HIDDEN TREASURES

Minister Assisting on Planning, the Hon. Justin Madden, MP speaking with La Trobe University's Graham Wilson

Camp Street Ballarat

Camp Street accommodated large numbers of military, police and officials associated with the colonial government almost 150 years ago, and it was also where the troops marshalled before marching to the Eureka Stockade. The second stage of an archaeological excavation of the site was undertaken over six weeks in June and July this year. Heritage Victoria Education Officer, Allen Jones, discusses the education component of the dig.

Never has the Latin motto *carpe diem* meant so much to this Heritage Victoria Education Officer, especially when the *Camp Street Precinct Ballarat Conservation Management Plan* (CMP) offered the possibility of an educational/interpretative program. Seizing the moment meant approaching some of the relevant Camp Street stakeholders, such as the Ballarat Fine Art Gallery. The site's strong link to the Eureka Stockade resulted in an approach to the Eureka Stockade Centre and Sovereign Hill as well.

The response was enthusiastic and the group met in March to assess the potential for learning activities. From this meeting a number of activities were highlighted, ranging from an electronic magazine to a professional development program for teachers. The meeting also discussed some long-term projects, such as web-site development (via a web-based competition), kiosk presentation (tourist orientation), multimedia-based CD-ROM on the precinct, curriculum materials for schools, and storyboards, all of which have the potential to involve other stakeholders.

The educational group was expanded to include a representative from the City of Ballarat, Heath Martin, and Anne Beggs-Sunter, a Lecturer in History and Heritage and representative of the Central Highlands Historical Association. Subsequent meetings focused on how to implement program ideas and also developed an action plan.

The potential to develop educational activities beyond the term of the excavation, including the foundation for an educational community-based program which may also serve as an example to other communities across the nation, was a pleasing outcome of the Camp Street project educational group.

The 'Mahogany Ship' legend lives on

The origin of a timber object discovered in the sand dunes near Warrnambool could not be determined, following an excavation of the site by Heritage Victoria in August.

Discovered in June last year by local shipwreck enthusiasts, Des Williams and Jim Henry, it was thought the timber could be a valuable clue in solving the mystery of the Mahogany Ship. CSIRO tests showed the timber was Northern European white oak, which is exotic to Australia.

Three non-disturbance surveys of the site were undertaken. A ground-penetrating radar indicated an object at a depth of three metres and about three metres in length. Two other surveys had indicated the possibility of metal being present, which increased the chances of the wood being ship-related.

The Heritage Council Victoria gave in-principle support for an excavation in May this year, Permits were sought from Moyne Shire, the Department of Natural Resources and Environment, Aboriginal Affairs Victoria and Heritage Victoria. Other key stakeholders involved in the planning for the dig were the Framlingham Aboriginal Trust, Warrnambool Council, Flagstaff Hill Maritime Museum and the local Mahogany Ship Committee.

A two-day archaeological excavation was held on 15–16 August. After digging to a depth of three metres, the timber was carefully excavated by Heritage Victoria archaeologists.

Despite initial speculation that the timber may have been part of a fireplace, once the area had been excavated it became apparent that the timber was not ship-related at all. No markings were found on the wood, and there were no other artefacts or archaeological deposits in the vicinity. It was also lying at an earlier beach level which may have been as recent as the 1960s.

Heritage Victoria archaeologist, Peter Harvey, said the origin of the wood could not be established, but it was possible that the oak timber was part of the cargo of the *Falls of Halladale*, which was wrecked near Peterborough early last century.

Spotlight on our public assets

Public Heritage Program heads into the third round

The third round of the $15 million Public Heritage Program has recently been announced by Minister for Planning, John Thwaites, at the Dandenong Town Hall, which was one of 19 projects across the State to share $1.4 million in funding.

Administered by Heritage Victoria, the Public Heritage Program funds the conservation of the State's historic public assets and is used for urgent repairs, restoration and refurbishment of important historic places.

Dandenong Town Hall will be redeveloped into a regional performing arts and conference centre and will receive $306,000 for the 1890 section of the building, which is one of the few surviving nineteenth-century buildings in the area.

Other projects to be funded included the Spotswood Pumping Station, Scienceworks $406,000, Mission to Seamen building, Flinders Street Extension, Melbourne $200,000; Koroit Railway Station $105,000; Port Fairy Hospital $100,000; and the Skipton Courthouse and Police Station $20,000.

The latest announcement by Mr Thwaites brings Public Heritage Program funding to just under $6 million, with almost $4.5 million already allocated for projects across the State under round one and two.

Left to right: Cr Angela Long, Mayor City of Greater Dandenong, the Hon. John Thwaites, MP, Minister for Planning, Catherine Heggen, Heritage Council Chair, the Hon. John Pandazopoulos, Member for Dandenong

Gardens and Designed Landscapes

The value of gardens to our heritage and recreation is widely acknowledged by the community. Although heritage at a State level has only officially recognised landscapes since the expanded *Heritage Act 1995* was introduced, steady progress has occurred over many years to recognise the heritage significance of trees and designed landscapes.

Victoria has an impressive array of landscapes and gardens, thanks to people such as government botanist and Director of the Melbourne Botanic Gardens, Ferdinand von Mueller and the highly gifted garden designer William Guilfoyle, who replaced Mueller as director at the Botanic Gardens in 1873. From the 1920s, the garden designer and author Edna Walling was influential in garden design.

The pioneering work by Peter Watts for the Garden State Committee and the National Trust in 1979–80 resulted in the first record of heritage gardens. In 1983, the Watts study led to the publication of *Historic Gardens of Victoria,* which was the first book to record our garden heritage. A campaign by the National Trust in the 1970s to protect the Rippon Lea garden used community support and strategies similar to those used in the protection of our built heritage in the1950s–60s. The *Planning and Environment Act 1987* allows for local government to protect landscapes and vegetation in the planning scheme.

Many trees, gardens and landscapes are now listed on the *Victorian Heritage Register*, including the Federal Oak in the Parliament House Gardens, the Royal Botanic Gardens and the Melbourne General Cemetery.

In June this year, the Heritage Council formed a Landscape Advisory Committee to address the numerous issues surrounding the identification, registration and management of gardens and designed landscapes. The committee is

comprised of four members of the Heritage Council: Catherine Heggen, Leonie Kelleher, Tim Hubbard, and is chaired by Dr Jan Schapper. Other members include Helen Page, Michael Looker, Neville Wale, Paul Fox, Ray Tonkin and John Hawker. The Committee will advise the Heritage Council on landscapes of cultural heritage significance, priorities for identification, and projects and studies which will advance cultural landscape protection and conservation.

Watch this space *with Frances Hall*

Hawthorn Tramways Trust Depot

Several permits were issued in March 2000 in order to convert the Hawthorn Tramways Trust Depot into a multi-storey residential development. These permits were for the subdivision, restoration, demolition and development of the site. The overall project achieves a sympathetic and appropriate adaptive use for the existing heritage buildings, which will allow their retention on site and future interpretation of their function. This is particularly evident with the original car shed, which will be enhanced and made serviceable. The permits include conditions requiring submission of photographic records, measured drawings and an interpretive display.

National Gallery

An application for the redevelopment of the National Gallery was received by the Executive Director in April 1999. A permit was issued by the Executive Director, which included a requirement to retain the water wall in its original location. Proposed modifications to the Great Hall were also to be reconsidered.

An appeal against the conditions of permit was subsequently lodged in August 1999, and 'called in' by the then Minister for Planning, Robert Maclellan. The matter was put on hold due to the change of government, and later determined by the newly appointed Minister, John Thwaites, following consideration of a report from an advisory panel appointed to provide a recommendation on the matter.

A new permit was issued in February 2000 with slightly modified conditions, requiring the applicant to provide additional plans which retain the water wall in its current position, the cross axial arrangement in the foyer area and paving in the Lindsay Courtyard and bluestone in the Northern and Southern Courtyards, as well as a dedicated gallery area to the design of Roy Grounds.

Limeburners Point, Geelong East

The Lime Kiln Complex at Geelong consists of the visible remains of five brick lime kilns built into the side of the escarpment, and the footing of the former powder magazine. In January 2000, a permit was issued for the development of boating facilities in the area, including the excavation and reclamation of land to develop additional car parking, and the construction of breakwaters. It is envisaged that the improved facilities will bring more visitors to the area. The permit requires an archaeologist to be on site during the excavation works and be responsible for evaluating, recording or salvaging any historic material exposed as a result of the works.

Lydiard Street Railway Gates, Ballarat

A project has been in the pipeline for a number of years to automate the Lydiard Street railway gates rather than replace them with standard boom barriers. The existing gates and underground control mechanism are in very poor condition, and need major rebuilding if they are to survive in operating condition. The only physical alteration required to the existing system for the automation is the installation of a small motor and enclosure at ground level beside the signal box, and the installation of 'Stop' signs on the gates. The control motor will be relatively unobtrusive, and the connection of the motor drive to the existing mechanism will be such that on special occasion the gates can be manually operated by the gate wheel in the signal box.

Following lengthy discussion and agreement, the automation of the gates will now proceed.

The location of the new traffic signals and kerbing (to narrow the road through the gates) as originally proposed was considered inappropriate. During an on-site discussion, VicRoads agreed to reposition the signals further away from the gates to minimise visual clutter and so that the gateposts were not obscured. The City of Ballarat also agreed to relocate the kerbs so that the present wide appearance of the street at the gates was maximised.

Melbourne General Post Office

In June 2000, a permit was issued to alter and develop the Melbourne General Post Office for conversion to a hotel. The architectural grandeur and the landmark qualities of the building will be retained. The proposed hotel addition will change the silhouette of the GPO from some view lines, although it remains in the foreground with the new element reading as a modern individual building in the background employing very different materials. The silhouette of the clock tower will continue to be read against the sky.

TECHNICAL COLUMN

Heritage collections

with Jenny Dickens, Heritage Victoria Conservator

Major city museums are not the only places where heritage collections are held. Important collections are found in such diverse places as cemeteries, churches, factories, old shops, local museums and in people's homes. Many of these artefacts are vital to our understanding and appreciation of an historic place and its significance. Examples of these types of artefacts include church plate and vestments, the tools in a blacksmith's forge, the equipment on a ship, cargo on a shipwreck or the furniture and ornaments in a house. In other cases, collections can have personal or family significance, or State or national significance in their own right. Almost every type of artefact can be significant, such as photographs, furniture, carpets, flags, wallpaper, tools, farm equipment, sculpture, china, plaques, documents, garments or saddlery.

It is commonly believed that historic artefacts which have survived to the present are durable and will last indefinitely. In fact, many artefacts have only survived through a combination of good luck or good craftsmanship. A carelessly considered treatment, or unsuitable storage or display method or materials, can destroy or compromise an artefact forever. Because it is not often possible for collections held outside major museums to receive the same level of care, heritage artefacts can be further endangered. It can be difficult for owners and custodians of heritage collections to find information to enable them to care for their collections properly.

Materials conservation is the art and science of caring for cultural materials such as heritage artefacts. Maintenance or preventive conservation ensures environmental factors such as temperature, humidity, light and UV levels are not damaging artefacts. The selection of appropriate storage and display materials is another example of preventative conservation, for example, acidic paper or wood can stain and weaken photographs, documents and clothing. Preventive conservation can be carried out by owners or custodians of heritage artefacts and is often the best way to preserve artefacts. Interventive conservation and restoration treatments can be risky if not carried out by professionals, and are relatively useless if the heritage artefact is returned to a poor environment.

Conservators are the professionals who maintain and treat heritage artefacts. They can provide information on the care of most artefacts. If a heritage artefact is badly damaged it may need interventive treatment. Private conservators can be contacted through their professional organisation, the Australian Institute for the Conservation of Cultural Materials (AICCM), through the conservation departments of any of the major State cultural institutions or through Heritage Victoria's conservation laboratory.

AICCM Inc.
PO Box 5269BB
Melbourne VIC 3001
http://www.aiccm.org.au

Staff of the conservation departments of major state institutions are often able to give free brief conservation advice over the telephone.

Publications which contain useful conservation information

Caring for collections across Australia. ISBN 0 642 37384 1

Contains practical information on caring for all types of heritage artefacts. Stocks of this publication are running low, however, copies have been sent to all museums (including local museums) in Australia.

Heritage Collections Council
GPO Box 2154
Canberra ACT 2601
Tel. (02) 6271 1094
Fax (02) 6271 1079
Email hcc@dcita.gov.au

CCI Notes
The notes offer practical advice about the care, handling, and storage of cultural objects. Includes instructions for the construction of time capsules.

Client Services
Canadian Conservation Institute
1030 Innes Road
Ottawa ON K1A 0M5
CANADA
Fax (613) 998 4721
Email cci-icc services@pch.gc.c
http://www.cci-icc.gc.ca

Conserve O Grams
US National Parks Service

Procedures, techniques and materials to care for museum objects. These notes can be purchased or are available for download.

National Park Service
Museum Management Program
1849 C Street, NW
Room NC230
Washington, DC 20240, USA
Fax (202) 512-2250
http://www.cr.nps.gov/csd/publications/index.htm

Useful web sites are

Australian Institute for the Conservation of Cultural Materials
http://www.charvolant.org/~aiccm/

Conservation special interest group, Australian Museums on Line (AMOL)
http://www.amol.org.au/craft/conservation/conservation_index.asp

American Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works
http://palimpsest.stanford.edu/aic/

Conservation Analytical Laboratory (USA)
http://www.simsc.si.edu/cal/index.html

Suppliers of archival materials include

S&M Supply Company
Tel. 1800 020 001

Zetta Florence
Tel. (03) 9416 2236

Heritage Victoria's conservation laboratory can also provide advice.

Conservation Laboratory, Heritage Victoria
Tel. (03) 9616 2390
Fax (03) 9616 2393