

## *Victoria's yuletide shipwrecks*

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*The Garden State: landscape special*

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# What's New



Ms Catherine Heggen

One of the big success stories of 2001 has been the Heritage Council's enforcement role. Enforcement Officer Annitia Rynhart came to us as a serving police officer in the Victoria Force. Among her early successes, Annitia has persuaded those involved in the development of Ballarat's Ranger Barracks to take their permit responsibilities seriously, and has overseen the successful prosecution of two divers spotted entering the protected shipwreck zone over the *City of Launceston*. For legal reasons, we can't report the details of the prosecution, but the end result has brought a \$600

'donation' to the Heritage Council and a letter of apology from one of the divers.

The case highlights the importance of protecting Victoria's shipwrecks from a small hard-core of looters. The *City of Launceston* has been plundered perhaps a dozen times, looters making off with crockery and bottles. In one case, someone had dug an excavation trench through the mud, while discarded relics had been tossed onto the seabed. By launching these prosecutions, we're sending a clear message that protected zones are out of bounds and are for the benefit of the whole community.

In December, Heritage Victoria recommended the Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne for the Heritage Register. I had the pleasure of meeting



Enforcement officer Annitia Rynhart

the Governor of Victoria for the announcement on the Oak Lawn. There's a full report on the recommendation on page 8.

I'm delighted to see the historic Olympic Swimming Pool at Maryborough is back in business. Largely thanks to community pressure, the 1930s pool got a new lease of life with a Public Heritage grant of \$171,000. Minister Justin Madden inspected the final stages of the renovation in September, just before the painters were sent in. The revival of the Maryborough Swimming Pool is a great example of how, together, we can turn around the fortunes of our historic places if there's local support.

One story that caught the eye of the media more than most recently was the decision to register the entire 27 km length of Melbourne's Main Outfall Sewer. In the 1890s, the sewer was the largest civil engineering project ever undertaken in Victoria. It was a time



The Heritage Council rides the Walhalla Railway

when planners were trying to rid the city of the 'Marvellous Smelbourne' tag and the far-sighted design was capable of meeting the demands of a surging population for the next 50 years. The new channel from Altona to Werribee included three redbrick aqueducts over Kororoit Creek, Skeleton Creek and the Werribee River. While deciding to register the whole length of the sewer, the Heritage Council has asked Heritage Victoria to look again at the permit exemptions to make sure the Federation Trail cycle path can be built without undue hindrance.



Mitchell bomber, similar to the one that crashed off Torquay

One of the more unusual dilemmas we may face over the coming months will be what to do with the wreckage of a Mitchell bomber that crashed off the coast of Torquay during the Second World War. According to reports, the remains of some of the crew are still inside the wreckage. Technically, the wreck comes under the protection of the Heritage Inventory so any attempt to disturb it will need the consent of Heritage Victoria. At the time of writing, no request has been made from the RAAF or the RSL.

Southern Gippsland was the destination for the Heritage Council regional visit. Our tour included the State Coal Mine at Wonthaggi, Walhalla, Churchill Island, Moss Vale Park and the Gippsland Heritage Seminar in Moe. Along the way, we met the councils of South Gippsland, Baw Baw and Bass Coast as



City of Launceston



*Victoria Brewery, East Melbourne*

well as others making their important contribution to the region's heritage. These trips not only give the Heritage Council a chance to see at first hand how the region's heritage is being managed, they also provide a useful forum for the concerns and aspirations of the many people we meet over the three days.

The Heritage Council hopes that an end may be in sight to the saga of the Victoria Brewery in East Melbourne. It's been derelict for more than 10 years, with much of the historic brewing equipment still on site. Several development options were put forward during the 1990s (and two permits were granted for apartments) but we came no closer to seeing the promised historical display. In September this year, The Age reported that a \$200 million project, called Tribeca, was being proposed by Red.C and R.Corporation. Heritage approval will be needed, and a formal proposal was lodged in November. We'll keep you posted.

Arguably one of the most effective ways of passing information to owners of heritage-listed properties is through the Heritage Advisor program. Every year, the State Government matches funds raised by local councils to pay for experts in heritage conservation. They give free advice to people on anything from how to recreate historic paint schemes to which heritage controls apply to a particular building. This year, Planning Minister John Thwaites

approved Heritage Advisor grants totalling more than \$330,000 to councils across the State.

The 2001 Heritage Council Annual Report has been published, detailing the huge range of responsibilities undertaken during the year. Printed copies are available from Heritage Victoria or by downloading from the Heritage Council web site.

Until next time.

*Catherine Heggen,  
Chair, Heritage Council*

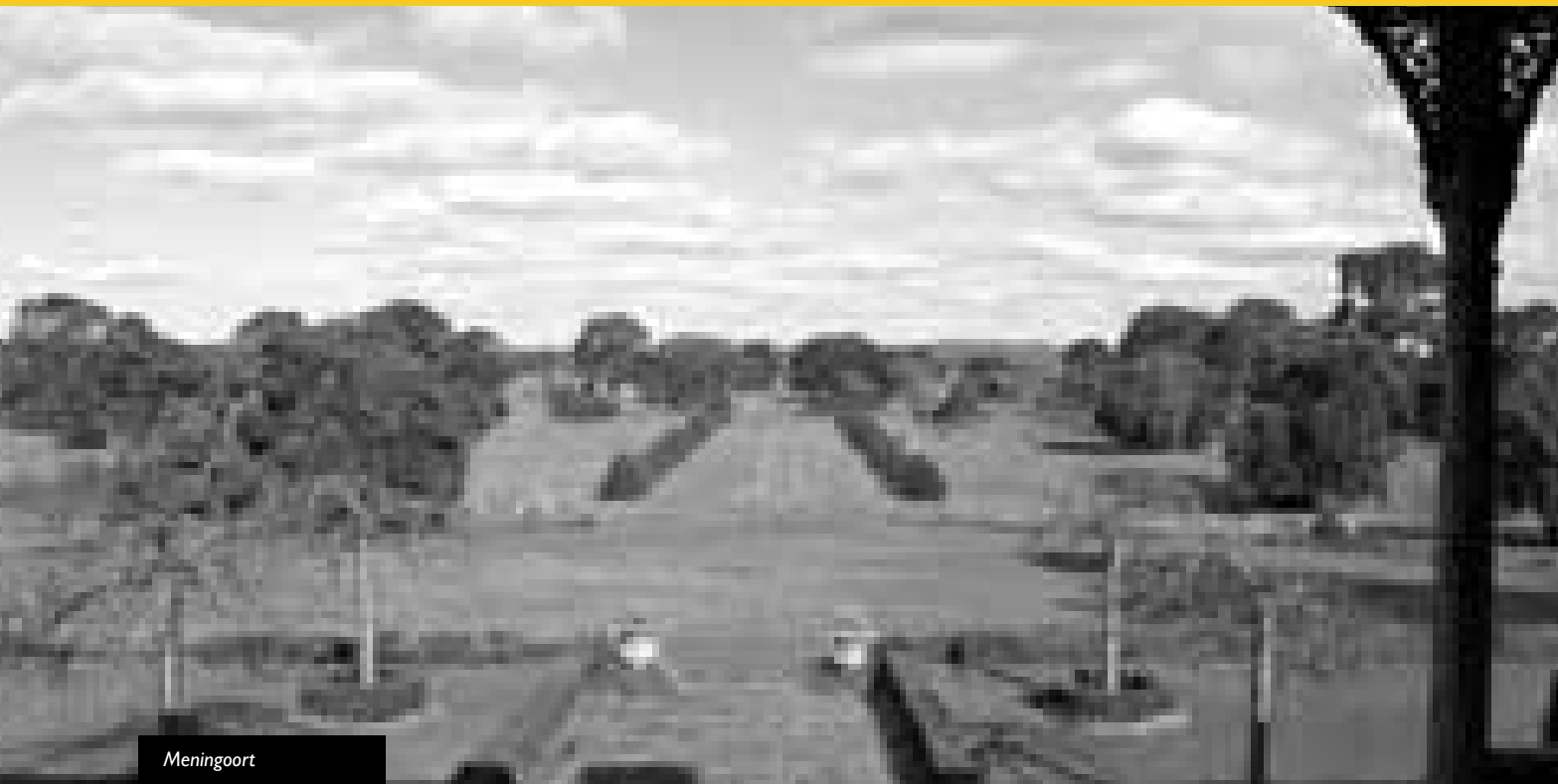


*Springthorpe Memorial, Kew, featured on the cover of the Annual Report*



*Construction of the Main Outfall Sewer*

# Beyond the garden gate: Victoria



Meningoort



Tim Hubbard

***The view was exceedingly beautiful over the surrounding plains, shining fresh and green in the light of a fine morning. The scene was different from anything I had ever before witnessed, either in New South Wales or elsewhere. A land so inviting and still without inhabitants! As I stood, the first European intruder on the sublime solitude of those verdant plains, as yet untouched by flocks or***

***herds; I felt conscious of being the harbinger of mighty changes; and that our steps would soon be followed by the men and the animals for which it seemed to have been prepared.***

**Major Mitchell, Pyramid Hill, Western Victoria, 1836.<sup>1</sup>**

Our understanding of who we are as Australians and, more specifically, as Victorians is largely based on our relationship with the land. The identification of cultural landscapes, a relatively recent undertaking by the Heritage Council of Victoria, presents some challenges in theory and in practice. The colonial landscapes of Victoria are one such type of landscape which is part of our heritage.

Historically, the first step in claiming the colonial landscape was to clear the land and to define it geometrically, as a square, a rectangle or, rarely, as a circle. The wild, indigenous bush was kept at bay by a post and rail fence. The wood of the forest became the timber of the first homestead. The next step was to plant one – could say ‘impose’ – exotics and, possibly, to retain some remnant vegetation because it was useful. These plantings might form the simplest of axes, and an old tree became a picturesque reference to the past. A site might be chosen which

was elevated. This offered both aspect and prospect. One could see and be seen. A site might be chosen with a dramatic backdrop, wild mountains perhaps and dark conifers which presented a picturesque contrast to the cultivated garden.

With economic success, owners could take the next step and rebuild incorporating the old into the new, consolidating their proprietary claim. The stone and clay from the quarry became the masonry of the second homestead.

Major Mitchell’s aesthetic approach, quoted above, was confirmed in the paintings of Eugene von Guérard. In *Mount William from Mount Dryden, Victoria (1857)* von Guérard depicted the notionally virgin landscape at a moment of transition – claimed but still unimproved. This may not be how we view the landscape today. Von Guérard went on to paint many ‘house portraits’ of squatting homesteads set in fully conceived, if still immature cultural landscapes. They depict the houses in a range of sometimes intimate or, more often, formal views, their gardens, the surrounding parks and, most importantly, the broader landscape beyond the homestead’s garden gate. *Glenara, 1867 (NGV)* the home of Walter Clark at Bulla is perhaps the best known.

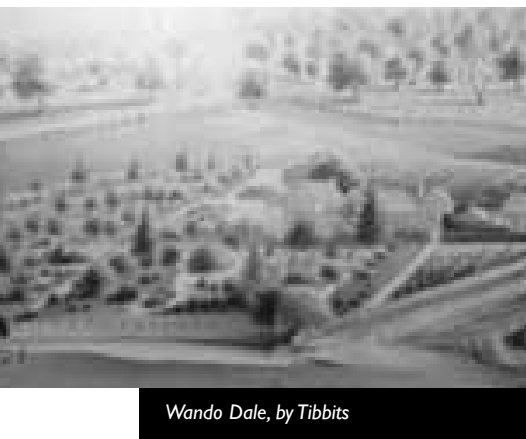
The teacher and amateur scientist, James Bonwick, a close friend of Major Mitchell, passed through the Western District landscape nearly 20 years later. He appreciated the Wando Valley with a different sensibility. His was perhaps an old fashioned, eighteenth-century appreciation, stating:

“Mr Robertson’s station is situated on the [Wando] creek, in one of the delightful vallies of this Paradise of Victoria. It was truly a Claude scene of tranquil beauty. There was no stern ruggedness to astonish and alarm, but the soothing influence of softened shades of hills reclining on each other in sleeping sisterhood. Over against these lovely slopes were the bolder and more erect rocks of basalt with their level gravel tops, and which



seemed to push themselves forward into the vale like frowning promontories.”

William Tibbits, another painter of house portraits, painted the neighbouring homestead, Wando Dale. It is a small house surrounded by a nascent garden. It is set in a cleared landscape with one dead tree remaining to tell of the ancient forest which had covered Bonwick's softened shades of sisterly hills. This is a much more humble homestead than others such as Glenara, but its most remarkable characteristic is that the



Wando Dale, by Tibbits

garden is circular in plan. Tibbits also painted Darriwil on the Moorabool River near Geelong. Its vineyards were enclosed in a circle with the homestead set at the end of a diametrical axis.

Gringegalgonna must be the most intriguing example of a homestead placed in a circular garden and related to the broader landscape. The overall park is bounded by a circular fence and, partly, by mature conifer plantings which act as a backdrop to the house. A curving drive rises from a creek crossing (now disused) and terminates in front of the house as a turning circle with three circular beds. The symmetrical house is on axis with Mount Melville, the source of the stone used in its construction. Key plantings reinforce this axis. The area to the front and side of the house included fruit trees. Behind the house, outbuildings are arranged along the same axis. That the house and garden were to be seen as one is demonstrated by the oeil-de-boeuf detail in the gable over the front door. An oversize keystone represents the

house within the circle – the villa in its landscape.

This is the most sophisticated of designs and yet its author is unknown. The quality and content of the Gringegalgonna garden plan – including the masterful use of geometry, axes and shapes – suggest the hand of a professional designer, possibly Edward La Trobe Bateman, who had been active in the Western District in the previous few years. The complex has just been added to the Heritage Register.

In 1861, Eugene von Guérard also painted Meningoort, the Macarthur homestead near Camperdown. The structure of its garden design must date from the construction of the first permanent house in the early 1850s. The house and garden are set on the south-eastern slope of Mount Meningoort. The plan of the garden is a square. The corners are marked by the early use of *Eucalyptus ficifolia*. Other exotic species reinforce the rigid symmetry. Points of interest, such as a folly, steps and urns, and low plantings create a sense of intimacy. Hedges, the main terrace and the various extensions of the house to the left and right create a strong linear disposition.

The most dramatic element in the landscaping of Meningoort is the central axis. It reaches out into the landscape from the front door across the flat grazing lands, crosses the Princes Highway and terminates not on Mount Leura but on a perfect cinder cone called The Sugarloaf. A double avenue of trees once lined the axis. Two diagonal axes reinforce the central axis. They reach out and terminate on other volcanic features.

It seems unlikely that the connection was intended to be direct, but the intellectual content and continuity of the design makes this one of the great landscapes of Victoria. The author of

the design, as with Gringegalgonna, is still not known.

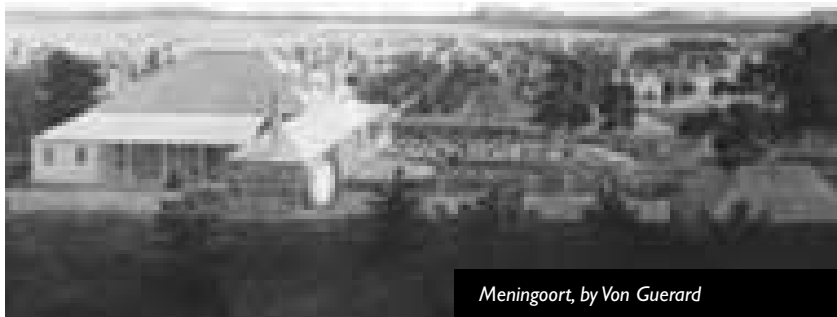
Meningoort was included in the first version of the Heritage Register. It contains the original furniture, a library and souvenirs collected over the years and the private papers of six generations. The pencil sketches done by Eugene von Guérard for several of his Western District paintings were discovered in a back room several years ago. What can the whole collection tell us about Meningoort, its occupants, designers, and its place in landscape over all those years?

And, being what I believe is a collection of national significance, what can it tell us about ourselves?

Other questions for the heritage registration also arise. Should the extent of Meningoort be limited by modern freehold title boundaries or is Meningoort's cultural landscape still the 13,196 acres leased to Peter McArthur in 1846? And, once identified, who is responsible for their management? It is clear from these few examples that pastoral landscapes extend well beyond the garden gate and, to be fair, often beyond the means of current owners.

The identification of cultural landscapes presents many challenges to the Heritage Council. Theoretical research is needed to attribute designs to individuals, to ascribe messages to the values displayed, to identify plantings and to compare and rank the designs. Then the Council must determine the extent of the landscape involved.

*I. T. L. Mitchell, Three Expeditions into the Interior of Eastern Australia, Vol. II, T. & W. Boone, London, 1838, second ed., 1839, facsimile ed., Eagle Press, Maryborough, 1996, p. 159.*



Meningoort, by Von Guérard

# H*h*

**hands-on-heritage**



*'Our first project was at Silverwells in Gembrook and we're growing all the time. It's a rich and rewarding experience for volunteers. They come from all walks of life to work together on projects, taking with them a sense of pride when the job is done.'*

*- Eden Kane, Co-ordinator,  
Hands-on-Heritage*



*'We're all custodians of our heritage, not just for the sake of the past but for the sake of the future. Hands-on-Heritage volunteers help turn many of these places into local attractions, and the obvious benefits flow through the whole community.'*

*- Catherine Heggen,  
Heritage Council Victoria*



*'Hands-on-Heritage has greatly enhanced Victoria Hill - one of our city's most important historic landmarks. We appreciate the work of the volunteers and we're very pleased to be part of it.'*

*- Barry Ackerman,  
Mayor of Greater Bendigo*



**Created by the Heritage Council, Hands-on-Heritage is one of the most successful conservation programs in Victoria. Historic buildings, gardens, parks and monuments are being transformed by teams of volunteers. Quite simply, we're passionate about heritage.**

Nobody wants to see the best of Victoria's heritage disappear, but owners can't always afford to keep their properties up to scratch. Sometimes, all it takes is a month or two of intense maintenance, gardening and painting to put historic places back in the bracket of heritage landmarks. That's where **Hands-on-Heritage** comes in, bridging the gap between small budgets and the need to conserve our past.

**Hands-on-Heritage** relies entirely on teams of volunteers. Projects last between one week and six months. It's the most practical way that Victorians can help make a difference.

So what's involved when you volunteer for a **Hands-on-Heritage** project? It can be anything from mending fences and repairing historic signs to painting and landscaping. Many old buildings conceal more than 150 years of colonial history, so there's always a chance of unearthing rare archaeological artefacts. No previous experience required, just a sackful of enthusiasm and a sense of pride in your community.

For more information about Hands-on-Heritage, contact Eden Kane on 0411 052630.

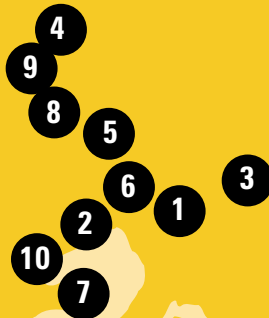




## **Hands-on-Heritage** projects are spreading out through Victoria

1. Silverwells, Gembrook
2. Werribee Park Mansion
3. The Hermitage, Narbethong
4. Victoria Hill, Bendigo
5. Glenara, Bulla
6. RMIT, Melbourne
7. Queenscliff Maritime Museum
8. Caretaker's Cottage, Castlemaine
9. Maldon Croquet Club
10. Point Cook Homestead

# H



*'We have terrific skills to share. It's a good bunch of people to work with and I enjoy the company of others. The conservation aspect is also important.'*

*- Alistair McCrawl, Volunteer*

*'Hands-on-Heritage keeps your mind active and lets you use your skills.'*

*- Bryan Johnson, Volunteer*



# New to the Register: Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne



Governor of Victoria, John Landy

***“The death of Baron Sir Ferdinand von Mueller has bereft Victoria of its most illustrious citizen, Australia of its most distinguished geographer and the scientific world of one of the most erudite, industrious open-handed, pure hearted and lovable phytologists that the present century has produced”.***

#### **Obituary notice**

Heritage Victoria has recommended the historic Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne for the *Victorian Heritage Register*. The announcement was made on the Oak Lawn at the gardens, and attended by the Governor of Victoria, John Landy.

The 36 hectares in South Yarra contain some of the world’s most outstanding nineteenth century landscaped gardens. They have been an icon of Melbourne and Victoria since European settlement on the banks of the Yarra. Lakes, pathways, lawns and buildings combine with a rich variety of trees and plants. Some of the markers of the State’s history include the ‘Separation Tree’, an indigenous River Red Gum commemorating the separation of Victoria from New South Wales and its independence as a colony. One of the recent additions, ‘Scarlet Blaze’, was named Victoria’s floral emblem for the Centenary of Federation.

Founded in 1846, the Gardens were most influenced by two prominent directors: Baron Ferdinand von Mueller and William Guilfoyle. Von Mueller was Director between 1857 and 1873. He experimented with native species and laid the groundwork of the botanic gardens network throughout regional Victoria, but was sacked for his rigid scientific approach to design.

It was the next Director, William Guilfoyle, who used his time between 1873 and 1909 to focus more on the pleasure potential of the gardens. It is largely the character of Guilfoyle’s design that exists today alongside the rich botanical collection.

The Undergardener’s Cottage (also known as the Plant Craft Cottage) is the oldest surviving public building in Melbourne. Built in 1850, it was once occupied by von Mueller. The original building remains intact as an important example of early Victorian architecture. Together with the Director’s Residence, the Undergardener’s Cottage is already listed on *Victoria’s Heritage Register*. The new recommendation would give similar protection to other existing buildings including the Separation Tree Pavilion, Lake View Pavilion and William Tell Pavilion.

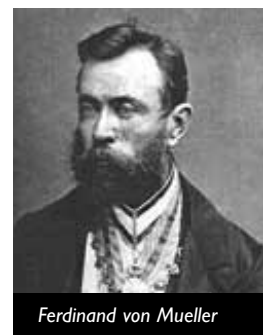
A listing on the Heritage Register will mean there can be no major changes to the Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne without a permit from Heritage Victoria. Heritage significance will guide any changes. However, certain works will be allowed without a permit as long as any changes retain the character of the landscape. These include the planting and removal of trees, maintenance of paths, adding benches or other furniture and minor repairs to buildings and pavilions. A listing on the Victorian Heritage Register will not make a difference to the management of the flying-fox issue.

Dr Philip Moors, Director Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne, said, ‘The consideration by Heritage Victoria to register the Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne on the *Victorian Heritage Register* is an important move in the recognition and preservation of one of Melbourne’s cultural and historic icons. It ensures that the Gardens will be a living reminder of our horticultural and scientific achievements, and that generations to come will be able to appreciate the value of one of the world’s finest landscaped gardens.’

The Heritage Council must endorse Heritage Victoria’s recommendation before the gardens can be added to the Register.



Oak Lawn, Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne



Ferdinand von Mueller

# New to the Register: H. V. McKay Gardens

Alison McKenzie

***“There are few more impressive sights in the world than a Scotsman on the make.”***

**James Barrie, 1860-1937**

In 1904, Hugh Victor McKay, inventor and entrepreneur, moved his manufacturing works from Ballarat to Braybrook Junction to establish a new agricultural implements factory closer to railway access and the Melbourne ports. This was the foundation for the Sunshine Harvester Works, which became one of the largest



Hugh Victor McKay 1912

manufacturing industries in Australia. Within three years, McKay was employing 1,000 workers and as provision for the workers McKay purchased land, financed employees to build houses, commissioned the forming of streets and planned a garden.

Braybrook

Junction was renamed Sunshine, possibly after Port Sunlight, the model industrial village established by industrialist William Lever near Liverpool, England.

***“We are taking a business risk in spending 1,000 pounds a year, because we believe that gardens, parks, bowling greens and so forth have an uplifting influence on the people, and make them feel more satisfied than they are when the surroundings of their homes are dull and unattractive.”***

Hugh Victor McKay

The H.V. McKay Memorial Gardens, formerly known as the Sunshine Gardens, form a key component of a wider complex envisaged by McKay, which also included the factory, offices and a housing estate for the workers. It is a tribute to McKay's foresight as an industrial entrepreneur that he should use the English model of the 'garden city', and that he supported not only the infrastructure, but, to a certain extent, the lifestyle of the community as well. There are few other examples in Victoria, or Australia, of public gardens given and maintained by an industrial firm.

The gardens are on a flat triangular site, bounded by the Melbourne to Bendigo Railway line, Anderson Road and Chaplin Reserve. The main area of the garden is designed in the Gardenesque style with sweeping lawns, curving paths, garden beds for floral displays and specimen trees through the lawn. At the northern entrance off Anderson Road, there is an iron gate with concrete posts as well as a bluestone gatepost. This bluestone gatepost is one of two, however the location of the missing gatepost is a mystery.

Within the gardens, a number of facilities were established including a tennis court, bowling green, bandstand, conservatory and Curator's House. The bandstand was removed, possibly in the 1960s, and the conservatory was burnt down and demolished in the 1990s. The gardens had a reputation for horticultural excellence formerly exemplified by annual floral displays.

H.V. McKay requested that Victorian Railways build a foot crossing over the lines at Devonshire Road in 1907. This footbridge is now the only access of any kind across the railway line for



Gardens in 1947

several hundred metres and this route leads immediately to the front gates of the former factory. The footbridge was not connected to the railway station as it was an amenity used almost solely by workers moving from the housing estate, to and from work, giving access to the gardens for their recreation.

The Sunshine Harvester Works were largely demolished in the 1990s and the clock tower and iron gates near the footbridge now denote the factory entrance. Today, the gardens provide a popular route to the railway footbridge and the main shopping centre, and are a well known landmark to the residents of Sunshine.

In recognition of their significance, the gardens were recently added to Victoria's Heritage Register.



Alison McKenzie and the local press

## Latest in landscapes

Seventy-five people came together at a day seminar and workshop at Heritage Victoria on 14 September to explore

and understand aspects of 'Assessing landscapes with cultural heritage significance'. The theme of 'Assessing' was the first of three tasks in addressing landscapes as part of Victoria's heritage, to be followed by seminars on 'Protecting' and 'Managing'.

The workshop sessions produced some lively discussions. People had the opportunity to share information about

their involvement in landscape heritage with others in small groups, and also to discuss specific issues and processes. Groups also road-tested an abridged 'ABC' assessment process which will form the core of Heritage Victoria's forthcoming *Draft Guidelines for assessing landscapes with cultural heritage significance*.

# Assessing landscapes: a local government perspective

David Helms



David Helms

**"The country habit has me by the heart, For he's bewitched for ever who has seen."**

**Vita Sackville-West, 'Winter' 1926**

The recent Heritage Council seminar on Assessing Landscapes with Cultural Heritage Significance brought back memories of my childhood growing up on a dairy farm set among the rolling green hills of South Gippsland.

Our family homestead is a classic 1920s bungalow with return verandah set within an English style garden protected by 80-year-old windbreaks of pine and gum trees. It overlooks the Stony Creek valley with its stands of remnant bushland and rows of exotic windbreaks to the verdant hills beyond. I spent many days gazing at this Arcadian scene, yet it was only later after I had lived in Melbourne that I truly appreciated its beauty, and later still when I came to realise that it was a landscape with cultural values.

My personal history and professional career coincided in 2000 when I was appointed Heritage Planner for South Gippsland Shire to prepare Stage 2 of the Shire Heritage Study. The purpose of the Study was to 'rigorously assess and document the identified places of post-contact cultural significance'.

However, the Study Brief specifically excluded the assessment of landscapes with cultural significance because of my lack of specific expertise.



Moss Vale

Nonetheless, I identified a number of landscapes using three categories developed by the World Heritage Convention.

The first category is the Designed Landscape, which is described as:

'clearly defined landscape designed and created intentionally by man.

This embraces garden and parkland landscapes constructed for aesthetic reasons.'

One of the most significant examples in the Shire is Moss Vale Park and the former Moss Vale Nursery near Leongatha. The Park includes mature exotic trees planted around the turn of the century in association with the former nursery established by Francis Moss, which are now listed on the National Trust Significant Trees Register.

The assessment of this place is hampered by a lack of historic information. For example, was there ever any overall or deliberate scheme for the planting of trees? One of the most intriguing features is a large number of oaks of various types (evergreen, chesnut, golden) planted in a square – was this deliberate or merely accidental?

The second category is the Organically Evolved Landscape. This is described as resulting from:

'an initial social, economic, administrative and/or religious imperative and has developed its present form by association with and in response to its natural environment.'

This type of landscape falls into two subcategories:

a relict (or fossil) landscape is one in which an evolutionary process came to an end either abruptly or over a period

a continuing landscape is one which retains an active social role in contemporary society closely associated with the traditional way of life, and in which the evolutionary process is still in progress.

'Relict' landscapes within the Shire include former mining and township sites, while, 'Continuing' landscapes includes farmland, which has had the most dramatic impact of any process and continues to evolve.

The final category is the Associative Landscape, which is described as:

'justifiable by virtue of the powerful religious, artistic or cultural associations of the natural element rather than material cultural evidence, which may be insignificant or even absent.'

Perhaps the best example of this type of landscape in the Shire is Wilson's Promontory National Park. The 'Prom' has strong cultural associations at a local, State, and (it could be argued) even a national or international level. It also contains examples of relict landscapes associated with sealing, whaling, mining, agriculture and even defence.

Identification of landscapes as part of heritage studies such as this is, in some ways, the easy part. However, my experience is that assessment of landscapes is often neglected because it is time and labour intensive and so may be sacrificed or limited because of budgetary constraints or (as in the case of this study) excluded entirely. A recommendation of the South Gippsland Study is that further investigation of landscapes be undertaken, but it is a moot point whether this will be implemented.

As a result, there is an inconsistent level of knowledge about landscapes with cultural values throughout Victoria. This is particularly true of Organically Evolved Landscapes such as farmland. Sometimes, there is also a lack of community understanding and awareness – while they may accept Wilson's Promontory, will they accept that farmland can have cultural values too?

One suggestion is that Stage 2 Heritage Studies should set aside a dedicated budget for the assessment of landscapes, which could be undertaken by a specialist consultant. This may not be appropriate in all instances, but may be used in areas where significant landscape areas have been identified by Stage 1.

These are just some of my thoughts from the perspective of someone working in local government. I have enjoyed the debate so far and look forward to further discussions about this important aspect of our cultural heritage.



# Castlemaine Diggings: National Heritage Park

David Bannear

**'Happy are those who see history in modest spots where others see nothing. Everything is historical; the whole secret lies in knowing how to interpret it.'**

**Camille Pissarro (paraphrased)  
1830–1903**

Australia will soon have its first cultural heritage national park. It is a new public forestland category created principally to recognise and protect an outstanding cultural landscape.

In June 2001, the Environment Conservation Council (ECC) provided the Victorian Government with final recommendations on the use and management of the

Box-Ironbark forests of central Victoria. These forests surround places such as St Arnaud, Bendigo, Castlemaine, Maldon, Rushworth and Beechworth. The forests are recognised as containing rare biodiversity and also as forming cultural landscapes possessing heritage values ranging from the buildings and infrastructure created by the wealth of gold to the archaeological evidence of the first homes of the gold rush settlers and the gold diggings that yielded up fortunes.

A landmark recommendation of the ECC final report was the classification of the Mount Alexander (Castlemaine) Goldfield as Australia's first cultural heritage national park. This status would see the area set aside primarily to conserve cultural heritage values, and secondarily to conserve natural values. This is a radical departure from the primary purpose of other national parks to recognise and protect natural values.

In the early 1850s, Victoria was transformed into a gleaming gold beacon for migrants – it was 'the bank till free to all' where ordinary men and women could find riches beyond their dreams. The migrant diggers who came to Victoria were independent people, working for themselves in a full expression of the pioneering spirit.

Ballarat, Castlemaine and Bendigo were ground zero for a rolling cycle of discovery, digging and development. They were the laboratories where the immigrants met and embarked on a great and defining democratic and nation-building experiment. The gold-bearing gullies, creeks and hills of the Victorian bush became their suburbs and towns. When the easily won surface alluvial gold ran out, a capitalistic goldmining industry arose that harnessed the forces and innovations of the industrial revolution. This created instant cities over two of the goldfields – Ballarat and Bendigo – but failed to do so at Castlemaine where a lack of sustaining underground gold resources on the Mount Alexander Goldfield meant that the gold rush landscape of the 1850s was to a large extent preserved.

The Castlemaine Diggings National Heritage Park is a precisely defined landscape which is publicly owned, managed by a single government authority (Parks Victoria) and is richly endowed with archaeological and geological features. It is a strip of land approximately 20 km x 4 km. It runs south from Barkers Creek (Specimen Gully) through Chewton and Castlemaine to south of Fryerstown and Vaughan, and is bordered by Campbells Creek and Guildford on the west.

The proposed national heritage park takes in all the main gold-bearing reefs and gully systems. One of the most valuable and consistent historic markers, and one that can almost exclusively be traced back to the early gold rushes, is its historic nomenclature (place names). It provides the key to tracing a chronology of site workings and occupation. Virtually every stump, bump and puddle in the landscape was named, and these names are part of the few remaining hints of the intensity of the area's early mining occupation – everyone, it seems, wanted to name a piece of ground.

Each of the area's rich gold-bearing gullies and quartz reefs has a history of reworking, stretching back to the mid-1850s. In the pursuit of wealth, either for themselves or their employers,

miners dug, puddled, sluiced and dredged alluvial gullies and hillsides, dammed creeks and gullies, built roads, constructed water races to convey water, and dug intricate networks of shafts, tunnels and open-cuts. They erected machinery of wood, stone and iron, which, depending on the capital involved, was driven by hand, animal, steam or waterpower. Machinery was added to and replaced as old ground was reworked, shafts and tunnels extended, and new mines started.

Archaeological surveys undertaken over the past 10 years have identified an extremely rich occurrence of archaeological sites ranging from habitation sites to evidence of all forms of mining technology undertaken on what proved to be a continuing goldfield. Very limited survey work has also identified evidence of Aboriginal occupation.

The historical and archaeological records mesh on the Mount Alexander Goldfield in that both make clear the continual (and continuing) nature of goldmining. They both show that superimposed on the early gold-rush landscape produced by intense habitation, mining and movement, is a landscape reflecting the 'feast and famine' nature of goldmining in the area from the later 1850s to the present day.

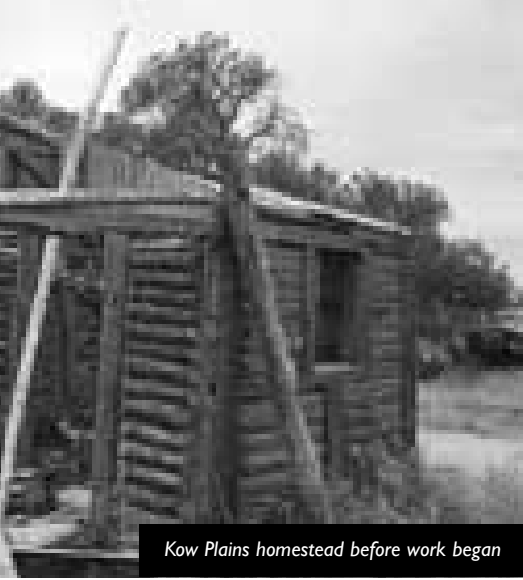


David Bannear



*First homes of the migrant gold seekers. Four hundred habitation sites have so far been identified in the proposed national heritage park.*

# Public Heritage Program: a Mallee story *Anne Cahir*



*Kow Plains homestead before work began*

***“The two-roomed house is built of round timber, slabs, and stringy bark, and floored with split slabs. A big bark kitchen standing at one end is larger than the house itself, verandah included... Bush all around – bush with no horizon, for the country is flat... Nineteen miles to the nearest sign of civilisation – a shanty on the main road.”***

## **Henry Lawson “The Drover’s Wife”**

A Public Heritage Program grant has helped a small Mallee community realise its vision for a valuable part of its heritage.

The story of Kow Plains in Cowangie is not just a story about the pioneering days of Mallee pastoral settlement. It’s also about a remarkable community effort to preserve part of its history.

Early reports of the northern plains around present-day Cowangie were not promising. Mr Beilby, a squatter, was one of the first Europeans to explore the region in 1849. He remarked on the scrubby pines, the scorching heat and dazzling glare and concluded that the country was bleak, barren and desolate. However, the native wells that Beilby noticed, along with middens of eggshells and animal bones, showed that the Aboriginal people enjoyed seasonal feasts in this seemingly inhospitable country.

Kow Plains was established as a pastoral run in 1859 after James Smith had been granted a licence. He named the run ‘Cow’ declaring it was ‘the native name given me by the native blacks’. Cow (later Kow) was an Aboriginal word for white, a reference to the gypsum common to the area. The homestead was probably built about 1879 after Dugald Macpherson and William Macdonald acquired the licence. Many of the Mallee runs were subdivided after the Mallee Pastoral Leases Act 1883, opening up the land for selectors. Kow Plains was not subdivided until 1909.

Kow Plains comprises a homestead and the remains of a cookhouse, privy and stables. All the structures are of drop-log construction made of local pine. The construction methods show the ingenuity and craftsmanship characteristic of bush life. These structures were once common in the Mallee but are now extremely rare.

In 1962, a gypsum quarry was set up on the property. The homestead stood neglected until, in the 1970s, some locals became concerned about its fate. Jocelyn Lindner started campaigning for the homestead to be put on the Historic Buildings Register in 1986. It was added to the Register in 1988. At that stage Kow Plains was in private ownership and the locals then spent nine years lobbying the local council to buy the property.

Dr Miles Lewis completed a conservation analysis in 1993. Everyone now had a clear idea of what works should be done but until the ownership issue was resolved, nothing could happen. Meanwhile the structures continued to deteriorate.

Finally, in 1997, the Mildura Rural City Council agreed to buy the property. The sale agreement was signed in July 1998 and by September 1998, a committee of management had been formed.

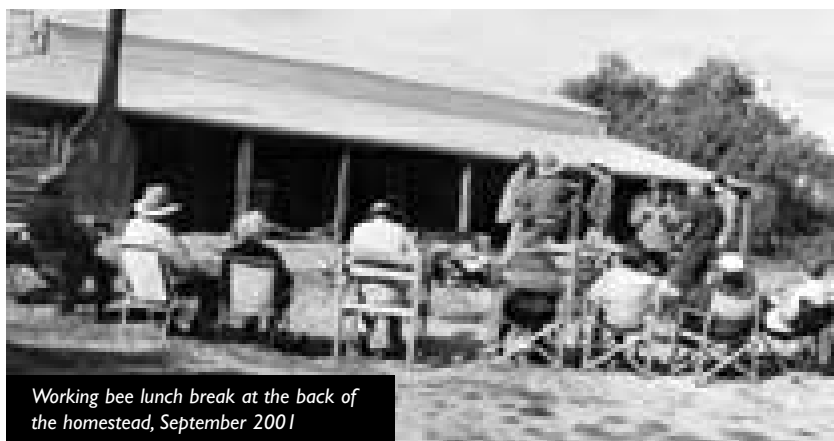
The next step was to obtain funding for the substantial works needed to restore the homestead. The locals held working bees to clean up the site. In June 2000, conservation architect Pip Giovanelli prepared a scope of works jointly funded by Mildura Rural Shire Council and Heritage Victoria. This became the basis of an application for funding from Heritage Victoria. The application was successful and a grant of \$68,850 was received from the Public Heritage Program. Finally, the restoration of Kow Plains homestead could begin!

Work began in March 2001. The work program has been divided into two stages. Stage 1 works, covered by the grant, comprised structural stabilisation of the homestead, roof replacement, interior repairs and reinstatement of the verandah. The second stage of works will include reconstruction of the cookhouse and privy. An interpretation policy will also be completed.

The works have been guided by Pip Giovanelli and undertaken by local builder Terry Gibson and his apprentice Tim Eichler. Terry and Tim have learnt old bush skills of adzing and axing. As much original material as possible was used in the works. For instance with the roof works, most of the original adzed roof battens were retained on the northern side. Previously sawn battens were replaced with new matching sawn material. Corrugated iron on the north face was repaired and retained while elsewhere new iron was introduced. Any reconstruction was done in accordance with evidence. The combination of some surviving fabric and photographic evidence meant that the verandah could be accurately rebuilt.

People are welcome to visit the homestead any day of the week, or visit their web site at [www.kowplains.com](http://www.kowplains.com)

The restored Kow Plains homestead is a testament to the perseverance of this small Mallee community. Their energy and determination have ensured that this important part of our pioneering history lives on to tell its story.



*Working bee lunch break at the back of the homestead, September 2001*



# Changing Faces, Changing Places

## ***It's back to the future for the former Collingwood Post Office***

Early photographs have been found showing the original clock tower, and Heritage Victoria has issued a permit for a revamp including zinc sheet cladding to the roof. Work has just begun to return it to the way it used to look in the nineteenth century.

The former Collingwood Post Office first appeared at 174 Smith Street in 1868. Like many other post offices built in the nineteenth century, it featured a tower with a 'space' for a clock. But there was not enough money for an actual clock, so the flat surface remained for some time.

In the years that followed, the tower was clad with sheet metal tray decking. As renovations went, the tower was a disappointment. Not only that, the circular space for the clock disappeared. In 1994, the former Post Office became a toy museum, but closed a few years later.

In May 2000, Heritage Victoria issued a permit for the building to be returned to the way it looked in the nineteenth century. The clock tower is being re-slatted, there will be a new flagpole, the 1970s roofing will be removed and the ground floor

windows and doors will be reinstated. A shop will remain on the ground floor, while the rest of the building will be converted to apartments.

## ***After two moves and one renovation, a Cabman's Shelter has returned home to South Yarra in time for its centenary.***

Until the mid-1920s when the motor car took over, the shelter was the focus of Punt Road's horse-drawn cab trade. It's now back outside Christ Church after more than 70 years as a garden shed and child's playhouse in nearby Millswyn Street.

Early photographs reveal the cabman's shelter was made of ornamental timber, brick base, terracotta ridge capping and slate roof. Last year, the Heritage Council Victoria gave \$10,000 for its restoration and relocation.

The shelter went up in November 1901. In 1926, it was moved to a back garden in Millswyn Street, South Yarra, where it stayed until last year. Loose bricks and slates, believed to be part of the original shelter, were gathered up from the garden and renovation work was carried out in Vermont. With the grant from the Heritage Council, the work was completed and the shelter was lifted back to the church grounds.



Left: taken between 1917 and 1930 Right: before renovation work began  
(courtesy State Library Victoria)



The Cabman's shelter, back in South Yarra

## Victorian Community History Award 2002

***'Though God cannot alter the past,  
historians can.'***

**Samuel Butler, 1835–1902**

There's not much time left to submit an entry for the Victorian Community History Award 2002.

All Victorians have a story to tell, and the Victorian Community History Award aims to keep these stories alive by promoting excellence in historical research.

There's a first prize of \$5,000 and six \$1,000 prizes for the finalists in each category.

Last year's winner was '1864', a CD ROM by Warik Lawrance. It was the first time the award had been given to anything other than a book. The judges

described it as a surprise and a treasure. The 3D image allows you to walk down the Collins Street of 1864, a scene similar to Gill's famous painting ten years earlier. Some of the buildings, like St Enoch's Church, are now gone. There's also a map, guide book and detailed bibliography.

The Victorian Community History Award is supported and sponsored by Information Victoria. The closing date for entries is 27 February 2002. For an application form, telephone Information Victoria on 1300 366 356 or go to [www.information.vic.gov.au](http://www.information.vic.gov.au)

# Heritage Online: a golden heritage

[www.heritage.vic.gov.au/agoldenheritage](http://www.heritage.vic.gov.au/agoldenheritage)

**'A state without the means of some change is without the means of its conservation.'**

**Edmund Burke, 1729-97**

'The frontiers are gloriously open.'

To a traditional bookworm, Heritage Council Education Officer Michael Ots has surrendered to the Dark Side of The Force with remarkable willingness.

'The possibilities are just endless.'

Michael's mouse swoops once more across the pad.

'Happy? I'm overjoyed !'

*A Golden Heritage Online* is not to be surfed with a hangover. Before you even click on anything, the part of the screen your cursor is loitering over starts growing in anticipation. This is a web site that wants to take you somewhere – to the story of gold, and how it turned a few shabby huts in the settlement of Port Phillip into arguably one of the most sophisticated cities in the Southern Hemisphere.

'Here in this bit we're on a virtual reality tour of the Gothic Bank. Some of these places are hidden to the public. Here you can climb the stairs and see the paintings on the wall.'

'There are video snapshots where some of our heritage experts appear on the screen talking about the places that fascinate them most. It's like an electronic book – new horizons of discovery with the click of a button.'

Regardless of the medium or the message, the under-18 audience is the most discerning. That's why the feedback from students has been so encouraging. One student quickly found that if he clicked on his home town of Ararat, up came the most important gold-related places together with complete background notes. Another was impressed by the way the pages explained how mining equipment, like the Chilean Mill, actually worked.

A third student found the animations 'exhilarating' and a fourth was so impressed that she thanked 'The Creator' for making the site so easy to explore. Michael Ots does have a beard, but any similarity with the Almighty ends there.

Like every creator, Michael needs a right-hand man.

Warren Harrop is the chosen one. Thanks to the Community



Virtual reality panorama



*A Golden Heritage Online* is the Heritage Council's first multimedia Internet enterprise. It takes the Heritage Council's travelling exhibition *A Golden Heritage* and puts the text and images online in easy, colourful chunks.

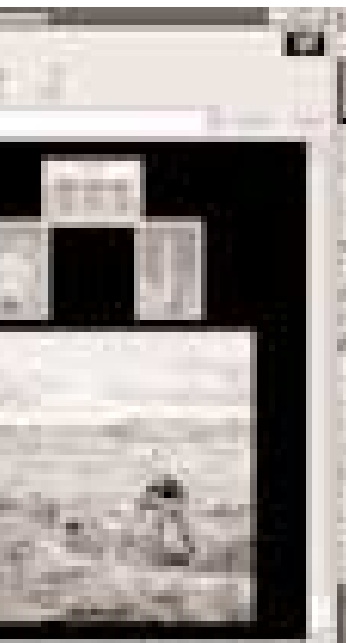
That's how it started: a bright, easy-to-navigate online version targeted at schools, with a few add-ons for enrichment. But the add-ons haven't stopped growing. The interactive map, line drawings of goldmining techniques, links to the Heritage Register Online, regional histories and educational resources all deepen the resource.

Support Fund, Warren joined the Heritage Council on a six-month industry placement. Quite simply, he put the *Online* into *A Golden Heritage Online*.

'Obviously, the need to appeal to a student audience dictates everything else,' explains Warren.

'For one thing, the background colour on most commercial web sites is white. Predictable, conservative white. That's partly why our background colour is black. It's the difference between cool and dorky.'





By jove, he's right. The remarkable achievement of *A Golden Heritage Online* is that it appeals to youngsters at the same time as conveying as much comprehensive reading material as you would find in any exhibition or book. No-one has ever accused Warren Harrop of dumbing-down, but you sense that he's rehearsing his rebuttal just in case.

'There's a strong amount of factual information here. Lots of content. Much of it comes directly from the Online Register and the original exhibition.'

It doesn't end there. *A Golden Heritage Online* also provides for primary and secondary teachers. VCE material is available as part of the free package, not just a link to another web site.

'There's a strong education element to this, as well as being accessible to all,' says Michael Ots.



Gold mine at Barkly-Navarre

*A Golden Heritage Online* is being shown at a number of educational conferences, and the beauty of it is that we don't have to throw out a book every time we want to update our web site with the latest information. We just change the screen and send the new version to the server.'



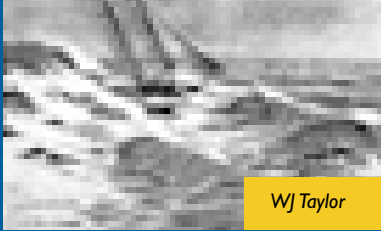
Warren Harrop and Michael Ots



Archaeologist Jeremy Smith on the video snapshots

Even the bean-counters can't complain. A commercially produced web site of this calibre would cost ten times the amount paid by the Heritage Council. But far from revelling in his status as bargain signing of the year, Warren Harrop is piously humble about his achievements: 'I hope I've made it look a bit easier than it really is.'

As Alfonso X wrote in the thirteenth century: 'If the Lord Almighty had consulted me before embarking on creation, I would have recommended something simpler.'



WJ Taylor



# Festive wrecks

Rebecca O'Reilly

**'This precious stone set in the silver sea.'**

**William Shakespeare**

There are many ships that have disappeared off the coast of Victoria due to unpredictable weather, unchartered coastlines, ignorant captains and leaky ships. From this long list, there are a handful of wrecks that took place during the festive season.

While Christmas and New Year is generally a time of happiness and good cheer, a time of new beginnings and new dreams, it wasn't so for those unfortunate souls who experienced a shipwreck. Immigrants faced starting the New Year with only the wet clothes in which they were dressed. Worst of all, they were within sight of the promised land after spending considerable time at sea.

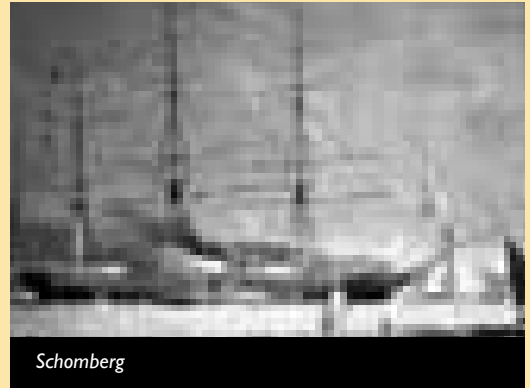
The passengers on board the *Schomberg* had little luck during Christmas of 1855. On a calm evening just one day after Christmas, the giant wooden clipper slipped gently onto a reef east of Curdie's Inlet. The clipper was on her maiden voyage from Liverpool to Melbourne with about 50 first-class passengers and 370 people in steerage. The captain was said to be entertaining ladies and playing cards in the saloon when called by the Third Mate who reported land three miles away. But Captain Bully Forbes decided to play another rubber before going on deck to give orders to change tack. By the time the captain gave the order, it was too late and the *Schomberg* slid onto the reef. The steamer *Queen* took most of the passengers off the wreck and returned to Melbourne while others remained on the beach and watched the vessel break up. Although most of the passengers' personal effects were rescued, some found they had lost all they possessed and were quite prepared to blame the captain.

On New Years Day of 1841, the passengers of the *PS Clonmel* were to face a similar disaster. On 30 December 1840, the luxurious steamer left Sydney bound for Melbourne on what was to

be its final voyage. It was carrying a number of influential people and a valuable cargo. The *Clonmel* grounded on the shifting sands just off Wilsons Promontory. In the hope of refloating the vessel, the Captain ordered that cargo be thrown overboard but the swells simply lifted the ship higher onto the sandbank. Major losses were incurred. Almost all the cargo was lost or destroyed and because it was uninsured, its owners were forced to bear the loss. Among the worst off were Mr C. Robinson and Mr and Mrs Cashmore. Mr C. Robinson, a representative of the Union Bank, lost 3,000 pounds worth of bank notes intended for the Union Bank in Melbourne. Mr and Mrs Cashmore, newly married and on their honeymoon, lost their entire stock of a new drapery store they planned to set up at the corner of Collins and Elizabeth Streets, Melbourne.

The Australian built ketch *WJ Taylor* was returning to Queenscliff early on the morning after Christmas Day 1894 from a four-day fishing and shooting adventure with eight prominent young gentlemen from Kew. Two of the passengers, the Alsop boys, were the sons of the actuary of the Melbourne Savings Bank. On Christmas evening, the vessel left San Remo for Queenscliff and reached Port Phillip Heads the morning after when the *WJ Taylor* drifted ashore on Point Lonsdale Reef. According to the *Argus*, the passengers behaved 'comparatively cool and collected' and were rowed to safety by the Queenscliff lifeboat.

Two weeks into the New Year of 1868, the bell rang over Queenscliff and the townspeople heard news that the *Light of the Age* was in distress. Thick squally weather, out-of-date charts and a neglectful captain were blamed for the loss of the ship after it ran aground about a mile from Point Lonsdale and quickly broke up. The vessel carried 45 passengers from Liverpool to Melbourne with a general cargo



Schomberg

including slates, crockery, liquors and possessions belonging to the immigrants sailing for Melbourne. The cargo from the *Light of the Age* scattered for a mile along the coast and the wreckers of Queenscliff and surrounding areas arrived with their spring carts and drays to collect whatever they could. Wreckers found themselves with crates of crockery, bales of drapery, barrels of liquor, bundles of brush-ware and many other personal items belonging to the passengers.

Of the 45 passengers from the *Light of the Age*, most were taken to Melbourne on board the schooner *Rip*, while others decided to remain at Point Lonsdale to see after their belongings. Many passengers were left with only the clothes in which they were dressed. The *Geelong Advertiser* reported that '...in all probability, had the weather been bad, every life on board would have been sacrificed.' The captain was found guilty of drunkenness, neglect of the navigation of his ship and was considered unfit to be in command. His certificate was cancelled.

Of these four wrecks, only the *Clonmel* is covered by a protected zone, preventing anyone diving on the wreck or recovering its cargo or fittings. The *Clonmel*, *Schomberg*, *Light of the Age* and the *WJ Taylor* have broken up but archaeological artefacts still remain on site. Together, they illustrate why it is necessary for divers to respect the laws and customs to make sure the remains of Victoria's maritime heritage are protected.