

History of The Basin

Chapter 2

Land and Roads

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Summary

This chapter describes the development of land and roads in The Basin.

Rev. James Clow held a Depasturing licence for a run known as Corhanwarrabul that included the area now known as The Basin. He pastured stock there as early as 1838.

The first known white occupier of land in The Basin was William Turner, his wife Margaret and their children. They settled in The Basin in 1851. Their story is detailed in Chapter 1 - Foundation.

William Peverill Watson is recorded as being the first official occupier of land in the area now known as The Basin. On the 5th February 1867, Watson was granted title to Crown Allotment A.

The first track to the top of the Dandenongs used by white men was known as the “Bullock Track”. It passed through The Basin and was created in the late 1840’s. It was used by early botanists, settlers and timber workers and followed the route of the road now known as Range Road.

Introduction

Development of land and roads in and around The Basin has influenced the foundation of The Basin. Therefore, this chapter should be read in conjunction with Chapter 1 - Foundation.

The development of land and roads is intertwined. To develop land, there must access to the land via a road. In the 1800's, when The Basin was being developed, the only access to land was via roads.

Land

After white settlement, all land in Australia that had not yet been settled or developed was known as "Crown Wastelands".

The early explorers and settlers created tracks through these "Wastelands" to find suitable land to settle. Initially, there was no mechanism for settlers to hold any claim over the land and many "squatted" on the land, thus becoming known as "squatters". In 1838, squatters were given the right to apply for a "Depasturing licence" (see Chapter 1 - Foundation) to lease land and later on to purchase the land.

The first known white occupier of land in The Basin was William Turner, his wife and children. Their story is detailed in Chapter 1 - Foundation. Turner had a number of Depasturing licences East of Melbourne, one which was North of the Dandenong Creek.

William Peverill Watson is recorded as being the first official occupier of land in the area now known as The Basin. On the 5th February 1867, Watson was granted title to Crown Allotment A.

Watson paid cash for his 102 acres at approximately one pound per acre. Improvements were already then valued at 345 pounds and they included a homestead, outbuildings, some fencing

and cultivation. Undoubtedly this land was inhabited well before the sale.

Watson was the first person officially recorded as owning freehold land in The Basin. However, there is no doubt that William Turner was the first resident of The Basin and information from his descendants and in other publications indicates he may have had freehold land and/or applied to purchase land in The Basin, but confirmation of either cannot be found.

An allotment marked as 72A is recorded as having been leased in 1867 to Wm. Turner Jun., of Lilydale who was most likely the Turners first son. He lost the licence for encouraging "illicit distillation".

It was in the mid 1860's that land in The Basin area was surveyed by the Government and broken up into large allotments. This land was then offered for sale. The first owners (with land size and date of possession) of this land were:

W. P. Watson (102 acres on 11/2/1867); E. Wicks (49 acres on 3/6/1881); J. Richards (61 acres & 58 acres on 14/11/1882), J. Schneider (170 acres on 20/1/1888); D. Dobson (80 acres on 10/12/1872); F. W. Woodhouse(127 acres on 26/2/1878); W. Chandler (41 acres on 15/2/1882); W. Chandler Jnr (13 acres on 2/3/1886); J. & M. Griffiths (184 acres 23/8/1888); J. J. Miller 205 acres & 114 acres in 1877 & 1879);

The astuteness of the early selectors was confirmed by Robert Thompson, Government inspector, who wrote in 1870:

"The command of water here for irrigation over an extent of 65 acres might turn out six loads of vegetables every day round the year".

William Chandler, David Dobson. John Miller. James Griffiths and Edmund Wicks had the most influence in The Basin and their stories are detailed in Chapter 1 - Foundation.

Distinguished Resident

Bert Chandler

Bert Chandler of Como Nurseries, was the 7th child of William Chandler, one of the original settlers in The Basin. Bert stayed on the original Chandler holding, developing Como into a world famous concern.

Born in 1880, he saw, and was responsible for, many outstanding developments hereabouts. As captain of the Bush Fire Brigade for 20 years he helped put this organisation on its feet.

He served with distinction as President of the Progress Association and partly through his work Wicks Memorial Reserve was proclaimed. He served on the school committee and was a commissioner for receiving affidavits for many years.

But his greatest achievement was crowned in 1964 when the Federation of Australian Nurserymen's Association presented a gold medal for the Chandler *Pieris Japonica* or Bert Chandler *Pieris*. This award was the first given for an Australian plant. This Japanese Pearl type flower received world renown and Bert was rightfully proud of it.

Bert passed away on 17 February 1970 shortly before his 90th birthday.

Land

Depasturing Licences

In 1838, squatters were given the right to apply for a “Depasturing licence” (see Chapter 1 - Foundation for more details) to lease land and later on to purchase the land. At the time, in the areas outside of Melbourne, there was no other mechanism available that allowed a person to officially have a claim on land.

In 1947, Victoria was classified into three districts for the purposes of administering Depasturing licences. These were the Settled District, Intermediate District and Unsettled District. The Settled district applied to all land within 25 miles of Melbourne. The licence conditions were slightly different in each district.

Rev. James Clow held a Depasturing licence for a run known as Corhanwarrabul that included the area now known as The Basin. He pastured stock there as early as 1838. By 1860, this run had been broken up into a number of smaller runs that did not include The Basin.

Between the 1840’s and 1860’s, William Turner held a number of Depasturing licences in the Settled District, one which extended into the area now known as The Basin.

By the 1860’s, in the Settled District, most settlers with depasturing licences had either purchased their land or had not renewed their leases. In the case of the latter, this opened up the land for other settlers. The passing of various land acts in the 1850’s and 1860’s enabled people to purchase freehold land. This land was usually surveyed by the Government and offered for sale.

Counties and Parishes

Those who have freehold land in Australia will have seen the terms “County” and “Parish” on their land titles describing the location of their land. These terms are taken from the English equivalents but have different use in Australia.

In England, a County is an administrative division similar to our Local Council and a Parish is an ecclesiastical district having its own church and clergyman.

In Australia, a County is large division of land bounded by natural features. There are a number Parishes within a County, each approximately thirty square miles.

When Victoria was first settled, there was no division of land. Division of land into Counties and Parishes occurred in stages as settlement progressed further from Melbourne. Initially, the area

now known as The Basin was in the “Port Phillip District” before any Counties or Parishes were created.

As early as 1838, the term “County Bourke” was used officially, roughly describing the area East of Melbourne. It was not until 1843 that the County of Bourke was officially proclaimed with its Eastern boundary following the Dandenong Creek to its “Northern Bend” and then continuing North. This placed The Basin outside the County boundaries and in an unproclaimed area.

In 1849, the Counties of Evelyn and Mornington were proclaimed, with The Basin in the County of Mornington.

The early division of Parishes in the Counties of Bourke, Evelyn and Mornington is not known. However, there is a record of a Thomas Napier, who in 1839 held a depasturing licence for run on the Dandenong Creek, near the area now known as Wantirna. The run was in the Parish of “Doutta Galla”, which extended into the area now known as “Doongalla Forest Reserve”. The name “Doongalla” originated from the Parish name.

In 1857, the Parish of Scoresby was proclaimed in the County of Mornington. This Parish included The Basin.

In 2001, The Basin is located in the County of Mornington, Parish of Scoresby.

Local Government

The first local government body to preside over The Basin area was the Berwick Road District Board which was proclaimed on October 24, 1862, and enlarged in March 11, 1864 to include the Parish of Scoresby and other nearby Parishes. The enlargement became the Scoresby riding which included The Basin area.

The Berwick Road District Board became the Shire of Berwick on May 12, 1868.

In the 1880’s, Melbourne was experiencing a land boom. The area serviced by the Scoresby riding was in the thick of this boom with the recent extension of the railway to Ferntree Gully and the launching of a number of speculative ventures. One The Basin venture was a proposed tramway to run from Bayswater to Olinda through The Basin.

Government policy allowed a riding to become a separate shire if its annual rates exceeded 500 pounds and generous grants were available. These factors, combined with a feeling of neglect by the Shire of Berwick encouraged a push to-

wards severance and the formation of a new Shire.

The Scoresby riding severed from the Shire of Berwick on May 23, 1889 to form the new Shire of Fern Tree Gully (note spelling - Fern Tree not FernTree). Despite blindness, John James Miller, who lived in The Basin, became first President of the Shire of Fern Tree Gully and was driven about by his son Fred in a horse drawn buggy.

On October 9, 1963, the Shire of Knox was formed by severance from the Shire of Fern Tree Gully.

Subdivisions or Estates

Subdivisions occur when areas of land are subdivided into smaller residential size allotments. From the 10 original parcels of land in The Basin, subdivisions over the years have created thousands of allotments and in 2001 there are still potential areas to be subdivided.

Some estates have been very large and others of little consequence. Subdividers give estates glamorous names, and their posters contained glowing reports of the magnificent land and the facilities available. In the early days, radio broadcasts were an added attraction at many land sales, and of course each block was at a giveaway price. Subdivisions create most of the private roads in

an area and these are usually given names that have some local flavour.

Early land estate brochures rarely mentioned "The Basin". The land for sale was either at Boronia, Bayswater or Mt. Dandenong.

Some early estates were located on the steep and heavily treed western and northern slopes of The Dandenongs. Most of this land was unsuitable for residential development and some of the land on these estates has been progressively purchased by the Government and amalgamated with the adjacent National Park.

Schneider's Estate

One of the first and largest estates opened in The Basin was "Schneider's Estate" on Boxing day 1917. The estate was named after the selector J. Schneider who first purchased the land that the estate was carved from. This estate took in part of the district known as "Chandler's Hill", "Schneider's Hill" and extended across Mountain Highway, taking in the Clevedon area and into the area now known as "The Ravine".

This was the largest subdivision ever in The Basin with 640 blocks offered for sale. Unfortunately, the planning of this estate was done in a draughtsman's office and when the block and road positions were marked out it was found they



somerville1935.jpg

The Somerville Park Estate looking South from junction of Mountain Highway and Toorak Avenue. Mountain Highway on left. Circa 1935.

Photo courtesy Knox Historical Society

Land

took little account of the terrain. Many blocks were narrow, on very steep terrain and some had creeks running through them. Claremont Avenue and Golden Grove had creeks running down one side of them. Little thought was given to fire safety, as in the original subdivision Claremont Avenue was the only access to The Ravine, and Bayview Crescent and Mercia Avenue were not linked. This was partly remedied in the 1950's, when Council purchased block 581 to connect the top end of Inverness Avenue with Mountain Highway, and block 135 was purchased to provide access between Mercia Avenue and Bayview Crescent. The planners had some foresight though, as they allowed for a number of "Right-Of-Ways" intended for use as shortcuts for walkers. One of these Right-Of-Ways between Claremont Avenue and Mountain Highway was concreted in 1994. Other Right-Of-Ways are between Toorak Avenue and the top of Mercia Avenue, and between Inverness Avenue and Bowen Street.

Soon after its opening the Schneider estate was renamed the "**Switzerland Estate**". It is thought that because of the German sounding name (the Schneider Estate was opened during the first World War) the name was changed to the more neutral sounding "Switzerland" in the hope of better sales prospects. Also, the area was known by the name "Switzerland" as early as 1905 when it is mentioned in one of Janet Dobson's diary entries.

Some street names were changed in the Switzerland Estate plan from the original Schneider's Estate plan. Toorak Avenue was originally named Flynn Avenue, Claremont Avenue was originally named Schneider Avenue, Inverness Avenue was originally named Hansen Avenue, and Fern Street was originally named Short Street.

Switzerland Estate was renamed again and reopened in 1930 as the "**Somerville Park Estate**", with 113 allotments on offer. The promoter of the estate, E.V. Jones, built about 10 cottages on selected blocks around the estate offering some allotments as "Land with Dwelling".

Grandview Grove was later renamed Golden Grove.

In the early 1960's, the blocks around the top end of Bayview Crescent, Short Crescent and Hilltop Crescent were reclaimed by the Government and amalgamated with the then Ferntree

Gully National Park. The top end of Bayview Crescent, which in the original subdivision ran into Government Road, was terminated near where Hilltop Crescent commenced and Hilltop Crescent no longer exists.

When this estate was first subdivided as the Schneider Estate and the land pegged out, the roads were not even formed. Even after being renamed the Switzerland Estate and later renamed again as the Somerville Park Estate and land sales heavily promoted, the roads were still not formed. Prospective land buyers had to push their way through thick bush to locate a pegged block. As land was sold, owners cut tracks to gain access to their land. These tracks sometimes followed the road line, but usually took the shortest path to the land.

In the Claremont Avenue area, land owners were for a while able to use the "Mill track" for vehicle access into the Claremont Avenue area of The Ravine. The Mill track ran between The Basin-Olinda Road and near the intersection of Claremont Avenue and Inverness Avenue. The track was originally constructed across private land for use by the saw-mill that operated in The Ravine in the early 1920's. When the sawmill closed, the Mill Track was no longer required. Although used for some years by Ravine residents, the track was closed in 1930.

The closing of the Mill Track prompted a few land owners to pool some money and a contractor by the name of Cunningham was hired to form Claremont Avenue from Mountain Highway to Corsair Road with fords across the two creek crossings. At that time Mountain Highway was only a gravel track up to the "Stone wall".

Around 1936, a footbridge was constructed across the second Claremont Avenue creek crossing and in the late 1940's wooden bridges were constructed across both creek crossings. One Frank Parr was instrumental in constructing these bridges.

In 1927 as a young child, Frank moved with his parents to a house at the top end of Claremont Avenue. Frank grew up in The Basin and worked at Dobson's orchard for many years. Frank donated the logs used to construct the bridges. The logs were sawn at Mansell Brothers saw-mill which was on the corner of Mount View Road and Albert Avenue. Frank and other residents held working bees to construct the bridges.

Frank's family had such an influence in this area in the early days that the area was once called "Parr's Gully". Later, the area became known as "The Ravine".

In the early 1950's, the first bridge in Claremont Avenue was replaced by concrete pipes. Len Herbert was a resident and a member of the Road Committee at the time. Len lobbied the local council to supply the concrete pipes and local residents provided the labour to lay the pipes and prepare the road surface over the pipes.

The original subdivision had Inverness Avenue coming off Claremont Avenue, running across a creek and winding around alongside Mountain Highway. Tracks were formed over time, but the tracks stopped at either side of the creek crossing in Inverness Avenue. This meant that Inverness Avenue was cut at the creek and residents at the top end of Inverness Avenue had no vehicle access for many years. The first access to the top end was when a track was cut in from Mountain Highway about half way between Alamain and Tobruk Avenues (this track was still visible in July 13, 2001). In the 1950's, Council purchased block 581 and this is now the road that connects Inverness Avenue with Mountain Highway.

The condition of the roads in The Ravine was always poor. Self-help schemes where residents contributed funds and held working bees to improve roads existed as far back as the early 1950's.

In 1977 the "Claremont/Inverness Roads Construction Association" was formed. By this time

the roads were in a terrible state. To raise finance to improve the roads, a voluntary contribution of \$100 per block was set. Unfortunately, not all residents contributed.


After a number of meetings and much planning the first temporary repairs to roads were carried out in June 1978.

In the summer of 1978, stage one of works commenced with high quality gravel construction of Claremont Avenue from Mountain Highway to Inverness Avenue. Drainage, which had been the major problem, was upgraded with property crossings correctly laid and pipes under the road to direct water into The Ravine. Further works included high quality gravel construction of Inverness Avenue from Mountain Highway to Claremont Avenue with minor works to the top end of Inverness Avenue.

In 1979, pipes were laid and a crossing constructed to bridge the creek and join the two sections of Inverness Avenue. The crossing was of major importance as previously both sections of The Ravine had only one entry/exit point in event of bushfire or other problems.

Drainage and road construction of the remainder of the estate as well as maintenance continued over the next few years until once again, declining contributions forced the scheme to lapse.

In 1984 the Association requested the Council to convene public meetings to consider full construction of roads in The Ravine. Following planning and time allowed for objections, construction was carried out in 1985/86. The construction included moving the entrance to Clare-



ferndale1in201925.jpg

Early view of the junction of Mountain Highway and Ferndale Road. Circa 1925.

Photo courtesy Knox Historical Society

Land

mont Avenue to its correct position directly opposite Toorak Avenue. Previously, the entrance was what is now the driveway into the property on the North corner of Claremont Avenue and Mountain Highway. The eastern end of Golden Grove was constructed with a concrete surface for extra stability where the road follows the creek

The eastern ends of Inverness Avenue, Bowen Street and Golden Grove have always been considered fire traps as they are dead-ends. In 1996, an access track was constructed from the eastern ends of these roads up to Mountain Highway. Locked gates bar general access to this track, but in an emergency these tracks can be used.

In the Mercia Avenue and Bayview Crescent Area, early purchasers of land on these unformed roads had to dig the roads themselves if they required vehicle access. In the 1940's, the top end of Bayview Crescent up to Short Crescent was formed in this manner. Even then, the roads were in very poor condition and locals did most of the road maintenance themselves.

The first Council forming of gravel roads in the area commenced in the late 1950's. Mercia Avenue was formed except for a section mid way along its length. The mid section was formed in the late 1960's. Bayview Crescent was formed up to Short Crescent in the late 1950's. The extension of the section of Bayview Crescent past Short Crescent was financed by residents in the early 1980's.

From the middle 1970's there was a rapid increase in residential development in these areas with a consequent deterioration in road quality.

Knox Council occasionally graded the roads, but in the late 1970's to early 1980's when grading was needed more frequently, council argued that these roads were private streets and consequently reduced the service.


Local residents formed working bees to improve roads, but they could not keep up with the deterioration in road condition. This accelerated the push for full construction and in 1984 Knox Council issued property owners with road construction notices. After hearing of all objections, construction commenced in 1985. The scheme was not without its problems though - after two contractors started and went bankrupt, the Council stepped in and took over completion of the scheme.

The construction of Nyora Avenue, Bayview Crescent, Mercia Avenue, Government Road between Toorak Avenue and Mercia Avenue and Wright Street was completed in 1987. At the time of road construction, not all areas had reticulated water. The road construction included extensions of reticulated water supply in all these streets.

Toorak Avenue was constructed in 1992 and was the first street in The Basin to incorporate speed restricting devices. Under pressure from residents, the devices were incorporated to deter motorists from using Toorak Avenue as a short cut between Forest Road and Mountain Highway.

Nareen Park Estate

This estate opened in the early 1920's just prior to the electrification of the railway line from Ringwood to Fern Tree Gully in 1925. 118 lots in Arcadia, Waratah, Carnarvon and Verbena Avenues



ferndalecoach1925.jpg

Early view of the junction of Old Coach Road and Ferndale Road. Circa 1925.

Photo courtesy Knox Historical Society

and Forest Road, were offered for sale from 35 to 65 pounds.

Frances Street was not included in this subdivision, but was added when the Eden Park Estate was created a few years later.

The roads in this estate were constructed in the late 1970's.

Chandler's Hill Estate

This estate opened in the early 1920's and included The Triangle, the area where the main shops are now, Church Street and around and behind View Road. Forty three "Week-End Blocks" were offered at 25 pounds each, with terms of 2 pounds deposit and 10 shillings per month.

View Road was constructed in the mid 1980's.

The Basin Progress Association first suggested closing Church Street at Mountain Highway in 1974, but it took at least another 10 years before it occurred.

Ferndale Estate

This estate was subdivided into 11 large areas varying from 9 to 37 acres and auctioned soon after the death of James Griffiths in December 1925; the owner then being a leather merchant E. L. Gans.

On 19 November 1927, part of Ferndale Estate was again offered for auction but this time it was subdivided into 100 smaller lots. A magnificent brochure was produced for this auction. Free railway passes from Melbourne to Bayswater and free cars from Bayswater to the estate were offered. Bert Piergrosse, the hire car proprietor in those days, received instructions not to take anyone back until 5 p.m., even though some may have arrived quite early. The auction was held in a large marquee carefully situated so that the bidders would get a resplendent view around them.

Some time later on, the above area and an additional area comprising a total of some 300 blocks were offered for sale between 25 and 45 pounds.

Why the estate was sold in three stages is not clear. Either someone purchased all of the original subdivision and re-subdivided it into smaller blocks or the original subdivision never sold and it was re-subdivided into smaller lots.

In the 1960's, the Government began purchasing land adjacent to the National Park. Most of the land associated with the Ferndale Estate has

now been purchased and amalgamated into the Dandenong Ranges National Park.

Eden Park Estate

This estate that included Stuart Street, Norman Street, Augusta Road and Frances Street area was auctioned by A. M. Welch & Co., in 1926. The terms being 5 pounds deposit and 1 pound a week for ½ acre blocks ranging from 45 to 75 pounds each.

The name didn't entice Adam and Eve but did attract a Mr. Ted Mortiboy, later the proprietor of the Wine Saloon in Mountain Highway, Bayswater. Ted, a keen scouter, bought 4 blocks in Stuart Street and often brought his troop, the 6th Malvern Scouts, there for weekend camps. A bunkhouse was built and many a pleasant weekend enjoyed. Camp fire "Sing-songs", and the appearance of "The Ghost of Sassafras" on initiation nights were features of these outings.

Ted and his scouts rushed to the scene of the first Boronia level crossing accident on 27 April 1926, there to render assistance to the injured survivors of that gory affair.

Later on Ted became Basin Progress Association President and once stood for Ferntree Gully Council against Brigadier Inglis of the Salvation Army, but as Ted explained the "Devil drink" (he was by then wine saloon proprietor) had little chance against the Salvation Army.

In the original subdivision plan of Eden Park Estate, Stuart Street did not connect with Forest Road. Lot 38 of the Forest Heights Estate blocked the end of the road. Residents who lived in the Western end of the estate had to traverse in and out via Augusta Road. For walkers, a track through the land was often used as a short cut. The land owner eventually erected a weekend house on Lot 38 called "Trails End" and placed a barbed wire fence on the Stuart Street boundary effectively blocking the short cut. For a time, tracks on other blocks were used for short cuts, but as houses were built these tracks disappeared.

After complaints, the Council negotiated with the owners of Trails End, and after assistance from a Doctor Lawrence from Boronia (who attended someone in Norman Street and had problems getting there) the Council purchased the land in the early 1950's. The weekender was demolished and the land converted into a road to connect Stuart Street with Forest Road.

Land

The roads in this estate were constructed in the late 1970's.

Forest Heights Estate

This estate in the area where the first Basin Fire Station was erected (since moved to the opposite side of Forest Road) and the Infant Welfare Centre and The Basin Kindergarten now stand, was broken up around 1927. The estate included land along Forest Road (then New Forest Road), Conyers Street and Harrison Street. The brochure touted:

"BEAUTIFUL BORONIA - Ideal for Health and Wealth - A Home in the Hills - A Holiday in the Bush - Happiness and Contentment".

Prices were from 45 to 100 pounds on 3 pounds deposit. Among the early buyers was a Mr. W. J. Wallis of "Glen Elbourne", The Basin, who later generously handed over two blocks to the Ferntree Gully Shire in the hope they would be put to good use. His hopes were not in vain as in 1953 the Infant Welfare Centre was built on one and in 1958 the Kindergarten on the other. There was a proposal in 1973 to close off the North end of Conyers Street and use that end as a car park for the Kindergarten and Health Centre. However, this never eventuated.

Conyers Street was constructed in the late 1970's and Harrison Street was constructed in the mid 1980's. Harrison Street originally ran between Forest Road (then New Forest Road) and Old Forest Road (then Government Road) but was blocked at Old Forest Road when it was constructed.

Milleara Estate

The Milleara and Simpsons Road area was subdivided in the late 1920's by Bert Chandler in an effort to raise funds during the depression.

Reserve Estate

This estate at the lower end of Arcadia Avenue was offered for sale in 1951. 30 lots were offered priced between 50 and 150 pounds.

Reserve Estate Extension

Later, in 1955, extended the Reserve Estate up Arcadia Avenue including Camellia Crescent and Rowan Avenue. 49 lots were offered at 100 pounds each with 10 pounds deposit and 4 pounds per month.

The roads in this estate were constructed in the late 1970's.

Dr. Yoffa

Dr. Yoffa, a member of a well known hosiery firm, lived as a hermit in a tent on a bush block off Mountain Highway in The New Mystic Lake Estate.

A well educated and highly intelligent woman, she claimed to be making a scientific study of the effect of discomfort on the mentally strong, and the possibility of survival among the natural elements. It is said she lived in almost impossible conditions and kept her fingers supple (she was an accomplished surgeon) by tearing quantities of paper into small squares. She made little effort to clear the property and the Council had numerous complaints about the masses of strewn newspapers.

She was not destined to complete her study as she was battered to death by a psychiatric case, who had sought her assistance. A violent end to a brilliant but pathetically lonely woman.

At the time of Dr. Yoffa's death, Mrs Stella Patrone was walking her dog Monty along the roadway adjacent to Dr. Yoffa's camp. Mrs Patrone noticed Monty's apparent intuition that something was wrong as his hair stood on end and his walk was stilted as they passed by the camp.

Dr. Yoffa's body was discovered a few days later.

Mountain Highway Estate

This estate was offered for auction in 1950 and included the area around Wicks Road and Walker Street. 28 lots were offered with terms of 20 pounds deposit and 1 pound per month. Road names have changed with Wicks Road formerly being Old Forest Road and Walker Street formerly New Street.

Wicks Road was first sealed in the 1960's and the link into Mountain Highway blocked. It was later upgraded and Walker Street constructed in 1981.

The block on the corner of Mountain Highway and Wicks Road was the original site of the Church of England and was donated by Miss Wicks for that purpose.

Clevedon Estate

This estate was created in 1951 when about 3 acres of the western part of the Clevedon property was subdivided into 17 lots. Streets included Ross Street, and Clevedon Road.

In 1953, another 3 acre section of the Clevedon property was subdivided into 17 building allotments with Cleve Street running down the middle.

Cleve Avenue, Ross Street and Clevedon Road were constructed in 1990. Clevedon Road

originally ran into Mountain Highway, but was blocked by a gate only accessible by emergency vehicles. Clevedon Road was also blocked between Cleve Avenue and Ross Street.

New Mystic Lake Estate

This estate, promoted by Spencer Jackson, opened in 1953 and was located on the lower northern slopes of One Tree Hill. The roads included Tobruk Avenue, Alamein Avenue, Crete Road, Mystic Road and Government Road. Some of the street names were chosen because of their association with the Second World War.

The roads were well formed gravel roads but were never sealed.

The "Mystic Lake" part of the name was chosen because of the "Lake" that appeared on some foggy winter mornings in the lower reaches of The Basin and surrounding districts. From the elevated view provided from the estate, this fog appeared like a lake. This "lake" can still be seen on occasions by those with an elevated northern view. The "New" title was added because there was an earlier estate near One Tree Hill called the Mystic Lake Estate.

The New Mystic Lake Estate was heavily promoted in the newspapers and on radio. Mrs Helen Walkers' Real Estate Agency in Mountain Highway sold some of the properties.

The natural bush setting of this land attracted much interest - even from people in other countries who had not even seen the land! Many lots were purchased sight unseen. Some lots were to-

tally unsuitable for building being steep, rocky and with creeks running through them.

Mrs Thorton, who was proprietor of Clevedon guest house around the time that the land was selling, recalled that many a time owners of lots in New Mystic Lake Estate would call into the guest house for a cup of tea in a very distressed state after viewing their property for the first time.

Despite all this, a total of nine holiday shacks and permanent residences were erected. A few houses were erected without permits and some people even lived in tents on their block.

The 1962 bushfires destroyed some homes on the estate and rebuilding of these homes was not permitted.

In the middle 1960's the Government, under pressure from groups promoting the "Save The Dandenongs" theme, restricted any further development in the estate and began progressively buying back properties, demolishing any buildings, and incorporating the land into the Ferntree Gully National Park.

The last house in the estate was purchased by the Government and demolished in 1993. This house, in Alamein Avenue, was ironically one of the first built in the estate by Bill and Lola Pope in 1953.

Gates were erected in 1994 to bar private vehicle access into the area that was once the New Mystic Lake Estate. For walkers, there are still many visible signs of past development such as



smithstore1925.jpg

Early photograph of The Basin main road junction where Forest Road meets Mountain Highway.

The building on the right is the first store in The Basin - "Smith's Store". Circa 1925.

Photo courtesy Knox Historical Society

Roads

levelled cuttings, rock walls, tracks into blocks and some exotic trees.

Goodwin Estate

The land around Democrat Drive and Goodwin Street was subdivided starting in 1976 (as the Goodwin Estate) in a few stages, the Eastern end of Democrat added in 1980 and 1981, with the area behind St. Bernadettes Primary School in 1985.

This land and residence originally belonged to J. J. Miller. In 1906 William Chandler bought the home and 50 acres. When his daughter Esther married Frank Goodwin in 1910, the couple were given half of the property, the other half being given to William's other daughter Louisa. Later on Frank Goodwin purchased the other half. Frank and Esther had eight children of whom Wally Goodwin was one. Wally and his brother started an orchard which later on was run by Wally alone. When Wally sold the land and it was carved up, the resulting subdivision was called the Goodwin Estate.

When the Goodwin Estate was subdivided, Knox Council intended to extend Stuart Street to join Rome Beauty Avenue, making a through road. When the Goodwin Estate Kindergarten was being planned, local residents lobbied Knox Council to not join the road. This was successful and the road was left blocked, making space for Kindergarten car parking.

Mountain Gateway Estate

Released in 1997, the Mountain Gateway Estate was the first major housing subdivision of land owned by the Salvation Army.

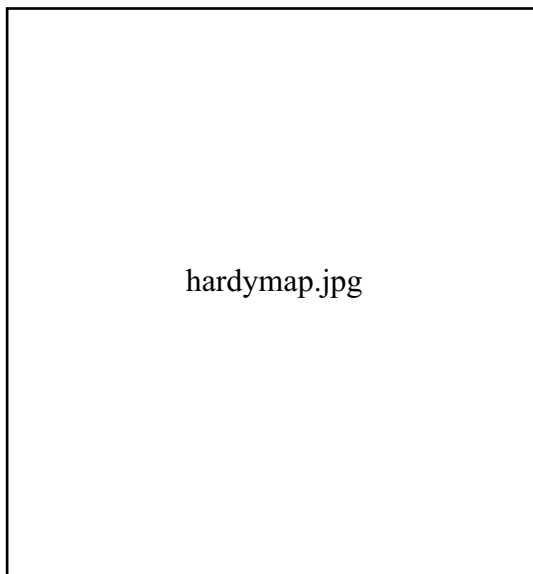
Situated between The Basin Primary School and the Water Tank in Mountain Highway, 63 home sites were offered at an average price of \$66,500.

Roads

Early Roads in The Basin

The Basin was a natural route for early settlers, timber workers and explorers to pass through on their way to the top of The Dandenongs. Consequently, many early tracks passed through The Basin.

The first track to the top of the Dandenongs used by white men was known as the "Bullock Track". It passed through The Basin and was created in the late 1840's. It was used by early bota-



Portion of a 1868 map by John Hardy of the Dandenong State Forest showing two dray tracks starting at The Basin. The Basin roundabout is located on the bottom LH side of the land marked "Turner".

nists, settlers and timber workers and followed the route of the road now known as Range Road.

In 1867, the Government instructed John Hardy to survey the Dandenong Ranges with a view to preserving sections of it as a forest. Hardy created a detailed map of The Dandenong State Forest which included details of tracks and huts around The Basin (see map on page 10).

The tracks marked on Hardy's map had been in existence for some time before Hardy created the map and the location of the tracks correlates with what is known of early tracks through The Basin.

On Hardy's map, a dray track starts below land marked "Turner" and then heads East splitting into two tracks, each following a ridge to the top of the mountain. The Northern track was first known as the "Bullock Track" and follows the route of what later became Range Road.

Range Road is the easterly extension of Doongalla Road and originally ran through to Olinda. It was open until about 1990, when the section through the National Park was closed. The Olinda end of Range Road is still accessible up to the National Park.

The name "Range Road" is contracted from "Holden's Range", the name of a forest area in Olinda first worked by George Holden and his

two sons, Mark and Luke, in the 1850's and continuing for over fifty years. They worked under licence felling giant mountain ash and splitting them into palings. In the 1880's, their base was on the site of Olinda township which was originally known as "Holden's Hut". The forest area they worked was known as "Holden's Range". They carted the timber down through The Basin along the Bullock track which later became known as Range Road.

The Southern track on Hardy's map follows the route of what later became Cobblestone Road (now closed) to Ferny Creek. Not shown on this map, as it came later, was the Old Coach Road which branched off Cobblestone Road and headed up to Sassafras.

Other dray tracks start above Watson's land and head North and East.

In the early days, The Basin served as the source for the major tracks servicing Olinda (Range Road), Sassafras (Coach Road) and Ferny Creek (Cobblestone Road).

The route of Cobblestone Road crosses Mountain Highway about halfway between The Basin and Sassafras on a sharp bend and continues on to Ferny Creek as Hilton Road. It was used as a coach and mail route until Mountain Highway was completed in the mid 1920's. Both Cobblestone and Hilton Roads are now closed through the National Park.

The name "Cobblestone" was given because some of the steeper sections had a unique construction. Cobblestones between 6 and 11 inches in diameter were hand laid in uniform lines as the base foundation then dressed with smaller metals and then screenings; quite a unique construction. A case was put to a meeting between The Basin Progress Association and Shire Councillors for the roads preservation, but it was not pursued. When the road was closed, the cobblestones were recovered.

When constructing The Basin end of Mountain Highway, screenings were transported up the Cobblestone Road in steel tyred heavy drays. The metal was rolled in using horse drawn rollers pulled by three horses. At the end of road, the horses were hooked at the other end of the roller for the return journey.

The Old Bayswater-Sassafras Road was created in the first surveying of The Basin area in the 1860's and was used for a time as a coach route

to Sassafras. A 1919 map shows this road as one of the major routes from The Basin to the top of the Dandenongs. It is now blocked by gates where it passes through the National Park.

The Basin-Olinda Road is shown on old maps as taking a relatively direct route to Olinda. However, it is believed that it was never more than a pack-horse track past Hazel Dell. Sometime later, the section past Hazel Dell was rerouted and constructed as a gravel track to Olinda, crossing and following Range Road for a few hundred meters.

It seems that planning and land purchase for Mountain Highway (first called the 1 in 20 because that was the gradient engineers made the road between The Basin and Sassafras) may have commenced as early as the 1880's. Although the Highway was officially gazetted in 1899, the map of land that J. J. Griffiths purchased from William Tyner in 1888 shows a dotted path of the Highway through the land.

Government Roads

Government Roads are those roads created when land was first surveyed and broken up into large allotments.

Construction of Mountain Highway commenced in the late 1910's in various stages and it was sealed in the late 1930's.

Forest Road was first sealed in the 1930's and upgraded between Boronia Road and Mountain Highway in 1971. The section between Church Street and Mountain Highway was upgraded in 1983.

Road Name Changes

Many roads have had their names changed over the years - some have even been renamed twice!

Mountain Highway was called Bayswater Road until 1939 and past The Basin towards Sassafras was also known as the "1 in 20 Road".

The Basin-Olinda Road was also part of Bayswater Road. Boronia Road was known until 1939 as "L. L. Vale Road" after Dr. L. L. Smith, a Collins Street doctor who lived in Vermont. Prior to that it was known as Rourke's Road after Hugh and Henry Rourke who ran the "Dandenong Creek Run" from 1843 to 1853. At the time, the approximate route of Boronia Road passed through the Dandenong Creek Run.

The section of Forest Road between Wright Street and Mountain Highway was created in the Forest Heights Estate in the 1920's and was origi-

Sources of Information

nally called New Forest Road but was later change to Forest Road.

Old Forest Road was originally marked as a Government Road which ran up the hill then part way along what is now Toorak Avenue and then down across Mountain Highway (which did not exist at the time) ending at the Basin-Olinda Road. At the instigation of The Basin Progress Association in 1969, the section of road between Basin-Olinda Road and Mountain Highway was renamed Wicks Road and where Wicks Road connects to Mountain Highway was blocked to vehicle traffic.

Old Forest Road and Nyora Avenue were marked on survey maps as Government Roads.

Pavitt Lane was previously known as Pig Lane and was so-called from the Salvation Army pig farm that was alongside the road. Previous to that it was known as Fern Glen Road as the road lead to the Doongalla property which was first know as Fern Glen.

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