief interval, he edited this journal himself.

Thomas Cavanagh was a professional newspaperman, even if he was not always wholly focused on the paper’s editorial and political role. Like Fawkner, he was an early employer, both of the journalist William Kerr and of compositors and printers, who were well-paid and skilled workers by colonial standards. In 1841 he secured a new press and type from Sydney, and his printery aspired to be Melbourne’s best equipped for jobbing work, offering the use of ‘coloured inks if required’. His *Herald* press published Kerr’s first *Melbourne Almanac and Port Phillip Directory*.²³ Cavanagh proclaimed in his first edition his high-minded intention ‘to avoid descending to personal abuse and by making truth our object and charity our motto, to mete out even-handed justice to all’. But, before long, as R.M. Younger has observed, the *Patriot* denounced the *Herald* as ‘the most intolerant, bigoted and lying censorious journal in the colonies’, and the *Gazette* added its condemnation declaring it to be a ‘truly despicable journal’. Kerr of the *Herald* responded with an editorial describing the *Patriot* as ‘a mean-souled and malicious recreant’ and the *Gazette* ‘a contemptible rag’.²⁴

Kerr’s replacement at the *Herald* was a former Presbyterian cleric, Thomas Osborne, who had had more than twelve years experience in the government printing office at Hobart. Cavanagh employed as reporters George Boursiquot and Edmund Finn, the latter an early St Patrick’s Society member and a well-known Catholic, indicating that

readers from this quarter were as welcome as any other. As ‘Garryowen’ he would, many years later, become one of Melbourne’s more notable memoirists with his two-volume *Chronicles of Early Melbourne* (1888). Cavanagh retained ownership of the *Herald* and established it as Melbourne’s leading commercial newspaper. He did not sell until 1852, by which time gold-rush circumstances and the then rampant *Argus* had overtaken it. Other newspapers of the period included the *Weekly Times Free Press*, published for only a few months in 1841 by James Stanley, and the ambitiously named *Times*, which was commenced in 1842 by Ryland Howard but ceased in 1844. The *Standard*, started in 1845 by former reporter George Boursiquot, was admired by Finn and in the same year amalgamated with the *Patriot*, which in turn became the *Daily News*. Samuel Goode started the bi-weekly *Courier* in 1845 and, in June, William Kerr became editor, attracting attention for vituperative personal comment. Goode started the *Albion* in 1847. It too lasted only about a year before closing, though not before Goode was imprisoned for two months for ‘outrageous slander’ directed against the lawyer Sidney Stephen. In 1848 an estimate of the circulation of the leading papers by Superintendent La Trobe saw the *Port Phillip Gazette* at 350 copies, the *Port Phillip Patriot* at 600, the *Port Phillip Herald* at 800 and the new bi-weekly *Melbourne Argus* at 400.²⁵ These were tiny figures by comparison with what would follow, although they raise already observed questions about the actual readership and extended influence of newspapers in this period. Melbourne’s population in 1846 was a third of Port Phillip’s 32,879 people.²⁶

William Kerr has claims to being Melbourne’s first truly professional journalist. He was a Scot, the son of a farmer. Kerr migrated to Sydney, aged 25, worked there as a tutor, then became a journalist. He was employed with the *Colonist* and next the *Sydney Gazette* before moving to Melbourne where he worked on the *Herald* and then, in 1841, edited Fawcner’s *Port Phillip Patriot and Melbourne Advertiser*. He came with a ready appreciation of what a colonial newspaper might achieve. Under Kerr the *Patriot* became the most potent of weapons, described by de Serville as an ‘unremitting enemy of social exclusion, champion of liberal principles, spokesman for the Scottish community and critic of La Trobe and his administration.’²⁷ After he parted company with the *Port Phillip Patriot* Kerr started the *Courier* in 1845, but this venture failed. Division of labour, and more pertinently of editorial and

management roles, was hardly evident in many of the early newspapers, although as time progressed Cavanagh appears to have become more of an editorial manager at the *Herald*. Subsequent appreciations of Kerr's character pay scant regard to his ability for organisation or his command of finances. After the failure of the *Courier* Kerr's 'friends'—or, more appropriately, his political backers—raised money to buy materials and start him once again in the newspaper business the following year with the leading Melbourne merchant Robert Porter.²⁸



William Kerr, photographer Thomas Chuck (Courtesy State Library of Victoria)

Kerr has come down to us as a comic and almost virulent caricature, a product of the personalised politics of the pre-gold-rush era. He was physically deformed (a withered arm), was undoubtedly cantankerous personally, and intemperate in speech and writing, a failure financially—both in the depression of the early 1840s and at the end of his days—and a fierce political partisan and sectarian. But he was also a political celebrity, using his newspaper as a vehicle to exercise influence beyond his immediate personal sphere. This was reflected in the ultimately successful campaign for separation. He championed the political career

of the personable, and altogether more moderate and able progressive liberal leader of the commercial middle class, William Westgarth, who in return described Kerr generously as a 'hard-headed liberal minded commonsense Scot ... in most things' and good-naturedly excused his anti-Catholic and anti-Irish sentiments.²⁹ Kerr was a partisan, who, in the absence of more established democratic forums and especially payment of members, conducted politics on all fronts. One of those was the newspaper, and, in better remunerated times politically, he would probably have been able to use his newspaper and journalistic skills as a springboard to a lucrative career. But it was 'with the editorial pen [that] Kerr was in his element', Westgarth recalled, and 'his naturally combative tendencies' found their fitting expression in the *Argus's* motto adopted from the Scottish Protestant leader, John Knox: 'I am in the place where I am demanded of conscience to speak the truth, and therefore the truth I speak, impugn it whoso list.'³⁰

Newspapers owed their first duty to the public, press historian Elizabeth Morrison has observed, and most contemporary practitioners voiced this sentiment as well. In remote colonial settings where authority was weak and market forces were powerful, the press was a random and potentially volatile element.³¹ Newspapers were the voice of a growing community that considered itself badly treated in the provision of infrastructure and the allocation of land fund revenue. As Michael Cannon has observed: 'In the days before parliamentary government, the press acted as a goad, a check on official bungling, and a reasonably educative force; even if its essence was a support of the merchant class which filled its advertising columns. The public had little enough protection elsewhere.'³² Early colonial newspapers were myopic and defensive of their communities in other ways that we might not applaud today. The *Herald*, for example, broadly defended the early squatters, excusing excesses committed against the Aborigines on the grounds that even as they were dispossessing them of their lands and taking their livelihoods the colonial government provided the invading settlers with no protection.³³ The representative of colonial authority, the tolerant and mild-mannered Superintendent C.J. La Trobe, was pilloried to an extent that would today be considered unjust and offensive. A jesting but nonetheless insulting letter of July 1846 to the *Argus* claimed that there was 'no instance on record' of him 'having done any thing, whether officially or otherwise, since he arrived in the District in September,

1839'; could any resident indicate 'any instance' of 'the Superintendent of Port Phillip ... having done any work beyond receiving his pay monthly from the Treasury'?'³⁴

William Kerr started the *Argus* in 1846 and, through this vehicle, continued a policy of vituperative assault on La Trobe's personality and administration. He also opposed the administration's land policy, convictism and transportation in all its forms. It was not retribution from authority that brought about his downfall, however, but heavy damages consequent on a libel action against him by the mayor of Melbourne, Henry Moor, which saw Kerr sell to a little-known but like-minded contributor, Edward Wilson, in 1848. The *Argus* might have been a sound commercial venture but for the impetuous nature of its leading figure, who imperilled it with reckless behaviour. Kerr made another bad career choice when, in 1851, he moved to what he thought would be a sinecure and power base at the town hall as the city's town clerk. But this position required a degree of tact, or guile, and attention to detail of which he was incapable.

Kerr's successor at the *Argus*, Edward Wilson, saw the paper through to the gold-rush era. Because he was prepared to ride the tide of increased demand and risk, the paper survived and he profited personally. A London-born former draper, only a year younger than Kerr, Wilson had been involved in radical politics in his youth, much to his well-to-do family's dismay. Brought undone financially in a speculative business venture, he had migrated to Australia in 1841. He ventured into sheep farming near Dandenong but in 1848 his fellow squatting lessee, James Stewart Johnston, persuaded him to buy the *Argus* in partnership. Wilson then returned to urban pursuits. He borrowed money to make the purchase and threw himself wholeheartedly into the newspaper business. He had been an occasional, but not frequent, contributor under the pen name of Iota. His contributions, in tune with the paper's direction, were a foretaste of powerful editorials to come.



Edward Wilson, photographer Thomas Chuck (Courtesy State Library of Victoria)

For Wilson, anti-transportation was the cause that mattered. In the first of two letters on 4 December 1846, he had dealt contemptuously with apologists for the transportation cause. His prose reveals the impatient tone of a young man exiled from public affairs, angered by the inactivity and perceived incompetence of authority, and possessed of a high-mindedness suggestive of puritanical intolerance. When his chance to exercise power came in September 1848, he made no loud announcement about the *Argus* being 'under new management'. Rather, it was business as usual with protestations that the policy of the paper would not change. Kerr's services were retained. Under Kerr and Wilson the *Argus* remained radical and partisan, opposing the squatting interest and attempts to introduce convict labour, even that of exiles and expirées. Convict transportation had been abolished officially in 1840, but between 1846 and 1849 nearly 2,000 exiles, or Pentonvillains, arrived at Port Phillip.³⁵ NSW colonial authorities were believed to be complicit, incompetent or unprepared to act on behalf of colonists'

interests. Wilson was luckier than his predecessor, Kerr, in surviving a libel case with Judge William à Beckett that might have spelt his and the paper's doom. The propagandist tone of the *Argus* was 'extreme', yet not untypical of the English press of the day, even of *The Times*, which was Wilson's model. In Geoffrey Serle's view, he was, for a while, the epitome of the radical editor.³⁶

Edmund Finn, the insider, recalled the contest for dominance and observed that the *Argus* was now 'fairly in the race', even though competing with two dailies, the *Daily News* and the *Herald*. In June 1849, the *Argus* moved from a tri-weekly to a daily. The *Gazette* became a daily in 1851 'but a three months' trial, according to Finn, was 'more than enough for Mr McCombie'; he 'succumbed before the force of competition and the last was seen of the second oldest Port Phillipian newspaper'. Towards the end of the year, the *Argus* bought up the *Daily News*,

and in so doing improved upon the mythological monster who fed on his children by devouring generations of its journalist ancestors. It had already swallowed the old *Argus* and *Courier*, and now rolled up in the *Daily News*, it had the *Patriot*, the *Gazette*, the *Standard*, and the *Weekly Register*.

This, according to Finn, was Wilson's triumph and, pursuing a lively racing metaphor, he contrasted the two 'motors' of their respective craft:

Cavanagh, though possessed of managerial aptitude of a secondary kind, was devoid of literary ability. He was also defective in the faculty of enterprise of the continuous sort, for spasmodic fits of energy would not now suffice. He had no financial resources to speak of at command, and the handicap of a large family to provide for, made him reluctant to incur liabilities, which might, or might not recoup themselves. In fact, he had not the pluck to cope with the extraordinary changes which every advancing week brought about, and like a timid mariner in an uncertain and troubled sea, he carried as little canvas as he could, trembled at the helm, and often wished to be well rid of the ship. Wilson, on the other hand, had dash and enthusiasm, and launched out on the ocean with as much sail as his craft could possibly carry. 1852–53 was the maddest of the mad years in Melbourne, and it was no easy task to work a newspaper through the shoals and quicksands of the times. Though the incoming[s] were considerable, the outlay was enormous.³⁷

From June 1849, when the *Argus* became a daily, circulation declined to about 250, but by the end of 1850 it had reached the combined circulation of its rivals and by the end of 1851 had risen to 1,500. This was when the city comprised some 29,000 people. By the following year this circulation figure had doubled. Then it trebled in 1853 and before long had reached 20,000, an increase almost unheard of anywhere in the world and related directly to the influx of gold-seeking migrants.

The *Argus* was both the witness to and the beneficiary of this massive influx in 1852–53, which caused the dramatic growth of Melbourne and its suburbs along with the spread of settlement and towns inland. The newspaper's dominance coincided not only with the spectacular unfolding of the gold rushes but with the formative events of Victorian history: separation from New South Wales in 1851; the creation of the first representative institution of the Victorian parliament, the Legislative Council; and the new constitution of 1855, which provided for the first popular elections, held in 1856, the bicameral system of parliament, and the first elected government. At a time when the former colonial authority was slowly relinquishing power, the paper offered a robust and effective political voice but only on certain terms and to favoured interests. Geoffrey Serle has observed that over five years Wilson provided the most influential opposition to the government of La Trobe and the Colonial Office.³⁸ It was largely owing to the *Argus* that the slogan 'unlock the lands' became a catch cry of the gold generation of immigrants who had missed out on the land bonanza. The librarian John Feely—careful indexer of the early issues of the *Argus*—saw no ideological change during the regimes of Kerr and Wilson:

From its inception on 1 July 1846, the *Argus* had one goal in view—a free and elected Parliament and Victoria a colony in her own right. Subsidiary to this, but dependent on it, were the minor goals—the cessation of transportation and the unlocking of the lands. The best way to achieve this was to get rid of the existing administration as quickly as possible.³⁹

Both the leading representative institutions of Port Phillip and Victoria, the Legislative Council and the Melbourne City Council, were attacked. The *Argus* pilloried what it saw as 'the squatting interest' in

the Legislative Council and challenged La Trobe's motives in relying so heavily on this group.

A key difference between the newspapers of the 1840s and those of the 1850s, between those of the fledgling town and those of the gold-rush immigrant city, was that most of the leader writers were now educated men, with university or professional qualifications. Wilson, who had a capacity for self-education and independent thinking, may have been challenged in this respect, as his active mind now turned in a very public way to mercantile concerns and a mapping of the role wealth would play in the new social order being constructed. He was, after all, a wealthy man himself now and a transitional figure. The early gold-rush years had witnessed much social upheaval but also the flotation of joint stock companies, and trading in shares with the market for commercial intelligence amplified accordingly. Edward Khull, a former government printer, commenced publication of Melbourne's first advertised share quotations in the *Argus* on 18 October 1852, listing thirteen companies—five banks, three railway companies and five other firms dealing in shipping, insurance, gas, water and private gold-escort operations. The making of the *Argus* as a commercial and mercantile organ was already underway. Among editorial columns of 1854 can be found discussions of the role of a colonial government, revealing thinking about the balance of responsibility between private enterprise and government in the raw, as yet undeveloped, colonial setting and the need for city merchants to take a greater role in government and civic affairs. The City Council was pilloried for becoming captive to the interests of publicans grown rich on the gold-rush immigrant trade.⁴⁰

As well as responding provocatively and actively to the issues of the day, the *Argus* expanded to cater for the new market as a business. Forty compositors were brought out from England, and, in mid-1852, Wilson doubled the paper's size and reduced its price from threepence to twopence. It was at this point in late 1853 that circulation rose to almost 20,000. Advertisements increased and the number of employees grew to 140, a far cry from the 1840s when newspapers were run by a handful of individuals. The industrial revolution that was underway in newspaper production saw the number of players reduced as well. From January 1852, when the *Argus* absorbed the Melbourne *Daily News*, only the *Herald* and the *Geelong Advertiser* survived as competitors for the gold-immigrant audience. The *Herald* sold by Cavanagh in 1852 had

been ‘an ably conducted middle-of-the-road’ paper. Backed now by the lawyer, Archibald Michie, and the judge’s son and lawyer, T.T. à Beckett, it was unable to join in the chase. The *Herald* collapsed and had to be reformed. Influenced by the challenging stance adopted by the *Argus* and with new contributors, it became more liberal and critical of the government when Wilson’s resolve began to flag. Serle tells us that, late in 1853, Wilson began to have doubts—‘the *Argus* veered and wavered as the democratic movement it had helped to create gathered strength’; La Trobe’s successor, the would-be martinet Governor Hotham, was ‘treated lightly, and Wilson grew to regret many of his early excesses’. The *Argus* became ‘conservative’, tellingly so over the 1854 revolt of the Ballarat miners at Eureka and the trial of Eureka Stockade participants the following year.⁴¹ When the *Argus* flagged, the *Herald* and now the *Age* kept up the pressure on the government. Wilson’s costs in expanding the business were heavy and he was almost ruined. A politically conservative and enigmatic Scot, Lauchlan Mackinnon, bought into the partnership late in 1852 and saved him. Mackinnon took over the management and persuaded Wilson that he was charging twopence for a paper that cost five pence halfpenny to produce. Mackinnon insisted on raising the price to four pence and increasing advertising rates by 25 per cent, ‘thereby ensuring the paper’s prosperity’.

Wilson retired in September but was not actually replaced until August 1856 when George Higinbotham was appointed editor. Wilson then set up as a gentleman farmer near Keilor but continued to interest himself in public causes such as the Acclimatisation Society and to dabble in the *Argus* with editorial columns on favoured topics like the need for Mediterranean industries. It was not long before Wilson came into public disagreement with his successor. In an exchange of letters to the editor, Wilson revealed himself as only a partial democrat in arguing for a ‘sound representation of interests’ rather than manhood suffrage. It was a discussion conducted in public and included a preamble in which he reiterated his liberal views on the necessity of the paper’s editorial independence from the views of its proprietor. In his *Personal Recollections* (1888), William Westgarth suggested a closer relationship between the *Argus* and Melbourne’s money-making merchant élite had been inevitable. The *Argus* ‘was allowed, and not unfairly, to be *The Times* of the Southern Hemisphere’, he wrote. Wilson had ‘retired in favour of more temperate editorship and in supporting, and being supported by,

the mercantile interests, and in the adoption generally of the Free Trade policy of the parent state, the paper followed its northern prototype.⁴² A political as well as an industrial revolution had occurred.

Meanwhile the rival *Herald* ownership changed, first to a syndicate led by Frederick Sinnett (1854), then to Charles F. Somerton (1856), Frank B. Franklyn (1859), Ronald Stewart (1863) and, in the same year, the London-born and University College-educated printer-journalist, George Collins Levey, and his brother associates, William and Oliver. G.C. Levey was the *Herald's* editor and chief proprietor and a member of parliament; he was to prove one of the city's more able cultural and political entrepreneurs and later became secretary of the Melbourne International Exhibition, 1880–81.⁴³

Former *Argus* staffers started the *Age*. But for their disaffection, the rival paper might never have begun, let alone prospered. *Age* founders Ebenezer Syme, T.L. Bright and David Blair disagreed with Wilson's views on the grievances of the miners on the goldfields in 1854, which culminated in the Eureka Stockade. Edward Wilson's new competitors were bred in the same or similar radical nests he had himself known. Ebenezer Syme had been a contributor to the *Westminster Review* and associated with prominent literary radicals and journalists of his day, including Marian Evans (George Eliot) and Horace Greeley. Archibald Michie of the *Herald* had moved in the same circles. Unlike his brother David who followed him, Ebenezer Syme was an instinctive radical who, in December 1854, joined former Sydney journalist David Blair in the *Age* and, in 1856, although penniless, purchased the business with money guaranteed by friends (in much the same way that Wilson had acquired the *Argus*). But for the idealistic and not at all business-minded Ebenezer, who died in 1859, David Syme—who was making a living as a road contractor—might never have become a newspaperman. The literary types and radicals of the 1840s, prominent as they had been and remained in some quarters, were slowly being removed from control. The destinies of Melbourne's newspapers were now in the hands of altogether more hard-headed types.

The *Age's* success as a popular newspaper had much to do with David Syme's business acumen and the adoption by the *Argus* of an élite conservative stance, both politically and commercially. The drift of the *Argus* opened up an audience for the *Age* and possibly helped sustain the *Herald* as well. Such was Melbourne's growth and prosperity there

was room for all three (albeit, eventually, with the *Herald* as an evening paper). When the government and unsympathetic commercial interests withdrew advertising, intending to kill the *Age*, David Syme's daring response in 1863 was to reduce the price of the paper to twopence and then in 1868 to a penny. Circulation increased markedly (to 15,000) with the size of the newspaper reduced. Increased circulation brought the advertising back, and the *Age* became both profitable and politically powerful. The weekly *Leader* for country readers (in advance of the *Argus's* stable mate *Australasian*) was another innovation; so was the purchase of the *Herald* in 1868, its repositioning as an evening paper the following year and then its sale in 1871, thereby effectively removing another potential rival. The *Herald's* association with the Winter family, producers of the *Catholic Advocate*, suggested a pitch to this quarter by some, but editor Samuel Winter proved too cautious a man commercially to inflame Melbourne's sectarianism.

During the 1860s Melburnians began to congratulate themselves on their achievements. The colony and the capital, Melbourne, with its parks and gardens, wide boulevards, new public buildings and entertainments, had begun to assume the character of a metropolis or 'mother city', an identity to which it now aspired. In time it would be as appealing as any place outside Paris or London. In the boom years of the 1880s Melbourne's population grew by 42 per cent to nearly half a million people. It was this increase, together with property development and commercial speculation, that fostered the further growth of a metropolitan press. Improved printing technology helped expand production, but circulation and advertising remained fundamental. In the 1880s Melbourne's newspapers outstripped all rivals comprehensively, with sales of the *Age* rising from 38,000 in 1879 to more than 81,000 ten years later.

Disaffection among *Herald* journalists had led in 1869 to the establishment of the morning *Daily Telegraph*. In 1883 it was purchased by a syndicate that included the merchant James Balfour and the financier and land boomer Matthew Davies, whose express purpose was to run the newspaper as the voice of evangelical Christian mission, with W.H. Fitchett, Wesleyan preacher and headmaster of the Methodist Ladies' College, as 'consulting editor.' That the *Daily Telegraph* lasted as long as it did before collapsing in 1892 reflected the buoyancy of

the economy in those years and also the extravagant ambitions of its principals.⁴⁴

The *Argus* remained profitable. All debts were cleared by the early 1860s, and in 1872 annual net profits had reached £22,000 a year. By this stage the paper's three proprietors lived comfortably in England, with business and general control given over to a local board except when the proprietors issued special instructions. Wilson became, in 1864, a country gentleman, setting up 'a small palace' in Kent with a zoo that included kangaroos and emus among animals from other parts of the empire. He died in 1878. His partners, Lauchlan Mackinnon and Godfrey Spowers, were hardly newspapermen. They outvoted Wilson on his recommendation to reduce the price from threepence to twopence to match the *Age* on the simple grounds that they saw no need to disturb a profitable enterprise. Many still considered it Melbourne's leading newspaper, and we may regard it historically so even today. Richard Twopeny, writing to imagined English gentlefolk, thought the *Argus* 'the best daily paper published out of England' with the American-style yellow press, given over almost entirely to sensationalism, mercifully absent.⁴⁵ But, after its dramatic period of growth in the 1850s, the circulation of the *Argus* remained weak. It grew only slowly to 20,000 in the early boom years of the 1880s when it was a poor second to its morning rival, the *Age*, and even the *Herald's* new rival, the *Evening Standard*, which claimed 35,000 in 1892. The *Argus* remained a money-making venture, nevertheless, run at arm's length by an overseas trust and a local professional journalistic establishment. After surviving near death at the hands of David Syme in 1868, the evening *Herald* came to be run by a partnership that included the publisher Samuel Winter and the printer Alfred Massina, backed by a businessman, John Halfey.

The *Herald* ran into trouble as the economy turned in the late 1880s. Only eighteen months after it was registered as the Herald & Sportsman Company it was sold. A new group was formed, the City Newspaper Company, as an arrangement of the interests now controlling the *Daily Telegraph* and the *Evening Standard*. Out of this corporate maelstrom, the Herald & Weekly Times company emerged, with the *Evening Standard* absorbed in 1894 and the lawyer, entrepreneur and politician (but ultimately press magnate) Theodore Fink, who had narrowly avoided financial ruin in 1892, well placed to oversee the company's growth in the new century. The *Herald* remained a clear

second to the *Age* with an advertised circulation of 60,000 in 1892. Its influence, together with that of virtually all other newspapers other than the *Age* and the *Argus*, has been neglected and misunderstood. The *Herald* had become a sleeper, the mildly conservative newspaper of commuters and middle-class suburbanites, achieving a platform for steady growth in the years and decades ahead.⁴⁶ It was the rock on which a future media empire of the twentieth century was built.

How should we view the origin, rise and fall of these newspapers? The American sociologist Robert Park observed that ‘the struggle for existence, in the case of the newspaper, has been the struggle for circulation.’ In his view newspapers were involved in a form of natural selection, rising or falling—like animal or plant species—according to their ability to satisfy the public’s needs or desires.⁴⁷ A contest of the different mastheads had been in train since Melbourne’s earliest days, and at various times there have been winners and losers. The clear winner at the turn of the century was the *Age* and its proprietor David Syme. But the contest was then by no means over. From the highly capitalised network of dailies and associated weeklies, which included the big three enterprises of the twentieth century, variants would continue to rise and fall and spawn. The depression of the 1890s that had so shattered Melbourne business confidence saw a further cleaning-out of newspapers and journalistic ambitions, one that prepared the ground for a new round of entrepreneurial conflicts influenced by changes to journalism and newspaper practices in the United Kingdom and the United States of America. Together with further advances in communications technologies, these would play out in the new century. Seen in this light the early proliferation of mastheads and the antics of their magnates seem like so much pre-history. But, when they are examined closely, the reality is more arresting. Newspapers emerge as an important modernising force in Australian cultural development and the creation of its urban identities. American historian Gunther Barth has given us a lead. Melbourne’s newspapers drew on much the same raw background for their growth and development as those of American cities, relying initially on the freedom of the press while developing new journalistic techniques and lowering prices to attract readers. As Barth puts it, ‘in the span of two generations, the economic power of the modern city converted the newspaper, formerly a stodgy mercantile sheet or a straggling political journal into another form of big

business.⁴⁸ From being the risky plaything of radical colonial hacks, the modern newspaper emerges as one of the key transformative elements of our urbanising world.

Notes

- 1 See, for example, Geoffrey Blainey, *A History of Victoria*, Melbourne, Cambridge University Press, 2006, p. 88.
- 2 Thomas McCombie, *A History of the Colony of Victoria from its Settlement to the Death of Sir Charles Hotham*, Melbourne, Sands & Kenny, 1858, p. 323.
- 3 Blainey, p. 85.
- 4 R.E.N. Twopeny, *Town Life in Australia*, London, Eliot Stock, 1883, p. 221.
- 5 Alan Atkinson, *The Europeans in Australia: A History*, Vol. 1, Melbourne, Oxford University Press, 1997, pp. 19–21.
- 6 James Belich, *Replenishing the Earth: The Settler Revolution and the Rise of the Anglo-World 1783–1939*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2009, p. 153.
- 7 See Daniel J. Boorstin, *The Americans: The National Experience*, New York, Random House, 1965, especially part three.
- 8 George Arden, *Latest Information with Regard to Australia Felix*, Melbourne, Arden and Strode Printers, 1840, p. 5.
- 9 Anthony Trollope, *Australia and New Zealand*, Vol. 2, Leipzig, Bernhard Tauchnitz, 1873, p. 42.
- 10 Thomas McCombie, *Australian Sketches (Second Series)*, London, W. Johnson; Melbourne and Sydney, Sands & Kenny, 1861, p. 93.
- 11 Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, Verso, London and New York, 1983, p. 46.
- 12 Elizabeth Morrison, 'Newspapers', in Graeme Davison, John Hirst and Stuart Macintyre (eds), *The Oxford Companion to Australian History*, Melbourne, Oxford University Press, 1998, p. 467.
- 13 McCombie, *A History of the Colony of Victoria*, p. 326.
- 14 C.P. Billot, *The Life and Times of John Pascoe Fawkner*, Melbourne, Hyland House, 1985, p. 188.
- 15 See James Curran and Jean Seaton, *Power Without Responsibility: Press, Broadcasting and the Internet in Britain*, London and New York, Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2010, 1:2, p. 6.
- 16 Paul De Serville, *Port Phillip Gentlemen and Good Society in Melbourne before the Gold Rushes*, Melbourne, Oxford University Press, 1908, p. 21; R.B. Walker, *The Newspaper Press in New South Wales, 1803–1920*, Sydney, Sydney University Press, 1976, p. 43.
- 17 Michael Cannon, *Old Melbourne Town before the Gold Rush*, Main Ridge Vic., Loch Haven Books, 1991, p. 197.
- 18 Edmund Finn ('Garryowen'), cited in Elizabeth Morrison, *Engines of Influence: Newspapers of Country Victoria, 1840–1890*, Melbourne, Melbourne University Press, 2005, p. 21; R.M. Younger, 'Let's Go to Press: The Saga of Melbourne's Longest Running Newspaper and its Place in the Community: A 1996 HWT Resource Document', Melbourne, Herald & Weekly Times Ltd, 1996 (copy held by HWT Library), pp. 11, 13.

- 19 Curran and Seaton, 1:2, pp. 8–9.
- 20 De Serville, p. 21.
- 21 McCombie, *A History of the Colony of Victoria*, p. 327; De Serville, p. 19.
- 22 P.L. Brown, 'Arden, George (1820–1854)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/arden-george-1714/text1869>, accessed 10 April 2018.
- 23 Review, *Sydney Monitor and Commercial Advertiser*, 22 March 1841, p. 2.
- 24 *Port Phillip Herald*, 3 January 1840, cited by Younger, p. 12.
- 25 *Historical Records of Australia*, Series I, Vol. 26, pp. 170–2, cited in Morrison, *Engines of Influence*, p. 21.
- 26 Cannon, p. 10.
- 27 De Serville, p. 22.
- 28 McCombie, *A History of the Colony of Victoria*, p. 328.
- 29 William Westgarth, *Personal Recollections of Early Melbourne & Victoria*, Melbourne, George Robertson and Company, 1888, p. 84.
- 30 Westgarth, p. 85. The motto long survived Kerr on the paper's masthead.
- 31 Morrison, *Engines of Influence*, p. 99.
- 32 Cannon, p. 15.
- 33 For example, *Port Phillip Herald*, 6 October 1840.
- 34 *Argus*, 7 July 1846.
- 35 See Ian Wynd, *The Pentonvillains*, Newtown, Vic., Ian Wynd, 1996.
- 36 Geoffrey Serle, 'Wilson, Edward (1813–1878)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/wilson-edward-4866/text8131>, accessed 10 April 2018.
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- 41 Serle, 'Wilson'.
- 42 Westgarth, p. 101.
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- 44 See Andrew Lemon, *The Young Man from Home: James Balfour 1830–1913*, Melbourne, Melbourne University Press, 1982, pp. 85–7, 107–15; Donald S. Garden, *Theodore Fink: A Talent for Ubiquity*, Melbourne, Melbourne University Press, 1998, p. 78.
- 45 Twopeny, p. 222.
- 46 Younger, p. 69.
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Police Use or Misuse? Police Agency and *The Neglected and Criminal Children's Act 1864*

Elizabeth Offer*

Abstract

This article examines the part played by the Victorian police under The Neglected and Criminal Children's Act 1864 in order to demonstrate how their actions, judgments, and negotiations affected the committal and discharge of children into the Industrial Schools.

Introduction

On 10 March 1873, Margaret Myers, a well-known fruit hawker, was brought before the Melbourne City Court on a charge of 'habitual drunkenness'.¹ While she was in court waiting to be sentenced, the police called to the attention of the judge Margaret's three children, stating that 'it would be a good thing to send them to the Industrial Schools as neither the mother nor the father attended to them.'² Their father, Charles Myers, had taken the two older children from school to 'put them to hawking'.³ The police argued that their father 'would be the worse parent of the two but for the mother's drinking habits'.⁴ Margaret was sentenced to six months gaol and an order was issued for her children to be brought before the City Court. Two days later, Caroline Myers, the youngest of Margaret's children at age ten, was summoned before the Melbourne City Court on a charge of neglect under *The Neglected and Criminal Children's Act 1864*.⁵ Caroline's father Charles was also summoned. Police described the family to the court as 'being a nuisance to any neighbourhood they frequented'.⁶ 'The eldest daughter', the police declared, 'was on the town, the son was a larrikin, and the parents were drunkards'.⁷ Charles denied such claims, insisting that he 'only took a little colonial wine' and that 'he sent [Caroline] to school'.⁸ The judge, however, believed that 'it was no use to trust to the father taking care [*sic*] of the child, and therefore sent her to the Industrial School for five years'.⁹ A case of adult drunkenness had instead become

* Elizabeth Offer won the RHSV prize in Australian History in 2015 awarded to the La Trobe University student 'who received the highest mark in the subject Australian History'. This article has been developed from her fourth-year honours thesis.

a court case over a neglected child. Whether from good intentions or merely a desire to move along a troublesome family within their city district, the Melbourne police had brought Margaret's children to the attention of the City Court, successfully charging one child as neglected.

The two court cases described above highlight an important but often simplified aspect of the Neglected and Criminal Children's Act—the agency of the police. This article focuses on children committed to the Industrial Schools within Victoria between 1864 and 1874. In doing so, it suggests how the decisions and actions of the police could influence outcomes for both children and parents. Police agency under this Act was complex and multifaceted, involving a range of powers that allowed the police to intervene not only to remove children but also to make character judgments and assessments of situations. Judgments were frequently made about the ability of parents to provide for their children, often in accordance with prevailing middle-class understandings. Police intervention and assessments, however, did not always work to disadvantage parents. The Act opened up the possibility for police to provide relief through legal channels, creating a space in which they could aid or work with parents and guardians to gain access to the Industrial Schools or their committed children. It thus gave the police options beyond punishment and prevention, enabling them to provide assistance and guidance where deemed appropriate

The Victorian Neglected and Criminal Children's Act was passed in June 1864 in order to deal with poor vagrant children seen to be at risk of becoming delinquents, as well as to reform youthful offenders. The Act enabled a child to be brought before a local court, either by police or parents themselves, to be charged as neglected. A child was seen to be neglected if found begging, wandering the streets, sleeping in the open air, and having no settled place of residence or visible means of support.¹⁰ It was a description more fitting of poverty and one that explicitly connected destitution to criminality. The Act also defined any child of a reputed thief, drunkard, prostitute, or person convicted of vagrancy as neglected.¹¹ In court, testimonies were usually provided by the police and parents on the circumstances of the child as well as the fitness of parents. Additional witnesses could be summoned to provide testimonies. If charged, the child would be removed from his or her parents and placed into an Industrial School, a large-scale institution that provided out-of-home care and training. Children who

were committed to an Industrial School came under the custody of the Victorian government, which exercised full legal rights over its wards.

Both Industrial Schools and Reformatories were established and built under the Neglected and Criminal Children's Act, but this article will focus only on children sent to Industrial Schools. These were more numerous than Reformatories. By 1873, there were eight Industrial Schools operating in Victoria for over 320,000 persons aged under fifteen.¹² George Duncan was appointed as inspector in 1866 to manage the Industrial and Reformatory Schools Department; he maintained this position until 1878, while also acting as the inspector of the Penal Department. The capacity of each Industrial School varied, with the Geelong Convent Industrial School housing only 24 children in 1869 while the Sunbury Industrial School recorded 674 children for the same year.¹³ Nearly all schools were severely overcrowded. The crowding together of large numbers of young bodies meant disease quickly became a problem in the Industrial Schools, which had higher rates of death than their surrounding communities.¹⁴ Parents could apply to the inspector of the Industrial Schools to have their children discharged to them, a process that many found difficult because it required a penned request and commonly involved a court appearance relating to payment of maintenance for the child while in the Industrial School.¹⁵ The discharge process usually involved a police report and investigations. It was not within the power of the police themselves to discharge children. Industrial School children could only be discharged by order of the Governor in Council.

The Neglected and Criminal Children's Act in Victoria was influenced by and based on similar legislation enacted in Britain, mainly Britain's notorious Poor Laws and *The Youthful Offenders Act 1854*. The introduction of the English Poor Laws from the mid-sixteenth to early seventeenth centuries arose from England's changing labour relations in the early stages of industrialisation.¹⁶ Attitudes to labour were transformed as morality came to be associated with productivity. Under the Poor Laws, no distinction was made between the labourers, beggars, and vagrants who hoped to gain access to relief. No difference was made either between adults and children. Later changes to the Poor Laws did create a distinction between children and adults, however, making children a family responsibility rather than a state one. This worked to submerge the individual needs of the child within the larger

family unit. Families would be assessed by the Poor Laws administrators to determine whether they could maintain their children. It was within this context, according to social work historian Jan Mason, that the earliest interventions into family life for childhood neglect took place.¹⁷ Such interventions typically occurred where children were deemed dependent through disability, destitution or being orphaned. Evidence of destitution included begging or idleness. The Poor Laws were never introduced into the Australian colonies, where they were unpopular with the general public and considered inappropriate. However, various elements of the English Poor Laws were adapted and incorporated into the colonial legislation on child welfare, where the state as well as child welfare reformers followed a similar trajectory of attitudes towards the poor, childhood, and the neglect of children. More crucially, however, the right to receive relief embedded in the Poor Laws was absent in Australia's colonies.¹⁸

England's Youthful Offenders Act reflected changing attitudes in Britain towards juvenile crime, attitudes coloured not only by the visibility of metropolitan delinquency but also by influential literature such as Charles Dickens's *Oliver Twist* and Henry Mayhew's *London Labour and the London Poor*. By the middle of the nineteenth century, two views had developed on the nature of juvenile criminals. The first viewed young offenders as exclusively male and as a mix of child-like immaturity and mature masculinity. The second view held juveniles to be developing adults, influenced by their environment and experiences. Questions were asked about the ability of such juveniles to know right from wrong and the consequences of sending young offenders to prison. One result of these shifting attitudes and questions was the Youthful Offenders Act, which made the trial process quicker for children and provided for Reformatories and Industrial Schools. This reconceptualisation of juvenile crime, combined with developments in social policy and the zeal of reformers such as Mary Carpenter, gave rise to a new discourse on youthful crime, one that was also taken up within Australia's colonies.

The rise in sentimental images and understandings of childhood that accompanied these changes was rooted in the middle class but also spread across class boundaries, attributing vice to the environment instead of the child. The Neglected and Criminal Children's Act, following this trajectory, aimed to remove children from the pollution

of prisons, neglectful parents, and the liminal space of the street with its potential for contamination and contact with offenders. During the early colonial period, children without guardians were placed in orphanages. If no place could be found for such a child, they were either consigned to an asylum with destitute adults or committed under vagrancy laws to prison. Children were often incarcerated with the imprisoned mothers, serving sentences in gaol for a crime committed by a parent. Both locations raised concerns about the potential for criminal contamination of children. By the middle of the nineteenth century, anxiety about the placement of children in prisons had grown. The gold rushes of the 1850s drastically increased Victoria's population, making children more visible and numerous and creating a potential danger. The aim of the Act was less about provision of care than control and reform of the colony's future criminals. Children perceived to be at risk of becoming youthful offenders constituted not only an immediate threat to order but also required a separate system to prevent juvenile delinquency through training.

Social Control or Agency?

In the 1960s and 1970s, sociological and historical critiques of philanthropic and professional intervention in the family viewed such involvement as an attempt at social control. Combining the work of Michel Foucault and Jacques Donzelot from the 1970s, Jose Luis Moreno Pestana explored more thoroughly the theory of social control behind philanthropic and professional intervention. Donzelot and Foucault saw the family as a space for intervention by various social bodies for the purpose of moderating individual behaviour and controlling family formation. Building upon this, Pestana explained that, for Donzelot and Foucault, family interventions had two component 'apparatuses', welfare and medical hygiene. The first worked to shift the responsibility of social problems to those affected, turning society's maladies into private family problems. The second worked to regulate the working class through women and children by introducing the norms of middle-class life. Donzelot saw both of these strategies as devices to destroy autonomous working-class culture. Australian historian Robert Van Krieken also understood welfare mechanisms as a form of social control over children. This social control analysis, however, obscured the more complex interactions between the internal family and external bodies. British historian Frank Prochaska warned

scholars against this approach, suggesting that the associated concepts of bourgeois hegemony and conformity were blurry and simplistic and risked becoming reductionist without further analysis of the complex exchanges and processes involved in social change.¹⁹

Charity relief and intervention, as well as many other types of interaction across social strata, involved a range of unequal relationships and actions as people tried to negotiate and renegotiate boundaries and exchanges. As historian Christine Fitzpatrick states, ‘the procedures and practices involved in charity relief belie a complex series of negotiations and compromises, as well as control and containment’.²⁰ In other words, understanding the relationship between the family, the individual, and outside intervention (whether by state officials, police, or charitable bodies) necessitates analysis of the complex ways people interacted and mediated outcomes within these relations of power. Welfare historian Shurlee Swain has demonstrated that reforming organisations, including both voluntary bodies and statutory authorities, were able to bring about change ‘because working-class families shared the organisations’ notions of what childhood should be about, not as a result of an alien subjectivity, [but] internalised in response to an undermining of class-specific norms’.²¹ ‘Such families’, Swain argued, ‘were active agents in the remaking of working-class childhood, adopting interventions which they saw as advancing their hopes for their children, and rejecting those which they saw as unreasonable and unwarranted’.²² A simple theory of social control would deny the agency of individuals to accede to or to challenge the Neglected and Criminal Children’s Act in order to gain access to relief or to their committed children.

A substantial body of literature demonstrates the ability of parents to exercise agency under the Neglected and Criminal Children’s Act. While never intended as a form of relief, the Industrial Schools were used by parents and guardians as a means of assistance, often in the form of temporary care during periods of family crisis. The ability of parents to negotiate access to Industrial Schools saw large numbers of poor children being committed, turning these institutions from training schools for older wayward children into makeshift state care. Government officials were strongly opposed to this practice, and, while parents were able to negotiate admission of their children into an Industrial School, they found that gaining a child’s release was more challenging. Parents first needed to prove their moral and physical

fitness to provide for the child. Meeting the narrow standard defining such fitness (clean and furnished home, steady and stable income, respectable character) proved an impossibility for many parents, especially for single mothers who often lacked economic stability. This did not, however, always prove a barrier to parents who were willing to challenge the state to gain access to their children. Historian Nell Musgrove has demonstrated the agency of parents under the Act once their children were admitted to an Industrial School: ‘while there were parents ... quietly waiting to apply for custody until their children’s committals were over, and others who deserted their children after admission, the files also show families who contested the length of their children’s stays.’²³

This wide range of literature only briefly mentions the police. Social worker and historian Donella Jaggs, writing in the 1980s, acknowledged the ability of the police (as well as poor parents and the state courts) to stretch the term ‘neglect’ to enable them to send destitute children to the Industrial Schools. However, she did not explore the ways police agency operated in any detail.²⁴ Another historian, Sheila Bignell, writing in the 1970s, drew very brief attention to the police, observing that deserted children and the children of gaoled mothers ‘were charitably supported, sometimes for years, by members of the police, who received no official recognition of their kindness.’²⁵ More recently, Nell Musgrove has highlighted the complicated relationship between the police and the wider community. Police work, she argues, reflected the position of the police as enforcers of moral and physical order; however, they did also negotiate relief access with and for the people they monitored.²⁶

Research on the interactions between the police and parents of Industrial School children in other Australian colonies has been limited. Gladys Scrivener, for example, examined such negotiations in New South Wales but concluded that the role of the police was largely coercive: ‘in cases of stealing or similar, most parents simply bowed to police pressure and agreed to either lay charges themselves or support police charges to avoid possible jail sentences.’²⁷ Evidence regarding the interaction between the police and parents of Industrial School children in Victoria indicates a wider and more complex range of possible responses, and enough room for individual policemen to decide how and when they would apply the Act. Coercion (in terms of police pressure) did occur but so did aid and assistance.

Police agency in the mid- to late nineteenth century has been more fully explored by historians of Australian colonial practices in relation to lunacy. For example, Catherine Coleborne has argued that ‘not only did police make choices about what constituted madness, possibly based on “popular conceptions” of lunacy, but they were also given permission to interpret behaviour’.²⁸ Police were in effect granted the discretion to act in cases of suspected lunacy, as well as the power to interpret the behaviour of individuals and to act accordingly, so long as they observed the processes allowed under law. Their assessments affected committals to institutions in ways that paralleled the application and processes carried out under the Neglected and Criminal Children’s Act.

While police work in the nineteenth century is an area of mounting interest to historians, gaps still exist within the literature on the Neglected and Criminal Children’s Act in Victoria. Historians studying the Victorian Industrial Schools have mainly focused on parents and magistrates, and have paid little attention to the role of the police within the discharge process. This article seeks to begin the process of bridging this gap in the literature by suggesting how police assessments influenced the committal and discharge of children. The research draws mainly upon the Victorian Police Inward Registered Correspondence but especially the discharge reports for Industrial School children written by the police. The discharge reports provide a wealth of information regarding Industrial School children, but they also reveal the influence exercised by police testimonies and the myriad ways the police were applying the Neglected and Criminal Children’s Act. The reports often include the circumstances of the child’s committal, the situation of parents, and the reasoning behind police judgments. The files examined here cover a specific timeframe, mainly between 1867 and 1870, but not every child discharged from the Industrial Schools in that period is to be found within these discharge reports. Some reports may have been misplaced or destroyed, and, in other cases, reports may never have been created in the first place. Further research may reveal reasons for these gaps in the records.

Police Agency in the Nineteenth Century

Even before the introduction of the Neglected and Criminal Children’s Act, police were using existing legislation to aid the destitute, usually those in the most desperate need of assistance. Historians Russell Hogg and Hilary Golder have shown that the working class and the poor

‘use[d] the policing, judicial, and carceral systems to an extent which emphasises the ambivalence of the relations between the police and the policed.’²⁹ The role of the police in the mid-nineteenth century was not limited to criminal prevention or punishment. Welfare duties were also included and were seen as being part of the more general task of controlling criminal activity. From the 1840s police used criminal laws such as the Vagrancy Act to arrest the destitute and homeless, so that those unable to support themselves could be committed to gaol, which served as an alternative form of charity. Typically those convicted served brief sentences, receiving shelter, food, and medical care. However, by the twentieth century, the police had been discouraged from doing welfare work in order to remove the stigma of criminality from problems now perceived as being social in nature.³⁰ Before this time, out-of-home care provided by the Industrial Schools proved a solution to a wide range of problems faced by children and their parents, and the description given by the Act of a neglected child was often expanded to gain the admittance of children for relief purposes, an opening that frequently saw the police and parents working together.

A pervasive street presence, when coupled with their bureaucratic responsibilities, enabled the police to continue to function in a welfare role for much of the nineteenth century. This street presence enabled police to identify those needing welfare intervention as well as to gather and provide the information on persons within their district that was relied upon in implementing the Neglected and Criminal Children’s Act. A police manual from 1877 titled *Regulations for the Guidance of the Constabulary* encouraged a strong public presence and detailed knowledge of the district and its inhabitants, advising that each constable ‘must make himself familiar with the personal appearance of all persons resident in his division.’³¹ An earlier police manual of 1856 outlines more clearly the interpretative power given to the police. In underlining the need to follow the proper procedures and to work within the confines of the law, it also impressed upon readers that they should use their discretion to interpret behaviour, declaring that, ‘in cases where an actual offence has not been consummated, the constable must judge from the situation and behaviour of the party what his intention is.’³²

The role of giving and providing information, and the credibility of this information, enabled the police to use the Act in ways they saw fit. The Act provided a legal channel for the police to intervene within the

family, to remove children and charge them as neglected, and while it outlined definitions of neglect it also left enough room for the police to act with discretion. Individual policemen were able to exercise agency in these interactions by forming their own opinion on each case. Such opinions, though based on the detailed knowledge of the constable, also included a range of other influences such as perceptions of class and ideas about childhood. However, these judgments were grounded not only in prior knowledge but also in interaction with parents; this was particularly the case in the compilation of discharge reports. Police often communicated with parents in order to ascertain parental employment and wages, if any, household furnishings and hygiene, and sobriety of character. This assessment influenced decisions over which children were to be charged as neglected as well as helping to formulate recommendations for aid or assistance on discharge. The altruistic use of the Act co-existed with its more punitive use; some cases clearly show an application of the Act as a means of punishment and further criminal prevention while others show a more benevolent use, depending on whether the police judged families (or rather parents) as being respectable and deserving of assistance.

Police Use or Misuse?

Through the deliberate misrepresentation of their circumstances, children in need of the relief provided by Industrial Schools could be charged under the Neglected and Criminal Children's Act. The extent of police involvement in such charges made under the Act is not always clear, and it can at times be hard to pinpoint how or in what ways the police were working with parents. By examining and overlaying the records, however, we can highlight discrepancies that suggest that police were assisting parents to misapply the Act. For example, Thomas Hamilton was committed to an Industrial School in 1868 while his mother was sick and unable to care for him,³³ but he was in the system for only two months before his father, Alexander Hamilton, applied for his discharge. Alexander stated to the police that 'his wife [has] quite recovered her health' and that 'she was anxious to take back her child and to provide for him.'³⁴ Thomas was discharged from the Sunbury Industrial School two months later.³⁵ Alexander was thus able to use the schools against the intention of the Act as a means of finding temporary care for his son until his wife was restored to health. While the definition of a neglected child under the Act was commonly skewed to include the

children of sick parents like Thomas, the submission of false information was not officially condoned. Thomas's ward register records that he had only a mother living, which the police report disproved.³⁶ This may indicate that Alexander or the police, or most likely both, had stretched the truth of Thomas's circumstances to have him committed to an Industrial School, a committal less likely to have been granted if it had been known that Thomas still had a living and working parent contributing to his welfare. It seems unlikely that his mother appeared before the court owing to her illness, and, if his father had attended, he would not have been recorded as deceased. Police involvement in this deception seems highly likely. Although it is not always clear whether it was parents, police, or even magistrates who were providing false information and expanding the Act's definition of neglect, it is evident that it did occur. Some collusion is likely, for parents and the police had to be in some agreement when they presented their case for a judgment of neglect before a magistrate. A parent could claim their child to be neglected, but police reports required by the court had to confirm it.

Parents were not always in a position to testify or work with police owing to sickness or absence. Such cases allow closer examination of police applications under the Neglected and Criminal Children's Act to demonstrate more clearly how the police at times misused its provisions. When widow Ellen Paul became ill in 1868 she was sent to Melbourne Hospital.³⁷ While Ellen was in hospital, her ten-year-old daughter, Mary Ann Paul, was committed to an Industrial School 'without my consent or knowledge', as Ellen claimed in arguing to have her daughter discharged to her two months later.³⁸ Following two good police reports and an appearance in court over child maintenance, Ellen succeeded in having Mary Ann discharged and returned to her.³⁹ Mary Ann clearly did not fit the description of a neglected child, nor did Mary Ann or her mother in any way seem criminal. Ellen was described by the police as 'bear[ing] a good character and has [*sic*] three grown up sons all at work'.⁴⁰ The police deemed Ellen to be 'a fit person to be entrusted with the care of a child' and yet, despite this, Mary Ann had been committed to an Industrial School.⁴¹ Ellen's hospitalisation meant that no parent had been available to charge Mary Ann or provide testimony in court. It was the police who summoned and charged Mary Ann, not her mother, evidence that they did sometimes misuse the Act to provide temporary relief.

While the police could, and at times certainly did, stretch definitions under the Act to find temporary relief for children experiencing crises at home, not all children had homes or parents. Children who seem to have been unfortunate rather than criminal were also sometimes admitted to the Industrial Schools under the Act. Early on 14 December 1868, 36-year-old Mary Dwyers went into labour.⁴² Married but alone, Mary travelled to the residence of Mary O'Donnell, who lived just off Lygon Street, Carlton. A police report details that Mary Dwyers was 'confined at 11:30 am ... and delivered of a male child.'⁴³ Shortly after the birth, Mary became 'very weak and died [at] about 1 pm, the same day.'⁴⁴ On the following day, an inquest was undertaken and attributed her cause of death to 'collapse after labour, probably from air getting into the uteri veins.'⁴⁵ Just before her death, the 'deceased told Mary O'Donnell that her husband was a gold digger named Maurice Dwyers and that he was working on a goldfield beyond Mansfield.'⁴⁶ While a police search for Maurice was carried out, Mary was 'interred at the expense of the Government', and the new-born was 'taken care of by Mary O'Donnell (at Sergeant Cuisp's request) until the deceased's husband [could] be communicated with.'⁴⁷ The father was never found, and, on 8 February 1869, the baby, by then christened Morris, was committed by police under the Neglected and Criminal Children's Act for seven years and sent to the Princes Bridge Industrial School.⁴⁸

The Act enabled difficult situations like Morris's to be resolved quickly. Few options existed for external accommodation before the Act came into operation. The Immigrants' Aid Society, originally established in 1853 to aid newly arrived migrants, had quickly expanded to include the care of hundreds of vulnerable children and, by 1864, was housing more children than it could accommodate. After the passage of the Act, the Immigrants' Home became an Industrial School. While orphanages also provided out-of-home care for children, they were more selective, meaning children in need could be turned away or end up waiting months for admission. A royal commission into charitable institutions in 1871 provided further evidence of the problem. The superintendent of the Melbourne Orphan Asylum, Edwin Exon, admitted that they had 'twelve cases waiting something like four months for admission.'⁴⁹ Children also needed to be either double or single orphans to be admitted, making those with both parents living ineligible. The Industrial Schools, on the other hand, had to admit any

child the court had deemed neglected, meaning the children of deserted and even struggling parents could quickly be placed into a care setting. As George Duncan, the inspector of Industrial Schools lamented, 'whether the children [were] imbecile, blind, deaf, afflicted with eye or skin disease, feeble in constitution, as the result of want and neglect or as the heritage of sin, they must be received'.⁵⁰ The time between serving a summons to charge a child as neglected and their actual committal into an Industrial School was incredibly short, usually a matter of days. The Act thus allowed for the immediate relief and care needed by young children in vulnerable situations, and was used by the police to find care for them quickly.

The Neglected and Criminal Children's Act also provided police with a helpful legal means to intervene and remove children from other vulnerable situations. As their reports and correspondence with the Industrial and Reformatory Schools Department show, the police used the Industrial Schools to remove children involved in serious court cases, whether as witnesses or victims. In 1873 Kate Gianni, as well as her sister and four brothers, were removed from their home by police and placed into an Industrial School.⁵¹ Their mother was at the time an inmate of the Yarra Bend Lunatic Asylum.⁵² Kate was to give evidence in court against her stepfather, who was on trial for attempted rape on Kate.⁵³ The Neglected and Criminal Children's Act was thus used by the police to fill a variety of needs, in much the same way as the Vagrancy Acts were employed to supply otherwise unavailable welfare options.

The ways police manipulated the Act depended on their judgment of specific situations and families. Such agency and influence worked not only to have children removed and placed into care but also to allow for their release back to guardians. With a deserting father and a deceased mother, William Gowrie, a little lad about five years old, had been adopted by a Mr and Mrs Phillips.⁵⁴ It is unclear how or why William was committed to an Industrial School early in February 1870; however, six months after his committal, Mr Phillips applied for William's release. The police report that followed described Phillips as 'an industrious and steady person'.⁵⁵ The constable writing noted that he had 'made the application on behalf of Mr Phillips and had he known anything at that time which would lead [the constable] to believe the child would not be properly taken care of he should not have lent his assistance'.⁵⁶ The constable's assistance has been underlined in blue pencil, presumably

by the Industrial and Reformatory Schools Department as the report was written in black ink. Within two months of the constable's report, William was discharged to Mr Phillips.⁵⁷

Nell Musgrove reminds us not to overestimate the opportunities offered to parents for negotiation under the Act, for the 'colonial bureaucracy was intimidating, and even the act of resistance involved in penning a polite request for a child's return was too much for many families.'⁵⁸ Applying for a child's release and confronting the colonial bureaucracy could indeed be daunting and simply beyond the ability of many families. However, with police assistance, successful challenges were possible, as the Phillips case demonstrated. It is important to view this assistance in the context of the reporting constable's assessment of Phillips as being of 'sober and steady' character, deserving, and in a position to provide for William.⁵⁹ The case of William Gowrie thus demonstrates not only the ability of the police to assist and negotiate with parents for the release of children from the Industrial Schools but also the agency of the police in defining and deciding which families were deserving of assistance and to what extent.

Conclusion

The role of the police was incorporated into the Neglected and Criminal Children's Act. The police were vital to the operation of the Act, especially in identifying and locating such children and providing the required information about their circumstances and their parents. The police were, however, more than an extended arm of the government; as well as being part of the apparatus of social control they exercised agency and formed individual judgments and, in the process, interpreted and applied the Act in ways they thought appropriate. The police could and did apply the Act in its original punitive form, but they also used its provisions in order to fulfil a variety of welfare functions ranging from temporary care for the children of sick parents to removal of those suffering abuse by their guardians. They also lent their assistance to parents by aiding them to petition for the return of their children.

The lack of the full range of records for all the discharged children means we cannot know with complete accuracy the extent or range of police assistance carried out under the Neglected and Criminal Children's Act; however, the records available do suggest a complex range for responses. A problem for historical research is that much goes undocumented, especially conversations. Without the recorded details

of such exchanges, it is not possible to grasp the extent of police agency and negotiation with parents. We can only follow an incomplete trail of clues detected from the written record. This article has attempted to search for the lost voices of the police, to reread used sources to elucidate clues left behind more than a century ago. The police did make decisions involving which children to apprehend in the street and bring before a court, were often present in court cases involving neglected children, and did later provide reports on parents. These actions are indicative of a level of agency that needs to be considered more thoroughly in the history of the Industrial Schools and the Neglected and Criminal Children's Act.

Notes

- 1 'Police', *Argus*, 12 March 1873, p. 2.
- 2 'Police', *Argus*, 12 March 1873, p. 2.
- 3 'Police', *Argus*, 12 March 1873, p. 2.
- 4 'Police', *Argus*, 12 March 1873, p. 2.
- 5 Throughout the article, the Neglected and Criminal Children's Act will often be referred to as 'the Act'.
- 6 'Police', *Argus*, 12 March 1873, p. 2.
- 7 'Police', *Argus*, 12 March 1873, p. 2.
- 8 'Police', *Argus*, 12 March 1873, p. 2.
- 9 'Police', *Argus*, 12 March 1873, p. 2.
- 10 An Act for the Amendment of the Law relating to Neglected and Criminal Children, cited as *The Neglected and Criminal Children's Act 1864*, 2 June 1864, Clause 13, p. 367.
- 11 *The Neglected and Criminal Children's Act 1864*, Clause 13, p. 367.
- 12 Number of persons aged under 15 years taken from 'Statistical Register of the Colony of Victoria for the Year 1874 Part III Population', 1875, Victoria Government Statistical Register, 17. Statistics used in the report were from the 1871 census.
- 13 'Industrial and Reformatory Schools: Report of the Inspector for the year 1869', Victoria Government (Report), 1870, p. 11.
- 14 Brian Dickey, *No Charity There: A Short History of Social Welfare in Australia*, 2nd ed., Sydney, Allen & Unwin, 1987, p. 59.
- 15 Nell Musgrove, "'Every Time I Think of Baby I Cry': Dislocation and Survival in Victoria's Child Welfare System', *Australian Historical Studies*, vol. 39, no. 2, 2008, p. 223.
- 16 Jan Mason, 'The Construction of Child Neglect in English-Speaking Countries: Children, Risk and Poor Families', *Children and Youth Services Review*, 2017, p. 2.
- 17 Mason, p. 2.
- 18 Julie Kimber, 'Poor Laws: A Historiography of Vagrancy in Australia', *History Compass*, vol. 11, no. 8, 2013, p. 539.

- 19 F.K. Prochaska, 'Philanthropy', in F.M.L. Thompson (ed.), *The Cambridge Social History of Britain 1750–1950, Volume 3, Social Agencies and Institutions*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1990, p. 371.
- 20 Christine Fitzpatrick, 'Human Dunnage: Poor Relief and the Bendigo Benevolent Asylum, 1890–1920', PhD Thesis, La Trobe University, 2015, p. 56.
- 21 Shurlee Swain, 'The State and the Child', *Australian Journal of Legal History*, vol. 4, no. 1, 1998, p. 60.
- 22 Swain, p. 61.
- 23 Musgrove, 'Every time I Think of Baby I Cry', p. 223.
- 24 Donella Jaggs, *Neglected and Criminal: Foundations of Child Welfare Legislation in Victoria*, Melbourne, Centre for Youth and Community Studies, Phillip Institute of Technology, 1986, p. 29.
- 25 Sheila Bignell, 'Orphans and Destitute Children in Victoria up to 1864', *Victorian Historical Magazine*, vol. 44, nos 1–2, 1973, p. 9.
- 26 Nell Musgrove, *The Scars Remain: A Long History of Forgotten Australians and Children's Institutions*, Melbourne, Australian Scholarly Publishing, 2013, p. 94.
- 27 Gladys Scrivener, 'Parental Imposition or Police Coercion? The Role of Parents and Police in Committals to the Industrial Schools in New South Wales, 1867–1905', *Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society*, vol. 86, no. 1, 2000, p. 27.
- 28 Catharine Coleborne, 'Passage to the Asylum: The Role of the Police in Committals of the Insane in Victoria, Australia, 1848–1900', in Roy Porter and David Wright (eds), *The Confinement of the Insane: International Perspectives*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2003, p. 135.
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McKay's 1891 Journey: A Window into the Victorian Mallee Back Country

John Burch

Abstract

In 1891 Nathaniel McKay travelled south from Mildura across the Mallee back country to Yellumjip, south-west of Ouyen. He described his journey in the Mildura Cultivator and his articles provide a rare description of the back country, also opening a window into colonial and Aboriginal use of that land. They document the squatters' attempts to develop the land, and their reliance on Aboriginal labour. In combination with other colonial sources, McKay's observations also suggest extensive pre-colonial use of the back country by Aboriginal people. That Aboriginal land use then provides a framework that explains the settlement patterns of the squatters.

Introduction

This article is concerned with colonial and Aboriginal use of one part of the Victorian Mallee—the back country. 'Back country' is the name given by the nineteenth-century squatters to the land set back from the Murray River and its floodplains. In giving the area its own designation they signalled their sense of its difference and strangeness. The back country was dry, with no waterways and apparently no permanent water. Geographically it consisted of either saline depressions associated with saltbush plains or stabilised dunes supporting dense mallee scrub on low reddish dunes, or heath and less dense vegetation on larger white dunes. Interspersed within these environments were small plains:

One of the strangest features of this strange tract of country is the small open circular plains which the explorer comes upon without any previous indication from his surroundings that he is going to emerge out of the thicket. These circular plains vary from a quarter of a mile to two miles in diameter ...¹

The combination of its seasonally harsh climate, the lack of water and the denseness of the mallee scrub contributed to the back country developing an aura of danger and impassability. This reputation was

formed from the point of first colonial contact, as the first explorers, Charles Sturt and Thomas Mitchell, avoided the area altogether. Despite some later settlement the back country's reputation persisted, and in the 1890s its mention still conjured up 'visions of vast trackless wastes and impenetrable thickets, of hunger and thirst, of broiling heat and inhospitable sand ridges, reflecting a blinding glare into the eyes of the bewildered wanderer.'²

The back country was taken up by squatters in the 1850s and 1860s but was, of course, Aboriginal land with a history of Aboriginal ownership. At the time of colonial settlement, the Murray River corridor had been continuously occupied for many thousands of years and was possibly one of the most densely populated areas of Aboriginal Australia.³ Aboriginal use of the back country is not well documented in academic literature. Anne Ross suggested that the back country was settled at least 7,000 years ago but subsequently abandoned.⁴ The current consensus in the literature is that, at the point of colonial settlement, Aboriginal people may have been making little use of the back country and just seasonally visiting the area, though seasonal visiting is never defined.⁵ John Mulvaney and Johan Kamminga suggest that Murray River societies 'did not venture far from the riverine corridor, which is about twenty kilometres wide, or as far as people can walk carrying a skin water bag.'⁶

This article uses the observations of Nathaniel McKay in 1891 to explore colonial pastoral use of the back country, the place of Aboriginal people in that pastoralism, and the nature of their use of the back country before they were dispossessed by the squatters.

The Journey

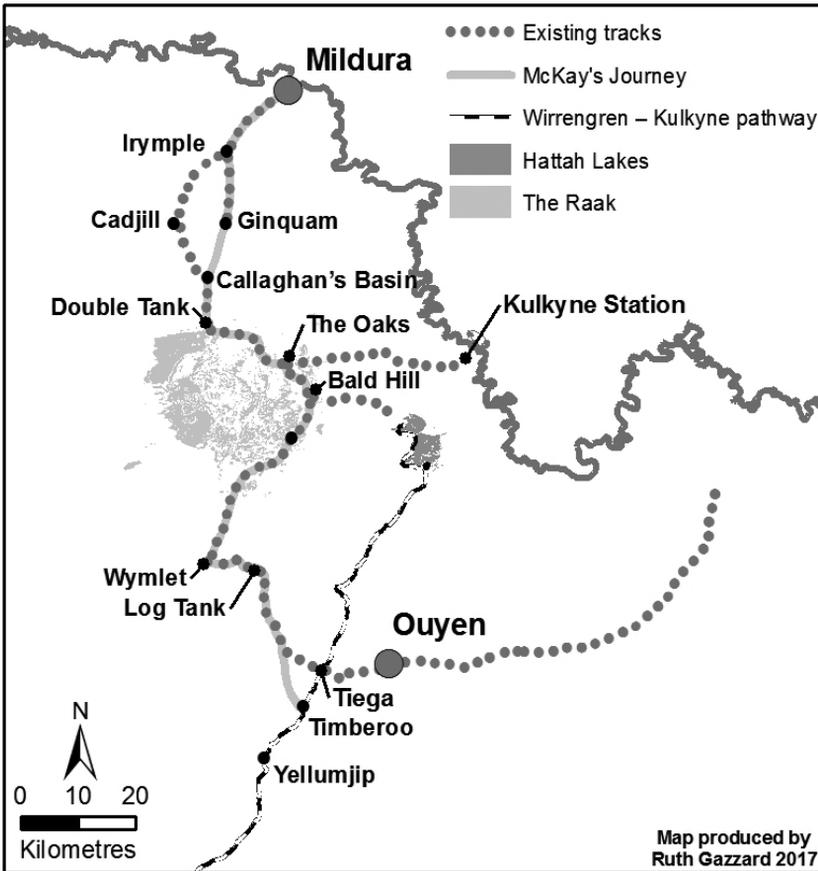
In April 1891 Governor Hopetoun and ministers from the Victorian government visited Mildura. During this visit, Edward Lascelles of Coorong Station at Hopetoun and George Chaffey of Mildura Station met with the chief secretary to lobby for the establishment of a postal service between Warracknabeal and Mildura.⁷ The proposed mail route would service Hopetoun and provide an improved service for Mildura. Lascelles and Chaffey offered to share the costs, with Lascelles to develop the route from Warracknabeal to Yellumjip, and Chaffey from there to Mildura.⁸ Lascelles and Chaffey must have been given some encouragement as Chaffey asked William Paterson to plan the route to Yellumjip. Paterson was the manager of Mildura Station and had considerable experience in the Mallee. He was accompanied on his

planning trip by Nathaniel Breakey McKay. McKay, brother of Hugh McKay the inventor of the Sunshine Harvester, had founded the *Mildura Cultivator* newspaper in 1888 and was its editor.⁹ He subsequently wrote a 7,200-word report of his journey that was published in his paper.¹⁰

There was no need to find a route to Yellumjip; one already existed and was regularly used. After visiting Mildura, Governor Hopetoun travelled to Kulkyne Station and from there to Yellumjip, where he camped for the night.¹¹ But Chaffey and Lascelles wanted something shorter and quicker, and Paterson assessed a route that ran almost due south from Mildura across the back country. McKay's articles make several references to a map that was used on the journey, and this was very likely a survey of the 142nd meridian carried out in 1885 (referred to as the 1885 survey).¹² The map and McKay's articles list the same locations and the same spellings for them.

The first part of McKay's journey ran through saltbush country and mallee scrub from Mildura to Double Tank, passing Two Tanks (Irymple),¹³ Ginquam and Callaghan's Basin. The second part ran around the edge of the Raak, a saline depression dotted with salt pans and bordered with saltbush plains, to The Oaks, Bald Hill, Dead Dog Corner (as named by McKay) and then through dense mallee to Wymlet. The final section ran through mallee scrub to Log Tank, Timberoo and Yellumjip.

In deciding to cross the back country, McKay was not entering a 'trackless waste', and he probably could have made his entire journey on existing tracks. The 1885 survey and other contemporaneous maps show a network of tracks crossing the back country.¹⁴ The only section of the journey for which tracks are not indicated on these maps is from Bald Hill to Wymlet, but McKay noted that there was a track there and they followed an 'old trail, made in the days when rabbits were unknown', which ran along the lake shorelines. Only about eight miles of the journey, from the southern edge of the Raak to Wymlet, is open to speculation. The route contained two shortcuts where it left existing tracks; from Ginquam it went across country to Callaghan's Basin, bypassing Cadjill, and from Log Tank directly to Timberoo, bypassing Tiega.



McKay's Journey 1891

McKay's was not a demanding or dangerous journey of exploration into the unknown; it was a Victorian gentleman's adventure. His peers in Mildura jokingly referred to his account as 'the rambling record of an idle jaunt through the scrub'. McKay travelled in a cart, partly out of preference and probably partly to demonstrate that a mail coach could follow the path he took. The journey also took place during the cool of winter when cold at night was more a concern than heat during the day. The land was at its most accommodating; recent good rain had left it lush and picturesque with plentiful water but not flooded. Supplies and a remount were sent out in advance and guides arranged to help with navigation. On the first night McKay stayed in a hut at The Oaks and was met by James Robertson,

manager of Kulkyne Station, with whom he shared 'a limited supply of cordials with a Scotch brand on the label'. On the second night he camped with Charley Thompson at Wymlet with 'a very moderate supply of wet groceries.'

Charley Thompson accompanied McKay from Wymlet, guiding him on the shortcut to Timberoo. Thompson had first come to Kulkyne Station as a child in 1870 and lived in the area until his death in 1933. In February 1933 'Steele Blayde', a reporter for the *Sunraysia Daily*, interviewed Thompson about his experiences in the Mallee. The interviews were published as 'FROM KULNINE TO KULKYNE, Reminiscences of "Charley" Thompson of Kulkyne' (referred to as the Reminiscences).¹⁵

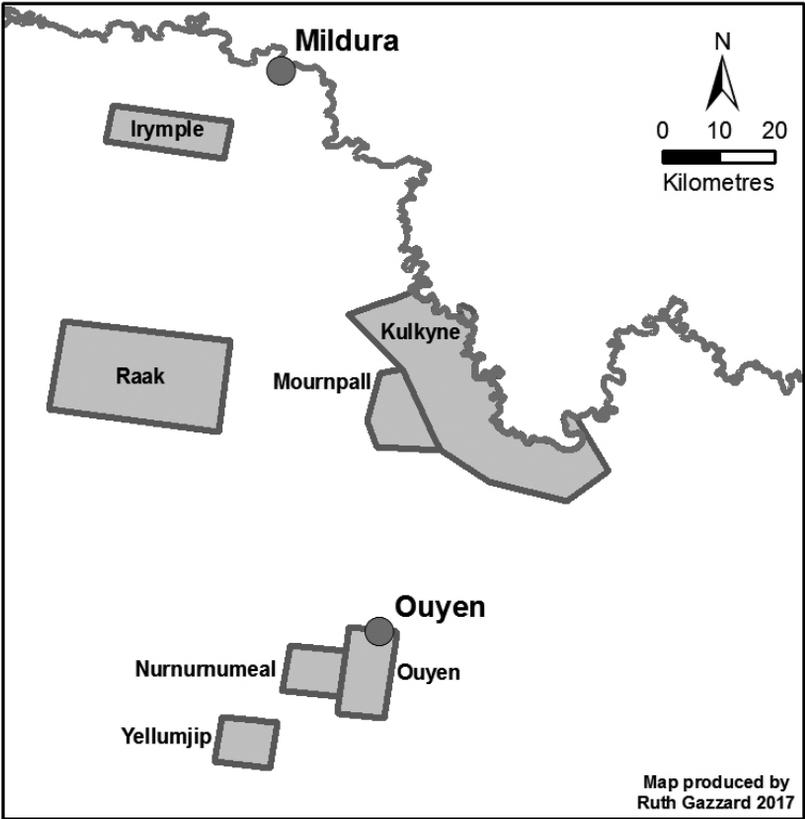
The survey of the proposed mail route was completed in three days without incident. McKay enjoyed himself, found no perils in the back country and pondered coming back with a shooting party. In fact the journey was relatively simple apart from the path from Dead Dog Corner to Wymlet. The conclusion was 'that a practicable track can be made from Mildura to Yellanjip [*sic*], a distance of about 75 miles'. McKay did, though, have some reservations about whether this was the best route, but that question was moot. Before he even went to press McKay received advice from Lascelles that the 'old track cannot be improved upon at my end' and that he was switching his attention to getting rail to Hopetoun.

Pastoralism in the Back Country

Pastoral occupation of the Mallee began in the mid-1840s when squatters took up all the land with good water along the Murray River and around the Hattah Lakes. Their sheep and cattle were managed by shepherds, who led them out to feed and water during the day and penned them up at night. The shepherds were based in huts across the runs, often multiple shepherds operating out of a single hut, with a hut-keeper to cook their meals.¹⁶ Huts were densely dotted across the first runs. Osgood Pritchard's 1851 map of just part of Kulkyne Station shows four huts supplementing the home station.¹⁷ Later maps of the entire run show more huts.¹⁸ By the 1860s the squatting runs were being fenced, stock roamed the fenced areas, and the shepherds' huts were replaced with larger outstations that managed an entire run. The shepherds were replaced by boundary riders, who maintained the fences, eradicated vermin and rounded up the stock as required for shearing or slaughter at the home stations.

Having settled the obviously good land by 1847, the squatters then turned their attention to the back country. Instead of an impenetrable

thicket or worthless land they found the saltbush country and the small plains that were often associated with ephemeral lakes, surface water or springs. By 1850, Kulkyne Station had taken up runs at the Raak, Tiega (the run was called Nurnurnemal), Yellumjip and Ouyen.¹⁹ Yerre Yerre (Mildura) Station took up the Irymple run in 1851.²⁰ This was not simply a matter of incrementally expanding boundaries; the new runs were separated from the first runs and clearly targeted towards specific resources. Expansion into the back country was probably initially just seasonal, and early applications for this land often refer to it as only suitable for winter grazing. John Chester Sandland, manager of Mildura Station from 1868 to 1874, said that he usually just spent the winter at Benetook, an outstation a few miles to the west of McKay's route.²¹



Back Country Runs 1851

McKay's observations reveal the extent to which the squatters extended their business model into the back country and the significant capital investments they made in the area. He noted the earlier presence of numerous shepherds' huts in the back country: three on the Raak, 'about four miles apart, round the north and east of the Raak country', others at The Oaks, Timberoo and Yellumjip, and a shepherd using Callaghan's Basin. Sandland said that there was also originally a shepherd's hut at Ginquam.²² These huts were almost invariably associated with the 'small, open circular plains'.

By McKay's visit, however, the back country had been fenced and the era of shepherds had passed; the huts on the Raak were in ruins and only identifiable by old poles and 'a rectangular patch of nettle, corresponding with the area of the old sheepfold'. Ginquam was 'just a small plain, shut in on all sides by mallee, and a shallow catch tank ... There are no old ruins, no traditions, no nothing'. The huts had been replaced by investment in larger outstations at The Oaks and Tiega. The Oaks had an expensive water management system, 'four 400gal tanks sunk in the ground, and filled from the surface drainage', a few acres under cultivation for stock feed and even a haystack. Tiega had become a 'place of considerable importance. A big pine hut with a floor of squared logs stands in front of a four-acre enclosure, behind and around which is a horse paddock of 103 acres, fenced with pine "slabs"'.

In addition to fencing the back country, the squatters tried to increase its productivity by investing in water resources. The naturally occurring sites of water were dug out to create larger water stores.²³ 'At Tiegge [*sic*] there are a salt-water well, a 4000 yds tank and some [other] tanks.'²⁴ McKay also visited water tanks at Irymple, Ginquam, Double Tank, Log Tank and Timberoo.

Despite the improvements, Mallee pastoralism reached its zenith in 1876 and then collapsed. Investment in the back country had coincided with a period of good rainfall, the 'extraordinary good years' from 1870 to 1875.²⁵ But the good years were followed by severe drought from 1876 to 1882, which was compounded by the accumulating impacts of colonial land use in reducing productivity. Wild dogs interbreeding with dingoes became an increasing threat to sheep in the 1870s, and rabbits started spreading north across the Wimmera in the mid-1870s, arriving at Kulkyne Station in 1880.²⁶ The combination of drought, dogs and rabbits temporarily made much of the land totally unusable. Even those runs with

access to water had reduced feed. The squatters responded by retreating to their home stations and abandoning the back country altogether, or leaving the runs to a caretaker.²⁷

The breaking of the drought in about 1883 improved conditions, but recovery for the squatters was not a simple matter of picking up where they had left off. Rabbits had permanently changed the nature of the vegetation and made the land less productive. Thompson observed in his 'Reminiscences': 'Strange to say stock thrived on the bush in those days better than they do on the grass of today'.²⁸ The squatters needed to find ways to improve productivity and faced a new expense of managing rabbits. Further adding to their challenges, the *Mallee Pastoral Leases Act 1883* had created another investment burden by changing the boundaries of runs and requiring new fencing at higher, vermin-proof, standards.

McKay describes the attempts of Kulkyne Station to respond to these challenges in the back country, and he presents a positive view of its progress. On the Raak he met Shailer at Bald Hill who was 'excavating a big tank' and Pitt who was 'fencing the Raak country'. Thompson appeared to be successfully managing wild dogs and dingoes.

But pastoralism was actually in a relentless and terminal decline, and the squatters' investments were becoming worthless. The land may have been thick with grass but the saltbush that provided good feed in dry seasons was not recovering. On the northern fringes of the Raak McKay noted:

At one time there was splendid saltbush all through this region, but the sheep and the rabbits attacking it at top and bottom have nearly extirpated it. There are a few green sprigs near the boundary fence, and it is Mr. Paterson's prayer that they may wax and grow exceedingly, and provide feed for the station sheep ...

The tank at Bald Hill failed and Kulkyne Station could only afford to fence 227,000 acres of the 812,000 acres it leased, leaving good land unproductive.²⁹ The Yellumjip, Tiega (Nurnurnemal) and Ouyen runs had not been reoccupied after they were abandoned in about 1880. Tiega, which had been an active outstation when visited by the Crown Lands Commission of Enquiry in 1879, was in ruins when McKay visited.³⁰ McKay lamented that the southern back-country runs were '[s]plendid land, abundant grass—and nothing being done with it'. Thompson may

have been very effective, but he was controlling vermin on land that was not being used.

Whether pastoralism could re-establish itself became irrelevant as the Mallee switched to wheat farming. Grazing licences were progressively cancelled and the land subdivided for agriculture. Kulkyne Station's last pastoral leasehold, the Raak, was cancelled in 1920. When the viable limits of agriculture were determined through experience, pastoralism returned and took up the residual land. In 1931 the MacArthur family established Glencoe Station at Cutthroat in the Sunset Country and recommenced grazing the Raak. In 1951 Glencoe relocated onto the Raak and still operates as a grazing property.

Aboriginal Pastoral Labour

Aboriginal labour was as an essential component in the development of Mallee pastoralism. During the gold rushes of the early 1850s much of the rural labour force deserted the Mallee and the squatters were forced to turn to Aboriginal labour as an alternative. Euston Station owed its survival to Aboriginal labour.³¹ Over time, the relationship of the squatters with Aboriginal people moved from one of forced dependence to a desire to retain them because of their skill as a workforce. Murdoch Leslie of Kulkyne Station reported in 1871: 'the youngest and strongest of the blacks are employed on this station; they are good riders, good at mustering cattle and sheep, good shepherds, and also good shearers, and they are a benefit to the station.'³²

McKay's observations confirm that Aboriginal labour was equally important in the back country and that Aboriginal men were employed in the initial settlement of the Raak as shepherds: 'We pass "Middle Hut", "Bryan's Hut", and "Sam's Hut" during the morning ... Bryan and Sam were aboriginals'. When the land was improved, one of the fencing teams that worked for Kulkyne Station was made up of Aboriginal people and led by Toby, an Aboriginal man from Lake Victoria.³³

By the time of McKay's journey, Aboriginal people had been so incorporated into pastoralism that they were managing outstations in the back country. An article in the *Mildura Cultivator*, written a month before McKay's journey and probably also written by McKay, reported that Irymple outstation was being managed by an Aboriginal couple, Jerry and Alice.³⁴ Jerry was almost certainly 'Jerry, the dusky boundary-rider' who guided Paterson and McKay on their shortcut from Ginquam to Callaghan's Basin. When McKay arrived at The Oaks he found it was also

managed by an Aboriginal family: 'It is "Mac's" [John Mack] camp. Mac is the aboriginal boundary-rider who looks after the 3,000 Kulkynne sheep that luxuriate at Raak. He and his spouse, Pinkie, with their offspring, live in a neat tent here ... "The Oaks" the place is called.'

This handful of Aboriginal people managing outstations in 1891, together with their children, constituted a significant proportion of the Aboriginal population of the northern Mallee at that time, and McKay documents the presence of greater numbers of Aboriginal people than government records would indicate.³⁵ Living in the back country provided Aboriginal people with an invisible niche. That this was a conscious strategy to protect their children from exploitation and forced abduction onto missions is a compelling possibility.³⁶

The pastoral industry in the back country may have offered positive opportunities for Aboriginal people in the 1890s, but its history had not been benign overall. Pastoral settlement led to the sexual abuse of vulnerable Aboriginal women and girls. The abduction of Aboriginal women and girls and their imprisonment in the isolated shepherd's huts by white males is documented.³⁷ One recorded instance associated with Kulkynne Station may be representative of the back country as a whole. In 1865 Hickson, a shepherd from Kulkynne Station, went into Wentworth for a drinking spree, accompanied by an Aboriginal woman who lived with him in his hut. Hickson was killed in an altercation that arose when the woman did not want to return with him.³⁸

The spread of agriculture into the Mallee took away Aboriginal people's paid niche in the back country. In the early twentieth century Jerry from Irymple and John Mack from The Oaks were living on the fringes of Mildura, old men in their 60s and 70s. Jerry died in the Mildura Hospital and John Mack was placed in the Bendigo Benevolent Asylum before being rescued by his family, which had separately moved to South Australia.³⁹ In 1918 the *Mildura Cultivator* reported the death of John Mack and described him, wrongly, as 'Our Very Last Blackfellow'.⁴⁰ The newspaper's source of information was Mack's son.

The pastoral back-country opportunities may have disappeared but non-Aboriginal oral history tells a number of stories of Aboriginal people living in remote Mallee niches well into the twentieth century. One story places a group of about twelve Aboriginal people living quite close to Kulkynne Station on Tarpaulin Island in the Murray.⁴¹ Other stories have Aboriginal people living in the back country near Hattah (and The Oaks) and at the Pink Lakes near Underbool.⁴²

The Pre-colonial Aboriginal Back Country

McKay's account and those of other contemporary colonial sources also provide insights into Aboriginal use of the back country before their dispossession, including the nature of their 'seasonal visiting'.

The most obvious sign of Aboriginal peoples' prior use of the back country and its resources was their naming of the land, particularly the small open circular plains. In 1888 M.D. Breen of Kerang travelled into the back country, assessing the likely success of the Chaffey's irrigation project at Mildura in the process. In his report to his community in Kerang he noted:

At intervals of several miles, you now and then meet with an opening in the scrub which is dignified by the name of a plain. These plains still retain their native names, and are found very useful to travel by from place to place. They are known as "Boonbonae," "Lychurra," "Ticklebed," "Kooralong," "Yackpool," "Ivyong," "Irymple," and a host of others which I forget. The euphony and the poetry of these names show their native origin.⁴³

Without realising it himself, McKay observed other evidence of Aboriginal use of the back country. As he travelled south, he started to encounter larger, open plains different from the small circular plains. On approaching Wymlet he observed, 'we see ahead a big open plain ... the grass is stronger and richer and better than anything I have ever seen on the Murray'. After leaving Wymlet, 'we come to Anderson's Plain. This is a level plateau of about 2,000 acres of rich chocolate land and splendidly grassed'. Charley Thompson told McKay of other grassed plains: 'the Boolka [*sic*] country [east of Timberoo] ... is an improvement on this and that round about Ouyen, a few miles further on, it is better still'. McKay had entered an arc of grassed plains stretching from Wymlet to Ouyen.

These plains, on fertile land that one would otherwise expect to be timbered like the land around them, were not the result of colonial land management. McKay makes no reference to land clearance and assumed the plains were natural. The first detailed map of the area, a map of Pastoral Run 160 (referred to as Run 160), was made in 1865 and shows 'richly grassed plains' in the areas McKay visited or was told about.⁴⁴ The presence of the plains at this early date, when there was no colonial

capacity to undertake such extensive clearing, confirms the plains existed before colonial settlement.

Bill Gammage has demonstrated that early colonial explorers and settlers frequently encountered land that had been cleared by Aboriginal people to facilitate hunting or the farming of agricultural products such as yams but failed to recognise it as a managed artefact. Instead they often described these plains as natural parkland: 'Parks chequered Australia.'⁴⁵ McKay describes Wymlet as a 'large park' and, when modern Ouyen was settled in 1906, a similar observation was made: '[T]here is a magnificent beauty spot, known locally as the "Fairy Dell". It is a gorge situated between two pine ridges. Here there is a natural plantation of stately pines that give the "Dell" quite a parklike appearance'.⁴⁶

Run 160 was made soon enough after colonial settlement that the Aboriginal names for the land were still known. Anderson's Plain appears on the map but is given its Aboriginal name, Woornooomal (the origin of Nurnurnemal?). A large sandhill south of Tiega is named Kooroop, and near it a location with surface water is labelled Koorongil Wittup. Timberoo is unnamed but already had a sheep yard near surface water. One of the plains towards Ouyen is labelled Kow Plain.⁴⁷ Aboriginal Ouyen is shown west of the modern town, with another named plain, Kulkilwityur, to its north. The district surveyor, A.E. Tobin, visited Aboriginal Ouyen, 'old Ouyen', in 1904 and noted, 'there is a splendid water catchment, and a good supply of water'.⁴⁸

Thompson provides further evidence of Aboriginal use of the land between Wymlet and Ouyen. In the 'Reminiscences', recalling his experience in 1870–72, he describes a regular, well-practised journey made 'mostly made during the winter' by what appears to be many, if not all, of an Aboriginal community of the Hattah Lakes. From the lakes Aboriginal people went 'into the Raak country', then 'to Wymlet, thence to Tiega', which was 'good hunting country', and finally 'toward Ouyen' where they probably also stayed for a while.⁴⁹ McKay's desire to return to Anderson's Plain to hunt was simply an iteration of Aboriginal land use.

Thompson makes no reference to land management during these winter journeys, but the possibility that Aboriginal people were maintaining, or had historically maintained, the plains along their journey needs to be seriously considered. Just as regular travel between Wirrengren Plain and Kulkyne had created a clearly delineated pathway, the winter journeys that Thompson describes could have created another

back-country pathway, and this article assumes that they did.⁵⁰ This pathway probably started at the Aboriginal campsite at what is now Kulkyne Station and ran to Ouyen via the Raak, Wymlet and Tiega (referred to as the Kulkyne–Ouyen pathway).⁵¹ Though there is no early map or records that confirm this pathway's existence prior to colonial settlement, there is evidence of its use early in the colonial period. Run 160, in the only area it maps, shows a defined track was in use between Tiega and Ouyen in 1865. Thompson's 'Reminiscences' also confirm that colonial use of this route had commenced by at least the early 1870s. He describes a cattle mustering by his father and Aboriginal stockmen using the same route earlier travelled by Aboriginal people. The cattle 'were shifted to Ouyen district ... then they were driven back to Wymlet for another muster. Later the shift was to Raak ... Eventually the whole mob were taken to Kulkyne homestead.'⁵² Dale Kerwin has argued that Aboriginal pathways frequently 'became drover runs and coach ways,' and the use of Kulkyne–Ouyen pathway fits this paradigm.⁵³ Thompson describes its use as a droving run, and McKay's journey was about using part of it as a mail-coach route.

A Kulkyne–Ouyen pathway may have had an extensive Indigenous history. There would certainly have been travel between the Kulkyne and the Raak when the Raak was occupied. There may also have been a continuing desire to travel to the Raak after occupation ceased in order to access the stone quarry that Anne Ross identified there.⁵⁴ Until trade developed with other regions, the Raak's stone would have been regionally important. McKay allows a possible link to be drawn between the earlier and later uses of the Raak. He describes a point on the edge of the Raak so precisely that it can be absolutely identified. This point is within 50 metres of a site that still has evidence of Aboriginal stone working and is probably one of the '[s]ites without geometric microliths' identified by Ross and belonging to earlier occupation.⁵⁵ Aboriginal people were travelling back to, or simply passing by, a site that had been in use thousands of years earlier.

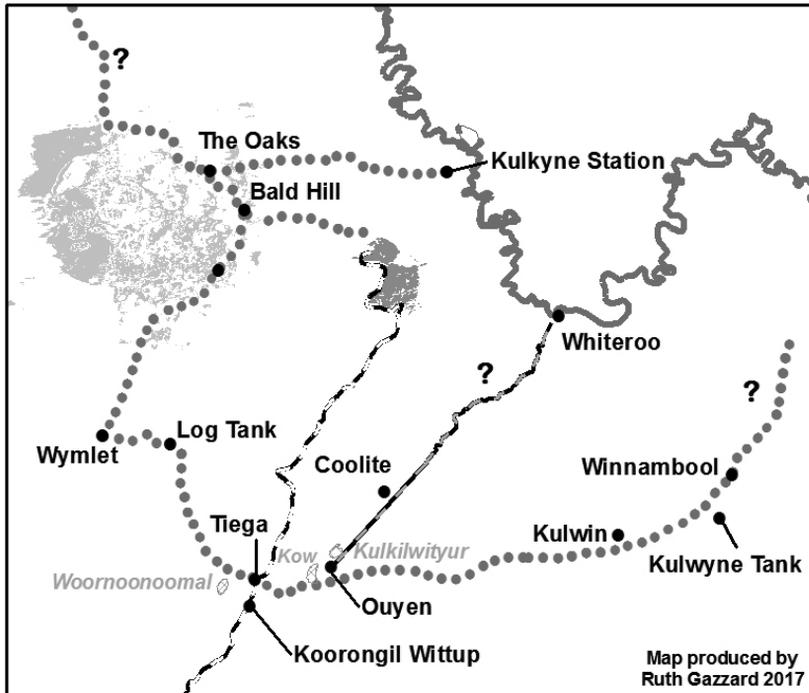
Thompson's account of the Aboriginal winter journey leaves an important question open. In his narrative, Aboriginal people simply went 'toward Ouyen, and later back to the lakes.'⁵⁶ The reference to only travelling 'toward Ouyen' is explicable. By the time the 'Reminiscences' were written, modern Ouyen had been established and the journey to

Aboriginal Ouyen would have finished before reaching modern Ouyen. But Thompson does not say how the journey back to the lakes was made.

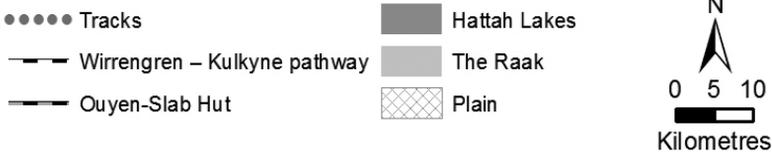
There are a number of routes that could have been taken to return to the Kulkynne. Aboriginal people could simply have retraced their footsteps, or they could have gone to Tiega and followed the Wirrengren–Kulkynne pathway. It is also possible that Aboriginal people could have travelled east or north-east from Ouyen and returned to the Kulkynne along the Murray on a circular path visiting, and perhaps managing, other land. References to tracks heading in these directions appear before modern Ouyen was settled in 1906. An obvious possible pathway leads directly east past water sources at Kulwin and Kulwyne, with travel from there further east or north to the Murray via Winnambool. Contemporary maps show tracks in these locations.⁵⁷ Tobin travelled through the area in 1904 and reported, ‘we eventually struck the old track from Winnambool to Ouyen.’⁵⁸

There is another possible route back to the Kulkynne. Soon after its settlement, residents of modern Ouyen started using a route north-east to a squatters’ hut, Slab Hut, on the Murray. This was the shortest route to the Murray. In 1910 an Ouyen banker went missing for a while trying to travel to Euston via Slab Hut.⁵⁹ In 1915 the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission grubbed a track along this line.⁶⁰ This route has associated Aboriginal use as it ran from the Aboriginal campsite at Ouyen to another Aboriginal campsite. Slab Hut was located at a point mapped by Osgood Pritchard in 1851 and named Whiteroo.⁶¹ Other evidence of an Aboriginal association comes from a survey of the 35th meridian conducted by Tobin in 1905.⁶² This survey crossed the Ouyen to Slab Hut route and shows two of the small circular plains at the intersection. Both have tanks and the second is marked with ‘crab holes,’ Aboriginal wells, showing Aboriginal people were using this land. The second plain also has its probable Aboriginal name, Coolite, which has since fallen out of use. This evidence is consistent with, but in no way establishes, the prior existence of an Aboriginal pathway. The southern section of this track was soon overwritten by agricultural subdivision, but a 1924 map of the County of Karkaroc preserves the northern part.⁶³

McKay’s observations, Thompson’s ‘Reminiscences’ and the evidence from the various maps discussed in this article build a picture of possible extensive and intensive Aboriginal land use in the back country, and this information is collated in the map ‘Aboriginal Use of the Back Country’.



Aboriginal Use of the Back Country



This is in no way an exhaustive picture of possible Aboriginal land use. The information available is limited by the randomness of colonial records. Charley Thompson reported on his experience at the Hattah Lakes, but there is no equivalent record for Ouyen. McKay did not travel to Ouyen or east of there. Early mapping was not comprehensive and was often restricted to particular features such as the Murray, property boundaries or lines of latitude and longitude, and ignored other land. The detail provided in Run 160 is uncommon. No consideration has been given in this article to the tracks McKay followed from Mildura to The Oaks, though some of them are very early. Thompson's family crossed the Raak in a cart in 1870.⁶⁴

Survival of the Back Country's Past

Apart from the Raak, most of the back country that McKay crossed has since been used for agriculture. Despite this, substantial evidence remains of both the era of back-country pastoralism and the Aboriginal land use that preceded it. Nearly all the places that McKay visited have found their way onto maps at various times and can be located.

The small open circular plains were unsuitable for agriculture and often remain as islands in cereal fields, where historically they had been islands in a sea of mallee. Ginquam and Callaghan's Basin currently lie deep within cereal fields. Because it is now totally protected from rabbits, Callaghan's Basin is returning to its original state and is covered in regenerating saltbush. The Oaks was occupied well into the twentieth century and appeared on maps as late as the 1970s. There are still two badly decaying buildings on the site. Yellumjip and Tiega are now fenced and managed public reserves. Most of the water tanks still exist and some are still in use. Double Tank still appears on maps, Timberoo's tank has become a typical farm dam in the corner of a cereal field, and Wymlet is the site of functional dams on a small plain between national park and farmland.

Other features have disappeared. The cleared Aboriginal grasslands, Woornoonoomal and Kulkilwityur, were fertile land and have been incorporated into agriculture. Aboriginal Ouyen has been lost, and the Fairy Dell is now public recreational space. The locations of the shepherds' huts across the Raak were never mapped and are unknown. There is, however, an intriguing possibility that one of the sites continues to be used. When Glencoe relocated to the Raak in 1951 it was to an open area with no sign of previous occupation.⁶⁵ But the chosen site lies on the Kulkyne–Ouyen pathway, and the features that recommended it to the McArthurs may have been equally attractive to the nineteenth-century shepherds.

The route that McKay and Paterson followed came into use, if it was not already being used, and use continued into the twentieth century. In local oral history, recorded by Harold McArthur of Glencoe, it became known as the Shearers Track and was used from the 1880s by shearers travelling on foot or bicycle between Mildura and Warracknabeal.⁶⁶ McKay confirms this in a different article about another trip he made to the back country in 1900: 'There was fair water at Kagill [Cadjill] ... and also the horses of the shearers who at present pass through frequently

en route to Warracknabeal or other towns on the southern fringe of the mallee territory'.⁶⁷

Most of the tracks north of the Raak have gone, buried under the harsh geometry of subdivision for agriculture and the expansion of Mildura, but a zig-zagging fence line next to Callaghan's Basin is an indication of earlier use. The track across the Raak remained in use until the 1950s. An undated commercial road map made before 1954 shows a public road going north from Wymlet to The Oaks and then north-east to the Calder Highway.⁶⁸ The sealing of the Calder Highway in 1954 probably led to declining use and then abandonment of the roads across the Raak. South of Wymlet, most of the route that McKay followed is still in place, if slightly modified by the later requirements of heavier vehicles. McKay's shortcut to Timberoo has been adopted as the modern road structure, avoiding the high sandhills around Tiega.

The Kulkynne–Ouyen pathway is substantially intact. Track lines still run from Kulkynne Station to The Oaks and Wymlet. The pathway from Wymlet to Tiega, used originally by Aboriginal people and then Johnny Thompson driving cattle, still follows its original line to Log Tank and is now known as the Honeymoon Hut Track. The Mallee Highway from Tiega to Ouyen roughly parallels the Aboriginal pathway.

Conclusions

McKay's journey may have been an idle jaunt or a gentleman's adventure but his newspaper articles make three important contributions towards understanding the history of the back country. First, they document the squatters' use of that land and the extent to which they tried to integrate it into their businesses. Second, they confirm the importance of Aboriginal people in the pastoral management of the back country and the almost invisible niche in the economy they were allocated in return. Third, they provide possible evidence of extensive Aboriginal land use and management in the back country before colonial settlement.

The picture that emerges is one of successive layers of land use, with each layer founded on previous use. The three maps used in this article show this layering. McKay's 1891 journey followed the squatters' earlier choice of back-country runs, which in turn had followed the pattern of prior Aboriginal land use. Clearing the land use palimpsest back to the original Aboriginal use thus provides a framework for understanding the behaviour of the squatters when they entered the Mallee back country. The presence of Aboriginal pathways explains the speed with which the

squatters found and took up the best resources in the area; all the runs taken up by 1851 were on Aboriginal pathways. Land already cleared by Aboriginal people was ideally suited for grazing and may explain the choices of runs; the Nurnurnemal and Ouyen runs were based on richly grassed plains possibly created by Aboriginal people. The shepherds' huts that dotted the back country were located on the small circular plains of the back country and were probably connected by Aboriginal pathways and served by Aboriginal wells. The tanks the squatters constructed expanded the Aboriginal wells and they used the pathways as droving routes.

This picture suggests the need to revisit understandings of Aboriginal use of the Mallee back country. Whilst 'seasonal visiting' may be a factually accurate description, it fails to capture the possible depth of the relationship with the land through management of its productivity. The notion that Murray River people 'did not venture far from the riverine corridor' is contradicted by some of the evidence provided here.

These findings also suggest a possible approach to identifying other pre-colonial Aboriginal land use in the back country. The close relationship between earlier Aboriginal land use and the initial pastoral land practices suggests that other pre-colonial Aboriginal ways of using the land may be inferred by studying the behaviour of the squatters when they took up their runs. The resources the squatters claimed may be markers of earlier Aboriginal ways of using the land. The tracks they left may mark earlier Aboriginal pathways.

Notes

- 1 Report of the Crown Lands Commission of Enquiry on Both the Agricultural and Pastoral Occupation of the Public Lands to be Instituted on the Expiration on the Present Act at the Close of 1880, Melbourne, John Ferres, Government Printer, 1879, p. vii.
- 2 *Mildura Cultivator*, 18 July 1891 p. 3.
- 3 D.J. Mulvaney & Johan Kamminga, *Prehistory of Australia*, Washington, D.C., Smithsonian Institution Press, 1999, p. 303.
- 4 Anne Ross, 'Holocene Environments and Prehistoric Site Patterning in the Mallee', in Tim Murray (ed.), *Archaeology of Aboriginal Australia: A Reader*, Sydney, Allen & Unwin, 1998, p. 159.
- 5 P. May and R.L. Fullagar, 'Aboriginal Exploitation of the Southern Mallee', *Records of the Victoria Archaeological Survey*, no 10, June 1980, p. 156.
- 6 Mulvaney & Kamminga, p. 304.
- 7 *Mildura Cultivator*, 8 April 1891, p. 3.

- 8 To limit confusion, the contemporary spelling of place names is used throughout this article, though locations had Aboriginal names and other colonial spellings.
- 9 Alice Laphorne, *Mildura Calling*, Red Cliffs, Sunnyland Press, 3rd edition, 1981, p. 67.
- 10 *Mildura Cultivator*, 18 July 1891, p. 3; 22 July 1891, p. 3; 29 July 1891, pp. 3 and 5; August 1891, p. 3. All unreferenced quotations in this article come from these newspaper articles.
- 11 *Adelaide Observer*, 7 April 1891, p. 15.
- 12 Connecting Surveys, CN 217: 142ND Meridian Murray River to Yallim Hill, Historic Plan Collection, VPRS 8168/P5, Public Record Office Victoria (PROV).
- 13 This is not modern Irymple. Aboriginal Irymple gave its name to a squatting run and, when the Victorian Railways opened a station on the former run, it used the name of the squatting run for the station.
- 14 The map, 'McKay's Journey 1891' is based on material drawn from CN 217 (note 12 above); Classification of Mallee Lands (1898), Unregistered Maps and Plans, VPRS 7664/P1, Unit 140A, Victoria, PROV; 'Plan of Mallee blocks and allotments, counties of Tatchera and Karkaroc [cartographic material] / photo-lithographed at the Department of Lands and Survey, Melbourne, by T.F. McGauran, 8.2.04', accessed on line from the State Library Victoria; and John Burch, 'The Wirrengren–Kulkyne Pathway: Locating a Cultural Icon', *Victorian Historical Journal*, vol. 87, no. 2, December 2016, pp. 261–77. Modern Ouyen is placed on the map for reference.
- 15 'Reminiscences', *Sunraysia Daily*, 15 February 1933, p. 1; 16 February 1933, p. 6; 17 February 1933, p. 8; 18 February 1933, p. 11; 20 February 1933, p. 3; and 21 February 1933, p. 1.
- 16 George Everard, *Pioneering Days in the Wimmera and Mallee*, Horsham, Horsham Times Print, not before 1892, reprinted April 1977 as *Pioneering Days: Journal of George Everard*, pp. 25–6.
- 17 Murray River, Murray31; From Kulkyne to Wemen, Historic Plan Collection, VPRS 8168/P5, Unit 3604, PROV.
- 18 Run158; Kulkyne Gayfield Mournpal; Bage; Gayfield Konardin, Historic Plan Collection, VPRS 8168/P3, Unit 154, PROV.
- 19 Alfred Kenyon & Historical Society of Victoria, *The Story of the Mallee: A History of the Victorian Mallee Read before the Historical Society of Victoria, 18 March 1912*, Rainbow, Brentwood Publications, 1982, p. 56.
- 20 Kenyon, p. 133.
- 21 *Mildura Cultivator*, 23 February 1907, p. 8.
- 22 *Mildura Cultivator*, 23 February 1907, p. 8.
- 23 L.R. East, 'Water in the Mallee', *Victorian Historical Magazine*, vol. 38, November 1967, p. 180.
- 24 *Mildura Cultivator*, 6 January 1894, p. 1.
- 25 Jenny Keating & Victoria, Department of Water Resources, *The Drought Walked Through: A History of Water Shortage in Victoria*, Melbourne, Department of Water Resources Victoria, 1992, p. 49.
- 26 *Mildura Cultivator*, 19 May 1888, p. 4.
- 27 Everard, p. 51.
- 28 'Reminiscences', *Sunraysia Daily*, 15 February 1933, p. 1.
- 29 Australian Mercantile Land and Finance Company Ltd Kulkyne, Land Selection and Correspondence Files, VPRS 5357/P0 Unit 3145, 10/187, PROV.

- 30 Report of the Crown Lands Commission of Enquiry on Both the Agricultural and Pastoral Occupation of the Public Lands to be Instituted on the Expiration on the Present Act at the Close of 1880, p. 412.
- 31 Uncle Bob Harradine, quoted in Laura Donati, *Hattah: An Oral History of the Hattah Lakes*, Mildura, Mallee Catchment Management Authority, 2008, p. 10.
- 32 Seventh Report of the Board for the Protection of the Aborigines in the Colony of Victoria, Melbourne, John Ferres, Government Printer, 1871, p. 22.
- 33 'Reminiscences,' *Sunraysia Daily*, 20 February 1933, p. 3.
- 34 *Mildura Cultivator*, 17 June 1891, p. 3. The writing style is similar to McKay's, as is the description of driving a cart around Mildura's boundaries.
- 35 The Board for the Protection of Aborigines reported, with decreasing frequency, the numbers of 'Kulkyne people' living in the Mallee. In 1878 it reported there were eighteen and in 1912 only three. A photograph taken by Ernest Oswald in 1890 (accessed at Mildura Historical Society), shows seven people and this was probably the entire official community at that time.
- 36 John Burch, *Returning the Kulkyne*, Melbourne, John Burch, 2017, pp. 133–4.
- 37 Aldo Massola, *Journey to Aboriginal Victoria*, Adelaide, Rigby, 1969, p. 125. Massola tells the story of the rescue of an imprisoned Aboriginal woman that led to the Piangil massacre.
- 38 *Argus*, 5 December 1865, p. 7.
- 39 *Mildura Cultivator*, 20 January 1917, p. 15.
- 40 *Mildura Cultivator*, 19 June 1918, p. 8.
- 41 Daryl Wilkie, Personal Communication, information given to him by Bert Calder, Kulkyne forester.
- 42 Wayne Eggleton, Personal Communication; Merle Pole, Personal Communication.
- 43 *Kerang Times and Swan Hill Gazette*, 9 March 1888, p. 3.
- 44 RUN160; NURNURNEMAL OUYEN PAIGNEE. MOURMPAL; BAGE; KONARDIN OUYEN PAIGNIE, Historic Plan Collection, VPRS 8168/P3, Unit 155, PROV.
- 45 Bill Gammage, *The Biggest Estate on Earth: How Aborigines Made Australia*, Sydney, Allen & Unwin, 2012, p. 15.
- 46 *Weekly Times*, 21 November 1908, p. 44.
- 47 Kow is probably a reference to gypsum, known by Aboriginal people as kow or copi. Kow Plains Station, 55 miles to the west of Ouyen, was named for the same reason.
- 48 *Mildura Cultivator*, 2 April 1904, p. 8.
- 49 'Reminiscences,' *Sunraysia Daily*, 20 February 1933, p. 3.
- 50 Burch, 'The Wirrengren–Kulkyne Pathway: Locating a Cultural Icon.'
- 51 For evidence of an Aboriginal campsite at the location of Kulkyne Station, see: Arthur Kinloch, *The Murray River: Being a Journal of the Voyage of the 'Lady Augusta' Steamer from the Goolwa, in South Australia, to Gannewarra, above Swan Hill, Victoria; A Distance from the Sea Mouth of 1400 Miles*, Adelaide, W.C. Cox, Printer, 1853, p. 18; and Daniel Bunce, *Argus*, 30 March 1850, p. 2.
- 52 'Reminiscences,' *Sunraysia Daily*, 20 February 1933, p. 3.
- 53 Dale Kerwin, *Aboriginal Dreaming Paths and Trading Routes: The Colonisation of the Australian Economic Landscape*, Brighton, Sussex Academic, 2012, p. xx.
- 54 Ross, p. 151.
- 55 Ross, p. 158. Personal observation. The precise location of this site is deliberately not given out of cultural respect and to protect its integrity. It can be made available on request.

- 56 'Reminiscences', *Sunraysia Daily*, 20 February 1933, p. 3.
- 57 Classification of Mallee Lands (1898), Unregistered Maps and Plans, VPRS 7664/P1, Unit 140A, PROV.
- 58 *Mildura Cultivator*, 2 April 1904, p. 8.
- 59 *Hamilton Spectator*, 28 November 1910, p. 3.
- 60 *Northern District Standard*, 2 December 1915, p. 3.
- 61 MURRAY RIVER, MURRAY31; FROM KULKYNE TO WEMEN, Historic Plan Collection, VPRS 8168/P5, Unit 3604, PROV.
- 62 Connecting Surveys, CN 217: 142ND MERIDIAN MURRAY RIVER TO YALLLIM HILL, Historic Plan Collection, VPRS 8168/P5, PROV.
- 63 'County of Karkaroooc' [cartographic material] / compiled by G.J. Nutting, 19.2.24; photolithographed at the Department of Lands and Survey, Melbourne, by W.J. Butson, 26.3.24, accessed on line from the State Library Victoria.
- 64 'Reminiscences', *Sunraysia Daily*, 16 February 1933, p. 6.
- 65 Gloria McArthur, Personal Communication.
- 66 Harold A. McArthur, 'Report on Hattah Lakes Area,' Unpublished, 1967, obtained from Alex Dowsley of Ouyen.
- 67 *Mildura Cultivator*, 27 October 1900, p. 2.
- 68 Victoria, Sydney, Vacuum Oil Company Pty Ltd, undated. The map shows the alignment of the Calder Highway at Hattah before it was straightened in 1954, allowing a partial dating.

More than just 'Peaceful and Picturesque': How Tuberculosis Control Measures Have Preserved Ecologically Significant Land in Melbourne

Rebecca Le Get

Abstract

Four government-run tuberculosis sanatoria, located within grassy eucalypt woodlands, once operated in the northern suburbs of Melbourne. Their landholdings have been partially retained as bushland reserves because of their biodiversity. Yet the reasons for these four properties sharing similar ecology and institutional purposes are largely unknown. This article aims to investigate if the placement of these sanatoria in eucalyptus woodlands was a deliberate action, even though it was not directly attributable to floristic considerations by the state and federal governments at the time of their decisions.

Introduction

The cultural impact of the disease tuberculosis upon urbanised landscapes has been little explored. Architectural historians have paid attention to the development of hygienic building designs and landscaping as a means to control and treat disease, but the wider physical environment that surrounded such medical institutions has been largely ignored. Three publically accessible reserves containing grassy eucalypt woodlands found in an arc across the northern suburbs of Melbourne may at first appear to have little in common historically, but all of them originated as locations of former government-operated tuberculosis (TB) sanatoria. The similar landscapes, flora and therapeutic uses of these sites between 1905 and 1970 make them a valuable resource for environmental historians and ecologists alike. This article aims to investigate whether these properties were chosen to become sanatorium grounds because of their similar environmental values; it also examines whether their preservation today is directly attributable to their role in the treatment of disease.

The lack of discussion about sanatorium placement in the twentieth century is not unique to Australian studies. Much of the environmental historiography of tuberculosis is dominated by analyses of nineteenth-

century institutions and processes, particularly the movement of tubercular individuals to localities and countries where the climate was considered beneficial.¹ On the other hand, architectural historians have tended to focus on the formal gardens that surrounded sanatorium buildings.² Both approaches overlook the histories of specific sanatoria, their landholdings, and what lay behind decisions by government agencies to treat tuberculosis patients in particular locations.

Tuberculosis control became a public health issue early in the twentieth century when the state and federal governments recognised the disease as ‘an issue of population health’ and took steps to establish and operate large-scale sanatoria.³ These government-run institutions, rather than the charitable and private sanatoria that operated throughout the state of Victoria in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, are the focus of this article. There are two reasons for this.

First, portions of these institutional properties have remained crown land and have been gazetted as reserves for nature conservation purposes. The general public can therefore freely visit these locations for diverse activities such as walking or nature appreciation, while also appreciating the ‘cultural heritage, a sense of place and spiritual value.’⁴ The reserves contain remnants of the grassy eucalypt woodlands that were once widespread across the volcanic soils of northern and western Melbourne. Because these remnant woodlands have been identified as ecologically significant, they have been preserved by the state government to form local, regional and national parks. However, they are also remnants of historic attempts to control tuberculosis infection, prior to the development of effective chemotherapies, and this aspect of the reserves has been neglected in their recent history. The medical history of these parklands and their association with the treatment of TB is not mentioned in information made available by Parks Victoria to the public, although reference is made to other historic structures within the reserves’ boundaries such as remnants of nineteenth-century colonial farming heritage and early twentieth-century engineering. This emphasis inadvertently discounts the importance of the former sanatoria and denies the experiences of the many patients who lived and died surrounded by these woodlands.⁵

The second reason to focus on these select sanatoria is that they were overseen by the Melbourne-based Board of Public Health (later the Department of Health) or the Commonwealth Repatriation

Department. As government agencies, they were—unlike private and charitable organisations—required to provide annual reports and to preserve and archive documentary evidence regarding the institutions and their operation. Furthermore, centralised planning would tend to result in the selection of suitable sanatoria sites according to population-centred criteria. Hence, it is possible to highlight similarities between these four sanatoria. Known as Greenvale, Janefield, Gresswell and Macleod, they were established in rural areas that have since been absorbed into suburban Melbourne (Figure 1, Table 1). Portions of these former institutional landholdings, which include patches of remnant indigenous bushland, have now been incorporated into three larger conservation reserves known as Woodlands Historic Park, Plenty Gorge Park, and the Gresswell Nature Conservation Reserves.

The process of reserving the land for conservation purposes, before incorporating the remnant woodlands into a larger park, occurred progressively from 1978 with the gazetting of portions of the Gresswell and Macleod sanatoria. These later became the Gresswell Nature Conservation Reserves in 2000.⁶ The former Janefield woodlands, managed previously by a predecessor of Parks Victoria, were gazetted as a natural interest reserve in 1995 and incorporated into the Plenty Gorge Parklands in 1997.⁷ The former landholdings of the Greenvale sanatorium were managed by Parks Victoria by 1997, and were incorporated into the Woodlands Historic Park in 2004 (Figure 1).⁸



Figure 1: Locations of the former sanatoria of Greenvale, Janefield, Gresswell and Macleod to the north of the city centre of Melbourne (VicMap API Aerial Imagery provided by and © State of Victoria, Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning)

By examining the three consolidated landholdings of these four former sanatoria sites it may be possible to determine the reasons government agencies considered these locations to be appropriate places for tuberculosis treatment, and to test whether their association with TB ultimately led to the conservation of their landholdings for environmental purposes after the sanatoria closed.

Treating Tuberculosis in Twentieth-century Victoria

The epidemiology of tuberculosis can be directly linked to the development of isolation methods employed by the sanatoria system in treating the disease. From the late nineteenth century, large landholdings outside of urban areas were used to confine contagious individuals within medical facilities and thus prevent its spread. In Victoria, agencies of both state and federal governments operated these specialised institutions, commencing with the opening of the Greenvale sanatorium in 1905.

Tuberculosis is caused by *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* and primarily affects the lungs, giving rise to pulmonary tuberculosis. More rarely, other parts of the body can be involved, including the skin, joints, bones, lymph nodes or other organs, grouped under the catch-all term of extrapulmonary tuberculosis.⁹ The bacteria are spread between humans via coughing, sneezing or speaking.¹⁰ Once infected, an individual's immune system can successfully contain the bacteria within a structure called a granuloma. Such an individual is non-contagious but has a latent TB infection.¹¹ If the immune system cannot prevent the bacteria from multiplying, the disease progresses to active tuberculosis and the individual can spread the illness to others. Between 1917 and 1950, 10 per cent of all deaths in Australia were attributed to TB, and 4,000 new cases were notified annually.¹² Prior to the development of effective antibiotics in the mid-twentieth century, the symptoms of tuberculosis could only be managed, not cured.¹³ Isolation was a form of management that enabled contagious individuals to be trained in methods to limit their risk of infecting family members and other contacts.¹⁴

Long-term studies on the natural history of tuberculosis have shown that approximately half of all people with a latent TB infection will develop an active infection within two years if not treated with antibiotics.¹⁵ Multi-drug chemotherapy, developed in 1952, can render a patient non-contagious and this 'antibiotic revolution' changed how TB was treated.¹⁶ From this time, chemotherapies could be administered

within private homes, in outpatient clinics and in general hospitals, making the sanatoria superfluous.¹⁷ The woodlands surrounding the sanatoria were therefore no longer necessary as a barrier between patients and the outside world. Yet, after the sanatoria were closed and their infrastructure used for other public health purposes, these woodlands remained.

The term ‘sanatorium’ could describe a range of specialised institutions for treating TB patients. Those with active disease, but considered to have a good chance of remission, were treated in ‘early stage’ sanatoria with extensive grounds, such as those found at Greenvale and Gresswell. Within these institutions, they learned to modify their behaviour to reduce the risk of infecting others, and undertook graduated exercise to recover their strength before discharge.¹⁸ Over time, treatment at these sites came to include surgical interventions and drug regimens.¹⁹ Patients who were infectious and at a later stage of the disease requiring palliative care were placed within ‘late stage’ sanatoria. These facilities were similar to small hospital wards and generally lacked the large landholdings of the early-stage institutions, or they were part of larger, established hospitals such as the Kronheimer Wing at the Austin Hospital for Incurables in Heidelberg.²⁰ An exception to this was the Janefield sanatorium, which was intended for female patients with late-stage TB. Janefield operated between 1925 and 1935 on a property of 826 acres (334 hectares) with 36 beds.²¹ This sanatorium re-used the infrastructure erected by the Red Cross Society as part of a training farm for returned soldiers who had recovered from tuberculosis and wanted to work on the land; it was closed by 1925.²² This pattern of re-using properties so that they remained crown land even as the intended purpose of the institution changed is a shared feature of these former sanatoria sites. None remained specialised institutions for the treatment of TB for the entirety of their usage by the Health Department. Properties were repurposed for other needs, including mental health, intellectual disability, drug addiction, aged care, and, in one case, as a general hospital (Table 1). The re-purposing, however, did not result in the clearing of vegetation seen at other hospital sites in Australia and overseas.²³ On the contrary, the eucalypt woodlands remained on these properties, even as the institutional buildings themselves were renovated, repurposed or demolished.

Sanatorium Name	Year Sanatorium Opened	Year Sanatorium Closed	Successor Institutions	Year Opened	Year Closed
Greenvale Sanatorium ²⁴	1905	1956	Greenvale Village (Special Hospital for the Aged)	1955	1972
			Greenvale Geriatric Centre	1972	1986
			The Greenvale Centre	1986	1991
			North-West Hospital	1991	1998
Heatherton Sanatorium ²⁵	1913	1976	Heatherton Hospital	1976	1998
			Heatherton Psychiatric Hospital	1987	1998
			Kingston Centre	1998	—
Number 1 Military Sanatorium, Macleod ²⁶	1916	Beginning in 1960	Macleod Repatriation Hospital	1960s	1993
Janeffield ANZAC Red Cross Communal Farm ²⁷	1920	1925	Janeffield Sanatorium	1925	1937
			Janeffield Colony	1937	1962
			Janeffield Training Centre	1962	1996
Gresswell Sanatorium ²⁸	1933	1970	Gresswell Drug and Alcohol Rehabilitation Centre	1970	Circa 1995

Table 1: The five government-run sanatoria surrounding Melbourne, with dates when they changed their focus, and names. Heatherton sanatorium, which continues to operate as a hospital, has not retained any significant wooded landscape, so is not considered in this article.

Sites Selected for Accessibility, Isolation and Economics

It is pertinent to ask why these four sanatoria were placed within river red gum woodlands in the first place. These locations are now considered worthy of protection primarily because of their floristic diversity, a diversity mostly lost in other areas of Victoria as a result of land clearing.²⁹ This would not, however, appear to be the reason these

locations were considered to be suitable places to erect sanatoria in the early twentieth century. No formal published criteria are available to explain the selection of sanatorium sites in Victoria. But the similarities between these four institutions in terms of the process of site selection for medical purposes and the means by which their landholdings became conservation reserves can provide insights into the Board of Health and Repatriation Department's reasoning.

The *Melbourne Metropolitan Planning Scheme* of 1954 suggests possible early selection criteria for sanatorium sites. Even in 1954, two years before the Greenvale sanatorium was converted into a geriatric hospital, the planning scheme noted that sanatoria were 'special hospitals' that should continue to be located in Melbourne's 'rural zone in convenient proximity to the urban area.'³⁰ The Hospital and Charities Commission, which at the time administered hospitals throughout Victoria, also listed its 'locational requirements' for general hospitals, and these may have been applied to sanatoria too.³¹ These criteria included:

1. Accessibility, particularly by public transport,
2. Economical establishment costs, and
3. Isolation from urban areas.

A fourth aspect that was not stipulated by the commission and remains unexplored in the literature was also clearly important in practice:

4. The sharing of resources between institutions located close to each other.

The selection of properties for sanatoria so they were in proximity to other government-run health services and institutions facilitated the generation of economic benefits through the sharing of resources and skilled employees.

Access to the Sanatoria

The need to balance the accessibility of a sanatorium with the isolation of contagious patients was an important issue in sanatorium planning in Victoria. As private motorcar ownership was not widely adopted in Australia until after World War II, transporting goods and people to and from these institutions depended on public transport.³² In Germany this infrastructure would generally only be developed after the sanatorium was founded. As historian Flurin Condrau has noted, 'the erection of a sanatorium often jump-started other regional infrastructure by

putting a village or small town on the map and requiring railway connections.³³ However, in Victoria the preference was to erect sanatoria in locations with pre-existing rail access; railway lines spreading radially from Melbourne appear to have been a significant factor in determining possible locations for sanatoria, thus enabling access while simultaneously ensuring relative isolation from urban areas.

Other Australian states took a similar approach. Westwood sanatorium in central Queensland, the multiple sanatoria of the Blue Mountains, and the sanatoria of the Adelaide Hills were all near railway lines.³⁴ The four Victorian sanatoria were outside the urban boundaries of Melbourne in the first half of the twentieth century, but all were constructed within a distance of 6.5 kilometres or less from an established railway line, with local transport available for the final leg from station to sanatorium (Table 2).³⁵ While accessibility was not the sole factor in determining where a sanatorium could be located, a site would be considered unsuitable if patients, staff, visitors and goods could not easily reach it.

Victorian government ministers inspected the Mount Macedon branch of the charitable Victorian Sanatorium for Consumptives after the institution was transferred to the state in 1910. The difficulty of access to the property was the stated reason why the institution would not be re-opened as a government sanatorium.³⁶ Although it was less than six kilometres distance 'as the crow flies' from the Macedon railway station, the route took the ministers along steep roads and a narrow track cut into the mountainside. While the 'disadvantages as regarded the conveyance of patients to such a site' as Macedon were not elaborated upon any further in the ministers' response, the terms in which it was reported strongly imply that accessibility was a significant deciding factor.³⁷ Macedon itself was a 60-kilometre journey from the city of Melbourne. Newspaper reports that mentioned the most isolated of the Melbourne-adjacent government-run sanatoria, Greenvale, also criticised its distance from the city. The disadvantages specified included the excessive cost of carting water to the site and the difficulties faced by friends and family wanting to visit patients by public transport alone.³⁸

Victorian Sanatorium Name	Year Sanatorium Opened	Railway Station Name (and Current Line Name)	Year Railway Station Opened	Approximate distance as the crow flies, between sanatorium and railway station (m)
Greenvale	1905	Broadmeadows (Craigieburn)	1872 ³⁹	6,500 m
Number 1 Military Sanatorium, Macleod	1916	Watsonia (Hurstbridge)	1902 ⁴⁰	1,500 m
Janefield	1920	Reservoir (Whittlesea)	1889 ⁴¹	5,000 m
Gresswell	1933	Watsonia (Hurstbridge)	1902 ⁴²	1,500 m

Table 2: The four sanatoria with large landholdings in Victoria, their year of opening, the year of opening of nearby railway lines, and approximate distance of each sanatorium from the nearest railway station (in metres)

Economy in the Founding, Construction and Maintenance of the Sanatoria

A traditional tuberculosis sanatorium, with its emphasis on work in the open air instead of surgical interventions, was a relatively cheap institution to operate.⁴³ Further pressure to reduce the costs incurred by government departments in providing these services was keenly felt at institutions such as Greenvale. Here, the health minister encouraged raising cows and sheep on the property ‘to effect economy.’⁴⁴ Patients deemed to be at the ‘early’ stage of tuberculosis ‘were by definition ambulant and could dress and feed themselves, and hence required less nursing,’ thus reducing the cost of hiring experienced staff.⁴⁵ Such economic considerations also extended to the acquisition of the sanatoria properties themselves. None of the Melbourne-area sanatoria were originally acquired by the government for TB treatment; all were repurposed from pre-existing crown land holdings.

Greenvale sanatorium’s land was originally a timber reserve that had been gazetted in 1875.⁴⁶ Gresswell and Macleod sanatoria were located on a block of land that had been intended for the use of the

Mont Park asylum.⁴⁷ The Janefield property was first acquired for the Lunacy Department to develop 'a training farm for wayward boys' that did not come to fruition.⁴⁸ This preference for using existing crown land holdings, when combined with the need for transport links, further limited the number of sites suitable for sanatoria. This may also explain why none of these sanatoria conform to the stereotype of a TB institution built on a mountain or hill.⁴⁹ Greenvale sanatorium was built at the base of a hill, and the Janefield sanatorium was placed above a gorge and river terraces. While Macleod and Gresswell sanatoria were on a hill slope, they were a mere 120 metres above sea level.⁵⁰



'View of buildings from the south', showing the wooded surroundings of the Greenvale sanatorium (*Views of the Greenvale Sanatorium for Consumptives, Victoria, circa 1906.* Courtesy State Library of New South Wales, Q725.5)

In analysing the spatial aspects of state-run sanatoria established in England and Germany around this time, Condrau has emphasised that these institutions were for the treatment of the working-class urban poor, who could not afford private treatment. They were thus located near to a large pool of prospective patients and close to existing infrastructure such as railway connections so that patients, friends, family, staff and

supplies could travel easily to and from the site.⁵¹ By the early twentieth century in Germany, sanatoria were no longer confined to the Alpine regions as they had been in the previous century. The ‘sanatorium’s increasing independence from a specific location’, according to architect Eva Eylers, encouraged civic planners to place them at points ‘determined by ... distance from certain cities, their population density and other statistical or measurable indicators.’⁵² Victoria appears to have adopted a similar approach. Sanatoria were placed in ‘convenient proximity’ to Melbourne, and not in more distant mountainous areas such as the Macedon, Kinglake, or Dandenong ranges.⁵³ While locating sanatoria near an urban centre that was accessible via an already established rail network was essentially an economic measure to reduce operating costs, it was also a matter of convenience for staff, patients and families. But nearness had to be tempered by the obvious need to isolate patients.

Isolation from Tuberculosis Patients

Distance from industrial and residential areas and proximity to public transport were not the only factors in determining locality, and the *Metropolitan Planning Scheme* preference for the ‘rural zone’ did not necessarily mean forested areas.⁵⁴ It was possible for locations to be rural but inappropriate, as evinced by the unsuccessful attempt to convert the former Rutherglen Viticultural College into a sanatorium.⁵⁵ The former Mount Macedon site was similarly in a ‘peaceful and picturesque’ location but was not sufficiently isolated from residences.⁵⁶ At both Macedon and Rutherglen locals protested against the proposal to operate sanatoria in the local area, and in both instances they were motivated by fear regarding the risk of contagion.⁵⁷

The government’s reliance upon previously gazetted crown lands as possible sanatorium sites was driven not just by economy but also by their large forested landholdings, which could provide a natural barrier against the outside world. This also ensured that land in the immediate vicinity would not be subdivided and thus attract denser housing development and an enlarged population.⁵⁸ The role of these forests as barriers also explains the positioning of buildings within the Janefield, Macleod and Gresswell sites. For example, Janefield’s sanatorium structures were located away from the eastern boundary of the property where the Plenty River ran. This may have been due to a common concern that such institutions ‘risked contaminating the waterways of the community through the leaching of disease-causing

agents through the soil after the disposal of excreta' such as tuberculous sputum 'into the ground'.⁵⁹ Macleod and Gresswell were located in the southern area of the sanatorium reserve to ensure they were distant from neighbouring properties that were not part of the Health Department. Their southern boundary was, however, shared with another planned facility, the Mont Park psychiatric hospital.

Isolation needed to be balanced with accessibility in terms of transport via rail and also with proximity to other government and charitable institutions. Since the establishment of the earliest Victorian government sanatorium at Greenvale, there has been evidence of institutions sharing resources with their neighbours thus enabling them to introduce a wider range of activities. Agricultural work, for instance, became an important part of patient life, on small and large scales.⁶⁰ Resource sharing as a factor in choice of location has not been mentioned in the research of Condrau, or in that of Julius Wilson, Stephanie Kirby and Wendy Madsen.⁶¹ It may be a fruitful area for further investigation.

Resource Sharing and Neighbouring Institutions

Resource sharing between institutions is discussed in contemporary records relating to the Victorian sanatoria, such as the 1918 Greenvale Sanatorium Royal Commission, and records in the Red Cross archives relating to the Janefield farm.⁶² This was an important consideration, not only for reasons of economy, but because it allowed for specialised expertise in the education, rehabilitation and treatment of tubercular patients to be utilised across institutions. A poultry expert, who primarily worked at the nearby Bundoora Convalescent Farm to the east of the sanatorium, was, for example, also utilised by the Janefield colony in training returned tubercular servicemen.⁶³

The practice of institutional clustering and placement of sanatoria near major urban centres was not universally adopted by the Australian states or federal government, even where public health departments were centrally administered. For instance, the federal Department of Repatriation oversaw the recruitment of patients to the Red Cross War Chest Farm Colony at Beelbangera from the pool of returned servicemen recovering at the Bodington sanatorium in the Blue Mountains.⁶⁴ Yet Beelbangera was located in the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area, approximately 400 kilometres away from its partner institution. The planning rationale and criteria for Victorian sanatoria

also differed from those underpinning the Queensland government's sanatorium system.⁶⁵ Queensland's Westwood sanatorium was located in the centre of the state 'on the rationale that [it] would then be equally accessible to all the state's inhabitants', but it was also therefore isolated from other institutions.⁶⁶ While the Victorian government's sanatoria locations did disadvantage people living outside of the city of Melbourne environs, they enabled staff easy access to the city for amenities and facilitated regular visits to patients by friends and family.⁶⁷

Resilience and Re-use of the Sanatoria Properties

The former state and federally operated sanatoria within the river red gum forests of northern Melbourne were all eventually repurposed for non-tubercular public health uses. This re-purposing and re-use inadvertently obscures any links between the location of the sites and their prior selection as places for the treatment of TB. When these woodlands were incorporated into nature reserves, their relationship with a once-feared contagious disease was also hidden. In the second half of the twentieth century, they were no longer associated with tuberculosis and were instead perceived by the state government as possessing flora that was worth preserving. From 1978 to 2004, these wooded areas were excised from lands managed by the Health Department and were gazetted as public parklands.

This gradual process of reserving land for conservation purposes was made possible by the creation of the Land Conservation Council in 1971. This was an advisory body charged with surveying the public lands in the state and recommending areas that should not be developed for commercial purposes.⁶⁸ William Borthwick, minister for lands, soldier settlement and conservation in the Hamer government, 'promoted the concept of a differentiated system of parks' for conservation purposes throughout the state.⁶⁹ The Land Conservation Council's goal became the preservation of the state's diversity of flora and fauna through the development and enrichment of a 'representative reserve system' of public lands set aside for conservation purposes.⁷⁰ This system aimed to reserve examples of lands that together would contain examples of 'every major terrestrial plant community in Victoria' within 'a national park or other conservation reserve'.⁷¹ In the late 1980s, the Victorian National Parks Service (predecessor of Parks Victoria) realised that examples of grassy river red gum woodlands were lacking in the Victorian Volcanic Plains bioregion,⁷² for the woodlands were cleared for agricultural

purposes soon after European occupation.⁷³ Remaining stands of the trees were predominantly on land held in private ownership.⁷⁴ Exceptions to this trend were the crown lands to the north and west of Melbourne, formerly the sites of the sanatoria discussed here.

Retention of sites as crown land, however, does not necessarily ensure preservation. As these institutions evolved over the decades, the surrounding natural environment was changed by building works, agricultural activities and forestry plantations. Yet these sites retained locally and nationally significant areas of biodiversity. In the second half of the twentieth century, planning for hospital construction and expansion tended to favour the development of a large central block, rather than a series of smaller, specialised buildings across the site. In 1947 the Greenvale sanatorium had a new central ward built, seen as an improvement on the traditional 'scattered pavilions' on the property⁷⁵ because it ameliorated 'the problems of servicing from a central depot to the more distant groups' of patients' cottages.⁷⁶ This trend discouraged the spread of new facilities, thereby leaving the woodlands uncleared.⁷⁷ Thus, when these institutions were permanently closed or being considered for residential redevelopment, the sites were re-evaluated and considered for inclusion in the conservation reserve system.

The introduction of the *Crown Lands (Reserves) Act 1978* had a significant impact on the former sanatoria properties. The Act provides for the reservation of crown lands for specific purposes, including nature study and education as well as recreation.⁷⁸ When the Gresswell and Macleod site was subdivided, the area now known as Gresswell Forest was excised and reserved. The sanatorium buildings were demolished and the remaining land sold as part of the larger Springthorpe housing development, advertised as having 'a tranquil bushland setting' that echoed the original rationale for building sanatoria on the site at the beginning of the century.⁷⁹ As public pressure in the later twentieth century grew for areas of ecological and biological significance to be protected from development, the other former sanatoria sites also became part of the reserve system. Their long association with TB treatment had ensured the retention of biologically significant stands of river red gum woodlands. Greenvale sanatorium was divided into four sections: privately owned land encompassing the hospital buildings; a cemetery; a 'bushland buffer' to the cemetery managed by the local council; and the remainder incorporated into Woodlands Historic

Park by 2004.⁸⁰ The Janefield site was subdivided in a manner similar to Gresswell. Housing was constructed on the previously developed portions of the site, with the remaining bushland divided between an area maintained by the local council and a larger portion incorporated into the Plenty Gorge Regional Park in 1995.⁸¹

The redevelopment of crown land with significant bushland remnants as sites of flora conservation seems to be unique to the former sanatoria. Other portions of nearby crown lands that were redeveloped in the later twentieth century as part of the deinstitutionalisation of mental health services were not retained and managed for their biodiversity. While both types of institution—psychiatric and tuberculous—had similar emphases upon isolation and large landholdings for agricultural work, the extensive tracts of land managed by mental health services were not transferred over to the state's statutory authority responsible for managing many of Victoria's parks.⁸² For example, the heritage-listed former Mont Park Lunatic Asylum has been repurposed for housing and educational facilities without large areas of parkland reserved, a common fate for these institutions in Australia.⁸³ This adaptive re-use of psychiatric institution buildings for housing and education necessitated the provision of open recreational spaces, such as sporting ovals. This contrasts with the recreational activities encouraged at Greenvale, Gresswell and Janefield, such as walking, and bicycle or horse riding through bushland. While further research is necessary to see if these trends in sanatorium placement and their role in conserving remnant bushland occur outside the area of eucalypt woodlands to the north of Melbourne, it is clear that tuberculosis treatment has, albeit inadvertently, done much for environmental conservation in this region.

Conclusions

Architectural historians have noted that the built environment of the sanatorium was deliberately designed in order to expose patients to fresh air and sunlight, using windows and ventilation systems.⁸⁴ With this emphasis on fresh air, sanatorium buildings generally needed to be outside of urbanised and industrial areas.⁸⁵ The rural zone to the north of Melbourne was chosen, at least in part, for its air quality, resulting in the location of sanatoria within pre-existing eucalypt woodlands. Where sanatorium design focused on the accommodation and treatment of people with pulmonary tuberculosis, it also needed to include transport links between the institution and those built-up areas from which the

bulk of TB patients came. The balancing of accessibility, isolation, and economy limited the number of locations where the state could construct these institutions. The river red gum woodlands that survived on the northern outskirts of the city of Melbourne at the time were already crown land, and were also relatively isolated in a rural landscape. This made them an attractive choice for the Victorian Board of Public Health and the federal Repatriation Department as places to construct specialised hospitals for tuberculosis patients.

None of the sanatorium sites discussed here was selected for an ecologically significant type of eucalypt forest or a particular geology, but the land—or significant parts of it—was nevertheless preserved as a result of these planning decisions. Were it not for these forests being selected for sanatoria in the first place and then retained by the Health Department, it is unlikely that they would have been kept as bushland. Hence, it is possible to conclude that the historic requirements for the treatment of tuberculosis are inadvertently responsible for the preservation of remnant vegetation in the suburbs of northern Melbourne, a factor overlooked in current-day guides to the reserves.

Notes

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Soldier Settlement at Yanakie: The Making of a Model Post-war Rural Community

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Abstract

Recommendations made by the Commonwealth Rural Reconstruction Commission in 1944 were influential in shaping new policies for post-war land settlement. The Victorian Soldier Settlement Commission applied these ideas, hand-picking settlers who would make successful farmers. At Yanakie, in South Gippsland, a decision to turn crown land into a group soldier settlement scheme resulted in a model rural community where post-war technology transformed the environment into productive dairy farms. Interviews with those involved locally look beyond the policy to the experiences of the settlers and employees of the Soldier Settlement Commission during the 1950s and 1960s.

Yanakie, located on the isthmus that joins Wilsons Promontory to the rest of South Gippsland, celebrated 50 years of community life in 2016. The Yanakie Hall was brimming with people, as memorials to the 46 original soldier and land settlement families were unveiled. With each one, a family member, sometimes an elderly first settler, told a story of his or her arrival in the community. It was a long afternoon, rich with laughter and reminiscence, replete with groaning tables of freshly baked cream sponges. This 'back-to' celebration of country and days gone by, organised by daughters of the pioneers, echoed events held in many small Victorian communities decades earlier during the first half of the twentieth century.

Formerly crown land, the Yanakie heath-and-scrub country, with several large swamps, was used for winter agistment, although most experienced farmers in the district considered it to be poor quality pasture. Despite this view, the vision and determination of a small group of locals resulted in the Soldier Settlement Commission making a major investment in transforming the isthmus into the rich dairy land of today. The construction of the Yanakie Estate was completed over ten years between 1955 and 1965; large caterpillar tractors cleared the environment, bulldozing vegetation and levelling the ground before

applying fertilisers and pasture seeds according to the best scientific and local knowledge available. The families arrived in stages, small groups of six or eight at a time, ready to establish their farms according to government requirements. Mostly from Gippsland, these families began the task of building a new community. The success of the farming district that developed was a measure of their optimism and hard work but also of the Victorian government's commitment to redress previous mistakes in land settlement. Yanakie became a model of the application of modernist thinking to the environment, a man-made grassland plain neatly divided into 46 farms, each with a new house and dairy, a family and a government-approved lease.

As an environmental history, this paper explores the relationship between nature and the original settlers, their children, and employees of the commission at the intersection of a major transformation of the landscape. The narratives of locals—insiders who hold a lived experience of their community—enrich the understanding of official historical records with insights into both the relationships between settlers and officials, and the emotional responses of individuals.¹ The recollections of settlers at Yanakie were gathered in a series of interviews recorded around the time of the anniversary celebration.² The participants included Tom Savage and Les Singleton, construction workers with the Soldier Settlement Commission; Robbie Davidson, son of the storekeepers; Val Williams, wife of a soldier settler; and Rob Grylls, son of a soldier settler. Interviews were also conducted with land settlers, Ewen and Dot Donaldson, Reg and Wilma Jennings, Trevor and Pearl White, Geoff and Shirley McCraw, Ernie Perry, Dulcie Mortlock and Audrey Truscott. Christine Kemper and Elaine Comben, daughters of land settlers and organisers of the 'back-to', talked about growing up on the settlement. Finally, Bill Davies and Bruce Lester provided valuable memories of the role of their fathers, John Davies and Don Lester, and also Jack Lester, in the development of the plains. In addition, a local history written by Rosemary Crawford, who with her husband Bill took up a farm at Yanakie, recorded many details of the settlement.³

Government publications and archives from the Public Record Office Victoria provided contextual information for this study. Reports in the local Foster newspaper, the *Mirror*, highlighted the tensions in plans for soldier settlement at Yanakie. Marilyn Lake's book, *The Limits of Hope: Soldier Settlement in Victoria 1915–1938*, examining

the experiences of World War I soldier settlements, looks at the reasons for failure that prompted widespread changes to later land settlement.⁴ Rosalind Smallwood documents the issues involved in preparing land and settlers after World War II in her history of the Soldier Settlement Commission, *Hard to Go Bung: World War II Soldier Settlement in Victoria, 1945–1962*.⁵ State funding for post-World War II soldier settlement was dependent on meeting the recommendations of the Commonwealth Rural Reconstruction Commission, and a recent history by Stuart Macintyre, *Australia's Boldest Experiment: War and Reconstruction in the 1940s*, explores national responses to the failings of earlier land settlement schemes, including soldier settlement after World War I.⁶

World War II brought far-reaching changes to Australia as people and politicians responded to the realisation that the nation was falling behind the rest of the world, and called for a 'new and better social order after the war'.⁷ The wartime transfer of state powers to the Commonwealth government provided the opportunity to deal with such issues, and from 1943 the Ministry of Post-War Reconstruction produced a series of far-reaching reports about re-shaping Australian society, the results of which Macintyre regards as a turning point in the nation's history.⁸ Of particular importance were the changing views on farming, housing and welfare as the basis for future national development. A significant benefit of the work of the Post-war Reconstruction Commission was the impact on national development for the next three decades of a broad-based attempt to redistribute wealth for a more equitable society.⁹

The Rural Reconstruction Commission, one of four committees tasked with reporting to the ministry, took into account the history of agriculture in Australia, including selectors, closer settlers, and World War I soldier settlers, finding the impoverished and frequently sub-standard living conditions of farmers concerning.¹⁰ Touring the nation at a time of extended drought in 1942, they found farms too small to make an adequate living, houses with no electricity or running water, and women ashamed to invite guests into their homes.¹¹ Surveys confirmed the extent of soldier and closer settlers abandoning small farms on marginal land, while those who remained on their farms suffered the worst privations during the 1930s Depression.¹² The response by the Rural Reconstruction Commission represents what historian Marilyn

Lake refers to as ‘the end of the eighty year project of land settlement, the end of the Australian attempt to establish a yeomanry’.¹³ Policy-makers shifted away from the long-held belief that national productivity increases would come from placing more people on the land with just minimal assistance. New farming would focus on efficiency, quantity of produce and improvement through technology and science. The Rural Reconstruction Committee argued that ‘farming was a highly skilled occupation that required training, aptitude and careful selection of an appropriate holding’.¹⁴ As a result, the terms for funding the state-based soldier settlement schemes following World War II included the expectation that soldier settlers would be ‘suitably qualified, their prospects for economic production were sound and their farm was capable of yielding an adequate income’.¹⁵

The Victorian Soldier Settlement Commission, formed in response to the passing of the *Soldier Settlement Act 1945*, began work in 1946.¹⁶ The Victorian Country Party Coalition government, together with the Returned Services League (RSL), was already exploring the potential for soldier settlement on crown lands in the south of the state in 1943.¹⁷ Early soldier settlement farms were developed on under-utilised private land purchased cheaply by the commission but, by 1950, rising land prices and the huge demand for farms forced the commission to look at crown land, including the former pastoral run at Yanakie.

Yanakie Run extended from twenty kilometres south of Foster to the Darby River, the original boundary of Wilsons Promontory National Park (Figure 1). This large area of crown land was known locally as Front and Back Yanakie, divided along what would become the current national park boundary. The Front Yanakie Run covered 50 square kilometres, while the Back Yanakie Run, or sand hummocks, was about 57 square kilometres, making a total of about 105 square kilometres. The area was known locally as ‘the plains country’ in contrast to the hill country of the surrounding Strzelecki Ranges where numerous small farms were located.

disease, although solutions were not widely available until after World War II. Attempts to sow European grasses had invariably failed over the previous hundred years of European settlement. In 1950, the local newspaper referred to the ‘despised plains country’.¹⁹

Before World War II, several local landowners were trying to develop the plains. Of these, John Davies, later named the ‘father of the plains’, experimented with minimising ploughing and focused on changing the soils by adding lime and fertiliser with grass seed in 1939.²⁰ This was a technique learned from his native Wales, but he initially had difficulty convincing the Department of Agriculture that lime was the key ingredient to changing the chemistry and structure of the soils to support European pastures. A department agronomist, Bill Pitman, would promote this method across Victoria in the post-war period. Davies had been grazing sheep on Yanakie Run during the summers and found the land supported one sheep to twelve acres.²¹ His son Bill remembered a farm worker pointing out to his father that there were no worms in the soils at Yanakie, a sign of the acidic nature of the ground.²² As a young boy, Bill Davies recalls clearly being told his family was ‘wasting your time, it will all go back to scrub one day’ when his father first started cultivating the plains.²³

Jack Lester had land at Yanakie from 1932, but it was not until his return from serving in the war that he began to improve the soils. His family held the grazing lease on Wilsons Promontory from 1927 and also the freehold to the pastoral freehold land at Swans Nest, Yanakie, which he sold to the commission. Together with his brother Don, Lester began ploughing the land and combining seed with lime to promote pasture, but realised that he would need heavy equipment to break through the roots in order to cultivate the land, and this was not readily available before the war years. They also drained Connors Swamp using a contour drain to divert the water around the lower ground, creating the template for the larger scale draining of the Red Swamp by the Soldier Settlement Commission a decade later.²⁴ Lester later advised Les Simpson of the Soldier Settlement Commission about the soils at Yanakie.²⁵

In the post-war quest to unlock the potential of the lands, it was the experienced and larger landholders in the Yanakie area—Davies, Lester and, further south, the Heywood family—who drove the initiatives for soldier settlement. Davies led the case put to the Soldier Settlement Commission to invest in developing Yanakie. A public meeting with

the Virgin Land Investigation Committee in February 1950 saw fierce debate about the use of the Yanakie Run. The meeting, fully reported in the local newspaper, the *Toora and Welshpool Ensign*, showed hill farmers clashing with the plains farmers, the former claiming that the public utility of the land was being met by winter agistment, which allowed them to carry about twenty more dairy cows on their farms. One protestor argued that of fourteen agisters who travelled past his place to Yanakie each year, ten were returned soldiers.²⁶

Councillor Ern Thorson, president of the Yanakie Agisters' Association, spoke against development. The Agisters' Association had been formed in 1949 at a meeting of about 80 hill farmers at the old Yanakie Homestead in response to the threat of losing the Run.²⁷ In an unusual alliance, local conservationists Norrie Rossiter and Jock Greenaway had also attended. They were intensely aware of what was at stake, Rossiter describing the Yanakie landscape in springtime as 'if an artist had splashed paint over the land' such was the profusion of flowering native plants along the swamps and sand banks of the isthmus.²⁸ Wildlife, including wombats, kangaroos, emu and bandicoots populated the bush. Native orchids were among the plants most valued by the conservationists, who were strong supporters of the Wilsons Promontory National Park.

Several advocates for development of the plains spoke persuasively at the public meeting, quoting costs of their own efforts to improve the land. Among these, five shire councillors, including Davies and Lester, had land on the plains and valued development over traditional practices. According to Bill Davies, the agisted cows tended to graze further towards Wilsons Promontory on land where lime was later mined and where the pastures were sweeter.²⁹

While conflicting interests divided hill and plains farmers at the local level, the external view of the panel of the Virgin Lands Investigation Committee centred on the question of viability. The committee's foremost priority was to reject all marginal land as unsuitable for returned soldiers. The experienced farmers and RSL members on the Virgin Lands Investigation Committee had become inured to lobbyists in rural communities promoting land. It was clear to the panel that some locals saw an opportunity for the government to bear the costs of development of the land without necessarily considering the welfare of returned soldiers.³⁰ At Foster, the conviction of men like Davies about

the future of the plains included recognition that it would increase the rates for the South Gippsland Shire.³¹ Following the meeting, the Virgin Lands Investigation Committee expressed reservations about the quality of the soils at Yanakie and delayed accepting the project until further tests were conducted, rating the proposal for development as poor.³²

In July 1951, a new Victorian government with a commitment to opening up crown lands for farming would influence the final decision when the Minister for Lands, Sir Albert Lind, stepped in.³³ Lind, a successful dairy farmer from Bairnsdale was a senior Country Party politician in the Victorian government with a long record of involvement in the administration of crown lands. An experienced developer with a personal interest in Gippsland, he would become minister in charge of soldier settlement as well as minister for lands.³⁴ Lind held modernist views, foreseeing a new era of agriculture when science would overcome nature, and, on a visit to Yanakie, he praised the successes of the 'private interests' developing the land:

These men have ... by their enterprise and initiative, created new wealth by bringing neglected land into production. I was most impressed by what has been achieved on this light country—don't call it poor country, because in these days of scientific knowledge applied to the land there is virtually no poor land.³⁵

As well as advocating land for returned soldiers and the sons of farmers, Lind argued for the need to increase production, especially in dairying, to provide for the anticipated growth in population as the Latrobe Valley developed coal-powered electricity generation.³⁶ There is little doubt that Lind was influential in removing the barriers to Yanakie as a soldier settlement development.

By the end of 1951, Yanakie was accepted as one of three group settlements on crown land, as opposed to freehold land, developed by the government. Nyora, in Gippsland was a smaller scheme with fifteen farms, while the large settlement at Heytesbury in Western Victoria, with more than 250 farms, shared many similarities with Yanakie. With most potential soldier settlers approaching the upper age limit of 45 years, time became a critical issue for developing land.³⁷ It was anticipated that Yanakie would take at least three years to reach settlement stage, and the heavily timbered Heytesbury longer again, with a further three years before the land would reach half of its potential capacity.³⁸ In 1953, local

estimates for the time it would take to prepare the Yanakie swampland to the standards set by the Soldier Settlement Commission were more realistic. Charlie Snell, who had drained the nearby Black Swamp, commented that 'it may take up to ten years to reach full production. It takes years to sweeten wet, peaty country'.³⁹ This would prove to be the case for the Red Swamp.

In 1954, the first tenders were let for extensive draining, fencing and clearing contracts at Yanakie, including 2,024 hectares of land.⁴⁰ Heavy equipment that could 'bust through hard compacted soil with tea-tree roots and mallee roots' was required, capable of ploughing deep enough to prevent the regrowth that the early developers had experienced with the vegetation.⁴¹ Early in 1956, the commission decided to manage the project itself, finding the scale of the equipment needed to clear and plough the land as efficiently as possible, as well as the need to use drag-line excavators to drain the swamp areas, was beyond most contractors.

Bob Cameron, the administrator from the Soldier Settlement Commission sent to oversee the development, saw 'nothing but scrub, kangaroos, and emus' when he arrived.⁴² The commission constructed an administration centre on the site of what was to become Yanakie village, including store and dining room, several houses and machinery sheds, and diesel generators for electricity. Most of the fifteen employees were locals, travelling from Foster on a bus each day, although some lived in the accommodation block at the site. In keeping with the militaristic approach to managing the project, the accommodation buildings for the men came from the Royal Australian Air Force base at Sale.

The military approach was also applied to the land, which was cleared and cultivated using International Crawler tractors TD9s, TD14s and Majestic ploughs, with the later addition of ex-army Blitz trucks. These 50 horse-power crawler tractors worked eight in a row from 7.30 am until dark every day.⁴³ Bruce Lester pointed out the contrast with previous land clearing in South Gippsland, where 'traditionally the hill country was cleared by cutting the forest down, burning the resulting debris and sowing in the ash in the soil'.⁴⁴ The application of heavy machinery at Yanakie also contrasts with the experiences of World War I soldier settlers, expected to clear their own land and discouraged from employing labour owing to the expense. At Yanakie, the land was ploughed twice before preparation for sowing pasture began, with

boundary fences for each farm erected as the final stage. Tom Savage described working on the tractors:

so it was pretty level going for us. The crawler tractors were sat back, they rode pretty well and no, they weren't rough we only worked in 3rd gear which was about 3 mile an hour. So it's a comfortable speed. Then, after it was ploughed we disced it, which we did in 4th gear.⁴⁵

By 1956, 3,238 hectares had been ploughed, swamp drainage was underway and experimental plots of pasture were showing signs of success.⁴⁶ When the Davidson family arrived in March 1956 to take over the management of the Yanakie Roadhouse to provide meals, petrol and supplies for the employed men, the land to the east had already been cleared and was 'desert-like'.⁴⁷



Putting in the Drains (Courtesy Foster and District Museum Archives)

In the initial meetings with the Virgin Lands Investigation Committee, the question of adequate rainfall for dairying was raised, and committee members were given assurances that the climate was sufficient if dams and bores were installed. The undeveloped environment, with its rich swamplands, seemed wet enough, but the district became heavily reliant on runoff after it was drained. Rainfall at

Yanakie proved marginal for dairying, for, although wet in winter, the sandy and peat soils did not retain moisture during the dry summers. The Soldier Settlement Commission provided dams, and on the sandy country they installed bores and windmills for water, although the water was brackish and poor quality and the sand clogged up the pumps and bore casings.⁴⁸ The dams, two for each farm, proved to be too small for the climate.⁴⁹ The dry summer of 1967 was the first experience of a 'green drought' for farmers and resulted in the construction of many more bores. The rainfall at Yanakie was lower than that falling on Wilsons Promontory and the rising Strzelecki Ranges. Bruce Lester described the microclimate between the hills at Foster where the 'average rainfall per year was 40 inches, dropping to 38, 32 and then 30 inches along the road before rising again in the mountains of Wilsons Promontory'.⁵⁰ Extensive drainage together with exposure to the constant winds meant the land soon dried out.

The soils at Yanakie varied from the higher ground to the swamps, and, in applying new scientific methods to improving them for dairying, the Soldier Settlement Commission specified the mix of fertilisers, minerals, and pasture seed according to the type of soils.⁵¹ Fertilisers included a mix of lime, superphosphate, copper sulphate and molybdenum. The pasture seed mix consisted of rye grass, white clover, subterranean clover, red clover and phalaris. Once the settlers were on their farms, the Soldier Settlement Commission expected them to continue applying superphosphate and lime annually, an expensive requirement.

In 1960, a syndicate of local farmers, including the Davies and Lester families, invested in the Yanakie Lime Company, mining second-grade lime for local use from the back Yanakie Run, which was still crown land at the time. Mining lime continued well after this land was added to the national park, finally being closed down by the Victorian government in 1987. The continual application of heavy fertilisers changed the structure of the soil, improving its suitability for the intensive nature of dairy farming and much needed water retention. The farmers applied for a herd-testing network and set up a group keen to improve their herds using the latest science. This resulted in stud- and prize-winning dairy cows as judged by the Royal Agricultural Society in the 1970s.⁵²

Developing the Red Swamp presented the biggest challenge, with 607 hectares of heavy black peat soils. In 1953, the surveyor, F.R. Tait, thought the drainage of the Red Swamp, with peat soils between two and four metres in depth, presented ‘a major problem’ as it was never without water.⁵³ In an example of the dominance of machine over nature, the Red Swamp was drained, burned and then grazed before it was prepared for the farmers, the peat soils still too soft for the heavy equipment. Locals remember the peat burning uncontrolled for months at a time.⁵⁴ The swamp was eventually cultivated using a rotary hoe, and the grass seed was hand sown by two men walking across the wet areas because they could not get machines onto the peat.⁵⁵



Ploughing soldier settlement land at Yanakie (Courtesy Foster and District Museum Archives)

As the work on preparing the land at Yanakie progressed, the Soldier Settlement Commission began selecting farmers. In keeping with recommendations of the Commonwealth Rural Reconstruction Commission, applicants were grouped according to experience in the type of farming they wished to pursue. The purpose, to ensure soldier settlers had the background to succeed, aimed to avoid one of the greatest criticisms of the World War I schemes. Applicants were required to demonstrate their thriftiness, show that they had managed capital effectively, and provide personal references to vouch for their skill.⁵⁶ Yanakie was settled towards the end of World War II soldier settlement

schemes in Victoria, when many—other than experienced farmers—had moved into other work.

The selection of farmers occurred in Melbourne. Unlike the other states where settlers were selected by ballot, the Victorian Soldier Settlement Commission established a panel to identify the best applicants from the thousands who expressed interest.⁵⁷ This focus on individuals was a significant contributing factor in the successful settlement of World War II farmers compared to the World War I schemes. The panel used a 100-point scale to assess applicants' 'war service (twenty points maximum), farming experience (thirty points), personal attributes—character, integrity, honesty and mental alertness (thirty points), evidence of thrift and financial responsibility (ten points), marital status (ten points)', noting each applicant's capital assets, details of his wife's experience, his age and any physical disabilities.⁵⁸ The Soldier Settlement Commission was looking for genuine long-term farmers, and extra points were given for married or engaged men because the panel considered a wife's back-up as important.⁵⁹

Ewen Donaldson recalled having to go to Melbourne for interviews, and that 'they were very fair, the fellows that interviewed us were ex-farmers.'⁶⁰ Wives were also invited to the interviews, and young wife and mother Audrey Truscott was concerned that they would miss out on a farm since she was unable to attend because her son was about to be born.⁶¹ If successful, the farmers were offered a temporary lease for up to three years during which time they had to prove they were capable and viable farmers. At the end of this period, they were offered a purchase lease with a minimum of six years before they could apply for a crown grant to own the land freehold.⁶² Financially, the terms were generous.

Victoria's *Land Settlement Act 1953*, passed in December, paved the way for civilians to share in closer settlement funded by the Commonwealth. As the work of the Soldier Settlement Commission concluded, the *Land Settlement Act 1959* saw the transfer of land and administration to a civilian scheme. In 1960, the scheme at Yanakie became the responsibility of the Rural Finance and Settlement Commission, which retained most of the processes put in place by its predecessor.⁶³ Soldier settlement and civilian land settlement schemes operated side by side at Yanakie from 1961 until 1965, when four groups of six to eight farming families arrived to take up their farms.⁶⁴

As late as July 1958, the Commonwealth government queried the proposed size of the farms at Yanakie and the viability of settling dairy

farmers where there was no irrigation. It also raised concerns about declining overseas markets for dairy produce, although suggestions of changing the Yanakie scheme to farms for raising fat lambs were not received well by the Victorian government, which viewed dairying as a key economic industry.⁶⁵ The threat to withhold funds to the Victorian Soldier Settlement Commission was resolved with a last-minute agreement to create mixed farms on the higher ground at Yanakie, thus appeasing the Commonwealth government sufficiently to release the funds. For this reason, five farms were designated sheep and dairy, and provided with a four-bale shed and a shearing stand in the machinery shed. Shortly after the soldier settlers arrived, these properties reverted to dairy farms, attracted by the prospect of a regular milk cheque from the factory.⁶⁶

The sixteen soldier settlers at Yanakie arrived in two groups, the first in 1958–59. Only three of the sixteen farmers came from outside of the Gippsland region.⁶⁷ One of the settlers was a bachelor, the rest all arriving with families, indicative of the priority given to married couples and the concept of family farms where the wives were seen as contributors. Despite all of the preparation, settler experiences were not easy in the early years, especially for the wives, who were isolated from towns. Groceries and mail were delivered by the Davidsons from the store at Yanakie, and, without telephones on the farms, even this was difficult.

Val Williams, wife of one of the soldier settlers, arrived in July 1959 and noticed that: 'Because all the trees had been cleared there were no birds. You would throw the kitchen scraps out into the paddock and they would just stay there. Once the trees started to grow again the birds started to appear. The first birds to return were the magpies.'⁶⁸

There was nothing but dirt. Removal of scrub left Yanakie exposed to the gale-force winds blowing off Bass Strait. Val Williams recalled, 'the first big lot of wind we experienced blew most of the garages, where the floors hadn't been cemented, away. Our hayshed, which was built on the top of the hill, as well as some others, was flattened. They all had to be rebuilt in more suitable places.'⁶⁹ A well-recounted story about the wind concerns the acquisition of a church, which had been moved from a nearby rural community. In the short time before a working bee could be held to tie it to foundations, a night of gale-force winds blew the building sideways. The community straightened it but a second burst of wind blew it over totally, after which services were held in the school

and later the hall.⁷⁰ Land settlers Dot and Ewen Donaldson described attempts to install insulation in the new houses, ‘the wind blew it into a heap in the middle of the ceiling.’⁷¹ Bruce Lester, who now farms the family property at Yanakie, commented,

well of course there’s a lot of wind; it’s on a peninsula; it’s sticking between two oceans. There’s always going to be a lot of wind. Of course the wind blows at Yanakie. It blows from the west for about nine months of the year and then it turns around and blows from the east for the last three.⁷²

The Soldier Settlement Commission expected the farmers to move to their Yanakie properties when all was ready, but most successful applicants were coming from share farms with employers who needed them to vacate so new share farmers could begin the spring dairy season. The settlers, with nowhere else to go, moved into caravans and sheds until houses were finished on the farms. Conditions were primitive at best, and Ewen and Dot Donaldson lived in a former superphosphate shed with two toddlers for five to six weeks before their house was ready, sharing with dogs, cats, canaries and chooks while Dot was in the last few weeks of pregnancy.⁷³ Val Williams remembers:

we didn’t have electricity for the first twelve months. We managed with good Aladdin lamps, the hot water was through the stove, there was a copper in the laundry for washing, a petrol engine at the dairy to run the machines and plenty of mallee roots for firewood. The worst part was not having a fridge.⁷⁴



Yanakie settlement house showing the environment soon after families arrived (Courtesy Donaldson family)

The commission, wanting to ensure farmers did not overstock on the new pastures, limited the size of dairy herds to 40 milking cows in the first year and 60 in the second year. For those who had been share farming, this was an additional cost, as they had to purchase stock. For some, who already had a dairy herd, hard decisions were made about which animals to keep, and Reg Jennings recalled they had to 'put them in the saleyards and sell for what we could get'.⁷⁵

Each property had a boundary fence, a new three-bedroom house and garage, dairy building, machinery shed and hayshed. Settlers were responsible for internal fencing, dairy yards and fencing the house yard with materials supplied by the commission once a plan was submitted for approval. The farm had to be divided into eight paddocks with a wide laneway down the middle.⁷⁶ For Geoff and Shirley McCraw, who were among the last group of land settlers to arrive, the conditions were stark, 'there was nothing, there was just a house and a paddock'.⁷⁷ Starting the dairy season, they had 'no fences at all, no hot water service', and they used milk cans because there was no driveway to the dairy for a bulk milk pick-up.⁷⁸ The dairy sheds, so modern in 1960, were outdated within a few years with their unrefrigerated bulk milk vats and 'just three double bails of two rails, six cows at a time. No herringbones or anything like that'.⁷⁹

The 1960s saw rapid changes in technology in the dairy industry, and the assistance of the commission and the low repayments on purchase leases enabled the Yanakie farmers to respond. The overseeing role of the Soldier Settlement Commission and later the Rural Finance and Settlement Commission meant the farmers were required to seek permission to make changes to their properties. Farms were inspected regularly to check that fences and pipes were as specified, all purchased through the commission store. Ewen Donaldson recalled erecting a temporary fence on the peat to stop his cows dying from bloat on the strawberry clover. Although he had the grudging permission of the local overseer, the inspector made him change the fence and 'pay 3 and sixpence for each old post' that he had pulled out.⁸⁰

An initial invasion of caterpillars threatened to destroy all of the hard work as the commissioners' concern to minimise stocking rates opened the way to ideal breeding conditions for the *oncopera* grub.⁸¹ Understocking on new grass rich with clover also caused cows to die from bloat, and this became a major problem for the farmers in the

early years.⁸² Once the grass had matured, stocking rates increased, and the combination of fertilisers, herbicides and pesticides meant the caterpillars did not reappear in plague numbers again.

The last fifteen farms each included a section of the Red Swamp, which had been grazed by the commission herd and so was well pastured with a dominant strawberry clover when the farmers arrived. The peat was still unstable several years after clearing, and Ewen Donaldson recalled that his farm, which had 80 acres of higher ground and then 100 acres of peat soil, was too soft to take a tractor across for the first few years, and he could not cut hay on the farm until the soil stabilised.⁸³ When he first arrived in 1964, he was told he could have four paddocks on the higher ground but was not permitted to fence the peat. Geoff McCraw remembered taking cows through gateways on the peat and feeling the ground move.⁸⁴ The drains for the swamp became less effective over time, and the winter rains caused widespread flooding in the former swamp areas until the drains were reconstructed. The farmers on the peat recalled the drop in soil as it dried out and hardened, a 30-centimetre drop that required all the fences to be redone. Within a few years, fences became measuring sticks, showing the extent to which the peat soils were shrinking.

In 1941, the Post-War Rural Reconstruction Commission regarded electricity for homes as a significant factor in improving the quality of rural life and creating greater equity between country and city.⁸⁵ But it would take decades before isolated districts in rural Victoria were connected, and, at Yanakie, the supply of electricity, which arrived in mid-1961, was inadequate to support the dairy farms when they all turned on their machinery at the same time. Elaine Comben and Chris Kemper recalled that power went off every night because the supply was inadequate.⁸⁶ Val Williams remembered that, 'the power supply was dreadful and every time the wind blew, the power went off'.⁸⁷

Despite all of the hardships, the new houses were appreciated. When the Post-War Reconstruction Commission conducted a major survey through the *Women's Weekly* magazine in 1942, an overwhelming majority voted for modern housing with bright, large kitchens and decent bathrooms.⁸⁸ The Country Women's Association echoed these demands, insisting that the Victorian Soldier Settlement Commission provide modern, well-designed homes for farmers, and, by the time the houses at Yanakie were constructed, this was a well-established

practice.⁸⁹ Collectively the Yanakie families were very happy to move into a modern house. As Reg and Wilma Jennings expressed it, 'everything was new and we thought that was quite absolutely marvellous. The house was all new, painted inside. Very basic. And we had carpet fitted before we moved in. That was a luxury and three bedrooms, kitchen, lounge.'⁹⁰ The inside septic toilets contrasted with the amenities of old houses in which many had lived as share farmers. It did not seem to matter that the designs were the same; because the houses were sited differently on each farm, they gave some impression of difference.

The priority for families when they first arrived was to pick up the mallee roots left lying in the paddocks from deep ploughing the bush. These were used as fuel in the wood stoves and open fires of the houses. With no trees left on the farms, the farmers then resorted to purchasing briquettes or bought oil heaters.⁹¹ Establishing a garden was made difficult by the wind and salt spray. As Trevor White recalled, 'gardens were fairly hard to establish ... because as soon as anything deciduous put out fresh new leaves, we'd get a blast of good salt and wind and it'd burn them off again.'⁹² Dulcie Mortlock was one of many who remembered the constant sound of the sea, 'we had no trees ... we could hear the sea roaring.'⁹³ Many farmers planted cyprus trees as protection from the wind.⁹⁴ Later they replaced them with native plants along the boundary fences and around the houses to break the wind and create the landscape that is familiar today.

The desire to build a community brought the families together as working bees on the farms merged with fundraisers to establish a school, a hall and sporting facilities. The farmers came together to help one another complete the fencing and yards on their farms, volunteering their time and donating the money that the commission would have paid a contractor to the hall fund. Ewen Donaldson described his experiences:

as the blocks came up we used to fence them and then they'd get paid for that and they'd put that towards the hall or the school ... they were very interesting working bees I can tell you working for some of the soldier settlers because I was only 28 and most of these guys were pushing 50 and they knew a heck of a lot more than I did ...⁹⁵

All of the families brought young children to Yanakie. They petitioned for a school, which opened in a new building in July 1960,

but, within a few short years, the number of children had outgrown the school room. There were about 70 children along Millar Road, and the parents financed a bus to resolve the problem of school times coinciding with milking times. The school became the meeting place for the community while money was raised for a new hall. This involved all of the families in numerous fundraisers, which included rearing calves: 'we had to rear a calf or heifer every year for the funds for the hall. You either bought it or sold it.'⁹⁶

Among the criteria for selection of Yanakie settlers were the contributions they could make to their community, including whether they played sport, or were churchgoers. Reflecting on her experiences, Elaine Comben observed, 'as well as choosing small families I think they must have looked at the other things that those families brought with them too, because by and large all of them were very community minded.'⁹⁷ In the words of Dulcie Mortlock, 'everyone helped each other, all young families and not a lot of money so they shared equipment. Everyone was treated the same.'⁹⁸ Sporting teams flourished, including at junior levels. Reg and Wilma Jennings recalled, 'it was a big family and it was a wonderful place, really, to bring up our kids.'⁹⁹ Dances, kitchen teas, concerts and other functions at the hall involved the whole community, with the women contributing the cakes and slices that were considered their speciality to the suppers. The tight-knit group of 46 hand-picked families had lived up to the expectations of the commission.

At the opening of the Yanakie Hall in 1966, Sir Herbert Hyland, MLC for Gippsland South, congratulated the community for the success of the settlement. Despite the high costs of the project, in terms of pounds of butterfat per acre Yanakie had produced 100 while the Victorian average was 59, New South Wales averaged 31 and Queensland just over 15 pounds. In August 1963, the sixteen farms in the Yanakie Soldier Settlement section cost each farmer the equivalent of \$32,518. The government had subsidised the development of each farm by \$18,200 so that, for an overall cost of \$50,700, the blocks of an average size of 121 hectares sown to pasture with improvements of \$12–16,000 were the most expensive farmland in the district. The settlers started their farming in conditions that contrasted totally with those experienced in previous settlement schemes, benefiting from low interest loans, established pastures, high levels of fertiliser, agricultural advice on infrastructure, and modern houses. Yanakie became a model

example of global settler grasslands, and, in 1967, the Rural Finance and Settlement Commission hosted members of the land settlement boards of several Australian states and New Zealand on visits to the district. In terms of post-war reconstruction, it was a triumph of man over nature: the expansion of the European grasslands at Yanakie at the expense of the wetland habitats.

The people of Yanakie were welcomed by the wider community, with shops in neighbouring Foster and Fish Creek offering deliveries. Sporting teams were included in local competitions, and groups like the Country Women's Association, the Yanakie Progress Association and a branch of the Country Fire Authority formed and became active. The success of this integration was attributable in part to the community-minded people selected for Yanakie, but acceptance may also be due to the local structural changes as farming families purchased land on the plains. Yanakie became the model for many hill farmers, who now turned their energies to cultivating the plains as a way of achieving more success in the dairy industry. The environmental barriers in the hills—steep terrain, limited access for milk tankers and prolific weeds—constrained the ability of farmers to adopt more technical approaches. The commission had proven to these farmers that investment and management could transform coastal land, and, with heavy equipment and fertilisers more accessible, large areas of plains land were fenced, drained and cultivated.

In an era when closer settlement schemes were still favoured by governments, the remaining section of crown land at Yanakie was proposed for development. In 1960, the Soldier Settlement Commission assessment of the project included developing the back Yanakie Run and 6,600 acres of Wilsons Promontory National Park to make the scheme viable for 80 to 100 new settlers.¹⁰⁰ The Yanakie Progress Association, perhaps seeing an opportunity to expand the community, supported the proposal, although the Yanakie Cattlemen's Association registered a strong protest.¹⁰¹ The proposal was rejected by the Victorian public and the Victorian government and, in 1965, the 18,000 acres that made up the back Yanakie Run were added temporarily to Wilsons Promontory National Park, a move that was made permanent in 1969 and shifted the boundary to the current position.¹⁰²

At Yanakie, the role of the Rural Finance and Settlement Commission concluded in 1968 when the last purchase leases were paid

and the land became freehold. A year later, the Yanakie Roadhouse took steps to service the increasingly lucrative tourist trade as the popularity of Wilsons Promontory National Park grew, applying for a liquor licence despite protests from some of the farming families. In 1970, however, world surpluses of dairy products saw farm incomes plummet, and Yanakie farmers joined 10,000 other producers from across the state to protest against rural poverty. This and drought resulted in farm sales and the first subdivisions for hobby farms. As Rob Grylls recalled, 'land subdivisions were a way out for some of the older soldier settlers given their age'.¹⁰³

The diversification of Yanakie brought many changes, but the settlers remember the good times when they created a community at the settlement. In the words of Dot and Ewen Donaldson, 'it was the best thing that ever happened to us'.¹⁰⁴ This view was repeated by all of the settlers interviewed for the project on which this article is based. Few people remembered the environment before clearing for settlement, and, reflecting on the decision to establish the settlement, Bruce Lester commented, 'the 12,000 acres they took on was a pretty good fit for land selection. It had probably minor conservation value, it was soil that could be worked easily, it could be laid out easily, it lay well and had a similar development on private land alongside it'.¹⁰⁵

Memories of a decade when the commission worked alongside the farmers to ensure they succeeded were positive, despite the close management and loss of autonomy. The financial support of the purchase leases enabled farmers to put their resources into establishing their farms in a decade when prices for dairy produce were high and demand was driving efforts to improve productivity.

The World War II soldier settlement at Yanakie is representative of the Victorian response to the failures of previous schemes, including World War I soldier settlement. In common with settlement schemes around the state, the application of technology to develop crown land and improve soils at Yanakie, together with close management of the farmers during their lease period, contributed to agricultural successes. Interviews with the settlers and workers of Yanakie suggest that achievements owed more to the relationships forged through shared experiences and the desire to build the community. It seems too, that the common Gippsland origins of the settlers played a role, drawing on their familiarity with the dairy industry, the general environmental

conditions and connections to neighbouring communities. By the end of the 1960s, only one of the 46 settlers had chosen to leave Yanakie, the farms were prosperous, sporting teams were thriving and the school was overflowing with children. On the eve of the tenth anniversary of settlers arriving in 1969, Yanakie was a model of World War II soldier settlement in Victoria according to both the settlers and the Rural Finance and Settlement Commission, which promoted the area internationally.

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Rights, Reconciliation, and the Restoration of Djabwurrung and Jardwadjali Names to Grampians–Gariwerd

Ben Wilkie

Abstract

Grampians–Gariwerd has been a site for contesting visions of Australia’s history and heritage. Controversies over its Indigenous history have reflected national debates around Aboriginal rights, reconciliation and recognition. The park has been, in particular, the subject of intense debates over the place of Indigenous names on the Australian landscape. Exploring public and political discussion surrounding its naming since the late 1980s, this article argues that the recent history of Grampians–Gariwerd shows how understandings of the park have been in a complex relationship with not only local and regional concerns but also issues and movements of national significance.

Introduction

In March 1989, the *Warrnambool Standard* announced on its front page that the Grampians, ‘a range of mountains in north-west Victoria and named by a Scotsman with a fine sense of the ridiculous, will be renamed by a Scotsman with a fine sense of history’. The latter Scot was the Victorian government minister, Steve Crabb, ‘who was born in Arboath near the foothills of the Scottish Grampians’. The reportage made much of the Scottish connection:

Mr Crabb, whose ancestors demolished the Roman army’s famed ninth legion and thereby led to the building of Hadrian’s Wall, said yesterday, “Why on earth would we want to borrow a foreign and erroneous name at that, when the [Victorian] Grampians have been known for thousands of years as Guriward?”

The *Standard* elaborated on how both the Scottish and Victorian Grampians came to be named:

[Crabb] said that the Scots had fought a fiery battle with the Romans at the end of the first century AD [at a location] which a historian had called *Mons Grapius*. “However, the 16th century historian Hector

Boece misspelt the name of the battle as *Mons Grampius*, and from the oversight the mountains became known as the Grampians”, Mr Crabb said. Victoria’s mountain range was named by Thomas Mitchell in 1836 ... “When the white man came he wiped out thousands of years of civilisation and quite arbitrarily imposed names that were foreign and irrelevant”.¹

The above declaration was the beginning of many years of heated debate and political conflict over the meaning and significance of Grampians–Gariwerd. This article explores the contemporary history of controversies surrounding the naming of the Grampians National Park that emerged in the late 1980s and continued throughout the 1990s under successive governments. Some of these issues remain unresolved to this day. While accounts exist of the initial public controversy—in the work of Tony Birch, Ian D. Clark, and especially Laura Kostanski, whose PhD dissertation and associated publications have illuminated how place-name attachments fuelled initial debate over Grampians–Gariwerd—this article extends the history forward into the 1990s and explores further debate and issues around the dual naming of the park.² It incorporates evidence and materials not publicly available at the time, including Victorian parliamentary documents and transcripts. My aim is to develop a broader picture of the history of Grampians–Gariwerd in this era with a focus on drawing out political, public and media debates over the significance and naming of the mountain ranges for Indigenous and non-Indigenous people.

The history of the Grampians–Gariwerd debate has significance because the naming of places involves the projection of human values onto landscapes. As David Bruno-Wilson and Meredith Wilson have observed, ‘social and personal expressions of place-marking signal a cultural presence and give the land social significance. At the same time, it is in the social construction of a sense of place that people’s identities unfold.’³ Competition between traditional Indigenous names and newer European names can be seen as a battle of cultures and identities for ownership of the land. Landscapes are not merely ‘out there’ as physical spaces, measurable, and independent of cultures, described either accurately or inaccurately. Rather, landscapes can be understood as ‘the engagement of people in place, as experience of the world.’⁴ They are ‘meaningful, socially constructed places involving bodily and cognitive experience ... [they] exist in relation to the human actors who engage

with them and imbue them with meaning.⁵ In particular, at the height of European imperialism, national parks in settler colonial societies were framed as an element of Europe's 'civilizing mission.'⁶ The establishment of the Grampians–Gariwerd national park in the relatively recent 1980s, on the other hand, took place in a rather different context, and debates around its naming reveal a range of broader issues relevant to a nation coming to terms with its colonial history.

This article therefore explores the meaning and significance of the mountain ranges encompassed in the Grampians–Gariwerd national park for Australians both Indigenous and non-Indigenous, and suggests that such histories highlight how these important natural landscapes can become sites of deeper cultural conflict. Indeed, as the first annual report of the barely weeks-old Victorian National Parks Authority observed in June 1957: 'The National Parks of this State are reserved as samples of the Victorian countryside as Nature made it. They are the living and only true portrayal of the National character.'⁷ The debate over Grampians–Gariwerd both reflected local concerns and occurred against the background of significant national issues, including the land rights and reconciliation movements. This important national context shaped state and local discussions around the use of Aboriginal place names and the naming of Grampians–Gariwerd.

Restoring Gariwerd to the Grampians National Park, 1989–1992

Crabb's 1989 version of the events was relatively accurate. Before Mitchell in 1836, the Grampians landscape had only ever been described by the Indigenous people of the area. The Jardwadjali and Djabwurrung were the traditional owners of the landscape and features that would become known as the Grampians, while the Buandig, Wergaia, Dhauwurdwurrung and Wathawurrung also had names for features in the area. Indigenous people had been there for over 20,000 years before the Europeans arrived. In the late Pleistocene, Gariwerd was devoid of the sclerophyll forests that now cover its ranges. The mountains stood at the edge of an expanded arid interior zone—a place of shelter, and perhaps a base from which trade and hunting expeditions might begin or end. Evidence of permanent or semi-permanent villages has been found in the centre of the ranges, near Lake Wartook. Rock shelters were used for a variety of ceremonial and practical purposes, and it is within their protective overhangs that most Victorian rock art can be

found. Some of this art depicts Bunjil, the creator, and stands central in Indigenous cultural and material life.⁸

When the surveyor-general of New South Wales, Major Thomas Mitchell, arrived in western Victoria in the mid-1830s and came upon the mountains, he re-named them 'the Grampians' after the ranges in his country of birth, Scotland. This was a break from his habit of seeking out Indigenous names for landscape features; some time beforehand, Mitchell's party had encountered and massacred seven Indigenous people, and, in the aftermath, word had spread among the Indigenous groups of western Victoria that he and his expedition should be avoided. Although Mitchell found it both preferable and convenient to use local Aboriginal names whenever they could be ascertained, he noted on this occasion that 'it was not without some pride, as a Briton, that I, *more majorum*, gave the name of the Grampians to these extreme summits of the southern hemisphere.'⁹ From 1836, therefore, the mountain ranges were known in official records and maps as the Grampians.

As scholars have observed, however, the Grampians:

were central to the dreaming of *buledji Brambimbula*, the two brothers *Bram*, who were responsible for the creation and naming of many landscape features in western Victoria. Many of the Aboriginal place names ... are believed to be conferred by mythological Ancestors, and as such they are memorials to these mythic heroes. They record actions and events associated with Ancestors and many contain references to Ancestral body parts.¹⁰

But, as Gariwerd gave way to the Grampians, the landscape was secularised in a process we might describe as 'landscape iconoclasm'.¹¹

After a significant period marked by European exploration, science, recreation, and industry, in 1907 a large proportion of the area became a state forest, and sanctuary was declared over most of the Grampians by 1914. From the late 1930s, public calls for the creation of a park increased in frequency and prominence until, in 1951, a State Development Committee on National Parks recommended the creation of a Grampians national park. Some 30 years later, in 1981, the Land Conservation Council put forward its first plans for a park, and, finally, in 1984 the area was official proclaimed and protected as the Grampians National Park.¹² Historian Tracey Banivanua-Mar has argued that the creation of national parks in settler colonial societies

such as Australia may be understood as the natural extension of the dispossession of Indigenous land; even ‘waste’ landscapes could be subjected to settler notions of private property.¹³ In this case, however, the Indigenous heritage of the mountains would be retained, it was hoped, with involvement of five Aboriginal traditional owner groups—brought together as the Brambuk organisation—representing a large portion of western Victoria.¹⁴

Five years after the establishment of the park, in March 1989, Crabb commissioned Ian D. Clark and Ben Gunn—a historical geographer and an archaeologist, respectively—to begin researching traditional names and to make recommendations to the government’s newly formed Aboriginal tourism unit for the restoration of Indigenous names to the Grampians.¹⁵ This was against a background of nationally significant Indigenous movements and issues, including controversies surrounding the bicentenary celebrations, the revival of the notion of a treaty in 1987 under the Hawke government, the beginning of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody in 1988, and, more broadly, the emergence of newly invigorated spheres of Aboriginal arts, media, and culture.¹⁶ Of particular significance to the renaming of Grampians–Gariwerd would be the 1992 Mabo land rights decision, which established communal native title as part of the common law of Australia and overturned the historical concept of *terra nullius*. The anxiety and turmoil that emerged in the wake of that decision, as well as the momentum for change in Indigenous affairs seized by the Keating government, would both be reflected in debates about renaming the Grampians National Park.¹⁷

In 1985, Gunn had already made submissions to the Victorian government, arguing that many of the European names were inappropriate and that new names should be chosen in consultation with local Aboriginal groups.¹⁸ Crabb did not approach Aboriginal communities from the outset, however, eliciting criticism from Framlingham Aboriginal Trust administrator, Geoff Clark, who characterised Crabb’s approach to the issue as ‘racist’ and said that, although he ‘supported changing the names ... it was unfair Aborigines had not been asked what they wanted’.¹⁹ Despite receiving assurances from the minister’s office that Aboriginal communities would be consulted, Clark warned that Crabb ‘and Major Mitchell are guilty of ignoring the Aborigines’ past and present association and ownership

of the Grampians area which extends over thousands of years.' Clark continued on this theme, asking sardonically: 'Will Mr Crabb, with his paternalistic attitude, expect those Aborigines among us with dark faces to be selling trinkets or beads and performing corroborees for his tourist industry?'²⁰

Non-Indigenous politicians and members of the public also reacted swiftly. One day after the announcement, a local Warrnambool politician, John McGrath, told the *Standard* that 'people in the Grampians area would probably be offended by the move,' and described the proposal as 'ludicrous.'²¹ As Laura Kostanski and Ian D. Clark argued in 2009, 'the non-Indigenous community in the Grampians region felt attached to non-Indigenous understandings of the landscape. The non-Indigenous community was not familiar with the Indigenous Jardwadjali and Djabwurrung landscapes of Gariwerd, and the most common human reaction to the unknown is fear and rejection.'²² One notable public statement—in the form of a letter to the editor of the *Age*—exemplified the complicated nature of the debate over the Grampians' meaning. One J. Fitzsimmons, writing a day after Crabb's announcement, asserted that 'the Minister for Tourism ... wants to rewrite history by renaming one of Victoria's more historic and scenic areas.' Fitzsimmons continues:

This would effectively deny recognition of the substantial human effort by Major Mitchell and his party more than 150 years ago to become the first Europeans to reach the area ... Mr Crabb's audacity is almost the equal of his ambiguity ... There is some question as to the validity of any Aboriginal place name recommendations in The Grampians. This is based on the claim that there are no true descendants of The Grampians' original inhabitants left ... This exercise in audacity, if pursued, would set a dangerous precedent. Leave history, and The Grampians, alone Mr Crabb.²³

There was evidence, therefore, of competing visions of the Grampians, their history and their ownership. Indeed, the national issue of land rights formed important context to the conflict over the Grampians' heritage. In May 1989, the deputy leader of the National Party in Victoria, Bill McGrath, drew attention in parliament to a petition of 11,000 signatures in opposition to the name change and then linked the issue to Indigenous land rights. 'Will the Minister for Tourism assure the House,' asked McGrath, 'that his unpopular push to rename the Grampians Guriwurd is not part of a hidden agenda to

hand over the area to people who may claim to be traditional owners and then lease it back, as is the case with Ayers Rock?’²⁴

All but confirming such fears, in June 1990, a Labor Party Aboriginal affairs policy committee recommended that Gariwerd be ‘handed over to Victorian Aboriginal communities and leased back to the State Government.’ The committee argued that the state government ‘should go further in recognising Aboriginal ownership of the park’ and called upon Labor ‘to strengthen its commitment to granting Victorian Aborigines land-rights and compensation for the unlawful dispossession and dispersal of their lands.’ The committee recommended that ownership of the Grampians National Park be transferred to the Indigenous community, and that the State Conservation and Environment Department then lease it back.²⁵ Indeed, a year later, in August 1991, the Victorian Labor government suggested it would introduce a bill granting Indigenous Victorians

the right to reclaim Crown land and national parks. National parks would be handed over subject to lease-back deals with the Government, such as at Uluru in the Northern Territory. The first such land claims would be made on the Grampians and Wilsons Promontory, both of which host significant Aboriginal sites.²⁶

Just a few months later, however, the government and Crabb himself backed away from the commitment.²⁷

The Victorian government, of course, had yet even to change the name of the Grampians. In an attempt to quell fears, Minister for Property and Services Ron Walsh reminded the public in June 1990 that ‘no decision to change the name of the national park would be made until there had been extensive public consultation’, which was already an element of the process. Walsh said that ‘he hoped a decision on the proposal could be made without hysteria’, and that, ‘because of the sensitive nature of the proposal, the [place-names committee] would be canvassing as many authorities as possible for their written comments.’²⁸ As historian and poet Tony Birch observed in 1992, many of the responses to the consultation process reflected an anxiety about ownership of land and history: ‘An attempt to recognise the history of indigenous people creates insecurity, paranoia, even hysteria’, argued Birch.²⁹ Responses submitted abounded with references to the potential to ‘wipe out’ British history, consigning the heritage of settlers to ‘the

scrapheap of history’, and the fear that familiar places and their pasts would ‘disappear from the map.’³⁰ The *Hamilton Spectator* argued in May 1990 that Crabb should ‘leave history as it stands.’³¹ This history was not, essentially, Indigenous Australian history.

Despite these controversies, sixteen months after the initial announcement Ian D. Clark and co-author Lionel Harradine submitted their final report to the Victorian Place Names Committee. The researchers had identified and documented 86 place names in and around the national park, along with nine preferred names for rock art sites. These names were derived from the words and vocabulary of nineteenth-century Jardwadjali and Djabwurrung speakers—the traditional owners of the land that formed the Grampians National Park. Clark and Harradine argued that there was

a very strong case for the restoration of Aboriginal place names and for the ascertaining and publishing of the meanings of these words ... Just as there is now a very definite interest and awareness of the need to maintain what has been left of Koorie life, culture, rock art and traditions, so there should be a growing awareness for the need to preserve Koorie place names.³²

Clark and Harradine noted their research suggested that ‘the Grampians Ranges were traditionally known as *Gariwerd*. *Gariwerd*, recorded by George Robinson on the 11th of June, 1841, as “Currewart”, was obtained at Coonongwootong station from *Jardwadjali* speakers.’³³ Explaining the etymology of ‘Gariwerd’, the researchers continued:

Gariwerd is a compound noun. *Gar* means “pointed mountain” and is cognate with the word for “nose”. The *-i* is the particularizing suffix, which translates into “the”. *Werd* means “shoulder” and appears in “*werdug*” (pronounced *werdook*) “his shoulder”, the correct form for “Wartook”. The compound simply means “The Mountain Range”, and is descriptive and specialized for the mountain range Mitchell subsequently named “The Grampians”.

Crabb and the Victorian Labor government thus set about renaming the park and its features with traditional Indigenous names. Importantly, in 1991 no legislation existed in Victoria that allowed for landscape features to have both Indigenous and settler names. There was no formal process for dual naming, and thus renaming the park and ranges would seem at the time to mean either removing ‘Grampians’ and

replacing it with ‘Gariwerd’ and other traditional names for features in the ranges, or implementing new hybrid, Anglo-Indigenous names.³⁴ Although Clark and Harradine found that Indigenous communities preferred the exclusive reintroduction of Aboriginal names, the alternative method of *de facto* dual naming would come to prevail as a compromise solution.³⁵

In October 1991, Crabb announced that the Victorian Place Names Committee had decided to restore 49 of the recommended place names, rejected fifteen, and asked for further investigation into four more. The park was subsequently renamed Grampians (Gariwerd) National Park, and many other landscape features received dual names, including: Yananginj Njawi Gap (Victoria Gap); Mount Sturgeon (Mount Wurgarri) and Mount Marum Marum (Mount Nelson). The changes would be accompanied by a \$1 million promotional campaign. Crabb maintained his enthusiasm for the changes, saying that the ‘Koori link is what can give a magnificent and rugged mountain range the depth and magic that distinguishes it from other spectacular mountain scenery’. The mayor of nearby Stawell, however, said he was incensed that ‘one man [Crabb] can defy the wishes of the electorate’, and that ‘the name changes were the first step in handing control of the area to Aborigines’.³⁶

The Labor government decision to change the name of the Grampians remained controversial, and the Liberal and National parties continued to attack and ridicule the move on various grounds. In October 1991, the Liberal whip in the Victorian Legislative Council, Richard de Fegely, argued against the name change from the point of view of cost. He said to the upper house:

The government is determined to change the name of the Grampians at enormous cost when the State is going down the gurgler and people are unemployed in their thousands. The government will spend \$1 million to advertise the name change. We will have to change maps, notices, road signs and the like. Surely the State would be better off by putting off that name change until farther down the track when Victoria can afford it.³⁷

The cost of changing the name of the national park was a recurring theme in arguments against the proposal. Shortly after de Fegely’s suggestion, Liberal upper house member Ken Smith noted his ‘concern about the recent name change made to the Grampians’. He continued:

The funds for that name change must have been transferred from Aboriginal affairs to conservation and environment so that Mr Crabb could pay for some of the work that has been done, such as identifying some of the Aboriginal tribes that lived in the Grampians area, to discover their correct names and so on. I am not sure how much money that cost the Victorian taxpayer; I am not sure how many Aboriginal tribes lived in the area. I am sure Mr Crabb, who is of Scottish descent, would not know too much about the Aboriginal people up there. How can he rename our Grampians? There was no community support for funds to be allocated for the name changes in the Grampians.³⁸

Indeed, the question of community support was another theme in objections to the proposal to change the name. Politicians who opposed the move, however, did so from the perspective of non-Indigenous communities. Even the Scottish Council of Clans considered renaming the Grampians ‘a threat to Scottish heritage and pioneers.’³⁹ Echoing some earlier voices in the debate, Smith went as far as to question whether the mountain ranges had any relevant Indigenous cultural heritage or history at all. ‘I remember the beauty of the place,’ he said:

but I cannot remember anything about Aboriginal tribes living there. I cannot remember any signs or plaques saying that such and such a tribe actually lived in that area. I do not know where Mr Crabb got his idea from. Perhaps it came to him in the middle of the night and he said, “Eureka”, or whatever is the Aboriginal translation, “I am going to change the name of the Grampians”.

Indeed, Smith ultimately suggested that the name change was ‘because the government is in its death throes and is trying to do some things to grab the Aboriginal vote ... It has attempted to do that by the renaming of the Grampians.’⁴⁰ This sentiment was echoed in a letter from the mayor of Stawell, who said that: ‘It seems to me more like a little group that can get what it wants like all the minority groups. The government just bows down to them and the government is ruled by the loudest noise all the time.’⁴¹

The notion that the name change was not to be taken seriously was another line of criticism, with parliamentarians referring repeatedly to the choice of name, whether it could be remembered, and whether it could be pronounced—‘Garryowen, or something like that!’, joked Ballarat Liberal politician Rob Knowles.⁴² In September 1991, the opposition member for Ripon, Tom Austin, described the name change

as a ‘gimmick’ and ‘a stupid decision.’ He argued that the Indigenous names chosen were ‘ones that people could not pronounce or spell.’⁴³ Arguing that conservation funding was being misspent and Victoria’s national parks were being mismanaged under the Labor government, the Nationals spokesperson on the environment, David Evans, said in August 1992:

There have been expensive programs ... such as the promotion of the name change of the Grampians to Gariwerd. Mr Crabb declared a new name for a park everybody knows as the Grampians—even the Victorian National Parks Association has not been able to fall into line with it. One year after having spent hundreds of thousands of dollars promoting the name change the latest issue of the Victorian National Parks Association Newsletter of 7 August 1992 refers to the Grampians National Park. Following the disgraced and discredited Mr Crabb in his program as Minister, the same government wants to declare the Murray–Sunset National Park Yanga Nyawi, even before the Place Names Committee has agreed to it. The government is ignoring the starving kangaroos and emus swimming the Murray in their droves to New South Wales; they would have appreciated a few dollars spent on feed from that \$500,000 spent on glossy brochures.⁴⁴

In the October 1992 state election—just twelve months after the final decision with regard to Indigenous naming was made—Jeff Kennett’s Liberal–National Coalition defeated the Labor government, which was by then into its third term and electorally unpopular. Crabb’s attempts to have Djabwurrung and Jardwadjali place names restored to signage, maps and official documentation were brought abruptly to a halt under the new government and, although public attention had been directed to the Grampians’ Indigenous heritage, little headway had been made in either formal government or popular recognition of ‘Gariwerd’ or other Aboriginal place names.

The brief episode had, however, highlighted the unease with which many Victorians responded to Indigenous claims on a landscape that non-Indigenous people had by now embedded with their own significance and meaning. As local writer Gib Wettenhall observed in retrospect, ‘citizens in townships surrounding the Grampians fought the reintroduction of Aboriginal place names as a major election issue on the grounds that Aboriginal clans had rarely visited the ranges. The citizens saw their indigenous antecedents as playing no part in creating

their floral wonderland'.⁴⁵ The government's reversal thus seemed to meet some local non-Indigenous community expectations at the time, but events of more national significance would compound sensitivities around the issue well into the 1990s. For now, competing understandings of the Grampians–Gariwerd landscape and deep cultural tensions had been revealed within the Victorian community.

Rights and Reconciliation, 1992–1998

The Kennett government was elected to power in the midst of a number of significant national debates on Indigenous affairs and issues. These issues were, in particular, the legal recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander land rights and the beginnings of the reconciliation movement, which had emerged in response to the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody as an attempt to reconceptualise relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. In 1992, the newly formed Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation presented its first triennial strategic plan to the federal minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander affairs. It argued that

Reconciliation is about bringing indigenous and other Australians together in mutual respect so that we can gain: a greater understanding of the importance of land and sea in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander society; better relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians and the wider community; recognition that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture is a valued part of Australian heritage; and, a sense for all Australians of a shared ownership of their history.⁴⁶

The election campaign did little to reassure Victoria's Aboriginal communities that the Coalition, if elected, would take these matters seriously. The opposition spokesperson on Aboriginal affairs, Michael John, released the Coalition's Aboriginal affairs policy on the eve of the election, with no official launch. In contrast to the 'usual glossy policy brochures', the document consisted of five stapled pages, and was criticised by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commissioner Alf Bamblett, who told the *Age* that the policy 'was so far off base it's not funny ... the coalition does not consider Aboriginal affairs a major policy area'.⁴⁷ Indeed, the policy warned Aboriginal people that they 'should fully understand that it will not be the intention of government to create a privileged group of people with special laws and ongoing

privileges not available to other citizens.’ John said that the Labor government had ‘acted insensitively in renaming landmarks, including the Grampians (Gariwerd), with their Aboriginal names. He supported dual names, but only where the local people had been consulted.’⁴⁸

From the first proposal in March 1989 to the announcement of the new names in October 1991, it had been the Coalition’s policy to overturn the name changes once in a position to do so.⁴⁹ Shortly after their election, the new conservation minister, Mark Birrell, announced that ‘Gariwerd’ would be removed from the name of the Grampians National Park. The decision was described as ‘a slap in the face for Koori culture.’ Geoff Clark, now chairman of Brambuk, told the *Age* that: ‘Governments come and go but Aboriginal heritage can be struck out or recognised at the stroke of a pen, it seems.’ He said that the ‘reconciliation process was meant to recognise Aboriginal heritage and foster a common understanding ... Yet you have a Government come to power that completely disregards Koori culture.’ In response to the decision, Brambuk said it would remove all mentions of ‘Grampians’ from the centre’s signage and documentation, and committed to only using ‘Gariwerd’ in the future.⁵⁰ An editorial in the *Sunday Age* described the dual naming of the park in 1991 as ‘a small, symbolic, and fine step along the path to reconciliation between black and white’, but said that Birrell’s move was ‘small-minded and arrogant’. Moving to land rights, the editorial continued:

With its judgment in the Mabo case, the High Court has demolished effectively the legal fiction that Australia was *terra nullius*—no one’s land—when Europeans arrived. In its own way, the renaming of the Grampians was a recognition that a people walked the land and worked it into their culture in a rich way that has tested the understanding of Europeans. They did not give up the land easily. They were dispossessed by force, or the threat of it, and that is the historical truth of it. Today, Aborigines in Victoria proudly call themselves Koories. It is their own word, and they seek their own place in their ancestors’ land. The struggle is difficult. But Aborigines have much to offer this society—different insights, different dimensions. They even seem willing to forgive the sins of the past. The renaming of the area the Grampians (Gariwerd) National Park was regarded by Koories as a reasonable compromise. To any right-thinking person, it was much more than that. Last week, the Government took a step backwards from reconciliation.⁵¹

Indeed, such was the impact of the decision that the *Age* would editorialise on the issue again a fortnight later. In the wake of the prime minister's now-famous Redfern speech, the next editorial argued that 'as Mr Keating spoke, Aborigines could reflect upon how little has changed and how—four years after similar fine sentiments were expressed during the Bicentennial celebrations—they are so often treated with indifference and hostility'. Pointing to the decision to remove 'Gariwerd' from the name of the Grampians National Park as an example of this hostility, the writer argued: 'Mr Birrell's action was hardly the high-water mark in the reconciliation process but it doubtless appealed to those who live in thoughtless dread of the repercussions of the High Court's Mabo decision and seek to deny Aborigines any recognition at all.'⁵² The decision to rename the Grampians without reference to its Aboriginal heritage therefore seems to have jarred with a new public and political interest in Indigenous Australian land rights and reconciliation in the early 1990s.

Letters from members of the public expressed similar concern and disappointment with the decision. 'Shame on you, Mr Birrell, for abandoning Gariwerd ... What else have you and your party in store for the Kooris?' asked Brian Stegley. Another joked: 'You little beauty, Mr Birrell. Changing the Aboriginal word Gariwerd to the Scottish Grampians will teach them who's running the state. If they don't like it, they can go back to ... um.' A spokesperson of Action for World Development wrote that they were 'appalled by Mr Birrell's decision to drop the name Gariwerd. This is a slap in the face to Koori culture and, in the light of next year's International Year of Indigenous People, quite incomprehensible.'⁵³ Another argued, 'Mr Birrell's claim that dual names had confused people is no justification for his actions. As an elected community representative, Mr Birrell should, in my opinion, be promoting acceptance and understanding of Aboriginal culture within Australian society, so that such confusion will not occur in the future.'⁵⁴ One tourist wrote:

In Scotland, I live north of the Grampians, but when in Victoria I would rather visit Gariwerd. It sounds, and is, much more romantic. There are thousands of years of history behind the name Gariwerd, while, in Scotland, the word Grampian is but a modern misspelling of an unidentified hill.⁵⁵

Clive Rosewarne, writing for Friends of the Earth, argued that Thomas Mitchell would have used the name Gariwerd if he had been able to, and that the ‘withdrawal of the name Gariwerd is an insult to the Aboriginal people’. He said that ‘taking this action on the eve of the International Year of Indigenous People tells the rest of the world that Victoria is stepping back into its colonialist past.’⁵⁶ A cultural officer with Brambuk in Halls Gap, Tim Chatfield, told one reporter:

the name Grampians is not the true name. It is only a Scottish name that has been brought upon us here. The name has been taken away from us once but I guarantee it won’t be taken away a second time. Some of the sites are over 20,000 years old. It is part of our heritage where we need to take our young children, or younger generation of Aboriginal people, to learn the stories. This is what government departments don’t appreciate.⁵⁷

The response to Birrell’s move went beyond the public expression of anger at the government. At the request of Aboriginal community leaders in Victoria, the federal minister for Aboriginal affairs, Robert Tickner, withheld \$210,000 of funding for Indigenous law enforcement services in Victoria. He argued that the new Coalition government’s policies had been ‘divisive’ and pointed to the Grampians–Gariwerd naming decision as one of many government decisions that had ‘contributed towards the deterioration in relations with the Aboriginal community, which are now at a critical point’. The minister said that ‘the new Victorian Government needed to come to grips with the reality of the 1990s—that Aboriginal people were not a marginal issue and that Government had a role to respect and act on their aspirations.’⁵⁸ Opinion writer, Martin Flanagan, argued that:

The impact of white culture on Aboriginal society did not start and end in 1788. It continues. Furthermore, the beliefs underpinning the original assumption of the country are still in circulation ... The Kennett Government removed the name Gariwerd from the Grampians because, the minister said, it caused confusion. If that rationale were repeated in an international forum, the speaker would be laughed from the room.⁵⁹

Indeed, the land rights debate and Mabo High Court decision in 1992 had a marked influence not only on concerns about whether the Grampians National Park should include Indigenous names and

what consequences this would have, but also on the future direction of discussion about the park's Indigenous heritage more broadly. When the decision to drop 'Gariwerd' was announced, one Aboriginal spokesperson said that it was 'being treated as a hiccup compared with the implications of the Mabo case, that has given local Aboriginal groups renewed hope of making a land claim on the national park'.⁶⁰ By the middle of 1996, an indecisive native title claim had been lodged by Gunditjmara traditional owners over parts of south-west Victoria, including some southern areas of the Grampians. This was amid a flurry of applications to the Native Title Tribunal by Aboriginal communities across Australia in the mid-1990s seeking to claim both crown land and land within national parks and other conservation areas.⁶¹

Further to this, in addition to land rights and reconciliation, a new issue emerged in the sphere of Australian Aboriginal affairs that would further determine government attitudes towards Indigenous rights and recognition. In 1997, the Report of the National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from Their Families was released. Better known as *Bringing Them Home*, this report documented the inquiry into Australia's history of 'laws, practices and policies which resulted in the separation of Indigenous children from their families by compulsion, duress or undue influence'.⁶² The report alleged cultural genocide, and called for reparations and an official apology. State governments, churches, and police forces issued apologies, while the federal government under Prime Minister John Howard famously refused to do so. In September 1997, Premier Kennett issued an apology in the Victorian Legislative Assembly. He said that the parliament 'apologises to the Aboriginal people on behalf of all Victorians for the past policies under which Aboriginal children were removed from their families and expresses deep regret at the hurt and distress this has caused and reaffirms its support for reconciliation between all Australians'.⁶³

The apology represented a noticeable change from the Coalition's approach to Aboriginal affairs in the election of 1992. *Bringing Them Home*, the debate over land rights, and the reconciliation process had given impetus to a change in political and public attitudes towards Indigenous affairs. The Victorian government had been roundly criticised for dropping Gariwerd from the title of the Grampians National Park, but, by the late 1990s, the debate had broadly shifted

away from the issue of whether or not Aboriginal recognition and rights should be acknowledged, and had moved towards discussions of how and when these issues would be dealt with.

Recognising the Importance of Place: 1998 to the Present

Within this context, the matter of Aboriginal place names emerged once again. In 1995, the Victorian Place Names Committee guidelines began to encourage the use of Aboriginal place names where the relevant Aboriginal community groups had been consulted and an agreement had been made.⁶⁴ In 1998, Liberal MLA for Seymour, Marie Tehan, presented a bill to the parliament that sought to alter the processes by which Victorian places were named. What would eventually become the *Victorian Geographic Place Names Act 1998* formally decentralised decision-making processes from the Place Names Committee, and empowered local and regional communities to choose and change place names. Changes to places of Victorian or national significance would be reviewed by an expert advisory committee that included members with knowledge of history, heritage, and Indigenous culture and language, among other specialisations.⁶⁵

Tehan argued that: 'Geographic place names serve two major purposes. The primary purpose is the practical need to identify localities and features and to communicate direction. Place names also express tangibly the human activity of investing the landscape with meaning and memory.'⁶⁶ The parliamentary discussions of the bill reflected a more sophisticated understanding of place and identity than was revealed in earlier debates around Grampians–Gariwerd. Labor member Sheryl Garbutt argued that: 'The bill is important to the community because names preserve our heritage. They tell of our culture, our history, the state and the people. Names are often used symbolically to reflect our historic events.' Martin Dixon, the Liberal member for Dromana, observed that:

Place names affect our lives in important ways, most of which we are unaware of until we start investigating them. For many years people all over the world have attached meaning to the places they name. A place could be given a name because of its geographical feature, because it is a site of significance, or because it reminds the person of home. We do the same thing in our own lives and extend the practice to our naming of places and things in the wider community.

Throughout the reading of the bill, members made frequent references to Aboriginal place names. Liberal MLC John Ross pointed out, for instance, that:

given the rich history of Bunurong people and the extent to which their lives were documented, I record my disappointment that as far as I have been able to ascertain there is not one street, road or locality in my electorate that celebrates their ancient history, and I take the opportunity of the passage of this important legislation to call on the relevant municipalities to give early consideration to correcting that anomaly.⁶⁷

David Lean, then the Liberal Party representative for Carrum, commended the bill for its 'cultural and heritage significance'. He focused in particular on Aboriginal place names and observed that 'when the name of Ayers Rock is registered as Uluru it has a magical quality. It is the same with the Olgas, or Kata Juta; they too have that magic'. Lean pointed out that the bill made provisions for Indigenous culture and argued 'many difficulties will be solved with its introduction'.⁶⁸ Indeed, the guidelines accompanying the Geographic Place Names Act, first released in January 1999, consistently encouraged the use of Aboriginal place names and set out processes for dual naming.⁶⁹ The Act and the parliamentary discussion around it reflected a shifting perception of the cultural significance of place names for Indigenous and non-Indigenous Victorians alike.

Significantly, changes to the ways in which Victorian places were named opened up the possibility for a return of 'Gariwerd' to the Grampians National Park. Although the Kennett government halted moves to rename the national park in 1992, since that time 'Gariwerd' had entered public vocabulary. The Friends of Grampians group, established in 1984, changed its name to Friends of Grampians Gariwerd in 1997 because it 'wanted to more formally recognise the importance of the Park to the indigenous peoples'.⁷⁰ Throughout the 1990s, travel writers and media reports referred, inconsistently and variously, to 'Grampians/Gariwerd' and 'Grampians (Gariwerd)', as did politicians. The debate sparked in 1989 by Steve Crabb had spread awareness of the park's Indigenous culture, heritage, and names. Indeed, when he was later interviewed about the controversy, Crabb revealed that his approach to the proposal was in fact intended to create controversy and

publicity for the park. In her study of public responses to Indigenous place naming, Laura Kostanski argued that Crabb and a local tourism lobbyist ‘had not only purposefully created a controversy with which to announce the name restoration proposal, but they had also continued to fan the fires of opposition to ensure publicity for [the Grampians]’. Kostanski found, however, that those who initially objected to the name change were not any more inclined to support Indigenous place names for the Grampians nearly two decades later. Crabb himself was non-committal.⁷¹



Roadside signage on the Glenelg Highway near Dunkeld, Victoria
(Photographs Ben Wilkie)

The naming of the park varies to this day. The Commonwealth National Heritage List registers it as ‘Grampians National Park (Gariwerd)’; as does the Victorian National Parks Association, while Parks Victoria refers to ‘Grampians National Park’ in its official documentation.⁷² Signage in and around the park is similarly inconsistent. In 2014, Jeremy Clark—then executive officer of Brambuk—told a Victorian parliamentary inquiry into heritage tourism and ecotourism:

We would like to see things like the name of the national park revert to its traditional name of Gariwerd. We would like to see dual signage at the very least throughout the park, for the Aboriginal story to be told in the park. The park is marketed on its natural assets, and that is great, but there is a whole layer of Aboriginal heritage that is not part of it. If that happens, it will lift the profile of Aboriginal people and the profile of our heritage ... I would love Aboriginal culture and heritage

to be incorporated across the board, whether it is names, information or experiences. It should not be a difficult thing, but it has been in the past. It could be the start of something.⁷³

It has, indeed, been a difficult process. Since 1989, Grampians–Gariwerd has been a site for contesting visions of Australia’s history and heritage, and it has reflected national debates around Indigenous rights, reconciliation, and recognition. As this article has shown, the Grampians have been the subject of intense controversies over the place of Indigenous names on the landscape. But, as Jeremy Clark attests, Grampians–Gariwerd also holds potential as a site for future recognition of Aboriginal history, heritage, and culture. What its history since the late 1980s demonstrates is that understandings of the park have been in a complex relationship not only with local and regional concerns, but also with issues and movements of national and even international significance.

Notes

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- 3 David Bruno-Wilson and Meredith Wilson, ‘Introduction’, in *Inscribed Landscapes: Marking and Making Place*, Honolulu, University of Hawai’i Press, 2002, pp. 5–6.
- 4 Bruno-Wilson and Wilson, pp. 5–6.
- 5 Bruno-Wilson and Wilson, pp. 5–6.
- 6 See the relevant sections on parks and imperialism in Bernhard Gissibl, Sabine Höhler and Patrick Kupper (eds), *Civilizing Nature: National Parks in Global Historical Perspective*, Berghahn, New York, 2012, pp. 31–122.
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- 9 Thomas Mitchell, *Three Expeditions into the Interior of Eastern Australia, with Descriptions of the Recently Explored Region of Australia Felix, and the Present Colony of New South Wales*, Vol. 1, T. & W Boone, London, 1838, pp. 175–85.
 - 10 Ian D. Clark and Lionel L. Harradine, *The Restoration of Jardwadjali and Djabwurrung Names for Rock Art Sites and Landscape Features in and around the Grampians National Park: A Submission to the Victorian Place Names Committee*, Koorie Tourism Unit, Melbourne, 1990, p. 21.
 - 11 Jose Antonio Gonzalez Zarandona, 'Towards a Theory of Landscape Iconoclasm', *Cambridge Archaeological Journal*, vol. 2, no. 2, 2015, pp. 461–75.
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 - 13 Tracey Banivanua-Mar, 'Carving Wilderness: Queensland's National Parks and the Unsettling of Emptied Lands, 1890–1901', in Penny Edmonds and Tracey Banivanua-Mar (eds), *Making Settler Colonial Space: Perspectives on Race, Place, and Identity*, Palgrave, London, 2009, pp. 73–94.
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HISTORICAL NOTES

Lt James Cook on the Coast of Victoria 1770

Trevor Lipscombe

Abstract

Lieutenant James Cook's 1770 journal records his naming of three land features on the coast of today's Victoria. On today's maps and charts two of these, Point Hicks and Ram Head, are not where Cook intended. The third, Cape Howe, is correctly placed but many historians believe it is elsewhere. This paper explains how these errors arose, and presents evidence that shows Cook's intended locations. For the first time in nearly 250 years this article presents an accurate record of what Cook saw and named on Victoria's coast in 1770.

The approaching 250th anniversary of Lt James Cook's 1770 charting of the eastern part of Victoria's coast provides an opportunity to at last correct the historical record regarding the land features he saw and named, and to restore Cook's legacy. The three land features concerned, Point Hicks, Ram Head and Cape Howe, are significant as the first land features on the eastern coast of mainland Australia to be named by a European. However, Point Hicks and Ram Head do not appear on today's maps and charts where Cook intended, and Cape Howe appears in the correct place but the recent historical record generally puts it elsewhere. Two of these errors, those at Point Hicks and Cape Howe, have their origins in articles in earlier issues of this journal.

Point Hicks

The first and most contentious of these errors is that of Point Hicks.¹ As day broke on 19 April 1770 *Endeavour* and her crew, arriving off the shores of today's East Gippsland, made their first landfall on Australia. At 8 a.m. Cook named the southernmost land he could see Point Hicks for Lt Zachary Hicks, who was the officer of the watch and the first to sight land on that fateful morning. Unfortunately for Cook, what he named turned out to be a cloudbank. Such was the reverence in which Cook was held that none of the early navigators who came after

him—Matthew Flinders, John Lort Stokes, and Philip Gidley King, all great navigators in their own right—were prepared to publish his error. Recognising that it did not exist as a land feature, they just left Point Hicks off their charts.

When Cook’s error was eventually confronted and published, it was by Thomas Walker Fowler, a land surveyor and civil engineer, in 1907, 137 years after the event.²

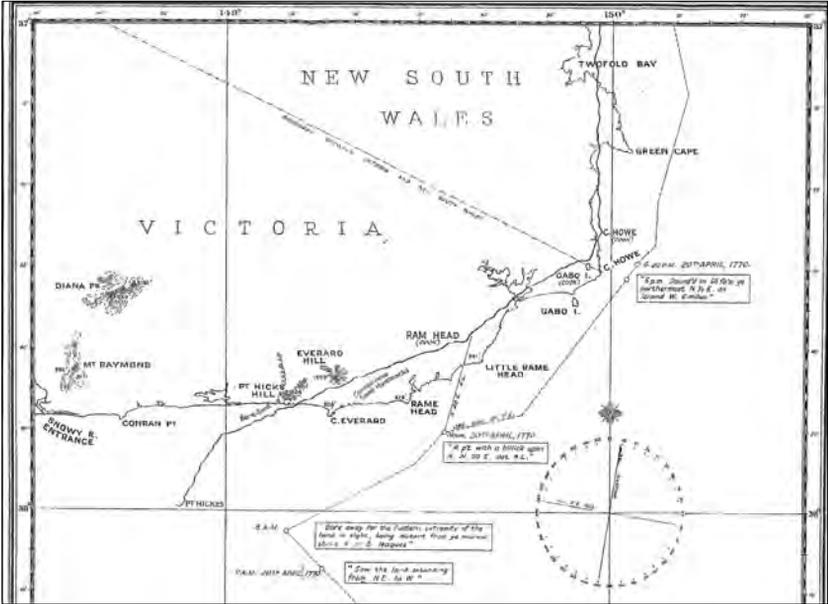


Figure 1: Admiralty Chart 3169 with Lt Cook’s Coastline and Track of H.M. Bark Endeavour—L. Barker 1933 (Courtesy National Archives of Australia)

Cook’s position for Point Hicks is shown, lower left, far from the actual coast. Cook’s placement of both Ram Head and Cape Howe is about three nautical miles north and west of their actual position. A map in Fowler’s 1907 article shows similar positions for the key features.

Fowler was taken to task in the pages of the *Victorian Historical Magazine* by eminent historian Ernest Scott.⁴ Scott had the highest regard for Cook and just could not believe that he could mistake ‘a clot of mist’ for land. So he tried to explain what had happened in the following terms:

There is also some doubt about the exact locality of Cook’s Australian landfall. He named the “southernmost point of land we had in sight”;

Point Hicks, because “Lieutenant Hicks was the first who discovered this country”. But unfortunately Cook stated the latitude and longitude of his Point Hicks incorrectly. He wrote that he “judged” the point to be where as a matter of fact there is no land at all, but only open ocean. We have therefore to infer what Cook’s Point Hicks was from his descriptive words. The “southernmost point” in sight of the *Endeavour* at the time was that which figures on Admiralty charts as Cape Everard.⁵

But Scott quoted Cook out of context. What Cook says, in Wharton’s edition of the *Endeavour* journal on which Scott relies, is: ‘The Southermost point of land we had in sight, which bore from us W $\frac{1}{4}$ S, I judged to lay in the latitude of 38.0 S and in the Long. of 211.7 W’. Scott completely ignores Cook’s key phrase ‘which bore from us W $\frac{1}{4}$ S’.

Today’s Point Hicks would indeed have been the southernmost point of *real* land nearest to Cook’s 8 a.m. position. But, owing to the curvature of the earth, it would not have been ‘observable from Cook’s situation’, as he was too far away for this low-lying land to be visible. However, and most importantly, Cook clearly says the southernmost point of land he saw lay W $\frac{1}{4}$ S (just south of due west) of his position at 8 a.m., not to the north as Scott insists. Further, Cook’s purpose in naming coastal features was for the guidance of future navigators. Hence they needed to be prominent and distinctive so as to be readily recognisable from out at sea. Cape Everard does not meet this criterion and so it is very unlikely that Cook would have named it even if he had seen it.

Scott’s reverence for Cook is indicated by the following passage. He just could not believe it possible that Cook had got it wrong:

Mr Fowler’s suggestion that “a bank of cloud was mistaken for land” would be fantastic, even if the observer was an amateur; but he was James Cook, the greatest navigator of his age, and one of the greatest of all time, the idea that he mistook a clot of mist for a cape is staggering. Cook made mistakes in reckoning ... But we may be quite sure that when Cook named “a point of land” it was a point of land and not a meteorological freak.⁶

Cook’s chart shows the coast in the vicinity of today’s Point Hicks reasonably accurately, but his Point Hicks was shown not on the coast where Scott said it is but more than 20 miles south-west of it (see Figures 1 and 7). This is hardly an error that ‘the greatest navigator of his age’ would have made. Fowler also points out that ‘banks of cloud close to

the horizon do assume appearances resembling distant land that would deceive the most experienced; citing the journals of Captain Furneaux in *Adventure* in 1773 and Flinders and Bass in *Norfolk* in 1798 to show that both were similarly deceived in the same area as Cook.⁷

Scott was treated with a reverence similar to that he had given Cook. Historians who followed, most similarly unqualified in maritime matters, just accepted Scott's version of events. Scott's most eminent convert to his cause was J.C. Beaglehole, perhaps the greatest of Cook scholars, who in a footnote on Point Hicks in his highly regarded *The Journals of Captain James Cook* agreed with Scott's position. Who would dare challenge the combined eminence of Scott and Beaglehole? Historians certainly did not, and most continue to follow Scott to this day.⁸ Fowler's evidence did not prevent a group of historians, including Scott, from persuading the Commonwealth government in 1924 to erect a plaque on Cape Everard asserting that Cook had named this spot Point Hicks. The plaque is still there. Since that time several navigators and surveyors have independently analysed Cook's data and provided clear evidence that Cook must have seen a cloudbank on that April morning.⁹



Figure 2: 1924 Obelisk at today's Point Hicks looking east towards Ram Head—the first land Cook saw (Photograph Trevor Lipscombe)



Figure 3: 1924 plaque at today's Point Hicks (Photograph Trevor Lipscombe)

The coast meets Banks's description of 'sloping hills covered in part with trees or bushes, but interspersed with large tracts Approaching from theof sand'.

When the bicentenary of Cook's voyage came around in 1970, despite protests, historians again prevailed and, to commemorate the bicentenary, on 20 April 1970 Sir Henry Bolte, premier of Victoria, stood on Cape Everard and announced: 'In 1770 Captain James Cook named the Point on which we stand Point Hicks'.

The final decision to rename Cape Everard as Point Hicks appears to have been strongly influenced by historian L.J. Blake, then president of the Royal Historical Society of Victoria and a member of the Cook Bi-Centenary Committee of Victoria. The announcement of the renaming event reopened the debate in the press. Maritime historian

Geoffrey Ingleton reaffirmed that Cook's Point Hicks was out to sea and concluded that Cook saw a 'cloud formation giving the illusion of land' and 'the false Point Hicks was placed on Cook's charts. Naturally, when the early Australian navigators began to traverse the coast, Cook's mistake was readily understood and the false feature, "Point Hicks" expunged from the charts.' Two hundred years after Cook, Ingleton was the first to state publicly that what Cook had seen was a cloud formation.¹⁰

Captain Brett Hilder, a very experienced Pacific navigator and hydrographer whose 1970 article provides the most elegant proof of *Endeavour's* track near today's Point Hicks, wrote despairingly: 'academics tend to believe the printed word of previous scholars rather than the printed charts of practical men who are the real experts in the matter of charting a coastline.'¹¹

Ram Head

Since Cook's Point Hicks does not exist as a land feature, Ram Head assumes a new importance as the first place Cook named on the coast of Australia. Following his naming of Point Hicks at 8 a.m. his journal records: 'At Noon ... a remarkable Point bore N 20 degrees East distant 4 leagues. This point rises to a round hillick very much like Ram head going into Plymouth Sound on which account I called it by the same name. Latd 37 degrees 39', Longitude 210 degrees 22'W'.¹²

By an amazing topographical coincidence, Cook's place of departure from England is neatly linked with his place of arrival in Australia. England's Ram Head was on the western shore of Plymouth Sound, and Cook would have seen it on his starboard side as he left Plymouth on 26 August 1768 at the beginning of his First Voyage. Confusion still surrounds both the exact site and correct spelling of Cook's Ram Head. Today's Rame Head is not the Ram Head that Cook named. On his whaleboat voyage from Sydney to Western Port in 1797, George Bass and his crew, hindered by bad weather, camped just to the east of today's Rame Head. Bass assumed, not unsurprisingly from its distinctive shape, that it was Cook's Ram Head. But the feature that Cook named, by a remarkable coincidence a similarly shaped but smaller version of today's Rame Head, lies further to the east. Bass's error was perpetuated on Flinders' chart, and Rame Head is still generally believed to be Cook's Ram Head.

In the summer months of 1852 and 1853 George Douglas Smythe, a Victorian Department of Crown Lands and Survey surveyor, made the first land-based survey of the coast from Sydenham Inlet to Cape Howe.¹³ His maps of this coast, on a scale of two inches to one mile, reached Surveyor-General Robert Hoddle on 4 February 1853 and were published as part of John Arrowsmith's Map of the Province of Victoria on 4 July 1853 (see Figure 4).¹⁴ This remarkable map shows a number of additional place names on a coast where, since the time of Cook, maps had shown only Ram Head (latterly where Bass and Flinders had placed it) and Cape Howe. The new names include Cape Everard and Little Ram Head, both names apparently bestowed by Smythe. Cape Everard was later to be renamed erroneously as Point Hicks.

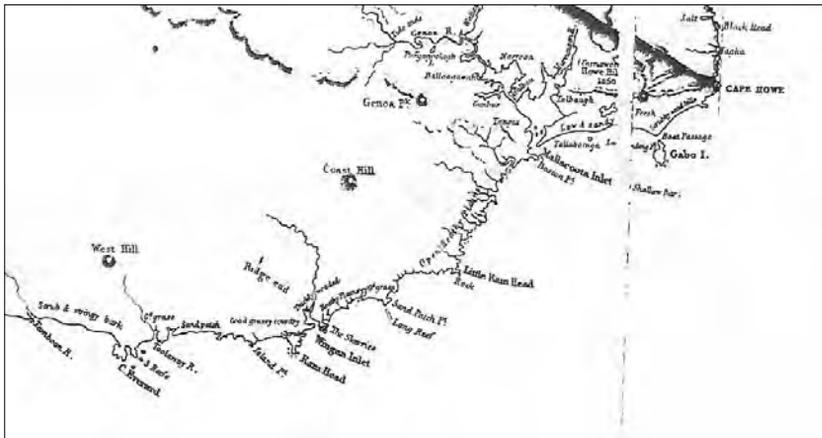


Figure 4: Part of J. Arrowsmith, Map of the Province of Victoria, 1853 (Courtesy State Library of Victoria, Libraries of Australia ID 14505336)

Little Rame Head is a smaller but similarly shaped point to today's Rame Head and fits Cook's description. The question arises of whether Smythe, a land surveyor, gave it that name because he recognised it as a smaller version of the Ram Head he had marked on his map a few days earlier, or whether he understood that it was actually what Cook had seen and named. The former seems more likely.

Thomas Walker Fowler, mentioned above for his role in the Point Hicks saga, gave an address to the Victorian Geographical Society of Australasia (Victoria Branch) in 1907 that appears to show he was the first person to demonstrate from Cook's data that Smythe's Little Ram

Head was Cook's Ram Head. Fowler suggested that today's Little Rame Head should be renamed Ram Head and today's Rame Head 'might well be called after Captain Cook or his vessel'.

As with Point Hicks, a number of land surveyors and hydrographers have arrived at the same conclusion about the intended position of Ram Head.¹⁵ It is unfortunate that more notice has not been taken by historians and governments of the findings of surveyors, on land and at sea, who were better qualified to assess Cook's intentions from the primary sources he left. More than a century later, Fowler deserves to be better known for his important contribution to these debates, and his suggestions for the renaming of Rame Head and Little Rame Head merit consideration in his memory.

Not only is Cook's Ram Head in the wrong place on today's map, but its spelling is incorrect. Cook, in his journal and on his chart, spelled it 'Ram', but today the English Ram Head is spelled 'Rame' and pronounced to rhyme with 'same'. Cook spelled Ram correctly, reflecting the spelling of the English Ram Head at that time. The English Ram Head appears on maps from the 1700s as Ram, but by the 1800s the spelling had changed to Rame.¹⁶ Arrowsmith's series of regularly updated maps of Australia, published in London from 1838 to 1850, show the spelling as Ram. His 1853 map shows Rame, reflecting the change of the spelling of the English feature. Admiralty charts, also published in London, changed the spelling of the Australian feature from Ram to Rame in 1852, and that spelling remains today. John Lort Stokes's 1851 survey resulted in two charts published in 1852, one showing Ram and the other Rame.¹⁷ In Australia, locally produced maps, especially those published in Victoria, continued to show the spelling as Ram well into the 1980s.¹⁸ The government of Victoria, compounding its error in renaming Cape Everard as Point Hicks, changed the spelling from Ram to Rame in the *Victoria Government Gazette* of 10 May 1972. The change was instigated by the hydrographer, Royal Australian Navy, who, in a letter to the Place Names Committee, claimed:

Rame Head and Little Rame Head. Since 1814 Admiralty Charts have used this form, which is correct. It will be noted that Cook named Rame Head after the prominent headland on the western side of Plymouth Sound, which was always, and still is, called Rame Head ... This office proposes to continue to use this correct form on its charts, and it is requested that the proper spelling be also adopted by your Committee.¹⁹

The hydrographer's reference to 1814 Admiralty Charts seems to relate to the English Rame Head. It may have been the spelling in use in 1814, but it was not that in use when Cook sailed out of Plymouth Sound in 1768.



Figure 5: Little Rame Head (Cook's Ram Head) from the north east (Photograph Trevor Lipscombe)

Approaching from the west, Cook saw the 'round hillick' as a more distinctive feature, rising directly out of the sea and marking the point where the coastline trends north (see map, Figure 1).

Cape Howe

In 1971 Brigadier Lawrence FitzGerald, in an article in the *Victorian Historical Magazine*, claimed that Telegraph Point, just to the north of Gabo Island, was the feature that Lt James Cook named Cape Howe in April 1770.²⁰ A number of reputable sources have since accepted FitzGerald's claim as correct.²¹

Cook's journal on 20 April 1770 recorded:

At 6 oClock [p.m.] shortened sail and brought to for the night having 56 fathoms of water a fine sandy bottom, the Northermost land in sight bore NBE $\frac{1}{2}$ E and a small Island lying close to a point on the

Main bore west distant two leagues. This point I have named Cape Howe, it may be known by the Trending of the Coast which is north on the one side and SW on the other (Latitude 37 28 S, Long 210.3 West [149.57 E]) it may likewise be known by some round hills upon the Main just within it.²²

The confusion in this case arises from Cook's statement that the small island, Gabo Island, was 'lying close' to the point that he named as Cape Howe. Today's Cape Howe is four miles from the island, a distance that might reasonably be regarded as not 'close'. FitzGerald wrote:

the nearest point on the main to which the island is "lying close" is that depicted on modern charts as Telegraph Point. There is another point of land four miles to the north east to which the name of Cape Howe has been attributed and which has been accepted by common usage. Cook's chart does not delineate two separate points of land, and the name Cape Howe which appears thereon, conveys no more than that the feature lies close to the island.



Figure 6: Gabo Island with Telegraph Point, the nearest point on the mainland, and Cape Howe beyond (Courtesy Parks Victoria)

FitzGerald's key premise is that Telegraph Point is the nearest point on the mainland, so it must be the point Cook was referring to as 'lying close' to his Cape Howe. But Cook did not say that Cape Howe was the *nearest* point to the island, only that the island was 'lying close' to it. Gabo Island was not Cook's defining parameter for his Cape; it was the 'Trending of the Coast'. Cook's chart (Figure 7) shows his 56-fathom sounding and thus his 6 p.m. position. Gabo Island is shown to the south west of his Cape Howe, which he clearly stated 'may be known by the Trending of the Coast which is north to the one side and SW on the other'.

Cook's purpose in naming land features was to assist later navigators on the coast to determine their position. Accordingly, Cook's named features are mostly easily recognised from well out to sea—usually distinctive mountains or cliffs. In this case Cape Howe (and Telegraph Point) are both low-lying sand spits and would not be visible unless navigators were quite close to the coast. But the Cape would, as Cook stated, 'be known by the Trending of the Coast'.

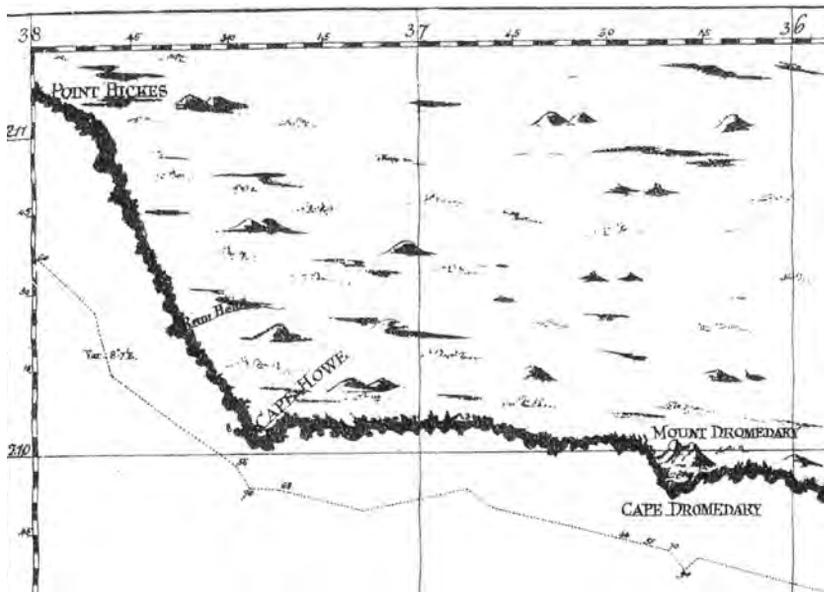


Figure 7: Cook's Chart of the East Australian Coast (part) (HRNSW, Vol. 1, Part 1, Chart No. 3)

Note that charts at this time did not always follow the convention of north being at the top.



Figure 8: The far point is Cape Howe. Gabo Island is just off Telegraph Point, shown in the foreground (Courtesy: Lighthouses of Australia Project)

Cook gave further guidance to later navigators: ‘it may likewise be known by some round hills upon the Main just within it’. The hills were worthy of mention since they would be more visible to navigators than the sand spits. The ‘round hills’ are sand hills, several of which are shown by 30 or 40 metres contours on topographical maps of the area behind today’s Cape Howe. Had Cook been describing the hills behind Telegraph Point he would have noted Howe Hill, a distinctive 391 metres high feature just four kilometres north north west of this Point.

Cook’s 6 p.m. position provided him with his first clear view to the north. There was open sea to the east, and he gave a bearing for the ‘northermost land’ he could see, which would have been Green Cape. This was a defining moment for Cook, as he suspected that he was about to head north along the uncharted east coast of the continent. Cape Howe was likely to be not just another cape but the continent’s south-east corner, and clearly qualified as a distinctive feature useful to navigators. Telegraph Point did not.

FitzGerald attempted to enlist Matthew Flinders and John Lort Stokes as supporters of his argument. He quoted Flinders, who ‘sought in vain for the small island mentioned by captain Cook’, and Stokes

who had concerns about ‘Cape Howe, which I discovered to be rather more out in longitude; while the islet, instead of lying off it, lies four miles to the south west’.

FitzGerald, still fixed on the importance of Cook’s words ‘lying close’, concluded:

The comments of Flinders and Stokes both point to the fact that the more northerly of the two points does not fulfil the description of Cook of “lying close” to the island. There surely can be no doubt that the more southerly point, now known as *Telegraph Point* was the one referred to by Cook. It fulfils perfectly the additional qualification of having “some round hills upon the Main just within it”.

Flinders’ and Stokes’s actions following their observations demonstrate that they were very clear about the point to which Cook was referring. Both showed it on their charts where Cook placed it, and where it remains on charts and maps today.²³ Given Cook’s clear description, it seems surprising that FitzGerald’s arguments have remained unchallenged for so long.

Restoring Cook’s Legacy

Cook, himself always a stickler for accuracy, deserves better than the treatment meted out to him by historians and governments. How can Cook’s legacy be restored? In my 2014 article in this journal, ‘The Point Hicks Controversy: The Clouded Facts’, I suggested, as others before me had done, that today’s Point Hicks, formerly Cape Everard, should retain its current name. Cook’s intention was to name the land first seen after Zachary Hicks, and that intention has unwittingly been fulfilled. However today’s visitors and future generations should be under no illusions about what Cook named, and why today’s Point Hicks is where it is. The 250th anniversary of Cook’s naming provides a timely opportunity to erect a plaque there explaining what happened on 19 April 1770 and why this place now bears the name Point Hicks.

As earlier writers have suggested, Little Rame Head should be renamed Ram Head, as Cook intended. It remains a forgotten part of Australia’s maritime history and heritage, and deserves to be better known. Ram Head is significant as the first feature on Australia’s coast to be named by Cook. By a remarkable topographical coincidence it neatly links Cook’s place of departure from England with his place of arrival in Australia. Ram Head has further significance as the first

place in Australia to be named after a place in Britain. It was also the first feature named by Europeans on the mainland coast of Australia between the eastern end of the Great Australian Bight and Cape York, a huge length of coastline that, at the time of Cook's arrival, still remained unexplored by Europeans.

Notes

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J.T. Gellibrand and the Naming of Gellibrand Hill

John Daniels

Abstract

This note traces J.T. Gellibrand's exact route over the Port Phillip Association's claimed territory (9–13 February 1836) and investigates Gellibrand's connection with Gellibrand Hill, a 204-metre high granitic outcrop to the east of today's Melbourne Airport, Tullamarine. This necessitates an examination of the earliest land tenure in the area.

Joseph Tice Gellibrand (1792–1837), appointed first attorney-general of Van Diemen's Land in August 1823, clashed with authoritarian Governor George Arthur over the issue of full rights of trial by jury. Gellibrand was dismissed in February 1826 and went into private practice. In January 1827, he and John Batman unsuccessfully applied for a land grant at Westernport. Undeterred, they led a group of prominent Tasmanian colonists to devise and fund Batman's expedition to Port Phillip in May 1835, with Gellibrand drawing up the deeds of the treaty. This group expanded to fifteen shareholders, eventually to be known as the Port Phillip Association, and used Gellibrand's legal skills in a campaign to legitimise their demands. On 29 June they produced a document outlining their claim as well as their agreement to certain rules that would govern the association and the new settlement. This document 'is now seen as Melbourne's and Victoria's foundation manifesto'.¹

In February 1837 Gellibrand and barrister friend George Hesse disappeared in the Otway Ranges while on a tour of inspection of the land to the west of Geelong. It was generally thought that they had vanished without trace and that their bodies were never found. It was a story surrounded in mystery that grew over time until a recent article in this journal by Fred Cahir, Ian Clark and Paul Michael Donovan unraveled its strands.² So ended the life of the man Rex Harcourt describes as 'the Architect of Victoria's colonization'.³ But Gellibrand's name lives on in an Australian electoral division, a village and certain landmarks: Fort Gellibrand, Mount Gellibrand, Gellibrand River and Gellibrand Hill, the latter being part of Woodlands National Park.

Gellibrand Hill provides a commanding view of Melbourne Airport, the city and surrounds, and is noted for providing the stone for Melbourne's Princes Bridge and other buildings. The questions that have intrigued me for a long time, and cannot be answered by the Woodlands historians, are: Why has this rocky hilltop carried the name of Gellibrand since Melbourne's beginnings? What was the connection with J.T. Gellibrand, if indeed there was one? To answer these I have had to go back to February 1836, eight months after the arrival of John Batman, and to determine (for it has never been established with any certainty) the route taken by Gellibrand on his tour of inspection of the land claimed by the Port Phillip Association (PPA). This journey led to subsequent land occupation developments that provide answers to my questions.

Joseph Gellibrand arrived in Port Phillip after a harrowing experience (being blown off course, drowning of men and loss of stock) in early 1836. He explored the Geelong area for a few days and, after spending 8 February in Melbourne, set off on horseback to view the claimed country to the north. With him were B.J. Ferguson (PPA member Charles Swanston's overseer), William Robertson (PPA member), William Linfield (Gellibrand's stock overseer), Robert Leake (independent settler) and Steward, one of the Sydney Aborigines who had accompanied Batman.

Surveyor and PPA member John Helder Wedge had toured Port Phillip in August 1835, producing a map of the claimed territory divided into seventeen portions. One assumes they were apportioned by the PPA executive of Gellibrand, Swanston and James Simpson. It is highly likely that Gellibrand was armed with this vague map, which shows no scale and very few landmarks. It could only have given Gellibrand a very rough indication of boundaries. Just like Batman before him, Gellibrand kept a diary, and a map of his route was made.⁴ Both are open to interpretation. Gellibrand's tour of the hinterland, unlike Batman's, did not produce momentous history-making consequences. However, it provides a puzzle that requires a solution; it provides clues to where Batman travelled; it adds to our knowledge of Melbourne's early beginnings.

Gellibrand's Route

The following diary excerpts and explanatory commentary describe Gellibrand's route:

9 February

At 2 o'clock ... left the settlement for the purpose of proceeding to the northward ... we proceeded in a straight line through the lands reserved for the settlement and over No. 9. In passing over No. 9 we crossed a chain of ponds extending a little to the N.W. When we had reached the extremity of No. 9 and were upon No. 7 it was nearly dark, we observed a tier of sheep hills to the right and concluded that we should find water at the foot, and we accordingly moved to the right and passed over about four miles of very fine land and just at dusk came upon a chain of ponds as we expected where we stayed all night.

They travelled north, to the west of Merri Creek. After crossing, they would have gone up the course of Gilbert Road (Melway 18 D11). Sheep hills were traditionally high but easily accessible lightly wooded land. This would be the Mount Cooper area in Bundoora (Melway 9 G1). Crossing Reservoir, they would have spent the night on the Darebin Creek.

10 February

We started this morning at day light bearing to the right and ascending the sheep hills so that we might be enabled to obtain an extensive view to the N.E. We travelled in this direction about four miles and from the summit of the hill we had an extensive view of the country composing Nos. 3 and 4 and part of No. 8. The country appeared rather thickly wooded towards No. 4 and particularly so over No. 8 and we were enabled clearly to trace the course of the River Yarra Yarra by the white fog. We then proceeded in a westerly direction until we came to the chain of ponds which I had particularly traced through No. 9 and the line of which I was then enabled to continue. This chain of ponds I considered to be within a mile of the side line between No. 7 and No. 6. The country and pasturage is here very fine and presents a desirable spot for a homestead. As I intended to come back over No. 1 and No. 2 and within a few miles of this spot I marked down on the chart two sugar loaf hills.

After ascending Mount Cooper, Gellibrand's party would have obtained excellent views from Quarry Hills Park (Melway 182 K8) across the wooded areas north and east, and the course of the Yarra would have been visible to the south-east. The Merri Creek was the chain of ponds, and the most likely hills in the conical shape of a sugarloaf are Summer Hill (Melway 387 H5), an unnamed hill one mile further north, and Woody Hill, a further two miles north. All three are now changed in shape and reduced as a result of quarrying. Since Gellibrand intended coming back 'within a few miles of this spot', these hills were a clear marker for his position.

The weather was exceedingly hot this day and we rested under a blanket tent for some hours at the ponds. In the afternoon we proceeded in a westerly direction over a continuation of plains. We then ascended a rise and from the summit obtained one of the most beautiful views I ever saw, commanding a full view of the junction near the settlement, of the bay Geelong Vilumanatta and the Barrabull Hill ... after taking observations and the bearings of these several places on the chart we continued our course over No. 6 until we reached the salt water river ...

The northern side of Aitken Hill (Melway 386 C12), just north of Greenvale Reservoir, slopes gently, and approaching it from that direction would equate to 'a rise'. Aitken Hill provides a good view towards Geelong. The Merri crossing was between Craigieburn Road East and Harvest Home Road (Melway 387 F11) where the Summer Hills and Woody Hill would have been within easy view. The map indicates a slight north-westerly trajectory from Mt Aitken where they would have reached Deep Creek, the upper part of the Maribyrnong River. The 'chart' Gellibrand refers to is unfortunately unknown.

We found the land lightly timbered and fully equal to our expectations as to quality. The country near the river is hilly and full of glens and is well calculated for an extensive sheep run. We continued our course on the high ground and near the river for about five miles and then descended into a small marsh near Gums Corner where we staid the night.

Although he does not say which direction they took upon reaching the river, Gellibrand's reference to Gumms Corner, named by Batman and which is in Keilor, indicates it to be south. Following the banks 'on the high ground' could equate to 'about five miles' to the junction with

Emu Creek (Melway 176 K1) where there was a marsh.⁵ Oddly, there is a property called The Five Mile on the western side of Deep Creek. Exactly how it was named is unknown. The troubling point here is that the marsh is a long way from Gumms Corner (Melway 14 K8). Gellibrand would not have known the whereabouts of Gumms Corner. Steward, who was advising him, possibly thought he was a lot closer than he was.

11 February

We this morning crossed the salt water river and took a westerly direction to the summit of a flat topped hill which Stewart stated was the hill from which Mr. Batman saw the native fires upon his first visit and which he called Mt. Iramoo. We then proceeded over a stream which nearly divides No. 5. Mount Cotterill was in full view.

Mt. Iramoo is Redstone Hill (Melway 382 K12).⁶ Jacksons Creek, the stream referred to, rises northwest of Gisborne and cuts a deep swathe southward through Sunbury. The exact location of this 'Mount Cotterill' is open to interpretation. Mount Cotterill in the You Yangs, as named on Batman's route map, would have been visible from here because Fox Hollow Drive, to the west of Holden Flora & Fauna Reserve, is high ground that tracks south along Lance Road (Melway 382 E2).⁷ However, Mount Kororoit (Melway 332 J12), called Mount Cotteril by P.P. King in March of 1837, was only four and a half miles south-west, and was more likely to be 'in full view'.⁸

We then proceeded NW about two miles and desirous of seeing land to the west we left our horses and ascended summit of the sugarloaf hill about half a mile distant. We then altered course due north and over good plains and near the foot of a tier of hills we crossed over two or three rivulets.

Bald Hill (Melway 381 K1) is a typical 'sugarloaf' shape. A range of hills runs roughly north-south behind Sunbury, with streams running from them through the Sunbury area.

We then came to a forest of gum and stringy bark and having rode about a mile and half we then altered course to due east. On our way from the forest to the line extending to the Vilumanatta hills we passed over two other creeks which appeared to flow south. Continued course until reached salt water river. The land of 1 is well-watered. We crossed three chains of ponds about three miles distant from one another. We stayed on the banks all night.

After following the range, they veered east, crossing the imaginary border line that runs from an unspecified peak south-west to the You Yangs, passing over Jacksons and Emu Creeks running south. Konagaderra Creek would be one 'chain of ponds'. Deep Creek was reached somewhere north of Konagaderra Road.

12 February

crossed the river and proceeded ... we now altered course to pass between the two hills I had marked down on the 10th. About a mile from the river we came upon a most beautiful vale extending apparently several miles to the northward and over 6 and 7. This vale contains about twenty thousand acres of the richest quality ...

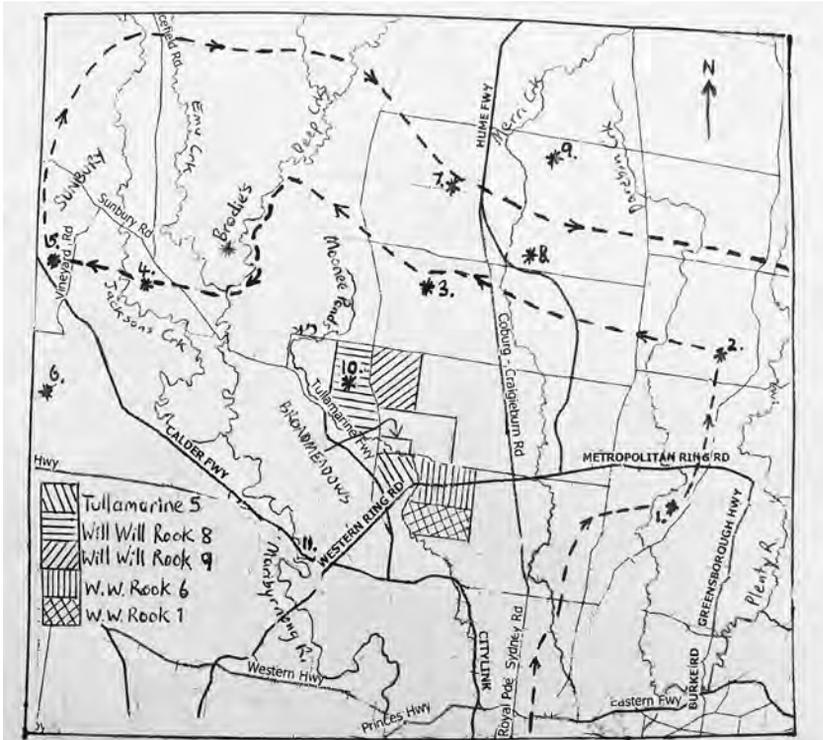
Since 'the two hills' are not marked on the map, it is difficult to establish his course other than to say it is south-east, as is indicated on the map. This aligns with them being the Summer Hills. The 'beautiful vale' north and south of Mount Ridley (Melway 387 A1) became Mercers Vale, named after George Mercer, who, together with British lobbyists, was allocated 2, 3 and 4.

We found the continuation of the rivulet and that it wound round the flat topped hill thereby affording a most eligible situation for a homestead. We then continued course about eight miles over fine feeding land and came upon a rapid stream flowing ... north to south ... We called this river the River Plenty ...

The use of the term 'the flat topped hill' indicates certainty and prominence. Such a landmark, which the Merri passes, is Mount Ridley. James Malcolm's Orlig homestead was established there soon after. Exactly at which point they crossed the Plenty is too difficult to determine. Continuing eastward they confronted difficult terrain and 'another rapid stream flowing in a southerly direction and which it was impossible to cross'. This was subsequently named Diamond Creek.

On 13 February, upon awakening, Gellibrand's party found the horses gone but tracked them to the Plenty, which the party then crossed; they returned to the settlement, arriving at noon.

The closest Gellibrand came to Gellibrand Hill was the 'small marsh' where Emu Creek meets Deep Creek, on 10 February. Now that it has been established that he did not visit Gellibrand Hill on his travels, we need to look at what evidence does connect Gellibrand to the hill that bears his name.



Map Legend:

1. Mount Cooper; 2. Quarry Hills; 3. Aitken Hill; 4. Redstone Hill; 5. Winilba;
6. Mount Kororoit; 7. Mount Ridley; 8. Summer Hill; 9. Woody Hill;
10. Gellibrand Hill; 11. Gumms Corner

After Batman's initial tour of discovery and land claim for the Port Phillip Association, pastoralists soon brought their stock across Bass Strait and took up land. Batman and Gellibrand, key drivers behind the PPA, were quick to take up some of the choicest pasture close to the settlement. Hoddle's map shows 'Sheep Station Batman's Hut' north of the West Melbourne swamp, 'Batman's Hut' just north of Moonee Valley Racecourse, and 'Batman's Sheep Station' on the Merri Creek at Craigsburn. 'Dr. Clarke's Station' is marked twice on the map: in Section 23 Jika Jika (present-day Oak Park), and opposite Broadmeadows Village Reserve.⁹ Another map, Parish of Will Will Rook, shows 'Dr. Clarke's Station' and three buildings opposite the village reserve.¹⁰ James

Bonwick outlines the initial distribution of flockmasters and says that Dr Clarke managed the flock for Gellibrand.¹¹ Hence, it is clear that Gellibrand lay some sort of claim to the Moonee Ponds Creek valley from Oak Park to its upper reaches around Gellibrand Hill. Shortly before Gellibrand's disappearance in February 1837, his order of cattle arrived, overlanded from Sydney.¹² The Moonee Ponds Creek valley was ideal for cattle farming.

Governor Bourke and Captain Phillip Parker King

Governor Bourke arrived in Port Phillip on 1 March 1837 and, on 9 March, accompanied by Captain Phillip Parker King and others, began a thirteen-day tour of the barely settled lands, first to Geelong and then north-eastward to Mount Macedon. His journal describes the return to Melbourne:

March 21. Moved to Mr Sams' on our return to Melbourne. Here crossed one branch of the Salt R. by a good ford and the second about three miles off Mr Brodie's Sheep Yard. The Plains from hence and to the Head of Gellibrand's Creek dry & bleak and of rather coarse herbage. Passed down the valley of Gellibrand's Creek (which is a good chain of Ponds) ...¹³

Just downstream of Sams' (and Jackson's) camp, on Jackson's Creek regarded as a branch of the Saltwater River, the other being Deep Creek, is a natural ford (at The Nook, Melway 382 G4), and Brodie's station was south-eastwards near the junction of Deep and Emu Creeks. Further south-eastwards is the upper reach of Moonee Ponds Creek ('the Head of Gellibrand's Creek'). The creek wends its way around the western and southern flanks of Gellibrand Hill. King also recorded going 'down Gellibrand's Valley, where he has three stations'.¹⁴

John McNall

Gellibrand Hill lies within the Parish of Will Will Rook, portion 8, purchased at the first lot of country sales in 1838 by Sydney-based land speculators Hughes and Hosking. They also bought portions 1, 6, and 9. C.J. Garrard (also Sydney based) bought portion 10. Duncan Cameron, in December 1839, bought all of these lots on mortgage to the owners.¹⁵

In January 1841, John McNall, Melbourne butcher, was answering to a charge brought by Duncan Cameron of having scabby sheep on crown land adjacent to Cameron's, 'Mr Cameron's being private and

Mr McNall's government property'.¹⁶ Hence, McNall's sheep must have been on or near Gellibrand Hill.

A map dated 1843 shows Mr McNall located south of the village reserve, on the same land as 'Dr. Clarke's Station' on the earlier maps.¹⁷ This land was in the parish of Tullamarine, not to be sold by the government until 1842.

In April 1841 McNall was facing insolvency, and the sheriff was selling about 2,000 of his sheep, on the 'defendant's run, known as Gellibrand's Old Station'. This was 'at the Moonee Moonee Ponds, ten miles from Melbourne'.¹⁸ In August of 1841 another sale (of McNall's furniture, implements, animals, crops, etc.) occurred at 'Gellibrand's upper station'.¹⁹ In November 1845, McNall's wife, in giving a deposition to court in a suit brought against her husband's estate (he having died in 1843), stated that 'when alive and residing in Melbourne he followed the occupation of a butcher; when he left he resided at Gellibrand's old farm, Moonee Ponds'.²⁰

At the government land sale in September of 1842, Portion 5 of Tullamarine parish was sold to George Russell of the Clyde Company on behalf of Niel Black. The *Port Phillip Patriot* reported that it 'includes McNall's station, on the Moonee Moonee Ponds'.²¹

Joseph Raleigh

Joseph Raleigh, merchant, arrived from Manchester in 1843 and became a very successful businessman, noted for his boiling-down works on the Saltwater River; for Raleigh's Punt at Maribyrong; for Raleigh's Wharf next to Queens Wharf; and for his steam-boats. He also owned several sheep stations.

In December 1845 Raleigh bought the remaining two years on the Portion 5 lease, previously held by Phillip Anderson who once worked for John McNall.²² In July 1847 a reward was advertised, to be paid to any party delivering lost 'cattle to Mr. Hill, at Gellibrand's Farm, or at Raleigh's Wharf'.²³ Henry Hill, farm manager for Raleigh, had property nearby and lived in Broadmeadows village.²⁴ In July 1848 Raleigh agreed to a further term of seven years and to fence the property.²⁵ In December of 1849 'the unexpired lease (being upwards of six years) of the GELLIBRAND FARM', was for sale: 'The farm contains about 400 acres, the whole of which is enclosed with a new fence'.²⁶ Apart from Gellibrand Hill and a nearby Gellibrand Cottage, that is the last mention found of the name Gellibrand in the area, and so ended Joseph Raleigh's

connection as well, although his permanent legacy was Raleigh Street, the main thoroughfare through the village of Broadmeadows. Raleigh died in November 1852. However, his family's connection was not completely severed. It seems that Samuel Thorp, Raleigh's brother-in-law, must have taken over the lease of Gellibrand farm, finally disposing of it in February 1856.²⁷

Gellibrand Hill

All original Will Will Rook portions (1, 6, 8, 9 and 10) were bought by Donald Kennedy in December 1847; he chose to live on portion 8. Gellibrand Hill had been quarried for its granite from at least 1844, with Kennedy's house, Dundonald, also making use of it. Ironically, John McNall came from Dundonald, east of Belfast in Northern Ireland.²⁸

Although we do not know exactly when the name Gellibrand Hill (or Gellibrand's Hill, or Mount Gellibrand) came about, the first written mention is found in a letter from John Leslie Foster to Robert Hoddle dated 13 July 1847. In this he called for the road from Melbourne to Mount Macedon to be 'in favour of the existing line in preference to that by Gellibrand Hill'.²⁹ In print the name is first found in a reward notice of April 1850, signed by 'WILLIAM SMITH. Mount Pleasant, Gellibrand Hill, Moonee Ponds'.³⁰ Again, in February, 1852, the name appears in an advertisement for a lost horse whereby the 'owner can have him by paying expenses to Messrs Machell, Mozergh, Yuroke near Gellibrands Hill'.³¹ In 1853 William Howitt travelled through what he described as a pleasant green valley 'called Broad Meadows, with a new though thinly-scattered village in it ... all backed by the high forest ridge of Mount Gellibrand'.³² Then, two years later, an advertisement in the *Argus* stated that: 'If William Murray, carpenter, from Portsea, comes out to Mount Jellybrand near Broadmeadows, he will meet his brother-in-law. J. Munro, carpenter'.³³

Gellibrand also gave his name to the residence of an early landholder, Gellibrand Cottage, situated on Mickleham Road and built around 1850. Marriages between local families, the Robertsons, Johnsons and McKerchars, were performed there, and a toll gate was installed opposite in 1861.³⁴ That cottage is long gone.

Joseph Gellibrand was allocated section 12 of the Port Phillip Association's claim, located between the settlement and Werribee River. To find his stock on the upper Moonee Ponds is quite surprising. And so, Gellibrand Hill was named because J.T. Gellibrand ran sheep on the

upper Gellibrand (Moonee Ponds) Creek and the name stuck. Whilst many others came and went, and development occurred around and on this rocky granite outcrop, its name has remained as a historical marker for what happened in the European beginning.

Notes

- 1 Letter reproduced in Rex Harcourt, *Southern Invasion Northern Conquest: Story of the Founding of Melbourne*, Melbourne, Golden Point Press, 2001, pp. 165–73, 207.
- 2 Fred Cahir, Ian D. Clark and Paul Michael F. Donovan, ‘The Remarkable Disappearance of Messrs Gellibrand and Hesse. What Really Happened in 1837. A Re-examination of the Historical Evidence’, *Victorian Historical Journal*, vol. 87, no. 2, December 2016, pp. 278–97.
- 3 Harcourt, p. 129.
- 4 Gellibrand’s diary features in T.F. Bride, *Letters from Victorian Pioneers*, Melbourne 1898, Reprint, C.E. Sayers (ed.), Melbourne, W. Heinemann, 1969; *Victoria No.1 Port Phillip*, Maps State Library Victoria (SLV). Original in Dominions Office, London.
- 5 Information from the Troutbeck brothers of Mickleham suggests that the only marsh along the length of Deep Creek was near the junction with Emu Creek.
- 6 John Daniels, ‘John Batman’s Route Revisited: His Exact Steps to a New Treaty Site’, *Victorian Historical Journal*, vol. 85, no. 1, June 2014, p. 149.
- 7 *Map of Port Phillip from the Survey of Mr. Wedge and Others*, Maps SLV
- 8 Captain Phillip Parker King, *Plan of the County of Bourke of Port Phillip, 1837*, SLV.
- 9 Robert Hoddle, *Melbourne—Surveyed Lands Northward 1837*, Maps SLV.
- 10 *Parish of Will Will Rook*, Maps SLV.
- 11 James Bonwick, *Discovery and Settlement of Port Phillip Being a History of the Country now Called Victoria, up to the Arrival of Mr. Superintendent Latrobe, in October, 1839*, Melbourne, G. Robertson, 1856, p. 85.
- 12 H.F. Gurner, *Chronicle of Port Phillip*, Melbourne, G. Robertson, 1876, p. 33.
- 13 Sir Richard Bourke, *Journal 1837*, MS5176, SLV, at <http://handle.slv.vic.gov.au/10381/249287>
- 14 Captain Phillip Parker King, in *Historical Records of Victoria, Vol. 1, Beginnings of Permanent Government*, Melbourne, Victorian Government Printing Office, Foundation series.
- 15 Jane Lennon, *Red Gums and Riders: A History of Gellibrand Hill Park*, Melbourne, Department of Conservation & Natural Resources, 1993.
- 16 *Geelong Advertiser*, 23 January 1841.
- 17 Tullamarine. SYDNEY T3, Tullamarine [microform], Historical Maps and Plans, Sydney Plans, Sydney, 1843, SLV.
- 18 *Port Phillip Gazette*, 31 March 1841.
- 19 *Port Phillip Patriot*, 5 August 1841.
- 20 *Melbourne Courier*, 7 November 1845.
- 21 *Port Phillip Patriot*, 8 September 1842.

- 22 Titles Application 26315–26318, Public Record Office Victoria (PROV); *Port Phillip Patriot*, 13 September 1841.
- 23 *Port Phillip Gazette*, 16 July 1847.
- 24 *Argus*, 28 September 1857.
- 25 Records and personal papers of Niel Black, 1838–1938, MS 8996, SLV.
- 26 *Melbourne Daily News*, 10 December 1849.
- 27 Raleigh family papers 1773–1988, MS12615, SLV; *Argus*, 28 January 1856.
- 28 *Melbourne Times*, 13 May 1843.
- 29 MS1046, Royal Historical Society of Victoria.
- 30 *Argus*, 15 April 1850.
- 31 *Argus*, 3 February 1852.
- 32 William Howitt, *Land, Labour & Gold; or, Two Years in Victoria, with Visits to Sydney and Van Diemen's Land*, Vol. 1, London, Longman, Brown, Green, Longmans and Roberts, 1858, p. 303.
- 33 *Argus*, 22 August 1854.
- 34 R. Gibb, *Mickleham Road, Mickleham, North of Melbourne*, <http://www.familytreecircles.com/mickleham-road-mickleham-north-of-melbourne-vic-aust-not-started-62180.html>, accessed 20 April 2018.

The Maldon Panorama

David Oldfield and Peter Cuffley

Abstract

The Maldon Museum holds an original 86cm-wide panorama consisting of three carefully joined albumen prints. This note describes the discovery of the date on which the panorama was made and the travelling photographer responsible. The available evidence suggests that it was taken at about 10.15 a.m. on Monday 29 April 1867 by Mr Charles Armstrong from Victoria-reef Hill in the area now known as Phoenix Street, Maldon. The panorama provides a glimpse of the commercial centre of Maldon at a time when the mining of the rich quartz reefs was in full swing.

Maldon in Central Victoria was gazetted as a township in February 1854¹ and surveyed by May 1854 following the discovery of gold near Mount Tarrangower in December 1853². One of the first acts of the newly elected town council in 1858 was to appoint a subcommittee to choose a site for a market building³, which was completed in 1859 and converted into the Shire Hall in 1865. The building became the home of the Maldon Museum in 1966. One of the artefacts that was passed to the museum was an undated panorama of Maldon. This note describes the discovery of the date of the panorama and the photographer responsible.

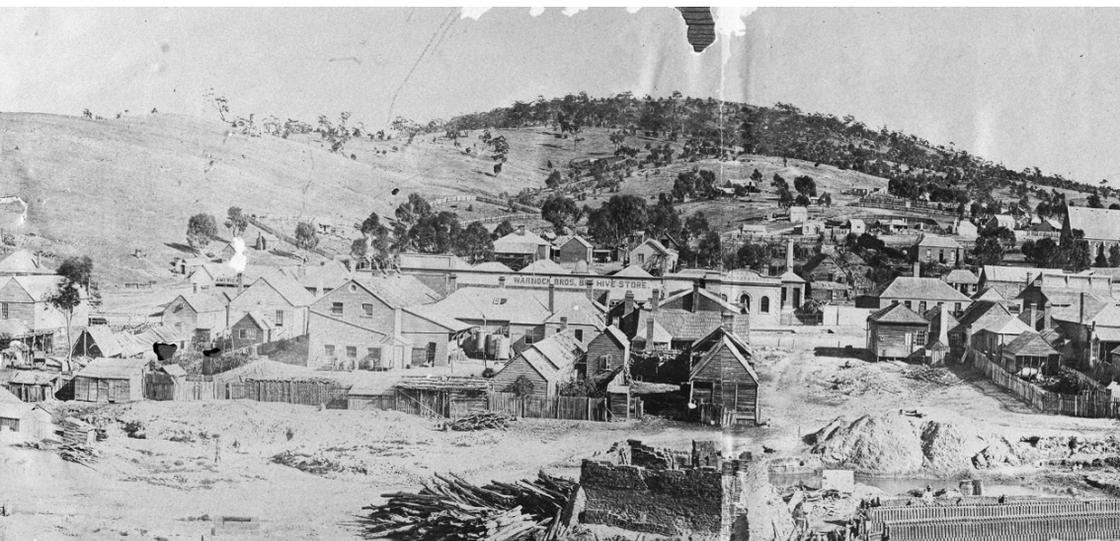
Quartz reefs, discovered in Maldon from 1854,⁴ cemented the reputation of the area as one of Victoria's richest quartz-mining centres and gave a settled appearance to the town, which had a population of 3,341 in the 1861 census⁵. A map of Maldon drawn in 1856⁶ shows a scattering of buildings along High and Main streets with a few drawn in the middle of the streets where they had presumably been built before the boundaries of the streets had been marked out on the ground.

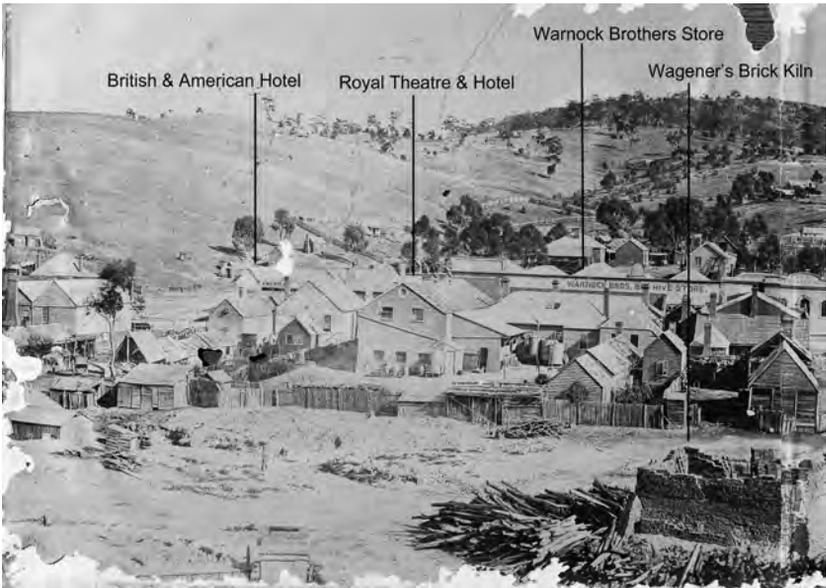
It has been estimated that the total amount of gold extracted up to December 1863 was at least 745,362 ounces, worth £2,981,448 at the then prevailing rate of £4 per ounce.⁷ In the reports of the Victorian mining surveyors and registrars for the quarter ending September 1867, there were 410 European and 320 Chinese alluvial miners in Maldon and 643 European but no Chinese quartz miners. The total yield of gold from the quartz crushed in that quarter was 10,169 ounces.⁸ This bonanza produced a building boom in the 1850s and 60s; one outcome

was the Bank of Victoria premises erected in 1858 on the prime site at the intersection of High and Main streets, which then became known as 'Bank Corner'. The Bank of New South Wales building in High Street was also constructed in 1858 next to the Carrier's Arms Hotel, which had been built the previous year.⁹

The panorama discussed in this note measures 86 cm wide by 21 cm high and consists of three albumen prints pasted onto card, displaying considerable skill in lining up the images at the joins between the three photographs. The panorama is taken from a ridge to the east of Maldon looking west towards the town with Mount Tarrangower beyond. The left-hand plate covers the area from Spring Street on the left to the Bank of New South Wales (1858) on the right. Clearly visible on this plate, left to right, is the British and American Hotel (moved to Maldon from Porcupine Flat in late 1857¹⁰), the rear view of the Royal Theatre (1857) and Royal Hotel (1862), and Warnock Brothers Beehive Store (1858). In the right foreground is the kiln of Edward Wagener's brickworks (1861), surrounded by stacks of timber with rows of drying bricks visible in the foreground of the centre plate. Three workmen can be observed posing behind the stacks of bricks. The central plate shows, on the left, the Bank of New South Wales, clearly visible on the west side of High Street through the vacant portion of Crown Allotment number twelve on which the Grand Hotel was later built (1888). To the right of the Bank of New South Wales can be seen its smelter (1866) and the Carrier's Arms Hotel (1857), Argyle House (1866) and the Commercial Hotel (1867), with the Wesleyan Church (1863) in Fountain Street

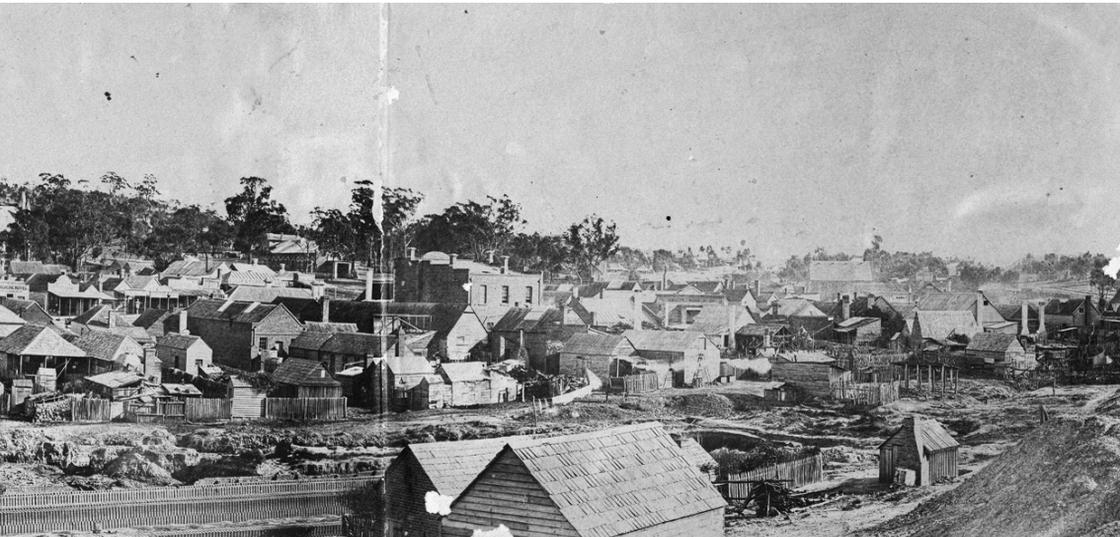
Maldon 1867 Panorama—View of Maldon from Victoria-reef Hill
(Courtesy Maldon and District Museums Association)

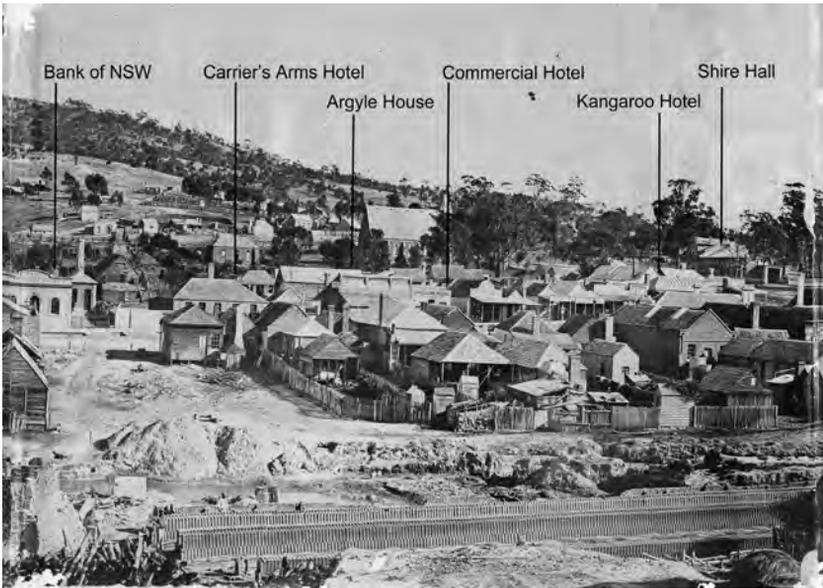




Left frame of panorama showing the American & British Hotel, the rear of the Royal Theatre and Hotel, Warnock Brothers' Store and Wagener's brick kiln (Courtesy Maldon and District Museums Association)

behind. One can also see the roof of the Bank of Victoria (1858) in front of the Kangaroo Hotel in High Street with its newly built brick section (1866) on the corner of Fountain Street. The Shire Hall (converted from the Market Hall in 1865) and the Court House (1861) form the right-hand edge of the central plate. The rear of the Albion Hotel (1866) in Main Street is found on the left side of the right-hand plate, with a distant





Centre frame of panorama showing the Bank of New South Wales, the Carrier's Arms Hotel, Argyle House, the Commercial Hotel, the Kangaroo Hotel and the Shire Hall (Courtesy Maldon and District Museums Association)

view of Holy Trinity Church (1861) in High Street in the centre and an almost empty Templeton Street on the right-hand edge.

The first clue to the date on which the panorama was taken is the presence in the photograph of the Commercial Hotel, which was licensed in early 1867. The *Tarrangower Times* of 8 February 1867 carried a notice from Ernst Hamdorff of Maldon, miner, announcing his intention to apply for a publican's licence for a house situated in High Street, Maldon under the sign of the 'Commercial Hotel'.¹¹ A month later, on 8 March 1867, he placed an advertisement in the *Tarrangower Times* stating that he had commenced business as a licensed victualler of the Commercial Hotel, High Street, Maldon, opposite the Bank of Victoria.¹²

The *Tarrangower Times* was established in 1858 and still provides Maldon with an essential record of events in the town and its surrounds. The archival copies held by the Maldon Museum and Archives Association proved a rich vein to mine to establish the provenance of the panorama. There were two local photographers in Maldon in 1867, T. Hannay, bookseller, stationer and news agent, of Main Street,¹³ and Jonathan George Moon, who had advertised the opening



Right frame of panorama showing the rear of the Albion Hotel, Holy Trinity Church and Templeton Street (Courtesy Maldon and District Museums Association)

of his new portrait rooms from 24 September 1866 until 19 February 1867.¹⁴ However, the *Tarrangower Times* of 26 April 1867 contained the following editorial paragraph:

Mr Armstrong, a photographer, is at present staying at the Kangaroo Hotel and he has taken several large and magnificently well done views of objects of interest in Maldon. Among others, we were particularly well pleased with a view of Maldon, from Church Hill, the Wesleyan Church, the Post-office and the Maldon Cemetery. His portraits, cabinet size and larger, are better than we have yet seen as specimens of the photographic art. Mr A was most successful in taking views, &c, for the late Exhibition, and his temporary studio at the Kangaroo is well worth a visit.¹⁵

The same issue carried the following advertisement:

MR ARMSTRONG, Photographic Artist, Having been lately engaged in taking Views for various Shire and Borough Councils for the Intercolonial and International Exhibitions, will remain a short time

in Maldon and will be glad to Receive Orders for every description of First-class Photography.

Mr A. would beg to invite inspection of his large Views and Portraits.

Families visited at their residences, and their portraits taken either large or small, without extra charge.

OFFICE:—Side entrance at Ellis's Kangaroo Hotel.¹⁶

We struck gold in the *Tarrangower Times* of the following week, Friday 3 May 1867:

Mr Armstrong, the photographer mentioned in our issue of Friday last, is still pursuing his profession in Maldon, and we are glad to say with great success. We had the pleasure of inspecting, on Wednesday, a full view of Maldon, taken from the summit of Victoria-reef Hill, and the distinctness with which the Mount and other objects of interest were brought out exceeds anything we have yet seen. Mr Armstrong's stay in Maldon is limited to a few days.¹⁷

Working backwards from Friday 3 May, the photograph must have been inspected on Wednesday 1 May and it was probably taken on the previous Monday, 29 April 1867, allowing Mr Armstrong to process the glass negatives on the same day and make and mount the albumen prints on Tuesday 30 April. Careful examination of the panorama reveals washing blowing on a line on the right-hand side behind the houses in Main Street, which would fit with Monday being a traditional washing day. The day was clear and sunny with an obvious shadow on the east wall of the Shire Hall from the balustrade on the portico indicating that the photograph must have been taken before noon when that wall would have been in shadow. As part of the celebrations of the 150th anniversary of the panorama, photographs of the shadow on the museum wall were taken on sunny days leading up to the anniversary on 29 April 2017, with the one taken on 27 April at 10.15 a.m. being a good match to that in the panorama.¹⁸ The sun was hidden behind cloud on 28 and 29 April 2017. The nearest rainfall recording station to Maldon in 1867 was at the Bendigo Prison, and the records reveal no rainfall between 19 April and 2 May 1867, indicating that the sun could well have been shining in Maldon on Monday 29 April at about 10.15 a.m. when we believe the panorama was taken.¹⁹ The total rainfall for April 1867 was only 31.7 mm and, to illustrate the extent of the dry spell, the *Tarrangower*

Times of Friday 10 May 1867 noted that: ‘The Springs are dry! The only resource for more than half Maldon for a supply of water is no more—at least until another favor [*sic*] from Jupiter Pluvius’.²⁰

Sight lines from prominent buildings in the panorama drawn on a modern satellite image of Maldon converge on the probable camera position in the small car park outside what is now the Blue Light Youth Camp in Phoenix Street, in the area formerly known as Victoria-reef Hill. Unfortunately, in the last 50 years, the growth of trees in this area has meant that the town cannot now be seen from this viewpoint. As part of the celebrations in 2016 of the 50th anniversary of the declaration of Maldon as Victoria’s first Notable Town, a camera-bearing drone was used to try to recreate the panorama, but, because of the trees, it proved to be impossible to replicate the camera position of the original photographer.

A search of local newspapers revealed that Mr Armstrong first appeared in Avoca (54 km west of Maldon) early in 1867, the *Avoca Mail* of 23 February noting:

We have inspected a series of photographs executed by Mr Armstrong, of the London Stereoscopic Society, now on a visit to Avoca. Mr Armstrong has been employed by several public bodies in taking photographs of the various objects of interest in their respective districts, to be forwarded to the Paris Exhibition. In clearness of outline and fidelity of representation, as photographic pictures, these are certainly unsurpassed.²¹

The same issue carried the following advertisement:

NOTICE, MR ARMSTRONG, sole agent for the London Stereoscopic Society, Having been engaged by the various Borough and Shire Councils in taking views for the Intercolonial Exhibition, will remain in Avoca for a few days to complete any orders that may be required by the residents in the district in every description of PHOTOGRAPHY. Address:—Avoca Hotel and the Operating Room at Mr Bryant’s.²²

Following his visit to Maldon, Mr Armstrong was next noted in the *Tarnagulla Courier* (38 km north west of Maldon) on 8 June 1867:

NOTICE At the solicitation of many residents of Tarnagulla, Mr Armstrong, Artist Photographer and Agent for the LONDON STEREOSCOPIC SOCIETY, has determined to remain for a few days,

which he will devote to PORTRAITURE. Special attention is directed to the Large-sized Portraits taken by Mr Armstrong. A Travelling Van and complete outfit for every description of Photography for sale and the art taught to the purchaser.²³

The *Tarrangower Times* of 26 July 1867 carried an advertisement by Jonathan George Moon:

Photography. Mr J.G. Moon, having purchased the entire splendid outfit of cameras and lenses from Mr Armstrong, is now prepared to receive orders for large or small views, life size, cabinet or carte de visite Portraits, beautifully colored if required. Stereograms executed in first-rate style. Parties favoring Mr Moon with a visit to his new rooms in High Street, near Mr Ormond's, may rely upon having a life like picture in less than ten minutes, and the annoyance of long wait obviated. Families visited at their own residences if required.²⁴

This strongly suggests that Mr Armstrong met Mr Moon some time between 8 June, when Mr Armstrong was in Tarnagulla, and 26 July, when the above note appeared in the *Tarrangower Times*. The *Ballarat Star* of 22 October 1867 included the following advertisement:

MR C. ARMSTRONG has much pleasure in announcing to the Inhabitants of Sebastopol, Cobblers, Cambrian Hill, and the surrounding districts, that he has taken one of Mr Costin's Commodious Shops, situate in Albert Street, Sebastopol, and intends opening it on Wednesday, 23rd instant, as a Photographic Portrait Gallery, thereby supplying a want which has long been felt in these important places; and in introducing his rooms to their notice, begs to state that having spared neither trouble nor expense they will be found replete with every convenience for the comfort of those who may favor him with their patronage.²⁵

The *Newcastle Chronicle* of 12 May 1870 carried the following advertisement:

The Royal Photographic Studio opposite The Steam Packet Hotel, Hunter Street. Mr C. Armstrong, ARTIST PHOTOGRAPHER (From Melbourne) begs to intimate to the inhabitants of Newcastle and the surrounding district, that he has leased the old established Photographic business so successfully carried on by Mr A. Smithers; and trusts, by the production of FIRST-CLASS PORTRAITS, to merit a continuance of the patronage so liberally bestowed upon his

predecessor. The studio will be found replete with every necessary convenience for the comfort of those who may favour him with their patronage.²⁶

The *Tarnagulla Courier* of 21 September 1872 carried a note of Mr Armstrong's reappearance in the town: 'Mr Armstrong announces to the public that he has taken premises lately occupied by Mr John Pierce, Commercial Road, Tarnagulla, and will commence operations on Monday next.'²⁷

Searches of local newspapers for references to Mr Armstrong prior to his arrival in Avoca in February 1867 proved fruitless; however, searches for 'London Stereoscopic Society' were more successful. The *Ballarat Star* served the surrounding communities by reporting the minutes of the Ballaratshire Council, the Borough Council of Ballarat, the Creswick and Clunes Borough Councils and the Buninyongshire Council. In early May there were reports in the correspondence to these councils that were similar to that of 4 May 1866 for the Buninyongshire Council: 'From the London Stereoscopic Society's agent, offering to take twenty views for £20 and fifteen for £15, extra copies 5s each. The letter was referred to the sub-committee to take action thereon.'²⁸ A similar piece was reported in the *Geelong Advertiser* of 10 May 1866: 'Letter from Edward J. Evans, Esq. secretary to the London Stereoscopic Society's Agency, Ballarat, offering to take views of the town and district of Geelong for the ensuing Intercolonial Exhibition, and enclosing specimen photographic view.'²⁹

Some suspicion was evident in local press coverage. The *Bendigo Advertiser* of 19 May 1866 reported:

Sandhurst Borough Council, Correspondence. A circular was received from the Ballarat Branch of the London Stereoscopic Society, requesting the patronage of the Council in executing photographic views of the town and district for showing at the forthcoming Intercolonial Exhibition, and enclosing scale of charges. The Mayor thought, although they were not protectionists, that they might judiciously confine their patronage to our local artists, who were quite capable of executing the work, if required.³⁰

Similar misgivings are evident in a letter to the *Ballarat Star* of 16 May 1866 entitled 'A Photographer's Complaint':³¹

Sir—I see that the Western Borough Council have been favored with a letter soliciting, it would appear, an order for taking views of Ballarat for the forthcoming exhibition, from the London Stereoscopic Society. As I, amongst many other photographers, never before heard of such a society, could you give me any information as to who and what the members are, and how it is that an old photo like me should first hear of the London Stereoscopic Society in this our good town of Ballarat? So far removed from the great city whose name it would seem is used to confound people's ideas with the London Stereoscopic Company, with whom they have as much to do as you or I. Surely, Mr Editor, there are respectable photographers, old residents and ratepayers of Ballarat, and men capable of producing work equal to any in the colony, whom the Western Borough Council may employ than patronising any stray travelling photographers, whatever name they may give themselves, who are here today and gone tomorrow, and try to tickle the ears of borough council's with neatly written letters. Since it would seem protection is to be the order of the day, it would surely be en regle [*sic*] for the select committee to encourage local industry we hear so much of, and it is hoped they will do so in these instances. I am Sir, Local Photo.

There was no mention in any of the above items of the name of the photographer, but it appears from an item in the *Ballarat Star* of 19 June 1866 that the Ballaratshire Council had in fact accepted the offer of the London Stereoscopic Society: 'Correspondence from the agent of the London Stereoscopic Society, intimating that in consequence of the inclemency of the weather he had been unable to complete the views of the shire.'³² The *Ballarat Star* of 17 July 1866 further noted:³³

Ballaratshire Council ... Shire Views—The various views taken by the London Stereoscopic Society's agent were submitted, and the agent in a letter to the council requested that some extra payment should be allowed for the distance he had to travel around the shire to obtain the views required—Cr Gilchrist stated that the council could not legally consider any claim beyond that contained in the contract, and he moved—"That the amount be paid as agreed on." Seconded by Cr Gunn and carried.

In News and Notes ... The views taken by the London Stereoscopic Society's agent of places within Ballaratshire, were submitted at the meeting of the shire council on Monday. In point of attractiveness the views are hardly what might have been expected from the scenery of

the district, although, as specimens of photography, they are perhaps creditable enough.

There is only one item in the State Library of Victoria catalogue under ‘London Stereoscopic Society’s Agency’, an undated *carte de visite* photograph of an unidentified gravestone with the following printed on the reverse, ‘London Stereoscopic Society’s Agency, Temporary Branch Office—Lydiard Street, Opposite Craig’s Hotel’.³⁴

Since Mr Armstrong had placed so much emphasis in his advertisements on having been engaged by various councils to take photographs for intercolonial and international exhibitions, we examined the catalogues of several such exhibitions. The Melbourne Intercolonial Exhibition of Australasia 1866–67 opened on 24 October 1866 and included the following in ‘Class V—The Ornamental Arts, Section 16 *Sculpture, Paintings, Casts, Photographs*’, ‘Many Boroughs and Shires submitted “Photographic Views and Statistics” but with no further indication of subjects or photographers.’³⁵ The catalogue for the Paris Universal Exhibition 1867 contains under ‘Class 6—Printing and Books’ an entry for:³⁶

21. Robert Howliston, Maldon September 25th, 1866, number of the “*Tarrangower Times*”.

In Class 9—Photographic Proofs and Apparatus we see:

4. The Borough of Buninyong. Photographic views of the borough.
10. J. Wheeler, Castlemaine. Three photographic views of Castlemaine district.

The *Tarrangower Times* of 25 January 1867 contained this comment, however:³⁷

The Great Exhibition at Paris will not be taxed to find space for Maldon exhibits, as, barring a copy of the *Tarrangower Times*, published expressly for the purpose (in common with all our contemporaries), we do not know of a single exhibit from the extensive Shire of Maldon intended for forwarding to Paris.

The Maldon panorama was taken after the Paris Exhibition had opened on 1 April 1867.

The next in the series of exhibitions we examined was the Victorian Exhibition, which opened on 6 November 1872 and was subsequently forwarded to the London International Exhibition of 1873. The catalogue, under Section II—Photography, claimed to include “Photographic Views and Statistics” of many shire and borough councils including Creswick, Geelong and Tarnagulla Borough Council which included “Photographs of Public Buildings”.³⁸ There was no entry from Maldon. No photographers are given credit for any of those items but perhaps some of Mr Armstrong’s work did see the light of day on the walls of some of those exhibitions. The official list of awards for Section II—Photography was:³⁹

Panorama of Ballarat, &c., by Wm. Bardwell. Bronze Medal

Photographs, by F. Cornell, Beechworth. Bronze Medal

Finished Pictures, by Johnstone, O’Shannessy and Co. Bronze Medal

Photographs by Royal Photographic Co., Portland (A. Marchand, Manager). Bronze Medal

Photographs, by Thomas Chuck, Royal Arcade. Honourable Mention.

Photographs, by William Hall, Victoria-parade. Honourable Mention.

Photographs, by J.P. Mayall, Collins-street. Honourable Mention.

By the time he appeared in Sebastopol, in October 1867, he had become Mr C. Armstrong, and he was no longer claiming to have taken photographs for intercolonial exhibitions or to be the agent for the London Stereoscopic Society. The *Ballarat Star* of 11 May 1869 under ‘Mining Intelligence’ stated:⁴⁰

A map of the Pleasant Creek reef claims has been compiled by Mr Armstrong, photographer, Pleasant Creek, from the maps of Mr Surveyor Dalton and is being lithographed by Mr Nevin. The plan, which is on a scale of 16 chains to the inch, shows over 150 claims, extending from Neille’s claim on the west, to the Cosmopolitan on the east, and the St. George on the north.

Searches in the files of the *Victoria Government Gazette* revealed that in 1860 a Charles Armstrong was entitled to receive the title deeds to a property in Ballarat East measuring 4 acres, 1 rood, 10 perches (1.75 hectares), on payment of the established fee.⁴¹ In 1866, Charles

Armstrong of Ballarat held two shares of £5 each in the Star Freehold Company with an office at No. 16, Mining Exchange, Sturt Street, Ballarat,⁴² and five shares of £5 each in the Newington Estate Gold Mining Company (Registered) with an office adjoining the claim of the company, Ballarat West.⁴³ In 1868 Charles Armstrong, Pleasant Creek, held ten shares of £5 each in the Newington Quartz Mining Company (Registered) with an office in Lydiard Street Ballarat,⁴⁴ and he held twenty shares of the same value in 1869 in the Durham Quartz Mining Company (Registered) with an office at the Quartz Reefs, Pleasant Creek.⁴⁵

It seems reasonable to assume that Charles Armstrong, Pleasant Creek, who held the above shares in 1868 and 1869, was the same person as Mr Armstrong, photographer, Pleasant Creek, who was compiling the map of the Pleasant Reef claims in 1869. We can then join the dots retrospectively to declare that, in all probability, Charles Armstrong was the photographer who took the Maldon panorama at about 10.15 a.m. on Monday 29 April 1867.

Notes

- 1 *Victoria Government Gazette*, No. 11, 7 February 1854, p. 290.
- 2 Miles Lewis (text) and G.H. Morton (illustrations), *The Essential Maldon*, Melbourne, Greenhouse Publications in Association with the National Trust of Australia (Victoria), 1983, p. 5.
- 3 Lewis and Morton, p. 108.
- 4 A.J. Williams, *A Concise History of Maldon and Tarrangower Diggings*, Maldon, Maldon Museum and Archives Association Inc., 2003, p. 13.
- 5 Williams, p. 34.
- 6 *Town Allotments in and Adjoining the Township Reserve Maldon*, Lithographed at the Surveyor Generals Office, Melbourne, 27 February 1857, at <http://handle.slv.vic.gov.au/10381/10917>, accessed 2 March 2017.
- 7 Jonathan George Moon, *Tarrangower, Past and Present: A History of Maldon from 1853: Guide, Business Directory, and Calendar. Reminiscences of the Good Old Times*, Maldon, Howlison, Tate, 1864, p. 8.
- 8 *Reports of the Mining Surveyors and Registrars. Quarter ending 30th September, 1867*, at www.parliament.vic.gov.au/papers/govpub/VPARL1867-2ndSessionNo4.pdf, accessed 27 May 2017.
- 9 Jacobs Lewis Vines, Architects, in conjunction with Miles Lewis, *Maldon Conservation Study*, Melbourne, Town and Country Planning Board, 1977.
- 10 Lewis and Morton, p. 36.
- 11 *Tarrangower Times*, 8 February 1867, p. 3.
- 12 *Tarrangower Times*, 8 March 1867, p. 3.

- 13 Moon, p. 36.
- 14 *Tarrangower Times*, 19 February 1867, p. 1.
- 15 *Tarrangower Times*, 26 April 1867, p. 2.
- 16 *Tarrangower Times*, 26 April 1867, p. 3.
- 17 *Tarrangower Times*, 3 May 1867, p. 2.
- 18 Photographic evidence, such as the shadow on the museum wall on 27 April 2017, can be found on the Maldon Museum and Archives Association website, at http://maldonmuseum.com.au/?page_id=985.
- 19 Climate Data Online, Bureau of Meteorology, at <http://www.bom.gov.au/climate> data, Product code: IDCJAC0009 reference: 30249321, accessed 10 May 2017.
- 20 *Tarrangower Times*, 10 May 1867, p. 2.
- 21 *Avoca Mail*, 23 February 1867, p. 2.
- 22 *Avoca Mail*, 23 February 1867, p. 3.
- 23 *Tarnagulla Courier*, 8 June 1867.
- 24 *Tarrangower Times*, 26 July 1867, p. 3.
- 25 *Ballarat Star*, 22 October 1867, p. 3.
- 26 *Newcastle Chronicle*, 12 May 1870, p. 1.
- 27 *Tarnagulla Courier*, 21 September 1872.
- 28 *Ballarat Star*, 4 May 1866, p. 3.
- 29 *Geelong Advertiser*, 10 May 1866, p. 2.
- 30 *Bendigo Advertiser*, 19 May 1866, p. 2.
- 31 *Ballarat Star*, 17 May 1866, p. 3.
- 32 *Ballarat Star*, 19 June 1866, p. 2.
- 33 *Ballarat Star*, 17 July 1866, p. 2.
- 34 State Library of Victoria, accession no(s) H2005.34/1798; H2005.34/1798A.
- 35 Intercolonial Exhibition 1866, Official Catalogue, p. 31, at <http://handle.slv.vic.gov.au/10381/80102>, accessed 19 May 2017.
- 36 Catalogue, Paris Universal Exhibition, 1867, p. 3, at <http://handle.slv.vic.gov.au/10381/167360>, accessed 19 May 2017.
- 37 *Tarrangower Times*, 25 January 1867, p. 2.
- 38 London International Exhibition of 1873 (Melbourne 1872–73), Victorian Exhibition, Official Catalogue, p. 9, at <http://handle.slv.vic.gov.au/10381/167641>, accessed 19 May 2017.
- 39 London International Exhibition of 1873 (Melbourne 1872–73), Official Record, p. 207, at <http://handle.slv.vic.gov.au/10381/167545>, accessed 23 May 2017.
- 40 *Ballarat Star*, 11 May 1869, p. 3.
- 41 *Victoria Government Gazette*, No. 31, 9 March 1860, p. 446.
- 42 *Victoria Government Gazette*, No. 110, 2 October 1866, p. 2124.
- 43 *Victoria Government Gazette*, No. 134, 30 November 1866, p. 2648.
- 44 *Victoria Government Gazette*, No. 132, 3 November 1868, p. 2099.
- 45 *Victoria Government Gazette*, No. 56, 8 October 1869, p. 1607.

REVIEWS

The Enigmatic Mr Deakin

By Judith Brett. Text Publishing, Melbourne 2017. Pp. 490. \$34.99, hardback.

Soon after the humiliating defeat of his Fusion government in April 1910, Alfred Deakin reminisced in his manuscript *Books and a Boy* about the happiness of his childhood. Suffering from cognitive decline, he clung to a small raft of memory and found a haven in ‘the warm gulf stream of literature’ that had constantly enriched his life. Deakin’s boyhood immersion in literature and flair for drama foreshadowed salient aspects of his later life, a theme pursued by Judith Brett in her biography *The Enigmatic Mr Deakin*.

Deakin moved from the makeshift stages of boyhood theatrics to a national and sometimes international stage, infusing dramatic intensity into his roles in the Victorian government, as a leader of the Federation campaign, and three times prime minister of the new nation. Brett highlights Deakin’s performative power, which was based on his striking physical presence, remarkable memory and gifted oratory.

Drama pervades Brett’s portrayal of Deakin walking a political tightrope as a federal politician. He undertook leadership in opposition and government while warding off nervous exhaustion and the temptation to succumb to what the *Age* disdainfully dismissed as ‘transcendental musings’. He led his Liberal Protectionists twice into minority government supported by the nascent Labor Party but knew that this party’s increasing regimentation was the antithesis of his treasured individualism. When he finally merged his Liberals with the other non-Labor parties to form a Fusion government, a member of his own party shouted ‘Judas’ and Labor reacted with ‘elemental rage’.

Through her book, Brett aims ‘to bring Deakin back into Australia’s contemporary political imagination’, so that he is no longer regarded as a ‘bearded worthy’ after whom institutes are named. Political analysis and interpretation are her forte, honed in numerous articles and books. She lucidly presents the political alliances prior to the emergence of the two-party system, a situation encapsulated in Deakin’s cricket analogy of ‘three elevens’; his Liberal Protectionists, the Free Traders and the Labor

Party were evenly balanced after the December 1903 election. When explaining the co-operation of the progressive Liberals and Labor until 1909, Brett notes that the policies of the two parties 'on most issues were indistinguishable', and Deakin found the Labor leader Chris Watson congenial. After Watson's replacement by the more hard-line Andrew Fisher, tensions increased, and Deakin denounced extra-parliamentary controls imposed on Labor politicians.

In arresting ways, Brett links her biography to later times, thus demonstrating its relevance to contemporary society. She presents David Syme of the *Age* in modern dress as a powerbroker, a 'one man political think tank'. Young men of the Australian Natives Association flocked to the federation banner of the native-born, inspirational Alfred Deakin, prompting comparisons with Robert Menzies' forgotten people, Gough Whitlam's baby boomers and John Howard's battlers.

The inclusion of a map in Brett's book showing Deakin's birthplace in Fitzroy, Parliament House in Spring Street and his home in South Yarra gives the reader bearings but also suggests Alfred's attachment to the local. Despite celebrity status, notably during his 1887 trip to the Colonial Conference in London, he was a grounded politician who eschewed ostentation in favour of a simple life style. He routinely walked or cycled to work from South Yarra and rejected a knighthood and nearly all other honours. His financial stringency when using government allowances was carried to extremes during his official trip to San Francisco in 1915 for the Panama–Pacific International Exposition. He returned £600 of his £1,000 allowance, thereby causing hardship for both his wife Pattie and daughter Vera, who assisted him on the trip.

Brett's biography integrates key aspects of several previous studies of Deakin: Walter Murdoch's personal memoir published soon after Deakin's death; John La Nauze's impressive politically oriented biography; Al Gabay's focus on an eclectic personal faith; and John Rickard's portrayal of spiritual and family life. The blending gives fresh perspectives on Deakin, especially by revealing patterns of intense public activity followed often by private despondency and soul searching. It becomes apparent that Deakin viewed his political career as but the scaffolding for a higher spiritual quest.

Deakin's mental disintegration will strike a chord with many readers today, owing to the prevalence of dementia. Acutely and cruelly aware of the loss of cognitive function, Deakin recorded his decline

while still retaining the ‘debris of a memory’. Meanwhile after years of debilitating poor health, Pattie emerged as a community leader, causing a strange reversal of roles. When Pattie managed the Anzac Buffet in St Kilda Road during the First World War, Alfred humbly accepted the position of occasional assistant.

Brett skilfully interweaves scenes from Deakin’s family life in both South Yarra and Point Lonsdale with the trajectory of his political career. He wrote poems to his ‘dear Pattie’ on birthdays and wedding anniversaries but failed to defuse the tension between her and his sister Catherine. While Brett discusses Deakin’s daughters Ivy and Stella, she only briefly mentions Vera, who was appointed OBE and is still honoured today for her First World War service as secretary to the Australian Red Cross Wounded and Missing Enquiry Bureau in London.

In her Introduction, Brett refers to Ned Kelly, thus anticipating assessment of the way in which Deakin is viewed today. The mysteries of mythology in popular culture have caused a lawless bushranger to supplant a liberal progressive statesman, prominent in the Victorian parliament, the campaign for Federation and legislative achievements of the new Commonwealth government. It is to be hoped that Brett’s fine biography will restore Deakin to his rightful place in the national political imagination.

Carole Woods

Passions of a Mighty Heart: Selected Letters of G.W.L. Marshall-Hall

Edited by Suzanne Robinson. Lyrebird Press, Melbourne 2015. Pp. 240. \$55, paperback.

G.W.L. Marshall-Hall erupted onto Melbourne’s music scene on arriving here from England early in 1891 as Melbourne University’s first Ormond professor of music. Overflowing with irrepressible and often pugnacious energy and with the assistance of pianist W.A. Laver, in 1895 he founded the University’s Conservatorium of which as Ormond professor he was ex officio director, thereby (and quite voluntarily) greatly increasing his university workload. In addition, he also conducted 111 public symphony concerts between 1891 and 1913 as well as a number of

operas and some chamber music and choral recitals. He also composed what, given his other responsibilities, was a considerable amount of music. And he repeatedly and publicly excoriated Melbourne's music performers, music critics, private music teachers and the Musicians' Union (which, paradoxically, he had played a large part in founding).

On top of all that, Marshall-Hall managed to deliver numerous public addresses, mostly in association with his concerts, and to write and publish a play and four books of verse. The alleged indecency and irreligious content of the verse and of a speech he delivered at a Liedertafel concert on 1 August 1898 provoked deep indignation among the more strait-laced members of the community whose views he had repudiated as pusillanimous and sanctimonious cant. The ensuing public outcry was joined by churchmen and others, who had taken umbrage at what was termed the 'libidinous' content and 'ostentatious disbelief in Christianity or any other form of theism' paraded in these fateful poems and the address. When, as a result, the University Council declined in 1900 to renew Marshall-Hall's five-year appointment, he established a rival conservatorium, taking most of the university's music teachers and students with him. He also continued with his conducting and other musical work until, in 1915, following the demise of his erstwhile successor, he was reappointed to the Ormond chair, only himself to die of appendicitis shortly afterwards in his hour of triumph.

Suzanne Robinson's meticulously researched book is a welcome contribution to the literature about this musician. Divided into four chronological sections, each with an editorial introduction, it comprises 249 annotated letters, mostly from Marshall-Hall himself and principally to newspaper editors, university, orchestral and conservatorium administrators, fellow musicians and friends. Robinson's own contribution consists in part in ensuring (successfully in my view) that the letters chosen are representative of the significantly larger number written by Marshall-Hall that survive. She certainly captures the essence of her subject, revealing him as highly intelligent, passionate, witty and possessing a penchant for scathingly caustic remarks while remaining generous towards those whose musical aptitudes he esteemed.

Her insightful editorial scholarship is witnessed in her introductions to the four sections, which, by setting the scene for what follows, add an important dimension to the letters. We learn of the childhood influences that helped shape her subject as well as of the interlacing patterns of

his adult intellectual and artistic interests. We get a description of the adult man with his imposing height and ‘booming voice’—essential components of his considerable charisma. And we discover something of the nature of Melbourne society. Attention is given to his friendship with Herbert and Ivy Brookes, the latter a former student of Marshall-Hall and daughter of Alfred Deakin, and with Arthur Streeton and other artists and kindred spirits. The breadth of his artistic and intellectual interests is implied in Robinson’s accounts of the bust of Michelangelo, which stood near the piano in his home, and of his references in university lectures to Schopenhauer and Aeschylus. It is also evident in his compositions based on the works of Keats and Tennyson and his stalwart defence of Henrik Ibsen against an unsympathetic Melbourne press. His love affairs are also touched on, as are the administration and financial woes of his concerts.

Robinson’s annotations, too, reflect the breadth of her scholarship and play an important role in the portrayal of her subject, facilitated by the fact that they are placed in the margins beside the letters. In addition to citing sources, estimating the dates of undated letters, identifying people mentioned and making sense of details not familiar to 21st-century readers, many significantly broaden and even modify the superficial, out-of-context meaning of the passages to which they refer. In this way, they provide what to me seems a more accurate and nuanced sense of what Marshall-Hall intended than do his bare words alone.

A consideration of Marshall-Hall’s youthful deafness—surely a matter of consequence to any budding musician—would have performed a useful heuristic function shaping our understanding of the man. Similarly, attention could have been given to the view that the purpose of his public outbursts was (in part at least) to advertise his concerts. And ‘de mortuis nil nisi bonum’ does not mean ‘of the dead nothing spoken’. But such quibbles notwithstanding, the impressive quality of this book is unmistakable.

Joe Rich

The Interior of Our Memories: A History of Melbourne's Jewish Holocaust Centre

By Steven Cooke and Donna-Lee Frieze. Hybrid Publishers, Melbourne 2015. Pp. xii + 300. \$35, paperback.

Melbourne's Jewish community is distinctive in terms of the relative proportion of Holocaust survivors. The post-war years were seminal in shaping the identity of the Melbourne community, with its Jewish population doubling in size between 1947 and 1961. A larger number of survivors reached north America, but they arrived in communities that had grown rapidly in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In very large Jewish centres such as New York and Montreal, their impact was much less than in Melbourne.

Contrary to the view that Holocaust survivors kept to themselves and did not publicly speak in the immediate decades after the war, the first commemoration of the Warsaw ghetto uprising was held in Melbourne in 1945, with community-wide services beginning in 1951. In addition to annual commemorations, photographs, documents and other Holocaust materials were collected and displayed in public exhibitions, first in 1953 at the Kadimah, the Jewish cultural centre in Lygon Street, Carlton.

Over a number of years planning for a permanent museum was undertaken, leading in the early 1980s to the purchase of a large building in Selwyn Street, Elsternwick. Leading advocates included Avram Zeleznikow, a survivor of the Vilna ghetto and partisan fighter, Aron Sokolowicz and Bono Weiner, both survivors of Auschwitz, and Mina Fink, who had settled in Australia prior to the war. The founding organisations were the Kadimah and the Federation of Polish Jews. One of the factors prompting survivors to act was the perception that Holocaust denial was growing. Denialism was feared as the harbinger of a 'two-fold annihilation', an assault on memory following the physical destruction of a people. The Jewish Holocaust Centre (JHC) opened on 4 March 1984 before an audience of 1,500. It was the first permanent memorial museum in Australia and one of the first in the Jewish diaspora.

This history of the JHC is co-authored by Steven Cooke, a cultural and historical geographer, and Donna-Lee Frieze, genocide studies scholar, both of Deakin University. The book is distinguished

by its meticulous research, rich detail, and critical engagement with international literature on museum culture, pedagogy, oral history and memory. It draws extensively on the museum's records, including minutes of meetings, newsletters, interviews, photographs, and other contemporary publications. The text runs to 184 pages, with a generous allocation of more than 100 pages to endnotes and bibliography.

The first chapter deals with post-war Holocaust commemoration and the moves to establish a museum, followed by two chapters that present a narrative overview of the museum's first 30 years. Four subsequent chapters are thematically focused on exhibitions, testimonial collection, education, and the development of intergenerational support groups.

For the survivors for whom the JHC became a second home, and whose lives and contributions are detailed, it was not only a place of public display and education but also a memorial to the countless dead. The book's title, drawing on the description of the Holocaust survivor and academic philosopher Harry Redner, evokes a resting place for the 'the interior of our memories'. Kitia Altman, survivor of Auschwitz, explained the ongoing trauma of survivors and the need to speak: 'though we're alive, we live with our dead. It's on their behalf we recount our experiences. It is in their memory we strive for a more humane society, so that you and I and our grandchildren can finally put the memories to rest'.

During the first phase of the JHC's existence, a period of some fifteen years, it housed relatively unsophisticated displays, with the character of an amateur collection, an intensely personal memorial. But it possessed a unique feature, the central place accorded survivor guides, who brought students and members of the public face to face with witnesses to the unimaginable.

Although not evident to visitors, the museum was also a place of controversy. Different views were held of priorities, which national groups should to be represented, the use of Yiddish in committee meetings and public addresses, and how pressures for change were to be accommodated. A later issue was the recognition to be accorded in the JHC to other genocides—Cambodia, Bosnia, Rwanda, Darfur—and the response to contemporary issues of potential relevance, such as how to react to refugees and asylum seekers who reached Australia.

The JHC failed initially to win widespread support within the Jewish community. There was a sense that it harkened to a dark past rather than to the future, and financial support was in large measure reliant on survivors. Some predicted a short life, that the JHC would close within years. Yet there was mounting success. Leading international scholars, activists and public figures visited to deliver lectures; they included Dr Yitzhak Arad (1984), Beate Klarsfeld (1985), Professor Yehuda Bauer (1985), Professor Elie Wiesel (1988), and Rabbi Emil Fackenheim (1994).

By 1998 the number of school student visitors had reached 180,000. Tens of thousands of objects were donated to the museum archives, including a large number of photographs, which in 2005 were being catalogued by thirteen volunteers. The museum's Testimonies Project, which became the mission of Phillip Maisel, developed into a resource of international significance, with 400 testimonies recorded by 1995, 1,000 by 2001. The testimonies covered thirteen countries and 370 communities; the project won a number of grants and attracted the interest of university researchers.

By the late 1990s the JHC was into the second phase of its history. A neighbouring property was purchased and, with a major donation from a survivor, the construction of a new building doubled the museum's size. It was opened by the governor general of Australia, Sir William Deane. Where there had been just one paid staff member for fifteen years—a part-time secretary—and reliance on a large number of volunteers, now there was a growing professionalisation, with the first paid CEO appointed in 2002. There was increasing involvement of members of the second and third generations and augmented funding. Under the leadership of Helen Mahemoff, first chair of the Museum's Foundation, \$2 million was raised by 2003, \$7 million by 2013.

Contrary to the fears of survivors that the Holocaust would be forgotten, there was mounting interest. The greatly diminished number of survivors able to speak posed the main challenge, increasing the need to modernise and utilise digital technologies to capture in virtual form the experiences and messages of the guides. In part, the growing interest stems from recognition of the need to transmit knowledge of the Holocaust to future generations. Sadly, the need to understand and combat genocide has not receded in the 21st century.

Andrew Markus

Breaking Out: Memories of Melbourne in the 1970s

Edited by Susan Blackburn. Hale & Iremonger, Sydney 2015. Pp. 342. \$34.95 paperback.

The sixteen chapters and introductory essay collected together in this book will appeal to both the people who were 'there' in Melbourne in the 1970s and a newer generation of readers seeking to make sense of a city and a world that is so different politically, economically and socially from the one we inhabit today. Each chapter consists of the recollections of a left-wing activist of 'their' 1970s, a reflection on how they became politically aware, and consideration of how that growing awareness changed the course of their life. For most the catalyst for activism was education, whether through attendance at one of the then rapidly expanding tertiary education institutions or through opportunities afforded by the growth of the community education sector after the election of the Whitlam government in late 1972.

Whitlam the man, and the government he led, loom large throughout this book. For a number of the female contributors the educational and social policies of his government combined with the burgeoning women's liberation and feminist movements to change their lives. The chapter by Jenni Mitchell on the importance of the neighbourhood house movement for married women looking to broaden their educational and career options is particularly insightful on this. So too are the chapters by Glen Chandler and Katy Richmond on feminist 'consciousness-raising' groups and the emergence of the Women's Electoral Lobby, which give a strong sense of how for many women the personal became intensely political in this decade of change.

Other chapters explore the anti-Vietnam War and anti-uranium mining movements, radical student politics, the emergence of the community radio and community legal aid sectors, the rise of a distinctly Australian cultural voice in the theatre and the arts, education reform, the struggle for rights for immigrant workers, gay and lesbian liberation and, in the final section, how involvement in overseas aid organisations and local support groups for national liberation movements increased knowledge of and engagement with the people and countries of our neighbours in Asia. All the essays mix the personal with the political to explain motivations for involvement in and support for ideas and movements that were often well outside the political mainstream.

The deeply personal nature of these stories tell us much about the individuals involved and their particular cause, but more reflection on the broader historical and societal implications of these issues and ideas would have been useful. For historians this book and its individual essays will likely raise as many questions as they answer. While the introduction and some of the essays recognise the somewhat fraught issue of the fallibility of memory and the need to locate the personal in wider historical contexts, for the most part these problems are glossed over. So, too, discussion of the common historiographical concept of the difference between the idea of 'the Seventies' as a period of radical change and the temporal decade of the 1970s is only briefly touched upon in the introductory essay and largely ignored in the substantive chapters. To be sure Harry van Moorst's opening chapter on the anti-Vietnam movement begins with the caution that 'the "Radical Decade" was not the 1960s, but the period from the mid-60s to the mid-70s,' but this is less an historiographical intervention than an explanation of why his story begins in 1967 (when he first went to university) rather than 1970 when the new decade began.

The confession by Blackburn in her introduction that the fact that Melbourne's 'economy began to undergo some painful changes in the 1970s' is 'something not well reflected in this book' is indicative of the problems that can come with dividing historical time periods into neat decade packages. Other than Anne Sgro's chapter on migrant welfare services, the stories here are of those who were able to harness the benefits of the increasing educational opportunities of the first half of the decade rather than those who found themselves on the wrong side of the economic restructuring that became a common feature of the more challenging second half. From a distance of more than 40 years it is easy to forget that the 1970s was marked by mass unemployment as well as liberation and protest.

These concerns aside, this is a book that will have appeal across a broad spectrum. For historians it confirms the idea that the 1970s (however defined) was indeed another historical era, a time and a place when they did things differently. As an example of this, for those of us who work in the tertiary sector it is almost impossible to recognise some of the workplaces and work practices described here. Accounts of casual intellectual interactions between students and staff, teaching and research opportunities seemingly handed out at whim, and education

and research agendas that looked to the greater good rather than the bottom line bear little relationship to the soulless profit-driven monoliths many of us inhabit today.

Seamus O'Hanlon

Reckoning: A Memoir

By Magda Szubanski. Text Publishing, Melbourne 2015. Pp. 374. \$32.99, paperback.

Reckoning is Magda Szubanski's reflections on her life. The chapters are basically chronological: the lives of her parents and their families in Europe before the Second World War, Magda's birth in England in 1961, the Szubanskis' migration to Australia, the culture shock of Australia, Magda's teen years, studying at the University of Melbourne in the late 1970s, the beginning of her work in Melbourne's entertainment industry, her pilgrimage to Poland in 1982, and her public coming out as gay in 2011. The book, its reminiscences and its anecdotes are interspersed with accounts of the war years, especially the experiences of her father, Zbigniew Szubanski, and how those experiences influenced the rest of his life and the lives of his family.

Reckoning is not a history in the conventional sense. There is no hypothesis with key arguments, no references and no index. Yet the book is historically enlightening in terms of the insight it gives into Szubanski's family's experiences in Poland during the Second World War, Magda's experiences growing up in the outer eastern suburbs of Melbourne and the suburban teenage culture of the 1970s. The content is supported by a selection of photos, mostly family shots, some taken in Europe before the war and others in Melbourne.

'If you had met my father you would never, not for an instant, have thought he was an assassin', is the opening sentence, creating an expectation in the reader that the book is about the juxtaposition of a man with a violent past with one whom others knew as caring and sensitive. But *Reckoning* is not the story of Magda Szubanski's father. Nevertheless, throughout the text there are many references to the life of Zbigniew Szubanski and the impact of this story on his daughter.

Zbigniew Szubanski was born in Poland in 1924. In *Reckoning* Magda Szubanski offers the reader the snippets of information her father provided: his memories of when German soldiers entered Warsaw; his experiences as a member of the Resistance from the age of sixteen and then as a member of the Polish execution squad *Kompania Semsta* when he was nineteen; and then later on the Lamsdorf Death March. She pieces these together and considers how her father's experiences affected his values and his personality. At his funeral there was more than a sense of forgiveness for past actions. There was a sense of deep understanding from Szubanski's community of friends and family, from that generation before us that really knew what it was like to be in Poland in the 1940s.

To explain the influence of her father's past experiences on his parenting, Magda employs tennis anecdotes from her childhood to show how his style had been that of a 'saboteur' while he expected her to 'play like a champion' (p. 104). He did not see being female as an excuse for being lesser in any way. Magda recalls a 'gender-blind' man who 'thought it was a criminal waste to deprive the world of half the population's talent' (p. 104). When young Magda volunteered for the Women's Refuge Referral Service, her parents provided her with anecdotes of how they stood up for what they had thought was right during the war and the consequences they suffered.

There are many references to aspects of growing up in Melbourne's outer eastern suburbs of Bayswater and Croydon, as well as to characteristics of popular culture of the 1960s. Magda's reflections on the early experiences of the Szubanskis in Australia are reminiscent of Nino Culotta's *They're a Weird Mob*: mostly humorous, sometimes cruel. These include tales about cicadas, milk bars, 'lollies', the lawn mower and school-yard taunts about her accent. She also describes how she transitioned from studying at the University of Melbourne to employment in the entertainment industry via *The D-Generation*, then goes on to reflect on her work, both as a writer and as an actor, with Terri Irwin, in *Fast Forward* and *Babe*. She writes too about the initial struggles and then successes of *Kath and Kim* and about her first experience of fame. Finally, Magda describes how she told her family about her sexuality. She reminds us of the many horrendous experiences homosexuals and lesbians have suffered over recent decades and the effects of changes in legislation, then provides her readership

with insight into some of the responses to her coming out on national television.

This memoir is both humorous, as Szubanski recalls her first experiences in Australia, and sensitively poignant, as she writes of the hardships of war and the lasting impact these had on those she loves, and of the personal difficulties of speaking openly about her sexuality. It is not a historical thesis in any formal academic sense, but it *is* a social history that provides the reader with a greater depth of understanding about life in Poland during the Second World War and life in Australia from the 1950s onwards.

Sharon Betridge

Acland Street: The Grand Lady of St Kilda

By Judith Buckrich. Pozible Crowdfunding and ATOM, Melbourne 2017. Pp. vi+170. \$49.95 hardcover.

Long before social media and the iPhone, it was the street that facilitated public interaction. The people you meet were to be found there. Of course, some streets were more notable than others, both for meeting people and as places to travel on, work and live. Streets take on identity and meaning. City dwellers know them well: their shops, crossroads, elevations and all manner of landmarks, dwellings, signs, monuments and refuges. They are commercial and residential, grand tree-lined boulevards and car-choked. Some are wonderful, others are as mean as can be, as in Scorsese's famous film of New York. They are a fit subject for historical research, as Andrew May in his landmark 1998 study *Melbourne Street Life: The Itinerary of our Days* revealed. But they require fine analysis and portraiture to bring their inhabitants to life. This is territory Judith Buckrich has made her own as well. This time she personifies her subject for the first time in my knowledge as a 'grand lady'. A vessel moored off its shores, the *Lady of St Kilda*, gave the suburb its name. But the street's association was with a Victorian period gentleman, Thomas Dyce Acland, the vessel's owner who never visited these shores. Gender can sometimes be a confusing thing in St Kilda. Such questions aside, Acland Street, together with Fitzroy Street

and the elevation-hugging Esplanade, remains one of St Kilda's feature thoroughfares: part residential, part commercial and with a wonderful decaying old Anglican church, All Saints.

Once a haven by the sea, a place away from the counting houses, the factories, the traffic, the dust, smoke, noise and commerce of Melbourne city proper, St Kilda boasted townhouse mansions and good schools for ladies. It was *the* place for the well-to-do, the genteel and leisured before Toorak became mandatory territory for the city wealthy. The Depression of the 1890s saw the first rattling of the cage. Old mortality left the grand houses to widows and children. Easy access by tram, train, and later bus and automobile, saw summer migrations of the working classes and popular entertainments designed to appeal to them: cinemas, dance halls, hotels and fun parks, all in the new century. A Foreshore Trust was formed, committed to creating a fantasy Continental Riviera. Depression and war saw demolitions and commuter flats sprouting in the old mansion gardens. After World War II St Kilda became shabby and patched, touted as Melbourne's King's Cross, with vulgar entertainments, drugs and vice. The poor, immigrants and Bohemians moved in. It remains beleaguered inner suburbia, with predatory vandals, blighted houses, bad planning, catch-up social welfare and failed heritage battles. Its Titanics missed the iceberg, to quote Hal Porter on the George Hotel—Luna Park and the Palais Theatre also. It still has extravagant, municipally constructed summer entertainments, and many people love it.

Buckrich's is a celebratory and chronological study. In her view, Acland Street sums up St Kilda. There is a focus on documenting the transformation of the area, individual buildings and their interesting occupants. An appendix lists residents taken from the Sands & McDougall directories. One wonders though if this is not yet another history of St Kilda, already the subject of many published studies, as well as consultant environmental and architectural works and *Australian Dictionary of Biography* subjects. Buckrich uses these, as you would expect. She quotes at length, too, from old sources when paraphrasing or a pruning knife would have been in order. The 'scissors and paste' method of local history writing railed against by the youthful Geoffrey Blainey more than 50 years ago is in evidence. Or, perhaps the method is to let the story tell itself. Moving closer to the realm of living memory Buckrich grants contemporary cultural stakeholders sections of

contributed memoir. Restaurateur George Biron's account of growing up here and his post-1956 failed Hungarian revolution immigrant parents' fruit shop is one of the best things in the book. Elsewhere, historical hearsay abounds. A sense of the actual street (if not the area) is often lacking, especially as a politically, socially and economically contested place. What would a more fine-grained and focused study have required? More detailed occupational and ownership data might have helped, along with a closer tracking of contemporary issues such as the troubled mall and tram super stop transformation of the commercial precinct. The innovative research and analysis of the now old New Urban History and the magic realism of imaginatively informed histories of places like Hackney in London could have offered other models.

Perhaps the most interesting aspect of this book is its gestation as a crowd-funded exercise. Local groups and individuals purchased in advance to underwrite the cost. A substantial and well-illustrated volume resulted but without a conventional publisher's input. The book has been copy edited, the design layout is fine, and the images are splendid, with reproductions from the State Library, including watercolours of the St Kilda foreshore by W.F.E. Liardet and evocative latter-day aerial photographs of the area. The illustrations, many in colour, are well captioned and sourced. But considered as a book to read (and many will want to read it), those who already have a familiarity with St Kilda's and Victorian history may see this as an opportunity missed. Others coming to the territory for the first time may be encouraged to travel further.

David Dunstan

The Good Country: The Djadja Wurrung, the Settlers and the Protectors

By Bain Attwood. Monash University Publishing, Melbourne 2017. Pp. 225. \$29.95, paperback.

Bain Attwood's latest book, *The Good Country: The Djadja Wurrung, the Settlers and the Protectors*, deepens our understanding of the complexities of Victorian Aboriginal history while also issuing a series of major correctives to recent colonial and Indigenous history trends. Attwood carefully traces the history of the Djadja Wurrung of central

Victoria from their first contact with white settlers, while strongly advocating a return to empirical historical research and an idea of Aboriginal history conceived in Canberra in the 1970s. Attwood's approach is not merely a return to the past, however; it is also a new way of navigating the political needs of Aboriginal history today.

Much of what Attwood wishes to see was enshrined in the founding guidelines of the *Aboriginal History* journal drafted at the Australian National University in the 1970s. That journal conceived of Aboriginal history not as any history that deals with Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal relations, but rather as a history bounded by particular standards that placed Aboriginal people squarely at the centre.

Attwood's book is in part a call for greater specificity in history: specificity in terms of groups, location and time. Critical of the tendency of historians to simplify colonial histories into a binary of Aboriginal people and white people, Attwood is careful to distinguish the competing interests of different Aboriginal nations, European protectors and European settlers. He calls also for localised histories that pay tribute to the 'spatial and temporal variations' of Aboriginal history, rather than accounts that advance 'sweeping arguments about the nature of Aboriginal culture and history' (p. xi). Attwood wants to see more 'transnational' histories that illuminate the many different Indigenous nations within Australia, an approach he notes that Alan Atkinson successfully employs (p. xi).

The Djadja Wurrung people are central to this book, which traces the invasion of their land through six chapters: encounter, conflict, frontier, protection, refuge and decline. Attwood acknowledges the challenges to incorporating the Djadja Wurrung viewpoint, given that their culture was oral during this period. However, he finds that the rich records left by the protectors appointed by the British government during these years give at least 'some sense of the Aboriginal people's perspective' (p. xvi).

This book's foundations lie in research that Attwood carried out alongside Nicholas Clark and Marie Fels for the Dja Dja Wrung Aboriginal Association in the late 1990s, which led to a small publication by Attwood in 1999. Attwood recently returned to the work, inspired by new scholarship in the area, encouragement from a central Victorian Reconciliation leader and a Djadja Wurrung elder, and a desire to conduct more archival research of his own.

Attwood closes with a discussion of the Djadja Wurrung's successful land claim of 2013 and their demands for the return of artefacts, which the British Museum loaned to Museum Victoria in 2004. He notes that 'the story that the Djadja Wurrung representatives told about the history of the three artefacts differed in important respects from the one that might be and indeed has been told by a historian working in keeping with the conventions of the discipline of history' (p. 194). Where the exhibition curator, Elizabeth Wills, told 'a story that depict[ed] negotiation perhaps even friendship, and which feature[d] Aboriginal agency and adaptation', the Djadja Wurrung, told 'of dispossession, powerlessness and exploitation' (p. 194). This conflict between history told by scholarly historians and Aboriginal claimants is 'an increasingly common problem in democratic nation states', writes Attwood (p. 195). Attwood suggests 'sharing histories' as a possible path forward. Different from 'shared histories', where different perspectives are combined and a single narrative is agreed upon, sharing histories is an approach that acknowledges the 'ongoing presence of different pasts or histories and seek[s] to accommodate these through a shared commitment to certain democratic principles' (p. 198).

Attwood's book is equal parts informative and provocative. His detailed and nuanced account of Djadja Wurrung fills an important historical gap. His approach, meanwhile, is sure to open up interesting (and potentially heated) conversations about what constitutes Aboriginal history, the relative merits of micro versus macro histories and how best to reconcile western and Indigenous ways of understanding the past.

Fiona Davis

The Vandemonian Trail: Convicts and Bushrangers in Early Victoria

By Patrick Morgan. Connor Court Publishing, Redland Bay 2016. Pp. 226. \$29.95, paperback.

Every now and then a book comes along that indelibly stamps itself on a period of history. Patrick Morgan's *The Vandemonian Trail* is one such book. The author has written an informative and fascinating account of the Tasmanian convict migration into Victoria, focusing on escapees,

bushrangers and ticket-of-leave men and women. ‘The Vandemonian Trail’, is a term the author uses to describe the convict pathway ‘across the strait’ from Tasmania to Victoria and further afield through the Gippsland region, spreading out to the north-east, the Western District and beyond, bringing lawlessness, disorder and intimidation in its wake. The ‘vilest of the vile, the incorrigible and the refuse of the mass of convict scoundrelism’ insurgency, had to be endured by the respectable people of Victoria for more than two decades.

Except for an early aborted attempt to settle convicts in the Port Phillip District (later to become the Colony of Victoria), the district prided itself on being convict free. With the closure of the Norfolk Island penal settlement in 1853, where the irredeemable and worst convict offenders had been held, the settlement’s prisoners were sent to Tasmania. A number of these prisoners, many as escapees or ticket-of-leave parolees, made the short journey across Bass Strait to Victoria. The Melbourne *Argus* sounded the tocsin: ‘The consequences of importing the felons of Van Diemen’s land, whether unpardoned or only half pardoned, has been written in lines of blood in the criminal records of Victoria.’

There are many incidents of violent confrontation and nasty conflict retailed in the book, including those attributed to a group of Tasmanian Aborigines who came to Victoria and committed crimes as defined by the colonists. These accounts graphically illustrate a community-wide climate of fear and property loss. The sense of unease among Victoria’s inhabitants caused by the disruptive convict presence is conveyed admirably by the author’s meticulous narrative. No one felt safe, and the fledgling Victorian police force was spread too thinly in rural districts to deal with what was seen as an out-of-control Tasmanian convict invasion.

Morgan defines his authorial task as myth-busting. Peeling away ‘the complex layers of proliferating folk accretions ... establishing the chronological sequence of events that occurred on the Vandemonian Trail, as distinct from the unreliable folklore versions which have come down to us’. In other words, he aims to replace folklore and myth with historical context and scholarly accuracy. In doing so, Morgan draws on Australian literary sources such as Rolf Boldrewood, Henry Kingsley and Marcus Clarke, as well as the usual array of historical records. He skilfully examines the Bogong Jack legend and the Tichborne claimant

controversy, shedding additional light on each and offering a new interpretation of these highly mythologised subjects. Bogong Jack is shown not to be the leader of the gang that bore his name. The gang was led by Thomas Toke, and, as the author points out, it should have been called the Toke gang. Morgan does a commendable job describing their horse and cattle-stealing activities throughout Gippsland and beyond, which involved driving the stolen livestock along perilous mountainous stock routes that would later be used for the same purpose by Ned Kelly and his Quinn relatives.

The tale of a Tasmanian impostor claiming to be Roger Tichborne, an English aristocrat and heir to the Tichborne fortune, is also fully recounted here. Morgan provides new biographical detail and a Hobart-town perspective on the impostor as a 'lowlife' butcher and petty confidence trickster. Thanks to the author's impressive knowledge and research, the Tichborne claimant and Bogong Jack narratives are no longer enmeshed in obscuring myth. Morgan's book contains other enthralling stories of Tasmanian convict ne'er-do-wells, and each story adds to the journey along the Vandemonian Trail. The book introduces an interesting array of 'colourful' characters, such as 'Ballarat Harry', 'Hopping Andy', 'Jack the Fencer', 'Blind Joe' and 'Mickey the Frenchman'.

This is a book for readers wanting to engage with the wild thrill of the Port Phillip District's lawlessness, focused on Tasmanian escapees, early bushrangers and ticket-of-leave convicts who terrorised the Victorian countryside with their misdeeds and violent crimes. Patrick Morgan has done more than tell an exciting tale of colonial days. He has mapped out the convict Vandemonian Trail to Victoria as never before, and for this alone his book deserves high praise.

Doug Morrissey

The Life of John Sadleir and his Role in the Capture of Ned Kelly

By Richard M.F. Sadleir. Richard Sadleir, New Zealand 2015. Pp. 151. \$30, paperback.

Richard Sadleir's biography of his great grandfather, John Sadleir, is a welcome addition to the Ned Kelly bookshelf, which is overburdened

with hero-worshipping accounts of Kelly's activities. Superintendent John Sadleir was a leading figure in the hunt for the Kelly Gang. He presided over the gang's Glenrowan destruction and Ned's capture. In 1913 John Sadleir published his memoirs under the title *Recollections of a Victorian Police Officer*. The author provides a wonderful link to his great grandfather's literary effort through a photograph of the book's title page bearing a written inscription from the author John to his son Henry, dated 15 September 1913. Two other inscriptions added by Henry's son Ralph (1940) and Ralph's son Richard, the present author (1965), mark when each received the book.

The authors draws on John Sadleir's published memoir and an unpublished family history manuscript by Melesina Sadleir (John's daughter), titled 'Memories: A Few Notes on our Father and Mother', sundry letters and his own research effort. It relates the history of the Sadleir family from its Tipperary roots in Ireland, where John's father James was a moderately well-to-do Protestant farmer, to the colonial adventure of the younger Sadleirs who emigrated to Victoria during the gold rush.

Within a couple of months of arriving in Melbourne in 1852, John joined the Cadet Corps of the Victorian Police Force. The author describes in much detail John's pre-Kelly police career, his postings, his promotions and his family life. At the age of 24, John married Isabella Crofton, 21, on 31 December 1857. Isabella was an Irish lass from Crossmoyne in County Mayo. The marriage was a happy one and was to produce thirteen children. Several letters written during the courtship phase of the relationship are included in the book, and they give a human face to a husband and father regarded by his family as a religious man with strict principles and a loving disposition. The letters are particularly poignant in the light of the death of three of his four young sons during a diphtheria epidemic nearly a decade later.

Sadleir family harmony was disrupted for a time when John's sister Helen arrived from Ireland and took up residence in the household. Melesina wrote 'My mother's happiness ... was spoiled by having a very disagreeable and mischief-making sister-in-law staying with her'. John took his sister to task for upsetting his wife. The author quotes a delightfully evocative passage from Melesina's memoir, which depicts the Sadleir family's domestic life at Benalla as John pursued the Kelly Gang. 'I loved the Benalla gardens and the river where we bathed and

fished. ... One afternoon when mother and maid and all of us were in the water, drovers came up with a herd of wild cattle to cross by the ford. We fled in terror as none of us wore proper bathing gowns ... Another time, a posse of police starting out on an expedition after the Kellys came up. Ralph [Melesina's brother] very quickly took charge of affairs and directed them away from dangerous snags, and from us. We thought him very smart.

These glimpses into Sadleir family life provide some insight into John's character as a father and a husband. They let us see the private side of a hard-working policeman, whose personal history is overshadowed by the celebrity criminal he pursued. This was a man of honesty, integrity and compassion, whose qualities and temperament have been passed over in the histories of the Kelly Gang. John had a passion for history and was a part of it beyond the Kelly saga. In later life, he became a founding member of what is now the Royal Historical Society of Victoria and contributed many papers to the *Victorian Historical Magazine* (predecessor of this journal), which led him to publish his book of recollections. At the age of 86 years, John died at his home in Elsternwick on 21 September 1919. He was hailed as a pioneer member of the Victorian Police Force, a well-respected community identity and an exemplary family man.

Richard Sadleir spends a good deal of the book describing John Sadleir's role as a policeman during the Kelly Outbreak, much of which he draws from Sadleir's *Recollections* and the royal commission into the police force (1881–83). In my view, he places undue reliance on the work of John McQuilton, a pro-Kelly historian whose view about the causes underpinning Ned Kelly's bushranging career are subject to question. What the author writes about Ned and John is interesting and relevant, but anyone familiar with the Kelly literature will have seen it many times before. The main strength of this book is the fascinating portrait the author provides of John Sadleir's private life, outside his connection with Ned Kelly's sordid tale of bushranging and murder.

Doug Morrissey

Notes on Contributors

Sharon Bettridge has a B.Ed. in librarianship and history, and has worked as a teacher–librarian for over thirty years at a range of Victorian state secondary schools. During that time she also authored several chapters in Pearson school history texts. Currently she is employed as a reference librarian with the City of Boroondara Libraries and as a speaker for the libraries’ history talks. Sharon is a member of the RHSV Publications Committee.

John Burch graduated from Melbourne University with a degree in history before undertaking further studies and a career in the public service. Now retired, he is pursuing a number of personal projects relating to the history of the Mallee and restoration of its natural environment. In 2017 he published *Returning the Kulkynne*, which explored both those interests and won the Victorian Premier’s History Award for 2017. John is currently a PhD candidate at Federation University researching Aboriginal land use in the Mallee.

Peter Cuffley is an author and historian who settled in Maldon in 2004. He has been a volunteer at Maldon Museum and Archives since 2007. After creating the Wedderburn General Store Museum in 1970/71, he was appointed the first Curator of History at Sovereign Hill, Ballarat, in May 1972. Since 1976 he has been an independent author and heritage advisor. In 1988 he was employed to prepare the first draft and framework of a Heritage Standards Manual for the Puffing Billy Railway. In 2006 his history of the Sovereign Hill Museums was published.

John Daniels has an interest in undiscovered, untold early Melbourne history. After contributing to the *Victorian Historical Journal* in June 2014 with ‘Batman’s Route Revisited’, he saw that examining Gellibrand’s route would be a logical progression. This tied in with an unanswered question about the origin of the naming of Gellibrand Hill, a feature that has long loomed large in John Daniels’ life.

Fiona Davis is a postdoctoral fellow at Australian Catholic University, investigating how public inquiries in Australia have collected and used evidence about past social welfare practices, and how this process may be improved. She completed a PhD thesis at the University of Melbourne in 2010 on the Cummeragunja Aboriginal station, which formed the basis of her 2014 book, *Australian Settler Colonialism and the Cummeragunja Aboriginal Station: Redrawing Boundaries*.

David Dunstan is a senior research associate with the School of Philosophical, Historical and International Studies at Monash University. He has a special interest in Melbourne’s history and contributed to the RHSV publication *Remembering Melbourne*. He lives in St Kilda.

Cheryl Glowrey is a regional historian living in South Gippsland and completed her PhD on the environmental history of Corner Inlet. Publications include *Snake Island and the Cattlemen of the Sea*, and chapters in *Prom Country: A History and Earth and Industry: Stories of Gippsland*. In 2015 she curated the exhibition *Road to the Prom* at the Foster and District Museum, which included the story of the soldier and land settlers of Yanakie. Recently, she wrote the revised entry for Angus McMillan in the *Australian Dictionary of Biography*. Cheryl is a lecturer in the School of Education, Federation University.

Rebecca Le Get is an environmental historian and ecologist, currently focusing on the history of the land use of remnant eucalyptus woodlands to the north of Melbourne that have shared a medical history associated with the treatment of tuberculosis. She is particularly interested in how these diverse woodlands survived until the present time to be incorporated into parks and reserves for environmental conservation. She is currently completing a PhD in history at La Trobe.

Trevor Lipscombe is a retired management consultant with an interest in the history of Australia's European coastal exploration and charting. He is the author of *On Austral Shores: A Modern Traveller's Guide to the European Exploration of the Coasts of Victoria and New South Wales* (2005) and several articles on the early maritime history of the coasts of Victoria and New South Wales. More recently his focus has been on correcting the historical record with regard to place names bestowed by Lt James Cook in 1770.

Andrew Markus holds the Pratt Foundation Research Chair of Jewish Civilisation. He is a Fellow of the Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia and is a past Head of Monash University's School of Historical Studies. He has published extensively in the field of Australian race relations and immigration history. He is tracking changes in Australian attitudes towards immigrants and asylum seekers through a series of national surveys. His research is part of the Scanlon Foundation's Mapping Social Cohesion project.

Elizabeth Offer is a current PhD student studying history at La Trobe University. She won the RHSV prize in Australian History in 2015 awarded to the La Trobe University student 'who received the highest mark in the subject Australian History'. In 2016 she completed an honours thesis that examined the interactions between police and parents of Industrial School children in the colony of Victoria, including ways they manipulated provisions of *The Neglected and Criminal Children's Act 1864*.

David Oldfield received an Award of Merit from the RHSV in May 2011 in recognition of his work as a volunteer in the Images Collection. During his time at the RHSV he assisted Amanda Lourie in her work, which resulted in 'Walter Woodbury's 1855 Panorama of Melbourne' (*Victorian Historical Journal*, vol. 81,

no. 2, 2010). David moved to Maldon in 2011 and joined the Maldon Museum where he volunteers in their Images Collection.

Doug Morrissey attended La Trobe University, where he studied land settlement in north-east Victoria and Ned Kelly. He completed an honours thesis on 'Ned Kelly's Sympathiser' (1977) and a PhD titled 'Selector, Squatters and Stock Thieves: A Social History of Kelly Country' (1987), where he examined the social, economic and cultural history of Kelly Country. Doug's first book *Ned Kelly: A Lawless Life* was published by Connor Court in 2015 and shortlisted for the Prime Minister's Literary Award for Australian History in 2016. Doug's second book *Ned Kelly: Selectors, Squatters and Stock Thieves* will be published in 2018.

Seamus O'Hanlon teaches contemporary and urban history at Monash University. His research focuses on the impacts of economic, demographic and social change on the culture of the twentieth-century city. His latest book *City Life: The New Urban Australia* will be published by NewSouth in 2018.

Joe Rich retired as associate professor of history at RMIT University in 1998. Among his published journal articles, a number are based on his 1986 PhD thesis, titled 'His Thumb unto his Nose: The Removal of G.W.L. Marshall-Hall from the Ormond Chair of Music'. He is also the author of numerous book reviews, two monographs, namely, *Hartnett: Portrait of a Technocratic Brigand*, Sydney, Turton & Armstrong, 1996, which is a biography of GMH automobile executive Sir Laurence Hartnett, and an autobiographical study titled *Refugee: A Kind of Jewish Childhood*, Adelaide, Ginnderra Press, 2010.

Ben Wilkie is a historian and honorary fellow at Deakin University. His broad research interests are the social and environmental histories of Australia and its region in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. His first book was *The Scots in Australia 1788–1938*, Boydell Press, 2017, and he is currently writing a history of the Grampians–Gariwerd national park, in addition to researching intersections of the environment and war in the twentieth century.

Carole Woods, FRHSV, is honorary secretary of the RHSV, a member of the society's Publications Committee, and long-term chair of the judges panel for the annual Victorian Community History Awards. In 2014 she curated a successful exhibition on the Australian Red Cross in the Great War and another exhibition, 'Vera Deakin's World of Humanity', is now on display at RHSV. Her biography of Vera Deakin will be published by the society later in 2018.

About the Royal Historical Society of Victoria

The Royal Historical Society of Victoria is a community organisation comprising people from many fields committed to collecting, researching and sharing an understanding of the history of Victoria. Founded in 1909, the Society continues the founders' vision that knowing the individual stories of past inhabitants gives present and future generations links with local place and local community, bolstering a sense of identity and belonging, and enriching our cultural heritage.

The RHSV is located in the heritage-listed Drill Hall at 239 A'Beckett Street Melbourne built in 1939 on a site devoted to defence installations since the construction of the West Melbourne Orderly Room in 1866 for the Victorian Volunteer Corps. The 1939 building was designed to be used by the Army Medical Corps as a training and research facility. It passed into the hands of the Victorian government, which has leased it to the Society since 1999.

The RHSV conducts lectures, exhibitions, excursions and workshops for the benefit of members and the general public. It publishes the bi-annual *Victorian Historical Journal*, a bi-monthly newsletter, *History News*, and monographs. It is committed to collecting and making accessible the history of Melbourne and Victoria. It holds a significant collection of the history of Victoria including books, manuscripts, photographs, prints and drawings, ephemera and maps. The Society's library is considered one of Australia's richest in its focus on Victorian history. Catalogues are accessible online.

The RHSV acts as the umbrella body for over 320 historical societies throughout Victoria and actively promotes their collections, which are accessible via the Victorian Local History Database identified on the RHSV website. The Society also sponsors the History Victoria Support Group, which runs quarterly meetings throughout the state to increase the skills and knowledge of historical societies. The RHSV also has an active online presence and runs the History Victoria bookshop—online and on-site.

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1. The *VHJ* is a refereed journal publishing original and previously unpublished (online and hard copy) scholarly articles on Victorian history, or on Australian history that illuminates Victorian history.
2. The submission of original scholarly articles is invited following the journal's *Guidelines* available at <http://www.historyvictoria.org.au/publications/victorian-historical-journal>.
3. Articles from 4,000 to 8,000 words (including notes) are preferred.
4. The *VHJ* also publishes historical notes, generally of 2,000 to 3,000 words. A historical note contains factual information and is different from an article in not being an extended analysis or having an argument. Submitted articles may be reduced and published as historical notes at the discretion of the editor and the Publications Committee, after consultation with the author.
5. The review editor(s) commission book reviews—suggestions welcome.
6. The RHSV does not pay for contributions to the journal.
7. The manuscript should be in digital form in a minimum 12-point serif typeface, double or one-and-a-half line spaced (including indented quotations and endnotes), with margins of at least 3 cm.
8. Referencing style is endnotes and must not exceed 10 per cent of the text. They should be devoted principally to the citation of sources.
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