



## Fishermans Bend Heritage Study

Revised report for Fisherman's Bend Taskforce

4 November 2016

## 4 Thematic History

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The Thematic History focusses on aspects of the Fishermans Bend District that have distinctive and relevant places, events and associations. Not all themes described in Victoria's Framework of Historic Themes are relevant, so only those which are appropriate to the history of the district are considered.<sup>6</sup>

### 4.1 Environmental determinants on land use

*Themes: 1 Shaping Victoria's environment; 1.1 Tracing climate and topographical change*

The nature of the landscape in the Fishermans Bend District has had an important effect on how the area has developed and its history. The Fishermans Bend District comprises a number of landforms, as described below.

Emerald Hill is a prominence of the Older Volcanics that stands proud of surrounding swamps and flats. The base of the hill reaches down to about City Road and Montague Street, with the area comprising the **Montague Precinct**, which straddles the railway and lies north of City Road, being a former swamp.

The Sandridge Road (City Road) ran along the higher ground at the foot of the hill, and then the dry ridge between the Port Melbourne Lagoon and swamps and sand ridges to the west. Williamstown Road also followed the higher ridges where possible, but required considerable more filling.

Further downstream was a large tidal marsh on the south side of the Yarra, commencing opposite the gasworks. This comprises most of the area of the **Lorimer Precinct**. Further west covering the **Employment Precinct**, were a series of sand ridges and intervening swamps, formed by the progressive shift of the Yarra meanders across the estuary, and the accumulation of sand as former beach ridges, which were left behind as the shoreline receded. Williamstown Road marks the approximate southern limit of these swamps and ridges. Another large marsh commenced beyond where Todd Road now runs. The **Sandridge** and **Wirraway precincts** comprise much of this area.

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<sup>6</sup> Victoria's Framework of Historic Themes, Heritage council, <http://heritagecouncil.vic.gov.au/research-projects/framework-of-historical-themes/>; Thematic History of the City of Melbourne's Urban Environment, Helen Doyle, Context 2011, Victorians <https://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/SiteCollectionDocuments/history-city-of-melbourne-urban-environment.pdf>



**Figure 11: Cox Plan 1864, showing section of Fishermans Bend and Sandridge**

The historical Fishermans Bend was a low lying area on the delta of the Yarra River. It was once a series of swamps and sand ridges composed of alluvium brought down by the river (Coode Island Silt) and beach sand.

The lower reaches of the Yarra, from the junction of the Maribyrnong River to the mouth was known in the past as Hobson's River. This section of the river has been the location of some of Melbourne's largest early industries, but it was also one of the best habitats for wetland flora and fauna, and consequently an important food resource for Aborigines.

Although alterations to the natural course of the Yarra began in the mid nineteenth century with the construction of training walls, removing snags and trees from the river bank and dredging the river bottom, these changes had only minor impact on the surrounding mud flats, salt marshes, swamps and other estuarine land forms. It was not until the large scale land reclamation and filling from the Second World War, that the area lost its predominantly natural character.

The basement rocks of folded and faulted Ordovician and Silurian marine sediments are overlaid by Tertiary sands and gravels and older volcanics. Between one and five million years ago volcanic eruptions buried most of these older sediments west of Melbourne under basalt lava flows. However the erosive force of the Maribyrnong River has cut through the basalt to expose the older sediments. The older volcanic lava flows, capped by the Pliocene 'Red Bluff Sands' outcrop north of the Yarra estuary at Kensington and North Melbourne. Batman's Hill near Spencer St. appears to be the southern edge of this exposure.<sup>7</sup>

Slumping of the Port Phillip basin resulted in the formation of the bay and drowning of the river mouth which was subsequently filled by estuarine and fluvial sedimentation including the Coode Island Silt. These recent and Pleistocene sediments now form the estuaries and flood plains of the Maribyrnong and Yarra Rivers and the lower reaches of Moonee Ponds Creek. The flats extend between Melbourne and Footscray, and south from the basalt ridge of Kensington to the Bay including Fishermans Bend and most of Sandridge/Port

<sup>7</sup> Geological Survey of Victoria, Melbourne Sheet SJ 55-1

Melbourne. Soils on these floodplains included silt deposited by floodwaters and swamp deposits of fine sand and silty clay. Raised beach ridges from wind-blown and wave-deposited sand were formed south of the Yarra River over much of Port Melbourne forming the geological unit known as the Fishermans Bend Sand.<sup>8</sup>

The shallow sand deposits were extensively exploited for building, roadmaking and other uses from the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century to the 1960s, while the deep Coode Island silt deposits, have continued to challenge foundation engineers, leading to several innovative structures, such as the 'Tea house' built on a massive raft of Red Gum, and the deep bored piles of the Kings Way Bridge.<sup>9</sup>

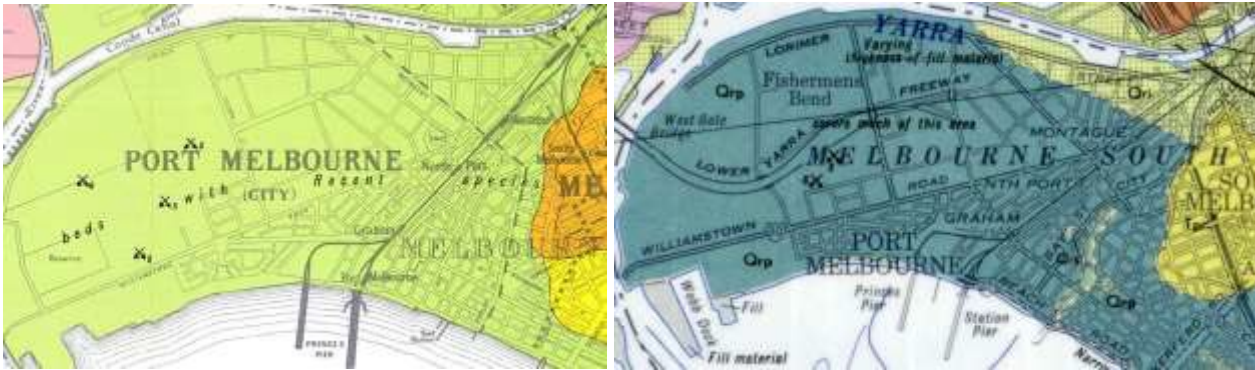


Figure 12: Geological Survey Plans 1959 and 1978, showing sedimentary units and sand quarries.

<sup>8</sup> N.J. Rosengren, *Sites of Geological and Geomorphological Significance in the Western Region of Melbourne*, Conservation Forests and Lands, Victoria, 1986.

<sup>9</sup> Kings Way Bridge classification report, National Trust Bridges Database Reg. No. 4042

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## 4.2 Aboriginal history

*Themes: 2 Peopling Victoria's places and landscapes; 1.4 Creation stories and defining country; 1.5 Living with natural processes; 4.1 Living off the land*

The first inhabitants of the Sandridge Flats and Yarra River estuary would have moved into the area around 5-10,000 years ago only when the level of waters in Port Phillip Bay became stable, and the regular floods had deposited sufficient sediment to form dry land. The area would then have become an important resource-rich environment for Aboriginal people. Earlier periods of lower sea levels when much of Port Phillip Bay was a dry plain caused erosion of the Yarra and Maribyrnong River valleys, and so land surfaces were lower. Only with the rising sea levels and flooding of the bay, did the accumulation of sediment cover any earlier landscape, and therefore any aboriginal camp sites.

Aboriginal occupation of the Yarra Delta is presumed to have been relatively intensive, and an important part of their overall natural and cultural resources. This is based on speculation and extrapolation rather than solid archaeological, ethnographic or historical evidence.

However, William Thomas, Assistant Aboriginal Protector, noted in 1840 that:

*By what I can learn, long ere the settlement was formed the sport where Melbourne now stands and the flats on which we are now camped [on the south bank of the Yarra] was the regular rendezvous for the tribes known as Warorangs, Boonurongs, Barrabools, Nilunguons, Gouldburns twice a year or as often as circumstances and emergences required to settle their grievances, revenge deaths....<sup>10</sup>*

Similarly, when Fawkner came across a group of Aborigines near Batman's Swamp he noted:

*'...the Blacks at first alarmed, the women in particular. When I drove towards them threw themselves into strange but pleasing positions and bellowed loudly'.<sup>11</sup>*

At the time of European settlement, Aboriginal people in the Central Victoria had a social, political, economic and cultural structure and organisation based on familial links and totemic associations or *Moeties*. A number of language groups (*Taung wurrung*, *Wadda wurrung*, *Dja Dja wurrung*, *Woi wurrung* and *Bun wurrung*) formed a loose coalition known as the Kulin Nation. The language groups were divided into a series of clans probably comprising extended families and social groups. The *Yalukit willam* clan of the *Bun wurrung* (or *Bunurong* as it is often referred to) occupied land which encompassed the coastal areas extending eastward from the Werribee River, through Williamstown and Sandridge to St. Kilda and therefore also incorporating Fishermen's Bend, Port Melbourne and South Melbourne.<sup>12</sup>

Robinson first listed them in his 1840 journal. Later, in 1900, Howitt and Fison refer to a difference between the Aboriginal groups at St. Kilda and at Sandridge.<sup>13</sup> According to Howitt and Fison, the group at Sandridge had *bunjil* as their moiety, and the St Kilda group had *waa* as their moiety.<sup>14</sup>

The preferred camping places of the *Woi wurrung* and *Bun wurrung* clans were along the south bank of the Yarra River, opposite the settlement of Melbourne and Government Paddocks (between Princess Bridge and Punt Road). A Government reserve run by George Langhorne was established in 1837 on an 895-acre site,

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<sup>10</sup> Thomas in Presland, G. 1985. *Aboriginal Melbourne: the Lost Land of the Kulin People*. McPhee Gribble, Ringwood., 35

<sup>11</sup> Billot, C.P. (1985). *The life and times of John Pascoe Fawkner*. Melbourne : Hyland House. p.14

<sup>12</sup> Clark I. *Aboriginal Languages and Clans*. 1990,: 365

<sup>13</sup> Clark 1990: 368

<sup>14</sup> Nicolson and du Cros 1999: 7

south of the Yarra River to the east of Anderson Street near the present Botanic Gardens. The presence of a rock bar near Market Street on the Yarra held back the tidal inflow and so maintained fresh water above the 'falls' providing the most reliable drinking water in the area. <sup>15</sup>

South Melbourne was first known as Emerald Hill, after the hill on which the Town Hall stands, which was a green island surrounded by swamps. This was a traditional social and ceremonial meeting place for a number of Aboriginal tribes. A great gathering had been witnessed there in 1840 by a number of the early European settlers. Corroborees were also recorded and painted by Wilbraham Liardet at Emerald Hill. In 1840 Richard Howitt described fifty men dancing there assisted by the musical accompaniment of women as a performance to '*haunt the soul for years afterwards*'. <sup>16</sup>

The flats of Fishermans Bend within the Sandridge and Employment precincts were further from the river than they are now, apart from the extreme western section. The Coode Canal caused the course of the river to change so that Aboriginal riverbank camp sites would not be found in the present riverbank locations.

*Woi wurrung* and *Bun wurrung* people camped from the falls (near Princess Bridge) for approximately 1 mile south east along the river. A particularly favoured location for camping was on the hill overlooking 'Tromgin', a swamp south of the Yarra River. Robinson and Thomas, an Assistant Protector, reportedly spent much time throughout the late 1830s to mid-1840s attempting to 'break up' Aboriginal camps by the Yarra River. <sup>17</sup>

The Yalukit willam headmen at the time of European settlement were Derrimart (Derrimut) and Eurernowel (Benbow), always referred to by the white men as "King Benbow". Benbow built a hut on Batman's land where he lived with his wife "Kitty", and he and Derrimut helped in the search for the murderers of Franks and his shepherd. He is recorded hunting at Williamstown in Fawkner's diary in 1836. Derrimut died in 1864 and his memorial stone is located in the Melbourne General Cemetery. <sup>18</sup>

### 4.3 Discovery and survey

*Themes: 2.2 Exploring, surveying and mapping*

Knowledge of Port Phillip Bay came to navigators and settlers in New South Wales only 14 years after settlement had begun in Australia when on January 5 1802 Lieut. John Murray aboard the *Lady Nelson* observed what was 'apparently a fine harbour of large extent' through the heads which guard the entrance to Port Phillip Bay. Two months later on a second visit he entered the bay and took possession of the port in the name of George III. Seven weeks after this Captain Mathew Flinders, aboard the *Investigator*, sailed into the bay and reported an 'extensive harbour' surrounded by country which had 'a pleasing, and in many places a fertile appearance'. <sup>19</sup>

On the basis of the reports from Murray and Flinders, Governor King despatched his Surveyor-General, Charles Grimes with instructions to explore the shores of the Bay. On 2 February 1803 Grimes and his party rowed a small boat up the course of the Yarra River to its tidal limit. James Fleming, a member of his party

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<sup>15</sup> Ian D. Clark, Toby Heydon 1998,, 25-7 *A Bend In The Yarra: A History Of The Merri Creek Protectorate Station*

<sup>16</sup> Howitt, 1904, *The Native Tribes of South East Australia*

<sup>17</sup> Clark & Heydon 1998, 34-5, 40, 49

<sup>18</sup> Presland, *Land of the Kulin* 1985.

<sup>19</sup> R.D. Boys, *First Years at Port Phillip, 1834- 1842*. Melbourne 1959.



later, described this place as 'the most eligible place for a settlement that I have seen'.<sup>20</sup> Grimes also mapped the river and coastline at Fishermen's Bend and Sandridge, describing his visit thus:

*At the usual time the same party as yesterday, with the addition of the doctor, went on shore; for about a mile the land was dry, a light sandy soil; afterwards a large swamp with three lagoons in it all dry. The land appears to be covered with water in wet seasons. Come to a salt lagoon about a mile long and a quarter of a mile wide; had not entrance to the sea. Soon afterwards came to a large river; went up it about a mile, when we turned back and waited for the boat to take us aboard. The ground is a swamp on one side...Saw many swans, pelicans and ducks.<sup>21</sup>*

The accounts of the area either did not inspire confidence among the Sydney adventurers, or else the time was not ripe for further expansion of settlement as nothing more was heard from Port Phillip for two decades, until Hume and Hovell passed west of the Bay, initially believing they had reached Westernport. Another decade was to pass before an attempt at permanent settlement was made.

The name "Sandridge" was given by Surveyor William Darke when he prepared maps of the shoreline of Port Phillip Bay in 1836, although Edward Curr recorded the area along the beach where surveyors had laid out allotments with stringlines, as "The Beach".<sup>22</sup>

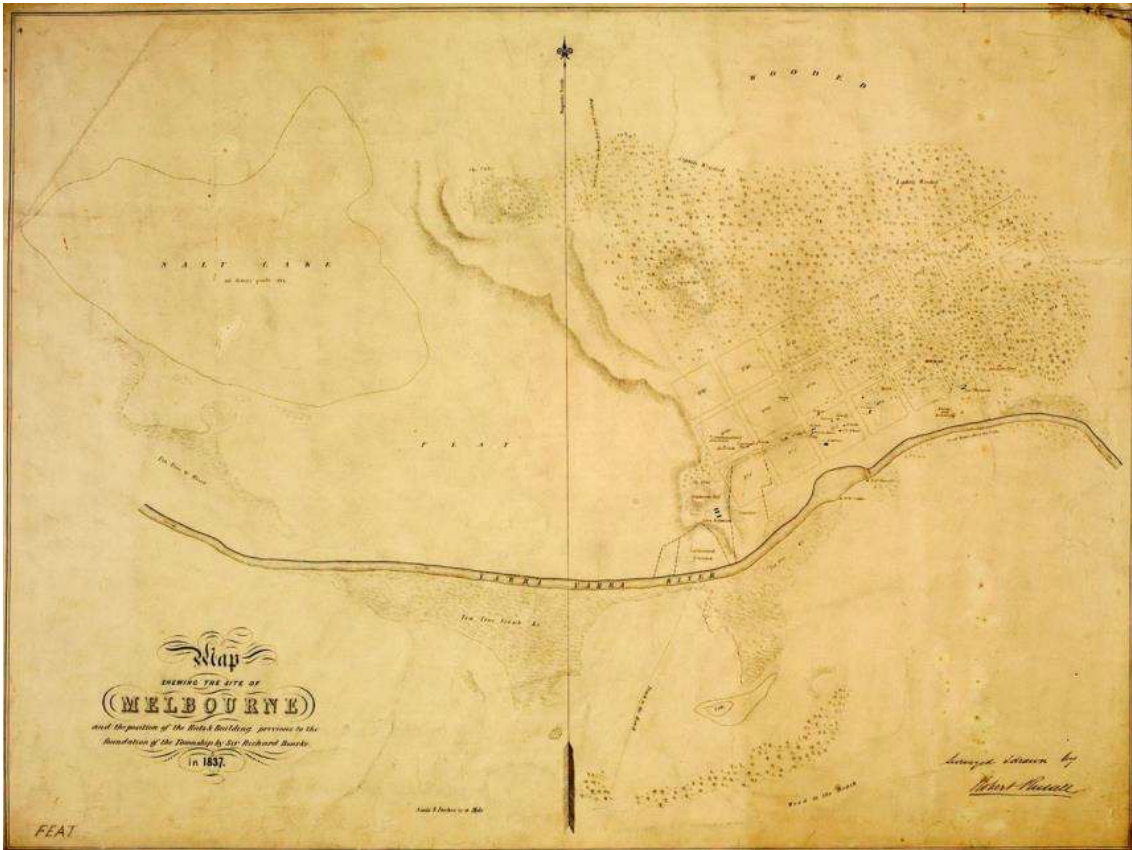
When the Government survey of Melbourne was carried out under Hoddle's supervision the streets were laid out around the existing huts to the east of Batman's farm on the north side of the Yarra river to take advantage of the high ground and avoid the swamps altogether. This geographic influence continued to determine all future land use in the area. As land around Melbourne was surveyed and sold, the higher and more fertile areas were given preference and the swamps and riverbanks were reserved for future public purposes.

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<sup>20</sup> Flemming Journal??

<sup>21</sup> Log book of Charles Grimes, 2.2.1803. Quoted in N. U'ren and N. Turnbull: A History of Port Melbourne, O.U.P. 1983, p.6 in Allom Lovell and associates: "Port Melbourne Conservation Study Review, vol.1, pp.13-14., and Ward A. Port Phillip Heritage Review Vol 1 2011, Version 15.p.26.

<sup>22</sup> Curr, E.M., Recollections of Squatting in Victoria Then called the Port Phillip District (from 1841-1851), MUP, (...), pp.9-10.



**Figure 14: Map Shewing the site of Melbourne, Russell 1837 8168-P1-312-SYDNEY-M20**

The prominent rise of Emerald Hill attracted initial settlement because of the views it offered and the land being permanently dry when much of the surrounding area was swamp or flood prone.<sup>23</sup> Edmund Finn, who wrote under the name "Garryowen", is credited with naming Emerald Hill, when he described the area as an: '...eminence ... green as the freshest shamrock ... encircled by shining lagoons, the sparkling sea, and growths of scrub and ti-tree' in October 1845 in an advertisement for a temperance society picnic.<sup>24</sup>

The first surveys in Sandridge were conducted in 1850 and in Emerald Hill in 1852 to 1854 at the time when Robert Hoddle, and then Andrew Clarke headed the survey office. The layout of the Emerald Hill survey was based on a grid bounded by Eastern Road, Park Street, Montague Street and the diagonal Sandridge Road (City Road). The South Melbourne grid was aligned with the original orientation of the CBD grid, with the line of Spencer Street continuing down as Clarendon Street. In 1854 the grid was extended to include the Three Chain Road (Albert Road) and Nelson Road.<sup>25</sup>

The diagonal track to the beach along what became Sandridge Road, and renamed City Road and Bay Street, pre-existed the grid survey, and so was retained. Like Williamstown Road which came a little later, it was also the shortest distance between two important points. The Sandridge Survey was also on a grid, but aligned parallel with the beachfront, to avoid awkward triangular lots.

However, development west of the Sandridge road was constrained by swamps and from 1854, the railway. A Crown Lands Department plan of 1855 confirmed the reservation of the land west of the railway and so

<sup>23</sup> Ward 2011 p.12.

<sup>24</sup> Susan Priestly, 'Emerald Hill' eMelbourne Encyclopedia, <http://www.emelbourne.net.au/biogs/EM00519b.htm>

<sup>25</sup> Streets of South Melbourne, <http://streetsofsouthmelbourne.wordpress.com/introduction/>

prohibited development. At the same time a wide landscaped reserve was provided along the railway itself. A much later plan included a "permanent reserve for stormwater channel and other public purposes",<sup>26</sup> on the alignment of Millers 1860 proposed ship canal.

## 4.4 Early settlement

*Theme: 2.7 Promoting settlement*

The Port Phillip Association, with John Batman as their agent, undertook a reconnaissance expedition in May-June 1835, followed by a permanent camp from late June on the Yarra and Batman laid claim to Aboriginal lands north and west of the Yarra on behalf of the Association, erecting his own house on Batman's Hill (near the later site of Spencer Street Rail Yards. South of the Yarra, however, was not part of the Port Phillip Associations Claim.

John Pascoe Faulkner arrived a little after Batman's men in August 1835, but made a more substantial landfall on the north bank of the Yarra River. Batman moved to this site in November 1835. However, in November Fawkner was persuaded to move to the opposite bank in deference to Batman's prior claim, becoming the first settler of South Melbourne. This pattern of settlement, focussing on the higher ground north of the river and upstream along the river was to continue for many years.

Melbourne's first white settlement in the vicinity of Batman's Hill, can be located today only from documents. No physical evidence of the first period of settlement is likely to be found because of the extensive excavations and reclamation associated with river improvements, railway construction and city buildings. However, the topographic features which identified the site such as the high ground adjacent to the river and swamp can be identified by the informed observer. Russell's 1837 map of Melbourne shows three long narrow buildings at the top of a ridge which led down to the river with paddock a garden and cultivated ground.<sup>27</sup>

## 4.5 Formation of towns and local government

*Themes: 7.1 Developing institutions of self-government and democracy*

Melbourne's initial settlement occurred at a slow pace – a few dozen huts and some more substantial buildings on the hill opposite the falls, some more huts along the beach at Sandridge – but the bulk of the settlers fanned out to the pastoral hinterlands to raise sheep and cattle. However, this dramatically changed with the discovery of gold in 1851 at Ballarat and Bendigo. Thousands came to Port Phillip, disembarking on the beach at Sandridge and walking across the flats to Melbourne. In 1852, 94,664 people arrived in the colony by sea, and within months of the announcement of the discovery of gold, a tent city had sprung up on the south side of the Yarra, between Emerald Hill and St Kilda Road known as 'Canvas Town' where the area was laid out in streets with shops, residences and hotels, all under canvas.

Creation of the Melbourne Corporation in 1842 initially provided local representation and services throughout the colony, but as suburbs grew, and Victoria became a separate colony of from New South Wales, suspicion of the power of Melbourne councillors among the colonial government, saw the subsequent fragmentation of local democracy in many small councils.

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<sup>26</sup> Port Melbourne, Parish of South Melbourne, County of Bourke, Department of Lands & Survey, Melbourne, T S Butson, 13.2.1914

<sup>27</sup> Robert Russel: *Map Shewing the Site of Melbourne...* 1837.



**Figure 15: Melbourne and its suburbs compiled by James Kearney, draughtsman; engraved by David Tulloch and James D. Brown. Melbourne, Andrew Clarke, Surveyor General, 1855**

The first land sales were held in 1850 at Sandridge and in 1852 at Emerald Hill. In 1854, the Canvas Town was dispersed and many of the inhabitants moved up to the Hill. Also on 14 December 1854, a residents' meeting was called to lobby for independence from Melbourne. On 26 May 1855 Emerald Hill became the first suburb outside of Geelong, to be declared a municipal district, taking the motto 'Ordine Primum', 'first in the field'. When the council met for the first time the July 4, James Service, later to be Premier of Victoria, was elected chairman.

Emerald Hill was proclaimed a borough in 1863, a town in 1872 and city in 1883 when its name was also changed to South Melbourne. Sandridge was severed and made an independent borough in 1860 then changed its name to Port Melbourne in 1884 becoming a town in 1893 and city in 1919.<sup>28</sup>

In 1994, under the Kennett government, a review of municipal government led to the amalgamation of most councils, with the former cities of South Melbourne, Port Melbourne and St Kilda, combining to form the City of Port Phillip (apart from the strip of land north of the West Gate Freeway, which went to the city of Melbourne).

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<sup>28</sup> Barrett, Bernard, *The civic frontier: The origin of local communities and local government in Victoria*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1979

## 4.6 Wasteland, wetland and wildlife

*Themes: 1.5 Living with natural processes; 4.7 Transforming the land and waterways*

Much of the Fishermans Bend area was originally low lying swamps and sand ridges (hence the original name for Port Melbourne) and its proximity to Melbourne and wasteland status saw it used as a convenient dumping ground. As a result there is now a metre or two of fill and rubbish across most of the area, only occasionally revealing the buried natural ground as a black humic layer over the original sands. It is in this layer that any potential Aboriginal Archaeology will be located, presenting a unique challenge for its appropriate and adequate identification and evaluation.

Coode Island was created as a result of the excavation of the Coode Canal in 1886 between a point on the river just below the Victoria Dock to just above the Stony Creek Backwash, cutting off a bend of the Yarra previously known as Fishermen's Bend, and a stretch known as Humbug Reach and reducing the trip from the bay to the Melbourne docks by about two miles. The old course of the Yarra remained as a shallow channel for many decades, creating an area of about 240 acres surrounded by water. The Island was then effectively isolated from major human impact from the 1880s to 1950s. As such it became a sanctuary for wildlife.

The original vegetation as described on early survey plans was dominated by tea-tree scrub, salt marsh, swamp and sandy waste with a small stand of trees, possibly swamp paperbark, which was destroyed when the canal cut through it. The swamps harboured a variety of species of plant, animal and insect life. Of the latter, new species of mosquito, *Culex labeculosus* and scale insect, *Pulvinaria salicornae*, were described early this century along with some more common scale insects. Of native plants, Black Wattle, and Coast Wattle, *Acacia longifolia*, Climbing lignum, *Muelenbeckia adpressa*, New Holland Daisy, *Vittadinia australis*, Sea Blight, *Myoporum viscosum*, Smooth Sea-heath, *Frankenia pauciflora*, and, Angular, Rounded and Small Pigface, *Mesembryanthemum australe*, *M. aequilaterale*, and *M. tegens*, were found by Tovey in 1908 and 1909, along with a vast array of exotic plants probably introduced from ships ballast which had been dumped on the island. The Small Pigface was apparently more common on the north side of the old river course around the West Melbourne Swamp.<sup>29</sup>

In regards the exotic species, there were also many introduced species of rock found on the south east portion of the island from foreign ships dumping ballast. The locality was noted as a good site for obtaining geological specimens which were otherwise unprocurable elsewhere in Victoria, some examples being gneiss banded with crystalized red garnets, granite porphyries, schist, limestone crowded with fossils, varied sandstones and quartzite. It was remarked that they *...would constitute handsome educational cabinet specimens of types of rock difficult to procure otherwise except at some expense...*<sup>30</sup>

One of Coode Island's few residents Bill Lemarquand, who was born on the island in 1901 and lived there until the 1940s, recalls how,

*The sky was ablaze with skylarks...every few yards there were nests on the ground. Springtime was full of their music. Sometimes there were dolphins in the river. The most beautiful thing I have ever seen was the pigface growing on the island in spring. It was a swamp in the middle before they drained it. I will never forget that pigface.*<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> J.R. Tovey, "Some notes on Coode Island and its Flora" *Victorian Naturalist*, No.XXVIII July 1911. pp.57-61.

<sup>30</sup> "Excursion to Coode Island", *Victorian Naturalist*, No.XXIX May 1912. pp.5-6.

<sup>31</sup> John Lahey, 'When Coode Island was a paradise for birds', *The Age*, 15 March 1994 page 7.

As a boy, Bill caught bream, mullet and eels in the rivers as well as rabbits, and he recalls that wild ducks were abundant.

Coode Island was once a significant breeding and feeding ground for thousands of wader and other birds. Local ornithologists such as "*gerygone*" (Jack Jones), Margaret McKenzie, Lawrence O'Conner and Ralph Kenyon recognised the area's importance, as did the many field naturalists, and bird watchers who made regular club excursions to both the Coode Island and Fisherman's Bend areas. The area was of sufficient note for the head of Severn Wildlife Trust, Peter Scott, to visit it during a trip to Australia,

Forty Years ago over 40 species of Australian birds were found breeding at Coode Island while many more species found food, shelter or rest there, either as part of a wider range, or during stop-overs on continental migrations. *Footscray's First Hundred Years* provides lists of breeding species as well as frequent and rare visitors, making particular mention of the almost extinct Australian Bustard, and several other rare birds. The brightly coloured Blue Winged Shoveler was often seen in spring on the Coode Island swamps and occasionally on the Maribyrnong River.<sup>32</sup>

The preponderance of wildlife at Fishermen's Bend even came to the notice of the Government bureaucracy when in 1909 the Governor in Council authorised the proclamation of the ground of the Victorian Golf Club at Fishermen's Bend as a sanctuary for animals and birds. The area comprised about 130 acres, near the south bank of the Yarra, leased by the club from the Crown. The club intended to plant the area with trees for ornament as well as providing shelter to native birds. This scheme eventually faded when the land reverted to other Government uses, eventually becoming part of the Aircraft factory and runways.<sup>33</sup>

The golf club occupied the area east of Salmon Street and was in use from at least 1908<sup>34</sup> to after 1928.

Large parts of the western portion of Fishermans Bend continued to be subject to sand mining into the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, initially this was to raise the runways at the CAC airfield, as shown in Figure 16 below. Quarrying also was undertaken later for obtaining fill for other works in the area, as well as extraction for use elsewhere, such as concrete and mortar, as was done by the Melbourne Washed Sands Co in the 1940s and 50s.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> "15,000 Water fowl were shot "for the table," *Footscray's First Hundred Years*. p.93

<sup>33</sup> "A Suburban Sanctuary", *EMU Vol. IX July 1909*, p.21.

<sup>34</sup> "GOLF." *Weekly Times* (Melbourne, Vic. : 1869 - 1954) 23 May 1908: 20. Web. 13 Sep 2016 <<http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article224464162>>.

<sup>35</sup> *Daily Commercial News And Shipping List* (Sydney, NSW) June 26 1931.



Figure 16: Aerial View of Fishermans Bend, Victoria c.1940, H96 163/11, State Library Victoria Picture Collection

## 4.7 Noxious trades and industry

*Themes: 5.1 Processing raw materials; 5.2 Developing a manufacturing capacity; 5.8 Working*

The proximity to the Yarra and swampy wastelands of Fishermen's Bend and Sandridge initially attracted the activities and industries that were shunned from the commercial and residential parts of Melbourne. Low lying areas on the south bank of the Yarra saw the development of ships chandlers, dry docks and repairers, stevedores and Melbourne's first iron foundries and engineering works. Related industries gradually spread westward. Further downstream boiling down works, fellmongeries, abattoirs and other noxious trades crowded along the river bank and discharging their wastes into the river. In the 1870s moves to clean up the river and move most of the worst noxious industries away from the city, generally to Footscray and Yarraville, saw most of this area cleared.<sup>36</sup>

A pipe factory, asphalt plant, timber yard with drying sheds were located in Brady Street, in the 1890s, while the Port Melbourne Abattoir was in Lorimer Street, and a boiling down works was in Boundary Street.

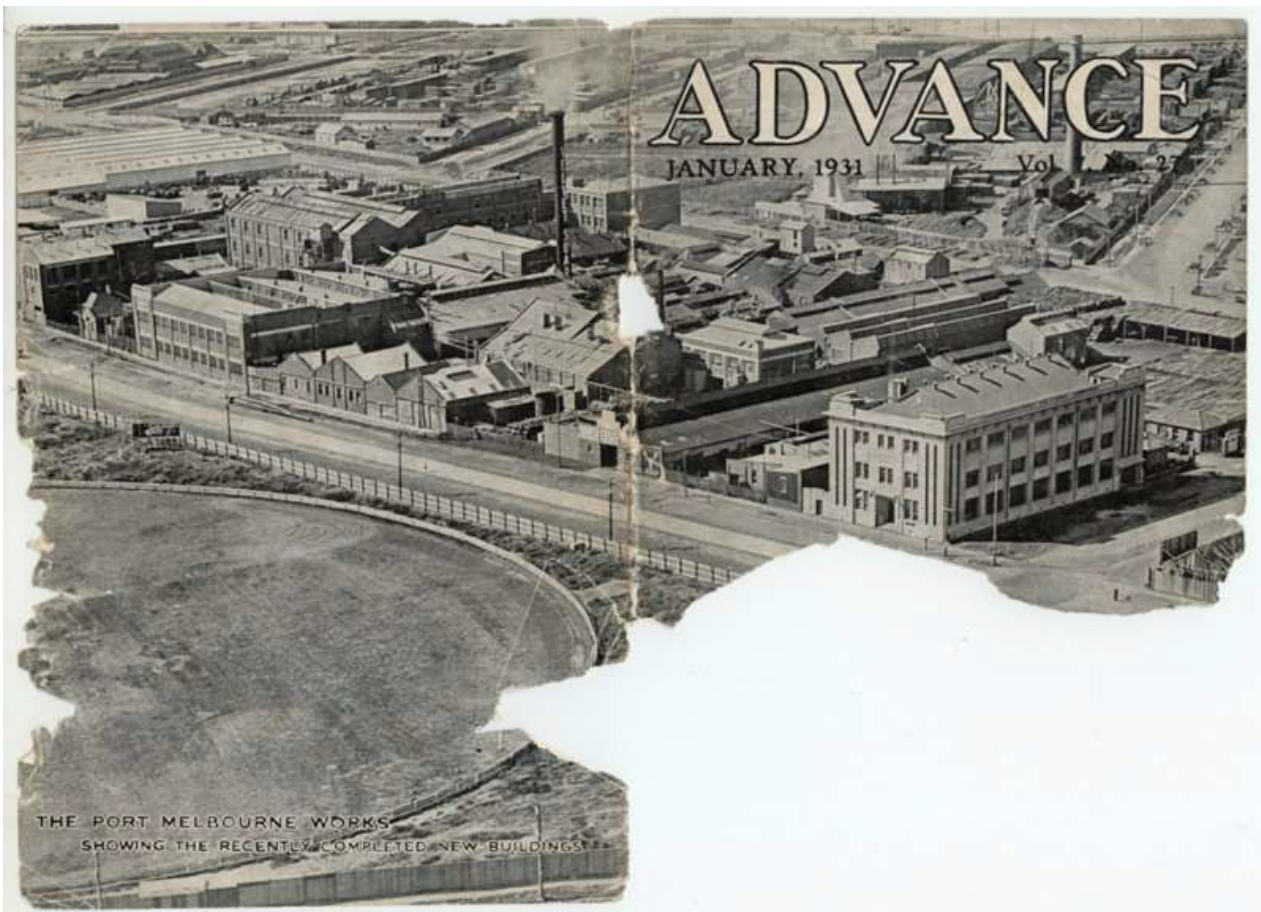
The abattoir was a subject of concern from its establishment in about 1861. It was completely rebuilt in 1899 to the same plan as the Melbourne City council abattoirs in Flemington<sup>37</sup>. It continued to operate into the

<sup>36</sup> Cannon, M. Old Melbourne Town before the Gold Rush, 1991.

<sup>37</sup> Record (Emerald Hill, Vic : Previous issue Saturday 17 June 1899

1960s, but was closed about 1975 and leased for less disagreeable uses, before being demolished to make way for warehouses and showrooms in about 1990.

One of the earliest of the noxious trades was Kitchen & Sons soap and candle works on Ingles Street. Established initially in 1856 as a backyard concern, but forced to move by the council, the company acquired the Ingles Street site in 1859 manufacturing candles, washing blue, soap, soda crystals, glycerine and baking powder.<sup>38</sup> The works was substantial with more than a dozen buildings, marked as the "Apollo Candle factory" on MMBW Plans (note a similarly named Apollo candle factory was on the Maribyrnong River at Flemington).<sup>39</sup> Kitchen had acquired the Apollo Company in 1883.<sup>40</sup>



**Figure 17: Kitchen & sons Factory, from a company brochure.**

In 1962 J. Kitchen & Sons Pty Ltd joined fellow soap manufacturer Lever Brothers Pty Ltd, forming Lever & Kitchen Pty Ltd. The firm was later restructured as Unilever in 2000, and later taken over by Pental and very recently Symex Holdings Limited.<sup>41</sup>

<sup>38</sup> Candles, Soap, Apples, Milk, Cream, Butter, Butterine, Marjarine and Margarine from The House of Kitchen Reg A. Smith Ras/Kal April, 1978, <http://member.melbpc.org.au/~tonkit/kitchen/docs/Candles.pdf>

<sup>39</sup> House Of Kitchen McKie <http://member.melbpc.org.au/~tonkit/kitchen/docs/McKie-HouseOfKitchen.pdf>; HISTORY OF J. KITCHEN & SONS Arnold Riches, c1944. <http://member.melbpc.org.au/~tonkit/kitchen/docs/Riches-History.pdf>

<sup>40</sup> J. KITCHEN & SONS PTY. LTD., MELBOURNE POSTAL CARD 1931, <http://www.auspostalhistory.com/articles/204.shtml>

<sup>41</sup> Lever & Kitchen Pty Ltd, National Library of Australia, Encyclopedia of Australian Science, <http://trove.nla.gov.au/people/584581?c=people>



The Ingles Street works progressively expanded with its southern boundary street moving twice. Initially this was "Kitchen Street", which aligned with White Street on the west side of Boundary Street,<sup>42</sup> then opposite the 'Unnamed govt road' (1950s photo) and finally becoming Munro Street to align with the through route to Montague Street.



**Figure 18: 1894 MMBW Plan and current image of Kitchen & sons showing changed road pattern.**



**Figure 19: View to east from near Port Melbourne Football Ground showing Kitchen & Sons and warehousing/timber yards beyond.**

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<sup>42</sup> MMBW plan c1898

Felton Grimwade & Co was established in Melbourne in about 1867, soon after moving from Russell Street to Flinders Lane where its importing business flourished. The firm operated as wholesale druggists but developed into a large manufacturing enterprise with products including acids, salt, glass bottles, fertilisers and eucalyptus oil. In 1870 they were operating a chemical works at their Port Melbourne manufacturing site and as early as 1872 the Port Melbourne Council opposed the manufacture of sulphuric acid at its plant. Nevertheless, company activities from the outset were to include the manufacture of sulphuric acid and other mineral acids including bi-sulphide of iron. By 1894 the Ingles Street building was the principal manufactory at Felton Grimwade and Co's. chemical works.



**Figure 20: Felton Grimwade chemical and bisulphide works Port Melbourne, *Australasian Sketcher* March 12, 1884, SLV A/S12/03/84/43**

The works was extensively damaged by fire in 1895, but was rebuilt and continued to operate into the mid twentieth century.<sup>43</sup> The complex was later occupied by Arthur Vale and Co. Pty. Ltd., oil stores, Cotton Dressing Pty. Ltd. and the United Oil Co. Pty. Ltd. oil store.<sup>44</sup> And more recently became part of AMI and then Toyota.<sup>45</sup> Alfred Felton is remembered for the generous bequest he gave to the National Gallery of Victoria, which continues to fund the purchase of artworks for the state collection.

Ballarat Brewing Company run by Coghlan & Tulloch's had three premises in Ballarat and in order to better establish themselves in the Melbourne market, erected a modest building in Cecil Street, South Melbourne in about 1910, for storage or distribution. Like many of the regional breweries, the company was subject to merger and takeover. In 1953, it acquired the Volum Brewery in Geelong and, five years later, was itself taken over by Carlton & United Breweries, although public pressure at that time ensured that the "Ballarat Bertie" logo was retained on the new beer bottles produced by CUB. After the takeover, the company's former building in Cecil Street was used by CUB for storage until at least the mid-1970s.<sup>46</sup>

A stone works in Smith and Tarver streets was the sole occupant west of the football ground in the 1894 plan. This had been commenced in 1883 as the "Patent Victoria Hydraulic Freestone works" of R. Holden Stone.<sup>47</sup> A

<sup>43</sup> FIRE AT PORT MELBOURNE. (1895, January 2). *Launceston Examiner* (Tas.: 1842 - 1899), p. 7. Retrieved May 13, 2013, from <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article39598421>

<sup>44</sup> Sands & McDougall directories.

<sup>45</sup> *Victoria and its Metropolis Past and Present*, A. Sutherland, 1888, v.2, p.601.

Green, J., Mann, A., Rene, V, Beruldsen, J., "Bosch 40 Years Australia 1954-94", 1994, p.11. Sands and McDougall directories.

<sup>46</sup> City of Port Phillip Heritage Review Citation No: 2315

<sup>47</sup> THE PATENT HYDRAULIC FREESTONE. (1883, October 3). *The Argus* (Melbourne, Vic.: 1848 - 1957), p. 10. Retrieved May 13, 2013, from <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article11830347>

detailed description of the works indicates substantial galvanised iron sheds with tanks, steam boilers and engine house.<sup>48</sup>



**Figure 21: MMBW Plan 18 showing Stone Works – distortion from GIS registration.**

The 1930s saw some dramatic expansion of industry in the Fishermans Bend area, partly as a result of government stimulus programs and then for the war effort itself. Port Melbourne prospered as an industrial location in the mid twentieth century. Amongst the factories established in the 1920's were the works of the engineering company, Malcolm Moore Pty. Ltd. on Williamstown Road from 1927, Kellow-Faulkner had its showrooms on City Road, the Dunlop Pneumatic Tyre Company erected a vast factory complex straddling Normanby Road and Montague Street in 1901. Originally formed in 1899, it acquired a bluestone and iron building on the corner of Normanby Road and Montague Street and was linked by a bridge over Normanby Road in 1913. From 1913, Dunlop became South Melbourne's largest employer employing both men and women. The factory expanded along Normanby Road on both sides between Montague and Boundary Streets. In 1929, Dunlop (Melbourne) and Perdriau (Sydney) amalgamated and in 1951, the Company operated as Dunlop Rubber Australia Ltd and continued at its Normanby Road sites until the late 1980s.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> VICTORIA PATENT HYDRAULIC FREESTONE CO. LIMITED. (1883, May 8). The Argus (Melbourne, Vic.: 1848 - 1957), p. 9. Retrieved May 13, 2013, from <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article8517984>

<sup>49</sup> City of Port Phillip Heritage Review citation 2134



**Figure 22: Dunlop factory from the air looking east along Normanby Road**

Frederick Laycock mills were a little further along the road, initially started in 1884, and later considerably extended. Frederick Laycock moved to South Melbourne from Yarraville after his factory there was burnt out, opening flock mills in about 1886 on the south side of Normanby Road.<sup>50</sup> In 1904, they built a new mill on the south west corner of Normanby Road and Doran Street to produce wire mattresses, bedding, flock, and blankets with the brand name Laconia. A store yard was located on the opposite side of Doran Street in 1910.<sup>51</sup> In 1906, the owners were described as bedding and wire mattress makers supplying local furniture industry including Maples and Andersons. By 1916, the business operated as Laycock and Son and Co continuing on the site to at least 1974.<sup>52</sup> The archives of the firm are at ANU Archives.<sup>53</sup>

Johns & Waygood pioneered the development of the lift in Melbourne – along with Austral Otis, and so contributed to the engineering which permitted the construction of multistorey office buildings. They established their head offices at the corner of Cecil Street in 1909, erecting extensive workshops behind. New

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<sup>50</sup> Graeme Cope, 'Laycock, Frederick (1839–1909)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/laycock-frederick-7126/text12295>, accessed 11 June 2013.

<sup>51</sup> "An Enterprising Firm." *Warragul Guardian and Buln Buln and Narracan Shire Advocate* (Warragul, Vic. : 1879 - 1894) 11 Nov 1892: 2 Edition: BI-WEEKLY., Supplement: Supplement to the Warragul Guardian. Web. 11 Jun 2013 <<http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article68729587>>.

<sup>52</sup> City of Port Phillip Heritage Review citation 45

<sup>53</sup> Laycock, Son and Company Proprietary Limited, Australian National University Archives, Deposit AU NBAC 79

plant for the manufacture of structural steel was installed.<sup>54</sup> A further works on the corner of Gladstone and Kerr streets manufactured mortar bomb cases in 1938-39 as a part of the war effort.<sup>55</sup>



Figure 23: Beginnings of Johns & Waygood works (State Library Vic)



Figure 24: Johns & Waygood head office, 1965, South Melbourne, Victoria, Wolfgang Sievers photo National Library nla.pic-vn3312669

<sup>54</sup> Pratt, A., The National Handbook of Australia's Industries, The Specialty Press Pty. Ltd., (1934)pp. 257-58.

<sup>55</sup> National Trust citation, Johns & Waygood 10/1989.

The land along Ferrars and Douglas Streets, backing on to the railway was first sold for small timber cottages in the 1860s, but appears to have been opened for redevelopment in 1888, when more than 50 existing cottages were sold in one auction.<sup>56</sup>

The Emerson Brothers Furniture Factory was established on Douglass St in the late nineteenth century, but appears to have been dogged by fire, such as one in 1913 which gutted the building.<sup>57</sup> The company auctioned its plant and "splendid modern brick factory" building in 1917, interestingly pointing out the suitability of the site for automobile manufacture.<sup>58</sup> The building was subsequently used by Elder Smith & co as a store – and then for the Melbourne Theatre Company.



Figure 25: Melbourne Theatre Co Store Railway Place and Douglas Street since 1977.<sup>59</sup>

Union Can Company Pty. Ltd., grew from a small manufactory in 1908 to occupy a three acre site in Ferrars Street. This was the administrative and technical headquarters of its nationwide offices as well as its production facility manufacturing food packaging articles. Interestingly, the location of this large manufactory had been determined by the need to import mild steel sheeting from Wales via the riverside wharves.<sup>60</sup> The works expanded to cover most of the block between Ferrars and Meaden Streets, with a complex production line process installed by 1938.<sup>61</sup>

<sup>56</sup> Advertising. 'Important Freehold Auction,' *The Argus*, 24 May 1886. p.2. Retrieved May 16, 2013, from <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article6097373portant>

<sup>57</sup> FIRE AT SOUTH MELBOURNE. *Bendigo Advertiser* 28/2/1913, p. 5. Retrieved June 11, 2013, from <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article90013404>

<sup>58</sup> "Classified Advertising." *The Argus*, 6 Oct 1917: 3. Web. 11 Jun 2013 <<http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article1654157>>.

<sup>59</sup> Melbourne Theatre Company, Plans for Proposed Alterations to Existing Premises at the corner of Ferrars Street and Douglas Street, South Melbourne for the Melbourne Theatre Company. Genser Shepherd & Associates Architects Pty. Ltd., 381 Punt Road, Richmond. 27 January 1977. Drawn by Vaso, Melbourne Uni. Archives 1988.0152

<sup>60</sup> Pratt, A., pp.325-27 and Priestley, p.259.

<sup>61</sup> "BEHIND THE SCENES IN INDUSTRY—No. 18." *The Argus* (Melbourne, Vic.: 1848 - 1957) 3 Dec 1938: 7 Supplement: The Argus Week-end Magazine. Web. 16 May 2013 <<http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article12071047>>.

In 1921, HOMEWOOD and O'NEILL PTY. LTD., Vulcan Engineering Works at 117 Ferrars Street, was advertising "MALLEABLE and" CAST IRON', BRASSWORK, Of All Descriptions".<sup>62</sup> This appears to be the same site as the Union Can Co, but ceased operating in 1929, when the Melbourne Branch closed.<sup>63</sup>

## 4.8 Port Development

*Themes: 3.2 Travelling by water; 4.7 Transforming the land and waterways*

As Melbourne was founded by sea and for much of its history has depended on shipping for its prosperity and livelihood, port and harbour facilities have been paramount. The first options were either to haul up the river by rope, to the 'Pool' at the bottom of Market Street, or anchor off Sandridge and lighter ashore, then walk the 2 ¼ miles into town. The Yarra River was narrow, shallow, winding and littered with snags, so that days could be spent getting ships up to the settlement. While the beach landing at Sandridge was only about 2 miles (3.2 km) away, by water it was more than 4 miles to the open water of the bay.

Fishermans Bend, was originally that part of the former course of the Yarra river where it made an almost 180 degree turn, located north of where Swanston Dock is now. The spelling has varied between "Fishermans" and "Fishermens" Bend, with some maps such as Coode's from the 1870s having "Fishermans", although according to Allan Meiers, the term "Fishermens" Bend with an 'e', was in popular usage in the 1920s for all the area west of about Graham Street including Garden City, while "The Bend" referred to the beach west of the Sandridge pier to the river mouth.<sup>64</sup> The name was officially gazetted as Fishermans Bend in 1998.

Numerous plans for improvements to the river situation were proposed, including several for a ship canal directly from Hobsons Bay, across the Sandridge Flats to Melbourne. Hoddle himself proposed a pier, railway, water supply pipeline, road and settlement at Sandridge in 1839, pre-empting the eventual solution by 15 years.<sup>65</sup>

The option for a ship canal directly between the settlement on the Yarra River and the bay was first proposed in the 1850s, and revived several times. A number of reviews, Royal Commissions and investigations were held into the issue. The Argus reported in January 1851, even before the announcement of gold discoveries changed the whole basis of trade and shipping in Port Phillip, that: a "*...Public Meeting, according to the requisition, of such of the inhabitants as are favorable to the formation of a Company for the purpose of constructing a SHIP CANAL.*"<sup>66</sup> This appears to have been well attended and shortly afterwards, was answered with the publication of a scheme employing a canal straight to the South Bank area along with a large wet dock, but not having these connected to the river.

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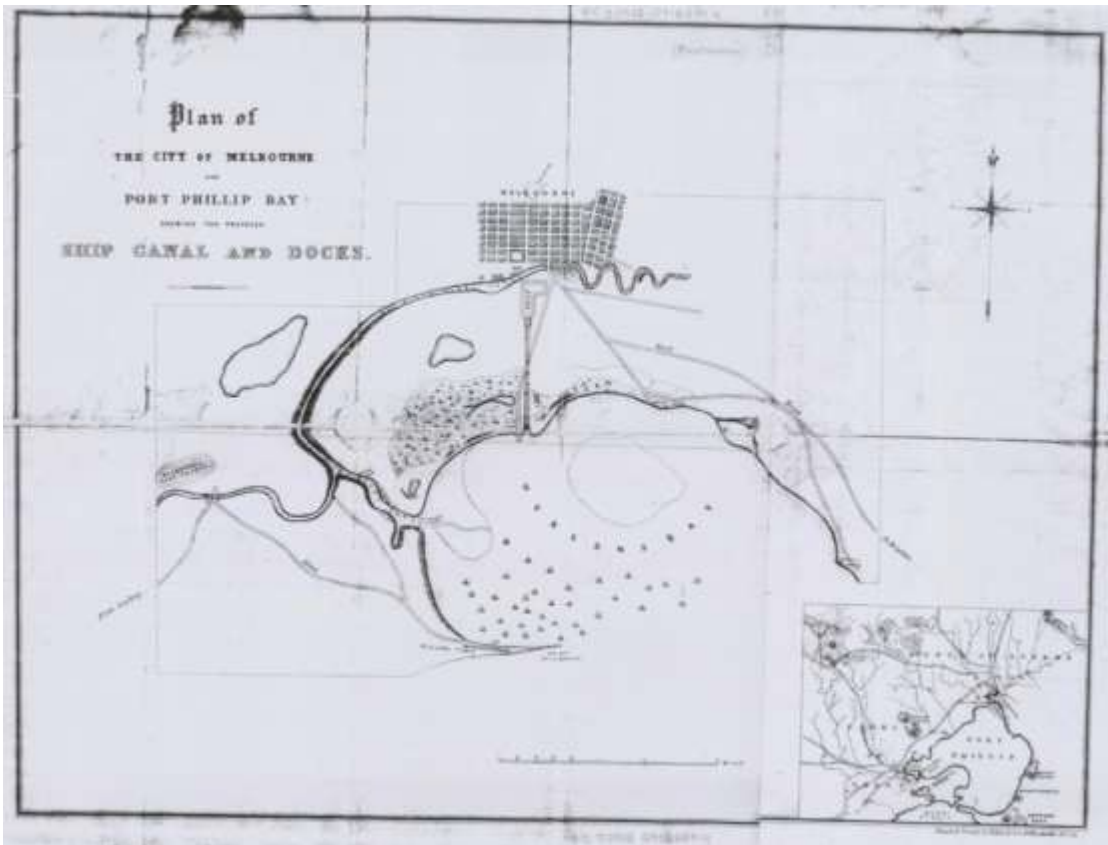
<sup>62</sup> Classified Advertising. (1921, October 5). The Argus (Melbourne, Vic.: 1848 - 1957), p. 1. Retrieved May 16, 2013, from <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article4643169>

<sup>63</sup> Classified Advertising. (1929, November 23). The Argus (Melbourne, Vic.: 1848 - 1957), p. 3. Retrieved May 16, 2013, from <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article4051987>

<sup>64</sup> Allan Meiers Fisher Folk of Fishermans Bend, Port Melbourne Historical and Preservation Society October 2006

<sup>65</sup> Robert Hoddle, Pioneer Surveyor 1794-1881, Bernes Hoddle Colville, Research Publications Melbourne 2004, p.177.

<sup>66</sup> PROPOSED SHIP CANAL. (1851, January 7). The Argus (Melbourne, Vic.: 1848 - 1957), p. 2. Retrieved May 10, 2013, from <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article4775479>



**Figure 26: "Plan of the City of Melbourne and Port Phillip Bay: shewing the proposed ship canal and docks Melbourne: Collins & Co., [1853?]" <http://handle.slv.vic.gov.au/10381/117444>**

Another complex and sophisticated design for ship canal or "tidal harbor" and docks was proposed along with an extension of the city west-ward. This was laid before the Royal Commission by John Millar in December 1860.<sup>67</sup>

The Melbourne Ship-Canal & Dock Company was formed in 1864, by a group of prominent Melbourne businessmen, with a commercial scheme to construct a canal and dock, again on a direct alignment. It was intended that it would have the added benefit of relieving the problem of flooding in the low lying areas of West and South Melbourne.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> Design for ship canal or "tidal harbor" and docks for the Port of Melbourne: with proposed extension of the city west-ward / laid before the Royal Commission by the author, John Millar ; lithographed at the Office of Lands and Survey, Melbourne, 21st December 1860. SLV

<sup>68</sup> THE MELBOURNE SHIP-CANAL AND DOCK COMPANY AND THE FLOODS OF THE YARRA. (1864, August 15). The Argus (Melbourne, Vic.: 1848 - 1957), p. 6. Retrieved May 10, 2013, from <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article5751552>



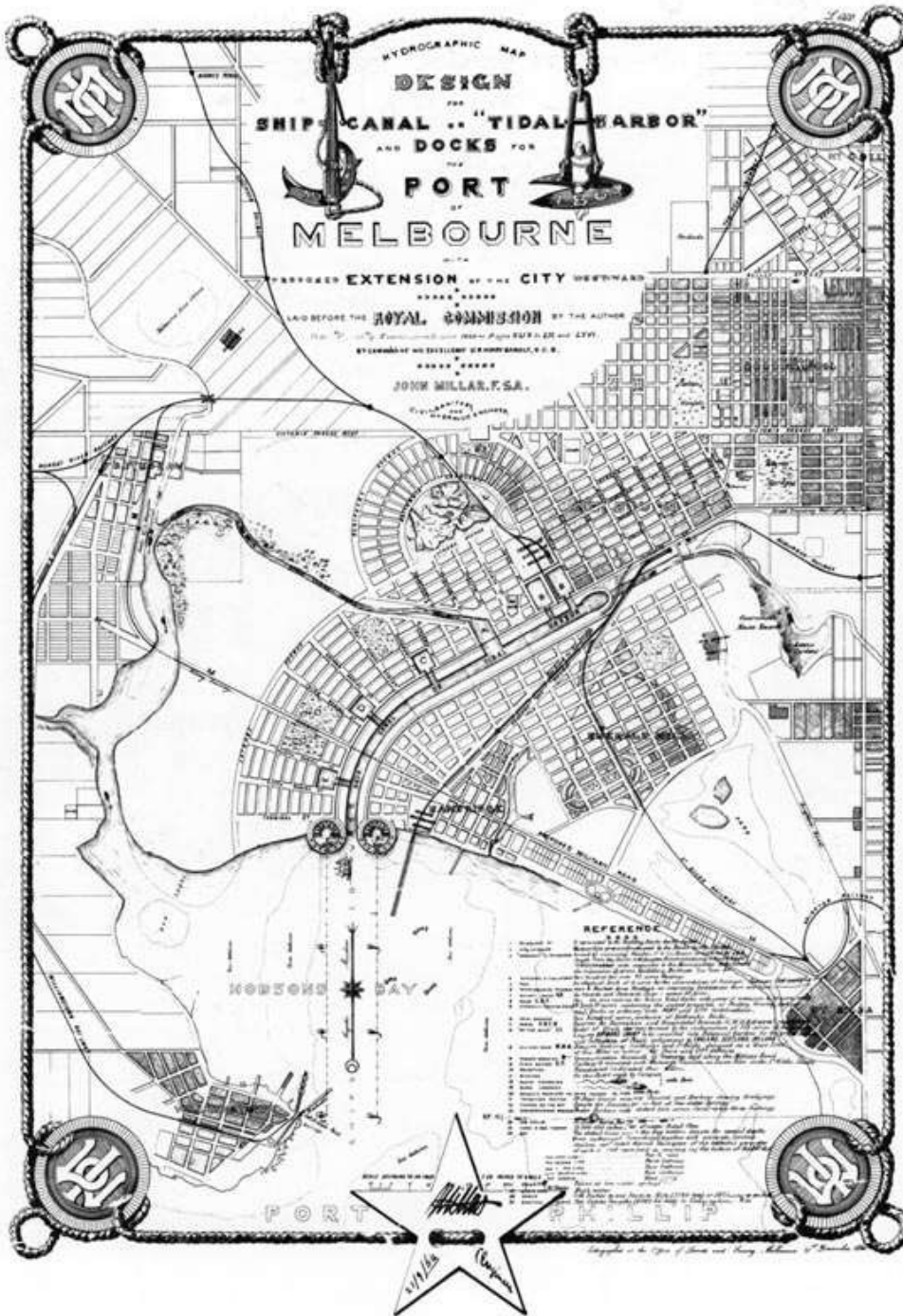


Figure 27: Plan for proposed Ship Canal, 1860 John Millar



**Figure 28: Plan of ship canal & site for docks [cartographic material] / submitted by Robert Adams Melbourne: Photo-lithographed by J.W. Osborne, at the Dept. of Lands and Survey 1860**



**Figure 29: Proposed ship canal and docks, port of Melbourne Victoria. Dept. of Lands and Survey Melbourne: Photo-lithographed at the Dept. of Lands and Survey by J. Noone 1875**

Improvements to wharves and jetties have been continuous, with the initial major early development at the ‘pool’ where a wide and deep section of the river was situated opposite Flinders Street near the customs house, which became known as “Queens Wharf”, then new wharves being built across the river at ‘South Wharf’ spreading downstream from the natural pool at the bottom of Market Street. By the 1860s there was continuous wharfage along both sides of the Yarra from Queens Bridge (then called the falls bridge) to near Spencer Street, and continuing further to the gasworks on the North Bank where the “Australia Wharf” was constructed in the 1880s and 90s.<sup>69</sup>

<sup>69</sup> Buckrich, Judith Raphael, *The long and perilous journey: a history of the Port of Melbourne*, Melbourne Books, Melbourne, 2002; Hoare, Benjamin, *Jubilee history of the Melbourne Harbor Trust: compiled from the original records of the Trust and from the Victorian Hansard*, Peacock Brothers, Melbourne, 1927.

The Melbourne city was initially in control of the waterfront, but the need for improvement eventually resulted in the formation of the Melbourne Harbour Trust in 1877. One of its first acts was to commission John Coode, an eminent British Harbour engineer, to prepare a plan for improvements to Melbourne's port and navigable rivers in 1878. His plan included widening and straightening the river entrance, excavating the Victoria Dock on the swamps immediately west of the city, and cutting a new canal to remove the long and difficult passage around Fishermen's Bend from Humbug Reach to near Yarraville. This commenced just to the west of where the Bolte Bridge now crosses the River.

As part of the Coode Scheme, a turning basin was proposed on the south bank of the river just above the gasworks to enable river shipping to be swung around as well as providing additional wharf space. An upper swinging basin had previously been created at the pool, by dredging and widening the river, and another swinging basin was formed at the mouth of Victoria Dock again by widening the river. The canal was opened in 1887,<sup>70</sup> cutting off the former Fishermans Bend, and so shortening the route to the bay. By forming a regular curve and widening and deepening the channel, shipping of the largest tonnage at the time could reach the main port immediately west of the city and railway terminal.

Other works continued to the bay piers, which were still dealing with over 30,000 tons in 1899. Deeper draft ships were accommodated at a rebuilt Station Pier (replacing the former railway Pier) in 1913, augmented a few years later by the new Princess Pier in 1922.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> "THE FISHERMAN'S BEND CANAL." The Age (Melbourne, Vic. : 1854 - 1954) 28 July 1887: 5. Web. 13 Sep 2016 <<http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article190641542>>.

<sup>71</sup> Ruhen p.180



**Figure 30: Coode Plan for Melbourne's Docks State Library Victoria, note "Fishermans Bend" in top left.**

In the early 1900s, further improvements were carried out to the upper parts of the wharves, including widening the swinging basin, which had by this time become known as the Interstate Swinging Basin, due to the nature of the shipping using the river wharves. This was needed because the former Turning Basin below Queens Bridge and the river wharves would be cut off from shipping but the construction of the proposed Spencer Street Bridge.

The Swinging Basin involved excavation of the low swampland on the south side of the river and creation of a large timber piled wharf as an extension to the existing south wharf. In the 1920s and 30s, further widening was carried out downstream of the swinging basin, and new wharves constructed along this stretch of the river. As a result the existing industries, storage yards and other port related activities were pushed further south, with timber storage, ballast yards and other maritime warehousing concentrated in the triangle between Lorimer Street, the Port Melbourne railway and Ingles Street.

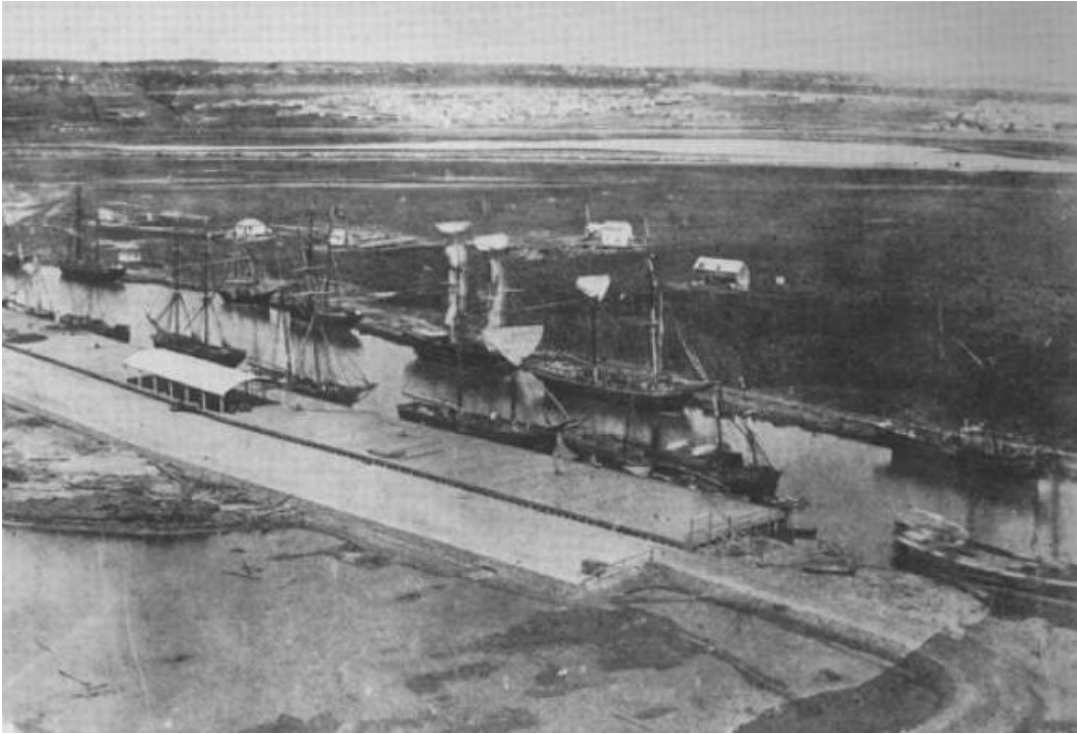


Figure 31: View across Australia Wharf to the south bank, note huts (Lewis 1994:21 cited in Duncan)



Figure 32: Yarra River and Port of Melbourne showing widening operations downstream of swinging basin. Between 1930 and 1948.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> State Library of Victoria H91.160/524 <http://www.slv.vic.gov.au/airspyglass/0/0/0/im/ai000525.jpg>

South wharf was gradually extended along the river; both as dredging widened the channel and construction of Lorimer Street improved access. By 1899 South Wharf was constructed down to the commencement of the Coode Canal, at a point opposite the Victoria Dock entrance. A small wet dock had been excavated back to Lorimer about where the Bolte Bridge now crosses the river bank. By 1942, the wharves had reached Salmon Street, with the Coode Canal doubled in width up to this point.<sup>73</sup>

Wharfage opposite GMH was considered an integral part of the factory operation, as considerable quantities of components and raw materials were required to be brought to the plant from overseas, or the BHP steel mills in NSW and South Australia. Wharf sheds Nos 31 and 32 were constructed by 1955, and provided general cargo for the building materials industries.

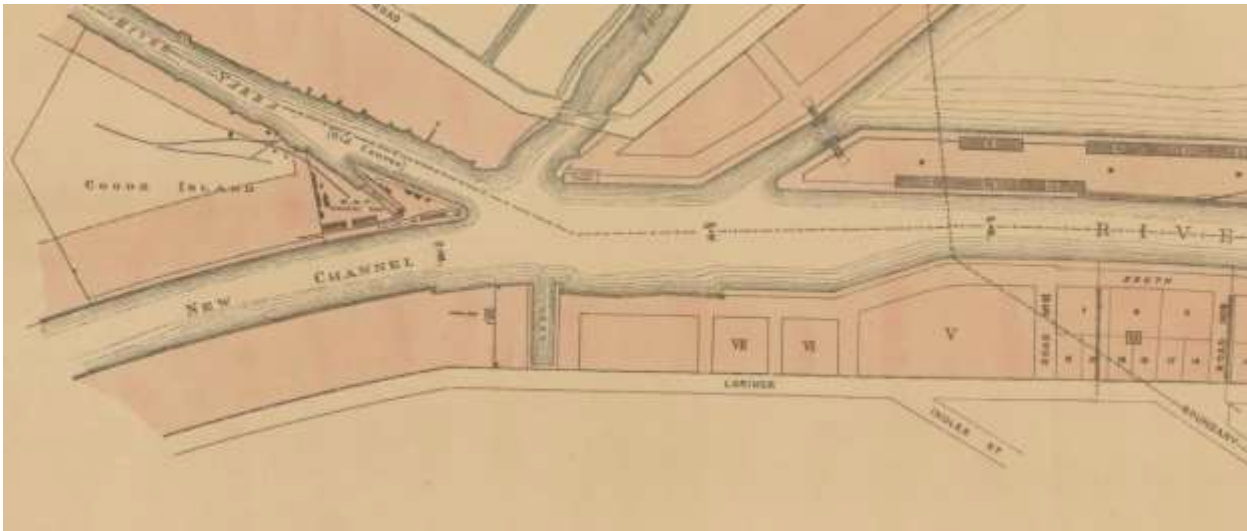


Figure 33: South Wharf and surrounds in 1899<sup>74</sup>

During the 'dockland war' of the early 1970s, this part of the port was subject to several incidents, including the burning of the Federated Ship Painters and Dockers Union office, and the murder of union official, Arthur 'the Ferret' Nelson, whose car was pulled from the river at South Wharf.<sup>75</sup>

## 4.9 Roads and Rail

*Themes: 3 Connecting Victorians through transport and communication*

Liardet's Hotel and jetty at Sandridge was the focus of the first track across the flats from the beach to Melbourne. This remained a sandy track for the first decade or so, with little impetus of funding available to undertake improvements. However, in 1853 construction of the road to Sandridge was undertaken by the Central Roads Board, which used extensive sections of "timber viaduct" (probably corduroy road where logs are laid side by side and chained together) to cross swamps.<sup>76</sup> The Sandridge Road was formally proclaimed

<sup>73</sup> Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works and McGowan, G. R. Map of Melbourne & suburbs. Melbourne Board of Works, Melbourne, 1942.

<sup>74</sup> Melbourne Harbor Trust Plan of River Yarra and Victoria Dock : shewing wharves, berths and sheds from Queen's Bridge to 2 miles. Melbourne Harbor Trust, [Melbourne], 1899.

<sup>75</sup> "'Arson' in dockland war" The Canberra Times (ACT : 1926 - 1995) 25 January 1972: 1. Web. 17 Sep 2016 <<http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article101754069>>.

<sup>76</sup> VGG 26 May 4 1853 p.622

as a Main Road in 1854,<sup>77</sup> while a toll bar was in place for much of the 1850s, to raise revenue for improvement and maintenance. As a result it was considered for a time as one of the best roads in the colony.<sup>78</sup>



**Figure 34: 'Sandridge Road as it will be', 1860 by R. Shepherd.<sup>79</sup>**

In 1839, only a few years after the first European settlement of Melbourne, consideration was already being given to a railway to link the main centre of habitation with the bay side where shipping arrived. Difficulties of navigating the shallow and tortuous lower Yarra saw many ships stand off in Port Phillip Bay, and transfer their cargoes of supplies and immigrants by lighter up the river or across the swamps of Sandridge. In the 1839 Government Survey, Robert Hoddle made provision for a railway linking Melbourne and Hobsons Bay. Nothing came of this due to lack of capital or motivation, but on September 7th 1851, a public meeting called for a railway linking Melbourne to Sandridge (Port Melbourne). The Government approved the establishment of the Melbourne and Hobsons Bay Railway Company on January 20<sup>th</sup> 1853 (followed shortly by the Geelong and Melbourne Railway Company and the Melbourne, Mount Alexander and Murray River Railway Company).<sup>80</sup>

Construction of the first line of rail from near Flinders Street to a wharf on Hobsons Bay was rapid and on September 12<sup>th</sup> 1854 the Melbourne and Hobsons Bay Railway was opened using a locally constructed locomotive. This was possibly the first locomotive hauled train in the Southern Hemisphere. The line ran for

<sup>77</sup> VGG 82, Tuesday, September 05th 1854 p.1988

<sup>78</sup> THE SANDRIDGE ROAD. (1859, June 25). The Argus (Melbourne, Vic.: 1848 - 1957), p. 5. Retrieved May 14, 2013, from <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article5683372>

<sup>79</sup> Lithographed Thomas Ham, Ladd & Carr printers, State Library Victoria collection H92.194/2 <http://handle.slv.vic.gov.au/10381/153976>

<sup>80</sup> National Trust of Australia (Victoria) Classification Report FN B4794 St Kilda Railway Road Over Rail Bridges

about 2¼ miles (3.6 kilometres) between the Sandridge Pier and Flinders Street, incorporating a sharply skewed timber trestle bridge over the Yarra River, the only major structure on the line. The railway achieved sufficient success over the next twelve months that the company, having returned an eight per cent dividend to its shareholders, decided to construct a branch line to St Kilda.

A public meeting was held in December 1855 to consider possible routes; A proposal to locate the line to the south and west of the hill known as Emerald Hill was rejected by residents, who considered that it would hinder their access to the beach, and it was subsequently decided that the line should be on the east of the hill, along Moray Street. Early the following year, this option was also dropped when a select committee deemed it too expensive. Instead, it was decided that the new line should neither follow the east or west of the hill but, rather ran through the centre of it, parallel to Ferrars Street.

In the meantime, the Victorian Government Railway Department was established (on April 1 1856) as part of the Board of Land and Works. George Christian Darbyshire was appointed as Engineer in Chief. Soon after his appointment, the Government took over the struggling Murray River Company. However, the Hobson's Bay line was still privately operated.

Construction of the branch line commenced in Spring 1856, with 200 workmen under the direction of the company engineer, William Elsdon, who had replaced its original engineer, James Moore, in December 1854. The new line turned off the main Sandridge railway soon after the Flinders Street terminus, extending 3 miles (4.8 kilometres) to a purpose-built station building on Fitzroy Street. Completion of the project was delayed due to difficulties with the original contractor, who was eventually replaced by another from Sydney, and the new line opened on 13 May 1857.

Over the next few years, the Melbourne & Hobson's Bay Railway Company upgraded both of its lines, which included the duplication of tracks and the opening of new stations. On the St Kilda branch, stations were opened at Emerald Hill (now South Melbourne) in September 1858, and at Butts (now Albert Park) in November 1860.<sup>81</sup> An extension was built by the St Kilda and Brighton Railway Co. in 1859, joined by a loop line from St Kilda to Windsor, and extended further to Brighton Beach by 1861. However a more direct route from Windsor to the city was built 11 months later, and the loop line was dismantled in 1867. In 1878 the private operator of the line was taken over by the Victorian Railways.

William Elsdon, C.E., came out from Newcastle, Northumberland in the 1850's and was the Chief Engineer of the Melbourne & Hobsons Bay Railway from 1854-1878, and then Chief Engineer of the Victorian Railways until 1882.<sup>82</sup> He was responsible for a large number of railway works in Victoria from the 1850s to 1880s. He designed the Rosedale Railway Station Complex dating from 1881,<sup>83</sup> among many other Victorian Railways works, and was engineer for the Royal Gymnasium Baths and Sea Bathing Company which was formed with G. H. F. Webb as the chairman of the company in 1861.<sup>84</sup> He retired from his position as Engineer in Chief of Victorian Railways in 1882, moving to Sydney in 1888 to practice in that city.<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> City of Port Phillip Heritage Review, Railway cutting and road bridges, Heritage Alliance.

<sup>82</sup> Minutes of the Melbourne & Hobsons Bay Railway Co., Public Records Office cited in National Trust of Australia (Victoria) Classification Report FN B4794 St Kilda Railway Road Over Rail Bridges

<sup>83</sup> Victorian Heritage Register H1589

<sup>84</sup> Priestly, The History of St. Kilda p.173, Susan Priestley South Melbourne: A History Melbourne University Publishing, 1995

<sup>85</sup> Victorian Government Gazette, No. 40 April 12 1882; The Brisbane Courier Friday 21 July 1882 p.3



A telegraph from Melbourne to Sandridge was constructed in 1854, the first in Australia, following Sandridge Road and the railway line. This provided shipping intelligence and synchronised signalling to set chronometers (via a time ball at Williamstown), with the observatory near the botanic gardens.<sup>86</sup>

Williamstown Road and Ingles Street were practically the only other roads of any substance in the area north of the Sandridge railway line and west of Emerald Hill until quite late in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. They were both still considered impassable in the 1880s, in part due to the carts to the sand ground cutting up the surface.<sup>87</sup>

Williamstown Road was known as the Short Road as, in combination with a ferry or punt at Greenwich (near the end of North road Williamstown), it considerably shortened the road from the city to Williamstown, compared with the alternative route around the north of Batman's Swamp crossing the Maribyrnong at Footscray. Substantial work was undertaken to the Short Road in the 1870s, with £400 from the Williamstown, Sandridge and Emerald Hill councils and £600 from Victorian Government. The road was proclaimed a main road on 28 March 1872.<sup>88</sup>

A ferry was briefly operated in 1857-9 from the temporary northern terminus of the Geelong Railway at Greenwich,<sup>89</sup> running up river to Melbourne, and a ferry to Williamstown (the "Gem"), was operating from before 1870, but this is likely to have only run between north wharf and one of the Williamstown Piers.<sup>90</sup>

Williamstown Council launched a steam ferry called 'The Link' in 1873, which became known as *Clough's Short Road Ferry*.<sup>91</sup> This operated until 1907 when a new steam ferry was commissioned, and it in turn was replaced in 1931 by the third ferry built by Thompson's engineering, also steam driven. The last was a combined vehicle and passenger ferry and was operated by winching along a chain laid across the bed of the river. The cable occasionally was snagged by ships using the river channel, and the ferry would have to stop and slacken the cable so it would drop to the bottom of the river whenever a ship passed.

The Short Road to Williamstown ran from Queens Street bridge (previously the Falls Bridge) along City Road and Williamstown Road to the so-called 'Short Road' Ferry, which crossed the river near the old Newport Power Station, and on to Williamstown via Douglas Parade. The 'long road' was via Dynon Road to Whitehall Street and Douglas Parade.

When the first ferry at this point began in 1873 fees were: - Foot passenger, one pence ; Vehicle with one horse or animal, six pence ; with two horses or animals, nine pence ; with three animals, one shilling ; Vehicles with four wheels, 2 shillings.

The Short Road appears to have always been subject to neglect, and commensurate lobbying for improvements. A conference of relevant authorities in 1888 seems to have come of little.<sup>92</sup> A proposal for a tramway along the route was given approval by the government, but the 'Astral-Anglo Tramway Company' did not manage to either raise the capital or undertake any works towards the project. Williamstown Council

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<sup>86</sup> VGG 99, Tuesday, October 31st 1854 p. 2419

<sup>87</sup> 'DEPUTATIONS.', The Argus (Melbourne, Vic. : 1848 - 1957), 28 May 1885, p. 10, viewed 26 April, 2013, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article6080703>

<sup>88</sup> VGG No 19, Thursday, March 28th 1872

<sup>89</sup> Museum Victoria, Victorian Railways, Geelong & Melbourne Railway Co <http://museumvictoria.com.au/railways/theme.aspx?lvl=3&IRN=449&gall=454>

<sup>90</sup> TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 6, 1870. (1870, September 6). The Argus (Melbourne, Vic.: 1848 - 1957), p. 4. Retrieved May 14, 2013, from <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article5830963>

<sup>91</sup> WILLIAMSTOWN BOROUGH COUNCIL. (1869, July 24). Williamstown Chronicle (Vic.: 1856 - 1954), p. 5. Retrieved May 14, 2013, from <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article68579312>

<sup>92</sup> 'The proposed Short road to Williamstown – conference of municipal representatives' *The Age* - Nov 22, 1888, p.4

offered to contribute to the project and the penal department even offered convict labour to undertake works.<sup>93</sup> In 1896 a committee with representatives of Williamstown and Port Melbourne Councils and the Harbour Trust, met on several occasions to address the condition and repair of the road.<sup>94</sup>

More substantial repairs were carried out by the Country Roads Board in 1926.<sup>95</sup> The ferry ceased operating on 15 November 1978, when the West Gate Bridge opened.<sup>96</sup>



**Figure 35: Williamstown Ferry (Photo Frank & Wendy Rouse)<sup>97</sup>**

Industrial development, in the first instance, spread down City Road from the Southbank area and later into Fishermans Bend, resulted in substantial road works in the early twentieth century with stone pitching constructed in 1907 to the main service roads, especially in the Montague area where most of the pitched roads in south Melbourne existed in 1924.<sup>98</sup>

In 1905-11, enamelled steel street signs were installed in much of the suburban areas and some main routes, while tree planting was carried out extensively along the main roadways with Oriental planes, poplars, elms, oaks, pines, sugar gums, kurrajongs and Pittosporum, sourced from the Mt Macedon government nursery.<sup>99</sup>

Tar macadam, wood lined channels, asphalt, some timber block paving on tramways and fully pitched laneways were all used to improve drainage, reduce rutting and limit the dust nuisance.

Lorimer Street was the only other substantial road through Fishermans Bend in the nineteenth century. It owed its origin to the use of excavated spoil from the Coode Canal to build up land along the banks of the new cut. This area then became available for occupation by various port related business, and formed the

<sup>93</sup> 'A Short road to Williamstown', *The Age* - Nov 22, 1888, p.5

<sup>94</sup> THE WILLIAMSTOWN SHORT ROAD. (1896, September 11). *The Argus* p. 6. Retrieved May 6, 2013, from <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article9168164>

<sup>95</sup> WILLIAMSTOWN SHORT ROAD. (1926, January 30). *The Argus* p. 33. Retrieved May 6, 2013, from <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article3731864>

<sup>96</sup> Heritage Inventory H7822-0385 Williamstown Steam Ferry Landing, [http://vhd.heritage.vic.gov.au/places/result\\_detail/13688?print=true](http://vhd.heritage.vic.gov.au/places/result_detail/13688?print=true)

<sup>97</sup> Williamstown Ferry Photo Frank & Wendy Rouse <http://historictrucks.blogspot.com.au/2009/12/short-road-ferry-to-williamstown.html>

<sup>98</sup> Priestly p250

<sup>99</sup> Priestly p251

initial area for new factories in the early twentieth century. Salmon Street was constructed as a result of the immediate pre and post war development at both ends for both GMH and Rootes, with a concrete road surface of the type built for military roads at the time.<sup>100</sup>

Electricity supply from the SEC came to the Fishermans Bend area in 1925, both providing some respite from the dangers of dark streets in the slum areas and facilitating further industrial development. As part of the power network, a number of specially designed electricity substations were erected, with the larger examples located close to established industry.

Additional electricity substations were constructed to provide greater capacity for the burgeoning industries from the 1930s. A large installation on the corner of Salmon Street and Turner Street was erected specifically to provide power to the new Holden Factory.

Further demand, in particular from the vast car factories, saw the establishment of the Fishermans Bend Terminal Station in the late 1960s near Turner Street and Graham Street at the SEC depot. Especially tall transmission towers were erected either side of the Yarra River to carry to 220 KV cables high enough to avoid shipping.

The South Melbourne cable tramway was opened by the Melbourne Tramway and Omnibus Co. on 17 June 1890, followed three days later by the Port Melbourne line which ran along City Road and Bay Street. The tramway engine house for both lines was located on City Road. With the formation of the MMTB in 1919, a new electric tram route was established via Albert Park and in 1937, the South Melbourne cable line was converted to electric traction, while the Port Melbourne line was closed down and the engine house sold off.<sup>101</sup>

#### 4.10 Humpies and Montague Slums

*Themes: 6.7 Making homes for Victorian; 6.8 Living on the fringes*

The wastelands of Fishermans Bend became a refuge for the dispossessed and homeless as much as wildlife, somewhat like the better known 'Dudley Flats' north of the river. As well as the rambling fishermen's camps along the beach, and on the remaining undeveloped stretches of river banks, humpies and shacks were thrown up at different times by people making a living scrounging from the rubbish dumps, or just taking advantage of the quite undisturbed locality. For example, a Portuguese man was living at Fisherman's Bend in 1877, and despite his diminished circumstances, was considered a subject worthy of the *Police News*, when it featured an illustration of him "...sitting at table, with his trained rat standing on the table on hind legs and dancing".<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>100</sup> Parliament of Victoria, ' Land Bill. 19 Nov., 1941, Hansard p. 1873

<sup>101</sup> Ward 2011. P.20

<sup>102</sup> "Police news", 14 April 1877, Melbourne : Richard Egan Lee, State Library Victoria Accession no(s) PN14/04/77/00, <http://www.slv.vic.gov.au/miscpics/gid/slv-pic-aab26620>



**Figure 36: "Portuguese man living at Fisherman's Bend, Sandridge," "Police news", 14 April 1877**

The famous Australian artist Albert Tucker also looked to Fishermans Bend for inspiration, evidence of the social deprivation and depression which came to feature strongly in his paintings. He took several photos of what it is assumed he regarded as "picturesque shacks" in preparation for some paintings in the 1930s.



**Figure 37: Fisherman's Bend Albert Tucker.<sup>103</sup>**

The Montague area was a notorious slum, with rows of decrepit terrace houses along Gladstone, Buckhurst and Thistlethwaite Streets and adjoining lanes. William Buckhurst had bought many allotments at the original land sales, and while he also promoted beautification of the gardens and development of nearby Albert Park, his own subdivided allotments became the locations of many inferior dwellings.<sup>104</sup>

The 1880s were a period of rapid growth in Emerald Hill with a population of 25,000 by 1880, rising to 43,000 at the end of the decade Port Melbourne saw a similar growth, but from a smaller starting point. A number of

<sup>103</sup> Fisherman's Bend Albert Tucker State Library Victoria H2008.98/205, <http://handle.slv.vic.gov.au/10381/140187>

<sup>104</sup> Ward 2011 p.54

the municipal councilors were prominent real estate developers and financiers including Matthias Larkin, James Page, J.R. Buxton and W. Thistlethwaite, or were land speculators such as Buckhurst. As a result subdivision and street construction (although rudimentary) went ahead rapidly.<sup>105</sup>

The Montague area was promoted as for 'persons of the artisan class' and this was reflected in the advertisements for houses for sale such as "neat two roomed cottage and land, plastered £1 10, Stoke Street, off Gladstone Place". By 1875, there were 560 households and by 1900, there were 1,000 in the district, with 200 in the lanes and little streets. Many of the people attracted to the low cost housing were labourers, fisherman, boilermakers, mariners and shipwrights, probably drawn to the area because of its proximity to the docks and metal works along the river, and the noxious trades on the Sandridge flats. Owner occupation was approximately 33 per cent and most of the houses in the smaller streets were made of timber and had two or three bedrooms. Almost no houses had a bathroom or washroom. By the 1920's, much of the housing stock was falling into disrepair due to regular flooding and inundation and little maintenance, particularly among the rental properties. However, Montague was renowned for its close knit community. The self-contained suburb had its own, school, church, police station, kindergarten, football team, hotels, post office, bank and shops.

A contributor to the *Argus* in 1881 described the Montague area, known colloquially as "Salt Lake City", as a poorly drained sector with a terrible stench in which typhoid was rife.

*[It is] "wonderful how people can live there; yet new houses are going up there daily in thick clusters, evidently intended for persons of the artisan class. Children are being reared...in great numbers. Their chief amusement here is to play in the horrible liquid surrounding their homes."*<sup>106</sup>

Floods exacerbated the problems with one description of the 1880 flood noting:

*Pedestrians could proceed along the footpath in Flinders-street to a point a short distance beyond William-street, where the flood barred all further progress. The houses from this point to the corner of Spencer-street were flooded on the ground floors and cellars. The water could be seen stretching from a short distance below the Falls Bridge to Sandridge Bend on the one hand, and from Emerald Hill to Footscray on the other.*<sup>107</sup>

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<sup>105</sup> Ward 2011 p.35

<sup>106</sup> *The Argus*, 16.8.1884 in Priestley, p.121.

<sup>107</sup> THE FLOODS IN VICTORIA. (1880, September 18). *South Australian Register* (Adelaide, SA : 1839 - 1900), p. 6. Retrieved June 4, 2013, from <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article43149401>



Figure 38: Floods along the Port Melbourne Line<sup>108</sup>



Figure 39: *The Argus* (Melbourne, Victoria: 1848 - 1957), Thursday 6 March 1919, page 8

The first inquiry into the condition of housing in Victoria was conducted in 1913 by a Select Committee of the Legislative Assembly. This first slum commission paid special note to the Montague district, noting the area between Ferrars Street and Boundary Street, and from City Road to the Port Melbourne railway, "...was very flat and the drainage bad, ... with very few exceptions the houses are all built of wood and iron..." where most did not have baths, and were small and in poor repair.<sup>109</sup>

<sup>108</sup> The Sandridge train-Keeping the line clear.- A scene in North Sandridge.. *Illustrated Australian news*. 25, 9, 188<http://handle.slv.vic.gov.au/10381/208269>

<sup>109</sup> 'Suburban slums, Evidence of Police, hovels and Shelter Sheds' *The Age* - Nov 20, 1913 p.6.

A number of testimonials for cures were recorded from the area for example residents of 100 and 116 Buckhurst Street praised of "Zam-Buk Balm" curing all manner of ailment. The manufacturer, Marshall's Chemical Co., was listed at 167 Buckhurst Street.<sup>110</sup>

By 1931, the second major economic depression occurred with its associated poverty and deterioration in living standards. Some efforts were made by the council to address the conditions in the slum. In 1930 the mayor of South Melbourne (Councillor H. A. Layfield) officially declared open a new children's playground in Thistlethwaite Street and personally introduced many children to the new swings and slides.<sup>111</sup> This was part of a larger plan to construct council houses on the British model. In what appears to be the first attempt under the Housing Reclamation Act at slum reclamation, J. L. Murphy, local MLA and Councillor, pushed forward the idea that council purchase about twenty dilapidated houses in Gladstone street, demolishing them, raise the ground level above the floods and construct nine pairs of semi-detached concrete and brick houses. These were then made available on apparently generous terms to purchasers who were required to buy the land at site value and pay off a loan raised to cover the cost of the house. The Housing Investigation Board however was critical of the Council's efforts, as it considered the efforts would only suit the better off residents able to afford the purchase price.<sup>112</sup>

Despite the poverty in Montague, Port Melbourne was not the primary focus of the slum abolition activities, with only 464 houses, or 6% of the total slum dwellings identified in the enquiry. It was related that in Port Melbourne: *"the slum problem is not as acute as elsewhere. A few slum pockets exist as well as narrow residential streets. There are, however, many substandard houses and replanning to eliminate narrow streets is appropriate"*.<sup>113</sup>

The Montague area, was however, subsequently earmarked in the 1930s for demolition by the Slum Abolition Board. In 1936 the establishment of a Housing Investigation Board considered housing conditions in Victoria. The Board's found numerous slum pockets and narrow residential streets with poor houses, at times subject to flooding in South Melbourne. The resulting Slum Reclamation and Housing Act in 1938, facilitated the clearance of the majority of the houses were cleared and the relocation of the residents, many of whom eventually moved to new housing at Garden City.<sup>114</sup>

Garden City began as a concerted attempt to address overcrowding and slum conditions by designing and constructing housing suitable for working classes, which in itself was thought to lead to improved social and health conditions.<sup>115</sup>

The Town Planning commission, which presented a far-reaching report in 1929, identified the Fishermans Bend area as having opportunities, not only for social housing, but for integrated transport and employment. In a prescient comment it identified the:

*"The plan includes provision for an arterial road two chains wide, westerly across this area to join with Bay View-avenue, Spotswood, which would make an extremely valuable direct route to the city from the Geelong-road and the whole of the area west of the River Yarra. The road will be of much value to the Fisherman's Bend area, but its*

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<sup>110</sup> Advertising. (1930, July 31). *Traralgon Record*, p. 6. Retrieved May 14, 2013, from <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article67503717>

<sup>111</sup> MAYOR AS PLAY LEADER. *The Argus*, Tuesday 13 May 1930 p 5

<sup>112</sup> Port Phillip Heritage Review – Gladstone Street public houses.

<sup>113</sup> Quoted in Phillips, A., "Kindergartens, Housing and Charity" p.30, in Allom Lovell and associates, op. cit., p.26.

<sup>114</sup> Allom Lovell Sanderson Pty Ltd, Port Melbourne Conservation Study Review p.4/20

<sup>115</sup> 'TOWN PLANNING COMMISSION.', *Williamstown Chronicle* (Vic. : 1856 - 1954), 3 July, 1926 p. 2, viewed 26 April, 2013, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article69517844>

*great usefulness will lie in providing a main "through" road, connecting the western suburbs with the city and the eastern suburbs by a much shorter route than at present exists.*

This was the proposed Howe Parade, which although only constructed within Garden City area, can still be identified in property boundaries and parkland across Fishermans Bend. What the commission predicted of course was the West Gate Bridge.

The Port Melbourne Council had previously petitioned the government to unlock land at Fishermans Bend and sponsor workers housing from 1906. It identified Fishermans Bend as a possible future housing site from as early as 1912.<sup>116</sup> The Harbor Trust, however, was not willing to unlock land it wanted for future port facilities. In 1920 the Housing and Reclamation Act authorised the building of homes by public bodies and shortly after the Victorian State Savings Bank became the first agency to participate in this scheme with loans from its Credit Foncier Department. Forty five acres of land were purchased at Fishermans Bend between February 1927 and August 1929 and the first houses were built in 1927 and by 1929, 154 houses had been completed.<sup>117</sup>

The development was designed and built under the influence of both American suburban estate planning and British Garden City principles, with attention payed to the environment ensuring adequate light and drainage, good services, and public areas with cul-de-sacs, a community centre and playgrounds. G B Leith was involved in the State Bank Houses with designs based on the British Local Government Board Manual of 1926-7, In 1936, a further 44 houses were built by the Public Works Department to designs of Saxil Tuxen of Tuxen and Miller, and Ballantyne and Wilson, architects. Later with the formation of the Housing Commission Victoria, the designs changed but construction continued in similarly 'English' idioms into the 1940s.

Because of differences in the perceived social strata, with many of the families from Richmond, Port Melbourne and South Melbourne relocating to the area, the Commission area became known as "Bagdad" after a magistrate's description derived from a reference to the "forty thieves" who lived there, while the Savings Bank area became known as "Nob Hill"<sup>118</sup>

## 4.11 Wartime industry and aviation

*Themes: 7.4 Defending Victoria and Australia; 5.2 Developing a manufacturing capacity;*

### Airfields

Fishermans Bend played an important role in the development of both civil and military aviation in Australia. In 1919 the first flight of a Maurice Farman S11 Shorthorn aircraft took place from what was known as the Carey Airfield, an informal grass runway established on the flats by aviation pioneer R Graham Carey, with financial backing from the Mayor of Essendon, Cr Arthur Fenton. Carey purchased four aircraft from the Defence Department after World War One, and established an airstrip on waste ground at the western end of Graham Street, taking Joy-flights from 21 April 1919. In 1920, the Melbourne Air Service was established 'to give instruction in the art of flying in the neighbourhood of Melbourne'.

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<sup>116</sup> U'Ren, N., Turnbull, N., A History of Port Melbourne OUP, 1983, p.227.

<sup>117</sup> Andrew Ward, Port Phillip Heritage Review, Version 14, 2009 Port Melbourne - The Garden City Housing Estates - HQ2, City of Port Phillip

<sup>118</sup> Ward 2011





**Figure 40: S11 returning to Port Melbourne after 18 years (PMH&PS collection)**

Aerodrome Licence No.1 was issued for the Fishermens Bend Aerodrome, 'behind the dunes' in Ferry Road (now Williamstown Road) on 30 May 1921. Possibly the first aircraft accident investigation in Australia took place the following year when Pilot Hubert Ross, on a joy-flight with Cyril Harris and Jessie Dorman, crashed into the yard of a cottage killing all three.

Later, when options for aircraft manufacture in Australia were being considered by private enterprise and government, and long drawn out negotiations between the Victorian and Federal Governments, a new aerodrome was eventually constructed at Fishermans Bend. On 11 November 1936, the Victorian Premier Dunstan announced 140 acres had been set aside as an aerodrome for the newly established Commonwealth Aircraft Corporation (CAC).<sup>119</sup>

### **Aircraft manufacture and testing**

In the 1930's concern about international militarisation, in Germany, Italy, and Japan led Essington Lewis of BHP, and several other prominent Australian industrialists including General Motors Holden to consider creation of an Australian aircraft manufacturing company capable of supplying the Royal Australian Air Force with locally built military aeroplanes as a contingency against the eventuality that aircraft might not be available from overseas in time of war. The CAC was established in Fishermen's Bend in 1936 to manufacture aero engines and complete aircraft.<sup>120</sup>

Lawrence Wackett, a captain with the Australian Flying Corps known for his engineering ingenuity, began designing and manufacturing civil aircraft after World War I. He was in command of the RAAF Experimental Section established at Randwick, Sydney in 1924. The chief of the Air Staff, (Sir) Richard Williams, nominated Wackett to set up and manage the CAC operation at Fishermens Bend, Melbourne. Wackett selected an American aircraft with which to begin production, which was named the Wirraway I. The first prototype was

<sup>119</sup> PMH&PS 'Wings over Fishermens Bend' October 24, 2014

<sup>120</sup> The Story Of The Commonwealth Aircraft Corporation, <http://www.beaufortrestoration.com.au/Pages/ProductionChild/Manufacturers/CAC.html>

flying by June 1938 and the first deliveries to the RAAF took place in July 1939.<sup>121</sup> It was a general purpose military aeroplane chosen primarily because it would be useful to the RAAF and was relatively simple to build.



**Figure 41: New CAC works at Fishermans Bend, late 1937<sup>122</sup>**



**Figure 42: CAC from the south showing camouflage painted buildings<sup>123</sup>**

In 1939, the Commonwealth Government decided to set up facilities to manufacture the British designed Bristol Beaufort twin engine bomber in Australia and a new factory was erected for the Beaufort Division of the Department of Aircraft Production and later as the Government Aircraft Factory (GAF). During World War II CAC manufactured Wirraway general purpose aircraft, Wackett trainers, Boomerang fighters and Mustang fighters at its Fishermen's Bend plant.<sup>124</sup>

In 1942, when the threat of invasion of northern Australia seemed highly possible, manufacturing facilities were concentrated in southern Australia for safety. Also, two United States Butler Hangars were erected at

<sup>121</sup> Alex Post, 'Wackett, Sir Lawrence James (1896–1982)', Australian Dictionary of Biography, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/wackett-sir-lawrence-james-15887/text27088>, published first in hardcopy 2012, accessed online 16 September 2016

<sup>122</sup> Geoff Goodall Collection 114112c6800-121R <http://www.goodall.com.au/australian-aviation/tugan-gannet/tugan-gannet.htm>

<sup>123</sup> State Library of South Australia Commonwealth Aircraft Corporation factory PRG 247/143/1 <http://collections.slsa.sa.gov.au/resource/PRG+247/143/1>

<sup>124</sup> D P Mellor, *The Role of Science and Industry, Australia in the War of 1939-45* series, Canberra, 1958, pp.381-422.

the CAC facility at Fishermen's Bend in which aeroplanes arriving from the United States were assembled, with the additional remountable Bellman Hangar added by August 1943. The Butler Hangar was also the wartime base of "Associated Airlines", the private corporate airline of BHP and its associated "Collins House" group of companies. Its aircraft were also used by Essington Lewis in his role as Director of Munitions and were also often used by the Prime Minister, in preference to airline services at Essendon Airport. The US Army and US Naval Attaches also based their executive transport aircraft at the Butler Hangar during the war due to the high level of security there and easier access to Melbourne.<sup>125</sup>



**Figure 43: Butler Hangar at Fishermans Bend prior to relocation (National Trust)**



**Figure 44: Lancaster Bomber demonstrated at Fishermans Bend Airfield**

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<sup>125</sup> National Trust classification report – Butler and Bellman Hangars at Commonwealth Aircraft Corporation Fishermans Bend. <http://vhd.heritagecouncil.vic.gov.au/places/12650/download-report>



**Figure 45: Aircraft Factories Fishermans Bend, with runways beyond.**

The Aeronautical and Engine Research Test Laboratory was created in 1939 as part of the CSIR Division of Aeronautics to conduct research in the area of aeronautics, especially aircraft and later missile design. H E Wimperis, a former Director of Scientific Research in the British Air Ministry recommended that an engineering Research Establishment be established by CSIR emphasising the need for it to be located close to centres of aeronautical industry and performance testing, identifying the site at Fishermans Bend as excellent for this purpose.

Construction of the Fishermans Bend site commenced in August 1939, one month before the start of the Second World War. The first staff to work at "the Bend" arrived in April 1940 and in May 1940, the laboratory formally became the Division of Aeronautics, part of CSIR, with L P Coombes, formerly of the Royal Aircraft Establishment Farnborough, as Chief.<sup>126</sup>

The organisation changed its name to Aeronautical Research Laboratories in 1949. In March 1994 the Aeronautical Research Laboratory merged with the Materials Research Laboratory to form Aeronautical and Maritime Research Laboratory of the Defence Science and Technology Organisation (DSTO).<sup>127</sup>

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<sup>126</sup> DSTO Our History, 2016. <http://www.dst.defence.gov.au/discover-dsto/our-history>

<sup>127</sup> Kepert J.L, Fishermens Bend - A Centre Of Australian Aviation Department Of Defence, Defence Science and Technology Organisation, Aeronautical Research Laboratory, Melbourne, Victoria



**Figure 46: Aeronautical Research Laboratory Lorimer St.**

Following the demise of both the commercial and government aircraft manufacturing ventures, the aircraft factories reverted to other owners and uses. DeHaviland took over parts of the plant and buildings and continued the manufacturing, repair and servicing programs, and in more recent years this has been continued by Boeing. However, large parts of the building complexes, including almost all of the Government Aircraft Factory have been demolished and replaced with modern buildings.

### **Tank manufacture and testing**

As military industries and scientific research facilities were already in place in the area at the outbreak of World War Two, it was the obvious choice for the establishment of an experimental military tank works. British artillery officer, Colonel W D Watson, advised the Defence Department from December 1940 on the technical requirements for the program, and by February 1941, the Australian Cruiser Mark 1 military tank was designed to a mock-up stage. An experimental tank depot was constructed around July 1941 on a 9½ acre site at Fishermen's Bend. (Reeves, 2015) However, production was very slow and only a few tanks were built before the local tank manufacturing programme was ultimately stopped in July 1943 in favour of imported tanks from America.

The Department of Aircraft Production (DAP) then took over the factory for expansion of the existing aircraft production in the area at the Commonwealth Aircraft Corporation (CAC) works on Lorimer Street, which commenced in 1937, and the Beaufort bomber factory was built on Lorimer Street in 1940. The Salmon Street factory became the DAP Maintenance Division and then the Maintenance & Disposals Division in August 1945. At the end of the war it was re-named the DAP Supply & Disposals Branch (and, later still, the Disposals Branch), from where surplus materials were sold off.<sup>128</sup>

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<sup>128</sup> Simon Reeves, former Tank Factory Fishermans Bend, National Trust of Victoria.

## 4.12 Auto Industry and GMH

*Theme: 5.2 Developing a manufacturing capacity; 5.8 Working*

Fishermans Bend provided the catalyst for three major and several other car manufacturers in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. Holden, Chrysler and Toyota all had their origins in the area, benefitting from Government tariff protection, direct investment, and the advantage of connectivity and infrastructure that the area provided.<sup>129</sup> The Adelaide coach-building firm of James Alexander Holden started as a saddlery business as early as 1854, and expanded into coach building, and then his sons developed motor body building, eventually erecting a large factory at Woodville. The firm evolved over the years, moving into the automotive field in 1908, repairing car upholstery, then the full-scale production of vehicle body shells. Throughout the 1920s Holden had supplied tramcars for Melbourne, but was more prominent as a motor body builder and assembler of various models, particularly for the imported General Motors chassis. In 1931, Holden merged with GM to become General Motors-Holden's Limited (GMH), and in 1936, the firm opened a new headquarters and assembly plant in Salmon Street, Fishermans Bend in Port Melbourne.<sup>130</sup>

During World War Two the factory produced more than 30,000 vehicle bodies for the Australian and United States forces and manufactured a wide range of equipment, including field guns, aircraft, aero and marine engines. After the war, Holden returned to producing vehicle bodies, including Buick, Chevrolet, Pontiac and Vauxhall.

Before the war ended, the Australian Government had already taken steps to encourage an Australian automotive industry. Both GM and Ford provided studies to the Australian Government for an Australian-designed car. Although Ford's proposal was the government's first choice, financial costs saw the government choose the GM proposal due to the low level of government intervention.

### **GMH**

Holden's managing director, Laurence Hartnett, favoured development of a local design, while GM preferred to see an American design as the basis for "Australia's Own Car". Holden commenced manufacture of a fully-Australian product in 1948, the 48-215, nicknamed the F X, with the second version the more famous FJ.<sup>131</sup>

Expansion of production saw Holden establish a second Victorian assembly plant in Dandenong in the late 1950s, so that complete construction of cars ceased at Fishermans Bend, and would concentrate on component manufacture including a substantial engine manufacturing plant.

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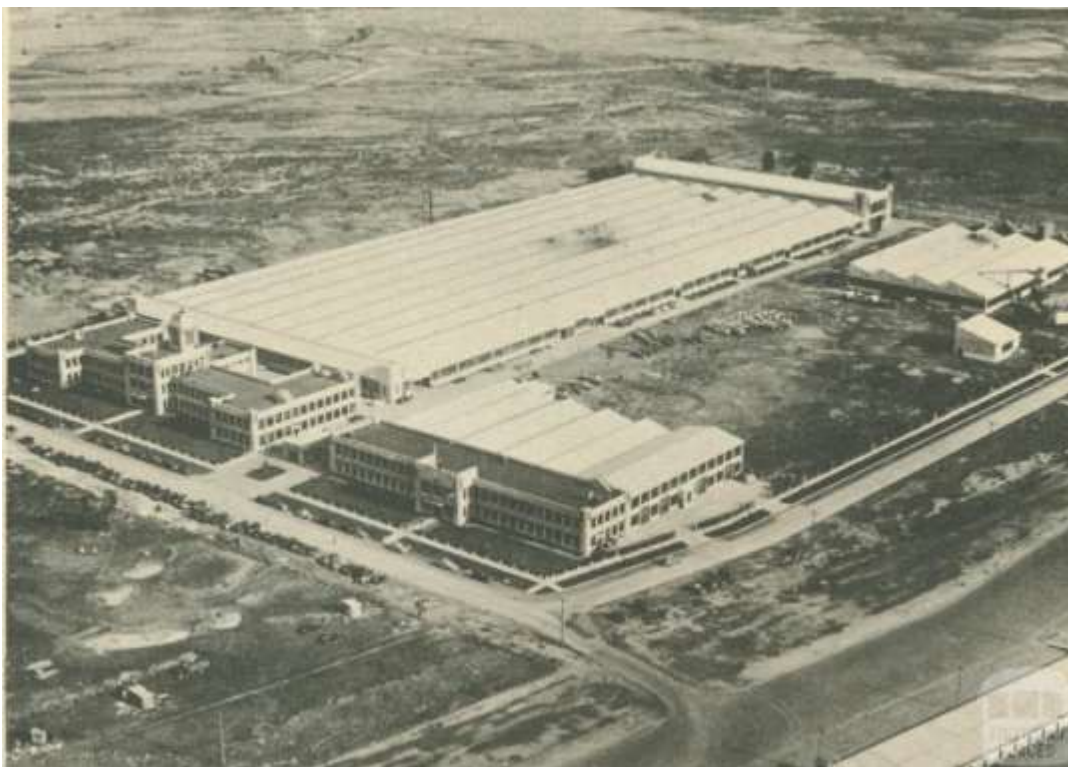
<sup>129</sup> Stubbs, Peter C. (1972). *The Australian motor industry: a study in protection and growth*. Cheshire for the Institute of Applied Economic and Social Research, University of Melbourne.

<sup>130</sup> Davis, Tony; Kennedy, Ewan; Kennedy, Alistair (1998). *The Holden Heritage: Eighth Edition*. Blakehurst, New South Wales: Marque Publishing. ISBN 0-947079-57-2.

<sup>131</sup> Darwin, N, 1983 *The History of Holden Since 1917* Melbourne: Gordon & Gotch ; *History of Holden, Holden History In Brief*, [http://history.gmheritagecenter.com/wiki/index.php/History\\_of\\_Holden](http://history.gmheritagecenter.com/wiki/index.php/History_of_Holden)



**Figure 47: GMH looking over the empty expanse of Fishermans Bend c.1926 (State Library Victoria H91.160/259)**



**Figure 48: General Motors-Holdens, Fishermans Bend, c.1937 (Victoria in Pictures *The Argus*)**

*1839 – the founding of PORT MELBOURNE . . .*



**1939** AUSTRALIA'S MOST MODERN MOTOR WORKS  
 PRODUCING CARS and TRUCKS EQUALLING the WORLD'S BEST

The Works and Administrative Offices of General Motors-Holden's Ltd., at Fishermen's Bend, erected at a cost of £438,000, are the most modern of their kind in Australia.

In these Works are machines and methods as modern as those employed in the world's leading factories, producing a complete range of cars and trucks for every transport need—and creating opportunities for Australian skill and workmanship to compete successfully with overseas standards.

**GENERAL MOTORS-HOLDEN'S LTD.**  
 Cadillac, La Salle, Buick, Oldsmobile, Pontiac, Vauxhall and Chevrolet Cars;  
 G.M.C., Bedford, Maple Leaf and Chevrolet Trucks; Holden Bodies.

Figure 49: General Motor-Holden's Ltd, Fishermans Bend, 1939 (Greater Port Melbourne, Port Melbourne Centenary Celebrations Committee)





**Figure 50: Industry at Fishermans Bend, 1964 (A Regional Geography of Victoria, Whitcombe & Toombs Victoria Places)**



**Figure 51: GMH Social Centre**



Figure 52: Interior of the GMH Social Centre<sup>132</sup>



Figure 53: Current views of History of transport Mural in the GMH Social Centre

The earliest part of the plant was at the corner of Salmon Street and Lorimer Street, with reinforced concrete 'Art Deco' office buildings fronting large areas are steel-framed saw-tooth roof factory space. The factory was

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<sup>132</sup> David Thompson GMH Social Centre, Port Melbourne <http://artdecobuildings.blogspot.com.au/2011/12/gmh-social-centre-port-melbourne.html>; City of Port Melbourne Building Permits 31/1/1945 canteen built for General Motors Holden by Richmond builder E A Watts

designed by a team of four (L H Hartnett, Managing Director; E J L Gibson, Construction Engineer; J S Storey, Director of Engineering and N A Pointer, Equipment Engineer).<sup>133</sup>

In the 1950s, major expansion to the south and west occurred, including the engine plan (which is now mostly abandoned). In the 1990s, the new V6 engine plant was constructed towards Todd Road, filling the last remaining vacant land. Holden started selling off sections of its 38-hectare manufacturing plant in the last few years, with the original office now occupied by Boral, and the earliest assembly buildings having been demolished to make way for an industrial park. The 1950s Boiler House, which featured an early glass curtain wall design, was demolished in 2011.<sup>134</sup>



Figure 54: Demolished Holden Boiler House (Photo Wongm)

### Autocraft

Holden was one of the first of the automotive works to be established in the Fishermans Bend area, which attracted a number of firms due to the availability of large vacant sites suitable for erecting manufacturing facilities, and its proximity to rail and sea transport.

Neal's Motors was granted land on the opposite side of Salmon Street to build a factory assembling Austin Cars in the 1938 under managing director J. H. Lane, building a large factory of 22 square yards to the design of architect Harry A Norris.<sup>135</sup> Neal's Motors expanded in 1940 with the purchase of Overseas Motors from P.

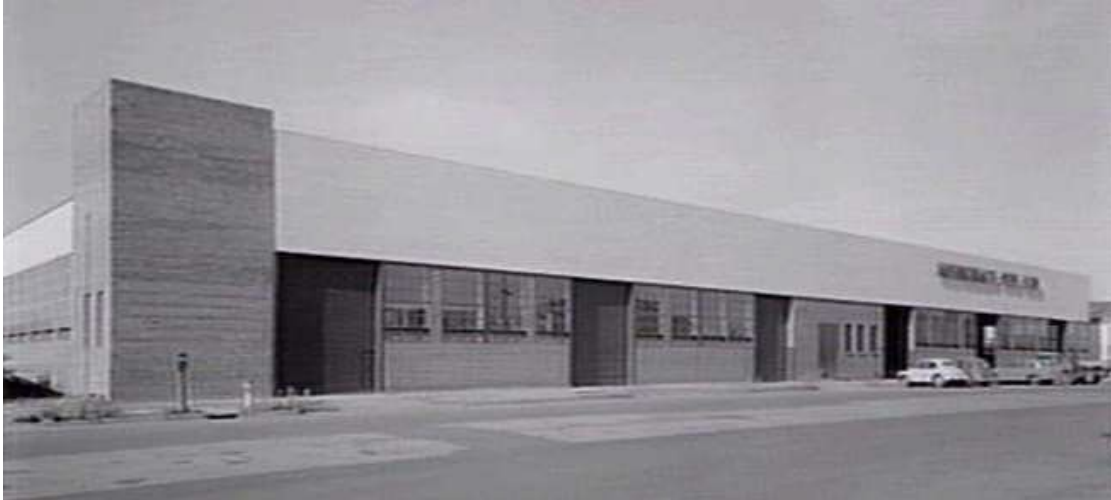
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<sup>133</sup> National Trust classification, General Motors Holden Administration Offices and Social Centre.

<sup>134</sup> Former GMH powerhouse in Port Melbourne, Marcus Wong, March 27th, 2012 4 Comments <https://wongm.com/2012/03/former-gmh-powerhouse-in-port-melbourne/>

<sup>135</sup> "NEAL'S MOTORS NEW PLANT" The Age (Melbourne, Vic. : 1854 - 1954) 26 January 1939: 7. Web. 17 Sep 2016 <<http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article205956761>>.

Armitage (who was also a partner in the Spicer & Armitage Central Spring Works in Sturt Street South Melbourne), gaining rights to assembly and distribution of Rootes cars including Hillman, Humber and Comer. This joined the nearby car factory of Autocraft Pty Ltd, which commenced in 1937 assembling Austin cars.<sup>136</sup> It continued in operation on a site in Lorimer Street until 1957, when it was bought out by the British Motor Corporation.



**Figure 55: Autocraft factory, Port Melbourne 1957<sup>137</sup>**

### **Standard Motor Co/AMI**

Australian Motor Industries (AMI) has its genesis in the firm of Eclipse Motors, which secured the Victorian agency for Standard Motor Company's cars in 1929. In 1952 one of its main investors, the Crosby family, in conjunction with Standard Motors in England financed a new plant in Port Melbourne to assemble Standard Motor Cars. It took over the former Felton Grimwade building in Ingles Street Port Melbourne in 1954, changed its name to Australian Motor Industries, and assembled Fiat, Triumph, AMC Rambler and Mercedes Benz cars.<sup>138</sup> In 1963 it secured the Australian franchise for Toyota cars and started assembling the Tiara Model. This was the first Toyota car built outside of Japan. Toyota acquired a controlling stake in AMI in the 1960's. Port Melbourne production was eventually shifted to Altona in Victoria in 1994.<sup>139</sup> The Factory extended along Cook, Graham and Bertie Streets, but the northern part was demolished for the West Gate Freeway and much of the remainder has been replaced with modern buildings in the last two decades.

<sup>136</sup> "AUTOCRAFT PTY. LTD." Examiner (Launceston, Tas. : 1900 - 1954) 16 April 1937: 6 (DAILY). Web. 17 Sep 2016 <<http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article52133970>>.

<sup>137</sup> Fowler, Lyle & Commercial Photographic Co State Library Victoria

<sup>138</sup> Sands & McDougall Directory

<sup>139</sup> Fawbert, and Turvey, Protecting the future of our automotive past. unpublished paper 2015



Figure 56: AMI offices in Cook Street 1970s (since demolished)<sup>140</sup>



Figure 57: AMI Factory Port Melbourne in the 1960s<sup>141</sup>

<sup>140</sup> Toyota History, 75 years, 'Ch. 2, Entering the automotive business'. [http://www.toyota-global.com/company/history\\_of\\_toyota/75years/text/entering\\_the\\_automotive\\_business/chapter2/section5/images/02\\_02\\_05\\_06\\_img04.jpg](http://www.toyota-global.com/company/history_of_toyota/75years/text/entering_the_automotive_business/chapter2/section5/images/02_02_05_06_img04.jpg)

<sup>141</sup> Phil Goschnick Mercedes-Benz in Australia During the Ponton Era (1953-1962) <http://www.mbzponton.org/valueadded/production/australia/australia.htm>; Belinda Stening, Australia led Toyota



Figure 58: External view of the Standard Motor Products factory, 1962<sup>142</sup>

### Rootes

Rootes Australia was the third large car manufacturer in Fishermans Bend. It was the Australian division of the British Rootes Group and assembled Hillman Minx vehicles at Port Melbourne in 1946. This was the first instance of a British motor manufacturer establishing a production line in Australia. In December 1965, Rootes Australia was merged with Chrysler Australia and assembly was gradually moved from Port Melbourne to the latter's existing facilities in Adelaide, South Australia. Chrysler Australia ceased production of Hillmans in 1973.

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expansion, *Curve*, 13 August 2006 <http://www.curvelive.com/Magazine/Archives/sixteen/Australia-led-Toyota-expansion>

<sup>142</sup> Photo by Wolfgang Sievers, National Library of Australia PIC WS 3140A LOC Cold store PIC Siev B&WN-F



Figure 59: Rootes Factory looking west, Williamstown Road on the left<sup>143</sup>



Figure 60: Rootes factory on the corner of Salmon Street and Williamstown Road.

<sup>143</sup> [http://www.sunbeam.org.au/?page\\_id=1119](http://www.sunbeam.org.au/?page_id=1119)



Figure 61: One of the surviving Rootes buildings on Salmon St.

### 4.13 Post War manufacturing

*Theme: 5.2 Developing a manufacturing capacity; 5.8 Working*

While development in Fishermans Bend in the immediate pre-war and wartime periods was characterised by the establishment of large new manufacturing complexes serving the war effort, after the war there was a period of diversification when many new industries were established. Among these was Mytton Grosvenor (later Mytton Rodd) which produced stainless steel tanks, beer kegs and cutlery,<sup>144</sup> Fowler's Engineering/ International Harvester, and G.N Raymond timber yards.<sup>145</sup> All were located on Lorimer Street by the 1950s, but later development of these sites has resulted in any original buildings being replaced.

Along with the expansion of the automobile industry, related manufacturers located in the Port Melbourne area. Among these were two paint manufacturers. Paints (British Australian Lead Manufacturers) in 1937 and Glazebrooks Paints & Chemicals, in 1945, both of whom are likely to have had close associations with the auto manufacturers, supplying paint in bulk.<sup>146</sup>

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<sup>144</sup> Memories of Mytton Rodd, [http://www.myttonrodd.9k.com/rich\\_text.html](http://www.myttonrodd.9k.com/rich_text.html)

<sup>145</sup> Golder Associates, 2016, Preliminary and Contamination Study, Fishermans Bend Employment Precinct.

<sup>146</sup> Fowler, Lyle & Commercial Photographic Co (photographer.) (1947). Glazebrook Australia Pty Ltd, Paints, Enamels and Lacquers, 269-97 Williamstown Rd. Port Melbourne. <http://nla.gov.au/anbd.bib-an49431357>





**Figure 62: Glazebrooks Paint factory on Williamstown Road 1959** <sup>147</sup>

Australian Gypsum Ltd. and Australian Plaster Industries were established by the 1960s in Lorimer Street to take advantage of the proximity to the bulk goods terminal on South Wharf. This complex went on to become a major plaster board manufacturer under Boral and continues as such, but again, with all recently constructed buildings.

Stewarts and Lloyds (Aust.) Pty Ltd erected a factory on Lorimer Street next to Neal's Motors in about 1945. The firm was established, in Newcastle, in the late 1920s by the English parent company. It was a member of the Tubemakers of Australia Limited group of companies, and manufactured steel pipes, boiler and stay tubes and water bore casing. The company also manufactured cylinder blank forgings, which were central to the automotive industry.<sup>148</sup> The pair of their original c 1945 buildings each with three gable roofs, survives with a new section joining them.

<sup>147</sup> Glazebrooks Paints Australia, Woman Sitting on a Car, Victoria, 28 Aug 1959 Photographer: Laurie Richards Studio Source: Museum Victoria <http://collections.museumvictoria.com.au/items/1912512>

<sup>148</sup> [http://www.beaufortrestoration.com.au/Pages/RestorationChild/Stories/Story\\_PubDAP002.html](http://www.beaufortrestoration.com.au/Pages/RestorationChild/Stories/Story_PubDAP002.html)



**Figure 63: Stewarts & Lloyds factory Lorimer Street**

The linesman depot training center and workshops of the PMG (Precursor to Telecom and later Telstra) were located in Plummer Street during 1940s-60s and possibly later. Plummer Street named for a councilor in late 19<sup>th</sup> century. This was possibly James K B Plummer, a Port Melbourne Solicitor from the 1880s, and on council in 1890s.<sup>149</sup>



**Figure 64: Linemen's Training School Fishermen's Bend in 1945.**

In the South Melbourne and Montague area, some further industrial development came as more of the Montague slums were cleared and converted to other uses. Many small factories and warehouses were erected in Thistlethwaite, Buckhurst and Gladstone streets, and some of the City Road properties changed from retail to manufacturing. Among them was W. H., Johnsons Jams in Meaden Street. Next door was a paint manufacturer Brolite Pty Ltd., which had a spectacular explosion destroy much of the factory in 1947,<sup>150</sup> but it continued to operate at least into the late 1950s.<sup>151</sup> The modern factory on the corner of Douglas Street

<sup>149</sup> PORT MELBOURNE. (1887, August 6). Record (Emerald Hill, Vic : 1881 - 1900), p. 8. Retrieved May 8, 2013, from <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article108485676>

<sup>150</sup> Lacquer factory fire causes £12,000 damage. (1947, August 29). The Argus (Melbourne, Vic. : 1848 - 1957), p. 4. Retrieved May 16, 2013, from <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article22439575>

<sup>151</sup> Advertising, *The Argus*, Saturday 19 January 1957 p 38), p. 16. Retrieved May 16, 2013, from <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article23222009>

still survives. This was probably located here because of associations with the nearby Union Can Company, or would at least have used their product.

One of the more recent manufacturers to move into the Montague area was Holvex Pty Ltd, "an old and highly reputable roofing and sheet metal firm" which was acquired by Steeldeck Industries P/L in the 1970s, to become Holvex Barden Roofing, later forming Barden Steeldeck Industries, with the Holvex name continuing for the sheet metal workshop and manufacture of architectural waste bins and ashtrays that Holvex were synonymous with for many years.<sup>152</sup>

McPherson's Machinery Merchants erected their International modern warehouse and showroom, at 6 Buckhurst Street, South Melbourne in 1964. Having previously upgraded their city showroom with a streamlined modern design it is appropriate that their new building featured the latest architecture which was photographed by Wolfgang Sievers. It included a large rooftop car park, suspended floating stair, cantilevered mezzanine off ice, and double height showroom. Thomas McPherson & Sons was founded in 1860 and in 1880 a plant was set up for the manufacture of jute wool packs. The company was also a long-term producer of nails, dies, gauges, and all sorts of tools. Later upper story office added in similar style.<sup>153</sup>



Figure 65: McPhersons South Melbourne Show Room, Wolfgang Sievers c 1960

## Kraft

Fred Walker started in the food business in 1899 and by 1908 was well established as an importer and exporter. Around 1910 he began canning food for export and in 1918 commenced the manufacture of the beef extract product Bonox.

His company's major innovation, however, was Vegemite, which was developed from 1923. In 1926 he formed the separate company of Kraft Walker Cheese Company Pty Ltd. after being granted an exclusive license by the Kraft Cheese Co. (Inc.) of Chicago USA to use their patented method for the manufacture of processed cheese.<sup>154</sup>

<sup>152</sup> Barden-Steeldeck Industries, web site <http://www.bardensteeldeck.com.au/>, accessed 13/5/13

<sup>153</sup> Encyclopedia of Australian Science 2010 <http://www.eoas.info/biogs/A001495b.htm> State Library picture collection

<sup>154</sup> Farrer, Keith Thomas Henry, 'C. P. Callister - a Pioneer of Australian Food Technology', Food Technology in Australia, vol. 25, 1973, pp. 52-65.



**Figure 66: Kraft Factory (Wolfgans Sievers, State Library Victoria)**

Fred Walker died in 1935, but the Kraft Walker Cheese Company Pty Ltd was subsequently amalgamated with Fred Walker and Co. and the American Kraft Company acquired a controlling interest. In 1950 the company changed its name to Kraft Foods Limited, and continued the production of a range of by then, well known food products including Vegemite, Bonox and Kraft Cheddar Cheese. Kraft is currently owned by Mondelēz International.<sup>155</sup>

The change in company structure also came with a recapitalisation and expansion of the production facilities. A new factory in Port Melbourne was built, replacing the Southbank premises. The new factory was opened on Tuesday 19 March 1957. By this time the company enjoyed an extensive home market for processed cheese, yeast extract, beef extract, meat and fish pastes and similar lines as well as considerable export business to Asian countries.<sup>156</sup>

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<sup>155</sup> K. T. H. Farrer, 'Walker, Fred (1884–1935)', Australian Dictionary of Biography, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/walker-fred-8953/text15747>, published first in hardcopy 1990, accessed online 22 August 2016.

<sup>156</sup> Kraft Walker Cheese Co The Kraft story : Commemorating the opening of the Kraft Port Melbourne Factory, Tuesday March 19th, 1957. Kraft Walker Cheese Co, Melbourne, 1957.



Figure 67: View of Kraft Factory from Salmon Street overpass

#### 4.14 Civic improvement and social history

*Themes: 8.4 Forming community organisations; 9.1 Participating in sport and recreation*

##### Football

Although sometimes considered a forgotten wasteland, Port Melbourne council and residents recognised the need for civil improvements in the Sandridge flats area and in particular along the boundary of the residential areas. A recreation reserve was provided for in early surveys on Williamstown Road by about 1880, with the creation of the North Port Oval, which was developed substantially in the 1900s. A focus of the working class industrial community, the ground was renowned for its rough play and fights among both players and fans, while it hosted a semifinal in 1903, the "roughing up" of an umpire in a 1907 game saw Victorian Football League (VFA) games moved away from the oval for the rest of the season. Unruly crowd behaviour and on ground incidents occurred regularly over the next 40 years and were subject to several VFA investigations.

Regardless the Port Melbourne club enjoyed considerable success in the 1920s with a winning streak of 33 games from July 1920 to June 1924. The £80000 grandstand was opened with much fanfare by the Mayor Cr A Tucker in 1928, later renamed the Norman Leslie Goss stand after the long time club secretary and player. The ground was taken over by the army in 1942 and used to grow vegetables, and subsequently lost its high quality playing surface when the Harbour Trust banned removal of sand (which had been used for many years) for top-dressing.<sup>157</sup>

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<sup>157</sup> Sando Caruso Football Grounds of Melbourne Pennon, 2002 pp.118-9.

Tommy Lahiff, put it bluntly: “you were either a wharfie or you worked in one of the factories. Swallow and Ariell’s, Kitchens, Dunlops, Laycocks”.<sup>158</sup> One of Unilever’s foremen in the 1950’s recalled that Port Melbourne was a close knit community, rough but honest: “once you were in you were right”.<sup>159</sup> The people of Port Melbourne suffered enormously through the 1930’s depression when between 75 and 90 per cent of young people are thought to have been unemployed.

## Golf

Fishermans Bend also lays claim to the origin of the Victorian Golf Club (VGC), which was established on 6 March 1903, by a group of influential Melbourne businessmen led by Billy Meader who wished to create a “good” golf club to play over leased links land at Fisherman’s Bend in Port Melbourne. Meader is widely regarded as the “father of Victorian golf”. He was one of a small group of devotees who set up the Victorian Golf Association in 1907 and was the VGC’s first Treasurer and later appointed Secretary in 1907 until 1932.

The original course at Fisherman’s Bend was located on the south east corner of Lorimer Street, and Salmon Street, opposite the site of the future Holden Factory. The Club relocated in 1926 to a new site in Cheltenham, a short walk from Cheltenham railway station as a convenience for the many members, as few owned cars in those early days.<sup>160</sup> While the club was located at Fishermans Bend, the VGC had the distinction of being the only “members club” in Australia. The old course continued to host the open and amateur events of the VGC at least up to 1928.<sup>161</sup>



**Figure 68: Fishermans Bend Golf Course from Todd Road**

<sup>158</sup> Tommy Lahiff, quoted in “They can carry me out” Memories of Port Melbourne, (1991), p.57. cited in Ward 2011, Port Phillip Heritage Review Vol 1, p.52

<sup>159</sup> Ward 2011, Port Phillip Heritage Review Vol 1, p.53

<sup>160</sup> A unique overview of the Victoria Golf Club History <http://www.victoriagolf.com.au/cms/about-us/history/>

<sup>161</sup> “GOLF NOTES” Table Talk (Melbourne, Vic. : 1885 - 1939) 23 February 1928: 42. Web. 13 Sep 2016  
<<http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article146843511>>. “Victoria’s Golf Clubs and Personalities” Table Talk (Melbourne, Vic. : 1885 - 1939) 21 December 1933: 41. Web. 13 Sep 2016 <<http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article147259999>>.

## Racing

After World War Two, the runways near the aircraft factories were adapted for use as a race track. Car and motorcycle races were held on the runways from about 1953 to 1959. Other areas of wasteland were also devoted to motorcycle scramble and dirt-track racing. The Fishermans Bend Track was laid out along the runways and taxiways, with hay bales marking the corners, but otherwise no barriers along the track. Many Australian racing drivers had their starts at Fishermans Bend including Bob Jane and Bib Stillwell.<sup>162</sup>

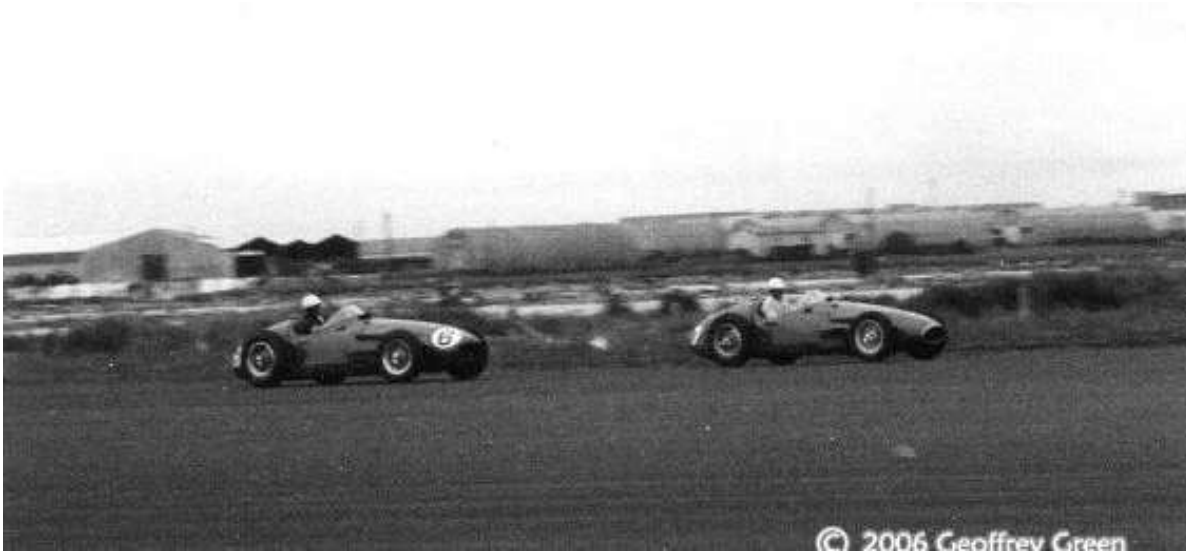
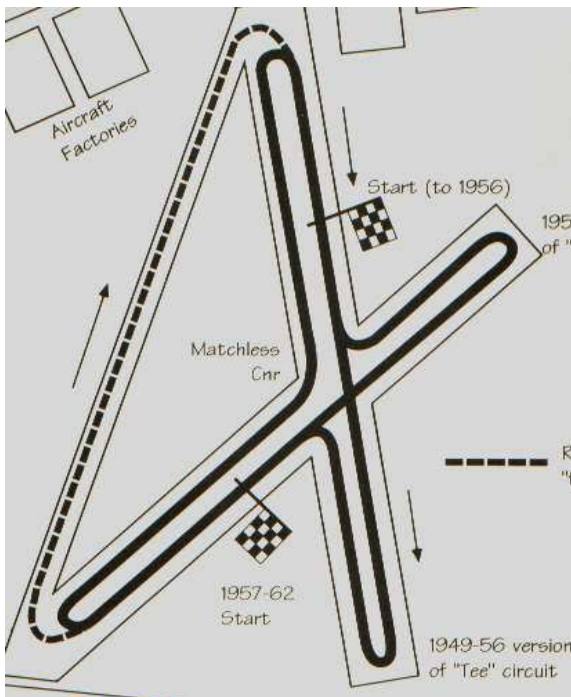


Figure 69: Motor Racing in the 1950s ( photo Geoffrey Green)



Figure 70: Pit straight on the main east west runway c.1954

<sup>162</sup> Motor Magazine, September 1965. <http://www.motorsportmagazine.com/archive/article/september-1965/58/those-maseratis-australia>



**Figure 71: Plan of race tracks at Fishermans Bend Runways**

## Migrants

*Themes: 6.7 Making homes for Victorian;*

From the 1940s, displaced persons and a government policy favourable to migration saw a new phase of mass migration with over 30,000 new arrivals in Australia every year from 1947 to 1961, with a large proportion from Britain, but significant numbers from Greece and Italy, as well as the other war torn countries of Europe.

As well as the more famous Bonegilla Migrant Camp, another large facility for housing new Australians was opened at Fishermans Bend in 1952, accepting new arrivals up to 1975. Located at the corner of Hall and Turner Streets in Port Melbourne, the Fishermans Bend Migrant Hostel contained former army huts, and large warehouses erected during the war.<sup>163</sup> In 1952, residents at the hostel were among 1000 protesters who marched through the city protesting evictions from migrant hostels, with men, women and children singing patriotic songs and carrying banners stating: "We fight for British justice" and "For six years we have fought the gestapo. We fight again."<sup>164</sup>

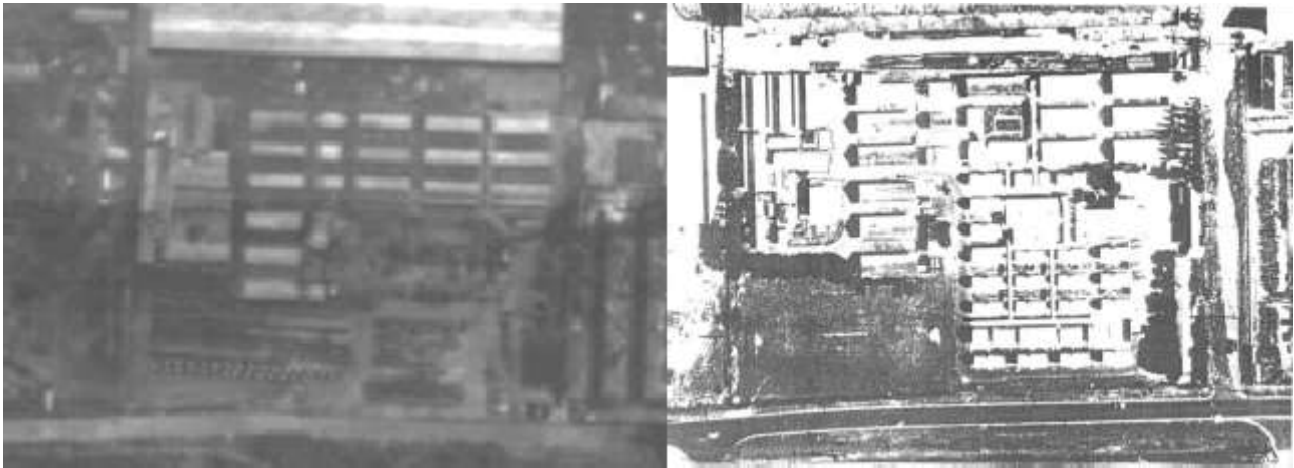
No buildings survive on the site, although one structure appears to have been relocated to Oakleigh and remains as the former Australian Air League headquarters.<sup>165</sup> Another hut was relocated in 1973 to Essendon where it was used for the sea scouts at Fairbairn Park.<sup>166</sup>

<sup>163</sup> Fishermans Bend Migrant Hostel, Facebook Page, <http://goo.gl/ROM6b>

<sup>164</sup> "700 MIGRANTS DEMONSTRATE IN MELBOURNE." Barrier Miner (Broken Hill, NSW : 1888 - 1954) 22 Nov 1952: 1. Web. 29 May 2013 <<http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article61225578>>.

<sup>165</sup> Heritage Alliance, 2008 'Survey of Post-War Built Heritage in Victoria' p. 248 "Fishermen's Bend Migrant Hostel (former) [remnant hut] 030-005 50-56 Atkinson Street Oakleigh, [http://www.dpcd.vic.gov.au/data/assets/pdf\\_file/0015/47202/Post\\_war\\_study\\_Stage1\\_Vol2\\_Trans.pdf](http://www.dpcd.vic.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0015/47202/Post_war_study_Stage1_Vol2_Trans.pdf)





**Figure 72: Plans of Fishermans Bend Migrant Hostel 1945 & 1969.**<sup>167</sup>



**Figure 73: Aerial photo showing Migrant Hostel with GMH in background**

A working class and radical political climate developed around a number of unions and other associations. The Amalgamated Society of Engineers was prominent at the Port Melbourne Railway Workshops from the 1890s while the Port Phillip Stevedores Labour Association, Hobsons Bay Fishermans Union and Melbourne Wharf Labourers Union all formed in the 1880s. They were all active participants in the 1886-7 maritime strike which was a major formative event in the Australian Union movement.<sup>168</sup>

Some more conservative factions in the local community formed the Temperance Hall, while the Licencing Reduction Board was responsible for closing 18 hotels in the district in the early twentieth century.

<sup>166</sup> 15<sup>th</sup> Essendon Sea Scouts, <http://www.vicscouts.com.au/essendon-15th/history/1956>

<sup>167</sup> Photos of Fishermans Bend Migrant Hostel by Linda Walton <http://goo.gl/sgDZx>.

<sup>168</sup> Lowenstein & Hills, *Under the Hook* 1982 p.7

## West Gate Bridge

By the 1960s, the character of Fishermans Bend had consolidated. While the Harbour Trust kept the western end locked up, and the West Gate Bridge cut a swathe through both South Melbourne and Fishermans Bend, industrial development progressed, and took on an air of maturity.

In 1964 plans were announced for a lower Yarra crossing and work started on the West Gate Bridge in 1968. The surrounding land was used as a construction site with large areas reclaimed from the remnants of the former swamps and sand pits. On 15 October 1970 a box girder span at the western side of the bridge collapsed killing 35 men and injuring 18. The reconstructed bridge was eventually opened on 15 November 1978. The bridge is Victoria's tallest at 2.58 kilometres long and 102 metres high. By 1979 it was carrying 22,000 vehicles per day, and in recent decades it has been widened and strengthened using innovative carbon fibre post tensioning. *The Age* described the land seen from the bridge in the early days of its opening as;

*"It is scrofulous scenery indeed ... dead water, swamp, sick factories, dead wood, haze, gasping barges, wretched refineries, wheezing chimneys, dead grass, institutional putrefaction."*



**Figure 74: West Gate Bridge toll plaza looming east just prior to opening (Museum Victoria)**

The toll plaza near Todd Road was demolished and service centres built in its place with the last remnant being the office building being demolished in 2010.

## Westgate Park

*Theme: 1.6 Appreciating and protecting Victoria's natural wonders*

Fishermans Bend was considered a wasteland and dumping ground, for most of its life. The filling of the natural sand ridges and swales was only finished in the last few years, with the completion of the Webb Dock development. The area saw a transformation as a consequence of the construction of the West Gate Bridge. Oscar Meyer, chair of the West Gate Bridge authority, wanted to create a beautiful park beside the Yarra River to complement the sculptural form of the bridge. Planning Minister, Evan Walker, and David Yencken in the

Planning Department were instrumental in getting the plan off the ground. The idea was presented to the Federal Government as part of Victoria's sequin centenary celebration and the Park became the largest project to be funded under the various celebrations, with initial works in 1984/5.<sup>169</sup>

A 1985 master plan by Loder & Bayly emphasised the grand scale and unique qualities of the site, which would be seen from above by motorists on the bridge each day. The fresh and saltwater lakes were to be focal points, with the bridge as the central, sculptural feature. An island visitor centre, amphitheatre and narrow gauge tourist train were proposed, but did not eventuate. Fill was brought in and shaped into an undulating landscape and construct hills to give views to the lakes and lagoons, which occupy a third of the land mass; a reminder of the Park's swampy past, and the salt lake the result of a deep hole left by 1930s sand mining.

Westgate Park opened on 7 November 1985, dedicated it to the people of Victoria. Lyn Moore was commissioned to produce an appropriate artwork: the *Earth Series* of eight sandstone, granite and ironbark sculptures, which were erected in the park in 1990.

The prototype of the concrete box girder bridge section is also, in place as an entry/viewing platform and a bridge over the water between the dam and the freshwater lake.



**Figure 75: One of Lynn Moore's Earth Series Sculptures in Westgate Park**

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<sup>169</sup> Friends of Westgate Park, The 30th Anniversary book: The Westgate Park creation story, November 2015, <http://www.westgatepark.org/friends-of-westgate-park/>

### **Council amalgamations and redevelopment**

In 1994, under the Kennett government, a review of municipal government led to the amalgamation of most councils, with the former cities of South Melbourne, Port Melbourne and St. Kilda, combining to form the City of Port Phillip (apart from the strip of land north of the West Gate Freeway, which went to the city of Melbourne).

The most dramatic changes in the area have come in the last two decades, perhaps building on the redevelopment of the bayside pier, where former rail yards and industry became the upmarket Beacon Cove development and the industrial sites converted to apartments. Such development has accelerated with the most recent apartment boom at both ends, moving up Bay Street from the beach, and down City Road from Southbank. Fishermans Bend can then be seen as the logical continuation of an established trend.