



Aboriginal links with the City of Monash

Sites to visit and background reading relating to the history of Aboriginal people in the City of Monash and beyond

*Assembled with the assistance of the Waverley and Oakleigh and District Historical Societies, the City of Monash and many helpful individuals
Photos, top to bottom, from Oakleigh, Glen Waverley and Ashwood*



DRAFT - STILL BEING REVISED IN 2017

STILL WORKING ON : INDEX , OVERALL LAY-OUT AND FORMAT, MATERIAL RECEIVED RECENTLY FROM REVIEWERS, SPELLING OF HISTORIC ABORIGINAL NAMES

Introduction and explanation

This document was assembled over time for the Monash Reconciliation Group. It has been made available to its members and to the groups and individuals who assisted in its development. It is a summary of readily available information from local Monash people, libraries and the Internet. Compiled with the assistance of the Waverley Historical Society, Oakleigh and District Historical Society, City of Monash and many helpful schools, churches and individuals. Thank you all.

Note that this document does not contain new, original writing. The text is mostly quoted from public sources or summarised with the aim of maintaining the original intentions.

To keep this checklist short, many of these quotes are incomplete and you are encouraged to read the originals. The accuracy of the information here depends on the accuracy of the source.

If you wish to use any of the information listed here, it is recommended that you double check the original primary source to make sure that it has been quoted correctly and refer to that original source.

If you find errors or omissions, in the first instance contact the person, society or group through which you received your copy of this document. Or contact Alfred Kruijshoop who put these DRAFTS together from 2011 onwards. If that is no longer possible please contact one of these organisations - in this order:

- Monash Reconciliation Group, City of Monash, Victoria
- Waverley Historical Society, Mount Waverley
- (If all the above fail: City of Monash Public Library Service)

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Useful reading about the Aborigines in the Monash area of Victoria

To better understand the history of Monash and Melbourne see these *Sections and pages*

1. Jeffrey Turnbull *Once there was Jordanville, a History of the Ashwood, Jordanville, Chadstone area and the Housing Commission, Victoria Estate* Published by the Waverley Historical Society 2007 ISBN 978-0-646-47701-5. See Chapter 3 (pp. 12-14) *Aboriginal connections - Prehistory to 1838.* This book is in libraries and can be viewed and purchased at the local Historical Societies.

2. Meyer Eidelson *Melbourne Dreaming, a guide to important places of the past and present.* Second (greatly expanded) Edition, ISBN 9781 92205 97104, Aboriginal Studies Press AIATSIS Canberra, 2014. See the comprehensive *Introduction* (pp. xiii-xxii).

3. Useful local material is on the City of Monash Web Site: <http://www.monash.vic.gov.au/>
Follow links: Home > About Us > Monash Heritage > Aboriginal Heritage > *Aboriginal Background Information* > *4. Monash Region Contact History*

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Worthwhile sites to visit and background reading relating to the history of Aboriginal people in the City of Monash and beyond

Places to visit, plaques and significant sites in the City of Monash	Page
• <i>Spirit of the Land</i> sculpture, corner Dandenong Road and Ferntree Gully Road, Oakleigh	4
• <i>Kulin Nation Acknowledgment Plaque</i> at City of Monash Civic Centre	5
• <i>Local Early Contact Plaque (Victoria 150)</i> on Waverley Road, Glen Waverley	6
• Aboriginal Acknowledgment Plaques at Churches; Girl Guides Badge	7
• Remains of Scarred Tree, now in Valley Reserve, Mount Waverley	8
• Scar Tree from Mullum Mullum Creek in Monash University Grounds, Clayton	9
• Aboriginal Garden in Monash University Grounds, Clayton	10
• <i>The Original Children</i> Statue at Ashwood High School	11
• Record of remains of an Aboriginal fireplace in the Chadstone - Jordanville area	13
• Early settlers' personal recollections of contact with local Aborigines: Oakleigh, Clarinda ... Anna Wilkinson, Grandma McLeod, Elizabeth Mara ...	14
• Other locations where Aboriginal people were recorded in the past	16
Present day interest; Aboriginal contact organisations in Monash	17
Some inspiring places to visit in the City of Melbourne	18
• Bunjilaka Cultural Centre, Melbourne Museum, Carlton	
• Koorie Heritage Trust, Federation Square (re-starting at new location)	
• National Gallery of Victoria at Federation Square Aboriginal Collection	
• Other significant sites, reference and guide books	
Background reading about the Aboriginal past in and around the Monash districts	19
• Lucy Amorosi and Andrea Murphy <i>Aboriginal Cultural Heritage (in Monash)</i>	
• Helen Gobbi <i>Taking its Place: a history of Oakleigh 1853 - 2003</i>	
• Jeffrey Turnbull <i>Once there was Jordanville</i>	
• Susan Priestley <i>Cattlemen to Commuters. A History of the Mulgrave District 1839 - 1961</i>	
• Lesley Alves <i>Suburban heartland: a history of the city of Whitehorse</i>	
• May Keeley <i>A Journey into Yesterday. A History of Clayton</i>	
• Wyn Hattwell <i>Wandering Around Waverley</i>	
Wider Melbourne and Victoria	20
• Meyer Eidelson <i>Melbourne Dreaming, A Guide to the Aboriginal Places of Melbourne</i>	
• Meyer Eidelson <i>Yalukit Willam, The River People of Port Phillip</i>	
• Gary Presland <i>Aboriginal Melbourne, the lost land of the Kulin People</i>	
• Gary Presland <i>First people: the Eastern Kulin of Melbourne, Port Phillip & Central Victoria</i>	
• Jim Poulter <i>Sharing Heritage in Kulin Country</i>	
• Jim Poulter <i>Batman's 'Treaty' - The True Story</i>	
From suburbs bordering on Monash	
• Across Dandenong Creek: Rev. James Clow, 'Tirhatuan', 'Nerre Nerre Warren',	21
• Further East: Aborigines in The Yarra Valley and the Dandenongs,	23



Sculpture in Oakleigh *Spirit of the Land* (2011)

In the J. W. Hurst Reserve at the junction of Dandenong Road and Ferntree Gully Road, Oakleigh. Commissioned by the City of Monash and unveiled on 10 February 2011. Melway 69 H7

The site of this large steel sculpture is probably close to the location of the Corroboree held in the mid 19th century as described by Miss Elizabeth Mara and not far from the old Oakleigh Court House site referred to by Mrs Anna Wilkinson. See the Oakleigh and Caulfield Times newspaper articles with their recollections later in this document.



Far left: Carolyn Briggs, Third lady from left: Dianne Kerr
Fourth lady from left: Megan Cadd, one of the artists.



Plaque at the base of the sculpture

The text on the Plaque at the base of the sculpture reads:

Spirit of the land 2010

*Artists Megan Cadd, Maree Clark and Vicky Couzens
working with Jeph Neale, Artery Co-operative*

*Bunjil soared high over the land . . . and as he circled he released a breast feather, soft and delicate, from close to Bunjil's heart. It wafted gently to the earth below . . . settling on a small rise. The Spirit of the Land stirred and rose up through the earth, trees grew and the animals and people returned.
From the story 'Spirit of the Land' by Vicky Couzens (Public Art Concept Proposal, December 2009)*

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From the City of Monash newsletter *Monash Bulletin* 1 March 2011

A FEATHER TOUCH IN OAKLEIGH

The Indigenous history of the City of Monash is as long as it is significant.

The municipality's history has been given pride of place, with the City of Monash's newest public artwork providing those in Oakleigh with a chance to reflect on the suburb's traditional owners. The 'Spirit of the Land' artwork has been installed in J. W. Hurst Reserve, next to the busy intersection of Dandenong and Ferntree Gully Roads, with preliminary landscaping works now finished.

The artwork was given a warm welcome to Monash by Auntie Carolyn Briggs, a senior elder of Boon Wurrung people, and Auntie Dianne Kerr from the Wurundjeri Council who performed a traditional 'Welcome to Country' and smoking ceremony at the artwork's official launch last month. Iconic musician, Kutcha Edwards, also gave a stirring performance at the event.

The 'Spirit of the Land' artwork, by artists Maree Clark, Megan Cadd and Vicki Cousens, weighs about two-and-a-half tonnes and is nine metres in length. The sculpture depicts a feather that references 'Bunjil the Creator', an important local Indigenous creation story. In Indigenous history, the feather is known as both delicate and strong and signifies the beginning of a new life.

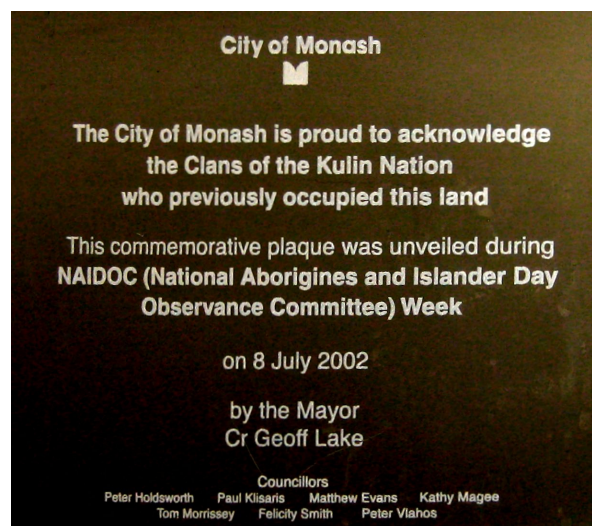
Cr Male said the new artwork and preliminary landscaping works had given the reserve a much-needed face-lift. "Thousands of people will drive past this fantastic piece of art every day. It will certainly make us think about the area's Indigenous history and the importance of recognising the traditional owners of the land," Cr Male said.

The project was first proposed in 2008 by Oakleigh Ward Councillors Stephen Dimopoulos and Denise McGill. In June 2009, students from Mazenod College were awarded first prize in an art competition that assisted in the development of the project brief and provided inspiration to the artist team.

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City of Monash Kulin Nation Acknowledgment Plaque (2002)

On a white tiled wall to the left of (almost opposite) the main entrance to the City of Monash Civic Centre on Springvale Road, Glen Waverley 3150. Melway 71 C3



Text on the plaque:

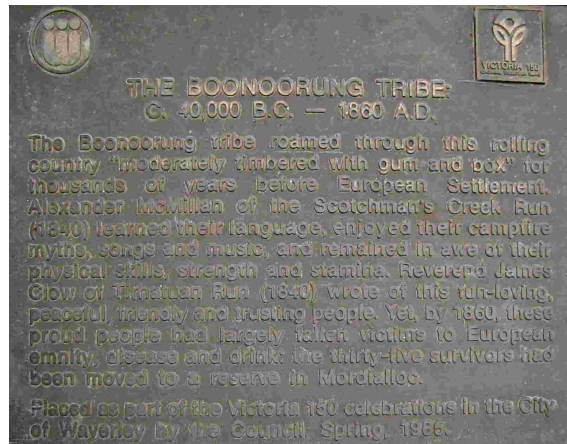
City of Monash The City of Monash is proud to acknowledge the Clans of the Kulin Nation who previously occupied the land This commemorative plaque was unveiled during NAIDOC (National Aborigines and Islander Day Observance Committee) Week on 8 July 2002 by the Mayor Cr Geoff Lake Councillors Peter Holdsworth Paul Klisaris Matthew Evans Kathy Magee Tom Morrissey Felicity Smith Peter Vlahos

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Local Aboriginal early contacts Plaque (1985)

Monash is in Woi-Wurung language group, Wurundjeri Clan Country, which is part of the Kulin federation of language groups (which also includes the Boon-Wurung language group). Dandenong Creek and the land to the west, from the southern slopes of the Dandenong mountains to Kooweerup was Woi-Wurung, Ngaruk Clan Country.

A plaque is set in the footpath on the north side of Waverley Road, Glen Waverley, about 90 metres west of Bogong Avenue, in front of the Holmesglen TAFE car park. Melway 71 A4



The (1985) text on the plaque (see Note below) reads:

THE BOONLOORUNG TRIBE:

C 40,000 B. C. - 1860 A. D.

The Boonloorung tribe roamed through this rolling country "moderately timbered with gum and box" for thousands of years before European settlement. Alexander McMillan of the Scotchman's Creek Run (1840) learned their language, enjoyed their campfire myths, songs and music, and remained in awe of their physical skills, strength and stamina. Reverend James Clow of Tirhatuan Run (1840) wrote of this fun-loving, peaceful, friendly and trusting people. Yet, by 1860, these proud people had largely been victims to European enmity, disease and drink: the thirty-five survivors had been moved to a reserve in Mordialloc. Placed as part of the Victoria 150 celebrations in the City of Waverley by the Council, Spring, 1985.

This name 'Boonloorung' on the plaque is found in historical records in many different approximate phonetic spellings, such as: Bunwurrung, Boon Werrung, Bunurong, Boonoorung, etc. etc.

IMPORTANT NOTE ABOUT THIS PLAQUE

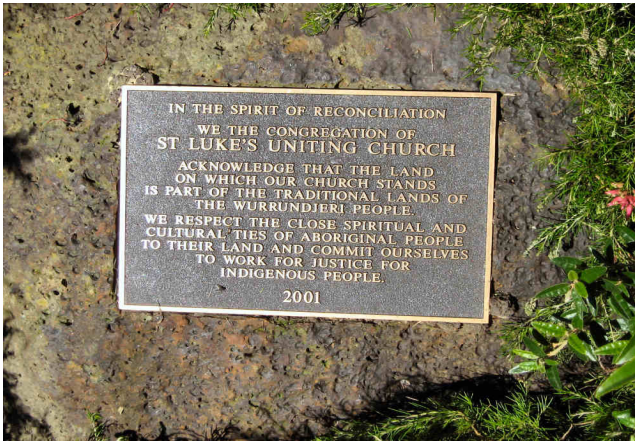
Quoting from the Historical Note (10/2/2008) by the Waverley Historical Society (available on the Internet at <http://home.vicnet.net.au/~whsvic/plaques&markers.htm>) and other sources:

The plaque is a tribute to the Aborigines, who were the original inhabitants. Acknowledges some of the original inhabitants of the current City of Monash - the Boonoorung (Bunurung) peoples.

This plaque may now be considered inaccurate in the light of recent studies which have shown that the Woiwurrung and not the Boonoorung were probably the custodians of most of what is considered the current City of Monash.

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Aboriginal Acknowledgment Plaques at Churches



(Left) St Luke's Uniting Church (2001)

In the small garden in front of the Church in Essex Street, Mount Waverley. Melway 61 D10

In the Spirit of Reconciliation, we the congregation of St Luke's Uniting Church acknowledge that the land on which our Church stands is part of the traditional lands of the Wurrundjeri people. We respect the close spiritual and cultural ties of Aboriginal people to their land and commit ourselves to work for justice for Indigenous people. 2001

(Right) Anglican Parish of St Stephen and St Mary (2010)

In small garden in front of the historic St Stephen's Church on High Street Road, Mount Waverley. Access along Park Road and Norman Court. Melway 61 D11

In the spirit of reconciliation this Parish acknowledges the Wurrundjeri people as the traditional custodians of this land February 2010

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Aboriginal Corroboree Ground in East Malvern (creeks junction) inspired the Waverley Girl Guides Camp Badges in the 1960s



The stream junction on the badge represents the junction of Scotchman's Creek and Gardiners Creek in East Malvern which was mentioned as a recognised Corroboree Ground. The Aboriginal woman represents womanhood. The overall shape of the badge was to represent an Aboriginal Churinga (Sacred Stone).

Ref: Page 78 of *Waverley Past and Present*, published by the Waverley Historical Society in 1988 (ISBN 0 9598179 5 6) The same design was used for the Girl Guides Camp Badges for the Waverley and Waverley West Divisions in the 1960s. Image credit: Mrs Shirley Lang.

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Scar Tree (mid section only) now in Valley Reserve

The mid section of a Scar Tree, originally on the east side of Springvale Road near Fairhills Parade, Glen Waverley (Melway 71 D1). In 1965 it was cut down for widening of Springvale Road. A very short middle section with the large scar was cut out and taken to Valley Reserve in Mount Waverley, near the Wills Road entrance, Melway 70 G2, opposite the Scout Hall. Ref. the 1987 photo. There the tree lay for 50 years, almost forgotten and gradually becoming overgrown. After approaches by the Friends of Scotchman's Creek and Valley Reserve and the Waverley Historical Society, in 2015 the City of Monash took measures to stabilise and preserve the tree.



- Left: the still living Scar Tree at its original location in Glen Waverley as published in the *Waverley Gazette* Newspaper of 24 February 1965. Note the distinct partial 'bridge' across the centre of the scar.
- Centre: the cut out Scar section on display in Valley Reserve as shown on page 22 of the book *Waverley Past and Present* published by the Waverley Historical Society in 1988 ISBN 0 9598179 5 6 The characteristic partial 'bridge' is still just noticeable.
- Right: the cut out Scar section on display in Valley Reserve after preservation treatment.

It is listed as a significant historic tree (AAV7922/614) in the Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Register by Aboriginal Affairs Victoria and the Victorian Archaeological Survey. The history of this tree is covered in detail on the City of Monash Web Site: see Home > About Us > Monash Heritage > *Aboriginal Heritage* > *Aboriginal Background Information* > 4. *Monash Region Contact History*

Note: the Valley Reserve scar section is currently the only one known to come from within the City of Monash. (A second known scar tree along the banks of Dandenong Creek (AAV 7922/353) was last recorded with certainty in 1993, when it had already died, but has since been lost permanently.) The City of Monash Indigenous Action Plan 2007-2011 observed that
..... both sites should be considered as being of high cultural value to the City of Monash, being the only indigenous sites currently identified within the municipal boundary.....

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Mullum Mullum Creek Scar Tree in Monash University Aboriginal Garden

In the Monash University Aboriginal Garden (see next page) in the north east corner of the Clayton Campus, is the **Mullum Mullum Scar Tree**. Available information indicates that it was discovered lying in the Mullum Mullum Creek and donated to Monash University in 1999 (information from Monash University web sites). It is also listed as a significant historic tree in the Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Register. It is well signposted, suitably supported clear of the ground and of vegetation. However, it is not known why it was not preserved closer to its original location in the Mullum Mullum Linear Park.



Photograph from Monash University Archives

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Monash University - *Aboriginal Garden* plant collection

The Aboriginal Garden is a collection of over 150 species of plants that were important to the life of the Aborigines of south-eastern Australia. They were used for food, medicine, tools, fibres and glue. Each plant is labelled with its Indigenous name, common name, botanical name and traditional uses.. The Garden is today beside the lake at the north-east corner of the Clayton campus, just south of Building 74. It was first established in 1999 in front of Building 17 by ethnobotanist Dr Beth Gott, Research Fellow in the School of Biological Sciences. In 2009 it was enlarged and moved to its present location. Details are in a booklet that can be downloaded from the Monash web site:

http://www.fsd.monash.edu.au/files/bethgottpamphlet_po.pdf

<http://www.monash.edu.au/about/glance/social-inclusion/indigenous/garden.html>

For more scientific information, see: Nellie Zola and Beth Gott *Koorie Plants, Koorie People: Traditional Food, Fibre and Healing Plants of Victoria*, published in 1992 by the Koorie Heritage Trust, Melbourne ISBN 1875606106



Dr Beth Gott at the Aboriginal Garden
(photo from *The Microtome* July 2013)

The Monash Aboriginal Garden is
very well laid out and signposted

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Statue *The Original Children* (1980), Ashwood

Bronze statue in the garden between the Office and the Multimedia Centre of Ashwood High School (until January 2016 named Ashwood Secondary College) near the corner of Vannam Drive and Poplar Avenue. Melway 60 J9. (Some older sources gave the location as Ashwood Primary School). Also see the follow-up story from *Waverley Whispers* further down, next page.



The stone base carries two plaques, one facing the Multimedia Centre (visible in the photo), the second on the rear of the base, facing the School Office. They read:

- "The original children" Sculpture by Stanley Hammond, M.B.E.
Donated to Ashwood High School by M. McKay, B.A. Principal 1968-1976
- This sculpture was unveiled by the Hon. A. J. Hunt, M.L.C.
Minister of Education on 29th July, 1980.

It is understood that Mr Merv McKay had travelled a number of times to inland northern Australia and developed an interest in the original inhabitants. The placement of the sculpture was supported by the school's art and technology department at the time. It was cast by the highly respected firm 'Artworks in Bronze', then in St Kilda.

Ashwood High School was built in 1958 on the site where originally John Jordan's homestead *Summerhill* was located from about 1855 onward. In the early days the family would frequently see Aborigines near their house, in the daytime and after dark. (Ref. Jeffrey Turnbull *Once there was Jordanville*, page 16). Ashwood was originally named *Jordanville* and the name lives on in the name of the local railway station. The extension of Vannam Drive south of High Street Road, leading south from the original location of *Summerhill*, is still named Jordan Street.

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The First Inhabitants - Article in Waverley Whispers (1990)

A photo of the statue at Ashwood College was used to illustrate an article in *Waverley Whispers*, Issue 3, November 1990. *Waverley Whispers* was a local newsletter, published for the community by Hannan Methven Real Estate at the time. The article reads in part:

THE FIRST INHABITANTS



Little has been recorded about the original inhabitants of our area. The Boonoorung Tribe of Aborigines travelled through on their nomadic wandering from the Yarra River and the foothills of the Dandenong Ranges to the coastal areas of Westernport.

They would set up their camps at the junctions of the creeks or a flat grassy spot along the banks. Possum, kangaroo, wombat, wallaby and emu were hunted for food and clothing. Eels and fish were caught in the creeks and in summer they ate shellfish and saltwater fish from the sea. The trees provided firewood in the winter.

At first they were respected, and their stamina was admired by the early settlers. They continued their hunting while the holdings were unfenced. Alexander McMillan's son, from the Scotchman's Creek Run learnt their language and sat around their campfires listening to their music and folk lore.

As the land was fenced their movements were restricted and although some tried to adapt to the new ways, their law and wisdom became lost as the tribal elders died.

A native Police Force camped on a flat area east of the Dandenong Creek where it now crosses the Mulgrave Freeway. They did good work as trackers, and fossickers still find the odd button or relic when they search the area.

However, by 1860 many of the Aborigines had died due to their low resistance to the white man's diseases and the influence of alcohol. By then William Thomas, protector of Aborigines, was only responsible for 35. Jimmy Dunbar, the last of the Boonoorung tribe lived at Mordialloc until he died in the Alfred Hospital in 1877.

A young Lawyer recently arrived from Ireland, who later became Sir Redmond Barry of Syndal, had great sympathy for the Aborigines camped on the outskirts of Melbourne, who were often in trouble with the law. He spent much time studying their cases and defending them without charging a fee.

» A related informative site is *The Tragedy of the Bunurong People: The Mordialloc Connection* on the City of Kingston web site <http://localhistory.kingston.vic.gov.au/htm/article/499.htm>

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Record of remains of an Aboriginal fireplace, oven in the Chadstone area

The history of the Colwell family, then living in the present Chadstone Jordanville area, includes a description of an Aboriginal fireplace, unearthened when land was cultivated by European settlers for the very first time. The source is the paragraph '*Aboriginal Fireplace*' on page 4 of an 8 page document '*Some reminiscences, as dictated to me by my father, James Colwell*' recorded by James' daughter Lorna Colwell in 1981. In these reminiscences, James (b. 1886) describes life and events in the late 19th century. Much more information on the Colwell family is in Jeffrey Turnbull's book *Once there was Jordanville* (Referenced elsewhere). Two generations Colwell farmed Crown Portion 48, Shire of Mulgrave from 1853 to 1907 (map on Turnbull page 6). James' father Thomas Colwell discovered the fireplace probably around 1896 - 1900. Lorna's document is in the collection of the Oakleigh and District Historical Society and was quoted by historian Clive Haddock in 2009.

The location of the fireplace could have been in the northern part of the Colwell property near the eastern part of today's Woonah Street and Batesford Road, just south-east of Gardiner's Creek. Melway 69 H1 (north half). This is about a km south of the Ashwood High School site where in the 19th century the Jordan family frequently encountered Aboriginal residents, as mentioned elsewhere in this document in connection with the statue *The Original Children*.



(Sketch of a possible arrangement by Clive Haddock)

SOME REMINISCENCES, AS DICTATED TO ME BY MY FATHER, JAMES COLWELL recorded by his daughter Lorna Colwell in 1981

(One paragraph only:) ABORIGINAL FIREPLACE

For reasons that will be apparent, and as I proceed with this note, I'm sure that any reader will agree that, in the very early times, before the advent of the white settlers, there was a large population of Aboriginal people in the area north of Oakleigh.

One day, when my father was ploughing some ground, that had not been previously cultivated, his plough struck a stone about six inches beneath the surface. He got his mattock and unearthened the stone, only to find that there were many more similar stones in that particular spot. When fully cleared, it was disclosed that there was a great collection of stones of about 15-18 inches in diameter forming a floor of about 10 feet in diameter. This was an Aboriginal fireplace or oven. Now, those stones must have been carried for miles as I know of no area in the vicinity of our place in which similar stones were found. After the advent of the first settlers, the Aboriginal people must have left the area, with the result that the old fireplace became covered with earth, and that would have taken many years to eventuate.

The fireplace was situated about 300 yards to the South of what the locals called Damper Creek. This spot is shown on the map as Gardiner's Creek.

NOTE: Gardiners Creek indeed comes to within about the right distance from the Colwell property. Damper Creek is much further north, along Stephenson's Road, High Street Road, through Riversdale Golf Club and Ashwood College and joins Gardiners Creek at Malmsbury Drive, Ashwood.

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A few personal quotes from early European residents.....

Mrs Anna Wilkinson's recollection of when Aboriginal people resided in Oakleigh

From the 'Oakleigh and Caulfield Times' of Thursday, November 25, 1937

This article was identified by Helen Gobbi in her book *Taking its Place: a history of Oakleigh*



The 1937 Court House, now known as the 'Oakleigh Courthouse Community Centre'

In 1870 the first Oakleigh Court House was built near the corner of Dandenong Road and Atkinson Street on a high point often called the "Atkinson Street Hill" - Melway 69 G6. In 1937 this 'old' Court House was replaced by the building that still stands today. In the newspaper Mrs Anna Wilkinson (born abt 1845) describes the presence of Aborigines at that location before 1870 who, she said "*used to nurse her eldest son*" (born 1864) "*70 years ago*", i.e. before 1867. This site is also not far from the location of the recent large sculpture *Spirit of the Land*. See the first section of this checklist and also Miss Elizabeth Mara's recollections on the next pages.

The 1937 article reads: *Remembered Where Coins Were Placed, 67 Years Ago*

From information given yesterday by Mrs A. Wilkinson, 91 years of age, of Clyde street, Oakleigh, workmen demolishing the old Oakleigh court house in Dandenong Road, were able to unearth a number of coins placed in the wall at the opening of the court house 67 years ago.

Mrs Wilkinson, who was at the opening ceremony in 1870, was able to finalise a search which had been made for some days for old relics.....

» *Mrs Wilkinson said she remembered the spot, where the old court house stood, over 70 years ago. Blackfellows camping there in a hollow tree used to nurse her eldest son, Mr Alfred Wilkinson, now 73 years old, who lives in Sydney.*

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Short anecdote from the McLeod family about Bald Hill (Park?), Clarinda This used to be part of Clayton, now in the City of Kingston Melway 78 J4

From May Keeley *A Journey into Yesterday. A History of Clayton* Chapter 6, page 17:

About an old member of the McLeod family in the late 19th century: *Frequently grandma told stories of the local Aborigines, the Mordialloc tribe. She often went to the slopes of the bald hill to gather firewood, then carried it home on her back. Sometimes the Aborigines would carry it for her, and as a reward got a piece of tobacco to chew.*

Another 'Bald Hill'

There is another 'Bald Hill' at Clematis near Cardinia Reservoir, also with significant Aboriginal connections; see: http://www.parkweb.vic.gov.au/education/pdf/crp_history.pdf

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**Miss Elizabeth Mara's recollection of when Aboriginal people were often seen
in the Oakleigh district, probably from the late 19th century**

From the *Oakleigh and Caulfield Times* of Thursday, July 28, 1938

This article was identified by Helen Gobbi in her book *Taking its Place: a history of Oakleigh*

Notes:

- The location of the corroboree was probably close to where the City of Monash installed the large Aboriginal inspired art work *Spirit of the Land*. See earlier in this document.
- Spelling and punctuation of the original 1938 newspaper article are generally maintained, but some words still in use in the 1930s were replaced as they are no longer used.

From the column *'Around the District'* in the *Oakleigh and Caulfield Times* of July 28, 1938:

From A Bullock Track To A City

Believed to be Oakleigh's oldest inhabitant - or, at least, the oldest inhabitant born in the district - Miss Elizabeth Mara, 84 years, Dalgety Street, has seen Oakleigh grow from a few huts along a straggling bullock track to a flourishing city of over 12,000 people.

Born in a one-roomed slab hut near Scotchman's Creek, not far from where she now lives, Miss Mara has spent her life in Oakleigh, only leaving once to stay for a few years in Toora.

Built Their Huts On Scotchman's Creek

Early settlers built their houses near Scotchman's Creek. Miss Mara's father, an Irishman, came to Oakleigh in 1841, and built his hut near Dalgety Street, one of the first properties bought from the Crown at the first government sale.

He was a wood carter and Mrs Mara was the only nurse in Oakleigh for nearly 40 years.

Miss Mara (Ed.: born in 1853 or 1854) was educated in a Catholic School in Dandenong road and was taught by a Mr Healy... now, after a lifetime in the district she retains all her faculties, enjoys perfect health. She is keen on gardening, and watches local affairs with interest.

Aboriginals' Corroboree In Dandenong Road

Miss Mara recalls incidents of her youth (Ed: possibly in the 1870s?) with remarkable clarity. She has a vivid recollection of when Aboriginals lived in the district, and when kangaroos, wallabies, and other animals were common in these parts.

On one occasion she saw a corroboree, when Aboriginals, returning to Gippsland and Dandenong districts, celebrated their visit to Melbourne, where they had received mirrors, blankets, and billy cans from the government as payment for their lands.

They gathered near the present junction of Dandenong and Fern Tree Gully roads, and lit an enormous fire. Using opossum skins stretched over their knees for drums, the Aboriginal women beat time as the warriors performed their wild dance.

All that seems long ago of course... but it is within the lifetime of one person to see the district grow from a wild outpost to a prosperous, flourishing city... what will the next generation bring...?

NOTE: The '*present junction of Dandenong and Fern Tree Gully roads*' is where the sculpture *Spirit of the Land* was placed in 2011. See the start of this document. It is also close to the 1937 Oakleigh Court House on *Atkinson Street Hill*, the site of Mrs Anna Wilkinson's recollection.

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Other locations where Aboriginal people were recorded in the past

Hidden in old records, reports, family letters, etc. will be many other stories about contact with the first inhabitants of the Monash area. A few examples:

- ◆ Mid 19th century report of a corroboree taking place near today's Hamilton Place shopping area of Mount Waverley by a descendant of William Stevenson, after whom Stephenson Road is named (with changed spelling). Correspondence is held by the Waverley Historical Society.
- ◆ Reports of significant Aboriginal activity in an area described as the 'Ashburton Forest', and area along Gardiners Creek (Ref. Jeffrey Turnbull *Once there was Jordanville*, page 132). A few web sites refer to*the Ashburton forest, overlooking Gardiners Creek, a site for picnics.*
- ◆ Further north along Gardiners Creek, as mentioned earlier: Ashwood High School was on the site where originally John Jordan's homestead *Summerhill* was located from about 1855 to 1961. In the early days the family would frequently see Aborigines near their house, in the daytime and after dark. (Ref. Jeffrey Turnbull *Once there was Jordanville*, page 16).
- ◆ Report by a young person of a visit in about 1960 to an old lady's home. "On her property she had a canoe shaped object about a meter and a half long and about half a meter high with flat ends. She told us it was an aboriginal canoe, she also showed us a tree which I seem to remember she told us it came from" Probably in the area of Federal Reserve, near Federal Street just south of Highbury Road. (preliminary note only; still being researched further)
- ◆ Some (but not all) residents' recollections link the name 'Black Flat' or 'Black's Flat' for the area near the junction of Springvale Road and Waverley Road, and the State School, to the presence of Aborigines (e.g. Ref. book by Wyn Hattwell, pages 9-10). Not confirmed.



- ◆ A number of stone tools were found on farms in the general Monash and Dandenong Valley area, confirming that the valley had seen active use by Aborigines.

Until the mid 1990s some of these tools could be viewed at the Jells Park Visitor Centre, but this is no longer the case.

The example shown left, about hand size, was found on a farm near the present centre of Glen Waverley. (Museum of Victoria Reg. DC61461)

- ◆ **We hope more artefacts and recollections will be recovered and made accessible.**

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Present day Aboriginal interest groups in Monash

A number of schools, universities, churches (some mentioned earlier), clubs have active groups studying Aboriginal issues and working with Aboriginal people: for example, students at all levels, on study, sport, the arts etc. Some schools have active exchange programmes with schools in Central and Northern Australia.

A few examples (please follow up on the Internet):

- ◆ Monash Reconciliation Group mrg2009@live.com.au or through the City of Monash
- ◆ There are active reconciliation groups in many surrounding suburbs and shires like Whitehorse, Knox, Manningham, Maroondah, Boroondara, Nillumbik, Casey, etc. Most have web sites and contacts are listed on the web sites of the city or shire and the site of Reconciliation Victoria <http://www.reconciliationvic.org.au> under the tab 'Local Reconciliation Groups'
- ◆ There are active Historical Societies in neighbouring areas such as Springvale, Doncaster and Templestowe, etc. Many have good web sites and information on local Aboriginal matters.
- ◆ Monash University offers culturally-sensitive support to Indigenous students both applying and currently studying at the University and a detailed long term Reconciliation Action Plan. In the Faculty of Arts is a dedicated Yulendj Indigenous Engagement Unit and the University has an Aboriginal Elder in residence. See <https://www.monash.edu/about/indigenous>
- ◆ Howitt Hall, one of Monash University's Halls of Residence, is named after Alfred William Howitt, geologist, anthropologist, explorer and naturalist. Author of the early important scientific study *The Native Tribes of South East Australia* published in 1904.
- ◆ Avila College, Mount Waverley: active Reconciliation student group; plaque to acknowledge Aboriginal land in the main Office; their main Assembly Hall is named the 'Bunjil Creation Centre'. There are annual student exchanges with the Ltyentye Apurte (Santa Teresa) community outside of Alice Springs. On the Avila College web site, search for 'reconciliation' for details.
- ◆ Wesley College, Glen Waverley, has since 2004 maintained an exchange programme with the Yiramalay/Wesley Studio School at Leopold Downs Station, via Fitzroy Crossing in the Kimberley region of Western Australia. There are regular student exchanges between the two schools and at Glen Waverley there is an active *Wesmob* Wesley student advocacy group.
- ◆ Huntingtower School in Mount Waverley have an annual student exchange programme with a school in Maningrida in Arnhem Land.
- ◆ Waverley Meadows Primary School in Columbia Drive, Wheelers Hill, have a beautiful display of poles with Aboriginal designs in their school ground, visible from the road.
- ◆ The Fusion Oakleigh Youth and Community Centre (linked with the Oakleigh Baptist Church) organises each year a '*Pilgrimage to Uluru*' bus trip visiting Aboriginal communities in South Australia and the Red Centre.
- ◆ **There will be many more interested people and organisations; please advise if you know of further groups, schools, associations, etc. with links to the City of Monash.**

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Selected places of interest worth visiting in Melbourne

Bunjilaka, Melbourne Museum, Nicholson Street, Carlton Gardens

Bunjilaka is the Aboriginal Centre at Melbourne Museum with world class displays drawn from the Museum's vast historic collection. Also permanent and temporary exhibits showing the life and culture of today's Aboriginal Australians. <http://museumvictoria.com.au/bunjilaka/>

Koorie Heritage Trust Cultural Centre, Federation Square

Yarra Building, Federation Square, Melbourne (until early 2015 it was at 295 King Street)
The Cultural Centre has a permanent educational display and exhibitions of work by Victorian and other Australian Aboriginal artists on both floors. There is reference library with original material from the early settlement of Victoria to the present and a shop with a selection of books about Aboriginal issues Australia-wide and craft items. <http://www.koorieheritagetrust.com/>

National Gallery of Victoria at Federation Square; Indigenous Collection

The NGV Ian Potter Centre at Federation Square has a major collection of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island art with displays covering early, traditional and contemporary art.

There are many other significant sites across the wider Melbourne metropolitan region

Often these are not easy to find and require local knowledge, guides or books. Sadly it may also be necessary to deliberately not publish such locations to minimise vandalism. There are a number of archaeological sites and scar trees along Dandenong Creek, part of which forms the eastern boundary of the City of Monash, including a few in the Dandenong Valley Metropolitan Park. Check the overview pages in the City of Monash report *Aboriginal Cultural Heritage* available on the web: <http://www.monash.vic.gov.au/city/history/cultural-heritage.htm>

Gary Presland (Text and sketched images) *Koorie Sites in the City of Whitehorse*

Brochure published by the City of Whitehorse in 1998. Out of print, but a copy can be viewed in the 'Ephemera' cabinet in the Nunawading Public Library.

The City of Stonnington is an example with excellent resources on the web. Reports, books, maps, teachers' guides, etc. downloadable as PDF, including those covering Aboriginal history:

* Local History Publications: numerous 'eBooks' including about *Stonnington Indigenous History*
<http://www.stonnington.vic.gov.au/Discover/History/History-of-Stonnington/Local-history-publications>

* Map of *Indigenous history markers*:

<http://www.stonnington.vic.gov.au/Discover/History/Heritage-Markers>

Illustrated Resource Material from Aboriginal Affairs Victoria

Fifteen mini-posters describing Aboriginal heritage places, objects and processes relating to the management of Aboriginal cultural heritage in Victoria. Informative, very well illustrated, colourful, double sided, printable on A4. The series covers: scarred trees, mounds, freshwater middens and coastal shell middens, flaked stone tools, burials, surface scatters, quarries, ground-edge axes, grinding stones, stone arrangements, axe-grinding grooves, rock art, **historic places**. Available on the Internet at: <http://www.dpc.vic.gov.au/index.php/aboriginal-affairs/publications-and-research/aboriginal-cultural-heritage-mini-poster-series>

» **Please advise if other significant places, books or listings should be included.**

«» «» «»

Aboriginal cultural heritage report and useful books

(i) Local, in and near Monash

Lucy Amorosi and Andrea Murphy *Aboriginal Cultural Heritage*

Prepared for the City of Monash by Tardis Enterprises, November 2002, reviewed 2010.

Originally available as a series of PDF files on the Monash City Council web site

<http://www.monash.vic.gov.au/city/history/cultural-heritage.htm>

but the web site was re-organised in 2015:

NOTE: In 2016 much of this material is still available, but in a different format, on the City of Monash Web Site: <http://www.monash.vic.gov.au/>

Follow links: Home > About Us > Monash Heritage > Aboriginal Heritage > Aboriginal Background Information > 4. Monash Region Contact History

This large informative background report is definitely worth consulting as it includes references to much of the documented 19th century historic background and a summary of previous investigations within the City of Monash, as well as wider regional and local investigations.

» The chapter on *Contact History within City of Monash* includes important records of meetings with local Aborigines by James Clow, a Scottish Presbyterian pastor turned squatter. Also see later in this document.

Helen G. Gobbi *Taking its Place: a history of Oakleigh 1853 - 2003*

Published by the Oakleigh & District Historical Society 2004 ISBN 0-9587947-5-8

Thorough resource book with full detailed references and good index. Interesting local Aboriginal items on pages 19 - 22 and 106 - 107 and probably more locations in the text.

Note: Low on page 21 is mention of the recollections of Mrs Anna Wilkinson and Miss Elizabeth Mara which are quoted elsewhere in this Checklist.

Jeffrey Turnbull *Once there was Jordanville, a History of the Ashwood, Jordanville, Chadstone Area and the Housing Commission, Victoria Estate.* Waverley Historical Society 2007 ISBN 978-0-646-47701-5.

This thorough book includes an excellent introduction to the Aboriginal history of Victoria on pages 12-16 and mention of settlers' contact with Aborigines on pages 16 and 132.

Susan Priestley *Cattlemen to Commuters. A History of the Mulgrave District 1839 - 1961*

John Ferguson, Sydney 1979 ISBN 0 909134 17 0 Extensive book about the district with limited mention of the early Aboriginal presence. Some items in Chapter 1: pages 5, 6, 9, 18 and 19.

A more detailed index was prepared later by the Waverley Historical Society (WHS) and is available on the WHS web site <http://home.vicnet.net.au/~whsvic/publications/CatcomIndex.pdf>

Lesley Alves *Suburban heartland: a history of the city of Whitehorse*

Published in Richmond by Utber & Patullo in association with the City of Whitehorse 2010

ISBN 9780980556940 (hardcover), ISBN 9780980556957 (paperback) Includes an overview of the history of Aboriginal presence in the outer eastern part of Melbourne.

May Keeley *A Journey into Yesterday. A History of Clayton* (1980) ISBN 0 9594752 0 6

Limited mention of Aboriginal presence in a few locations such as in Chapter 3: pages 10 - 11 and Chapter 6: page 17 and possibly more locations in the text (no index). The anecdote about Grandma McLeod from Bald Hill Park, Clarinda, later in this Background Note, is taken from this book.

Wyn Hattwell *Wandering Around Waverley* (1990) ISBN 0 908081 52 9

Large book with a wealth of general local material and anecdotes. In a very few places, mention of Aborigines in the district on pages 9, 10, 113, 255 - 257 and 383. An index and erratum were prepared by the Waverley Historical Society; available on the Internet at <http://home.vicnet.net.au/~whsvic/publications/WAWindex.pdf>

(ii) Wider Melbourne and Victoria

Meyer Eidelson *(The) Melbourne Dreaming*

First Edition, subtitle: a Guide to the Aboriginal Places of Melbourne

ISBN 0 85575 306 4, Aboriginal Studies Press (AIATSIS) Canberra, 1997, reprinted 2000

Second (expanded) Edition, subtitle: A guide to exploring important sites of the past and present

ISBN 1 92205 971 4, Aboriginal Studies Press (AIATSIS) Canberra, August 2014

<http://www.creativespirits.info/resources/books/the-melbourne-dreaming/>

Describes the places holding historical and cultural significance for Melbourne's Aboriginal people.

Also informative are the introductory chapters in: Meyer Eidelson *Yalukit Willam, The River People of Port Phillip*. Available as printed booklet from the City of Port Phillip and can also be viewed on the Internet at: http://heritage.portphillip.vic.gov.au/Aboriginal_heritage/Yalukit_Willam_The_River_People_of_Port_Phillip

Each of the above books by Meyer Eidelson includes an introductory overview of the life of the original Aboriginal population, the early days of British settlement, the communication difficulties leading to misunderstanding between two cultures over land use, the concept of "ownership", etc.

Gary Presland *First people: the Eastern Kulin of Melbourne, Port Phillip & Central Victoria*

ISBN 9780980619072 Museum Victoria Publishing, Melbourne 2010 Authoritative, informative work giving an overview of the situation across Victoria and Melbourne, with numerous illustrations, detailed maps and references.

An earlier, more limited but still useful edition may be found in some libraries:

Gary Presland *Aboriginal Melbourne, the lost land of the Kulin People* ISBN 0 9577004 2 3

Published 1985, revised 1994, reprinted 1998 and 2001. 158 pp.

Jim Poulter *Sharing Heritage in Kulin Country* - Lessons in Reconciliation from Our First

Contact History. ISBN 978 0 949196 13 2 Red Hen Publishing, Templestowe 2011, 118 pp. A5

Early contact in Victoria, the impact of colonisation, smallpox, Aboriginal belief and totem systems, traditional Marngrook football and its links with the development of Australian rules football.

Jim Poulter *Batman's 'Treaty' - The True Story* ISBN 9780949196323 Red Hen Publishing

2016 16 pp. A4 An in-depth analysis of many contemporary references to the events, confusion, misinformation and misunderstanding surrounding this 1835 'treaty', including the rarely mentioned observations by William Barak, highly respected negotiator and leader of the Wurundjeri people.

Further references and book list on the web site www.jimpoulter.com

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Across Dandenong Creek in Rowville, City of Knox **Rev. James Clow, *Corhanwarrabul, Tirhatuan, Nerre Nerre Warren***

On the eastern boundary of the City of Monash, the area along Dandenong Creek has a significant history of contact between the original Aboriginal residents and the settlers and colonial government in the early 19th century. Examples are the Rev. James Clow (very early Presbyterian Minister) and the 'Dandenong Police Paddocks' in Brady Road, Endeavour Hills, now managed by Parks Victoria. All signs at City of Knox boundaries read: *Welcome to Knox - Kulin Nation Country*

A good starting point to read up on the wider Rowville area is a series of articles published by the *Rowville-Lysterfield History Project* on the Internet at <http://www.rlcnews.org.au/stories/> Sections of the project with significant Aboriginal connections are:

1. *The Kulin People* http://www.rlcnews.org.au/stories/the_kulin_people/index.php
2. *The Native Police* http://www.rlcnews.org.au/stories/the_native_police/index.php
3. *Rev. James Clow Writes to Governor La Trobe* http://www.rlcnews.org.au/stories/the_changing_landscape/clow_rev_james_clow_writes_to_governor_la_trobe.php
4. *Tirhatuan: Stories behind the Rowville-Lysterfield Ward Names* http://www.rlcnews.org.au/stories/the_changing_landscape/tirhatuan_stories_behind_the_rowville_lysterfield_ward_names.php

More valuable resource material and informative booklets are available from the Knox Historical Society Museum at *Ambleside Park* located at 3 Olivebank Road, Ferntree Gully. There is a biography of the Rev. James Clow at <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/clow-james-1906>

Original source material can be found using the State Library of Victoria:

- Marie Hansen Fels *Good men and true : the Aboriginal police of the Port Phillip district 1837-1853* Melbourne University Press 1988 ISBN 0522843506
- *Letters from Victorian pioneers : a series of papers on the early occupation of the colony, the Aborigines, etc. addressed by Victorian pioneers to His Excellency Charles Joseph La Trobe, Esq., Lieutenant-Governor of the Colony of Victoria* Published by the Government Printer in 1898. Reprinted in 1969 and 1983, lastly with ISBN 0855506180 (Check pages 65-100)

Quoting selected paragraphs from articles No. 3 and 4 above:

The Corhanwarrabul Run ... In August 1838, Clow obtained the squatting rights for only a few pounds a year for this huge area of land which extended from Dandenong Creek to the Dandenongs. It covered 36 square miles and was known as the Corhanwarrabul Run. In 1841 he built a homestead on rising land to the east of the junction of the Dandenong and Corhanwarrabul Creeks and named it Tirhatuan. It is believed that Tirhatuan was the local Aboriginal word for the sugar glider possum that can still be found in the area ...

From Rev. James Clow ... Throughout the period of Mr Clow's residence at Tirhatuan, his family was very frequently visited by the Aborigines belonging to the Yarra Yarra and Western Port tribes. They often encamped near his house; they were uniformly treated with kindness, and in return they always conducted themselves peaceably and honestly ...

... is a pleasing illustration of the trustworthiness of two of the Aborigines, and reflects favourably on the whole tribe, for it is not unreasonable to suppose that there were others belonging to it, who, if they had been employed in the same way, would have acted in a similar manner. As to their honesty, no instance to the contrary was ever detected at Tirhatuan. Potatoes and melons were two articles of which they were very fond, and were produced at the station, and quite accessible; but never was a single instance known of any of them being stolen by the Aborigines

The Aborigines in Rowville ... *James Clow spoke highly of the Aborigines who visited the homestead. Members of both the Yarra Yarra (Wawoorong) and Westernport (Bunerong) tribes who frequented the area were kindly treated by Clow and his family and he maintained very good relations with them. In discussions about how government should assist the Aborigines, he advocated very enlightened views that were at odds with the opinions of most of his contemporaries. He proposed that the unsettled areas of Westernport and Gippsland should be given to the Aborigines and that they also be given cattle to run on these lands. However, he recommended that no houses or cattle yards be constructed but that the cattle be allowed to run wild. The Aborigines would hunt them when they needed food and Clow advocated that they be given guns to allow them to hunt more effectively.*

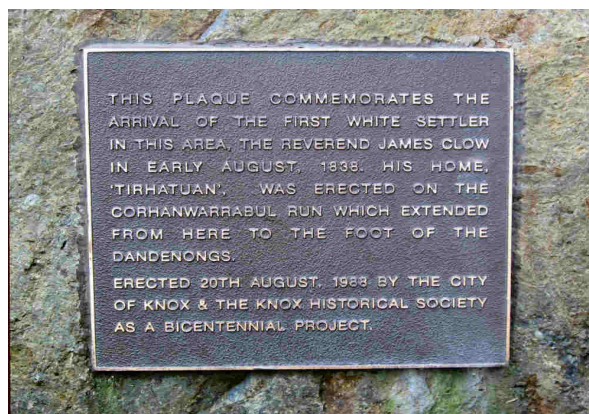
Rather radical for a clergyman was his opposition to allowing Christian missionaries access to the tribes. He believed that the Aborigines needed to be removed entirely from the influences of white society until "the unnatural progress of extinction of the race has become to a material degree checked or averted". Sadly Clow's suggestions were not adopted and by the 1860s there were only a few survivors of the once flourishing Yarra Yarra and Westernport tribes.

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The Reverend James Clow's home *Tirhatuan* Plaque (1988)

On a large rock in grass on the north side of Wellington Road, about 250 metres east of the new wide bridge over Dandenong Creek (which is about 80 metres east of the old small creek crossing) on the Rowville side of the creek in the City of Knox. The plaque can be found by looking for the *Welcome to Knox Kulin Nation Country* sign 200 metres from the bridge. From the sign go 50 metres further east and 7 metres north from the shared two-way bicycle track and footpath. To visit, park cars in Garnett Road, Wheelers Hill and walk east along the Wetlands Golf Course. Melway 81 C2

This plaque does not mention the Aboriginal people in the district. However, as described in the previous paragraphs, the Rev. James Clow was significant in that he was a considerate settler who respected and maintained good relations with his indigenous neighbours.



Text on Plaque:

This plaque commemorates the arrival of the first settler in this area, The Reverend James Clow in early August, 1838. His home, 'Tirhatuan', was erected on the Corhanwarrabul Run which extended from here to the foot of the Dandenongs. Erected 20th August, 1988 by the City of Knox & the Knox Historical Society as a Bicentennial Project.

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Further East, North, South, the Aborigines of the Yarra Valley and Northern Dandenongs, Casey, Cardinia, Bass, Mornington....

Further east and north of the City of Monash are districts with a rich Aboriginal history and more recent devastating contact with government policies in the 19th and early 20th centuries.

In this region are many places of great significance such as

- *Murrup Brarn*, the site of the Battle of Yering,
- *Coranderrk* Station, active and for long periods very successful from 1863 to 1923,
- Worth a visit is the Yarra Ranges Regional Museum in Lilydale which has an excellent display about Coranderrk, Simon Wonga (1820 - 1875) and William Barak (1824 - 1903), the last influential leaders of, and negotiators for the Wurundjeri people in the 19th century.
- *Barngeong* (Brushy Creek) in Croydon North, the birthplace of Barak,
- Worowa Aboriginal College in Healesville on part of the original Coranderrk site,

A full list is beyond the scope of this Checklist, but there is an excellent book about the Aboriginal history in the Yarra Valley and Dandenong districts. This includes a wealth of local history and site information and excellent lists of printed and Internet references. It is available in two editions:

- First published as: D. Beryl Phillips, Janice Newton & Paula Herlihy *Aborigines in the Northern Dandenongs* Published in November 1997 by the Mount Evelyn Environment Protection & Progress Association (MEEPPA) as No. 6 in their *History Series*. ISBN 978-0-9578588-1-7
- Second edition revised and updated by Janice Newton, Paula Herlihy, Karen Leadbeater Phillips & Ian James. Published in 2011 as *Aborigines in the Yarra Valley and Northern Dandenongs* by the Mount Evelyn History Group, P.O. Box 101, Mount Evelyn, Victoria 3796, with support from the State Government and Yarra Ranges Council (no new ISBN in colophon).
- This book is available from the Mount Evelyn History Group from their web site
- And available from *Burrinja* Cultural Centre in Upwey, see <http://www.burrinja.org.au/>

Also containing material relating to the Aboriginal history of this area is the web site *Yarra Healing, Towards Reconciliation with Indigenous Australians* with some interesting text and audio material: <http://www.yarrahealing.catholic.edu.au/stories-voices/index.cfm?loadref=80>

The South East: the Inter Council Aboriginal Consultative Committee

The web site of the City of Casey lists Aboriginal sites and a link to The Inter Council Aboriginal Consultative Committee (ICACC, established in 1997) covering the City of Casey, City of Greater Dandenong, City of Knox, City of Frankston, City of Kingston, Shire of Cardinia, Shire of Bass Coast and Shire of Mornington Peninsula.

<http://www.casey.vic.gov.au/council/our-city/history/aboriginal-policy>

» Please advise if you know of more information that should be included.

Thank you.