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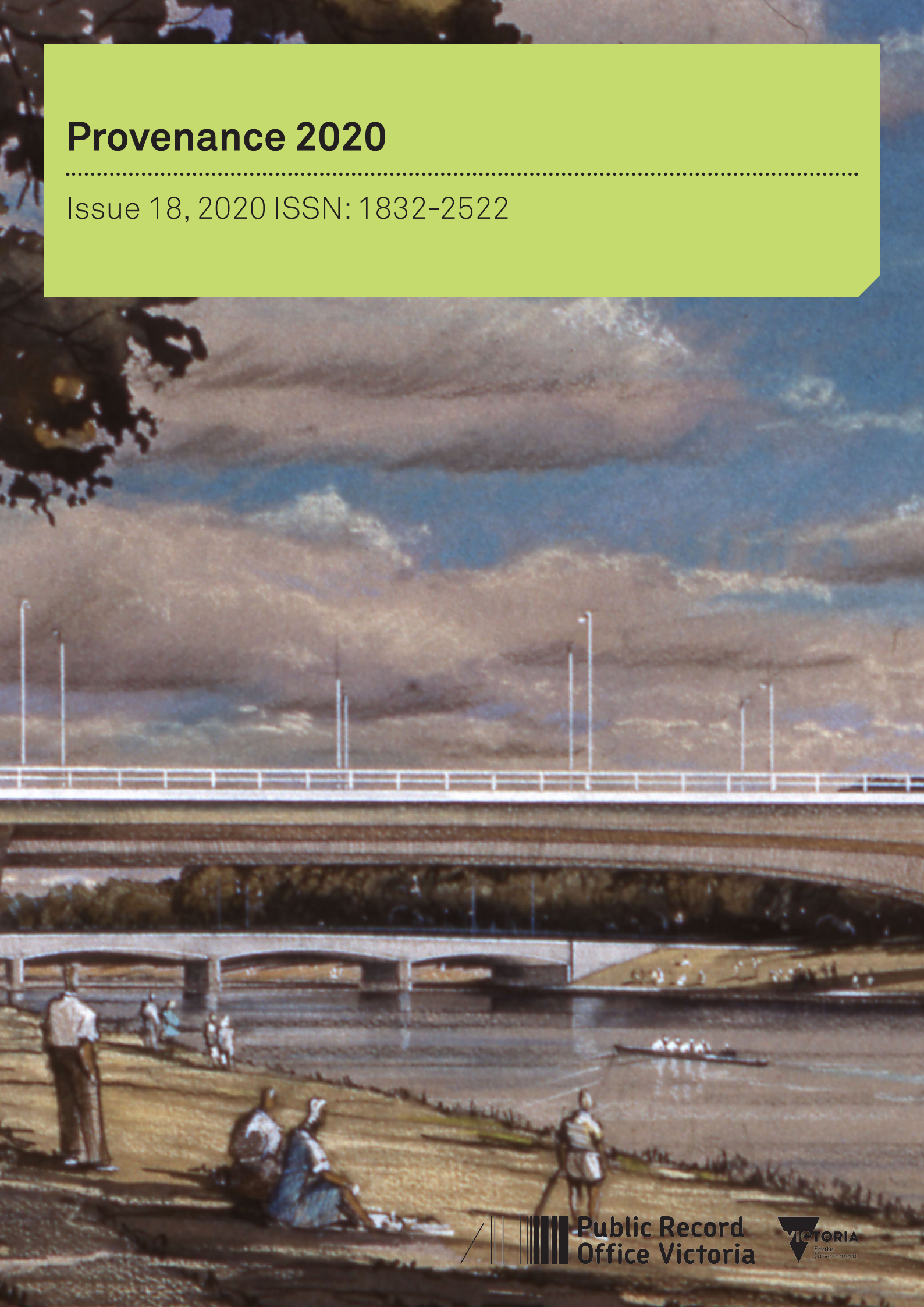

Public Record Office Victoria

VICTORIA State Government

Front cover: Sir Robert Gibson, photographer, *Looking across river towards Flinders St Station*, c. 1922, State Library of Victoria, Pictures Collection, H42558/6.

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Editorial

Welcome to the 2020 issue of *Provenance*. This issue includes seven articles that employ in-depth research of original historical documents to explore new and deeper understandings of our past and present, and the linkages between them. They highlight the potential for researchers to take primary sources in new directions, to illuminate new areas of inquiry and to discover fresh insights or a greater understanding of a particular topic or point of view.

Public Record Office Victoria (PROV) holds public records deemed to be of permanent value to the state of Victoria. However, as Andrew J. May, Helen Morgan, Nicole Davis, Sue Silberberg and Roland Wettenhall remind us in this issue, in many cases these records were not originally intended for general public consumption. The gap between the context in which records were originally created, and the ongoing uses, meanings and legacy that they have for current and future research and understanding is a theme underpinning the articles in this issue. In exploring methodological issues associated with particular records or record collections for historical research, we are reminded of the interrelationships between current researchers of public records, the people that they are researching and writing about, and present-day families and communities.

Two peer review articles explore parts of PROVs wide collection of maps and plans in detail for their potential to reveal significant information about the past and present, although for very different purposes and in very different contexts.

Barbara Minchinton looks at the history and significance of a single plan located in PROV's Historic Plan Collection, widely known among heritage researchers and urban archaeologists as the Bibbs map, using in-depth research to analyse and date the map. What is now called the Bibbs map was originally created to facilitate the construction of Melbourne's water supply system in the 1850s, and is now a valuable source for decoding the built fabric of Melbourne's gold rush era development. Through fresh examination of the complex development and context of the Bibbs map, Minchinton highlights the significance of the map both at the time of its production and for researchers in the present day. A fresh examination of this significant record, documentation of Minchinton's journey through the archival research process and identification of similar maps in the PROV collection, will no doubt be of great interest to many researchers and historians of inner Melbourne.

John Burch, Ian D Clark and Fred Cahir argue that a more nuanced reading of parish plans, in particular cadastral plans of surveys relating to the control and alienation of Crown land in Victoria, present new opportunities for understanding the ways in which the traditional owners of the Mallee back country region of north-western Victoria inhabited the land both prior to, and immediately following, the arrival of non-Aboriginal people in the area in the 1830s and 1840s. In the absence of other documentary and oral evidence of Aboriginal land use in this area dating from this time period, the use of new methodologies and record series to uncover this information is a valuable contribution. The authors present a methodology and case study to demonstrate the potential for examining and interpreting the plans in the context of Aboriginal land use, and provide a strong argument for further detailed research of the parish plans for this purpose. The article highlights the value of this type of record for similar research in other parts of Australia.

'Untimely ends' is a fascinating exploration of the richness and scope of inquest records for exploring both individual and community stories. Through the use of case studies, May et al. confirm the value of inquest records as archival sources for illuminating human and individual details, but also embrace the methodological issues associated with the creation and use of these records. What sorts of questions do researchers need to ask of their sources,in which context were they created, and what can they reveal or not reveal? May et al. demonstrate the ways in which these records can be interpreted and 'read' on many levels to reveal information about race, class, gender, family relationships, life and death both in and through the record.

In 'Deleting freeways', Sebastian Gurciullo expands on histories of community resistance to freeway proposals in inner Melbourne in the context of an overarching emphasis on roads and freeway construction within transport planning, a priority that continues to the present day. Through a detailed investigation of the archival record associated with Melbourne's 1969 *Transportation plan*, and the proposed F2 freeway to connect the inner- north with the south-east in particular, Gurciullo argues that a changing demographic of educated inner city communities and associated politically aware activism in the mid to late 1970s were pivotal in challenging this ascendency and giving voice to community and environmental issues in transport planning in the inner city. While the anti-freeway campaign successfully contributed to an abandonment by the Victorian Government of the planned F2 freeway, such 'deletion' has not diminished the broader focus on road construction to ease congestion in favour of public transport initiatives that meet growing demand.

In each of the three articles in this issue's Forum section, we witness the power of archives as evidence about people that can reveal not only basic facts about their lives but also their character and motivations.

In 'Witnessing the familial'—a companion article to 'Untimely ends' co-authored by Helen Morgan and members of the Melbourne History Workshop—Morgan demonstrates how inquest and court records can be read carefully to tell us about the family relationships and more of those giving evidence. Close readings of evidence given by her great-great-grandmother Elizabeth Morgan leads her to investigate the other deponents who gave evidence. By doing so, the evidence given in depositions is placed in the context of the known facts about the person giving the evidence to elicit the motivations for what they said or did not say in those depositions.

Virginia Blue embarks on a mission to dispel the rumours and popular myths that have posthumously clouded the reputation of Howard R Lawson, a progressive Melbourne architect who made innovative use of recycled materials. Seeking to redress the reception of his work and the unwarranted disparagement of his status as an architect, Blue researched Lawson's application for registration as an architect submitted to the Architects Registration Board of Victoria as required by the *Architects Registration Act 1922*. The application, correspondence and associated documents relating to Lawson's bid in 1923 to be formally registered as an architect not only reveal aspects of Lawson's personality but also the circumstances that saw his application ultimately fail, and, consequently, the events that led to the sullying of his reputation as a noteworthy architect.

Darren Arnott re-examines the events surrounding the fatal shooting of Rodolfo Bartoli, an Italian prisoner of war, while he was allegedly attempting to escape from the Rowville internment camp on 30 March 1946. Records about the incident are contained in a number of series created by the Australian military, many of which are now held in the Victorian office of the National Archives of Australia, and in depositions from a coronial hearing that are held by PROV. Giving evidence before a military court of inquiry, commandant of the camp, Captain John Walker Waterston, claimed he shot Bartoli while he was trying to escape. The inquiry exonerated him but reports had already reached Minister for the Army, Frank Forde, that contradicted this finding and prompted him to pursue the matter further, leading to a judicial inquiry and court martial. Through a thorough examination of the correspondence, reports and court martial files, Arnott's thoughtful and sensitive narration of Bartoli's untimely death and its aftermath ultimately raises more questions than it is able to answer. They are questions about Waterston's motivations and conduct, but also questions about how he evaded any significant consequences for his actions when his initial version of events were clearly refuted and some kind of wrongdoing was evident.

Tsari Anderson and Sebastian Gurciullo

Refereed articles

Parish plans as a source of evidence of Aboriginal land use in the Mallee back country

'Parish plans as a source of evidence of Aboriginal land use in the Mallee back country', *Provenance: The Journal of Public Record Office Victoria*, issue no. 18, 2020. ISSN 1832-2522.

This is a peer reviewed article.

John Burch is a PhD candidate at Federation University Australia, Ballarat. After a career in the public service, he is pursuing his interests in the ecology and human use of the Victorian Mallee. In 2017 he was awarded the Victorian Premier's History Award for *Returning the Kulkyne, an exploration of the history of land use of the Hattah–Kulkyne National Park*. He is currently researching Aboriginal land use in the back country. He is supported by an Australian Government Research Training Program (RTP) Fee-Offset Scholarship through Federation University Australia.

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Fred Cahir is Associate Professor in Aboriginal history at Federation University Australia, Ballarat. Fred's masters and PhD research focused on local Victorian Aboriginal history. His PhD thesis, 'Black gold: the role of Aboriginal people on the gold fields of Victoria', was awarded the Australian Historical Association's 2008 Alan Martin Award and was subsequently published by Aboriginal History Inc. and ANU Press. Fred's latest co-edited books include T*he children of the Port Phillip Protectorate* (2016) and *Aboriginal bio-cultural knowledge in southeastern Australia* (2018). In 2019 he published *'My country all gone. The white men have stolen it': The invasion of Wadawurrung country 1800–1870*.

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Abstract

The nature of Aboriginal people's use, indeed occupation, of the Victorian Mallee 'back country' warrants detailed investigation. Probably arising out of the paucity of observations of Aboriginal people on the land before it was pastorally occupied, an historical analysis from the 1870s suggesting Aboriginal people were not occupiers but mere 'seasonal visitors' to the 'back country' was unquestionably accepted for the next century. Growing understanding of the fundamentally sophisticated ways in which Aboriginal people managed their land has led to some recent historical works with a revised understanding of land use in the 'back country', but there is no agreement to move away from the orthodox historical paradigm.

Parish plans from the Mallee, part of PROV's 'Parish and township plans' collection, were investigated to determine whether they contain evidence of former Aboriginal land use that could inform this question. It was found that these plans can potentially reveal the presence of pre-colonial Aboriginal water management, pathways, quarries, land management, cemeteries and placenames. Thus, parish plans were shown to be a potentially valuable resource that might have the capacity to support a reinvestigation of Aboriginal land use in the 'back country'. Approaches for a more detailed investigation of the value of these plans are suggested.

Aboriginal land use in the Mallee back country—that part of north-western Victoria set back from the Murray River and without immediate access to its water (Figure 1)—has been little studied and is poorly understood. This article begins by describing the very limited documentary evidence of Aboriginal land use available from the period of colonial settlement, paying particular attention to its geographical scope. It then reviews the conclusions about Aboriginal land use that have been drawn from these sources, before describing more recent challenges to this historiography. The article then explores the potential of the parish plans contained in VPRS 16306 as a new source of information about Aboriginal land use. It examines their dates of creation and geographical scope to determine their possible capacity to contain useful information, and identifies examples in which historical Aboriginal land use is either explicitly recorded or can be inferred with confidence. Finally, focusing on one plan, a case study is presented that demonstrates the kind of information that potentially can be drawn from this collection when the plans are placed in their correct historical and environmental context. The article suggests a methodology for a comprehensive investigation of these plans, and in particular show that VPRS 16306 can be used as a source of information about Aboriginal land use.

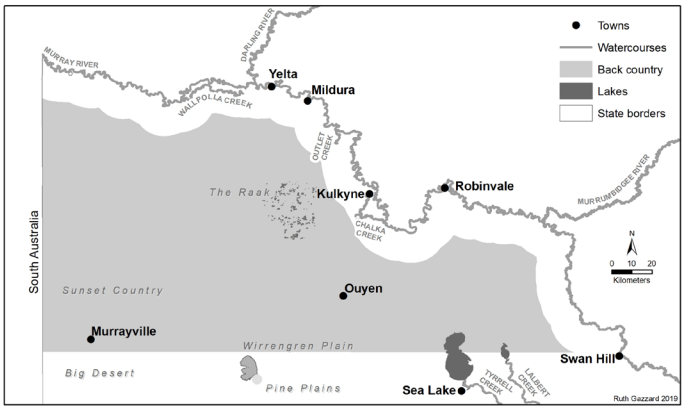

Figure 1: The Mallee back country. Commissioned by John Burch.

Aboriginal land use in the Mallee back country

The Mallee back country being studied is Aboriginal land and the details of its ownership have been investigated in a number of studies. These investigations have concluded that this area is primarily the country of Aboriginal communities living along the Murray River—the Ngindai, Jari Jari, Ladji Ladji, Tati Tati, Weki Weki and Wadi Wadi peoples—and the Ngargad people who occupy similar back-country land in South Australia. Norman Tindale's work in 1974 divided ownership of the study area between these communities.[1] In 1990, Ian Clark examined the spatial organisation of the Wergaia people and concluded that their lands extend further north than Tindale had believed, crossing into the southern fringe of the study area.[2] Subsequently, Clark and Ted Ryan undertook a further reconstruction of the spatial organisation of Aboriginal people along the Murray River between the South Australian border and Mildura, correcting an error that Tindale had inherited from Robert Brough Smyth.[3] These revisions by Clark and Ryan did not, however, change the understood owners of the land.

The Victorian Government has recognised two organisations as Registered Aboriginal Parties and the formal custodians of land within the study area. The First Peoples of the Millewa–Mallee Aboriginal Corporation are the custodians of the north-west corner of the Mallee, managing a section of land that stretches south from the Murray into the back country. The Barenji Gadjin Land Council Aboriginal Corporation is responsible for land that crosses the southern fringe of the study area. The land that lies between these sections has no formal custodian and is subject to dispute. There is also no formally recognised custodian of large parts of the eastern half of the study area in 2020.

While ownership of the land has been investigated, limited information has led to poor knowledge of how it was used. The Mallee back country intimidated the first colonial settlers to visit the area in the 1830s and 1840s. The denseness of its mallee scrub, the seeming lack of reliable access to water and the harshness of its weather discouraged investigations of the area. Consequently, few observations were made of the land and its use by Aboriginal people at the point at which pastoral settlement dispossessed those Aboriginal people. Both Thomas Mitchell and Charles Sturt dismissed the area as valueless and did not investigate it further; Mitchell deliberately skirted around the southern fringes of the Mallee back country. Edward John Eyre attempted to cross the area but was driven back after a few days by lack of water; he made no mention of Aboriginal people.[4] Likewise, the records of the Port Phillip Aboriginal Protectorate contain almost no information. The responsible assistant protector, Edward Stone Parker, did not visit the area and appears to have known very little about it, apart from making references to the Malleegoondeet people.[5] Nor did Chief Protector George Augustus Robinson enter the back country; however, he came closer than Parker, making a fleeting visit to Lake Hindmarsh in the southern Mallee in 1845[6] and visiting Tyntynder Station in the riverine corridor near Swan Hill in 1846,[7] before following the Murray River to Adelaide.

The missionaries that came later also avoided the back country. Those working at the Anglican mission at Yelta remained in the riverine corridor, while those from Ebenezer, the Moravian mission south of Lake Hindmarsh, also ignored the area.[8] This catalogue of those who stayed out of the Mallee back country also includes most of the German scientific expeditions of the 1850s and 1860s to north-western Victoria.[9] Of these, only Georg Neumayer visited the area.

In light of this, the list of non-Aboriginal visitors to the Mallee back country during the mid-nineteenth century is short. Apart from Eyre and Neumayer, we are almost entirely dependent on the accounts of two surveyors and a handful of pastoralists. The two surveyors, Osgood Pritchard and Edward Riggs White, drew a number of plans,[10] and White made brief reports to the surveyor general,[11] but none of these mention meeting Aboriginal people. The pastoralists who made observations included two run seekers, John Wood Beilby[12] and William Morton;[13] three squatters, James Clow,[14] Peter Beveridge[15] and William Stanbridge;[16] and two pastoral employees, George Everard[17] and Charlie Thompson.[18] Of these, only Everard made reference to observing Aboriginal people in the back country; however, the encounter he described occurred a decade after colonial settlement and the family he met may have only been displaced to this location for a brief period. Nevertheless, although most colonists did not directly observe Aboriginal people in the Mallee back country (or leave records of their observations if they did), evidence of the presence of Aboriginal people is variously recorded. For example, White and Beilby reported seeing Aboriginal wells, Beilby saw evidence of Aboriginal burning, and Beveridge and Thompson described Aboriginal seasonal journeys into the back country.

The information contained in these few sources has limited usefulness as it covers a very limited area—a few small parts of the back country. Beilby, Morton, Clow, Everard and Neumayer wrote about the same narrow strip of land heading west from Ouyen towards the South Australian border. Pritchard, Stanbridge, Neumayer and, to a lesser degree, Beveridge, reported on the area around Lake Tyrell. White, Neumayer and Everard documented their knowledge of an Aboriginal pathway from Wirrengren Plain to the Kulkyne, and Thompson described another Aboriginal pathway from the Kulkyne to Ouyen.[19] Vast expanses of the back country, over 75 per cent of the area, were not described by Europeans at the time the land was occupied by colonists.

Based on this limited information, Robert Brough Smyth concluded in 1878 that the Mallee back country was 'used only at certain times during each season, when the productions which it affords might tempt ... the Aboriginals to penetrate several parts of it'.[20] A poorly defined notion of 'seasonal visiting' was created. While seasonal visiting could be interpreted to mean visiting an area for an entire season, just as current cattle graziers take their cattle into mountain pastures for the summer and have a clearly defined relationship to the land, here it appears to be used to describe short visits to limited parts of the land with perhaps no sense of land ownership.

This view of minimal Aboriginal land use went unchallenged, and was the historical orthodoxy, for over a century. The Mallee's reputation as a howling wilderness discouraged visits to the area during the second half of the nineteenth century and severely constrained any further information coming forward.[21] In the early twentieth century, Alfred Kenyon reinforced Brough Smyth's conclusion in his very influential regional history, *The story of the Mallee*, by presenting the agricultural settlement of the Mallee as the story of the occupation of a previously empty and unproductive land.[22] Following Brough Smyth, Kenyon believed that Aboriginal people only had a cursory visiting relationship with the Mallee back country:

> Owing to the absence of reliable water supplies, there was no tribe of natives belonging to the Mallee; one or two families or small coteries only made it their home. The Mallegundeet, the people of the Mallee, belonged to the Wimmera, Richardson, and Avoca blacks, who in favorable years made incursions in large numbers.[23]

This view was then perpetuated in the 1960s by Aldo Massola. Despite Massola's commitment to re-establishing the place of Aboriginal people on the land, his *Journey to Aboriginal Victoria*, which documented physical evidence of Aboriginal people in the state, did not include a single reference to the Mallee back country,[24] and his view of Aboriginal land use was almost a simple paraphrase of Brough Smyth:

> The Mallee can be said to have been 'back country' to the tribes bordering on it, and it was only visited by groups from these tribes at various times of the year for the purpose of obtaining seasonal foods. It is certain that eventually some groups did settle on it.[25]

The first questioning of 'seasonal visiting' in the Mallee came from archaeologists. In 1949, Stan Mitchell had only been able to identify two sites in the Mallee where Aboriginal stone tools had been found, but archaeologists working in the 1970s and early 1980s identified dozens of sites, prompting the nature of Aboriginal land use and occupation to be questioned.[26] In 1980, P May and

RLK Fullagar[27] argued that the key factor determining occupation of the Mallee back country was the availability of water and speculated that occupation could have been more sustained, lasting for months in wet periods or even years after floods. Anne Ross went further, arguing on the basis of historical (not archaeological) material that it was 'almost certain that the Aborigines of the Mallee were not simply using the dune tract as "back country" in suitable seasons'.[28] Despite these revised views, at the very end of the twentieth century the authoritative DJ Mulvaney and J Kamminga effectively reasserted Brough Smyth's judgement, claiming that Aboriginal people of the Murray River 'did not venture far from the riverine corridor, which is about twenty kilometres wide'.[29]

This continuing narrative of seasonal visiting in the Mallee back country was eventually challenged again in the wake of a fundamental reconceptualisation of the nature of Aboriginal people's relationship to land and land management. Initiated by Rhys Jones's seminal work in 1969 on 'fire stick farming',[30] new research progressively revealed the extent to which Aboriginal people were active and sophisticated land managers.[31] This reconceptualisation was informed by, and dependent on, cultural knowledge retained in Aboriginal communities. In *Aboriginal Dreaming paths and trading routes*, the Worimi historian Dale Kerwin gave what he called an 'Aboriginal perspective' and identified three myths that needed to be discarded: that 'Aboriginal societies are nomadic and non-sedentary', that 'Aboriginal society does not produce specialists' and that 'Aboriginal society were food collectors not food producers'.[32] Acknowledgement of the sophistication of Aboriginal land management was eventually brought into the public sphere and public consciousness by Bill Gammage and Bruce Pascoe.[33] Both worked from colonial records, believing that unrecognised information about Aboriginal land use was contained within them, as well as cultural knowledge. Gammage emphasised the role that fire played in shaping the land and how cleared lands were misinterpreted by early colonists as 'natural parks', leading to the view that 'parks chequered Australia'.[34] Pascoe placed more emphasis on the role of Aboriginal people as agriculturalists.

Reaction to the notion of Aboriginal people as sophisticated land managers has taken various forms. For example, some scientists and environmentalists have expressed concern that the use of fire by Aboriginal people is not properly understood, resulting in some areas of land currently being inappropriately burnt on the assumption that Aboriginal people would have burnt it previously. This burning represents a risk to native species and biodiversity. In 2010, Ron Hateley argued that 'Victorian Aboriginals did not have such a major effect on our forests, compared with the plains and woodlands, which undoubtedly bore deeply numerous signs'.[35] Another response has been to refute the very notion of sophisticated land management. Tom Griffiths has described such criticism as a reprise of the culture wars: 'Agriculture is at the front line of the ideological war about the British colonisation of Australia.'[36] Peter O'Brien proposed in a *Quadrant* article that 'there is nothing shameful in a nomadic hunter-gatherer history for Aborigines', and this would be the understanding of Aboriginal land use (and ownership) that such critics wish to return to.[37]

This dialogue about land management appears to have fostered new understandings about Aboriginal land use in the Mallee back country. In 2006, in a history prepared for the Native Title Tribunal, Raine Quinn examined evidence of Aboriginal peoples' presence in Buloke Shire in the southern Mallee and reached the conclusion: 'there were people *living* in the mallee country and not that it was an area where Aboriginal people just visited'.[38] Similarly, a 2012 publication on heritage issues in the Rural City of Mildura adopted this understanding, noting that the 'archaeological record challenges the idea that the resources of the Mallee were only accessed by Aboriginal people during periods of plentiful food and water'.[39] Without citing the source of the archaeological evidence, it continued:

> By the time Europeans arrived, the landscape was thus significantly marked by well trodden pathways, excavated wells, scar trees, crops of cultivated yams, large earthen mounds and middens, the creation of grasslands through fire stick burning, engineered channels to catch fish, and burial sites.[40]

A new imagining of Aboriginal people in the Mallee back country emerged alongside the historical orthodoxy of seasonal visiting. These conflicting narratives were examined in a recent publication, *Mallee country: land, people, history*.[41] The first authoritative history of the Victorian Mallee (within its broader theme of all mallee country) since Kenyon, *Mallee country* makes the same distinction as this article and treats the Victorian Mallee as two areas—the riverine corridor and the back country, which it calls 'dry scrub country'.[42] The book provides rich and vivid images of Aboriginal people in the riverine corridor, but it has very little to say about the dry scrub

country. Its judgement is that the back country 'was not permanently occupied, but Aboriginal people travelled through it and used it on a seasonal, temporary basis'.[43] *Mallee country* agrees that Aboriginal people shaped the land, often with fire, yet finds the evidence of this in the Victorian Mallee slim. According to Hateley, the reported use of fire by Aboriginal people in the Mallee is a post-colonial phenomena. *Mallee country* is also influenced by the work of Michael F Clarke, which has shown that some mallee bird species, particularly the iconic Mallee Fowl, require an environment of old (unburned) mallee, suggesting that fire was not widely used.[44]

These conflicting narratives of how the Victorian Mallee back country was used arise, it can be argued, because of the extremely limited observations by early colonists in the area. Indeed, and following on from this, it could be argued that there is a weighted assumption that if it was not observed by early colonists it did not happen. This article explores whether there are new sources of evidence that can be brought to the question of Aboriginal land use. Specifically, it examines the utility of parish plans in VPRS 16306 held at Public Record Office Victoria (PROV). Parish plans have previously proved useful as sources of pre-colonial vegetation patterns, but their utility as a source of Aboriginal land use has not been explored, though investigation is progressing in this area.[45] In *Decolonising historical maps*, Beth Moylan undertakes a very brief analysis of the utility of colonial maps and suggests that:

> Historical maps can be useful when researching Aboriginal cultural landscapes and they can help researchers develop family histories, trace trading paths and Songlines, investigate traditional fire management regimes, reconstruct land use patterns, and explore local languages.[46]

VPRS 16306 Record plans ('put away' and 'current')

VPRS 16306 consists of cadastral maps that define land boundaries. PROV describes these as 'the definitive legal documents that determine the status of land in Victoria that has been sold by the Crown (alienation) or reserved for public purposes', and explains that these form 'the basis of the current land titles system'.[47] VPRS 16306 consists of two consignments: P1 or the 'put away' plans, and P2 or those that were 'current' in 2001 when the use of hard copy plans was replaced by digital record keeping. This article focuses on plans in the P1 consignment. These are described by PROV as covering the period 1837 to 2001 and, while a number of possible uses are suggested, Aboriginal land use is not included.

The record plans do not automatically recommend themselves as sources of information about Aboriginal land use in the Mallee. They appear to have two significant limitations, namely contemporaneity and geographical scope. Land ownership, and the consequential making of cadastral parish plans in the Mallee, is primarily associated with the agricultural settlement that commenced decades after the original colonial occupation of the land. Pastoral squatters moved onto the Mallee in the 1840s and 1850s, but agricultural settlement only commenced in the southern Mallee in the early 1890s and continued until the 1920s.[48] The passage of that amount of time between the arrival and agricultural settlement of Europeans could reasonably be presumed to have removed evidence of Aboriginal land use. The second apparent limitation is geographical scope. Large parts of the Mallee, such as the Sunset Country and the Big Desert, have never been settled and, hence, have never needed cadastral mapping. The area involved is extensive. The Murray–Sunset National Park alone is over 600,000 hectares (1.5 million acres). The expectation would be that record plans would add little to our knowledge of those areas.

Initial inspection

An initial inspection of VPRS 16306 was undertaken to assess its potential value as a source of Aboriginal land use. The P1 consignment contains over 1,600 parish plans of north-western Victoria and each of these was briefly examined to determine the type of information it contained. The microfiche copies that were initially used made detailed investigation difficult, some maps were too small to read and some microfiche were missing; nevertheless, it was possible to conceptualise the series into six distinct categories.

1. *Land purchases by squatters*

When squatters occupied the Mallee, they had the option to purchase up to 640 acres of the land on which their station buildings stood under what was called a 'Presumptive Right'. Land Acts in the 1870s extended these rights and the squatters bought up further land. VPRS 16306 contains the plans of some of the land purchases made from the mid-1870s onwards.[49] These plans, while accurately describing an allotment's dimensions, can be vague about its relative location. Though listed as being located in a specific parish, there is sometimes no sense that the surveyor knew the relationship of the land purchased to the parish boundary, or indeed where the parish boundary was. However, these purchases, and the plans of them, are important because

they reveal the land that squatters valued—often water sources that they hoped to monopolise. Overall, the extent of these land purchases was very minor—probably less than 10,000 acres over the entire Mallee.

2. *Grazing blocks under the 1883 Mallee Pastoral Leases Act*

Government had little interest, and played little part, in mapping pastoral occupation of the Mallee. After White and Pritchard had mapped the state boundaries, it was left to squatters to map their personal holdings. This changed in 1883 when the *Mallee Pastoral Leases Act* introduced new leasehold arrangements and government needed to map and mark the boundaries of the leaseholds it was offering. The surveying was carried out in 1885 and 1886 by contract surveyors Tom H Turner and EJ Nankivell. Kenyon was confident that this process left little about the Mallee unknown; yet, Turner's plans leave large areas of the Sunset Country blank.[50] Some of Turner's and Nankivell's plans—of whole counties with no mention of parishes—are only remotely cadastral in nature and are stored in VPRS 16306 under titles such as 'Mallee' or simply the name of one parish in the area so mapped.[51]

3. *Pre-agricultural settlement land assessments*

Agricultural settlement of the Mallee began as a private initiative. Holders of grazing blocks in the south-east of the Mallee started subdividing their blocks in the 1890s and bringing agricultural settlers onto the land. Agricultural settlement was dependent on, and went hand in hand with, the expansion of the railway network. As government became progressively more involved in agricultural settlement through initiatives such as closer settlement, it became more interested in the viability of land for settlement and its capacity to repay the costs of railway development. Plans associated with the assessment of the suitability of land for agricultural settlement are filed in VPRS 16306. These plans usually cover large areas, equivalent to a number of parishes, and record the features that may make the land suitable for settlement. Many plans were made of the Sunset Country when settlement of that area was being considered in the 1920s.[52]

4. *Pre-agricultural settlement parish plans*

When it was decided to offer land for settlement, individual parishes were surveyed and progressively subdivided into townships, farms, water and timber reserves, and proposed roads. The maps of these subdivisions are the first detailed 'parish maps' of the Mallee in VPRS 16306. With a high level of detail, they were designed to help prospective settlers understand the value of an individual piece of land. They record the presence of water, soil types, vegetation, plains, dunes and tracks. The quality of this category of map increased over time as government became more involved in promoting and supporting agricultural development. Earlier maps could have proposed boundaries and roads that bore little resemblance to the way the land was eventually used.[53]

5. *Township plans*

As parishes were opened for settlement, land was also set aside for townships to support the settlers. VPRS 16306 contains the plans of township subdivisions; however, inspection of these maps revealed nothing of value to this research.

6. *Post-agricultural settlement parish and township plans*

Following agricultural settlement, the original parish plans were progressively updated to show the addition of new allotments, alienation of allotments, new reservations and new features added to the land, for example, water channels. At the same time, pre-agricultural features such as tracks disappeared from the land and updated versions of the parish plan. Though fossilised features such as quarries could remain, later plans progressively lost any value for this investigation.

This initial inspection had two clear findings. First, it refuted any concerns that might have been held about the contemporaneity and geographical scope of VPRS 16306. The plans of squatters' purchases, the surveys of the entire Mallee dividing it into grazing blocks and the land assessments made before agricultural settlement each hold material that is earlier and of greater scope than might have been expected. Second, this initial inspection found, particularly in the pre-agricultural settlement parish plans, that VPRS 16306 contains a comprehensive and highly detailed mapping of the Mallee back country before it was disturbed by agricultural use.

This initial inspection also noted evidence of possible Aboriginal infrastructure, which suggested that a more detailed investigation of plans from the period before agricultural settlement might yield useful information.

Detailed investigation

The initial inspection identified 234 plans that contained, or were thought likely to contain, evidence of Aboriginal land use. PROV was extremely supportive of a detailed investigation of these maps and made their original hard copy versions available to overcome the difficulties of interpreting microfiche.

The detailed investigation sought to find evidence of specific land use features. Drawing partly from the assertion of sophisticated Aboriginal land management quoted earlier (i.e., 'well trodden pathways, excavated wells' etc.), it sought to find evidence of Aboriginal campsites, pathways, water management, cleared land (possibly used for agriculture or hunting), quarries, burial sites and placenames.

While it was considered possible that direct evidence of these forms of Aboriginal land use could be found, it was also anticipated that these land uses could have been obscured by colonial settlement. Pastoral squatters had very similar interests to Aboriginal people—water, cleared land and grass—and overwrote existing Aboriginal infrastructure when they usurped it to meet their needs. In the riverine corridor, squatters occupied the sites of Aboriginal villages, no doubt because they were best placed to access water and usable land, and their land purchases in the back country may also mark sites of Aboriginal occupation.[54] Pathways were also appropriated. Kerwin has argued that Aboriginal pathways frequently 'became drover runs and coach ways'.[55] The first overlanders through the Mallee, Hawdon and Bonney, followed 'well beaten native paths' but, by the time their cattle and wagons had passed, the Aboriginal nature of such pathways were very likely already suppressed.[56] Similarly, squatters built log tanks at the same locations as Aboriginal people had had wells, once again obscuring the Aboriginal history of such sites.[57]

Consequently, the investigation also sought evidence of pastoral land use that might have been founded on Aboriginal infrastructure, land purchases, water management and tracks. This approach of seeking evidence of both Aboriginal and pastoral land use treats the plans of VPRS 16306 as akin to palimpsests—artefacts containing a series of stories layered over each other. Each layer tells a discrete and meaningful story, but the earliest stories have often been hidden and need to be recovered through analysis and interpretation that peels away the later layers to reveal the original story.

The detailed investigation revealed some direct evidence of Aboriginal land use, but it was limited in scope. Apart from single references to an 'Aboriginal Burying Ground' and a pile of ironstones (which may indicate Aboriginal resource gathering), all the references directly construable as indicative of Aboriginal land use referred to water management. Nearly all of these were references to crabholes (Figure 2).

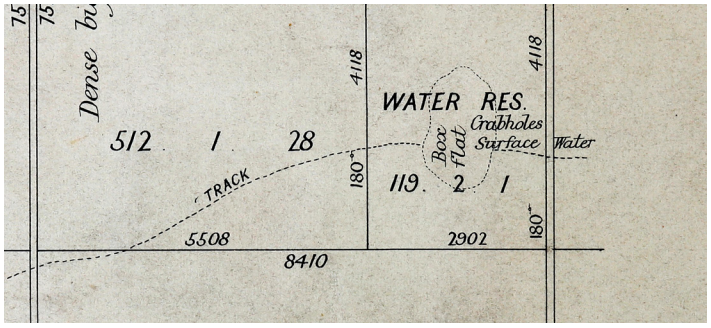

Figure 2: Extract from 'Parish of Pirro' plan, 1893, PROV, VPRS 16306/P1, Unit 12944, M 544, O: Parish of Pirro.

Though the term crabhole is used in various ways, it most frequently describes small cylindrical wells that are less than a foot in width and only a few feet deep that are dug on clay pans and fill with water draining from surrounding land. The narrow and deep structure of crabholes protected the water from evaporation and use by animals, but also made it difficult to access. Robinson described Aboriginal people sucking up water through reed tubes, and this process may have been applied to crabholes.[58] Massola, without giving his source, referred to grass being tied to the end of a spear and dipped into crabholes (and tree hollows) to sponge water out.[59] Covered with a piece of bark to reduce evaporation, these crabhole wells would become invisible.

Failure to record more extensive Aboriginal infrastructure is probably a simple matter of ignorance on the part of the surveyors, but it may also reflect a desire to deny Aboriginal people's place on the land. N Etherington found that ignoring Aboriginal land ownership and infrastructure, except wells, was frequent on plans, and posited that it may have been common practice not to record the presence of those deemed not capable of land ownership, thereby suppressing their existence and relationship to the land.[60] Being such a valuable commodity, water was always recorded.

In addition to these direct references, the plans occasionally show associations that suggest Aboriginal land uses that probably did not even occur to the surveyors. On at least two occasions, associations are shown between stone sources and Aboriginal water management. Figure 3 shows a crabhole next to 'Limestone Cliffs'. Given that usable stone was uncommon in north-western Victoria, and that Aboriginal people were known to travel into the back country to gather other resources such as ochre, there is a clear suggestion that this might be a quarry site supplied with water. The repetition of the pattern reinforces this interpretation.

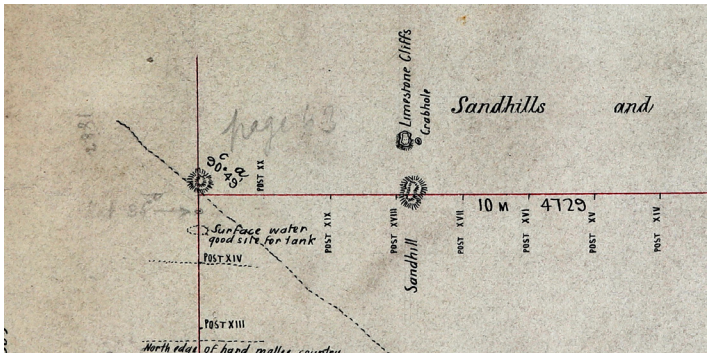

Figure 3: Extract from 'Parish of Daalko' plan, 1887, PROV, VPRS 16306/P1, Unit 12779, M 527, S: Parish of Daalko.

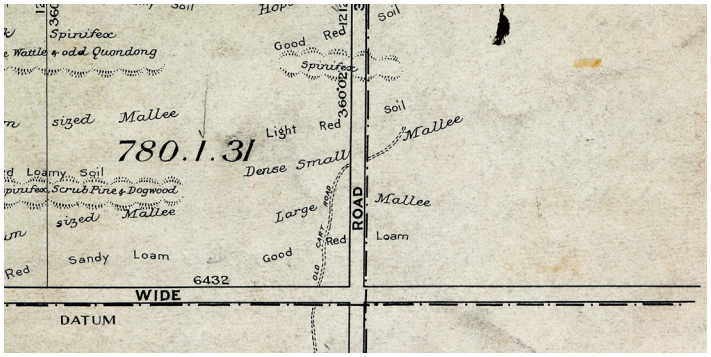

Figure 4: Extract from 'Portion of Parish of Nulkwyne' plan, 1911, PROV, VPRS 16306/P1, Unit 13865, N 120, A: Portion of Parish of Nulkwyne.

The other Aboriginal land use feature that may also have been unwittingly recorded is cleared grassland. As already noted, the pre-agricultural settlement parish maps went to considerable lengths to describe the state of the land, and these descriptions can suggest the presence of cleared land. The Mallee back country is naturally dotted with very small plains, usually places whose poor soil does not support mallee scrub, and the surveyors may simply describe these as a 'plain' or 'bead bush plain' or 'salt bush plain', but, occasionally, they make a point of specifying that a plain is 'grassed' or 'well grassed'. The presence of well-grassed plains (i.e., potentially fertile land that is devoid of trees) may suggest land clearance. The 'Parish of Boulka' plan,[61] made in 1904, shows five such plains, all very small in size. Figure 5 shows a typical representation of these plains.

As well as describing well-defined plains, the surveyors used other terms and phrases that may be construed as suggesting land clearance. Gammage argues that land cleared by Aboriginal people could take on a parklike appearance for Europeans—open grassy areas with clumps of trees—and some of the surveyor's descriptions suggest just this.[62] To the south of Robinvale, in what was otherwise dense mallee scrub, a surveyor noted: 'Small to medium mallee stunted pines and broom bush with clumps of big mallee and open stretches well grassed.'[63] Similarly, to the north of Underbool, another surveyor described a small patch as 'grassy country with occasional small belts of big mallee with some dead pine and belar'.[64] This by no means counts as definitive evidence in support of Gammage's arguments, yet these examples are sufficiently evocative to warrant further investigation.

While this investigation revealed some clear instances and suggestions of Aboriginal land use, the plans appear to predominantly record colonial pastoral land use. The maps show numerous tracks and instances of pastoral water management—for example, log tanks, tanks and dams. A typical example is the survey of the Parish of Chillingollah, undertaken in 1899, which shows four tanks and four tracks.[65] As already discussed, other studies have shown that these 'pastoral' tanks and tracks may have Aboriginal origins. Figure 4, which shows the proposed subdivision of part of Nulkwyne Parish, notes the presence of an 'OLD CART ROAD'. That road is known to overlay an Aboriginal pathway that ran from Wirrengren Plain to Kulkyne on the Murray River.[66] Similarly, the 'Parish of Boulka' plan, made in 1904,[67] shows sites set aside for the later construction of tanks, and one of these, the 'Blue Mountain Tank Site', shows pre-existing surface water and Aboriginal 'crabholes' where a dam was planned.

Further comprehensive analysis of the 'colonial' land use in these plans is needed to determine how much Aboriginal infrastructure lies concealed in them. A case study was undertaken to demonstrate how the material in VPRS 16306 could be analysed and yield valuable information through a comprehensive analysis.

Case study

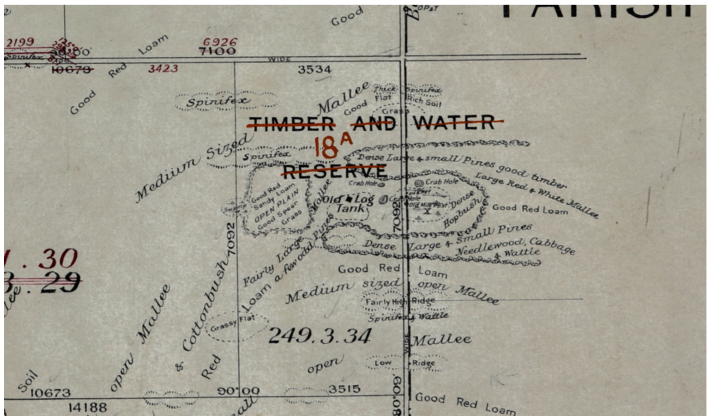

Figure 5: Extract from 'Parish of Kia' plan, 1911, PROV, VPRS 16306/P1, Unit 9887, K 201, A: Parish of Kia.

An analysis of the 'Parish of Kia' plan, made in 1911, highlights the depth of material that individual plans can contain and the opportunities and challenges of interpreting this material. Figure 5 is an extract from that plan measuring about 1 kilometre by 2 kilometres of land about 12 kilometres north-east of Ouyen. The extract shows a relatively large 'U' shaped dune that opens west, within a surrounding area of smaller east-west dunes and swales. The 'U' shaped dune is covered with native pine trees while the surrounding area is covered with mallee eucalypts of various sorts. Spinifex is growing on some of the ridges of the east-west dunes. Within the bowl of the 'U' shaped dune, drainage from the surrounding land has created a small infertile plain and an apparently damp, swampy piece of ground. Another swampy piece of ground lies to the west.

The capacity to understand and interpret this site is enhanced because its early colonial use is well documented.[68] Though squatters moved onto land to the immediate west (Paignie Run) and south-west (Ouyen Run) in about 1849 or 1850, the area was apparently not seen as valuable and was ignored until it was taken up by James Bennett in 1861. Bennett did not immediately occupy the land and, after unsuccessfully attempting to obtain access to water in the Kulkyne Lakes, abandoned the leasehold in 1864. The land then remained officially vacant until it was leased by the Lemprieres in 1876. It is also highly unlikely that the Lemprieres occupied the land, as their lease coincided with a severe drought and the arrival of rabbits in the Mallee; these conditions were so challenging that surrounding areas were abandoned as unusable. The Lemprieres' tenancy ended with the re-division of the Mallee into grazing blocks in 1884 and the land was then acquired by Kulkyne Station. But Kulkyne Station was unable to fence and use all the land that it had leased and also did not occupy the area. Therefore, when the land was subdivided in 1911 and this plan made, wheat farmers moved onto land that had apparently never been used for pastoral purposes.

Yet, the notion that the land had never been used for pastoral purposes is illusory. In the first decades of pastoral settlement of the Mallee, government exercised little control and supervision, and the squatters occupied land illegally and invisibly. The Ouyen Run was illegally occupied by Kulkyne Station from about 1849 to 1860 and that occupation could have extended to this area. Allegations were made in the 1870s that Kulkyne Station was grazing the unoccupied runs surrounding its official holdings. So, it is likely that Kulkyne Station grazed this area in good years until 1860, when it was claimed by Bennett, and may have used it again between Bennett abandoning it in 1864 and the Lemprieres taking it up in 1876. Still, the land had probably only been used lightly, and not for over 35 years, when this plan was made.

This history of light land use, which is not uncommon in the Mallee back country, increases the theoretical possibility that evidence of Aboriginal land use could have been preserved and recorded when the area was mapped 60 years after its Aboriginal owners were dispossessed. Analysis confirms that possibility, and this plan of an island of tall green trees with associated water in a sea of mallee, preserves evidence of three layers of land use. The first layer, showing clearly the original Aboriginal use of the land, is evidenced by three 'crab holes' surrounding the swamp in the basin of the 'U' shaped dune. These crabholes probably only survived until 1911 because of the limited colonial use of the area. The second layer is the 'Old Log Tank', a colonial artefact probably dating to Kulkyne Station's illegal use of the land. (Incidentally, the post marked 'X' in the middle of the plain is probably from Nankivell's survey of grazing block boundaries in 1883.) The third layer, agricultural settlement, is marked by the new roads, farm boundaries and the declaration of a timber and water reserve to control the use of those valuable resources.

More problematic and difficult to explain are the three plains—one to the north (partly obscured by the word 'AND'), one to the west of the Log Tank and one to the south-west of the dune—that surround the 'U' shaped dune. Each is labelled as grassy. The northernmost plain is simply labelled 'Grass', that to the south-west is labelled 'Grassy Flat' and that to the west is labelled 'Good Red Sandy Loam OPEN PLAIN Good Spear Grass'. These plains raise the question, referred to earlier, of whether they are natural or human artefacts, and, if they are human artefacts, of who created them. There is no evidence of these grassy plains in the area today, though the plain in the dune basin remains untouched and apparently agriculturally unusable. The land where the grassy plains were located now seems indistinguishable from that around it, suggesting those plains might not have been the product of different or poorer soil types. The notes on the map reinforce this conclusion and the surveyor seems to have been at pains to point this out. In labelling the western plain 'Good Red Sandy Loam', he made it clear that the soil was the same as the surrounding area, which he described as 'Good Red Loam'. Perhaps the surveyor also pondered how the plains came to be there.

If the plains were not naturally occurring, the inescapable conclusion is that they were of Aboriginal origin. Both the limited colonial occupation of the land and the absence of any evidence of colonists clearing mallee elsewhere in the

back country before this time, stands against them being pastoral artefacts. If these are Aboriginal artefacts, it radically revises the way we might imagine the Aboriginal use of this land. Instead of just being a spot where Aboriginal people might have accessed water as they travelled the Mallee, this location might have been a place regularly visited by Aboriginal people where yams were grown on cleared plains or green 'pick' fostered to attract game. A much more sophisticated image of land management and land use begins to emerge.

This analysis of an extract from the 1911 'Parish of Kia' plan does not establish that Aboriginal people had cleared plains in the Mallee or that they were practising sophisticated forms of land management before colonial settlement. It merely describes a source of evidence that may be brought to an investigation of those questions. More detailed examination of the land on which these plains were located is needed to advance the investigation further, and to have any confidence in judgements that might be made. It should also be noted that suggesting that the plains in the extract may be Aboriginal artefacts is not the same as suggesting that the Mallee was subject to large-scale land clearance by Aboriginal people. The plains in this extract are small, measured in hundreds of metres. There is no suggestion that any more than 5 per cent of the Parish of Kia was managed in this way. This is quite consistent with Michael F. Clarke's finding, referred to earlier, that large parts of the Mallee had to remain unburned to support the species that have been found there.

Conclusion

PROV's collection of plans in VPRS 16306 was investigated to determine whether it contained evidence of Aboriginal land use in the Mallee back country that could supplement the scant resources currently available. An initial inspection of the material found that VPRS 16306 can provide a relatively comprehensive and detailed picture of land use before the land was settled by colonists for agricultural purposes. A more detailed investigation revealed that some direct evidence of Aboriginal land use can be found in plans from VPRS 16306. It was also found that Aboriginal land use is concealed by later colonial land use. This finding follows the dominant presumption that land use is colonial unless demonstrated otherwise. It can be argued that this presumption is both a tool and a relic of a process that has sought to deny Aboriginal peoples' relationship to the land and should be reversed. However, simply reversing that presumption would not, of itself, show how Aboriginal people were using the land.

The opportunity for future work with VPRS 16306 will be to find approaches that will allow a greater amount of the land use recorded before agricultural settlement to be identified as Aboriginal in origin. For this to occur, the material in VPS 16306 will need to be comprehensively analysed in multiple ways. It is beyond the scope of this article to fully discuss and describe the methods that could be used to locate early Aboriginal layers in the land use palimpsest, but some indications can be given. Further analysis can be done solely with the material already contained in VPRS 16306. 'Tracks' that run to and between known pieces of Aboriginal infrastructure can reasonably be argued to have a presumption of Aboriginal origin. This would apply to a track found to run to a possible quarry site, like that shown in Figure 3. If the track that runs to the crabholes in Figure 2 connected to another example of Aboriginal land management, another presumption of Aboriginal land use would arise.

Further analysis could also be carried out combining the information in VPRS 16306 with other sources, especially knowledge retained by Aboriginal people. Aboriginal people need to be consulted and Aboriginal narratives examined. 'The story of the Coorongendoo Muckie (Great Stone) of Balaarook', recorded by Peter Beveridge,[69] describes an Aboriginal journey from Swan Hill to Lake Hindmarsh. The path of that journey coincides with a later important colonial track and raises a presumption of usurped Aboriginal infrastructure. Plans from other sources and archaeological records may also prove useful in decoding the parish plans and peeling back the layers of the palimpsest.

VPRS 16306 has the potential to provide information about Aboriginal land use in the Mallee back country—an area for which almost no colonial records were made at the time Aboriginal people were dispossessed. This information may, in turn, allow a reassessment of the narratives of Aboriginal land use that have developed since the mid-nineteenth century. A comprehensive examination of this material is fully warranted.

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[49] For example, PROV, VPRS 16306/P1, Unit 12859, M 533, L: Parish of Mildura; PROV, VPRS 16306/P1, Unit 13944, N 128, A: Parish of Narrung.

[50] AS Kenyon, 'The story of the Mallee', *Victorian Historical Magazine*, vol. iv, no. 2, December 1914, p. 73.

[51] For example, PROV, VPRS 16306/P1, Unit 12779, M 527, S: Parish of Daalko.

[52] For example, PROV, VPRS 16306/P1, Unit 6922, F 107, B2: Parishes of Galick, Galpunga, Goonegul and Sunset 1920; PROV, VPRS 16306/P1, Unit 6922, F 107, B6: Parish of Willah.

[53] PROV, VPRS 16306/P1, Unit 12944, M 544, O: Parish of Pirro.

[54] Burch, *Returning the Kulkyne*, p. 113

[55] Kerwin, *Aboriginal dreaming paths*, p. xx.

[56] C Bonney, Autobiographical notes, Charles Bonney, p.8.

[57] LR East, 'Water in the Mallee', *Victorian Historical Magazine*, vol. 38, November 1967, pp. 178–179

[58] Clark, *The papers*, p. 18.

[59] Massola, 'The Aborigines of the Mallee', p. 270.

[60] N Etherington, *Mapping colonial conquest: Australia and Southern Africa*, University of Western Australia Press, Crawley, 2007, pp. 92–93.

[61] PROV, VPRS 16306/P1, Unit 3373, B 768: Parish of Boulka.

[62] Gammage, *The biggest estate*, p. 15.

[63] PROV, VPRS 16306/P1, Unit 13188, M 578, A: Parishes of Mamengoroock and.

[64] PROV, VPRS 16306/P1, Unit 12792, M 527, U3 [Sheet 5]: Mallee Blocks.

[65] PROV, VPRS 16306/P1, Unit 5133, C 461: Parish of Chillingollah.

[66] Burch, 'The Wirrengren-Kulkyne pathway'.

[67] PROV, VPRS 16306/P1, Unit 3373, B 768: Parish of Boulka.

[68] Burch, *Returning*, Chs 3 & 4.

[69] P Beveridge, 'The story of the Coorongendoo Muckie (Great Stone) of Balaarook', *Ballarat Star*, 3 March 1877, p. 4.

The Bibbs map

who made it, when and why?

'The Bibbs map: who made it, when and why?', *Provenance: The Journal of Public Record Office Victoria*, issue no. 18, 2020. ISSN 1832-2522.

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Abstract

The Bibbs map is employed by Melbourne's urban archaeologists to decode the remains of the city's gold rush era building fabric, but it has been dated differently by different researchers. There are two known copies of the plan in existence, one held by Public Record Office Victoria (PROV) and the other by the Melbourne City Council. This article argues that the two maps were produced at different times for different purposes, but the survey on which they were based was completed in the first half of 1856 in order to facilitate the implementation of Melbourne's reticulated water supply. The plan is one of a number in the Historic Plan Collection at PROV providing valuable background information for heritage research.

Melbourne's urban archaeologists love the nineteenth-century Bibbs map (Figure 1). It not only sets out where buildings were located at a particular point in Melbourne's rapid gold rush development, but also colour-codes their building materials, representing iron buildings, for example, in rich blue.

Archaeological investigations conducted on areas covered by the Bibbs map have a head start when it comes to interpreting the remains of buildings found on the ground. For this historian, however, the Bibbs map provided as many puzzles as it solved, starting with the question of how to reference it correctly: who surveyed it, when was it made and where was the original located? Other questions followed: why was it called the 'Bibbs map', who was Bibbs and why was it made? Answering the last question led to the location of a series of similar maps covering areas surrounding the central city. By setting out the context of the creation of these maps and the process involved in dating them, this paper aims to help archaeologists use and interpret the information found on them. The discussion focuses on determining when the survey data represented on the Bibbs map was collected and why, as well as when the physical maps were produced.

Figure 1: 'Bibbs map—a cadastral map of Melbourne, c. 1854', City Collection, City of Melbourne, available at <http://citycollection.melbourne.vic.gov.au/bibbs-map-a-cadastral-map-of-melbourne/>, accessed 19 October 2020.

What was the purpose of the Bibbs map?

When Melbourne's household water supply system was being built in the 1850s, the Commission of Sewers and Water Supply needed to determine where to put the standpipes (on every corner) and the stopcocks (outside each dwelling), not to mention where to locate the 1,700 fireplugs and fire hydrants, all of which meant working out how and where to lay the water mains on Melbourne's streets.[1] Obtaining the measurements that enabled the engineers to specify the required number and length of pipes, stopcocks, fire hydrants and so on meant surveying the entire area where water was to be supplied, including determining the type of building to be connected and its location on the allotment. The survey information used to create the Bibbs map is the result of that process for central Melbourne.

Where is the Bibbs map located?

In his article 'Maps for building research', Miles Lewis refers to 'Thomas Bibb's [*sic*] *Cadastral Map of Melbourne*' as being 'held at the PRO' (Public Record Office, now Public Record Office Victoria, hereafter PROV) with 'a copy at the Melbourne City Council'.[2] Searching PROV's records, however, will not produce this map with any mention of the name 'Bibb' or 'Bibbs', and nor does it appear in the records of the Commission of Sewers and Water Supply.[3] It is actually held as part of what is known as the Melbourne Roll sub-collection within the Historic Plan Collection, and not referred to as 'Bibbs' at all: it is MELBRL 12 within Victorian Public Record Series (VPRS) 8168, to be exact, and it is referred to as a plan, not a map, because the series was nominated as part of the Historic Plan Collection by the creating agency. Unlike many of the other plans in the Melbourne Roll, MELBRL 12 is not available online from PROV in a digitised form. Instead, it is only available to the public in black-and-white microfiche form at PROV's reading room; the original is closed to the public under Section 11 of the *Public Records Act 1973* due to its fragility, and its catalogue entry does not attribute it to 'Bibbs' or anyone else.[4] So, how is it that so many archaeologists have nice, coloured, digitised versions of it available for use? The answer to that question is an example of the best of collegiate cooperation between Melbourne's archaeologists.

Back in 2015, archaeologist Geoff Hewitt spent many hours tracking down the elusive Bibbs map at PROV and, having located MELBRL 12 in the PROV catalogue, Natalie Paynter followed it up and confirmed that MELBRL 12 was indeed the Bibbs map mentioned by Lewis. Megan Goulding of Ochre Imprints subsequently paid PROV for a high-quality digitised colour version, which she then generously shared with the profession; at that time, PROV had no facility for making it available to the public on its website.[5] By 2019, the digitised version from Ochre Imprints had become well known in the industry as a standard research tool for Melbourne's urban archaeologists, but its PROV reference was not included on archaeological documentation. It was simply referred to as 'the Bibbs map'.[6] PROV has subsequently digitised a selected portion of the Historic Plan Collection (including some of the Melbourne Roll) and made these plans available through its online catalogue, but the Bibbs map is not among them (Figure 2).[7]

Figure 2: PROV's version of the Bibbs map, VPRS 8168/P3 Historic Plan Collection, Unit 46, MELBRL 12 Melbourne: [Melbourne. n.d.]. The detailed selections in Figures 3–7 are all taken from this version of the map.

But what of the copy Miles Lewis mentions as being held by the Melbourne City Council (MCC)? A low-resolution image of that 'copy' is currently available online,[8] but a comparison of the two maps—PROV's MELBRL 12 with the MCC 'Bibb's [sic] map' (which, following Lewis's description, is attributed to 'Thomas Bibb')—reveals small but important differences. While it appears that the two maps were drawn from the same underlying survey data, the PROV version is much clearer, and carries many more labels (e.g., on hotels, horse bazaars and small streets). The MCC version is described as 'pen, ink and watercolour on linen', while PROV's map 'appears to be lithograph colour plate', 'mounted on a cloth backing',[9] which perhaps explains some of the differences in colouring and clarity. The colours are much more consistent on the PROV map, but some of those on the MCC version—especially the blocks of red and blue—are much brighter. The most important difference, however, is the addition on the PROV map of pencilled outlines of some 'proposed' buildings. The Treasury, for example (now known as 'the Old Treasury Building'), does not appear on the MCC plan at all, but it is there on the PROV map accurately outlining its masonry in a later pencilled addition, alongside other roughly pencilled 'proposed' buildings (Figure 3).

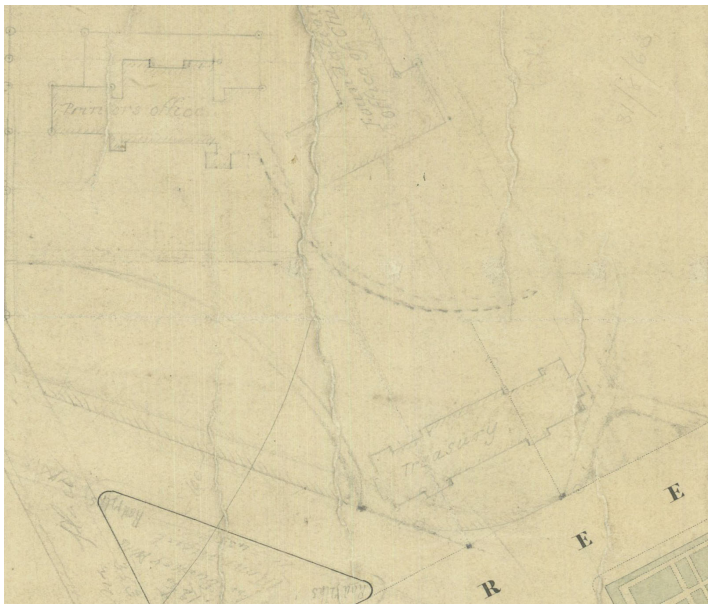

Figure 3: Pencilled outlines of Treasury and proposed offices in a detail taken from the PROV version of the Bibbs map, VPRS 8168/P3 Historic Plan Collection, Unit 46, MELBRL 12 Melbourne: [Melbourne. n.d.].

Who made the Bibbs map? Clement Hodgkinson's preparatory sketches and other plans

When Melbourne was part of the Colony of New South Wales, surveys were done by officers located in the Port Phillip District, but the plans they drew had to be sent to Sydney for approval. After separation from New South Wales in July 1851 Victoria appointed its own surveyor-general, and the gold rushes of the early 1850s made his department an extremely busy one.[10] Surveys were desperately needed, especially for the remote goldmining areas, but qualified and experienced staff were hard to find and expensive to hire. Early in 1852, Clement Hodgkinson ('formerly Contract Surveyor in the Sydney District') was appointed as a draftsman in the Surveyor-General's Office; by April, he had been recommended as a (temporary) assistant surveyor and, in August, he was 'placed on Establishment as Assistant Surveyor'.[11] At that time, he was working on a tramline to Melbourne, but soon afterwards he became involved in the planning for Melbourne's sewerage and water supply.

With the influx of thousands of goldminers, Melbourne's sanitary state had become a major problem, as had the question of who was responsible for improving it; the Melbourne City Council believed it should be in their bailiwick, and the newly formed Victorian Legislative Council thought it was in theirs.[12] The Legislative Council had the most power and, in 1852, took the initiative away from the MCC by forming a Water Supply and Sewerage Committee. Lieutenant-Governor Charles La Trobe then instructed Clement Hodgkinson to 'perform such work as may be required for the information of the Committee', and ordered the surveyor-general to 'see that [Hodgkinson] is provided with the proper instruments', and 'supply such maps &c from your Department as the Committee may deem it nece[s]sary to consult'.[13] So, by the time the Legislative Council set up the Commission of Sewers and Water Supply and appointed its three commissioners on 13 April 1853, Hodgkinson had already completed some of the preliminary planning. A plan he produced, dated 12 April 1853 with the heading 'Contoured Plan of part of the City of Melbourne Showing the Street Frontages: Melbourne Sanitary Survey Sheet No 1: Working plan of Contours' is held by PROV in the Melbourne Roll of the Historic Plan Collection as MELBRL 15-1 and is available online.[14] It is another useful tool for Melbourne's archaeologists because it, too, colour-codes the building materials making up the frontages of buildings at that date. More useful still for some areas is the series of 10 sketches of central Melbourne blocks drawn by Hodgkinson from his surveys in March and April 1853.[15] They are in the same style and colouring as

the Bibbs map, and show the full detail of the buildings rather than just the frontages; they are annotated as 'transmitted to the Commissioners of Sewerage and Water Supply for the City of Melbourne July 9th 1853', but some are clearly incomplete as though they were sent off in haste for someone else to finish. Hodgkinson's survey book for the series contains the survey details for the 10 mapped blocks, but the rest are only there in outline.[16]

For all the similarities of style and content, these Hodgkinson plans of 1853 are not the same as the Bibbs map. Melbourne was developing rapidly as a result of the gold rushes and even a few months could make a substantial difference to the number and type of buildings on any particular block, so when the Commission of Sewers and Water Supply appointed its own surveyor, one of his first public actions was to ensure that details of 'the level or intended levels of the cellar or lowest floor' and the 'situation and construction of the privies and cesspools to be built' in any new buildings were passed on to him through the city surveyor.[17] Thus, details of buildings erected after Hodgkinson's survey sketches were sent to the commission appear frequently on the Bibbs map and form the basis of more accurate dating (see below).

After submitting his incomplete sketches of central Melbourne to the commissioners of sewers and water supply in July, Hodgkinson went on to create contour maps of Collingwood and Richmond, also showing buildings. [18] By the middle of 1854, he was 'Surveyor in Charge of the Melbourne Districts', and other surveyors were being employed to create this kind of map for other areas.[19] These maps are also in the Historic Plan Collection at PROV and most of them have been digitised (Table 1).

Table 1: A list of the maps held in the Historic Plan Collection at PROV that provide information about Melbourne's building fabric in the 1850s similar to that recorded on the Bibbs map.

Historic Plan Collection details	**URL**
MELBRL 2 'Municipal District of East Collingwood shewing Streets Buildings and Enclosures in existence at close of Survey July 1856 ... Submitted to ... the Surveyor General on Oct 3rd 1856 Clement Hodgkinson'.	<https://beta.prov.vic.gov.au/collection/PID4174214871>
MELBRL 2a 'Plan of the Streets & Buildings of East Collingwood January 1st 1858 ... Surveyed &c. by John S. Wilkinson in accordance with Mr Hodgkinsons instructions. Engraved by J.D. Brown'.	<https://beta.prov.vic.gov.au/collection/PID2174214880>
MELBRL 2a1 'Plan of the Streets & Buildings in East Collingwood January 1st 1858 ... Surveyed &c. by John S. Wilkinson in accordance with Mr Hodgkinsons instructions. Engraved by J.D. Brown' [Part map only].	<https://beta.prov.vic.gov.au/collection/PID0174214899>
MELBRL 2a2 [Streets and Buildings in East Collingwood n.d.].	<https://beta.prov.vic.gov.au/collection/PID2175598008>, <https://beta.prov.vic.gov.au/collection/PID0175598017>, <https://beta.prov.vic.gov.au/collection/PID6174214915>, <https://beta.prov.vic.gov.au/collection/PID8174214906>
MELBRL 2a3 [Streets and Buildings in East Collingwood n.d.].	<https://beta.prov.vic.gov.au/collection/PID4174214924>
MELBRL 3-1 'Contoured Plan of Collingwood and East Melbourne shewing the Buildings Facing the Principal Streets ... Transmitted to the Surveyor General ... Novr 29th 1853 Clement Hodgkinson'.	<https://beta.prov.vic.gov.au/collection/PID8175595626>
MELBRL 3-2 'Contoured Plan of Collingwood and East Melbourne shewing the Buildings Facing the Principal Streets ... Transmitted to the Surveyor General ... Novr 29th 1853 Clement Hodgkinson'.	<https://beta.prov.vic.gov.au/collection/PID6175595635>
MELBRL 4 'Emerald Hill ... Compiled and drawn by Wm H. Steel ... 29 May 1857 [with] Clement Hodgkinson'.	Not yet online. The physical copy is at PROV VPRS 8168 Historic Plan Collection P3 Unit 51.
MELBRL 6 'Emerald Hill ... Drawn by B. Beckett ... under the command of Capt. A. Clarke ... 1854'.	Not yet online. The physical copy is at PROV VPRS 8168 Historic Plan Collection P3 Unit 53.
MELBRL 11 [Melbourne Doutta Galla Jika Jika Melbourne North Melbourne South Prahran n.d.] [only shows hotels, churches and other public buildings, with corrected date of 1866 superimposed on one building].	<https://beta.prov.vic.gov.au/collection/PID3174215059>
MELBRL 12 [Melbourne. n.d.], [Bibbs Mapp].	Not yet online. The physical copy is at PROV VPRS 8168 Historic Plan Collection P3 Unit 46.
MELBRL 15-1 'CONTOURED PLAN OF THE CITY OF MELBOURNE Showing the Street Frontages Transmitted to the Surveyor General with accompanying Report dated April 12th 1853 Clement Hodgkinson Surveyor Jno Debenham Draftsman'.	<https://beta.prov.vic.gov.au/collection/PID5174215095>

Historic Plan Collection details	URL
MELBRL 18 'Melbourne and its suburbs [Jika Jika Melbourne North Melbourne South Prahran] ... Compiled by James Kearney Draughtsman. Engraved by David Tulloch and James D. Brown, Captain Andrew Clarke, R.E. Surveyor General. 1855'.	<https://beta.prov.vic.gov.au/collection/PID0174215166>
MELBRL 18a 'Melbourne and its suburbs [Jika Jika Melbourne North Melbourne South Prahran] ... Compiled by James Kearney Draughtsman. Engraved by David Tulloch and James D. Brown, Captain Andrew Clarke, R.E. Surveyor General. 1855'.	<https://beta.prov.vic.gov.au/collection/PID8174215175>
MELBRL 19 'Prahran Municipality ... Surveyed under the Superintendence of Serjeant Forbes R. S. & M. & Drawn by Horace Samson, ... Melbourne April 1856'.	<https://beta.prov.vic.gov.au/collection/PID6174215184>
MELBRL 25 'Municipality of Richmond Shewing buildings and other details in existence on completion of Survey Sept 1855'.	Not yet online. The physical copy is at PROV VPRS 8168 Historic Plan Collection P3 Unit 49.
MELBRL 28b 'PLAN OF ST KILDA And the Sea Coast from thence Eastward to the Town Boundary Post on Point Ormond Surveyed & Plotted by Alexander Black July 1854'.	<https://beta.prov.vic.gov.au/collection/PID9174215451>
MELBRL 33a [Williamstown; appears to be early sketch of part of MELBRL 34].	<https://beta.prov.vic.gov.au/collection/PID8174215601>
MELBRL 34 'Williamstown ... July 5th/58 G.A. Windsor'.	<https://beta.prov.vic.gov.au/collection/PID6174215610>

Dating the survey for the Bibbs map

The digital copy of Bibbs's map of Melbourne being used by archaeologists today comes from PROV, but it has no date appended. It is clearly the completed version of the plan that Hodgkinson began in 1853, and Miles Lewis dates it at 'about 1854'.[20] A portion of it is held at State Library Victoria, but there it is dated 's.n. 1855'.[21] Archaeologists, however, are inclined to date their digitised map c. 1856 or 1857.[22] Given Melbourne's rapid development in this era, and the map's content in terms of buildings and their construction materials, these are wildly divergent dates.

Melbourne was growing at a great rate when Clement Hodgkinson created his first sketch plans for the Commission of Sewers and Water Supply in 1853. The *Australian architectural index* created by Miles Lewis provides some idea of the pace of building, with the Melbourne entries being based on 'Intention to Build' notices lodged with the MCC and information from other sources.[23] While the notices do not guarantee that building took place, and other notices may be missing, overall, the index illustrates the pace of building in the city: searching the keyword 'Melbourne' for 1853 produces over 700 entries, many of which were for multiple houses, shops or warehouses.[24] The rate decreased in 1854 to just over 400 entries, again including multiple constructions. By 1860, it had slowed even further, but still produced over 100 entries. Every time a new building was erected in Melbourne, Hodgkinson's survey became outdated, which affected the engineers' calculations for the delivery of water. But survey office procedures were designed to allow for updates.

Working plans in the office incorporated alterations until they were too crowded or messy to accommodate more, which is when a new plan was drafted from the old data. These plans were not dated unless they were printed and made available to the public. State Library Victoria holds several versions of a map of the entire County of Bourke 'compiled by Thomas Bibbs, 1855'.[25] Printed on each map is the information that it was lithographed by William Collis, first in 1856, then with the information 'corrected up to 1857', and then with dates up to 1866.[26]

Dating a survey map is, therefore, a tricky business because different sections will have been surveyed at different times. Dating the Bibbs map means beginning with Hodgkinson's 1853 sketches for the Commission of Sewers and Water Supply (which are clearly dated both for survey and submission), and then adding the information available from other sources regarding new buildings and additions. But first, some information about Bibbs himself.

Who was Bibbs?

Thomas Franklin Bibbs was born in Worcester, England, in 1823. His father was a saddler. By the time of the 1851 census, Thomas had become a 'Clerk to Com[missioner] s of Sewers' in London.[27] At the age of 30, he embarked at Liverpool on the *Marco Polo* and arrived in Melbourne towards the end of May 1853. Five months later, on 1 November, he was appointed as a temporary draftsman in the Surveyor-General's Department, Melbourne, earning £250 per annum, presumably on the strength of his previous work with sewers.[28] Exactly how 'temporary' that first appointment was is not known, but Thomas's younger brother and cousin arrived in Melbourne in

January 1854, and they seem to have travelled about with Thomas, who returned from Sydney on the steamship *Waratah* in July 1854, suggesting that his first stretch of employment in Melbourne had not been very long.[29] Nevertheless, he was back working in the survey office soon after his return, because he is credited with drawing a 'map of part of the southern coast of Victoria shewing Port Fairy and Lady Bay' in August 1854.[30] His employment was frequent if not continuous, since he made a generous donation to the Patriotic Fund while working at the Surveyor-General's Department in July 1855, and the 1856 St Kilda electoral roll shows him as an employee earning the requisite '£100 from government'.[31] In December that year, Bibbs won a gold medal from the Victoria Industrial Society for his plan of Corner Inlet, Bass Strait, and a silver medal for his plan of the Castlemaine and Sandhurst goldfield.[32] He was obviously capable of high-quality work but, unlike Clement Hodgkinson, he remained a draftsman through the 1850s rather than climbing to the rank of surveyor, although he described himself as a 'civil engineer' when he became insolvent in 1861.[33] This and other evidence suggests that he had also remained a temporary staff member rather than obtaining a permanent position.[34] On 1 May 1863 he was appointed as a photo-lithographer in the Department of Crown Lands and Survey 'in consequence of Mr Bibbs's professional skill, as ascertained in his previous connection with this department'.[35]

Bibbs's dismissal in 1866 suggests both a cause and an explanation for this intermittent work history. At the request of the surveyor-general, who 'complains of Mr Bibbs frequent absence from duty', the chief secretary arranged for the chief medical officer to visit him and 'report on [the] state of his health'.[36] The report indicated that Bibbs was 'suffering from results of irregular mode of living', which was translated in the Executive Council Minutes as 'charges of intemperance'. As a result, he was dismissed from the public service.[37]

After leaving the survey office, Bibbs created a few maps for commercial publishers, including 'a very beautiful map of Launceston' and 'The excursionists map' for Whitehead & Co. in the 1870s, but little else is known of his life or creative work.[38] He appears to have moved to New South Wales, where the death of one 'Thomas Bibbs' is recorded in 1879.[39]

This outline of Bibbs's life gives us a framework for plotting the possible dates for the Bibbs map, if indeed it was Bibbs who compiled it. At the earliest, it could have been December 1853 (after he took up his first appointment in the survey office) and, at the latest, 1866 (when he was dismissed), but his appointment as a photo-lithographer in 1863 makes it unlikely that he was creating new survey plans after that date.[40] The pencilled addition of the Treasury Building (begun in 1858 and completed in 1862) and other 'proposed' buildings on the PROV version, together with the fact that Melbourne's water supply from Yan Yean was delivered in December 1857, narrows the dates closer to those suggested by Lewis, State Library Victoria and the archaeologists—that is, between 1854 and 1857.

When was the Bibbs map lithographed?

Given that Clement Hodgkinson's sketches were submitted to the commissioners of sewers and water supply early in July 1853, and that he moved on to create the same kind of survey for Collingwood before becoming 'Surveyor in charge of the Melbourne Districts',[41] it is reasonable to ask whether 'the Bibbs map' might have been Bibbs's first task when he began working at the department on 1 November 1853. The plan itself, however, argues against that date. Examination of the following features provides a more accurate estimate of the date of the surveys represented on the plan.

The foundation stone of St John's Church, which was located on the corner of Elizabeth and La Trobe streets, was laid on 30 January 1854, and the church was opened on 2 July 1854, although the chancel and nave were not completed until 26 October 1856. Hodgkinson's 1853 sketches would not have recorded this building even if they had covered this block (they do not), but it does show up on the Bibbs map (Figure 4).[42]

Figure 4: St John's Church in a detail taken from the PROV version of the Bibbs map, VPRS 8168/P3 Historic Plan Collection, Unit 46, MELBRL 12 Melbourne: [Melbourne. n.d.].

Similarly, in July 1854, Charles Webb called tenders to erect Wesleyan School Rooms; they were opened on 26 December that year, and they too appear on the Bibbs map, but not on Hodgkinson's plan.[43]

More tellingly, on 7 March 1855 the Age reported that the Great Western and Temple Court hotels, both in Queen Street, applied for new licences, neither of which were granted until 26 April 1855.[44] Both buildings are labelled as hotels on the Bibbs map (Figure 5), suggesting that the survey of that portion of the map at least took place after the middle of 1855, a supposition that is extended by the representation of Coppin's Olympic Theatre in Lonsdale Street, as building there commenced on 13 April 1855.[45] Even later, the Assay Office, represented on the Bibbs map at 58 Queen Street, was not opened for business until 23 October 1855 (Figure 5).[46]

Figure 5: Great Western Hotel, Temple Court Hotel and Assay Office in a detail taken from the PROV version of the Bibbs map, VPRS 8168/P3 Historic Plan Collection, Unit 46, MELBRL 12 Melbourne: [Melbourne. n.d.].

These cases all push the date of survey towards the end of 1855, a date that is confirmed by the presence of the English Scottish & Australian Chartered Bank on the corner of Flinders Lane and Elizabeth Street. Construction there commenced on 4 December 1855 and was 'nearly complete' on 25 September 1856. It appears on the Bibbs map, though erroneously labelled the 'English Scottish and Colonial Bank', suggesting that it did not have its shingle out when the surveyors drew it (Figure 6).[47]

A decisive piece of the puzzle comes with the construction of the Bank of New South Wales on a vacant block of land on Collins Street across the road from the Criterion

Figure 7: Vacant block that became the Bank of New South Wales in a detail taken from the PROV version of the Bibbs map, VPRS 8168/P3 Historic Plan Collection, Unit 46, MELBRL 12 Melbourne: [Melbourne. n.d.].

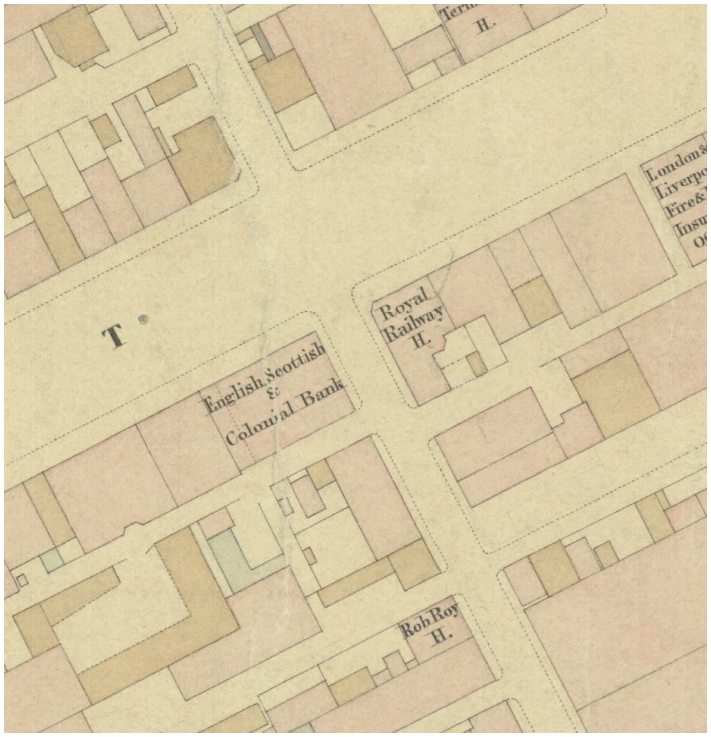

Figure 6: English Scottish and Colonial Bank in a detail taken from the PROV version of the Bibbs map, VPRS 8168/P3 Historic Plan Collection, Unit 46, MELBRL 12 Melbourne: [Melbourne. n.d.].

Hotel.[48] Building commenced on 29 May 1856 in Collins Street, with further tenders let on 17 July 1856, but this block is still entirely vacant on the Bibbs map (Figure 7),[49] indicating that the survey was completed prior to any building taking place on that block. Other buildings that were begun later in 1856 also do not appear on the Bibbs map.[50]

All of this points to a date for the Bibbs map surveys being early to mid-1856—after construction of the English Scottish & Australian Chartered Bank (December 1855), but before building started on the Bank of New South Wales (mid-1856). Given that the incomplete surveys of Hodgkinson's 10 blocks (out of the 24 making up central Melbourne) were spread from March to June 1853, there is probably little point in attempting to specify the dates of survey for the entire Bibbs plan any closer than 'the first half of 1856'. This timing fits with the completion of several other maps for the commission, which enabled it to turn the Yan Yean water on for Melbourne in December 1857: MELBRL 25 Richmond, September 1855; MELBRL 2a East Collingwood, January 1856; MELBRL 19 Prahran, April 1856; and MELBRL 2 East Collingwood, July 1856. All of these plans, except that of Prahran, were surveyed by Clement Hodgkinson, although they are not all attributed to him on the plans themselves. Apart from the consistent style of the maps, confirmation of the attribution comes from two lists that were drawn up of the plans located in the Surveyor-General's Office in 1855 and 1856. These include the name of the surveyor responsible for each plan, and some were specifically recorded as being held in 'District Surveyor Hodgkinson's Drawer'.[51]

Did Thomas Franklin Bibbs compile 'the Bibbs map'?

Unfortunately the 1855 and 1856 lists from the Surveyor-General's Office do not indicate who the draftsman or lithographer might have been. John Debenham drafted Hodgkinson's early sketches, and carefully noted his own and Hodgkinson's names and relevant dates on the plans themselves, but the later maps are not so helpful. No evidence has been found in this research to link Bibbs to any of Hodgkinson's maps of Melbourne's streets and buildings for the Commission of Sewerage and Water Supply; however, tying their survey dates in with Bibbs's employment history does not rule out the connection. The years 1855 and 1856 were successful for Bibbs professionally at the survey office—he won prizes for two plans—but there is a curious inscription on another plan that perhaps explains something about his professional development.[52]

The map drawn by Bibbs that is most commonly found in libraries today is his 1855 map of the County of Bourke.[53] His later maps are usually inscribed 'TF Bibbs Lithographer' or something similar, but this early map is quite specific: 'compiled by Thomas Bibbs, 1855; lithographed by William Collis, 1856', suggesting that Bibbs was not at that stage qualified or experienced enough to lithograph maps himself. Another common map of his, published in 1859 but compiled and lithographed before that date, is even more specific: 'Lithographed at the Office of Lands & Survey, Melbourne', and 'the outline and hills by Thomas Franklin Bibbs, the writing by William Collis'.[54] It would seem that either the work was large and needed two sets of hands, or Bibbs was only halfway to being a fully competent lithographer, or the lettering was added later (see below). From 1858 onwards, Bibbs was acknowledged as 'lithographer'. So, while Bibbs certainly drafted ('compiled') maps drawn from Clement Hodgkinson's surveys of the County of Bourke, he would not have been the lithographer on the Melbourne water supply maps of 1856. He may well have drawn the Melbourne City Council copy, however, because it was created later.

On 25 July 1860, the town clerk of Melbourne requested copies of the plans 'prepared for the Sewerage of the City' from the government's Sewerage and Water Department—that is, the plans from which the Bibbs map was compiled. In reply he was told that 'the City Surveyor can have the tracings required provided he sends a Draftsman for that purpose'.[55] If the MCC had to make its own copy of the sewerage plans, who did it? There are very few maps by Thomas Bibbs that were published in 1860, suggesting that he was not working much with the survey office. Perhaps he was employed by the town clerk for this one-off task and perhaps it was the first time he had done the lettering himself. The Old English font of the title is impressive, it is true, but the building labels are very poor compared to the PROV copy (Figure 8). Bibbs went on to work on a number of maps for the Department of Crown Lands and Survey early in 1861, but he was declared insolvent in November that year due to 'illness, bad debts and loss of employment'.[56]

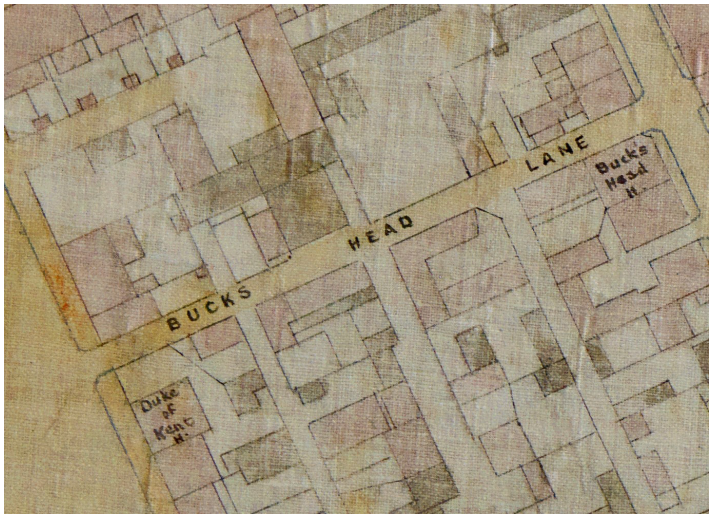

Figure 8: A sample of lettering from 'Bibbs map—a cadastral map of Melbourne, c. 1854', City Collection, City of Melbourne, available at <http://citycollection.melbourne.vic.gov.au/bibbs-map-a-cadastral-map-of-melbourne/>, accessed 19 October 2020.

The City of Melbourne Art and Heritage Collection attributes its copy of 'Bibb's [*sic*] Plan' to 'Thomas Bibb' on the strength of Miles Lewis's reference in his 2001 article 'Maps for building research'.[57] Lewis attributed the work to Bibbs on the basis of his late colleague George Tibbits's familiarity with it rather than his own research; nevertheless, he believes the attribution is likely to be correct because 'Bibbs is not a name like Hoddle, which people throw in as a guess'.[58] I am inclined to agree, thinking that perhaps somewhere in the Melbourne City Council archives there exists a contract or document relating to Bibbs's work on the plan in their possession, but I have not found it.

Whether Bibbs created the map or not, the timing of the surveys underpinning it now seems clear, but there is a proviso. Under the *Melbourne Building Act 1849* builders were required to lodge Intention to Build Notices with the city surveyor before commencing construction, and the surveyor for the Commission of Sewerage and Water Supply in turn required that the city surveyor notify him of any new building works, but it is unlikely to have been a foolproof system.[59] It is possible that, on some blocks, buildings may have been built prior to mid-1856 without the required notification, and therefore not recorded on the Bibbs map.

Conclusion

The Bibbs map is well known to Melbourne's urban archaeologists as a useful tool for decoding the remains of the city's gold rush era building fabric. It was created to facilitate the implementation of Melbourne's reticulated water supply from the Yan Yean reservoir, which was turned on in Melbourne at the end of 1857, and it was not the only map of its type to be drawn up. Table 1 provides a list of similar plans in the Historic Plan Collection at PROV that could prove to be of great use to archaeologists working in surrounding suburbs, most of which have now been digitised (available by searching under 'MELBRL' on PROV's catalogue). Importantly, the Bibbs map has been dated differently by different authors. A careful comparison of historical sources with the two known copies of the plan (MELBRL 12 of the Historic Plan Collection at PROV and 'Bibb's [*sic*] map' in the City of Melbourne Art and Heritage Collection) indicates that the survey on which it was based was completed by Clement Hodgkinson in the first half of 1856. The two Bibbs plans appear to have been put to different uses and to have been produced at different times, with the PROV plan created in time for the laying of water pipes in Melbourne's streets in 1857–1858 and the Melbourne City Council plan created after July 1860. The PROV plan seems to have remained a working document of the Department of Crown Lands and Survey (hence the pencilled-in updates of major buildings such as the Treasury Building and 'proposed wings' on the hospital and government buildings), while the MCC copy is more likely to have been an item for reference or display. It was already outdated by the time of its making.

How to correctly reference the Bibbs map

The full reference to the Bibbs map for archaeologists using the digitised version obtained from PROV by Ochre Imprints is:

MELBRL 12, Public Record Office Victoria, VA 2921 Surveyor-General's Department VA 943 Surveyor-General's Department, Port Phillip Branch, VPRS 8168/P3 Historic Plan Collection, Unit 46.

Endnotes

[1] Tony Dingle and Helen Doyle, *Yan Yean: a history of Melbourne's early water supply*, Public Record Office, Melbourne, 2003, p. 31.

[2] Miles Lewis, 'Maps for building research', *LaTrobe Journal*, vol. 68, Spring, 2001, p. 22.

[3] The extant records of the Commissioners of Sewers and Water Supply are held at Public Record Office Victoria (PROV), Victorian Agency (VA) 2802 Commissioners of Sewers and Water Supply Victorian Public Record Series (VPRS) 8609 Historical Records Collection. I have consulted P20 Unit 361, P25 Unit 24, P35 Units 220, 273, 520, 869 and 889, P28 Units 12 and 14.

[4] PROV, VPRS 15899 Historic Plan Collection (microfiche copy of VPRS 8168), MELBRL 12; PROV, VPRS 8168 Historic Plan Collection, P3, Unit 46. PROV identifies the plans in VPRS 8168 by reference to the Historic Plan Collection plan number (allocated by the agency that established the collection), a description of the plan and the area to which the plan pertains.

[5] Megan Goulding, personal communication, 7 January 2020.

[6] For example, Figure 6, Qu.A.C. Archaeology and Heritage, '229-241 Franklin Street, Melbourne (H7822-2042)', Archaeological Excavation Report, Heritage Victoria report 4760, 2018, p. 12; Figure 7, ArchLink, 'Langlands Iron Foundry and Stookes Shipping Butchers H7822-1847', *Historical archaeology excavation report*, [2015], p. 16.

[7] The digitised maps can be found online on PROV's website in VPRS 8168, various consignments. The digital image scan of the Bibbs map held by PROV will soon be made available online through its catalogue after the implementation of new systems that will facilitate the online publishing of many other digital scans of records in the PROV collection.

[8] 'Bibbs map—a cadastral map of Melbourne, c. 1854', City Collection, City of Melbourne, available at <http://citycollection.melbourne.vic.gov.au/bibbs-map-a-cadastral-map-of-melbourne/>, accessed 19 October 2020. A high resolution copy was made available to the author by Cressida Goddard, Art and Heritage Collection Administrator City of Melbourne, 15 January 2020.

[9] Notes on the plan from Charlie Farrugia, Senior Collection Adviser, PROV, provided to the author 19 December 2019.

[10] Robert Hoddle was Victoria's first surveyor-general until 1853. He was followed by Andrew Clarke (1853–1858). PROV, VA 2921, Surveyor-General's Department covers the period until 1857.

[11] PROV, VPRS 6/P0, Surveyor-General's Department Outward Letter Books, Unit 4, 52/5, 6 January 1852, p. 65; 52/126, 5 April 1852, p. 110; 52/215, 3 August 1852, p. 140.

[12] Dingle and Doyle, *Yan Yean*, pp. 6–7.

[13] Colonial Secretary to Surveyor-General, 18 September 1852, PROV, VPRS 1258/P0, Surveyor-General Inwards Correspondence, Unit 1, bundle 2, 1852–1853. Hodgkinson described this period as being 'when my professional services were lent to the Board of Commissioners by the Government', 'Water supply to Melbourne', *Argus*, 7 June 1854, p. 5.

[14] A list of all map links can be found in Table 1.

[15] PROV, VA 2802 Commissioners of Sewers and Water Supply, VPRS 8609/P35 Historical Records Collection, Unit 520. The blocks represented in these surveys were Queen/Lonsdale/Elizabeth/Bourke streets, Bourke/Queen/Collins/William streets, Bourke / Queen/Collins/Elizabeth streets, Swanston/ Bourke/Russell/Collins streets, Collins/Russell/ Flinders/Swanston streets, Collins/William/Queen/ Flinders streets, Collins/William/Flinders/King streets, King/Lonsdale/William/Bourke streets, Russell/Lonsdale/Stephen/Bourke streets and Queen/Lonsdale/William/Little Bourke streets.

[16] PROV, VA Surveyor-General's Department, VPRS 16685/P1 Surveyors' Field Books, Black Sequence, Unit 12, item 77, Book 1141 [Survey Book 1141, Bundle 77].

[17] *Banner* (Melbourne), 24 January 1854, p. 13.

[18] 'The Legislative Council', *Argus*, 7 September 1853, p. 4. See Table 1: MELBRL 2 'Municipal District of East Collingwood close of survey July 1856'; MELBRL 2a 'Plan of the streets and buildings in East Collingwood January 1st 1856'; MELBRL 2a2 'Plan of the streets and buildings in East Collingwood January 1st 1856'; MELBRL 25 'Municipality of Richmond shewing buildings and other details in existence on completion of survey September 1855'; and MELBRL 3 'Contoured plan of Collingwood and East Melbourne 29 November 1853'.

[19] See Table 1: MELBRL 4 'Emerald Hill, Wm H Street [with assistance from Clement Hodgkinson], 29 May 1857'; MELBRL 6 'Emerald Hill, B Beckett, 1854'; MELBRL 19 'Prahran, Serjeant [sic] Forbes, April 1856'; MELBRL 28a and 28b 'St Kilda, Alexander Black, 1854'; MELBRL 34 Williamstown, A Windsor, 5 July 1858.

[20] 'Thomas Bibb's [*sic*] Cadastral Map of Melbourne', cited in Lewis, 'Maps for building research', p. 21.

[21] [City blocks bounded by Collins, Lonsdale, King and Queen streets, by TF Bibbs] Melbourne, State Library Victoria, MAPS 821.09 EH 1855? BIBBS.

[22] Melbourne CBD south post excavation stage 3 preliminary land use history v.1, Melbourne, Ochre Imprints Pty Ltd, p. 1; Figure 7, ArchLink, 'Langlands iron foundry and Stookes Shipping butchers H7822-1847', *Historical archaeology excavation report*, [2015], p. 16.

[23] Miles Lewis, *Australian architectural index*, available at <https://aai.app.unimelb.edu.au/apex/f?p=199:11:::NO>, accessed 17 January 2020; PROV, VA 511 Melbourne (Town 1842–1847; City 1847-ct), VPRS 9288 Notices of Intention to Build. The index includes the Burchett index of MCC Notices of Intention to Build, together with information extracted from newspapers such as the *Argus* and journals such as *Australian Builder*, so the number of actual buildings constructed is necessarily imprecise.

[24] These figures are confined to Melbourne, excluding East Melbourne, West Melbourne and North Melbourne.

[25] For example, 'County of Bourke', [Melbourne], Surveyor General's Department, [1857?], State Library Victoria, MAPS 821.1 BJE 1857.

[26] See State Library Victoria collection. The map was published by the Surveyor-General's Department, then FF Bailliere, then the Department of Crown Lands and Survey.

[27] 1851, England Census, St Anne Soho, Co Middlesex, Westminster, household schedule 49 Piece 1510, Folio 527, p. 10.

[28] PROV, VPRS 6/P0, Surveyor-General's Department Outward Letter Books, Unit 4, A53/439, 29 November 1853, p. 335; Colonial Secretary to Surveyor-General, 14 December 1853, PROV, VPRS 1258/P0 Surveyor-General Inwards Correspondence, Unit 1, bundle 2, 1852–1853, 53/817.

[29] Benjamin and Frederick Bibbs arrived on the *Marco Polo*, PROV, VPRS 947 Unassisted Inward Passenger Lists. For their return from Sydney, see Victoria Coastal Passenger lists 1852–1924, listed incorrectly under 'Worotag', available at <findmypast.com.au>, accessed 22 January 2020. His younger brother Frederick John Bibbs was killed by a fall from a cart near Castlemaine, see 'The late Mr Bibbs', *Mount Alexander Mail*, 6 February 1861, p. 2.

[30] 'Drawn by Thomas Bibbs, August 1854', Surveyor-General's Office, Melbourne, 1854, State Library Victoria, MAPS 825.56 A 1854 BIBBS (2 copies).

[31] *Victoria Government Gazette*, no. 69, 20 July 1855, p. 1669; Victoria Electoral Roll, St Kilda Division, 1856, p. 19.

[32] 'Victoria Industrial Society', *Age*, 12 December 1856, p. 3.

[33] 'New insolvents', *Age*, 20 November 1861, p. 7.

[34] For example, on 26 November 1856 he returned from Sydney on the *Yarra Yarra* and in August–September 1859 he went to Launceston. See Victoria Coastal Passenger lists 1852–1924, available at <findmypast.com.au>, accessed 22 January 2020.

[35] *Victoria Government Gazette*, no. 51, 20 May 1863, p. 1098.

[36] PROV, VPRS 3993/P0 Chief Secretary's Department Register of Inward Correspondence II, Unit 9, p. 216 no. 5307.

[37] PROV, VA 2903 Executive Council, VPRS 1080/P0, Minutes of the Executive Council, Unit 9, 66/59 10 September 1866, p. 532; 'The Gazette', *Australasian*, 29 September 1866, p. 20.

[38] 'Map of Launceston', *Cornwell Chronicle* (Launceston), 31 December 1870, p. 8. 'The excursionist's map', Trove, available at <https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-450281697/view?searchTerm=Bibbs#search/Bibbs>, accessed 12 March 2020.

[39] Thomas Bibbs, NSW Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages, Death 1122/1879. Note, this record has not been sighted to confirm whether it is Thomas Franklin Bibbs.

[40] Curiously, there is a map entitled 'Special allotments, Parish of Beechworth' at State Library Victoria 'lithographed at the Department of Lands & Survey, July 19th 1867 T F Bibbs'. Presumably, after losing his permanent position, he continued to do some contract work.

[41] See Table 1, MELBRL 3 Collingwood and East Melbourne 1853; 'Lynch versus Murphy', *Argus*, 22 May 1854, p. 5.

[42] Lewis, *Australian architectural index*, record nos. 10080, 10137 and 10081.

[43] Lewis, *Australian architectural index*, no. 37394, *Melbourne Herald*, 11 July 1854, p. 1; 'Domestic intelligence', *Argus*, 28 December 1854, p. 5.

[44] 'Quarterly transfer day', *Age*, 7 March 1855, p. 5; 'Licensing meeting', *Age*, 26 April 1855, p. 7.

[45] Lewis, *Australian architectural index*, record nos. 75568 and 43028.

[46] 'Assay Office-E T Danburghy', *Argus*, 23 October 1855, p. 6.

[47] Lewis, *Australian architectural index*, record no. 7560 *Australian Builder* 25 September 1856, and record no. 76039 Intention to Build notice no. 1059.

[48] P Goad and G Tibbits, *Architecture on Campus*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 2003, p. 49; *Sands & Kenny's Commercial & General Melbourne Directory*, Melbourne, 1859, p. 29.

[49] Lewis, *Australian architectural index*, record nos. 7525 and 7530.

[50] For example, Oriental Bank Buildings, 'Tenders', *Argus*, 15 August 1856, p. 7; additions to the Prince of Wales Hotel, Flinders Lane, 'Tenders', *Argus*, 23 May 1856, p. 7.

[51] 'List of Plans in the Surveyor-General's Office', PROV, VA 943, VPRS 8306/P1 Estray Registers and lists of Plans, Unit 2, Part 1: April 1855, pp. 30–32, Part 2: May 30th 1856.

[52] 'Victoria Industrial Society', *Age*, 12 December 1856, p. 3.

[53] 'County of Bourke', Surveyor-General's Office, Melbourne, [1857?].

[54] 'General map of Australia shewing the routes of the explorers', Office of Lands & Survey, Melbourne, 1859, copies held by State Library Victoria, for example at MAP 804 AT 1859.

[55] Acting Secretary Sewerage & Water Department to Town Clerk, 31 July 1860, PROV, VPRS 3181/P0 Town Clerk's Files Series 1, Unit 811, 60/525.

[56] 'New insolvents', *Age*, 20 November 1861, p. 7.

[57] Lewis, 'Maps for Building Research', p. 22.

[58] Personal communication, 16 January 2020. George Tibbits taught urban studies and architectural history at the University of Melbourne.

[59] *An Act for regulating Buildings and Party Walls and for preventing mischiefs by fire in the City Of Melbourne 1849*, New South Wales 13 VICTORIAE no. 39, s. 10.

Untimely ends

place, kin and culture in coronial inquests

'Untimely ends: place, kin and culture in coronial inquests', *Provenance: The Journal of Public Record Office Victoria*, issue no. 18, 2020. ISSN 1832-2522.

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Abstract

This article explores the utility of using the rich holdings of coronial inquests in the collection of Public Record Office Victoria as fertile sources for exploring histories of place, kin and culture. It suggests ways in which the minutiae of everyday life contained in inquest deposition files provide a unique source enabling the historian to tell stories about ways of life as much as the circumstances of death. Coronial inquiries were established in the British legal tradition, with hotels playing an important early role in both the housing of dead bodies and the holding of inquests. The article further explores a range of examples under the themes of work, place, family and race to analyse the value of inquest files in understanding the experience of individual workers against the backdrop of occupational categories, to research fine-grained local histories, to disrupt racial stereotypes, and to understand family dynamics and extended relationships. These case studies throw light on a range of methodological and ethical issues pertinent to this genre of record, revealing inquest records as a complex body of important public documents with personal sensitivities, both for the historian and her subject.

At around 7 am on the morning of Monday 3 January 1898, 13-year-old Ralph Charles left his house at 9 Windsor Street, Footscray, on an excursion to Brooklyn. He met up with his 19-year-old brother Edwin, a civil servant of 58 Hamilton Street, Yarraville, and William Pearce, a coach painter of 8 Errol Street, and together the boys walked around 4 miles to Brooklyn Creek on a day's rabbiting and fishing expedition. After setting their fishing lines in a quarry hole, John and William went off looking for rabbits and, on returning an hour later, found no sign of Ralph, though his lines were still in the water. Edwin noticed Ralph's cap on the ground, and also that a branch with a nest of young birds had broken off a tree overhanging the waterhole and was now lying on the bank. After Edwin and William unsuccessfully dragged for the body with a piece of barbed wire, Edwin went off to telephone the police. On his return, the pair found the boy's body at about 3.45 pm in 15 feet of water. His wrist looked broken and there was a wound on the heel of his foot. Edwin carried Ralph's body 2 miles to Rumpf's quarry at Spotswood, and thence to Footscray; the boys arrived at around 4.30 pm to break the news to Ralph's father James, a quarryman. On 4 January 1898, William Gallant JP conducted a magisterial inquiry at Footscray Town Hall into the death of Ralph Frederick Charles and found that, though a good swimmer, he had accidentally drowned at Brooklyn while fishing—the assumption being that he had climbed the overhanging tree to see the bird's nest and had fallen—and that there was no blame attributable to any other person.[1]

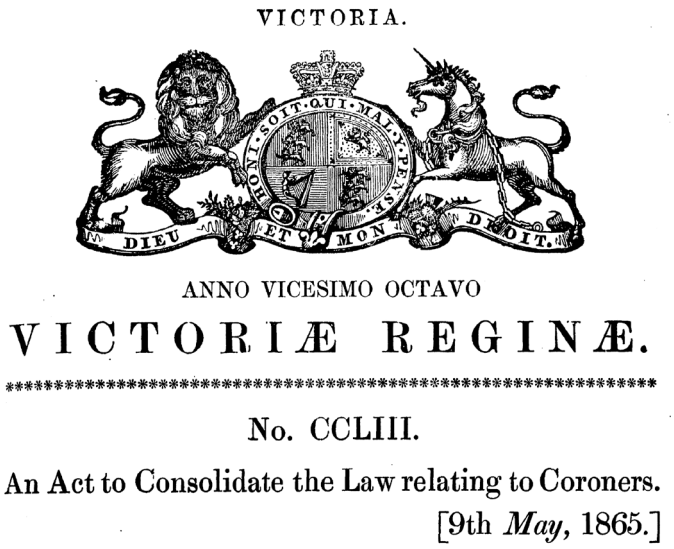
The tragic demise of one young life lies at the heart of this historical record, its emotional impact and reverberations for family and community barely captured in a legalistic and methodical evidence-based investigation. However, for the historian, evidence in a file such as this can tell us much more than the personal circumstances surrounding one unfortunate case. Information about age, residence, occupation (e.g., quarryman, coach painter and civil servant), locality (Rumpf's quarry) or technology (the telephone) can add everyday personal and local detail to demographic or other historical generalities. Evidence of the activities of one particular child, moreover, can tell us about the experience of childhood in general in peri-suburban Melbourne at the end of the nineteenth century. In their quest for rabbits, fish and birds' nests, the boys walked around 4 miles (over 6 kilometres) from Footscray to Brooklyn, extending our understanding from previous studies of children's urban range as a historical measure of autonomy in the public realm. [2]

This article explores the richness of inquest records at Public Record Office Victoria (PROV) as unique and important sources for exploring histories of place, kin and culture, and for telling stories of life as well as death. After setting out the legal framework for the establishment of coronial inquiries, we will discuss a range of examples under the themes of work, place, family and race. In so doing, our task is to demonstrate the broad utility of using inquests as historical evidence: to understand the everyday experience of individual workers against the backdrop of occupational categories, to map communities against the patterns of their particular geographical localities, to disrupt racial stereotypes, and to understand family constitution and personal conditions and shed light on extended relationships. At the same time, our case studies illuminate a range of methodological issues pertinent to this particular genre of record: why it is important to consider how inquests were conducted (i.e., the question/answer format put to deponents) and how inquest records were created (transcription of testimony), what role gender might have played, what we may need to do to research deponents to fully understand their testimony, and how we can use newspaper accounts and other records to supplement information.

At a more fine-grained level, inquests also enable analysis of a range of variables that shape the cause, experience and aftermath of dying. 'As mortals', notes the 'CSI: Dixie' team at the University of Georgia, 'we all die, but we do not die equally. Race, place, gender, profession, behaviour, and good and bad luck play large roles in determining how we go out of the world'.[3] Research into individual family histories reflects important light back on to the history of the family. Placing the history of our own families against the broader history of the family in colonial and postcolonial Australia makes genealogical approaches richer, and broader critical syntheses of demographic and social trends more complete. The detail of personal experiences in the everyday lives of Australian families—shaped by class, race and gender—transforms and is transformed by the broader cultural, economic and political context. It is in this sense that the history of families, as microcosms of the modern world, is essential to our universal historical understanding.[4] In a similar vein, the 'trinity' of family history, according to American historian Joseph Amato, comprises genealogy ('the players on the program'), history (as everyday life at a micro-regional level) and storytelling (as anecdote, event, narration).[5]

Catie Gilchrist is correct in asserting in her recent study of Sydney's coroner's court cases that 'Australian historians have not used coroners' inquests in a detailed or systematic manner' in major studies,[6] which is not to say that studies of crime, murder, suicide, infanticide, domestic violence, the court system in general, or women, children and the family, have not drawn on inquests as historical sources, as of course have biographical accounts. Regional history groups and genealogical societies have also consolidated information from inquests for family and local history research.[7] In the Victorian context, researchers have made good use of inquests to explain things about individuals and families: illness, relocation, connecting people to place, institutionalisation, road trauma, murder, infant life protection, public health and sanitation.[8] Madonna Grehan, for example, combines evidence from coronial inquests into maternal deaths with other historical sources to explore the nature of care provision in order to 'illuminate the challenges of administering justice in what was a contested professional arena in the nineteenth century'.[9] Gilchrist herself draws substantially on newspaper reports, taking a thematic approach to Sydney deaths, which enables her to construct a lively and informative social history on all manner of topics, from accidents, alcohol and childbirth to diet, dress and workplace safety. The title of her book—*Murder, misadventure & miserable ends*—reflects a common and almost universal morbid fascination, observable in Australia, Britain and parts of Europe, with deliberate and accidental deaths, echoing the same sense of titillation that drew thousands of people to view unidentified or infamous corpses at nineteenth-century city morgues from Melbourne to Paris.[10] Simon Cooke's benchmark social history of suicide in Victoria to 1921 analyses the

inquest as a site for the construction of meanings of suicide during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, a period when the social isolation of a largely immigrant cohort created greater susceptibility to suicide and a little over 7,000 individuals took their own lives.[11] More recently, Carolyn Staines has employed a historical epidemiological approach to analyse coronial inquests into 1,162 drowning deaths in Victoria, identifying a 'step wise pattern of reduction' over the period 1861–2000. Early factors contributing to drowning deaths—such as unprotected hazards, alcohol intoxication, lack of supervision of children and the inability of people to swim—were increasingly mitigated, in part due to the role of coroner's inquests in informing drowning prevention.[12]



VICTORIA.

ANNO VICESIMO OCTAVO

VICTORIÆ REGINÆ.

No. CCLIII.

An Act to Consolidate the Law relating to Coroners.

[9th *May*, 1865.]

Figure 1: Title page of the *Coroners Act 1865*.

Inquests were first held in Melbourne in 1840 and Dr William Byam Wilmot was appointed the first coroner.[13] Victoria inherited the role of the coroner through British common law. An 1865 statute (Figure 1) consolidating the law relating to the appointment and jurisdiction of coroners set out their principal task as being:

> To enquire concerning the manner of the death of any person who is slain or drowned, or who dies suddenly or in prison or while detained in any lunatic asylum, and whose body shall be lying dead within the district ... and to enquire into the cause and origin of any fire whereby any building ship or merchandise or any stack of corn pulse or hay or any growing crop ... shall be destroyed or damaged.[14]

Coroners were empowered to impound a jury for this purpose (only after 1903 could inquests be held without a jury), and publicans were required to receive dead bodies into their premises (which, of course, usually had cool sub-floor cellars) and to host inquests if requested.[15] Jurors lists can place individuals in specific locations at particular times. For example, the 1848 inquiry conducted by Wilmot at the Richmond Hotel into the death of Samuel Grant, who, having come to Melbourne from Bong Bong on business was accidentally drowned when horse and rider fell off the punt crossing the Yarra River, recorded the names of 12 jurors, 'good and lawful men of the district', one of whom, William Oswin, was likely the publican of the hotel.[16] Together with individuals deposing evidence at an inquest, jurors (always male) were usually required to sign their name, which can often also give a clue as to whether or not they were literate (i.e., those who were not making their mark with a cross) (Figure 2).[17]

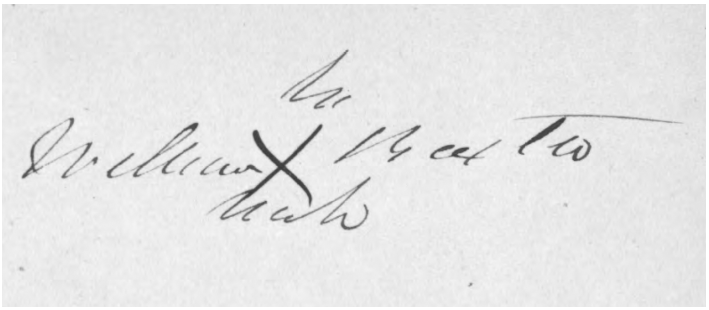


Figure 2: The mark of deponent William Baxter, giving evidence at the inquest into the death of fellow bootblack Michael Thomas, VPRS 24/P0, Unit 180, Item 1866/1117, Michael Thomas.

Inquest and other coronial records at PROV cover a range of materials relating to coronial investigations. Fire Inquest Records (VPRS 407) relate to the causes or origin of fires in the period 1858–1940, though their investigations do not extend to any resultant deaths.[18] Melbourne Admittance Books (VPRS 7662, 1931–1959) contain information concerning bodies removed to the city mortuary, including about deaths that did not result in an inquest. Post-mortem investigation records, also known as body cards (VPRS 10010, 1959–1985) relate to coronial investigations at Melbourne and include records of investigations that did not proceed to an inquest. Inquests into deaths (deposition files 1840–1985) is a substantive open-access series covering 1840–1985 (VPRS 24) that is among the more popularly accessed records in the Victorian archives. If someone was charged over a death, the inquest file will be found in VPRS 30 (criminal trial briefs) rather than remaining in VPRS 24. Inquests from 1840 to 1937 are being progressively digitised and are accessible online up to the mid-1920s.[19] While the content of inquest files can vary over time,

records commonly include the coroner's verdict, a list of jurors, depositions of evidence given by any witnesses, a police report, and (from the 1950s) other exhibits or photographs.

Work and occupation

Inquests provide many important insights into working lives, especially at a time when occupational health and safety measures were nascent or non-existent. A range of studies have drawn on inquests for details on health and social and economic conditions of the rural working class,[20] or labour conditions, occupational risks and working technologies in particular industries.[21] Recent research to identify officers, field services workers or contractors of the Victorian Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning and its precursor organisations who suffered a workplace fatality determined that inquest records provided the most useful and accurate sources on workplace fatalities. However sketchy employment information may be, information in inquests can be matched with other primary and secondary sources to determine verifiable cases. A search of the online inquest index[22] using pertinent keywords related to forestry-related deaths (e.g., forest, fire, bushfire, flood, timber, tree, employee, contractor, burn, explosion, blaze) narrowed the research to 28 hard copy inquests and several hundred digitised inquest files, which could then be analysed for relevant content. Sampling by event date—for example, the Red Tuesday fires of 1 February 1898—also returned relevant files. In most cases, while the occupation of deceased individuals was usefully described (farmer, mill worker, labourer, engine driver, ropeman, overseer, logging contractor), their employer was rarely specifically described. When it was, employers in the case of forestry-related deaths tended to be timber milling companies (e.g., Sanderson's Sawmill, Edmond Robinson, Parbury's Sawmill, John Hay & Co.'s Sawmill, Angliss Sawmill, Broomfield and Goeman).[23]

The search function enables interrogation of the archive via occupational status, which can then enable cohort analysis of particular occupational groups. Between 1854 and 1869, for example, there were nine inquests into the deaths of men who worked in the streets of Melbourne as shoeblacks or bootblacks, enough for some particular patterns to emerge (Table 1).

Previous research has identified 188 individual men who had permission from the City of Melbourne to shine shoes in the streets between 1868 and 1923.[33] The shoeblack of the 1850s was most likely to be a juvenile, as depicted in Henry Heath Glover's 1857 lithograph, but by the time ST Gill caricatured the same occupation in 1869 ('Ease without opulence'), he was clearly a dishevelled older man (Figure 3).[34]

Table 1: Inquests of Melbourne bootblacks 1854–1869 (PROV VPRS 24/P0)

1854[24]	William Swain	54	'cripple, and obtained his living by begging'	Chronic inflammation of the membranes of the brain
1859[25]	John James Sutherland	27	Unmarried, drunk, no doctor to attend him	Fracture of the skull
1861[26]	Thomas Copeland	35	'a shoe black in the streets'	Disease of the heart liver and kidneys produced by habits of intemperance
1863[27]	Joseph de Gusperri	40	'Swiss ... without relatives in the colony he was a gold digger ... a drunkard...he had no settled home'	Tubercular pneumonia and pericar-ditis
1864[28]	John Exford	50	'single without relatives in the colony ... a drunkard'	Disease of the heart
1865[29]	William Stockdale	40	'no friends in the colony'	Serous apoplexy
1866[30]	Michael Thomas	50	'a pensioner he was single ... drank very much'	Disease of the liver and spleen
1866[31]	William Lancaster	60	'had a wife and family in England'	Disease of the brain, lungs liver and kidneys
1869[32]	Edward Morcam	40	'not married ... a great drunkard'	Sanguineous apoplexy

Figure 3: ST Gill, 'Ease without opulence', 186-, National Library of Australia, available at <https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-135629540/view>, accessed 3 November 2020.

Analysis of the evidence from witness depositions and medical reports in the inquest files provides a better picture of this cohort of the casual urban labour force. A precarious occupational category at the best of times, scraping a meagre living in a lowly and often despised street occupation, they reveal themselves to be the castoffs of a goldrush generation: mostly single men, with no relatives or friends in the colony, heavy drinkers and suffering the health effects of its addiction. The ages for this small sample of nine men as recorded by witnesses are clearly approximations, as six of them were rounded to the decade (three aged 40, two 50 and one 60). In a friendless world of immigrants and strangers, coupled with a lack of official documentation (civil registration of births only dated from the 1850s), this is an object lesson in the inaccuracies of 'official' documentation.[35] Further, to a current-day reader, their ages may seem to range from young men to middle age; however, given that the life expectancy of a man born between 1881 and 1890 was 47 (compared to 80.5 for a boy born in 2015–2017), the majority of these men were definitively elderly by the measure of the day.[36] Finally, crosschecking the names of three of the bootblacks reveals inconsistencies in the data that are the likely result of errors in transliteration and rendering spoken into written word, and/or the difficulties of reading handwriting: with Victorian birth, death and marriage indexes (where Joseph de Gusperri[37] is listed as Joseph Gasperre[38]); with newspaper references (where Edward Morcam is recorded variously as Edward Morecum [39] and Edward Morceau[40]); and with the online inquest index itself, which incorrectly records Michael Thomas as Thomas Michael.[41]

Place and local history

As inevitably as local residents have lived and died in localities across Victoria, they have left traces of their attachment to place in the archive. Inquests have been a critical source in the armoury of the local historian, often one of the few records that can pin individuals to place, particularly in the early years of the colony. Dawn Peel's study of Colac in 1857 gleaned precious minutiae from inquest depositions[42] and Joan Hunt's history of Piggoreet identified the value of coroner's inquests as being 'their ability to reveal something of the daily lives of families'.[43] For the purposes of this article, we take one locale in Footscray to exemplify the rewards of exploring inquests as primary sources for local history, based on a range of inquests examined as part of a heritage study of sites along the Maribyrnong River.[44] The study area was historically significant as the location of the first direct crossing of the Saltwater River at a punt established on the initiative of William Lonsdale in 1839 on the road to Williamstown and Geelong. The locality of the punt as a transport node, the subsequent inns that were established to service the needs of travellers and the natural advantages of the river combined to make the nascent settlement an important interchange from the very earliest years of European settlement in the district. With sparse contemporary descriptions of Footscray's social life in the 1840s and 1850s, inquests are a profitable source of information. In the immediacy of witness statements, we not only become privy to personal trauma and tragedy, but also are led incidentally into the thoughts, motives and reactions of a contemporary society that left few other written records of daily life. Maps, land records and other statistics can draw lines on the ground, but inquests reveal a world of affect and action, of aspiration as well as the quotidian world of children,

women, leisure, clothes, work, social rituals, food, family and education. With its riverside location, the people on the Maribyrnong were also susceptible to the dangers of the river. An abstract of inquests held before coroners or inquiries by justices for the second six months of 1853 reveals that of the 172 accidental deaths in Victoria, 69 (or 40 per cent) were from drowning.[45]

In April 1847, an inquest into the death of Thomas Gaskell, found drowned in the Saltwater River, conclusively links Henry Kellett with the Bush Inn.[46] Inquests were held at the Stanley Arms Hotel (1857, 1859, 1862 and 1863), the Punt Hotel (1861 and 1862) and the Bridge Hotel (1864). These assist in building a collective picture of the rhythms of life in a riverine community, helping to reconstruct patterns of travel and communication and reveal the shifting variety of maritime activities over time: for example, with references to the captain of the steamer *Hercules*, a lighterman finding a dead body,[47] a drowned man who had been in charge of a Hulk moored opposite the Punt Hotel[48] and a young lad who fell out of a boat when his oar slipped out of the sculling notch.[49] The occupations of both witnesses and deceased reveal a variety of jobs in the 1850s and 1860s: for example, labourer and carpenter in the employ of Messrs Philpotts melting down works (1850), butcher and cook at Raleigh's (1851), fisherman and farmer (1852), shipbuilder and fellmonger (1854), quarryman at the Junction (1857), drayman working on the railway (1857), master mariner (1862), and soap and candle maker working for Mr Hayes on the Melbourne side of the river (1862). Work was not always easy to come by:

> Abraham Sharp, a labourer, had been working some time on the Govt Line as a Plate layer ... He had been ill about three weeks & was low spirited from that & his not being able to get work. He went to Wms Town to look for work & on his return, he told me that he would not scruple to put an end to himself. Has no friends in the country.[50]

A number of deaths were indeed attributed to suicide by drowning.[51] Inquest records do not always make pleasant reading, and the residents on the riverside, the jury, the coroner and the local constable alike often faced the disagreeable tasks of dragging the river for bodies (some of which had been in the water for weeks and were so decomposed as to be unrecognisable), shifting them to a hotel for the inquest and/or making a close examination of the deceased. Yet, the records also provide a unique glimpse of personal tragedy, social attitudes, sentiment and the sometimes fatal end to lives in a new land.[52]

Births are recorded from the Saltwater River locality from the 1840s, and early inquests often record infant mortalities. The most common cause of death was drowning, and witness statements reveal the everyday activities of children as well as the parental challenges of surveillance.[53] In addition to their central role in child rearing, women made a significant contribution to the household economy, engaging in many tasks such as milking cows, preparing food and chopping wood. Tragic accidents reveal the demands on women as well as their strength and resourcefulness.[54] Other inquests suggest the common fate of young children who were accidentally overlain or smothered in bed.[55] A jury in 1856 concluded in another case that it was impossible to determine whether a dead child had been stillborn or murdered: 'but from the fact of a rope wound round the body, the jury are inclined to think that some person or persons unknown may have thrown the child into the River to avoid a discovery of shame'.[56]

Leisure time was often taken up with attending the races at present-day Flemington, bathing or going up the river for a day's shooting, a pastime often also indulged in by visitors from Melbourne. Fishing too was a popular activity as well as an economic necessity. When bodies were plucked from the river, police reports often contained a description of what the deceased was wearing as a clue to identification, which, for the researcher, serves as evidence too of typical fashions of the day—from cabbage tree hats and high-low, blucher and wellington boots, to pilot-cloth and moleskin trousers, monkey jackets, Crimean and Gurney shirts, Bedford-cord trousers and worsted socks.[57] While death by accident was often linked to the loose behaviour that came with drunkenness, both on land as well as on the river, not all the inhabitants were partial to strong drink. The father of a nine-year-old boy who drowned while out fishing with a Mr Williams blamed the man for not looking after his son but also himself for allowing the child to go fishing on the Sabbath.[58]

Race

Studies of Bendigo and Vaughan Springs have been able to determine the living and working experiences of Chinese miners in regard to health, nutrition, accidents and general working conditions through insights gained from local inquests, enabling Valerie Lovejoy to argue that 'Chinese miners led full lives on the goldfields, supported in sickness and in health by strong networks of relatives and countrymen with whom they enjoyed their leisure time'. [59] Our next two examples are inquests of a Chinese baby and mother who died in 1865 and 1870, respectively. These were the daughter and wife of Chinese storekeeper, Fong Fat, owner of a fancy goods shop on Swanson Street,

Melbourne, and, later, the Eastern Arcade on Bourke Street, who arrived in Victoria in 1857.[60]

Ah Chow, the four-month-old child of Fong Fat and his wife, Quinti, was born in Victoria and died in July 1865 of inflammation of the lungs. The inquest reveals a little of their lives, with testimonies not only from the father (who discusses the child's mother) but also non-Chinese neighbours and associates, including neighbour Bridget Gallagher, who did some housekeeping for the family.[61]

Five years later, Canton-born Quinti (who seems to have arrived not long before the birth of her daughter) died at their Swanston Street home of 'a serious apoplexy from disease of the brain', aged 24. According to newspaper reports, she had been 'out of her mind' for five and a half years.[62] Quinti's inquest is mislabelled in the PROV index as being the inquest of a male named Fong Fah.[63] The inquest contains depositions from Fong Fat and the family's housekeeper/shop assistant, Catherine Downey, a widow, whom Fong Fat married the next year. The inquest of Quinti was claimed in the press to be 'probably the first inquest on a Chinese woman in Australia', although that of her daughter was held five years earlier. [64]

Newspaper reports on the inquest, found when researching Fong Fat himself, led to the inquests at PROV, then the birth certificate for Ah Chow and her death certificate, as well as those of Quinti, Fong Fat's second wife, Catherine Downey, and the man himself.[65] Together with these other records, the inquests provide useful insight into the lives of Fong Fat, Quinti and their baby daughter. While these give quite small snippets of the Chinese–Australian experience, when read alongside other sources, they shine further light on these histories, which often portray Chinese goldfield's sojourners as having no family in Australia, or as taking non-Chinese women as wives despite having wives and family in China.[66]

This is an interesting case of a Chinese storekeeper catering to settler colonial tastes for Chinese wares (he sold imported Chinese fancy goods such as ivory boxes and fans), as well as tea and perhaps opium, in the centre of Melbourne. His shops were just outside the supposed Chinese enclave, although close to it, on Swanston Street and in the more elite setting of the Eastern Arcade on Bourke. They are of further interest as they reveal a little about Chinese women and families in the period. The Victorian census indicates that there were only eight Chinese women in the colony in 1861 and 34 in 1871. The presence of these females in the archival record disrupts the idea that Chinese women were not present in Australia and de- anonymises two of them.[67] Tantalisingly suggestive of what life was like for Chinese women in Australia, they put a human slant on the often racialised and sensationalised newspaper reports about the Chinese community in colonial Australia.

Kith and kin

In the early morning of 16 December 1877, a large storm blew over Melbourne and a 16-foot, heavily decorated chimney fell from a house on the corner of Jackson and Acland streets, St Kilda, killing both Esther Marks (nee Woolf, aged 39) and Julian Jacobs (aged nine). Esther and her husband Nelson Samuel Marks were living in a single storey rented house. On the weekend of 15–16 December, Nelson was in Gippsland on business, while his wife was at home with their adopted nephew Julian Emanuel Jacobs, his cousin Miss Levinson and another nephew Henry Robert Woolf. This complex family group raises a number of questions. Henry Robert Woolf's father had died in New Zealand when Henry was a baby and he had been apprenticed to his uncle in business as a manufacturing chemist. But this does not explain the presence of the other children. Julian's parents lived nearby in St Kilda, while the Levinsons had recently moved from Ballarat to Victoria Parade. While both the Levinsons and Jacobs each had 12 children, it is unclear why they were not in the care of their relatively well-off parents, and, therefore, why they were living with the childless Marks family. Nor is it clear why Julian Jacobs was sharing a room with his aunt.[68] This vignette, gleaned from inquest depositions and newspaper reports, serves as a starting point for exploring some of the benefits of using inquests as sources for family history. While it raises as many questions as it perhaps answers, it demonstrates the kind of detail available in some inquest files that can assist in unravelling the at times complex web of family structure and extended familial interrelationships.

Conclusion

As a range of our examples have shown, for the family and local historian, Victorian inquest files, like many archives—created as public records but not necessarily intentionally for general public consumption—bequeath us an extraordinarily rich body of data that, when alert to some of the methodological pitfalls, can be used to tell individual stories as well as for larger analytical and aggregate purposes.

The PROV website contains an apposite warning for researchers planning to explore Victorian inquest records: 'The photographs in these records can be upsetting for some researchers. Spaces are available in our reading room for people who wish to view inquest records in private'. Just as the material they contain can be

unsettling in the present, so too it was originally created and experienced with a personal force and emotional valency that demands sensitivity from the researcher to the realities of the past. The archive of the coroner's inquest, in other words, sits within competing imperatives of open and transparent justice on the one hand, and personal sensitivity and private trauma on the other.[69]

Our examples have revealed a moral purpose and ethical responsibility in this endeavour, both in seeking the voice of victims (whether of circumstance or of larger historical forces) and in ensuring that we remain attuned to the agency of the individual and the actualities of their existence (even in the face of the bureaucratic abstraction of official records). Amato succinctly voices this imperative: 'If I were to put an individual and human face on the family', he asserts, 'I could not treat the family as mere molecules in the flow of a great river, nor portable mannequins for my research generalisations'.[70] Conversely, as Holly Crossen-White cautions, the availability of online digital archives shines a light onto a level of detail about our forebears that they may not wish to have illuminated.[71] Greg Dening puts it slightly differently: 'The dead', he figures, 'need history for the voice it gives them'.[72] The historian's opportunity—indeed, we might say, duty—is, thus, to be responsible to the people of our past.

Endnotes

[1] PROV, VPRS 24/P0, Unit 682, Item 1898/32. The press reported the incident with just a few additional details: 'Drowned while fishing', *Age*, 4 January 1898, p. 5; 'Drowned through bird's nesting', *Age*, 5 January 1898, p. 7.

[2] Simon Sleight records 3.15 kilometres as the maximum urban range in a cohort of 56 young people aged three to 16, calculated from cases recorded in the Melbourne City Council Town Clerk's files, 1892–1900. Simon Sleight, *Young people and the shaping of public space in Melbourne, 1870–1914*, Ashgate, Farnham, 2013, pp. 67–75 and Table A.1.

[3] 'CSI: Dixie. The view from the American south's county coroners' offices, 1800–1900', available at <https://csidixie.org/>, accessed 4 May 2020.

[4] Patricia Grimshaw, Chris McConville and Ellen McEwan, *Families in colonial Australia*, George Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1985.

[5] Joseph A. Amato, *Jacob's Well: A case for rethinking family history*, Minnesota Historical Society Press, St Paul, 2008, pp. 10–14.

[6] Catie Gilchrist, *Murder, misadventure & miserable ends: tales from a colonial coroner's court*, Harper Collins Publishers, Sydney, 2019, p. xiii.

[7] For example, a mining accidents index compiled by the Ballarat Genealogy Society, and a list of local inquests compiled by both the Castlemaine & District and the Avoca & District historical societies, were used to build up a database of local hotels, publicans, doctors and midwives.

[8] Rick Clapton, 'Keeping order: motor-car regulation and the defeat of Victoria's 1905 motor-car bill', *Provenance*, no. 3, 2004, pp. 12–24; Fred Cahir and Ian D. Clark, 'The case of Peter Mungett: born out of the allegiance of the Queen, belonging to a sovereign and independent tribe of Ballan', *Provenance*, no. 8, 2009, 29–45; Helen D. Harris, 'Victoria police involvement in the Infant Life Protection Act 1893–1908', *Provenance*, no. 9, 2010, pp. 73–79; Janet Marles, 'Everything changes: piecing together evidence for a story of loss and absence', *Provenance*, no. 9, 2010, pp. 80–88; Lee Hooper, 'Preparation for death: the story of Francis O'Brien, Mildura High School headmaster and family annihilator', *Provenance*, no. 13, 2014, pp. 76–85; Jacquie Browne, 'Who says "you can't change history"?', *Provenance*, no. 14, 2015, pp. 131–145; Barbara Minchinton and Sarah Hayes, 'Dating Melbourne's cesspits: digging through the archives', *Provenance*, no. 16, 2018, pp. 61–67; Cate O'Neill, '"She had always been a difficult case … ": Jill's short, tragic life in Victoria's institutions, 1952–1955', *Provenance*, no. 14, 2015, pp. 40–55; Keith Macrae Bowden, *Doctors and diggers on the Mount Alexander goldfields*, KM Bowden, Maryborough, 1974.

[9] Madonna Grehan, '"A most difficult and protracted labour case": midwives, medical men, and coronial investigations into maternal deaths in nineteenth-century Victoria', *Provenance*, no. 8, 2009, pp. 106–114.

[10] Andrew Brown-May and Simon Cooke, 'Death, decency and the dead-house: the city morgue in colonial Melbourne', *Provenance*, no. 3, 2004, 25–36.

[11] Simon J. Cooke, 'Secret sorrows: a social history of suicide in Victoria, 1841–1921', PhD thesis, University of Melbourne, 1998.

[12] Carolyn Staines, 'History of drowning deaths in a developing community: the Victorian experience', PhD thesis, Monash University, 2013.

[13] Simon Cooke, 'Coroners', in Andrew Brown-May and Shurlee Swain (eds), *The encyclopedia of Melbourne*, Cambridge University Press, Melbourne, 2005, pp. 173–174.

[14] *An Act to Consolidate the Law relating to Coroners, 28 Vict. No. 253, 9 May 1865*, available at <http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/vic/hist_act/cs1865198.pdf>, accessed 3 November 2020.

[15] Simon Cooke, 'Inquests', in Andrew Brown-May and Shurlee Swain (eds), *The encyclopedia of Melbourne*, Cambridge University Press, Melbourne, 2005, p. 366.

[16] 'Body found', *Argus*, 14 November 1848, p. 3; 'Inquest on the body of Mr. Grant', *Melbourne Daily News and Port Phillip Patriot*, 15 November 1848, p. 2; 'Melancholy accident', *Geelong Advertiser*, 14 November 1848, p. 2. William Oswin is recorded as the licensee of the Punt Inn, Richmond, in 1853. See Robert K Cole, *Index of Victorian hotels: manuscript 1841–1949*, State Library of Victoria.

[17] According to Cooke, *Secret sorrows*, p. 439: 'The assumption that coroners did not deliberately select literate witnesses is supported by evidence suggesting that the proportion of witnesses able to sign their names was similar to the proportion of people able to do so in the Victorian population'.

[18] Records of investigations leading to criminal charges of arson are contained in criminal trial briefs. Fire inquests 1940–1959 can be found in inquest records, and for records from 1959–1985, see autopsy and investigation records.

[19] Inquests post-1986 are closed to the public and access is through the coroners court.

[20] Lisa Hay, 'Finding Thomas Brookhouse: locating the nineteenth-century Western District rural working class through public records', *Provenance*, no. 15, 2016–17, 9–17.

[21] Susan Walter, 'Quarry and stone research methods: looking for holes in history', *Provenance* 15, 2016–17, 35–46.

[22] Public Record Office Victoria, 'Inquests into deaths', available at <https://prov.vic.gov.au/explore-collection/explore-topic/inquests-and-other-coronial-records/inquests-deaths-deposition>, accessed 4 May 2020.

[23] Andrew May, Roland Wettenhall, Helen Morgan, Henry Reese and Gretel Evans, 'Final report for DELWP on historic workplace (occupational) fatalities', Melbourne History Workshop, School of Historical & Philosophical Studies, University of Melbourne, October 2019.

[24] VPRS 24/P0, Unit 21, Item 1854/493, William Swain.

[25] VPRS 24/P0, Unit 71, Item 1859/955, John James Sutherland.

[26] VPRS 24/P0, Unit 96, Item 1861/340, Thomas Copeland.

[27] VPRS 24/P0, Unit 132, Item 1863/1032, Joseph de Gusperri.

[28] VPRS 24/P0, Unit 146, Item 1864/855, John Exford.

[29] VPRS 24/P0, Unit 156, Item 1865/347, William Stockdale.

[30] VPRS 24/P0, Unit 180, Item 1866/1117, Michael Thomas (incorrectly indexed as Thomas Michael).

[31] VPRS 24/P0, Unit 176, Item 1866/648, William Lancaster.

[32] VPRS 24/P0, Unit 229, Item 1869/921, Edward Morcam.

[33] Andrew J. May, *Melbourne street life*, Australian Scholarly Publishing, North Melbourne, 2017, p. 158.

[34] Henry Heath Glover, '11 o'clock', in '12 hours road scraping in Melbourne: scraped from the streets', c. 1857, State Library of Victoria, available at <http://handle.slv.vic.gov.au/10381/128890>, accessed 3 November 2020; ST Gill, 'Ease without opulence', 186-, National Library of Australia, available at <https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-135629540/view>, accessed 3 November 2020.

[35] Cooke, *Secret sorrows*, p. 441.

[36] Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 'Deaths in Australia', web report, 17 July 2019, available at <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/life-expectancy-death/deaths-in-australia/contents/life-expectancy>, accessed 4 May 2020.

[37] VPRS 24/P0, Unit 132, Item 1863/1032.

[38] Births Deaths and Marriages Victoria, 'Research and family history', available at <https://www.bdm.vic.gov.au/research-and-family-history>, accessed 3 November 2020. See record 8751/1863.

[39] 'Inquests', *Argus*, 13 November 1869, p. 1.

[40] 'Sanguinous apoplexy', *Herald*, 11 November 1869, p. 3.

[41] VPRS 24/P0, Unit 180, Item 1866/1117. Births Deaths and Marriages Victoria gives his name as Richard Thomas. See record 11421/1866.

[42] Dawn Peel, 'Colac 1857: snapshot of a colonial settlement', *Provenance*, no. 7, 2008, pp. 73–81.

[43] Joan Hunt, 'Piggoreet: a township built on gold', *Provenance*, no. 12, 2013, 18–25.

[44] Alan Mayne, Andrew May and John Lack, *Heritage survey. Quay West development site. Part 1: main report*, 1989.

[45] *Victoria. Inquests. Laid upon the council table by the attorney general, by command of his excellency the governor, and ordered by the council to be printed*, Government Printer, Melbourne, 1854.

[46] VPRS 24/P0, Unit 4, Item 1847/26, Thomas Baitson Gaskell.

[47] VPRS 24/P0, Unit 68, Item 1859/599, unknown male.

[48] VPRS 24/P0, Unit 29, Item 1855/729, William Holloway.

[49] VPRS 24/P0, Unit 27, Item 1855/476, John Wade.

[50] VPRS 24/P0, Unit 70, Item 1859/862, Abraham Sharp.

[51] VPRS 24/P0, Unit 6, Item 1849/39, Edwin Elwin.

[52] VPRS 24/P0, Unit 48, Item 1857/71, Katherine Kleinhen.

[53] VPRS 24/P0, Unit 73, Item 1859/1096, James Young.

[54] VPRS 24/P0, Unit 5, Item 1848/29, Thomas Gorman.

[55] VPRS 24/P0, Unit 109, Item 1862/161, JA Landorf.

[56] VPRS 24/P0, Unit 38, Item 1856/99, unknown female infant.

[57] VPRS 24/P0, Unit 88, Item 1860/1123, unknown male; VPRS 24/P0, Unit 73, Item 1859/1106, unknown male; VPRS 24/P0, Unit 68, Item 1859/599, unknown male.

[58] VPRS 24/P0, Unit 141, Item 1864/320, James S. Durop.

[59] Valerie Lovejoy, 'The things that unite: inquests into Chinese deaths on the Bendigo goldfields 1854–65', *Provenance*, no. 7, 2006, p. 17. See also Keir Reeves and Benjamin Mountford, 'Court records and cultural landscapes: rethinking the Chinese gold seekers in central Victoria', *Provenance*, no. 6, 2007, pp. 30–41; Kevin Wong Hoy, 'Murder, manslaughter and affray: making a cold case of the Buckland Riot, 4 July 1857' in Keir Reeves and David Nichols (eds), *Deeper leads: new approaches to Victorian goldfields history*, BHS Publishing, Ballarat, 2007, pp. 131–155.

[60] *Herald*, 2 December 1871, p. 1, and 20 December 1872, p. 4; Nicole Davis, 'Personalities of the arcades: Fong Fat, Chinese merchant in Melbourne's Eastern Arcade, part one', 8 November 2018, available at <https://afashionablepromenade.com/2018/11/02/personalities-of-the-arcades-fong-fat-part-one/>, accessed 3 November 2020; Nicole Davis, 'Personalities of the arcades. Fong Fat, part two: a Chinese–Australian family in Melbourne, 10 May 2020, available at <https://afashionablepromenade.com/2020/11/15/personalities-of-the-arcades-fong-fat-part-two/>.

[61] VPRS 24/P0, Unit 167, Item 1865/202, Ah Chow; 'Inquests', *Leader*, 15 July 1865, 2.

[62] 'The coroner: sudden death', *Herald*, 9 May 1870, p. 3; 'Inquests', *Argus*, 11 May 1870, p. 7.

[63] VPRS 24/P0, Unit 239, Item 1870/379, Fong Fah.

[64] 'Summary of news', *Border Watch*, 21 May 1870, p. 3.

[65] Births Deaths and Marriages Victoria, see records: Ah Chow, death, 7051/1865; Quinti Fong Fat, death, 4910/1870; Catherine Downing and Fong Fat, marriage, 754/1871; Catherine Fong Fat, death, 5148/1884; Fong Fat, death, 15719/1887.

[66] Kate Bagnall, 'Rewriting the history of Chinese families in nineteenth-century Australia', *Australian Historical Studies*, vol. 42, no. 1, 2011, pp. 62–77.

[67] For Chinese women in NSW in the period, see Kate Bagnall, 'Chinese women in colonial New South Wales: from absence to presence', *Australian Journal of Biography and History*, no. 3, 2020, pp. 3–20.

[68] VPRS 24/P0, Unit 369, Item 1877/387, Esther and Julien Emanuel Jacobs Marks; 'The St. Kilda disaster', *Age*, 18 December 1877, p. 3. Average household size in Victoria from 1840 to 1900 declines from around 14 in 1840 to five by 1900.

[69] For a broader discussion of court records and archives, see Ann Genovese, Trish Luker and Kim Rubinstein (eds), *The court as archive*, Australian National University Press, Acton, 2019.

[70] Amato, *Jacob's Well*, p.12.

[71] Holly L. Crossen-White, 'Using digital archives in historical research: what are the ethical concerns for a "forgotten" individual?', *Research Ethics*, vol. 11, no. 2, 2015, pp. 108–119. See also Gavan McCarthy and Helen Morgan, 'Rights and the commons: navigating the boundary between public and private knowledge spaces', in M Moss, B Endicott-Popovsky and MJ Dupuis (eds), *Is digital different? How information creation, capture, preservation and discovery are being transformed*, Facet Publishing, London, 2015, pp. 171–187.

[72] Greg Dening, 'Past imperfect', *Australian Review of Books*, April 1998, p. 5.

Deleting freeways

community opposition to inner urban arterial roads in the 1970s

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Abstract

This article explores community resistance to the F2 freeway proposal that emerged in the wake of the 1969 Melbourne *Transportation plan*. Drawing on published work in urban social history and urban policy analysis, as well as a wide range of archival sources, it provides an account of the defeat of this freeway proposal through community protest and the exertion of political pressure on government. It argues that the defeated proposal had been generated as part of a broader road-building consensus in Melbourne that gave little consideration to community impacts and the possibility of alternative transport solutions—a consensus that largely survives to the present day despite occasional backdowns such as the one explored in this article.

Roads equals transport

This article examines an attempt to challenge the ascendancy of roads policy networks in Melbourne's urban planning bureaucracy and the Victorian Government, and the substitution of massive roads construction for true transport planning in Melbourne. The 1969 Melbourne *Transportation plan* was the ultimate expression of this ascendancy. Though more than 50 years old, it has continued to shape the broad parameters of how mobility has been defined and delivered in Melbourne until the present day, leaving public transport development relatively stagnant for much of that time.

The ascendancy of roads construction in the form of a massive freeway grid covering the whole metropolitan area was challenged most successfully in the inner suburbs of Melbourne, particularly in the inner north: Carlton, Collingwood, Fitzroy, Brunswick, Coburg, Northcote, Clifton Hill and East Melbourne. In these suburbs, demographic changes, particularly the influx of professionals, crystallised an effective coalition of community resistance movements. The F2 freeway, proposed as a cross-city north–south link between the Hume Highway in the north and the Princes Highway in the south-east made it a crucial battleground for this challenge to the ascendant policy networks that were seeking to impose freeway construction as the primary solution for delivering mobility in the city. Community groups were politically effective in demonstrating that freeway construction in these suburbs would seriously damage and disrupt certain community amenities, intangible qualities and aesthetics of the neighbourhoods concerned, and that these aspects could not be ignored when developing mobility solutions in these areas. The community activism and anticipated electoral backlash forced the Victorian Government to formally abandon much of the proposed freeway network, even if the policy consensus remained largely unchanged and influential for years to come.

The article draws upon research into the history of demographic changes in Melbourne's inner city, particularly the influx of younger generations of educated people who were drawn to the architecture, lifestyle and cosmopolitan flavour of these inner neighbourhoods. The work of urban social historians such as Graeme Davison[1] and Seamus O'Hanlon[2] provides us with an understanding of the economic, social and demographic

transformation of Melbourne during the 1970s, while more specialist histories of road-building and infrastructure authorities by Tony Dingle and Carolyn Rasmussen[3] and Max Lay[4] have shown how these agencies shaped and implemented transport in Melbourne in the early 1970s. The works of Renate Howe and David Nichols[5] in relation to activism in the inner city are a valuable source for informing the discussion of the freeway protests that feature in this article. In addition, planning and policy analysis from Michael Buxton, Robin Goodman and Susie Moloney,[6] John Stone,[7] Geoff Rundell,[8] and Crystal Legacy, Carey Curtis and Jan Scheurer[9] help us understand the power and resilience of the road-building hegemony in Melbourne. These authors have been particularly useful for drawing attention to the policy planning networks in Melbourne that solidified around a roads construction consensus across government and planning authorities.

Much of this literature has dealt with the resistance to freeways in the inner north, particularly the Eastern Freeway that was initially proposed to cross through Collingwood, Fitzroy, Carlton and beyond. Less attention has been given to the F2 freeway proposal. The main contribution of this article is its detailed examination of the documentary evidence surrounding the F2 proposal, both the decisions and actions from government and the planning authorities on the one hand, and the efforts of community action groups and citizens in resistance on the other.

The 1969 Melbourne *Transportation plan*

December 2019 marked the fiftieth anniversary of a visionary and radical transportation plan that sought to impose a new urban form on Melbourne. Though called a transportation plan, it was heavily skewed to building roads, particularly freeways. Following the release of the plan, on 18 December 1969 the *Age* reported that the road component was costed at $2.2 billion (a very considerable sum in 1969) out of a total of $2.6 billion ($242 million for rail projects, $55 million for tram upgrades and $58 million for bus upgrades).[10] In recent years, a number of transportation experts have observed that the plan still remains highly relevant and influential for understanding current policy and expenditure priorities. This is the case because the underlying policy networks have resisted change despite some incoming governments having campaigned on advancing public transport priorities at elections. Therefore, the plan expressed a highly influential policy consensus that has remained largely unchallenged until the present. It rested on two interlocking assumptions that ignore the problem of induced demand. First, that, given a choice, commuters will generally prefer to drive cars; second, that the road congestion resulting from this preference can be alleviated by building more roads rather than managing the demand.[11] The inherent geometric inefficiency of single-occupant vehicles as a way to move large volumes of people at peak hour has also been largely ignored.[12]

Melbourne in 1969 was a city of 2.5 million inhabitants. The greater metropolitan area was already vast and dispersed with a predominantly radial public transportation system. Such a system encouraged car usage as a primary means of commuting to work and other daily activities that did not involve movement into or out of the central city. Generally, Melburnians seemed to like the freedom and convenience of cars and there was an openness to freeways as a solution to growing congestion on the existing arterial road network.[13]

The cost of implementing the transportation plan would have been a considerable impost on Victoria's state finances; however, it was the cost to community amenity and political pressure, particularly in the inner city, that eventually brought changes to the plan's ambitions. Although spread throughout the metropolitan area, the freeway and arterial road proposals provoked disquiet in inner urban areas where the concentration and density of the freeway network would have caused a major dislocation and reconfiguration of the existing urban fabric. On 19 December 1969, the day after announcing the plan, the *Age* reported that city councils from Collingwood to Brighton were expressing concerns about a loss of parkland and rateable properties and the permanent disruption to the integrity of many of their neighbourhoods.[14] These initial reactions were the beginnings of the local resistance that led to many of the proposed inner city freeways being deleted from the planning documents.

There was much deletion to be done! The 1969 *Transportation plan* featured 494 kilometres of new freeways integrated with a supporting network of 520 kilometres of highways and arterial roads. This vision would have covered the whole of the Melbourne metropolitan area in a freeway grid that would have resembled aspects of the Los Angeles network.[15] The network was most concentrated in the city's inner north where many of the new routes would have converged or intersected in relatively dense and well-established suburbs (see Figure 1 for the insets from maps 7-8 and 7-1 from the transport plan).

Among the small number of transport initiatives, the plan proposed an underground rail loop and a new railway line (the Eastern Railway) along what would become the Eastern Freeway (route F19 on map 7-8). At the time the transport plan was made public in 1969, the railway proposal featured a future direct link from the loop via an underground tunnel, including a station at Fitzroy, that would have been partly integrated into a westward extension of the F19 freeway (presumably also underground). A major north–south freeway, the F2 would have intersected with the F19. The proposed route for the F2 (see Figure 1, map 7-8) would have taken it all the way from the Hume Highway at Craigieburn in the north to Dingley, via Merri Creek then through Clifton Hill, Collingwood, Richmond, South Yarra, Prahran and Windsor and other bayside suburbs before heading east to join the Princes Highway.

The integration of the Eastern Railway extension from the loop can be seen in the inset on map 7-1, which also shows major freeway and arterial roads proposed for the area. The prospect of a railway along the freeway was a major selling point in communications surrounding the freeway work; it was touted as 'Australia's first road–rail complex, connecting Doncaster and Templestowe with central Melbourne'.[16]

These were the proposals in the published report, but there were several draft versions of the freeway and rail proposals that emerged in the *Melbourne transportation study* that preceded the final report. The study was largely shaped by policy networks that were heavily skewed towards freeway building that gave the published plan its supporting evidence and justification.

The *Melbourne transportation study*

The 1969 plan followed many years of data gathering (including surveys and interviews) and analysis that started in 1963. The study was designed to inform decision-making by the Melbourne Transportation Committee, which had representatives from 'all authorities concerned with transport, road building and planning'.

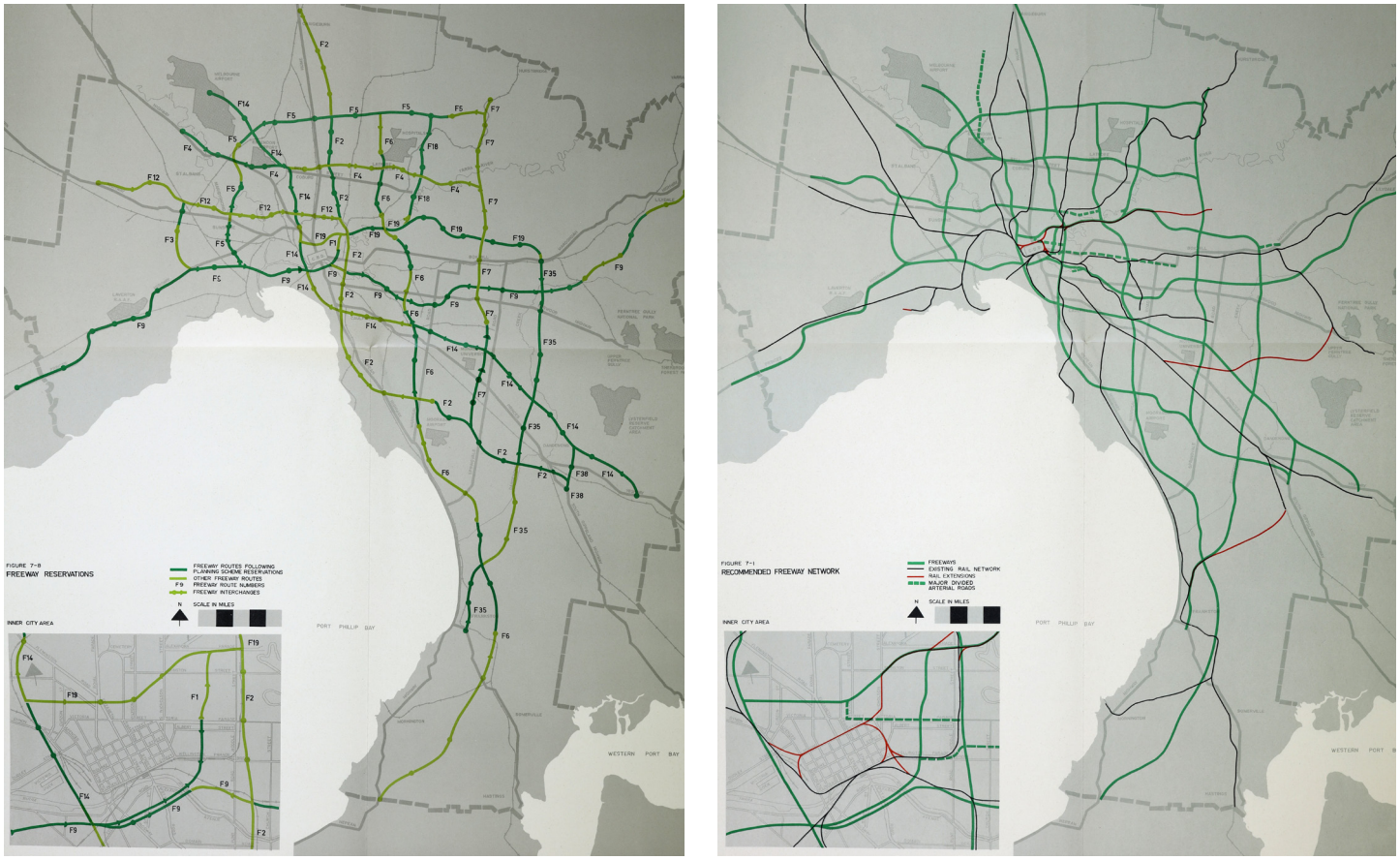


Figure 1: Maps 7-8 (left) and 7-1 (right) from the 1969 Melbourne *Transportation plan*. The red lines on the right-hand map indicate new railways: in addition to the Doncaster line, a Rowville line connected the Dandenong and Belgrave lines via Mulgrave, and a line connecting Dandenong and Frankston were also proposed. The only rail proposal that actually got built was the city loop.

The work was conducted by the firm Wilbur Smith & Associates from the USA, with the support of LT Frazer and Associates in Melbourne. Wilbur Smith was widely known to be a freeway advocate, and his firm's appointment clearly signalled a preference to find a freeway solution rather than a transport plan that gave due consideration to public transport options.[17] With the aid of computer analysis, the study extrapolated from data collected in the mid-1960s to model what would be needed from Melbourne's transport infrastructure by the year 1985.[18]

The draft freeway and railway networks that emerged from this research and analysis show an evolution that led to the proposals put forward in the 1969 plan. These documents are now held by Public Record Office Victoria (PROV). The freeway route numbers and the physical location of routes changed with each draft as analysts and engineers worked out what was considered to be an optimal coverage for the entire metropolitan area. These abstract lines on a map could be shifted at will and seemed to pay scant attention to the neighbourhoods they would impact; seemingly, the thinking was that, if the modelling and engineering deemed it was required, the impacted residents would simply have to accept the necessity for progress. The development of the published plans (described above) occurred through an iterative process using computer modelling:

> Seven possible plans were developed and tested before the final plan, now recommended, was evolved. Each of these plans took between 30 and 45 weeks' work for a full-time staff of 13, including six professional engineers and two economists. This time was taken up in planning network layouts, preparing computer input data, displaying and interpreting the computer output and evaluating performance characteristics of the networks. Actual computer operation took about ten hours per plan.
>
> The findings of the testing process were reported to the technical committee which in return reported their recommendations to the full committee which made the final decisions.[19]

Six of these seven plans are shown in Figure 2.

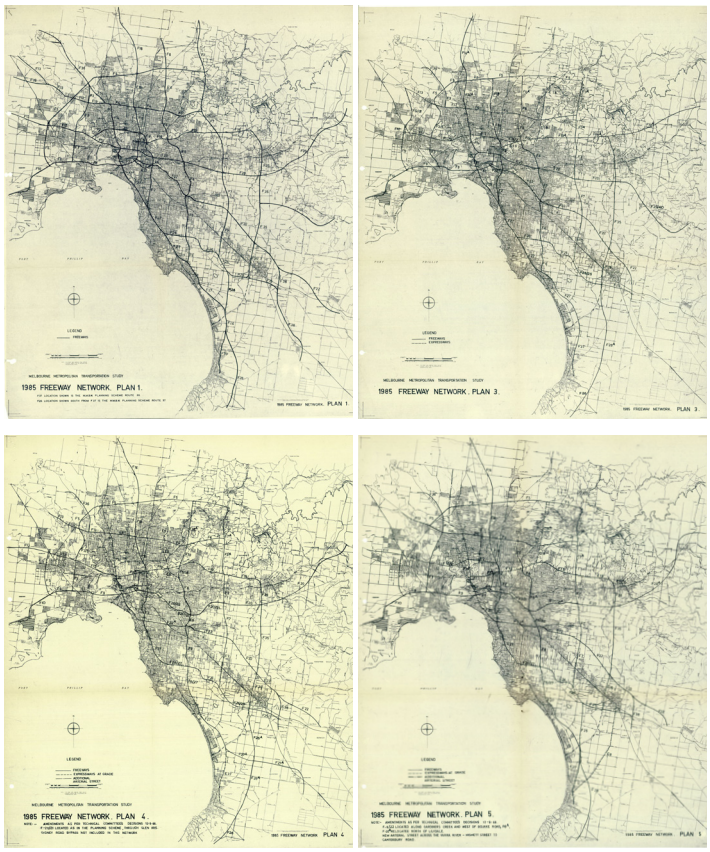
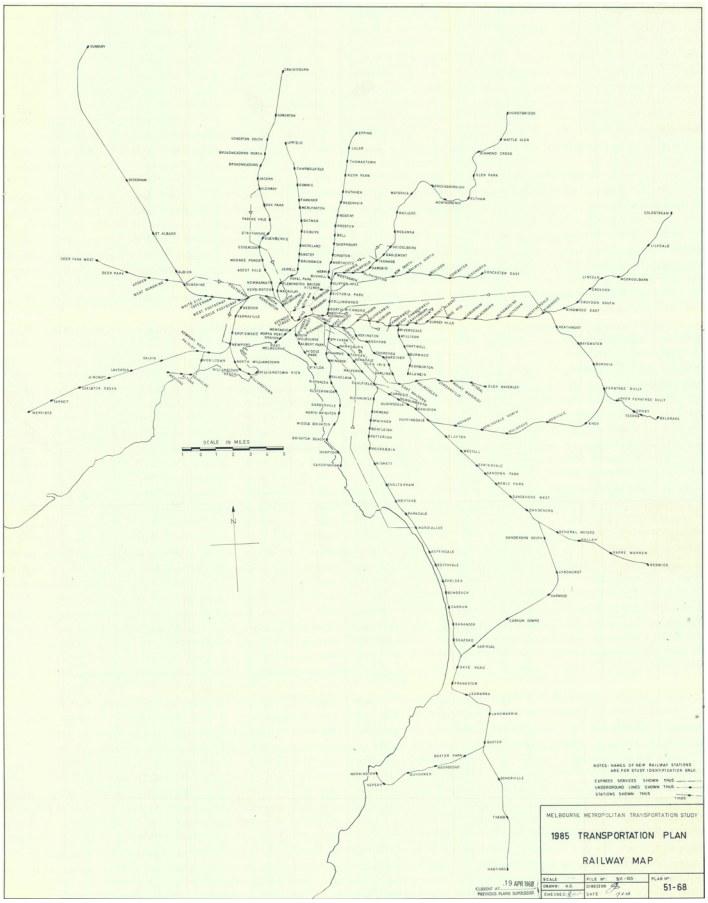


Figure 2: Lines on a map: the evolving freeway network. Starting from top right, plans 1, 3, 4, 5 and directly above plan 6. Compare these to Figure 1 (the published 1969 plan). PROV, VPRS 10090/P1, Unit 19, Melbourne Transportation Study. Click on the images to view details in enlarged versions.

In one of the draft railway plans, the underground loop extension for the Eastern Railway featured not only a station at Fitzroy but also one named Exhibition (named for its proximity to the Exhibition Building), and a station named King on the southern part of the loop (presumably above King's Way on a viaduct) (see the inset in Figure 3). These proposed stations were not included in the published 1969 plan.[20]

The underground loop was among the early projects to get underway, commencing shortly after the release of the 1969 plan. The Melbourne Underground Rail Loop Authority (MURLA) began operating on 1 January 1971, just a little over a year after the release of the 1969 plan. Shortly thereafter, as work commenced on planning the alignment of the actual tunnels, and as the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works (MMBW) began work on the Eastern Freeway, the idea of a tunnel directly from the loop through Fitzroy to the freeway (where it would run in a median strip to Doncaster) came under question.



Writing to Director of Transport GJ Meech in August 1972, MURLA Acting Chief Engineer GG Bennett sought clarification on whether planning work should continue to accommodate a future Fitzroy tunnel. The letter questioned the need for the tunnel, the extra costs and engineering considerations involved and sought direction as to whether its future connection to the loop should be considered in designing the main loop tunnels.[21] Though immediately raised with then Minister for Transport Vernon Wilcox in a memorandum dated 23 August 1972, a final decision was not made until 1975 by his successor ER Meagher who 'accepted the recommendation that the junction and associated works be deleted'.[22] This meant that the underground loop tunnels would be built in a way that would foreclose forever the possibility of the Fitzroy tunnel being added at some future date (the proposed alignment for the Fitzroy tunnel is shown in yellow in Figure 4). This proved to be a harbinger of what was to come for the Eastern Railway, which remains unbuilt despite the reservation created on the freeway to accommodate it, and numerous studies and promises to build it.[23] By the time the Fitzroy rail tunnel was formally abandoned, many of the freeway routes, particularly in the inner city, had already been 'deleted', not primarily because of financial costs or engineering difficulties, but because people did not want them in their neighbourhoods. As we shall see, abstract lines on a map had disruptive consequences for real communities that rejected the characterisation of their suburbs as slums requiring urban regeneration, and which saw themselves as already undergoing renewal and regeneration on their own terms.[24]

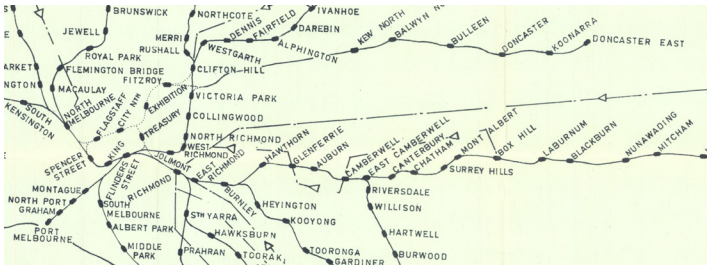


Figure 3: Draft railway network plan, 17 April 1968, from records of the Department of Transport documenting the evolution of the transport study, PROV, VPRS 10090/P1 Correspondence Files, Unit 18, File 394-F 1985 Transportation Plan – Rail services Melbourne and metropolitan transport study. The full plan (left) and a detail (right) showing the proposed new stations on the loop (King, Flagstaff, City Nth, Treasury) and the Eastern Railway (Exhibition, Fitzroy, Kew North through to Doncaster East). Also proposed was a Rowville line connecting the Dandenong and Belgrave lines, and a new line connecting Dandenong to Frankston. Only the loop was ever built.

City ring-road—the first freeway deletion

The first indication that the freeway plan would meet fierce community resistance followed an attempt to commence work on the eastern leg of an inner city ring-road. In what would be unimaginable today, a major freeway and extensive access ramps were proposed that would cut through some of Melbourne's most iconic parks (namely, Fitzroy Gardens, Yarra Park and the King's Domain) and bisect one of its inner suburbs, East Melbourne (see Figure 7 for a model to visualise the full extent).

The idea for an inner city ring-road in Melbourne was first officially proposed by the MMBW in the *Melbourne metropolitan planning scheme 1954* report. The road was intended to alleviate through traffic using the city centre to reach destinations beyond. In the initial proposal, the eastern leg of the road was to be partially underground in a trench along Spring Street in front of the Victorian Parliament, and would cross over the Jolimont Railyards and the Yarra River via a bridge to reach Alexandra Avenue. From there it would have tunnelled under King's Domain to connect up with Grant Street in South Melbourne.

The MMBW approved the road in 1963, but relocated it eastward to Clarendon Street in East Melbourne. A ramp alongside the southern end of the Fitzroy Gardens and Wellington Parade would have elevated the road to cross the Jolimont Railyards and the Yarra via a bridge (see Figure 6). The encroachment on parkland and amenities precipitated protest from local communities and sections of the media.[25] In defending their selection, the MMBW explained that Spring and Landsdowne streets had also been considered but, for a variety of reasons including costs, aesthetics, encroachment on parkland and engineering difficulties, the Clarendon Street alignment had been chosen as the best option.[26] By 1965, opposition to the road was enough for the Bolte government to let the project go into abeyance and request alternatives. However, in July 1967, the Victorian Government, acting on advice that this remained a high priority project, gave Cabinet approval to the ring-road and three other major road projects advanced by the MMBW.[27] Despite community unease, the road was also included as a priority project in the Melbourne Transportation Committee's 1969 transportation report (see Figure 1, F1 route in map 7-8). As Dingle and Rasmussen have explained, the network of inner city freeways depicted as 'lines on the map were on too small a scale for detailed appreciation of their impact'.[28]

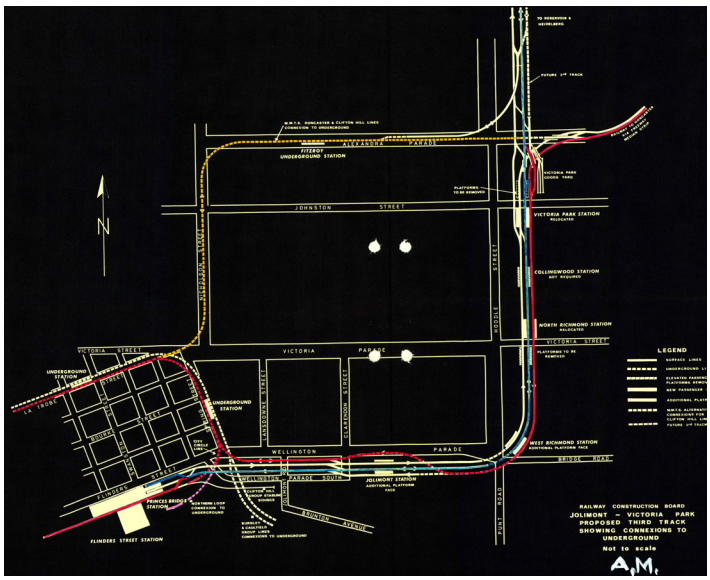


Figure 4: The first part of the Eastern Railway that was formally dropped: the tunnel connecting it to the underground loop beneath La Trobe Street in the city to the Eastern Freeway (dotted yellow line), PROV, VPRS 6347/ P4 General Correspondence Files, Annual Single Number, Unit 125, File 76/236.

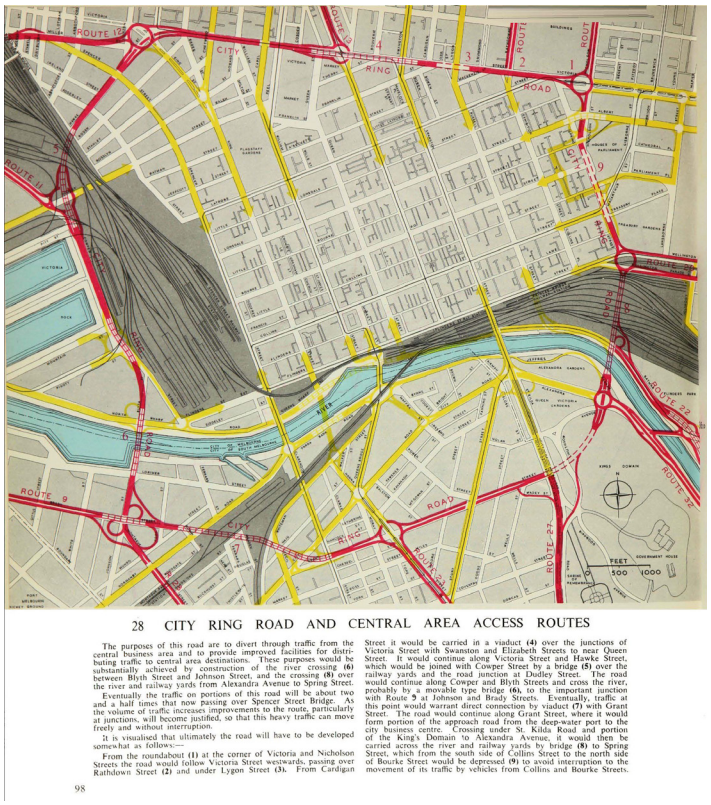


Figure 5: MMBW, 'City ring road and central area access routes', *Melbourne metropolitan planning scheme 1954 report*, p. 98. This was the first time a city ring-road was mooted as a solution to CBD traffic congestion. In this version, the eastern leg of the road would have been in a cut and cover trench along Spring Street in front of the Victorian Parliament and a proposed Civic Centre that would have been built opposite it.

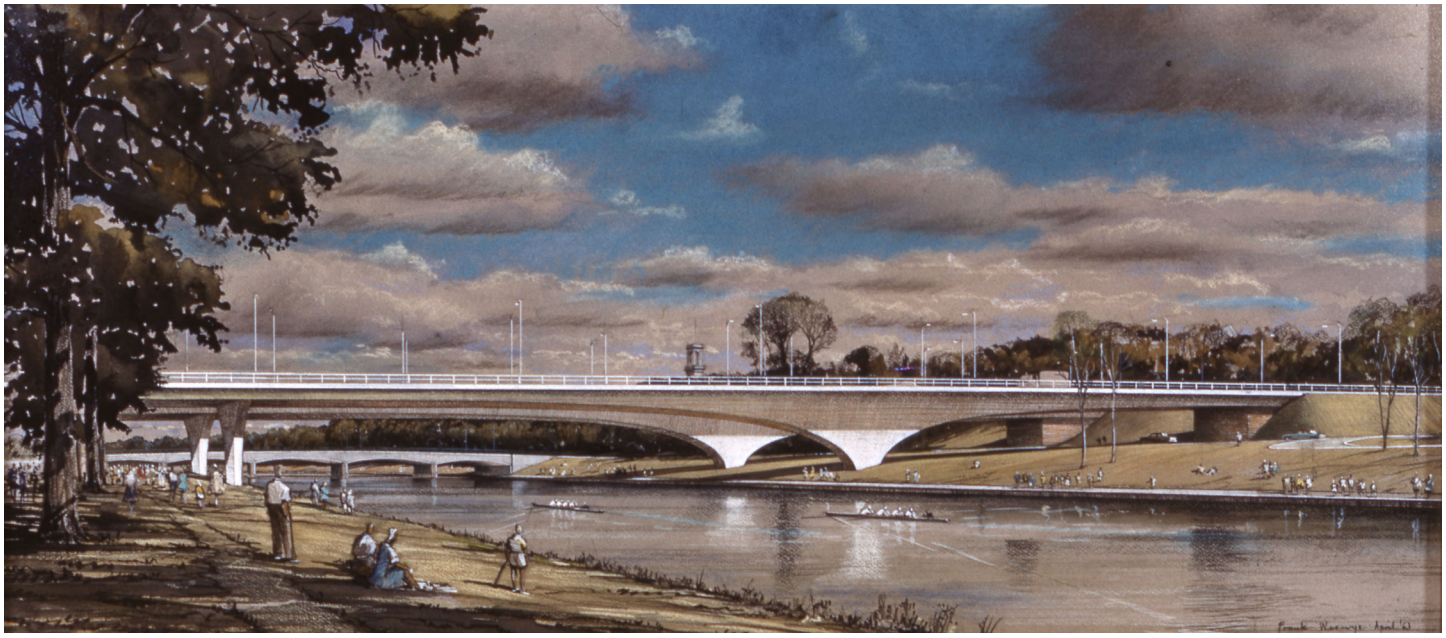


Figure 6: Detail of a photographic slide taken of a framed artist impression of the Yarra bridge for the eastern ring-road, which roughly coincides with the location of the current underground CityLink tunnels. This view of the bridge's elegant span is from the Jolimont side looking eastward, the Swan Street bridge can be seen in the background, PROV, VPRS 8609/P37, Unit 60, F MISC.

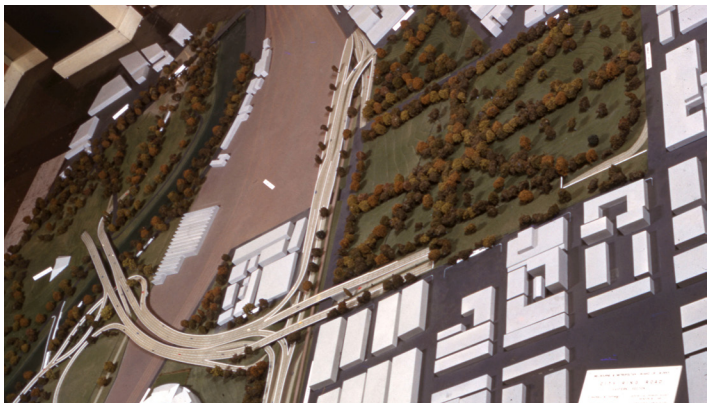


Figure 7: Detail of a photographic slide featuring a model of the eastern ring-road, showing its proximity to parklands, the Myer Music Bowl (see on the left), the MCG, and a variety of associated approach roads and ramps along Wellington Parade and the area now occupied by the tennis centre, PROV, VPRS 8609/P37, Unit 60, F MISC.

Among the MMBW records held by PROV are scrapbooks containing newspaper clippings in VPRS 8609 Historical Records Collection. There is an entire scrapbook devoted to newspaper clippings about the city ring-road, indicating officers of the agency were closely following the public reporting on a project that the agency was strongly advocating. The reports were largely taken from the *Sun* and *Herald* newspapers between 1969 and 1971 and provide a rolling narrative of the saga behind the construction of the city ring-road. The East Melbourne Group, a community organisation opposing the road, the Urban Action Committee (composed of numerous councils whose suburbs would be affected by the road) and the Town and Country Planning Association emerged as the main antagonists, highlighting impacts on communities and loss of parklands. A refusal to explore alternatives after the issue first came to a head in 1965, such as putting the road under Clarendon Street, emerged as areas of contention. As opposition to the road grew, public statements from Minister for Local Government Rupert Hamer and Premier Henry Bolte indicated that they too were starting to doubt the necessity for the road.[29]

The eastern leg of the city ring-road was the first piece of the visionary 1969 plan to be officially renounced by the government. Concerted community and media scrutiny led Cabinet to drop the road in October 1971 after the MMBW was unable to provide viable alternative options. The MMBW had 'full contract drawings and was ready to call tenders', but the plans were defeated by a revaluation of the inner city's existing urban fabric, showing that:

> Melburnians in the 1970s had a different set of values from the 1950s and different expectations of planning. Planners increasingly needed to combine their technical expertise with a consideration of intangible, unquantifiable values such as aesthetics, sense of community and attachment if their plans were to be implemented.[30]

The eastern leg of the inner ring-road was formally scrapped on 4 October 1971 with the Victorian Government announcing that it would be looking towards public transport options to ease traffic congestion in the inner city. In addition, the government stated it would order the Melbourne Transportation Committee to review the 1969 plan and would consider modifying it 'to reduce costs and disruption of community life'.[31]

Community opposition to the F2

As we have seen, the inner city ring-road was the first casualty of the ambitious freeway plan to be abandoned. The reason for this was community opposition to the impact it would have had on an inner suburb (East Melbourne) and adjoining parklands. Meanwhile, one of the very few railway proposals (an underground tunnel under Fitzroy) had been formally abandoned, placing in doubt the Eastern Railway because it was meant to service the increased peak hour traffic from that new line. This was done primarily because of cost and engineering difficulties, and indicated that, when it came to public transport, the government had little appetite to fund anything but the bare minimum compared to the vast sums involved in constructing the proposed freeway grid.

The community backlash that commenced with the inner ring-road proposal soon spread to other suburbs facing disruption by freeway building. Among the many records held by PROV that relate to the F2 freeway and freeways in general are three large Ministry of Transport correspondence files. Each of them contains hundreds of letters and associated documents (for example, reports, plans and newspaper cuttings) on the F2 freeway proposal. These files provide detailed evidence for how disruptive this freeway would have been, not only disturbing the Merri Creek valley as a place for recreation and enjoyment of open space, but also impinging on numerous facilities and community structures along its path, including the Merri Creek Primary School (see Figure 8). They also document the concern of residents south of Merri Creek in Fitzroy, Clifton Hill, Carlton and Collingwood that would have had the F2 and other freeways bisecting their residential areas. The files show how public servants and their respective ministers considered the project's impacts on stakeholders, particularly local residents and communities, and local government bodies. Some of the documents reveal the sensitivity of ministers and public servants as to how announcements about the project would be perceived, and how they attempted to manage these outcomes.

Between 1971 and 1979 many letters were written to ministers for transport and local government from members of the general public, protest and local community groups, local councils, members of parliament and a range of other interested parties in relation to the F2 freeway. Many express one or several recurring concerns: the diminishment of local amenities if freeways and arterial road upgrades were to be built; the increase in traffic a major route would induce in the surrounding suburbs; and uncertainty about private property, namely whether homes would be compulsorily acquired and whether there would be a negative impact on property values adjacent to those acquired for demolition.

The correspondence demonstrates the constant pressure that can be exerted on a government by the simple act of letter writing and relentlessly asking informed and pointed questions. It also reveals tensions between the politicians heading various ministries, the various ministers for transport, local government and planning, and the senior officials running the Country Roads Board (CRB) and the MMBW, whose agencies were empowered to set their own independent agendas. With the F2 being effectively an extension of a state highway (the Hume), the CRB was undertaking the project and the correspondence sometimes reveals a reticence to acknowledge and respond to the political expediencies that were paramount for an elected government.[32] The CRB continued to see the route as essential. As one of two major north–south freeway routes, the F2 was considered a crucial piece of the overall network's design. The central part of the route would have cut through long-established industrial and residential neighbourhoods, areas that planning authorities had long thought required urban renewal and could, therefore, be amenable to freeway incursions without considering the consequences for those concerned. This was a miscalculation that misunderstood the renewal that was already underway through the influx of migrants and, more recently, the arrival of young professionals and others with a willingness to organise and resist.[33]

The original idea for the F2 was for a cross-city freeway (effectively from Cragieburn to Dandenong through the middle of the city); however, local community opposition emerged most strongly in the northern suburbs, no doubt because the February 1971 press release from Rupert Hamer (then minister for local government) announced that work would begin with an investigation of the route along Merri Creek from Bell Street to Clifton Hill, where land had already been reserved for an arterial road in the existing metropolitan planning scheme.[34] The proposed route would have snaked its way along the creek from the north where the road would connect with the Hume Highway in Craigieburn, until it reached Clifton Hill, at

which point it was to somehow intersect with the Eastern Freeway or Alexandra Parade. Merri Creek was the border between several suburbs and municipalities and numerous community facilities had been established on its banks, in particular, a number of parks and recreation reserves, a velodrome, government schools and retirement villages. In addition, parts of residential areas near the creek along what emerged as the CRB's preferred route would have to be demolished or would become 'islands' between the freeway and the creek. For these reasons, a sociological study of the likely effects on residents was commissioned.[35]

The existing planning scheme provision for a road along the creek was considered to be too narrow and curvy for a modern freeway and, consequently, incursions into surrounding residential areas and other facilities became a likelihood if the CRB's preferred route was adopted. Among the first properties identified as requiring acquisition by the investigation were 40 new residential flats under construction in Ida Street, Fitzroy North.[36] The need to cease construction of the flats, compensation for the developers and purchase of the land was reported in the *Age* on 22 February 1972.[37] The flats are shown on a plan indicating residential areas, infrastructure, facilities and existing structures that would be impacted by the proposed route (see Figure 8). The minister for local government was provided with briefing notes on the freeway proposal, which stated that the CRB 'would have no objection to the Minister showing this plan to the T.V. cameras but requests that it not be made available to the press until the plan has been forwarded to councils and other authorities concerned'. Interestingly, handwritten annotations by Chairman of the CRB REV Donaldson added the observation that 'it could be wiser NOT to show the plan even to the TV cameras'.[38]

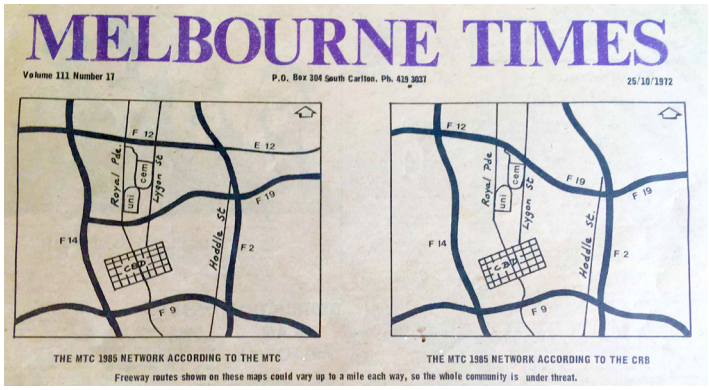
Anticipating that traffic from the freeway would have flowed into and out of (via on/off ramps) main roads on either side, concerns were raised by Preston, Coburg, Northcote, Brunswick, Clifton Hill, Fitzroy, Collingwood and Melbourne councils. From the outset, these councils, which formed the F2 Regional Municipal Committee, felt that they were not being properly consulted by the CRB and that the agency was not responding to their requests for information.[39] Media reports appeared indicating decisions were being made without community consultation. The correspondence received by the minister for transport shows that, in March and April 1972, councils were not the only parties seeking further information and assurances, or expressing a wish to be consulted. For instance, the Pensioner's Association of Victoria requested assurances that the Marjorie Nunan Memorial Homes in Brunswick East would not be affected by the road; Chairman of the East Brunswick Freeway Protest Association ML Ayles sought a meeting to discuss worrying claims appearing in newspapers; Member for Brunswick East David Bornstein requested an opportunity to meet with senior officers of CRB to become fully informed; and Member of the Legislative Assembly for Northcote Frank Wilkes wanted information, as the road affected his electorate.[40]

Figure 8: Country Roads Board, locality plan for freeway F2 Coburg to Clifton Hill, dated February 1972, showing the existing road reservation as a yellow strip, the board's preferred route as a red line, and the various community, residential and infrastructure sites affected by the preferred route in various shadings with a corresponding list, PROV, VPRS 6347/P4, Unit 42, File 75/138 part 1.

The correspondence also shows community organisations started to organise and meet to garner opposition to the project. For instance, the East Brunswick Progress Association wrote to Local Government Minister Alan Hunt to express their opposition to the F2 freeway; report that, at their April 1972 meeting, 'some 90 members and residents living adjacent to the proposed Hume F2 Freeway [recorded their] total opposition to this plan to further decimate our city with yet another freeway' (a reference to the Tullamarine Freeway on Brunswick's west boundary); and stress the need for better public transport instead.[41]

Under the leadership of newly appointed Premier Rupert Hamer, the Victorian Government's position on freeway construction continued to soften. By the end of 1972, it had publicly acknowledged the need to avoid disrupting established inner urban residential areas and communities.[42] This intention, however, was difficult to square with the CRB's continuing push to seek alternative freeway routes through inner suburbs. In October, the *Melbourne Times* published a map showing how the CRB was proposing to accommodate not only the F2 but also an extension of the Eastern Freeway through Carlton North (Figures 9 and 10).[43]

The Carlton Association (CA) was one of the most vocal and well-organised groups that opposed not just the F2 freeway, but also questioned the imposition of freeways on the inner urban fabric without due consultation and proper coordination. The association benefited from the young, educated professionals that made up its membership, and proved to be influential and effective in shaping a range of inner city urban policies apart from freeway issues, including 'slum clearances' for high-rise flat development proposed by the Housing Commission of Victoria (HCV), local traffic management and other local planning issues.


MELBOURNE TIMES

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THE MTC 1985 NETWORK ACCORDING TO THE MTC

THE MTC 1985 NETWORK ACCORDING TO THE CRB

Freeway routes shown on these maps could vary up to a mile each way, so the whole community is under threat.

Figure 9: Report on the CRB's plan for an extension of the Eastern Freeway (F19) through Carlton North, 'CRB stakes its claim to North Carlton', *Melbourne Times*, 25 October 1972, p. 1.

The members of the CA were part of the demographic transformation that swept through Melbourne's inner north in the 1960s and 1970s, their presence coinciding with the decline in manufacturing and working-class jobs in those areas.[44] Many newcomers were attracted by the affordable and conveniently located housing close to places of work or study, the nineteenth-century urban fabric of the inner city and the cosmopolitan conviviality of the new European immigrant communities that were already established in those places. Their activism drew inspiration from influential overseas thinkers, such as Jane Jacobs who had participated in, and written about, organised community resistance against similar threats in lower Manhattan.[45] Howe, Nichols and Davison have described the demographic groupings (often overlapping or merging) in inner Melbourne as consisting of 'patricians', 'trendies' and 'radicals'.[46] Together they formed a broad and diverse inner city coalition of activism that sought to defend their neighbourhoods from 'bureaucratic silos, unresponsive to democratic influences ... predominantly staffed by men with a technical background, many of them returned servicemen'. Howe, Nichols and Davison characterise the clash as being:

> Grounded in the cultural divide between old-fashioned, hard-nosed technocrats and a younger generation of university-educated professionals attuned to ideals of personal self-discovery and democratic decision-making. The inner suburbs became their battlefield ... neither the HCV nor CRB had adequate capacity for economic and social impact planning.[47]

The CA, and allied groups, effectively provided the environmental and social impact assessments, and often were able to produce cogent and informed alternative planning proposals drawing on the relevant expertise of the many academics in their memberships. As it turned out, they often found it far easier to engage with ministers and the premier than with the men of the planning authorities.[48]

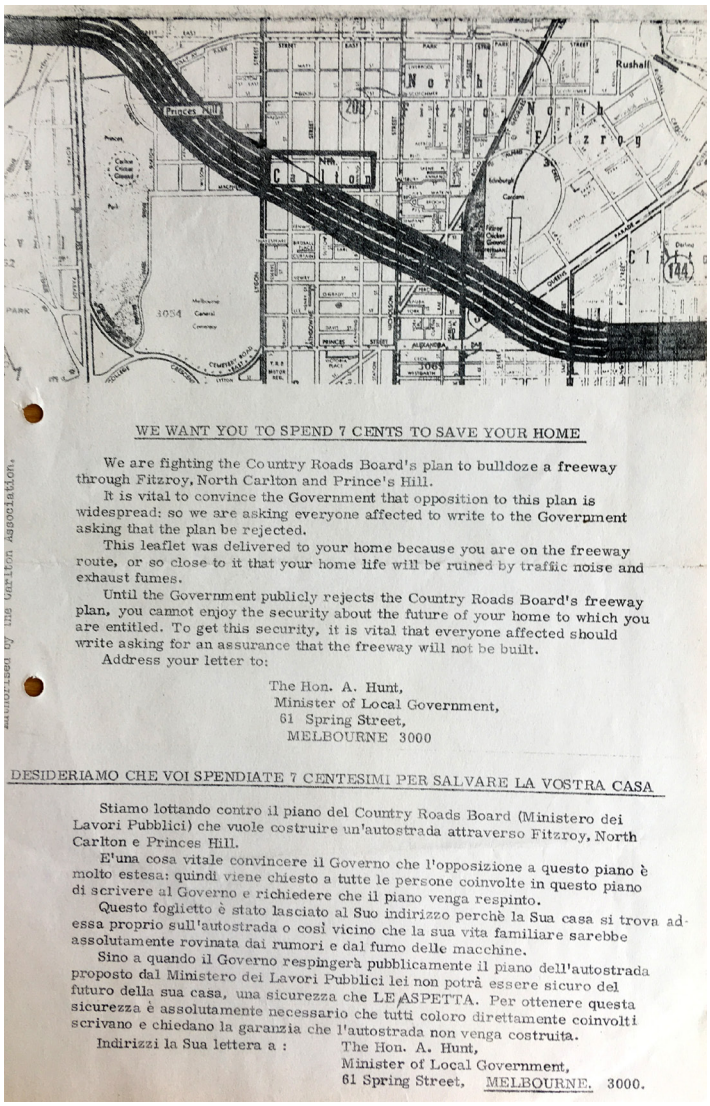
The CA included specific action groups formed for particular purposes. A Freeway Action Group was formed on 23 December 1971 convened by John Anderson. The aims of the group were to halt freeway construction in the inner suburbs until all viable alternatives were explored by the relevant authorities and the public was given an opportunity to debate these, to liaise with relevant authorities involved in freeway planning and construction, and to forge links with other community groups taking similar action to share information. A newsletter produced by the group in February 1972 stated that block organisers were 'being appointed to deal with distribution of leaflets,

petitioning, door-knock appeals etc', and called for more volunteers to undertake these tasks. The newsletter also reported that consultations were being planned with the MMBW, CRB, Metropolitan Transportation Committee and planning consultants.[49]

A dramatic flyer to encourage letter writing shows the proposed freeway slashing through Carlton North with information translated into Italian.[50] The CA was cognisant of the large Greek and Italian communities living and working in the area and sought to inform and mobilise them as part of letter-writing and other campaigns by appointing liaisons with native language skills and printing translations of relevant information (Figure 10). One such volunteer, Aurora Calogero (who was among the members present at the group's inaugural meeting), reported on her engagements with Italians running businesses in the Carlton area.[51]

In its March 1973 report, Freeway crisis, which was also endorsed by the executive of the Fitzroy Residents' Association, the CA Freeway Action Group highlighted the inequity associated with the social costs of freeway building, arguing that:

> The social cost component has received inadequate consideration to date. Typically, those likely to benefit most from a new freeway are the already affluent, who own one or more cars and make full use of them; the freeway serves these people at the expense of the few (frequently the underprivileged) who have to bear the social cost component.[52]



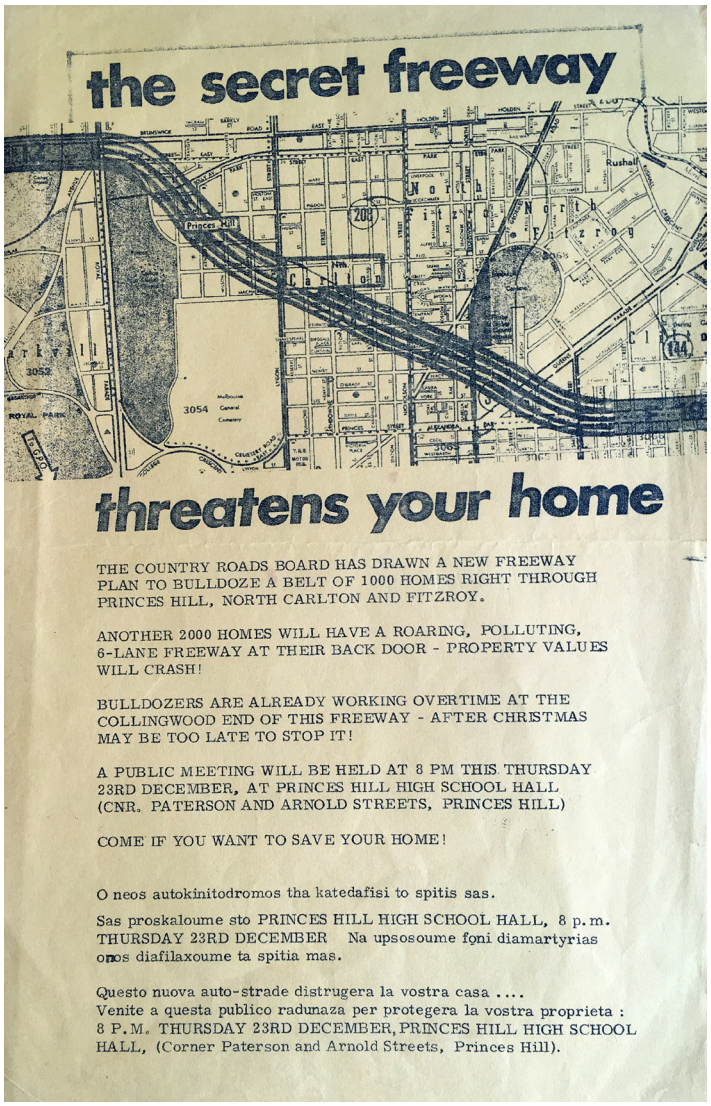
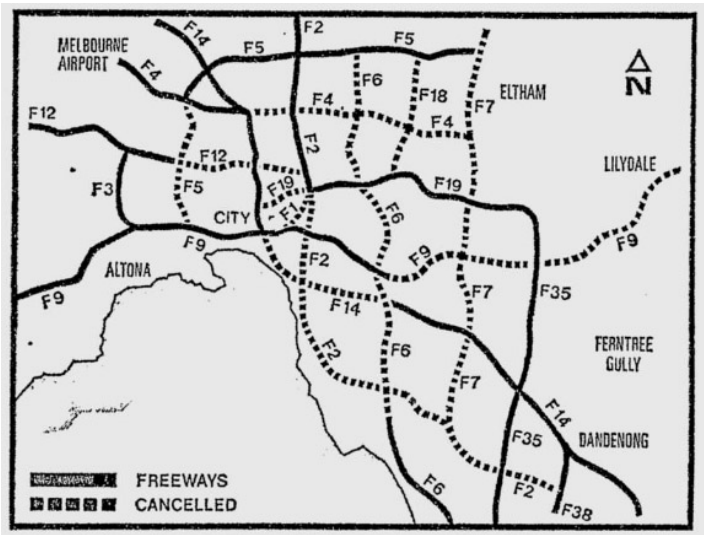


Figure 10: Carlton Association leaflets with Italian and Greek translations, depicting the extension of the Eastern Freeway through Fitzroy North and Carlton North to Brunswick South, University of Melbourne Archives, Carlton Association Collection, 1984.0092, Unit 5, files 4/5/4 and 4/5/5.

A deputation from the association met with Minister for Local Government AJ Hunt on 3 February 1972 and received his assurance that the stated Victorian Government policy on freeway planning would oblige the freeway building authorities to accept 'the need for priority to be given to environmental and social factors above cost and engineering factors'.[53] However, the report observed that there was little evidence that this policy was being followed by either the MMBW or CRB. Among the other points raised in the report was the lack of coordination between the two freeway building authorities on matters such as the junction of the Eastern Freeway terminus in Collingwood (then under construction by the MMBW) and the proposed F2 (under planning by the CRB). The report also drew attention to the CRB's 'secret plan' for an extension to the Eastern Freeway that would cut diagonally across Fitzroy North and Carlton to Brunswick South.[54]

The association had links with a number of other local protest and community groups in Melbourne's inner north. Among these were umbrella groups such as the United



The sections of freeways cancelled, see map, are:

F 1. Eastern leg of inner city ringroad.

F 2. South of Eastern freeway through Collingwood, Richmond, Prahran, St. Kilda and Brighton to Moorabbin.

F 4. (Bell Freeway) From Tullamarine Freeway easterly.

F 5. From F 4 (Calder Freeway) south to F 9 (Lower Yarra Freeway).

F 6. North of South Road, Moorabbin.

F 7. Cancelled throughout.

F 9. (South Eastern Freeway) From Glen Iris easterly to East Burwood.

F 12. Easterly from Sunshine.

F 14. (Mulgrave Freeway) From Lower Yarra Freeway to Warrigal Road, Chadstone.

F 18. From Watsonia South to Burke Road Bridge.

F 19. (Eastern Freeway) From North Melbourne to Collingwood.

Figure 11: Detail from news article reporting the Victorian Government's announcement of the cancellation of half of the freeway network proposed in the 1969 plan, *Age*, 29 March 1973, p. 3. However, the diagram shows the F2 survives from the Eastern Freeway northwards.

Melbourne Freeway Action Group with more than 20 representatives from various community groups and individuals, primarily from the inner northern, eastern and southern suburbs. Consequently, the CA's records allow us to glimpse not only their side of the anti-freeway fight, but also that of other community organisations with which they collaborated.

Responding to community concerns and fear of electoral backlash

On 28 March 1973, with a state election looming, the Victorian Government announced that it would effectively halve the number of freeways planned for the Melbourne metropolitan area. Those in outer suburbs and country areas would be built, but the premier cited 'sociological and environmental impact' as reason to abandon the inner city proposals. Many of the inner city components of the plan were indeed deleted from future plans; however, the F2 from the Eastern Freeway to Craigieburn had survived for the time being (as shown on the map in Figure 11 below). The premier observed that the deletions would curtail the 'freedom of movement' originally envisaged by the freeway grid and that alternatives, such as tunnels and airspace over railways, might still be investigated to allow traffic to bypass the central area.[55] As an Age editorial opined on 30 March 1973, 'when a network of freeways is superimposed on an old-established and fully developed city, the disruption and damage to residential neighborhoods, to parks and gardens, to the whole environment and the community structure may far outweigh the benefits of easier transportation'.[56]

From this point forward, the Victorian Government and the Ministry of Transport were increasingly at odds with the CRB in regard to road-building priorities and philosophies.[57] Documents relating to the review of the transport plan from the Ministry of Transport reveal a greater sensitivity to the financial costs of the proposed network and the political consequences of imposing freeways on inner urban communities. One document commenting on the CRB's plans states emphatically that the:

> F2 south of Bell Street has a massive environmental and economic impact and cannot be justified. The benefits to road users would be insufficient to outweigh the monetary cost alone. Without this section of F2, the section north of Bell Street does not appear viable as a major freeway. This is because it unnecessarily duplicates an existing good highway and will create a significant problem at the freeway terminal (Note: the total cost of F2 is about $180 million!).[58]

These planning review documents demonstrate the CRB's ongoing eagerness to build not only the F2 freeway but also many others first proposed in the 1969 plan. Referring to its statement dated April 1976, which acknowledged that 'investigations south of Bell Street have been deferred for the time being',[59] the CRB asserted that the 'urgently needed' road required a seven- to 10-year lead time (once an acceptable proposal was found, and the planning scheme amended).[60] The ministry, as part of its reassessment and 'updating' of the 1969 transport plan, critiqued the CRB's plans, stating that it had based its 'work on not providing for an ever increasing use of cars but rather on the attraction to public transport of as many trips as possible particularly those along dense corridors'.[61] Instead, the ministry proposed a number of smaller, less expensive, short-term projects to alleviate current problems rather than implementing a visionary but costly plan for meeting future demands.

The CRB seemed determined to maintain the plan for the F2 and F12 (an arterial road west from Hoddle Street along a Park Street alignment in Brunswick South), and the ministry was concerned about public perceptions of a lack of amendments to the plan since 1973. As the alignments were 'labelled investigation areas in the Country Roads Board plan', the concern was that:

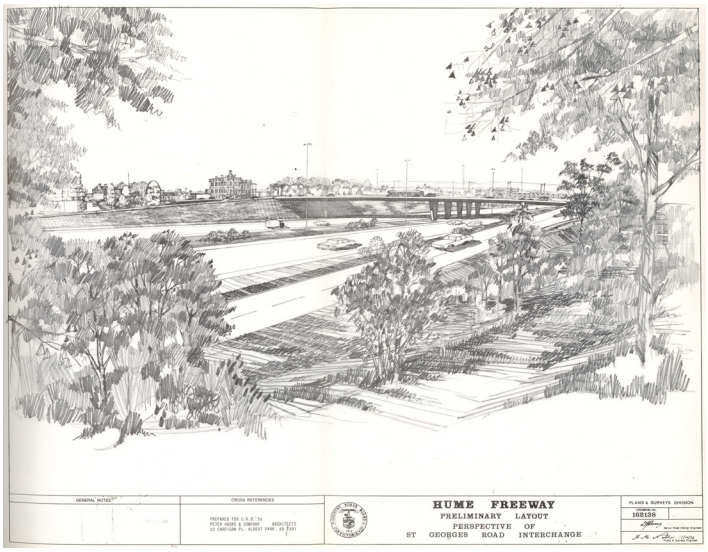
> The Government will be subject to criticism if these areas of the plan are published and still indicate that they are areas to be investigated ... some considerable progress should have been made to resolve these issues ... it is possible to have other solutions which will no doubt be not as efficient as far as traffic movement goes, but will be less expensive and less environmentally destructive.[62]

Nonetheless, the CRB continued its F2 'investigations' in spite of government doubts and community opposition, and acquired properties along the proposed F2 route (which it had been doing so since 1971) in Fitzroy and elsewhere, and generally going about its business in preparing for the road's eventual construction.[63] As the Victorian Government slowly withdrew from this particular freeway solution, the CRB's continued exploration of arterial road options for the inner north was reported in the media, creating the perception that the CRB seemed impervious to community concerns, was secretive and sneaky, and was largely pursuing its own agenda. G Houghton, a resident of Park Street Brunswick, writing to Minister Rafferty expressed concern about the F2–F19 termini being connected to the Tullamarine via Park Street. In concluding, he observed that the standard 'reply that the CRB has no "no plans" (meaning blueprints) for a road in the area is quite unsatisfactory', and drew attention to what he saw as deliberate obfuscation:

> It is universally recognised, but ignored by the CRB and the previous Minister, that the process of 'planning' involves a great deal of preparation for the task of preparing blueprints. We seek an assurance that the process of planning will be discontinued.[64]

A letter from John Larkins of 504 Park Street, Brunswick, dated 13 May 1976, to the CRB chairman asked pointed questions about whether investigations had been conducted into turning Park Street into a main road and whether this had been required under the *Country Roads Act 1958*. Larkins stated:

> I would myself have thought that the Board would have by this time appreciated that the construction of freeways leading into the central section of Melbourne is futile, and will do nothing to overcome problems associated with the use of motor vehicles. Overseas experience, as well as our own, must be well-known by the Board and, one might have hoped, demonstrated that the direct and indirect cost of freeway construction in inner areas was simply not justified.
>
> Whilst one is prepared to accept assurances from the members of the Government that it is opposed to further freeway construction, it is, to say the least, alarming, to hear relatively senior officers of your Board boasting with pride of the ravages they, or the Board, are about to commit in the future. I dare say that such comments are made without the authority of the Board, but it can readily be understood that such reports do nothing to allay doubts about the intentions of the Board.[65]



(Left): Figure 12: CRB Plans and Survey Division, Hume Freeway preliminary layout perspective of St Georges Road interchange, 1 October 1973, prepared by Peter Hooks and Company Architects, PROV, VPRS 242/P, Unit 1032, File C101174, Proposed Hume Freeway Bell Street to St Georges Road – reservation file. Merri Creek Primary School is replaced by an on ramp from St Georges Road in the foreground, with the Albion Charles Hotel still standing at the corner of Charles Street and St Georges Road on the horizon left of centre. The creek bed is no longer visible, presumably buried in a drain under the road. A tram is visible crossing on the bridge carrying St Georges Road across the freeway.

Deleting the F2

From October 1977 until June 1979, many of the letters received by the Ministry of Transport about the F2 proposal asked pointed questions about the properties acquired by the CRB and when they would either be sold back to the original owners or placed on the market, as confirmation that the route was no longer being considered. By 1978 the CRB had acquired 75 residential and commercial properties on the route between Bell Street and St Georges Road.[66] There were also questions being asked about whether the route reservation had actually been deleted from planning documents. Both sets of questions were met with responses that stated updates to planning documents had not yet been prioritised, but eventually the MMBW advised that it still wanted to keep the road reservation because it thought it would still be needed. For its part, the CRB supported the MMBW's recommendation as the relevant planning authority.[67] Despite this last-minute bid to seek a reprieve for some kind of arterial through the Merri valley, the place remains undisturbed and has subsequently been restored to better health by vibrant community and volunteer efforts.

This attempt by the MMBW to keep an arterial route a live possibility revealed the ongoing consensus for road building in the planning bureaucracies. The intransigence of the CRB in the face of government concern at community disquiet and the potential for voter backlash were other such indicators. This has remained largely unchallenged despite a number of progressive Labor governments presenting policy priorities for advancing public transport. Ultimately, each successive government in Victoria has favoured roads construction regardless of stated policy intentions that have been taken to elections and dwindling community support for roads construction and growing support for public transport options.[68]

Figure 13: 'Save Carlton Stop the CRB' badges, University of Melbourne Archives, Carlton Association Collection, 1984.0092, Unit 13, File 14/6.

Clearly, in the early 1970s, there was a lack of community support for freeways on the grounds that they would diminish local amenity in inner urban suburbs. Concerned residents were willing and able to organise and coordinate across Melbourne to make the government and its agencies more responsive to environmental and community concerns, and to hold them to account for their decisions. The correspondence of the Ministry of Transport and the CA demonstrate the impact that a concerted community letter-writing campaign could have on decision-making processes and accountability. In conjunction with broader community organising and action, the letters from members of the public, community organisations and local councils contributed to the tensions that emerged between government and its road-building agencies. The anti-freeway campaign succeeded in saving most of the inner northern suburbs from bearing the burden of freeways through residential areas. This was part of a number of changes to policies affecting inner suburbs in Melbourne, and was just one of the signs of a dramatic demographic and political shift in Melbourne's inner suburbs.

However, the roads policy network and the consensus on roads as a primary solution to mobility survived largely intact. Public transport initiatives were negligible for the next 40 years, especially compared to ongoing freeway and arterial road expansions. Successive governments and the planning bureaucracy learnt their lesson and never again unveiled the true extent of their intentions for road construction in such an unguarded way. Instead, 'progress' was made piecemeal, one project at a time, and always presented as a necessity to ease congestion. Tackling demand has never been raised as a serious political possibility. Much of the 1969 plan has now been built in one way or another. Most recently, the East-West Link would have created the link between the Eastern and Tullamarine freeways first envisaged in the 1969 plan and, though abandoned after a change of government, freeway expansion continues to the present, albeit with some major public transport improvements that have been a long time coming, such as level crossing removals and the Metro Tunnel.

Endnotes

[1] Graeme Davison with Sheryl Yelland, *Car wars: how the car won our hearts and conquered our cities*, Allen & Unwin, Crows Nest, NSW, 2004; Graeme Davison, *City dreamers: the urban imagination in Australia*, New South, Sydney, 2016.

[2] Seamus O'Hanlon with Tony Dingle, *Melbourne remade: the inner city since the 70s*, Arcade, Melbourne, 2010; Seamus O'Hanlon, *City life: the new urban Australia*, NewSouth, Sydney, 2018.

[3] Tony Dingle and Carolyn Rasmussen, *Vital connections: Melbourne and its board of works 1891–1991*, McPhee Gribble (Penguin Books Australia), Ringwood, Vic., 1991.

[4] Max Lay, *Melbourne miles: the story of Melbourne's roads*, Australian Scholarly Publishing, Melbourne, 2003.

[5] Renate Howe, David Nichols and Graeme Davison, *Trendyville: the battle for Australia's inner cities*, Monash University Publishing, Melbourne, 2014; Renate Howe and David Nichols, 'A new relationship between planning and democracy? Urban activism in Melbourne 1965–1975', in *Planning models and the culture of cities: Proceedings of the 11th International Planning History Conference 2004*, Universitat Politecnica de Catalunya, Catalunya, Spain, 2004, pp. 1–11; Renate Howe, 'The spirit of Melbourne: 1960s urban activism in inner-city Melbourne', in Seamus O'Hanlon and Tanja Luckins (eds), *Go! Melbourne: Melbourne in the sixties*, Circa, Beaconsfield, Victoria, 2005, pp. 218–230; Renate Howe, 'New residents—new city: the role of urban activists in the transformation of inner city Melbourne', *Urban Policy and Research*, vol. 27, no. 3, 2009, pp. 243–251.

[6] Michael Buxton, Robin Goodman and Susie Moloney, *Planning Melbourne: lessons for a sustainable city*, CSIRO Publishing, Clayton South, Vic., 2016.

[7] John Stone, 'Contrasts in reform: how the Cain and Burke years shaped public transport in Melbourne and Perth', *Urban Policy and Research*, vol. 27, no. 4, 2009, pp. 419–434, available at <https://researchbank.swinburne.edu.au/file/a5e2a928-3594-492e-a21f-608574f69378/1/PDF%20(Accepted%20manuscript).pdf>, accessed 15 August 2020; John Stone, 'Continuity and change in urban transport policy: politics, institutions and actors in Melbourne and Vancouver since 1970', *Planning Practice and Research*, vol. 29, no. 4, 2014, pp. 388–404, available at <https://researchbank.swinburne.edu.au/file/04e7dba1-e4d5-4de3-85ef-fb140be9c6d6/1/PDF%20(Submitted%20version).pdf>, accessed 15 August 2020.

[8] Geoff Rundell, 'Melbourne anti-freeway protests', *Urban Policy and Research*, vol. 3, no. 4, 1985, pp. 11–21.

[9] Crystal Legacy, Carey Curtis and Jan Scheurer, 'Planning transport infrastructure: examining the politics of transport planning in Melbourne, Sydney and Perth', *Urban Policy and Research*, vol. 35, no. 1, 2017, pp. 44–60.

[10] 'Cabinet to decide traffic plan', *Age*, 18 December 1969, p. 1; 'Prescription to relieve congestion', *Age*, 18 December 1969, p. 9.

[11] Victorian Auditor-General's Office, *Managing traffic congestion* (report tabled 17 April 2013, PP No 221, Session 2010–13), Victorian Government Printer, Melbourne, 2013, p. viii, available at <https://www.audit.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/20130417_Managing_Traffic_Congestion.pdf>, accessed 10 April 2020. The need to factor induced demand into modelling is discussed at pages 24 and 29. See also Eric Keys, Chris De Gruyter and Graham Currie, 'The problem with transport models is political abuse, not their use in planning', *Conversation*, 10 December 2019, available at <https://theconversation.com/the-problem-with-transport-models-is-political-abuse-not-their-use-in-planning-127720>, accessed 10 April 2020. This assumption is declared in the published transportation plan by Wilbur Smith and Associates, *The transportation plan*, vol 3, *Melbourne transportation study*, prepared for the Metropolitan Transportation Committee, Melbourne, 1969, p. 47. See also Buxton, Goodman and Moloney, *Planning Melbourne*, pp. 20–21, 95–96, 107–108; Legacy, Curtis and Scheurer, 'Planning transport infrastructure', p. 49; Stone, 'Continuity and change in urban transport policy', pp. 399 and 401; Stone, 'Contrasts in reform', pp. 419–434.

[12] For a visualisation and explanation of this fundamental fact about moving people efficiently, see public transport consultant Jarrett Walker's blog entry, 'the photo that explains almost everything (updated!)', available at <https://humantransit.org/2012/09/the-photo-that-explains-almost-everything.html>, accessed 15 August 2020.

These ideas are discussed in greater detail in Jarrett Walker, *Human transit: how clearer thinking about public transit can enrich our communities and our lives*, Island Press, Washington, DC, 2011.

[13] See Davison's discussion of automobilism in *City dreamers*, ch. 10.

[14] 'New transport plan worries local councils', *Age*, 19 December 1969, p. 3.

[15] The figures of freeway and arterial road works were originally given in miles, for a summary see Wilbur Smith and Associates, *The transportation plan*, p. 48. Lay, *Melbourne miles*, p. 200. As Lay notes, some commentators have argued that models other than Los Angeles were influential, see endnote 7, p. 257.

[16] PROV, VPRS 8609/P1 Historical Records Collection, Unit 32, Item 261 Australia's First Road-Rail Complex Melbourne Transportation Committee. The publication is undated but most likely would be c. 1972 by which time work on the freeway had commenced.

[17] Davison with Yelland, *Car wars*, p. 179.

[18] PROV, VPRS 8609/P1, Unit 60, MMBW, 'Big survey will show our 1985 traffic wants', in *Master plan review*, August 1966, p. 2.

[19] Wilbur Smith and Associates, *The transportation plan*, p. 32. The data and computer analyses are held by PROV, VPRS 10089 Computer Analyses [Metropolitan Transport Committee].

[20] Other draft public transport plans included a rail line to Tullamarine and the Doncaster East line as a branch from Alphington, PROV, VPRS 10090/P1 Correspondence Files, Unit 18, Item 394–39 Evaluation of Public Transport Plans 3, 3A, 3B diagram masters Melbourne and Metropolitan Transport Study.

[21] PROV, VPRS 6347/P4 General Correspondence Files, Annual Single Number, Unit 125, File 76/236 Loop and Associated Projects (includes Eastern Railway Connection to Loop), GG Bennett to GJ Meech, 18 August 1972.

[22] PROV, VPRS 6347/P4, Unit 125, File 76/236, Director of Transport GJ Meech to MURLA General Manager and Director of Engineering FG Watson, 29 September 1975.

[23] Buxton, Goodman and Moloney, *Planning Melbourne*, p. 98. See also 'Doncaster railway line', *Wikipedia*, available at <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Doncaster_railway_line>, accessed 10 April 2020.

[24] Davison with Yelland, *Car wars*, p. 190; Howe and Nichols, 'A new relationship', pp. 5–7.

[25] Dingle and Rasmussen, *Vital connections*, p. 251.

[26] PROV, VPRS 8609/P1, Unit 60, MMBW, '17 million cars may use the ring road in a year', in *Master plan review*, December 1963, p. 4.

[27] Dingle and Rasmussen, *Vital connections*, p. 313. The other three road projects were the Tullamarine Freeway, St Kilda Junction and the South Eastern Freeway extension to Toorak.

[28] Ibid., p. 315.

[29] PROV, VPRS 8609/P21 Historical Records Collection, Unit 345.

[30] Dingle and Rasmussen, *Vital connections*, p. 318.

[31] 'Planners told: put public transport first', *Age*, 5 October 1971, p. 1.

[32] Melbourne's road building responsibilities until 1974 were divided between the CRB and MMBW, after which they were brought under the CRB, see: PROV, VPRS 421/ P11, Unit 14, File 72/3521, *Report of the Board of Enquiry into the Victorian Land Transport System* (the Bland Report) with comments by Victorian Railways Commissioners, Victorian Government Printer, Melbourne, 1972, pp. 161–162; Lay, *Melbourne miles*, pp. 53–54 and 201–202; Dingle and Rasmussen, *Vital connections*, p. 325.

[33] Davison with Yellend, *Car wars*, pp. 184, 190–219. Howe, Nichols and Davison, *Trendyville*, also provides several discussions of this miscalculation.

[34] PROV, VPRS 6347 General Correspondence Files, Annual Single Number System, Unit 42, File 75/138 part A, media release February 1971.

[35] PROV, VPRS 6347 General Correspondence Files, Annual Single Number System, Unit 42, File 75/138 part A, research proposal for the CRB, Dr Colin J Balmer, 25 June 1971.

[36] PROV, VPRS 6347 General Correspondence Files, Annual Single Number System, Unit 42, File 75/138 part A, CRB Chairman REV Donaldson to Minister for Local Government AJ Hunt, 24 January 1972.

[37] PROV, VPRS 6347 General Correspondence Files, Annual Single Number System, Unit 42, File 75/138 part A, newspaper clipping, *Age*, 22 February 1972, p. 3.

[38] PROV, VPRS 6347 General Correspondence Files, Annual Single Number System, Unit 42, File 75/138 part A, CRB press statement, 22 February 1972, statement provided to Mr Hills of the *Age*, 21 February 1972, notes for the minister on the F2 freeway with handwritten annotations by REV Donaldson, 22 February 1972.

[39] PROV, VPRS 6347/P4, Unit 42, File 75/138 part A, Secretary F2 Regional Municipal Committee LD Cook to Minister for Local Government Alan Hunt, 8 March 1972.

[40] PROV, VPRS 6347/P4, Unit 42, File 75/138 part A, correspondence March to April 1972.

[41] PROV, VPRS 6347/P4, Unit 42, File 75/138 part A, letter from East Brunswick Progress Association, 27 April 1972.

[42] PROV, VPRS 6347/P4, Unit 331, File 78/279 Transport Plan – Part and B, 1978 Ministry of Transport document providing historical background to the government's evolving position on urban freeways.

[43] 'CRB stakes its claim to North Carlton', *Melbourne Times*, 25 October 1972, p. 1.

[44] O'Hanlon has contested the often rosy view of the attractions of the inner city in the early 1970s by documenting the losses and displacements that took place there in *City life* and, with Dingle, in *Melbourne remade*.

[45] Howe, Nichols and Davison, *Trendyville*, p. xiv.

[46] Ibid., p. 32.

[47] Ibid., p. 19. A similar characterisation of the clash between Victoria's planning bureaucracies and inner city residents in the early 1970s is made by O'Hanlon, *City life*, p. 138.

[48] Howe, Nichols and Davison, *Trendyville*, pp. 68 and 138.

[49] University of Melbourne Archives, Carlton Association Collection, 1984.0092 Carlton Association 1969–1980, Unit 5, file 4/5/2 Freeway Action 1971–1972, Freeway Action Group Newsletter, 5 February 1972.

[50] University of Melbourne Archives, Carlton Association Collection, 1984.0092 Carlton Association 1969–1980, Unit 5, file 4/5/2 Freeway Action 1971–1972, 'We want you to spend 7 cents to save your home / Desideriamo che voi spendiate 7 centesimi per salvare la vostra casa', undated [c. February 1972].

[51] University of Melbourne Archives, Carlton Association Collection, 1984.0092 Carlton Association 1969–1980, Unit 5, file 4/5/2 Freeway Action 1971–1972, letter from Aurora Calogero, 8 January 1972. The Freeway Action Group had gathered information through a variety of informal discussions with representatives from Metropolitan Transportation Committee; Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works; Country Roads Board; Civil Engineering Department, University of Melbourne; Town Planning Department, University of Melbourne; Loder Bayly & Associates, Consulting Engineers; Committee for Urban Action; Fitzroy Residents' Association. See paragraph 3.3.1 in the report.

[52] Carlton Association Report, *Freeway crisis*, 29 March 1972, paragraph 4.2.6, University of Melbourne Archives, Carlton Association Collection, 1984.0092 Carlton Association 1969–1980, Unit 5, file 4/5/2 Freeway Action 1971–1972.

[53] Minister for Local Government AJ Hunt to the Carlton Association deputation, 3 February 1972, quoted from the Carlton Association Report, *Freeway crisis*, 29 March 1972, paragraph 5.3.4, University of Melbourne Archives, Carlton Association Collection, 1984.0092 Carlton Association 1969–1980, Unit 5, file 4/5/2 Freeway Action 1971–1972.

[54] This was gleaned from a leaked document from the CRB that is part of the CA collection, University of Melbourne Archives, Carlton Association Collection, 1984.0092 Carlton Association 1969–1980, Unit 14, folder 16/6 Country Roads Board Review of the Met Freeway Network 1985 [c. October 1971].

[55] 'Premier halves freeway projects: He'll look at other plans for the city', *Age*, 29 March 1973, p. 3

[56] 'Editorial opinion: Putting people before cars', *Age*, 30 March 1973, p. 9.

[57] PROV, VPRS 6347/P4, Unit 331, File 78/279 Transport Plan – Parts A and B.

[58] PROV, VPRS 6347/P4, Unit 331, File 78/279 Transport Plan – Part A, comments on CRB plan, 1977, p. 5. Many of the documents critiquing the CRB plan appear to have been authored by Senior Engineer JE Hartnett.

[59] PROV, VPRS 6347/P4, Unit 331, File 78/279 Transport Plan – Part A, letter in review documents, 1977, p. 12.

[60] PROV, VPRS 6347/P4, Unit 331, File 78/279 Transport Plan – Part A, letter in review documents, 1977, p. 21.

[61] PROV, VPRS 6347/P4, Unit 331, File 78/279 Transport Plan – Part A, draft points on the Ministry of Transport's review of the 1969 plan, 1977, p. 1.

[62] PROV, VPRS 6347/P4, Unit 331, File 78/279 Transport Plan – Part A, Draft response to CRB plan, 1977, pp. 3–4.

[63] See PROV, VPRS 6347/P4, Unit 42, File 75/138 part A.

[64] PROV, VPRS 6347/P4, Unit 42, File 75/138 part B, G Houghton to Transport Minister Rafferty.

[65] PROV, VPRS 6347/P4, Unit 42, File 75/138 part B, John Larkins to CRB Chairman, 13 May 1976.

[66] PROV, VPRS 6347 General Correspondence Files, Annual Single Number System, Unit 42, File 75/138 part C, CRB Chairman REV Donaldson to Minister of Transport JA Rafferty, 26 April 1978.

[67] PROV, VPRS 6347/P4, Unit 42, File 75/138 part C, Minister for Planning Hayes to Transport Minister JA Rafferty, 4 July 1978, forwarding letter from MMBW Deputy Secretary OTW Cosgriff, 1 June 1978, and letter from CRB Chairman REV Donaldson, 21 November 1978.

[68] See especially Stone, 'Continuity and change in urban transport policy', pp. 394–396.

Forum articles

Rowville's Italian prisoners of war

'Rowville's Italian prisoners of war', *Provenance: The Journal of Public Record Office Victoria*, issue no. 18, 2020. ISSN 1832-2522.

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Abstract

In March 1946, the war was over. The Italian prisoners of war who had been captured several years earlier in northern Africa were interned in camps around Australia and were waiting to be returned home. One Saturday evening, the commandant of the Rowville internment camp, Captain Waterston, shot and killed a prisoner, Rodolfo Bartoli, who he claimed was attempting to escape. What initially appeared to be a straightforward case of an Australian army officer carrying out his duty in an attempt to prevent an Italian prisoner from escaping soon appeared to be something other. Allegations of assaults, reckless firing of weapons, drunkenness and stolen goods began to emerge. This article explores the history of the camp and follows the investigations into the shooting and the camp administration.

Walking through a small bush reserve tucked away in the middle of a suburban housing estate in Rowville, Victoria, it is possible to see the remains of concrete foundations and a section of road where an Italian prisoner of war hostel once stood. I grew up in the area and heard stories about the hostel. After rediscovering these remains several years ago, I began to do some research into the hostel. I was curious as to why Italians had been shipped all the way to Rowville, so far from their places of capture in northern Africa and the Middle East. The first item that I found at the National Archives of Australia that piqued my curiosity was a large archive box titled, 'Shooting of Italian POW [PWI 48833 – Rodolfo Bartoli at Rowville Prisoner of War Control Hostel]'.[1] Rodolfo Bartoli, a 26-year-old Italian soldier from Florence, was shot and killed by the camp commandant, Captain Waterston, on 30 March 1946, while allegedly attempting to escape from the Rowville Italian prisoner of war hostel. The archive included the details of seven separate police, military and government inquiries into the administration of the Rowville hostel and the death of Bartoli. None of these inquiries provided a single and consistent version of events.

March 1946

World War II had ended and the approximately 18,000 prisoners who had been captured and shipped to Australia for the duration of the war were awaiting ships to become available so that they could return home.[2] An employment scheme had been implemented, allowing Italian prisoners to be employed, thereby helping with the labour shortage in Australia.[3]

Rodolfo Bartoli was one of 250 Italian prisoners housed at the prisoner of war hostel at Rowville, a small township 27 kilometres south-east of Melbourne. The Rowville hostel opened in December 1944 (see Figure 1) and, along with 24 other camps and hostels around Victoria, was overseen by the Murchison Control Centre under the supervision of Major Herbert Thomson. Many of the prisoners at the camp were employed during the day on nearby farms, at the engineer's depot at the Oakleigh rail yards or at the salvage depot at Fishermens Bend. The Rowville hostel was used as a staging camp, a place where men were temporarily placed while being relocated to other camps throughout the state. The hostel was also used as a detention centre for prisoners with disciplinary issues. Between December 1944 and August 1946, over 2,600 Italian prisoners of war passed through the camp.[4] The Italian prisoners, in their distinctive burgundy-dyed uniforms, were a familiar sight to the local residents.

Figure 1: Rowville camp buildings, from the *Argus* newspaper collection of war photographs, World War II, originally captioned 'Rosehill (Dandenong) camp, these huts at present empty', c. 1945, State Library Victoria, Pictures Collection, H99.201/410.

Figure 2: Rodolfo Bartoli and Nora Gearon, Rowville, photograph from Nora O'Ryan's personal collection.

Figure 3: Rodolfo Bartoli (centre), Rowville, photograph from Nora O'Ryan's personal collection.

The Rowville hostel was a low security facility and, unlike other camps, was not enclosed by a wire fence or gated entrances; instead, it was surrounded by a farming fence consisting of a single strand of wire.[5] During the day the prisoners were allowed to walk around the main roads near the hostel.[6]

Bartoli, a private in the Italian infantry, was captured in Libya in December 1940 and arrived in Sydney on the *Queen Elizabeth* in October 1941. He was initially interned at Cowra, New South Wales, before being relocated to Murchison in August 1944. He arrived at Rowville in December 1944 and, apart from a short period of time at Koo Wee Rup and Mount Martha, spent most of his time at the Rowville camp, employed in the hostel quartermaster store.[7] He befriended a local family and developed a romantic interest in 20-year-old Nora Gearon who lived with her family on a farm near the hostel. Bartoli had a bike hidden in the banks of the nearby Dandenong Creek and, at times, used it to leave the camp. He was hoping to one day marry Nora and wrote numerous letters to her during his times away from the Rowville hostel (see Figures 2 and 3).[8]

Unsettling stories about the hostel

In March 1946, Minister for Immigration Arthur Calwell received a letter of complaint from a member of the public, Louisa (Lena) Santospirito, who was a prominent campaigner for the rights of Italians and Italian immigrants.[9] The letter alleged that Captain Waterston was mistreating prisoners. Captain Waterston was referred to as a 'veritable Nero' in the letter and was accused of hitting prisoners, firing his weapon at them, confiscating their belongings, depriving them of food and being drunk on the job.[10] Santospirito was interviewed by Gerald Healy from the Deputy Commonwealth Crown Solicitor's Office about her source/s of information. She said that she did not have firsthand knowledge of the issues in the camp but had received information from Mrs Ganora in Mordialloc who had been given the information from Mrs Siletta and Mrs Biletta of Oakleigh. Mrs Biletta was a cousin of one of the prisoners in the Rowville hostel, Aldo Poggi, who was a close friend of Bartoli's.[11] Calwell forwarded the letter to Minister for the Army Frank Forde who directed the letter to the adjutant-general.[12] The letter was then forwarded for investigation to Southern Command, which was responsible for overseeing military operational and administrative matters in the region.[13]

On 27 March 1946, Major Archer was appointed to lead an investigation into the allegations against Captain Waterston.[14] This investigation had only just commenced when, on 30 March, Captain Waterston shot and killed Bartoli.

The men were eating their evening meal when a loud shot was heard. Dinner was eaten in two shifts because the number of prisoners was too high for the capacity of the mess hall. Bartoli had eaten in the first shift and had been walking with the hostel leader, Michele Scuma, when the incident took place.

With only 12 staff in the camp that night and over 200 prisoners, Captain Waterston called the civil police to assist in case of possible disruption. The provost (the military police) also arrived shortly afterwards to assist.

Bartoli was carried to the hostel infirmary where he received initial medical treatment from the camp doctor, Dr Galli. He had suffered a gunshot wound to the groin and his condition was grave. The doctor called for Captain Waterston to arrange a car to drive Bartoli directly to the Heidelberg Military Hospital where, despite undergoing surgery and a blood transfusion, he died later that night.[15]

In the confusion that took place during the evening, one prisoner, Luigi Melampo, managed to escape from the hostel (Figure 4).

In the press

The following report was published in the *Herald* on Monday 1 April 1946:

> Facts relating to the incident were that on Saturday afternoon several prisoners of war were seen to be acting furtively. They were whispering in a group and would stop talking when guards approached. Because of the suspicion that something was brewing the 11 guards stationed with the prisoners of war were placed on duty around the headquarters section of the hostel area. At 6.30 pm, the commandant of the camp (Captain J W Waterston) saw an Italian prisoner of war, Bartoli, trying to crawl under a wire fence, apparently trying to escape.[16]


ARMED SEARCH FOR P.O.W.

ARMED with pistols and rifles, Army men searched the Dandenong district for Luigi Melampo, an Italian prisoner-of-war, who escaped from Rowville Camp in the mutiny on Saturday night. In that disturbance another P.O.W. was shot fatally while trying to escape.

Figure 4: Photograph of the search party seeking Rowville escapee Luigi Melampo, *Weekly Times*, 3 April 1946, p. 5.

TRUTH, SATURDAY, APRIL 6, 1946—PAGE 1

BREAK-OUT BY 5000 PLANNED

Missing

In this page are 19 of the 37 Italian escapees now at large in Victoria. Report to the police if you see any of them.

Di-Fiore, Murchison · Fasini, Rowville · Ponzoni, Rowville · Mazzola, Rowville · Camerata, Mt. Martha · Pennacchio · Rago, Mt Martha · Rowville · Rowville

Cirillo, Murchison · Villeva, Rowville · Ciccone, Rowville

Fiasi, Rowville · Rowville · Rowville · Rowville

Mt. Martha · Mt. Martha

ITALIAN P.O.W. MUTINY THAT FIZZLED OUT

BEHIND the planned mutiny at Rowville P.O.W. camp last week-end, which resulted in the fatal shooting of one Italian, was a scheme by which Italian prisoners-of-war at each of three main camps—Murchison, Hume and Rowville—would break free and scatter under a well-organised plan which provided for specially placed cars picking up escapees most desired by Australia's underground Fascist movement. Those not picked up by cars were to be secreted by Italian communities and either hidden or "passed on" until they were out of danger. But the plan misfired. The Rowville mutiny was premature. By the time Rowville's meagre guard was reinforced by civilian and military police, other P.O.W. camps harboring Italians had been advised, and they, too, were on the alert. The scheme collapsed—and it involved 5000 Italians!

THAT is why Italian prisoners of war are to be congregated as quickly as possible at Puckapunyal, with ample armed guards.

... and Hume camps, in which Italian prisoners, the very men who fought Australians at Bardia, Derna, Sollum, Benghazi and El Alamein, enjoyed life so much that they don't want to leave Australia, are over.

Until they embark for Italy, they will become full-time prisoners again under adequate and specially instructed guards. ...

ALL BACK TO ITALY

Figure 5: Photograph of the original article published in the *Truth*, 6 April 1946, p. 1, June Ponzoni's personal collection.

On Saturday 8 April 1946, the *Truth* published an outrageous article that took the story several steps further, stating that there had been a mutiny at the hostel, and that this had been part of a much wider, orchestrated escape plan (Figure 5):

> **Break-out by 5000 planned: Italian POW mutiny that fizzed out**
>
> Behind the planned mutiny at Rowville POW camp last weekend, which resulted in the fatal shooting of one Italian, was a scheme by which Italian prisoners-of-war at each of three main camps—Murchison, Hume and Rowville—would break free and scatter under a well-organised plan which provided for specially placed cars picking up escapees most desired by Australia's underground Fascist movement. Those not picked up by cars were to be secreted by Italian communities and either hidden, or 'passed on' until they were out of danger. But the plan misfired. The Rowville mutiny was premature. By the time Rowville's meagre guard was reinforced by civilian and military police, other POW camps harbouring Italians had been advised and they, too, were on the alert. The scheme collapsed—and it involved 5000 Italians![17]

Military court of inquiry

A military court of inquiry into the circumstances leading to the shooting and death of Bartoli was held at the hostel on 5 April for the purpose of 'inquiring into and reporting on the circumstances of the injuries sustained by PWI 48833 Bartoli Rodolfo on 30 March 1946, death of said PWI on 30 March 1946'.[18] The inquiry was presided over by Colonel Christison. Nine witnesses were heard: four military personnel, the Australian military doctor who treated Bartoli at the hospital and four Italian prisoners who helped Bartoli immediately after he had been shot.

Captain Waterston gave his account of the events of the afternoon and evening. Waterston stated that he had caught two prisoners taking lettuces from the engineer's vegetable garden. He said that he questioned them, searched their huts and determined that there was going to be an escape attempt that evening. According to Waterston, at around dinner time, he sent two armed staff to positions along the main road outside the camp. The captain, armed with a .303 rifle, and Sergeant Major McDougall, armed with a .38 pistol, headed to the southern boundary of the camp to begin patrolling. The remaining staff stayed in the orderly room to attend to telephone duties and were instructed to draw arms from the arms chest if required.

Waterston explained to the court:

> At approximately 1830 hours on the evening of 30 March 1946, I posted two guards in Stud Road. Then myself and Sergeant Major McDougall went to the south boundary of the camp and patrolled that area for the purpose of preventing PWI escaping.
>
> At approximately 1900 hours, I saw a prisoner running for the south boundary fence. I called on him to stop. He changed his course and ran at an angle towards the scrub in a westerly direction. I ran along the boundary fence, and again called on the prisoner to stop. He kept running, and I fired a shot over his head. He did not stop, and attempting to stop him reaching the scrub, I fired another shot at his ankles. The PWI then fell, and on investigation made later, it was found that he was shot. Sergeant Major McDougall came running from the scrub, and I had ascertained by that time that the prisoner was hit. I immediately dispatched the Sergeant Major for the doctor and stretcher bearers. I went to the office and rang Heidelberg for an ambulance. I was then informed by the POW doctor that the POW should be taken to hospital immediately. He was sent in a hostel staff car and arrived at the Heidelberg Military Hospital at 1935 hours. The prisoner of war concerned was PWI 48833, Bartoli, Rodolfo.[19]

Captain Waterston was asked about the camp boundaries and he stated that the boundary was the road to the south of the camp, where the shooting had taken place, and that prisoners had been instructed in both English and Italian at least once a week that, if they were seen outside these boundaries, they were liable to be fired upon.

The court found that the death of Rodolfo Bartoli:

> Resulted from his own misconduct, in that he attempted to escape and failed to halt when challenged … It was particularly noted that two warnings were given before any shots were fired … The court found that Captain Waterston, in firing on the said PWI acted properly in the execution of his military duty.[20]

Further inquiries: foolishness and larking

Even before the military court hearing, concerns had been raised about the incident at Rowville. On 1 April, the Monday after the shooting had taken place, a memo from Frank Sinclair, Minister Forde's secretary, to Minister Forde read: 'If the incident in regard to the shooting of the prisoner of war is read in conjunction with the allegations made by Mr [*sic*] Santospirito regarding this camp, it gives the incidents associated with the shooting of the prisoner of war on 31 [*sic*] March a rather sinister appearance.'[21] On 8 April, concerned with the allegations in the letter and the news in the press, Minister Forde announced the appointment of Justice Simpson to inquire into the administration of the hostel and the circumstances of the shooting.

On the evening following the military court of inquiry, Captain Thomson (Captain Waterston's superior officer), Major Archer (who was conducting the inquiry into the allegations made in the letter) and Captain Waterston (accompanied by a lady friend), attended a dinner party in the officers' mess at the hostel. During the night, several bottles of beer were consumed and two army revolvers were drawn. Shots were fired at the ceiling lights and some of the crockery. Major Thomson later stated that: ' A silly bit of foolishness and larking occurred that night and a number of shots were fired by the Major [Archer] and I fired one shot myself.'[22]

On 10 April, a hand-drawn map of the hostel was posted outside the orderly room showing the hostel boundary (Figure 6). This replaced an older version that had been in place since the camp opened in December 1944 that showed the bridges on the main roads several kilometres from the camp as the camp boundaries.

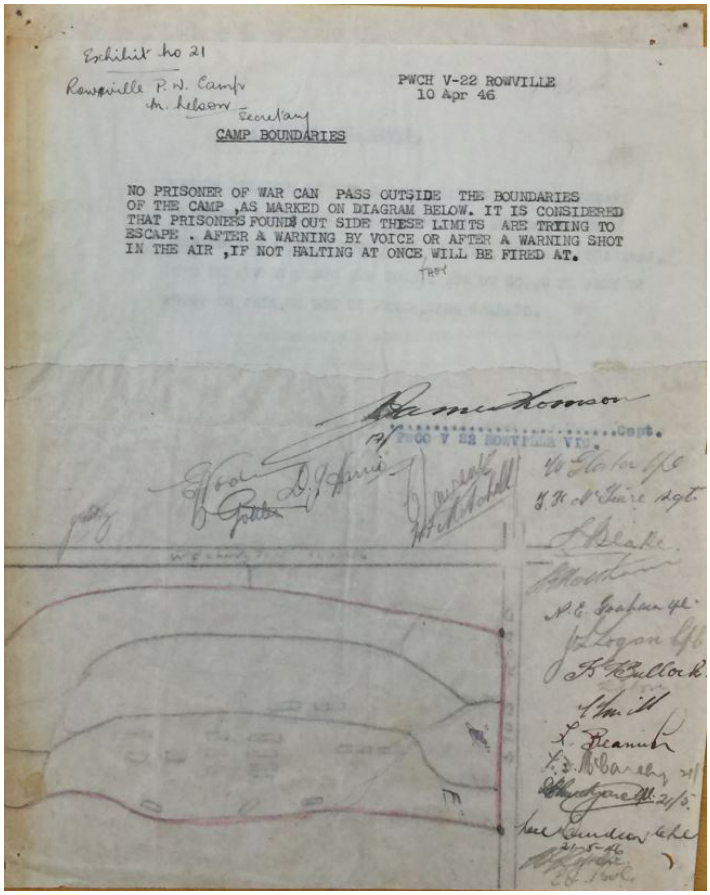


Exhibit No 21

Rowville P.W. Camp
M. Nelson Secretary

PWCH V-22 ROWVILLE
10 Apr 46

CAMP BOUNDARIES

NO PRISONER OF WAR CAN PASS OUTSIDE THE BOUNDARIES OF THE CAMP ,AS MARKED ON DIAGRAM BELOW. IT IS CONSIDERED THAT PRISONERS FOUND OUT SIDE THESE LIMITS ARE TRYING TO ESCAPE . AFTER A WARNING BY VOICE OR AFTER A WARNING SHOT IN THE AIR ,IF NOT HALTING AT ONCE WILL BE FIRED AT.

Figure 6: Map posted with red line marking the camp boundaries, NAA: MP742/1, 255/6/774 Part 1, camp boundaries, exhibit 21.

Major Archer's findings

Major Archer's findings were delivered on 18 April. He cleared Captain Waterston and the camp administration of any wrongdoing. The covering note accompanying his report read:

> It is observed that the investigating officer has found no evidence to support the charges of habitual drunkenness and ill treatment of PW made against Capt Waterston, or the statement that food supplied to PW is very scanty. Articles confiscated from PW were found by the investigating officer to be only those items improperly in their possession and his report concludes that no legitimate grounds for complaint exist.[23]

Upon receiving the outcome from the military court of inquiry, Minister Forde responded to the secretary of the Department of the Army in a minute paper marked as urgent:

> The report of the Court of Inquiry forwarded by the Adjutant-General with his minute of 24th April, 1946, is a most uninformative document and is the most unsatisfactory report of its nature that I can ever recollect having read.
>
> The Court was called upon to report, among other things, on the circumstances under which this man sustained his injuries, including the cause of same; but the report as submitted is most indefinite and gives no real information as to the circumstance.
>
> I assume that a full report of the Court of Inquiry will be made available to Mr Justice Simpson when he makes his investigation.[24]

The coroner's inquest

The coroner's hearing into Rodolfo Bartoli's death commenced on 15 May, almost a month after Major Archer released his findings. Twenty-seven witnesses were heard, including Italian prisoners who were present when the shooting took place, military personnel from the camp, three medical staff who treated Bartoli at the hospital, homicide detectives and a local farmer (Figure 7). This was the first time that prisoners of war who had witnessed the shooting were asked to provide statements.

PERSONALITIES AT INQUEST TODAY

WITNESSES in the inquest resumed today at the Coroner's Court into the shooting of an Italian P.O.W. at Rowville prison camp on March 30. From left: Capt. J. Waterston, the Camp Commandant; Michelle Schuma, camp leader; two Italian P.O.W. witnesses, and former Warrant Officer H. McDougall.

Figure 7: 'Witnesses at the coroner's inquest', *Herald*, 16 May 1946, p. 3, available at <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article245393631>, accessed 9 March 2018.

Among the documents in Bartoli's inquest file is a handwritten statement from Captain Waterston taken by Homicide Detective Petty. The file also contains a haunting crime scene photograph showing Homicide Detective Adam standing at the location where Bartoli had been shot (Figure 8). This photograph was a key piece of

evidence used in the coroner's inquest and Justice Simpson's inquiry into the camp, held several months later, as a reference point for witnesses to describe where they were standing and where they saw Bartoli and Captain Waterston at the time of the shooting.

Figure 8: Photograph of Homicide Detective Adam standing at the location where Bartoli was shot, PROV, VPRS 24/P0, Inquest Deposition Files, Unit 1547, Item 1946/1126, Rodolfo Bartoli.

As the eyewitness accounts emerged, the explanation that Captain Waterston had shot the prisoner while attempting to foil an escape attempt began to show some discrepancies. It became apparent, both from the prisoners and the military personnel, that the instructions about the hostel boundaries were unclear. Apart from the map posted outside the orderly room after the shooting on 10 April, no formal announcement about camp boundary changes had been made.

Sergeant Major McDougal was the only witness who said that he heard a verbal warning and a warning shot. All the other witnesses heard no warning and only one shot. Several prisoners standing at their tents saw Bartoli walking calmly before falling to the ground after he was shot. The tents are visible in the background of the crime scene photograph. Only a minute or two before he was shot, Bartoli had been walking with hostel leader, Michele Scuma, who had gone into the latrine block, also visible in the photograph.

Captain Waterston could not account for the missing spent cartridges from his rifle or give a satisfactory explanation for blood stains that were found in a different location to where Bartoli had reportedly been shot. Nor was he able to explain why the bullet appeared to enter Bartoli's body at an angle that suggested he was not where Waterston had indicated. Waterston said that Bartoli was carrying something concealed under his jacket but forgot to check for it. Those who helped to undress Bartoli to administer first aid said that he was not carrying anything.

The coroner found that 'Rodolfo died from the effects of a gunshot wound of the abdomen inflicted on him by John Walker Waterston at Rowville prisoner of war camp on 30th March 1946 but from the evidence adduced I am unable to say whether the killing was justified or otherwise.'[25]

Confiscated items and missing iron sheets

On 14 May, the evening before the coroner's inquest, as the prisoners were returning to the hostel on trucks from their day of work, Captain Waterston approached one of the trucks. He singled out Enrico Quintavalle, slapped him in the face and ordered him off the truck. Quintavalle was taken into Captain Waterston's office with the hostel interpreter, Sergeant Holtham, and was questioned about a rumour regarding a large quantity of corrugated iron that had gone missing from the hostel after one of the buildings had been dismantled and was said to have been delivered to John Finn's farm across the road from the hostel. Waterston had heard that Quintavalle had told another local farmer, John Gearon, that Waterston had shot Bartoli because he knew too much about Waterston's arrangements with John Finn. Waterson forced Quintavalle to make a written statement, which was translated into English for Justice Simpson's inquiry:

> Mr Gearon asked me if I believed the Captain had shot Bartoli, because the latter knew too much about the Captain. I replied that I could say nothing about this, as I was not in strict confidence with Bartoli, I could not say what he knew about the Captain. Then Mr Gearon asked me if I knew anything about some of the iron sheets that were disappearing from the Camp, and if I believed that Bartoli, knowing where the iron sheets had gone had lost his life on that account. I replied, No, I know nothing about those iron sheets. Then he asked me if I had seen any iron sheets at the place where I went to work (Mr Finn), and I replied that there were some iron sheets there but I could not say whether the iron sheets were the same.[26]

Just days prior to Bartoli being shot, Nora Gearon had typed a letter for her father, John Gearon, that was sent to the authorities. Some of the prisoners had told John Gearon that Captain Waterston had been confiscating their possessions as they returned to the camp. The items included gifts and food they had been given while working on farms. The prisoners told John Gearon that Waterston was passing the confiscated items to John Finn who was then selling them at local markets and the Queen Victoria

Market in Melbourne. To this day, Nora wonders if the letter she typed for her father 'had some bearing on the matter'.[27]

Justice Simpson's inquiry

Justice Simpson's inquiry into the shooting and the hostel administration commenced on 28 May. The allegations in Louisa Santospirito's letter were used as the terms of reference for the inquiry. The inquiry sat for a total of 19 days between 28 May and 16 August 1946 and 106 witnesses were heard. Justice Simpson's report was completed on 26 August 1946.

Over the course of the inquiry, numerous accounts and allegations were heard of Captain Waterston assaulting prisoners, brandishing and firing his pistol at or near prisoners, being regularly intoxicated while on duty, and confiscating and not returning prisoners' property. One of his own personnel reported that, while patrolling the hostel one night, he heard Captain Waterston say: 'I want to see a dead eyetie tonight.'[28]

The final report, delivered to Minister Forde in October 1946, was highly critical of Captain Waterston and the hostel administration. Justice Simpson was satisfied with the evidence that the allegations of assaults on prisoners were true and that Captain Waterston frequently brandished and fired his revolver in and around the hostel. Justice Simpson stated: 'I regret to have to report that in my opinion these slaps and occasional punches were not given in just moments of irritation, but were part of Captain Waterston's methods of keeping discipline.'[29] He found evidence that Captain Waterston had failed to pass on written complaints from a former hostel leader, but found no evidence that prisoners were deprived of food.

Justice Simpson was not satisfied that Bartoli intended to leave the camp, either temporarily or permanently, on the night that he was shot. He stated that Bartoli was not out of bounds when he was shot and concluded that only a single shot had been fired.

Justice Simpson was critical of Captain Waterston's superior officer, Captain Thomson, and his conduct during the inquiry: 'I have no hesitation in saying that he was a witness who had no regard for the truth.' He recommended that Captain Waterston, Captain Thomson and Major Ruddock, who had responsibility for regularly inspecting the camp, be removed from duty.[30]

The army expressed concern that, since censorship controls had been removed on prisoner of war correspondence, the criticisms made within the report could have 'unfortunate results'. The report was marked as secret.[31]

Courts martial and charges laid

Justice Simpson conducted a thorough inquiry into the allegations against Captain Waterston, the administration of the camp and the shooting of Bartoli. He was clear in his findings about the misconduct that had taken place. Addressing the issues from Justice Simpson's inquiry, the coroner's inquest and the military court of inquiry, the army director of legal services laid nine charges against Captain Waterston and two charges against Captain Thomson. One of the charges against Captain Thomson was related to him firing his revolver in the officer's mess at the dinner party after the military court of inquiry. Despite him admitting to doing this while giving evidence during Justice Simpson's inquiry, he was found not guilty on both counts.[32]

Captain Waterston was found guilty of one of his nine charges—common assault against a prisoner, Enrico Quintavalle, for which he received a reprimand.[33] This was the only tangible punishment issued as a result of all of the investigations carried out.

The adjutant-general recommended that a note regarding the finding be placed on Major Ruddock's service record. However, following a request by Major Ruddock and Southern Command that 'certain derogatory' remarks be removed from Ruddock's record, the comments were expunged.[34]

The issue of the missing corrugated iron sheets being delivered to John Finn was briefly investigated by Victoria Police but not pursued. This is despite John Finn having been found guilty at the Dandenong Magistrates' Court of receiving stolen goods from the Rowville hostel in July 1946, a matter that was not mentioned in any of the inquiries.[35]

Fortunately for Captain Waterston, Victoria Police notified the Australian military that they did not propose to take any further action against him in connection with the shooting incident. Whether Waterston shot Bartoli by accident or design may never be known.

After internment

Rodolfo Bartoli was buried at the Springvale cemetery on 2 April 1946. In 1961, his body was moved to the Ossario at Murchison cemetery where 130 people of Italian descent who passed away in prisoner of war and internment camps around the country during World War II are laid to rest. In December 1946 and January 1947, the surviving Italian prisoners, many of whom had been away from home for most of the war, began their journey home.

Endnotes

[1] NAA: MP742/1, 255/6/774 Part 1.

[2] Alan Fitzgerald, *The Italian farming soldiers: prisoners of war in Australia 1941–1947*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1981

[3] Ibid.

[4] NAA: MP742/1, 255/6/774 Part 1, in the matter of a reference by the Minister of State for the army in relation to the administration of Rowville Prisoner of War Control Hostel, and the circumstances resulting in the death of an Italian prisoner of war no. 48833 R. Bartoli.

[5] Bryan Power, 'Brian Seymour remembers the friendly POWs at Rowville', *Rowville & Lysterfield Stories*, Rowville–Lysterfield Community News, 2005.

[6] NAA: MP742/1, 255/6/774 Part 1, inquiry into the administration and matters surrounding the administration of the prisoner of war hostel, Rowville, Victoria, transcript of evidence from Captain HJ Thomson, 28 May 1946.

[7] NAA: MP1103/1, PWI48833; NAA: MP1103/2, PWI48833.

[8] NAA: MP742/1, 255/6/774 Part 1, inquiry into the administration and matters surrounding the administration of the prisoner of war hostel, Rowville, Victoria, Mr Minogue, 15 July 1946.

[9] 'Louisa Angelina (Lena) Santospirito', Italian Historical Society, available at <https://www.coasit.com.au/santospirito-collection-louisa-angelina-lena-santospirito>, accessed 8 October 2020.

[10] NAA: MP742/1, 255/6/774 Part 1, Lena Santospirito to Arthur Calwell, 1 March 1946.

[11] NAA: MP742/1, 255/6/774 Part 1, inquiry into the administration and matters surrounding the administration of the prisoner of war hostel, Rowville, Victoria, transcript of evidence from Gerald Healy, 25 May 1946.

[12] NAA: MP742/1, 255/6/774 Part 1, Frank Sinclair to Adjutant-General Captain Waterston, POW Camp, Springvale, 21 March 1946.

[13] NAA: MP742/1, 255/6/774 Part 1, Adjutant-General to Southern Command, PWC Hostel – V22 Rowville, 27 March 1946.

[14] NAA: MP742/1, 255/6/774 Part 1, Southern Command Headquarters to Major HJ Archer, appointment as investigating officer into allegation of ill-treatment of PW at PWCH V.22 Rowville.

[15] PROV, VPRS 24/P0, Inquest Deposition Files, Unit 1547, Item 1946/1126, Rodolfo Bartoli, inquisition held at City Morgue – Melbourne – on the body of Rodolfo Bartoli 15 May 1946.

[16] 'Army explains POW shooting case', *Herald* (Melbourne), 1 April 1946, p. 7.

[17] *Truth*, 6 April 1946, p. 1.

[18] NAA: MP385/7, proceedings of court of inquiry assembled at Rowville, 5 April 1946.

[19] Ibid.

[20] Ibid.

[21] NAA: MP742/1, 255/6/774 Part 1, Frank Sinclair to Francis Forde, POW Camp – Rowville, 1 April 1946.

[22] NAA: MP742/1, 255/6/774 Part 1, inquiry into the administration and matters surrounding the administration of the prisoner of war hostel, Rowville, Victoria, Herbert James Thomson, 13 August 1946.

[23] NAA: MP385/7, Adjutant-General to Secretary for Minister, 18 April 1946, Captain Waterston – PW Control Hostel V.22 Rowville.

[24] NAA: MP742/1, 255/6/774 Part 1, Francis Forde to Secretary, death by shooting – PWI 48833, Bartoli, Rodolfo, 3 May 1946.

[25] PROV, VPRS 24/P0, Inquest Deposition Files, Unit 1547, Item 1946/1126, Rodolfo Bartoli, inquisition held at City Morgue – Melbourne – on the body of Rodolfo Bartoli, 15 May 1946, Detective Frederick John Adam and Detective Charles Herbert Petty.

[26] NAA: MP742/1, 255/6/774 Part 2, inquiry into the administration and matters surrounding the administration of the prisoner of war hostel, Rowville, Victoria, Enrico Quintavalle's statement, exhibit 17.

[27] Nora O'Ryan (née Gearon) & Carmel Riddell (née Gearon), interview by Darren Arnott, 14 April 2019.

[28] NAA: MP742/1, 255/6/774 Part 1, inquiry into the administration and matters surrounding the administration of the prisoner of war hostel, Rowville, Victoria, Lee McCarthy, 12 August 1946.

[29] NAA: MP742/1, 255/6/774 Part 1, Justice Simpson's final report, 27 August 1946.

[30] Ibid.

[31] NAA: MP742/1, 255/6/774 Part 1, Australian military forces minute paper, 5 September 1946 – Rowville enquiry – administration of prisoners of war.

[32] NAA: A471, 79310.

[33] NAA: A471, 79821.

[34] NAA: MP742/1, 255/6/774 Part 1, Adjutant-General to Secretary, Department of the Army, Rowville prisoner of war camp, 2 February 1947.

[35] 'Twice-heard court case', *Dandenong Journal*, 17 July 1946, p. 1.

Howard R Lawson

the architect who built

'Howard R Lawson: the architect who built', *Provenance: The Journal of Public Record Office Victoria*, issue no. 18, 2020. ISSN 1832-2522.

Virginia Blue is a master of urban cultural heritage student at the University of Melbourne, and an interior designer who focuses on heritage architecture in her practice Blue Fruit, based at the Abbotsford Convent. This article was inspired by her minor research thesis on the life and architectural works of Howard R Lawson. Having 'accidentally' bought a Lawson house a few years ago, Virginia was curious as to the thinking of its architect. She is currently engaged in further research for a book on Lawson, building on her discoveries and understanding of his architecture gained through research at Public Record Office Victoria.

Author email: vb@bluefruit.design

Abstract

This article explores some of the myths surrounding the early twentieth-century Victorian architect, Howard R Lawson. Known today as the eclectic architect who designed the highly dramatic Beverley Hills flats at South Yarra (c. 1935–1936), his reputation has suffered over the decades due to misinformation and a misunderstanding of events. He was, in fact, a very progressive architect, with a keen interest in bettering lives through considered town planning and thoughtful design. Lawson utilised recycled materials well before it was considered to be fashionable or desirable, and was an early pioneer of building conversions in 1912, many decades ahead of his time.

How rumours almost became architectural history

Early twentieth-century Melbourne architect Howard Ratcliff Lawson was larger than life—a prolific designer with over 200 buildings to his name who held court with judges and ministers, discussing his progressive ideas for urban planning and social housing.

But Lawson has gently slipped through the cracks of architectural history. He is largely a forgotten architect, apart from being known as the genius mind behind South Yarra's astonishing Beverley Hills flats complex. And, in that genre of forgotten Australian architectural history, in the murky depths of vaguely remembered detail, his story has become muddied. Rumours and myths about him circulated for decades after his death, intensifying and becoming more fantastical with each retelling. Though held in high regard during his lifetime, his architecture was posthumously devalued, partly through the prism of stories that had become 'facts' in populist culture, and partly through a lack of either alternate information or extensive academic study to explain his design intent. The enormous tally of his works has also faded from history's pages, to the point where he is now generally only known for his 1930s works, and, of those, Beverley Hills (Figure 1) and Garden of the Moon (Arthurs Seat) (Figure 2), are the works with which he is mostly associated.

Lawson's reputation and name has been tarnished over time as a consequence of two main rumours: first, that he was not really an architect, yet called himself one; second, that he was a 'cheapskate' who used recycled materials to save costs. His later architecture, in particular, is very different to that of his contemporaries. There has been confusion over how best to define and label his works, partly due to a lack of understanding of who Lawson actually was and what drove his architectural mind. Delving into the archives of history clarifies not only what drove him and his insatiable appetite for design and construction, but also illuminates his life, putting to rest many of the rumours about him. In this article, I discuss and dispel the two main rumours.

The architect who builds: the tagline that came to define the rumour

It is frequently said that Lawson himself came up with the tagline 'the architect who builds' after he was refused registration as an architect. While this makes for a colourful story, and has been repeated in both published works[1] and opinion pieces[2] on social media platforms,[3] it is a tangled explanation of the truth. It has also been suggested that Lawson only began property development (and using his famous 'architect who builds' tagline) after his registered architect application was refused.[4] Rather than a flamboyant salesman who pretended to be what he was not, the archives show a different sequence of events that paints a very different picture.

Figure 1: Lawson recycled many elements of earlier building fabrics in his landmark Beverley Hills flats (c. 1935–1936). The stunning leadlight and stained glass window in an apartment in Block 2 is believed to have come from one, or more, of the nineteenth-century mansions of Toorak that were demolished in the early 1930s. This area was originally the cafe and small shop for the complex, but has since been converted into an apartment. Personal photo supplied to the author by Heather Nette-King.

Lawson enrolled in architecture and building construction studies at the Working Men's College (now RMIT) in 1902, when he was 17 years old, and studied there for the next three years.[5] Initially, he worked as a builder, and would only later work as an architect. His maternal uncle, Ernest Henry Ratcliff, was a director of the Glen Iris Brick and Tile Company, as well as a builder and investor.[6] The young Lawson worked for his uncle as a building manager,[7] and first garnered public attention for his role as the daring young builder of the Britannia Theatre in Bourke Street, Melbourne, in 1912.

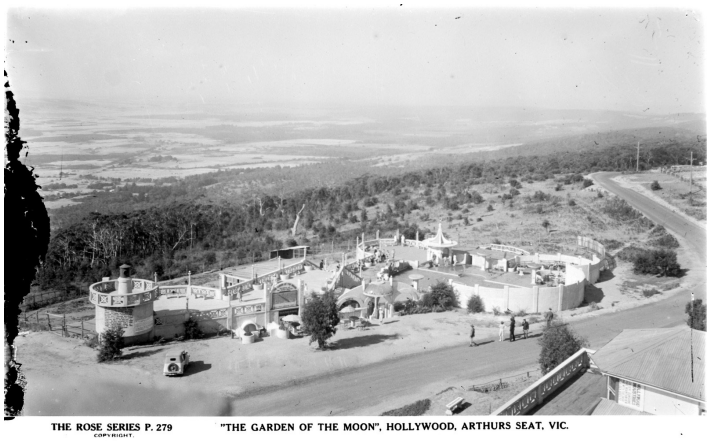


Figure 2: The extraordinarily imaginative Garden of the Moon tourist folly at Arthurs Seat on the Mornington Peninsula (constructed c. 1939) was one of Lawson's final designs. It encapsulated Lawson's belief in the importance of leisure via architectural fantasy. Rose Stereograph Company, *The Garden of the Moon, Hollywood, Arthurs Seat, Vic*., [c. 1940s], State Library of Victoria, Pictures Collection, H32492/362.

Figure 3: Lawson gained welcome publicity for his progressive ideas of efficiency as the young building manager of the Britannia Theatre in 1912. Unknown photographer and date, Britannia Theatre, Cinema Treasures, available online at <http://cinematreasures.org/theaters/52931>, viewed May 2020.

The architect of the new picture theatre was Nahum Barnett, but it was the radical method of building that attracted interest.[8] In order to complete the building ahead of schedule, Lawson introduced then novel concepts of efficiency. Bricklayers were encouraged to break the world record in bricklaying by being given monetary incentives to best their efforts. A 24-hour shift system was used, with massive arc lamps providing illumination at night. This allowed Lawson to run multiple trades onsite at the same time, and not lose valuable hours overnight waiting for one trade to finish before the next began. In a very early use of pre-built offsite construction, gangs of carpenters built the roof in sections in vacant allotments, which were then transported to the site for installation.

But perhaps the greatest insight into Lawson's architectural understanding from a structural viewpoint was his unusual idea to completely 'reverse the order of affairs'[9] by constructing the brick walls *before* the basement was excavated; this also shows his application of a new way of thinking to achieve efficiency. The highly noted *Building* magazine, then a well-read publication outlining the latest in both architecture and construction news in Australia, ran a story exclaiming:

> That bricklaying record on a picture theatre job in Bourke-street was no fake. I write as one who saw the men at work, and assisted afterwards in the measuring up. The joints were left neat and clean on both sides, and the wall is deemed by the architect quite good enough to carry a specially heavy domed roof ... If any place in the world has a better showing we would be glad to hear of it. The Trades Hall people were not at all put out [by] the 'speeding' of it as one of the papers tried to make out.[10]

In fact, Lawson was so proud of this extraordinary achievement—completing the building 'in 3 months and 21 days, instead of the contract time of 5 ½ months'[11]—that he made it the cornerstone of his speech on efficiency a few years later, given to the Accountants' Society of Students in 1917.[12] This speech gives a very good clue into the workings of Lawson's mind, and helps to explain why he favoured exploring new ways of doing things, rather than following the status quo.

Recycling: pioneering Melbourne warehouse conversions

Hot on the heels of the great success of the Britannia Theatre, Lawson embarked on two even more ambitious projects in 1912, this time applying his skills in building efficiency to property development and working in his own employ. The bold scheme involved recycling an entire factory into completely new uses. While this is common today, and is considered architecturally clever as well as environmentally responsible, in early twentieth-century Melbourne, it was inspired.

The Hoadley family, known in Australia for their confectionary and chocolate manufacturing, were friends with Lawson. When the Hoadleys decided to sell their jam factory at Snowden Gardens near Princes Bridge, South Melbourne (Figure 4), in favour of new premises a little further out of the city, the large landholding set Lawson's active imagination into top gear.

Figure 4: Hoadley jam factory, c. 1900, before conversion to a theatre and flats. Robert Vere Scott, photographer, *Looking south across Yarra River at Princes Bridge, Melbourne*, c. 1890–1910, State Library of Victoria, Pictures Collection, H2006.48.

Abel Hoadley had wanted to sell the factory as a whole but, due to lack of interest, split it into two parts: south (which was to be leased) and north (which was to be sold). This gave Lawson the chance to get involved in both parts, but in different ways. Lawson purchased the northern portion for the sum of £14,000 in August 1912.[13] Considering that he was only 27 years old and, at that stage, a building manager with architectural aspirations, it was an extraordinary sum of money.

Lawson planned to convert the factory into flats, and would fund the works, as well as recoup the original purchase price, via the raising of shares for a new company to oversee the process. This prospectus was advertised in *Punch* the following month.[14] The choice of architect for the conversion was Robert Haddon, who had been head of architecture when Lawson studied at the Working Men's College, a fact that no doubt influenced Lawson's selection. Haddon was well known as being flexible in working with other Melbourne architects, and was held in high regard by the architectural profession.[15]

The prospectus makes it clear that Lawson's own designing eye and hand were also at work: 'The alterations, which are estimated to cost £5800, have been designed by Mr R. J. Haddon, the architect of the proposed Company, and by Mr Lawson.'[16] The prospectus explained that the proposed Alexandra Mansions would be designed to include the very latest ideas in modern flat living, and would:

> Comprise suites of rooms with all accessories complete, and also single rooms. Hot and cold water will be laid on to all bathrooms, the building will be lit by electric light, while every modern comfort in the way of ventilation, heaters, telephones, etc., will be installed, where necessary, throughout the buildings.[17]

The new flats were intended to provide short- and long-term accommodation for middle-class tenants, and were a response to the growing demand for flats as an alternative to boarding houses. Most flats in Melbourne at this time were either conversions from existing residential properties (i.e., mansions into flats) or were purpose-built on the land of former mansions.

Solving the servant problem

Lawson believed that the Yarra River, then a dumping ground for the various factories that lined its banks, could be a desirable location.[18] Signalling both this and his belief in the value of providing a more modern style of accommodation to respond to changing social conditions, the prospectus extolled the benefits of lifestyle for future residents:

> These Mansions will be at the very door of the city, on the south side of Prince's Bridge, facing eastward towards the panorama of the Alexandra Drive, the winding river, and the city beyond, and fronting immediately the picturesque slope of Snowden Gardens ...
>
> Residents in the Mansions will be so near the city that they may easily walk to any of its business centres within a few minutes, while every modern appliance and convenience to enable residents to enjoy life while minimising the 'servant problem' will be provided.[19]

The southern part of the Hoadley factory was also recycled into a totally new use, again with Lawson's involvement. A new company, Snowden Pictures, leased this portion, with the intention of converting it into a silent picture theatre.[20] 'The alterations will be under the supervision of Mr Lawson, who has just completed the Britannia Theatre', explained the prospectus.[21] Lawson held financial interest in the project too, as he was also a director of the Snowden Picture company.[22] One of his fellow directors was his friend, Walter Hoadley, son of Abel Hoadley.

Lawson's expertise in swift and efficient building programs meant that the Snowden Picture Theatre was open by the end of October 1912, just three months after the prospectus was advertised. The architect credited for this work was A Phipps Coles, but it is difficult not to ponder how much influence Lawson would have imparted, given his later works and passion for new ideas. In any case, the theatre was applauded for its modern use of colourful, and moving, lighting on the facade, which was then a relatively unusual concept:

> The Snowden Picture Theatre, with vari-coloured disappearing electric lights illuminating its entrance at Prince's bridge, was formally opened last evening ... The theatre is replete with the most modern fittings. There is a nursery with bassinets for infants, left in charge of the nurse, a smokers' gallery, screened off with plate glass, at the rear of the dress circle, from which there is an uninterrupted view of the picture screen; and refreshments nooks, where ices and other delicacies can be enjoyed without any of the programme being missed. Special attention has been paid to the ventilation, and with the electric fans.[23]

Both buildings were later demolished. Today the site is part of Melbourne's greater arts precinct and the National Gallery of Victoria, Southbank.

Importantly, the conversion of a factory into flats and a picture theatre foreshadowed Lawson's life-long interest in recycling building materials, and goes towards an understanding of his beliefs in efficiency. Figure 5 is an undated photograph of the front facade of Alexandra Mansions and the Snowden Picture Theatre that, although fairly faint, is nonetheless helpful in seeing how one building became two. This image also reveals the use of large letters mounted above the roofline of the buildings. In itself, this was a novel idea at the time, and was an early use of building advertising designed to be seen from afar.

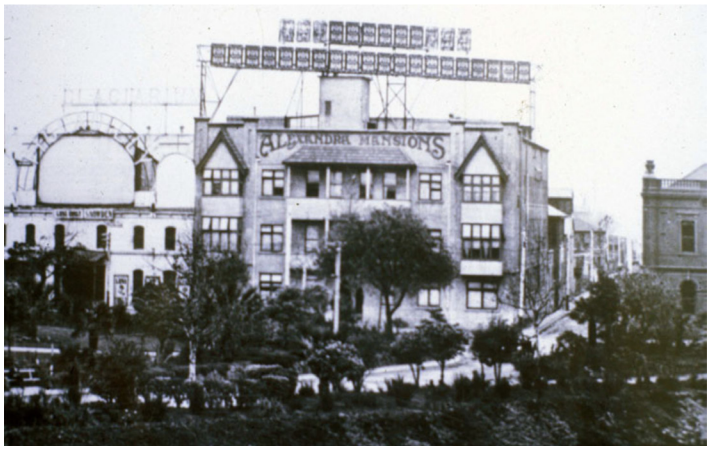


Figure 5: Alexandra Mansions was a very early example of adaptive building re-use, converting a former factory into upmarket flats, including a rooftop garden for residents' use. Unknown photographer, title and date, image courtesy of Professor Miles Lewis.

Figure 6 shows the side of these buildings, c. 1920, and the 'picturesque' Snowden Gardens on the opposite side of the theatre and Alexandra Mansions.

Figure 6: The recycled buildings of the Snowden Picture Theatre and Alexandra Mansions can be seen on the left side of this image, looking north towards the city. Sir Robert Gibson, photographer, *Looking across river towards Flinders St Station*, c. 1922, State Library of Victoria, Pictures Collection, H42558/6.

The architect and respected expert emerges

From 1916, Lawson referred to himself as an architect, and became increasingly active as a spokesperson for both building efficiency and better town planning. He was called to appear before the Victorian Government's Royal Commission on Housing Conditions in 1916,[24] set up to explore how best to deal with the shortage of men and materials during the Great War. Introduced as 'Mr Howard R Lawson, architect', he was asked his opinion on the effect of reducing house sizes to no more than a quarter of a block, and how he managed to contain the building costs of his own house designs. 'Architect tells secret' screamed the newspaper headline reporting on his evidence.[25] The article explained that Lawson felt that 'more attention should ... be paid to the design of the house' and revealed that he used a system of specialised tradesmen to achieve his efficiencies: 'I have one man who does nothing but windows, another who devotes himself exclusively to skirting, and so on ... My workmen are a happy family ... there is absolutely no talk of "slowing down"'.[26]

It is testimony to the regard in which Lawson was held that he was invited to give evidence as an expert witness at no less than three separate royal commissions regarding building matters (1913, 1916 and 1924). Lawson regularly had articles published in the Melbourne papers discussing town planning issues and aspects of housing design, and conversed on town planning matters with the chief architect for the Public Works Department.[27] He was invited to speak at the Accountants' Student Society about building efficiency in 1917 (as mentioned above), and the speech was later reprinted in London newspapers. Lawson moved in influential circles, with politicians, judges and captains of industry among his acquaintance.

The famous tagline appears

Increasingly busy, Lawson designed and built flats and houses for private clients in an idiosyncratic Arts and Crafts style, always looking to promote his services in imaginative ways. His 'architect who builds' tagline seems to have evolved from an earlier descriptor—'architect who builds fashionable houses in town or country', which appeared in an advert in the *Prahran Telegraph* in 1918 and was repeated in numerous other publications (Figure 7).[28]

Figure 7: Lawson's famous 'architect who builds' by-line appears to have evolved from an earlier, longer descriptor—'the architect who builds fashionable houses in town or country' line, which first appeared around 1918, well before he applied for architectural registration in 1923. Advertisement, *Prahran Telegraph*, 2 March 1918, p 4.

In 1919, *Real Property Annual* published an interview with Lawson, billed as 'the architect who builds', under the title 'Modern flats and bungalows from the specialist's point of view'. The story featured several of Lawson's 'recent works' for Arts and Crafts properties.[29]

Tagline as sulking response?

Until the *Architects Registration Act* amendment was passed in 1939, use of the title 'registered architect' was not restricted. Lawson was perfectly entitled to call himself an architect at this time, before formal registration necessitated that rules must be followed.

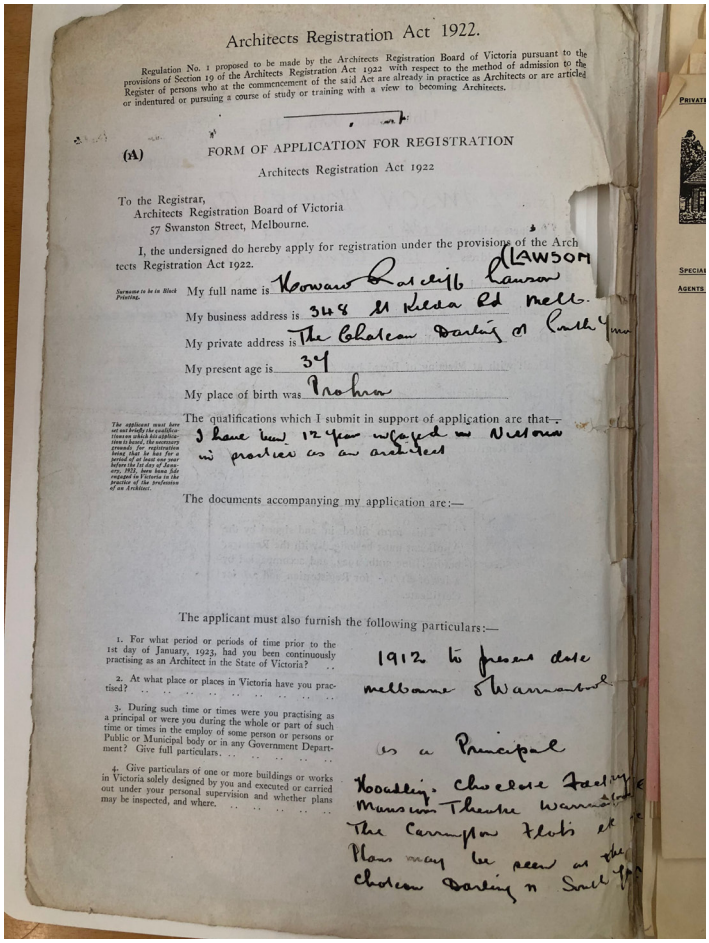
The increasing demand for new housing after World War I altered the types of designs that were desirable in most parts of the British Empire, including Melbourne. Soldiers returned from the front and new businesses were launched and marriages entered into. As a result of shortages during the war, domestic servants had become a legacy of the past, except in the wealthiest of households, and there was an upsurge in demand for houses and flats that could be managed without servants.[30] In this fast-moving housing bubble, some builders claimed the title of 'architect' to advertise their services. Members of the Royal Victorian Institute of Architects (RVIA) began to agitate for a way to separate jerry-builders from those who practised architecture as a profession, adhering to a set of regulated standards and knowledge of architectural history and design. The members believed that some sort of formal recognition would help to define the two groups.

In 1922, the Victorian Parliament passed the *Architects Registration Act*, which decreed that a newly formed Architects Registration Board of Victoria would have the power to create a register of members, and could 'issue or cancel certificates of registration'.[31] This Act also limited the use of the title 'registered architect' to members who had been admitted to the board's register. The board could chose to admit members on several grounds. For example, an applicant who did not hold formal qualifications, but had 'for a period of at least one year before the first day of January One thousand nine hundred and twenty-three [*sic*] been bonâ fide engaged in Victoria in the practice of the profession of an architect and ... made application for registration within six months after that date' could be admitted.[32]

It was under this option that Lawson chose to apply in 1923. For reasons unknown, he did not mention his earlier study of architecture at the Working Men's College, but instead stated: 'I have been 12 years engaged in Victoria in practice as an Architect' (Figure 8).[33] The exchange that followed between Lawson and the Architects Registration Board tells a more detailed story, and can be found in the original file of application held at Public Record Office Victoria.[34]

The board requested a meeting with Lawson to discuss his application. While there are no details of what was discussed, it seems that Lawson provided examples of his works that involved both design and construction, as the board subsequently, and very subtly, suggested that he would do better to supply a list of buildings that he had designed only—not designed *and* built.

The letter noted that: 'The Board does not regard the mixed practice of designing buildings and carrying out Building operations as bona fide practice of the profession of an Architect.'[35] If Lawson had carefully read between the lines, he would have realised that he was being given another chance. Lawson could easily have produced a list of buildings that satisfied the board's delicately worded request, as evidenced in his later court documents. But he did not do this, instead choosing to respond with firm resolve and admonition of the board's point of view. He instructed his solicitors to prepare and send a letter detailing a very long list of buildings that he had proudly designed *and* built, as well as enclosing several glowing



Architects Registration Act 1922.

Regulation No. 1 proposed to be made by the Architects Registration Board of Victoria pursuant to the provisions of Section 19 of the Architects Registration Act 1922 with respect to the method of admission to the Register of persons who at the commencement of the said Act are already in practice as Architects or are articled or indentured or pursuing a course of study or training with a view to becoming Architects.

(A) FORM OF APPLICATION FOR REGISTRATION

Architects Registration Act 1922

To the Registrar,
Architects Registration Board of Victoria
57 Swanston Street, Melbourne.

I, the undersigned do hereby apply for registration under the provisions of the Architects Registration Act 1922.

My full name is Howard Ratcliffe Lawson (LAWSON)

My business address is 348 St Kilda Rd Melb.

My private address is The Chateau Darling St South Yarra

My present age is 34

My place of birth was Prahran

The qualifications which I submit in support of application are that— I have been 12 year employed in Victoria in practice as an architect

The documents accompanying my application are:—

The applicant must also furnish the following particulars:—

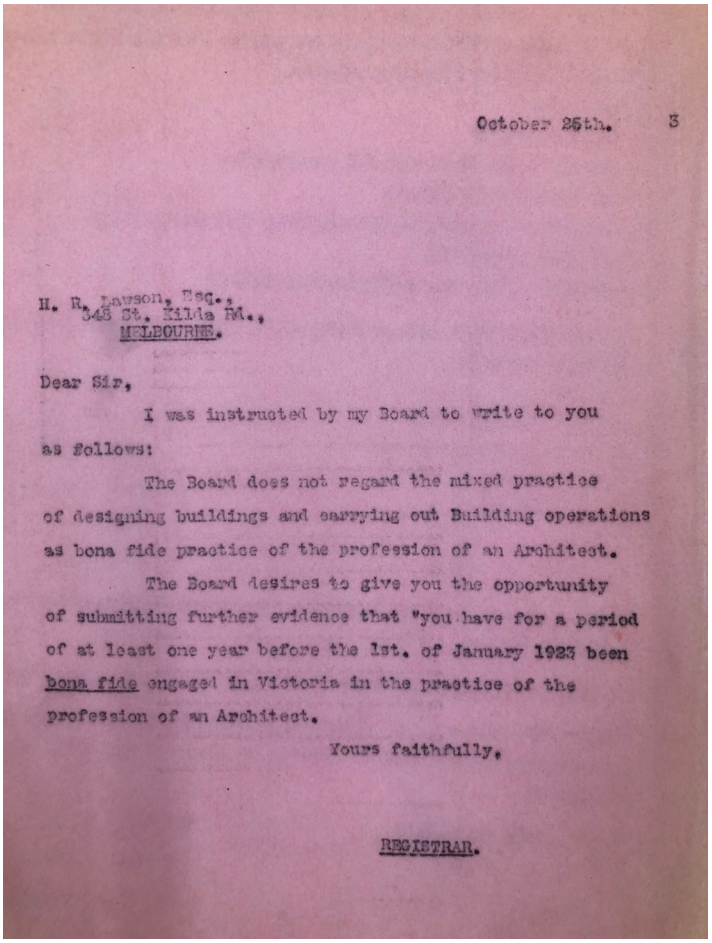
1. For what period or periods of time prior to the 1st day of January, 1923, had you been continuously practising as an Architect in the State of Victoria? 1912 to present date

2. At what place or places in Victoria have you practised? Melbourne & Warrnambool

3. During such time or times were you practising as a principal or were you during the whole or part of such time or times in the employ of some person or persons or Public or Municipal body or in any Government Department? Give full particulars. as a Principal

4. Give particulars of one or more buildings or works in Victoria solely designed by you and executed or carried out under your personal supervision and whether plans may be inspected, and where. Hoadley Chocolate Factory Mansion Theatre Warrnambool The Carrington Flats at Plans may be seen at the Chateau Darling St South Yarra

Figure 8: Howard Lawson's application for registration as an architect in 1923 clearly shows his handwriting and his reason to be considered, VPRS 8838/P1 Individual Architects Files, Unit 9, Lawson, Howard Ratcliff (1923-), Form application for Registration, signed and dated 27 June 1923.



October 25th. 3

H. R. Lawson, Esq.,
348 St. Kilda Rd.,
MELBOURNE.

Dear Sir,

I was instructed by my Board to write to you as follows:

The Board does not regard the mixed practice of designing buildings and carrying out Building operations as bona fide practice of the profession of an Architect.

The Board desires to give you the opportunity of submitting further evidence that "you have for a period of at least one year before the 1st. of January 1923 been bona fide engaged in Victoria in the practice of the profession of an Architect.

Yours faithfully,

REGISTRAR.

Figure 9: This letter holds a clue as to why Lawson was refused registration as an architect in 1923. The Architects Registration Board hinted that if Lawson provided further evidence, it would give him another opportunity for admission, PROV, VPRS 8838/P1 Individual Architects Files, Unit 9, Howard Ratcliff (1923-), Architects Registration Board to Howard Lawson, 25 October 1923.

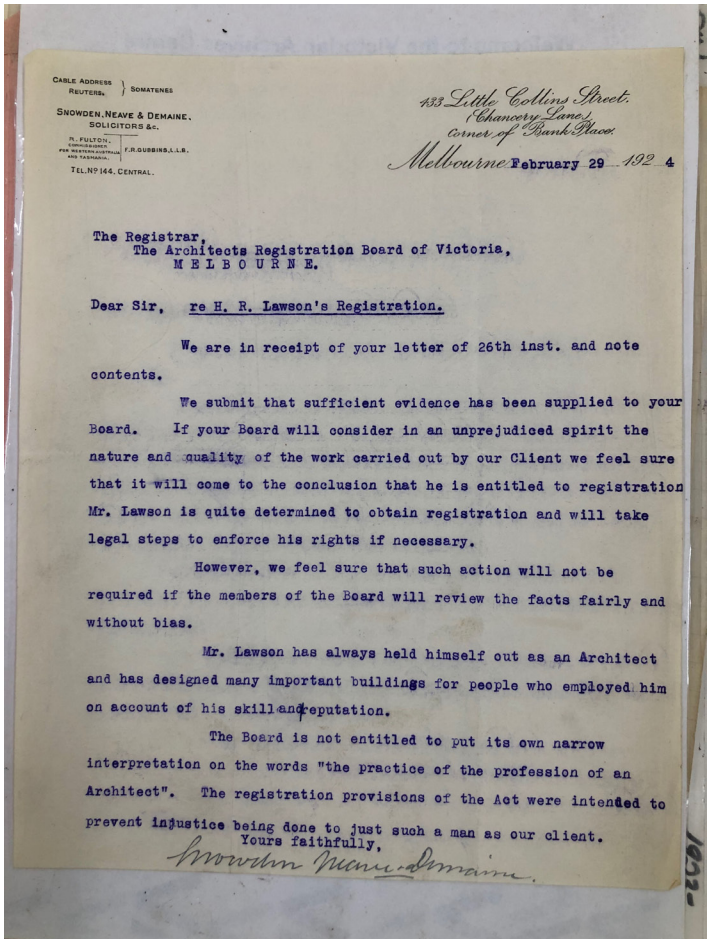
letters from his clients. An excerpt provides insight into Lawson's determination:

> Attention to this matter has been delayed owing to the holiday season; but we now enclose a list of buildings designed by Mr. H. R. Lawson and built by his Company under his supervision. We submit [that] your Board's previous decision was wrong and that on the evidence before it our Client's application should have been granted. However, we tender this further evidence in compliance with your Board's wish, and confidently expect that our client will experience no further trouble in obtaining registration.[36]

However, the exchanges between the board and Lawson's solicitors moved further and further from resolution, and dragged on for some months as neither side would budge. A terse letter from Lawson's solicitors to the board in February 1924 expressed Lawson's sense of righteous indignation: in addition to threatening legal action, it asserted that the board was 'not entitled to put its own narrow interpretation on the words "the practice of the profession of an Architect"' (Figure 10).[37]

Not surprisingly, after receiving the letter the board decided to end the matter with a final decision addressed directly to Lawson. To reinforce that the matter was concluded, they returned his application fee (Figure 11).

Lawson's decision to fight rather than conform created the basis of a later-muddled story that reversed the sequence of true events, and led to a rumour about his claim to be an architect.



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SNOWDEN, NEAVE & DEMAINE. SOLICITORS &c.

TEL. Nº 144. CENTRAL.

433 Little Collins Street. Chancery Lane, corner of Bank Place.

Melbourne February 29 192 4

The Registrar,
The Architects Registration Board of Victoria,
M E L B O U R N E.

Dear Sir, re H. R. Lawson's Registration.

We are in receipt of your letter of 26th inst. and note contents.

We submit that sufficient evidence has been supplied to your Board. If your Board will consider in an unprejudiced spirit the nature and quality of the work carried out by our Client we feel sure that it will come to the conclusion that he is entitled to registration Mr. Lawson is quite determined to obtain registration and will take legal steps to enforce his rights if necessary.

However, we feel sure that such action will not be required if the members of the Board will review the facts fairly and without bias.

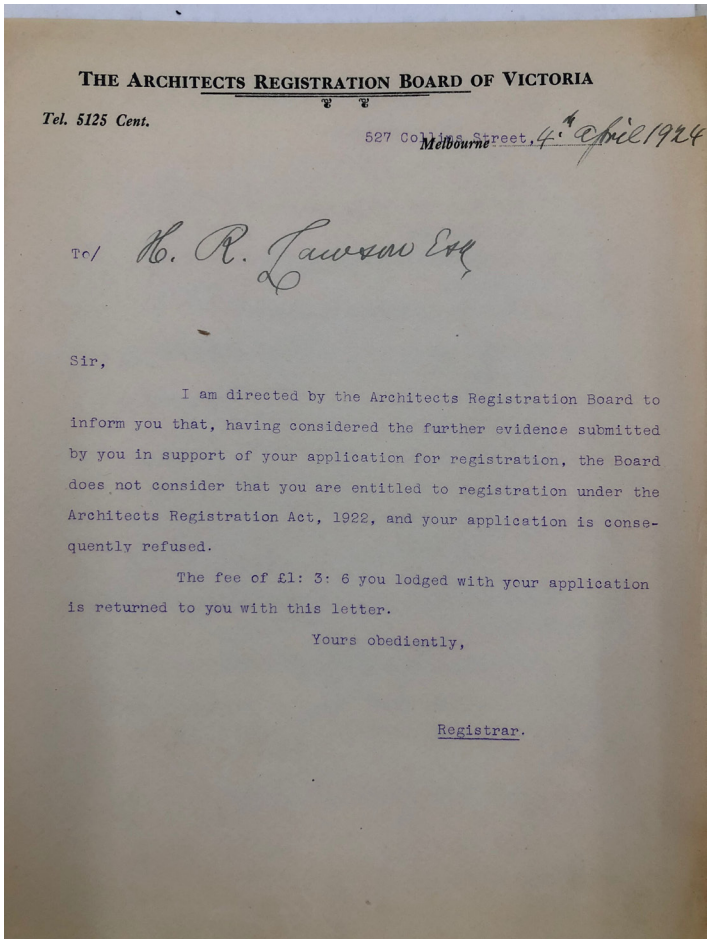
Mr. Lawson has always held himself out as an Architect and has designed many important buildings for people who employed him on account of his skill and reputation.

The Board is not entitled to put its own narrow interpretation on the words "the practice of the profession of an Architect". The registration provisions of the Act were intended to prevent injustice being done to just such a man as our client.

Yours faithfully,

Snowden Neave Demaine.

Figure 10: This terse letter from Lawson's solicitors provides valuable insight into Lawson's indignation at not being able to both design and build his own works, PROV, VPRS 8838/P1 Individual Architects Registration Files, Unit 9, Howard Ratcliff (1923-), Snowden, Leave & Demaine to the Architectural Registration Board, 29 February 1924.



THE ARCHITECTS REGISTRATION BOARD OF VICTORIA

Tel. 5125 Cent.

527 Collins Street, Melbourne 4th April 1924

To/ H. R. Lawson Esq

Sir,

I am directed by the Architects Registration Board to inform you that, having considered the further evidence submitted by you in support of your application for registration, the Board does not consider that you are entitled to registration under the Architects Registration Act, 1922, and your application is consequently refused.

The fee of £1: 3: 6 you lodged with your application is returned to you with this letter.

Yours obediently,

Registrar.

Figure 11: The final letter from the Architects Registration Board to Lawson politely refunded his application fee, bringing the matter to an unambiguous if ignominious end, PROV, VPRS 8838/P1 Individual Architects Registration Files, Unit 9, Lawson, Howard Ratcliff (1923-), Architects Registration Board to Howard Lawson, 4 April 1924.

Was Lawson an architect then?

The *Architects Registration Act 1922* did not quite achieve all the RVIA had intended, as the Act only stopped people who were not members of the Architects Registration Board from using the title 'registered architect'; it did not prevent non-members from describing themselves as architects. Therefore, Lawson was allowed to continue calling himself an architect until 1939, and he did. At the end of 1939, an amendment to the Act placed further restrictions on the permitted use of titles.[38] The amendment stated that neither 'architect' nor 'registered architect' could be claimed by people who had not been admitted by the Architects Registration Board.

Ironically, the majority of the vast number of designs—over 200—that Lawson produced, including Beverley Hills and Garden of the Moon, were created prior to the end of 1939, so were well within the timeframe in which he was legitimately allowed to call himself an architect. Thus, the rumour about him falsely claiming this title is incorrect.

The reality is that Lawson simply got caught in the crosswires of an evolving definition of what constituted the profession of a registered architect in the early twentieth century, as the industry tried to position itself in a changing world. It is clear that Lawson both understood, and applied, the principles of architectural design. The extant examples of his works, such as Beverley Hills, are testament to this.

World War II curtailed building activities across Australia, restricting works between 1939 and 1945 for most architects and builders. After the war ended, Lawson was looking forward to resuming his business, but such plans came to abrupt end when he died in January 1946.

Lawson left behind a legacy of extraordinarily imaginative buildings. He used recycled materials in his buildings not because he was a 'cheapskate', as so many have falsely alleged, but because he had a passion for efficiency and an appreciation of the inherent value of beautiful things. His use of recycled products was decades ahead of his time. Whether that meant recycling a factory into a new style of residential housing, like Alexandra Mansions, or celebrating the beauty of a nineteenth-century leadlight window in the 1935–1936 Beverley Hills flats, Lawson was never afraid to follow his own convictions.

Held in high esteem during his lifetime, the rumours that damaged his reputation were posthumous, and may, in part, have circulated due to changing ideas about what was considered desirable in the pursuit of contemporary architecture post–World War II. An emphasis on new materials and simplicity of form meant that recycling was not valued. Further, the use of decorative elements was no longer seen as playful or whimsical, but as an affront to the streamlined 'honesty' of postwar architecture. Indeed, during the mid-twentieth century, the architectural establishment eschewed 'playful' architecture as old-fashioned. The good and the bad were thrown together and relegated to history. In so doing, Lawson's architecture was devalued and his use of recycled elements misunderstood. Somewhat ironically, our current awareness of the need to preserve and value existing materials in a world that is looking for new methods for sustainability have made Lawson's ideas on recycling suddenly appealing.

The origin of the rumours and myths about both Lawson and his architecture are hard to pinpoint. Left unchallenged, what is certain is that, over the decades, they grew more colourful and exaggerated, taking on fantastical proportions. These popular stories were repeated in detail, so that, over time, they became accepted facts. Lawson was perceived as something of a scoundrel, an element that makes for a great story. From real estate copy to social media platforms, the story has run unfettered.

If the true measure of successful architecture is the ability to hold value independent of its creator, then Howard Lawson's architectural legacy is quite safe. His rampaging imagination was not constrained by existing frameworks. He dreamed and built ideas that embody the power of architecture to transform the everyday into a world of whimsical imagination and beauty. Truly, that is his, and our, architectural and social heritage legacy, and no rumours or myths can dispel it.

Endnotes

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[2] Elizabeth Kulas, 'Beverley Hills: sunset glamour', Assemble Papers, c. 2013, available at <https://assemblepapers.com.au/2013/04/11/beverley-hills-sunset-glamour/>, accessed 30 May 2020.

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[16] 'Abridged prospectus Alexandra Mansions', p. 11.

[17] Ibid.

[18] Miles Lewis and Victoria Department of Planning, *An industrial seed-bed: Volume 2 of the South Bank architectural and historical study*, Victorian Department of Planning, Melbourne, 1983.

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[20] Ibid.

[21] 'Abridged prospectus Snowden pictures', *Punch*, 11 July 1912, p. 8.

[22] 'Snowden picture theatre. Fresh directorate', *Argus*, 12 February 1914, p. 10.

[23] 'Snowden picture theatre', *Argus*, 1 November 1912, p. 5.

[24] 'Housing Commission the minimum allotment question', *Age*, 6 December 1916, p. 11.

[25] 'Architect tells secret', *Herald*, 5 December 1916, p. 9.

[26] Ibid.

[27] 'Ratepayer critical', *Herald*, 19 October 1916, p. 4.

[28] Advertisement, *Prahran Telegraph*, 2 March 1918, p. 4.

[29] 'Modern flats and bungalows from the specialist's point of view, an interview with Mr Howard R Lawson', *Real Property Annual*, 1919, pp. 64–65.

[30] Graeme Butler, *The Californian bungalow in Australia*, Lothian, Port Melbourne, 1995, pp. 27–29.

[31] *Architects Registration Act 1922*, State Parliament of Victoria.

[32] Clause 7.(1), *Architects Registration Act 1922*, State Parliament of Victoria.

[33] PROV, VPRS 8838/P1 Individual Architects Files, Unit 9, Lawson, Howard Ratcliff (1923-), Form application for Registration, signed and dated 27 June 1923.

[34] Ibid.

[35] Ibid., Architects Registration Board of Victoria to Howard Lawson, 25 October 1923.

[36] Ibid., Snowden, Leave & Demaine to the Architects Registration Board of Victoria,11 February 1924.

[37] Ibid., Snowden, Leave & Demaine to the Architects Registration Board of Victoria, 29 February 1924.

[38] 'Registration of architects, amending bill passed', *Journal of the Royal Victorian Institute of Architects*, Oct–Nov 1939, p. 211.

Witnessing the familial

insights from inquest depositions and minding the gaps

'Witnessing the familial: insights from inquest depositions and minding the gaps',
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Abstract

Drawing on the common thread of Elizabeth Morgan's appearance as a deponent in her father's and daughter's inquests (1861 and 1870), this article examines how inquest depositions can be mined for evidence of familial relationships and circumstances. It considers what other records and research strategies can support the interpretation (and absence) of inquest records, and what insights can be gained from minding the gaps in the narratives offered.

This reflection functions as a companion piece to the article 'Untimely ends' published elsewhere in this issue of Provenance. I examine (or, in one case, do not examine) inquest records on the deaths of Gabriel Blewett, Emma Morgan, John Morgan and a woman named Morgan that are relevant to my Morgan forebears, in particular, my great-great-grandmother Elizabeth Morgan, born Blewett. These examples illustrate how inquest depositions can be useful to family historians, helping to identify family members and shedding light on relationships and living conditions; they also suggest that researching the deponents may be necessary to understand their testimony. Understanding how inquests were conducted and how inquest records were created further aids in interpreting the evidence.

My father knew nothing of his Morgan ancestors beyond the fact of his grandfather Gabriel Morgan's middle name being Blewett. My first foray into rectifying this lack of knowledge revealed the connection: Blewett was Gabriel Morgan's mother Elizabeth's maiden name.[1] From knowing nothing, after years of research I now know a great deal, because across three generations the family's lives were circumscribed by courts, prison cells, asylums and hospitals—all great generators of records that have providentially been kept. Yet I hesitate to say I am lucky to have these records, as so many of them bear witness to trauma. I have omitted the real trauma behind them because it would feel like exploitation to share everything I have learnt about my family.

Gabriel Blewett died in the Melbourne Hospital after a leg amputation on 14 May 1870, aged 70.[2] From my perspective, the most important evidence this inquest record contained was certain proof that Elizabeth Morgan and Gabriel Blewett were related. The question and answer nature of deponent's testimonies before inquest juries and the requirements for identifying oneself proved this without a doubt. Elizabeth identified herself as a dressmaker and also gave her first married name (she had been known by other names since). Aside from further details about how Gabriel Blewett's injury was exacerbated at home, most importantly Elizabeth stated: 'The deceased was my father. His name was Gabriel Blewett. His age was 70 years. He has left a wife and three children'. The statement that he left three children suggested something—namely, that Elizabeth was still in touch with her remaining two siblings back in England. She had not seen them for between six and 10 years, yet she knew they were both still alive. Inquest testimony was taken down by a government employee and then given to the deponent to read, swear to and sign before the coroner. It can come across as somewhat neutral in its accounting, but still be revealing.

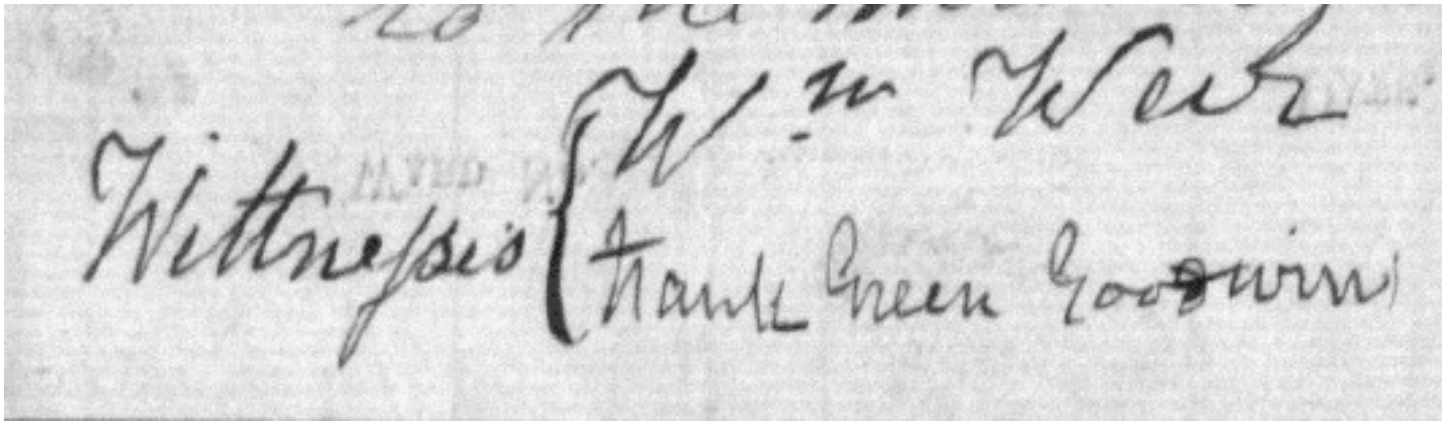

Figure 1: The signature of William Weir, foreman of the jury, from the inquest record of Gabriel Blewett, VPRS 24/P0, Unit 239, Item 1870/421 Gabriel Blewett; and the signature of William Weir, witness to the codicil of Gabriel Blewett's will, VPRS 7591/P1, Unit 38, Item 8/469 Gabriel Blewitt.

This was one of the first records I found about this family and it reassured me that I was on the right track, because the relationship between the parties was very clear. I went back to it a few years later and noticed something else—the name of the first juror, the foreman of the jury, William Weir. Gabriel Blewett was a stonemason and I had since discovered that one of the earliest buildings he worked on was the Christ Church School in Collingwood in 1855 with William Weir, another Collingwood-based builder.[3] I had also noticed on another record revisitation that William Weir was the witness of a codicil to Gabriel Blewett's will in 1870, just before his accident. Were they the same William Weir? There were two things I had to work out: how many William Weirs were there in Melbourne at this time (and how do the signatures compare), and what was the usual conduct of an inquest—did they just grab any old 'good and lawful men' off the street? In country inquests in smaller towns, the chances are this would not be a coincidence, but in Melbourne, at the hospital, it could be. Checking Sands & McDougall's Melbourne directories suggested that my assumption was reasonable; however, as not everyone was listed in the directory, I searched Births, Deaths and Marriages Victoria for deaths of William Weir. This revealed potentially eight candidates alive in Melbourne in 1870. Therefore, I remain uncertain about the signatures (Figure 1).

That William Weir witnessed Gabriel Morgan's will is proof enough that the men retained a friendship over a 15-year period (which is important to me). Him participating as a juror at Gabriel's inquest feels like the final act one might perform for a friend. Taking this as far as I could, I found Gabriel's record in the hospital ward book held at Public Record Office Victoria (PROV),[4] which notes that he slipped into a coma and died at midnight. Perhaps Ruth, his wife, and William, his old friend, came to see him the next morning only to find he had died in the night, and William was roped into the inquest jury. The inquest was not held until two days after Gabriel died, so this scenario is not likely, but it is where my narrative bent wants to fill in the gaps.

Gabriel's inquest was not the first that his daughter Elizabeth Morgan had borne witness to. It was likely the third, in Australia at least, the first being her two-year-old daughter Emma's. Emma died in a tent at Clinker's Hill, Castlemaine, in 1861.[5] The verdict of the inquest was 'that Emma Morgan aged 2 years died at Castlemaine on the 22nd March in consequence of tubercle of the mesentery but we believe the mother has been guilty of great carelessness towards the child'. Aside from Elizabeth's testimony, there were six deponents, all men, three from neighbouring tents, the Castlemaine hospital surgeon, another medical man and the police constable who found Emma. Everyone except Elizabeth referred to Emma as 'the deceased', 'the child' and 'it'. Granted, probably nobody except Elizabeth knew her daughter's name and use of 'the deceased' is probably an artefact of how the testimony was taken down, but use of *it* for a child grates.

Some of the witnesses were very critical of Elizabeth. I researched what I could about all the witnesses in order to understand their testimony a little better. One was a very elderly man who appeared to tell it like it was. One was only about 17, which may explain the guarded nature of his testimony (he refused to be negative about Elizabeth). Neither of the medical men implicated Elizabeth. It was the police constable who did so on the word of the neighbours. The most negative and judgemental of those was George Greenhill. This man eventually became the mayor of Castlemaine. Three years after making this

deposition, Greenhill was assaulted by a fellow member of his friendly society in lodge rooms, which suggests something about his character that is borne out in newspaper reports of his local campaigning in Castlemaine. Greenhill, who effectively retired in disgrace from his council position, was described by one of his fellow councillors as a 'low, snarling, miserable cur' and a 'man entirely devoid of principles'.[6] I bear this in mind when I consider his testimony.

In this case, there is evidence of how Elizabeth felt about the inquest process, because a few weeks later, pregnant with my great-grandfather, she appeared before the Castlemaine Court to give testimony against her husband, who was charged with deserting his wife and family:

> John Morgan was brought up on warrant, charged with deserting his wife and family. Elizabeth Morgan, defendant's wife, said that in March last he left her and went to Bendigo, and that since that time he had never given her any money to support her, with the exception of 5s [shillings]. During that time one of their children died, and she was not able to obtain the necessary medical aid. The consequence was that an inquest was held on it, and she was nearly committed for manslaughter, because she had not had means to obtain necessaries for it.[7]

Elizabeth not only understood how she had been judged, but also the consequences of that judgement.

The next example concerns the death of Elizabeth's son, John Morgan, who drowned at Dromana in 1863. The cause of death was given as drowning on his death certificate, which states that a magisterial inquiry was held at Schnapper Point two days after six-year-old John drowned.[8] No doubt the record of the magisterial inquiry, had it survived, would have illuminated the family's personal circumstances at the time, and described how John came to drown. However, unfortunately, this record is one of the 3–5 per cent of magisterial inquiries and inquest records in Victoria that PROV estimates have not survived.

This is where it is important to read PROV's series descriptions, which help both to understand the context of the records and to save time in research. The series description for Inquest Deposition Files (VPRS 24—see under 'Missing Files') suggests alternative record sources for information about inquests, including VPRS 937 Chief Commissioner of Police, Inward Registered Correspondence 1852–1893, which may contain reports by attending police officers. I have consulted records from the 1870s in this series and found the size of the files and, in many cases, the lack of indexing, to be quite daunting. (The 1863 files are on my to do list.)

In many cases like this, it is possible to find detailed descriptions of inquest depositions and findings in newspapers; however, to date, this one has defeated me. The lack of local newspapers for Mornington at this time and the distance from Melbourne meant that John's death may never have been reported as news. To build a picture of what might have happened, I extracted inquest data on drownings for 1863 from the PROV catalogue and looked at the inquest record for a young girl who drowned in the same location later that year.

My first thought was that John probably drowned in the ocean, as his death was recorded at Dromana; however, of the 278 drowning records for the year 1863, it can be inferred from location that people, and children particularly, commonly drowned in waterholes. From the 1860s through to the present day, 1863 recorded the highest number of deaths by drowning: 83 per cent of these were males. They fell into wells, waterholes, rivers, creeks, tanks and dams; they fell down mine shafts and off bridges; one man drowned escaping from the police while another man accidently fell off a log. Children, then as now, drowned in the smallest depths of water, even a few inches at the bottom of a cellar. Seven months after John drowned at Dromana, a four-year-old girl called Phoebe Allison drowned at Schnapper Point in a waterhole on her father's premises in the middle of the afternoon. Several other children had drowned in waterholes at Schnapper Point in the preceding years. Their inquest records reveal commonalities: many children were playing without adult supervision when they drowned. What was John doing on the day he drowned? Where might his mother have been? Looking after my great-grandfather, the baby, while her eldest son, aged 12, looked after John, perhaps exploring together in the scrub? Without specific records relating to John's death, other inquest records can at least suggest something about the circumstances.

The final example relates to my search for a death certificate or proof of death for Elizabeth Morgan, daughter of Gabriel Blewett, and mother of John and Emma Morgan. Given what I knew about her personal circumstances, and a last conclusive sighting of her alive in 1889 in Collingwood where she had spent most of her 35 years in Victoria, I searched Trove using the phrase 'woman named Morgan' in connection with 'Collingwood' and 'death' from that date. I found something interesting under the heading 'Sudden death at Collingwood' in 1896

about a woman aged approximately 70, known only by her surname, Morgan.[9] I knew there would be an inquest record, and yet nothing came up in a search of PROV's catalogue for inquests for Morgan in 1896.

But at least the inquest was reported in the newspapers.[10] The initial newspaper account of the death stated she was about 70; however, the newspaper report of the inquest findings stated she was 53, and the death certificate stated she was 63. Neither newspaper report indicated that the woman's first name was known, and her death certificate lists her only as 'woman named Morgan'. The ages 53 and 63 are very particular and I could not explain the change from an approximation of 70 to 63 without further details about the woman. But, if the people who knew her did not even know her first name, how could anyone have known her actual age? Could she perhaps have had some keepsake on her person that indicated her birth year? Knowing what information comes to light in inquest depositions, this is one missing record I regretted not having survived, because there may have been further clues that would have helped me.

I searched the newspapers in Trove for the names of other people who had inquests held on them in Melbourne in August 1896 and could not find them in the PROV catalogue either. Perhaps there was a whole swathe missing? Looking at the catalogue results around this date, I realised that the inquest records were there but that the name metadata was missing. I reported this to PROV and was informed that it would be rectified (a reminder of how valuable the work of volunteer transcribers of name metadata is). The files were there with only the file number and, by sampling in the file number range where I hoped my inquest would be, I finally found the one I was looking for.[11] I was hugely disappointed because it is unlikely the 'woman named Morgan' is my great-great-grandmother Elizabeth. It was the deponent Mrs Quinn, who found the body, who stated 'she said she was 53 years', which is too young to be my Elizabeth Morgan, who would have been 69. Who was right: Sarah Quinn reporting the words of the deceased woman; the police, who first reported her age as about 70; or the registrar of deaths?

Nevertheless, there is something very poignant about this record—this woman with a name nobody knew—and the humanity of those around her. Mrs Smith, whose house the woman named Morgan lived in, told the police that the woman, who was of the 'vagrant' class, came to her house about three months prior and, as she complained of being ill, Mrs Smith would not turn her out, from which I presumed that the woman named Morgan could not afford the rent and that Mrs Smith had let this slide.

My Elizabeth is probably the Elizabeth Morgan who died in November 1894 in the Melbourne Hospital of senile debility and exhaustion.[12] This Elizabeth was aged 70, according to her death certificate, which may have been an approximation, as no other particulars were known. She was buried on 3 November 1894 in an unmarked (pauper's) grave in the 'Other Denominations' section of the Melbourne General Cemetery. My Elizabeth was almost 68 in late 1894, so this could have been her. The gaps in this record may say it all.

Inquest deposition files as public records offer a very distinctive kind of access to personal information, drawing together the testimony of multiple witnesses (deponents), and often including family members of the deceased. When using these records for research, I have learnt that interpreting them requires empathy and fanning out the research to consider the circumstances of the deponents as well as the deceased. Minding the gaps in the records and the narrative they purport to tell through asking questions and seeking answers in alternative record sources can help to shed light on more than just the death of the individual.

Endnotes

[1] I explored the beginnings of my research journey in two blog posts for the Find & Connect web resource, 'Encounters with the Immigrants Home', 24 and 29 August 2017, available at <https://www.findandconnectwrblog.info/2017/08/encounters-with-the-immigrants-home-part-1/>, accessed 10 November 2020.

[2] VPRS 24/P0, Unit 239, Item 1870/421, Gabriel Blewett.

[3] William Weir, born c. 1825, died in 1890. See 'The late William Weir', *Mercury and Weekly Courier*, 8 May 1890, p. 2.

[4] VPRS 12477/P1, Unit 18, 15 February 1864 – 16 August 1872, Males, No. 2 & 3 Wards Gillbee GSV Book No: 144, pp.101, 104–105.My transcription is available at <https://ancestry.helenmorgan.net/references/001-004-0002>, accessed 10 November 2020.

[5] VPRS 24/P0, Unit 106, Item 1861/181, Emma Morgan.

[6] 'Disgraceful scene in the Castlemaine Borough Council', *Leader*, 12 January 1884, p. 32.

[7] 'Castlemaine Police Court', *Mount Alexander Mail*, 5 April 1861, p. 5.

[8] Victorian death registration number 2816/1863.

[9] 'Sudden death at Collingwood', *Age*, 25 August 1896, p. 5.

[10] 'To-day's inquests. Natural causes', *Herald*, 27 August 1896, p. 2.

[11] VPRS 24/P0, Unit 662, Item 1896/1067 [no name].

[12] Victorian death registration number 14031/1894. Beneath the hospital, as the place of death, is the notation 'Abbotsford', which fits with Elizabeth's last known residence in Collingwood.