

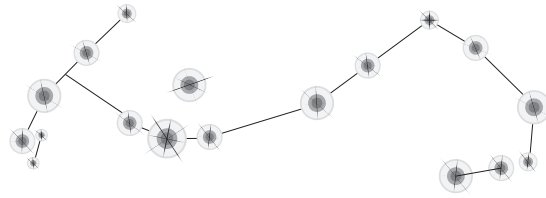
Harewood, Western Port
Stardust to Us

By the same author:

Everybird, a Guide to Bird Health (Editor)

Love Behind the Frontline (with Bette Richardson)

Harewood Nature Guide (with Ian Inderby)



HAREWOOD, WESTERN PORT

STARDUST TO US



PAT MACWHIRTER

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For Harewood friends and family

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Firstly to the Yallock Bulluk Clan of the Kulin Nation, the traditional owners of the land on which Harewood House was built and to the Lyall family who built it. To mark 100 years of Anzacs in 2015, William Lyall, 5th generation Australian, and his son William (Liam), 6th generation, planted a Lone Pine at Harewood, which you can see at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aD_MH4Ap7dY. The stories of the men whom that planting honoured are contained in this book but their stories are only a small part of the mark this remarkable family has made on Australia. Lyall family members were hugely helpful in compiling this manuscript, especially Ken and Lorraine who provided transcripts of many family diaries, photographs and correspondence as well as stories of their own, also Barbara Brown, Suzanne Parry Okeden, Norma Black, Jean Lyall and Harvey Allen. David Mickle had a wealth of information that he freely shared. Members of local historical societies including Phil and Dawn Harris, Robert Cheetham, Audrey and Jack Mills were also helpful. Some of these individuals are no longer with us but their spirits live on.

On the academic side, this book emerged from my Ph D thesis, 'Harewood, Western Port: a History of the World from an Australian Verandah' in the Australian Studies Department of Monash University, supervised by Peter Spearitt and John Rickard, examined by Tim Flannery and Peter Read. During the preparation individuals with whom I consulted included Gary Presland, Valda and Harry Cole, Eric and Juliet Bird, Paul Taçon, Elizabeth Read, Roger Luebbers, Alan Thorne, Pat Vickers-Rich, Tom Rich, Ian Parsonson, Bruce Bennett, Niel Gunson, Tim Wilmot and Jeff Yugovic. Kulin community members with whom local history was discussed included Murrundindi (Gary Hunter), Vicki Nicholson, Carolyn Briggs, Sonya Murray and Steve Compton. Having started my original thesis before Google and Wikipedia were widely available I appreciate what a huge difference these have made to research and acknowledge their generous contributors. Will Meyer, Jim Mynard and Ron Rogers helped with editing. The book's design is Sylvie Blair's work. Everyone's constructive comments were much appreciated. Pat Stephens and Michelle and Peter Law were wonderful in looking after Harewood as I buried myself in the library and became lost in her story. Most of all, I acknowledge my family, especially Lachlan, Katie, Sam and Bette. Thank you all.

Apart from individuals mentioned above, others whose images appear in this book include the Museum d'Histoire Naturelle du Havre the Lesueur Collection, Lerwick Museum, Shetland and the many authors and illustrators from over a century ago whose works found their way onto the shelves of the Lyall family's library at Harewood. To all of these and others whom I may not have named individually, I am very grateful.

Pat Macwhirter, 2016

CONVENTIONS, BOONWURRUNG WORDS AND ABBREVIATIONS

The geographical position on which Harewood homestead was built is referred to as ‘Harewood’ throughout the text. Its aboriginal place name is not known. It is pronounced ‘Hare – wood’ after hares William Lyall released on the site in the 1860s.

‘Stardust’ refers to the fundamental forces and particles of our universe out of which everything on our planet, including energy, matter and lifeforms, are made. ‘Ourstory’ is history inclusive of both genders and all lifeforms.

Direct quotations in the text are indented. Obvious spelling, capitalisation and punctuation mistakes have been corrected for ease of reading but otherwise the quotations have not been altered.

Boonwurrung has many different acknowledged spellings including Bunurong, Bunwurrung, Boonwerung, Bunurowrung, Boonoorong and Buruong. The spelling used throughout this book, including in quotations, is that proposed by Elder Aunty Carolyn Briggs and adapted by Cardinia Shire in their Reconciliation Action Plan 2015-2019.

GLOSSARY OF KEY KULIN WORDS

Bunjil	Father-creator, Wedge-tailed eagle, moiety figure-head
Kangun	Mother’s brother
Karalk	Bright colour of the sunset said to be caused by spirits of the dead going in and out of ngamat
Kowe	Water
Kooweerup, Kuwirap, Cowirrip	Placename of the Great Swamp. The township is spelt Koo Wee Rup
Lo-an	Ancestral spirit connected with Boonwurrung lands
Marine-bek	Coastal land between the Yarra and La Trobe Rivers, ‘excellent country’
Mrart	Ghost
Murup	Ghostly spirit
Nerm	Port Phillip Bay
Ngamajet	Spirit or white person
Ngamat	Place where the sun goes down and where spirits go immediately after death
Tharangalk-bek	Sky or manna gum country, heaven
Waang (Waa, Waung)	Raven or Crow, counterpoised moiety figure-head to Bunjil
Wamoon	Wilson’s Promontory
Wirap or Werup	Blackfish
Warn-mor-in	Western Port
Wirrarap	Shaman or sorcerer
French Island	originally named Île des Français by French explorers, was known both as Jouap and Bel-lar-marin by the Aboriginals.

ABBREVIATIONS

DNA	deoxyribonucleic acid
myr	million years ago
kyr	thousand years ago
H.L.	present in the Harewood Library at the time of Lyll family occupancy (1857-1967)
H.C.	present in the Harewood Collection

DISCLAIMER

Because Kulin clans intermarried extensively, some Kulin descendants of today would have Boonwurrung and/or Yallock Bulluk links but, to my knowledge, no present day indigenous families claim direct descent from the Yallock Bulluk, the clan that held custodianship over the Harewood site and none were identified in the course of researching this book. The Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Council has recognised families of both the Boon Wurrung Foundation and the Boonwurrung Land Council as being descendant from Kulin women abducted from the Mornington Peninsula but, to date, neither has been made a registered Aboriginal Party for Boonwurrung lands. As is the case for many parts of Australia, material for reconstructing stories and vocabulary comes from oral traditions of surviving nearby clans and written versions recorded by nineteenth century Anglo-Celtic males, brought up with British, Christian values who had limited knowledge of Kulin language or culture. Lack of understanding of Aboriginal traditions, translation difficulties, lack of knowledge on the part of their informants and deliberate alteration or withholding of information by the Aboriginal people (especially in relation to women's stories) bias their information and truncate the stories. Underlying meaning is also lost when the stories are taken away from their geographic, cultural and spiritual context. These challenges, as well as not being part of an Aboriginal community myself, restrict my capacity to understand events from an indigenous perspective. These limitations are explicitly acknowledged: this is an immigrant rendering of Western Port history.

Pat Macwhirter, Harewood, 2016

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FOREWORD

When I examined Pat's doctoral thesis, *Harewood, Western Port: a history of the world from an Australian verandah* I wrote:

"It is a rare thing indeed to receive a dissertation that is both a significant contribution to knowledge and a pleasure to read. Patricia Macwhirter's thesis is such a creature. Moreover it is wide-ranging and ambitious and reveals a mastery of research into a diversity of disciplines, from earth history to Aboriginal anthropology and Australian colonial history. As such I recommend unhesitatingly that it be passed without revision as the candidate has demonstrated all of the primary requirements for admission to the degree Doctor of Philosophy.

What I like about this work is its fearlessness. The candidate is unafraid to follow her interests from the Big Bang to the present. This may be troublesome for some, who might have preferred a more conventional approach. And indeed Macwhirter lays herself open to claims of superficiality by experts in the fields she transgresses. In my opinion, however, such criticism would be hard to sustain, because she uses her exceptionally broad palette to a particular end – that of elucidating the forces that have led to the building and maintenance of a particular house in a particular place.

Another aspect of the work's fearlessness is revealed in its documentation of Aboriginal-European interactions. Here Macwhirter does not give us the conventional story, but rather a carefully argued case for what may or may not be an unusual, specific set of interactions. Criticism is likely to be levelled at the assertion that, around Harewood, the massacres were not of Aborigines by Europeans, but rather one Aboriginal group by another. Yet this assertion is well founded in Macwhirter's material: it seems to me to be an inescapable if unpalatable conclusion."

I noted at the time I did the review that given the quality of the writing I imagined that the thesis would soon end up in book form. The wait for the public version has been worth it. In *Stardust to Us*, Pat has used Harewood's uniquely placed story to demonstrate how each of us, consciously and unconsciously, is 'weaving stardust' into our planet's future. While the language is relaxed, the science and historical research is sound. This underpinning hasn't stopped Pat exploring faith and spirituality transects when these have crossed the narrative. In our current era of rapid climate change, ecosystem extinctions and unsustainable human population growth, Harewood's remarkable story is refreshing and highly relevant. I commend it to you.

Tim Flannery, 2016

HAREWOOD



Map of the Colony of Victoria, 1856. The arrow on the north shore of Western Port Bay marks the location of Harewood. Harewood Library.



Aerial view of Lyall's Inlet and Harewood 1993. It is located on the northern shore of Western Port, sandwiched between the Cardinia Creek outfall (Zallan) on the east and Lyall's Inlet (Kirkbellese) to the west. The road is South Gippsland Highway.

Below and right : Illustrations from McCoy F, *Prodromus of the Zoology of Victoria*, Gov Printer, Melbourne, 1885. Harewood Library.



Pl 53 Growling Grass Frog. McCoy F, *Prodromus of the Zoology of Victoria*, Gov Printer, Melbourne, 1885. H.L. McCoy had this species labelled as a Green and Golden Bell-Frog. The warty appearance, however, is characteristic of the now threatened Growling Grass Frog, a species common at Harewood.

Pl 91 Leadbeater's Possum (*Gymnobelideus leadbeateri*), Victoria's critically endangered state mammal, was first described from the Bass River and the fringes of the Koowerup Swamp. McCoy F, *Prodromus of the Zoology of Victoria*, Gov Printer, Melbourne, 1885. H.L.



Australian Fur Seal, pl 31, McCoy F, *Prodromus of the Zoology of Victoria*, Gov Printer, Melbourne, 1885. H.L. French explorers took the type specimen to Paris after their visit in 1802. McCoy included it in his *Prodromus*.

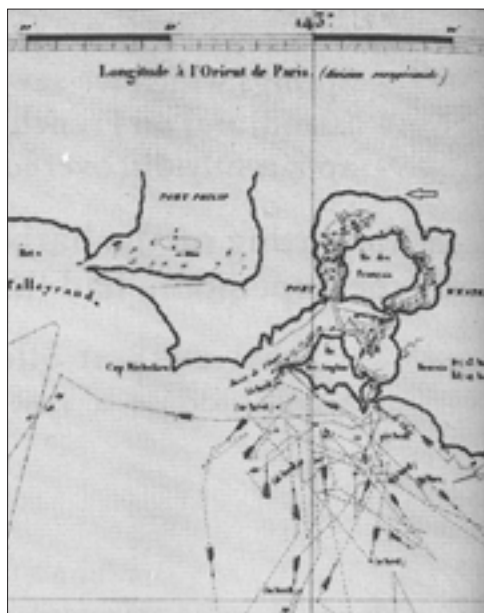


An Australian Fur Seal pup resting on the dock at Harwood. 2014.

One place, all of time: Harewood is a magical kaleidoscope where a twist of human imagination can conjure up changing patterns of our earth's history. South from her verandah, beyond the poa grass and mangroves, black swans glide across the dark blue waters of Western Port while pelicans cruise for fish. The sun moves across the sky, the tide retreats, the Bay turns brown and shorebirds arrive to feed on the mudflats' rich invertebrate fauna. Lo-an, the ancestor spirit-hero of the Boonwurrung people, was cooking eels on the Yarra River when he noticed a swan's feather carried to him on a wind. He followed its source to find the Kooweerup Swamp and Warn-mor-in, as Yamerboke's people called the bay where the swans lived. Continuing to follow the swans, he slowly travelled east to reach Wamoon (Mt Oberon, Wilson's Promontory). From the Dreaming, Lo-an guarded his people as they raised their children in the lands through which he had passed and they watched the tides move in and out and the seabirds return from their annual journeys to the other end of the world.^{1,2}

In the middle of the bay lies an island once called Jouap and beyond the island are the distant shadows of hills. When Captain Pierre Milius and his crew of French explorers sailed their long boats into War-mor-in in 1802 they renamed the island, 'Île des Français' or Island of the French. The hills led to a cliff they called Cape du Feu for fires lit there. Signalling to the Boonwurrung, the Frenchmen ended thousands of years of human family separation when their young Captain climbed the cliff and danced naked with the tribesmen. The British later renamed the cape 'Settlement Point' and established a penal colony there but the island is still called French Island and the traditional owners are recalled in the name Jam Jerrup, the point where boats are launched from the mainland. The seeds for the meeting of the three cultures were sown some 600 million years ago, when multicellular life emerged on earth, but the kernel of Harewood's story, which could be that of anywhere on the planet, materialised far far earlier, over 13 billion years ago, when energy and matter decoupled into fundamental particles and forces: primordial stardust of which everything in the universe is made. Unfolding clues lay hidden in the sky, the landscape and in the old house.³

'Harewood House, two storey and built to last for centuries, a landmark for fishermen and for others for miles around on the north shore of the bay', was Harry Peck's description of William and Annabella Lyall's home. He had known Harewood, and its fine library, since the 1850s. 'When a youth on a trip on the Grantville coach, giving the driver a spell with the unicorn team, I



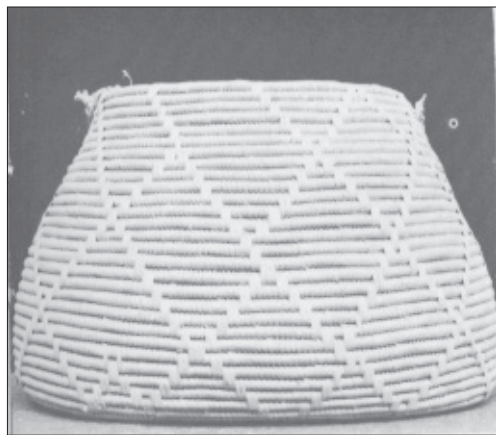
Section from Carte Générale de la Terre Napoleon (de la Nouvelle Hollande). Author: Francois Peron, 1811. Harewood's position is marked with an arrow.

went within an ace of upsetting the coach when one of Lyall's Highland black steers suddenly appeared out of the tea-tree scrub. With wide-spreading horns and lank hair from crest to shoulders, the steer looked a fearsome creature and our leader - a hard-mouthed sort - tried to whip right around and, more by luck than good management, the coach missed a stiff 3 ft stump by a coat of paint.' This was the story he told in *Memoirs of a Stockman*, which came to lie amongst the other volumes in the oak bookcases, which William bought in Scotland in 1855.⁴

Local people all have memories of Harewood. I remember driving past Harewood in the early 1980s, taking my American Uncle Mel down to see the penguins on Phillip Island and discussing other fascinating Australian birds which might interest overseas visitors. Too busy with small children and a growing veterinary practice to delve into ecotourism possibilities, nothing happened immediately, but later, in 1992 our family purchased Harewood along with its contents and 'books', from the estate of Mrs Betty Balas. Our dogs were delighted with the dams, rabbits and open spaces; our city-orientated teenage children were less enthusiastic. We were only the second family to have ever bought the heritage-listed property.⁵

In addition to antique furniture, lamps and old clocks, there were Victorian clothes and bottles, nineteenth century newspapers, bits of family memorabilia and pictures of the house with deer, Shetland ponies, cattle and horses as well as one of 'Old Jimmy and Eliza' an Aboriginal couple, posed with three foxhounds. On the window sill in the billiard room lay a wooden club, several stone axe heads, a small scraper, two large, oval, pink granite rocks as well as two small egg-shaped stones, a heavy black one and a lighter white one, each of a size that would fit comfortably in the palm of your hand. We were curious - were these connected with the Aboriginal axe heads or were they just rocks?

Eliza's basket. The original has not been located but this photograph of the basket described appeared in Massola, Aldo, *The Aborigines of South-Eastern Australia As they Were*, Heineman, Melbourne, 1971, p. 111.



There was no mention of them in the inventory of household contents Lyall's granddaughter Bertha Ricardo compiled in 1958, but in family memoirs she recalled stories that her grandmother and mother had told her of Jimmy and Eliza and the 'Boomerang' tribe.

There must have been a large native tribe in the Westernport district for an old Blackfellows' midden was situated on a sand rise near the "Harewood" homestead. It contained cockle shells

and stone axes - small ones made for the children, and large ones for the use of adults. The axes were found usually after the paddocks had been ploughed. Latterly, when the Lyall family were living at "Harewood", there was not a dozen aborigines to be seen in

the district. Every winter William Lyall gave those who remained a bullock and red blankets, the latter of which they delighted to wrap around themselves like a cloak and to show themselves off. The lubras made picturesque oval-shaped baskets from a rush-like plant, the leaves of which were at least three feet long and a quarter of an inch wide with flowers in the springtime, which were small, blue and star shaped. The natives would not make baskets from any other plant in the district than this.

Some of the white settlers complained about the aborigines stealing their belongings, but William Lyall had no trouble at all with them. Sometimes when he was driving in his buggy, the black men would run alongside laughing and chatting. They regarded him as a king. The last of the natives to come to "Harewood" were old Jimmy and Eliza. When Eliza was asked by any member of the Lyall family what she had to eat, she usually pulled out of the basket she carried on her shoulder a piece of half-cooked opossum, and said, "only a piece of 'possum." The basket could be carried in the hand or, by means of a piece of cord attached to the opposite sides of the edges by its two ends, it could be slung upon the shoulder. Two baskets, brought by Eliza as gifts to the Lyall family, are still in possession of Maud Lyall (Mrs Ernest Ricardo) in this year - 1956, and are as strong as ever after seventy years.⁶

Curious to know more about the 'Boomerang' tribe of whom Bertha spoke and through a controversy that erupted in the local paper about the origins of the bunyip 'Too Roo Dun', we came to know Murrundindi, a Wurundjeri (Yarra River tribe) Aborigine. Local lore had it that Too Roo Dun frequented the Kooweerup Swamp, which had been Victoria's largest wetland before William Lyall and others who followed him drained it for agricultural purposes. Murrundindi maintained that Too Roo Dun didn't fit with his knowledge of local Aboriginal traditions. He offered to come to Harewood for a chat.⁷

It was a beautiful evening and against the background of red setting sun Murrundindi spun an ancient bull roarer over his head. Its resounding roar re-echoed across the Bay. We talked over dinner in the dining room then retired to the library. By this time I had started to read some of the old books behind the glass doors of the antique oak book cases, many were from the 1800s and earlier, still on the same bookshelves where they had been placed when the house was completed in the 1860s. There was a sense of intermingled Scottish diaspora and Aboriginal energies as we brought out artefacts to examine. Murrundindi could say nothing of the oval pink granite stones but identified some of the axe heads as coming from a quarry near present day Lancefield and said the scrapers were used in skinning possums. He thought the lines carved on the handle of the club (he called it a wonguim) would have been typical of the local clan. Then examining the smaller, oval rocks, he said the black one was a male spirit stone and the white a female spirit stone. Tradition held that a man or a woman should hold the appropriate stone in their hand if they needed inspiration or self-confidence.

Pressing further, we asked, did they hold religious significance? Was it proper to keep them at Harewood or should they be sent to the museum? Was it inappropriate to handle



'The little dancer in the white frock danced on,' from Quin, Tarella *The Gum Tree Brownie and other Fairie Folk of the Never-Never*, George Robertson, Melbourne, undated, c 1920, p. 117. Illustration by Ida Rentoul. H.L.

Frogs interspersed with 'popple bonks' from the Banjo Frogs that had inspired early authors and artists. We encountered echidnas, bandicoots and an exhausted seal pup, avoided Copperhead snakes and got to know Swamp Rat mounds and the peaty Kooweerup mud that cracked open in the dry summers. We caught Swamp Skinks with researchers from the Department of Natural Resources (the little lizards couldn't resist traps baited with pilchards and peanut butter) and hid behind poa grass when we went cannon netting and shorebird banding with the volunteers in the Wader Study Group. The migratory birds on Western Port came from as far away as Alaska, Siberia, Japan, New Zealand and Tasmania.

The locals all had stories to tell about the spooky old house and the bay it stood beside. We started to take visitors through Harewood and many a pleasant evening was spent as we swapped yarns in front of the library's old fireplace or celebrated milestones, like local identity David Mickle's ninetieth birthday or when Governor Richard McGarvie came to launch the Cardinia Shire Heritage Study. As the 2002 bicentennial of the French exploration of the Bay approached, we formed a local 'bicentennial committee' and invited the French Consul for afternoon tea to plan how we might celebrate. All along we tried to retrieve books and objects that had previously been in Harewood but had been lost. Lyall family descendants dropped by with treasures, letters, diaries, information and photographs to share and the garden again became the setting for a Lyall family wedding, for the first time in more than 130 years.

them? He shrugged his shoulders casually, "No," he said, they should stay on Harewood if they came from here, "you look after them." He described his reawakening interest in Aboriginal culture and his mother, a Wurundjeri elder and descendant of the Aboriginal leader William Barak's sister, taking him through initiation rites.

In the months and years following Murrundindi's visit we came to realise what a fascinating home we had moved into. It was a delight getting lost in the books in the old library and being transported back in time to the days of the early settlers. In springtime we would listen to the loud 'ggrs' of the Growling Grass

‘OLD JIMMY & ELIZA’

With much searching and help from locals we discovered Jimmy’s tribal name was ‘Yamerboke’ and Eliza’s was ‘Toolumn’. This allowed us to piece together information about their lives and the objects they had left behind. Ken Lyall turned up with Aboriginal spears, reputedly from Jimmy, which his Great Aunt Nellie Lyall had given to his father. Other Aboriginal visitors, members of the Briggs and Nicholson families, told us more of their own family histories. Of the ‘spirit stones’ they knew nothing but geologist Eric Bird advised the white one was quartzite and the heavier black pebble a basaltic volcanic rock, both of a type found abundantly in the gravels in coastal river terraces of Gippsland. One day, browsing through a copy of Brough Smyth’s 1878 book, *The Aborigines of Victoria*, my eyes jumped.⁸



‘Eliza and Jimmy’,
(tribal names
Yamerboke and
Toolumn) c. 1857,
from a Lyall family
photograph album.
H.C.

Skull of King Jimmy of the Mordialloc Tribe

This Australian chief died lately, and, through the kindness of Dr. Cooke and of one of my students (Mr Brownless), his skull was given to me. There being some very peculiar points about it, I think it fit to include a description of it in this work.

...The sort of mid-rib running along the top of the skull, like the crest of the gorilla, and bounded on each side by a temporal ridge, gives the skull a most ape-like appearance. The immense orbits and nasal fossae with prognathous upper-jaw complete the picture.

Professor George B. Halford, M.D., Melbourne University (1877)⁹

“King Jimmy” had to be Harewood’s ‘Jimmy’. The date matched Yamerboke’s death, the Boonwurrung were sometimes known as the ‘Mordialloc Tribe’ and, by 1877, there were no other Boonwurrung of that name. I knew the drawings and text would hit a raw nerve with Aboriginal friends who were deeply offended by anyone disturbing human remains and wondered whether his body parts had been located and buried according to Aboriginal spiritual beliefs. Yet comparing the drawings of European, Chinese and other Aboriginal skulls in the book I could understand why scientists, curious about how our species peopled this planet, might think the indigenous folk of this region could hold a key. Why did Yamerboke have such distinctive, robust features?

Where might the Kulin people and their kin, the Lyalls and theirs, and the plants and animals associated with Harewood fit into a shared global history? Why was it a Scots family from the other end of the world who built Harewood House on the coast of south east Australia in the 1800s? How were these interlopers able to vastly change the landscape Yamerboke and Toolumn's ancestors had sustained for tens of thousands of years? How were they changed by it? Could spiritual beliefs of such divergent people have any common ground?

Stardust to Us delves deeper into these questions as it opens Harewood's books, explores her buildings and walks across global landscapes to follow her 'big history' tale from the big bang singularity event through the lives and families of Yamerboke, the Kulin tribesman, Dockin', the Shetland pony and William Lyall, the Scottish entrepreneur. Please, gentle reader (as authors of her 19th century books would implore), be patient. To maintain academic integrity without losing continuity in an account filled with twists, turns and subplots, tentative wording and references are used and, for the most part, chronology kept and mainstream scientific views expressed. If the story kindles your imagination and inspires you to reflect on how you, consciously and unconsciously, are an alchemist weaving stardust into our planet's future, the effort will have been worthwhile.

Report of the
Archaeological
Institute of Victoria
meeting, "from
the Argus of Nov 1
2030." *Melbourne
Punch*, Nov 1, 1860,
p.114.



YAMERBOKE



'Hunting the Kangaroo'. from *Foreign Field Sports*, Howitt, Atkinson, Clark, Manskirk & Co, London, c. 1819, facing p. 162. H.L.



The Baudin expedition, sponsored by the French under Napoleon, was the first to map Western Port's northern coastline. They also carried out excellent ethnographic studies with indigenous people they encountered in Australia (above left) and Timor (above right). Paintings by Nicolas Petit, 1803. Originals held in the Lesueur Collection, La Harve, France.

Below illustration from Howitt, Atkinson, Clark, Manskirk & Co, *Foreign Field Sports, Smoking the Opossum*, London, c. 1819, facing p.161. This quality colour plate book took pride of place alongside many other beautiful volumes in William Lyall's library.



Sealers' Dwelling on Western Port. This often reproduced engraving by Louis Auguste de Sainson from the 1826 Dumont d'Urville expedition was the first illustration of a dwelling in Victoria and showed Aboriginal women and European domestic dogs living with the sealers. Coloured engraving H.C.

THE DREAMING

Boonwurrung, Woiworung, Warthaurung, Taungurong and Jajowrong tribes of the Kulin nation occupied the land around Western Port and Port Phillip. They were united by a belief in Tharangalk-bek, the sky country, and similarities in religion, law, language, cultural practices and kinship, which linked the communities that held custodianship of the catchment areas of the Yarra, Goulburn, Campaspe, Loddon, Avoca, Werribee and Broken Rivers. 'Custodianship' entailed ritual and land care responsibilities but relatives from other areas would also have resource rights, especially in times of hardship. Such family connections were common in most parts of Australia and served the Aboriginal people well in helping to survive the droughts and floods of Australia's oscillating El Niño-La Niña weather cycles.¹

The old men governed the tribes and amongst them were men called 'ngurungaeta' in the Woiworung language or 'arweet' by the Boonwurrung. As Murrundindi's great-uncle-ancestor, William Barak, a Kulin leader of the late nineteenth century, put it, if a man was sensible, "spoke straight" and did harm to no one, people would listen and obey him and he would likely be accepted as a ngurungaeta if his father before him had been one. It was the ngurungaetas/arweets who called people together for the great tribal meetings, sent out messengers and, according to their degree of authority, gave orders which were obeyed.

The most influential ngurungaeta at the time of white settlement was Billibillary, a Woiworung ngurungaeta whose home country was west of the Yarra, between the Maribyrnong and Plenty Rivers. Alongside him stood Bunergim, whose country centred on Sunbury. Billibillary's brother and Barak's father was Bebe-jan, ngurungaeta of the Wurundjeri people, a subsection of the Woiworung whose lands were north and east of Melbourne. Bebe-jan's lieutenant was Winberi, his uncle, a singer and song writer of note. Another cousin in the extended family, Ningulabul, was leader at Mount Macedon in the Northwest and beside him was Bebe-jan's brother, Warador and 'Jack Weatherly' who was to figure prominently in Western Port history at the time of European settlement.²

The Woiworung clans were mostly of the Waang (Raven) moiety and the men were culturally required to take their wives from Bunjil (Eagle) clans and give their sisters and daughters to Bunjil men in return. The Boonwurrung clans, who held custodianship of coastal land from the Werribee River east to Cape Liptrap, were mostly Bunjil and so would take Waang partners. Billibillary's wife was Boonwurrung and his daughter was given to Benbow, the arweet from the Yalukit-willam (Werribee River to St Kilda) clan of the Boonwurrung in return. Beside Benbow was Derrimut. Poleorong (Billy Lonsdale) was the arweet of the Ngaruk-bulluk clan whose lands were along



Billibillary, the most influential Kulin ngurungaeta at the time of white settlement. His family held control of the axe quarry north-west of Melbourne. Drawing by William Thomas held in the La Trobe Library.

Map showing approximately areas occupied by Aboriginal Tribes of Victoria. Brough Smyth, *Aborigines of Victoria*, Vol I, 1878. H.L. Spelling used by Smyth for the Kulin Nation tribes differs from that in the text. Clans of the Boonwurrung (Bonurrong) tribe included: 1. Yalukitwillam (Bunjil), 2. Ngarukwillam (Bunjil), 3. Mayonebulluk (Bunjil), 4. Burinyung-bulluk (Waang), 5. Yallock-bulluk (Bunjil), 6. Bonkoolawal, 7. Yowangerra. Harewood's position is marked with an arrow.

Port Phillip, southeast of the Yarra. The Yallock Bulluk ('river people') clan, who held custodianship of the Kooweerup Swamp and the waterways leading into the top of Western Port where Harewood lay, had been decimated by war with the Gippsland nation, the Kurnai, and clashes with sealers. At the time of the white settlement of Melbourne, their leader, Warrengitlong, was young. Boonwurrung people moved freely around their collective tribal land and into other parts of Kulin territory.³

Kulin culture was orally based and revolved around law derived from the Dreaming, the creation period Aboriginal people believe is timeless. As in other Aboriginal societies a rich tapestry of sacred stories stressed complementary matrilineal and patrilineal responsibilities for custodianship of the local landscape that cycled through generations. Elders would gradually reveal these stories to young people as they matured and were ready to assume adult responsibilities. Accurate recounting was important as the stories were layered as tales, parables, geographies and cultural history. There were different versions: parts were confidential to initiated males; other parts women would have as their secrets.



CREATION

According to Kulin imagining the earth was flat and in darkness until the sky vault and sun were made by the old spirits who inhabited the earth at that time. Bunjil was their all-father, creator-spirit. His totem was the Wedge-tailed Eagle and he was represented as an old man, a wise and benign ngurungaeta. He held out his hand to the sun and warmed it and the sun then warmed the earth, which opened and black fellows came out and danced a corroboree. The sun was a woman, “the sister of everyone”, who went round the sea every night and returned the next morning on the other side. Where the sun set was ngamat, the place where the murup, human spirit, went after death.⁴

The sky country was the place where Bunjil lived and murups could reach it by the karalk, the bright rays of the setting sun. Once ascended, the murup became a mrart. Kulin wirraraps (shamans) were carried by mrarts through a hole in the sky to Bunjil, from whom they received magical powers. To the rainbow the Kulin gave the name Binbeal, Bunjil’s son, and to the sky country, Tharangalk-bek, after the manna gums which they believed grew there. Murups of deceased ancestors could talk with the murups of the living when sleeping people snored and would counsel and warn them against danger. Tharangalk-bek was propped up by poles where it rested on mountains in the north east. “Before white men came to Melbourne”, in a clever ploy, one tribe spread a message that the props were becoming rotten and unless tomahawks were sent to cut new ones the sky would burst and all the people would be drowned. They were inundated with axes.⁵

In another creation story Bunjil carried a large knife (Bul-li-to kul-pen-kul gye-up), and when he made earth (Beek) he cut it in many places, forming creeks and rivers, and mountains and valleys. Bunjil reputedly made the first men out of clay and breathed life into them in the country ‘towards the north west’.⁶

With his big knife he cut three large sheets of bark. On one of these he placed a quantity of clay, and worked it into a proper consistence with his knife. When the clay was soft, he carried a portion to one of the other pieces of bark, and commenced to form the clay into a man, beginning at the feet; then he made the legs, then he formed the trunk and the arms and the head. He made a man on each of the two pieces of bark. He was well pleased with his work, and he looked at the men a long time and danced around them. He next took stringybark from a tree (*Eucalyptus obliqua*), and made hair out of it and placed it on their heads - on one straight and on the other curled hair. Pund-jel looked again at his work and was well pleased (Bul-li-to monomeeth), and once more he danced about them. To each he gave a name: the man with the straight hair he called Ber-rook-boorn; the man with the curled hair, Koo-kin Ber-rook. After again smoothing with his hands their bodies, from the feet upwards to their heads, he lay upon each of them, and blew his breath into their mouths, into their noses, and into their navels; and breathing very hard, they stirred. He danced round about them a third time. He then made them speak, and caused them to get up, and they rose up, and appeared as full grown young men - not like children.⁷

The Kulin credited Pallyyan, Bunjil's brother, whose totem was a bat, with helping to create the first two women from mud and water. Bunjil gave men their spears and women their digging sticks. Together he and Pallyyan taught their people to hunt and find roots. Having completed this task a whirlwind blew up and swept them through the hole in the sky. Another story explained that, in the early days, there was constant fighting as the Kulin married without any regard for kinship. Two wurraraps went up to Bunjil in Tharangalk-bek and through them he told the Kulin they should divide themselves into two parts – Bunjil (Eagle) and Waang (Raven). "Bunjil should always marry Waang and Waang should always marry Bunjil."⁸

One night, when Murrundindi's great uncle-ancestor William Barak was a boy, he was taken by his Kangun (mother's brother) out of their camp. Pointing at the star Altair with his spear thrower, his Kangun said: "See, that one is Bunjil, you see him, he sees you." Bunjil's name in the Kulin language was synonymous with wisdom and knowledge; the stars beside Bunjil were his two wives, Kunawarra, the Black Swans.⁹

Totem groups were not as strongly fixed with the Kulin as they were in other Aboriginal societies but there were six 'young men' whom Bunjil chose to become totem animals, who figured in the lives, mythology and sustainability practices of the Kulin people. Of these, Yukope, the Purple-crowned Lorikeet and Dantum, the Rainbow Lorikeet, became alpha and beta crucis in the Southern Cross. Thara, the Swamp Harrier and Jurt-jurt, the Kestrel became the pointers. Tadjeri and Tarung, the Brush tailed Possum and Gliding Phalanger, became the constellation in which the Greeks would see the archer Sagittarius. In time, Lo-an, the ancestor-hero of the Boonwurrung people and his wife Lo-an-tuka, were also taken up into the sky country and became the stars Sirius and Canopus.¹⁰

Present day imagining about the creation of humans, life and the universe is just as animated as it was in 19th century colonial Victoria when Aboriginal spirituality, Judeo-Christian beliefs and Darwin's new evolutionary theory first collided, however focus has shifted. Since Albert Einstein formulated his theories of relativity in the early 20th century, mathematicians and physicists have changed from a 'common sense' view of history to understanding of the inter-relatedness of energy and matter and time. A universal 'Theory of Everything' that would reconcile conflicts between the theories of relativity and quantum mechanics has become many scientists' Holy Grail, yet at the same time respected workers have identified core sets of limitations to scientific knowledge. Supersymmetry, multiverses, M-theory, P-branes, black holes and superstrings are active areas of research.¹¹

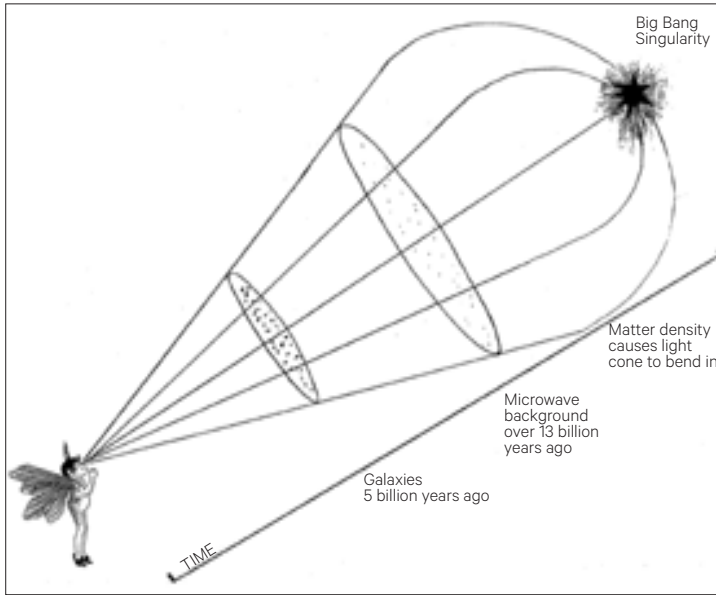
In winter, looking with binoculars from Harewood's verandah, a faint glow can be seen near Antares, the red star in the constellation Scorpio that Boonwurrung creation stories associated with Pallyyan, the bat. Astronomers call this glow the globular cluster M4 or Cat's Eye and it is believed to be over 10 billion years old, amongst the oldest visible objects in the universe. While the Bible on Harewood's bookshelves

compressed the evolution of our universe into 4 days and 18 metaphorical verses, in 1968 Stephen Hawking and Roger Penrose used a mathematical model of general relativity to prove that time must have had a beginning in what they termed a singularity event or the 'big bang'. The Hawking/Penrose expanding 'nutshell' model matched up with observations other physicists and astronomers made subsequently and the big bang singularity event is now estimated to have occurred around 13.8 billion years ago. In a creation story eclipsing Tarella Quin's 'Fairie Folk of the Never-Never' weaving mazy gossamer webs with magic swiftness, these physicists claim our universe started from a super-dense point, smaller than an atom, exploding into elementary particles.¹² How or why this happened is speculative but the current Standard Model (it has been updated and refined many times) has these consisting of 6 quarks, 6 leptons and their antiparticles which are associated with matter and four force-carrying particles (photons, perhaps gravitons, gluons and bosons) associated with electromagnetism, gravity and sub-atomic strong and weak forces respectively.¹³

As the universe expanded it cooled into a primordial plasma, baryons emerged from quarks and, under the influence of gluons of strong force, formed into the nuclei of hydrogen, helium and other light elements. By 300,000 years from the singularity event, the universe was dark and, with temperatures dropping below 3000° C, electrons (one type of lepton) slowed to a point where nuclei could capture them to form atoms. Ever so slight variations in the temperature of cosmic background radiation meant that some areas became denser than others. Gravity began to magnify these differences and, by pulling atoms together, triggered temperature rises as high as 10,000,000°C at which point nuclear fusion reactions allowed some of their matter to be changed into pure energy pushing back against the force of gravity. The ripple effect was that stars twinkled over a second grand threshold in our story and proto-galaxies, such as the one that would become our galaxy, the Milky Way, and globular clusters such as M4, began to form over the 'p-brane' surface of an ever expanding shell. Space between became transparent.¹⁴

In this model of our universe, time and distance are relative and interchangeable; the oldest visible objects to observers on earth are those on the distant side of the expanding shell and vice versa. Because it has taken 10 billion years for light to travel between the M4 globular cluster and an observer on Harewood's verandah, the reciprocal should also be true: an imaginary observer scanning the skies from M4 today, earth-time, could paradoxically, see Harewood as an infinitesimal part of 10 billion year old proto-galaxy. History depends on the vantage point of the observer.

To this point the universe comprised of light elements, mainly hydrogen and helium configured into stars and young galaxies. Some older stars exhausted their supply of hydrogen and formed supernova, dying stars that briefly generate temperatures six thousand times hotter than the sun. At these levels heavier elements of the periodic table such carbon, oxygen, nitrogen, calcium and phosphorus, which are needed to make lifeforms, as well as iron, gold, silver and other metals are forged. Such reconfigured stardust, formed by forces far beyond those of mortal men, was strewn across the third



‘The night sky, looking back through time.’

The puzzled stargazer is Ida Rentoul’s ‘Gum Tree Brownie’, from Quin, Tarella, *The Gum Tree Brownie*, George Robertson, Melbourne, c 1920, p. 15. H.L. Illustration adapted from Stephen Hawking, *The Universe in a Nutshell*, Random House, 2001, p. 40.

grand threshold of ourstory some 5 billion years ago when a super nova disintegrated and spewed forth light and heavy elements and immense energy as it produced our infant solar system: a spinning disc of exploding gases, dust and molten rock. Over time, gravitational forces pulled spinning rocks together by accretion forming infant planets, including ours, the third from the sun. Some 4.5 billion years ago asymmetry and a collision with an object that would become our moon, caused earth to tilt on its axis and spin past the fourth grand threshold of ourstory. The sun rose and set on our world’s first day. The tilt created seasons as earth circled the sun. Meteors, attracted by earth’s gravity, continued to crash land as the globe’s crust cooled into massive tectonic plates. Volcanos erupted, the ozone layer began to form blocking harmful electromagnetic radiation from the sun and, thanks to the stardust of the supernova out of which our

solar system had been formed, key elements of life came together: hydrogen, carbon, oxygen, nitrogen, calcium, phosphorus and trace elements, shared between a gaseous atmosphere and liquid seas.¹⁵

Lifeforms began to reproduce over the fifth grand threshold of ourstory around 4 billion years ago as in one of these seas a primordial broth of organic chemicals gave birth to replicating ribonucleic acid (RNA) and the common ancestor of life on earth, thought to have resembled present day prokaryotic bacteria. Intricately linked with RNA, replicating varieties of the double helix form of deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA) began to unzip, match base pairs and re-zip in a process central to the replication of life forms. Christian de Duve, and others, taking a positivist approach, constructed a model for natural biochemical processes being the driving force behind their appearance, sea floor volcanic vents could have been the site. Subsequently, over two billion years, ongoing random variation and selection pressure on the emerging micro-organisms favoured novel chlorophyll-containing oxygen-producing life forms that could capture the energy of the sun. Some 1.8 billion years ago a new cell type, with a responsive cell membrane, nucleus and other internal organelles, emerged on the primordial super continent of Columbia. By capturing cyanobacteria, which became oxygen-producing chloroplasts, an ancestral eukaryote is thought to have given rise to the Plant Kingdom, while another, capturing proteobacteria to form oxygen-using mitochondria, gave rise to our lineage, animals.¹⁶

Table 1. Earth's Geological Timeline ¹⁷			
GEOLOGICAL ERA	PERIOD	EPOCH	Commenced - millions of years ago
Cainozoic	Quaternary	Holocene/ Anthropocene	0.01
		Pleistocene	2.6
	Neogene	Pliocene	5
		Miocene	23
	Paleogene	Oligocene	34
		Eocene	56
		Palaeocene	66
Mesozoic	Cretaceous		145
	Jurassic		201
	Triassic		252
Palaeozoic	Permian		299
	Carboniferous		359
	Devonian		419
	Silurian		443
	Ordovician		485
	Cambrian		541
Proterozoic	(Complex single celled life)		2500
Archean	(Simple single celled life)		4000
Hadean	(Formation of the earth and moon)		4567

The longest ever Ice Age, lasting from one billion to 600 million years ago (myr), caused major extinctions of this early biota. As glaciation eased and waters warmed, currents increased and minerals, including phosphate, a previously rare element needed for skeletal development, were mobilised from the depths of ocean basins. Our first truly multicellular ancestors appeared and began to share their energy and matter, to 'spread their stardust', as they interacted with particles and forces they encountered in the world around them. The Ediacaran biotas of the Flinders Ranges, South Australia, dating from 670 myr, are amongst the earliest examples and include multiple bilaterians and a possible fossil chordate, the forerunner to our lineage, animals with backbones and brains. Sexual reproduction ensured organisms shared and recombined their DNA from one generation to the next, allowing a vastly more varied range of life forms to emerge. In common with the innate world in which they lived, all these varied life forms traced back to, and were a reworking of, the elementary particles and forces, the primordial stardust, that made up our early universe.¹⁸

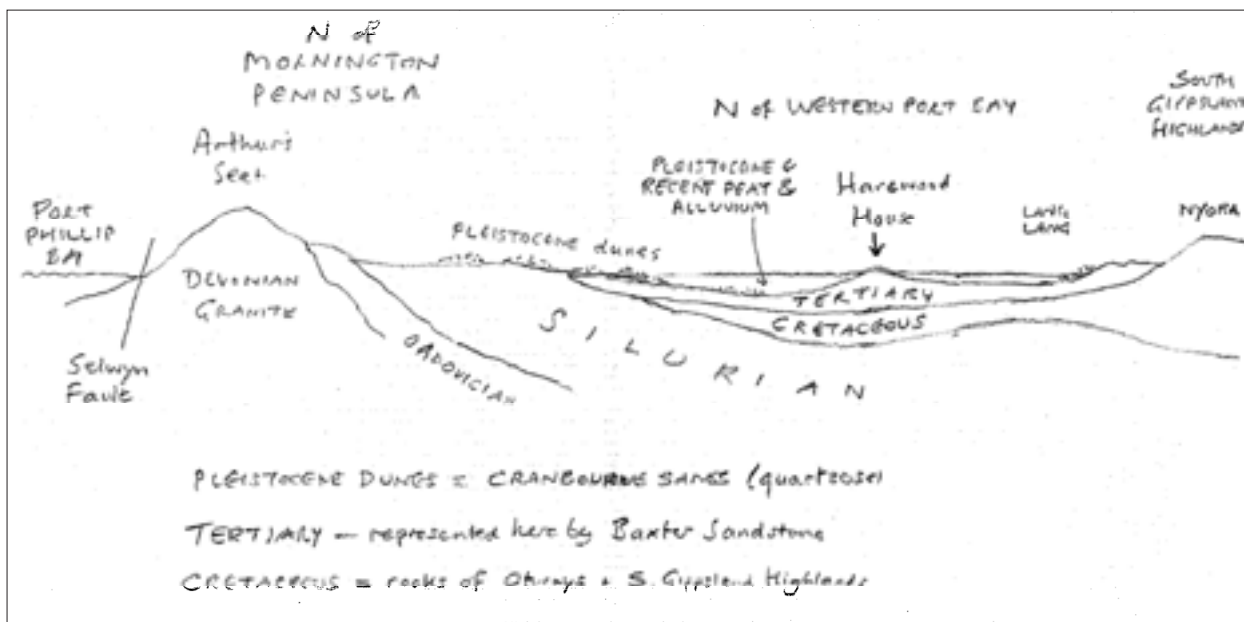
In early Palaeozoic Times, 500 myr, when Harewood lay beneath proto-Australia's coastal waters, life forms included early bivalves which would later give rise to oysters and brachiopods, including, lamp shells, which can still be found in Western

Port today. Trilobites and graptolites began to dominate the seas and one very large continent, Gondwana, which then included Africa, South America, Australia and Antarctica, straddled the equator. Thanks to countless millions of generations of cyanobacteria and chloroplast containing plants, the earth's atmosphere and oceans had become rich in oxygen, which co-evolving animals could use for respiration and, in turn, produce carbon dioxide on which most plant life relied. In unison, the earth's changing geography and life forms were warping a space-time trail that would one day create the moment when humans would look around at their surroundings and ask, "Why?"¹⁹

RIFTS

From the Cambrian to the Silurian periods (c. 541 to 419 myr), Gondwana drifted slowly to the south under the influence of convection currents from the molten metallic mass of the earth's interior and came to rest near the South Pole. Australia became a peninsula whose extensive coastline straddled the Tropic of Capricorn. Bedrock for Western Port was laid down as plants and insects, evolved from crustaceans, colonised the land. Harewood still lay beneath the sea when the planet's first major extinction event, the Ordovician of around 445 myr, wiped out 80% of the ocean's filter feeding fauna and cleared the way for early vertebrates, including our ancestors, to expand. First they appeared as simple, small, gill bearing organisms, then some developed jaws which enabled them to better feed on plants and animals. From these beginnings emerged primitive sharks and bony fish, to live alongside the trilobites and graptolites of earlier times. As part of the largest continent and with one of the longest coastlines in the world it is not surprising that the Australian Peninsula was a place

Pencil drawing of a stylised east/west transect through Harewood by geologist Eric Bird. 2004. H.C. Rocks from the Carboniferous, Permian, Triassic and Jurassic eras are not found in Western Port.



where sea creatures came to breathe air and venture ashore. More than 400 myr a small amphibian placed its footprints on shore in Victoria, while early lungfish gulped air in coastal rivers.²⁰

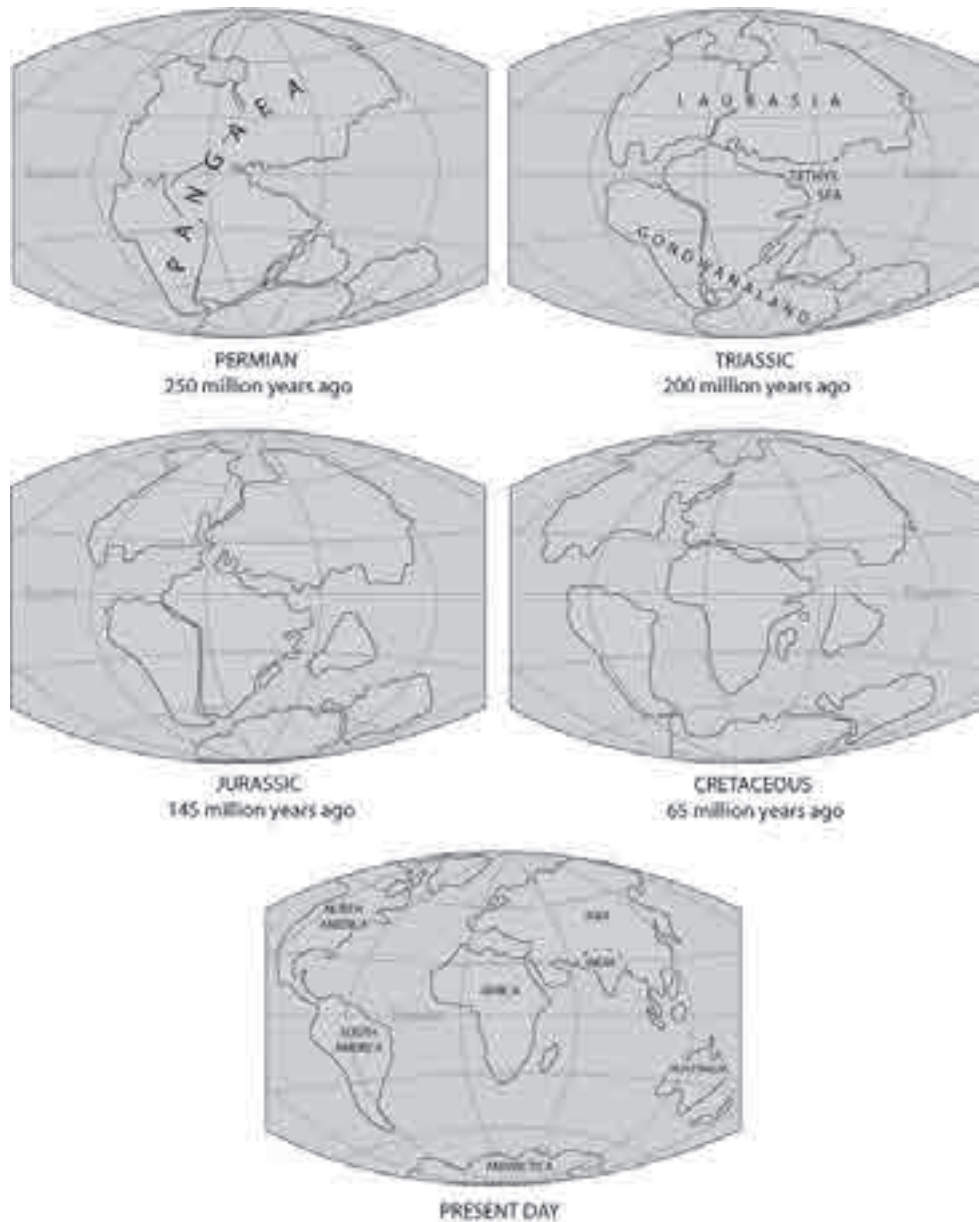
For the next 175 million years, amphibians called labyrinthodonts and air-breathing invertebrates dominated the land, the sea receded. Granite, intruded from within the earth's crust, uplifted to form high points of the Mornington Peninsula and wet land around Harewood became vegetated with primitive psilophytes, lycopods and horsetails. Enclosed seeds emerged allowing colonisation of drier lands. The second major global extinction, the late Devonian of around 370 myr, again wiped out some 80% of the world's animal species but in the Carboniferous Period which followed oxygen levels increased to as high as 35%. Evolving land dwelling invertebrates and insects including cockroaches and dragonflies, reached prodigious proportions and some had developed flight.

Scotland lay not far from the equator and, on land that had only recently emerged from the sea, a millipede-like creature, over a metre long, left 350 million year old tracks. The changing islands of Laurentia, which then included Europe, Britain and parts of North America, uplifted, moved south and coalesced with Gondwana to become a single but constantly changing land mass, Pangaea. Both flora and fauna intermingled in love and lust and re-juggled their DNA enabling a vastly increased pool of natural variation. With new selection pressures reconfiguring life's stardust, some 340 myr the amniotes, vertebrate creatures able to produce eggs that could develop away from water, became the trunk of a family tree that gave rise to the therapsids, ancestral to ourselves and all mammals and the sauropsids, ancestral to reptiles, including dinosaurs and their descendants, birds.²¹

The End-Permian extinction around 252 myr was planet's third major extinction and the most massive ever to occur. Biodiversity was halved with some 95% of Pangaea's fauna being wiped out. In the humid, hothouse times of the Triassic (250-205 myr), the earth's convection currents carried Harewood to its furthest point south, near the Antarctic Circle. Walk west and you could cross Antarctica and reach those parts of Pangaea that would one day become India and Africa, then veer north through Patagonia and you would reach lands that would become the Americas. Proto-Europe and proto-Asia lay beyond the east-west orientated Tethys Sea, the predecessor to the Mediterranean Sea. Populations of turtles, crocodiles and, our lineage, therapsids, had survived, moths emerged and the diminutive archosaurs of Permian Times had diversified to become flying pterosaurs and dinosaurs that lumbered over the landscape of North America and Europe.

The late Triassic extinction, the planet's fourth, around 201 myr, saw the loss of some 70% of global species but frogs and the therapsids, the ancestors humans share with other mammals, survived and dinosaurs rebounded so that, as Jurassic times moved on, they came to range as far as the Australian Peninsula of Pangaea. The Atlantic rift

Palaeographic
Reconstructions
of the Earth. 2012.
United States
Government
Publications



began to slowly unzip from 175 myr as some small, feathered, two-legged, theropod dinosaurs in northern proto-Eurasia began to evolve flight. In proto-China, by 160 myr the earliest placental mammals emerged from our therapsid ancestors, represented by the shrew-like fossil, *Juramai*. By early Cretaceous times, 125 myr, tiny shrew-like placental mammals such as *Eomai* and pouched marsupials such as *Sinodelphys* began to spread across Pangaea, the forerunners of the animals that would one day become totems of the Kulin nation. Fossils of an egg-laying monotreme mammal, *Teinolophos*, have been discovered in Victoria dated to 123 myr, a time when Australia was beginning

to be slowly unzipped from Antarctica. Monotreme mammals, living and extinct, have only ever been discovered in Australia and New Guinea.²²

As Australia tore away from Antarctica it created a river system that flowed westward along Victoria's southern boundary to join up with the slowly encroaching ocean. In the late 20th century, a team of volunteers and scientists unearthed fossils from the tributaries of this ancient river system dating from 120 to 110 myr that suggested that Western Port's landscape at that time was occupied by a suite of polar adapted reptiles with relations worldwide. Some, like the relatively small leaellynasaurs and timimus and the much larger allosaurus, ran on two legs. The minimi was armoured; the ornithocheirus could fly; there were turtle-like notochelones, sea dwelling plesiosaurs and early monotreme mammals. All needed to survive winters with long periods of darkness near the Antarctic Circle.²³

At a site 50 km to the east of Harewood, when workmen were widening the South Gippsland Highway at Koonwarra, they discovered the fossil bed of an ancient wetland that also proved to date from around 115 myr. Alongside cycads and bracken, beside a freshwater lake, a forest of ancient ginkgo trees had grown, with leaves similar to fossils from India and Patagonia echoing links the land masses shared when the continents were joined. A few moulted feathers were found, but which dinosaur or early bird moulted them remains a mystery. Wasps and pollen from an ancient angiosperm, a flowering plant, lay on the forest floor. Bees, ants, birds and mammals would explode in diversity as they adapted as pollinators of this new form of plant life.

No land animal bones were amongst these fossils, but in 1997, at a site on the Bass Strait coast where Cretaceous reptile bones had previously been unearthed, the fossilised jaw bone of a tiny shrew-like mammal, named *Ausktribosphenos nyktos*, dated to 115 myr was discovered. It had features typical of placental rather than marsupial mammals. Reptiles, feathered creatures and mammals have all been present around Western Port for over 100 million years. A case could be made that echidnas, which still chase ants on Harewood's sandy soils, evolved locally from ancient mammal-like reptiles. Australia's wide diversity of marsupials is of more recent origin.²⁴

By 105 myr, on the other side of the world, DNA evidence suggests early placental mammals had two main radiations. One radiation included the Xenarthra ('strange joints'), which would further evolve into the ancient mammals of South America like armadillos, anteaters and sloths, and the Afrotheria which included ancient African moles as well as elephants and sea cows. The other radiation, the Boreoeutheria ('true northern placental mammals'), further split by around 90 myr into the Laurasiatheria, a hugely diverse group which would include dogs, seals, cats, and hoofed animals and our lineage, the Euarchontoglires, which gave rise to rats and rabbits, as well as supraprimates.²⁵

As this was happening, the Australian Peninsula continued to travel north, further stretching connections between Antarctica, Tasmania and the Mainland. Flinders and

‘The *Dasyuri* or brush tailed opossum.’
Swainson, William,
*The Natural History
and Classification
of Quadrupeds*,
Longman et al,
London, 1835,
p. 110. H.L. The
carnivorous
Dasyuridae are
now considered
a separate
family from the
Phalangeridae,
possums.

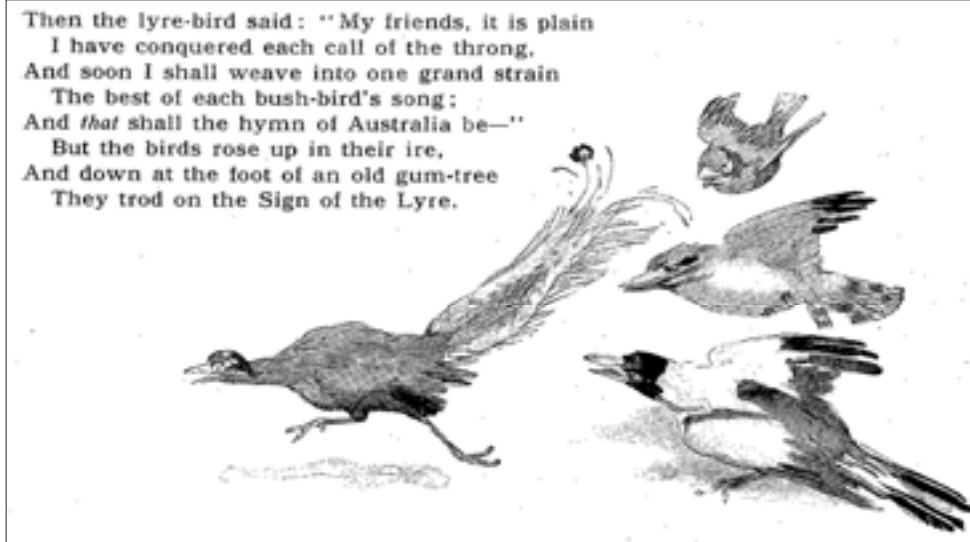


King Island became high points in the rift valley that would one day be flooded to make Bass Strait, while ‘the Southern Ocean’ (as Florence Lyall scribbled in her 1870s *Philips’ Student’s Atlas*), was forming to the south. DNA evidence suggests it was about this time and from this region that many modern birds emerged. Now greatly threatened,

New Zealand’s suite of endemic birds comprise some of the earliest modern species in the world and these islands rifted away from Australia some 80 myr with the Tasman Sea flooding and widening the gap. Around 75 myr, land connections between conjoined Antarctica/Australia and north travelling South America, finally severed. Of South America’s many diverse marsupials, one genus, *Microbiotheria*, shows DNA connections with Australia’s marsupials that suggest South America, or perhaps Antarctica, as the place where the ancestral parents of Australia’s marsupials first unzipped their DNA before carrying their stardust on to the newly forming island continent. Myrtle Beech (*Lophozonia cunninghamii*), a cool temperate rainforest tree Victoria shares with Tasmania and South America, also crossed the divide to survive to this day in rainforest refugia at the headwaters of the Bunyip River, 40 km away from Harewood. The waters of the Pacific Ocean rushed into the Atlantic, the Southern Ocean reshaped and Australia’s plant and animal populations were now isolated from the rest of the world. Monotreme mammals would survive and marsupials would thrive but placentals disappeared from Australia’s fossil record, until bats arrived some 15 myr.²⁶

To the north, from 90 myr, as the Laurasiatherian mammals were developing into the very early ancestors of hoofed animals, canids and, later, bats, the Euarchontoglires were splitting into rodents, rabbits and supraprimates. Both shared the landscape with small amphibians, turtles, crocodiles, pterosaurs and dinosaurs, including early birds. Suddenly, around 65 myr, a huge meteorite, the cause of our planet’s fifth major global extinction event, crashed to earth near the present day Gulf of Mexico initiating a train of events that marked the K-T (Cretaceous-Tertiary) boundary. It set the stage for the emergence of life as humans have known it.

Vast fires ignited as atmospheric oxygen levels were 10% higher than currently, the earth burned fiercely then darkened for months as an enormous cloud of dust encircled the globe. Huge dinosaurs could not withstand these extraordinary conditions but resilient birds, lizards, snakes, frogs and terrestrial animals with an ability to hide or burrow and maintain their body temperature, fared better, especially those who lived far away from the crash site. Without their previous rivals, they multiplied, diversified and, later, explosively spread across the continents. Final ties between Australia and Antarctica ruptured around 35 myr. Gondwana ceased to exist and water could travel circumferentially around Antarctica.²⁷



Lyre-Bird chased by a magpie, kookaburra and grey thrush, Norman Lindsay, artist, E.S. Emerson, author, *An Australian Bird Calendar*, George Robertson and Co, Melbourne, July, 1911. H.L. Understanding of the evolution of these endemic Australian birds has expanded greatly since Lindsay & Emerson did their delightful calendar.

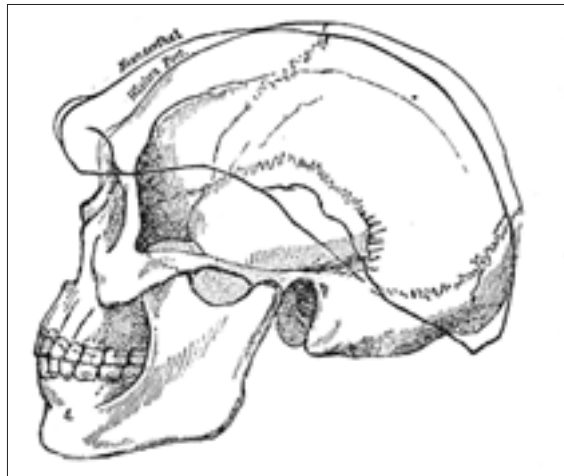
'La Grande Coupure' ('the great cut/rupture') as it has been called, was associated with a profound cooling of the earth's climate as warm equatorial waters no longer reached the shores of the still static continent that straddled the South Pole. Ice began to form, locking up the waters of the oceans and lowering the level of the seas, strong winds blew. Penguins and waterfowl, as well as birds with deep keel bones, capable of powered flight, emerged from earlier avifauna to take advantage of new ecological circumstances. Their ability to fly or swim allowed birds to cross widening bodies of water where terrestrial species could not. Primitive quail-like wader birds may have swum and flown between the fragmenting landmasses, then grown in size and evolved to become Australia's now extinct giant mihirungs and, their smaller cousins, the emus. These flightless birds share much of their DNA with flightless birds in South America (rheas), New Zealand (moas and kiwis) and elsewhere. Successors to their ancestors, Western Port's rich diversity of present day endemic Australian bird species including cockatoos, lyrebirds, magpies, thrush, honeyeaters and kookaburra, owe their existence to early Gondwana connections and La Grande Coupure. New families of terrestrial animals also appeared in Australia's fossil records: frogs, lizards and snakes. Turtles and monotreme mammals, known from earlier times remained; but labyrinthodonts, dinosaurs (apart from their bird descendants), plesiosaurs and the tiny placental mammals that had lived locally before the K-T disaster were missing.²⁸

To the north, Arabia and India collided with the Eurasian Plate, the Tethys Sea closed, the Alps and Himalayas rose and the Bering Strait intermittently became a land bridge. Wildlife from Europe, North America and Africa, including hoofed stock, canids and primates, juggled their placental mammal stardust to create new families destined to have profound effects on human history and reverberate on Western Port.²⁹

CLEVER PEOPLE FROM ACROSS THE SEA

The mammal that would most mould Harewood's history came from Africa. By the Eocene Epoch (c. 56-34 myr) 'new world' monkeys split from those of the 'old world' as the Atlantic Ocean widened and the Americas drifted away from Africa and Europe. Unlike today's Sahara Desert, the North Africa of 30 myr was a damp tropical place with rich forest vegetation through which early primates howled, swung, played, fought and copulated. It was probably from this source old world monkeys began to expand into Europe and Asia, reaching Britain by 5 myr. When the globe again cooled, they retreated south. No apes, apart from humans, ever reached Australia.³⁰

Humans share some 98.5% of our DNA with chimpanzees and fossil evidence suggests our common ancestral parents lived some seven million years ago. It was near present day Chad that one of the first proto-human twigs, so-called *Sahelanthropus tchadensis*, branched off from the chimp-human trunk and began to walk upright. A later group, the australopithecines (*Homo afarensis* and/or *Homo africanus*) roamed over much of east Africa. With the slow rise of the Isthmus of Panama from some 4 myr, warm currents were diverted away from the Arctic and a sharp ice age was precipitated. Africa dried and cooled and areas that had been jungle changed into open savannah. With a bipedal gait and ability to lock their knee joints, the australopithecines were able to walk distances and to use their hands while walking as no other species had done before. Half a million years later a group of three australopithecines were able to leave foot prints of human form, with the heel taking the impact and the arch, ball and big toe launching the next step as they followed dawn ponies and hare across volcanic ash in Laetoli, Tanzania. By around 2.5 myr in northern Africa bipedal primates with somewhat finer facial features were using crude stone tools as well as 'tools-to-make-tools'. *Homo habilis* ('handyman') searched for plant food and hunted prey in organised social groups. With their faces further from the ground these emerging humans came to rely more on vision than smell as their key sense, and might have expressed thoughts with words, as their larynx was placed further down the throat allowing a sound-producing chamber above it.³¹



When humans strode out of Africa 1.7 myr, life expectancy had increased and more than one group spliced their stardust into the Middle East and Asia. A race with light-boned, 'gracile' features like their *Homo habilis* forbearers formed a community near present day Dmanisi, close to the Black Sea, and most likely others further afield. Another, a group, with

'An Australian skull from Western Port, in the Museum of the Royal College of Surgeons, with the contour of the Neanderthal skull.' Thomas Huxley, *Man's Place in Nature*, Watts & Co London, 1863, Figure 30, p. 101. H.C. Of all the crania he had access to study, Huxley picked a Western Port man to compare with the recently excavated Neanderthal skull.

robust features, longer legs, a heavy single brow ridge, flat forehead, a larger brain, and an angled occiput (back of the skull) fanned out across the width and breadth of Eurasia. Palaeoanthropologists typically assign these robust people to a variety of species, *Homo erectus* in Asia and Africa and *H. ergaster*, *H. neanderthalensis* and *H. heidelbergensis* in Europe. The depth of this taxonomic splitting is open to debate however as DNA studies have shown hybridisation, suggesting one hominid family with a lot of variation: a single, but diverse, family of humankind for over 1.5 million years.³²

Early robust humans threw spears, wore clothing, walked long distances, made shelters, used fire and collectively learned how to improve these technologies as they established new communities and passed down oral traditions. They were in Spain by a million years ago, they were building shelters in northern China by at least 500 thousand years ago (kyr) and, by 400 kyr, these pioneers were hunting and butchering with spearheads, flint carvers and stone hand axes in Germany and Britain. Using clothes, shelters and fire would have enabled their communities to survive in a much greater range of weather conditions. Their crania enlarged but there was a trade-off, as walking upright on two feet required a narrow pelvis and birthing babies with large heads placed mothers at greater risk of death in childbirth. Ritual cremations and burials of individuals, including bodies of some people riddled with illness or old injuries, provide evidence these ancient people experienced inner feelings, cared for their disabled members and had crossed a sixth grand threshold in ourstory: asking “Why?” to universal puzzles of life.³³

Fossil records suggest Indonesia has long been home to a varied group of humans. Radioisotope dating for a child’s cranium found near Mojokerto suggests heavy browed people, some with a arch on the top of their skull, lived around Java from as long as 1.8 myr, while dates for several adult crania found near Ngandong suggest robust people were still there around 33 kyr. But they weren’t the only folk. Fossil evidence of human artefacts dated 800 kyr as well as skeletal remains of a highly distinctive race of diminutive people (so called *Homo floresiensis*) dating to 18 kyr have been found on the island of Flores, a possible stopover on ancient human journeys leading to Australia. Even during ice ages, when most of the Archipelago would become linked with Asia as ancient Sundaland, Flores remained separated from the mainland by at least three deep-water channels, the narrowest 19 km wide. Humans who first reached Flores could have been storm-blown or paddled themselves but what they looked like and when the ancestors of the little people, who were there 18 kyr, arrived is still an open question.³⁴

How did present day Europeans and Australian Aboriginal people evolve from earlier African and Eurasian humans? The earliest fossils of recognizably modern *Homo sapiens* appear at Omo Kibish in Ethiopia more than 100 kyr. They started to leave Africa between 60-70 kyr after one of the worst parts of the last Ice Age. Genetic evidence points to a sharp population drop to fewer than 10,000 individuals before it

'A Perplexing Problem.'
Melbourne Punch
 17 July, 1862. H.L.
 William Lyall
 enjoyed a joke, he
 had his copies of
Melbourne Punch
 from the first
 volume in 1856
 until 1878 bound
 and added to his
 library.



bounced back from this near extinction event and some intrepid explorers ventured across the Bab-al-Mandab Strait separating present day Yemen from Djibouti. Populations expanded rapidly along the coast to India and Southeast Asia and with these new African emigrants came a flowering of imaginative cave artwork, music and technical innovation. Whether this was due to more complex mental capacity, social organisation or ideology is not really understood but evidence

suggests that these people were the first to breathe life into gods and creation story telling. It was only after modern *Homo sapiens* appeared on the scene that evidence of human communities sharing such symbolism began to emerge.³⁵

In many instances, human nature being as it is, through love and lust genetic swapping likely took place between the new comers and communities they encountered. This left a legacy of Neanderthal markers on the genomes of some Eurasians and many Aboriginal people with some also carrying markers indicating Denisovan ancestry, a distinctive ancient group related to the Neanderthals.³⁶

Common sense, archaeological evidence and now expanding genetic sequencing data suggest humans have repeatedly dispersed over both land and sea and hybridisation with pre-existing societies probably has happened. Following arrival, natural selection pressures operate to change local human populations just as they do in all living communities. Chronologically, humans from robust, gracile or diminutive communities, or people from mixed backgrounds, would all have been positioned to make the sea crossing from Sundaland (the conjoined Eurasia and islands of South East Asia) to Sahul (conjoined Australia, New Guinea and Tasmania) and to weave their stardust into Australian history. Evidence suggests many did.

The first crossing was thought to have first occurred at a time of low sea level around 60 kyr but there were many since. At least fifteen distinct mitochondrial DNA lineages (genetic material received from the female side) have been demonstrated in Aboriginal populations, suggesting an ongoing trickle of women from diverse backgrounds as founding mothers to current day Aboriginal people. Contrasting with this, the presence of Y chromosome markers m168 and m130 suggest that direct male

ancestors of present day Aboriginal people trace to a handful of related individuals who came from north-east Africa, sometime after 80 kyr. The practice of invading warriors murdering or marginalising the men of vanquished tribes they met and taking their wives and daughters as sexual partners is a pattern seen in both chimpanzees and some human cultures and could account for the differences seen in Y chromosome (male lineage) and mitochondrial DNA (female lineage) analysis.³⁷

ACROSS THE CONTINENT TO LO-AN'S LAND

As an Ice Age continent, Australia was much bigger than the present day; it was cold, windy, hyper-arid and some 40% was covered with mobile sand dunes. The first humans raft-wrecked upon the coast must have thought the land extraordinary. The only placental land mammals that existed in the country were bats, who had arrived over 15 myr and rodents, whose ancestors had managed to island hop and raft on flotsam from Asia in the preceding 10 or so million years. What wiped out the descendants of *Ausktribosphenos nyktos*, Victoria's 110 million year old placental shrew, is not known but, isolated from lions, tigers, bears, wolves and man, the aggressive, efficient, placental predators of Eurasia, marsupial mammal fauna had evolved into unique and giant forms. Australia's grassland marsupials, the macropods, had developed large hind legs and a hopping gait to enable them to move swiftly while carrying pouch young. Giant kangaroos, lumbering diprotodonts, huge monitor lizards, fish and pythons would likely have been easy prey for humans but crocodiles, venomous snakes, stinging insects and poisonous plants abounded and survival could not have been simple. Populations in very early settlements may have remained low and perhaps huddled coastally, their existence hidden from archaeological discovery by subsequent coastal flooding.³⁸

At Devil's Lair in West Australia there is evidence of human artefacts dating from 48 kyr while earliest human skeletal remains so far uncovered in Australia come from Lake Mungo in western New South Wales, around 40 kyr. The bodies had originally been cremated suggesting that this Ice Age community struggled with the mind/spirit/body trinity and questioned what happened after death. By 40 kyr anatomically modern humans had also arrived in Europe and appeared to be constructing their own metaphors, mythologies and moral codes as they puzzled over the same questions. They played flutes made of mammoth bones, carved fertility goddesses from



'Grass Trees',
Sidney, Samuel,
*The Three Colonies
of Australia*,
Ingram, Cooke
& Co, London,
1853, p. 370. H.L.
Indigenous firestick
farming sculpted
the landscape for
thousands of years
before Europeans
drew scenes, such
as this, for their
books.

Aboriginal people of the Murray, Mitchell, Thomas, *Three Expeditions into the Interior of Eastern Australia*, Vol II, T & W Boone, London, 1839, following p. 104. H.L. Aboriginal communities along the Murray have a rich cultural heritage that has included cemetery burial of their members dating back over 15,000 years.



ivory and later drew life-like scenes on the walls of dark caves depicting their hunters herding ponies, rhinoceros and cattle into slaughter corrals in southern France and Spain. Fire was central to both cultures and, using fire to hunt and encourage grassland herbivores, had the ripple effect of promoting fire-resistant vegetation, fundamentally changing the landscape.³⁹

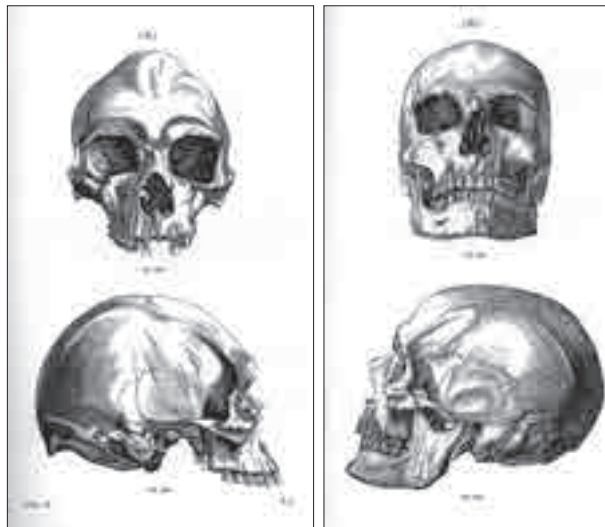
Falling sea levels created a land bridge between Tasmania and the mainland around 42 kyr which remained for the next 28,000 years. Circa 40 kyr is the earliest date for human cultural material in Tasmania and, on the terrace of the Maribyrnong River, not far from Melbourne's Tullamarine Airport, the skull of a tall, gracile man dating from before 12 kyr was found adjacent to a deposit of struck flakes of human origin dating back to between 25 and 36 kyr. While there is no direct fossil evidence, because Western Port was part of the overland route between the mainland and Tasmania, around 40 kyr seems a reasonable estimate for the time when light-boned Aboriginal pioneers first discovered the grassland that would become Western Port.⁴⁰

By 15 kyr Aboriginal people with gracile features were spread widely across Australia, including conjoined Tasmania, where they stencilled handprints on the walls of their dwelling caves. Another group of people with robust features that echoed those of 'Java Man' (though any relationship is unproven) had emerged in the fossil record along a corridor running from Northwest Australia to the Murray River. Between 15 and 10 kyr these robust Aboriginal people were living beside the Kow Swamp, along the upper reaches of the Murray River, and buried their dead in shallow graves, carefully laying out the bodies on their left sides with knees drawn up towards their chin, one of the earliest examples of cemetery burial yet discovered in the world.

In trying to explain why Aboriginal Australians, like Yamerboke, had different facial features than Europeans such as William Lyall, the suggestion has been made that for humans evolving in a cold climate, a narrow nose would be useful in warming air prior to inhalation and, perhaps, farming people, such as the Europeans, had less need for robust features and large teeth. European gracilization, however, predates farming by some 15,000 years. Anthropologist Colin Pardoe suggested strong, physically robust men were at an advantage in combat (some Aboriginal men were much larger than the women) and so could better protect their families and territory in productive areas such as along the Murray or around Western Port. Gracile individuals with smaller bodies may have fared better in arid, marginal areas remote from the river system. As with many areas of human evolution these various imaginings of how body features might have related to differing climatic or cultural influences and/or population isolation are hotly contested.⁴¹

DOGS, AGRICULTURE AND HUMAN FACES

In life, Yamerboke was a tall, handsome, solid man who was physically strong and excelled in tracking and boomerang throwing. His features bear passing resemblance to the strongly robust early Javanese or, more recently, the Kow Swamp people, who could have been a founding population for the Port Phillip and Western Port people. The Yorta Yorta people of the Murray still maintain links with Kulin today. Halford's now controversial 1878 drawing of the 'Skull of "King Jimmy"', compared with European crania, showed a large, long and thick-walled skull with a strongly sloping, flat forehead and an arch along the top, a feature shared with some *Homo erectus* crania, that would have allowed for the insertion of strong jaw muscles to aid chewing hard foods. Strong brow ridges were especially prominent, in fact the Boonwurrung used the term *tourn-a-myng* ('thick bark over eye') to describe this feature. His full face allowed ample room for large wisdom teeth. His large, low set, rectangular eye sockets and wide nose could have been related to his superior visual and olfactory acuity compared to the invading Europeans, though whether bigger would equate to better in this context is a moot point.⁴²



Skull of 'King Jimmy of the Mordialloc Tribe', p. 369 compared with that of 'Morgan the Bushranger', p. 349, Brough Smyth, *Aborigines of Victoria*, Vol II, 1878. H.L. Aboriginal people have rightly challenged an unfettered pursuit of scientific discovery and raised a raft of intertwining ethical, emotional and spiritual questions regarding handling of human remains. Finding these images of Jimmy when researching his biography brought the differing cultural perspectives into sharp contrast.

Inter-relationships between humans, dogs and other domestic animal species may have played a small role in evolving human features. DNA evidence suggests the Carnivoramorpha, which would eventually give rise to the cat, dog and seal families, emerged soon after the K-T boundary disaster of 65 myr with the earliest felids evolving out of Asia and the earliest canids from North America. Wolves made their way to Eurasia via the Bering Strait several million years ago and, most likely, would have first met the genus *Homo* around 1.7 myr when small groups of humans and a suite of other adaptable and opportunistic animals were escaping Africa via a land corridor, the Levant, that had formed between the Mediterranean and the Red Sea and were exchanging their stardust with western Asia.

The Levant and western Asia was a melting pot where modern humans came into contact with the animal species that enabled 'civilisation', as we know it, to emerge: wolf-dogs, sheep, cattle and horses. There is evidence of wolf domestication in Asia as well. Archaeological evidence emerging from Europe and Siberia suggest wolf-dog domestication dating back over 30 kyr with an undisputed record of a woman found buried with her hand resting on the body of a dead puppy at a site in Israel dated to a little over 14 kyr. Pictures of dogs, including sight hounds and guard dogs, appeared on the walls of tombs in Egypt and on ancient friezes and hieroglyphics. Domestication of the dingo appears to have occurred less than 10 kyr, in Southeast Asia. Dramatically diverse breeds of domestic dogs – Great Danes, British Bulldogs, Italian Greyhounds, Pekingese, Dachshunds and Chihuahuas and Dingoes are all products of manipulation by humans. In spite of their diversity they are the same species, *Canis lupus familiaris*, and, if physical challenges can be overcome, interbreed freely.⁴³

Could inter-relationships between dogs and humans have impacted on the physical features of present day humans in the same way we have impacted on dogs? A massive stretch perhaps but the human-domestic dog partnership was strengthening at a time and place close to where populations of humans with flat faces and narrow noses were beginning to increase in numbers. It wasn't until some 3.5 kyr dingoes arrived in Australia. Dogs' superior olfactory, auditory and visual acuity along with their sharp teeth and protective instincts could have given human communities working with them advantages in hunting and warfare and such human communities might have had less need for olfactory acuity, large teeth or robust features. This could partially explain why Yamerboke, whose ancestors were isolated in a distant corner of Australia and so had a much shorter period of co-evolution with dogs or other domestic animals, might have been advantaged by retaining distinctive robust features. Undoubtedly a complex range of other interacting local and climatic conditions influenced physical features as well.⁴⁴

GLOBAL WARMING SPURS INVENTIONS AND ALLIANCES

The first appearances of stone tools in sites around Australia date to before 40 kyr, a time when most of the British Isles were still buried beneath huge glaciers. These stone tools were often found by archaeologists immediately over deposits devoid of human artefacts but containing many bones of giant marsupials. One such early site, dated up to 100 kyr, was found in the northwest part of Woiwurung lands, in a swamp near present day Lancefield. Over 10,000 mammals died in, or perhaps were washed into, the accumulation and became fossilised. These included species that still exist today but in addition there were giant grey kangaroo (*Macropus giganteus*), twice the size of their present day counterparts, huge emu-like ground dwelling mihirungs, (*Genyornis*), large diprotodontids (*Diprotodon* and *Zygomaturus*), unusual kangaroos (*Protemnodon*, *Prolepus* and *Sthenurus*), marsupial lions (*Thylacoleo*), and giant wombats (*Phacolonus*). Two large stone tools were found with the bones but, unlike similar finds in Europe and North America, no marks were identified that might prove human weapons or tools were used to butcher these now extinct large animals.⁴⁵

The Kulin were not noted for rock art but Pleistocene people living in other parts of Australia hammered patterns into stone and used red ochre and other pigments to paint animals such as the long beaked echidna (*Zaglossus*) and the marsupial tapir (*Palorchestes*), extinct since 18 kyr. In Tasmania, Ice Age Aboriginal people spat ochre to stencil their hand prints on the walls of their caves, while, beside a much lower



'The museum going away at last.' *Melbourne Punch*, April 6 1865. H.L. Scientists in colonial Victoria were fascinated by fossils of giant marsupials being dug up and there were fights as to whether specimens should go to the university or the museum. Professor Fredrick McCoy, a staunch creationist and prolific writer, with whom Lyall worked in the Acclimatisation Society, was a colourful protagonist.

Mediterranean Sea, Cro-Magnon people continued their earlier tradition and painted ponies struck with bow and arrow, reindeer, boar and aurochs on their cave walls.⁴⁶

In the western part of Victoria, Aboriginal people watched as Mount Buninyong spewed fire and stone from its crown and the surrounding plains were littered with debris from this, and other active volcanoes. The stories of these events were passed down through campfire corroborees over countless generations, allowing the Kulin people to later recount them to Europeans who recorded them in memoirs and books. On the dry land along the north of Western Port, north-westerly winds were sweeping sands across lowland into parabolic dunes to form hills that would later become French Island and the site on which Harewood House would one day be built. Here, as in much of the world, the climate was arid and vegetation sparse so the people of the day congregated by inland lakes, river flats or coastal sites such as those to the south, along the Bassian Plain, to take advantage of richer food sources. Perhaps they might have camped beside an ancient, now submerged, Bunyip river that ended in a large distributary fan (the sandy remains of which would one day underpin the Kooweerup Swamp) then flowed south between French Island and the mainland. Or they may have viewed the countryside from high ground that would later form the islands of Western Port.⁴⁷

Elsewhere in the world adventurous humans continued to fan out from their early African and Eurasian strongholds. They crossed the ice-covered Bering Sea from west to east but a vast glacier that covered Canada impeded their journey southwards. Around 18 kyr the last glacial maximum had reached its peak and the earth began to warm, melting polar ice caps and flooding the world's oceans. Some scientists have suggested this was due to the increasing amount of radiation reaching the earth because of a change in the ellipticity of the earth's orbit and a tilt of the polar axis relative to the plane of the orbit, but there is debate about this view, as there is for so much of emerging 'big history'. At this time of global warming a small group of innovative humans managed to traverse the Canadian glacier to found the dynasties and lay the foundations of the rich cultures of the Native Americans. Within centuries of their arrival, the Paleo-Indians and their accompanying dogs had grafted their stardust into North America, crossed the Panama land bridge and reached South America. Human artefacts and skeletal remains that can be confidently dated to before 15 kyr have been emerging in the Americas, suggesting early ancient seafarers may have made landfall in the Americas multiple times on both the east and west coasts. The spread of humans can be linked chronologically with the decline of large mammals as people, working co-operatively, hunted wild horses, lions and sabre-toothed tigers, rhinoceros, and woolly mammoths with bows, arrows, spears and, in some cases, dogs. In the battle of DNAs, those not smart, strong, camouflaged or collectively organised enough to protect themselves from the most invasive species the world has known left no descendants and were pushed to local extinction.⁴⁸

Likewise in Australia, early Aboriginal hunting, coupled with cyclical climatic alteration and the use of fire, contributed to the demise of the large marsupials with which indigenous people co-existed. Some would argue that these activities of over 10 Kyr marked the beginning of the earth's latest epoch, the Anthropocene, which has been characterised by human induced changes to our planet. It may have been from the experience of losing key megafauna prey species that the Aboriginal world view came to centre on sustainability and to interweave birds, animals, religion and all elements of their environment. Controlled patch burning, 'fire stick farming', could cyclically replenish the grasslands for a diverse range of indigenous plants and animals. Whatever the origin, the practice favoured plants adapted to fire and shaped the continent's landscape to benefit species upon which Aboriginal survival and spiritual beliefs were based.⁴⁹

From 18 to 6 kyr, the last Ice Age gradually abated, the flooding rift valley of the Bassian Plain transformed into the Bass Strait and exhausted fur seals, swept by currents from South Africa, climbed onto the newly formed islands to found their colonial dynasties. Tasmania, with her human, plant and animal inhabitants, was progressively cut off from mainland Australia from around 14 kyr and coastal Aboriginal campsites were lost beneath the sea. Aboriginal stories spoke of their kinsfolk being transformed into seals.

Lifeforms were shepherded across the seventh grand threshold in our story when humans, plants and animals co-adapted to develop agriculture. In the Middle East, some 10 kyr Mesolithic communities began to tinker with locally available plants and to cultivate wheat and barley. The availability of surplus fodder from grain cultivation may have had some bearing on the domestication of sheep and goats, which dated from around the same time and place, the Zagros and Taurus Mountains of Anatolia. It was a reciprocal exchange as humans tapped into the flocking instincts of grassland herbivores to their mutual advantage. Wild Bezoar goats and Mouflon sheep had mild temperaments, grew quickly, herded readily, bred freely and would easily imprint on humans and accept them as part of their 'flock'. When Europe's climate returned briefly and temporarily to cold dry conditions, wild animal populations fell, and selection pressures likely favoured humans who had built on the earlier experiences of their communities and could work co-operatively with emerging domesticates. Herding, as opposed to hunting, might sustain higher populations of humans and help to preserve the DNA of both the people herding and the flocks on which they relied and so the stardust of the people, plants, animals and ecosystem were reconfigured in succeeding generations. Along with the auroch and wild boar, these Eurasian sheep and goats were the progenitors of key domestic species, animals that readily bonded to humans and were able to live in a diversity of climates. They became the mainstay of agriculture in the Old World and followed human colonists around the globe. Turkeys, camelids and guinea pigs were independently domesticated in the Americas. Equally suitable wild candidates for domestication did not exist amongst the native plants and marsupial mammal species of Lo-an's Land.⁵⁰

Emus and kangaroos roamed the grasslands near Harewood 9 kyr and, like the wild deer, gazelle and antelope of other continents, they did not easily lend themselves to human control. While well adapted to the local climate, they had flighty temperaments and tended to panic rather than accept humans as surrogate leaders of their mobs. They would crash through barricades and leap heights. Suitable indigenous plants that could be grown intensively for fodder to sustain large human and animal populations were also scarce. Rather than Eurasian style cultivation, firestick farming continued to replenish the grasslands that would one day become the seabeds of Western Port and Port Phillip Bay. The land was managed to provide a sustainable hunting ground but without access to large quantities of reliable, nutritious food sources or milk from domestic animals to feed small infants, Aboriginal populations remained low and constantly moving. There were neither privileged nor under classes, as emerged in expanding human communities elsewhere around the world.

In Southwest Asia, communities built on earlier agricultural innovations, cattle were harnessed to the first wooden ploughs, grain production swelled and beer, wine and then other alcoholic drinks began to be fermented. Around 6 kyr, people from north of the Black Sea, tapping into collective learning from agricultural communities to their south, began to domesticate wild ponies to serve as beasts of burden and sources of meat, milk and leather.

Around 6 kyr was also the time the 1831 Bible on Harewood's bookshelves dated Adam's banishment from the Garden of Eden and, fatefully, archaeological evidence suggests that fertile land emerged from beneath the vast retreating British glaciers. Bear, auroch, ponies and the creative people whose ancestors had earlier painted pictures on the walls of caves in southern France followed to exploit the forest fringe in the south of England.⁵¹

Meanwhile some Africans and Eurasians were developing a fascination for a malleable shiny metal, an element found in local rock formations that could be traced back to stardust from the supernova that gave rise to our solar system. It had little utilitarian use but could be hammered into beautiful jewellery, vessels or religious icons. Later gold objects and then gold coins would replace containers of barley as the world's first currency. These particular abstractions were not shared by Aboriginal people who were aware of gold, but saw more symbolic meaning in natural rocks, such as the round basalt and quartzite spirit stones at Harewood. The value their distant human cousins came to attach to alcohol and gold would have a profound effect on Kulin history.



'There is no luck
about the house'
Melbourne Punch 28
June 1860, p. 178.
H.L

s well as with fermentation and gold, African-Eurasians began to tinker with molten metals: elemental copper, then bronze (copper and tin), and later iron were cast

or hammered into metal tools which began to complement those of wood and stone. Wheels and chariots were invented, horses harnessed to them, and their use spread across the conjoined continents. With more reliable food sources, easier transport and the development of written communication, collective learning burgeoned and humans could imagine themselves as belonging to broader religious, trading or geographical affiliations. Rich cultural packages were emerging that enabled African-Eurasian people to form alliances, federations and conquering empires that harnessed the forces and particles of nature in deliberate, as well as unintended, ways and rewove its stardust fabric in their wake.⁵²

Hopping kangaroos or long legged emu did not lend themselves as beasts of burden. Spears, digging sticks and fire remained the key elements of Kulin agriculture. Local initiation and religious practices fostered care of the land, skills in hunting and gathering and loyalty to family and the Kulin confederacy. Incisor tooth avulsion became a rite of passage for young men perhaps over 7 kyr, but the Kulin never adopted circumcision, which was practised by some of the tribes in the northwest, nor the didgeridoo. Human voices and drum beats on rolled possum rugs provided the background music to corroborees held near Harewood while message sticks and bark-paintings comprised the visual record. As in many other indigenous cultures around the world, the Kulin people imagined a supreme creator deity who could manifest as human, as well as lesser gods and tricksters and saw their spiritual connections reflected in stars, stones, mountains, trees, animals and the world around them.⁵³

Powered by the same fundamental forces that drove the evolution of life forms, oceans continued to rise, reaching their current day levels by around 6 kyr. Global melt water from thawing polar ice caps widened the river that separated Neolithic Britons from Eurasia while at the same time flooding around mainland Australia further isolated the island continent. Beyond human control or understanding, local catastrophes associated with this extended period of global flooding may have been the basis for the legend of Noah's flood in the Hebrew Bible as well as being remembered in Aboriginal legends as the great Tundun flood that submerged Bass Strait, engulfed Lo-an's Land and later created Warn-mor-in and Nerm, the bays around which this narrative revolves.

GREAT FLOODS

He sent the fire (the Aurora Australis), which filled the whole space between the earth and the sky. Men went mad with fear and speared one another, fathers killed their children, husbands their wives, and brethren each other. The sea rushed over the land, and nearly all mankind were drowned. Those who survived became the ancestors of the Kurnai. Some of them turned into animals, birds, reptiles, fishes; and Tundun and his wife became porpoises. Mungan left the earth, and ascended to the sky where he still remains.⁵⁴

As Ice Age temperatures rose, water from melting polar ice caps caused sea levels to rise while further rifting between Tasmania and the mainland caused land levels to fall in many areas. The coastal tribes of south-eastern Australia all had traditional stories about Great Floods which may have related to these or more recent events. In the ancestral-creation version the Kurnai of Gippsland told, *Mugan-ngaua* was the all-father equivalent to Bunjil, *Tundun* (after whom the bull-roarer was named) was his son and the men's initiation ceremony, was called the *Jeraeil*. A traitor revealed the secrets of the Jeraeil to women and brought the wrath of Mugan upon the tribe.⁵⁵

Without robust sailing vessels, when the sea inundated the rift valley of the Bassian Plain, for 14,000 years the Tasmanian people and their mainland relations became

Map of Victoria and Tasmania, taken from Admiralty Chart showing 50 and 100 fathoms lines. Howitt, Alfred, *The Native Tribes of South East Australia*, London, 1904, p. 21. H.C. Howitt was one of the first to identify that a drop in sea level would have seen Tasmania connected with the mainland along the island chain on the east of Bass Strait.



separated but not forgotten. The sequence of events in Western Port is not entirely clear but as Bass Strait rifting continued, fault lines formed around what were to become Port Phillip and Western Port and land levels in the Bays dropped. Harewood was transformed from a sandy dune into a wooded hill overlooking wetlands and a grassy plain, then with further tectonic movement, organic debris accumulated in the north part of the sunkland and water from the Bass Strait flowed in from the south. It became a rim of high ground sandwiched between sea and swamp. When land and sea levels stabilised to their present configuration after 6 kyr, the centre of the swamp was impenetrable but the outer swamp had fertile peat soil and a wealth of food resources. Aboriginal people firestick farmed and camped along the coastal corridor where William Lyall would later build his family's home.⁵⁶

Around Western Port, as was the case in many coastal sites around the world, there was innovation as human communities, pushed back by the rising oceans, were thrown together in competition for diminished dry land. Archaeological digs around Western Port have yielded no evidence of the 'large tool tradition' characteristic of earlier, Pleistocene, sites, but 'Small Tool Phase' sites dating from after around 6 kyr have been found in abundance. While they had no written language, the Kulin people had oral memory of their presence on the land before the creation of the present day landscape around the bays. Billibillary, the leading ngurungaeta at the time of Melbourne's white settlement, gave this version of his people's traditional flood story that tried to make sense of forces of nature they sought to control.⁵⁷

Once the waters of the Yarra were locked up in the mountains. This great expanse of water was called Moorool, or Great Water. It was so large that the Woiworung had little hunting ground. This was in contrast with the Wothowurongs and the Bonurongs, whose hunting ground was the lovely flat, which is now Port Phillip Bay.

Mo-yarra, Slow-and-fast running, was the headman of the Woiworung. He decided to free the country of water. He therefore, cut a channel through the hills, in a southerly direction, and reached Western Port. However, only a little water followed him, and the path cut for it gradually closed up, and the water again covered the land of the Woiworung.

At a latter time the headman of the tribe was Bar-wool. He remembered Mo-yarra's attempt to free the land. He knew that Mo-yarra still lived on the swamps beside Western Port (Koo-wee-rup). Each winter he saw the hilltops covered with the feather down which Mo-yarra plucked from the water birds sheltering on the swamps.⁵⁸

Current geological evidence supports the idea that Port Phillip Bay was once river flats of the Werribee and Yarra Rivers, which flowed into a freshwater lake.⁵⁹ The catchment area for Western Port was not as large and the Kooweerup sunkland impeded freshwater flow. Billibillary's picturesque metaphor unfolded further.

Bar-wool resolved to free the land. He cut a channel up the valley with his stone-axe. But he was stopped by Baw-baw, the Mountain. He decided to go northwards but was stopped by Donna Buang and his brothers. Then he went westwards, and cut through the hills to Warr-an-dyte. There he met Yan-yan, another Woiworung who was busily engaged in cutting a channel for the Plenty River in order to drain Morang, the place where he lived. They joined forces and the Moorool and Morang became Moo-roo-bark, the Place-where-the-wide-waters-were. They continued their work and reached the Heidelberg-Templestowe Flats, or Warringal, Dingo-jump-up, and there they rested while the waters formed another Morool.

Bar-wool and Yan-yan again set to work, but this time they had to go much slower, because the ground was much harder, and they were using up too many stone axes. Between the Darebin and Merri Creeks they cut a narrow, twisting track, looking for softer ground. At last they reached Port Phillip. The waters of Moorool and Morang rushed out. The country of the Woiworung was freed from water, but Port Phillip was inundated.⁶⁰

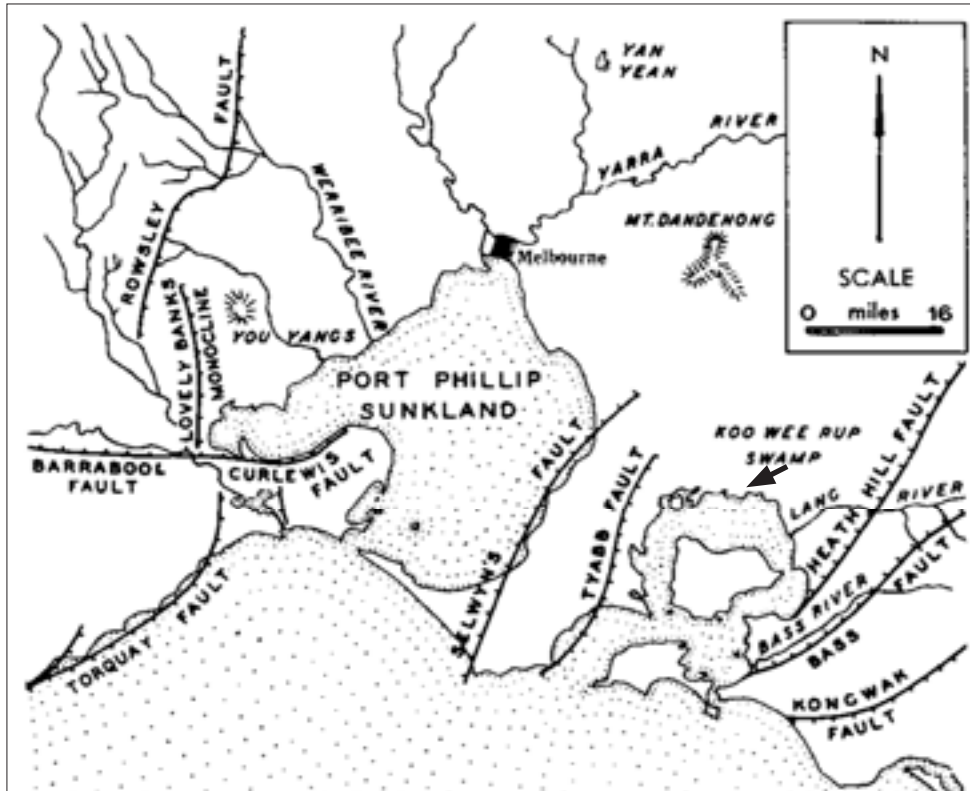
George Haydon, a settler who came to Western Port in the 1840s to cut and burn mangroves to make soda ash for soap, recorded another part of the Kulin story of the Great Flood.

There is a tradition amongst the natives of this part of the country, that the whole space occupied by Port Philip was once dry land, and that the sea overstepping its natural boundary burst through the part of the coast now forming the entrance and harbour and flooded the whole country and drowned great numbers of people.⁶¹

Billibillary and Haydon's descriptions both suggested that the flooding of Nerm (Port Phillip) was recent and cataclysmic rather than gradual. Based on work with the Geological Survey of Victoria, Guy Holdgate proposed that marine waters entered Port Phillip from around 7 kyr and reached a peak some 2-3 metres above their current level around 6 kyr. The entrance became blocked with sand some 3.6 kyr and, with water evaporation, much of the floor of the bay became dry land. Port Phillip's entrance again unblocked around 1000 years ago and coast lines reached their modern levels shortly afterwards.⁶²

In her diary of 30 October, 1851, Georgiana McCrae relates a somewhat different version of the Kulin story and, second hand, another tradition that before the great flood a branch of the Yarra wound around into Western Port.

"Plenty long ago... gago, gago, gago... alonga Corio, men could cross, dry foot, from our side of the bay to Geelong". They described a hurricane – trees bending to and fro – and the earth sank, and the sea rushed through the Heads until the void places became broad and deep, as they are today. Mr La Trobe adds the aboriginal tradition that the Yarra's course followed the Carrum Carrum Swamp and debouched into the sea at Western Port.⁶³



Fault lines South Central Victoria. Hills, E. Sherborn, *The Physiography of Victoria*, Whitcombe & Tombes, Melbourne, 1946, p. 161. H.L. Western Port and Port Phillip Bay are complex sunklands and former river flood plains. Harewood's position is marked with an arrow.

With a wide mouth and long history as an open, swampy estuary, flooding of Western Port is likely to have occurred more gradually than that of Port Phillip, allowing the Aboriginal people ample time to escape the rising seas on hillocks, such as Harewood, without loss of life.⁶⁴ William Thomas, a Wesleyan preacher and Aboriginal Protector who lived with the Kulin from 1839, recounted a version of the Kulin flood story laced with moral overtones.

The blacks say that after they had fire they were all marnumuk (meaning comfortable), and increased to great numbers; and after many, many years "blackfellows get very bad (wicked), when Punjil and Pallian big one sulky." "Punjil come down with his big one knife and cut the earth all over like blackfellow cut up damper, and come up water, and Pallian drive all big one water from sea on land; then like great guns come up koor-reen (storms) and pull up all trees, and come up water everywhere, and very bad blackfellows drowned, and that a great many not very bad, Punjil take up and make stars of, and that Punjil when all gone water, send another very good man and woman, named Berwool and Bobinger, and take and cut up one kangaroo and other animals into small pieces and they became a great number."⁶⁵

The parallels between Thomas' telling of this Kulin flood story and the story of Noah's Flood could be seen as reflecting his biblical background. But equally it could have been because two otherwise disparate, separately evolving, human communities both made sense of the experience of catastrophic flooding events in similar ways.

RETREAT TO LO-AN'S LAND

A friendly reception from the local people was not assured for refugees escaping great floods reshaping the world's land masses. Kurnai/Kulin rivalry may well have dated

from times of rising sea levels and altering coastlines and it is perhaps not co-incidental that new technology, in this case back blade spears and composite tools of the innovative Small Tool Phase, date from around 6 kyr, and to South East Australia.

In the north and centre of Australia, Aboriginal people attached sharp stone points to spears using spinifex resin. Stone points were occasionally used locally, but so too were triangular stone chips with one end blunted by a 'steep retouch' that were set in pid-jer-ong, gum harvested from wattle or grass trees and applied along the spear's sides. The peak period for the use of these 'back blades' in weapons and tools was 4 to 2 kyr but use continued up to post British invasion times. Back blade spears, called mongile, would cause great loss of blood on penetration and often could not be removed except if pushed completely through the victim's body.⁶⁶

Table 1. Classification of artefact types found at Harewood 1981 (0.8 artefacts/ m2) (after Gaughwin, Denise, 1983)

Tool Types (21 tools)

Scrapers	
Thumbnail scrapers	14%
Concave	5%
Small flake scrapers	5%
Nosed or steep edged	0
Microliths	
Bondi points	52%
Non-specific	14%
Crescent	5%
Utilised pieces	5%
Anomalous flakes with retouch	5%
Segment, grindstone or hatchet heads	0
Total	100%

The Blackfellows' midden on the sandy rise near the Harewood homestead, about which Bertha Lyall Ricardo had written, was destroyed when her grandfather's workmen crushed and burnt shells in the 1850s and 60s to make the mortar that bound the bricks of his new house. There was nothing left of them when government archaeologists came to survey the land in the 1980s. But Aboriginal artefacts scattered over the ground's surface occurred in abundance compared with other sites on Western Port. Over half of the stone tools recovered from west of Lyall's Inlet (now the Tooradin Airfield) were back blades of the Bondi point type. These slender asymmetrical blades, named for the beach on which Europeans first discovered them in the 1800s, are more than twice as long as they are wide and taper to a point. Amid the surface scatter there were also many other small stone tools for working wood, suggesting Harewood may have been a favoured workshop for thousands of years.⁶⁷

The land at the top of the Bay was a natural crossroad for people coming to or from Gippsland but the swamp was comprised of peat, clay and sand infill washed up by both streams and the tides. Silcrete and quartz, hard rocks favoured for tools, were not found locally but could be got from the Mornington Peninsula and Phillip Island. Silcrete, a fine-grained, hard siliceous stone, useful because of its toughness and suitable fracturing properties, occurred in outcrops in sandstone, as veins in granite or, along with flint and quartz, as pebbles on beaches and in streams. Quartz was difficult

to work because it fractures in a tabular fashion and tended to shatter on impact but small pieces were sharp edged and useful. These stones were the key materials used to manufacture tools to skin animals and to carve wooden implements and blades to incorporate in composite spears.⁶⁸

Physical evidence that land around Harewood has been lowered by earthquakes aligns with the Aboriginal traditions, stories of seismic events by white settlers such as the Reverend James Clow of Dandenong and the mild tremors felt in recent times. While geological dating is imprecise, the resulting sunkland became marshy, allowing peat to accumulate to form the Kooweerup Swamp, perhaps for as much as 80 kyr. When the oceans rose and sea flowed into the Western Port, inlets formed on either side of Jouap (French Island) until the two invading arms met. In contrast to Port Phillip, where narrow Heads held back tidal water from the rest of the Bay, Western Port's wide mouth ensured large volumes of sea water ebbed and flowed, giving Harewood 3.3 metre tides, some of the highest in Victoria.

Jeff Yugovic, studying the complex patterns of soils and vegetation in the Inlets around Cardinia Creek Drain in 2008, identified a line of marine origin islands with distinctive vegetation 1500 m back from mangrove fringed coastline. He interpreted these islands as the highmark waters reached in the mid-Holocene (some 6 kyr) before falling back to their present-day level. Along with eroded clays brought in by the tides, creeks on either side of the site brought clay, mud and organic material from the ranges and allowed the salt marsh and mangrove fringe to expand seaward. At low tide, salt water subsides into dendritic channels exposing broad mudflats where thousands of waders and water birds gather to feed on the rich invertebrate fauna of the Bay before resuming their annual migrations, some as far as 15,000 km, along the flyways of Eastern Asia.⁶⁹

MARINE-BEK

William Barak, Billibillary's nephew and eventual successor, described Kulin cultural traditions relating to the Western Port district to ethnographer Alfred Howitt in the 1890s. He said that Aboriginal people considered the coastal country harmful to strangers but bountiful for those who legitimately lived there.

Such a tract of land is that lying along the coast between the La Trobe River and the Yarra River and extending to the sources of those rivers. It therefore includes two tribes, the Kurnai and the Bonurong and the knowledge of it extended from the latter

Table 2. Classification of artefact types found at Harewood 1981 (0.8 artefacts/ m2) (after Gaughwin, Denise, 1983)

Material Types (246 Artefacts):

Silcrete (fine or medium grade)	65%
Quartz	28%
Ochre	2%
Volcanic	1%
Marine cherts	1%
Siltstone	1%
Granite, sandstone, coarse grain silcrete	0
Total	100%

Artefact Types:

Flakes and blades	88%
Tools	9%
Cores	2%
Bipolar cores	<1%
Manuports	2%
Total	100%

to the tribes at least as far as Kilmore. In Gippsland it was called Wea-wuk or the “Bad Country”, the Kulin tribes called it Marine-bek or the “Excellent Country”⁷⁰

Marine-bek was hallowed by the creator-spirit Bunjil and the Kulin ancestral hero-figure Lo-an as they rested at sacred sites that marked points along Lo-an’s epic journey from the Yarra River to Wamoon (Wilson’s Promontory). The Kurnai told a similar story about their own ancestral hero-figure, Tundun, and shared with the Kulin the belief that Lo-an and his wife, Lo-an tuka, lived in the mountains of Wilson’s Promontory.⁷¹

According to Kulin informants, any newcomer to Marine-bek had to obey various ritual prohibitions and “must also learn the Bunurong language which is spoken there and which is the language of Loo-ern who lives at Wilson’s Promontory and who made this custom.” To what extent the legends of Lo-an (spelt Loo-ern by this source) and the dangers of Lo-an’s Land might have emanated from a community caught between fear of further sea level rises to the south and hostile tribes to the north and east is open to conjecture, but rituals commemorating Lo-an’s epic journey served the local community and were still practised when the British invaded thousands of years later.

Loo-ern’s permission to enter his territory was granted in this way: If any blacks - say from Geelong - wished to visit the blacks at Western Port, they were to repair to some part of the mouth of the Yarra, wait there for the Yarra blacks, and having found them, tell them where they proposed to go. If their proposal was approved of they were conducted over the river, but always with their backs towards the side to which they were going. When they had crossed over they were made to sit down with their back towards Wamoon [Mt Oberon, Wilson’s Promontory]. A large fire was kindled in front of them, and they had to sit there a whole day without moving, and without food or water. This was done to let them know in what manner Loo-ern would roast them if they offended in any way against the laws of his country. At sundown, or perhaps a little before sundown, one of Loo-ern’s young men would bring some water in a tarnuk, holding in his hand a reed. The tarnuk full of water was placed near the lips of the first amongst the strangers, and just as the lips of the half roasted and perspiring creature touched the wooden vessel the reed was passed between his lips and it, and the tarnuk was taken to the next man, and the same ceremony repeated. This was done to all the strangers; and then the tarnuk was taken away. After this some meat would be brought, and the smallest piece that could be cut was given to each. These things were done to show in what manner Loo-ern would treat them if they offended against the laws of his country in any way.⁷²

The profound connection these rituals could give participants (open to such experiences) with landscape and community can be imagined. Paraphrasing the rest of the story, after sundown the young men were allowed to drink and the next day each would be given a piece of bark which they would light at Lo-an’s fire. For the remainder of their journey they held this bark and kept their eyes to the ground. If a halt were made each would have to sit with his back towards Wamoon. As they

approached Wamoon the strangers would wash themselves two or three times for several days and then paint their bodies. Early on the final morning the guides would awaken the strangers and conduct them 'through the tall damp ferns, past the ghost like forms of the grass trees, through the deep mazes of the tangled reeds and tea-tree' to briefly gaze towards Wamoon where Lo-an might reveal himself. Forever after this pilgrimage, empowered by their Lo-an connection, the strangers could kill all enemies except those belonging to Lo-an's country.⁷³

Whether Lo-an's awe-inspiring white form was supernatural, contrived by the elders or induced by hallucinations of exhausted, dehydrated, heat-stressed young minds was immaterial. The core of the experience, as in many initiation rites around the world, was to delve deeper than rational thinking and spark a deep spiritual connection with land, universe and nature. Belief in Lo-an's spirit would have left a strong sense of belonging and confidence in having achieved a great quest. In the language of Star Wars, the force was with them.

Kulin culture accepted humans as an integral part of a broader family of innate and living beings and was based on two classes, Bunjil and Waang (Eagle and Raven), as well as descent from other totem ancestors. An infant's class or moiety was that of its father and this was retained throughout life. Marriage within the same moiety was not permitted and men of the Yallock Bulluk clan, who like most Boonwurrung were of the Bunjil moiety, would be expected to take wives from surrounding Waang clans, although they would continue to reside on Boonwurrung lands. In exchange, their sisters and daughters would be promise brides for men in the Waang clans. Being reciprocal and intertwined with religious ceremonies and property rights, marriage laws were central to their lives. Typically parallel cousins (mother's sister's or father's brother's children) would be of the same moiety and could not legally marry each other while cross cousins (mother's brother's and father's sister's children) or cross second cousins would be of the opposite moiety, so could. Marriage might sometimes be plural with men or women of one moiety/totem group considered suitable partners for a complementary moiety/totem groups. Arrangements were often complex and it was common for young girls to be married to older men.⁷⁴

'The Law' governed how the Kulin set up their shelters or broke camp.

In arranging the miams, care is taken to separate the young unmarried men from the unmarried females and the families, and it is not permitted for the young men to mix with the females. They are strict in preserving order amongst the young of both sexes, but it happens frequently that all their precautions are evaded.⁷⁵

Aboriginal people use the English terms auntie, uncle, brother and sister broadly as our language is too inexact to describe the traditional Aboriginal relationships that were central to a wide range of Aboriginal values, ceremonial life, how they arranged their camps and marriages and who held custodianship of the land. Aboriginal culture was holistic, relationships between people and the environment tied back to the

two moieties and lesser totems: landscape, animals, plants, stars, marriage, family, everything. While physical conception was recognised, Aboriginal people traditionally believed that it wasn't until there was an energetic union of the developing foetus with one of the many spirit children that dwelt in the landscape that the foetus would come to life. When an appropriate Bunjil moiety baby boy was born, Bunjil elders had a traditional right to designate the part of the country for which he would hold custodianship when he reached maturity.

Experience with the difficulty of caring for young children in the Australian environment weighed heavily and infanticide was accepted practice. Unlike Eurasian mothers, Kulin mothers had no sheep or cattle to provide food or alternative sources of milk if their own failed, nor horses to carry food or infants on the tribe's seasonal journeys. Too many young children could jeopardise the survival of the whole group. Mothers made the decision, albeit influenced by their male relations, as to whether a newborn child should live. If she were still suckling another child, if the child were deformed, a twin, illegitimate, or population was too high for the resources available to the clan, the baby might be killed within the first few days after birth. If a Kulin child were allowed to survive it would be lovingly treated and protected. If an infant died, their mother might affectionately guard the bones in a net bag that was tied around the grieving mother's neck by day or placed under her head at night.⁷⁶

These practices served to control population growth and linked family groups to particular landscapes. Cross linkages through marriage in each successive generation strengthened the Kulin confederacy, sustained families through hard times and enabled their genes, culture and spirits to become moulded into the next generation as they warped the stardust fabric of their tiny part of the universe. It was also the reason for seasonal movements within the confederacy as Bunjil and Waang in-laws and relations in different clans had defined reciprocal responsibilities in ceremonial life, custodianship of the landscape, and education of each other's children.⁷⁷

By 6 kyr human and animal populations had adjusted to living on less land. Former peninsulas had become off shore islands as rising sea levels flooded coastal lowlands. In Europe, the English Channel flooded breaking contact between Britain and the continent but the Channel's breadth was less than half that of Bass Strait, and fishermen and those standing at vantage points along the mainland coast could still see the British islands. Inventive coastal people created dugout canoes and skin covered coracles in which people and their domestic plants and animals could be transported over the sea.

With secure food sources, Eurasian human populations swelled while wealth became consolidated into the hands of privileged families who controlled the lives and fates of an expanding underclass. A pyramid structure was reflected in the health, architecture, music and religious beliefs of emerging civilisations. Pox virus jumped from domestic animals to humans as pestilences gained momentum in crowded, dirty

conditions. When Moses reputedly led the Israelites out of Egypt around 3.3 kyr, they numbered in their thousands, far in excess of known gatherings of Aboriginal people. Like Aboriginal Law, Hebrew Law touched on diet, property, marriage and kinship responsibilities but Hebrew worldview saw connection with the universe through a single God. Ideologies that would engulf Europe, foster imperialism and challenge the Kulin nation were taking shape.⁷⁸

SONGLINES, DINGOES, FIRE AND A BUNYIP

Songlines and a dance of the Kundi-Djumindju people of the coast of northern Australia re-enacts the arrival of dingoes in Australia. They portray the dogs as running excitedly up and down the deck of a boat, stopping to look towards the land and water and then jumping overboard, swimming to shore, shaking dry, then nosing to hunt. The boat people, according to another Aboriginal story, were Baiini, small yellow skinned sea gypsies from Indonesia who left stardust legacies of human DNA, culture and dogs amongst the Aboriginal people of Australia. The story and dance accord with fossils records which suggest dingoes arrived from Asia about 3,500 years ago and, from the north, spread across the continent, reaching southern Australia some 500 years later. Like wolves, the dingoes that arrived from Asia had pricked ears, howled and came into season just once a year.⁷⁹



'The Native Dog or Dingoe', Sidney, Samuel, *The Three Colonies of Australia*, Ingram, Cooke & Co, London, 1853, p. 63. H.L.

There was a unique association between dingoes and Aboriginal people as the only two large placental land mammals in Australia. Unlike the marsupials, both dingo and Aboriginal gave birth to advanced infants that could intermittently suckle rather than being permanently attached to a nipple as were marsupial pouch-young. Dingoes might be accepted as members of the family by being given subsection names that gave them community status of parent, grandparent, child and so on. Some dingoes were even allowed rights to attend exclusive rituals as fully fledged "lawmen", expert in religious lore.⁸⁰



While domestic dogs exhibit great diversity, the dingo, originating from a small founding population and having common selection pressures, remained physically similar throughout Australia. It expanded its range, becoming feral as well as closely integrated into the Aborigines' culture. With no other milk-producing domestic animals in the

'The Thylacinus or Dog-faced Opossum', Swainson, William, *The Natural History and Classification of Quadrupeds*, Longman Rees, London, 1835, p. 143. H.L. Published the year that Melbourne was settled, this book drew on information from the already established Van Diemen's Land colony.

Aboriginal camps, puppies would be suckled by lactating women, cuddled for warmth and trained for companionship, to hunt and to guard miams. In a pattern that mirrored the expansion of human populations working co-operatively with domestic animals elsewhere in the world, the ripple effect of the Aborigines' and dingoes' special bond and superior hunting skills pushed large carnivorous marsupials such as the *Sarcophilus* and *Thalacinus* into extinction on mainland Australia. These marsupials now have the common names of Tasmanian Devil and Tasmanian Tiger after the island where they still flourished at the time of white settlement. The dingo arrived too late to get across the wide rough seas of Bass Strait.⁸¹

In addition to recalling a groups' totem heritage, songlines occupied both topographical and spiritual space and taught geography, vital survival skills and connection with country. Sub-consciously imprinted through music and corroborrees experiences in childhood and further expanded through rites of passage at puberty, such knowledge could make the difference between life and death as well as impact on the chances of having children and keeping them alive. These complex connections were a key in determining to what degree the 'stardust' of the community might be represented and influence generations to come. In Kulin and Kurnai cultures, each of the clans had variations of the story of how humans first acquired knowledge of fire, a skill central to a fire-stick farming life style. Smyth's 1878 version of the Boonwurrung fire story, reported here, will have lost elements in translation but relevance to country around Harewood can be recognised.⁸²

Two women were cutting a tree for the purpose of getting ants' eggs, when they were attacked by several snakes. The women fought stoutly and for a long time, but they could not kill the snakes. At last one of the women broke her ken-nan (fighting stick), and forthwith smoke came from it. Waung (the Raven) picked up the fire and flew away with it. Two young blacks, Toordt and Trrar, both very good young men, flew after the raven and caught him. The Raven, much frightened, let fall the fire, and a great conflagration followed. The blacks were much afraid when they saw this. Toordt and Trrar disappeared. Pund-jel came down from the sky and said to the blacks - "Now you have fire, do not lose it." Pund-jel allowed them to see Toordt and Trrar for a moment and then he took them away with him, and set them in the sky where they now appear as stars. By-and-by the blacks lost the fire. Winter came on. They were cold. They had no place whereat they could cook their food. They had to eat their food raw and cold like the dogs. Snakes multiplied and everywhere abounded. At length Pal-yang, who had brought forth women from the water, sent down from the sky, Kar-ak-ar-ook, who was a very fine woman, with a nerrim-nerrim kan-nan (a very, very long stick), went about the country killing a multitude of snakes (Ood-yul-yul Kornmul), but leaving here and there a few. In striking one, her big digging stick broke, and there from came fire. Waung (the Raven) again flew away with it, and for a length of time the blacks were in great distress.⁸³

As in other sacred journey myths, fire, serpents, a cosmic mountain, a sacred tree and a trickster crow are brought together as the layers and purpose of the metaphor unfold.

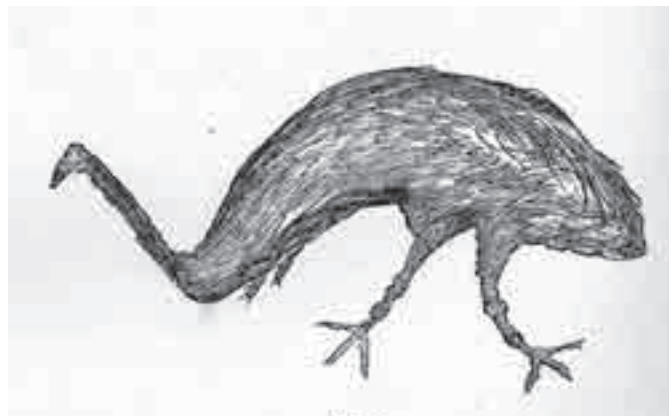
Toordt and Trrar come down from the sky and tell the people that Waung has hidden fire on a mountain named Nun-ner-woon in the ranges to the north of Harewood. In acting out the story the pair's journeys are recounted with Toordt traditionally being burnt to death on another mountain (Mun-ni-o) as he kindles a fire in order to keep the small quantity he had procured alive. In recognition of Toordt's good deeds, Bunjil transforms him into the planet Mars. Kar-ak-ar-ook tells the women to carefully examine the stick she had broken, and from which the smoke and fire had come, and never to lose the gift. The constellation Pleiades is associated with the women still carrying fire on the end of their yam-sticks. Trrar takes the men to the mountain, where Djel-wuk, the native mulberry tree (*Hedycarya augustifolia*), from whose wood they could make fire sticks, grows and shows them how to form and use Bo-bo-bo and Bab-a-noo, so that they will always have the means to light fire, then flies back into the sky and is seen no more. In the Woiworung version of the fire legend the two young blacks became large stones at the foot of the Dandenong Mountains. In the Kurnai version, a single hero returned to earth as a Beautiful Firetail Finch, its red rump being a mark from where he carried the coal.⁸⁴

The Boonwurrung had other beliefs about the ranges to the north east of Harewood. In the mountain called Narn lived an animal named Wi-won-der-rer with a form resembling a human but with a body hard as stone. Many Boonwurrung were slain by this beast until, in a story reminiscent of Odysseus and the Cyclops, a resourceful hero thrust his spear into the beast's eye. Blacks would not go near the mountain. A rich tapestry of sacred stories, kinship, religion, law and history were moulded around every part of the Kulin landscape and linked to the Dreaming.⁸⁵

TOO-ROO-DUN

Spirits and mythical creatures abounded in Kulin stories including a tradition of a bunyip that lived in the Kooweerup Swamp.⁸⁶

The Western Port blacks call the Bun-yip Too-roo-dun, and a picture of the animal, made by Kurruk many years ago, under the direction of a learned doctor, is that of a creature resembling the emu. On the Western Port plains there is a basin of water - never dry, even in the hottest summers - which is called Too-roo-dun, because the Bunyip lives in that



Too-roo-dun the Bunyip, as drawn by Kurruk. Smyth, Brough, *Aborigines of Victoria*, Vol I, 1878, p. 436. H.L.

'It was the Bunyip!
Folks call the
Bunyip cruel and
wicked, & make
children tremble at
its name ...But it is
only the lost soul of
the ancient forest
that wanders abroad
when the evening
shadows deepen....
At the coming of the
white man to the
South-lands where
the gum-trees
grow the Bunyip
vanished, never
more to be seen...
But sometimes
mystic Guiding
brings little lost
ones safely home
again...' Rentoul,
Ida & Annie,
Mollie's Bunyip,
Robert Jolley,
Melbourne, 1904.
H.L. The sisters
were schoolgirls at
Presbyterian Ladies
College, which Lyall
granddaughters
also attended,
when they wrote
and illustrated this
delightful little
book.



water. Too-roo-dun inhabits the deep waters, and the thick mud beneath the deep waters, and in this habit resembles the eel. The natives never bathe in the waters of this basin. A long time ago some people bathed in the lake, and they were all drowned, and eaten by Too-roo-dun. The Goulburn blacks have the same dread of this terrible creature; but their doctors, priests, and wise men say that Too-roo-dun does not eat the blacks but contents himself with holding them in his embraces until they die. All blacks believe in the existence of a huge seal-like animal, which lives in swamps and deep water-holes, and growls and bellows at night, and destroys, if he does not eat, all black people who venture near his haunts.⁸⁷

To deconstruct Too-roo-dun, the call of the bittern could be mistaken for its growls and bellows; a person could come to grief through misadventure or murder in any of the deep, dark, lonely waterholes around the swamp; eels, seals, sharks and sticky mud were found in the Western Port Inlets and could have accounted for the people in the story being gobbled up or drowned. But human imagination gives bunyips an energy that is more than the sum of deconstructed parts and this rich mythology is remembered in the township names of Tooradin and Koo Wee Rup and the way these traditions acted as a force in Aboriginal people respecting country. People around the world have found energy and spiritual connections through stories of mythical creatures in wild and remote places.

A BOUNTIFUL LARDER

Spun from the stardust of the universe, Lo-an's Land provided a wealth of game and food plants for indigenous people and was cared for to promote a 'living larder'. Regular burning increased the range of plant resources such as orchids, lilies and myrrnong and encouraged grassland where Grey Kangaroo (koo-im) and Black Wallaby (wym-bir) could be hunted with reed spears (tirer), spear throwers (kurruk) and waddys (kudgerin). Nets and pit traps might also be used. Emus (burri-mul) were speared. Their fat, which, according to Brough Smyth's informant, was considered to have once been that of a black man, was handled with special care and not allowed to touch the ground. As humans had done for thousands of years, fat mixed with ochre (we-rup) was applied to the body for warmth, ceremonial and therapeutic purposes and to keep mosquitoes at bay. Bustards (brea-ell) might be mesmerized with a decoy looking like a small bird or butterfly and caught with a running noose. Frogs (nar-rut) and lizards ranging from small skinks (pudg-gen) to large goannas (per-ren-un) were roasted and eaten. The numerous snakes (karn) were regarded with abhorrence and death from snakebite was an ever-present danger.⁸⁸

The koala, (kur-bo-roo) was revered as a sage. The Boonwurrung would kill them but in accordance with their Law, they would not skin them as they did kangaroo, possum or wombat (warren), for fear the waters of their creeks would dry up. Echidna (ka warren), platypus (murin-moor-roo), gliders (eu-ran and ku-an-boo) and bandicoots (bang) could be caught by hand, or by spearing, digging or climbing trees. Echidna quills were used for bleeding and extracting thorns, pieces of spear-points and the like.⁸⁹

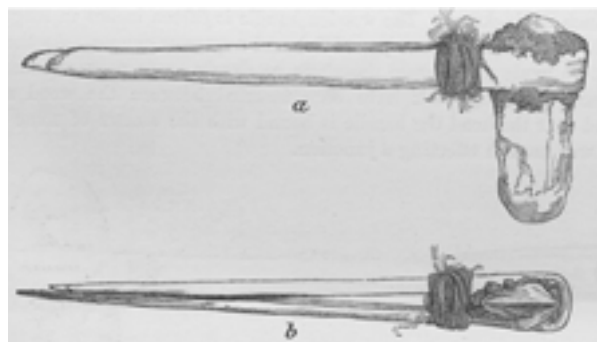
Invertebrates such as mussels (mur-bone), cockles (mur-yoke), periwinkles (pid-de-ron), snails and other shellfish could be collected by hand around the bay or by diving or dredging from mud. They were eaten and the shells used in tool making and to provide scrapers to clean skins. Trading and ceremonial exchange with the Burinyung Bulluk clan for species such as abalone, lobster, sea slugs and oysters that were prevalent on the rocky coast of the Mornington Peninsula could have increased variety in diet and helped in times of hardship. Insects (kam-kam-koor) were also an important food source. Grubs were eaten raw. Yeour-ong, the size of small maggots, could be got by the tarnuk-full near the roots of trees; the Boonwurrung would mix them with charcoal to separate them from rotting tree and then eat them. Native bees, Bogong Moths, ant pupae (knu-nal) and earthworms were eaten. Blossoms and lerp (sugary casings made by insects) from 'targan' and 'beal' (probably *Eucalyptus mellidora* and *E. camaldulensis*) and 'warrak' (*Banksia marginata*) could be sucked directly or soaked in water to make a sugar-based beverage. Locusts (tee-een and karl-kal) occurred in abundance and could be eaten uncooked or made into a beverage. Martkaan, a green caterpillar found on the targan and beal, could be roasted.⁹⁰

Plant foods such as root crops and berries were picked or harvested by the women with digging sticks. The murrnong or daisy yam (*Microseris lanceolata*) grew throughout the

Kulin hatchet comprised of a greenstone head ground sharp and fixed by gum resin to a wooden handle. The green wood would be heated and moistened so it was flexible and could be bent around the axe head then bound tightly with stringybark fibres. Smyth, *Brough Aborigines of Victoria*, Vol I, 1878, p. 365, H.L.

bush and could be stored in the hollows of trees. Flowers, young shoots and inner leaves of the grass tree, Kum-be-deek (*Xanthorrea australis*) and rhizomes of bracken (*Pteridium esculentum*) were collected in spring and after fire. Roots and young shoots of bulrush, Bourt-bourt (*Typha angustifolia*), water ribbons

(*Triglochin procera*) and tubers of native orchids were eaten. Fruits, seeds and foliage of wattle, apple-berry, kangaroo apple, mangrove, pigface, bindwood, currant bush, cherry ballart, boobialla and mushrooms provided nutritious variety.⁹¹



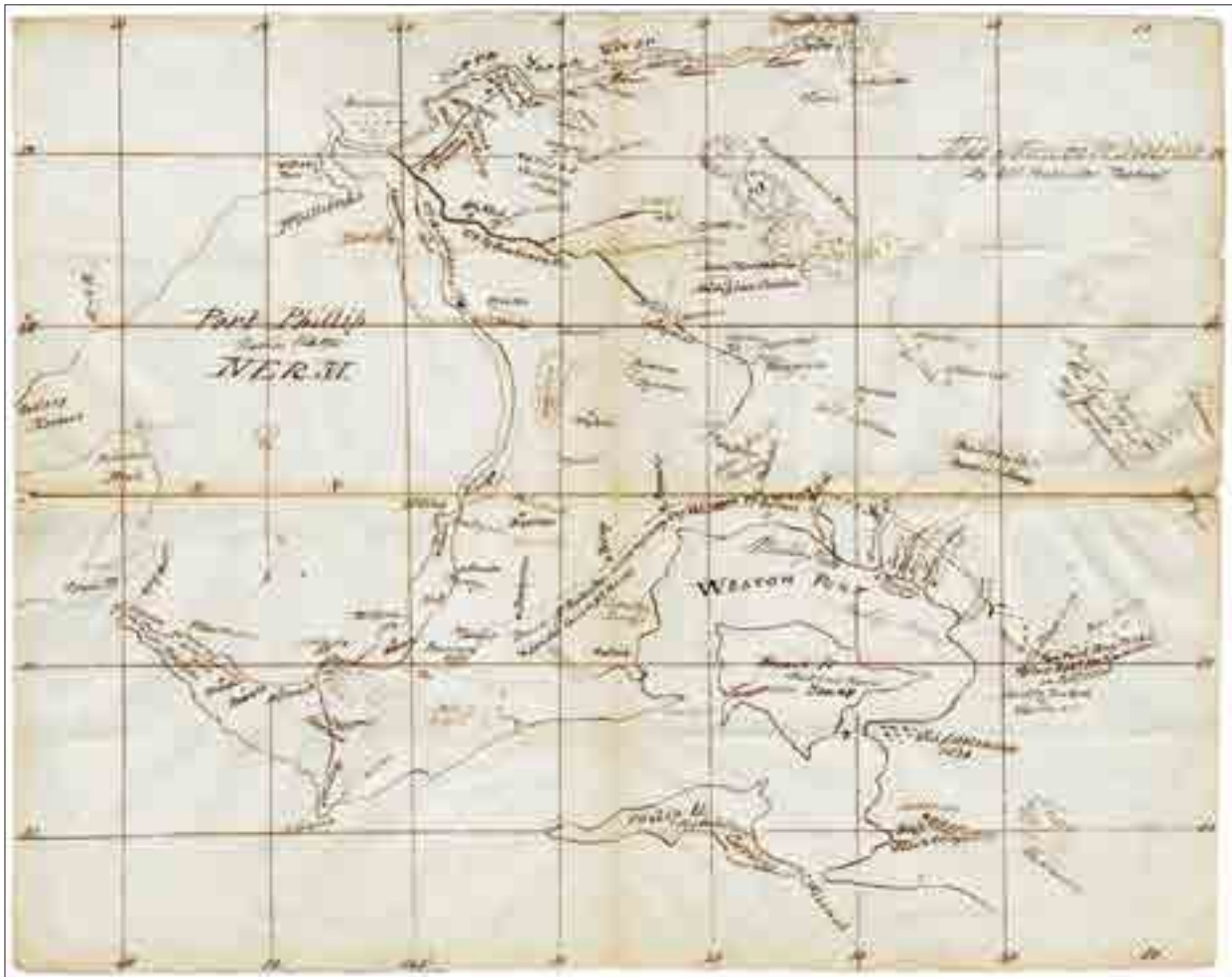
Derived from the Dreaming, laws relating to food for the Kulin were complex and Aboriginal people believed that to break them would result in dreadful disease. A person could not eat meat from their totem animal, nor animals that were the property of sorcerers. Unless they were given leave by the old men of the tribe, young people could not eat possum, glider, echidna, emu, bustard, duck, swan, turtle or a certain type of lizard (pujing) or large fish (woora-mook).⁹²

Making use of this living larder required even further innovations in the Aboriginal toolkit. The technology of grinding hatchet-heads and hafting them onto wooden handles has existed in northern Australia from before 32 kyr and continues to be used, for example around Kakadu, today, but the technique did not seem to be adopted in South Eastern Australia until some 2000 years ago. While deposits of gold and silver were left untouched, one of the largest axe head quarries in Australia was developed in Woiworung territory on the south eastern slopes of Mount William (near Lancefield) using large outcrops of high quality volcanic greenstone. For over 1,000 years, axe blanks were traded as far afield as the Darling River and blanks and ground axe heads from the quarry remain at Harewood today. Other greenstone deposits occurred closer e.g. at Cape Liptrap, but it was not of the same quality.⁹³

Formed at even higher temperatures than granite, greenstone has the hardness, toughness and fine grain needed to make heavy duty stone axes with a ground edge but Mount William lacked water and soft rock needed for the grinding process. Final finishing of the axe-heads had to be done at other sites, such as at St Kilda, where suitable sandstone was available. Alternatively, grindstones could be transported to other workshop sites. Once ground, the axe-heads were 'hafted' (attached) onto wooden handles by wetting and heating a flexible piece of wood, shaping it to the stone and binding it with fibres of stringybark. Gum (pid-jer-ong) from wattle or grass trees would be used to seal the union.

These hatchets (kul-bul-ling-ur-rook) were an essential part of the Boonwurrung tool kit. To climb trees, men or women would cut a notch for their big toe, scramble with the hatchet in their teeth, and then cut a second notch in which the opposite toe would be placed and so on until the desired height was reached. The hatchet could then be used to cut open limbs to get possums (wallert wallert) out of hollows, to split open trunks to take out honey or grubs or insects, to cut off sheets of bark (tournderry) for miams or canoes or to cut down trees to shape the wood into shields clubs or spears. The hatchets were also used in ceremonies. Early settlers wrote about Aboriginal people dancing around and clanging stone axes on meteorites near present day Five Ways, whose tips still emerged from the Western Port landscape, thousands of years after they had fallen from the sky. It was no co-incidence that Billibillary, whose family had rights to the greenstone resource, was the most influential Kulin ngurungaeta when the Europeans arrived but even with this status he still took his turn at hunting while his female relatives gathered plant foods.⁹⁴

A map of Westernport District made by William Thomas, Assistant Protector of Aborigines, in 1841. The map identifies both Aboriginal and European names. Citation: Public Record Office Victoria, PROV VPRS 6760/PO, Unit 1, Item 1



The Yarra Blackfish
(*Gadopsis gracilis*,
McCoy). McCoy,
Frederick,
*Prodromus of
the Zoology of
Victoria*, Vol 1,
Plate 27 –2. H.L.
‘There is a second
species of *Gadopsis*
proportionately
shorter, deeper,
and with a much
more convex dorsal
outline, abounding
in the Bunyip River
in Gippsland, to
which I have given
the name *Gadopsis
gibbosus*.’ (McCoy).



From around a
thousand years
ago, shellfish hooks
came into general
use, enabling the
Boonwurrung to
fish open water and
catch such species

as snapper from shore or canoe. These may have been invented locally or the technology may possibly have come via someone with links to the Lapita people. These seafaring folk are thought to have come from islands near South East Asia before they sailed their innovative outrigger canoes to explore and populate Melanesia, Polynesia and Madagascar. Along with their boats, distinctive pottery, fish hooks and navigational skills, the Lapita people had domesticated chickens, dingoes and pigs acquired from Eurasia. But they had no horses, cattle or sheep and their culture was more easily adapted to tropical islands than to invading already populated places like inhospitable northern Australia or the distant temperate lands of the Kulin.⁹⁵

While the Kulin did not use outriggers, they made large bark canoes (koo-ron) up to 6 metres long that could carry as many as six men. These were constructed from a curved sheet of thick bark cut from a tree with the ends packed with clay. Independently, the Tasmanians developed their own type of watercraft, a raft comprised of bundles of *Melaleuca* bound together. These vessels were capable of short journeys but would sink if used in the open sea. None of the Australian tribes used sails; there was no flax, cotton or silk with which to make them.⁹⁶

On calm evenings the Kulin fishermen could spear fish. ‘Tying several long dried sticks together they would light the thickest end and ‘with this torch blazing in one hand and a spear in the other they would go into the water, and the fish, attracted to the flame, would be easily taken.’ Their name for the great swamp was ‘Kuwirap’ or ‘Kooweerup’ from kowe (water) and wirap (blackfish). Near the Bay there were water holes that would fill with seawater on the incoming tide, leaving marine fish stranded and easy prey when the tide went out. Shoals of Australian Salmon, *Arripis trutta* (Kur-nur-guil), bream, trevally, mullet, anchovies, flathead, stingray and shark would come up the muddy rivers.⁹⁷

ANCESTRAL TIES ACROSS AUSTRALIA

As well as having close affinities with other tribes from south-eastern Australia, the Kulin also shared cultural affinities with Tasmanian Aborigines including intricately woven baskets, wooden spears with fire hardened tips, throwing clubs, digging sticks, fire-sticks, kangaroo skin cloaks, possum skin pouch bags, huts and stone tools. Differences from the Tasmanian Aborigines reflect some of the innovations that had

occurred in both places during the 14,000 years the cultures were separated as well as skills that had been lost by the small, isolated population of Tasmanians. By the time of white contact the Tasmanian tool-kit was reduced to less than 25 items. It lacked spear thrower, boomerang, shield, hunting net, trap, fishing equipment, hatchet, adze, millstone or multi-component tools, like the spears that remain at Harewood.⁹⁸

While Aboriginal people had no silk worms, sheep, flax or cotton with which to make woven cloth, they were expert at working native fibres. The Boonwurrung made baskets from Spreading Flax lily (*Dianella revoluta*), the reeds with the purple flowers Maud Lyall recalled from her youth, but they used others as well. The belang or net bag Toolumn flung over her shoulder with 'a piece of old possum' could have been made from stringy bark (*Eucalyptus obliqua*), fur from the native cat or possum, common reed, (*Phragmites australis*), poa grass or any of a variety of others. Baskets (called bin-nuk) were made, the largest of which could carry a child. Large stones were apparently used to steady the work and free hands for weaving the sides of the basket. Perhaps this was the purpose of the pink granite boulders left with the axe heads on Harewood's windowsill.⁹⁹

Examples of war and returning boomerangs have been found in South Australia dating back to before 12 kyr but none were found in Tasmanian culture. The Kulin used them on a daily basis, with the men being experts in the technology of carving perfect returning models. Flat sticks could be thrown further than round sticks, a bend would make the stick hit the target more easily and a slight twist could make it return.

For adornment the Tasmanians made beautiful shell necklaces while the Kulin wore necklaces made of reed (kourn-but) or kangaroo incisors strung on the sinews of emu's legs (Kourn-ur-run). The everyday clothing worn by the Kulin was minimal and even in corroborees decoration was more often painted than worn. Women, or occasionally young men, made leeks or forehead bands from sinews from kangaroo tail or fur from possum or native cat. Feathers from eagle, lyrebird or brolga or occasionally teeth might



Weapons and implements of the Tasmanian Aborigines, 1802, by C.A. Lesueur (Original held in Lesueur Collection, cat. 18011.1). The French expedition that mapped Harewood's coastline also carried out excellent ethnographic studies with Aboriginal people they encountered in Tasmania and New South Wales.



Weapons and implements of South East Mainland Aborigines, 1802, by C.A. Lesueur (Original held in the Lesueur Collection, cat. 16035.1)

Tarnuks & baskets, Smyth, Brough, *Aborigines of Victoria*, Vol I, 1878, p. 347. H.L. Smyth's two volume work, a compilation of information from multiple authors, including William Thomas, contained numerous black and white drawings of implements and individuals, relating specifically to Victoria.



wore a murriguil, made of strips of possum tied with fibre, while post-pubescent unmarried women wore a similar garment, the nour-rite. These were no longer worn after initiation or marriage but in corroborees adult women might put on a til-bur-nin, or apron of emu feathers.¹⁰⁰

While the kangaroo cloaks of the Tasmanians were simple, the Boonwurrung elaborately decorated the insides of kangaroo or possum pelts with herringbone and straight-line patterns or designs of animals or humans, then perforated their edges using min-der-min (bone awls) so they could be stitched together. These hung loosely about the body, had a knot at each upper corner and were fastened by a small stick thrust through a hole made by the min-der-min. To ward off hunger pains a belt, called a beruk, made from a dingo's pelt with fur to outside and skin pressed against the body,



adorn a leek, but rarely flowers. Art and body decoration was done in accordance with clan practice. A noute-kower, made from the slightly curved leg bone of a kangaroo or a reed was sometimes placed through the septum of the nose, while an arm band (yel-un-ket-ur-uk) made from a sugar glider's (tuin-tuin) pelt was thought to give men strength. To hide their genitals uninitiated men

would be tightened. These were traditionally used if men were travelling in hostile country where discovery would mean death. To carry water and food the Tasmanians made kelp and reed baskets while the Boonwurrung carved wooden

tarnuks from the knolls of the Be-nup (River Red Gum). Large tarnuks were left at regular campgrounds, while smaller ones were carried between camps. Although clay was available and figured in creation mythology, neither culture used pottery, nor did either culture have anything made of metal: boiling water would require hot stones to be placed in water, not an easy system.¹⁰¹

Grindstones were used for crushing millet. Our local species, the same genus as the staple of early Chinese agriculture, was reaped with stone knives, piled into haystacks and threshed to obtain seeds which were stored, then ground into a kind of flour to make native damper.¹⁰²

In addition to the fire hardened wooden spears (called tare by the Boonwurrung), the mainlanders also used light-weight reed spears (tirer) that could be hurled with a kurruk (woomera or spear thrower) for distances up to 100 metres. The front end of the spear comprised a straight, fire-hardened sapling filed into a sharp point while attached behind, using resin and kangaroo tail sinew, would be the stalk of a grass tree (bag-gup, *Xanthorrea minor*) or reed (djarkk, *Phragmites australis*). The hollow stalk provided lightness to enable the spear to fly straight and also allowed for the insertion of the kurruk which gave the hunter power to hurl the spear a greater distance with greater speed and accuracy.¹⁰³

Duck (toolumn), swan (koo-war-ror), brolga (goor-rook), pelican (war-gil) and other water birds abounded on Warn-mor-in and, in spring and summer, huge flocks of waders and mutton birds (Short-tailed Shearwaters), whose eggs and young could be collected for food, arrived back from the Arctic to feed on marine life. Adult birds were speared with the tirer, netted or simply caught by hand when moulting or incubating eggs. Parrots, cockatoos and small birds were killed with a wonguim or a kurruk and tirer. Sausages might be made from the intestines of pelicans and other birds. Currawongs (gean-gean), bats (pollyong) and mopokes (goor-koom) figured in Boonwurrung superstitions, just as crows, owls and bats did in many other cultures around the world.¹⁰⁴

Fishnets were worked from fibres of stringy bark (karrt-keert) and complex funnel shaped eel traps were constructed to catch the large fat, silver eels (*Anguilla australis occidentalis*) in inland lagoons. Eels migrated in great numbers up the inlets in the spring (moo-dee-e-ram) to reach their inland feeding grounds and, years later, downstream in autumn (moo-dee-nger-wein) to the sea and the breeding grounds far away in the tropical Pacific Ocean. While clay was not used for pottery or bricks, the muddy banks of the inlets were moulded into eel-trap dykes, or the eel could be simply caught between the toes when wading knee deep in water. They were also speared. On a single day in February 1840, five hundred eels were caught at Harewood as the Boonwurrung camped beside the inlet and feasted.¹⁰⁵

While bone and shell tools began to appear in the Kulin tool kit about a thousand years ago, the new technology did not reach Tasmania. For warfare, the Boonwurrung might use mongiles in which sharks' teeth (and later glass) substituted for the traditional back blades. They also used the nandum, a wooden spear with carved points on one side. For shields, a mulga was used in single combat to ward off club attacks, while a large geam was used to ward off spears. In hand to hand offensive combat, as well as a simple waddy (kudgerin), the Kulin would also use knobbed worra worras and bent and pointed leoniles, inspired by the shape of bent branches.¹⁰⁶

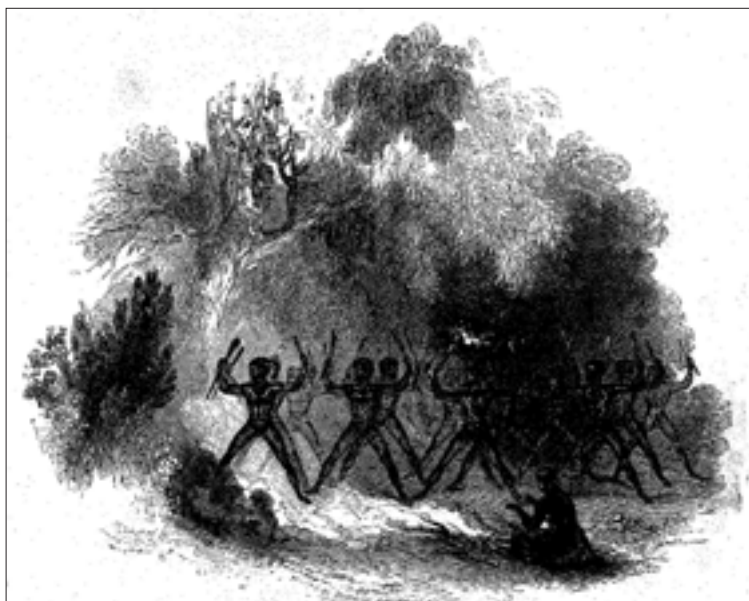
SACRED STONES AND SUNSET SPIRITS

Largely isolated from the rest of the world, fatal epidemic diseases were virtually unknown to Australia's sparsely populated indigenous communities before the arrival of Europeans. Living on Australia's coastal 'verandah', Kulin diet was varied and nutritious and the people were not prone to deficiencies that affected the health of inland Aborigines. Ophthalmia occurred, but with adequate sources of vitamin A and without the glaring sun and swarms of flies of Central Australia, it did not spread rapidly and blindness was rare. According to William Thomas, sores, diarrhoea, colds, headache, burns and injuries were the most common complaints. For penetrating wounds, a wirrarap (shaman doctor), would suck blood until the bleeding ceased, perhaps probing the wound with a sharp bone to check for any foreign matter. Once the wound was thoroughly clean they would apply pid-jer-ong (wattle gum) to seal it. If any discharge built up the gum would be removed and the wound cleaned again and then resealed. Thomas described a skin disease passed from animals to people that the Boonwurrung called bubburum (mange) that the natives said had been among their people before the arrival of the Europeans. Kulin doctors would grease the affected parts with wheerup (red ochre) mixed with a decoction of wattle bark. Dysentery was also treated with wattle bark. The patient would drink plenty of the decoction as well as taking 'pills' made from gum and wattle bark. Cutting, rubbing, pressing, applying hot ash, bandaging or treading on the affected parts, were common therapies.¹⁰⁷

'A Corroboree.'
Mitchell, Thomas,
*Three Expeditions
into the Interior of
Eastern Australia*,
Vol II, T & W
Boone, London,
1839. H.L.

Spiritual belief played a large part in the healing process and wirraraps could use their magic both to try to heal their friends and to inflict disease on their enemies. Payback was an integral part of both medicine and culture, with bone, human fat, charcoal, thurdal (quartz crystals) and round stones being part of the wirraraps tools of trade. Near the swift running mountain streams of the high country the shaman of

the Ngarigo people worked with black and white stones called thaga-kuribong and thaga-kurha to both cause and cure illness. So too did a Bunjil-barn, shaman of the Kurnai, who, like Jacob in the book of Genesis, found the magic stones on waking after being visited by mrarts in his dreams. The Kurnai called such magic black stones bulk and they were thought to be highly dangerous to all but their owner. Women were terrified to touch them. They could be used by placing the bulk in fresh excreta of the victim, with the expected result being that evil magic would kill them by attacking the intestines. Fighting sorcery with sorcery provided a constant



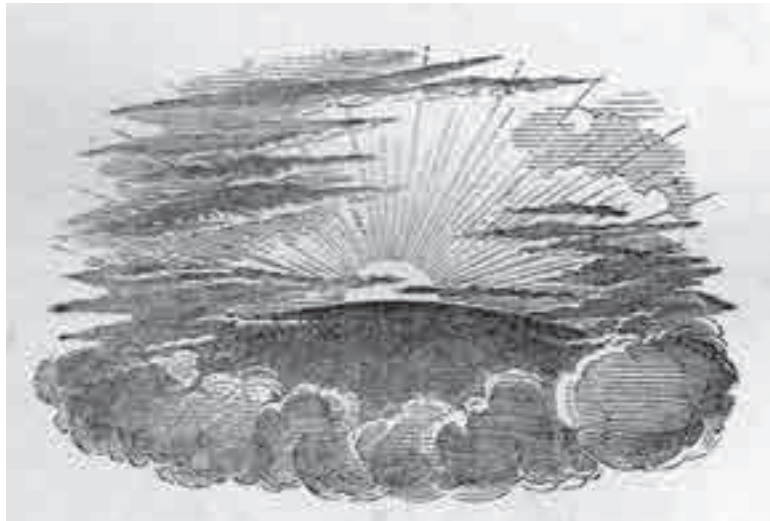
undercurrent in tribal affairs as the Kulin believed death, whatever its immediate cause, was ultimately due to sorcery on the part of the dead person's enemies. When a person died, identifying the culprit and exacting revenge were important cultural duties on the part of friends and relations. Grief was public; there was loud wailing and slashing of body parts. Devoted spouses sometimes followed their partners to the grave.¹⁰⁸

As mentioned above, Kulin Law, derived from the creator-spirit Bunjil and the Dreaming, was the ultimate authority but everyone was expected to enforce its provisions and delivering retribution was an important obligation. Payback might be done by stealth, ritual, battle or magic. Those who transgressed might be suddenly speared to death on a hunting expedition or young men might be secretly dispatched into foreign lands to exact revenge. Within the same confederacy, payback was more often satisfied by stylised battles, one to one combat or ritual punishment at tribal gatherings. As in other cultures, such tournaments could serve both social and political purposes and marriages might be brokered and initiations arranged in the background of other events. For the thousands of years that Harewood was a campsite for the Boonwurrung people, the Law was observed. Wars, fighting, marriage laws and infanticide helped to control the population and there was ritual land management that allowed sustainable yields of natural resources. The Boonwurrung generally lived well but there were inklings of a world outside. The end of the eighteenth century brought harbingers of a holocaust that would abruptly change their lives, the DNA of their descendants and the lands they held sacred. After 26 January 1788, messages would have been passed down from the tribes in New South Wales about white people arriving in ships with billowing sails and of morra-morra (small pox), a terrible disease that was decimating the Weerong people of Port Jackson and other tribes it touched.¹⁰⁹

From the Kurnai they could have heard of white men landing in long boats along their coast as the Europeans tried to recover 7,000 gallons of spirits shipwrecked in 1796 on Preservation Island with the *Sydney Cove*. On his exploratory trip to Western Port in 1798, George Bass saw only four natives fleetingly in the distance but he rescued escaped convicts who had travelled down from Sydney and become stranded on an island off Wilson's Promontory. He set the five strongest on the mainland with a musket, hooks and lines, a kettle, a small compass and what clothing they could spare. The Kurnai wrote songs about the 'the white men a long way off sailing about with a great noise' and were said to cry, 'Lo-an', and look aside when the white men first appeared, perceiving them to be mrarts, or ghosts of the pale shade aboriginal corpses become after death. The newcomers were thought to possess supernatural powers in their eyes; with a glance they could draw together the banks of a river or instantly flash death to the eyes of the beholder. The convicts Bass befriended, if they ever returned to Sydney, chose not to report to the authorities. They may have boiled water in the kettle Bass gave them and shared the first cup of tea with the Kurnai but there were no writers amongst them and their experiences are not part of our historic record.¹¹⁰

Toolumn's people, who were connected with the Bonkoolawal (Bass River) clan, may have seen the pale men in George Bass' whale boat sail into Warn-mor-in. Bass named it 'Western Port', 'from its relative situation to every known harbour on the coast.' 'Bass River' was the name given to the stream the Bonkoolawal called 'Yallock Weardon' and the island 'Corriong' became 'Phillip Island' after the white peoples' Governor. But in 1798 the Boonwurrung observed from afar and avoided contact with the Europeans. Many years later Barak explained white men were called ngamajet, or ghosts, by the Boonwurrung after ngamat, the place where the sun goes down, where a dead man's murup or spirit went before returning to earth or ascending to Tharangalk-bek, the sky country. '...when he comes back he is ngamajet. This is a Westernport belief'.¹¹¹

'Ngamat, the place where the sun goes down, the sunset, According to Western Port Aboriginal belief this was where the human's spirit went after death before returning to earth as a ngamajet or ghost or ascending to Tharangalk-bek, the sky country. Sunset illustration from Chambers W & B (Eds) *Ancient History*, Chambers, Edinburgh, 1852, p. 7. H.L.



NGAMAJET

In January 1800, His Majesty's Ship the *Lady Nelson*, the latest innovation for coastal exploration, hoisted canvas, slipped her three sliding keels into the Thames River and sailed through the Straits of Dover to Portsmouth. There she was fitted and victualled and, under command of Lieutenant James Grant, began her long, slow journey to New South Wales. Relations between Napoleon's France and King George III's England were degenerating into outright war but, on the continental side of the Channel, the French prepared to send their best and brightest on a show case scientific expedition to explore the southern coast of Australia. Despite the hostilities, Joseph Banks remembered the safe conduct the French had extended when he sailed with Captain Cook as botanist on the *Endeavour*. Now, as President of the Royal Society, he used his influence to ensure the French scientists were given safe passage to promote "the increase and improvement of human knowledge by whatever nation it may be undertaken".¹¹²



The Straits of Dover. Gaultier, Ron (ed) *The Book of Ballads*, William Blackwood & Sons, Edinburgh, 1866, p. 116. Illustrated by Doyle, Leech and Crowquill. H.L.

Crowds waved as *Le Géographe* and *Le Naturaliste* departed Le Havre on 19 October 1801 under the command of Nicolas Baudin and Felix Jacques Hamelin while, back in Britain, thought leader Banks hustled to equip young Matthew Flinders in the *Investigator* to follow the French and try to pre-empt their efforts to chart the still blank spaces around New Holland's coast. A vessel that leaked from dry rot hampered Flinders, who overcame this and other difficulties to establish a reputation as a first rate cartographer. The French boats were sound and the artists and scientists on board gifted, but organisation and discipline were poor and the Baudin Expedition would lose twenty-two men from scurvy, disease and misadventure before they limped home, without their commander, four years later.

For Yamerboke's people, thousands of years of isolation were about to end as both French and British ngamajet abruptly arrived from the other side of the globe.¹¹³

Docking in Cape Town, Grant received advice to proceed through the newly discovered Bass Strait, making the *Lady Nelson* the first ship ever to journey through those waters from England to Port Jackson. On reaching Sydney, Governor Philip Gidley

Letterhead of the French Expedition to the Great South Land. The French were the first to chart the land on northern part of Western Port Bay where Harewood lies. (Original held at Museum d'Histoire Naturelle du Havre, cat. MH 13039.1)



King ordered the little coastal explorer to go back to survey the bay George Bass had discovered and, if possible, to meet with the natives. Departing again in March 1801, Lt James Grant took with him Euranabie and Worragan, an Aboriginal couple from Port Jackson, to act as intermediaries and botanist George Caley to survey the plant life. Efforts to make contact with the Western Port people proved fruitless but the party found deserted campsites with enormous emu eggshells and dingo footprints in the sand:

We encamped for the night on the borders of a lagoon which abounded with ducks, and here we found some gunnies or habitations of the natives, about which fish and other bones were strewed in great profusion, with egg-shells of an uncommon size. We observed the tracks of quadrupeds, which we supposed to be made by the native dogs, if so, they were of a larger size than any I had before seen. These tracks were impressed deep in the sand, very round, and without any mark of the claw...The tracks were numerous, and the foot-marks of various sizes, but the largest did not exceed the bigness of those of a large Newfoundland dog.¹¹⁴

The giant eggshells were new to the Europeans but dogs had entwined into human communities throughout the globe. On the eastern side of the Bay, exploring near the Bass River, they chanced upon a canoe.

Mr Bowen, my second mate, having been sent up the river for fresh water, returned with part of a canoe which he had found sunk near the mouth, together with the two paddles belonging to it, and some line used in fishing. This canoe differed from any before seen, as it was framed with timber, and instead of being tied together at the ends was left open, the space afterwards filled with grass worked up with strong clay.¹¹⁵

RIVAL REUNIONS (1802)

Acting Lieutenant John Murray was in command on the *Lady Nelson*'s second trip to Western Port when, in January 1802, the Boonwurrung chose to allow contact. The seemingly orchestrated encounter took place near the Bass River on 3 January 1802, where Mr Bowen had first discovered the canoe, paddles and fishing line.



Kulin canoe with
clay-packed ends.
Brough Smyth,
*Aborigines of
Victoria*, Vol I, 1878,
p. 408, H.L.

As the Boat Approa'd the beach these Blacks were perceiv'd sitting in the same form as those of Sydney, and each of them a bundle of Spears in their hands, our people hollow'd to them, which they instantly answered, and did not seem at all alarmed on the nearer approach of the Boat. Three Boys made their appearance; as between the Beach and the Boat there lay a Bank of Mude about 200 yards across. Mr Bowen could not get [quite] so close as he could wish. however he singly got out and began to Walk towards them. which when they perceiv'd they jump'd up on their feet and now was perceived that one of them was a very old man with a large Bushey Beard, and the rest of his face besmear'd with red Oaker, the others were young Men; they were all cloth'd with the Skins of Apposums as far as their Middle and this Old Man seemed to have Command over the others as Mr Bowen advanc'd they all pulled off their dress and made Signs to the Officer, that before he came any nearer he must do the same this was immediately complied with.¹¹⁶

How long had it been since the men of these two twigs of our modern human family last parted? 65 kyr in northeast Africa? How often did spears, fire and ochre figure in encounters? The meeting conjures up images spanning tens of thousands of years of other such stand-offs where display, curiosity, fear, murder and lust would leave stardust legacies for generations to come. In Aboriginal society, nudity, ceremony and silence were observed when outsiders wished to enter another's land in peace. Juggling options, the British chose to obey the stout, white-bearded Boonwurrung chief smeared with ochre who insisted they should undress, down weapons and meet on Boonwurrung terms. But it wasn't long before the relative power between the two peoples was made clear.¹¹⁷

...they then all sat down again, and Mr Bowen plucking a root of Fern advanced pretty close to them holding it up. (they seem'd to understand it as it was meant) when he got within a few Yards of this party the Old Man Seem'd rather uneasy, and began to handle his Spears. Mr Bowen then threw them a Tomahawk, and one of the young Men pick'd it up, on Mr Bowen reckoning them to sit down he doing the same, they again threw

back the Tomahawk, and with the exception of the Old Man sat down. Mr Bowen broke then a piece of Stick and cut it with the Tomahawk and tied a handkerchief to it and again reach'd it to them, on this one of the Young Men ventured to reach his hand, and take it out of the officers, but would by no means be so familiar as to shake hands. Mr Bowen then [ate] some Bread and then gave them some, which they did not eat, but carefully laid it by under some fern Roots or leaves [. On] getting some Ducks they took no other notice of them, than to examine in what manner they were kill'd [What] their Ideas on that head were we know not as they did not take the least notice of our Fire arms, even when towards the later end of the Parley it was found necessary to point one at the Breast of the Old man who all along was very suspicious of our designs. All this time they expressed a good deal of wonder at the Colour of Mr Bowen's Skin, and one of the Young Men made very significant Signs to him that he must have wash'd himself very hard.

The Kulin shared symbolism with other South East Australian tribes with whom Bowen was familiar, strangers would 'carry a green bough in their right hands, which was an emblem of peace'. The mariners' pale and the Aborigines dark skins were both created through interplay between the fundamental forces and particles of the universe, but they were moulded from different geographic, cultural and ancestral circumstances. In Europe's high latitudes, pale skin, a feature of both Neanderthals & modern humans, allowed more sunlight to be absorbed for Vitamin D and healthy bones; in Western Port's abundant sun, dark skin was an advantage in preventing too much radiation causing sunburn, fatal cancer or birth defects from folate breakdown.¹¹⁸

The Boonwurrung men signalled Mr Bowen to drag the boat a half mile up the beach to where, in the distance, there were three 'middling well shap'd' women, each with a good looking child on her back. He went on shore and a little later the other men 'got out of the Boat Stark naked as was desired' and walked towards the women and young boys. This upset the old man who sent the boys and women away, and 'he after having in a great passion made signs for us to go to the Boat, began to retire with his face to us and brandishing his spear'. The young men of the group were clothed in possum skins and carried only light spears, tomahawks and woomearas, and were quieter than their elder. As the British saw that all hope of further intercourse for the present was finished, Mr Bowen ordered 'Bond to fire his piece over their heads in order to make good his retreat to the Boat.' This 'had the desir'd effect as they one and all, were out of sight in an instant, before this they must have taken the Musket for nothing but a stick.' For the rest of the day the natives retired to the woods then about 6 PM 'dous'd their fire at once, altho' it must have cover'd near an Acre of Ground'.

Given the local traditional stories about the origin of fire, one wonders how this smoking, exploding stick was interpreted as each side used all of their mental skills and tested boundaries, postured, planned strategies and compared strength. The Elder's distrust was well grounded but Kulin weapons would be poor defence against the invaders. Luckily a light wind sprang up and Bowen's party climbed back into their long boat, 'hove short loosed Sails' and departed. The following day the *Lady*

Nelson sailed west and later discovered the entrance to Nerm, which Murray named 'Port King' in honour of their governor. Governor King subsequently renamed it 'Port Phillip' after his predecessor. No 'green bough in their right hands' symbolising peace this time, the fully clothed invaders hoisted the Union Jack near today's Point King at Portsea on 8 March. They were attacked by more spear-brandishing Kulin and shots were fired in return. No one was injured. The northern coast of Western Port remained uncharted and the island the Boonwurrung called Jouap was still perceived by the British to be a peninsula.¹¹⁹

Le Naturaliste

On 9 April 1802 two French chaloupes were lowered from the store-ship *Le Naturaliste* for eight days exploration of Western Port. Supplies on *Le Naturaliste* were dangerously low, the crew had lost three of their five anchors in exploring Tasmania and the Southern Australian coastline, and the expedition's lead corvette, *Le Géographe*, had not been sighted for many weeks. Commander Hamelin carefully weighed up the risks and decided not sail his ship in unknown shallow waters such a long way from France, but rather to manoeuvre in Bass Strait while he delegated the tasks of charting the Bay and describing the landscape to his men. Lieutenant Pierre Milius was ordered to captain the larger of the two long boats, accompanied by the botanist Théodore Leschenault. The cartographer Xavier Faure. Midshipman Leon Lebrèvedent would conduct soundings from the smaller vessel. All would rendezvous south of Ile des Anglais (Phillip Island to the English, Corriiong to the Boonwurrung) on April 17.¹²⁰

Journals compiled by Milius and Leschenault tell of the plants, people and countryside they saw in 1802 and the maps compiled by Milius, Faure and Lebrèvedent were the first to show Harewood's coastline. They secured, 'for France', the honour of identifying 'Isle des Francais' as an island. Charles-Alexander Lesueur and Nicolas Petit, the artists of the French expedition, were not with these Western Port explorers, so there were none of the exquisite illustrations these talented men did elsewhere during the expedition but Boonwurrung culture had much in common with Sydney tribes, whom they did paint.¹²¹



J-B.L.C. (Théodore) Leschenault, botanist with the French Western Port explorers. Portrait from *Bull. des Sociétés des Sciences de Saône et Loire* 1884 –II, p. 17.

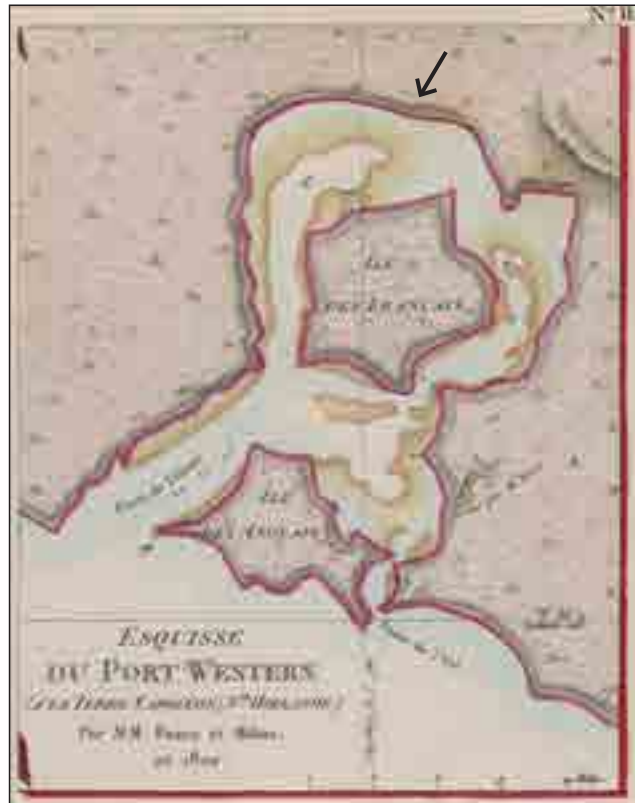
Casting off from 'Isle des Francais' on April 11, 1802, Captain Milius and those with him saw thick smoke on Settlement Point and were beckoned by Aboriginal men to come ashore and climb a 50 foot cliff to meet with them. Milius recorded in his journal:

Not one of them dared to descend though they had called to us. They babbled a very long time, without our being able to understand what they desired. Believing, nevertheless, that they were inviting us to leave our clothing, and that they would descend the cliff to get it, I took off my socks and my shirt. That appeared to satisfy them. I commenced to climb the cliff and as it was steep they indicated plants by which I should pull myself up. In vain I made demonstrations to induce them to reach out a hand to me. They showed the same mistrust. When I was nearly to the top, I pretended not to be able to climb further and extended my arms towards them, as though to supplicate them to save me; but none advanced to help me.

Map of Western Port, 1802, M.M. Faure and P. Milius. H.C. The Baudin expedition, sponsored by the French under Napoleon, was the first to map Western Port's northern coastline. Harewood's position is marked with an arrow.

Grey cells were working feverishly as both sides applied knowledge and experience to the novel situation and Captain Milius' met the Bonkoolawal Clan members, the traditional owners of the eastern shore of Western Port. Who was this pale intruder, unschooled in Aboriginal Law, wearing bizarre garments and speaking a strange language? Could these people be mrarts (ghosts) come back to earth, or even their creator hero Lo-an, incarnate? The perception might have been reinforced when the Frenchman traced the path of the sun as he explained the workings of his watch, which

could have been interpreted by them to mean that Milius had come from the west, beyond the sunset, from ngamat, where Kulin spirits paused after death before ascending to Tharangalk-bek, the sky country.¹²²



I perceived that my pantaloons and my shoes troubled them, and they wished to see me naked as themselves. I then made signs of leaving them. I took my watch, which they regarded with cries of astonishment. I pointed to the sun, and traced upon the soil its daily movement, which they appeared to understand. I gave them my pantaloons and my shoes, which they took, carefully covering up the shoes. They then made signs to follow them to warm myself and take food...They looked at me very much and appeared very satisfied to see that my form resembled theirs. They made some movements to induce me to imitate them, and when I had executed these they manifest their joy by laughing. Having demanded to see my mouth, showing me theirs - which I found well furnished with teeth - I complied, whereat there was renewed laughter. I saw that they were great children, whom

it was necessary to amuse, and I succeeded perfectly in doing so when I chanted to them a little piece, at the same time making grimaces and dancing. I made fresh demonstrations of friendship but it was impossible to approach nearer than a step or two. The slightest gesture on my part of coming near them made them retreat.

Social cooperation, language, music, and an ability to ask “Why?” had seen Aborigines and Europeans independently find their way to Western Port tens of thousands of years apart and had set the stage for another historic reunion, the second within four months, of distant cousins in our modern human family. Wariness and lack of a common language reduced complex communication to chimp-like charades. Milius noted in his journal that the Western Port people, unlike Aboriginal people they had encountered in Tasmania and Western Australia, had blackened their skin with charcoal and some had a white cross painted on the middle of their forehead and white circles around their eyes. Several had red and white crosses all over their bodies, others had their nasal septum pierced with an ornament of dried straw. One small man, for whom the rest ‘appeared to have no consideration’ had black skin reaching to the middle of his legs, and a hideous face Milius thought was so ugly he ‘scarcely dare affirm that he was a man.’ The body ornament suggests the Bonkoolawal were involved in ritual ceremony, perhaps mourning a close relative or receiving messengers from another clan. Like the Europeans, they dressed according to rank and ‘had with them a big dog which by his skin and his tail resembled a fox, but his head appeared to be large and his muzzle short and gross.’



French explorers rediscovering Western Port, 1802-2002. Thierry Roland played the part of Pierre Milius and Françoise Debard, Théodore Leschenault. April 2002. H.C.

Hidden from view behind the tea tree, as Bass, Grant and Milius manoeuvred their boats into Warmorin, were the lubras and children, including a little boy, Kurboroo, so named because a koala grunted and growled in the tree above when his mother was in labour. Kurboroo would grow up to be a dreamer, a songwriter and doctor, forever having a close affinity with native bears.¹²³ Milius, Leschenault, Faure and Lebrèvedent prepared to re-join *Le Naturaliste* as, further west, the lost lead ship of the French expedition, *Le Géographe*, had survived the fierce storms of Bass Strait. Exploring off South Australia, the French sighted the British ship *Investigator* in what became named Encounter Bay. When Commanders Nicolas Baudin and Matthew Flinders met, it was clear that the wily British had beaten the French in the race to chart the coastline. Flinders would later write of a perceptive,

'Captain Flinders', Sidney, Samuel, *The Three Colonies of Australia*, Ingram, Cooke & Co, London, 1853, p. 44. H.L. A great lover of history, *Three Colonies* was likely one of a number of books about Australia that William Lyall bought in London in 1854 and brought back with him to Victoria to add to his expanding library.



disappointed French officer, Henri Freycinet saying: 'Captain, if we had not been kept so long picking up shells and catching butterflies at Van Diemen's Land, you would not have discovered the south coast before us.' The work the French artists and naturalists had done was outstanding but the priority British leadership placed on establishing political control would have far greater effects in moulding Western Port's future.

Sailing on towards Sydney, the *Investigator*'s capable crew spotted the entrance to a bay both French ships had missed. Turning into Port Phillip, the ship's botanist, Robert Brown, established his scientific reputation as he collected new species from the shores of Mornington Peninsula. His numerous plant specimens and descriptions contrasted with the more superficial reports of the earlier botanists, George Caley and Théodore Leschenault. Flinders' party picnicked on oysters as they viewed Western Port from the top of the granite outcrop they named, 'Arthur's Seat', after the granite outcrop of that name in Edinburgh. The Boonwurrung kept their distance.¹²⁴

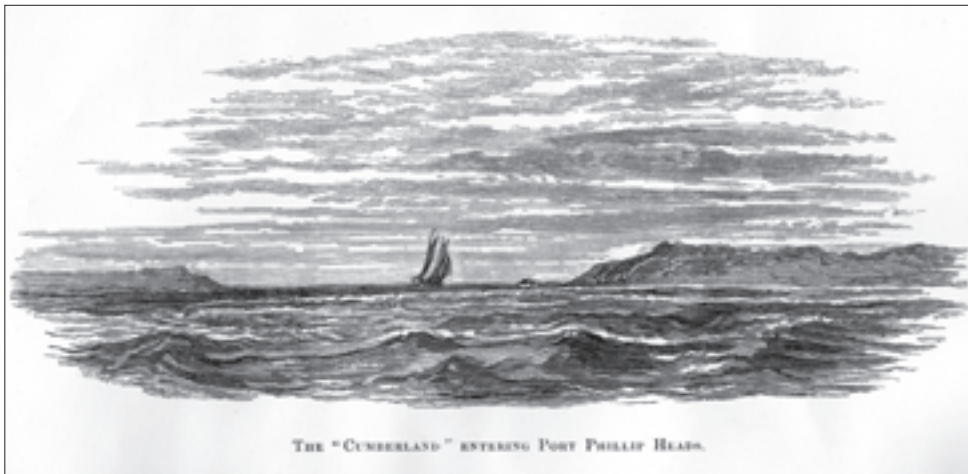
In May the crews of the *Lady Nelson*, the *Investigator* and *Le Naturaliste* met in Port Jackson and were received cordially by Governor King. Peace had been declared between the two nations and the explorers shared their information. To the disgust of the British, Flinders' discoveries later appeared on French charts with different names and no acknowledgment of priority. Aboriginal place names were disregarded by both.

The Cumberland

François Péron, a zoologist and political schemer sailing aboard *Le Géographe*, never visited Western Port himself, but used the descriptions of those who did to compile his report of the expedition on their return to France. In this he described twelve of the thirteen natives the party saw on French Island as being naked, the other clothed with a black skin and that 'In their features, the shape of the head and the smoothness and great length of the hair, the inhabitants differ from D'Entrecasteaux Channel.... [they] pierce the nostrils, through which they thrust a small stick six or seven inches long, like the aborigines of Port Jackson. They wear collar fashion a sort of necklace, formed of a number of short tubes of coarse straw.'¹²⁵

Aware of duplicity on all sides, when the French crews sailed out of Sydney, an uneasy Governor King sent the *Cumberland* in pursuit. Péron described their meeting again at King Island.

...we saw the little schooner the *Cumberland* appear. She had come from Port Jackson and had on board Mr. Grimes, Engineer-in-Chief of the English establishment, who came by order of the Government to make a declaration to us which was as singular in form as remarkable in its object. "It being reported" wrote Mr King to our commander, "that you propose to leave some men either in Dieman's Land or on the Western coast of New South Wales in order to form there a French colony, I think it my duty to declare to you, M. le Commandant, that, in virtue of the Act of 1788 for taking possession, solemnly proclaimed by England, all these countries form an integral part of the British Empire; and that you cannot occupy any part of them without breaking the bonds of friendship which have so recently re-established between the two nations. I shall not even attempt to dissemble, for such is the nature of my special instructions with regard thereto that I must oppose by all means in my power the execution of the project you are suspected of being about to execute. In consequence of which H.M.S. *Cumberland* has received orders not to leave you until the officer who commands her is satisfied that your operations are foreign to any kind of invasion of British territory in these parts."¹²⁶



'The *Cumberland* entering Port Phillip Heads', Shillinglaw, John, (ed) *Historical Records of Port Phillip, First Annal of the History of the Colony*, John Ferres, Melbourne, 1879, Front piece. H.L. This book was one of a number written by Lyall's contemporaries gifted by their authors to add to his library.

The Frenchmen stifled their mirth as Grimes' party inadvertently raised the Union Jack upside down but Governor King's intent was achieved and *Le Géographe* continued home, without, at that critical early time, leaving men to mould French stardust into Australian life. History could have gone otherwise. Péron's map of southern Australia hollowly claimed as 'Terre Napoleon' 1000 leagues of coast, 'all the part lying between Western Port and Nuyts Land', Western Port was the proposed capital. The collective audacity of the British people in laying claims early and asserting those claims through might or bluff would see their empire encircle the globe and this book written in the English language.

The *Cumberland* continued on her mission to explore Port Phillip, entering the heads on 20 January 1803. As the explorers made their way around the Bay, James Fleming, the expedition's gardener, recorded that they, like Flinders, ascended 'Arthur's Seat'

and viewed 'Western Port'. Aborigines had set fire to the countryside, all of which was newly burnt. Going up the Yarra he described a clever rock fish trap made by the Kulin, who were 'very civil'. At one point, near Corio Bay, they handed him their spears, 'one of which was barbed and one with two prongs'. Distrustful, they would not come into the boat. He noted 'Two of them appear marked with the small pox'.¹²⁷

Evidence suggests 'the small pox' is caused by a virus that originally jumped from domestic animals to humans, causing epidemics in Africa and Eurasia since the time of the pharaohs. It likely hitchhiked to Australia with the First Fleeters whose immune systems, through generations of co-adaptation, prevented the virus from causing fatal disease but didn't destroy it. Not so with the Aborigines. Never previously exposed, they had no protection and the virus appeared to have spread from tribe to tribe from the original Sydney settlement, causing great loss of life. Haydon later reasoned that he had 'never heard of a case of small pox during the time I was in Melbourne, but the way many of the natives are disfigured by it, proclaim that this disease must have made fearful ravages amongst them at some former time.'¹²⁸

BATTLE FOR NERM (1803)

Being alerted to French aspirations in Bass Strait, the worldly-wise British Ministry didn't wait for the *Cumberland's* survey but dispatched from England the *Calcutta*, man-of-war, and the *Ocean*, transport, with newly appointed Lieutenant Governor David Collins to spearhead a settlement. Collins had fought bravely on the British side in the famous Battle of Bunker Hill in the American War of Independence but when that War was lost, he gave up his military career and accompanied Captain Arthur Phillip, as Chief Magistrate with the First Fleet. He had recently returned to Britain from Port Jackson. Sailing on board the *Calcutta* were 51 military men, 307 convicts and 22 women and children, a colonising force thought to be sufficient to strategically forestall French aspirations in the region. Collins orders were to keep away from the Aborigines and not interfere with them. Their reception from the Kulin people living on Nerm (Port Phillip) was not friendly and it wasn't long before First Lieutenant Tuckey recorded a fierce black-white battle on Lo-an's Land, near Narr'-m, the place on which the City of Melbourne was later constructed.¹²⁹

The NW side of the port, where a level plain extends to the northward as far as the horizon, appears to be by far the most populous; at this place upwards of two hundred natives assembled round the surveying boats and their obviously hostile intentions made the application of firearms absolutely necessary to repel them, by which one native was killed and two or three wounded.¹³⁰

On my reading, this unnamed warrior was the first to lose his life defending Kulin land against the British. Numbers and organisation suggest that the Yalukit and Ngaruk Willam clans, who held custodianship of the territory at the north of the Bay called on their Kulin allies to oppose the invaders. Further describing the skirmish Tuckey

wrote, 'they advanced in a compact body to the brow of the hill, every individual armed with a spear, and some who appeared to be the attendants of others, carrying bundles of them; when within a hundred yards of us they halted, and the chief with one attendant, came down to the tent; and spoke with great vehemence, holding a very large war spear in position for throwing.'



'David Collins, Lt Governor.'
Shillinglaw, John
Shillinglaw, John,
(ed) *Historical Records of Port Phillip, First Annal of the History of the Colony*, John Ferres, Melbourne, 1879, p. 30. H.L.

British efforts to conciliate were unsuccessful, as the Kulin warriors continued to advance and Tuckey's party resorted to 'selecting one of the foremost, who appeared to be most violent, as a proper example, three muskets were fired at him, at fifty yards distance, two of which took effect, and he fell dead on the spot, the chief turning round at the report saw him fall, and immediately fled among the trees, a general dispersion succeeded, and the dead body was left behind.'¹³¹

Sad context acknowledged, Tuckey's description of the behaviour and ornament of the warriors, which describes clear social hierarchy, is interesting to compare with earlier accounts of Murray, Milius and Fleming.

Among these savages, gradations of rank could be distinctly traced, founded most probably upon personal qualities and external appearance. In these respects the chief far excelled the rest: his figure was masculine and well proportioned, and his air bold and commanding. When he first was seen approaching the boat he was raised upon the shoulders of two men, and surrounded by the whole party, shouting and clapping their hands. Besides his cloak, which was only distinguished by its superior size, he wore a necklace of reeds, and several strings of human hair over his breast. His head was adorned with a coronet of the wing-feathers of the swan, very neatly arranged, and which had a pleasing effect. The faces of several were painted with red, white and yellow clays, and others had a reed or bone running through the septum of the nose, perhaps increasing in length according to rank, for the chief's was by far the longest and must have measured at least two feet. Ornamental scars on the shoulders were general, and the face of one was deeply pitted as if from the small pox, though that disease is not known to exist in New Holland. A very great difference was observed in the comparative cleanliness of these savages; some of them were so abominably beastly, that it required the strongest stomach to look on them without nausea, while others were sufficiently cleanly to be viewed without disgust. The beards, which are remarkably bushy in the former were allowed to grow, while in the latter they were cut close, apparently by a sharp instrument.

The only covering they make use of to preserve their persons from winter's cold is a square cloak of opossum skins, neatly sewed together, and thrown loosely over their shoulders; the fleshy side, which is worn inwards, is marked with parallel lines,

forming squares, lozenges, etc., and sometimes with uncouth human figures in the attitudes of dancing.¹³²

While most authorities consider that ‘Chiefs’ did not feature in Aboriginal culture, the picture Tuckey paints of the headman with an especially long bone through his nasal septum, swan feather headdress and large cloak being carried aloft on the shoulder of his warriors, suggests chief-like rank and ritual amongst the assembled Kulin.¹³³

CONVICTS AND SEALERS

William Buckley, a convict who absconded from the Collins camp established near present day Sorrento, lived the next thirty-two years with the Kulin people. He also spoke about the feather headdresses that were apparently worn by influential leaders and the great pains taken in their fabrication. Buckley’s story was extraordinary, both to his contemporaries and subsequent readers and writers of Australian history. A red and black paperback copy of Bonwick’s *The Wild White Man and the Blacks of Victoria* (with ‘W Lyall’ written in ink on the first page) lies in Harewood’s library, one of the many accounts written of this man.¹³⁴

Buckley, the
Wild White
Man, Bonwick,
James, *Port
Phillip Settlement*,
Sampson, Low,
Marston, Searle &
Rivington, 1883, p.
220. H.L.



Buckley, born in 1780, measured 6’ 6” at a time when the average Englishman was 5’ 3”. His face was badly scarred from small pox. Wounded as a young recruit when fighting Napoleon in the King’s Own Regiment on Foot, he was sent back to Britain where he became involved in some irregular dealings and was convicted for ‘criminally receiving’ and transported ‘for life’ in 1803 on board the *Calcutta*. Along with two other convicts he escaped from the Sorrento settlement and made his way up the Mornington Peninsula and around Port Phillip. The fate of the other escapees remains unknown, but Buckley, after wandering along the coast for some weeks was found by two Aboriginal women. He was exhausted, half-starved and carrying a spear taken from the burial mound of a Warthaurung man and they thought him to be their dead relative brought back to life. The women named him ‘Murangurk’, which meant ‘one who has been reincarnated’, and adopted him into their community. Buckley welcomed their friendship.¹³⁵

As the Warthaurung tended Buckley, strategists amongst the British elite decided a colony in Van Diemen’s Land might better serve their aim of forestalling French settlement and be a more amenable site for a penal colony. Lt Governor Collins abandoned the Port Phillip settlement and shifted his prisoners to the Derwent River;

it was only three months before the first of many massacres of Tasmanian Aboriginal people was perpetrated. The 1803 Sorrento settlement was long remembered by the Kulin people. William Barak would later recount how, before he was born, ‘Captain Cook’ landed at Western Port...’¹³⁶

With Collins’ departure, European interest in the region waned. France and England were again at war as the remnants of Napoleon’s showcase expedition to the Great South Land limped sadly home. Tuberculosis claimed Captain Baudin’s life and Pierre Milius was placed in command to bring *Le Géographe* back to France. François Péron sought favour with the Empress Josephine by giving her plants and animals brought back from the expedition that she acclimatised in the gardens of her stately home, Malmaison. Over 100,000 live plants and animals and museum specimens had been collected. Matthew Flinders, meanwhile, languished for five years under house arrest in Ile de France (Mauritius) until the fortunes of war swung back in favour of the British and Napoleon was defeated at Waterloo.¹³⁷

Ships’ captains now knew of Western Port. The British colonial government, wanting to maintain control of the thinly spread European population, classified Western Port as ‘out of bounds’ but this didn’t stop the arrival of convicts absconding from expanding Van Diemen’s Land settlements or seamen from around the world coming to seek adventure, profit or to dodge trouble from where they had come. Warping the landscape with their foreign stardust, these men took Aboriginal women from the mainland and Van Diemen’s Land as partners or slaves to found distinctive maritime communities on the islands of Bass Strait and elsewhere on islands off the south coast of Australia. Some, like the sealers John Scott and William Foster, who set up camp on Phillip Island, enjoyed a remote life and saw a commercial opportunity. Over a hundred thousand seal skins were shipped from the region before over exploitation killed the trade.¹³⁸

Kuburoo had nearly reached manhood and new Boonwurrung babies were being born in good numbers in the clan lands around Western Port. Some would later achieve distinction in Melbourne’s early days of settlement. A woman named Dindo gave birth to a son, Derrimut, around 1805. Another baby boy, born around 1810 under the shelter of a native cherry tree, was named Poleorong based on the circumstance of his birth, Poleorong meaning native cherry. Yamerboke (or Jimmy, Jimmie, King Jimmy, Big Jemmy, Jimmy Dunbar, Charley, Hawk’s eye, Yamaboke, Yam-mer-book or Yammabook to give his other aliases) was born around 1814. His death certificate recorded Mordialloc as his birthplace but when he joined the Native Police his clan was recorded as the ‘Marinbulluk’ section of the ‘Wawoorong’, a clan that held the land between Koroit Creek and the Maribyrnong River. Of his parents there is no record but, as a Waang clan, the Marin Bulluk men would take brides from Bunjil clans, which included the Yallock Bulluk.¹³⁹

HUME, HOVELL AND MISSING TEETH

By the 1820s squatters to the north were setting their minds to snatching up Kulin land. Ironically, with good food, a fine climate and a healthy life style, white babies born in New South Wales were growing up with strong teeth and bones and fine physiques, far outstripping the rickety, disease ridden children of the crowded cities of northern Europe. But Australian-born children had little book learning and were considered only a slight cut above their convict and poor white parents in the rigid colonial social hierarchy. Hamilton Hume, one such native born 'currency lad', as they were called, volunteered to lead an expedition to determine whether any navigable rivers flowed over the land to the south of the Goulburn Plains to the oceans on the coast. As he self-deprecatingly put it, 'presuming myself (altho' an Australian) capable of understanding such an expedition'.¹⁴⁰

William Hovell, of 'sterling' British birth, volunteered to take part as well and in 1824 Governor Brisbane sent them off on what was to prove to be a trial of strength between native born and migrant. They arrived, exhausted and fighting in Corio Bay on the western side of Port Phillip, not far from where Lt Fleming had observed pox-marked Warthaurung fishing. Because ways to measure longitude at that time were problematic, they wrongly guessed the bay to be Western Port. Turning for home, Hume suspected their mistake and revised his story, but Hovell, remained convinced it was Western Port they had reached.¹⁴¹

The debate raged on in the Sydney papers (with the press backing the currency lad), as the French restored the Bourbon monarchy. In Lo-an's Land, Kurboroo would have been fully initiated as Derrimut, Poleorong and Yamerboke, joined by Toolumn (born c. 1822) and Barak (born c. 1824) experienced traditional Aboriginal upbringing. In their schooling Kulin girls were shown how to build miams, collect gum, weave baskets and nets and make twine from possum fur by rubbing it on the inside of their legs.¹⁴² The boys received instruction in the skills needed as warriors and hunters. Under the guidance of the old men the older boys would cut a disc of bark to serve as a target and the youngsters would practise spear throwing.

Each little boy in turn threw his spear. Few hit the disc, but those that struck it or came very near it were complimented by the old man and by their fellows. The attitude of the boys, their eagerness, the attention of the old man, the triumph exhibited in his countenance when better play than usual was made, and the modest demeanour of the most successful spearman formed a picture that was very pleasing. Other exercises followed this performance and their aged instructor seemed to delight in the work he had taken in hand. Obedience, steadiness, fair-play and self-command were inculcated by the practices witnessed..¹⁴³

Traditionally Yamerboke would have had his nasal septum perforated by elders before he reached puberty. After the hole had been made with a sharp bone, the old men would make a fire and doused the coals with water to produce steam. For several days

Yamerboke would have his head covered with a possum skin rug and be made to keep his face over steam until the peg could be easily turned.

THE *FLY*, THE *DRAGON* AND *L'ASTROLABE*

In 1826 another expedition to promote French science, revive French prestige and secretly test the water for the possibility of French colonial settlement, set sail for Southern Australia. This time it was under the command of botanist and naval captain Dumont d'Urville. Receiving word of the planned visit, Earl Bathurst in London dispatched urgent orders to Governor Ralph Darling in Sydney to re-establish a settlement in the Western Port area. Hovell, still smarting from his dispute with Hume, leapt at the chance of accompanying Captains Wetherill and Wright aboard the *Fly* and the *Dragon* as they sailed south around the coast to establish the new outpost.¹⁴⁴

When the sails of d'Urville's corvette *L'Astrolabe* appeared on the horizon at King George's Sound, West Australia, three sealers, abandoned by their ship's captain the previous year, thanked their good fortune and gratefully guided the French back to Western Port. They sailed through the western entrance and anchored off Rhyll's Inlet. To meet them were former shipmates, also deserted, along with John Scott and Mr Foster dressed in kangaroo skins with their Aboriginal partners, children and kangaroo dogs. Toolumn would have still been a little girl and Yamerboke a youth when the Aboriginal people and sealers helped the French scientists examine the flora and fauna of the Bay. Louis Auguste de Sainson, an artist on board *L'Astrolabe*, painted the scene on Phillip Island and several others about the Bay before the French expedition sailed peacefully on to Sydney, taking with them the rescued sealers.¹⁴⁵

The *Dragon* and the *Fly* crossed paths with *L'Astrolabe* and arrived in Western Port days later to be welcomed by the remaining members of the Phillip Island sealing community. Hovell, explored the area around Wonthaggi while Captain Wetherall, accompanied by soldiers, sealers and convicts, made a circuit of the Bay. On Christmas Eve 1826, aboard the *Fly*, Wetherall wrote to Governor Darling about the view from the Bay across Harewood.

...all the Northern Coast consisting of swamp from which few small rivers with deep channels running with considerable velocity empty themselves into the Harbour all but one are inaccessible to Boats at 1/2 flood by the extreme shoals at their entrance. .

A range of very high mountains appear to terminate in a Northerly direction these are what Messrs Hume and Hovell, call "Australian Alps" but from a very careful examination of the Northern Shores of this Harbour and the character of the Country differing so materially from the account given by these gentlemen I feel confident that the expedition undertaken by them could never have reached Western port.¹⁴⁶

Sterling born Hovell's competence as an explorer was under a cloud but he was still the governor's choice to survey the Bay. Returning to Phillip Island the convicts were set to clearing a piece of ground they called "Fort Dumarsesq". Michael Kain, under sentence for deserting from the army, was flogged three times for taking to the bush. On his fourth session on the triangle he slit his own throat and bled profusely but Captain Wright made sure it was sewn up so he could live on to face his tormentors: he was later sent to Moreton Bay, the settlement for recidivists the British opened in Queensland. The Boonwurrung might well have puzzled over the wanton cruelty the Europeans showed their own people.¹⁴⁷

William Hovell's
Survey of Western
Port, 1826.
(Original held by
State Records of
N.S.W: SZ555;
W.1.1167).



Using a camp established at Settlement Point as a base, Hovell made forays around the Bay. A team of sealers, soldiers or convicts would sail or row to various starting points, drop Hovell and his party off and then rendezvous days or weeks later. Hovell crossed Harewood's landscape by land from east to west and again from west to east. On one of his trips he was landed at 'Snapper' Creek (Sawtell's Inlet, Tooradin) and travelled northwest along an old native trail to a granite outcrop 22 miles inland at present day Berwick. Here, turning south, he gazed at the panorama from Arthur's Seat to Phillip Island, then made his way back towards the Bay along the upper reaches of Cardinia Creek, encountering, for the first time, Boonwurrung people.¹⁴⁸

19/1/27 At 1 o'clock 2 native men paid us a visit, they had tracked us for some distance, having heard us fire at some Ducks. They left us for a short time and took some Tea which had been given them to show to their friends which were encamped at no great distance from us but previous to their going I made them understand that if they

brought the pot back which contained the Tea I would give a tomahawk in lieu, in half an hour they returned bringing an old man with them, who from the great degree of familiarity used towards us and his examining everything belonging to the Party with a sort of desire I strongly suspected him to be a rogue and cautioned the men against him. It was not long before my suspicions were verified for having found where the hatchet was put used by us he contrived to conceal it under his cloak, close up to the arm pit and appeared carelessly lounging about at the same time siding off towards a thick scrub close by, on seeing this I enquired if the hatchet was safe, it was gone and he was going to [sic] but the sight of the musket pointed towards him brought him quickly back.¹⁴⁹

Hovell's description reflected a quantum change from the disciplined Kulin warriors who orchestrated the attack on Tuckey's men in Port Phillip in 1803. The Kulin now knew about boiling water in metal pots and coveted iron tomahawks but they were aware that they were bargaining from a position of weakness. Rather than head on confrontation, they experimented with trickery, stealth and negotiation as ploys to achieve their aims.

...I made them sensible where I had been & where I was going, gave each of them fishing Hooks which they knew the use of and the Tomahawk to the young man who in turn gave me the Tin Pot, and there set forward on our journey [...]

There were several old men among them, but one in particular which appeared the Chief was the oldest, the hair on his head and also his beard which was very long was perfectly white, his legs and arms were small, body lanky but he appeared in good health and I should judge his age to be about 70 years, they are all in what may be termed good case and from the cause of them having several good Kangaroo Dogs no doubt live well, they appear very active and whatever we may think to the contrary I have no doubt happy.

Thousands of years of selective breeding by people across Eurasia had given rise to a plethora of dog breeds, including the sight hounds the Boonwurrung had acquired from the sealers and which they were finding better than their dingoes for hunting kangaroo. Ironically, with traditional population control measures, their metal-less, cloth-less, gun-less culture was delivering the Boonwurrung a better standard of health than that in the swarming, poverty-stricken, industrial slums of Dickens' London. After their return to 'Snapper Creek', Hovell's party rowed east along the north coast of the Bay to explore the inlets. He camped overnight to the west of Kirkbillesee (Lyll's Inlet).

20/ 1/ 27 At 5 arrived at the West most of the three rivers mentioned above / it is not so large as the last left, that being at least 150 feet wide, this is not more than 80 or 100 in its course North and South, on the left on entering is a salt water creek, branching off nearly West, high standing Trees between it and the Bay, on the North side quite clear, and appears to be all made [?] land. On entering the river, and before I came to

the creek, I found the water to be quite fresh, but on arrival at the creek it was salt, this I suppose is occasioned by a peak in the river from the late rains, but which did not effect the water in the creek, and that the fresh water floated on the top of the salt. I think I am right in my supposition as several small sharks were caught in it / After landing the people I took 4 men with me in the Boat to examine the river higher up, at a distance of about half a mile it branches off into number of separate streams, and at the head of every stream which is not more than from one to three hundred yards from the main one, it is closed by very highly impenetrable Tea Tree Brush, through this the water was running very strong and as there was about two feet fall, and there being such a number the noise was so great that it was impossible to hear each other speak - Finding that the Branches ended in the same way I returned to where I intend stopping till tomorrows higher tide, in the meantime I shall examine the land adjoining this stream on both sides.

If Hovell were to retrace his steps today, the creek branching off to the west where he caught the sharks is buried under the Tooradin Airfield but some tall trees remain. The river (Lyll's Inlet) disappears beneath the dual carriageway of South Gippsland Highway rather than into impenetrable Tea Tree Brush. It would be aircraft noise, rather than rushing water, that impeded hearing. While exploring near Harewood, Hovell also wrote about the sealers and their Aboriginal concubines.

I should have observed before that one of the sealers and his Black wife came up in the Boat for the purpose of seeing if a Country Woman of the Girls is in any of the tribes of Natives that reside generally by these rivers. It appears that she and another / both from Van Diemen's land/ had passed from the Sealers some years back and joined one or other of the tribes. The way these men get those girls and Women is by purchasing or more properly speaking bartering for them to the appointed Chiefs. Along the East Coast of Van Diemen's land, when the trade first commenced a Girl could be got for a piece of dead seal, or porpoise, now they require Bread, Flour or Kangaroo Dogs I have been told by those who have had dealings in those articles of barter that some of the girls leave their friends without any sort of regret, this I think cannot be believed for according to the old adage home is home if it is ever so homely others they say make strong resistance but that the Chief's authority is absolute - In the course of time after a little training they become expert Sealers much the best hunters, Dirty domestics and much worse cooks, over these women (though speaking generally they use them tolerably well) they exercise a sort of Sultan's authority which they could not do over their own country women, some hundreds of these women are bartered for in this way.

Kulin women traditionally left their birth families after marriage but the loss of 'some hundreds' of Aboriginal women (if this report was true) to seafarers would have had a major genetic and social impact on the coastal tribes. A later report suggested that there were only about a dozen sealers living on Bass Strait Islands, each generally living with one Aboriginal partner. In his journal Hovell, refers to John Scott, whom D'Urville's party had met on Phillip Island, and Scott's black wife rowing their boat

to the settlement at Settlement Point and presenting them ‘with some Green peas & Potatoes, the product of his Garden.’ While the relationship between Scott and his partner seemed comfortable, the Tasmanian women Hovell mentioned in his journal as evading the sealers indicated not all the women traded were willing. Some of them fought back and would risk their lives to escape abusive relationships and repay injustices done to them.¹⁵⁰

D’Entrecasteaux Channel, where artists of the Baudin Expedition had painted beautiful pictures 25 years earlier, had become a place of great sadness for Aboriginal people. Devastating social upheaval followed in the wake of Collins’ British convict settlement and murder, abduction and racial violence had become commonplace. In one incident, which would later rebound into Western Port history, an Island woman, Truganini, and her fiancé accepted a boat ride across the Channel and when half way across the channel the white men pushed the young man overboard and then chopped off his hands as he struggled to get back on board and left him to drown. Truganini’s mother was killed and her sister, Moorinna, was abducted and later shot.¹⁵¹

The Quaker diarist George Walker also chronicled rape and violence in Bass Strait. An Aboriginal woman named Boatswain told him of her treatment.

She made signs that she would be nude, stretched out with her hands up against a wall, in the attitude of a prisoner tied up to be flogged, for the hands and feet were tied as well, she made at the same time a doleful cry and personated the beater, in the course of his work on her. After this she descried a different scene. She represented a person striking another over the back and legs, and then herself as sinking down on the ground, while she repeatedly exclaimed in a piteous tone, ‘Oh, I will clean the mutton birds better’, until her voice seemed to fail through exhaustion. It seemed that in the first scene the purpose was for sex and the second was in regard to work. She said the men beat with great sticks.¹⁵²

The women were beyond legal protection from either their own tribe’s or European law. Some authors blame the sealers for introducing disease leading to loss of Boonwurrung lives but Derrimut and William Buckley maintained venereal disease, at least, was not introduced until after 1836. As the women were often taken away from the mainland, even if they became infected by white males, the chance of spreading it back to their own people was less.¹⁵³

Travelling further south around the Mornington Peninsula, Hovell again ran into the old man who stole the axe head, along with a larger party of natives, ‘they are most of them healthy and each had a child, both Men & women had good covering made from the skins of the Kangaroo, they had several fine Kangaroo dogs by which they get their principal support.’¹⁵⁴

Hovell also observed (19 January 1827) that ‘Some of the men and Boys had one of the front teeth knocked out, others again had not. Most of them had curly heads but one

or two had lank, they had parts of several Kangaroo, one or two Tin Pots, some pieces of Iron made into Tomahawks and some pieces of woollen cloth.'

Yamerboke's front incisors were missing at the time he died but whether they were avulsed at his initiation and given to his mother to ceremonially place in a commemorative tree, as was the local tradition, is not known. While he claimed to come from a Woiworung clan, the links he had with Boonwurrung land suggest his mother's family was Boonwurrung, part of the interconnecting network of Kulin family groups. As teenage years progressed he would have undergone rites of passage to mark his progress into manhood and assumption of adult responsibilities. It is not known precisely what these would have been, but typically a young man was taken away from his mother and placed under the guardianship of his Kangun (mother's brother) or Gurvich (sister's husband) both of whom would be of the intermarrying moiety to his own. 'The Law' would be revealed and the initiate put to test under trying conditions. Several different descriptions of Kulin initiation rites were recorded by Europeans.¹⁵⁵

When a boy was about thirteen years old, he was taken away by the old men of the tribe a considerable distance from the camp, where they made a mi-mi, and remained for about one month, during which time the boy was instructed in all the legends of the tribe. At the end of that time several of the men took hold of the boy, and held him until two others knocked out one of his front teeth; this was done by first loosing the flesh from round the tooth with a piece of sharp bone, then one knocked it out with a piece of wood used as a punch. He now had to cover his nakedness with pieces of opossum skins; he then returned to the general camp, and was known as Wang-goom.¹⁵⁶

By the 1840s George Haydon reported tooth avulsion had been practically abandoned and the Aboriginal protector William Thomas did not describe tooth avulsion in his description of Til-but initiation ceremony which was held in Yallock Bulluk clan lands at a place called Derendye, northeast of Yallock, near present day Yannathan. In Thomas' description, the ceremony was performed by a 'married man of influence' (Thomas didn't understand the nuances of Aboriginal kinship relations), the young man's head was shaved 'save a narrow streak from the front of the neck to the forehead' and the whole body was then daubed with mud, clay and charcoal powder. Stripes of old rags, string, slips of possum skin and old rope were attached as a fringed girdle around his waist, giving him a beastly appearance. Thus attired the boy would run about the encampment calling out 'Tib-bo-bo-but' with a basket under his arm containing 'all the filth he can pick up'. He would frighten and smear 'all he meets with some of the beastly commodities in his basket, but he must not touch any who are in their mia-mias, or lubras on the way getting water.' The children were especially frightened. When growing hairs began to appear he was washed and the women would streak his face with charcoal and ochre and dance before him to complete the ceremony.¹⁵⁷

William Barak, in relation to Woiworung Jibauk initiation ceremonies, said they were held periodically and that different clans would act as host. A bough enclosure was made several hundred metres from the main camp in which the initiates would camp with their guardians for several weeks. He describes the boys being thickly plastered with mud and pipe-clay but the culmination was the boy being given a possum rug prepared by his Kangun, much corroboreeing and his finally being taken to the men's camp. He said, "In the Boonwurrung tribe the equivalent of the Jibauk was called Talangun. All that was done was that the boy was taken by some men who dressed him in full male attire, and he was made to eat forbidden food animals as soon as the men could catch them." According to Barak there were no other initiation ceremonies, he made no mention of a ritual journey to Wilson's Promontory to see Lo-an, but Barak may not have been comfortable about reporting Boonwurrung customs as he was not Boonwurrung himself.¹⁵⁸

As indigenous births dropped, more Anglo-Celtic Australian babies were growing up to take a role in reshaping Lo-an's land. On 11 January 1827 a 'currency lad' of convict heritage, John Batman, and a lawyer, Joseph Gellibrand, both living in Van Diemen's Land, tried their luck with a grovelling letter to Governor Darling in their first attempt to settle across Bass Strait.

Understanding that it is your Excellency's intention to establish a permanent settlement at Western Port, and to afford encouragement to respectable persons to settle there, we beg leave most respectfully to solicit at the hands of your Excellency a grant of land at that place, proportionable to the property which we intend to embark. [...]

We propose to ship from this place 1,500 to 2,000 sheep, 30 head of superior cows, oxen, horses & c. & c., to the value of 4,000 to 5,000 pounds, the whole under the personal direction of Mr Batman (who is a native of New South Wales), who will constantly reside for the protection of the establishment.

Under these circumstances we are induced to hope your Excellency will be pleased to grant to us a tract of land proportionable to the sum of money we propose to expend, and also to afford us every encouragement in carrying the proposed object into effect.

(Signed) G.T. Gellibrand and John Batman¹⁵⁹

Mr McLeay, the Colonial Secretary at Sydney wrote back.

GENTLEMEN, - In reply to your letter of 11 January last, soliciting a grant of land at Western Port, I am directed by the Governor to inform you that no determination having been come to with respect to the settlement of that place, it is not in His Excellency's power to comply with your request.

The Governor forbid private settlement and, with the French threat again abating and water supplies low, the short-lived convict settlement at present day Corinella, like

the Sorrento settlement before it, was abandoned. The Boonwurrung children would have watched with the rest of the tribe as Captain Wright and his soldiers, sailors and convicts sailed off from Warn-mor-in. Western Port was again declared 'off bounds' to British settlers. The collision of cultures was postponed for another day.

KURNAI-KULIN CONFLICT

Ritual continued to mark Aboriginal family milestones and inter-connect the community with each other, country and universe. Billibillary's Boonwurrung wife gave birth to a son at Wonga (Arthur's Seat) who would take the name of his birthplace but later add the European name Simon. Sons of principal men were greeted by ceremony that echoed practices of tens of millennia earlier.

In that case there is a grand corroboree; the infant is rubbed over with emu oil or fat, afterwards a thin rubbing of (wheerup) red ochre. The infant is held carefully in the palm of the right hand, and exposed to the tribe while corroborying.¹⁶⁰

Bass Strait sealers continued to impact on Kulin tribal life while, to the east, the Brataulong tribe of the Kurnai, traditional enemies of the Kulin nation, made a series of raids into Boonwurrung territory that resulted in heavy loss of life. The trigger to the dispute was reputedly an incident 'long before the white men came to Melbourne' when, according to William Barak the 'Mordiallock people went down to the Tarwin to feast on native cabbage' then followed and killed some of the Port Albert Kurnai who had consumed this resource without permission.' The Kurnai raided Western Port to avenge these killings and 'the Gippsland and Westernport blacks were never friends after.' It beggars belief that such a seemingly trivial incident would lead to a blood feud that would wipe out the Boonwurrung clans on the mainland but there is little doubt that, whatever its cause, the feud had a huge impact. Living remote from the coast, Kurnai numbers and health had not been as adversely affected by European contact and the balance of power swung in their favour.¹⁶¹ Haydon reflected retrospectively on the feud and how the Kurnai/Kulin war contributed to the formation of the Native Police:

...their old and formidable enemies the Gippsland tribe, who had invaded Westernport some years since, and nearly annihilated a whole tribe. One of the old warriors of this tribe who had escaped the massacre, said that his people were laying about the country like dead kangaroos. On my expressing surprise at the number that must have been killed, he construed it into an expression of unbelief. "Look at my people," said he; "where are all my brothers? do you see any old men? I am the only one. I talk with the young men. My old companions sleep at Monip." He then told me the berber or wild blacks from Gippsland had surrounded the tribe one night, and having killed nearly all the men, stole the females and destroyed their children so few escaped. Nearly all the remnants of this tribe whose members were then young, has now entered into the

native force, and makes an efficient police; being such excellent trackers nothing can escape them when once they are on a trail.¹⁶²

There was other evidence of Bratauolong attacks on the Boonwurrung. Thomas reported tribal songs that recounted a massacre wiping out the Boonwurrung inhabitants of Jouap (French Island) and a dawn raid at Brighton that wiped out nearly a quarter of the Boonwurrung population.

...in McMillan's Estate, at Little Brighton, was a large gum-tree, having carved on the trunk for a yard or two high, a host of blacks lying prostrate as dead. Near this spot, in 1833-34, the Gippsland blacks at midnight stole upon the Western Port, or Coast, tribe, and made sad havoc, killing sixty or seventy of them. The spot was named Worrowen, or 'Place of Sorrow'. The tree mentioned, I am sorry to say, was shattered by lightening many years ago.¹⁶³

James Clow of Dandenong documented the clashes as well. 'Previous to the country which lies on the Western side of the Bay of Western Port (between what was at one time Manton's and Allan's run) being occupied by squatters in the year 1835, the Gippsland blacks attacked some five and twenty of the Western Port tribe in the grey of the morning and cut off every one of them. Their tombs consist of many cairns plainly visible to this day.'¹⁶⁴

Independent reports from multiple sources confirm high numbers of Boonwurrung deaths. While Woiworung warriors, including another of Murrundindi's great-cousin-ancestors, Jacky Weatherly, were also involved in the clashes, it was the Boonwurrung who buffered the Kurnai and suffered the greatest losses.¹⁶⁵ The Yallock Bulluk, sandwiched between the Bay and the Kooweerup Swamp as well as the Bonkoolawal and Yowengerre clans, who held custodianship of the land on the eastern shore of Western Port to the Tarwin River, were all but wiped out.¹⁶⁶ Kurboroo and young Worrenggitolong, still a boy but regarded by other Boonwurrung leaders as the rightful clan-head of the Yallock Bulluk, survived.¹⁶⁷ Yamerboke's family's clan lands lay further to the west, more safely within Kulin territory. By the early 1830s Yamerboke would have been ready to complete the final stages of initiation into manhood and to be eligible to take a wife. Quoting again from Brough Smyth about Kulin initiation,

When about eighteen, he was again taken to some distance from the camp by the old men; this time he was painted as a warrior; about sunrise one of the old men struck him, and he told him to take off the covering of skin, that he was now a Geeowak. He had now to go and find something to take to the general camp for them to eat, and on his approach to the camp all who were there ran and hid themselves, because they were ashamed to look upon him naked; he then found them all, and gave them something to eat, and then they were no more ashamed.¹⁶⁸

FAMILY CONNECTIONS ACROSS THE STRAIT

Along the east coast of Van Diemen's Land where Dutch, French and possibly Chinese had made earlier landfalls, the British blatantly abused their position of power and dispossessed the Aboriginal people. British-Aboriginal clashes revolved around the European notions of land ownership rather than Aboriginal Law in which inherited resource rights were linked with traditional land care responsibilities. There were gross injustices as the British appropriated tribal lands and allowed white men to commit outrages against the natives with impunity.¹⁶⁹

A haunting passage from one of the volumes in Harewood's old bookcases describes how the natives 'Jack' and 'Dick' were executed in a botched hanging in Hobart in May 1826, a scene that would be sadly repeated in Melbourne a dozen years later.

'The poor lad died very hard - the rope which tied his arms slipped to the elbows, he reached his hands to his neck, and a deluge of blood came from his mouth.'

'...the natives could have come to no other conclusion than that the death of their companions was but deliberate murder. To have fallen by a musket ball in the heat of conflict, or to have been pierced by the spear of an open enemy, would have been considered the fate of war; but to be deliberately taken upon a scaffold, and there inhumanely put to death in the presence of numbers of people whom they were not endeavouring to injure, was beyond their comprehension. They could not regard such proceedings as otherwise than as cruel torture, for when they revenged themselves upon their enemies they destroyed life as speedily as possible, never inflicting unnecessary pain. From this period, all friendly intercourse was at an end - the few natives that had been in the habit of visiting the settlers occasionally, were seen no more as friends, but all bent on the one common cause of revenge.'¹⁷⁰

Aboriginal Law was based on their belief in supernatural sanctions relating to the Dreaming rather than imperial authority, and even those being punished might have the chance to defend themselves. Deliberate torture was not a part of Aboriginal culture as it had been in European tradition. This hanging and other atrocities had the ripple effect of arousing the ire of Aboriginal Tasmanians who fought bravely with Stone Age weapons in a lopsided war against the horses, guns and sabres of the British settlers, including those of John Batman and Joseph Gellibrand who later became key players in Melbourne's settlement. Shocked and angered that the behaviour of his countrymen contravened Christian beliefs, George Augustus Robinson, a zealous lay preacher from Hobartown, devised a plan to entice the depleted remnants of the Aboriginal clans to accept exile to Flinders Island, where he intended to save their lives, and their souls, for Jesus Christ. Truganini and her husband Wooreddy were amongst the 195 who ultimately boarded the boats. John Lyall, William's father, arrived from Foveran, Scotland in 1833, as the last Aborigines were being evicted. News of the massacres the settlers perpetrated so angered Church groups in Britain that they pushed for an Aboriginal Protectorate System, creating another ripple effect, one

that would later bring George Robinson, Truganini and a dozen other 'Christianised' Tasmanian Aborigines to Western Port.¹⁷¹

The deliberations of those in high places on the ethics and practicality of Aboriginal policy had little immediate relevance for the Aborigines on either side of Bass Strait. Distance ensured British officials had no effective control and dreadful crimes went unpunished. May-te-pue-min-ner (Matilda), a Van Diemen's Land woman who had been kidnapped by sealers and escaped to Wybelena on Flinders Island, later accompanied George Robinson to Port Phillip and indicated a site at Point Nepean where, in the early 1830s, she had been used as a decoy in the taking of Boonwurrung women. George Robinson recorded her version of the story in which the Kulin fought back and killed two white men.

Said they deceived the people, gammoned them. Said the native men upset the boat and the men were all wet and fell into the water. Said there was plenty of blackfellows, some on the Port Phillip side, some outside, seacoast. Said the sealers were afraid of Port Phillip natives. Said they employed her to entice them. George Meredith stole the, I think she said, four women, took them in the schooner first to Kings Is and then to Hunter and Clarks and Gun Carriage Islands, and they sold them to the sealers there. I am informed that Munro bought one. She pointed out the small islands in the mid port soon after you enter and told me that the natives had killed two white men there, they found their bones and an iron pot and tomahawk.¹⁷²

This passage, and others like it, would later be central when Kulin descendants pressed Land Rights claims through the Australian justice system in the 21st Century.

BATMAN'S TANDERRUM

By the 1830s John Fawcner, a convict's son who was amongst the entourage of the 1803 Sorrento settlement, had become the publican of the still existing Cornwall Hotel in Launceston. His bar was a hotbed of scheming to try to induce the British government to allow legal British settlement north of Bass Strait. Bushman John Batman, also of convict parentage, lawyer Joseph Gellibrand and their supporters in the Port Phillip Association, having been refused permission to settle in Western Port in the 1820s, plotted to make use of the public outcry in Britain over the treatment of the Tasmanian Aborigines. Drafting a peace treaty to present to the Kulin, Batman and other would-be settlers crossed the Strait on board Captain Robson's *Rebecca* and landed at Indented Heads. Here Batman's Sydney blacks, who had been with him in conciliation efforts with the Tasmanians, followed native tracks and led the party to a group of forty Warthaurung women and children. The women indicated that their men were away fighting in the Barrabool Hills. Gifts were given, and sex ensued. The following morning, leaving some of his party behind, Batman and Captain Robson 'Got under way and started for the Yarra' where Batman, James Gumm and Ned Thompson and the Sydney natives 'fifteen in all, armed to the teeth, and loaded with as much as they could carry', landed on the northern side of the Salt Water (Maribyrnong) Creek and commenced to explore the fertile Yarra river flats.¹⁷³

Accounts varied as Batman and others told their stories to best support their political purposes, but on 6 June 1835 a Kulin elder and his family met the party at a place near the present day site of Melbourne University.

On looking back we saw eight men all armed with spears, &c. When we stopped they threw aside their weapons and came very friendly up to us. After shaking hands, and my giving them tomahawks, knives, &c., they took us with them about a mile back, where we found huts, women and children. After some time and full explanation, I found eight chiefs amongst them who possessed the whole of the country near Port Phillip. Three brothers, all of the same name, are the principal chiefs, and two of them men of six feet high, and very good looking; the others not so tall but stouter. The other five chiefs were fine men. After a full explanation of what my object was, I purchased two large tracts of land from them - about 600,000 acres, more or less and delivered over to them blankets, knives, looking glasses, tomahawks, beads, scissors, flour, &c., as payment for the land and also agreed to give them a tribute or rent, yearly. The parchment the eight chiefs signed this afternoon, delivering me some soil of each of them, as giving me full possession of the tracts of land. This took place alongside a beautiful stream of water, and from whence my land commences, and where a tree is marked four ways to know the corner boundary.¹⁷⁴

Even assuming Gellibrand had armed Batman with pen, parchment and appropriate legal wording, it would have been impossible for Batman to so quickly prepare his intricate treaty, in which he mistook Dutigallar, the name of one of the Kulin women, as the name of her tribe.¹⁷⁵ However, there is no dispute that a ceremony took place. The following morning,

Just before leaving, the two principal chiefs came and brought their two cloaks, or royal mantles, and laid them at my feet, wishing me to accept the same. On my consenting to take them, they placed them round my neck, and even my shoulders, and seemed quite pleased to see me walk about with them on. I asked them to accompany me to the vessel. They very properly pointed to the number of young children, and then at their feet, meaning they could not walk, but said they would come down in a few days. I had no trouble to find out their sacred marks. One of my natives (Bungett) went to a tree out of sight of the women, and made the Sydney natives' mark; after this was done I took, with two or three of my natives, the principal chief, and showed him the mark on the tree; this he knew immediately and pointed to the knocking out of the teeth. This mark is always made when the ceremony of knocking out of the tooth in the front is done. However, after this I desired through my natives, for him to make his mark, which, after looking for some time, and hesitating some few minutes, he took the tomahawk and cut out in the bark of the tree his mark - which is attached to the deed, and is the signature of their country and tribe. About ten A.M. I took my departure from these interesting people.

Here Batman said he established the marks of the chiefs after they had supposedly already signed the parchment the previous day, making their informed consent a nonsense. However, the apparently bloodless negotiations were in sharp contrast to the Kulin-British battle that had occurred nearby in 1803 as Batman cleverly developed



'Discovery of Buckley' John Batman's encounter with William Buckley and the Kulin leaders at Geelong, 1835. Bonwick, James, *The Wild White Man and the Blacks of Victoria*, Fergusson & Moore, Melbourne, 1863, front piece. H.L.

rapport then applied his conniving tricks. In Kulin culture there was no equivalent to legal sale of land but the ‘tanderrum ceremony’, by which the Kulin honoured Batman’s party, gave Batman right to access and permission to use resources. From the time of the ceremony forward, the binding promises made by the Kulin Elders created a ripple effect that would shape emerging black-white relationships. Batman’s distribution of gifts, his knowledge of Aboriginal culture and his use of the Sydney blacks as intermediaries were favourably received. Very likely, the Kulin leaders’ earlier inability to defend their people against David Collin’s troops also influenced their approach. Billibillary was amongst the eight Kulin clan heads who took part in the ceremony and whose ‘marks’ were placed on the treaty. Barak, now a boy of about twelve years, watched on. He would outlive all the other participants, black or white, and remember the event for the rest of his long life.¹⁷⁶

Some weeks after the so-called treaty was signed, William Buckley, after 33 years of living with the Warthaurung, decided to walk into the newcomers’ base camp on Indented Heads. Stunned, the Port Phillip Association members invited him to join them.¹⁷⁷

With Batman returning to Van Diemen’s Land to press the case for acceptance of the treaty, a rival party under the leadership of John Fawkner arrived on the Yarra. Many others followed. Honouring obligations imposed by the tanderrum agreement, Derrimut earned the gratitude of the white settlers by warning of an intended attack by the Taungurong (Goulburn) tribe. But as European stardust permeated the Kulin community, he contracted syphilis, a disease until then unrecognised locally, through sharing his wives with infected whites. The British government rejected Batman’s ‘treaty’, upholding their own legal nonsense of *terra nullius*, ‘land belonging to no one’, as Governor Bourke reasserted the doctrine that indigenous people could not sell or assign land, nor could an individual person or group acquire it, other than through distribution by the Crown.¹⁷⁸

Swept up by the speed of events, Bourke appointed Captain William Lonsdale as police magistrate and charged him with extending colonial government to the Port Phillip settlement, maintaining order and, hopefully, preventing a recurrence of the genocide that blighted white settlement in Van Diemen’s Land. William Buckley was appointed as a constable on £60 annually to help peacefully draw the Aboriginal people into a European lifestyle. Gellibrand described in his journal on 5 February 1837, the reaction of the tribe as he rode with Buckley into the Warthaurung camp.

There were three men, five women and a dozen children. Buckley had dismounted, and they were all clinging around him, and tears of joy and delight running down their cheeks. It was truly an affecting sight, and proved the affection which this people entertained for Buckley. I was much affected at the sight myself and considered it a convincing proof of the happy results which would follow our exertions if properly directed. [...]

The men seemed much surprised at the horses. I, however, after some little persuasion, induced the youngest man to put his foot in the stirrups and mount my grey mare and I led the horse round a few paces, to the great delight of the whole party. I then coaxed the mare, put my face to hers, to show that they need not be afraid, and then prevailed upon a young girl, about thirteen years of age, also to have a ride. As soon as the horse began to move she seemed very much alarmed and her countenance bespoke her fears, but she continued silent. We gave them a few presents, and then left them to proceed on our journey.¹⁷⁹

Gellibrand's mysterious disappearance shortly after this encounter sparked a huge manhunt in the infant colony, an event about which William Lyall later was moved to scribble a pencil note on one of his books, disputing the author's, Henry Melville's, version of the story, 'The skull of Mr Gellibrand was found by Mr Allan at Moonlight Head. It was recognised by its peculiar formation and the want of some teeth'.¹⁸⁰ Gellibrand's killers were not Kulin tribesmen but rather their traditional enemies from the Western District. Buckley eventually moved to Hobart. A complex array of clashes and collaboration occurred between the Kulin and the British invaders, as John Wedge reported.

It appears that the Aborigines were fired upon soon after sunrise, whilst lying in their huts, and one young girl about thirteen years of age was wounded in both her thighs, the ball passing through one into the other, grazing the bone on its passage, which so far disabled her at the present moment that her parents were obliged to carry her on their backs from Westernport to this place - a distance of about 30 miles - and it is apprehended that she will not recover the use of her legs. To rescue this poor girl the mother took her in her arms and in carrying her away was fired at and wounded in her arm and shoulder with buckshot. Notwithstanding this inhuman attack, the Aborigines persisted in removing the girl and two more of them, a girl and a boy, also received wounds.

About a year and a half ago, a similar attack was made upon the natives and four of their women were taken from them. It is to be lamented that the like outrages have been committed upon the Aborigines at Portland Bay and other whaling stations and unless some measures be adopted to protect the natives, a spirit of hostility will be created against the whites, which in all probability will lead to a state of warfare between them and the Aborigines, which will only terminate when the black man cease to exist.¹⁸¹

Governor Bourke responded quickly to the attack, dispatching George Stewart, a 'Magistrate of this Territory' to investigate and proclaiming,

WHEREAS it has been Represented to me that a flagrant OUTRAGE has been committed upon the ABORIGINAL NATIVES OF WESTERN PORT by a Party of WHITE MEN, and that other OUTRAGES of a similar Nature have been Committed by Stockmen and others upon Natives in the Neighbourhood of PORT PHILLIP; NOW, therefore, I, THE GOVERNOR, in pursuance of the Power and Authority in me vested, do hereby Proclaim and Notify to all of HIS MAJESTY'S Subjects and others

to whom it may concern, that the whole of the country on the Southern Coast of New Holland extending Westward from Wilson's Promontory to the One Hundred and Twenty-ninth Degree of East Longitude, reckoning from the Meridian of Greenwich, being within the limits of New South Wales, all Persons residing or being within the same are subject to the Laws in force in the said Colony, and the promptest measures will be taken by me to cause all Persons who may be guilty of any Outrage against the ABORIGINAL NATIVES, or any breach of the said Laws, to be brought to Trial before the Supreme Court of New South Wales, and Punished accordingly.

GOD SAVE THE KING!¹⁸²

The investigation laid responsibility for the abductions on George Meredith, who was also responsible for the 1833 abductions off Point Nepean. He had fled the colony but was soon after speared to death by natives at Spencer's Gulf. The wounded Boonwurrung girl, Quondom, eventually recovered and became Kurboroo's third lubra. A 'half-caste' named Tomlins, at present employed in a whaling establishment at Portland Bay' was conveniently blamed for the shooting. In New South Wales, Bourke's successor Governor Gipps, under orders from Britain, took a hard line on equal application of British justice and seven white men were hanged for murder of blacks on the Myall Creek. Colonial opinion shifted strongly against Aboriginal people, the ripple effect was murder by stealth and conspiracy of silence became accepted practice in much of frontier Australia.¹⁸³

THE ABORIGINAL PROTECTORS

Colonial Secretary Lord Glenelg, responding to British public wrath against the killings occurring in Van Diemen's Land and New South Wales, agreed to trial a novel Aboriginal Protectorate System for the new Port Phillip colony and sought George Robinson to take up the position of Chief Protector. Robinson accepted on condition that some of the 'civilised' Van Diemen's Land natives living on Flinders Island should be permitted to accompany him to the mainland to 'mediate and instruct' the Port Phillip natives.¹⁸⁴

Assistant Protectors were appointed in Britain and William Thomas, a Wesleyan principal of a London school, was one of the successful applicants. Thomas sailed for Sydney on board the *Florentia*, along with two gentlemen who would soon figure in Harewood's history: Robert Jamieson, 'a canny gentleman from north of the Tweed', and Samuel Rawson, a young Yorkshire man awaiting his commission in the army. Meeting with church luminaries and Governor Bourke, the protectors were given their brief to civilise the Aborigines and save their eternal souls for (a Protestant) Jesus Christ: the practicalities of how this should happen were left obscure. Thomas found himself camped with his family in a tent south of the Yarra, meeting with the Kulin people and maintaining his diary.¹⁸⁵

22 January 1839

Upwards of 20 blacks paid us a visit, some were fine young men. I gave them tobacco, all I had. Saw one particularly fine young man as I was going to Melbourne. He was leaning against the post of a hut door. In his clean blanket down to his legs he had a majestic appearance. Nothing of the savage appeared in him. His countenance was dignified and frank. He surpassed all that I had yet seen. I went up to him. His speech was remarkable. Soft, in fact more like a female. He spoke English well, that is to say what he spoke was correct in the pronunciation. He said, 'You go to Melbourne.' I said 'Yes', he said to the brick maker whose hut he was at 'Good bye'. He asked me my name and he told me his, he said Captain Lonsdale was his brother. I walked with him. He called a boat, we crossed the Yarra together. He was particular in telling me the names of trees, ground, grass, water, dogs, & c.¹⁸⁶



William Thomas, c 1840. Unsigned oil painting. (Original held by the State Library of New South Wales)

Governor Bourke had conferred on Poleorong the name Billy Lonsdale after Captain Lonsdale, the police magistrate. In Kulin culture, to be designated a classificatory 'brother' carried a plethora of reciprocal religious, social and marital obligations of which the Europeans were only vaguely aware, if at all. In line with the strategy Kulin leaders adopted from the time of the 1835 tanderrum ceremony, Poleorong took up the challenge of learning English and embracing European society on one hand but keeping faith with his own culture on the other. Disparities between black and white world views were an endless source of friction.¹⁸⁷

In his journal of 5 February 1839 William Thomas described four fine looking blacks, armed with spears, waddies, shields and a musket coming in from the bush after dark. They seated themselves by the fire, causing great anxiety amongst the ladies. Applying, with deep sincerity, the beliefs of his Christian upbringing, Thomas prayed, 'Oh that God who called our ancestors from their wild state would look down on these and make who are sent for the purpose civilizing them the honoured instruments. Unless thou Lord conduct the plan our labouring schemes are in vain.'

Three of these had (the older three) one of their front teeth knocked out. I felt some anxiety to know how and for why. These could not talk much English, but taking my little boy Jemmy who was about eight years old and catching hold of my son William who was 18, raised their hand from Jemmy's head higher and higher until they got as high as my William and then opened the mouth and pretended to knock out the teeth, plainly telling me that when they got to be young men and not till then their front tooth was knocked out. To make the thing more perfect to us one of them took my son William and pretended to knock his tooth out.¹⁸⁸

Could Yamerboke have been one of these men?

Newly introduced germs from Eurasia continued to wreak havoc with the Kulin people. Derrimut arrived with his family at Thomas's tent the next week, 'suffering much from influenza'. Mrs Thomas sent them a quart of tea, bread &c. until they got better.¹⁸⁹

In March of 1839, Robinson arrived from Flinders Island accompanied by his group of 'civilised' Van Diemen's Land Aborigines, including Truganini and Matilda, to embark upon his new social experiment. He wrote optimistically to his wife, Maria, about what a delightful spot Melbourne was compared with the dry bleakness of Flinders and what a fine, intelligent race the Aboriginal people were. Yamerboke and Toolumn would likely have been amongst the three hundred or more Aborigines who, in honour of the Chief Protector's arrival, were fed to the full, then 'gathered after dinner for running for tomahawks, throwing spears at targets for 'white money', climbing a pole for knives and handkerchiefs, display of fireworks &c. &c. with a grand corroboree to close the day'.¹⁹⁰

Many of the Aborigines remained encamped along the Yarra, attracted by the tobacco, alcohol and excitement of the new settlement but their numbers quickly fell as the strength they drew from belief in their culture faltered. Marginalised, they fell victim to fighting, starvation and epidemics caused by exotic pathogens whose DNA the settlers had brought with them from the teaming dockyards of Britain: dysentery, typhus, tuberculosis, venereal diseases, influenza, rheumatism and catarrh. Unable to weather the mayhem, belief in Kulin rituals collapsed and when Barak was ready for his initiation, rather than full ceremony, Billibellary and Poleorong simply invested him with a reed necklace (gornbert), illi jeri (nose peg) and kaiunj (waist string) at a campfire beside the River.¹⁹¹

'Kulpendurra, son of Billibellary. Chief of the Yarra Tribe fights with his father for maltreating his mother. Native Encampment, Merri Creek, April 5, 1839. Pencil sketch by William Thomas, published in Bride, Thomas (ed.) *Letters from Victorian Pioneers*, 1898, following p. 96. H.C.



It is sad to read Thomas's journals as he struggled, hamstrung between official indifference, racism and Robinson's increasingly obsessive demands, to try to give practical assistance to the Aboriginal people. Dr P.E. Cussen wrote of terrible disease in the Yarra encampment.

... I immediately visited the tribe of black aboriginal natives at present encamped on the banks of the river adjoining this township, and it is my painful duty to report to you that I witnessed a most distressing scene of disease, destitution and misery. The unfortunate creatures alluded to are labouring under dysentery (accompanied with typhus fever) of the worst description, and which occurring in subjects (for the most part) worn down by rheumatism, (or more properly a [illegible] disease of the bones originating from the former disease) and acute catarrh (which has been lately very prevalent here), has already committed fearful havoc among them. To these horrors are to be added famine (their present peculiar circumstances rendering them totally incapable of obtaining food by their ordinary pursuits) and cold (as they appear to be altogether destitute of covering).

Six of their number have died within the last four days, and from what I witnessed this morning more are likely to perish unless the most prompt and active measures for their relief are had course to. From an experience of more than a year and a half of the tribes which frequent this neighbourhood, I can assert that syphilis is (generally speaking) committing the most extensive ravages amongst them, and shall probably, if unchecked, render them extinct in a very few years. I have had several of them from time to time under my care and they appear to receive with avidity and gratitude any measures that are adapted for their advantage.¹⁹²

Ironically, on the same day Dr Cussen wrote his letter, John Batman died, a sad and disillusioned man, his face disfigured by syphillitic ulcers. The blacks who had greeted



'Melbourne in 1839'. In 'A Resident' (J. Kerr), *Glimpses of Life in Victoria*, Edmonston & Douglas, Edinburgh, 1872, p. 346. H.L. Originally written anonymously but later revealed to be by fellow Scotsman John Hunter Kerr or, more likely, his wife Frances Murphy, Harewood's copy of *Glimpses* was well thumbed by Lyall family members.

him with their tanderrum ceremony and their numerous small children three years earlier reflected silently as his body was lowered into the land to which he and his party had been given freedom of access and on which they had unleashed this dreadful plague. Even though rejected by the Home Office, the uneven treaty he instigated was enabling settlement with minimal loss of white lives while Kulin numbers tumbled.

On 4 July 1839 Thomas submitted his first statistical return of the Aboriginal population of the Port Phillip and Western Port districts. The list was incomplete (some new names appeared on later lists) but of the Boonwurrung mentioned, there were only eleven women of childbearing age, a tragic statistic in the face of epidemics of influenza, venereal and other diseases. Fertility amongst the Kulin plunged while the death rate soared, but not because of government-sanctioned violence. Disease, falling births and the Kurnai-Kulin war had played a more important role in the Boonwurrung collapse than direct Anglo-Celtic aggression. Even in 1839, with an apparent lack of mothers to produce a new generation, the demise of the tribe would be difficult to reverse. With deep prejudice and plenty of white men available, white women weren't looking for black partners so perpetuation of Boonwurrung stardust rested with the few remaining lubras' liaisons with the settlers behind the eyes of officialdom, the tribe's links with other Kulin and Kurnai clans and the mixed bag of Bass Strait Islanders who kept their Aboriginal partners away from the diseases of the new settlement.¹⁹³

Preparing to depart Melbourne for Western Port for the first time, William Thomas visited the neatly kept grave of a youth who had just been buried beside the Yarra (15 August 1839).

I could not help ruminating over this spot till night quite crept upon me. While musing I heard a noise and turning round saw two blacks with spears. I got behind a tree close by to see what they would do at the grave. They adjusted the two fires and well examined the grave as though to see if there had been anyone to disturb it. After a few moments they were about departing when I came from behind the tree and advanced towards them, shook hands with them. Poor creatures. Although tens of thousands have the last months been realized from their land, not a blanket is to be given them in return.

The Chief protector gives me leave to give the blacks some flour to the amount of 28 pounds, which I do. They are highly delighted. The Chief tells me that I may proceed to my District. I apprised the blacks of it, and intend, God willing, to start tomorrow.¹⁹⁴

'Yamerboke and lubra' were amongst the Aborigines leading the dray headed for Western Port that following morning. Thomas's planned visit was cut short by orders from Robinson to return to Yarra encampment, where the Aborigines were complaining bitterly about uninvited whites.¹⁹⁵ Alcohol played havoc and fierce fighting broke out between the Kulin and the Taungurong blacks. Derrimut, Poleorong and Toliorong (leading men of the Yalukit-willam and Ngaruk-willam clans) had been implicated in two separate murders of young Taungurong blacks, who had been 'adopted' by

white settlers and were working on Boonwurrung land. Peter's body was found 'in a wretched decomposed state, right hand cut off, the back of the skull knocked in with the hair in the skull. Some of the flank and arm seem to have been cut off and an incision in the side.' He had driven cattle to Reverend Clow's station at Dandenong. Bravely entering unarmed into a fray of angry blacks, Thomas challenged them, 'What for my black fellows kill em good poor black fellow?'

One pushing forward exclaimed 'No good that black fellow, no his country this, and no good you.' His tomahawk was over my head in a moment, and as he was about falling it I had the presence of mind to raise my arm to my head and caught the blow on my wrist. One old man (Old Kollorlook) was very angry and rescued me, or more properly speaking, protected me. I felt very dull after this occurrence and thought that I should in the end fall by these people.¹⁹⁶

The Kulin Elders chose to protect the one who had been an ally but, with Aboriginal Law an anathema to the invaders, the Elders' authority was undermined and turmoil in the camp exploded. Benbow's young daughter, Mary, who had been living as a companion to Mrs George Smith, fought against becoming Billibillary's third wife. Billibillary cracked her head open with a tomahawk and her father nearly broke her arm 'through waddying'. Two squatters, Mr Hobson and Merrick rode seven miles in the dark to report the outrage to Thomas. In this time of alcohol abuse and social upheaval, ill usage of the Kulin women in their own culture could be worse than they might fear in the hands of whites.¹⁹⁷ Thomas wrote,

Yesterday evening three were severely wounded, besides the blows inflicted by boomerangs, waddies, & c. At night, shocking to relate, about a dozen had a young Goulburn woman named Judy, about 13 years old not more, and ravished her, two or three holding her down while the others accomplished their purpose....

At last I left her in charge of her brother and sister for protection, who I verily believe, would rather encourage (were I not on the spot) than prevent a recurrence of the deed. This affair detained me an hour upon the grounds. When I laid down, before long a fray took place between the Goulburn lubras, which I found was in consequence of the lubra who was assaulted by the men making a noise and not quietly submitting to their brutality. Her own sister, Billy's lubra, a mother of three children, was exclaiming against her and me for not suffering the continuance of the act. This will at once give an idea of the moral state of this people.¹⁹⁸

While Kulin culture permitted men and women multiple sexual partners, provided they were of appropriate marriage class, the new wave of rampant venereal disease, particularly amongst people not previously exposed, would likely have been a death warrant for the protesting young girl who was pack raped. If not death, then certainly infertility or disease in her unborn children, ripple effects of the European invasion with which the guardians of the moral code of the Kulin community had not previously had to deal.¹⁹⁹

KULIN PAYBACK

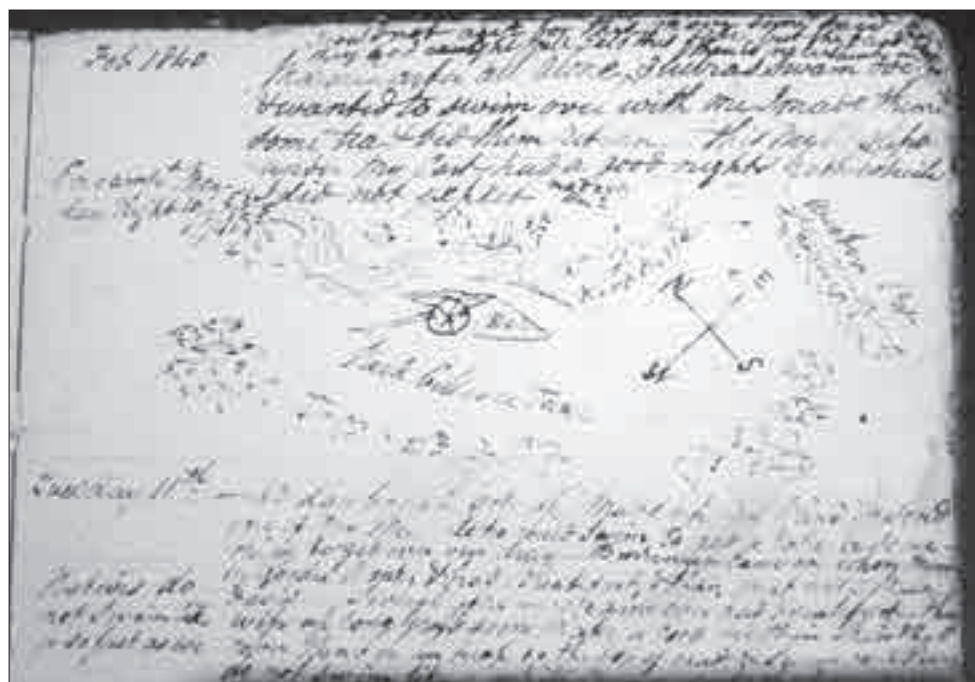
Brawling and ritual combat at the Yarra encampment culminated, on 3 January 1840, in a fight between Jack Weatherly and 'Young Murry', which Thomas and the Elders brought to an end. Afterwards

'... a council took place of 35, the greatest number I have known in council, of the principal men in each tribe, which lasted for near two hours. I soon learnt that their principal object was to remove altogether. I pressed the subject, counting with my fingers the number that had died. They proceeded with their deliberations and ultimately agreed to leave.'²⁰⁰

Thomas was relieved to be able to take his dray and follow his charges back to Western Port but he was naive as to the outcome of the council's discussions. Poleorong and some of the other young men had cleverly procured guns from the settlers telling them they planned to shoot Lyre Birds and bring back their feathers. Playing their cards close, one of the men led the procession with a long spear, some of the women and children rode on the dray and about twenty dogs brought up the rear as the tribe travelled around the Mornington Peninsula as their ancestors had done for thousands of years. Thomas quizzed them on Kulin vocabulary, place names and beliefs and recorded their answers in his journal. Young Quondom gave birth to a baby girl, Lowungrook, near present day Tyabb.²⁰¹

Heading east around the top of Western Port the dray was up to its axles in mud, but the party pressed on, following a signal fire made at the east end of the swamp. 'On

William Thomas' Journal, 10-11 February 1840, showing a sketch map of 'Kirkbillesee River' (now Lyall's Inlet). It was here he asked Quondom how she came to have three large wounds, she replied, 'Long time ago me Pinkaninny White Man plenty shoot me, all Blackfellows pull away.' (Source: Thomas, William, papers, microfilm, Monash Univ Library, 5883-214/2).



getting to the rise the Bullocks were much exhausted the tongues hung out of their Mouths, we would have stop'd but the Bush had been set on fire, & for a Mile it burnt furiously the flames ascending high - as soon as we came on this rising ground we were forced to make all the speed possible as the Natives said the fire might overtake us.' On February 9 they 'stop'd at 1/2 past 10 on a Beautiful small Plain, Kirkbillesee by the 1st Creek' an open meadow across the inlet, a stone's throw from what would one day be the verandah of Harewood House. Here Thomas recorded their party of about 50 caught 500 eels in mud dykes and had 'three ducks for dinner'.²⁰²

As the group slowly made their way across the inlets of the Kooweerup Swamp, Thomas asked Poleorong if the Blacks had ever been to French Island. Poleorong replied that he had gone over once but this was not his country.

He told me pointing to the mountains that all the Blacks from Wilson's Promontory to Kirkbillesee all this country where we now were dead - not one left - Two Fold Bay blackfellow long time ago killed many many [...] all dead. This evening the Blacks make up their mind to go Bullen Bullen for 5 days, a lubra told me they were going to kill wild Blackfellow²⁰³

On discovering the tribesmen's real purpose Thomas launched forth with a sermon on how it was wrong for anyone, black or white to kill. The Kulin concluded their plans in secret. At Kunnung (Yallock Creek) Samuel Rawson and Robert Jamieson's servants, two convicts and a ticket-of-leave man were splitting logs for a new hut. Quondom's baby girl, aged 12 days, died, likely a result of infanticide. Thomas troubled over convincing the women that the child should be buried 'in a box' according to Christian ritual. With European technology and common purpose, eighteen Kulin warriors from Western Port, Mt Macedon and the Yarra and the Barabool clan, including Jackie Weatherly, Warador, Poleorong and Warrengitolong slipped away to revenge the 'Two Fold Bay blackfellows', a term they used for any Kurnai.²⁰⁴

Thomas and the women, children and old men spent the next month moving between Kunnung and Tobinerk (Yallock Creek and Lang Lang) where they speared kangaroo, caught fish, 'bears' (koala), possum, 'large hare' (probably bandicoot), and ate gum, currants, roots and 'narnpeep'.²⁰⁵ The Aboriginal women happily swam with the servants in Yallock Creek and collected reeds to help thatch Jamieson's cottage but peace was shattered by booms from Sam Rawson's gun as he retaliated against Boonwurrung dogs attacking the homestead chickens and killing 5 chicks. Unfortunately he killed one wrong dog and wounded another. Their owners wailed loudly and Rawson was moved to apologise for his actions and describe in his journal how they 'buried the bodies of their four legged companions with great ceremony, wrapping them in blankets and sheets of bark & lighting fires by their graves after which they decamped, and proceeded about 1/2 a mile further up the river'.²⁰⁶

On 1 March 1840, Thomas led the group in prayers,

It was a fine thing to hear the splendid liturgy of the Church of England read to the blacks in the midst of the native forest, where only a month or two before a white man had never trod, it was a pitch dark night, with immense fires lighted round which were collected about 60 blacks mingled with whom were about 6 White Men, while against the trees were leaning their spears & shields &c ready for immediate use, We concluded the service by singing the Halleluiah chorus in which nearly all the blacks joined, they having been taught by the Protector and when the sound rose on the night air & went echoing thro' the forest, it filled one with greater awe and deeper religious feeling, than ever felt from hearing the finest performed service in an English Cathedral.²⁰⁷

While some among them may have shared Thomas' awe in the divine energy of the universe through the breath-taking forest landscape, resonating music, fire, and Christian corroboree, the Blacks had good reason for keeping their weapons at the ready. James Clow of Dandenong later recounted Jacky Weatherly's version of the expedition into Gippsland and their return.

The old men, who always shut their eyes and stopped their ears when they saw a gun being fired off, decreed that the powder and shot which had just been received from various squatters on the ostensible plea of procuring lyre-birds, & c., should, by Jackie Weatherly (who was appointed leader of the expedition) and those of his compeers who were proficient in the use of their guns, be buried in the skins of the wild blackfellows as they termed them (to show them the new mode of warfare they had adopted, and thus to prevent a recurrence of their visits) - wild in contradistinction to the life of amity they themselves led with the white men.²⁰⁸

Combining evidence from several reports, the war party marched four days across the mountains that separate Western Port District from Gippsland and came across a sleeping encampment of 14 Kurnai near the Tarwin River. In a surprise attack they killed one man, two lubras and six children, the rest escaped. Cutting out their kidney fat, the Kulin warriors took as much of the carcasses as they could carry and commenced their retreat. On March 9, they reached Yallock Station, the first settlement on the Western Port side of the mountains, Rawson's journal recorded the party 'brought immense quantities of human flesh' on which the whole tribe feasted.²⁰⁹

Seven months later the Brataulong survivors regrouped and drew on their Kurnai allies to form a war party to retaliate against the Boonwurrung. Instead of finding miams at Kunnung, the Yallock Creek was dotted with settlers' huts. To the Kurnai, these must have seemed like beings from another planet.²¹⁰ Jamieson described what ensued:

'They numbered at least one hundred able bodied men & from their proceedings I am confident that they never saw whites before - last Saturday morning at daylight, a terrific yell started me from a sound sleep, & on looking from the window I saw the flat literally covered with savages, & before I had time to turn myself every hut was surrounded - Prenty and Gill had just gone to the yard to begin milking, & they were

chased for their lives, Carr & Macnamara were in their own hut, Houston & his wife in theirs - A very short time after their appearance the windows were all smashed in & everything they could reach with their hands or spears was dragged from the place; to try the effect I fired a shot, to which however they paid not the slightest attention, & as for leveling my gun I might as well have pointed a walking stick - Meantime the shouting and talking was horrible & the only way I was able to keep them from bursting in at the windows was taking my gun club fashion & making signs as if to cause its descending on their heads - for four hours I was in this situation which you may easily fancy was not an enviable one, but the result of it all was that I kept them out, & thereby prevented the gutting of the hut - they got however an immense lot of things hooked out by the windows, such as the blankets & bedding, my watch, glass, brushes razors &c &c. In the other huts they were not so lucky as they at last burst into both and literally took every thing - I have no time to write more, as I am just starting with the Mounted Police, who will ride out look merely at the place and ride back again - I have however applied for a stationary force which I hope to get - You may wonder why I did not fire but surrounded as the hut was had I shot one a dozen spears would next moment have adorned my carcass - Houston & his wife are nearly frightened to death, but in fact all of us got a bit of a start - The Blacks loaded themselves with plunder & at half past nine made off - as soon as I collected the men I armed them & went after them, & to the astonishment of us all we found that they had been two nights at the crossing place!! they had evidently been in search of the Port Phillip tribe & must have been surprised to find the Station; they no doubt had examined it & made arrangements previously for carrying it by storm in the way they did.

They threw away damper tea sugar flour &c &c evidently unacquainted with any of them.

I wish to God you were here, you Hobson and myself would give them some play even without any other help. Sell out like a good fellow & come down.

Robert Jamieson to Samuel Rawson, written from the Port Phillip Club, 6 October 1840²¹¹

As soon as news of the attack reached Melbourne, William Thomas, concerned as ever for his charges, set off for the Yallock with two Boonwurrung trackers, brothers Nulupton and Mumbo. He met Jamieson, who was returning to Melbourne, at the 'last plain' on 8 October 1840 and, leaving his dray 'this side of the Muddy Creek', they swam the four Inlets and arrived at Jamieson's station. From there they followed the trail of the retreating Kurnai to Tobinerk (Lang Lang) picking up leaves from a book, part of a looking glass, several large shields and broken cups of china along the way. Nulupton and Mumbo refused to go beyond Boonwurrung territory. Returning to Yallock, they killed a kangaroo for food and took back its joey to Mrs Hobson 'who required something to amuse her & change the scene from her recent fright'.²¹²

Meanwhile, Jamieson gathered a party for a punitive expedition against the Gippsland blacks. Thomas preached a sermon on the Sixth Commandment, 'Thou shalt not kill'.

What happened was perhaps worse, for it was as a result of this expedition that Angus McMillan, well known for his harsh treatment of blacks, wrote a letter to the Sydney Herald claiming that a dead white baby boy had been found at the native's camp and they suspected a white female had been taken captive. His testimony was later discredited but truth was irrelevant, the widely circulated letter had the ripple effect of igniting white feeling against the Kurnai and justifying more punitive expeditions against them.²¹³ Allied against the Kurnai, the Boonwurrung lived relatively peacefully with the Western Port squatters. Jamieson later wrote:

During the seven years of my residence in the bush I saw a great deal of the natives, and invariably found them to be quiet, inoffensive, and willing, in their way, to be useful. They never did me any harm intentionally, and on many occasions really helped me; although any attempt to induce one or more of them to settle to any steady work, however light, even for a single day, was utterly vain. I believe I may safely say that the settlers south of the Yarra were invariably kind to the natives, and there are, I believe, few or any instances of ingratitude in return on record.

I was not, however, so fortunate with the aboriginal natives of Gippsland, who, before the occupation of that district by white men, came to attack the Western Port tribe, and making my station, did a considerable damage; but fortunately, no lives were lost.²¹⁴

Although unacknowledged here, the discredited Kulin-Batman 'tanderrum-treaty', as well as the presence of Aboriginal protectors (in spite of their many faults), probably played key roles in the relatively peaceful co-existence of blacks and whites in the early days of Melbourne, compared with what happened elsewhere in Victoria.

THE PRICE OF TRUGANINI'S REVENGE

Truganini by Thomas Bock c. 1837. Painting commissioned by Lady Jane Franklin when she was the Governor's wife in Van Diemen's Land.



Chief Protector Robinson had brought with him 'civilised and Christianised' blacks from the Flinders Island settlement with whom he hoped to 'civilise' the Port Philip and Western Port tribes. They included Matilda, Fanny and Truganini, as well as three men, Tunnerminnerwait (Jack) and Peevay (Robert) and 'Thomas Bruney'. Before their exile, all had lived through the atrocities of the Van Diemen's Land Wars, Truganini having seen her mother, fiancé and sister die at the hands of white men under brutal circumstances.²¹⁵ Camping together beside the Yallock Creek, the Boonwurrung and their trans-Bass Strait relations must have puzzled as they compared languages, customs and their mixed encounters with the European invaders. Climbing a tree, 'Thomas Bruney' was badly injured by a fall and, as a Christian convert, asked William

Thomas to read from the Bible and pray with him as he died then was buried 'under a fine old Gum Tree'. Earlier predictions from the settlers that allowing the Van Diemen's Land blacks freedom on the mainland would place settlers at imminent risk of 'violence, rapine and murder' seemed unfounded. This all changed in October, 1841.²¹⁶

At about 5:00 p.m. a large party, consisting of two coal miners and wives, and four whalers arrived from Massie and Anderson's in a boat with the intelligence of the murder of two of their party by some V.D.L. (Van Diemen's Land) blacks who are now at liberty in that neighbourhood - the murder had taken place near Cape Paterson but the blacks were supposed to be near Massie and Anderson's.²¹⁷

What the miners and whalers did not relate was one of the murdered whalers had earlier been amongst those who had inflicted atrocities on Truganini's family. The inherent justice of the revenge killing was lost as Rawson and others rowed off in pursuit, picking up Fitzherbert Mundy (the prodigal son of the Mundys of Shipley Hall) at Stockyard Point as they made their way to Bass River. The black fugitives eluded them but they found a double-barrelled shotgun and a stomach pump stolen from Dr Hugh Anderson that Truganini's party had left in the bush.²¹⁸

In the meanwhile, George Westaway and his men were clearing land at Settlement Point, near the place where Captain Milius had sung his French ditty and did his nude dancing with the Boonwurrung forty years earlier. When they returned to their tent, they discovered their possessions had been stolen beneath their noses. They dropped tools and pursued the black thieves and were able to recover many items but could not catch the culprits. As they sat around their campfire that evening, shotgun blasts rang out, and bullets penetrated Westaway's chest and made his servant, Bates, a cripple for life. The able bodied men rowed the wounded to Yallock Station and spread the alarm throughout the district. The Van Diemen's Land blacks fled into the Kooweerup Swamp.²¹⁹

Warador and Warrengitolong, the young clan head of the Yallock Bulluk, and four other Kulin acted as trackers for the squatters and officials who had formed a party to capture the black outlaws. They met at Mr Sawtell's new station at Tooradin and followed tracks eastwards towards the site where Harewood House would later be built. When they arrived in sight of the sea, they heard two shots fired off and, seeing people about two hundred metres away, those on horses charged across the open stretch of country only to find themselves up to their girths in mud. They managed to scramble back to firm ground but the 'outlaws' turned out to be Mr Anderson, Sawtell's manager, and four servants out swan shooting. The Van Diemen's Land blacks vanished through the teatree and paperbarks to be sighted again at the Bunyip River. Their camp dogs gave warning and they escaped again.²²⁰

Guided by Kurboroo, whom William Thomas described as a 'celebrated Western Port black', Thomas made his way around the Bay independently hoping to be able

to conciliate with the Van Diemen's Land blacks before the settlers found them. Kurboroo connected intuitively with the bush in ways unfathomable to Europeans.²²¹

The tracks had been lost some days at a part of the country where we expected they must pass. We ran down a creek; after going some miles a bear made a noise as we passed. The black stopped, and a parley commenced. I stood gazing alternately at the black and the bear. At length my black came to me and said, "Me big one stupid; bear tell me no you go that way." We immediately crossed the creek and took a different track. Strange as it may appear, we had not altered our course above one and a half miles before we came upon the tracks of the five blacks, and never lost them again.²²²

By then Rawson and Powlett had assembled a party of twenty-five at Yallock Station and rode out around the Bay finding Thomas and the trackers at Westaways. Together they made their way south, eventually sighting the fugitives' fire. Thomas was forbidden to negotiate. The men took up positions in a semi-circle surrounding the outlaws' camp, in the sandy dunes west of Wonthaggi. At break of day the white men rushed the blacks, shots were fired in all directions with a bullet grazing Truganini's scalp, the remaining blacks surrendered, unharmed, and were taken back to Melbourne for trial. All were found guilty. Truganini, Matilda and Fanny were taken back to Flinders Island. Tunnerminnerwait and Peevay received the victors' justice. They were the first criminals hung from gallows in Port Phillip.

Peter & Eliza
Western Port Tribe.
Undated image
taken by Fred
Kruger held by the
State Library of
Victoria.



There is no record in 1842 of Kulin views of the executions but it is recorded 'Peter and Elizabeth of the Bass River Tribe' (Toolumn and her first husband, Tu-ardeet), told William and John McHaffie of land on Phillip Island. The McHaffies took out a lease and the Aboriginal couple guided the brothers there with cattle from the McHaffie's Moonee Ponds property. They made their mia mia behind 'McHaffie's' Lagoon and were employed for many years helping to develop the leasehold. John McHaffie's daughter later told the story that her father took an Aborigine, probably Peter, with him on a return visit to Scotland around 1852 but he couldn't stand the climate and, in an effort to get warm 'by the use of a certain famous Scotch product', he became so unruly they had to lock him up in a stable.²²³

NATIVE POLICE

Partly motivated by George Robinson's accounts of the performance of Aboriginal trackers on the expedition to capture the Van Diemen's Land blacks, Governor La Trobe approached Captain Henry Dana to establish a native police force. It would have the two-fold objects of 'the civilisation of the younger natives, and the creation of a force which would be seemingly better adapted, in the existing circumstances of the colony, than any other to check, if not prevent, the aggressions of the tribes upon the lives and properties of the scattered European population.'²²⁴ Unlike two previous short-lived attempts, this Corps was to last for almost a decade. Billibillary and Thomas were drawn in on negotiations, which Thomas subsequently recounted, with some dramatic licence.

Having received intimation that Government was desirous of forming a native police, I consulted this chief who had often protected my life. I remember well the day I and Captain Dana, on a large gum log, on the 17th February 1842 made known to Billibillary the government's intention, and to further it stated that his influence was applied to first. He begged seven days to think. Night after night did this faithful chief address the encampment. True to the day, on the 24th he had the company together, leading the train. After stating the duties, he signed his name first, not, however, before saying, "I am king; I no ride on horseback; I no go out of my country; young men go as you say, not me." Through his influence the native police was first formed.²²⁵

Unprecedented in Kulin experience, the worldly-wise British had applied the native police concept to their advantage, such as with the sepoy's of India or Malay Corp in Ceylon. The force's headquarters were set up at Narre Narre Warren and each soldier was given the trappings of a 'green jacket with opossum skin facings, black and green trousers with a red stripe, and a green cap with similar red stripes around it.' The trackers who had taken part in capturing the Van Diemen's Land Aborigines were included amongst the 23 men initially recruited, So too was 'Yammabook', of the 'Marinbulluk section of the Wawoorong', nicknames 'Hawk's eye' and 'Charley', who, to this point, had hardly figured in European records. Barak, now nearly twenty and in line, one day, to assume leadership of the Wurundjeri clan, was also recruited and given the name 'William'. While many of the young leaders of the Kulin clans participated in the Native Police, Yamerboke was not recorded as a clan head or heir.²²⁶

CAPTAIN DANA'S LOYAL TROOPS

In his persona of a foul tongued, hard drinking, professional soldier, Captain Dana was disliked by the protectors but earned his men's respect and succeeded in moulding the Aborigines under his command into an effective fighting force to use against tribes

outside the Kulin nation. Warrengitlong, (probably the young Yallock Bulluk clan head), along with Buller Bullup and Warador, went absent without leave the month following their recruitment, and Dana, under orders from Governor La Trobe to restrict the force to twenty men, refused to take them back. During its ten years existence, over 140 Aborigines from all parts of Victoria were involved with the Corps.²²⁷

A key to Dana's success was his ability to work alongside his men and to adapt military requirements to Aboriginal culture. He made no attempt to foist Christianity on them and allowed them home leave at critical times for ceremonial purposes. Working together gave benefits to both sides; through Dana, Latrobe gained access to Aboriginal tracking skills and the informal Aboriginal network to which Dana's black troops were privy. For the Native Police, their fine uniforms, fire arms, sabres and huge horses (some were over 17 hands high) gave them status amongst their own people, for whom all these things were astounding, and a privileged entree into white society. If Dana and his men were in agreement as to their objectives, their intelligence network spanned Victorian society and, together, they were a formidable, persuasive force.

With horses scarce in the new colony, Yamerboke was amongst the Native Police who marched on the first expedition to the Western District in the winter of 1842, while Buckup, Nerimbinerck, Gellibrand and Yupton rode on Punch, Buffalo, Frenchman and Mousey. Riding horses, smoking tobacco and moving, uninvited, through the tribal lands of other Aboriginal people struck at the heart of Aboriginal Law and the young recruits and their clans took great risks in siding with the white people. Their emotional homecoming the following January was described by Dr W. Baylie:

Honourable mention has been made in the public journals, and can be well authenticated, of the conduct of those forming the Aboriginal police, their courageous and forbearing conduct on many trying occasions, their submission to strict discipline, their attachment to their officers and their willingness at all times to risk their lives in their defence. The prejudicial opinions of many would have been shaken had they witnessed the moving scene on the occasion of the party returning after an absence of some months on duty, fathers and mothers were to be seen embracing their sons, their heads resting on the bosoms of those they loved so tenderly, and tears of joy flowing; young men hand in hand, tears glistening in their eyes, with choked utterance gazing on each other; the plaintive wail of welcome and general appearance of dispassioned interest, show them to possess the warmest feelings of humanity and presented a scene which would not have dishonoured the most civilised and enlightened community.²²⁸

There is no record of how the Kulin themselves interpreted the same expedition and homecoming.

Helping to spread the tentacles of white settlement, on 20 September, 1843, Yamerboke joined Murremmurrembean, Munmungina, Kulpendure, Borro Borro, Mumbo and Nunnuptune, some of the best trackers in the force. Under the command of Sergeant Bennett they set off with the Commissioner of Crown Lands, Charles Tyers to cut an

overland route to Gippsland. While they were away other sections of the Native Police Force were sent to the Murray and Portland Bay District. Reports filtered back to Thomas and Robinson. In his journal on 5 January 1844 the Chief Protector recorded this version of a Murray River encounter.

Allen called. Said they told him that a number of men also women were shot by Dana's party at the Murry and the children were knocked on the head with carrabines. They first sent out a party to look for the natives and then planted themselves in the scrub and sent two or three troopers to round or drive them like sheep to be a large party corralled; they then commenced firing and shot some of them in the river & c. He went to the Murry by the Campaspe and returned said 20 men, one woman, five children were shot. Kelsh's overseer told me at Kelsh's that he, Dana, said he would turn the natives out.²²⁹

Second hand reports need to be read with caution and one historian takes a benign view that incidents like Robinson described were, for the most part, exceptional and, unlike the Border Police who numbered ex-convicts amongst their ranks, bloodshed at the hands of the Native Police under Dana's command was low. The Corps could affect control by the persuasiveness of their presence, their informal network and their excellent reputation for being able to track and apprehend offenders.²³⁰ This was not so when black and white laws conflicted or when the Kulin were evening up old scores.

In 1844 Charles Manton had taken over Sawtell's run and employed a Goulburn (Warralim) youth to work with his white stockmen at Tooradin. He had not been on Manton's station three weeks before he was found killed, a short distance from Manton's house, struck down as he carried a bucket of milk from the milking yard to the house. It wasn't the first time murder was committed when Taungurong entered Boonwurrung land against Aboriginal law at the behest of whites. On both occasions, Warador and Poleorong were the assassins. The white people's papers 'teemed with complaints against the government and the Chief Protector' and the Taungurong people also demanded satisfaction.²³¹

Acting according to Aboriginal Law, messengers were dispatched between the tribes and it was decided that Warador and Poleorong should undergo traditional punishment of having spears thrown at them by the clans to which the Warralim were aligned: the Yarra, the Coast, the Barrabool, the Bun-ung-on, the Leigh River, the Campaspe, the Loddon, and the Goulburn. There were over five hundred natives encamped near Heidelberg to watch as the offenders came forward, in deep mourning, painted

'Native Fight' by Calvert (probably Samuel) c. 1855, H.L.



with white ochre, showing no signs of fear. One by one, nearly one hundred spears were hurled, first at Poleorong, then at Warador, each with only their broad shield for protection. They shifted, twisted, and skilfully used their shields and while both were slightly wounded, neither was hit anywhere that would have proved fatal.²³² Justice having been satisfied by their Law, the Kulin closed ranks to protect their warriors against white involvement. On 10 February

...Broadie, a senior constable, came to execute a warrant against Billy Lonsdale for the murder of the Native lad, he and constables were defeated, Billy escaped, Broadie had two men armed with a double barrel gun. The Native Police would not assist in taking Lonsdale.²³³

By 19 February the Taungurong warriors had once again gathered near Narre Warren, this time the ritual fighting was over the bludgeoning to death of another Taungurong youth by Budgery Tom, clan head of the Mayone Bulluk. Thomas reported 'a large party of blacks had gone to the Lodden station and had massacred a large number of blacks in retaliation for the murder done by the Lodden natives on them.' The Protectors' mission to stop black bloodshed was proving impossible as both Native Police encounters and movement of foreign tribesmen into Kulin lands provoked reprisals. Relations between Dana and the protectors deteriorated further.

SUBDUING THE KURNAI

Despite the friction, Governor La Trobe ordered Captain Dana and the government surveyor, Charles Tyers, to take Robinson with them on a second expedition to establish a road to Port Albert and to make contact with the Aboriginal people of Gippsland. The entourage, which comprised a dozen men with horses, bullocks, kangaroo dogs, a bull dog and a dray, made their way to Tooradin, where the Mantons now had a house with French windows and 'a nicely grass-thatched roof and verandahed front'. Amongst the blacks was Munmunjinind, whose father, Purrine, had been leader of the once powerful Yowengerre, or South Gippsland, section of the Boonwurrung tribe before that clan was decimated in the 1830s Brataulong-Boonwurrung conflict. He was eager to avenge his family's deaths through his position in the Native Police. At Tooradin, Mrs Manton just wanted him and the other blacks out of her kitchen but otherwise hospitably received the surveying party members who were entertained by the older Manton children's beautiful piano playing.²³⁴

The party travelled east to the firestick-farmed grassland corridor of the Yallock Bulluk clan where they met Edwin Cockayne, an enigmatic individual with a copperplate signature, who was first to hold an occupation license over 'The Inlets' (Harewood). Cockayne operated a boat service ferrying travellers across the creeks draining the Great Swamp and the group availed themselves of his rough and ready services. George Robinson wrote one of his typical rambling diary entries about 'Cockeen's' rickety boats.

19/4/44 - Swam the horse over, crossed the inlet, my horse behaved very well considering it was the first time. A stormy day throughout: see names of inlet in vocabulary and plains & c. Some of Jamieson's cattle were going to town for sale. A boat at east of the first second inlet and a dinghy at the third: it was frail and near being swamped. A Mr Ferguson was in charge of Jamieson's cattle, going to town, and Jarman had charge of station. Cockeen had the ferries at the inlets. The fourth creek had a bridge but it was broken; the horses were made to scramble over, occasionally slipping their legs through broken timber. It was near dark, dark of evening when we crossed. We slept at Jamieson's about six mile from Manton. At this station the Gippsland Blacks made there attack; it is now stockaded round. The natives have not visited since. Dana slept here a night. Tyers dray and eight bullocks were here and two men and bullock driver and one horse and Keef policeman was here: he was no policeman. Stormy weather all this day - rain.²³⁵

Cockayne's punts didn't improve with time. Subsequent travellers along the route that Robinson, Tyers and Dana pioneered were to harass Commissioner Tyers about Cockayne's outrageous behaviour and of being left 'to spend the whole night on a neck of land between two inlets, hemmed in on both sides by the tide without food or water'. Cockayne was reprimanded for his frequent absences, his failure to keep the punt in repair and for 'harbouring idle people' which culminated, in 1853, in a recommendation to cancel his license. By this time William Lyall had taken over Cockayne's lease and the bush inn he had constructed on the banks of Kirkbillesee. Yamerboke and Toolumn were likely amongst the 'idle people' who were his visitors.²³⁶

Time didn't alter the mutually low opinions Robinson and the other members of the expedition held of each other. As George Haydon expressed it,

...The protectors were generally speaking haughty and tyrannical amongst the aborigines, I am sorry to say it, but the chief protector in particular. Mr William Thomas, the only one of the sub-protectors, I am personally acquainted with is an honourable exception...

As long as men are engaged under whatever system it may be, whose education and ideas of the native are as limited as are those of the present body of protectors, so long will failure and mortification be the result, until in the course of a few more years there will be no natives left for them to experimentalize upon."²³⁷

'The Conversion of the Aborigines', *Melbourne Punch*, 10 April, 1856. H.L. One of a series of 'frescoes' depicting what Punch cartoonists considered were 'definitive events' Victoria's history.



These were prophetic words, as the ripple effect of the 1844 expedition proved catastrophic for the Kurnai.²³⁸ Opening up the cattle route to Port Albert also opened up Gippsland to settlement and, beyond the reach of the Protectors, slaughter was commonplace. In 1846 Henry Meyrick, formerly a squatter at Coolart, on Burinyung Bulluk land, wrote to his mother in England from his new property on the Thompson River in Gippsland.

The blacks are very quiet here now, poor wretches. No wild beast of the forest was ever hunted down with such unsparing perseverance as they are. Men and women, and children are shot whenever they can be met with. Some excuse might be found for shooting the men by those who are daily getting their cattle speared, but what they can urge in their excuse who shoot the women and children I cannot conceive. I have protested against it at every station I have been in Gippsland, but these things are kept very secret as the penalty would certainly be hanging.'

I remember when my blood would have run cold at the mention of these things. I have heard tales and some things I have seen that would form as dark a page as ever you read in the book of history, but I thank God I have never participated in them.

The Native Police also took advantage of their position of power to settle old scores with those who had been their traditional enemies. In 1846 an expedition was mounted to rescue a lost white woman, 'Loan-tuka', who was rumoured to be living with the Snowy River tribe.²³⁹ James Warman, who was second in command, published a detailed account of the operation. He was much disturbed by the 'slaughter of unoffending natives by those harpies from hell, misnamed police.'

'The Conference', illustration from a serialised fictional story, 'The Captive of Gipps Land' in *The Illustrated Journal of Australasia Vol II*, Jan-June 1857, p. 65. H.L. Rumours of a kidnapped white woman being held captive fuelled pulp fiction of the day and expeditions into Gippsland that led to slaughter of the Kurnai.



'So long as Messrs. Dana and Walsh are in command of the Native Police nothing can stop their extermination...the Native Troopers should be employed only as trackers... nothing gives them so much pleasure as shooting and tomahawking the defenceless savages. Indeed it is cruel to employ them.'²⁴⁰

The white woman was never found but Bunjil-ee-nee, principal man of the Snowy River tribe was taken as hostage with his family to Melbourne and held at the Narre Warren Police Barracks. He died in custody eighteen months later.²⁴¹

GRAVES BESIDE THE YALLOCK

On 10 February 1848, while the Kurnai leader, Bunjil-ee-nee was still under house arrest, Bill Bailey, the overseer at Yallock Station, was discovered murdered, speared to death. Blacks had ransacked the station and abducted his wife then escaped along the Yallock Creek. Mrs Bailey was recovered the same day but it is unclear whether the Aborigines involved were Kurnai or disaffected Boonwurrung. Aborigines killing a European in Kulin territory was very rare. It is perhaps significant that Bailey was speared rather than shot and that the incident occurred in the same place that the Kurnai had made their attack eight years earlier. The Kurnai had good reason to want revenge against both whites and Kulin.²⁴²



'The Reconnoitre',
from a serialised
fictional story,
'The Captive of
Gipps Land' in *The
Illustrated Journal
of Australasia* Vol
II, Jan-June 1857, p.
129. H.L.

Bailey was buried near the old stockaded homestead, not far from the 1840s graves of Thomas Bruney, the Tasmanian Aboriginal who had fallen from the tree, and the dogs the Yallock Bulluk people had laid to rest. When Alex Mitchell, a 23-year-old drover was crushed to death as he tried to stop a stampede of cattle getting past the slip rails in the cattle yards he, too, was buried beside the Yallock. The picturesque, meandering old creek had witnessed more than its fair share of violence.²⁴³

From 1843 to 1853 recorded Kurnai numbers dropped by over 90%, from 1800 to 131. Officially births amongst the Kulin community had also all but ceased during this period as Aboriginal women, including Billibillary's daughter and Barak's sister, were co-habiting with European men and being absorbed into white society. This angered the Native Police, who lost their wives and Billibillary expressed regrets at having allowed the young men to join Dana's force. He told Thomas, 'Blackfellows all about say no good have them pickaninneys now, no country for blackfellow like long ago', '[...]by and by we jump up whitefella'. Kulin genes were finding their way into the white population but believing blacks would be reincarnated as whites when they died and that babies should not be allowed to live unless there was secure country for them, only added to the devastating decline in Aboriginal numbers. When the old chief died Thomas mourned, 'I have lost in this man a valuable counsellor in Aboriginal matters.'²⁴⁴

Yamerboke continued in the Native Police throughout the latter half of the 1840s as tragedies of one form and another befell most of his Boonwurrung contemporaries. In one incident, William Willoughby's three-year-old daughter disappeared from his Lang Waring run. Rumour had it the Boonwurrung had been antagonised by the whites and retaliated by abducting the child with one 'confessing', 'Blackfella knock its brains out against a tree'. Nunnuptune was accused of the crime and 'the natives took a hiding from stock whips' and 'if more horsemen had been armed more natives would have been shot'. The body of the child was found 3 weeks later, some 2 km from where she had wandered, mangled by native cats, but the incident so disturbed Nunnuptune that 'for years he scarce rambled further than along the coast from Mount Eliza to Point Nepean' and died in 1849. A sad end considering his earlier reputation as a superb tracker and loyal member of the police force.²⁴⁵

Corporal Buckup, a Mayone Bulluk clan member recruited to the Native Police, injured his leg in a stirrup iron and, when the leg was amputated, became the first person in Australia to undergo general anaesthesia. The doctors were perhaps more willing to risk such experimental surgery on a black than a white man. Remarkably, he recovered from the operation only to succumb to 'a violent cold and inflammation' eleven months later.²⁴⁶

'The State of the colony' *Melbourne Punch* 26 April 1860, p 107. H.L



quickly falling Aboriginal population and the discovery of gold in 1851 changed the nature of policing requirements in the colony at the same time as scandal struck the Native Police. Two white officers were discharged because of a love-related shooting and the blacks would not transfer their loyalty to the officers' replacements. The number of recruits tumbled as Henry Dana died suddenly, from influenza. His stalwarts, Yamerboke and Barak, would almost certainly have been amongst the mourners described at his funeral.²⁴⁷

On the 25 November 1852, I happened to be standing in Elizabeth St Melbourne, when I saw a semi-military funeral pass towards the old cemetery in William St. Most of those who followed were officer and men in uniform and on horseback, and what most struck the new chum as I then was, was the large number of black troopers, about forty I suppose that brought up the rear...²⁴⁸

The following year the force was disbanded. Afterwards, in reminiscing, Governor La Trobe stressed the positive role the Corp had played at a critical time in European settlement.

It at once formed a link between the native and the European, and gave many opportunities for the establishment of friendly relations. The marked success which in numerous instances, followed its employment gave confidence to the settler, removed the pretexts under which he would feel justified in taking redress into his own hands,

and left no excuse for the vindictive reprisals which have been a blot upon the early years of settlement.²⁴⁹

In the same collection of letters, William Thomas reflected sadly on the fates of the former members of the Native Police Force. Yamerboke, he wrote, had been a capable member of Henry Dana's Corps in the 1840s but, like most the other ex-Native Police, had fallen on hard times after the Narre Warren Camp was closed and force disbanded in 1852.²⁵⁰

'An intelligent and faithful black, good tempered, and no one on a bush excursion more to be depended upon; was a considerable time in the native police, and had accompanied most of the journeys through the district. On leaving the police he commenced, with others, to go to and fro to Gippsland, and is, for what I know, still alive in Gippsland; but he has for years been a notorious drunkard.'

The numbers of Boonwurrung listed in censuses continued to fall but government sanctioned murder does not appear to have played a role in their plummeting population figure as it did in other parts of Australia. The peace the Kulin established at the time Batman's tanderrum ceremony along with the presence of William Thomas appeared to have forestalled atrocities that happened elsewhere. Nineteenth century British culture, disease and weapons had a devastating impact on the fabric of Kulin society, yet at the same time, violence, infanticide, murder, child abuse and sexual attacks by Aboriginal people against members of their own or



Black police on the Route to Gippsland, G.H. Haydon. (Original copy held by the National Library of Australia)

neighbouring communities make it difficult to view the traditional owners as guiltless victims of a white invasion. By the mid-1800s, playing out the tragedy that had been determined in earlier decades, through death, introduced disease or choice, Kulin women ceased to have babies, or intermarried with white Australians where their children no longer received schooling in Kulin ways and most eschewed wirraraps, ngurungaeta and their Aboriginal heritage.²⁵¹

KING JIMMY

In 1851, six years after Warador and Poleorong assassinated the Taungurong lad at Tooradin, William and Annabella Lyall and their two toddlers Nellie and Willie moved into the old Manton brothers' homestead. The arrival of their second daughter, Margaret Mickle Lyall, born in the house with the thatched roof and French doors, was hailed as the first white birth in the district. Margaret's granddaughter Mary Lyall-Davis recounted a Lyall family tradition about early encounters with the Boonwurrung, which likely would have taken place around this time.

From my Grannie and great-aunt Nellie (Helen) I heard many tales of growing up at "Harewood".... 'Annabella and her daughters were able to coax the shy women of the tribe to show them the baskets they made from rushes and grasses. Annabella would sometimes bake a currant cake and give it to the women in exchange for a basket. They would sit on the ground with the cake and pull it apart, sharing the currants that they thought were the best part and then eat the crumbs of cake. Annabella was not at all pleased to see her cake thus dismembered, especially as her daughters thought it very funny. They would suggest that every cake should have more fruit than flour.'²⁵²

SORRY TIMES – 1860S

As the British invaders made remnant Kulin people fringe dwellers in their own country, scientific circles were focusing their curiosity on Aboriginal crania and the now discredited study of criminal phrenology. Between the 1859 publication of Charles Darwin's *The Origin of Species* and *The Descent of Man* (1871), Thomas Huxley published his essay on *Man's Place in Nature*. Foreshadowing works of over a century later, he proposed, "The differences that separate man from the Gorilla and the Chimpanzee are not so great as those which separate the Gorilla from the lower Apes." In support of his theory, Huxley, who had spent some years in Australia, superimposed a drawing of 'an Australian skull from Western Port' (the identity of the individual is not known) on a tracing of fragments of a fossil skull, which had been found in a cave in Neanderthal, Germany, amongst bones of Mammoth and woolly rhinoceros. The resemblance between the robust Neanderthal and Western Port skull was not close (see page 24) but it was arguably closer than with a typical, light boned, nineteenth century European. Digging up and comparing old bones to lend support to either side of the creationist vs. evolution debate leapt into vogue.²⁵³

Victorian history and Aboriginal ethnology could also draw a readership and James Bonwick found an audience for his narrative *The Blacks of Victoria*, published in 1863. Still lying in Harewood's library, it drew on Bonwick's personal experiences:

Several years ago we visited a small party of aborigines camping near our home. There were four of them: old Jemmy, his lubra Mary, an adopted child, and their friend Simon. They had just returned from Melbourne, laden with packets of sugar, and tea, loaves of bread, meat sardines, & c. The men were clad in European fashion, though without boots or hats. The women had some under garments, but the dirty blanket enveloped it all. The little girl had only a piece of a blanket. Simon was preparing his supper at the fire. Jemmy was drunk and quarrelling with his wife. The child was crying on the damp ground. The poor young half-caste was motherless; her reckless father might, for ought we know, be still tending sheep on the plains, or standing behind a counter in Melbourne.

The dispute which had lulled at our entrance was soon resumed in angry earnestness. We found out it was a family quarrel. Oaths and opprobrious epithets, wanting in his own language, the man borrowed from the classic tongue of the English. Taking us privately aside, he recounted to us a narrative of wrongs such as few husbands are called to endure. The lady utterly denied everything, and charged her spouse with conjugal improprieties; these he frankly acknowledged, but alleged that such could be no excuse for her own faults. After further talk, as she evidently had the best of the argument, a fire stick was applied to her head to induce sounder convictions. This induced an attack of so active a nature that we were compelled to interfere, and forcibly hold the avenging arm, while the screaming woman fled in the darkness.

Such was the exhibition of native domestic life and such the march of improvement from a contact with the civilised white man!²⁵⁴

It is not possible to say with certainty whether the ‘Jemmy’ of whom Bonwick wrote was Yamerboke, also known as Jimmy, but the story reflects the despair of the Kulin people following European settlement. ‘Mr Tuck of Western Port’ spoke, circa 1860, of Black Mary and Eliza as noted characters who used to climb trees to amuse whites and to get a piece of damper as a reward. If this were so, a case could be made for ‘Mary’ being Yamerboke’s wife. It is probable that ‘Simon’ who was camped with Jemmy and Mary was Simon Wonga, cousin of William Barak and son of Billibillary and his Boonwurrung wife. Bonwick continued his narrative.

In the meantime, Simon sat silently and stoically by the fire. He was one who had seen Batman at his first celebrated conference with the aborigines. His father Jagga Jagga was an influential and faithful friend to the then humble, weak and smiling whites. As the last member of his family he now wandered a stranger in the



Simon Wonga, Brough Smyth, *Aborigines of Victoria*, Vol I, 1878, p. 9. H.L. Billibillary's son, born at Arthur's Seat, his mother was Boonwurrung. Wonga later became leader of the Kulin Nation.

land of his forefathers. He was ill, melancholy, and without hope. He told us that there was not a black child in his tribe; adding in a sad tone, "All black-fellow go away."²⁵⁵

While Yamerboke took to grog but clung to his own country and traditional beliefs, Simon Wonga renounced alcohol and became Christian. Following his father as a wise leader of the Kulin nation he negotiated for land on which his people could settle. Eventually about a hundred Kulin, including Simon's cousin and successor William Barak, were settled at Coranderrk Aboriginal Reserve, near Healesville, under the care of the Reverend John Green. While other government officials repeatedly reneged on agreements, Green was a man of his word and was generally well remembered by the Kulin people as standing by them in their struggle to keep their land and fighting against the damage caused by alcohol and disease. The power of belief, that science has yet to deconstruct, be it in either an Aboriginal or Christian spiritual tradition, was highlighted in Barak's conversion experience.²⁵⁶

Some years ago a number of Aborigines encamped on the Yarra had amongst them some men who were in the habit of indulging in intoxicating liquors to excess. One of them, Barak having indulged like the rest, became very sick. He could eat scarcely at all, and was indeed very ill. He attributed his illness, however, not to his bad habits, but to sorcery. Punty, a black from Gippsland, at this time visited the tribe, and Barak, on seeing him, requested him to go back to Gippsland and bring away his spears, which he said the Gippsland blacks were using in some way to his hurt. Punty said he knew nothing of the spears and would not go back. Barak immediately got behind Punty, and cut off some of his hair, and threatened that if he did not go back and fetch the spears he would kill him by treating the hair in the manner prescribed by the Wer-raap. Barak

and Punty fought and the disturbance caused Mr Green to interfere. Mr Green told Barak that he had been tipsy, and lost his spears. He took Punty's hair from Barak, and offered some of his own, in order that Wer-raap might make him (Mr Green) sick; but Barak would have none of it. He said he could not manage to get a white man made sick. Mr Green still retains the hair. Barak speedily got well and reformed his life. Poor Punty died some years later.²⁵⁷

Punch's view on the Kulin quest for Land Rights. 'A Sketch at the Levee', *Melbourne Punch* June 11, 1863. H.L.



THE HUMBLE PETITION OF KING BILLY

To big one speaker with him wig,
Him poor black fellow prays;
And him will sing him merry jig
Him everlasting days,
If him will throw em Central Board
Into him one big hole;
Or hang em up with a strong cord
To stop em rigamarole...

So come Sir FRANCIS, see him place,
And live along o'me;
You will see much that's a disgrace,
Me freely guarantee.
BRUFF SMITH write up to Mr. GREEN
To tell him of him vote,
And that him Board have busy been
In talking plenty rot...

The boys and girls will all run about,
And fish into em creeks,
Though Mr. GREEN sends em all out
Without em plenty brees.
BRUFF SMITH may write him long humbug,
And send him in report,
But give blackfellow a good rug
And let him have him sport

Then he will prosper, be at peace
With all him human race;
And will feel thankful, and not cease
To say him prayer and grace.

Corrinderk, December, 1870

Excerpts from a satirical poem in which Premier James Francis, Brough
Smyth and Rev John Green were called to account. *Melbourne Punch*
Dec 22, 1870. H.L.

Emma Read Balcombe told stories of her family's early days on their property, 'The Briars', on the Mornington Peninsula, when the Boonwurrung people still visited.

The whole property teemed with wildlife, native cat, kangaroo, possum and plover (which last made good shooting) and Grandmother talked of Native Companions there and bush turkey. Local records noted the 'tremendous number of snakes'. A tribe of blacks periodically drifted across the swampland and fished in the creeks. Some of their names are remembered in local history: Derrimut, the Chief and his lubras; old

Jimma, who died at the roadside guarded by a pack of devoted dogs. The ring of camp fires marked their journeys to and fro: Derrimut in bell-topper and bright ribbons, requesting potatoes and hawking eels; dogs barking; and the voices of Aboriginal children from the swamp were familiar accompaniment to a night's camp, with the old blackfellow chanting as he ate his potatoes, 'Googera-Googera, one goes to one dog; Yagera Groo, another goes to another'; a mumbo-jumbo of contentment, potatoes being his favourite food. He died eventually in Collingwood.

It is likely some inaccuracies crept into Grandma Emma's recounting or in the way in which her granddaughter, Dame Mabel Brookes, recorded her story. Others reported Jimmy died at the Alfred Hospital and Thomas's evidence suggests there were very few Aboriginal children by the 1850s when Emma first came to live on the Peninsula.²⁵⁸

Jimmy and Nancy Dunbar, c. 1870. Held by the Royal Historical Society of Victoria. Nancy, from Gippsland, was Jimmy's (Yamerboke's) second wife.



According to William Thomas' notes, Pin-der-brig (Betsy), a child when he arrived at Western Port, remained with her people and became Tu-ardeet's second wife, alongside Toolumn, as the couple had moved from Phillip Island to the Mordialloc Aboriginal Reserve. By 1860, Pin-der-brig had contracted scrofulous (a form of tuberculosis) in her left foot that left her crippled and chronically ill. She refused to go to the hospital when Thomas called for her in a gig, preferring instead to stay with her own people. In September 1861 she was living in a miam, seven and a half months pregnant, emaciated and very ill. When she went into labour, her premature son was unable to suckle and died the following day. In spite of Toolumn's ministrations, Betsy died soon after, her lungs solidified with chronic consumption. An inquest followed which drew attention to the lack of proper

diet, clothing or medical attendance, but concluded that Betsy and her child would likely have died even if these had been available. Tuberculosis was a grim reaper and would also take the life of a Lyall family member.²⁵⁹

In his September 1863 census, the last which Thomas completed, 'Big Jimma' ('Yamer-book') and Derrimut were listed amongst eight surviving Boonwurrung men and three women: Eliza (Toolumn), Betsy (Pin-der-brig) and 'Nancy', a 'fresh lubra from Gippsland'. Thomas knew Pin-der-brig was already dead, having taken part in the inquest into her death, but politics probably played a role in his choice to fudge the figures. He died of a stroke the following year.²⁶⁰

BUSH SUTURES AND A TOLL GATE WEDDING

Ben Brett was a boy when, in 1863, his father's wagon bounced across the Kooweerup Swamp taking his family to their new Gippsland selection. In the memoirs he wrote in *Land of the Lyrebird* he recalled how Mr Lyall sent a man on horseback to pilot the way who rode ahead and was up to the horse's belly in water nearly all the way as they ploughed through the wake with their team. He also remembered Yamerboke, Toolumn and Tu-ardeet.

At the Red Bluff was one of the kitchen middens of the old Westernport tribe of blacks, containing large heaps of cockle shells; but only three or four of the blacks remained in my time. They had a mia-mia at Tooradin, and used to come as far as the Red Bluff. They used to shoot ducks and catch eels and sell them to buy drink; food they would cadge. They had a novel way of catching eels. They would wade in the mud at Tooradin Creek when the tide was out, feel for the eels with their hands, seize them, bite them at the back of the head, and throw them on the bank. They were so plentiful that they could get a couple of sacks in a short time.²⁶¹

Jimmy (Yamerboke) would periodically appear on Lyall's payroll. He and his 'fresh lubra' from Gippsland, 'Nancy King', were part of a small group that wandered between Mordialloc, Tyabb, Harewood and Dandenong. Jimmy took his British surname "Dunbar" from the publican who ran the Dandenong Hotel, as 'GRF' related.

And whilst Mr. Dunbar is in mind, may I digress and tell of what might have upon one occasion been a serious matter but for the promptitude and skill of Mr. and Mrs. Dunbar? It happened thusly. Jimmy and Eliza, and Peter and Nancy were blacks, and highly respectable. During a family quarrel Jimmy received a knife thrust on his buttock. His yells brought out all the townsfolk, but whilst others looked on Mr. Dunbar grabbed Jimmy and held the wound together firmly whilst Mrs. Dunbar rushed for the surgical box. The blood poured from the wound, which was deep and fairly long. Soon poor Jimmy's yells were gradually reduced to moans, either through weakness or terror. Other helpers held Jimmy whilst Mr. Dunbar drew the edges of the wound together, inserted several stitches, and did all that was possible for his patient. Jimmy was a subdued party for a few days, but he mended very quickly, and became rather a nuisance, wanting his wound dressed too frequently—because of the generosity of his benefactors most likely.²⁶²

Yamerboke, Nancy, Toolumn and Tu-ardeet continued their wandering lifestyle, visiting Harewood as they had previously. Tu-ardeet died of tuberculosis in September 1874 and Nancy, from kidney disease the same year, both aged in their 40s.²⁶³ GRF' continued the story in his reminiscences of Dandenong, this time calling 'Peter' (Tu-ardeet"), 'Bill'.

In the earlier days of which I write, four only of the aborigines survived—Jimmy, Bill, Nancy and Eliza. But, as time went on, the number dwindled to two, Jimmy losing



'Jimmy Dunbar and his Lubra, the last of the Mordialloc Tribe.' Wood engraving from *The Illustrated Australian News*, 1877. While not specified, this line drawing is likely of Nancy, his second wife rather than Eliza (Toolumn), his third.

his lubra, and Eliza her man. So, what was to be done? There was talk of having Jimmy and Eliza removed to the "sanctuary" for homeless blacks; but they would have none of it. The unco guid were scandalised at the "ongauns" of the heathen, and already had their heads together, planning for the morale of the town, when Jimmy and Eliza settled the matter by appealing to the toll barkeeper on the Gippsland road. He solved the problem by pronouncing them "man and wife!" in a manner somewhat after the style of the famous blacksmith of Gretna Green, only more so. However, it satisfied the bride and groom who marched into Dunbar's Hotel and triumphantly

gave out the news of their second marriage! The ladies of the household were shocked beyond belief and appealed to the men to "do something" to stop such scandalous proceedings! But what could be done? Jimmy and his dusky bride were satisfied - so what else mattered? And there the matter ended. Someone provided the liquor desired by the couple for their wedding breakfast, and everyone was happy.²⁶⁴

In mocking the 'unco guid' (old Scots for 'rigidly righteous') and supporting Jimmy and Eliza "G.R.F." took his lead from the Scotland's favourite poet Robert Burns who identified with the underdog. It was at this time that William Lyall was also moved to diarise one of his few comments about Aborigines.

13 March 1875. Mr. Green, in charge of Black's Protection Station, wanted to kidnap old Eliza, the last aboriginal native woman of this part. Her husband, Jimmie (also the last of the males) and self, resisted. Eliza left free."²⁶⁵

Alcoholism aside, working with Captain Dana had given Jimmy self-assurance and some notions on how to get around white people. Lyall would have known the couple for 25 years and was prepared to take their side in the dispute. Shielded, Jimmy and Eliza's last two years were spent together, tramping their old haunts and camping as they wished with their numerous dogs.

TRUE FRIENDS

Truganini's days were also drawing to a close. The last full blooded Aboriginal still in Tasmania, she could be seen wandering about the streets of Hobart with a red turban on her head, garbed in knitted cardigans and scarves, her dogs always nearby. The one wish she expressed was that when she died she should be cremated and her ashes scattered in the deepest part of the D'Entrecasteaux Channel, near where her fiancé Parweena had been pushed to his death. Instead, in 1876, when her end came, the Royal Society of Tasmania claimed her skeleton and placed it on public display in their

museum. It took 100 years and a paradigm shift from a white supremacist world view before her spiritual beliefs were respected and her ashes scattered as requested.²⁶⁶

Toolumn, now aged about 55 years, died from pneumonia at Mordialloc Reserve on 28 February 1877 and was buried nearby. Yamerboke, unwell for some time, must have known his end was coming soon and chose to go to the Prince Alfred Hospital. He may not have cared what happened to his remains, but one has to wonder what scheming had taken place or what inducements offered to encourage him to go the Prince Alfred where the doctors were plotting to remove his head and dismember his skull. His entourage of dogs, who followed the cart that carried him to Melbourne and kept vigil by the hospital, were more faithful than his human friends. Ironically, his death certificate recorded 'Hydatids of the Liver and Suppuration of Hydatid Lung Tissue' as the immediate cause of his death. Hydatid cysts are caused by a tapeworm, which people contract from dog droppings. It was another exotic, disease-causing parasite that hitched a ride into Australia with white man's stardust. Tracking deeper, Yamerboke, his dogs, the Europeans and those fatal tapeworm parasites all traced to a bilaterian ancestor amongst the Ediacaran biotas, some 600 myr. Sadly, the devotion Yamerboke and his dogs had for each other played a role in his death. So too did social break down, melancholy, alcohol and his loss of Toolumn.²⁶⁷

The Illustrated Australian News carried Jimmy's obituary as the 'last' of the Boonwurrung tribe, but this was not accurate as Yamerboke himself was not Boonwurrung, nor was he the last of the tribe. He was Marin Bulluk (Woiworung) by birth but, like most Kulin people, Yamerboke's family would likely have traced their ancestry to several tribes within the Kulin nation, including Boonwurrung. Simon Wonga, whose mother was Boonwurrung, was alive at the time of Jimmy's death. The significance and sadness of Jimmy's life and passing touched even the hardened colonists.

The aboriginal tribes of these colonies are gradually becoming extinct. Jimmy was remarkably sagacious, dry and amusing, qualities which he combined with a keen regard for the interests and welfare of number one. He was also possessed of a very retentive memory, and was a perfect mimic. He was a perfect master of the boomerang, excelling all competitors at tribal matches. Physically he was well made and a favourable specimen of his tribe.

At one time he served as a mounted trooper. Jimmy's last lubra died in his mia-mia at Mordialloc six days prior to his own decease, leaving as mourners for her loss, Jimmy himself and some twelve or fourteen dogs. When Jimmy was being removed to the Alfred Hospital this troop of vagabond dogs followed, and formed a canine encampment outside. After remaining outside the Alfred Hospital door two days, these inconsolable followers of Jimmy returned to the desolate mia-mia, and there became so fierce that no-one dared approach the spot. Finding, however, that there was no reappearance of Jimmy, they set off to visit his usual haunts. To the last, Jimmy considered himself to be the supreme lord and master of Mordialloc. He was in the habit of offering large areas

of the district for small amounts of rum or tobacco. Recently he tried hard to negotiate the sale of fifty acres to a certain speculative well known medico of Fitzroy.²⁶⁸

As Professor Halford's technicians carved off Yamerboke's head to fuel the evolution debate, the rest of his body was buried in Melbourne Cemetery. Brough Smyth squirreled away at his book *Aborigines of Victoria* while scheming with others to obtain Kulin land at Coranderrk. Spirit stones, Smyth said in Volume I, were believed by the Aborigines to possess extraordinary powers and were held in great estimation by the sorcerers. Some Aboriginal people believed their dead ancestors existed in spirit stones as divine powers and, that rubbing spirit stones could increase a person's inner strength for the benefit of both the living and the dead. They were known throughout Australia and were called 'bulk' by the Kurnai, 'teyl' by the people of south-western Australia and 'mur-ra-mai' by Morton Bay people. They would be rolled in yards of possum fur cord; women were not allowed to see them, only priests could touch them. Smyth did not mention that women, too, kept secret stones, or that cultures around the world have seen round stones as a metaphor of man's wholeness, his innermost thoughts and a focal point for memory, imagination and spiritual connection. To his obituarist, Jimmy's death was extinction but death and dismemberment didn't put an end to Yamerboke and Toolumn because for a blackfella the dead never leave the earth but become the very air they breathe and the ground they walk on. Their lives inspired this book, landscape bears the marks of their community's presence and their spirit stones and artefacts remain with Harewood. Kulin genes are sprinkled through Victoria's population and new generations are finding resonance with Kulin cultural beliefs.²⁶⁹

Jimmy and his dogs,
'The Last of the
Mordialloc Tribe of
Aborigines.' Wood
engraving from
*The Australasian
Sketcher*, 1877.
Jimmy died from
hydatid cysts, an
exotic disease he
caught from his
dogs.



3

DOCKIN'S JOURNEY



'Dockin' from a painting by Frank Madden. H.C.

Pyrrhus arrives in Italy with his Troupe. Illustration by John Leech, in A'Beckett, Gilbert, *The Comic History of Rome*, Punch, London, 1848, p. 138. H.L. Pyrrhus reputedly attacked the Romans with 2000 horses and 20 elephants but was ultimately defeated. Knowledge of the history of the Roman Empire was an essential part of every British school boy's education, and formed a model for building their own empire, as humorously portrayed here, in one of the books from William Lyall's collection.



Beautiful, swift, Arabian horses, the mainstay of Islamic armies became foundation stock for British Thoroughbreds, *Sultan's Polka* by Charles d'Albert, 1857, sheet music from the Lyall family collection. H.L.



'Touchstone', paintings by Frank Madden, c. 1875. The Lyalls were the first to bring Shetland ponies to Victoria and were closely involved in the horse racing fraternity. Frank Madden, the artist, was a lawyer and family friend. He illustrated Touchstone on the lawn at Harewood with mangroves and French Island in the background.

So far.....

In a universe of constantly reconfiguring stardust, some 18,000 years ago, global warming on our planet caused partial melting of polar icecaps and sea levels rose submerging lowlands, including the plain that had existed across Bass Strait. Western Port became part of Bass Strait coast as people and land animal populations were pushed back to higher ground while, concurrently, the same global warming melted a huge glacier that covered northern Europe, allowing humans access to Britain. Exploring our story through the kalidoscope of things that found their way to Harewood, the scene now shifts to Eurasia and animals people domesticated there.

DOCKIN'S DESCENT

The windswept cliffs of the island of Noss in the Shetland Group are home to thousands of orange-beaked puffins, guillemots and razorbills. Looking down to the sea, rocks appear to magically transform into seals which dive and frolic in rough ocean pools and, in springtime, the coarse green pastures burst into soft pink with sea thrift carpeting between the reeds, rushes and heather. The colourful little herds of black, brown, chestnut and broken colour ponies that used to graze on the cliff tops were removed when the island was turned into a wildlife sanctuary in the 1980s. But formerly, in one of these small herds, at a time when the diggers fought with Hotham's troopers on the gold fields of Ballarat, a tiny, black, wet foal, later to be known as 'Dockin' pawed and stretched his spindly little legs as he scrambled to his feet to begin life. Over three thousand years had passed since boat people had brought the little pony's ancestors to these remote islands, now their descendants would sail with 'Dockin', and others in his herd, to the other end of the globe.¹

Boats can only pass the rough seas and reach Noss from the adjacent island of Bressay when the winds are calm and the weather fine. On one such day in 1857, Andrew waited as crofters herded their small charges, including the foal who had grown into a fine young stallion, into a 'pony pund' and loaded them onto a small sailing skiff to take them to the cobblestone dock yards of Lerwick, Shetland's main port. From here, 25 of the ponies set sail for Britain to take their place on the decks of the *General Nowell* and the *Indemnity*. Along with them were 'Sir Colin Campbell', a thoroughbred stallion, prize bulls and champion Hereford cattle, Cotswold Sheep, and other pure-bred livestock through which the Lyall family hoped to fulfil their vision of founding, in the new colony of Victoria, a dynasty of landed gentry.²

A long, difficult voyage behind them, on 22 December 1857, 'Dockin' held his head high, splashed past the row boat and implanted his sharp little hoof prints on the shores of Port Phillip. As the men regained their land legs, seawater spilled from the coats of

the 18 mares and 2 stallions that had survived the voyage and were set to weave their stardust into the fabric of Australia.

The account book noted that for the ponies that arrived safely Andrew's brother, William Lyall paid £920.4.10, but in the new colony a Shetland could fetch more than the cost of a house. The sterile accounts belie the difficulties of the project. In a letter penned angrily to his agent, Richard Philpott in London, William wrote:

‘The General Nowell arrived with a loss of four ponies. The Indemnity lost at least half of her stock, for which I greatly blame the old idiot sent in charge of the stock. I am happy to think that you did not select that specimen of the homogeni. I presume that you have insured the stock in your name and have requested your brother, William, to procure and forward to you the dicturation [sic] of the Captains of “General Nowell” and the “Indemnity” of the death of the stock so that you can recover the insurance which will stand as under..

General Nowell	
Four Shetland ponies	£120.0.0
Indemnity	
One horse - ‘Sir Colin Campbell’	£350.0.0
One bull - ‘Magnet 3D’	£280.0.0
Seven Cotswold Sheep	£117.5.0
One Cotswold Sheep	<u>£16.15.0</u>
	£884.0.0 ³

‘Shetland ponies being loaded on a boat at Lerwick.’
(Source: Lerwick Museum, Shetland)



FROM THE SHADOW OF THE DINOSAURS

Ancestors of the people and their animals on board the *General Nowell* had undertaken epic voyages before but exactly when humans started our journey trying to understand our place in the universe is unclear. John, Jesus' deep thinking discipline, started his book in the New Testament 'In the beginning was the Word ('Logos' or 'premise' in the original Greek) and the Word was with God and the Word was God'. While John's words were accepted as gospel by the folks who built Harewood, 'evidence-based' science counterposes a creation narrative based on energy and matter and particles and forces. According to this latter narrative, the ones that make up our double helix DNA zipped and unzipped back some 90 myr through the fabric of life to Cretaceous Laurasia. It was at this point in space-time the shrew-like Boreoeutheria lived, the last common ancestor dogs, cats, seals, cattle, sheep, horses and humans shared. Some Boreoeutheria descendants in southern Asia founded the Euarchontoglires clade, that gave rise to rabbits, rodents, primates and, eventually, contemplative people. Other descendants, the Laurasiatheria, spread across the conjoined Laurasian continents to give rise to an even wider diversity of species, including the carnivorans (forerunners to dogs and cats), hoofed animals, whales, bats and pangolins.⁴

For twenty or so million years the little Laurasiatherian mammals kept a low profile as they lived in the shadow of the dinosaurs and scurried around changing land masses. Generations passed and, in some lineages that scampered over forest floors, claws evolved into tiny hooves and sharp teeth evolved into crushing molars, which could take better advantage of vegetarian food sources. When the meteorite crash of 65 myr wreaked its havoc and the non-avian dinosaurs perished, pockets of small, warm blooded mammals that had cheated death by finding shelter in caves, beneath ground or in the lea of mountain ranges, re-emerged on a devastated landscape. In the Palaeocene era that followed, bereft of large carnivore and herbivore competitors, mammals and birds began to diversify, first slowly, then explosively to fill niches on land, air and sea left vacant by the extinct giants. In South Asia even-toed hoofed stock were evolving into deer, cattle and aquatic creatures that would come to populate rivers with hippopotamuses and the world's oceans, including Western Port, with whales, dolphins and other cetaceans.⁵

Laurasia split further from Gondwana, oceans lapped around South America, Australia separated from Antarctica and the cold circum-Antarctic current began to flow. In faraway Eocene epoch Europe and North America, as jungle transformed into grasslands, the knee high, four-toed dawn ponies split from their nearest relations, whose North American lineages would lead to modern tapirs and rhinoceros, and fled marten-like carniform predators through soft carpeted woodlands with their tiny foals dashing behind. In wetlands in the Pacific Northwest carniform relations were evolving forms with flippers from which ocean going seals would evolve. The world cooled and grassland expanded globally.

Volcanoes of 40 myr marked the northern edge of an expanding rift valley that would one day become Bass Strait. Basaltic lava flowed that would become boulders and vantage points from which early Aboriginal and European explorers would take their bearings on Phillip Island and Berwick. Australia became an island continent and her

'Map showing the extent of the Surface of Europe that has been covered by the sea since the commencement of the Eocene Period.' Between pp 120-121, Lyell, Charles, *Principles of Geology*, 9th ed., John Murray, London, 1853. H.L. William Lyall's distant relation, Charles Lyell, the pre-eminent geologist of the 1800s, was the first to name different geological eras based on fossil associations.



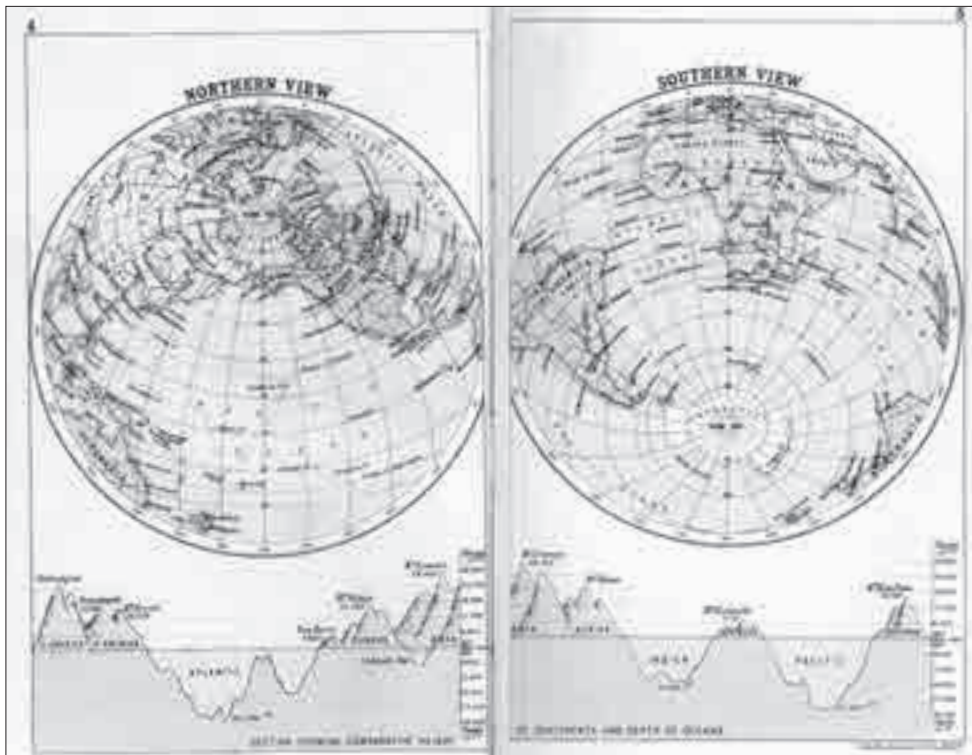
indigenous birds and marsupial mammals adapted to changing landscapes. Kangaroos and wallabies would gradually evolve an energy-efficient bounding two-legged hop to better enable them to carry their pouch young while fleeing early marsupial carnivores across dry Western Port plains.⁶

In North America, the evolution of grasslands along with selection pressure from predation by primitive bear dogs and wolf-like canids saw a wide diversity of dawn ponies with *Eohippus*, Dockin's ancient lineage, transforming into *Mesohippus*, as it evolved longer legs and larger muscles. With no pouch young to carry but a long gestation and a need to escape ever more efficient predators, rather than centring power in two giant rear springs, all four legs elongated. Each foot had a one central, springing hoofed toe with the toes lateral to it reducing in size. Elastic energy could be stored and reapplied with each stride and the biomechanics of pendulum forces could be utilised sequentially in each leg. Speed increased, but the back was kept level and the springing force of the strong muscles of the hip translated to a forward thrust rather than an upward bound, so speed could be sustained over a distance.

Serendipitously, primates of the genus *Homo* would one day be able to ride on their backs, harness them to carts and, together, dominate world history for some 6,000 years. Australia's hopping, pouch-young carrying marsupials would be unsuitable for such a partnership.⁷

By the Miocene era, 20 myr, primitive rodents, rabbits, cattle, pigs, goats and cats had emerged in central and southern Eurasia and spread their stardust across that continent and into Africa and North America, while elephant populations from Africa had spread theirs into Asia and were expanding further north. The dawn horses of both Europe and North America had diversified with *Meshippus*' successor, *Merychippus*, represented by several lineages, including *Hipparion*, who made an east-west trip across Beringia, along with early bears and emerging seals to make their marks on Eurasia. Sea levels rose and water again lapped over Port Phillip and Western Port, laying down marine fossils, which can still be found today on the bay side cliffs of suburban Beaumaris.⁸

Still in North America, Dockin's *Hipparion* ancestors became even more specialised grazers on the expanding prairies. Their face and neck elongated so they could reach grass but still perceive predators with their eyes and ears, which remained high, above the grass level. In so doing they developed a gap between the incisors and the rear grinders, a diastema, which some later human populations would make use of for the emplacement of bits. The compressive action of their jaws and teeth were



World Map from Coles Handy Atlas and World Gazetteer, New Revised Edition, E.W. Cole, Melbourne, undated, c. 1870, pp. 4-5. H.L. Horses, whose domestication helped spark the emergence of global empires, evolved in North America and travelled across the Bering Strait to Eurasia some 4 million years ago.

replaced by a transverse shearing action and their teeth became high crowned and grew continuously throughout life. Their lips became more sensitive and their brains enlarged. With sharp hooves they were able to paw through snow, their remaining toes, now only two in number, became smaller and one no longer reached the ground. Their caeca (equivalent to a human's appendix) enlarged so they could rapidly break down indigestible cellulose of stems and leaves and so exploit marginal grassland, fodder on which Eurasian-evolved cattle would starve to death.⁹

From about 16 myr, when ocean levels periodically fell during times of global glaciation, Eurasian-evolved genera of bears and big cats, including sabre tooth varieties, crossed the land bridge of the Bering Strait into North America, displacing many earlier North American carnivores. Woolly Mammoths and the forerunners to Native American species of bison, musk ox, deer, rats, mice, cottontails, jack rabbits and big horn sheep, all of whom had their roots in Eurasia, followed the same route to intermingle stardust and evolve into the distinctive wildlife of North America. Blocked by land rather than seas, North Pacific evolved seals likely travelled with the flow of ocean currents to navigate the still open Central American seaway to reach the Atlantic.

When ocean levels fell 5-4 myr, North American-evolved wolves, foxes, camelids and equids, including *Pliohippus*, which evolved into *Equus*, modern horses, dispersed across Beringia from east to west to reach the Old World. There, some distantly related cousins still ran free. African footprints at Laetoli, 3.5 myr, not only showed hominids walking in the soft lava, they also showed hare and *Hipparion*, the later moving in a 'tolt' or running walk, a gait that comes naturally to Icelandic, and some Shetland and Scandinavian ponies. The tracks suggest an ancient evolutionary basis of the tolt and showed equines and humans shared landscapes for millions of years before domestication. Possibly from over-hunting by early humans, *Hipparion* died out two million years ago, but their North American-evolved relatives flourished to become the Asian wild ass or onager and, Dockin's lineage, *Equus caballus*, the wild ponies of the Eurasian steppes. Some 1.7 myr, making use of the newly formed Afro-Asian land bridge straddled between the Mediterranean and the Red Sea, early humans were dispersing from Africa into Eurasia. Herds of *Equus* roamed the opposite way, interacting with the stardust of the African continent, their descendants evolved into the donkeys and zebras of today.¹⁰

Oscillating climate and tectonic plate movement continued to push humans and animals back and forth between changing sea, land and snowlines. Volcanoes and uplift at the Pacific Rim continued to heighten the Rockies and Andes and the mountains of Central America until 2.5 myr, the Panamanian isthmus reconnected the Americas, allowing South American-evolved wildlife, including opossums, sloths and armadillos to spill into North America. North American species, including jaguars, lamas, wolves, bears and foxes, dispersed southwards. Of the placental mammals, only bats (15 myr) and, from some 5 myr, rats, managed to island hop through Southeast Asia and meld their stardust into Australia. Being able to swim without drowning their pouch young,

rats were at a particular advantage in aquatic environments. Their diverse descendants include the indigenous Swamp Rats (*Rattus lutreolus*) that dig distinctive mounds at Harewood today.¹¹

In an interglacial period, some four hundred thousand years ago (400 kyr), the earth was at its hottest and the seas rose 35 metres above their present level. Harewood sunk beneath the sea. Early robust archaic humans fanned out across Eurasia, and reached the deciduous oak, elm and lime forests of Britain. Elephant, deer, aurochs, ponies, bear and boar abounded as the first human families camped beside warm muddy rivers in which hippopotamus grazed. Subsequent global cooling saw Britain submerged beneath a huge glacier, in parts over 600 metres thick, destroying the forests and driving humans, ponies and other animals back onto the European continent.

DNA evidence suggests human males living outside of Africa share a common forefather, a man who had the marker m168 on his Y chromosome and lived in or near present-day Ethiopia sometime after 80 kyr. Lyall family antecedents, traced through Y chromosome markers m189, m9 and m45, travelled up through the Middle East to central Asia where artistic, musical, boat-building, abstract-thinking anatomically modern humans, with Y chromosome marker m173, followed herds of reindeer west into Europe some 35 kyr. Here they encountered and killed or outbred the Neanderthals, the earlier indigenous inhabitants, but they were unable to venture onto ice-choked Scotland.

Before 15 kyr, when cunning Ice Age Aboriginal people were outwitting the marsupial megafauna of Pleistocene Australia and wily 'New-Europeans' were hunting the megafauna of Pleistocene Europe, venturesome humans living in Siberia, who bore the Y chromosome marker m242, were crossing a frozen Bering Strait land bridge, from west to east and, perhaps, skirting the coast in small craft. With well-established spear and arrow technology, more than four million years after Dockin's ancestors had crossed in the opposite direction, descendants of those early Eurasian people made their home in Alaska.

Their menfolk had a new marker, m3, on their Y chromosome when they scooted through huge glaciers that then covered Canada. The ripple effect of these early adroit, spear-throwing, pack hunting Paleo-Indians was they likely hunted populations of naive North American horses, mammoths and camelids to extinction as they boldly expanded south to populate the Americas. There was no record of these large mammals in pre-Columbian Native American culture, their existence was forgotten until horses arrived with ocean-crossing European invaders and scientists began to puzzle over abundant fossil evidence, fossils that disappeared abruptly after about 11.5 kyr, the time when human numbers began to expand. Other impacts, such as local climate change, likely also contributed to their demise.¹²

To Higher Ground

Some 18 kyr our climate slowly began to warm, polar ice caps thawed, melt water began to fill the oceans and lap into low lying coastal valleys and the huge glacier that had covered the British Isles retreated. As Europe's coastline was re-sculptured, Britain remained connected by a broad land bridge with parts of Europe that would become France, Belgium and Holland. Ponies, along with mammoths, aurochs, bear, beaver, bustard and modern humans followed the retreating glacier's edge to exploit the forest fringe in the south of England. Hippopotamuses no longer frequented Britain's now cool rivers as they had when archaic humans first encountered the Pleistocene animals of Europe, but pony bones of two types from this era have been found in the caves of Somerset.¹³

A brief shift back to near glacial conditions from 12.5 to 10.5 kyr halted the glacial retreat and made the climate cold and dry. When the thaw resumed, melt water

from the ice caps of Russia and Scandinavia, instead of flowing south to fill the Black Sea as had happened earlier, flowed west along the glacier's leading edge and filled what would become the North Sea with fresh water. The Middle East remained arid. Somewhere around the foothills of the Mountains of Anatolia (the precise location has been a subject of considerable debate), innovative people harvested wild wheat and brought back to their dwellings variants with larger seeds that remained attached to the stem. Selection of seeds from these plants over generations saw the development of domestic wheat and the beginning of agriculture.

As the oceans resumed their gradual rise, sea water back flooded along the river that served as an outlet to the North Sea to create the Straits of Dover. Humans were squeezed back to higher ground and Europe's

The World as Known to the Ancients 1000 BC, *Cole's Handy Atlas and World Gazetteer*, WE Cole, Melbourne, undated, p. 1. H.L.



ponies, along with lions, rhinoceros and mammoths, were gradually being hunted to the brink of extinction. Like the Aborigines, practical Mesolithic people of cool, foggy Britain, deliberately began to burn off forests to encourage the concentration of grazing animals in the clearings. They could still see across to the great land mass of Europe with which they had been formerly connected, and perhaps pressured by this, intrepid coastal people improved upon their dugout canoes and made skin covered boats called coracles to journey across the water.

Along the shoreline of the much reduced Black Sea, in the Anatolian highlands and Middle East, human communities expanded the range of crops they grew. The bonds between humans, Bezoar goats, Mouflon sheep and Eurasian aurochs drew tighter, such that the relationships could truly be called domestication. The people had food sources compatible with a sedentary lifestyle, a rising population and the time and incentive to invent. Dogs, which had been part of their cultures for thousands of years, could be selected to herd as well as to hunt.

Willingness to be led was a key trait for domestication. Selection pressure favoured cattle with placid temperaments that submitted to being harnessed to ploughs, one of the first power-driven tools in human history. Wild auroch were driven to extinction as humans bred and spread domestic oxen across Eurasia. Gold, copper and then bronze metal working technology emerged and selection pressures on the human farming populations changed, as it did on the crops and animals they tended. People's faces and teeth became smaller as their food was more easily eaten. Their noses and eye sockets diminished in size, if too large, they would dissipate heat. In China, the earliest sites with evidence of crops date to a similar age, around 9.5 kyr and contain millet, along with bones from domestic pigs, dogs and chickens.¹⁴

The Mediterranean Sea continued to rise and water lapped at coastal sites such as Marseilles and Gallipoli, both of which would, in time, have stardust links to Harewood's history. Around 7.6 kyr, the Mediterranean burst past the Dardanelles and Bosphorus, the straits which separated Europe from Asia, cascading millions of megalitres of seawater into the valley, expanding what would become the Black Sea, flooding shoreline communities and igniting a diaspora up the river valleys of the Danube, the Dnieper and the Don and to higher ground, wherever it might be found. Some workers see a link between the Black Sea flooding and the story of Noah's flood or other traditional flood stories of the region. A ripple effect was the spread of proto Indo-European languages, which appears to date from around this time and from this region.¹⁵

PARTNERS IN CONQUEST

As available land reduced globally and human hunting methods became more efficient, the forbearers of the Indo-European tribes of the Ukraine witnessed a decline in animal species their forefathers had hunted for generations – mammoth, auroch, deer and ponies. Already living with domesticated sheep and goats, some insightful

tribesmen began to rethink their association with the Steppe ponies. From around 6 kyr, in Dereivka, archaeologists have found the skull of a pony stallion, along with two dogs, clay figurines, and two pieces of bored antler thought to have served as cheek pieces for a rope bit. Tooth wear suggested the stallion might have held a bit between his molars.¹⁶

Human-domestic animal partnerships were about to reset global history and the spiritual beliefs of Eurasian communities. Harewood's 1831 Bible and the Lyall children's 1867 *Figures and Facts; Chronology for Schools* had the universe created 4004 years before the birth of Christ and squashed history now believed to have taken some 13.8 billion years into the first 31 verses of Genesis, six metaphorical days. This date, 4004 BC, 6 kyr, was however close to the time oceans reached present day heights and humans and horses formed a powerful alliance that gave people power and mobility to expand empires. Horses reappeared in association with humans in Eurasian archaeological sites from which they had previously vanished. Centaurs appeared in the art and sacred stories of ancient Greeks, recalling the local people's wonder as Scythian tribesmen from the north first rode mounted into their midst as well as their own equestrian accomplishments.

By Genesis Chapter XI dates in the 1831 Bible begin to align somewhat more plausibly with secular evidence but discrepancies signal the Judeo-Christian-Islamic epic as a founding myth rather than historical fact. Abraham, the patriarch of the Abrahamic religions reached the Holy Land in Genesis XI (1721 BC). By Genesis XXVIII (1760 BC) Jacob, his grandson lay down to sleep on a pillow of stones at Bethel and dreamed of a ladder reaching up to heaven and the Lord saying "thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east and to the north, and to the south: and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed." In the morning Jacob set the inspirited stones upright as a pillar, poured oil upon them and vowed the Lord should be his God. Prophetic words indeed about

Assyrian king and archers fight from a horse-drawn chariot. The divinity Baal is depicted above and birds of prey peck at the dying. Bonomi, Joseph, *Nineveh and its Palaces*, 2nd ed. Ingram, Cooke & Co, London, 1853, p. 233. H.L. Discoveries by archaeologists of sites known from the Old Testament found an enthusiastic audience amongst the educated colonists.



the ripple effect of Jewish and Christian peoples and their belief systems which would spread globally in the millennia followed.¹⁷

Adopting horse warfare, Semite horsemen penetrated as far as the Nile Delta and used chariots and archers to sack the city of Memphis around 1720 BC. For 150 years they governed Northern Egypt until an astute Egyptian prince adopted horse warfare and reconquered the land.

Responding to repeated attacks by mounted tribesmen, Assyria's rulers swapped their aggressive onagers, wild asses that they had earlier used to pull chariots, for more tractable *Equus caballus*. With horses, stone and brick buildings and cuneiform alphabet, the Assyrians were able to gradually expand their brutal empire and build palaces for their emperors at Nineveh and Babylon. Across cultures sacrificing a bull became a metaphor of the victory of man's spiritual nature over his animalism; sacrificing of a lamb might atone for sins. The stallion was a symbol of instinctive drives beyond conscious control. The onagers would battle extinction as selection pressures favoured the human-horse-cattle-sheep-crops partnership now set to spread globally. For the next 3,500 years, horses, metallurgy, written communication and gold currencies were key instruments of war and those nations that embraced the new technology cruelly subdued those that did not.¹⁸

Mounted tribes from the Asian steppes drove war chariots across central Europe, they had no written language but were ideologically united in seeking connection with the stars and universe. Their priests performed mysterious rites in sacred oak groves and around stone monuments, some of which had been constructed by earlier inhabitants. They played harps, recited epics, knew how to make bronze from tin and copper and carried horse-based culture by conquest and acculturation throughout Europe and across the English Channel. Over the next millennium, stardust of the British Isles was transformed by innovative people whom writers of books in Harewood's library described to as 'the Cambrians', but, thrown off the scent by biblical orthodoxy, delved no further. Horse based cultures changed Britain from a landscape where indigenous forests had been shaped by 4,000 years of burning and slashing with stone scythes, into a landscape cleared with Bronze then Iron Age tools for cultivation and domestic animals.¹⁹

By 1700 BC, bold Indo-European warriors had turned their horses, swords and chariots to the East and were conquering the dark-skinned, indigenous Dravidian peoples of India. The Indo-Europeans became the priestly Brahmin caste, grafting their storm-God Indira into the complex pantheon of Hindu mythology. The dark Dravidian people became the Sutras, servants and untouchables of human society and the demons and rakshaas of Brahmin myths. Along the distant east coast of China and South East Asia, offshore island peoples were having a similar exchange to that of the Britons, but horses were not yet part of their cultures. Pioneering Asian seafarers experimented with early outrigger canoes that would later become the great ocean-going vessels that carried the ancestors of the Polynesian people, along with their Asian dogs, pigs

and chickens, to the tropical islands of the Pacific. Knowledge of boats, wind, and weather and food preservation needed to be accumulated for people to navigate the sea. To dominate the land, skills in communication, social organisation, warfare and agriculture were keys. With their emerging alphabet-based records, weaponry, cattle farming and horse riding, inventive Europeans would be better placed to ripple around the world with global colonisation than their seafaring cousins of the Pacific Basin. Asian seafarers from the north would bring dingoes to Australia that spread across the continent to reach Western Port about 1500 BC and an occasional sea gypsy would overstay and become absorbed into the Aboriginal population, but the Melanesians had no army and navy with which to conquer Australia.²⁰

Harewood's 1831 Bible confidently dated Exodus Chapter XV, the flight of Moses and the Hebrew slaves from Egypt, to 1491 BC, however, secular evidence is so sparse that this part of the biblical epic is particularly hotly contested. It is more widely agreed that the Israelites reached a zenith c. 1000 BC under the rule of King David, a gifted ruler, who played the harp and wrote beautiful Psalms and his son Solomon, famed for his wisdom, proverbs and many wives. Their writings, and those of other Jewish leaders and prophets were collected into what became the Old Testament when the Hebrew people were taken into captivity at Nineveh and Babylon (c. 607 BC) and would, many centuries later, survive as instructional stories for European colonists around the world, including those who came to Western Port.²¹

Whether the earliest Shetland ponies, sheep, dogs and cattle came with seafarers from Britain or Scandinavia is not clear but horses had been part of Eurasian cultures for 3 millennia by the time traces of their presence appeared amongst ruins at Jarlshof, on Shetland. The absence, to date, of pony bones in earlier deposits suggests that they came with brave people by sea, rather than making their own way to Shetland when land connections existed between the islands and Britain or Norway. Only the smallest ponies could make the voyage in the primitive boats and survive the severe conditions once they arrived.²²

A white stallion, Kantaka and his rider, Prince Siddhartha, from the foothills of the Himalayas galloped across the pages of another book, an 1887 paperback, on Harewood's shelves. The verses tell how Siddhartha set off on a quest to answer the 'why' questions of human existence and after years of meditation beneath the sacred Bodhi-tree, Buddha (620-543 BC) emerged to preach his religion centred on the unity of nature and transmigration of the soul. His teachings would ripple globally and rest relatively comfortably with current notions of universal particles and forces being reconfigured over time and reincarnated in different forms. Kantaka, according to Buddhist metaphor, was reborn a Brahmin and, listening to Buddha's teachings, achieved enlightenment. Buddha never rode horses again.²³

Two centuries after Buddha, around 360 BC, Pytheas the Greek completed the epic journey of his generation circumnavigating Britain and possibly travelling to Shetland

and Iceland. A bold and exceptional navigator, along the way he measured distance travelled, daylight hours and the shadow cast by his staff as he tried to calculate the curvature of the earth. Herodotus, his countryman, described the tin miners of Cornwall in his history of the world, the oldest preserved, probably using Pytheas as a source. Herodotus' seminal volumes, in which he sees history as being foretold by oracles and controlled by the tripartite divinity, Jove, Neptune and Pluto, provoked by human arrogance, survived to be translated into English twenty-one centuries later and find their way onto Harewood's bookcases. Beside his book lay the fables of the slave Aesop, who wrote about eagles, crows, bats, swans, kites, doves and other animals from the Greek countryside and drew instructional lessons from them, much as Aboriginal people had done for generations with their stories about the creatures with whom they shared their daily lives.²⁴

Throughout Herodotus' ancient world expanding human mastery of horses, domestic animals, weapons and writing continued to shape landscape, genomes, cultures and history. Herodotus told of the great Persian emperor Xerxes assembling a million soldiers and building a pontoon bridge across the Dardanelles to invade the Balkans. Generations later, mounted on his black, wall-eyed stallion, Bucephalus, audacious Alexander the Great, in moves that would be carefully studied by later British school boys, led the Greeks in conquest over the Persians then expanded their empire to India.

With mounted attackers from the north and east, the Chinese, with a long tradition of agriculture, sericulture, writing, philosophy, science and statecraft, constructed their Great Wall and themselves embraced horse warfare. They invented the horse collar and breaching strap to enable their draft horses to transport wagon-borne infantry. By 221 BC they were politically united under the Qin Dynasty whose cavalry could be deployed rapidly to reach the far corners of the Empire and whose sailing junks were beginning to probe the Pacific. China has remained united ever since.²⁵

In 54 BC Julius Caesar carefully organised the use of slave galleys to transport legions, sheep and cattle across the English Channel as he led his wave of Roman invaders into Britain. The indigenous Britons, now a mix of Celts, Picts



Christ riding to Jerusalem, many spread their garments in the way, o-



ther cut down branches off the trees and strawed them in the way. Mark xi.



Christ in Jerusalem. *The Book of Common Prayer*, Illustrated by Albert Durer and Hans Holbein, 1853, Third Sunday before Lent. H.L. From a stunning book with beautiful woodcuts that William Lyall made a special effort to obtain.



Spreading Christianity on pony back. One of three ornamental stones found beside an old Church at Papil on the island of Burra dating to the 9th century. The carving shows elements of Pictish, Norse and Celtic art styles. (Original in the Shetland Museum)

and earlier races, opposed him at Canterbury with a force of 4,000 ponies, charioteers, swordsmen and archers. It took reinforcement from his mounted divisions to turn the battle Rome's way and enable his soldiers to rout the Britons' army and superimpose Greek/Roman deities over the gods of the Druid priests. Along with their baggage, the Romans are thought to have brought the first Fennel (*Foeniculum vulgare*)

and 'Scotch' thistle (*Onopordium acanthium*) to Britain, as well as a prototype for Empire building that would see *The Comic History of Rome* and *The Comic History of Britain* become humorous companion volumes on William Lyall's book shelves. The barefooted, tent-dwelling, indigenous Caledonians evaded subjugation by escaping into the forest on their swift ponies and returning to raid the Roman camps.

Around eighty years on, the Scots were still raiding the Roman camps while, at the other end of the Roman Empire (at least according to Matthew, Chapter I) Zoroastrian magi were symbolically placing gold (for a king), frankincense (for a priest) and myrrh (for one who would die) by a humble manger where the infant Jesus lay. Multiple copies of the New Testament, gospels, sermons, prayer books, catechisms and other theological literature in Harewood's library proclaim Christ a son of God as well as an heir to the throne of David. Compared with his aesthetic cousin, John the Baptist, Jesus grew up to enjoy a drop of red with disreputable friends and challenged established religion. In its place he preached a simple code of loving God and fellow humans and purposefully living a life of service. He triumphantly entered Jerusalem on the back of a humble donkey, rather than a war horse and, on being crucified at Calvary and coming (or not as your belief system would have it) back to life then accending into heaven, his spirit touched human hearts and ignited a religion, built on Hebrew traditions and centred on grace, humane behaviour, a personal God and eternal life for repenting believers. In time, the metaphorical life he led and the gospel he preached became entwined in European civilisation and reset calendars. The energy of Christ's message, in both appalling and beautiful manifestations, became moulded into the stardust of evolving European cultures that, intricately linked with the horses, cattle, sheep and agriculture, would ripple around the world and, one day, reshape Lo-an's Land.²⁶

Now riding with stirrups on their saddles, an innovation adopted from Asia, tribes from the east assailed the Roman Empire, ultimately causing its downfall. Pony based warfare gradually filtered into South East Asia to reach as far south as the island of Timor by the fifth century AD. The widened Timor Sea impeded the ponies' passage to Australia, but square-rigged junks regularly traversed Indonesian waters and by the Sui dynasty (589-618 AD) the Chinese knew of a huge landmass south of China with

an animal, the *Shan Lai Jing*, with a head like a deer, that hopped on its hind legs and had a second head (presumably it's joey) in the middle of its body.²⁷

Across the Eurasian continent, greater human and animal populations, generated in the wake of domestication, continued to meet death from violence or disease agents people and animals at one time shared: pox, tuberculosis, measles, plague, diphtheria and influenza. The fates of humankind and their small band of domestic species were intimately intertwined. On the Arabian Peninsula the charismatic Prophet Mohammad (570-632 AD), inspired by revelations from the God of Abraham, Jacob, David and Jesus, wrote the Koran stressing submission to the will of Allah and the almighty, invisible, formless nature of God, then waged holy wars for the spiritual extension of Islam. Galvanised by Mohammad's teachings and the resonance of his beautiful Arabic verse, Muslim armies mounted on swift Arab steeds spread Islamic art and influence from Spain to China. The Koran found a place in William Lyall's library shelves and the stardust of the Arabian horses a place in the bloodlines of his Melbourne Cup contenders.²⁸

While distance ensured Kulin forbears in Australia remained isolated from Eurasian pestilences, belligerent Angles, Saxons, Jutes and other invaders from across narrow seas repeatedly attacked the British Isles. By the ninth century, fierce Vikings from Scandinavia rowed and sailed their long boats and left a stardust legacy in the music, art, people and broken coloured ponies that would one day be woven into Harewood's story. Carved stones dating from this time have been found on the Shetland Islands of Bressay and Burra depicting ponies and riders, hooded figures, perhaps monks or priests in a blend of Pictish, Celtic and Norse styles, suggesting Pagan or Christian beliefs were spread from the ponies' backs. The ponies are estimated to be about 110 cm tall, a little larger than modern day Shetlands, and strong enough to carry the diminutive people of the first millennium AD. The one painting that exists of Dockin' is reminiscent of these early images of saddle ponies rather than the solid little pit ponies later bred for the coal mines. Some Vikings dared to take their Norse gods, boats and ponies beyond Shetland, to conquer Iceland. The 'tolt' (running walk), broken colours and ab-



The Whale fishing and killing of Morsses. F. Marten's Observations made in Greenland and other northern countries. Brown D., *An Account of several late voyages and discoveries*, London, 1711. Opp. p. 199. H.L. The story of Leif Ericson's voyage, later supported by archaeological evidence, had not been translated into English and was not known to William Lyall's generation.

sence of chestnuts (small, horny protuberances) on their legs are distinctive features of the ponies of Iceland, Shetland and Scandinavia that have no parallels in British ponies. From Iceland and Greenland, at a time of global warming that would not be repeated for another thousand years, Leif Ericson launched his expeditions to North America's coast between 985 and 1101. The settlements eventually faltered and failed and the Vikings pulled back to their Scandinavian strongholds.²⁹

BRITAIN MOVES TO CENTRE STAGE

From the first millennium voyages of the Vikings, there was probably little pressure and little change in the DNA of the ponies on Shetland for the next 800 years. Dockin's ancestors can be left for the moment to peacefully graze on Noss. But geography, technology, religion and nationalism need to be examined to explain the forces that caused Scots, from a small island at the opposite end of the globe, to transform Warn-mor-in's landscape when the next wave of daring descendants of the Celts, Vikings, Anglo-Saxons and Normans rippled forth to explore the world.

Ocean going vessels and endless gradations of rank were alien to Aboriginal culture, which saw people as custodians of a land criss-crossed by songlines, dreaming tracts and intricate kinship networks. As the Kulin leader Simon Wonga explained, 'Blackfellows always this country. No like whitefellow, walk plenty, go new country.' Aboriginal raiding parties might kill men and abduct women, but, having spread throughout Australia over 50,000 years, all-conquering chiefs and colonisation of distant lands ceased to be a feature of their cultures. Aboriginal Law, derived from the Dreaming, was kept by all rather than flowing from an elite judiciary, pope, king or emperor. Ritual land care responsibilities cycled endlessly through generations. Yet the concept of a soul within linked to place and family origin were corner stones of both European and Aboriginal values.³⁰

Taking a European genealogical perspective, Andrew Lyall sent a letter to the *Weekly Scotsman*:

In the Weekly Scotsman of the 24th June, just come to hand, I am much pleased to see the name Lyall in the list given of the heroic men who fought for Scotland's freedom. I shall esteem it a great favour if any correspondent will give me some information as to the history of the people of that name and their crest.³¹

Respondents wrote back describing several Lyall family crests, ironically, the replies Andrew received suggest that Lyall ancestors were invaders rather than the freedom fighters.³²

...there were two distinct and different families of Lyall in Scotland: - vis Lyles of Duchal, in Renfrewshire, and Lyells of Murthill, in Forfarshire. As both families originally came from England, they are believed by most genealogists to be descended

from one common ancestor, Baldwin de Lisle. The Renfrew family settled in Scotland at the end of the eleventh century, whereas the Forfarshire family came from Northumberland and settled in Fifeshire about 1280.³³

Baldwin de Lisle's French name and era suggest that he could have been descended from William the Conqueror's knights from Normandy, who used their navy, swords and steel-armoured steeds to subdue England's yeomen in 1066 and then carved up the spoils of war. The dates when the Forfarshire Lyalls departed Northumberland suggest they too were favoured when the conqueror's descendant, Edward Longshanks, led his English cavalry and infantry to defeat the Scots in the thirteenth century. But the spirits of indigenous Scottish heroes, like William Wallace, who were tortured and killed by the invaders, were etched into the essence of Scotland. The Scots named their children after him and composed epic poetry that generations of Scotsmen (even those whose DNA recalled French and English invasions) would learn by heart. To their children's children, they gave leather-bound copies of the verses. One Scots lad would carry both Williams' stories and name to the end of the world and his Australian-Scots children would be brought up on Collier's *History of the British Empire*, which told how Robert Bruce eventually repelled King Edward's horsemen and the Scottish crown and people remained free.³⁴

While patriotic Scots battled England's horsemen, Italian Marco Polo (1254-1334) ventured forth with his father and rode the full length of the silk route to China to be dazzled by the opulence of the court of Kublai Khan. It eclipsed the courts of Europe. Ingenious Chinese had been the first to cast iron, use the compass and invent gun powder, printing and paper money. A united China led the world in political power and navigation: her square-rigged sailing ships plied the world's oceans. On pack horses Marco Polo brought back secret early world maps, some of which



Lyall Family Crest.
H.C.

'The Landing of William the Conqueror', A'Beckett, Gilbert, *The Comic History of England*, Punch, London, 1857, p. 53. Artist John Leech. H.L. 'Those families who are in the habit of boasting that their ancestors came in with the Conqueror, would scarcely be so proud of the fact if they were aware that the companions of William comprised nearly all the roguery and vagabondism of Europe.'



stretched far south to what the Chinese called Greater Java but would one day be known as Australia.³⁵

Driven to oust their foreign rulers, in 1382 the Chinese cavalry led by bold Prince Zhu Di overthrew the last of Kublai Khan's dynasty, butchering adults and castrating pre-pubescent boys for conscription as eunuchs into the imperial service. By 1421, some of these men had risen to become admirals of the greatest naval fleet the world had ever seen. Guided by celestial navigation and travelling sea routes mariners had plied for thousands of years, they brought heads of state and envoys from countries in Asia and Africa to celebrate the completion of the magnificent Forbidden City at Beijing and to pay homage to the Prince who had now become the Emperor Zhu Di. To return the foreigners to their home ports, a huge armada was assembled made up of treasure ships measuring over 100 metres long and laden with Chinese porcelain, silk, cotton and jade, along with support vessels, including horse-ships that carried the mounts for the cavalry. Once the envoys were returned the ships were to continue on voyages of global exploration.

Zhu Di's knowledge and fascination with the stars played no small part in this ambitious project that is now thought to have generated early maps of Africa, the Americas and Australia, maps that were secretly carried to Europe and used by early navigators. Gavin Menzies makes the case that 'Lao Jen', the star the Kulin called the Crow and the Greeks Canopus, was the Chinese cartographers' guide and its location fixed so that latitude of new lands could be accurately placed on their charts. But the China to which Zhu Di's greatly diminished fleet returned was very different to the one they had left. A huge fire had swept through the Forbidden City and the Chinese believed their gods had visited this disaster upon them because of displeasure with their emperor's rule. The country rebelled, Zhu Di died soon after and, by political decree, his Confucian-conservative son stopped the treasure fleets, forbade ocean-going shipping and destroyed journals of the expedition. China's geography and political unity had made it the most powerful nation in the world, but policies could switch abruptly based on changed ideologies and circumstances of the people in control. The way was left free for other nations to gain maritime dominance.³⁶

Not so in the topographically and politically divided countries of Europe that gradually adapted the compass, gunpowder and other Chinese inventions for their own purposes. Basque whalers, an ancient race of seaboard people sandwiched between France and Spain, had access to salt and refined techniques for drying fish to provide rations for long ocean voyages as well as to sell on European markets. Years before Columbus' three little ships made their way across the Atlantic to the Caribbean in 1492, Basque fishermen had sailed to the rocky coastline of Newfoundland which was ideal for salting and drying, and laid beside a sea that teemed with cod. When Jacques Cartier later arrived to "discover", and claim for France, the St. Lawrence River, he not only found thriving communities of Native Americans but also a huge fleet of Basque fishing vessels: they, and possibly earlier Chinese explorers, had kept their secrets.³⁷

It was boats, horses, guns, cattle and a suite of nasty pathogens that gave Europeans the edge when they finally set out to conquer the Americas. In 1519, clever, bold and devious Hernan Cortes crossed the Atlantic and landed in Mexico with 16 horses, 600 Spanish infantry and a belief in Catholicism that united and motivated his army but conveniently did not extend Christian compassion to heathen people. With these advantages he proceeded to kidnap their leader, Montezuma, usurp the Aztec empire and thrust Spanish stardust into Central America. To the south Francisco Pizarro did likewise with the Incas of Peru. Through these, after an absence of some 8000 years, horses returned to the Americas. Within a mere 400 years, there were over 25 million, a third the size of the human population, spanning from Canada to the tip of South America. Catholicism usurped Aztec and Inca belief systems but its rule was hardly less cruel.³⁸

The Lyall library told little of Spanish colonial successes, and nothing of the Basque or Chinese, but much of Scots and English monarchs. Charles Dickens' *Child's History of England* (c. 1860) described how a courageous Elizabeth I (reigned 1558-1603) defended England by beheading her Catholic cousin, Mary, Queen of Scots. Mary's little dog 'cowered under her dress, frightened, when she went to the scaffold, lay down beside her headless body when all her earthly sorrows were over.' When Catholic Spain launched its 'invincible' Armada to attack predominantly Protestant Britain, Elizabeth herself, decked in armour and astride her white horse at Gravesend, stirred her British troops with impassioned words and, brimming with boldness, Commander Drake sent blazing fire ships into the midst of the Spanish ships and defeated a far superior foe. Shakespeare's *Complete Works* and a beautifully bound *Common Prayer Book* attest to the flowering of literature and printing technology which dated from Elizabeth's reign. Elizabeth's romance with Lord Robert Dudley became the basis for one of the twenty-five gilt-bound, thistle-embossed *Waverley Novels*, written by Sir Walter Scott, with which Shakespeare's works share shelves.³⁹

Ironically, when childless Elizabeth died in 1603, it was beheaded Mary's stardust, in the shape of her son James, under whom 'Great Britain' was peacefully united. According to Dickens, James spoke in broad



Queen Elizabeth at Tilbury Fort, Hume, David, *A History of England*, Vol V, AJ Valfy, London, 1834, facing page. H.L. Their protestant Queen, on her white charger, inspired the troops who defeated the Spanish Armada and commissioned the *Common Prayer Book*.

Scotch and, having had rickets as a child, was 'dull, google-eyed and the worst rider ever seen', but, scholarly, he had the Bible translated into the English version that took his name. His belief in the Divine Right of Kings put him at odds with the world view of his Catholic subjects as well as that of Protestant sects that preached the Bible as the only way to personal salvation. Strong in their convictions, the Puritan Pilgrims rippled across the Atlantic on the *Mayflower* during his reign and reached New England, to find a bountiful land and empty Native American villages, their former owners swept away by 'a pestilence', most likely small pox, caused by a virus whose DNA had rippled across from distant European settlements and dispersed via adjoining tribes. This pattern of exotic disease spread amongst indigenous people would sadly be repeated 200 years later in Western Port.⁴⁰

The clash of Protestant forces with James' son, Charles I, eventually cost Charles both his throne and his head. With Britain imploding in Civil War, explorer Abel Janszoon Tasman was sent off in 1642 by the Dutch East India Company from Batavia. Using a 'magnetical needle', compass technology borrowed from the Chinese, he was the first European to reach Tasmania where he described finding trees with 'steps 5 foot asunder' but no humans and guessed these people must be 'very great...or else they have some unknown trick to make use of said steps for climbing these trees'. He went on to reach New Zealand and Fiji but he found no gold or exotic spices, the stardust his employers were seeking, and they chided him for his lack of persistence. Tasman's account, along with those of other 'late voyages and discoveries' to distant and fabulous corners of the world, were published in London in 1711. Self-taught student of history that he was, Lyall bought and rebound an antiquarian copy for his collection.⁴¹

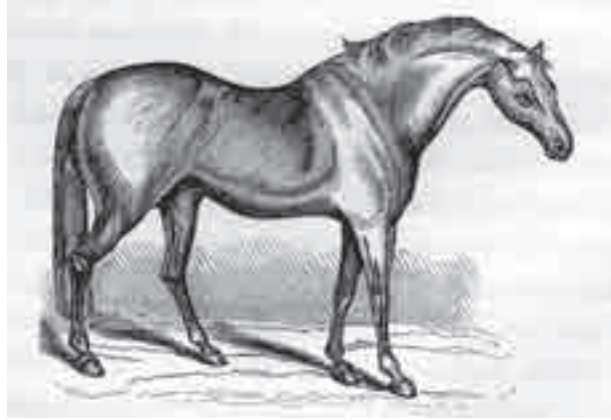
Scarred by the dreadful divisions of Cromwell's war-torn Britain, Non-Conformist John Bunyan wrote his *Pilgrim's Progress* in a British gaol cell while Alexander Pope, a devout Catholic, grew up to compose his *Essay on Man*. Both authors sensed unity in life and their works found their way into William's worldview and library.

One all-extending, all preserving soul
Connects each being, greatest with the least;
Made beast in aid of man, and man of beast;
All serv'd, all serving: nothing stands alone;
The chain hold on, and where it ends, unknown. [...]

The bounding steed you pompously bestride,
Shares with his lord the pleasure and the pride.⁴²

As well as the so-called Enlightenment, where reason, scientific rigor and individualism took on religious orthodoxy and traditional authority, Pope's generation saw the beginning of British horse racing, as it continues today. Charles II was an enthusiastic supporter of the Turf and the aristocracy imported swift horses, such as the Godolphin Barb from Morocco and the Darley Arabian, as foundation sires for their thoroughbred studs.

In the isolated hills and valleys of Britain, breeds of domestic animals, evolved for local conditions, attracted the mind of Robert Bakewell of Leicestershire (1726-1795) who applied himself to choosing animals with desirable traits, then by inbreeding, culling and out crossing, tried to see if better combinations could be found. In so doing, he



'Godolphin Barb', Whyte, James Christie, *History of the British Turf from the Earliest Period to the Present Day, Vols I & II*, Henry Colburn, London, 1840, p. 64. H.L. Lyall's passions for history and horse racing were linked in this book.

revolutionised the breeding of sheep and cattle and showed he could manipulate life forces for his own purposes. He developed Leicester sheep for meat rather than wool production and Leicester longhorn cattle for meat production rather than the draft work for which their ancestors had been bred. Literacy and animal husbandry skills increased hand in hand as the British aristocracy became almost as obsessed with documenting their animals' pedigrees as they were with their own. The white-faced Hereford cattle Lyall imported to Victoria could be traced back to William the Conqueror's *Doomsday Book*: from the teams of oxen bred to break the stiff clay soils of Herefordshire, a powerful, muscular draught animal emerged that could also pull heavily laden drays.⁴³ Alongside bullocks and bullock drivers, Dutch engineers and windmills were engaged by the British aristocracy to drain peat-land fens to produce some of the richest arable farmlands in the kingdom. Rivalling France, Britain moved to the centre of the world stage in scientific farming as King George III, the 'farmer-king', lent this his patronage. George III also showed the spirit of the Enlightenment by giving his approval, in 1770, for Captain Cook to set sail in the *Endeavour* and explore the east coast of Australia.

Paradoxically, chafing at British rule but also under the spell of the Enlightenment, American colonists wrote their 1776 Declaration of Independence, finding 34 reasons why George III was an unfit ruler then, fought and won independence from Great Britain for their adopted lands. In Scotland, 'A man's a man for a' that' poet-lyricist Robert Burns gave voice to his countrymen's national pride, romanticism and egalitarian ethos. Both Burns and the Americans would weave their stardust into the literature and music on Harewood's bookshelves and the psyche of the Australian people.

By the 1780s, with France quietly probing for strategic advantage in the western Pacific, King George approved the departure of the First Fleet from Portsmouth, and placed Captain Arthur Phillip at its head. An audacious move, it was the largest and most distant attempt at colonisation ever undertaken, anywhere, anytime, for which Sir Joseph Banks, who had been the botanist on board Cook's *Endeavour* and later took on the role of President of the Royal Society, was the inspiration. With people in high places

passionate about science and farming, the new penal settlement in New South Wales was set to become a hub for a vast interchange of genomes and culture that would set off ripple wave after ripple wave transforming the fabric of the island continent.⁴⁴

It wasn't British breeds of livestock that were sent to establish herds and flocks in the new colony; rather it was stock purchased at the Cape of Good Hope. According to quiet and efficient David Collins, who would later take command of the first settlement on Port Phillip, "1 bull, 1 bull-calf, 7 cows, 1 stallion, 3 mares and 3 colts together with a great number of rams, ewes, goats, boars and breeding sows as room could provide" were loaded. The 'colts' included two fillies, as eighteenth century terminology did not distinguish gender. They caught the circum-polar current and sailed over the ocean-filled rift fur seals had traversed 12,000 years earlier but which had, for over 65 million years, stopped evolving hooved animals from reaching Australia. Soon after the First Fleet landed its exotic-stardust-laden cargo of humans, plants and animals safely in New South Wales, the cattle escaped to form a wild herd and, with plenty of food and without effective predators, they flourished. To their number were added more African and Indian cattle. It wasn't until 1800, when William Kent imported a Devon bull and some Shorthorn cows, that purebred British stock swelled the Australian cattle gene pool. In 1802, the colony received the gift of a fine thoroughbred stallion named *Northumberland* after the Duke who donated him.⁴⁵

Ponies didn't reach the colony until 1803, when a shipment kicked off a flourishing trade from the island of Timor, where wild Asian ponies thrived on the island's extensive savannah lands. *Le Géographe*, the French ship that had earlier explored Bass Strait, stopped by Timor in 1803 on the way back to France. There Nicolas Petit painted a remarkable picture of a Timor pony whose huge rider wore a blanket of cream and red woven cloth with metal bands encircling his arm and leg. In his right hand he carried a plumed spear and under his left arm a scabbarded sword. His legs were doubled up and his toes pointed towards the pony's tail to prevent them dragging on the ground. A pink plume adorned the pony's decorative halter. As an instrument of warfare the pair seems utterly incongruous, but the rider's grim expression left no doubt the pair

could inflict lethal injury. The gulf in culture between the Timorese warrior and Petit's earlier drawings of Tasmanian and Mainland Aborigines was dramatic (see page 10). Before the First Fleet reached Port Jackson, horses, cloth and metalwork were unheard of.⁴⁶

'Merino Ram',
Sidney, Samuel, *The
Three Colonies of
Australia*, Ingram,
Cooke & Co,
London, 1853, p.
54. H.L.



The price of wool soared during Britain's war with Napoleon, and clever-thinking Banks conspired to establish a Royal flock of fine wool Spanish (Merino) sheep, initially with contraband and, after General Wellington's victory on the Iberian Peninsula, with spoils. King George saw the Spanish sheep as a means of improving the quality of British wool and distributed progeny to progressive farmers, including John Macarthur in New South Wales. Their stardust provided the early basis for the Australian wool industry and some of their descendants would later graze on Harewood's pastures.⁴⁷

Improved maritime technology allowed the French and British to jostle for control of the South Pacific and also made travel more accessible for ordinary people. Contact with remote islands, like the Shetlands, increased. They were no match for the huge warhorses of Europe but the little ponies that had been there some 3,000 years charmed visitors. In his journal of 1814, Sir Walter Scott wrote,

There are numbers of shaggy, long-backed, short-legged ponies running wild upon the extensive moors. There is, indeed, a right of individual property in these animals...but when any passenger has the occasional use for a pony, he never scruples to lay hold of the first one which he can catch, puts on a halter, and, having rode him as far as he finds convenient, turns the animal loose to find his way back again as best he can.⁴⁸

Alongside herds of deer, herds of Shetlands began to be exported on an increased scale and became a feature of stately homes in Britain. They were used as children's mounts or broken to harness to pull miniature vehicles driven by ladies. Raised at Foveran Mains near Aberdeen, the closest sizeable Scottish port to Shetland, William and Andrew Lyall would likely have had childhood memories of the little ponies. Their little sister Margaret later wrote of the family background.

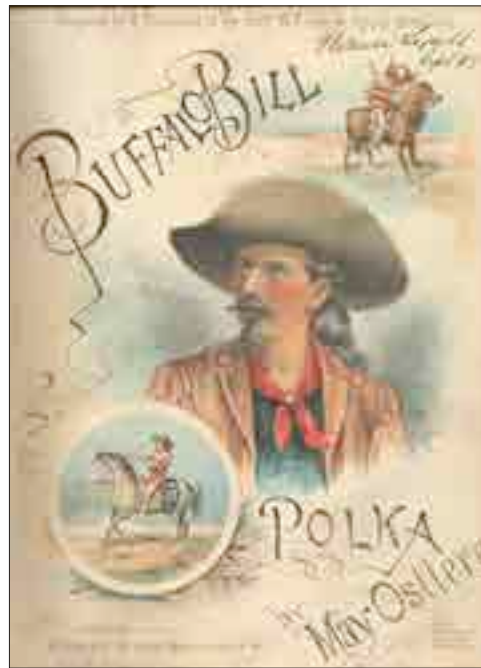
...my Father John Lyall was born in that County [Forfarshire] on a farm some miles south of the town of Montrose, this farm had then been occupied by Lyall's for five generations. My grandfather died when my father was only five years old and the farm being what is called "life rented" was taken away from his widow and let to a neighbour at a higher rent. My father - the youngest of three sons - proved a very talented man, and was much sought after for advice by other farmers. [...] Our mother, Helen Webster was the eldest daughter of a gentleman farmer, her eldest stepbrother was a Dr. in Dundee, her younger brothers, John, William and George were lawyers in Edinburgh.⁴⁹

As the scientific movement expanded in Scotland, a model farm was set up at Frogmore to the south of Foveran, and journals such as the *Farmer's Weekly* spread agricultural news and reports of farming in the British colonies. Meanwhile, in the same British-based crucible of collective learning, lifeforms chugged across the eighth grand threshold in our story as Glaswegian James Watt and others tinkered with machines that converted fossil fuel into energy, thrusting Europe into the Industrial Revolution and, argueably, the world into the Anthropocene, our current epoch in which many

environmental processes are profoundly impacted by human activities. The innovative entrepreneurs measured the output of their steam engines in 'horsepower'.

With landed gentry connections but no land of their own, the desire to be able to secure land and a comfortable position on the social ladder for their children would have been strong for an educated, determined and competent couple, such as John and Helen Lyall, who had been brought up with Calvinist ethics of diligence, thrift and austerity. In London, hard-line economic theorists, including David Ricardo, were preaching the Iron Law of Wages 'that those who worked were meant to be poor, and that any other state of affairs would threaten the whole edifice of industrial society'. *Laissez-faire* policies, low wages and low taxes were needed to ensure capital available for investment. The gulf between rich and poor was widening and there was a strong incentive to be on the privileged side of that gulf. John Lyall was all too aware of the precarious nature of tenant farming and employment in Britain: emigration offered opportunity.⁵⁰

'Buffalo Bill Polka'
sheet music from
the Lyall family
collection, 1887.



Joseph Banks and George III both died in 1820 as convict transportation to New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land was at its height and free settlers were joining the wave of emigration. The King's flock of Spanish sheep was dispersed and there were further sales to Australian graziers and pastoral companies. Squatters illegally pushed their mixed bred flocks and herds south towards the Murray River and into the Monaro high country, driving the indigenous owners from their land and damaging the pastures and water resources upon which the native animals and Aboriginal people relied.

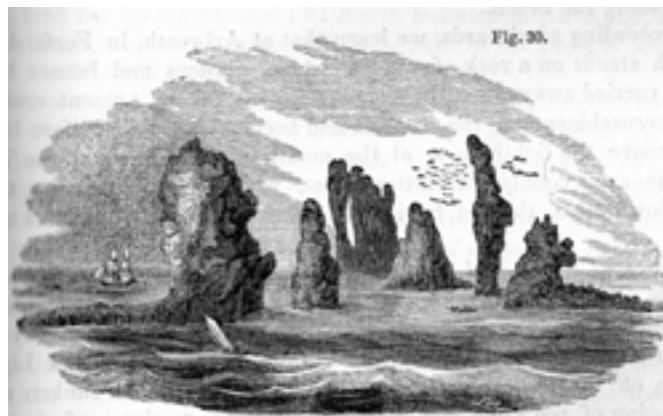
The New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land Establishment (renamed the Cressy Company) was formed in London in 1825 under encouragement from Governor

Darling and a suggestion that the enterprise would receive 20,000 acres at Western Port (where settlement was still disallowed) and 20,000 acres in Van Diemen's Land. The land grant at Western Port was a pipe dream but the company shipped quality thoroughbred horses, Spanish Merino and Leicester sheep and Durham (Shorthorn) cattle to Van Diemen's Land, along with probably the first imports of Hereford cattle, improved for meat production using Bakewell's principles. The fittest offspring of this Tasmanian stock would provide the stardust from which Harewood's foundation cattle, sheep and bloodstock derived.⁵¹

LYELLS AND LYALLS: SCOTS WITH PRINCIPLES

John Lyall's distant relatives, the 'e' Lyells of Kinnordy, occupied the stately family home at the foot of the Grampian Mountains in Forfarshire, Scotland. In 1797, Charles Lyell was born into this family's comfortable wealth and intellectual vigour. He was taken as a child to England and Oxford for his education. Geology was young Charles' consuming passion and he returned to Forfarshire to study the sediments in freshwater lakes in the district. Observing these and other geological formations he began to reason in new ways about geology in much the same way as Bakewell had earlier done in agriculture. Connecting dots that others hadn't seen, he stressed that natural, as opposed to supernatural, explanations could be used for geological phenomena and that ordinary processes occurring from day to day did not differ in kind or magnitude from those in the past. Challenging a literal interpretation of the Bible, he postulated the world must be very old because these processes work very slowly and identified suites of fossils of progressively more complex life forms that regularly appeared in successive geological formations. In so doing he pre-empted nearly every natural history project to follow, including the one you're reading now.⁵²

In 1830 Charles Lyell published his views on the formation of the earth in his first edition of *Principles of Geology*, a copy of which Charles Darwin carried with him when he sailed from Devonport, in December 1831, for his world voyage on board the *Beagle*. As young Darwin was puzzling



'Granitic rocks to the south of Hillswick' Ness, Shetland.', Lyell, Charles, *Principles of Geology*, 9th ed., John Murray, London, 1853. pp. 300-1. H.L. 'The greater indestructibility of some rocks may enable them to withstand the actions of the elements.'

over capybaras, the large and brilliantly coloured butterflies of Rio de Janeiro and the lack of dung beetles to clean up horse droppings in Maldonado, John Lyall departed London, a steerage passenger aboard the *Vibilia*, to make the long sea journey to Van Diemen's Land.⁵³ He promised to send for Helen and the children when he had established himself. His daughter, Margaret, recounted the story:

...a neighbour's young son (in the parish of Forran Aberdeen)⁵⁴ Andrew Mitchell aged 19 had adventured away to the far off island, Tasmania, "Van Diemen's Land" then called and mostly used as a Penal Settlement but to encourage the advent of respect-

able people, the Government offered them tracts of land grants. This proved a great inducement, and my father like many others, thought first to try to secure a home for his large family in that far away country. In those days the Voyage by Sailing Ship occupied about five months. It must have been about the year 1832, when he left the home country and unfortunately the land grants had been stopped just a few days before his arrival in Hobartown (now Hobart), his wife and family were to follow when he had secured a home for them, and he was so far fortunate in obtaining the management of a considerable property named "Williamstown", about ten miles distant from a small town named Ross...⁵⁵

With land grants discontinued and herds and flocks increasing, Van Diemen's Land pastoralists were pressing the government, who wished to keep settlement within readily managed bounds, to be allowed to settle on the mainland across the Bass Strait. George Town and Launceston became hives of clandestine activity with ringleaders in rival groups plotting how to circumvent regulations. The Port Phillip Association, led by John Batman was the first to arrive on the banks of the Yarra with men, but thorny John Fawkner's party aboard the *Enterprize* was the first to bring horses and livestock.

Initially the *Enterprise* stopped at Western Port where, from 8 to 15 August 1835, the party examined the cold, wet, swampy lands about the Bay. Giving them up 'as not likely to form a good site for any very dense population', they pushed on to Port Phillip where they encountered a whale boat manned by Aborigines from Sydney and one white man who proclaimed to the party 'Mr John Batman, KING of Port Phillip, had bought all the lands and desired ALL Trespassers to keep Aloof!'⁵⁶ Ignoring the warning, the party continued to explore around Port Phillip until they arrived at the Yarra, where

The velvet-like grass carpet, decked with flowers of the most lively hues, most liberally spread over the land, the fresh water, the fine lowlands, and the lovely knolls around the lagoons on the flat or swamps, the flocks, almost innumerable, of teal, ducks, geese, and swans and minor fowls, filled them with joy. They all with one voice agreed that they had arrived at the site of the new settlement and resolved to have the vessel brought up if possible, the goods, stores &c., landed, and the commencement of a town forthwith made.

Releasing their kangaroo dogs 'a fine boomer was startled not many yards from the vessels, driven into the river, just above the site of the Prince's Bridge, killed and taken to the vessel. The river above the Falls, was most odoriferous with the scent of wattle blossom, which added to the beauty of the scenery.'⁵⁷

It was agreed that each person of the six associates should have a plot of land, on which to build and make a garden, and to grow crops, and if it was found that the Government would not allow the whites to buy and hold land under title obtained from the aborigines, it was thought no reasonable British Government would refuse to

the first *bona fide* settlers a plot of land on which they might grow food for themselves and dependants.

Breaking a tradition of fire and digging stick farming with which the local landscape had been sculpted for more than 30,000 years, George Wise, one of Fawkner's servants, hitched his horse to a plough and dug a furrow, a deep furrow that would transform Lo-an's Land forever.⁷⁵⁸

THE SHORTER CATECHISM AND PRINCIPLES OF GEOLOGY

John Lyall's wife, Helen, was a slender woman, a little above medium height, very fair, pale clear complexion, bright blue eyes, large, slightly Roman nose and large laughing mouth showing big regular white teeth. Her face was delicate and oval, her hair fine as silk. On 6 February 1836, she shepherded their five youngest children, John, William, Julia, Andrew and little Margaret up the gangway from the wharf at Dundee to the good ship *Adelaide*, and they set sail to join their husband, and father, in Van Diemen's Land. On the other side of the globe, the *Beagle* slowly wound its way across the Pacific with Charles Darwin's mind engrossed in Lyell's *Principles of Geology*, relating them to the wildlife and geological formations he encountered at each stop. As energy captured from winds and waves carried both parties to their destinations, the Lyall children accumulated indelible memories of spouting whales, patient sheep, a large Wesleyan missionary book and questions about the purpose of life from *The Shorter*



'Fawkner Fraternizing with the Aborigines.' *Melbourne Punch*, April 3, 1856. H.L. Cartoonists hit a rich vein in drawing parallels between Romans bringing 'civilisation' to Britain and the British bringing 'civilisation' to Victoria.

Catechism. Half a world away, Darwin wrote thoughtful entries in his journal, reflecting on the changes occurring to indigenous human and animal populations in the wake of European colonisation.⁵⁹ Foreshadowing changes the 'a' Lyall family would later effect at Harewood, he wrote of his time in Uruguay and Argentina:

According to the principles so well laid down by Mr Lyell, few countries have undergone more remarkable changes, since in the year 1535, when the first colonists of La Plata landed with seventy-two horses. The countless herds of horses, cattle and sheep, not only have altered the whole aspect of the vegetation, but they have almost banished the guanaco, deer and ostrich. Numberless other changes must likewise have taken place; the wild pigs in parts probably replaces the peccary; packs of wild dogs may be heard howling on the wooded banks of the less frequented streams; and the common cat, altered into a large and fierce animal, inhabits rocky hills.⁶⁰

By the time he reached Sydneytown, Darwin was enthusing 'Here, in a less promising country, scores of years have done many times more than an equal numbers of centuries have effected in South America. My first feeling was to congratulate myself that I was born an Englishman. Upon seeing more of the town afterwards, perhaps my admiration fell a little: but yet it is a fine town.' Hiring a man and two horses to take him inland to Bathurst he was disturbed by the adverse impact settlers were having on wildlife and Aboriginal people.

'City of Sydney',
Sidney, Samuel, *The
Three Colonies of
Australia*, Ingram,
Cooke & Co,
London, 1853, p.
110. H.L.



We continued riding the greater part of the day, but had very bad sport not seeing a kangaroo, or even a wild dog. The grey-hounds pursued a kangaroo rat into a hollow tree, out of which we dragged it: it is an animal as large as a rabbit, but with the figure

of a kangaroo. A few years since this country abounded with wild animals; but now the emu is banished to a long distance, and the kangaroo is become scarce; to both the English greyhound has been highly destructive. It may be long before these animals are altogether exterminated, but their doom is fixed. The aborigines are always anxious to borrow dogs from farm houses: the use of them, the offal when an animal is killed, and some milk from the cows, are the peace-offerings of the settlers, who push farther and farther towards the interior. The thoughtless aboriginal, blinded by these trifling advantages, is delighted at the approach of the white men who seem predestined to inherit the country of his children.⁶¹

Dropping anchor in Hobart in February 1836, Darwin continued his observations and discovered fossiliferous strata with characteristics like the 'Devonian' fish or 'Carboniferous' forest stratas that Lyell's new book described as occurring in Europe. About the war against the Tasmanian Aborigines he wrote, 'I fear there is no doubt that this train of evil and its consequences, originated in the infamous conduct of some of our countrymen. Thirty years is a short period, in which to have banished the last aboriginal from his native island, - and that island nearly as large as Ireland.' Darwin's Australian experiences would influence his seminal evolutionary works, *Origin of Species* (1859) and *The Descent of Man* (1871) which marked a watershed in how humans view order within the universe.⁶²

Five year old Margaret Lyall remembered quite different things about her family's earliest days in Van Diemen's Land. A lonely child, she could just recall sitting in the pews of the Church at Ross with her much older sister Julia and brothers, William and Andrew, the altar draped in black, mourning for the death of King William IV. In the pomp and splendour of distant London, eighteen year old Queen Victoria was taking over the reins of the British Empire. In Ross, Margaret's big brother William would perch her on the back of an old brown mare named 'Dolly' who would meander around at her own sweet at will, finally resting in the shade of a large wattle tree. The convict servants, probably longing for their own families, would bring her all kinds of small creatures for pets: possums, kangaroos and kangaroo rats but, for fear of interfering with discipline, she was forbidden to cuddle the fat little sheepdog puppies.



Queen Victoria at the commencement of her reign. RJ Lane, 1839, in *The Australasian* 26 Jan 1901. H.L.

Caught red handed on one occasion, she raced away with a pup under each arm as bossy William chased after her with shouts of disapproval. With the Black War ended, sixteen-year-old William was in charge as he took sheepdogs and convict shepherds to graze sheep on the slopes of the Western Tiers Mountains of central Tasmania. Their other sister, Julia, 'fair and rosy, with pretty sunburnt curls, fine hazel eyes and pearly teeth', and one of the few marriageable women in the colony, was heart-broken over a love affair with a young clerk, James Francis, of whom her father did not approve. Steering her towards what seemed a more promising match, the family sent her to visit respectable friends in the new colony of Port Phillip, just when the first herds of cattle were being overlanded down from New South Wales.⁶³

William was 'nice looking - a tall and handsome youth with fine features, blue grey eyes and fine glossy curly brown hair'. His writing wasn't copperplate, and his spelling and grammar were poor compared to university-educated intellectuals such as Banks, Lyell and Darwin, but he was a prolific reader and found his flow in trading; he was good at mathematics and loved working with stock. Both his mother and father were principled people and strong role models. Margaret described their parents thus:

My mother was singularly fearless among the prisoner servants - she had them all so completely under her control. The men stood in great awe of the master, whose manner was very quiet and commanding, but at all times they could approach their kindly Mistress and every request they had to make was brought to her, so ready was she to sympathise, so outspoken also in rebuke.

My father was tall also, very handsome and carried himself well from the effects of early drill. He had beautiful hazel eyes, regular fine features and curly brown hair. They had been remarkable when a couple for their beauty and were equally so to the end. My father was held in great respect by all who knew him and was considered a friend to all. His love of reading had given him a thorough knowledge of most things. His farming was carried on upon scientific principles and not the clod-hopping way that was so prevalent in those days. In 1845, when he died our then landlord, Dr Gaunt, said "Well, we have lost the best farmer in Tasmania."⁶⁴

Gentle John Lyall never achieved land ownership, but his life warped the stardust of his small part of the planet far more than many who did. Building a grand estate in the British tradition became a consuming passion for William, who honed his head for figures and eye for livestock at the sale yards of Launceston, at the time when another Scotsman, Angus McMillan, was first bringing stock from the Monaro high country down through Gippsland.⁶⁵ McMillan's description of the Kurnai people's reaction on first seeing horses recalled the days when the Indo-European tribesmen first rode their mounts into Greece or the conquistadors into South America.

...they approached close up to us, and stood looking at us until I dismounted, when they commenced yelling, and instantly took to their heels. It is my belief they took

the horse and rider to be one until I dismounted, having never seen a white man or a horse before.

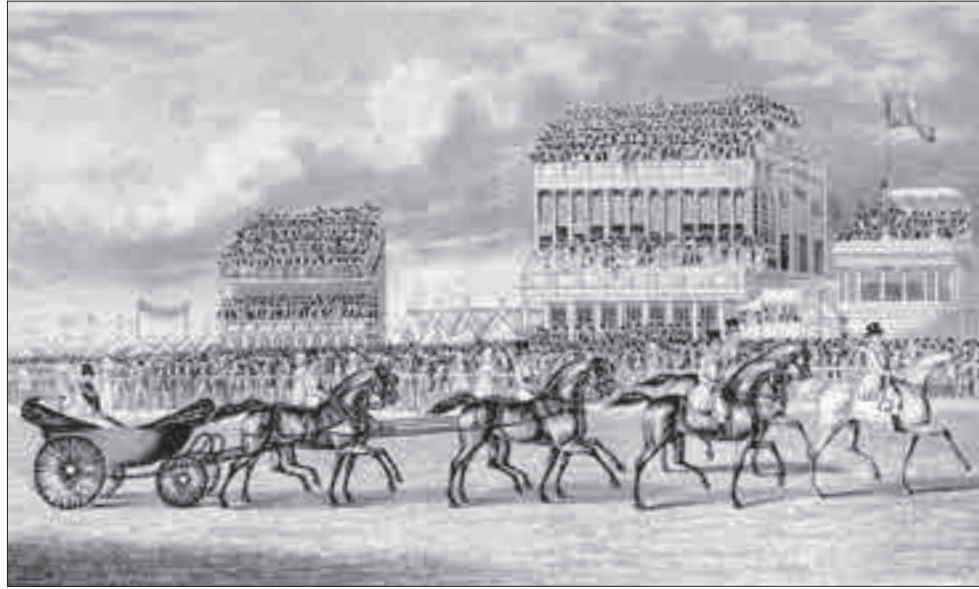
About three morasses to the north-east of the River Latrobe, we saw some hundreds of the natives, who, on our approach, burned their camp and betook themselves to the scrub; we, however, managed to overtake an old man that could not walk fast; to him I gave a knife and a pair of trousers, and endeavoured by all means in my power to open a communication with the blacks through him, but they would not come near us. It was amusing to see the old man after shaking hands with all the party, walking up to the horses and shaking each of them by the bridle, thinking the same form necessary to be gone through with them as with us. The only ornaments he had about him were human hands, either men's or women's, beautifully preserved, suspended from his neck.⁶⁶

In 1839, young William first sailed across Bass Strait, minding cattle for James Raven, a sea captain who owned ships that traded between Launceston, Geelong and Melbourne. By the time he reached his twentieth year, recession bit throughout the Australian colonies and livestock prices tumbled but, in a pattern that would be repeated, William's sharp mind saw profit to be made in back-shipping fat bullocks from Port Phillip to Van Diemen's Land. His trips became more frequent and he developed a network of family and business relationships that would serve him well throughout his life. His parents' match making had borne fruit and wedding bells rang for his sister Julia and Henry Anderson, a 'Buninyong squatter' originally from Fifeshire, who had been one of the earliest 'cross-straiters' from Van Diemen's Land to Port Phillip. Together the couple developed a fine property on the volcanic plains of the Western Districts, and spread Lyall stardust across the traditional lands of the Warthaurung people. Meanwhile, in Melbourne, William shared a house with another Scotsman, John Mickle, a giant of a man who lived up to the Scots meaning of his surname and 'broke a chair every time he sat down.' Mickle was a stock and station agent who worked in partnership with John and Robert Bakewell, newly arrived Quaker wool sorters with energy and capital, from Leicestershire, the same district as the famous Robert Bakewell.⁶⁷



William Lyall and
John Mickle c.1855.
H.C.

'Queen Victoria and Prince Albert at Ascot in 1840.'
 Whyte, James Christie, *History of the British Turf from the Earliest Period to the Present Day, Vols I & II*, Henry Colburn, London, 1840, front piece.
 H.L.



BLACK SHEEP AND YOUNGER SONS

With overlanders moving down from New South Wales and more cross-straiters arriving every day, Melbourne of the 1840s became a convenient far corner of the British Empire to ship younger sons, illegitimate offspring and embarrassing black sheep of upper class families. With a family name and an allotment of capital, such individuals could acquire land or businesses and have the opportunity of being accepted into the inner circle of the bustling new colony. But the trappings of the aristocracy were few and their backgrounds left many of this class, divorced as they were from social supports, poorly suited for lives as entrepreneurs or pioneer graziers.⁶⁸

Gracious and gifted Georgiana McCrae, the illegitimate daughter of the Duke of Gordon, was amongst the group of exiled, educated gentry. Raised with émigrés from Napoleon's France, she spoke French fluently and painted exquisite landscape and miniatures. In 1841, as the great Charles Lyell was lecturing to sell out audiences in Boston about marine zeolites and seismic eruptions in Italy, she arrived in Melbourne with four children to join her husband, Andrew, who was already established in a law partnership. Her background, grace and multiple talents enabled her to become firm friends with Governor La Trobe's family, but the struggling McCrae marriage added to the trials of colonial life and Georgiana faced many personal hardships. When Andrew McCrae's law partnership verged on insolvency, the McCrae's were forced to sell their house and try their luck with a grazing lease at Arthur's Seat.⁶⁹

Back in Britain, a cauldron of political change engulfed the early years of Queen Victoria's reign. The Enlightenment had driven intellectual, agricultural and industrial revolutions which, alongside burgeoning colonial expansion, were making privileged upper class Britons exceedingly rich. Steam engines sparked a huge increase in the

demand for coal but they came at a dreadful social cost to powerless workers in coalmines, factories and farms. Articulate and humane commentators like Charles Dickens and political reformers like Edward Wakefield focused public conscience on the abuses that were occurring. Legislation forcing factory and prison reform, poor laws and embryonic child and worker protection began to be enacted.⁷⁰



'My Coach and Six'
Georgiana McCrae,
Georgiana's Journal,
Melbourne a
Hundred Years Ago,
Hugh McCrae, ed,
1934, p. 300. H.C.
The elite of the
colony might aspire
to the trappings of
the aristocracy but
could laugh their
reality.

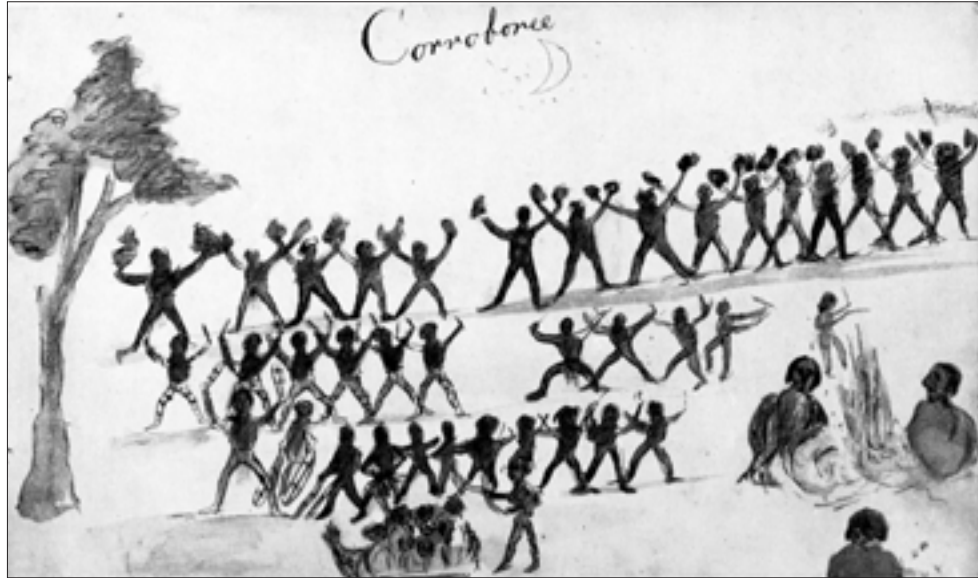
While the Mines Act of 1842 forced mine owners to exclude women and boys under 10 from all underground coalmine employment, ponies did not fall within the ambit of this early nineteenth century awakening of social conscience. Large numbers began to be shipped from Shetland to work in British coal pits and even more were bred in Britain. By the end of the century, the deliberate selection for sturdy little ponies with thick bones and low head carriage would change the genes and character of the breed.⁷¹

In Port Phillip, rather than serving as pit ponies or playthings of the gentry, small ponies were a practical means of transport, often the only available for women and children. Pregnant in early 1844 and not relishing the role of a squatter's wife, Georgiana reluctantly accompanied her husband to inspect their new property at Arthur's Seat on a Timor pony. "He says he can't afford to pay for a conveyance, so I *and mine* must take our chance."⁷²



'Her Majesty
the Queen, The
Princess Royal, and
The Prince of Wales
at Loch Laggan,
Scotland', from
a painting by Sir
Edwin Landseer,
R.A., *The Graphic*
Jubilee Number,
June 20, 1887. H.L.

'Little George McCrae's Picture of a Corroboree.' Georgiana McCrae, *Georgiana's Journal, Melbourne a Hundred Years Ago*, Hugh McCrae, ed, 1934, p. 330. H.C.



She was 'wearied to death by an uneasy saddle and the chaffing of a too-long stirrup-leather', so on their way back, her husband gave her his horse, Don Quixote, in exchange for the pony. This ended in tragedy as 'without my seeing the projecting branch of a She-oak on a level with my head - a smart stroke on the side of my head made me aware of the obstacle- I lost my balance & felt the crown of my straw bonnet- rubbing against the Don's saddle girth!' Mrs Reid and Mr McCrae came to her assistance but she had 'reason to dread the effects of the wrench in my side.'⁷³

In spite of the bumps, her baby daughter, Margaret Martha, was safely delivered on 25 June and Georgiana and her husband went on to take up their pastoral run where Matthew Flinders and Robert Brown had picnicked and picked flowers 42 years earlier.⁷⁴ By March of 1845, their young son George was peering through the keyhole of the homestead at the corroborees the Boonwurrung were holding and recording the differences between Boonwurrung and British farming methods:

The blacks set fire to the top of the mountain for the purpose of driving out the wallabies from the bushes and killing them. The fire gradually encircled the brow of the Mount like a diadem on the head of a monarch. In the dark night its appearance was magnificent and imposing in the extreme the smoke curling up among the trees in the morning made it appear as if Arthur's Seat was covered with cottages in whose chimney fires were burning. Tuck has made a new saw-pit by the side of his hut to save the trouble of transporting the logs of black wood to the saw-pit on the side of the mountain. The men have a new water hole in the horse-paddock for the benefit of the cattle We have the piebald and brown mare pony but not the colt. Captain Reid has been here several times and was so kind as to send us one pound of candles and two new melons. Dunn killed a large black snake by the side of the new house; had it not been killed it might have proved a troublesome neighbour. Since Ellen has been here we have had bread instead of damper made with sour milk in place of yeast: and

sometimes, butter. Our hens are beginning to lay, and Ellen thinks that the ducks will begin soon. [...]

As the two rabbits are dead, please to send up a young buck as companion to the remaining one. I find in Chamber's that a pair of wild rabbits will produce no less than 1,250,000 in the space of four years. --I remain, etc.,

George Gordon McCrae⁷⁵

Prophetic words indeed about wild rabbit reproduction! Even in ideal circumstances, none of the native marsupials had capacity to reproduce on this scale. The Boonwurrung language had no numbers beyond thirty, yet here was a young child who could tap into his culture's collective learning and understand calculations over a million in magnitude. Horses, cattle, chickens, ducks, melons, yeast and rabbits were now jockeying to have their DNA represented into the next generation and saws, candles, the printed word and mathematics, unknown in the previous 30,000 years of human history at Harewood, were new stardust forces shaping the countryside around the Bays.⁷⁶

Europe's democratic revolutions of 1848 exploded and were crushed in France, Austria and Britain, as the McCrae's struggled with the land and Georgiana quietly maintained her place in the inner circle of Port Phillip society. William and his entrepreneurial associates were thriving. John Mickle fell in love with William's little sister, Margaret, and won her heart and the family's approval. William continued to correspond with his Launceston sweetheart, Annabella Brown. Born in Glasgow, Annabella had come as a child to Launceston with her father, a Clydebank furniture maker.⁷⁷

9th December 1848

My Dear Annabella

I had the pleasure of receiving your most welcome letter by the "Raven" and would have answered it sooner only a slight Accident having befallen me prevented me writing by the "Swan" - you remember the Horse I had in the Gig the morning before I left - well on the evening of this day week I had that same Beast put into the Gig (to drive home, as I intended to bring my Mother in to the Church on Sunday). But I am sorry to say I hardly got outside the Stable Gate, when she bolted at the top of her speed, and I am sorry to think I am not the only one who was injured, but it being quite dark at the time it was impossible to avoid accidents - this unfortunate occurrence I am afraid will be the cause of preventing me returning to V-D's Land before the end of January. Business of importance compels me to visit the Western District before I return, and this unfortunate affair Confines me to the House, when I ought to be travelling. But my Dear Anna I am, (and ought to be) very thankful to God that I escaped so well for the Chances were Certainly in favour of my being killed where as I have only received a few Slight Bruises of which I shall be recovered in a few days. (...)

My Brother Andrew and myself are about renting a Station in the Geelong District. If we succeed Andrew will live on it and my Mother contemplates going with him to look after him - We have a Shipload of Female immigrants (Young Irish Ladies) arrive here within this last few days, also a large number of Chinamen, whom we intend to make into Shepherds and domestic Servants. In a short time, we will have plenty of Labour, at present we have to Change our Servants Every Month, it is so difficult to please them. (...)

I hope this may find you well.
Take care of yourself until I return.

I am dearest Annabella
Ever affectionately Yours
William Lyall⁷⁸

The couple were married in Launceston on 28 January 1849. William's brocade wedding waistcoat and Annabella Brown's pantaloons remain to this day, worn reminders of the happy soul mates' forty-one years together.⁷⁹ Annabella was not one to write journals and few of her letters have survived, but her presence permeates Harewood and her life was reflected in her children, books, pictures, needlework, music and stories others recorded of adventures in which she played a part. Her granddaughter, Bertha Ricardo, wrote:

When William Lyall was returning with his wife from a race meeting to his home at "Stony Park", Brunswick in 1849, he was on one occasion, bailed-up by two armed and masked men. One held the horse and the other stood on the step of the carriage demanding money; however, the sound of galloping riders approaching nearby, and the screams of Mrs. Lyall alarmed them and they made off into the scrub.⁸⁰

Port Phillip was in name a non-penal settlement, but more than 1,700 men with conditional pardons had been sent directly to the colony, and many hardened criminals living across the Bass Strait or north of the Murray swelled Port Phillip's numbers when they were released from chains. A convict-made jug, motif to their suffering, remains in Harewood's kitchen. Over 6,000 men, a quarter of the colony's male population, had been convicts at some time in their lives. To the squatters, they were a cheap source of pastoral labour, but to the free Port Philippians, concerned about security and the 'taint' of living in a penal colony, their presence was a threat. In August 1849, the free settlers got behind the Australasian League and, against the wishes of the British establishment, forced the transport ship *Randolf* with its cargo of ticket-of-leavers to sail on to Sydney. But for the best part of the nineteenth century, bushrangers mounted on stolen thoroughbreds remained a feature of the Australian countryside and ex-convict shepherds and bullock drivers led a lonely existence stuck at the bottom rungs of colonial society.⁸¹

Not so for William, who, unfettered by social taint clamoured for the top. He became the junior member of a partnership, with his stock agent brother-in-law John Mickle

and wool sorter John Bakewell both older and financially well off. It only lasted seven years but with family, business and agricultural connections intertwined, it was the springboard for William's family acquiring property and being drawn into the emerging 'bunyip' aristocracy, the up and coming gentry of Lo-an's Land.



'Opening of Prince's Bridge, 1851.' drawing by William Strutt. (Source: State Library of New South Wales). It is easy to imagine William and Annabella, along with Georgiana, Governor La Trobe, Captain Dana and Yamerboke all being depicted here. See text.

The young couple had set up house at Stony Park, a fine bluestone residence on the Merri Creek in Brunswick (not far from where William Thomas had earlier run a school for Aboriginal children) when the bell from the prison-ship *Lysander* rang out news that the Queen had agreed Port Phillip could break from New South Wales to become the separate colony of 'Victoria'. The town went mad with excitement and the revelry flowed into the next day when the new Prince's Bridge was opened over the Yarra. Georgiana McCrae was there, watching the wild crowds and red-coated soldiers as she rode in the carriage with the Governor. "Mr La Trobe gathered up the reins and we proceeded at a majestic pace until we reached the middle of the arch, 75 feet from either bank; here His Honour stopped, and merely saying "I declare Prince's Bridge open," drove to the opposite side." Captain Dana's Native Police weren't painted into Georgiana's word pictures, but they were central to artist William Strutt's interpretation of the event. Protector William Thomas appears with one of his pupils, both standing near Dana's prancing horse. William Barak and Jimmy Dunbar, who by 1850 had been members of the Corps for over 8 years, could have been amongst the handsome troopers, resplendent in their green uniforms and mounted on their impressive horses. It was a remarkable transformation for Kulin warriors, whose people had been custodians of the land for over 30,000 years but hadn't known horses, guns or European clothes until the previous decade. Annabella Lyall could have been one of the ladies in the crowd in Strutt's painting, a neat spoon bonnet covering her head, a wide cape hiding a pregnant waistline and with William by her side. Their

Annabella Lyall in a
spoon bonnet, hoop
skirt and cape, c.
1853. H.C.



first daughter, born the following month, was named Helen (Nellie) after her Scottish grandma.⁸²

Back in Britain, Charles Lyell was writing his 'ninth and entirely revised edition' of *Principles of Geology*. A gold embossed copy, published in 1853, is the edition that still lies on the shelves of Harewood's library. Five hundred and fifty pages challenged the biblical version of creation, flirted with evolution, and gave detailed evidence for long-term natural changes in the inorganic world. An additional 175 pages were filled with evidence for such changes also occurring in the organic world. Behind closed doors, Lyell and Charles Darwin exchanged ideas, as the returned

world traveller painstakingly compiled his work on the origin of species by descent with modification.

In Port Phillip, the British invaders were determining the face of the next generation of Australians as exotic horses, cattle, sheep and ponies trampled the murrnong yams and displaced the kangaroos. The new folks spent their evenings gathered round their fireplaces reading their history, journals, technical books and stories from the Bible along with the new wave of novels and romantic poetry by Dickens, Scott, Keats, Byron and Tennyson that counter-pointed industrial and scientific developments. Rather than beating possum skin drums and droning corroboree chants, the colonists sang their hymns and ditties round the piano but both Aborigines and immigrants believed in divine creation and an All-Father in the sky country. Both had their heroes and holy men, and both found numinosity in the stars, the moon, the sun and the world around them.

In reason's ear they all rejoice,
And utter forth a glorious voice,
For ever singing as they shine,
"The hand that made us is divine."⁸³

EUREKA

‘Franklin, as all the world knows, was a self-taught man; and, strange as some of my readers may think the assertion, I would tell them, that very few are taught to any great or good purpose, who are not, like Hooker and Baxter, self-taught. I cannot however pause to substantiate my assertion by 100 examples. Hobbes, the philosopher (author of the *Leviathan*) was wholly self-educated; and when asked, How he had attained such a depth of penetration into men and things, He attributed his skill to having read little and thought much; and he was often heard to say, Had I read as much as other men around me, I should have been as stupid and ignorant as they are.’

Highlighted by William Lyall in Penny Readings No. 2, by B.S.N., 15 Aug 1866 (H.L.)

Changes were brewing for the colony. Edward Hargreaves sailed from Sydney to join the '49 rush to the Californian gold fields and, while there, observed there were ‘the same classes of rocks, slates, quartz, granite, red soil and everything else that appears to constitute a gold field’ from where he had come, around Bathurst, New South Wales. Recounting his story in a dark blue book (which Lyall acquired), he put the case that the ‘professed geologists’ who had searched the district without identifying auriferous deposits had taken the wrong approach.

... I knew how different scientific knowledge was to practical experience. I knew that the greatest philosophers had sometimes missed most important discoveries in science, which an unlettered mechanic had afterwards worked out practically. It was very possible, nay probable, I thought, that a man deeply read in the science of geology should be ignorant how to wash a pan of earth in search of gold, or where to look for it; just as a great mathematician may be ignorant how to turn an arch, or even lay a brick.⁸⁴

Armed with his amateur geology and knowledge of proper washing techniques, he sailed back to Sydney and rode his horse to the country he pictured in his mind. He started to pan from the Lewes Pond Creek, striking gold in four out of his first five washings. “This is a memorable day in the history of New South Wales,” he exclaimed to his guide, “I shall be made a baronet, you will be knighted, and my old horse will be stuffed, put into a glass case and sent to the British Museum.”!



Edward Hargreaves and his horse. Sidney, Samuel, *The Three Colonies of Australia*, 1853, p.325, H.L.

A RICH VEIN OF LIVESTOCK

Others would argue Hargreaves grabbed the glory unfairly, but when the news hit Melbourne in early 1851, it distorted the stardust of the colony as never before. Many would-be Victorian diggers rushed to Bathurst, but Lyall was not among them. His rich vein would be in trading livestock, not minerals. In the first of his extant diaries, the young entrepreneur described having spent January shipping stock on board the *Raven* and buying over 2000 sheep (from the Chirnsides and McCallums) and 350 head of cattle. In March, he visited Kirk's Bazaar and 'received "Besborough"', an 'imported thoroughbred horse of the best class,' who would be the foundation sire for his string of race horses, as well as his efforts in producing stock suited for Australian conditions and export.⁸⁵

At a time when Queen Victoria and Prince Albert were busily planning the opening of The Great Exhibition of 1851, William noted in his diary 'Bought Moor and Martin's cattle station (...) a/c Mickle, Bakewell & Lyall.' This was the leasehold along the Yallock Creek and the first of the partnership's Western Port properties. The birth of his first son, William, at Stony Park early the following month didn't rate a mention! It wasn't until late May, when he got back from the Western District, that William Snr could hurriedly inspect their new property. By July, he was back in the Western Districts, having purchased for the partnership Scott Richardson's station with 3,000 cattle for £12,350.⁸⁶

Crossing the Inlets by Harewood to reach Yallock was risky. In August 1851, William Harris's horses got bogged and Lyall, bringing 41 horses from Melbourne, had to head the creeks in full flood. He wasn't happy with his workmen. 'Sandy found the cattle wild. Self as wild as the cattle as Jack has been kept jobbing about the home while he ought to have been out with the cattle.' The Inlets were still flooding on 20 August, as news arrived that John Mickle purchased the leasehold on the Manton Brothers old run for the partnership: 15,000 acres on the Tooradin plains. This was excellent grazing country and, after a mere ten years of white settlement, the run could boast 2030 cattle and 11 horses. It was here William spent September shooting wild bullocks and cutting and branding calves.

Melbourne was bustling with anticipation as the extent of the gold discoveries unfolded, first small amounts near Clunes, then more at Buninyong. The bitter, wet winter, with widespread flooding, slowed the influx of diggers, but at the end of September, when the Cavanagh brothers arrived in Geelong with 60 lb of gold, excitement turned to rush and Mickle, Bakewell and Lyall's financial future was secured. The great tide of emigration from Europe, which would increase the price of horses and cattle tenfold, did not start to ripple until the ships reached London, first with news and then, soon after, with eight tons of gold in proof. In the meanwhile, Melbourne was emptied as locals flocked to the diggings: 'an unwonted silence reigned in the nigh well deserted

streets: the shops and public resorts were almost empty, and the few wayfarers who remained had a restless and excited appearance.⁸⁷

In Western Port, workmen were also deserting their posts and owners selling up to try their luck at the new diggings. Andrew McCrae departed for the gold fields and Georgiana spent her last days at Arthur's Seat. In her journal, she unburdened her thoughts about the fate of the Boonwurrung people who had become her family's friends.

1st October 1851. A hard frost, and I have been to visit our blacks, who are quambied (camped) outside the paddock fence, on the edge of Cape Schank Road. Here I found "Bogie" in great distress, because his son, Johnnie (aged nineteen), was dying. Every few minutes the old man would spread himself over the boy's body and try to revive him by breathing into his mouth, or else he would have him in his arms to sing down his ear, or lift up the lids of his eyes, so that he might see the day.

At last, not being able to bear this sight, I returned to the house where, after I had rested an hour, I heard a loud wail from the lubras and knew that Johnnie was gone. Back at the camp, I watched the grave being dug by some, while others wrapped a possum-rug about the corpse, which they interred in a sitting position, the elbows on the knees, the chin supported by the left hand, and the opposite one laid, with the fingers open along the angle of the jaw. Cords were drawn tightly across the shoulders and around the waist, then a new pannikin and the last bottle of medicine I had sent him having been put in the grave, the father and (fifth) step-mother filled the hole with sand. After that "Bogie," by himself, started to fence the place with branches gathered from the scrub beside the road. [...]

This Johnnie had accompanied George Smith on a journey to California, and, on return to Australia, he threw off the clothes of civilization and took to the bush, but the changed existence proved fatal, and he succumbed to phthisis [tuberculosis].

Before his world-adventure Johnnie had been a companion to my boys and they felt the loss of him more than I can tell; yet a deeper sorrow has fastened at my heart, since the time has now arrived when I must say good-bye to my mountain home, the house I have built and lived in, the trees I have planted, the garden I have formed.⁸⁸

As Georgiana packed her belongings, on the opposite side of Western Port, grabbing the opportunity for a bargain, Mickle, Bakewell and Lyall took over the lease on Red Bluff, Fitzhubert Mundy's old station. By Christmas, the three were back in Melbourne, the deserted city having sprung to life as successful diggers swarmed into town for the festive season. William and Annabella now with two small children, would have watched, amazed, along with the other respectable Port Philippians, as the social pyramid wobbled precariously and the diggers ran wild:

A season of reckless extravagance ensued, and the gold of the diggers was scattered with wild profusion, and was spent even more quickly than it had been amassed. Every conceivable folly was perpetrated by the rough men with unwashed faces, who parad-

ed the streets arrayed in the finest broadcloth, and with huge rings glittering on their dingy toil-worn hands. With them might be seen women decked out in the brightest of silks and satins, below which not infrequently peeped bare red feet, while long tawny locks hung uncombed over their shoulders. The utter incongruity of their conduct and appearance defies all description, and they seemed uneasy until all their quickly won wealth had been dissipated. [...]

There were at that time barely a half-a-dozen carriages to be had on hire, and these were daily engaged by some of the lucky diggers who drove about with their fair companions. Weddings among them were a daily occurrence, and were celebrated with fantastic pomp and splendour, extending to the favours and nosegays, which were of unusual dimensions, and to their own costume, which was refulgent in brilliancy of colour. In exultation they drove through the streets in their showy plumage, while their superiors in station walked humbly in their sober array. "It is our turn to be masters now," was their taunting exclamation; you will have to be our servants yet."⁸⁹

William had brief thoughts of where he might be able to find gold, and set out on New Year's Day 1852 to join the rush. He didn't meet with instant success, and neither pick nor shovel suited him. By February, he was back doing deals with the partners' money in the sale yards. A pastoralist at heart, he could see beyond the hysteria and, even at this stage, may have been contemplating a grand engineering feat that would be his legacy: transforming the Kooweerup Swamp into a huge expanse of arable farming land, as his forbears had done when they drained the fens of Scotland.⁹⁰

The New Rush. The Illustrated Journal of Australasia Vol II, Jan-June 1857. p.145. H.L.



FLASH POINT

Victoria was the cry! 'Australia hysteria' hit all classes in Britain. Convicts under sentence of transportation in the hulks at Woolwich mutinied, protesting the government had 'broken faith' by not carrying out their sentences! Every derelict hulk and retired sea captain that might make the long journey was pressed into service, and for the only year ever, more migrants sailed for Victoria than to the United States. A huge tent city sprang up beside the Yarra, straining to flash point both the administrative and political capabilities of the government. Governor La Trobe wrote of the 'Chartists, Socialist, and others...who have recently come amongst us'⁹¹

We live in times of restlessness and desire for political change and there is nothing in the character and prospects of the mass of colonists...which may induce us to believe that they can remain unaffected by the spirit of the age; or that the growing sense of importance and independence arising from unexampled prosperity, emancipation from old ties and obligations, and powers of self-support, and self-government, should not influence the multitude.⁹²

By November 1852, the young Lyall family moved from Brunswick to the Manton brothers' old home at Tooradin (with the thatched roof and French windows) to manage the partnership's expanding 'Western Port Stations'. The new lairds of Western Port had control of all the land from Tooradin around the north of the Bay to Jam Jerrup, except for the Inlets. Dreaming tracts still criss-crossed the land, Boonwurrung graves were still visible from the 1830 Kulin-Kurnai battle and Aboriginal place names still recalled Too Roo Dun, the bunyip of the Great Swamp and Boonwurrung connections with the landscape. But the territory vacated by the Yallock Bulluk, the wetland people, was a different place and destined to become even more so. The decision makers were brash young men trading cattle, sheep, horses, land and cash, rather than wirraraps and ngurungaetas with knowledge of 'the Law'. Having made money on the back of the gold rush, the newly affluent white folk aspired to a British gentry's life style and manoeuvred to gain a place in the new colonial elite.

And for the Lyalls, wealth came flowing in. While the diggers in Bendigo were wearing red ribbons and fighting the gold miner's licence fee, Besborough was proving his worth by winning gold for 'Best Thoroughbred Stallion' at the Melbourne Show and, standing at Tooradin, £395 in service fees. Six hundred and fifty calves were branded, and 950 fat cattle were sold for exorbitant prices and there were still over 2477 cattle, 65 Leicester sheep and 177 horses on the Western Port Stations.⁹³

Beneath the hustle of everyday life, the penal origin of the colonies remained a constant undercurrent. Lured by gold, convict bushrangers Dalton and Kelly escaped Van Diemen's Land in an open whaleboat. Forewarned, Captain Dana and the Native Police were lying in wait at Yallock Creek, but gave up their vigil when the outlaws didn't turn up. Two days later, the pair burst into the homestead and demanded horses and saddles with which they made good their escape. Their freedom was short-lived, as they were subsequently caught trying to exchange Launceston Bank notes in Melbourne. 'A dance upon nothing' (as William called hanging) awaited them on their return to Tasmania, on 20 April 1853.⁹⁴

In spite of bushrangers and El Niño drought conditions, by 3 October 1853 William was able to write "this day settled up my accounts with Messrs. Mickle and Bakewell, leaving my third share clear and out of debt with everyone."⁹⁵ A still young and confident 32 year old, with gold rush guineas in his pockets and a vision to re-craft the Western Port in a Scottish mould, Lyall with his family and partners decided on a visit to Britain. Travelling first to Van Diemen's Land to see old friends and purchase fodder for his



'Gold Escort.'
Sidney, Samuel, *The
Three Colonies of
Australia*, Ingram,
Cooke & Co,
London, 1853, p.
350. H.L.

drought-stricken livestock, he was 'Much astonished at the miserable appearance of the horses.' and felt that the country appeared overstocked. Two days later, he was heading back to Melbourne on board *Lady Bird*. Nostalgic, he wrote: "It is 18 years this day since I left my native land for this colony. This must be my day of fate for on 28th January 1849 the Rev. R.K. Ewing tied for me that Gordian Knot which I have no wish to unravel." Annabella and their three youngsters met him in Melbourne and, buying a

new horse and gig for £50, he and Annie made the trip to the Western Port Stations to see the township of Tooradin and the partnership's square mile, 'pre-emptive right', block surveyed by the government surveyor, Mr Foot. Settling his affairs before departing for their long voyage 'home', he bought cattle to fatten from Dr Adams of Balla Balla, a man whom he found 'quite devoid of principle'. John Mickle's cousin, William Hudson, was to manage their properties while they were away.

February 16th, 1854

Mickle and Foot returned from Yallock having surveyed the paddock home section. Mr. Foot has removed the township and given us a square section fronting the Creek commencing at the round waterhole in the creek above the house and running north to the Wattle hill, from thence to the Bay and on around the coast-line to the point of commencement. In this 640 acres, the salt-bush and salt-water flats are not measured in and, therefore, the whole of this lot is first-rate land. Mr. Foot has also promised us to survey and join up in our lots of 640 acres, the whole of the land from our surveyed section at Yallock, to join our Tooradin section. This will include Cockayne's homestead and all the Inlets. The Bluff section is to have one mile Bay frontage.⁹⁶

Lyll left instructions with their agent Mr Philpott to purchase 'should it be put up for sale, all the land on the middle run below the road and also all the cleared land on the top of the run, about 7000 acres'. When Edwin Cockayne sold his lease for The Inlets (Harewood) along with the weatherboard homestead he had constructed in the late 1840s as a bush inn, it gave the Mickle, Bakewell and Lyall partnership clear control of the crucial corridor across the north of the Bay.⁹⁷

ASTONISHING BRITAIN

The grand little *Kent* was the finest specimen of a first-class passenger ship that Wigram's Blackwall Yard could turn out for the booming passenger trade to Melbourne. She was full in bow compared to the Liverpool clippers, and had a heavy frigate stern with large windows and quarter galleries. Clever with wind, in light weather she would fan along in the faintest of airs when other ships of her type were motionless. A hatch, caulked down for the passage, led from the Captain's cabin to a strong room in which gold was stowed. She would carry as much as half a million in gold bars.⁹⁸

The Lyall party took passage on the *Kent*'s first return trip to Britain. The El Niño drought that had engulfed south-eastern Australia had broken and the diggers were, for the moment, quiet on the gold fields. William saw Grandma Helen, Annie and the children rowed safely to the ship. Governor La Trobe might have granted funding for a university in Melbourne, but the bustling community still lacked wharves. With his hectic business pursuits suddenly placed in abeyance and an enormous, treacherous, yet beautiful, planet to traverse, William rechannelled his entrepreneurial brain into social reflection.⁹⁹

February 25th, 1854

This morning very busy shipping our luggage and embarking on board the "Kent". Mr. Mitchell and Mr. Buckland had gone to the Bay to see the ladies on board, also to our luggage safely placed in our cabins. We were exceedingly busy about town amongst Lawyers, Bankers and Agents. Gave Mr. Philpotts my deeds and papers.



'*Kent* amongst the Ice', from a painting by Captain Clayton. The Lyall family sailed to Britain on this ship in 1854. Source: Basil Lubbock, *The Blackwall Frigates*, 1924, p. 198. H.C.

February 26th, 1854

During the night a gale of wind had sprung up, bringing with it a storm of rain. Continuing through the whole day, so much as to prevent communication with the shore and our friends Messrs Andrew Lyall, James Collins, Neil McArthur, W. Hudson and John Buckland. Several vessels arrived during the day. The bay had anything but a tempting appearance, being rough and stormy. Last evening the steward at 10 o'clock came and removed the wine and spirits from the table by the Captain's orders. Mr. Bakewell and self went to the Captain and gave him a good blowing up. We were very much aggrieved and insulted by the Captain's behaviour.¹⁰⁰

The gale continued to blow furiously and tried everyone's patience. Pregnant, Annabella struggled with small children and morning sickness in their cabin while William's prejudice surfaced in his finding their Irish servants 'like all other Irish people I've ever met, best at a distance'. He threatened to send them ashore at the first opportunity. From the deck, he watched a sailor bravely jump overboard to save sails and spars, while further away, the steamship *Westwind* went up in flames. The winds finally settled and Lyall wrote 'Our Captain and ourselves appear to understand each other better than we did at first, and things begin to assume a better appearance and look comfortable.' It was five days before the *Kent* at last cleared Port Phillip Heads and sailed east for Cape Horn.¹⁰¹

By 6 March, a live bullock they had brought from Williamstown was killed and consumed, their last fresh meat. Fighting headwinds slowed the journey and William complained, 'Although there are a great number of passengers on board our time passes very monotonously. There appears to be a lack of general conversation and a want of taste on the part of some of the gentlemen at our end of the table, introducing subjects which cannot be turned into general conversation, and a want of ability on the part of others to enter into a general conversation.' As the days wore on, Nellie, Willie and little Margaret were sick with Measles. As the seas roughened, the Captain pressed canvas and 'went the whole hog', frightening William 'into fits'. He swore he would never sail on a fast ship again.

March 27 'broke beautiful and calm and the scene was beautifully enhanced by the appearance of a huge iceberg and sundry smaller ones. A large whale showed himself close to the ship's side.' At daylight the next day William wrote:

This morning at daylight passed two ships hove to and under close roped topsails. They appeared to be going the same way as ourselves but at a very different pace. They must have thought us a phantom ship. It was blowing hard and we were under full sail, and passed them like a streak of lightning. At 11 o'clock this day we passed the Horn, Mr. Clarke winning the sweepstakes, he having purchased Patterson's ticket from Mr. Colbourne. The day has been very rough, the quarter boats at times nearly touching the water and the ship flying along at a great rate all day. We have made the run to the Horn from Victoria in 26 days 17 hours.¹⁰²

A school of Killer Whales broke the monotony of the journey, as seamen harpooned one of their number, cut it up and ‘cooked it forward’. The rough weather had a visible effect on the passengers and William wrote ‘I have been much troubled for some time with my old complaint, and having consulted our doctor wished him to give me some medicine. He sent me a bottle of some mixture and told me he had forgotten whether it was for myself or Mrs Lyall. After such a display of intelligence, as a matter of course I have declined to swallow any of the mixture.’ William’s ‘old complaint’ (perhaps gall stones or liver disease) was to give him recurrent trouble throughout his life.

Listless days made for sleepless nights and, as they sailed north over the equator, William longed for the luxury of a dreamless sleep. The now-motionless sea just added to the monotony. Further north, the wind picked up and, by 7 May, William had come to appreciate the *Kent*’s speed.

This forenoon a vessel appeared in sight ahead and we had the satisfaction of coming up with her quickly. She was hardly in sight a 7 o’clock. At 10 o’clock we were alongside of her and at 2 o’clock she was out of sight astern. She is the “*Halifax Packet*” from Calio 140 days out, bound for London and wished us to report her on our arrival. They tell us that England was at war with Russia which has created quite a sensation on board with pleasant hints to each other about the prospects of Siberia, &c. The Captain [of the *Halifax Packet*] was kind enough to offer us an American paper which he had board of the 15th April, but as we were running with six knot breeze our Captain did not think it worth stopping for. The advantage of a fast ship was now better shown between the “*Halifax Packet*” and ourselves. With the same wind the “*Kent*” would make a passage in half the time take by the above tub. Latitude 30.48N.¹⁰³

‘HARDLY LARGER THAN MY HORSE Paddock’



ime has left to us no structure so closely and curiously connected with the history of our country as the Tower of London.’ Or so said the illuminated opening to the 1854 *Guidebook to The Tower, its History, Armories & Antiquities* that still lies in Harewood’s library. The black and white line drawings of armoured equestrians and forged battle axes and swords illustrated in it were a dramatic contrast to the possum cloak and boomerang souvenirs the Lyalls had brought from Western Port to give to family friends.¹⁰⁴

The beautiful summer months of June and July were spent at Radley’s Hotel, with the family ‘Astonished beyond measure at everything in London.’ A steam train then carried the party to Bonnie Scotland where they stayed in Portobello, Edinburgh. Here Margaret wrote:

We ladies were company for each other while our two gentlemen roamed about the country enjoying some grouse shooting and so on. A party of them including Dr. &

Mrs. Sim and their brother and the old General (from India), rented for that Season the shooting at the old historical place, Kildrummy Castle in Aberdeenshire. There was a very pretty new Lodge close to the ruins of the old Castle and there our party spent a merry time and had some shipmates visit us.¹⁰⁵

John Mickle bought three hunting dogs for £25; they shot grouse and rabbits, chased poachers and fished in the river Don. When the party left on 15 September, William had enjoyed himself 'beyond the power of description' and hoped to 'have fifty such seasons'. The next day he,

Hired a horse and gig for 10/- and drove Dr Sim out to Foveran. Was very much astonished at the appearance of the place. It was so different to what I expected. It appeared to have shrunk to nothing. The parish hardly appeared larger than my horse paddock, and I saw only one or two persons of whom I had any recollection.¹⁰⁶

He was, however, charmed by Mr Cadenhead's residence, considering it 'the best kept and nicest little place near Aberdeen.' Unfortunately, there are no drawings of the house, so what influences it may have had on his design of Harewood House are not known. On the 18th, "Mrs Lyall being confined this evening in Edinburgh at half past seven o'clock" was "delivered of a daughter" whom they named Annabella. The next morning, William escaped the women and was back at Kildrummy. This time the gentlemen confined their shooting to 'partridge and Blackcock principally'. When Annie was well enough to travel he moved the family to a country house they had rented, Balmakewen, south of Montrose.¹⁰⁷

'Edinburgh', Scott,
Sir Walter, *Poetical
Works*, Vol II,
Robert Cadwell,
Edinburgh, 1830,
Front piece by JMW
Turner. H.L.

In the meanwhile, Andrew Lyall and his bride, Annabella's sister Helen, had also arrived in Britain. The handsome young couple dressed in the latest fashion and bought a resplendent four-in-hand carriage, oozing Australian colonial success as they toured London. William admonished his brother for his extravagance. Over dinners, the couples would have discussed what horses, cattle and other livestock they might import from Britain that would sell well and improve their properties.¹⁰⁸



From Victoria, news came of a miners' rebellion. On his appointment the new governor, former naval commodore Sir Charles Hotham, and his elegant wife had been greeted at towns and goldfields with an emotional outpouring of support for the British Empire. This soured as the couple's excessive haughtiness and

distain for the locals alienated the hundred thousand miners who identified with liberty, equality and fraternity, the spirit of the age. Hotham ordered a police crackdown on unpopular miner's licence fees. The miners defiantly refused and marched to the tune of the Marseillaise in sympathy with the democratic ideals of both the French Revolution and British Chartism. By dawn of 2 December 1854, Peter Lalor was rallying the Ballarat diggers to defend the Eureka Stockade against 400 of the Governor's troops. Within ten minutes, the miners' blue and white flag with the stars of the southern cross had been hauled down, their tents torched and some thirty souls lay dead or later died of wounds.



'Let It Burn, I'm Only a Lodger.'
Melbourne Punch Vol 1, p 23. 1855. H.L.
Punch reflected public anger at Governor Hotham's approach to the miners' revolt in Ballarat.

Lalor and the other ringleaders slipped through the troopers' cordon as the others surrendered, but officers of their still-beloved Queen had killed loyal subjects and the stockaders' blood had inspired Ballarat's soil and the Eureka flag. Here forward, as a point of pride, 'diggers' would stand by their mates against authorities, foreigners and people strutting airs. A new mood warped the stardust of the populous: the Victoria to which the Lyalls returned would never be the same as the one they left.¹⁰⁹

ENVISIONING A GRAND ESTATE

William's next diary, aptly kept in *The Scottish Agriculturist's Almanac and Year-Book of Progress for 1855*, is a notebook full of an active mind's jottings on useful ideas to take back to Western Port. He scribbles:

Grasses used in reclaiming the Sand Hills at Newcastle NSW by the Director of the Botanic Gardens. The ground was prepared by being made smooth. Holes dug twenty feet apart and filled with manure. Plants and seed of different descriptions carefully deposited and then lightly covered over with brush woods intervening positions with couch or doab (?) grass. Seeds of lucerne or barley were then strewed over the whole surface and covered by means of bush harrowing.¹¹⁰

Opposite February, he writes 'Dining Room Furniture Oake, Packing cases for do of Oake.' The ornately carved oak furniture around which he would build the rooms of

Oak sideboard at Harewood, undated photograph. Furniture in Harewood's dining room and library is thought to have been purchased in Glasgow, in 1855. The pieces still remain in the house. H.C.



Harewood House matches pieces shown in Peter Thomson's furniture design book, *The Cabinet Maker's Assistant* (1853). He and Annabella didn't choose European Oak; rather they chose to have their dining room and library furnished with American Oak, timber North Americans were exporting back to Europe as ballast as Canadians and independent citizens of the United States felled ancient forests to create farms. Oak trees were no longer sacred as they had been in Druid times. Ironically, as the Lyall's fine furniture was being machined in Britain's workshops, to the east of the Kooweerup Swamp, magnificent Mountain Ash, *Eucalyptus regnans*, some of the tallest trees, were being felled. The settlers left that timber to rot on the forest floor.¹¹¹

Lyall records garden flowers and pasture grasses as well as 'Deodaree pine from Hemalayah Mountains' and, on another page of 'Trees for Sandy Soil' and 'Forest Trees for Yallock'. Before a late snowstorm in March, he and Mr Mickle marked down measurements for 'Mr Wilson's Horse Ackerman' and 'Mr Barthrops Suffolk horse'. By the end of May, the party was again off to London where Lyall continued to jot matters of interest to him. 'Professor Balfour's Botany 31/6 also Professor Lindley's *Introduction to Botany* 2 vol Longman.' The latter must have been acquired at this time, as it still remains, gilt bound, in the library, along with Lindley's works on *Flora Medica* and *Horticulture*, well annotated books on Agricultural Chemistry and bound Agricultural Pamphlets from the 1700s discussing the British Corn Laws, manure, peat moss and pasture grasses. Professor Balfour's work, if it was ever acquired, is gone.¹¹²

Lyall's notebook doesn't mention Shetland ponies, although as the springtime wore on, Nellie and Willie would have been having their first riding lessons. Dockin', King Pippin and the other small ponies that William and his brother Andrew would bring out to Victoria were being foaled on windswept Noss. William was still envisioning



Pedestal Sideboard, details from Scottish furniture designer Peter Thomson, *The Cabinet Maker's Assistant* 1852-3 which closely match Harewood's sideboard. Illustrations that matched the dining room table and chairs and library furnishing also appeared in the book.

his grand plan, rooted in British cultural tradition, of plants, animals and machines to 'improve' Western Port.

Crossing the Channel from Dover to Calais, the Lyalls travelled to Paris and attended the '*Concours Universel Agricole D'Animaux Reproducteurs*'. William scribbled pencil notes about the animals in the catalogue, which still remains in Harewood's library. Next to the 'Race Hereford' he writes 'a very good select lot' and notes the '1 Prix' winner sold for 3,000 Fr. but of the Durhams (Shorthorns, of which he had a herd of 65 at Western Port) he scribbles 'an indifferent show'. His comments on the continental breeds: Race Hollandaise – 'a rough lot but evidently good milching'; Fribourg – 'very good rough cattle, a good size, colour magpie - black and white'; Swiss cattle 'very pretty dun'; Normandy – 'colour like the Hereford not so handsome but heavier cattle, a very good sort'; Charolaise – 'a fine race of pure white cattle, not so large as the Durham but nearly as good'; Garonnaise – 'a lot of indifferent cattle mostly Dun coloured'. There were no entries beside the 'Espèces Ovine, Porcine or Oiseaux' (sheep, pigs or birds) and none of the animals he brought back to Port Phillip came from the Continent; the cost, logistics of transport and the risk of foot and mouth disease, which periodically devastated the cattle herds of Europe, weighed against it.¹¹³

Returning to Britain in July he began to seek out in earnest what he would be taking back to Western Port. In his notebook for July he wrote, 'When in London purchased a large lot of Books to Completion of my library left them with Mr G Willis Covent Gardens to have them carefully packed in a wood and Tin Case and to have ready for me when I am about to leave for P.P.' By August, he was back at Balmakewen deciding on which ship to sail back to Port Phillip. The *Cheviot* was rejected in favour of the *Beemah*, Lyall giving as his reason 'I find my wife is more afraid of Gunpowder than I am as she objects to go in the vessel with it.'¹¹⁴ In his correspondence, he wrote precise requirements for his gilt-bound books, along with amusing bursts of Scottish haggling.

To Mr Willis, Bookseller, London

13 August 1855

Will you please procure the following Books for me and have my case ready by 25th of this month as I expect to sail from Leith about 5th September. I observe the following in a list belonging to Mr Petheram 94 High Holby. If you can supply any of them yourself do so if not procure them from Mr Petheram or Elsewhere (if you can) if the binding of any of them is defective or not equal in condition to those books supplied by you please to have them bound to match the others and send me the account as soon as you can that I may direct my agent to call and pay you and also to give you a direction for the Books. Do not forget a Bible and send another Prayer Book the same as the last. If you cannot procure the continuation of Allison's History of Europe you can send it out to me afterwards. The following Books selected from Petheram's List viz

57	American report for 1850 Culture of Corn	5/-
212	Experimental Agriculture Johnson	4/6
226	Kemps Agricultural Physiology	3/-
410	Transactions of the Agricultural and Horticultural Society of India	1.18.0
590	Lt. Britons Excursions in Australia	3/6
648	Lt Col Collins account of N.S. Wales	7/6
725	Ellis Polynesian (?) 4 Vols	12/-
835	Hodgsons Reminiscences of Australia	3/-
1031	Mitchell's Expeditions in Australia	18/-
1055	History of Botany Bay	8/-
1056	History of New Zealand	4/6
1064	Oglivys Journal (best copy)	12/-
1065	Oglivys Historical Account	6/-
1208	The Australian Colonies	4/-
1267	Account of the Settlement of Port Jackson	4/-
586	White's History of the British Turf	10/6
692	Walkers Analysis of Beauty	15/-

Also please let me know at your earliest convenience at what price you can procure a copy of Goulds Birds of Australia

Your attention will oblige

Dear Sir

Yours very Truly

(Sgd.) William Lyall¹¹⁵

In William's next letter he writes 'Had Mr Gould's Book been at a price within my means I would like to have had it but the price you name is altogether beyond me.' He must later have bought the cheaper edition, without the colour prints, as two volumes of Gould's works were mentioned in a surviving inventory of the library that was done in 1916. So too were *Mitchell's Expeditions*.¹¹⁶

The *Prayer Book* to which he refers to is perhaps the 1853 *Common Prayer Book of the United Church of England and Ireland*, an interesting addition for a Scots Presbyterian family. Beautifully illustrated with macabre woodcuts by Albert Durer and Hans Holbein, it dated back to Elizabeth I's reign. Spiritual matters stirred William's inquiring mind. There is a copy of the Rev. Emilius Guers 1854 book *Irvingism and Mormonism* in which Lyall has underlined the author's criticisms about the 'many unwholesome doctrines gradually embodied in the standards of "The Holy Catholic Apostolic Church"' (of which sect Irving was the founder). Lyall's pencil notation in the margin reads 'name them and point them out', suggesting open mindedness on his part about the early pentacostalists, whose worship included speaking in tongues. A copy of the *Koran* was also amongst the books he eventually obtained.¹¹⁷

Lyall ordered an extensive list of garden plants and trees from P. Lawson & Son, Edinburgh, less than a quarter of which grow currently at Harewood. The native British species were more difficult to grow in the hot, dry summers than those, like broom or pelargoniums that had evolved for Mediterranean climates. In procuring seeds of wheat, barley, pasture grasses, rape, mangle, carrots, parsley and chicory (Thos Gibbs, Maldon Essex, 14 August), he astutely noted 'Please let the packages be Bags as I find that Wheat sent out in air tight packages has generally lost its Germinating power.'¹¹⁸

Agricultural equipment caught Lyall's energy and attention, as he wrote letters in his capacity as 'a Managing Director of the Industrial Society of Victoria [...] collecting samples of most useful articles of Husbandry to take with me.' Improving livestock was his central aim as he gave explicit instructions to Mr Cruikshank Esq regarding a Shorthorn bull calf, later to be named 'Great Britain'.

I have directed my agent in London to remit to your credit at the Town & Country Bank in Aberdeen the sum of Sixty-five gns. (£68.5.0). The price of the young bull out of Rose Blossom. This is a very much higher price than I ever thought of giving for a calf but I like the colour of the calf and the appearance of his mother better than the white which you were kind enough to offer me. I think that considering the circumstances of this being the first Beast that you have sold to Australia you ought to pay the carriage to Edinburgh. It is usual in this country to give back a lucky penny. I shall look to you to give this as my lucky penny. I will be glad if you give him a name and have him entered in the Herd Book as being sold to me. And also write out his pedigree. It might be of service to both you and me if you were to mention the price that you have been offered for his sire. I will be glad if you will send him through to Edinburgh on Friday week and in the meantime give him a little oil cake to get him used to it. In the meantime with kind respects to self and brother.¹¹⁹

The importance of perceptions and brand name was not lost on Lyall. Whether Mr Cruikshank paid the carriage is not known, but he loved his livestock. On 7 September he wrote back in quaint Quaker idiom.

Dear Friend,

I have seen the Calf nicely off this morning by the 6:30 train and should arrive by 2 o'clock and I hope will do so quite safe - poor thing. I feel for it very much - so young and so long a journey before it. I wish thou had bought his dam. She would have nursed him nicely and spar'd a little milk for your selves, altho' I would not take 100 G's for her in an ordinary way I would have reduc'd her price in this case considerably, say to 70 or 80 - she is in calf to "The Baron" the fine Red Bull which thou would see.

The calf can freely eat food of all kinds, but particularly fond of cut turnips and thou should have a lot on board to serve him as long as they keep fresh - cake or clover hay will be fine for him also.

Be pleased to let me here from you when convenient

Thine very truly

Anthony Cruikshank

Space was at a premium and Lyall made 'Great Britain' suffer the long journey without his dam, but the young Shorthorn bull arrived safely and many of Rose Blossom's grandchildren and great grandchildren grazed the stardust of Western Port, thanks to the Quaker farmer and the expat entrepreneur.

To Mr Cother, a Middle Aston Auctioneer, Lyall wrote (11 August 1854): 'I wish to purchase ten Cotswold Lambs say eight ewes and two Rams. They must be above average quality and I would like to have five from Mr Wm Lane and five from some other good Breeder. If you can make a purchase for me at a reasonable price I will thank you to send me the particulars also state what numbers they will allow you select or pick from. The price must be reasonable.'

He was also after a pure Hereford Cow. 'I would like her to be in milk and in Calf perhaps you could purchase the 2nd prize cow from Mr Turner by Pembridge at a reasonable price or one of the Prize Heifers. ... I would prefer a young cow in low condition to either of the Heifers provided the quality is first rate. I would like to have something superior but I must not pay an Extravagant fancy price.'¹²⁰

'Nora', the chosen one, was sent directly to the wharves at Leith but William and Annabella had to make a last minute dash to Dublin where Mr Long was showing his Cotswold sheep, descendants of sheep the Romans had first brought across to Britain on their galleys. The Lyalls brought their pick back just in time for an emotional parting as the family embarked on the *Beemah*. Grandma Helen Lyall was now very elderly, frail and close to death. John and Margaret remained to look after her as William and Annabella tearfully departed, promising to look after the Mickle's' affairs in Australia.¹²¹

The ton of oil cake that Lyall took on the *Beemah* was perhaps excessive, as one of the lambs died from 'eating too much'. Five of his pheasants 'died from wounds inflicted

on each other from want of a proper coop to keep them from each other. 'But no other deaths were recorded amongst the livestock. There were no Shetland ponies on this trip.'¹²²

Lyall's account of the voyage back to Victoria was brief compared to the journey over, but his morals were outraged when, on 2 November, he found that 'the Third Mate had been stealing my wine and suspect that he and the First Mate had been debauching my servants.' On 'finding proof that Mary and Ann Allardyce had made themselves quite common to the two Mates', he was moved to draft a letter to Captain Rickswell.

Before leaving Leith I paid your agent a large sum of money for the safe conveyance of myself, my family, my servants and my property to Australia, and you as well as your officers were to protect my interests while under your care, but the reverse has been the case. My servants have been debauched by your officers. Mr. Scott, your Chief Officer, has been repeatedly in my servants' cabins for improper purposes, as well as having Mary Allardyce in his cabin for many hours, and in consequence I have suffered both in the loss of my servants and my property enumerated on the margin of this letter, as well as the sum of fifty pounds, being the amount of passage money paid by me for Mary and Ann Allardyce. They having made an arrangement to repay me the above sum by domestic service in the colony and whose services I now lose through the debauchery of your officers.¹²³

Perhaps Annie, who again made the voyage pregnant while now caring for four small children, was more forgiving of their servants' private affairs. The Allardyses remained in Lyall's employ and later both married in Melbourne. The trip to and from their homeland had taken the Lyall family nearly two years. Their thoughtfully selected seeds, livestock, clothing, furniture and books, the stardust they carried back to Australia with them, would not create another Scotland at the opposite end of the globe, but it would meld with that of Kooweerup, radically alter Western Port's landscape and, in time, ripple effects would be felt throughout Australia.

The missing last volume of Allison's *History of Europe*, mentioned in William's letter to the bookseller must have followed, as it is still in the library now, completing the author's twenty volume epic with Napoleon's state funeral. Marengo, the aged grey stallion once ridden by the Emperor on his battlefields of fame, followed his master's colossal hearse. The leader, whom William's father had fought and whose lieutenants had first mapped Harewood's shoreline, was suitably laid to rest and French aspirations to see Western Port as the 'Paris of the South' and capital of 'Terre Napoleon' died with him. There was not a picture of Napoleon to be found in the Lyalls' library, but both nations marvelled at Napoleon's amazing mind, his farsightedness and the outstanding advances in French art and science, which he inspired.¹²⁴

WESTERN PORT LAIRD

Reviled Governor Charles Hotham fell dead in a fit of apoplexy as the *Beemah* moored in Hobson's Bay on New Year's Eve of 1855. The spirit of the Eureka Stockaders was abroad and the battle the miners could not win by force of arms had been fought in other ways. In its first year of publication, *Melbourne Punch* satirised the unpopular Governor mercilessly, but when he died *Punch* laid aside 'his' acid pen and wrote In Memoriam, 'Peace to the dead and oblivion to the past. *Punch* remembers only that the dread shadow has darkened the household of him who represented the Majesty of England, and that a lady has sustained a bitter bereavement in a strange land. He reverently respects that mourner's grief, and laying a wreath of cypress on the coffin-lid of the illustrious dead, silently passes on.'¹²⁵

Wages had fallen, labourers were plentiful and railway shares were not saleable at more than a 10% discount. Property values had tumbled so far from their gold rush peak that Hugh Glass, once the wealthiest squatter in the colony, and now the owner of Balla Balla, Dr Adams' old property, offered to sell it to Lyall for £5,000.¹²⁶ Squatters' lease holdings were being surveyed and auctioned. On 8 January 1856, wily William wrote to John Mickle, who was still in Britain and considering staying there.

There is about 8000 acres of one run at Yallock been surveyed and is to be put up for immediate sale. I must try to keep strangers out. I shall try and buy it all and when I hear from you again as to your likelihood of returning or not I will know how to act. I really feel so much at home about the old spots that I can hardly fancy that you mean to forsake them.¹²⁷

'New and Important Discoveries by Mr Layard.' *Melbourne Punch*, 1856, p.76. H.L. Melbourne showgirl Lola Montes featured in this spoof of Layard's Assyrian archaeological discoveries. Bonomi's *Nineveh and its Palaces*, 1853, about the discoveries was one of the many books Lyall brought back from London to Melbourne.



There was sadness in the tone. He would later captivate his children with stories of galloping his horse into a mob of wild steers, seizing a bullock by its tail and turning the beast on its back with a deft twist, but such youthful exploits were now behind him. Refreshed by his world trip and his mind filled with months of shipboard reading, he applied himself to his vision of using scientific farming methods to transform the Western Port landscape into a grand estate.¹²⁸ Forever juggling multiple projects, he advised his brother-in-law about the condition of their holdings.

I went down there this day week and only for having more grass they look much as I left them. I believe John Mitchell has done his duty. Everything appears in its place and I have ordered all the Horses for Sale as well as 300 or 400 Cattle. The old bullocks must this year be sold whether they are fat or lean they may have been there nearly 4 years and it is time they were fat. Many of the CH Bullocks are scrubbers in fact worse than when they came down. Adams mob are sold off or fit for sale and many young stock are first rate. I never saw them look so well. The Yallock Cattle were the best for the number that went to Melbourne last year. The Horses are I think more trouble than profit. I will reduce the pure Herd if I can find liberal purchasers.¹²⁹

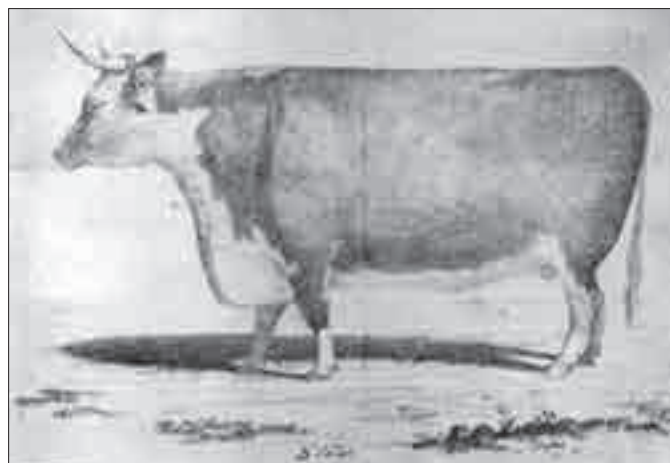
The family's return was marred with tragedy. The bonny wee Scot Annabella gave birth to in Edinburgh was buried at age one and a half. She still rests with her parents in the Cranbourne Cemetery. It must have been bittersweet when another baby daughter arrived the following month. She was named Annabella, after her mother and dead older sister, as was the custom of the day.¹³⁰

Lyall family interests extended to the Western Districts as William bought Lyne Station near Hamilton, in partnership with Andrew. James Lyall, their older brother, had given up his life at sea and moved to the town of Portland. The first entry from these times in William's silverfish-chewed stock book nostalgically read, "Alice Grey", bred in 1853 by William Lyall, her sire Besborough, dam an Arab mare "Beauty". With Besborough dead, Lyall eagerly sought a new imported sire 'of the best class' to stay competitive on the turf and stud Herefords to improve his Western Port herd.¹³¹

Back in Scotland, Andrew was grumpy, homesick and ready to come back to Victoria. When his grouse shooting was washed out by rain, he wrote to his brother James. 'I was so disgusted I wish myself 200 miles in the wild bush of Australia, and talk of cheap living in these old countries, it's all bush living just as I done in Port Phillip it cost me just double what it done there and I shall forever regret coming to this country at all. Aberdeen, the fine city I used to think it, is a forsaken, ugly looking place.'¹³²

Star, William Lyall's
prize imported
Hereford cow, c.
1865. H.C.

It is possible Andrew travelled with John Mickle to the 1857 meeting of the Royal Agricultural Society of England at Salisbury. Here a red and white-faced cow named 'Star', calved on 15 October 1854, having been bred by Mr Richard Hill, Golding Hall, Shrewsbury, won first prize.¹³³ She was sold to Mr Lyall for export to Australia and, along with a fine stud bull they called 'Candidate', survived the journey to take pride of place at the Western Port stations. While stardust from Spanish culture and Spanish Longhorn DNA were being moulded into the fabric of the American cattle industry, the British Hereford and Shorthorn were the



key breeds in southern Australia. Star was successful in the show ring and bore many calves that were influential in the early days of Hereford breeding. She served as the model for the first Mornington Agricultural Society Coat of Arms but died of eye cancer, her pretty white face a liability in Australia's strong sun.¹³⁴

The technical challenge of bringing horses or ponies from Britain to Australia can be imagined from the valuable advice William had to offer to John Mickle's youngest brother Alexander, who with his wife Agnes, came out on board the *Blackwall* about this time.

...Do not bring Good but Superior the best of anything is good enough for us and less Than that will not do so see to it on looking. I would advise you if can to find a large Ship sailing from Leith or Greenock (Particularly Greenock or Glasgow to come by one then as you can come at half the cost and have more room on deck. Have the Boxes stand fore and aft Two one on each side of the fore rigging and one abaft the main rigging if possible. See that the boxes are strong and well secured that they are large enough to allow the horse to lay down. Provide yourself with a good pair of slings for each horse and as many Bags of Hay or Straw as will protect the horse from the sides of the box in case of a storm. (...)

A good Scotch Ploughman or two to assist you in looking after the horses and with early morning attendance they will do have the men indented to you for Two years at £50 per year wages and get some of their friends to become responsible for the amount of their passage money in the event of their bolting. There time on board ship will not count but there time to begin the day they enter port Phillip heads...¹³⁵

'The Australian in England',
Melbourne Punch,
Oct 1860, p.100.
H.L.



Young Alexander and Agnes Mickle moved into Robert Jamieson's old homestead at Yallock and it was there their first son, David, was born in March 1858. He and Maggie Lyall would lay claim to being the first white babies born at Tooradin and on the Kooweerup Swamp, though one would have to suspect there had been other births that didn't make the record book.¹³⁶

Andrew Lyall was still in Britain, as rivalry intensified between the older convict-settled colony of New South Wales and the mostly free-settled, gold-rich, rapidly growing colony of Victoria. Following the events of the Eureka Stockade and fears of another

American-style war of independence, the Australian colonies became one of the first places in the Empire to be granted limited self-government.

Victoria's first parliament was elected in 1856 by property owners and men of means, but the workers and miners were flexing their muscles as deflation and unemployment hit and they pressed to broaden the franchise and open lands for settlement the squatters had locked up under lease. William's family took pride in their hard won position as part of the elite, acquired by having arrived in the colony early and with clear goals, clever dealing and having Mickle and Bakewell's financial backing at a critical time. William's enthusiasm for history, and his place in making it, may have also stood him in good stead.¹³⁷

Victorian-NSW rivalry hit a peak in 1857 with a match race between the horses "Alice Hawthorn", owned by the Chirnsides of Werribee, and the New South Wales horse, "Veno", owned by C.T. Rowe. The Victorians were ecstatic when the Chirnside mare won and William Lyall who had been entrusted with the stakes, handed over £1,000. His hopes of himself breeding competitive, first class race horses were pinned on 'Sir Colin Campbell', a thoroughbred stallion amongst the blood stock purchased by his brother and brother-in-law, now on the high seas, sailing from Britain or so William thought.¹³⁸

A well prepared stable awaited 'Sir Colin' at 'Frogmore', the Lyalls' 'Model Scottish Farm' being constructed at Caulfield, and there was accommodation for 'Magnet', his prize bull, the stud Hereford cows, the Cotswold sheep, and Dockin' and the Shetland pony mares. The same year, William probably commenced building what his family called his 'Shooting Box' at the Inlets, harking back to his grouse hunting days in Scotland. Willie, Nellie and Maggie would have been excited about 'their' ponies and there would be more to sell to their squatter friends. The Cotswold sheep would bring new blood to his nucleus flock and the Herefords would upgrade his cattle herd. Life was going well and William and Annabella had good reason to eagerly await the arrival of the ships the *General Nowell* and the *Indemnity*.



ardy congratulations, dear reader, you've at last returned from your epic journey! Dockin's triumphant arrival in Port Phillip in December 1857 and William's angry letter about the loss of 'Sir Colin Campbell' and other stock on board the *Indemnity* loops back to the departure point in this seventy-million-year epic of how plants, animals and humans came to criss-cross the globe to infuse their stardust into Western Port. Ourstory moves forward...

'A Rush of Campbells,'
Melbourne Punch,
26 April 1860,
p.106.

VIKING HEROES AND A MEMBER FOR MORNINGTON

With John Mickle's brief return visit to Victoria nearly over, the partners decided to amicably split and settle their affairs and, drawing lots, Bakewell got Tooradin, Mickle the northern part of Yallock and William the southern part of Yallock, including the Inlets. The family was still keen to acquire a top racehorse and together John and William plotted how to use their insurance money to replace their lost livestock. Mickle wrote to James Fairbairn of their disappointment about the loss of Sir Colin Campbell.

He it appears died soon after crossing the line from Influenza (?) he caught cold in the English Channel and never recovered. His death is a considerable loss to myself and he was a loss to the Country. I am almost afraid to venture upon another spree. But with your assistance I will try just once more. We may have better luck this time so I will ask you to purchase for me Two More Horses the best you can find, at any price you think within the bounds of reason. They must be first rate for we have plenty of second class horses here...¹³⁹

Mickle shared his thoughts with William Garne of Gloucestershire about acquiring 25 more Cotswolds.

My Brother-in-law Mr. William Lyall has established a small breeding flock of pure Cotswold sheep and he is anxious to breed only first rate sheep and wishes to breed only from the best kind having due regards for wool as well as mutton (...) We have here to contend against a great amount of prejudice in favour of other breeds particularly the Leicester. We are anxious to establish a fact apparent to ourselves, viz the Cotswold will make a most desirable cross with our Australian Merino for improving the constitution of flocks in the cold rough parts of the colony..¹⁴⁰

Meanwhile the safe arrival of pony stallions Dockin' and King Pippin and the Shetland mares raised considerable interest. A Mr Stuckey paid £100 for one mare. J.F. Strachan Esq paid £65 for another that was sent by steamer to Geelong along with a mare (or maybe two?) for which John Calvert Esq paid £130.0.0, more than the cost of a house.¹⁴¹

Andrew took four of the mares as well as 'King Pippin' to Lyne Station, in the Western Districts, while the remainder went to Frogmore and to the Inlets. Pippin proved something of a disappointment, according to Australian pony historian Lorna Howlett, "Soon after they arrived in Australia one of the little stallions disappeared. Though no trace was ever found, it was believed that the pony had been killed and eaten by aborigines who were roaming the area." This oft repeated piece of family lore is incorrect, however, as the Lyall family diaries recorded on 13 June 1865 that William bought 'King Pippin' back from Andrew for £30.0.0. Fertility seemed to be a problem, as only one foal is recorded for Pippin in Lyall's 1860s Stock Book, while his handsome, virile shipmate was a winner, being used over many mares, at a guinea a

service, broadcasting his stardust and siring pure and crossbred foals that found a ready market as mount and carriage ponies for the women and children in the colony.¹⁴²

Ambitious Scots, not afraid of hard work and brought up on Calvinist theology and Robert Burns' philosophy 'The honest man tho' e'er sae poor, is king o' men for a' that.' were invading the Kooweerup Swamp. Alexander Mickle built his weatherboard house, Monomeith, in 1859. Its crumbling remains can still be seen, but within two years Alexander was struck down by appendicitis. His wife, Agnes, gave birth to John, their third baby, a few weeks later. Agnes later married Andrew Hudson, who managed Yallock Station for the Lyalls and then became a landowner and stock agent in his own right. The children of all three families would intermarry and play a prominent role in the great changes in store for Western Port.

Some of the friends William had known from his Tasmanian days, including his sister Julia's former sweetheart James Francis, had become key players in Victoria's first elected parliament and they encouraged William to stand for the conservative side. Elected to the second parliament in 1859 as the first member for Mornington, which at that time incorporated the whole of the Western Port catchment, William took his lower house seat alongside the hero of the Eureka Stockade, Peter Lalor. A thick volume on the Harewood library shelves, *Votes and Proceedings of the Legislative Assembly Session 1859-60*, inscribed 'Florence's Fern Book' with numerous ferns and magazine clippings pressed between the pages recalls his time as a lawmaker, as well as the lack of importance his daughter would subsequently attach his service.¹⁴³

It is difficult to be certain of Lyall's contribution during his term in parliament as he is absent more often than present for votes. He predictably sided with the squatters on land bills, protecting his family's position against pressure to release land for less affluent families. On both sides of parliament, European memory and imagination replaced that of the traditional owners. Indigenous Law vanished and new legislation reflected expedience by a novice parliament unschooled in civic planning or Australian conditions. Impetuous settlers were allowed to carve the Gippsland forests into blocks without reserves for roads, parks, wildlife or townships. Mountain Ash sentinels, amongst the tallest trees in the world, were razed for struggling dairy farms and firestorms took their toll. On some matters the conservatives and miners agreed. Francis, Lyall and Lalor all voted 'Aye' 'That a Select Committee be appointed to consider the best means of inducing immigration to this Colony.' A gilt-lettered, leather-bound folio, *Victoria Acts of Parliament 22-23-24 1859-60*, that might have told more of Lyall's time in politics, still lies in the library but the Lyall daughters perceived the binding more valuable than the contents: the pages were torn out and replaced with issues of *The Young Ladies Journal*.¹⁴⁴

In his private endeavours, William's achievements were inspiring. He commissioned an elegant house near Caulfield at a cost of £4331, but where it was is a mystery. Long thought to be the beautiful home that remained on the Frogmore property, a fierce

battle broke out in 2014 when developers, presenting evidence that the house was of later construction than the Lyall period of occupancy, applied to demolish the building to construct a multi-story Jewish Aged Care facility. They won their case. In an instant, the Frogmore residence was gone.

But a cosy brass canopy bed William and Annabella brought out from Scotland came with them to Harewood and still remains, the springs much worse for wear but not replaced for sentimental reasons. It saw the addition of two more daughters to the fold, Edith in 1857 and Florence in 1859. The older children were each given their own Shetlands to ride, drive and treasure: to Maggie – Fairy, to Helen – Eva, to Willie – Daisy and to Bella – Piebald. None of the pure Scots, English, Irish or Welsh pony breeds had piebald genes. Little Bella's broken coloured pony carried the stardust of Viking sailors, of brave but nameless heroes and of ancient sea voyages that left a global legacy.¹⁴⁵

4

LYALLS' LANDMARK



'Harewood House 1870' from Percy Ricardo's album. Courtesy: Barbara Brown

Originally, looking north across the swamp from "Harewood", the tea-tree was so dense that it appeared to be green undulating hills interspersed by small streams, the banks of which were lined with ferns and reeds in which the swans built their nests. Looking towards Western port from the house, the bay was to be seen frequently covered with hundreds of swan and duck and many varieties of sea-birds. Wild flowers grew in profusion and the paddocks around the house were sown with rye grass and white clover.



'Imperial Federation Map of the world showing the extent of the British Empire in 1886. Supplement to *The Graphic*, 24 July 1886 (above). Possibly Florence Lyall's earthenware plate painting (above right) and her 1885 tea pot and cup(right). H.C.



A poster drawn c. 1885 by William Lyall's son-in-law, Percy Ricardo, a founder of the Queensland Mounted Infantry, the forerunner to the Australian Light Horse. Human-horse partnerships were integral to expansion of empires from the time horses were domesticated 6000 years ago. H.C.

As William Lyall built his reputation in racing, farming and political circles in the new colony of Victoria, in London Sir Charles Lyell was about to present two scientific papers that would profoundly change the way humans viewed creation, religion and the world.

The *Beagle* sailed back to Britain in 1836 with Charles Darwin sick in body, but with a mind fomenting with new ideas. Over the next ten years, he completed his work, *On The Origin of Species*, and debated his views with a close circle of scientific colleagues, including Charles Lyell, Thomas Huxley and the botanist Joseph Hooker. Within this tight-knit, tight-lipped group there was diversity of opinion as they exchanged ideas. Lyell subscribed to the geological antiquity and evolution of the inanimate world. He did not initially believe in transmutation of species, although reading Harewood's copy of the 9th Edition of *Principles of Geology* it is clear that by 1853 his views were moving in this direction. Hooker and Huxley were more in agreement with Darwin's thinking, and perhaps even at this time Huxley, who had visited Australia between 1846 and 1850, was pondering man's place in nature and how Australia's Aboriginal people might fit in. Darwin, knowing full well the religious furore expounding his controversial theory would unleash, kept his manuscript under wraps.¹

Meanwhile, peripatetic Alfred Russell Wallace, a British naturalist who corresponded with Darwin, was also pondering physical evidence of evolution but was lost for an underpinning mechanism. As he travelled around the Malay Archipelago on collecting expeditions, he found himself where ancient Laurasian and Gondwanan faunas were juxtaposed side by side. He was struck by the variation in island populations of animals, which fell into a western group including Borneo and Bali, with Oriental affinities, and an eastern group, including Celebes and Lombok, with Australian connections. Laid up with a severe attack of malaria, delirium freed his brain from conventional constraints and, in a flash of inspiration, he came up with the idea of 'survival of the fittest' as a possible mechanism for evolution. In a single evening he penned off a manuscript to Darwin and Lyell.²

Their hand at last forced, Darwin and his cautious colleagues decided Charles Lyell should present a combined paper, 'Darwin and Wallace's Theory of Natural Selection' before the Linnaean Society on 1 July 1858. The fully anticipated, acrimonious, religious, moral and scientific conflagration was ignited: the impact of *On The Origin of Species*, published in 1859 but twenty years in the making, was immediate and profound. With few exceptions, established scientists and clergy voraciously defended, with all power vested in their high offices, the literal, biblical, creationist beliefs with which they had been brought up.

ACCLIMATISATION FEVER

Younger scientists and theologians with 'less to lose' and less ingrained with traditional paradigms, were more open to the new ideas and willing to adjust their scientific and religious views to the emerging information. Darwin's idea of evolution was not new. Lyell, for one, had devoted slabs of text to the general concept in edition after edition of *Principles of Geology*, but Darwin now provided a plausible mechanism for why it occurred in lifeforms: incremental natural variation and selection of organisms best able to survive to reproduce over a long time scale. It was this that sparked the flurry of activity, as both camps strived to gather evidence to support their respective cases. Australia, with her primitive life forms, was viewed as a possible laboratory to put evolutionary theory to the test and upsurges in interest in archaeology, ethnology, anthropology, 'scientific' collecting and museums trace to this time. A vigorous colonial debate opened with Melbourne's leading scientists, by and large, staunchly opposing the new theory. *Melbourne Punch*, as always, poked fun at both sides.³

While community leaders couldn't accept species change, they embraced the catchy slogan 'survival of the fittest' as it sat comfortably with the expanding British

'Man's Place in Nature.' Melbourne Punch's view of the human evolution debate, this raged just as vigorously in Victoria as it did in Europe. *Melbourne Punch*, 6 July 1865. H.L.



Empire's conquest ethic and *laissez-faire* economic policies. Later applied to humans and tagged 'Social Darwinism', it justified the domination of 'inferior' indigenous animals, plants or races as inevitable and desirable, and underpinned a generation of social and scientific thought. Baron Ferdinand von Mueller, a gifted botanist but staunch creationist, in his 1859 Presidential Address to the Philosophical Society of Victoria (still resting in Harewood's library), reflected this perspective as he painted a grand vision to graft exotic stardust into Australia on a colossal scale. His address foreshadowed the formation of the Acclimatisation Society,

Might not the pastures of our silent Alps, might not our grassless forest-ranges, like the Andes or the Himalayan mountains, yet be enlivened by the alpaca or the Cashmere goat? Might not the desert game of Southern Africa yet roam in lively sport throughout our inland solitudes, and render them more hospitable, perhaps betraying the wearied wanderer, by their paths, the water-pool on which his life depends? Might not the camel's track across the continent guide with their flocks the harbingers of new colonisation to the oases of our inland wastes, and lead them on and on, until by peaceful conquest we raise another Indian empire in continental Oceania?⁴



'Burke, Wills, King and Gray leave Cooper's Creek, 16th Dec. 1861.' Burke and Wills Exploring Expedition. 2/6 supplement to *The Argus*, 1861. H.L. Only King, who was cared for by the Aborigines, survived the expedition. Alfred Howitt led the rescue party. The tragedy deeply affected the public psyche.

His mother's shipboard bible lessons may have rung in William's ear as he considered von Mueller's address and, far from the centre of the scientific debate, Lyall was not convinced about evolution. In his library, the children's well-worn copy of *Chronology for Schools*, which had the world created in 4004 BC, lay next to the barely touched, ninth edition of Lyell's *Geology*. But 'acclimatisation' was a practical concept that fired

his imagination.⁵ Gold had delivered one of the highest per capita incomes in the world to Victoria and with it came self-assurance. There was money to underwrite audacious biological experiments and determination to expand the colony's economic base. Von Mueller's address continued:

An improved system of agriculture shall afford bread to millions then, where now only thousands exist; forests of varied useful trees shall have been transplanted to our shores; the introduction from Flora's and from Fauna's treasures, commenced in our days, supported by our anxious exertions on this spot, may then enliven a much more varied industry; the trout and salmon shall transverse our streams, and game in manifold variety shall roam through the forest, in which the feathered tribes of many zones shall, in their melodies, have added primeval charms..... But not alone in promoting the material welfare of our adopted country shall this Institute have borne its honourable share. A higher ideal of man's destination in the world shall have shown its influence. Man elevated more and more by science shall have abandoned that egotism by which he but too often retrogrades. No longer shall be lost that skill and that amount of physical and mental energy which now are wasted on the field of war ...and, in aiming to fulfil the destiny for which we here are called, may our symbols be "Concord and Progress"⁶

'Useful Introduction.'
Melbourne Punch 28
February 1861. H.L.
Punch's view of the
Acclimatisation
Society of which
William Lyall was a
founding member.



The unintended consequences of this thought leader's vision would become all too soon apparent but, in Melbourne, in 1859, "Concord and Progress" carried the day. The Acclimatisation Society of Victoria, which would incorporate Melbourne's Zoo, was launched with £3000 of government funding and the new Governor Sir Henry Barkley as its active patron. As a member of the Legislative Assembly, William Lyall took an ex officio seat, on the founding committee beside Baron von Mueller, Professor Frederick McCoy, who was the Society's first president and fifteen other public figures and luminaries. Boatloads of exotic birds and beasts from around the globe began

to arrive in Port Phillip to be housed at von Mueller's Botanic Gardens, while at Frogmore Lyall experimented with Chinese sheep and still nurtured the game birds he had brought with him on the *Beemah*.⁷

Viewed with 20-20 hindsight, Professor McCoy's Anniversary Address, which took up nine pages in the Acclimatisation Society's *First Annual Report* (1862), is a fascinating porthole into a clever mind trying to mould partial insights and overzealous confidence into inventive thinking on how the Society's vision could be harnessed for humanity's long term benefit. Perhaps he was partly trying to justify European presence in Australia

as he explained the concept of acclimatisation, which aimed at 'the bringing together in any one country the various useful or ornamental animals of other countries having the same or nearly the same climate and general conditions of surface.' On a large map specially prepared for the talk, he traced the world distribution of plant and animal species, noting that in 'scarcely any case do you find any native wild animal of the temperate or cold latitudes of the northern hemisphere, inhabiting the corresponding similar latitudes of the southern hemisphere' and describing what he termed 'the law of representative forms'. McCoy's creationist beliefs could be stretched sufficiently to allow that perhaps all the world's animals did not come from Noah's solitary Ark, but that there may have been 'specific centres' of creation. However, it was separate creation rather than geographic separation and evolution which caused the one humped camel (for example) to develop to the south of the Himalayas, while the two humped camel was found to the north. Whatever the reasons, it was clear many parts of the earth suited animals not inhabited by them.

Of all the quadrupeds useful for food, by far the largest number and most important to the acclimatiser, belong to the great group of ruminating animals which chew the cud and have a cloven foot. Of these there are no less than fifty different species inhabiting India in the latitudes corresponding to Australia, including upwards of twenty species of deer, six antelopes, and various species of sheep, goat, ox, & c. In corresponding latitudes in both hemispheres in Africa, you have about fifty other species, here curiously enough the deer being represented by only one species but antelopes, or hollowed horned ruminants, reaching the marvellous number of thirty four distinct kinds... And now comes the extraordinary fact to which I have been gradually leading your attention, that while Nature has so abundantly furnished forth the natural larder of every other similarly situated country on the face of the earth with a great variety, and a profusion of individuals of ruminants good for food, not one single creature of the kind inhabits Australia!⁸

The relevance of Wallace and Darwin's new theory in explaining this remarkable observation was lost on McCoy as he expounded his plan for Australia.

If Australia had been colonised by any of the lazy nations of the earth, this nakedness of land would have been indeed an oppressive misfortune, but Englishmen love a good piece of voluntary hard work, and you will all, I am sure, rejoice with me that this great piece of nature's work has been left to us to do; that this large continent extending from the 10th to the 40th parallel of latitude, capable of supporting 100 out of the 180 species of known ruminating animals, may be filled with such a selection from them as may present the highest points of excellence, omitting the inferior kinds... the good we do will live after us, and the work of our hands will thrive and prosper to our hearts' content, and so become a lasting benefit to the millions of men who will in the fullness of time inhabit this land..⁹

Enthused by their 'higher calling' and blind to the ripple effects, McCoy enjoined the colonists to embrace the ideals and lend practical support to the Society. He observed

‘certain beasts of the most highly useful kinds for the purposes of man, show a special aptitude for domestication, and a love of human society, obviously implanted in them as part of their original nature..’ He used the hare and domestic rabbit, the wild and domestic cat of Europe and the ass and the zebra of Africa, to demonstrate his point and then went on:

I do not believe, then, that any very large addition is to be expected to our lists of domestic animals, but my principal reason for dwelling on this point is to disclaim on the part of the Acclimatisation Society any intention of expending money on attempts at domesticating animals, and keeping them in confinement. Our object, on the contra-

ry, is to select and import into the country, from various parts of the world, all those useful animals which the nature of the climate and vegetation satisfy us would thrive here, and feed and tend themselves in the wild or semi-wild state.¹⁰

‘Jugged Hare’,
Melbourne Punch, 4
Aug 1870. H.L.



What the Spanish conquistadors had done accidentally in the 1500s in releasing horses to populate the grasslands of the Americas, with the backing of the worldwide technological resources of the British Empire, Victoria’s Acclimatisation Society would do on a grander scale over a vastly greater number of species and with scientific deliberation. In the battle of genomes, Australia’s indigenous wildlife was about to be pitted against a host of new players. Stardust Wars were looming.

Queen Victoria’s forward-thinking Consort, Prince Albert, had already presented roe-deer from Windsor Castle to the Society, but his untimely death deprived

the Society of a zealous friend who ‘at the very time of his lamented decease engaged in preparing a selection of game for this Society’. Other members of the British Royal family and crowned heads of Europe continued to offer support. The Acclimatisation Society of Paris numbered more than a dozen kings amongst its members, ‘although without the great vantage ground of usefulness that we possess in having an unstocked country to fill.’ With enthusiastic input from all walks of European society, Australia’s landscape would see a rapid change ‘for the better’. Or so it seemed.’

William Lyall and John McHaffie of Phillip Island were amongst the first forty-one backers who gave over their ten guineas to become life members of the Society, along with another 240 or so who paid the lesser sum of a guinea for a year’s membership.

The islands of Western Port were seen as ideal sites for acclimatisation because of the absence of dingoes or native cats as predators. Nine pheasants, ten skylarks, eight blackbirds and eight thrushes were recorded as having been liberated on Phillip, Sandstone or Churchill Islands in 1861. Even as the First Annual Report was going to press another large shipment of common English partridge, sent by the Society's President, Edward Wilson, were to be released on the islands of Western Port.¹¹

Animals were being brought from Asia and the Americas as well as Africa and Europe in return for Australian exports. As well as seeking tigers for the Zoo, nine Sambar deer ('Ceylon Elk'), nine spotted Axis deer and five diminutive hog deer had already been imported from the Indian subcontinent; some of these had been liberated and more of each were coming. Again, it is uncertain exactly when and where the initial releases took place, but in 1865 the Society sent down to Lyall one Sambar stag and two hinds that were released at 'Deerside', as William had renamed part of the Manton Bros old Tooradin Run. They thrived and expanded their range. Being from enclosed Indian and Ceylonese stock, they were accustomed to humans and the tame does became favourites with the Lyall women.¹²

By 1861, upwards of fifty red deer were roaming free on Phillip Island and several had been encountered between the Bass and Powlett Rivers. The death of Burke and Wills on their return trip from the Gulf of Carpentaria had left an indelible mark on the collective psyche of the people of Victoria, and the release of oryx, komodo, Eland and camel along the route they travelled was seen as a priority, 'to fix in that country for ever a supply of that wholesome food, the want of which has caused us to mourn our heroic explorers.' Thirty-eight llamas had been bred by the Society and were intended for release in the mountains of Gippsland. Secretly, alpacas were being herded over the Andes to be shipped by a cunning Mr Duffield to Australia from South America.¹³

Hare and the rabbit had both already been introduced by 1861, the latter so thoroughly that, 'it swarms in hundreds in some localities, and can at any time be extended to others.' Hares were released nearly simultaneously by the Society at Royal Park, by Mr R Godfrey near Donnybrook and by William Lyall at the property he chose to name 'Harewood' to commemorate their liberation. The date of release and exact location is uncertain, but by 1862 Lyall reported that in a short

'Ocular Demonstration of the Fact' *Melbourne Punch* 27 March 1862. H.L. The Acclimatisation Society provided much fodder for Punch, including this dig at Lyall's efforts at introducing Sydney Rock Oysters to Western Port.



walk he had startled five. Unlike rabbits, hare do not dig warrens and their leverets, born twice yearly instead of every month, are fully furred. They proved popular for greyhound coursing, which was legalised in 1873, and hunting to the hounds, but found few friends amongst the orchardists, market gardeners and vigneron because of their habit of chewing and ring barking trunks and selectively damaging vegetables. Compared with rabbits, however, their damage was minor.¹⁴

Insects also fell within the gamut of Acclimatisation Society interest, with the English glow-worm, the Ligurian (Italian) bee and the silkworm attracting attention. Of the lower invertebrates, the Mollusca, as represented by the oyster, engaged both the Society's, and William Lyall's, attention. The government adapted measures for the privatisation and preservation of oyster beds along the coast and Lyall obtained oyster leases along the northern shore of Western Port. William's efforts to acclimatise hare proved more successful, however, than his pioneering foray into acquiring Sydney rock oysters to replace over-exploited local mud oysters.¹⁵

FLAWS IN THE VISION

Exotic animals, plants, wildlife, machines and culture were not the only alien stardust being off-loaded on the colony. A plethora of Eurasian-evolved pathogens were also beginning to entwine their DNA into the fabric of the emerging society and cause devastation. Alongside small pox, influenza, syphilis and gonorrhoea, which had taken a terrible toll amongst the Kulin people, tuberculosis and anthrax were killers of both humans and livestock and liver fluke, hydatids, scab and footrot appeared in sheep. In 1858, pleuropneumonia was introduced with a shipment of cattle going to the Plenty River from where it was spread by bullocks taking supplies to the gold fields. Bullocks died in their yokes and draught horses had to be used instead. During his time in parliament, William supported legislation to prevent pleuropneumonia from spreading but there was strong political pressure to allow Victorian stock to be overlanded to Queensland and scientific knowledge was inadequate to provide an appropriate eradication plan.¹⁶

In a political-scientific story that paralleled the evolution debate, conservative Professor Frederick McCoy, a staunch supporter of the prevailing miasma ('malignant vapours') theory of disease causation, refused to believe a living infectious agent could be responsible for 'the pleuro'. Having both scientific credentials and a viewpoint the would-be overlanders wanted to hear, he was a popular choice to head a Royal Commission. William's 1860s stock book records cattle supplied from Harewood to be used in 'scientific' pleuropneumonia transmission trials, alongside stock from Tasmania where the disease was not known to occur. The study rapidly reached the conclusion that pleuropneumonia was 'not transmissible', but when the cattle were sold at the end of the trial they broke with the disease and transmitted the organism to other cattle. The trial's report was not altered to reflect this. With his reputation at stake,

McCoy covered up the inconsistencies in his flawed experiment. It would be another hundred years, with many cattlemen pushed to bankruptcy, before pleuropneumonia could be eliminated from Australia.¹⁷

William chose not to run for a second term in parliament, instead he filled his days with efforts to propagate plants and animals on Western Port. He was credited with being amongst the first to import Scottish Gorse (*Ulex europaeus*), which was allowed to grow wild, and *Camellia reticulata*, originally from China, as a garden plant. The gorse spread to become one of the twenty most noxious weeds in Australia, but the impact was not as bad as Scotch thistle, for whose introduction others were to blame.¹⁸

The Cotswold sheep were not proving to be as successful as John Mickle and William had hoped. Their heads were large and, when crossed with Merinos, this led to lambing difficulties. Fluke and foot rot were also problems in the damp conditions at Western Port. Lyall sold some of his stock to Robert Anderson of Cape Schank and John Calvert of Geelong, who did well with them but they were never popular under Australian conditions. Ironically, back in Britain, cheap wool from Australian Merinos would make wool growing uneconomic and bring the Cotswold breed to the brink of extinction.¹⁹

For another iron in the fire, in 1863, Lyall decided to import Romney Marsh Sheep. Bred on the marshes of Kent, he hoped they could adapt to the damp conditions of the Kooweerup Swamp better than other breeds. He picked a winner. By 1875, the sheep often reached 80 lbs. at 12 months old and the average weight of the fleece was 6 lbs. of washed wool, which realised from 1s, 6d to 2s. per lb. in the London market. Unlike Merinos, the Romney Marsh sheep were hardy, rarely suffered from fluke, and did well at Western Port.²⁰

Overall, Lyall's Western Port properties were proving to be better suited to fattening cattle and raising saddle horses and ponies than they were to rearing sheep. Dockin' performed well in the show ring, winning the First silver medal for Pony (12 hands or under) at the Great Annual Exhibition of the Port Phillip Farmers' Society every year, until, by 1862, he was declared 'Not for competition'. The opposition may not have been particularly stiff, as Lyall's marked 1860 catalogue shows only 8 other entries in Dockin's class. Lyall was also showing with success his Hereford cattle and Cotswolds.²¹

From the day that Archer won the first Melbourne Cup in 1861, William tried for a winner. He purchased 'Touchstone', a stallion by the successful English horse of the same name and out of the well-bred imported mare, Quebec, by Gladiator. Touchstone was used extensively over visiting mares at £8.8.0 a service, as well as over Lyall's own expanding string of quality brood mares. Lyall's brown and gold racing colours were carried first past the post in less prestigious events but the Melbourne Cup eluded him. The family continued to live at Frogmore while at Western Port, along with his acclimatisation efforts, drainage work was expanded and pastures planted. His entry

for 9 September 1862 reads 'Mrs Lyall confined of a son. Sowing oats at the Inlets, 10 acres.' Four days later it was 'Mrs Lyall £5.0.0. Finished cropping at the Inlets, 10 acres of oats, 3 acres of wheat, 2 acres of grass and 3 acres of potatoes.' The baby, Theodore, took the name of an infant brother who had died the year before: this Theodore would live to leave descendants. A delightful picture of young Ted as a toddler in a tartan dress and lace pantaloons speaks much of the Lyalls' Scottish heritage and upper class aspirations.

Comfortably ensconced beside Lyall's other stud livestock, Dockin' was being used over crossbred ponies and larger mares, as well as pure Shetlands. Families like the Armytages of Como and John McHaffie on Phillip Island were among those who sent mares to Dockin' and also bought ponies from Harewood. The stock book recorded over 84 services at £2.2.0 in the 1860s.

When the next gold rush hit this time at Otago, New Zealand, Lyall was ready with the six shipments of livestock, mainly cattle to feed the miners, but Dockin's progeny and Cotswold Sheep were also loaded on the boats. The first shipments were delivered safely, but William's 1864 voyage back from Bluff Harbour was harrowing. A strong gale left the vessel all but foundering; the fore cabins and bulwarks washed overboard, sails blown away and several men injured. The Captain stopped meals and grog, and ships fittings were burned for fuel before the storm finally abated and the ship limped into Williamstown.

Horses from Harewood were among 7,292 to be exported to India from Victoria in the 1860s. A thriving trade had sprung up and Lyall was one of many who bred remounts, as Indian horses were too small to pull or carry the heavy British artillery. His 1860s stock book records ex-police mares were put to Touchstone to produce stock suitable for army requirements. While numerous colts and fillies were sold 'to Mr Learmonth for India', the swiftest he held back, like a colt called Benjiroo out of his thoroughbred mare, Koo Wee Rup.²²

Attempts at acclimatising game birds were disappointing: pheasants and partridges released from Tooradin in 1863 all fell prey to dingoes, wild dogs and poachers, but this was a minor glitch. From 1865, Lyall was building again at Harewood, this time to complete the family home. The oldest photographs of the ponies that have been so far uncovered were likely taken from the balcony of the new house at Harewood, c. 1870, and depict the distant image of a young girl, perhaps about 5 years old, in a pinafore, standing in front of a weather board stables next to 'Lyall's Inlet', the stream the Yallock Bulluk had called Kirkbillesee. Now lined with dense mangroves, in the 1870s salt marsh and meadow led down to its banks. Judging by her age, the little girl is likely to have been Maud Lyall, who loved to gallop her pony around the paddock, sitting sideways without a saddle, wind in her face, her fingers twisted in its long mane with the mare's foal in hot pursuit.²³



Child thought to be Maud Lyall in front of the stable at Harewood built c. 1856, photograph taken c. 1870. H.C

Imagining little Maud tearing across Harewood's landscape, as one with her spirited pony re-lives human-horse partnerships of past lives and earlier millennia: Scythian horsemen astounding the Greeks, young Buddha and Kantaka, Bucephalus and Alexander, Islamic conquerors on Arab stallions, Spanish conquistadors, Marengo and Napoleon, or Hargreaves and his stock horse. Without horses the Europeans could not have colonised the globe. As for Dockin', his stardust legacy, along with those of Welsh, Timor and other ponies who had braved the sea voyage, can be found in the DNA of "the Australian Pony". The little stallion's last mention in William's papers was in a letter to Geo. Poole of Sherwood on 23 May 1877. 'For some time past horses, represented to be yours, have been a nuisance on the road to Koo Wee Rup, especially a bay pony that has been persistent in her efforts to mate with my Shetland entire. She is in my paddock now. You will kindly remove her, first paying for the service of the entire £2.2.0.' There is no record of whether Mr Poole ever paid William the stud fee but, more than 140 years after Dockin' and the little bay mare had their rendezvous, the Victorian Shetland Pony Enthusiasts Club is going strong and holds annual shows at Harewood's annual 'Scots on the Swamp' open days in aid of the Koo Wee Rup Hospital.²⁴



Children thought to be Theodore and Maud Lyall with their ponies at Harewood, in the background a ship with three smokestacks hidden behind the mangroves, c. 1870. H.C



Helen (Nellie) Lyall, c. 1864. H.C



Child thought to be Margaret Lyall, c. 1864. H.C.



Annabella Lyall, c. 1864. .H.C



William Lyall Jr, c. 1864. H.C

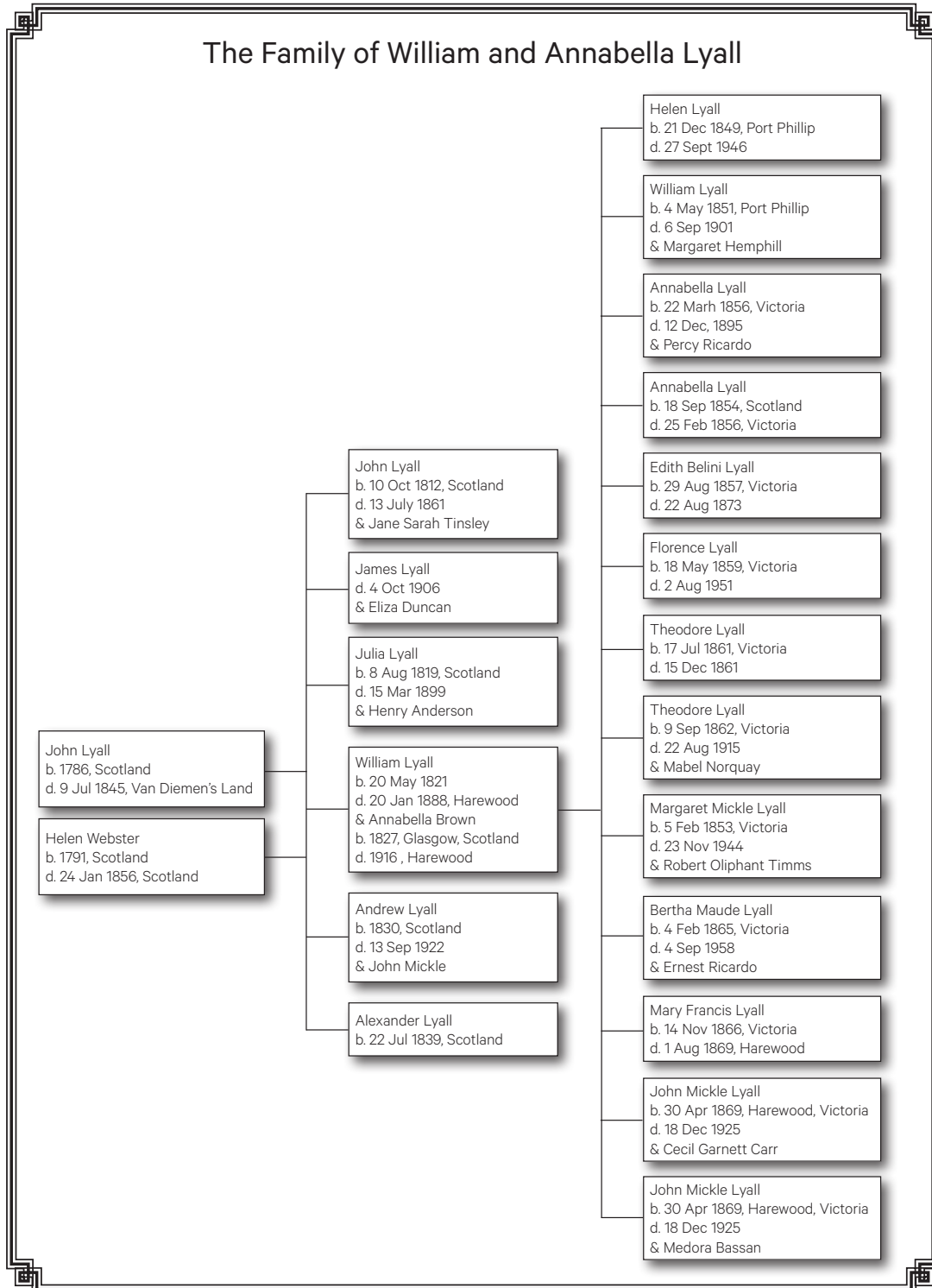


Theodore Lyall, c. 1864. H.C



William Lyall, c. 1864. H.C

WILLIAM LYALL'S FAMILY TREE



MIDDENS TO MORTAR

By the latter half of the nineteenth century, the power of humans to harness the forces and particles of nature, ‘manipulate stardust’ and mould environments on a grand scale was being greeted enthusiastically. With news of wealth from gold discovery, people were flocking to Victoria from around the world. One such immigrant was a passionate and creative Italian, Alessandro Martelli, who graduated from the University of Milan and went on to work as an architect and civil engineer in Turin, Piedmont, where land reclamation and irrigation had enabled major agricultural expansion. His reasons for migrating are obscure but, at that time, the colony had one of the highest per capita incomes in the world. The promise of building and agricultural development in the wake of the gold rush probably would not have been lost on a clever person with his background.²⁵

Arriving in 1858, he first worked as an architectural and mechanical draughtsman in the rapidly expanding Railway Department, but soon moved to private practice and was employed as an advisor on irrigation to the Victorian government. In 1860, he advertised in the *Victorian Farmer’s Journal* that he would ‘undertake any kind of works for distribution of waters on agricultural or horticultural lands, and also the construction of artificial meadows after the true Italian System’.

Martelli,
Alessandro, *The
Silkworm and its
Food*, Clarkson,
Shallard & Co,
Melbourne, 1863
Cover image. (H.L.)



A keen supporter of the Acclimatisation Society, it was perhaps in this capacity that he first met William Lyall and was drawn into conversation about his experiences with swamp drainage and architecture, Italian style. In 1863 Martelli published an essay on sericulture; a mottled copy of his *The Silkworm and its Food* still lies in the Harewood library and tells of the intrigue involved in smuggling the silkworms out of China and eventually establishing a financially successful silk industry in Sicily.

He enthused about the potential for sericulture to take over from gold as an export earner for Victoria, given the colony’s similar Mediterranean climate. Harewood’s three surviving mulberry trees date from around this same period.

The global village was shrinking, Victoria was setting trends as well as feeling the impact of global movements and distant civil disturbances were changing the face of world politics. Women were accidentally, and briefly given the right to vote in Victoria’s Electoral Act (1863) as Martelli threw his energy into leading Victoria’s

Italian community to support Giuseppe Garibaldi's nationalistic drive to oust the French and Austrians and to unite Italy.²⁶

From the United States, on 25 January 1865, a front-line fighting ship, the fully rigged steam cruiser, the *Shenandoah*, under the command of Captain James Waddell, limped into Port Phillip flying the Confederate flag. Britain was under treaty to remain neutral in the fighting engulfing America, and Victoria was considered part of Britain, so the colony was not permitted to offer succour to either side. Affable Sam Amess, the mayor of Melbourne and a friend of the Lyall family, was taken in by the charming Southerner, as Waddell smooth-talked his way around the party circuit his men surreptitiously refurbished their ship and took on more crew. The Captain presented Amess with one of the *Shenandoah's* small canons before they sailed out of the heads. The gun still remains in what were the Amess family gardens on Churchill Island, Western Port. That gun cost the British dearly: an incredible six million dollars in reparations had to be paid by the British when Waddell proceeded from Victoria to the north Pacific and reputedly sank thirty-seven Massachusetts whalers, raising the world market price of whale oil from £140 to £240 a ton.²⁷

In bustling 1860s Melbourne, Martelli set up an architectural practice in Collins Street and, with Luigi Verdi from Tuscany, established the Cavara Marble Works. They began importing marble artefacts and selling them throughout the Australian colonies with much success. That same year, William noted in his diary that Martelli had been paid for 'preparing a floor plan for Harewood'. The nature of Martelli's now-lost plan has been a source of interest, as it is agreed by all that no architect designed Harewood House. In style it is a strange mix of Early Victorian architecture and it still retains features of the period, including French doors, casement windows and narrow double hung windows; architraves and skirtings; an unusual coved ceiling; and boxed and scalloped eaves. The ad hoc arrangement of connected building forms, the highly variable elevations and delightful inconsistencies suggest Martelli's contribution to the design was minimal and that, as building progressed, Lyall and his builder, George Binding, adapted the floor plan to their own ideas and locally available materials. They made mortar from lime taken from the aboriginal middens, and fired homemade bricks from local clay. The window openings had different sizes and shapes, there were different roof pitches and eaves overhangs and the eave heights were variable



'Disenfranchised.'
Melbourne Punch,
1 February, 1866.
H.L.

Annabella Lyall, c.
1874. H.C.



in each elevation. The connection between the two-storey and single-storey sections of the house was awkward and the stairs to the second storey were tucked in behind the entry hall rather than leading directly from it, as would have been more typical for architect-designed homes of the era. Perhaps Martelli's Italian influence can be seen in the stuccoed brick exterior, with lines drawn to give the appearance of sandstone, or in the light colour or in the verandah, but Scottish influences are there as well.²⁸

Whether Martelli's 1865 plans were for a new house or an extension to an existing hunting lodge has not been finally resolved. Based on analysis of the physical fabric of the house, heritage architect Helen Lardner was of the opinion that the house was constructed as a single unit between

1865 and 1868, but this view was not supported by Lyall family tradition. Nor was it supported by Peter Lovell, a second heritage architect who examined the house. Lovell noted the presence of split hardwood laths in the single-storey section and sawn softwood laths in the two-storey section of the house, as well as different bricks and cedar door frames in the single-storey section and pine frames in the two-storey section, suggesting a time lapse between construction of the two sections, with the single-storey section being older. Lovell's putative sequence of construction suggests the dining room and sitting room were first built in the late 1850s, followed by an extension 1865-68, and would explain the disjunction between the two sections. Miles Lewis, a professor at Melbourne University, put forth yet another view: that the two-storey section was constructed first and the single-storey section added later.²⁹

Another of Harewood's puzzles is why the Lyalls choose to leave Frogmore, the home they had worked hard to build at Caulfield, to come to Western Port. With the birth of Mary Francis in 1866, the Lyall children now numbered eight. They had been married nineteen years, hard work had paid off and their lives were busy and comfortable. William could give Annabella an allowance of £20 a month, she had servants to help her and could visit neighbours or take a carriage to town to shop in Melbourne's elegant city stores. Perhaps the loss of a shipload of livestock being sent to New Zealand made cash tight, and by selling their home and moving the family to Western Port, they would be able to rationalise their holdings and have enough funds to embark on the grand plan of draining the Kooweerup Swamp. The idea of having broad acres always appealed to William, and the arrangement of the staircase and beams in Harewood

House hints that he and Annabella looked forward to extending their second storey when good fortune smiled on them again.³⁰

On 2 June 1868, William reported they had ‘arrived at Harewood from Tooradin having arrived there last night from Frogmore.’ The oak dining room and library furniture fitted perfectly in the rooms, as did the hallstand and brass canopy bed. By 6 August, he recorded that he ‘planted vines by the kitchen and two at the north end of the House at Harewood and left for Warrnambool.’ Their brass canopy bed must have been put to good use as their youngest son, John Mickle Lyall, suitably nicknamed Harewood, arrived the following April. For his name-giving, instead of his naked body being anointed with emu fat and ochre according to Kulin custom, this infant was dressed in white and daubed with water from the Lyall family’s christening font. Sadly, his sister Mary Francis died four months later. The Rev Janeway’s tiny book, *A Token for Children, being an exact account of the conversion, holy and exemplary lives and joyful deaths of several young children*, may have offered her parents and young siblings some solace in trying to make sense out of their grief. Keeping children alive was difficult even for affluent families.³¹



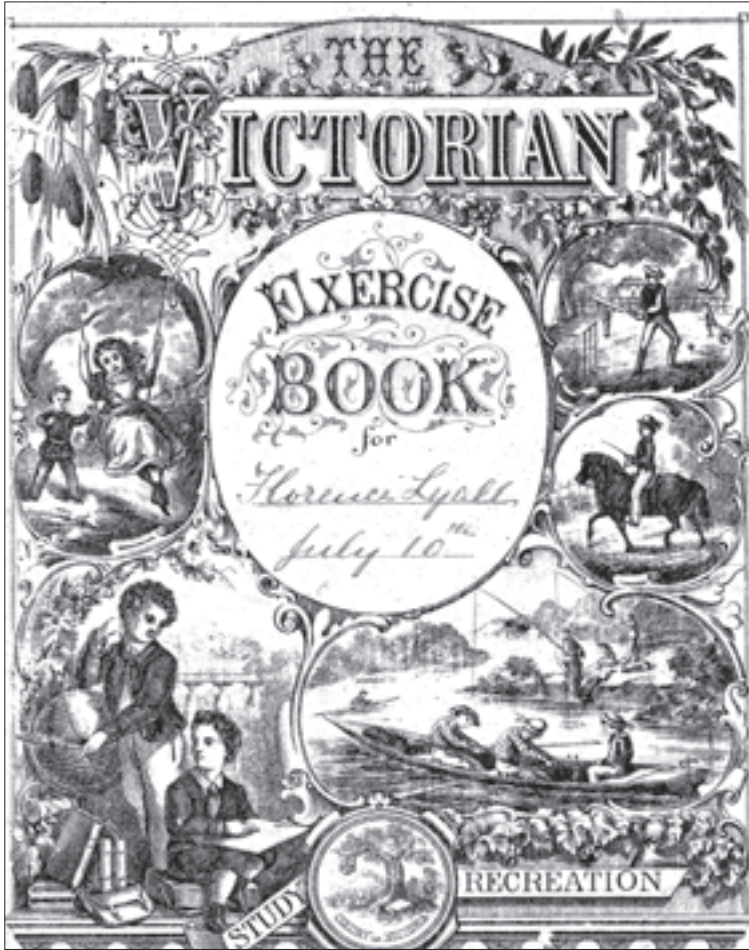
John Mickle Lyall c.
1869. H.C.

Encased in glass and oak, the Harewood library is dotted with memories of the Lyall children’s growing up years. Scribbled inscriptions say more about the family than the printed words. On the facing page of the gold leaf epic poem *The Princess* by Alfred Tennyson, written in pencil is ‘Taken from the parliamentary library by JG Francis for Nellie Lyall’: the colony’s Premier had nicked a book for his mate’s daughter. There are no plans to return it, the overdue fine might break the bank. Other poetry books abound: Scott, Burns, Milton, Dryden, Bryon, Gray and ballads by aspiring local poets.³²

‘Master W Lyall’ practised copperplate as he wrote his name on the title page of *Basil, the schoolboy, or the Heir to Arundel* by Rev Monro. As ‘A Prize for Improvement’ in 1862, he was given *The History of Insects*. ‘Maggie’ drew a line on top and below her name inside the cover of *A new Method of Learning to Read, Write, and Speak a Language in Six months, Adapted to the French for use of Schools and Private Teachers*. Of three *The Child’s Companions*, one with a broken binding



Florence Lyall, c.
1875. H.C.



Florence Lyall's
'Colony of Victoria'
Exercise Book, c.
1870. H.L.

and missing title page, has 'Edith Lyall, 1859, Frogmore, Melbourne', written in a childish hand inside the cover. The family was devastated when Edith died of influenza at age sixteen. Perhaps being in the middle order of many daughters made Florence particularly possessive, she seemed to write her name on everything: *A Child's History of England*, Philip's *Student Atlas of Modern Geography*; *Fungi*, Lennie's *English Grammar*; *Biographical History of English Literature*; *Eton's Latin Grammar*; recycled *Joyce's Arithmetic* and *Runnymede and Lincoln-Fair*, previously inscribed by her father, over a hundred novels, scrapbooks and newspaper clippings, the list goes on. Her younger brother Theodore left hardly a trace; and just one of many character-building little tales, *The One Moss-Rose*, by Rev Power, has 'to Maud Lyall from her affectionate mother A.B. Lyall' as its inscription.

Music, that universal connector, was an important part of Lyall family learning, especially singing and playing the

traditional songs of Scotland. As the girls grew older, they enthusiastically swapped popular sheet music. 'Bella Lyall' was neatly written in the top right corner of sheet music, *Don Juan*, *Petite Fantaise de Mozart pour le Piano* by A. Croisez. Hundreds of pieces remain: Scottish folk music, polkas, waltzes and popular tunes dating from Annabella Brown's childhood to numerous items the girls exchanged amongst themselves throughout their lives.³³

Close encounters with native animals were also etched into the Lyall children's memories.

One day Maud Lyall was in the fowl-house searching for eggs when she noticed a large tiger snake disappearing down a small hole in the floor. Knowing that her mother would be coming later to collect the eggs, she grabbed the tip of the snake's tail before it had completely disappeared and tried, unsuccessfully, to pull it back. Calling to a farm employee working nearby, "Come quickly and kill it," she still held on and, just as the man arrived, the snake became limp so that she was able to pull it out and throw it



Left: Maud Lyall, c. 1875. H.C.



Right: Nellie Lyall with Mary Francis, c. 1869. Mary was the daughter of John Francis, Victoria's Premier. 1872-74. H.C.

quickly away. The man was white in the face with alarm and said, "Oh, Miss, you must never do a naughty thing like that again."³⁴

In another story, Maud Lyall and her sister Florence were running down the stairs into the hall when Florence, who was leading, called: "Look out a snake!" and jumped the remaining steps, upon one of which a tiger snake was lying. Maud also jumped and seizing a crook-handled walking stick, quickly dispatching the unwelcome intruder.³⁵

Trevally was plentiful in the creeks. One time, Maud was fishing at the bridge beside the "Harewood" gate when a large shoal swam up. She kept pulling them up until she was exhausted and then walked back to the house, where she asked a farm employee to take two large buckets and collect the fish. Even this was not enough to hold the catch. Whiting was also plentiful, and family and friends would smoke whole fish on a piece of wire stretched across a fire made of green chips, grass or saw dust. Unlike in Aboriginal homes, smoked eels did not appear to be a favoured menu item and the Lyall girls were never recorded wading barefoot in the inlet to catch the eel between their toes!³⁶

While the Lyall children were discovering 'the bush', their father was endeavouring to 'improve' it. He released beautiful silver and golden Chinese pheasants into the swamp that were seen for some years afterwards thriving in the tea-tree scrub. Granddaughter Bertha Ricardo

'Not so useless as they appear,'
Melbourne Punch
5 April 1860, p. 88.
H.L.



told the story of a man who arrived at Harewood holding two pheasants he had shot, and asked "What kind of birds are those?" An irate William replied: "You confounded idiot, they were my pheasants!" Peacocks and guinea fowl were also released, but in spite of repeated attempts, their stardust didn't suit Kooweerup: none of Lyall's game birds survived to establish feral populations.³⁷

COMING OF AGE

The older Lyall daughters were growing out of childhood. Annabella's worn 1839 copy of *Preparation for the Lord's Supper with a Companion to the altar intended for the use of Ladies* by Mrs Cornwallis (London) was probably used by all. It was a gentle interpretation of Christian doctrines with sensible advice that could transcend time and place. While defending a literal interpretation of the Bible, Mrs Cornwallis acknowledged,

Much must necessarily remain beyond our apprehension; the sight of the sun, which, though it has been the source of light and vegetation through successive ages, remains still incomprehensible as to its nature, might teach us that, while we remain in the body, we must remain babes in knowledge; and if we cannot understand the objects of our sight, how can we expect to pierce into the hidden counsels of the Most High? Still, however, the humble inquirer may discover enough to establish his faith, and to support him as he travels through life's weary pilgrimage.³⁸

Margaret Lyall, c.
1870. H.C.



In advocating forbearance of 'alternative paths', she defended her stance, 'When the question was put to our Lord, "Who shall be saved?" he waived it, and replied, "Strive to enter in at the strait gate," &c.: an answer which may convince us that it is not a lawful inquiry, and that our own salvation is the proper object of solicitude.' A Lyall family reader of the book highlighted St Paul's quote 'Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall.' On a more practical note, Mrs Cornwallis offered 'It is the advice of an eminent divine respecting wandering in prayer, never look back to the portion of service lost, but to go on with that which is present; and at the close to concentrate all in a sincere Amen.'³⁹

With expectations as to duty and conduct made clear, the elder Lyall daughters surveyed the field of potential suitors their parents encouraged in their direction. Percy Ricardo, a handsome, talented, jack-of-all-trades, who carried the stardust of the hard-

line economist David Ricardo's family, had been a driver with Lord Wolseley's Red River Exhibition in Canada in 1870. Then he decided to seek his fortune in Australia. A superb axeman, horseman and blacksmith, as well as a fine draughtsman, he was working in Sydney when William Lyall came to judge the cattle at the Sydney Show. An invitation to bustling Melbourne followed.⁴⁰

Percy soon discovered his father-in-law-to-be was involved in all kinds of enterprises. William served as the first President of the Mornington Farmers' Association and also of the Cranbourne Road Board, which later became the Shire of Cranbourne Council. He pressed for government involvement in his grand vision to drain the Kooweerup Swamp and convert the land into rich grazing and farming country and he hired men to construct drains. Later he contributed £400 to the Board to employ others to cut channels to give the Lang Lang River a direct outlet to the sea. Water flowed from his new windmill, the first on the swamp, as the wine flowed at Harewood House, the focus of social life in the district.⁴¹

Mrs. William Lyall who had only her daughters and one maid to assist her, managed her large household with great skill. Delicious meals were always provided for the family and their numerous friends, and all the catering necessary for the many dances and parties held there, was done in the home.

In the hall, which had a glass roof, tall tree ferns grew in green tubs and there were also palms and other glass-house plants. The large dining table was put in there for the dance suppers and the soft light from the candles, in the Sheffield-plate candle sticks, which were part of the decoration, shone on the pale green Celadon-glass plates patterned with birds and butterflies. Altogether, it was a lovely setting and the suppers



'Melbourne in 1871'. In 'A Resident' (J. Kerr), *Glimpses of Life in Victoria*, Edmonston & Douglas, Edinburgh, 1872, p. 347. H.L.

provided would have delighted even an epicure. The happiness, laughter and contentment which prevailed in the home made the many friends of the Lyall family love and remember them.⁴²

Family lore has it that Percy would drive from Melbourne to Harewood with Jubilee and Dandy, his hackneys, harnessed in tandem. Young Annabella caught his eye. There are tales of William giving Percy a silver horn that Percy would blow as he came down from Cranbourne, the signal to put on the kettle for a cup of tea.⁴³

The Lyall daughters' other suitors did not meet with such ready approval. Nellie had the misfortune to fall in love with her music teacher, a man of good character but, according to William, of no real prospects. She was heartbroken and, while a popular partner at balls and race meetings, she lived her life a vivacious spinster, who, as she put it, 'went to the top of the fence but never over it'.⁴⁴ Maggie's first love was a local doctor-grazier who was considered a 'possibility' until news came he had been involved in an affray in Collins Street, outside the Melbourne Club, the worse for liquor. Another of their parents' books, *The Habits of Good Society* (by 'the Man in the Club Window' and 'a Matron'), spelt out the hypocritical mores of 19th century British culture and the social ostracism that befell those who didn't conform. Which Lyall family members read and marked the book is uncertain, but there are heavy 'Xs' next to the paragraph:

The vice of courts is proverbial, but courtly manners are reckoned as the best. All the beaux and halfwits on record have led bad lives. Chesterfield himself was a dissolute gambler, and repented bitterly in his old age of his past life, and it is he who says, that the best company is not necessarily the most moral, which determines the value of his book on etiquette. There is, however, something in the vice of this kind of society which makes it the most and the least

gilded; it is made elegant and covered with the gloss of good breeding. Men of family have to mix with ladies, and ladies of the family have almost public reputations to keep up. All that is done is done sub rosa.⁴⁵

Had the affray involving Maggie's suitor been inside, the judgment might have been less harsh, but the doctor-grazier was crossed off the list. So too was the next to seek her hand: a man of good reputation but slender means, whom William encouraged to go to the gold fields. He caught typhoid fever and died.⁴⁶

Young Master William Lyall was educated by tutors at home and, later, at Melbourne Grammar School. With the family's return trip to Britain under his belt by the age of

William Lyall Jr., c.
1870. H.C.



six, he was a seasoned seaman when the family came to live at Harewood and spent much of his spare time sailing a 30 ft. yacht his father had given him. He loved being out in rough weather and one story tells of the family watching from Harewood's balcony as his yacht's mast snapped in a storm and he battled his way back up the creek. He became one of the original trustees of the Cranbourne Racecourse and lived in the shadow of his father in the management of the various Lyall properties. He would stay in the homestead at Yallock where a brick stable had been constructed with beautiful wrought iron doors and woodwork fashioned from imported oak. Beside the Yallock Creek, a picturesque water-wheel turned. In the garden, large mulberry trees grew from which his sisters loved to pick baskets full of berries. A little further down the creek, William Senior had installed a brick-making machine that was churning out fine quality bricks with W. Lyall imprinted on them. Galvanised iron windmills, barbwire fences and corrugated iron roofs were dotting the Western Port landscape.⁴⁷

William's close friend, James, became Victoria's premier in 1872. Both fathers watched their children grow up as quickly as the new colony to which they were dedicating their lives. William gave the Francis children, Annie and Jim, splendid hunters they often rode from Melbourne to Harewood. They could leave Melbourne at 5 a.m. and complete the journey of forty miles in time to arrive for breakfast. More exciting, Benjiroo, the colt by Touchstone that Lyall had bred and owned, was a starter in the Melbourne Cup. The families packed the stands as the horse left the barrier and the race was called.⁴⁸

COUNT, BENJIROO, and IRISH KING were in the lead, ACE, and KING OF THE RING getting a very bad start. Passing the stand BENJIROO was leading, DAGWORTH, QUACK and CONTESSA being in the middle of the ruck. At the old stand THE ACE went up, and passing the abattoirs was leading, with BENJIROO second and QUACK third; DAGWORTH ABOUT SIXTH. Coming into the straight QUACK passed THE ACE, and then Donnelly brought on DAGWORTH, who, however, could only pass BARBELLE, QUACK winning by about two lengths. ACE beat DAGWORTH by a neck for second place, BARBELLE was fourth, MISTY MORN fifth, BENJIROO sixth, KING OF THE RING seventh. Time, 3m 39 sec.⁴⁹

Their disappointment at The Quack's win was a little allayed when Benjiroo romped home first in the four-year-old handicap the following day. Another try at the Cup the following year saw Benjiroo well back in the field and Don Juan an easy winner. Through this, William Senior persisted in his chequered acclimatisation attempts and, in 1874, again planted Sydney rock oysters in the inlets.

July 4th. In the two branches of home inlet above the bridge, planted 17 bags of oysters, about 5,000 full size. In middle inlet, below bridge and above the mangroves, twenty bags fine sized oysters.

July 11th. Oyster planting from a little below third inlet down to a point at the beginning of the mangroves - 19 bags of two-year old oysters from Broken Bay.

July 12th, Sunday. Six bags Broken Bay oysters bottom of middle inlet within range of mangroves.

July 13th. 40,000 oysters in drains, all killed by fresh-water floods.

July 14th. Cheque, Mr Bracks for Oysters - £25.0.0.⁵⁰



Hunter with side-saddle at Harewood, c. 1872. The upstairs balcony roof on the house had not yet been constructed. Lyall sowed ryegrass and clover, which looked luxuriant. H.C.

Captain Lock regularly sailed the *Swan* into Lyall's Inlet with supplies. On one occasion, the Hon. Mr Francis arrived on the *Pharos* along with the Hon. Mr Casey and others to inspect Lyall's oysters. On another Sam Amess, once mayor of Melbourne, came by boat from his property on Churchill Island to deliver a gift of Highland cattle. On still another, Victoria's only battleship, the ironclad ship *HMVS Cerberus*, which Britain had given to Victoria in 1869 as a monitor ship, steamed up the Bay and lay anchor.

The Captain was brought ashore to the landing in the creek to visit Harewood House.⁵¹

Being a respected Port Phillipian pioneer with a reputation for fairness and a gift for spotting good breeding brought Lyall many invitations to judge at agricultural shows. At Gisborne, in 1875, he judged the Shorthorn cattle and returned to Melbourne 'with the Governor in a special railway carriage.' Going back to Tooradin the following day with the new school mistress, he found the Reverend Green deep in dispute with Jimmy and Eliza Dunbar as the minister tried to convince Eliza to go to the Reserve at Coranderrk. Lyall took the Aboriginal couple's side and Green left empty handed.⁵²

Newcomers were taking up land in the swamp as the Lands Department sold new blocks at auction. Fellow Scotsman Duncan McGregor took his place beside Lyall and McMillan as the third largest landholder. He set thirty men to work clearing and draining the western edge of the great swamp to create Dalmore. Meanwhile, Lyall's dealings in local politics were proving stormy: he resigned from the Cranbourne Council declaring, "...that the Secretary and the books entrusted to his care were living lies; that the books of the Shire were falsified, and that the Secretary was not a fit and proper person to be entrusted with the books." A local clergyman was called in to arbitrate the dispute. Losing the case, Lyall was required to apologise in the public press and pay £5 damages to the Secretary, Mr Dumaresq, but such was the esteem with which he was held in the community, he was still invited to lay the foundation stone of the new Shire Hall on 6 March 1875.

Racing, sailing, fishing and shooting were sports the colonists loved and Western Port was developing a reputation as a sportsman's paradise. The locals cheered Woolamai, the McHaffie's horse, from Phillip Island, as he flew past the post to win the Melbourne

Cup of '75. Tooradin fishermen took parties from Melbourne out sailing on the Bay then came back, past the old Aboriginal middens, for a drink at the local pub. At Harewood, shooting parties were a feature of the social life and visitors came from as far afield as the Western District. In his book, *Memoirs of a Stockman*, Harry Peck, of Peck, Hudson & Raynor, recalled one such event.⁵³

William Lyall, a big man physically and in every other way, was lavish in his hospitality and had large house parties at "Harewood" at Christmas time. At one such, in the seventies, that good pal, Walter Beattie and I were spending holidays at "Yallock", a few miles away, and we were invited to join the house-party for Christmas Day which fell, that year, on a Monday. At "Yallock" only a bachelor overseer and a stockman were in residence and, somehow, we lost the run of days and observed the Saturday as Sunday. The next morning we rode over to "Harewood", arriving about 11:30 a.m. We walked up to the house and were just about to knock at the front door when Walter had a brain-wave. "I believe its Sunday and we have mistaken the day. Mr Lyall always has a service for all on Sunday mornings in the big dining room. I'll peep over the window-sill." Sure enough, there was the family, visitors, and all the staff at the Sunday morning service. We two sneaked quietly down to the stables, got our horses and returned to "Yallock" to observe two Sundays running. Returning the next day for Christmas, we had our first clay-pigeon shooting match and, altogether, a great day.⁵⁴

'Our Annual Cup, or Naught.' The Lyall's horse 'Impudence' came in fourth.
Melbourne Punch,
2 November 1876.
H.L.

Alec, Jack and Harry Anderson, cousins whose parents, William's sister Julia and Henry Anderson, lived at "Bore-Yallock", near Skipton, visited often, enjoyed hunting and impressed the family with their clever, well-trained horses. Maggie's third suitor, Robert Timms, a cousin of the Andersons, could boast a fine Western Districts property, Eurack, near Mt Hesse. He won Maggie's heart and William's approval and Harewood filled with happy festivity as the Reverend Duff married the couple on 23 March 1876.⁵⁵

It has been something of a Lyall family joke that William enjoyed more success in pairing off his offspring than at growing his oysters. Maud told of a huge flood that swept up the two creeks on either side of the house in October 1876, leaving it and the surrounding home paddocks an island in the centre of a sea of water and sounding the final death knell for the Sydney oysters. Their stardust was better suited to Sydney's rocky shores than Western Port's muddy flats. Ironically, over a century later, the



Pacific Oyster *Crassostrea gigas*, a similar species, was accidentally introduced and is now considered an exotic pest.

While their oysters were drowning, Lang Lang, the Lyall's best brood mare, in foal to Tim Whiffler, gave birth to a bay colt with a large star and two white socks the family named Tidal Wave. Another of Lyall's horses, Impudence, was a starter in the Cup the following month, but was thought to have so little chance the bookmaker Joe Thompson caused much amusement by calling the odds "I don't like to mention it". Impudence only just missed out on the money, however, and ran a respectable fourth. Nine out of eleven horses being sent down from Sydney for the Cup by sea that year died in a tragic shipping disaster.⁵⁶

When Percy Ricardo joined Bella and the newlyweds for their first Lyall family Christmas, all held hopes 'Tidal Wave' might someday carry the brown and gold family colours home in the elusive Cup.⁵⁷ Bella's poem to mark the happiness of that Christmas gathering still lay in the library table drawer, over 140 years later.

Harewood 1876

Hard by the sea it stands, its white walls glancing
Across the blue rippling sea
Right merrily the waves are dancing
Even as tho' joining our glee
With smile and laughter is the old house filled
Our hearts are glad, the dance goes merrily
Old friends are gathered round the festive boats
Dear house of boundless hospitality

Bella Lyall - Xmas 1876⁵⁸

Harewood buzzed with romance and the family's old friend James Francis, with memories of his early affection for her Aunt Julia, penned this poem when was it Bella's turn to wed. The new Mr and Mrs Percy Ricardo journeyed north to Queensland, where Percy took the position as manager of Franklinvale Station. Tidal Wave finished well back in the field for the 1879 Melbourne Cup.⁵⁹

Our Bella is married and bidding adieu
To the friends and the home she loved in the past -
And her life & affections must now be recast -
But let us all hope, she had made an election
Which anchored in hope, may be moored in affection.
We know her career in the future of life
Will conform the "good child" to the dutiful wife -
"God bless" her we say, but with tears in our eyes
The man who has got her, indeed has a prize -
He came as a stranger, & with love almost cruel

Has carried away her friends' dearest jewel.
 But she made her own choice, & chose her own mate -
 And whatever may happen, is equal to fate.
 She will make his home happy, whatever it be,
 For in tact & money she holdesth the key.
 She abounds in interest, & her own happy smile
 From poverty & pain or sorrow could beguile.
 Make a home in the bush, "a palace of light" -
 And all the surroundings, look beaming and bright.
 JG Francis, Airlie House 1879⁶⁰



Annabella Lyall-Ricardo c. 1876. H.C.



Percy Ricardo c. 1876. H.C.

NOT FOR A TITLE

The younger members of the Lyall family continued their education at Harewood. The public library at Cranbourne had only a modest 381 volumes compared to over 600 volumes that filled the family's bookshelves at home. Books were a favourite present. A beautiful volume of Longfellow's works was inscribed 'To Florence from her friend Connie Hudson for Christmas in 1880'. William and Annabella gave their daughter two volumes of Jean Ingelow's poetry the same Christmas to add to the family's collection.⁶¹

While William Lyall's large family was thriving, at the Coranderrk Aboriginal Reserve, William Barak lost his only son, David, to tuberculosis. Grieving, Barak later told his friend Alfred Howitt that in his dreams, strings had dropped down from the hole in the sky and his murup (spirit) climbed up one and his son the other. When they reached

John Mickle Lyall,
next to Lyall's Inlet,
with pony and dog,
1886. H.C.



the hole to Tharangalk-bek, David passed through and, for a brief moment, Barak was reunited with his dead family before being sent back to earth.⁶²

At Harewood, the thriving Lyall children needed a tutor and one of the job applicants was Mr Turner, who had come to Australia with an English cricket team but lost all his money betting on it.

Invitation sent
to William Lyall
to attend the
First National
Convention of
Cattlemen in
Kansas, 1884.



Having answered Mr. Lyall's newspaper advertisement for a Tutor, he obtained the position and proved to be highly educated and, to the delight of the Lyalls, an accomplished pianist. He was also an entomologist (butterfly collector) and often, when the children told him they had seen a rare butterfly he would seize his net and rush out in pursuit, but seldom had such success. Shooting was another pastime and on Saturdays he and Theodore Lyall, who usually accompanied him, would walk many miles on these shooting expeditions. Through the efforts of Mr. William Lyall, who wrote much good accounts of Mr. Turner's exemplary behaviour

while Tutor at “Harewood”, to Mr. Turner Senior, the father and son were reconciled and the latter returned to England.⁶³

Pleased at having made it to age sixty and forever thinking about new projects, William wrote to Maggie about the boring he was doing for gold, kerosene, oil or artesian water. He reckoned he had tasted kerosene in the middle drain, but had his hopes set on oil as it would ‘make light of all our money worries’. In the end, the workers found only water.

Railways octopusing their way out into the Victorian countryside dominated discussions, especially when a new clause, added to Thomas (‘Bent by name, bent by nature’) Bent’s 1882 Bill for a Great Southern Railway, dealt with the Kooweerup Swamp. It read ‘The board may, after it has reclaimed or drained the whole or any parts of the land comprised in the said swamp, sell by public auction any portion so claimed or drained.’ An impassioned Opposition Leader, Graham Berry, and his radical supporters managed to squash the legislation as they argued that linking the Government with the land speculators would block chances of poor hard-working farmers being able to buy land.⁶⁴

Victorian women had been unintentionally enfranchised in 1863 but this was rescinded the next year and not reinstated. Well looked after by their menfolk, the Lyall women didn’t engage in political activism, rather their ‘accomplishments’ were displayed around the piano and within their families. An undated newspaper clipping, still in the library drawer read,

The girl who pleases is seldom very brilliant. She can play, paint, write - a little of all three but she is perfect at none. Her performances on the piano are simple but elegant. She knows exactly the mood of her listener, and chooses her pieces accordingly.

Ah! that is the secret of her success. To know what is wanted, to understand perfectly the desires and movements of her friends and relations - that is her gift, her talent I may term it, and using this talent every hour, every moment of her life, she is regarded as a blessing to all who may be so fortunate as to come within her magic circle of acquaintances.



Annabella Lyall
Ricardo with baby
Amy, c. 1880. H.C.

Amy Ricardo born 1880 (Courtesy: Suzanne Perry Okeden)



Ralph Ricardo born 1884 (Courtesy: Suzanne Perry Okeden)



Need I add, she is the one to win a man's heart, and, what is better still, she knows how to keep it.

Outgoing Maud Lyall 'danced all the ball dances delightfully' while more retiring Florence Lyall played dance music 'remarkably well'. Dottie (Margaret) and Lizzie, the Hemphill sisters of Happy Valley, Cranbourne, also played well and, on warm summer evenings, while family and friends rested under the cypress trees on the grassy rise facing the Bay, Lizzie would entertain the group with such items as Beethoven's Moonlight Sonata. Dottie had her heart set on William Junior.

Up North, Bella was kept busy with babies: Amy, born 1880, and Ralph, born four years later. Their Grandma, Grandpa and numerous aunts and uncles at Harewood cherished the growing up photos of the children that Bella sent, and her sisters had gifts of popular sheet music she inscribed 'love from Bella' bound into books. Percy decided to leave Franklinsvale and take up a position as manager of the Brisbane Ice Works. Spurred by the German annexation of New Guinea in 1884, Queensland expanded her navy and was reviewing land defences. With his Canadian experience behind him, Percy was instrumental in creating the 130-man-strong Queensland Mounted Infantry, of which he was appointed Lieutenant.⁶⁵

William and Dottie married in 1884 and optimistically followed in Percy and Bella's tracks, to take up a lease on Greenvale Station, near Townsville and spread their stardust in Queensland. Sadly, the force of a Southern Oscillation-El Niño weather cycle struck northern Australia around that same time and magic didn't happen. Willie stuck it out on the land as Dottie returned to Melbourne to be with her mother for the birth of their first child, Margaret (Meta).⁶⁶

When the baby was old enough to travel, Dottie set off homeward to Queensland aboard the *Cahors*, accompanied by her sister-in-law Maud. The ship struck a rock a mile from shore, between the mouths of the Clarence and Richmond Rivers. Rockets were being fired as distress signals and after some hours, about dawn, a ship appeared. She was the *Lyemoon* standing by a considerable distance, but near enough for lifeboats to reach her. A crane, from which was suspended a large wicker basket, was hanging over the side of the stricken ship. The first boat lowered was upset, and two sailors were thrown into the sea, from which they were hauled with some difficulty. When the next boat was ready, the women passengers could not be persuaded to leave the ship. The captain turned to Maud and asked her to lead the way. She replied, "I do not mind whether I go first or last," and bravely stepped into the basket. There were hearty cheers from the sailors and, after being lowered again, the basket was grasped by two sailors standing in the life boat and Maud was shaken out onto the bottom of the boat. The success of the manoeuvre was enough to reassure the other passengers, including Maud's sister-in-law Dottie Lyall and her baby, who were next to follow.⁶⁷

The lifeboat made it to the waiting steamer and eventually all but one sailor were safely landed at Brisbane. Two ponies managed to swim ashore. Maud, who stayed with Bella and Percy, was feted in Brisbane, with balls to attend and invitations to parties at Government House. Dottie made her way back to Greenvale Station and wrote to the Harewood folk of her life there with baby Margaret.

... I did not feel much up to writing - was too unsettled and this is only the second mail since our arrival. We are all quite well and getting on famously even tho' we have no married couple. We are invaded with niggers - the house sometimes swarms



William Lyall Jr and
Margaret Hemphill-
Lyall c.1885. H.C.



Maud Lyall, c. 1885.
H.C.

Greenvale Station,
Burdekin River,
Queensland, c.
1886. William Lyall
Jr and his bride
Margaret Hemphill
came here after
their marriage in
1884. H.C.



with them - some are as dirty as can be with just old shirts that barely hold together and they come and sit down and watch me give the baby her bath and are highly amused. I have two old gins working. One is a really good old thing and works well, but the other does not understand working, besides has a small child which takes a lot of attention. It is such a dear wee mite. Then I've a small girl about 10 years old (I've called her Dinah). I'm trying to break her in and already she has improved very much - Willie

and I have great fun with her. I had to make them all frocks before I could let them do work, then had to make others so as to have one to wash the others. They go to the river and bathe every day and are gradually becoming civilized. There must be over 40 at the camp altogether. We hear them at the corroborees at night.⁶⁸

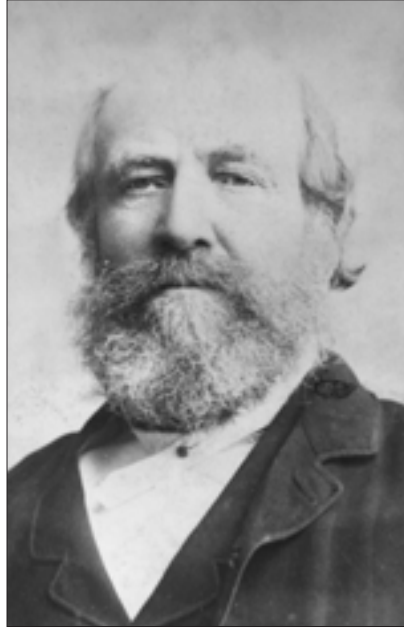
Florence Lyall
(right) with the
Hudson sisters,
Connie and Maggie,
c. 1885. H.C.



Life went on at Harewood, but William Senior's health was failing. He may have compounded his vaguely described 'old complaint' (perhaps gall stones or a liver problem) with a stroke, as he could still ride but had difficulty in writing. He would have felt gratified when Victoria's Governor-in-Council ordered an audit of the Cranbourne Council. In their damning twenty four page report, the auditors found that 'Almost every known subterfuge and mode of falsification and deception have

been brought into requisition by the assistance and connivance of Councillors, all of which have remained unchecked and unchallenged for the last twelve or fourteen years.' Lyall's earlier outcry against the Cranbourne Councillors was vindicated and the audit was the catalyst for a major revision of the Local Government Act.⁶⁹

Florence Lyall was artistic. An exquisite gold-gilded teapot decorated with forget-me-nots, roses and yellow butterflies signed and dated 1886 still remains at Harewood and one of her plates is now the earliest item in the Victorian China Painter Guild's collection. These are both so well executed that she must have received training, but who her teacher was is not known. Like Murrundindi's comments about the magic of the spirit stones being related to their remaining in the context of where they were found, the gold gilt adorning the spout and handle of Florence's tea pot spurs memory and imagination. It conjures up a vision of the same gold, five billion years ago, being poured from the exploding supernova into our infant sun, spun off with molten rock to join our planet, then, oozing through quartz, becoming a nugget on Victoria's gold fields before, at last, turning up as decoration on this beautiful work of art. Her tastes in books turned to novels and volumes like Frances Wilbraham's *The Sere and Yellow Leaf*, with 'hints to brighten and invigorate declining years'. Nellie took to writing her father's letters for him and the family diary.⁷⁰



William Lyall c.
1887. H.C.

A change of government saw construction on the Great Southern Railway get underway, and a scheme for reclamation and leasing of the Kooweerup Swamp finally passed. Falkingham & Sons got the contract to build the railway from Tooradin into Gippsland and by 1887 there were 500 men working on the railway construction.⁷¹ Western Port stardust was being reconfigured at an ever accelerating rate. With his health further deteriorating, William Lyall did not live to see it; but his dream of turning the swamp into productive farmland would become a reality to such an extent that only minute fragments of this once vast and complex ecosystem remain. An alchemist not perceiving the greatness of his power, without large tigers for predators, the Ceylonese Sambar deer he released would expand up the east coast of Australia, sometimes reaching plague proportions, as was also the case with European hare and Scottish gorse. More positive in his legacy were his breeding of high quality livestock, his fine collection of books, the family he educated, the home he built and the intellectual vigour he brought to agricultural pursuits in Victoria. Nellie wrote:

18 January 1888

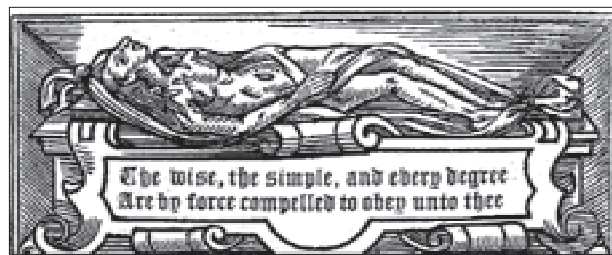
Telegrams from Dr. Moore and Frank Madden saying they would be down during the day. Mrs A. Hudson & Son called thought our father looking bright and well and very much better all hopeful about him. Dr. and Frank thought him much better than expected. Poor father quite bright and merry - change at 1/2 past 8 p.m. - not nearly so well all very anxious

19 January

In good spirits but seems very tired and very anxious to have will signed and after that said in reply to my question, are you satisfied now? Quite satisfied Darling had some spirits and milk and about 20 past 1 p.m. fell asleep, breathing loud and very short. We thought he was resting but I thought he grew weaker but could not tell. (...)

20 January

'All must needs die' from *The Book of Common Prayer*, Illustrated by Albrecht Durer and Hans Holbein, 1853 edition, Day 21. H.L. 'William Lyall, Frogmore September 17, 1858' written inside the cover.



Breathing shorter and quicker. At one o'clock with the outgoing tide our father passed quietly away without a move looking so happy and at rest - Poor Mother! & Harewood.⁷²

The girls left his library untouched, as a shrine to his

memory. Granddaughter Bertha's family memoirs bent the story to build William into a presence larger than life, but he left a remarkable legacy and, in essence, her comments ring true.

Physically well-built and essentially a man's man, William Lyall possessed great charm of manner. It was said of him that when he entered a room, no matter how crowded, he attracted great attention. (...) With his kindly generous disposition, combined with great knowledge on many subjects, William Lyall was ever ready to respond to the many demands made upon him for help, and even was consulted by his fellow Parliamentarians on matters of etiquette. At that time Members of Parliament were not paid, and when it was suggested that they should be, William Lyall opposed it. Described by his friends as "the finest man God ever made", he gave evidence of his sincere public-spiritedness and modesty, when on being offered a title, he refused saying, "What I have done is for the good of the country and not for the sake of an empty title."⁷³

5

A LIFE, A LEGACY



Duke and Duchess of York, Welcome to the Land of the ANZACs, 1927.
Harewood Library.

Children's book illustrations by women artists featuring Australian landscape: Violet Teague, cover, *Night Fall in the Ti-Tree*, Elkin Mathews, London, 1906. (right), Ida Rentoul-Outhwaite, Goblin Stairs, *Elves and Fairies*, Lothian, Melbourne, 1916 (far right). From the Harewood Library.



Cootamundra Wattle (*Acacia baileyana*). The end of the First World War saw an abandonment of tight laced Victorian fashions as well as an awakening of affection and pride in things Australian. A loosely clad maiden is posed amongst wattles in Archibald Campbell's book, *Golden Wattle, our national floral emblem*. Osboldstone, Melbourne, 1921. p. 5, H.L



Bertha Ricardo, one of William and Annabella's granddaughters, in fashionably flowing robes c. 1921. H.C. She was the last Lyall family member to own Harewood (1953-68).

Let every man be occupied, and occupied in the highest employment of which his nature is capable, and die with the consciousness that he has done his best. - Sydney Smith

Quotation marked 'X' by Florence Lyall¹

In his will of eight closely written pages, William named Helen and his old friend William Hudson as executors and asked to be buried 'on the sandhills of my Harewood estate'. Harewood House, was to pass to John Mickle Lyall, not yet twenty at the time of his father's death, with Annabella to receive an annuity from the property for her lifetime. William also requested 'no member of my family shall on my decease assume black clothing by way of mourning', but Annabella chose to dress in black in spite of William's appeal and, rather than on the sandhills of Harewood, it was under the granite monument at the family plot in the Cranbourne cemetery that she joined her soul mate 28 years later.²

The ponies on Harewood were split into eight lots for the eight children, total value £525.0.0. Thirteen were sold but fetched less than £10 per head, considered a 'very bad sale' at the time. Deerside was put up for sale. Melbourne folk caught the train to the newly constructed Tooradin station and a coach to the Bridge Hotel for the auction. While Lyall's Chinese pheasants didn't survive, his hare and Sambar deer had acclimatised and now descendants were spreading their stardust exponentially. Hundreds ran free on the estate, a nuisance for the farmers, as one of the auction attendees described.

So bad are they that farmers oft lie in wait for them at cultivation patches and shoot them to save their crops. The buck deer possesses a great antipathy to bulls, and only a week before my arrival a buck deer had ripped the stomach of a valuable bull to ribbons belonging to a farmer beyond Deerside Estate. The fact that thousands of acres



John Mickle Lyall in front of Harewood's refurbished stable, 1886. H.C.

in the immediate vicinity of Tooradin being government preserves allows all kinds of game to increase and multiply in a wonderful manner. Indeed all the time I am here I cannot overcome my surprise at the fecundity of sea, air and earth.³

The Lyall women continued to mix with the elite of Melbourne and celebrated the centenary of British settlement of Australia. Silverfish-chewed programs in the old library show they attended the 1888 Melbourne exhibition and the Liedertafel Concert at the Town Hall where, along with Baron von Mueller, they listened to 'The Crusaders' by Danish composer Niels Gade. The railway to Tooradin made the district more accessible, but it still took a coach to reach Harewood and beyond. Willie Lyall came back from Queensland to visit in February 1889 and brought with him an eleven-year-old Aboriginal boy, Guy, from the 'Black Fin' tribe, who had been orphaned when his mother died at Greenvale Station the previous year. Guy proved to be a fine athlete and horseman, as well as a good shot and became a popular figure in the local community.⁴

Col Percy Ricardo
with his horse, c.
1890. H.C.



The Great Southern Railway pushed ahead. It took 400 men driving huge poles 10 metres into the mud and peat, and 1.2 metres above it, to build a bridge over the Great Kooweerup Swamp to reach Yallock. One reporter, travelling the line before the official opening, equated the train journey through the old swamp to a 'trip through Venice', but it dried come summer and three of the Lyall ponies were killed when they wandered onto the track. In November 1889, the young aristocrat, Lord Hopetoun, Governor of Victoria, paid a visit to Harewood; his sisters were Shetland pony enthusiasts in Britain.⁵ John Lyall struck up a friendship with Captain De Moleyne, Lady Hopetoun's brother,

and the following January they came again, John fetching them from Tooradin Station in his buggy.

Lady Hopetoun had a charming natural manner and apparently enjoyed her day at Harewood, having come to inspect a pair of ponies she wished to buy, and drive herself, in Melbourne. She and her brother walked about the paddocks with Maud and John Lyall, admiring the thoroughbred horses. Lady Hopetoun insisted on climbing over a two-railed fence in preference to walking around by the gate, saying she was accustomed to country life at her old home in Ireland where they had lived a similar country life to that of the Lyall family at Harewood, declaring at afternoon tea, she had never eaten such delicious sponge cakes.⁶

Up north, Percy's Queensland Defence Forces had their first deployment in breaking up the massive shearer's strike of 1891. Major Ricardo urged his men, 'Now is the time to show whether you are playing at soldiers, as the sneer so often has it, or whether you are prepared to protect your hearth and homes.' Nearly 1,500 troops were employed in the affected districts protecting non-union labour and pastoralists' properties. They became part of the inspiration for Banjo Paterson's 'Waltzing Matilda' and ignited the early beginnings of the Australian Labour Party. With fine horses and the backing of the troopers, the squatters might be able to subdue the rural workers, but the shearers could hold their own in a fight. Paterson later watched the squatter's family 'handing out champagne through a pub window' to the same men who had burnt down their wool shed.⁷

Maud Lyall married Percy's cousin, Ernest Ricardo, and Lyall grandchildren were now regularly arriving in both Queensland and Victoria, eventually twenty-seven in all. Only the eldest, Margaret's boy Colin, had personal memories of his Grandpa (William gave him riding lessons and sweets from the drawer in the library), but he and others would remember their Grandma Annabella as a kind lady of stern appearance in long black frocks. She appears in a photograph of Harewood House, c. 1892 posed in her pony cart with Guy holding the pony, John nearby and Florence mounted side saddle on her horse. Another photo has the group posed northwest of the house, with a pony and a Sambar doe, in front of a garden trellis. William had returned to dust, but the way he had engineered stardust was self-regenerating and continued to be reflected in the Western Port landscape. A Melbourne *Argus* from this era still lines Harewood's library table drawers.⁸

Forces of nature and economics played havoc with the newly constructed railway line. Over two hundred unemployed men were given work on repairing flood damage and extending the drains, until strike action delayed the project. Recession began to bite. A government scheme enabled unemployed, married men to work to acquire a twenty-acre block of land, but provisions were harsh, as described in this 1894 report in the *Leader*.

Stumbling along the utterly impractical track formed by the earth thrown up out of the drains, one comes to a group of half naked children, varying from baby upwards, taking care of themselves on the strip of dry land on the edge of the drain while their mother, toil worn, black and begrimed with

Afternoon Ride
Harewood House
from the west c.
1892. Believed
to be Annabella
Lyall (in carriage),
Guy holding pony,
Florence Lyall on
horse, John Lyall in
shadows. H.C.



Lyall woman & deer
at the eastern side of
Harewood House c.
1892.



scrub burning, is engaged in clearing. Her husband is away at work on the drains. He labours for a fortnight for four shillings and sixpence a yard, only payable on condition that he does as much clearing on his block during the next fortnight...in fact he does £8 worth of work per month, for which he is paid £4. Out of this five shillings is deducted for roofing iron, and three shillings and sixpence for seed potatoes. The work in the drains, done in water, involves a heavy expenditure for boots and clothes generally, while wages are further encroached on in providing tools, shovels which cost five shillings at the government store are often broken. If clearing of the block is not done to

the satisfaction of the inspector, the wages are withheld which is why the wives have to work.⁹

Florence Lyall c.
1897. H.C.



Kooweerup had not seen poverty on such a scale. The mud was so thick that bullocks or ponies were useless for this work, but Harewood's Shetlands were in demand as coalmines opened in Korumburra and Gippsland and the Cretaceous swamps of 120 myr found themselves being recycled into steam to power trains and industry. The 1894 Lyall diary noted over a dozen ponies were bought for the mines at £7 per head. Even without taking inflation into account, the price of Shetlands had fallen

to less than 7% of the £100 Mr Stuckey had paid William Lyall for his little mare in 1858.¹⁰

From the La Niña floods of the early 1890s, the Southern Oscillation again reversed into a dry phase, causing severe El Niño droughts throughout most of Australia in the later part of the decade. These were difficult times. In Queensland, Annabella Lyall Ricardo died a lingering death from tuberculosis. She was only 39 years old. Maud and Ernest Ricardo came back to Victoria and the young couple bought the Leongatha property 'Mount Vernon'.¹¹

The zenith of social life at Harewood had passed and the family never came close to breeding another Melbourne Cup contender, but each year, along with the rest of Australia, they had their bets and cheered the winners. When Gallus made it first past the post in 1897, William Johnson, one of their stockmen, went on a week-long binge that ended in tragedy when Guy discovered his hatless body in Lyall's Inlet. The hearing that followed revealed the man's name was Lanty Keating, not William Johnson. More remarkable was the discovery, a hundred years later, that he was an Irish Catholic rabble-rouser, related by marriage to the Macwhirter family. We passed round the Irish whisky and gave him a rousing wake on the centenary of his demise.¹²

'Church, School and Public Hall.' in *Land of the Lyrebird*, p. 275, South Gippsland Pioneers Association, 1920. Mountain Ash, *Eucalyptus regnans* are the tallest hardwood (angiosperm) trees in the world.



THE FIRESTORMS OF 1897-8

The women at Harewood continued their genteel existence as El Niño drought continued into the summer of 1897 and the weather turned extremely hot. Without the regular burning the Aborigines had traditionally carried out, there had been an enormous build-up of dense, dry vegetation. Reptiles abounded and Florence's little chestnut pony died of snakebite.¹³ Fires were breaking out throughout Gippsland.

One evening in February 1898, there was noticed an ominous red glow in the sky and, as night fell, four Frogmouths flew on the roof of the Ricardo home making their continuous call which is similar to that of the Boobook Owl. This proved to be the sign of what is called a "crown-fire", the biggest and most terrifying of all, which was raging through the thick scrub, and tall eucalypts many miles away. That night Ernest and Maud Ricardo spent pacing up and down the verandah anxiously watching. Each would try to persuade the other to go inside and rest, but in a short time, both would be outside together scanning the sky. Next afternoon, a neighbour - William McPherson - came galloping over the hill to the homestead, calling Maud Ricardo, said: "I am riding for my life from the fire. You and the baby get up in the saddle and I will take you both over to your neighbours, the Robert Smiths". ... They had not left "Mount Vernon" too soon as, with amazing swiftness, the whole house was reduced to ashes and even two 1,000 gallon iron tanks filled with water, were totally destroyed.¹⁴

Maud's little baby was Bertha Ricardo, who must have heard the tale of the Gippsland fire many times in her childhood. Evacuating to a neighbour's house, the worst of the fire appeared to have passed when a tongue of flames suddenly shot down from the ceiling. In no time, the people scattered out into the paddock and saw the whole house, which had so recently been their refuge, again completely burnt out. A spark from the flames had blown in under the galvanized iron roof and there was no time to save anything.

A farm-cart was procured and, after the horse had been blindfolded to prevent it, in its terror, from bolting, the women and children were put into it. All night long the cart moved round the paddock with the men walking beside it beating out the falling sparks and cinders which were continually falling on them. Maud Ricardo had managed to bring for her baby a billy of boiled milk which was shared with the other children, and procured some water with which she bathed the men's eyes, which were almost closed and very painful as a result of the intense heat and smoke. When daylight came, with the women and children still in the cart and the men walking beside it, they commenced the long slow journey along a rough corduroy road, i.e. a road with logs laid parallel to each other upon the earth foundation, to the Leongatha Railway Station.

They were thankful to reach the station and escape by train. The usually dapper Ernest Ricardo, now covered with black charcoal dust, joked with the guard, "You had better put me in the dog-box, I am not fit to be in the carriage." John Lyall met them at Koo Wee Rup and drove them back to Harewood. By March, John was taking the ponies

out of Mitchell's Tooradin Paddock as "it's all on fire." Dense smoke from more bush fires raging in Gippsland added discomfort to the extremely hot weather.

...not a fence from Lang Lang to Mirboo North, over sixty miles, was left standing. They completely wiped out a Danish settlement and only ashes were left of Mountain-ash logs as thick as 8 and 10 feet in diameter. Hugh Campbell described the scene as an inferno in which the sky seemed to be one mass of flames. Many people in the Strezlecki Ranges thought the last day had come. However those fires, although they caused such appalling losses, practically cleaned up many blocks of land in two days, which otherwise it would have taken years to clear.¹⁵

Percy Ricardo remarried, this time to a fellow officer's daughter, Ina Patterson. When the Boer War broke out in South Africa, he and his unit were the first to race to the service of the Empire. By 13 December 1899, he was promoted to Lt Colonel and, with his men, earned the praise of Banjo Paterson, Australia's great bard.¹⁶

Queensland Mounted Infantry

There's a very well-built fellow, with a swinging sort of stride,
About as handy sort as I have seen.
A rough and tumble fellow that is born to fight and ride
And he's over here a-fighting for the Queen.

He's Queensland Mounted Infantry - compounded 'orse and foot.
He'll climb a cliff or gallop down a flat.
He's a cavalry to travel but he's infantry to shoot.
And you'll know him by the feathers in his hat!

Later generations might be more inclined to question the cause but, in 1900, these Queenslanders, forerunners to the Australian Light Horse, served with distinction and gained a reputation as hard fighters with a larrikin streak. Percy earned himself a byline in the Boer War section of the Australian War Memorial with his quote 'the government ration for a horse is barely enough for a pony and our big Walers will soon all be dead.' These were sadly prophetic words, as none of the 16,000 horses shipped were allowed to return. Horses were seen as the commodity and based on their experience with 'the pleuro' and other tragedies, the government perceived the risk of introducing African Horse Sickness was too great.¹⁷

Percy and Bella's daughter Amy never warmed to her stepmother and came to live in Victoria, where she would visit her Aunties and Grannie at Harewood. Her little brother, Ralph, was sent to Britain to live with his uncle, where he impressed his English relations with his optimistic outlook, commercial instincts and ability to improvise, even though his academic education had serious gaps. He later founded 'The Two Stroke Engine Company' with his brilliant cousin, Harry Ricardo.¹⁸ Correspondence survives from Percy to his daughter from this period.

Kenilworth March 3rd 00

My dear old Amy

I got your letter alright and a bushel of letters from England yesterday. One sentence in your letter made me feel very sad, when you say that Ina does not care for you, if you could see her letters to me I am sure you would not think that. I am taking the opportunity of Col Patterson going back to Queensland to send you a white ostrich feather fan, I believe it is a very good one but am not much of a judge. I have sent Ina one as well I hope these will arrive safely. We have got our marching orders for the front again, and leave tonight to march 32 miles. It is ideal marching at night we start at 2:30 am I don't suppose we shall meet any boers, but we are to attack a big laager next day, about 7 miles further in. There are 40,000 of us now stationed about here and with Buller's force on the Natal side we should soon make an end to this horrid war.

I can't tell you how I long to get back to you all. I never was so homesick in my life. I write all the news to Ina and I expect she tells you how I am getting on. They are very good in England I get bushels of letters from them and they send me lots of things but I never get even a paper. Hard luck isn't it. I am sending you a little bit of a shell that fell in Knirberk (?) to wear on your watch chain and a few stamps.

Give my love to all at Inlecolin and write lots to my little daughter.

I remain your loving father

Percy Ricardo¹⁹

Dottie Lyall and William Lyall Jr's family at 'Frogmore', Ackers Street, Townsville, Queensland, 1901. H.C. L-R: Kath (on pony), Brian, Nan, Bill. With unnamed Aboriginal helpers. Brian was later killed at Gallipoli, Bill fought on the Western Front.



A white ostrich feather fan with an ivory handle still remains at Harewood, along with buttons from Col Ricardo's uniform. Amy would later tell her children of the times when her grandmother Annabella would preside over afternoon teas in Harewood's formal dining room, where grandchildren were expected to sit quietly and listen to adult conversation and were not permitted to ask for a second cup of tea. But Amy also recalled the favourite Shetland was allowed to sneak into the dining room and ask for sugar at the table. He was no higher than the table and a great pet.²⁰

The liberal education William provided for his children may have ennobled and brightened their minds, but it also left them better able to spend money than to generate it. Between the pages of *The Cultivation and Use of Imagination* by GJ Goshen, (F. Lyall, 1900 penned inside the cover) Florence stuck an undated newspaper clipping, 'Evils of high wages'. 'The trade unions 'under the banner of 'The standard of living', continually are striving for wage increase independent of the economic condition of Australia. It is nothing to them that the farmer has to accept the world's price whatever it may be for his produce...' She had written 'Very true' in the margin. The Liberal-conservatives held power in parliament but workers made their presence felt. William Cook's book, *Ducks: and How to Make Them Pay* was another of her turn of the century acquisitions. January 1901 saw the death of Victoria, the frumpy little Queen who ruled over 400 million people and, arguably, warped the stardust of the planet to a greater extent than any other person in history. It also saw the birth of the Commonwealth of Australia with Lord Hopetoun as first Governor General and voting rights for both men and women (albeit excluding Aborigines) long before these were granted in the United Kingdom.

Women's hearts and voices were filtering through more strongly in the pages of the books on Harewood's library. *The Little Black Princess of the Never Never*, by Melbourne University educated Mrs Aeneas (Jeannie) Gunn, was about 8 year old Bett-Bett and the blacks of the Roper River tribe living near Elsey Station in the Northern Territory. Beautifully written, it portrayed the humour, happiness and incredibly deep environmental understanding of that indigenous community. Being female and willing to suspend prejudice, in the short 13 months Jeannie lived on Elsey, she was able to get her head around traditional Aboriginal social relationships that had eluded William Thomas through all the years he had spent with the Boonwurrung.²¹

In Queensland, the El Niño Southern Oscillation was delivering a fatal blow to William Jr. Prolonged drought, then flood and tick fever, left Willie and Dottie in very much reduced circumstances. Suffering depression, Willie turned to drink and died suddenly after a pub binge. The image of their father's body being brought back to their mother at the homestead would forever remain with his young family. Dottie brought the children, Margaret, Annabella, William, Brian and Kathleen, back from Townsville to live with her mother, Margaret Hemphill, in South Yarra. At Harewood, John Lyall married a local girl, Cecil Carr, and together they had four children, the

eldest, Harewood ('Harb', 1899), shared his name with the house. Eric (1904) became one of Victoria's first radiologists and later died of radiation related illness.²²

At the Aboriginal Reserve at Coranderrk, William Barak, the long-time *ngurungaeta* of the Kulin Nation, burnt his hand. Neither white man's medicine nor *Pidg-er-on*, red gum resin, could stop the sepsis and he died, as he always said he would, at the time when the wattle came into bloom. He was buried with a simple Christian cross to mark his grave.²³ Journalist John Sands wrote his eulogy.

Barak

At the age of 85 King William
Barak, the last survivor of the Yarra Tribe.

Droops the wattles golden head,
Sigh the low winds, Barak's dead.
River gliding to the sea,
Gum bough whispering ghostly,
Stars that keep their watch on high,
Barak's dead.

King, and of his tribe the last,
Remnant of a vanished past,
He has seen the white man come,
Pitch his tent and build his home,
Where his tribe were wont to roam,
He that's dead.

Oft beneath the stars has stood,
In primeval solitude,
Where the city hums today,
Then the bush slept, still and grey,
Kookaburras laughed and jay,
Hailed the dawn.

Swings the world, and still pass on,
Ages, peoples, one by one,
Gumtrees whisper secrets old,
Life is but a tale that's told,
Barak's dead.

'Oriël' (John Sands) the *Argus*, 17 August 1903

The wise, patient, quietly dignified white-haired elder had witnessed the signing of Batman's Treaty and the Federation of Australia, something no one else, white or black, could claim. He had embraced Christianity, but had kept faith with that of his own community. The stories he told provided a core of information to keep Kulin

culture alive through hard times and into the future. It was Barak's sister's descendant, Murrundindi, who explained the significance of the spirit stones when we moved into Harewood in the 1990s and it was Murrindindi who followed in Barak's footsteps as ngurungaeta of the Kulin Nation in 2006.

The Queensland Aboriginal boy, Guy from Harewood, as he came to be known, was a familiar sight in his red shirt and cream trousers, and seemed to be well accepted. Throughout the 1890s, Nellie's diary noted him attending Balls at Tooradin, 'Miss Gibb's garden party' and various dances with a succession of partners, Kate Mahon being a special friend. He was houseguest of the wealthy Miller family at 'Larnook' at Armadale, and Herbert Miller came regularly to shoot with Guy at Harewood. In 1902, the diaries mention Guy collected fifty dozen mutton-bird eggs from San Remo. These birds, Short-tailed Shearwaters Mathew Flinders had observed travelling in a flock 4 km long during his circumnavigation of Tasmania, still arrived from the Arctic in huge numbers, but over-exploitation and predation by feral cats and foxes would greatly dent their vast population, and that of other shorebirds.

The Boer War concluded, Percy Ricardo and his men returned to a hero's welcome, with a few mutterings to the contrary firmly quashed. Colonel Ricardo was given the post of Military Commandant, first of Western Australia and then, in 1905, of Victoria. Enjoying the peace, he gave Amy away to Mr Robert Beggs, a grazier from an old Western Districts family, from their fashionable home, Salerno, Toorak Road, South Yarra. His first grandson was born the following year. In 1907, a tragic accident occurred when he fell from his horse while hunting with the Melbourne hounds at Cranbourne. He fractured his skull and died without recovering consciousness. The Lyalls watched as his large funeral cortege moved up Flinders Street, the band playing the German "Dead March" and a bell in the cathedral belfry tolling at intervals.

'The khaki harness of the horses was laced with white ribbon. The coffin was draped with the Union Jack, on top of which were the dead officer's sword-belt, sword and plumed helmet. Round the gilded handle of the sword clustered a modest wreath of dark red roses, with streamers of khaki and maroon. It was the last tribute of the Queensland cattlemen to their old commander - the father of the Q.M.I. To the red roses was attached a pathetic little message. It read: -

"From the old boys in the Queensland bush, who will never forget."

'Carnage', the commandant's favourite charger, was led behind the gun carriage, reins laced with white ribbons and empty jack boots, spurred heels facing the front were strapped in the stirrups. He was buried with full military honours as Major Clark's sharp command was heard three times, "Present! Fire!" The drums rolled and the trumpets wailed out the "Last Post".²⁴

FAIRIE-FOLK IN THE TI-TEE

Perhaps Florence chose to remove evidence of personal romantic attachments from Harewood's drawers, but swathes of romantic novels with her name inside the cover remain on the library shelves. In the cover of her dictionary she pasted the clipping 'When asked why she never married, Marie Corelli said, "I have no need, I have three friends at home that serve the same purpose as a husband, I have a dog that barks all day, a parrot that swears all afternoon and a cat that comes home late at night."' Three of Corelli's novels still rest on the shelf below. She pressed blossoms and butterflies between book pages and continued with her crafts, needlework and scrapbooks.²⁵

The early years of the twentieth century saw an upsurge in popular interest in natural history, with women artists and authors reflecting a new-found affection for Australian flora and fauna. Florence acquired books by Ellis Rowan, a gifted flower painter who had earlier collected specimens with Baron von Mueller around Western Port and then made her reputation painting in Queensland. She had fairy stories by Ida and Annie Rentoul, the artist and poet who were at Presbyterian Ladies College at the same time as Florence's nieces, Amy Ricardo and Margaret Lyall. There was a beautiful Japanese-style woodprint paperback by Violet Teague. Amid the pages, fairie-folk, rabbits and hares now found their homes in ti-tree swamps, bilbies were pets and wispy little white

Lyall women
(probably Florence
and Maud) on
Harewood's
verandah, c. 1911.
'To Joseph (a
family nickname
for Florence) with
love and kisses
from Bertha.' on the
back. H.C.



children were guided by bunyip spirits. An earthenware plate hand painted with a kingfisher flying over the swamp stills hangs in Harewood's dining room and several hand carved picture frames suggest that Florence tried her hand with multiple media.²⁶

John Lyall's wife Cecil died unexpectedly and he married Medora Basan, the daughter of the publican of the Tooradin Hotel. His class-conscious spinster sisters never warmed to their new sister-in-law and he moved his family to Kildrummy, a farm on Lyall family property closer to Tooradin. Here John continued the family tradition of breeding and showing Shetlands. John and 'Mrs Kildrummy', as Florence would call Medora, had four children. All were fine riders.²⁷



Gordon Lyall going over the fence on his pony 'Bally' c. 1911. H.C.

Over the years, Florence became more withdrawn in her spinsterhood, as Lyall family fortunes dwindled and the population of 'swamp hogs', as she pejoratively called the latter-day Kooweerup settlers, burgeoned. In 1904, there were 2,024 souls digging drains and trying to make a living in the swamp, of which 1,424 were children. Compared to her earlier expensive tailor-made garments, for her new-century wardrobe Florence creatively sewed clothing from black hessian and curtain material. She was amongst the entrants in the First Australian Exhibition of Women's Work that was held at the Exhibition Building in 1907, which was opened by Lady Northcote, the wife of the Governor General. The catalogue riley noted 'The conditions of labour in Australia are said to be the best in the world; and if any woman of ordinary intelligence - especially after the holding of this Exhibition of Women's Work - fails to find an honourable means of making a living the fault must lie with herself.' While the sub-text was Australian women need not turn to prostitution to survive, in reality this was a bleak choice early feminists and groups like the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) worked hard to address. Living was difficult for single women without male support.²⁸

The classes in which Florence entered were telling, 'Best Loose Cover for an Arm Chair, fitted, to be made of inexpensive material.' 'A mantel drape' and 'Best Daily Bill of Fare (3 meals a day) for one week for a family of four, the bread winner's earnings to average £2 2 s. (the basic wage) per week for all expenses.' What her menu comprised or whether she won a prize was not apparent from the catalogue.²⁹

Agnes Mickle-Hudson's swamp-born son David had long since reached adulthood and married Alice Atyeo. They were running the Tooradin general store as their little boy, David Johnson Mickle, was growing up with his Lyall relations and having first

memories imprinted on his four-year-old mind. Commander Perry's American Fleet arrived in Port Melbourne in August 1908 and, held aloft, young David could see the distant searchlights from the mighty ships. True to form, Florence clipped a memento from the *Argus* to mark the event. Margaret Lyall-Timms, Tooradin's 'first' white baby, now had nine children, but, like many, the family suffered setbacks from investments in drought-stricken Queensland that left them in diminished circumstances. They had to move from their beautiful bluestone homestead Eurack to a modest farm at Poowong, in the 'Heart Break Hills' of Gippsland. Margaret hated it when venomous snakes used to get in behind the walls, which they would do with alarming regularity. One of her daughters, Daisy Timms, told how she would ride out to neighbouring farms to teach piano. "After putting the porridge to cook on the stove, I would saddle my pony Dolly, so as to be away right after breakfast." Daisy (1880-1985) lived to 105 years, while her brother, Robert (1882-1989), lived to 107.³⁰

Drainage of the swamp was pursued with renewed vigour as the State Rivers and Water Supply Corporation sent their engineer Carlos Catani to Germany, where he acquired a huge, powerful Lubecker Steam Dredge. With this technology the government would change the physical and social landscape of the Kooweerup Swamp as never before. It weighed eighty tons and had a capacity of eighty cubic yards per hour.³¹

On 12 December 1912, Guy married Mary Scalon, from Koo Wee Rup. As a key member of the local cricket and football teams, Guy was good mates with the Colvin, Atyeo and Henderson boys. David Mickle recalled that all were moved and greatly saddened by his untimely demise from pneumonia, 9 October 1913. He was quietly laid to rest at Springvale cemetery.³²

Lyall family members in car, thought to be a Dodge, at Harewood, c. 1914. H.C. Ernst Ricardo driving Gordon and Florence Lyall in front, Harewood Lyall, Bertha Ricardo and Maud Lyall-Ricardo in back. Mature Hoop and Bunya Pine trees and exotic Cypress remain a feature of the property.



THE ANZAC GENERATION

The globe was shrinking further and the future of Lo-an's Land was being ever more dictated by politics on the other side of the world. In 1914, when Belgian people inspired the world in their spirited resistance to German invasion, 98% of Australia's non-Indigenous population was British by birth or origin. Australia, along with the other dominions of the British Empire, promptly declared war on Germany. Men flocked to serve God, King and Country, including Brian Lyall, William Jr and Dottie's second eldest son. He enlisted and entered camp at Broadmeadows, where he was attached to the 6th Battery, Australian Field Artillery.³³



Brian Lyall in
Egypt, 1915. H.C.

Trained as a gunner, Brian sailed on the troopship *Shropshire* on 20 October 1914, and arrived in Egypt, where he joined the troops at Mena Camp and wrote in his diary that he climbed the highest Pyramid and “engraved my name on the rock at the top”. On another occasion he “was thrown three times by the same horse that shied me at Broadmeadows. Finished up riding him tho!” When the Officers’ mess got rid of their native waiters and Lyall was ordered to wait on the table, he “Had a talk with Major Mills and told him I did not like it”. The Major found a more pliant soldier to take his place.³⁴

By the 25 April 1915, Gunner Lyall's troopship neared the steep coastline of Gallipoli, later to be renamed Anzac Cove,.

Left (Lemnos) at 6:20 am. Firing heard. In sight of land and ships at 12 pm. Won't be long before we get a go now. The warships big guns were in use and the roar was like a thunderstorm. Violent bombardment at 5:30 pm, several shells fell close to our bows and one came right over. Big guns stopped firing at dusk, tho' there was plenty of rifle fire during the night. We are still aboard and the boys are just itching to get ashore. The Infantry attack in the morning, the sailors tell us, was magnificent.³⁵

Because gun positions could be found for only half of the Artillery at Anzac Cove, Brian's Battery remained on the transports and landed later at Cape Helles. His diary told of brave raids and counter attacks by an equally brave and resourceful enemy.

The Turks made an attack on our left flank at 5:30 pm, but lost heavily for their trouble. Our Observation Post reports that there are fully 600 dead lying outside our trenches now. Had rather an exciting time going along the telephone wires while the attack was on, shells bursting all around, and was hit in the arm by a piece of shrapnel, but it only tore the shirt and bruised my arm a bit. (2 July 1915).³⁶

Brian dodged fire and repaired broken phone lines, and as autumn began the men's thoughts turned to springtime back home. Fellow Anzac Frank Westbrook wrote longing, vivid poetry about Gippsland that found its way back onto Harewood's library shelves.

In Exile

The flashing fire of wattle trees in league-long rows will rise,
The glory of thy hill and plain will spring to cheer my eyes,
Their rosaries of blossom, the incense of its fire,
The perfume of its yellow beads, the breadth of my desire.

Ah, I will see thee ever, September at its best,
Thy songs and melodies of spring in flowery verdure drest.
O keep thy kiss, my country, thy smiling mother face,
For those who love and leave thee and find no better place,
For those in distant exile who dare the hand of Fate,
To keep thy well-loved honour and homes inviolate.
I ask no more, Australia, my dear loved native isle,
Than this my longing hallows, the welcoming of thy smile.³⁷

Brian Lyall's brandy flask and diaries returned to his family after his death at Gallipoli. H.C.





Bill Lyall and Hilda Maxwell and friends at Black Rock, 1915. H.C.

By October the stalemate was such Brian reported “Our chaps and the Turks in the firing line are getting quite friendly - actually get out and swap cigarettes, tobacco etc.”, but five weeks later Brian’s last diary entry told of a new Turkish howitzer, a bitterly cold southerly wind, falling snow and oh-so-cold feet. He was on a mission to repair a phone line when struck by a piece of shell in the small of his back. He died in the field hospital. His commanding officer, Major Stevenson, wrote of his death to Dottie Lyall, and recalled Brian’s character, which, as a fellow Australian, he had particularly respected. ‘Personally I will miss him, as I always admired his modest and respectful bearing which at the same time had no trace of servility in it but rather a calm dignity which appealed to me.’ Brian was only twenty-one.³⁸

GUNNER WILLIAM LYALL

Bill Lyall was on the train from Ballarat to Broadmeadows to join the artillery as his brother lay buried in a beach cemetery close to Anzac Cove. Some weeks later, he hurriedly married his sweetheart, Hilda Maxwell, and departed from Melbourne on board the troopship *Themistocles*. A homesick soldier, he missed his bride dreadfully and knew full well that more than 7,000 Australians had already perished at Gallipoli. When he reached the pyramids, he wrote to Hilda of the pitch dark chamber “where the Queen stood waiting death after the King had passed away.” He sent cards to his sisters, Granny Lyall and Uncle Ernest before he left for a land where, he cryptically wrote, they ‘eat frogs and of song and dance’. The troopship landed in Marseilles and Bill rode artillery horses along the slippery cobblestones to board the train, the Australian soldiers’ slouch hats causing the locals amusement.³⁹

By 13 April, the 3rd Artillery was an impressive sight, parading through the main street of Le Havre with horses, guns and wagons as the French people waved them off to the front. The welcome was not so enthusiastic along the Belgian border. Gas helmets and respirators were issued with good reason, but as Bill unloaded 29 wagons of howitzer ammunition, he was pleased to report the wind changed and blew the deadly vapours back on the Germans. Spies were plentiful and he found 'Some of the people do not like the Australians because we are always on the go. They say "English no bombard" - Australie plenty bombard" - Australie no bon". A great number sympathized with the Germans and did all they could 'to make things unpleasant for us.'⁴⁰

Bill wrote loving letters to his wife, marking each monthly anniversary of their wedding, but offended the "Harewood folk" by his lack of correspondence. "Must write old Granny a few lines tomorrow" he promised on 28 May 1916. Books like Rudyard Kipling's *France at War*, Harold Hansell's *The Everlastin' Ballads* and Dorothy McCrae's *Soldier, My Soldier*, told of determination shared by the women at home. They still lie on Harewood's library shelves.

Nightly they in order stood
Ready for the word of war,
While the watchword stirred their blood
Like a distant cannon's roar.⁴¹

By 1 June, Bill Lyall was standing to attention as Prime Minister Billy Hughes and General Birdwood inspected his Battery. Sent south to the front, the battle continued as the 9th and 11th Battalions advanced under the cover of their artillery. At Harponville, the rain poured down, the poor horses were "absolutely knocked up" and the gunners had to walk most of the way. The unit struck a huge field of poppies "tinted from faint

heliotrope to violet" that were simply glorious and contrasted with the gory battle scenes. "Talk about hell - I'm sure it can't be any worse - for every conceivable weapon made for killing mankind is being used here. In many places we have not been able to bury the German dead and they are lying about in score"⁴²

On 23 July, the 1st Division was chosen to open the attack on Pozières, the Anzacs' greatest battle.⁴³ Bill wrote Hilda as he sat in his dugout, "quite pleased when 6 am arrived and we were able to have a few hours sleep...you would laugh if you could see me - one looks such a comical object

William Lyall,
Australian Imperial
Forces, 1915. H.C.



nowadays. I have not had a chance to shave for three days and feel a real break up.” In his diary he was more frank.

Aug 6 1916

They shelled our position and got very close to our guns and dugouts. Most of their shells were 8 inch delayed action and are terrible things. All attacks were repulsed - our boys are holding all gains and consolidating. Fritz sent over crowds of gas and tear shells. Our Battery expects to go out for a rest today having been in this position for 17 days. All men are suffering nerves and are as deaf as posts.

Pulled back to a safer position, he eventually confided to Hilda he never thought he would see out the 7th of August. The thought of getting back to Australia and having a farm and starting a family with his dear wife kept him going. “It will mean hard work and long hours for a start, and I am quite prepared for it.” (16 Sept 1916)

The war dragged on and Bill’s Battery was moved to the Ypres front and Bonningues, then back to the Somme. ‘We saw in one of the English papers where conscription had failed in Australia and are all very disappointed. God knows we need men badly and unless we get them, I’m afraid those left of us will be drafted into other units - it will be the finish of our grand Australian Army, of which the people at home are so proud.’ (8 Nov 1916). November 29 brought sad recollections of Brian’s death, the snow was thick and the wounded in ‘an awful plight as the frost plays havoc with their wounds.’ The Australians were expected to stand the bitter cold ‘as well as the troops that belong in such climates’. Bill could hardly hold a pencil as he wrote about the scene at Delville Wood.

It is a typical battlefield and is strewn with war material of all descriptions, guns, limbers, wagons, old rifles, bombs, shells, aeroplanes. Tanks, dead men and horses are to be seen everywhere. Had the opportunity of seeing some of these wonderful “tanks” the other day - there are quite a number of them about here. They are such wonderful affairs - they are mounted with different types of guns varying in calibre and are such



‘Waiting to go into action behind the tanks.’ *The Silver Jubilee Book*, Odhams Press, London, p. 137, 1935. H.L.

big ungainly looking structures. You can imagine how old Fritz ran the first time he set eyes on them for they clear the trenches and take everything before them and spit fire the whole time with such deadly effect. The infantry swear by them.

As in other times, conflict spurred innovation and accelerated the pace of global change. Bill probably didn't know that his Ricardo relation, Harry, with whom his cousin Ralph had been in business, had played a key role in the tank's development.⁴⁴

New Year's Day 1917 was welcomed in with gunfire 'from the sea to Switzerland'. 'As far as the eye could see was nothing but a huge glow and every gun worked like clockwork.' The anniversary of 'absolutely the happiest day' of his life passed, then came sad news that Granny Lyall's chapter had finished. A lady of gentile grace and fashion to the end, she was laid to rest in her ninetieth year. 'Harewood Mains', part of the Lyall family property at Tooradin, was to be put on the market and Bill anticipated an inheritance of a quarter of his dead father's 1/8 share. Not much, but enough to contemplate a deposit on a small property. The fighting continued in the freezing cold. By March, he was laid up with trench fever, then severe dysentery. Convalescing in Rouen, news came of the United States' declaration of war on Germany, "She will be a great help and has come at the most opportune time."⁴⁵

Longing for home

The Allies may have had an advantage with the first controlled fixed-wing flight taking place in Ohio in 1903, but both sides of the European conflict threw their might and best brains at mastering the sky.

. '...four Taubes came over our lines, three white and a red chap. This red machine is evidently a new plane of Fritz's and naturally it caused a great deal of interest. About 4 pm we were brought into action. Fritz too was very active and was sending his shrapnel over pretty solid for a time – some of his bursts were beautiful." (26 Feb 1917) The new plane may have been that of the 'Red Baron' Von Richthofen. Horses remained vital on the wagon lines, though "the beggars play up terribly at times." A Red Cross letter brought news from home that his Mum died 25 July 1917, and, later, a poem from his wife written at Dottie's deathbed.

Annabella Lyall
1822-1917. H.C.



...Little mother, perfect mother
of the man I love, why that solitary tear;
the luxury of a tear has not oft been yours.
Oh seared heart that I could bring to you
your soldier son, so beloved, so far removed,
for one last embrace, ere you enter
that great beyond. Wherefore that ethereal
lustre in those soulful eyes!
Do you see that face of that angel soldier,
your other "little lad" gone before his time?
Leaving you to battle and to win.
Dear little mother, your other loved ones
are about you. How those dear eyes trace the
face of each, and you e'en would spare them the
pain of your own passing....⁴⁶

Bill had not had a single day's leave since March 1916 and longed for Australia. He was given furlough in London. Like the Mickles and Lyalls of sixty years earlier, he strolled along the Thames and visited the Tower, the Bridge and the Abbey. Air raids punctuated his visit but, seasoned by battle, "Instead of taking cover as the civilians do, we just go about as if nothing was happening." He was astounded at the number of men who went down into the tube when there was a raid as "every man who goes down keeps a woman out. We men were meant to protect women and it's our duty to see that they get cover." (30 Sept 1917) Margaret and John Mickle's only child Julia, who had remained and married in Scotland, lost all four of her sons on the battlefields of the Great War.⁴⁷

With other Australian soldiers, Bill went to an investiture of V.C.s by King George at Buckingham Palace, then with his mate Raddie he took a train to Edinburgh and saw the Castle and Holyrood Palace. But there was no sense of homecoming in his descriptions as there had been in his grandfather's Scottish diary. "The trains are nothing compared with our Australian trains for comfort - not even the 'Flying Scotsman', and never yet have I seen a train to come within co-ee of our Sydney Express."

He anxiously awaited news of his application for home leave as he made his way back to the Ypres front. British West Indies boys were being used in labour battalions and Lyall and his mates went to the rescue of a



Margaret Mickle
(William Lyall's
sister) and her
daughter Julia c.
1895. Julia lost all
four of her sons in
World War I. H.C.

group trapped under a truck. It reconfirmed his abiding faith. "They were knocked about badly and suffering intense pain... praying to God for help - these people whom many white men despise and look down upon. It was grand to see the belief and trust they have in their maker." Desperate and losing, the Germans were "very generous with their deadly gases" (30 Oct 1917), Lyall didn't come away unscathed. He voted 'yes' to the second referendum that was held for conscription and was bitterly disappointed when it was defeated. Potassium cyanide was being thrown, he wrote, "the poor fellows that got the stuff suffered terrible agony and turned blue from the effect. It eats their lungs away and makes it impossible to breathe." (29 March 1918).

Bombardments were every bit as fierce as they had been earlier in the War, but the Allies were slowly gaining the upper hand and battles were punctuated by quieter times behind the front. Bill enjoyed a good gallop across the fields exercising the gun team horses. "We had a bit of a race on the way home and I let them out to it and passed everything ahead of me." The fresh air and wild flowers could be "just glorious". (17 May 1918)

News of men back in Australia "sitting right in good fat jobs and who leave the fighting to the other fellow" galled him. "We have never been beaten over this side and we'll show those slackers at home they have got men to face when we return. It breaks a chap up when he hears of all these fine strapping fellows hanging back - especially at a time like the present when they are so badly needed here." (17 May 1918) He longed to be home. "Won't I put on the dog when I stroll down Collins Street with my dear sweet wife on my arm. I won't call the King my uncle. I would give a lot to have a little one of our own to bear my name when I'm gone."

August 8 marked the final big push. "Our boys hopped the parapet last night on a wide front and have penetrated German lines to a depth of eight miles. The cavalry and tanks followed the infantry over and they are still going." It was open warfare with no trenches. "As far as the eye can see there are scores upon scores of batteries galloping into action and ammunition wagons and limbers bring up the rear." The advance was so fast that they captured two trains full of reinforcements, and a Field Hospital with staff complete. By the 18th, the total number of prisoners captured was 530,344. Bill's wish? "I want to forget all about war - when I return I will blot it out of my life altogether."

'When this war is over there will be no other for centuries to come, so that our children and our children's children will live in a land of peace, and please God, shall never know what we have gone through for them. There will be, (I think), a great international conference in which all the nations of the world will be represented. They will form an arrangement whereby all the powers will work in unison - and all squabbles will be settled by arbitration - not by war as has been the case in the past.' (22 Aug 1918)

The Americans fought beside them. "We had another big go, this was when we captured the main Hindenburg line. That stunt is one I will never forget - it was just hell to see all those brave men slaughtered (...) I never want to see such an awful sight again." He was badly gassed and vomited blood. Given leave to England, on 15 October, Bill Lyall

was having afternoon tea with Princess Mary at Windsor Castle.⁴⁸

When the Armistice was signed on the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month in a railway carriage in a forest near Tergniers, of the 420,000 Australians who had volunteered, over 160,000 had been wounded in action and 60,000 did not return. Bill made it back to Australia and Hilda. Their first child, christened 'William Brian Lyall', was born in January 1921, his name encapsulating bitter-sweet stardust memories of his uncle killed at Gallipoli and lineal descent from three Australian William Lyalls. The couple pondered what lay in store for their tiny son, who would be known as Brian.



"Australia is waiting" Hansell, Harold, *The Everlastin' Ballads*, Degaris, Melbourne, c. 1917. H.L.

LAND OF THE ANZACS

The Anzac experience changed the way Australians viewed Australia. Memories of Europe were no longer those of happy childhood story books but rather a place of mud, cold, ice, suffering, death and fallen comrades. The cream of their generation, the descendants of squatters, convicts and Aboriginal people had fought together bravely with the best in the world and were not found wanting. For what purpose had they done this? Why were they fighting Europe's war when Australia's destiny laid



Perhaps a returned soldier being welcomed home? Harewood House 1918. H.C.

anchored at the other end of the world? There was a new sense of pride, ownership and curiosity in things Australian. On a wide front, traditions were being pushed aside as the ex-soldiers returned with ideas from abroad to mould into earlier Australian experiences. Rather than arriving as Europeans in an alien land, the 'diggers' began to blur social distinctions of the previous generation and question the nation's values. Yet, paradoxically, their military experience made most of them more conservative and they held firm to imperial ties.

The money Bill had hoped to inherit from his grandfather's estate didn't materialise. Harewood Mains was sold in 1919, but Maud and Ernest Ricardo had earlier lent money to family members, secured against the sale of the property. When principal and interest were taken into account, there were no funds left for the beneficiaries. There was much unhappiness within the family at the handling of the estate and solicitors' letters flew back and forth for many years.

Dudley and Noel
Lyall on their
ponies, ready for
school. c. 1921. H.C.



Harewood House and surrounding property had been bequeathed in 1888 to young John Lyall, subject to Annabella being given an annuity, but he behaved irresponsibly and by the time of her death in 1917 was heavily in debt. Harewood was put up for auction. It didn't sell. Maud and Florence subsequently pooled resources and bought it in Florence's name. John continued to breed and show Shetland ponies at Kildrummy. 'Banjo', a little black Dockin' descendant, by 'Scot Free' out of 'Tottie', grew up with perfect conformation and a temperament to match. He won Champion Shetland Stallion against stiff imported competition at three consecutive Melbourne Royals. John died in 1926 and Banjo was sold to Sir Archibald

Howie in New South Wales, who went on to win Champion Shetland Stallion with him at the Sydney Royal for two years running. In a sinister twist of pony politics, Banjo was then barred from showing in Shetland classes because he was not studbook registered. The Shetland Islands Register was only established in 1891, some 45 years after the Harewood ponies had departed Noss. The Australian Shetland Register had only just begun. Banjo was such a beautiful little pony, however, he was still widely used and became a foundation sire, registration number 18, in the Australian Pony Stud Book Society.⁴⁹

Growing up years behind them, William's grandsons Harewood and Gordon Lyall swapped their ponies for motorbikes and cars and opened a garage at Tooradin. Dave Mickle had his first pillion ride on his brother's Harley Davidson, which the two of

them took to Dandenong. He recalled having a very sore behind as the motor cycle had high-pressure beaded-edged tyres and ‘any number of cushions could not prevent the pain on those blue metal roads.’ Moving with the times, by 1924, Gordon Lyall was advertising motorcar tours to Sydney and return for four passengers at £12 each.⁵¹



Harewood Lyall and motorbike, c. 1921.
H.C.

Florence continued to survive off a modest income from renting farmland and retained contact with old friends from the days when her father was close to the wheels of power. She was said to have ‘worn trousers and made snake bone jewellery’, but if this was the case no items have been found. Newspaper clippings bulged in scrapbooks, between pages and inside the book covers: weddings, recipes, events, obituaries of old friends, gardening tips. Maud and Bertha would regularly come to visit and enjoy the countryside and reminisce about earlier times.⁵¹ The marine and bird life was diverse, with birds such as the Helmeted and Regent Honeyeaters, which are now battling extinction, frequent visitors along the creeks.

...Florence Lyall and Maud and Bertha Ricardo were fishing in the Creek near “Harewood” house when a shoal of small shark, eighteen inches long, appeared. Eighty-three were caught in a short time, the mother shark having spawned near the mouth of the Creek. Although the sharks were small they exhibited the ferocity of a big shark and



Tooradin Motor Garage, c. 1922.
H.C.

snapped angrily with their sharp little teeth. Another day, a huge Stingray was seen swimming down the creek with the out-going tide, its side fins touching and curling back from the banks on either side. In the water it gave the appearance of a dark cloud.

The wood-paddock, within sight of “Harewood” house, still contains many varieties of birds. In the Spring the Whip-bird’s resonant crack and the immediate response of his mate, indicated that a nest might be found in the adjacent scrub. The Regent Honey-eaters were observed near their nests and with their beautiful gold and black plumage made brilliant flashes of colour as they flew among the sweet-scented man-

na-gums. Numerous, also, were the white-eared and singing varieties of the Honey-eaters, while Black and White, and also Scarlet-breasted robins were often seen. The bronze-wing pigeons are common and the Spur-winged Plover frequently call from the sand-rises. Quail are plentiful.

In the large Cypress trees beside "Harewood" house, the Blue Herons build their nests and in the marshes, among the salt-bushes, are those of the Spotted Cranes. At dusk, the delicate Owls, with their beautiful fawn and white plumage, fly about and with nightfall, the Duck fly up the Creeks, and the soft call of the swans may be heard.

A pretty sight was to see about 200 Gang-gang Cockatoos with their neat grey plumage, the males with scarlet heads and crests, eating and playing about the grass and clover near the house.⁵²

The motorcar gave mobility undreamt of by earlier generations. Alf Zimmerman, 'Zim, the old German', Florence's devoted hired help, would chauffeur her around the countryside. The Shell Motor Company's book on *Wildflowers of Australia*, 'distributed free to motorists', and other publications encouraged Australians to enjoy the bush, continuing the interest the Lyall women had shown the previous century.⁵³

In the wake of wholesale destruction of forests that had characterized earlier practices, lonely voices spoke of the beauty and inspirational value of trees, and the need for regulation and sustainability. An aging March 1923 copy of the *Australian Forestry Journal*, produced by the Forestry Commission, told how Australian gum trees were growing in profusion in the Holy Land and California, yet conversely there were more *Pinus insignis* (synonym *radiatus*) in Australia than in California, from where they had originally come. Some would now argue these pines were native to China and were taken to California in Chinese junks in pre-Columbian times, but no such thought was around in the 1920s. German politicians and Britain's Prince of Wales both advocated the need to reforest their countries. Between the leaves of her old dictionary lay a clipping with the slogan 'Floods Follow Forest Felling' and an invitation to a talk, 'Tall tree, past and present, our vanishing heritage ... illustrated with magic lantern slides' by Professor Hardy. A more connected view of nature and agriculture was emerging that harked back to Aboriginal values.⁵⁴

Fashions changed dramatically as the men came home from war. Recalling the flimsy dresses that found favour when Great Grandfather John Lyall returned home in Scotland after the horrendous Napoleonic hostilities, strait-laced Edwardian clothes gave way to free flowing robes. Patriotism, natural history and the new fashions were united in Archibald Campbell's book *Golden Wattle, Our national floral emblem*, inscribed 'F. Lyall's 1926' on the front cover and with wattle blossoms still pressed between the pages. Female figures, draped Grecian style, were posed beside Campbell's flowering wattles. Wattle Day was at its height of popularity.⁵⁵



Bill Lyall with his four oldest children in Camberwell, 1929 L-R: Margaret, David, Brian, and Ian. Like the uncle after whom he was named, Brian was later killed in Europe, fighting in the Second World War. H.C.

Campbell's obituary found its place inside the front cover the following year, along with a 1927 broadsheet titled *Welcome to the Land of the ANZACs*, festooned with flags and wattles and a picture of the Duke and Duchess of York (later King George VI and Queen Elizabeth, the Queen Mother). Dave Mickle would recall watching from the top of a fruit case as the Duke and Duchess took the salute on the steps of Victoria's Parliament House from 25,000 soldiers and sailors. The royal couple were feted by all as they travelled to open the new Australian Houses of Parliament in the open paddocks that were becoming the federal capital of Canberra. We felt the connection when we watched the Queen Mother's funeral on television at Harewood in 2002.⁵⁶

Florence tightly packed her family's memories and old clothes into a tea chest and left it in the old stable. When opened seventy years later, there were yards of ribbon, buttons, unfinished needlework, pillowslips, black trimmed handkerchiefs and leather, silk and taffeta belts to fit a 20-inch waist. Her mother's 1840s handmade lace pantaloons with 'A. Brown' in the waist band were pressed neatly between combinations Florence might have worn 50 years later. There were worn and fragile evening clothes and a skirt and riding jacket lined with cream silk branded 'Shave, Ladies costumer and tailor, Collins Street, Melbourne' with an 'Advance Australia' coat of Arms. There were patched, and repatched, black and dark purple skirts, fancy black stockings from Germany, kid gloves from France and sturdy underarm protectors from the USA. A Swiss cotton blouse and a black dust jacket of 1920s vintage suggested when she sealed her time capsule shut.

The Great War remained forever with Bill Lyall. His hearing was permanently damaged and his sub-conscious mind could never wipe out its experiences. On more than one occasion, at a railway station, to the amusement of fellow commuters, he mistook the sound of the approaching train for the rushing of a shell and threw himself

prostrate on the platform. But young Brian was growing up strong and two more sons, David and Ian, and a daughter, Margaret, were added to their brood. Without family money to help acquire a farm, Bill chose to go into selling insurance, first to Wimmera farmers and then back in Melbourne. The young family's income was stretched but comfortable, and they were able to acquire a house in Canterbury, a pleasant suburb of Melbourne.⁵⁶⁷ Hilda had her own war demons.

Salvage

Wayward but you are mine;
You shall not go
I love you so
Wayward but mine for all time.

Yet have you tortured me;
My poor heart breaks
But excuses makes -
Long years you fought for me.

Years that were mine and pure.
Ah: yes you came through,
Your dear soul true blue.
Now my part to endure.

Wayward, but lost you will never be;
My life's one aim
Your soul to reclaim
What's best in you, mine will ever be.

Hilda Lyall 1929

The high expectations Bill had built up over the war years for a happy family life must have been difficult to fulfil. With four young children to raise, her husband often away and limited help, Hilda would have had little time for herself. Depression set in after the birth of their fifth child, Ken, and a suicide attempt followed. Amid the turmoil of the Wall Street crash, Bill was pushed out of his job and the family had to sell their home and move to rented premises. By April 1931, they were accepting government sustenance, 'and devoutly thankful for it.' A war pension and seasonal work on his sister Kath's farm at Renmark eased the burden, but it was temporary. In 1934, his car was given to the local garage in lieu of monies owed. By 1936, Bill had employment pruning trees for the City of Camberwell. As Brian and his siblings became old enough to go out to work, the family's standard of living improved, but even in 1939 the electricity had never been connected. The same, however, could also be said of his Aunt Florence's time-warped life at Harewood. Unlike William and Annabella, few of the children or grandchildren were able to maneuverer themselves into that sweet confluence of circumstance and ability from where life flows easily and material success follows.⁵⁸

RESHAPING KOOWEERUP

With multiple Australian generations of William Lyalls and David Mickles, identities begin to blur. The ever-ebullient David Johnson Mickle wrote beautifully about a lifetime on the Swamp from his first memories in 1908 to the opening of the Second World War. He recalled shooting rabbits along the Yallock with his Hudson relations as a child, and living on his Uncle John's Rossiter Road farm when, in December 1921, the first press messages to be sent directly by wireless from England to Australia were received by AWA Experimental Station at Koo Wee Rup. When the Koo Wee Rup Electric Light and Power Company commenced operations in 1927, he took charge of the powerhouse and electricity supply.⁵⁹

Dave kept a diary and had a great love of history. Old camera in hand, he would often take his Uncle John around the district and get him to tell of old times. When new owners demolished the grand old stable at Yallock in 1930 and obliterated the old graves, Dave was heartbroken: his father had been born there. He was there with his notebook and camera and shared the excitement of any new happenings: floods, derailments, level crossing accidents, bumper potato crops, the first Scout groups, the opening of 'The Yallock Soldiers Memorial Hall', motor cycle club outings, Phar Lap's death 'at the hands of the Yanks' or when the local Bayles Cricket Team travelled to French Island to play the team from the penal farm.⁶⁰

At the prison farm the team found beautiful and well laid out grounds, pretty flowers, well kept lawns and vegetable gardens. This is not a prison" one of the visitors was said to exclaim, "it is a gentleman's home!"

Can these tall, straight-limbed, lithe, bronzed men with clear eyes be "the bold, bad men" we hear about? No, they are guests at a guests' home, the clean open-air life making them men. (...) As to discipline, four officers control 50 men, this speaks for itself. After dinner (we took our own food), we played the match. His Majesty's Guests vs. Bayles. we were sadly beaten, but we make no excuse for that: the better team won. (...) To sum the whole matter up, the writer thinks it is money well spent on this reformatory prison, and reflects great credit on those who have the management. Wet through and tired, but very happy, it was the best day we had for a long time - the day with the King's guests."⁶¹

Community attitudes on Western Port had softened dramatically from the harsh 1820s, when Michael Kain slit his own throat when faced with a third round of torture on the triangle from Captain Wright.

SWAMP HOGS

In December 1932, David Mickle wrote 'Last Sunday I drove Uncle John Mickle and Aunt Laura to see Miss Florence Lyall at "Harewood". It was not often that we were able to see this wonderful old home with its beautiful antique furnishings, just as it was in the 1880s.' Fourteen months later, the budding historian went to visit Nellie Lyall at 'The Barn', the house she had built half way between Harewood and Tooradin. 'This was a special day for history when I received a large sack full of diaries of the late William Lyall, an original pioneer of Western Port. These valuable old diaries which dated from 1851 had apparently been with Miss Helen since the death of her father in 1885 (sic).'

When record La Niña rains set in November 1934, Peter Pan won Victoria's Centenary Melbourne Cup and the Duke of Gloucester dedicated the Shire of Remembrance in Melbourne. Dave lived in 'about the highest single level house in Koo Wee Rup' and he was able to save the Lyall diaries from the great flood by stacking them high on top of their laundry copper.⁶³ He wrote in his notebook,

Heavy rain started this morning and continued all day with terrific gales. I have had a lot of trouble with lights. My house service was broken by a pine branch (Alexander Avenue). It is the wettest day and night that I have ever known.⁶⁴

Three families sought shelter from the flood on blankets in the rafters above the Mickles' bathroom as the floodwater, blocked by the railway embankment, rapidly rose to a depth of five feet six inches. They waited with many others on the roof tops

Harewood House
c. 1930. H.C. The
old out-building on
the left is possibly
Edwin Cockayne's
original 'bush inn'
from the 1850s.



of Koo Wee Rup, watching cows, sheep, pigs, poultry and oil drums go by until a flotilla of boats from Tooradin came to their rescue. 'The horses appeared to be more intelligent and swam upstream to less water and high land', David observed.⁶⁵

At the mercy of Southern Oscillation, El Niño – La Niña, weather patterns, the swamp settlers remonstrated as over 10,000 acres of potatoes and other crops were destroyed, and along with them the livelihood of many families. Unemployed men again took up shovels in an effort to oppose the demon, but old timers like Florence protested about the cost and inappropriateness of the latest scheme. She wrote to Maud:

We are having the usual new moon tides, now encroaching further and further inland, owing to the Bay being so filled up with silt from the W.C.s. Banks & drains and water will find its level - it then comes within 50 yards of my house in front & I fail to see where the "improvement to my property", on the high, dry spot they chose, comes in & they keep their floodgate at the bridge shut so it must flow in here, instead of keeping it open like the Tooradin Bridge one, & letting it out again - I am not surprised to see in the "Argus" they are sending one of the heads over to America to see the engineering done there. Very necessary, I say, as I call them a lot of fools - they should have made a reservoir in the swamp & saved all that nice clean mountain water in the first place - I am sure it would not cost any more than all these unsightly drains and banks, letting the tides further inland & now charging the swamp hogs for the water they use!!! & while the drought was on they were all carting water for miles!⁶⁶

The possibility of another war loomed greater every day. Rifle and gun clubs increased their membership and anyone able stayed tuned to their radio sets. Bill and Hilda despaired their children would go through what their generation had and wondered at the futility of it all.⁶⁷

ANOTHER FALLEN

On 1 September 1939, news came Germany had invaded Poland and soon after Britain had declared war on Germany. 'As a result,' said Prime Minister Robert Menzies, 'Australia is at War.' It didn't stop the running of the Melbourne Cup. A local horse, Rivette, won and the shire ranger Mr G. Crowe delighted in telling the story of the time the winner had spent in the Cranbourne Pound when the mare had strayed from her grazing paddock at Clyde.

By Christmas 1939, the weather had warmed and Florence wrote of going with Alf Zimmerman and his wife to the Mordialloc Carnival on Port Phillip Bay where 'Zim had a dip in the briny & I sat in the old bus till they returned. The beach was crowded & I never saw so much human form before & they don't mind what is thought of them and go about quite self-possessed.' On her tax return she would designate her occupation as 'Minding my own affairs'.⁶⁸ By herself at Harewood, Florence was prey to rogues and vagabonds

Had a big surprise on Saturday, 6th morning. A visit from a "war tax collector", with typewritten documents for me to sign (being compulsory), or imprisonment. They asked to see my bank book & cheque book - which, of course, I produced, then signed various papers & eventually had to write a cheque for £37, payable to "Alan Curtis", head tax collector, in Bourke St, then the balance of my small sum in the bank placed as the deposit for war fund but he said I would be able to draw on same! He gave his name as "Francis" and now I am wondering if I have given my little all away, also £37 tax, which I couldn't well spare at present. He said he knew Mr Brown, my bank manager, but of course, I had no way of making enquiries & Zim was out having his truck repaired in K.W.R...⁶⁹

Disturbing radio reports were coming in daily, first of the fall of France and then of Hitler's Luftwaffe trying to bomb Britain into submission. Florence wrote that life at Western Port went on. 'The number of motors that have gone past this weekend would surprise you. Apart from this, "sports" are a legion & from morn till night after quail on one side and the Bay duck on the other. Just as if there was nothing doing

and really, to my idea everything seems to be going wrong at the present time and no one worries at all!!!'⁷⁰

Flight Sergeant
William Brian Lyall
(1921-1944). H.C.
William Lyall's great
grandson was killed
when his Halifax
plane was shot
down over France.



But people were worried, very worried and Lyalls were again stepping up to the mark. As the Royal Air Force pilots won the Battle of Britain and Germany turned her armoured units to attack the Soviet Union, Bill enlisted in the Volunteer Defence Corps and his eldest sons Brian and David began training in artillery units before being transferred to the Air Force.⁷¹

At Harewood the season was wet, rabbits sparse and Florence found the flowers - red roses, chrysanthemums, narcissus and flowering cactus a joy. As always, snakes were a worry.

25 Sept 1941

My bread day was a real spring day & I decided to walk down to the gates to get it, taking Andrew's old cane walking stick (in case "Molly" should want to know what the parcel was). When I got a few yards from the gate there was a huge black snake lying full length in the green grass at the side of the track - so I reversed the stick, using the knob, and succeeded in killing the nasty brute, but it took all I knew to do it and I was quite out of breath with all the whacking I gave it - I had never tackled one before & had no idea it was such a tough job & hope there are no more about.⁷²

Uncle Andrew's knobbly-ended cane is still there, next to the front door, in the old decorative iron Coalbrookdale hall stand and 'Bomber', the black snake, occasionally makes an appearance. We leave her alone if she stays away from the house.

The Japanese bombed Pearl Harbour and the Americans joined the war in both theatres. Training completed, Brian's cheery diary from 11 September 1943 told of leaving Victoria for the first time and travelling to Sydney, where he reflected that crossing the Harbour Bridge by night 'must be one of the most beautiful sights anywhere in the world'. In Brisbane, he boarded the *Matsonia*, a 'crack pleasure liner' and discovered American 'chow' – fruit served for breakfast and delicious 'fresh bread' that had been baked in 'Frisco weeks earlier and frozen in air tight packaging'. The voyage was vastly different from his grandfather's and great grandfather's blustery trip on the *Kent*, where gold was caulked down in the hold and the cow killed for food as the ship rounded the Horn. Brian quickly tired of eating beans, but was fascinated to discover gum trees in San Francisco and 'swell' American girls who would drink at the same bars as the men and knew nothing about Australia except Australians were the best fighting men in the world and had a song called 'Waltzing Matilda'.

Crossing the American 'outback' on a sleeper train with beds as comfortable 'as a bed at home', Brian marvelled at the scenery, got up to mischief at the whistle stops and thought about going to university in the States before finally reaching New York on 7 October, when his diary stopped. He boarded the *Queen Mary* for Britain, where he was attached to Australian 466 Squadron, Leconfield, Yorkshire, as a gunner on Halifax Bomber Crew 108, flying missions over Stuttgart, Essen, Nuremburg and Tergnier.

The knock came on Bill and Hilda's door at Canterbury on 22 April 1944.

REGRET TO INFORM YOU THAT YOUR SON WILLIAM BRIAN LYALL IS MISSING AS RESULT OF AIR OPERATIONS OF 19TH APRIL 1944 STOP KNOWN DETAILS ARE HE WAS MEMBER OF CREW HALIFAX AIRCRAFT DETAILED TO ATTACK TERGNIER FRANCE WHICH FAILED TO RETURN TO BASE STOP THIS INFORMATION IS CONFIDENTIAL AND NOT FOR PUBLICATION

More information trickled in over the next year. On the way back to base, the Halifax was attacked by an enemy fighter aircraft and the aft section burst into flames, killing Brian instantly. The pilot put the aircraft into a corkscrew and some of the crew were able to bail out and parachute to safety. They heard the plane crash and then the explosion of ammunition before they escaped or were captured behind enemy lines. William Brian Lyall was buried with his two crew mates in a cemetery north of Paris. In one of those ironies of history, blood had been shed by two out of four Australian generations of the Lyall family in France, for the benefit of the French people, while their patriarch, John Lyall, had fought against France in hostilities where British success had ensured South Eastern Australia would become 'Victoria' rather than 'Terre Napoleon'.⁷³

By May 1945, the season at Harewood had swung back to El Niño dry as the Allies and Soviets encircled Berlin and Hitler took his own life. Germany surrendered.

2 May 1945

No green grass anywhere & here around the house is just full of rabbit burrows. I never remember seeing the like before - the long drought has been the cause (...) Harb has just come in bringing me his copy of the "Sun" & must now see what "Churchill tells Empire" so will close this short scribble & hope it finds both you dear and Bertha well and strong. Poor old England must be glad of peace but we still have to settle the dirty little Japs unfortunately & can see it will be a long task.

Best love to you both from your old and tired sister,

Florence⁷⁴

'What we have won', newspaper clipping, *The Sun*, 1945, found tucked in the back of Florence's 1870 school days atlas. H.L.

The 86-year-old must have pored over her old 1870 school atlas as she tried to work out where the Anzacs were fighting, as inside the atlas' cover there was a clipping from *The Sun* from 29 May 1945 with a panoramic map of South East Asia entitled 'WHAT WE HAVE WON-what we have yet to win'. The American and Australian flags were tied together with Australians fighting in Tarakan and Americans fighting in Okinawa,



972 miles from ‘Tokio’.⁷⁵ It would be the Americans discovering how to unpack the gluons of stardust that would blast lifeforms across the ninth threshold in ourstory as they dropped atom bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, ended the war and opened the Nuclear Age.

In one of her last letters to Maud, Florence wrote ‘There will be great excitement in England over the “Baby Princess” (& just as they wished) And the Reds seem to be making warfare everywhere and I would not be surprised if they started here, we have so many of the Creatures!!’⁷⁶

The Great Jubilee Book, The Story of the Australian Nation in Pictures by Jules Feldmann may have been one of the last books to be placed in Harewood’s library before Florence’s death. With post-war immigration, the likes of Martelli and Catani would no longer be odd exceptions in an overwhelmingly British country, but credit was given the ‘able and sane Scot colonist’, who added to the distillation of the Australian psyche ‘a love of learning and a forthright approach.’⁷⁷

Florence’s health was failing and money low. She kept her pet pony but sold her Fahr piano, which had given her so much pleasure over the years. Her hands were now too arthritic to play and her ears too deaf to hear.⁷⁸ Her fainting spells and heart turns became more frequent and she finalized her will, transferring the old house to Maud and Bertha Ricardo. By February 1951, Florence wrote ‘My legs are useless now & I just creep about holding on to everything’, but she was adamant she did not want to leave her dear old home.⁷⁹

On a chilly August morning, a fourteen-year-old schoolgirl from Dalmore rode her bicycle up to the house. The front door was open. When there was no answer to her knock, she let herself in and wandered into the downstairs bedroom. Florence’s ancient body laid cold and stiff on the brass canopy bed in which William and Annabella had given her life 92 years earlier. Lyall family stardust permeated every corner of Harewood House, rippled across the landscape and into the fabric of Australian life.⁸⁰

HOME OF THE DEAD PIONEERS

Harewood - cold and indifferent
colonial mansion,
home of the dead pioneers.
Shrouded now by monkey trees
and ancient pines.
The weather bird
sings an eerie rustic song
as the wind
whistles through the trees
and down the old brick chimneys.
Thin echoes
heard from distant cranes
soaring
like magic flying spears
bleak and grey the evening.

At night the rain falls
in pearl drops
that meander down the window pane.
The road mocks these streams:
uneven mobile headlights
that string together
independent,
going to happier, brighter places.

A snow owl broods
and stares
out of black beaded eyes.
They shine soullessly
from tufts of fluffy white plumage
speckled brown markings.
Frail and pristine white cheeks
and black granite beak
sits on a sterile nest
and blue spotted eggs.

The library,
a place of fine gold leaf books,
untouched,
glass encased for many years.
The child wonders
who could possibly read so many books
in a lifetime.



'Oh Kitty! How nice it would be if we could only get through into the Looking-glass house! I'm sure it's got, oh! Such beautiful things in it! (...) And certainly the glass *was* beginning to melt away, just like a bright silvery mist.' Carroll, Lewis, *Through the Looking Glass and what Alice found there*. John Tenniel, artist, Macmillan & Co., London, 1902, p. 9-11. H.L.

The Spanish Bridal room,
canopied, gossamer
trailing net to the foot of the bed.
Stiff white linen, hard and cold.
She feels ice daggering in her heart.
Somehow she knows
That the art of love
has long since been a stranger there.
Every quarter Lady Ricardo visits Harewood,
like 'old faithful' a returning geyser.

Upstairs the rooms are empty
save for one bedroom
and a junk room -
relics are kept here.
Years of suit
coat boxes and trunks

Filled with hoards of past remains
from distant parts.
French cosmetics and creams
hooped skirts
cigar cases illustrated with men in waistcoats

and centre parted hair,
huge moustaches and sideburns.
Snuff boxes
depicting men in knickerbockers
and buckled shoes.
Handmade lace handkerchiefs
ancient toys
strange Christmas cards and calendars
of the early 1900s
pictured with blue birds
and flowers
and pink cherub faces
flawless
and all trimmed lace.

Musty faded remnants of bygone years
faded happiness and tears.
The child didn't wish to be there
lying across a brass bed,
living deep in superman comics
and munching sweet treats
she passes through the looking glass.

Margaret Askew⁸¹

Maud and Bertha Ricardo continued to live in town at 'Thurla' as Florence rested with William and Annabella beneath the Lyall monument in the Cranbourne cemetery. Margaret, the lonely child of these verses, lived with her mother and John Albon, the caretaker, at Harewood in the 1950s and 60s. After a full and adventurous life Maud passed in 1958 and Bertha had the house listed with the recently established National Trust of Victoria. It was classified B – highly significant, to be preserved. Bertha sold Harewood in 1967 to Huey and Betty Balas and it stayed with the Balas family until Betty passed in 1990. From there Harewood drifted into our family's hands and so the end returns to the beginning.

6

REFLECTIONS



Reflection on Cardinia Creek c. 1930. H.C.



Harewood 1995, with the Scottish flag and a young couple of a new generation– painting by Tony Purcell. Harewood Collection.



100 Years of Anzacs, Lone Pine planting by 5th and 6th Australian generation William Lyalls, at Harewood, 2015, honouring Brian Lyall, killed at Gallipoli, 1915 and William Brian Lyall killed over France, 1944.



Southern Brown Bandicoot. This now threatened species was once common around Western Port. With re-vegetation, fox control and wildlife corridor connectivity, bandicoots have returned to Harewood.



Harewood 2015, preparing for the 100 years of Anzacs commemoration

Lying awake in the old brass canopy bed in the downstairs bedroom at Harewood, I can watch the Southern Cross rise above French Island. It becomes perfectly framed through the old, imperfect glass of the French doors: the two pointer stars in the left frame, the Crux on the right. Floating in time, the bed's canopy becomes the rough bark of a miam, the stars of the Cross become the brightly coloured lorikeets of Boonwurrung tradition being pursued by hawks over the island of Jouap. A pony's whinny and a morning chorus of birds greet me as the sunrise lights the poa grass, the levee, the mangrove fringe, the bay and the island beyond. The musical calls of blackbirds and magpies and the soft quacks of black duck and teal can be picked out from the background chatter of the starlings and mynahs in the cypress trees. Edward, the peacock, sounds his muffled siren and I become aware of ibis, heron and a swamp harrier drifting slowly past in the distance on the way to their day's chores. The room brightens and through the sheer cloth of the canopy I can see the vaulted lath and plaster ceiling. On the bedside table, a worn Bible and the spirit stones (thaga-kurha, thaga-kuribong) come into view against the backdrop of the mangroves, the bay and the sky.

Rising, I open the doors onto the verandah and watch the blue shadow of French Island and the distant hills become light as I contemplate Harewood's unique, yet universal, narrative. Twelve fundamental particles and four elementary forces physicists say lie deep within each living cell and atom, as well as comprising everything in the universe: the essence of all things, timeless, spaceless and transcendental. How did this stardust become what I'm seeing before me, what I'm thinking, what I feel within me?

Moving into Harewood in the early 1990s and becoming captivated by the library, artefacts, spirit stones and stories raised Russian doll puzzles: 'Why did a Scotsman build Harewood House?', 'How did these people, plants and animals tie in with global evolution?', 'Could spiritual beliefs of such divergent people have common ground?'

These weren't easy questions. The simple conviction with which mainstream educators of 19th century wrote in the Lyall children's *Facts and Figures; Chronology for Schools* that the world was created by God in 4004 BC, in which year He also created man in His image, tempers any suggestion answers from any generation can be certain. Accepting this caveat, 21st century science has 'creation' tracing back from the view from Harewood's verandah across thresholds in space-time to a singularity event of some 13.8 billion years ago. Along the way primordial forces and particles developed into light elements, then thousands of twinkling early stars, one of which aged to become 'our' super nova which exploded to become the stardust, including heavy elements, of our solar system and planet. Some of this stardust morphed into a primordial organic broth and then, crossing another threshold, competing lifeforms with global expansions punctuated with global mass extinction events. Charles Lyell spotted the existence and immense time scale of geological evolution but it was his younger, globe-travelling colleague, Charles Darwin, who expanded on the evolution in life forms. Later geographic determinist insights also helped to partly answer the

question why it was Europeans from the opposite end of the world who came to colonise Australia and build Harewood House: selection pressures placed on naturally variable communities in the context of preceding history and geography have been a key driving force. With the discovery of elementary particles and forces, evolutionary theories have converged, side-lining a 'need' for a deity. Yet, considered side by side, Harewood's spirit stones, scriptures, library and context evoke a unity in life that connects with a unity in the universe. If not exactly made in 'His' image, evidence-based science suggests we are all made from the same essence/ fundamental particles/ stardust of the universe. There is plenty of room for wriggle in the God debate and Harewood abounds with both spiritual and scientific clues.

Harewood from the
east dam with sheep
dog, 1886. H.C.



WEAVING STARDUST INTO OURSTORY



tardust to us. Changing opportunities and impediments, be they from land, sea, air or culture, were cornerstones in determining which plants and animals came to Harewood. The timing of rift formation between shifting tectonic plates was critical, so too was earth's last great mass extinction event of 65 myr. A few million years' delay in continental separation and important terrestrial placental mammal progenitors may have crossed emerging oceans, perhaps allowing Australia to develop indigenous primate species to rival the hominids of Africa and Eurasia or hoofed species suitable for domestication. As it happened a small nucleus of marsupial mammals that crossed over from South America, survived and multiplied alongside a unique suite of ants, bees and other invertebrates, birds, lizards, snakes, frogs and

plants that had also managed to jump on board the undocking island continent. Having to carry pouch young outside the body meant Australia's large marsupials lumbered or hopped rather than ran, making their bodies unsuitable to carry people or pull carts. Emerging from the womb in an undeveloped state limited the marsupials' potential brain development and, produced in small volumes, marsupial milk was inappropriate for human infants. While these traits may seem trivial and unrelated, together they had major implications in the developing history of the Aboriginal people who were the first humans to arrive in south-eastern Australia.

Geographic, historical, cultural, technological and political factors have profoundly influenced the DNA mix of people who have called Western Port home. Cool climate Eurasian farmers had little need for exceptional visual, olfactory or auditory acuity or large teeth, but pale skin (even Neanderthals had this), small brow ridges, flat faces and narrow noses allowed them to take advantage of limited sun and restricted heat loss in the cold climates into which they expanded. With a sunny climate and no domestic animals until the relatively recent arrival of dingoes, dark-skinned humans with robust physiques and keen senses were better able to survive as hunter-gatherers and defend territory in south-eastern Australia.

While comparing physical features raises interesting questions about the possible influence of climate, crops and domestic animals on two distantly evolved human populations, it does not provide an answer. Technology rather than racial superiority has been a key issue. In this respect, the bond Eurasians formed with horses from their first domestication around the Black Sea some 6,000 years ago, played a key role in the

Melbourne Punch
Dec 27 1860, p. 183.
H.L.

expansion of empires and the translocation of human, plant and animal genotypes, as did evolving religions and advances in metallurgy, literacy, agriculture, weaponry and marine technology.

These elements converge in what I see, feel, hear and experience at Harewood. William, Annabella, Toolumn and Yamerboke's life stories suggest how politics, technology and an appreciation of history can help in dealing with generational challenges. Their lives were lived in the context of colonial expansion, our generation lives in the context of huge population and information growth, human induced climate change and loss of whole ecosystems on an unprecedented scale. Our local story of the destruction of the Kooweerup Swamp is not entirely negative however as the whole of Western Port has been declared a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve and we have today, along Cardinia Creek The Inlets Waterway Reserve, a conservation zone which includes part of the original swamp. It fortunately survived and is now actively managed by Melbourne Water. It was from this reserve wallabies and Southern Brown Bandicoots were able to expand back to Harewood when suitable revegetation was re-established. More work needs to be done but by combining flood mitigation with habitat restoration and ecological connectivity, especially around the confluence of Cardinia, Deep, Gum Scrub and Toomuc Creeks, Helmeted Honeyeaters and Leadbeater's Possums, the endangered, endemic State bird and mammal emblems of Victoria that were once inhabitants at the fringes of the Kooweerup Swamp might be able to stage come backs. Perhaps there could be a lake as Florence suggested.¹

Why did a Scotsman build Harewood house? Reflecting on Harewood's story, this question could equally be posed, "Why did the British bring Shetland ponies? Or Thoroughbreds? Or hare?" William Lyall's generation simply praised the merits of British stock for global colonisation of God's creation. But even as leading 'Victorian Victorian' colonists made self-congratulatory remarks, thought leaders Darwin, Wallace, Lyell and Huxley were publishing the books and papers that saw evolution, fuelled by natural variation and selection pressures, as a more rational solution to puzzles thrown up by global geography and plant and animal distribution. The 21st century saw a paradigm shift with the realisation that, at a basic level, humans and other lifeforms are all orderly re-arrangements of the elementary particles and forces that have likely been around since our universe began.

Against this vast backdrop, the sequence that led to the Lyall family building Harewood appears to have had roots some 14,000 years ago with global warming and subsequent stop-start rising of sea levels around the world. Call it Bunjil's punishment for women looking at a forbidden bull roarer, Jehovah's wrath for the sins of Hebrews or a marine transgression caused by a shift in the earth's axis and orbit, it was, for the first time in our story, a series of global flooding events about which intelligent humans had sufficient consciousness to reflect, remember and develop myths to pass down to their children. It is also something the world is again experiencing today.

Geographical proximity made Asia the logical contender for a first maritime super-power to colonise Australia. Indeed, Zhu Di's massive Chinese fleet of 1421 was on the brink of doing just that when, in a moment of madness, China's new Emperor and his inner circle of reactionary religious advisors, dismantled the Chinese navy, destroyed hundreds of years of written knowledge and imposed strict inwardly looking policies. Chinese involvement in Harewood's story did not come until the Victorian gold rushes, by which time the Europeans had seized the opportunity for colonisation the Chinese had allowed to pass. Early Melanesian/Polynesian mariners had no horses, sheep or cattle and their cultures were better suited to expanding into uninhabited islands than a continental landmass with an existing population. Asian links with Harewood were camellias and Cantonese dinner plates rather than Cantonese people and there were no Polynesian items amongst the artefacts.

The early thrust for the nineteenth century invasion of Western Port emanated from Europe and the Levant. The founding story of the Old Testament related how thousands of Hebrew slaves could successfully flee Egyptian oppression with hoof stock and monotheist, transcendental, spiritual beliefs that enabled them to successfully colonise Canaan. Evolving Judeo-Christian and later Islamic beliefs and values sustained subsequent colonists who successfully spread around the globe. Aboriginal people developed their integrated, holistic, and sustainable spiritual beliefs centred on the Dreaming while living in a land of oscillating climate that lacked equivalent crops or easily herded domestic animals. Indigenous food gathering was based on firestick farming, kinship reciprocity and a holistic relationship with the land. This form of agriculture did not generate sufficient excess agricultural production to support the population growth seen in Eurasia, nor the social structures that supported the advances in metallurgy, communication, transport and warfare. Yet it has sustained Aboriginal people for more than 50,000 years, and delivered fulfilling life styles to Indigenous communities that, before disruption by Europeans, were more comfortable than those in many parts of Dickensian England. Some improvements in weapons, such as the woomera, boomerang and composite spears, emerged locally but maritime transport remained primitive and the people of Lo-an's Land remained largely isolated from the rest of the world.

Living in close proximity to Eurasia, the British were exposed to ideas and advances from Eurasia's huge land mass, as well as to Eurasian pathogens, to which, over generations, the population developed resistance. Their Christian faith bade them to 'go and make believers of all nations' and their rulers wanted the prestige and benefits colonisation could bring.

As maritime prowess improved, the Europeans spread their weapons, germs, livestock, religion and DNA globally. The close of the American War of Independence saw both British and French jockeying for control of Australia as the Spanish and Portuguese had done in South America two centuries earlier. The decisively won battle between David Collins' troops and the Kulin in 1803 and Napoleon's loss at Waterloo ensured that it was the British, rather than the French, who colonised Western Port. In unexpected



Annabella Lyall c.1870 (Head)



William Lyall c.1870 (Head)

ways, past history and geography played key roles in determining which people settled the region but small groups of resolute people in key positions at critical times could dramatically alter the course of our story for generations to come.

On an individual level, how did William and Annabella Lyall manage to accomplish so much? They both looked the part and had a great marriage and their goals and passions ideally matched the times in which they found themselves. They were willing to take risks and knew how to leverage their value, they kept moving, made ripples and managed to stay in flow. Their legacies, good and bad, often occurred out of the corner of their eyes. Precession it's called today. Their Cotswold Sheep, oysters, pheasants and peacocks were 'failures' but their swamp drainage, pasture grasses, Shetlands, Herefords, Romney Marsh Sheep, camelias, Scottish Gorse, Sambar Deer and hare flourished and rippled far from their points of introduction, in some cases fortunately, in others not so, for future generations. There was no background of privilege but there was a protestant work ethic and Scottish traditions of independence, frugality and intellectual vigour, qualities that served them well in the wake of British Imperial success and were reflected in the life stories of the four generations of Australian Lyalls this story spanned. Harewood's beautiful old oak bookcases, and their contents, are a lasting statement of the skills, values and humour of an enterprising couple and a nation from the other end of the globe.

At the same time, Yamerboke and Toolumn's spears, axe heads and spirit stones reflected the Kulin Aborigines' ongoing relationship with a sacred landscape that spanned tens of thousands of years and still continues, it is part of the air we breathe and the earth we

walk on. Reconciling these traditions remains a key challenge for thought leaders of our community. Honouring and respecting traditional owners and ensuring any misappropriated remains are buried in accordance with Aboriginal spiritual beliefs are obvious tasks along this journey.

INSPIRITED PLACES

Although there are gaps, it is now possible to construct what seems to be a rational 13.8 billion year space-time story to explain the people, animals and landscape of Harewood today. There is also a nebulous, spiritual dimension to Harewood.

Harewood abounds with symbols with which people from many different cultures have found mystical resonance. Having read the books in the library, I can look to the east from the verandah, watch sun rise and, to the left, see the cosmic mountain of Narn where the monster was slain and Waang, the raven, gave fire to the Kulin people. Like 19th Century romantic poets, I can look to the south and see the wide expanse of Warn-mor-in that can be charming one day and then break into a raging storm with thunder and lightning and winds strong enough to tear dwellings apart the next. I can see Bunjil, Jehovah, Indira or Allah at work in both the landscape and heavens. I can watch Binbeal, the rainbow. I can see ngamat in the red glow of the sunset and picture murups travelling to Tharangalk-bek on bright sinking rays of the sun. Over the western horizon I can imagine the ngamajet spirits of departed Aboriginal people or arriving nineteenth century French and British explorers. I can walk at night in an aromatic grove of mulberry, pine, cypress and lemon-scented gum trees with white ibis returning to the tree tops in the twilight to become silhouetted by the moon and the stars. I see symbolism of life, rebirth and knowledge. I can see Altair (Bunjil) to the north and Sirius (Lo-an) and Canopus (Lo-an tuka) shine over an estuary where Toorudun, the bunyip once lurked while convicts rowed explorers up our creek or aboriginal women caught eels between their toes. I can watch shorebirds take off on a journey to the other end of the world.

In the library, William's beautiful oak bookcases could be an avatar of a sacred Druid oak grove. The books contain the wisdom, literature and humour of Jehovah, Christ,



Title page, *Glimpses of Life in Victoria*
by a Resident,
Edmonston
& Douglas,
Edinburgh, 1872



'The Horse Fair,'
engraving by Edwin
Landseer of a
painting by Rosa
Bonheur. H.C.

Buddha, Herodotus, Scott, Burns, Pope, Dickens and a host of early Australian authors. There are framed sepia photos of William and Annabella who left their spirits to watch over the landscape they helped to create. While ponies are now pets rather than power tools, in Edwin Landseer's engraving of Rosa Bonheur's wonderful painting 'The Horse Fair', I can feel the sweaty bodies and see unity of life in a barely controlled, instinctive contest of power, beauty and ambiguous sexuality. The mysterious owl behind the glass dome is special to Harewood but countless other owls around the world have been perceived by humans as penetrating, wise and all seeing.

The energy waves that formed these images were sub-liminal, sensuous and formed in the milieu of an abstract-thinking brain at the intersection of faith and science, but that does not make them invalid compared with a 'rational', secular, rendering of how life forms interconnect. They hint at a version of geographic determinism that involves left and right brain, head and heart, this point or any other point in time-space on the planet, innate or living, past, present and/or future connecting with the stardust of the early universe.

In other cultures small, spherical stones, viewed with ritual and context are said to represent the essence of ancestors and soul. Like an antenna focusing discrete energy waves, rubbed and reflected upon, they can allow receptive individuals to tune into their subconscious or their collective consciousness in the same way as the sun, the moon, the stars, fire, water, dreams, music or close human or animal relationships. The spirit stones of Harewood are said to represent the male and female spirit. There are no marks of human manipulation upon them, they could be any stones and there are hundreds of free-association interpretations that different people and cultures might ascribe to them, for example, yin/yang, good/evil, sky/earth, heaven/hell or conscious/subconscious.

Holding the black stone I feel an igneous rock extruded from basaltic outflow from an ancient volcano that was later tumbled for millennia in swift flowing currents. Helped by Murrundindi's suggestion that it represents the male spirit, my meditation gravitates to fathers, husbands, sons and a heavenly all-father. For the white stone, I see the intruded sands of a sea bed metamorphosed over millions of years into quartzite, then scraped and tumbled into a sphere like its black partner. I think of daughters, wives and mothers going back to heavy elements forged in the supernova that gave rise to the sun, earth, spirit stones and all of us. Black and white relationships on Lo-an's Land come to mind. Starkly there currently are no known descendants of Yamerboke or Tolumn, nor of the Yallock Bulluk clan, the traditional owners of the land on which Harewood stands, nor of any of the clans from the eastern side of Western Port. However, the stereotype of white oppression and black resistance does not match with our local history, there is evidence of much more complex relationships. Which human DNA would survive in the next generation was not simply a matter of race, but rather who were friends or foes, which communities had technological advantage, self-belief, clever leadership or immunity to pathogens and who was able to spot and take advantage of critical moments.

The identity of the Aborigine(s) who may have first found meaning in the spirit stones is unknown but juxtaposed against the Scottish diaspora culture embodied in Harewood's library and the landscape the two cultures have shared, they incite reflection. The nature of divinity, purpose in life, finding peace and where the soul goes after death were questions about which the authors of Harewood's books wrote extensively. Aboriginal people approached the same questions in an oral tradition. Both perceived an Almighty, male, sky god in human image as a creator but this interpretation does not sit well with evidence for the recent emergence of humans compared with the multi-billion year old history of the universe. Logically it must have been humans who breathed life into this image of God, rather than the reverse, but it doesn't disprove 'His' existence. Both cultures also had an alternative perception of an 'Immortal, invisible, God only wise', to use the first line of the still popular 19th century Scottish hymn.

The thought that fundamental particles and energies within each individual and atom are the same as those that were present at the beginning of the universe and of which the whole of the universe is made speaks of timelessness and tolerance. It is not inconsistent with the Judeo-Christian view of humans being made in the image of God, nor the Aboriginal concept of the Dreaming, nor of the Buddhist concept of re-incarnation, nor the Hindu concept of humans being a microcosm of the universe nor of the Islamic concept of a God without form, the one and only, the eternal and absolute, nor atheists' rejection of all traditional gods.²

As collective learning spurred the industrial, informational, nuclear and genetic revolutions, the alchemy of elementary particles and forces has shaped, and re-shaped, landscapes, genomes and cultures, all the while determining the fates of individuals living out their legacies and those around them. The rational and spiritual approaches

of both indigenous and immigrant traditions have insights to offer as Australians face the big challenges of the Anthropocene era: human-induced climate change, rising sea levels, human population growth, sustainability, social justice and the biggest mass extinction event of the past 65 million years.

Western Port is at the forefront with biodiversity and natural heritage values significant enough for the United Nations to declare it a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve yet with a potentially huge container terminal proposed for Hastings and an international airport for Koo Wee Rup-Lang Lang.

Inspired places, like Harewood, serve a purpose as retreats and reflective havens. Kept intact, her 'big history', spirit stones and kaleidoscopic connections provide focus for memory and imagination as our generation navigates these challenges and, hopefully wisely, takes our turn at weaving stardust into our planet's future.

'Time bowling
out the Druids',
A'Beckett, Gilbert,
*A Comic History of
England*, Punch,
London, 1857, p. 2.
Artist John Leech.
H.L.



ENDNOTES

A comprehensive bibliography was compiled for Macwhirter, Patricia, 2005, *Harewood: A history of the World from an Australian Verandah*, Ph D thesis, Monash University, on which this book was based. Databases of the Harewood Collection and publications in the Harewood Library were compiled and updated in 2002 and are kept at Harewood. Along with the books in Harewood's library and the journals of William Hovell, William Thomas and William Lyall, other influential works have been Jared Diamond's *Guns, Germs and Steel*; Stephen Hawking's *The Universe in a Nutshell*; Carl Jung's *Man and his Symbols*, Pat and Tom Vickers-Rich's *Wildlife of Gondwana* and following developments in various disciplines on Wikipedia and other internet sites. Connecting with Harewood's energy by reading the books *in* the library rather than just reading books from the library was significant.

PART 1: HAREWOOD

1. Books that were present in the Harewood Library during the Lyall family period of occupancy (1857-1967) are designated (H.L.) in these notes. Other items from the house are designated as part of the Harewood collection (H.C.).
2. The story of Lo-an's journey, as told by William Barak, was published in Howitt, Alfred, *The Native Tribes of South-East Australia* Macmillan & Co, London, 1904, p. 485. Paralleling stories of lonely epic journeys of other cultures, the swan feathers on the wind may symbolise transcendence as Lo-an takes on divine qualities after his ordeal. See Jung, Carl, *Man and his Symbols*, 1964, Picador, London, 1978, pp. 101-119, 146-56. The Boonwurrung name for Western Port (Warn-mor-in) and French Island (Bel-lar-marin) were on William Thomas' Map of the Western Port District 1840; he changed the name for French Island to 'Jouap' in his 1841 Map. Public Records Office, Victoria. The name for Wilson Promontory (Wamoon) comes from Smyth, Brough, *The Aborigines of Victoria, Vol I*, George Robertson, Melbourne, 1878, p. 453. (H.L.).
3. Milius, Pierre-Bernard, journal April 1802, English translation in *The Victorian Historical Magazine, Vol 6, No. 1*, Sept 1917, reprinted in Macwhirter, Noel & Pat, Saggiocco, Jean & Southwood, Jane, (eds) *Proceedings, Le Naturaliste in Western Port Commemorative Seminar*, 2002, pp. 3-9.
4. Peck, Harry, *Memoirs of a Stockman*, Stockland Press, Melbourne, 1942, pp. 172-3. (H.L.).
5. Harewood was placed on Heritage Victoria's register (HO264) in 1974. It is classified B – highly significant; to be preserved, by the National Trust.
6. Ricardo, Bertha, 'Extracts Collected from the Diaries of William Lyall, Esq. of Harewood, Westernport, Victoria, Australia and members of his family by his granddaughter, Bertha Irene Ricardo', unpublished manuscript, copy in the H.L., 1956, p. 33.
7. Murrundindi's European name is Gary Hunter. The bullroarer mentioned in the narrative was stolen out of his car some months after his visit.
8. Thomas, William, *1863 Census of the Bonurong*, Australian Archives, Victoria, (CRS) B 312, Correspondence Files. Item No. 9. Reproduced in Joy, Shirley, *The Search for the Beaumaris Cemetery, Victoria 1855-1865*, Shirley Joy, 1995, p. 63. In this document Thomas spelled the name Yam-mer-book. Jimmy Dunbar's (Yamerboke's) death certificate records Mordialloc as

his birthplace and burial in Melbourne Cemetery but age was not recorded. The photograph in a Lyall family photograph album had 'Eliza and Jimmie' written on the back. While it is very difficult to estimate ages, it shows a dark haired Eliza, no more than 35 years, and Jimmy, beginning to grey, perhaps around eight or ten years older. If Eliza's age was correctly estimated on her death certificate, where she was recorded to be around fifty five years, (February 28, 1877), this could date the photograph to around 1857 and would place her birth around 1822, and Jimmy's, perhaps, around 1814. The photograph would have been taken many years before their 'marriage' that took place c 1875.

9. Smyth, Brough, Vol II, 1878, op.cit. pp. 368-378.

PART 2: YAMERBOKE

THE DREAMING

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2. Ibid; Howitt, Alfred, 1904, op. cit., pp. 71-2, 309-10, 418-22; Howitt, Alfred MS:5, 33, 34, 1882, cited by Barwick Dianne *Rebellion at Coranderrk*, Aboriginal History Monograph 5, Aboriginal Affairs Victoria 1998, p. 9; Murrundindi's family are descended from William Barak's sister. See Smyth, Brough, 1878, Vol II, op.cit. p. 55. Aboriginal names mentioned have numerous spellings and interpretation of genealogies is challenging. I apologise for any errors and would welcome correction.
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4. Howitt, Alfred, 1904, op. cit. pp. 89, 381, 405, 427-8, 432-6, 491-2. William Barak was Howitt's primary informant. Smyth, Brough, Vol I, 1878, op.cit. p. 427; Massola, Aldo, 1968, *Bunjil's Cave*. Landsdowne Press, Melbourne, 1968, pp. 40 & 108.
5. Ibid.
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7. Smyth, Brough, Vol I, 1878, op.cit. p. 424.
8. Ibid; Howitt, Alfred, 1904, op. cit. p. 253, 484, 491-2; Smyth, Brough, Vol I, 1878, op.cit., p. 428.
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88. Smyth, Brough, Vol I, 1878, op.cit. pp. 183-252, 450. Vocabulary is that recorded by William Thomas in Smyth, Brough, Vol II, 1878, op.cit. pp. 118-27.
89. Ibid, pp. 446-9, 350.
90. Smyth, Brough, Vol I, 1878, op.cit. pp.125, 208. In relation to the Gippsland giant worms Smyth writes 'This worm is about four feet in length and thick in proportion, and, if it can be eaten, must afford readily the means of satisfying the craving of hunger, if not appeasing the appetite. It has a peculiar smell, like tar.'
91. Gaughwin, Denise, 1983, op.cit. Table p.184.
92. Smyth, Brough, Vol I, 1878, op.cit. pp. 234-236; Howitt, Alfred, 1904, pp. 309-13.
93. Flood, Josephine, 1995, op.cit. p. 88. .
94. Walcott, R.H. 'Descriptions of the Victorian Meteorites, with Notes on Obsidionites', *Mem. Nat. Hist. Mus. Victoria*, No 6, 1915, p.6. Cited in Gunson, Niel, 1968, op.cit. p. 14. The 'Cranbourne' meteorites were shared amongst Australian and European Museums and one remains a centre-piece at the British Museum (2005).
95. Diamond, Jared, 1998, op.cit. pp. 334-54 and Mulvaney, John & Kamminga Johan, 1999, op.cit. p. 291-3.
96. Smyth, Brough, Vol I, 1877, op.cit. pp. 406-22; Bonnemains, Jacqueline, Forsyth, Elliott & Smith, Bernard, *Baudin in Australian Waters*, Oxford Univ. Press, Melbourne, 1988, pp. 115-20; Cole, Valda, *Western Port Chronology*, 1984, Hastings Historical Society, citing Lt James Grant's journal, footnote p. 22
97. Thomas, William, journal 10 Feb 1840, Monash Univ Library, microfilm, 5883-214/2 (There are alternative spellings for Kirkbillese in his later writings); Gaughwin, Denise, 1983, op.cit., Table p. 182; Smyth, Brough, Vol I, 1878, op.cit., pp. 388-392. Database of Aboriginal Placenames of Victoria 2002.

98. Mulvaney, John & Kamminga, Johan, 1999, op.cit. pp. 343-4 and Flood, Josephine, 1995, op. cit. pp.198-201.
99. Ricardo, Bertha, 1956, op.cit. p 33, quoted on pp. 8-9 of this text. Gott, Beth & Conran, John, *Victorian Koori Plants*, Yangennanock women's Group, Hamilton, 1991, pp. 53-8; Smyth, Brough, Vol I, 1878, op.cit., pp. 385-6. Murrundindi indicated that such stones might also be used in initiation ceremonies, personal conversation, 1998.
100. Smyth, Brough, Vol I, 1878, op.cit. pp. 270-298.
101. Smyth, Brough, Vol I, 1877, op.cit. pp. 342-56.
102. Diamond, Jared, 1998, op.cit. pp. 308-13.
103. Thomas, William, in Bride T., 1898, op.cit. pp. 69-71. The spears remaining at Harewood are tiers made with thin, fire-hardened saplings and grass tree stalks.
104. Bonwick, James, 1863, op.cit. p. 35; Smyth, Brough, Vol II, 1878, op.cit. p. 124.
105. Thomas, William, diary entry, February 1840.
106. Smyth, Brough, Vol I, 1878, op.cit. pp. 299-341.
107. Smyth, Brough, Vol I, 1878, op.cit. p. 258, 264. William Thomas appears to be describing Sarcoptic Mange, which is caused by a mite (*Sarcoptes scabiei*) and usually transmitted from dogs to people. Europeans generally have good immunity to this disease. What is now beginning to be understood about acupuncture/acupressure theory might explain how these techniques could be useful.
108. Howitt, Alfred, 1904, pp. 349, 365-7, 376-82; Genesis chapter 28; Smyth, Brough, Vol I, 1878, op.cit. pp. 98-122.
109. Smyth, Brough, Vol I, 1878, op.cit. pp. 253-258. Menzies, Gavin, 1421, *The Year China Discovered the World*, Random House, Sydney, 2002, pp. 153-4 suggests the Chinese may have landed on the south coast of Victoria in 1421-2 but his evidence is slight.
110. Cumpston, JS, *First Visitors to Bass Strait* Roebuck, 1973, p. 2-6; Cole Harry & Valda, *Mr Bass's Western Port, The Whaleboat Voyage*. Hastings-Westernport Historical Society, 1997, pp. 27-48; Pepper, Phillip & De Araugo, Tess, op. cit. 1985, p.7; Howitt Alfred, *Kamilaroi and Kurnai*, 1880, Facsimile Edition, 1991, p. 248; Howitt, Alfred, 1904, op. cit. pp. 442-6.
111. Howitt, Alfred, 1904, op. cit. pp. 387; Howitt MS: 24, 63, cited by Barwick, Dianne, 1998, op.cit. p. 10. William Thomas spelled 'ngamajet' phonetically as 'hom-mer-geek' in Smyth, Brough Vol II, 1878, op.cit. p. 123.

NGAMAJET

112. Grant, James, *The Narrative of a Voyage of Discovery Performed in His Majesty's Vessel The Lady Nelson of sixty tones burthen, with sliding keels, in the years 1800, 1801, and 1802 to New South Wales*, 1803, facsimile edition, pp. 1-80; Horner, Frank, *The French Reconnaissance, Baudin in Australia 1801-1803*. Melbourne Univ Press, 1987, p. 81.
113. Austin, K.A., *The Voyage of the Investigator 1801-1803, Commander Matthew Flinders, R.N.*, Rigby, Adelaide, 1964, pp. 15-65; Tiley, Robert, *Australian Navigators*, Kangaroo Press, Sydney, 2002, 64-84, 106-142.
114. Grant, James, 1803, op.cit., pp. 141-2; Cole, Valda, 1984, op. cit., p. 11; Caley, George, *Reflections on the Colony of New South Wales*. Currey (ed), Landsdowne Press, Melbourne, 1966, pp. 44-50.
115. Grant, James, 1803, op.cit. pp.138-9.
116. Murray, John, *Log entry of the Lady Nelson p.m. 4 January 1802 (sea time)* reprinted in Cole, Valda, 1984, op. cit., pp. 98-100.
117. Curnoe D. and Thorne, A, 2003, op. cit. pp. 201-24.
118. Smyth, Brough, Vol II, 1878, op.cit. p.154.
119. Bonwick, James, *Port Phillip Settlement*, R. Clay, Sons & Taylor, London, 1883, pp. 4-7. (H.L.). Governor King later insisted the name be changed to Port Phillip after his predecessor. See also Lang, John, *An Historical and Statistical Account of New South Wales* Vol 1, Longman, Brown, Green and Longmans, London, 1852, pp. 78-80. (H.L.). Lang credited the French with independently discovering Port Phillip but this was incorrect, both Nicolas Baudin and Felix Hamelin missed identifying the opening to the Bay but François Péron copied from Matthews Flinders charts when they were later together in Sydney and did not acknowledge his source. Murray, John, *Log of the Lady Nelson 1801-1802*, reprinted in Cole, Valda, *The Summer Survey*, Hastings-Western Port Historical Society, 2001.
120. For English translations of the journals of the French explorers at Western Port see Macwhirter, Noel et al (eds), 2002, op.cit.: Pierre-Bernard Milus pp. 3-9, Theodore Leschenault, pp. 11-14, Felix Hamelin p.15, along with biographical material on the French explorers, pp. 21-23; Horner, Frank, 1987, op.cit., pp. 245-6. "Chaloupe" is a French term for long boat.

121. Bonnemains, Jacqueline et al (eds), 1988, op.cit. passim.
122. Howitt, Alfred, 1904, pp. 381, 387, 433.
123. Smyth, B, 1877, Vol I op. cit. pp. 447-8
124. Flinders, M (1814) *A Voyage to Terra Australis* I London pp. 192-3, cited in Horner F (1987) op.cit., p. 220; Brown R. Diary entry 27 April 1802, cited by Austin, K.A., 1964, op.cit., pp. 123-7; Leschenault, Théodore in Macwhirter, Noel, et al (eds), 2002, op.cit., pp. 11-4; Caley, George, *Reflections on the Colony of New South Wales*, Currey, J.E.B. (ed), Lansdowne Press, Melbourne, 1966, pp. 44-48.
125. Péron, François, *A Voyage of Discovery to the Southern Hemisphere, performed by order Emperor Napoleon during the years 1801, 1802, 1803 and 1804*, translation of Vol I only of the French original, London, 1809, cited by Bonwick, James, 1863, op.cit., p. 20.
126. Péron, François, *Voyage de Decouvertes aux Terres Australes, sur les corvettes le Géographe, le Naturaliste, et a la goelette le Casuarina pendant les annees 1800-4*. Quoted, but translator not noted, by Shillinglaw, John, (ed) *Historical Records of Port Phillip, First Annal of the History of the Colony*, John Ferres, Melbourne, 1879, p. 9 (H.L.).
127. Flemming, James, Journal 1802-3, published in Shillinglaw, John, 1879, op.cit. pp. 15-30.
128. Haydon, George, 1845, op.cit. p. 23; Smyth, Brough, Vol I, 1878, op cit. pp. 253-6.
129. Smyth, Brough, Vol II, 1878, op. cit. p.188, gives this Aboriginal name for the place on which the City of Melbourne was built.
130. Tuckey, First Lieutenant, Journal 1803, published in Bonwick, James, 1883, op. cit., p. 26.
131. Ibid, p. 28.
132. Ibid pp. 28-9.
133. Howitt, Alfred, 1904, pp. 295-320.
134. Morgan, J., *The Life and Adventures of William Buckley: Thirty two years a Wanderer amongst the Aborigines of the Unexplored Country of Port Phillip, now Province of Victoria*, 1852, reprinted, Schicht, Roland (ed) McPherson, Sydney, 1996; Bonwick, James, 1863, op.cit., pp. 1-17.
135. Campbell, Alistair, *John Batman and the Aborigines*, Kibble, Melbourne, c.1980, pp. 119-20.
136. Elder, Bruce, *Blood on the Wattle, Massacres and maltreatment of Aboriginal Australians since 1788*, New Holland Publishers, Sydney, 1988, p. 31; Barak William, oral history cited in Wiencke Shirley, *When Wattles Bloom Again*, Woorti Yallock, 1984, p. 3. 'Captain Cook' never reached Western Port, Barak was presumably referring to Collins' party.
137. Horner, Frank, 1987, op.cit., pp. 363-4; Jill, Duchess of Hamilton, *Napoleon, the Empress and the Artist*, Kangaroo Press, Sydney, 1999, pp. 107-210. Eucalypts and other Australian plants were cultivated and found their way into other gardens but after Josephine's divorce from Napoleon many artefacts were dispersed at auction. Many specimens still remain in storage at the Museum of Natural History in Paris, but the whereabouts Western Port material, if there is any, is not known.
138. Cumpston, JS, 1973, op.cit., pp. 1-88; Warnecke, Robert, 'Seals at Seal Rocks, Western Port, and in Bass Strait, before and after the Baudin expedition's visit in 1802.' in Macwhirter, Noel et al, (eds), 2002, op.cit., pp. 77-98.
139. Smyth, Brough, Vol I, 1877, op.cit., p. 55; see Barwick, Dianne, 1984, op. cit., pp. 115-25 for name correlation; Thomas, William, Journal 12 February 1839, in MacFarlane, Ian (ed), *Historical Records of Victoria: Vol. 2B, Aborigines and protectors 1838-39*, Vic. Gov. Printer, 1983, p. 438, gives Derrimut's mother's name as Dindo; Fels, Marie Henson, *Good Men and True, The Aboriginal Police of the Port Phillip District 1837-1853*. Melb Univ Press 1988, pp. 55-6.
140. Clark, CMH, *A History of Australia Vol II, 1822-1838*, paperback edition, Melbourne Univ Press, Melbourne, 1979, p. 52.
141. Ibid, pp. 52-5.
142. Smyth, Brough, Vol I, 1878, op.cit. p. 50.
143. Ibid.
144. Clark, CMH, *A History of Australia III 1824-1851*, paperback edition, Melb Univ Press, Melbourne, 1978, p. 12-3 citing *Voyage de la Corvette L'Astrolabe Execute par Ordre du Roi, pendant les Anees 1826-29, sous le commandement de M. J. Dumont D'Urville*, 5 vols, Paris, 1830, Vol I pp. 197-8, 125-37.
145. Horton, Thomas & Morris, Kenneth, *The Andersons of Western Port*, Bass Valley Historical Society, 1983, pp. 13-20; Gliddon, JW, *Phillip Island in Picture and Story*. Wilkie & Co, Melbourne, 1958, p. 222.
146. Wetherall, FA to Governor Darling, *Report on Western Port*, unpublished manuscript in the Mitchell Library, 1826-7.

147. Clark, CMH, Vol II, 1973, op.cit. p. 13. When the Aboriginal Protector, George Robinson came by the site of the abandoned Corinella settlement in 1846 he noted that 'A grave yard was discovered, but among all the remains of the buildings there was no plan for the worship of God.' 23 April 1844 in Clark, Ian (ed), *The Journals of George Augustus Robinson, Chief Protector, Port Phillip Aboriginal Protectorate, Vol 4*, Heritage Matters, Melb, 1998.
148. Hovell, William, Journal 1826-7, unpublished, held in the Mitchell Library, Sydney; Bowden Keith, *The Western Port Settlement and Its Leading Personalities*, South Eastern Historical Association, Melbourne, 1970, pp. 20-26.
149. Hovell, William, 1826-7, op.cit. 19 Jan 1827.
150. Wright, Samuel, Journal, 1827, held in the Mitchell Library.
151. Elder, Bruce, 1998, op.cit., p. 28-48; Ryan, Lyndall, *The Aboriginal Tasmanians*, Univ Queensland Press, St Lucia, 1981, p. 216-219.
152. Backhouse, J & Walker, George, *The report of a visit to the Penal Settlement of Port Arthur, and to the Aboriginal Establishment on Flinders Island etc.*, 1832, reprinted in Plomley, N.J.B., *Weep in Silence, A History of the Flinders Island Aboriginal Settlement*, Griffin Press, Netley, SA, 1987, pp. 254-5.
153. Barwick, Dianne, 1984, op.cit. p. 116.
154. Hovell, William, 1827, op.cit. passim.
155. Ibid, p. 60; Smyth Brough, Vol II, 1877, op.cit. p. 369. The drawing of Jimmy's skull shows teeth missing. Howitt, Alfred, 1904, op. cit., pp. 610-3, 639-41, 740-1.
156. Howitt, Alfred, 1904, op. cit., p. 64.
157. Ibid, p. 61, citing Blandowski, William, *Trans Phils Soc of Vic*, Vol I, p. 72; Thomas, William, 1840 journal entry, 17 February 1840, cited by Gunson, Niel, 1968, op.cit., p.13; Thomas, William, in Bride, Thomas, 1898, op.cit., pp. 99-100.
158. Howitt, Alfred, 1904, op.cit. pp. 610-3.
159. Bonwick, James, 1883, op.cit. p. 105.
160. *Report of the Select Committee of the Legislative Council on the Aborigines; together with the Proceedings of committee, Minutes of Evidence, and Appendices*, Melbourne, 1859, p. 50, cited by Gunson, Niel, 1968, op.cit., p. 5.
161. Barwick D, 1984, op cit. p 116, citing William Barak's account from A Howitt's manuscript papers. According to Marie Fels these papers have since been lost.
162. Haydon, George, 1845, op.cit. p. 152.
163. Thomas, William, *Report to the Legislative Council's Select Committee on Aborigines*, 1858-9. Also mentioned by George Robinson, 27 April 1844 journal, in Clarke, Ian, 1998, op. cit., p.49. 'The natives of Gippsland have killed 70 of the Boongerong at Brighton.' Fels M, 2011, op. cit. pp. 255-6.
164. 53 Clow, James, in Bride Thomas, 1898, op.cit. p. 111. These tombs should have been visible when the Lyalls first came to Tooradin in 1851 but no mention was made of them in the family diaries.
165. Gaughwin D & Sullivan H, 'Aboriginal Boundaries and Movements in Western Port, Victoria.' *Aboriginal History*, 1984, 8:1-2, p. 88. Citing Thomas and Jamieson, their estimates Bonurong population before the Kurnai raids were 250-300.
166. Robinson, George, 27 April 1844, journal, in Clarke, Ian, Vol 4, 1998, op.cit. pp. 49-50; Fels M (2011) op cit, 255-65
167. Worringittolong. As with most Aboriginal names spelling is phonetic and changes with different authors. It is challenging to be certain if it is the same or a different person about whom they are writing.
168. Smyth, Brough, Vol I, 1878, op.cit. pp. 65.
169. Menzies, Gavin, 2002, op. cit., pp. 169-70.
170. Melville, Henry, *Melville's Australasia*, G. Willis, London, 1851, p. 354. (H.L.).
171. Ryan, Lyndall, 1981, op.cit. pp. 83-172. The early Australian history books on the shelves of Harewood's library openly discussed the injustices being suffered by the Aboriginal people though, no doubt, there was selective suppression of material that might have led to criminal prosecution of whites. e.g. Melville, Henry, 1851, op.cit. & West, John, *The History of Tasmania*, S. Waddell, Launceston, 1852, (both H.L.). Historians writing in the mid-1900s chose to suppress unpalatable aspects of white on black aggression in their portrayal of Australia. e.g. Feldman, J, *The Great Jubilee Book, The Story of the Australian Nation in Pictures*, Colorgrature Publications, Melb, 1951, (H.L.). Henry Reynolds, in *The Other Side of the Frontier*, James Cook Univ, 1981, again highlighted Aboriginal resistance to the European invasion of Australia and started a swing, in which historians began to take up a cudgel on behalf of the Aboriginal people and to use history as a tool to help address Aboriginal disadvantage.

172. Robinson, George, *Journal 26 December 1836*, published in Plombey, 1987, op.cit. pp. 405-6. See Fels M, 2011 op.cit. pp. 325-91 for further, detailed analysis of the abduction.

BATMAN'S TANDERRUM

173. Batman, John, Journal May-June 1835, in Bonwick, James, 1883, op.cit. pp. 180-9. Steve Compton noted that in the original, hand written version of the journal Batman mentions having intercourse with the women, a point omitted in the version published by Bonwick, personal conversation 2001.
174. Batman, John, Journal 6 June 1835, cited in Bonwick, James, 1883, op.cit. pp. 186-7.
175. Bonwick, James, 1883, op.cit. p. 212 and Barwick, 1984, op.cit. p. 122, citing Boowurrung elders speaking to Robinson in 1836. 'Doot-ty Galler was the name of the 'first woman the settlers met.'
176. Wiencke, Shirley, 1884. op.cit. pp. 8-12.
177. John Batman to John Montagu 30 Nov 1835, republished in Jones, Pauline, *Historical Records of Victoria, Vol I, Beginnings of Permanent Government*, 1981, pp. 20-1.
178. See Robinson, George, Journal 31 Dec 1836, republished in Plombey, op.cit. pp. 410-1 and Colonial Secretary to John Montagu 1 Sept 1835, republished in Jones, Pauline, 1981, op.cit., pp. 14-5 and Wiencke, Shirley, 1884, op.cit. pp.16-8, Governor Bourke's Proclamation 10 Oct 1836, PRO UK: CO 201/247 ff 411 r + v at <http://www.foundingdocs.gov.au/item-did-42.html>, 2014.
179. Bonwick, James, 1863, op.cit. p. 5.
180. William Lyall's pencil note recorded in Melville, Henry, op.cit. 1851, pp. 68-9.
181. See Jones, Pauline, 1981, op.cit. Chapter 2, Outrage against Aborigines: Police Magistrate Stewart's Visit. pp. 33-44. The quote is taken from the letter from J.H. Wedge to John Montagu, from Bearpurt (one of several unofficial names for Melbourne), 15 March 1836, pp. 34-5.
182. Bourke, Richard, Proclamation 18 May 1836, republished in Wiencke, Shirley, 1984, op.cit. p. 20.
183. Fels, M, 2011, op cit pp. 328, 241; Elder, Bruce, 1998, op.cit. p. 83-94.
184. Cannon, Michael, *Historical Records of Victoria Vol 2B. Aborigines and Protectors 1838-39*, 1983, pp. 365-92.
185. Gunson, Niel, 1968, op.cit. p. 20; Robinson, George, journal 17 Dec 1838, published in Plombey, N.J.B., 1988, op.cit. p. 608.
186. See Cannon, Michael, 1983, op.cit. Chapter 17, 'Instructions and Supplies for Protectorate Operations', pp. 434-489. Thomas, William, journal 22 Jan 1839, p. 436.
187. Smyth, Brough, Vol I, 1878, op.cit. pp. 55, 83, 424. quoting William Thomas 'In company with some blacks, I was looking at a brickmaker at work near the new bridge over the Yarra (Prince's Bridge) when a Western Port black named 'Billy Lonsdale' seeing the bridgemaker smoothing the clay in the mould, said "Marminarta, like'em that Pund-jel make'em Koolin." See Genesis 2: 7, op.cit. and discussion of archetypes in CG Jung, *Psychology and Religion*, The Autonomy of the Unconscious in *The Basic Writings of C.G. Jung*, Princeton Univ Press, 1990, pp. 487-545. Biblical and Kulin creation stories had parallels.
188. Thomas, William, journal, 5 Feb 1839, in Cannon, Michael, Vol 2B, 1983, pp. 437-8.
189. Ibid, 12 Feb 1839.
190. G.A. Robinson to Col. Secretary 26 March 1839, in Cannon, Michael, Vol 2B, 1983, op.cit. pp. 448-9. Robinson estimated 500 in the context of justifying expenses, James Dredge's journal, 23-8 March, Ibid, pp. 449-51, estimated 300.
191. Wiencke, Shirley, 1984, op.cit. p. 21.
192. Dr P.E. Cussen to G.A. Robinson 6 May 1839, in Cannon Michael, Vol 2B, 1983, op.cit. p. 461.
193. Haydon, George, 1845, op.cit. p. 152.
194. Thomas, William, journal, 15 Aug 1839, in Cannon, Michael, Vol 2B, 1983, op.cit. p. 535.
195. Thomas, William, 1839, Papers ML MSS 214/4 5883.
196. Thomas, William, journal, 18 Sept 1839, in Cannon, Michael, Vol 2B, 1983, op.cit., p. 544.
197. Ibid, 25 Nov 1839 to 2 Dec 1839, p. 567. Fels M, 2013, op.cit. pp. 95, 201-2
198. Ibid, 17 Dec 1839, p. 574 and William Thomas to G.A. Robinson, pp. 609-10.
199. Thomas, William to G.A. Robinson, 20 Nov 1839, *Census of Aborigines of the Waverong and Bonurong Tribes*, in Cannon, Michael, 1983, op.cit. pp. 603-7. Eighty three Boonwurrung tribal members, 34 of them female are listed. Only eleven

- Boonwurrung women were of childbearing age (14-39 years). There were twice the number of males aged 10-30 years (27) compared with females (13), suggesting that females had been removed from the population, either by death or their living with white people where they were not being counted by Thomas. This census is not complete, missing, for example, were Toolumn and Yamerboke and eight Bonurong men listed in Thomas' 1863 census.
200. Ibid, William Thomas to G.A. Robinson, 3 Jan 1840, pp. 613-4.
 201. Thomas, William, journal 1840, Monash Univ Library, microfilm, 5883-214/2, Fels M, 2011, pp. 30-1
 202. Ibid; Gaughwin, Dianne, 1983, op.cit. p. 66.
 203. Ibid.
 204. Thomas, William, *Return of Births from 1st April 1839 to 29 February 1840* in Cannon, Michael, op.cit., 1983, p. 626. Fels. M.2011, p 263-4
 205. Gaughwin, Denise, 1983, op.cit.
 206. Rawson, Samuel, Feb 1840 journal and Thomas, William, 24 Feb 40, in Gunson, Niel, 1968, op.cit., pp. 11, 233.
 207. Rawson, Samuel, journal, 1 March 1840, cited by Gunson, 1968, op.cit. pp. 23-4.
 208. Clow, James, in Bride, 1898, op.cit. p. 111.
 209. Rawson, Samuel, Feb 1840 journal, in Gunson, Niel, op.cit. 1968, p. 11. Fels, M, 2011 pp. 249-52
 210. Around this time an exploration party including James Macarthur, James Riley, 'Count' Paul Strzelecki and Charley Tara had crossed Gippsland overland via the Monaro and arrived, starving, at Corinella where they found three runaway convicts. They made their way to Tooradin, where they recuperated, and then to a hero's welcome in Melbourne on 19 May 1840. Angus McMillan also made his journey from the Monaro through Gippsland in early 1840s. These Kurnai tribesmen do not appear to have encountered the explorers. See Watson, Don, *Caledonia Australis, Scottish Highlanders on the frontier of Australia*, 1984, Random House, Sydney, 1997 Edition, pp. 133-171.
 211. Jamieson, Robert, 1840, in Gunson, Niel, 1968, op.cit. p. 38. Walking along the Yallock Creek flats more than 150 years later I could imagine Mrs Hobson, terrified in her hut, as one hundred naked Kurnai warriors smashed windows and threw spears. Jamieson's huts are gone, but the remains of William Lyall's brick making machine could still be seen in the creek.
 212. Thomas, William, 1840 journal, 'the last plain' is now the Tooradin Airfield, the 'Muddy Creek' is Lyall's Inlet.
 213. Watson, Don, 1997, op.cit. pp. 211-2, quoting a letter of 28 December 1840 which appeared in the *Sydney Morning Herald* from Augustus McMillan of Gippsland or South Caledonia.
 214. Jamison, Robert in Bride, Thomas, 1898, op.cit. pp. 159-60.
 215. See Cannon, Michael, 1988, op.cit. pp. 392-418 and Elders, Bruce, 1998, op.cit. pp. 35-7.
 216. Thomas, William, 1841, journal; *Report from the NSW Legislative Council Committee appointed to inquire into the present state of the Aborigines*, 12 October 1838. in Cannon, Michael, op.cit. pp. 395-397.
 217. Rawson, Samuel, 10 Oct 1841, journal, op.cit.
 218. Ryan, Lyndall, *The Aboriginal Tasmanians*. Univ Queensland Press, 1981, pp. 217-20.
 219. Horton, Thomas & Morris, Kenneth, 1983, op. cit. pp. 73-81.
 220. Fels, MH, 1988, op cit, p. 43. The other black troopers were Buller Bullup, Pereuk (Poky Poky), Beruke (Gellibrand), Nunuptune and Buckup. Whites included Rawson, Powlett and Ayre.
 221. Smyth, B, 1876, op. cit. Vol 1 pp. 446-9
 222. Thomas, William, in Bride, Thomas, 1898, op.cit. pp. 90-1; Fels M, 2011, pp. 241-4.
 223. See Edgecombe, Jean, *Phillip Island and Western Port*, Edgecombe, Sydney, 1989, p. 17 and Hardy, Anna, in Gliddon, Joshua (ed) *Phillip Island in Picture and Story*, Wilkie & Co Ltd, Melb, 1958, pp. 252-3.

NATIVE POLICE

224. Letter from C.J. La Trobe to Sir J Pakington, Melbourne, 22 January 1853 in Bride, Thomas, 1898, op.cit. pp. 266-69.
225. Thomas, William, Bride, Thomas, 1898, op.cit. p. 70.
226. Wiencke, Shirley, 1984, op.cit. p. 38; Fels Marie, 1988, op.cit. p. 55.
227. Robinson, George, 25-27 April 1844, journal, in Clarke, Ian, 1998, op. cit., pp. 47-9. 'his damning and swearing sort of character made more noise with four blacks than Bonaparte with all his armies.' Fels Marie, 1988, op.cit. p. 54. This

reference to Warrengitlong was the last that I could locate relating to someone thought to have belonged to the Yallock Bulluk clan, the traditional owners of the land on which Harewood now stands.

228. Ibid, p. 58.
229. Robinson, George 5 Jan 1844 in Clark I, 1998, op.cit. p. 2.
230. Fels, Marie, 1988, op.cit., pp. 221-7.
231. Gunson, Niel, 1968, op.cit., p. 47.
232. Smyth, Brough, citing W Thomas, Vol I, 1878, op.cit. p. 82.
233. Robinson, George, 10 Feb 1844 journal in Clark Ian, 1998, op.cit. p. 18. Both Robinson and Thomas recorded this.
234. Ibid, 13 to 27 April 1844, pp. 38-50. Yamerboke was not mentioned as one of the party. Gunson, Niel, 1968, op.cit. p. 41.
235. Ibid, 19 April 1844. p. 43. 'Cockeen', Edwin Cockayne, was at 'The Inlets' (Harewood) from c.1844-52.
236. Mitchell, L., *Historical Geography of the Kooweerup. District 1798-1903*, Thesis, 1965, pp.18-9, cited in Gunson Niel, 1968, op.cit. p. 48. The travellers could have dined on the Inlet's shark, fish and eel as the Aborigines had done. Lardner, Helen, *Harewood Conservation and Management Plan*, 1997, pp. 40-2.
237. Haydon, George, 1845, op.cit. p. 94.
238. These reports of intertribal payback show that, given the means, both whites and blacks were equally capable of infamy.
239. Pepper, Philip & Araugo, Tess, 1985, op.cit., pp. 44-57 and Watson, Don, 1997, op.cit., pp. 210-41. Loan-tuka was the wife of the Aboriginal creator-hero Lo-an.
240. Ibid, Warrum J, 1846, pp. 50-57.
241. Ibid, pp. 67-76. Fels M, 2011, op cit, p 288.
242. Gunson, Niel, 1968, op.cit. p. 47.
243. Andy Lyall to David Mickle, August 1937. The location of these graves is no longer clear.
244. See Fels, Marie, 1988, op.cit. p. 97 and Barwick, Dianne, 1974, 'And the lubras are ladies now', in *Woman's Role in Aboriginal Society*, 2nd ed, Fay Gale (ed), Institute of Aboriginal Studies, Canberra, pp. 51-63.
245. Thomas, William, in Bride, Thomas, 1898, op.cit., p. 74; Gunson, Niel, 1968, op.cit., p. 46; Fels M, 2011, op cit, pp192-3.
246. Ibid.
247. Fels, Marie, 1988, op.cit. pp. 202-6.
248. Argus 26 Nov 1852; John Sadleir, The Brothers Dana, newspaper clipping, no date, Box 21/2, La Trobe Library cited by Fels Marie, 1988, op.cit. p. 136.
249. La Trobe to Pakington, Jan 23 1853, in Bride Thomas, 1898, pp. 266-9.
250. Yamerboke, or alternative spellings, was not listed in Thomas' 1839 census of Boonwurrung Aborigines, nor did Thomas list him amongst the Native Police in the Western Port District that same year. Thomas, William, in Bridge, Thomas, 1898 op.cit., p. 76.
251. Between the 1972 and 1996 censuses, with land rights and reconciliation on the public agenda, the number of Tasmanians (including Bass Strait Islanders) who identified themselves as Indigenous swelled from 846 to 13,873. These claims need to be examined with caution but some would also be expected have Kulin ancestry. Guillatt, Richard, 'A whiter shade of black?' *Good Weekend, Sydney Morning Herald*, 15 June 2002, pp. 18-23.

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252. Lyall-Davis, Mary, *William Lyall of Harewood*, Ancestral Publications, Melb, 1993, p. 69. The author places this story at Harewood but the Lyall family did not move into Harewood House permanently until 1868 by which time Boonwurrung population had fallen dramatically. The story related was more consistent with the family's earlier time at near-by Tooradin.
253. Darwin, Charles, *The Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection*, 1859, Penguin Edition, London, 1985; Huxley, Thomas, *Mans' Place in Nature*, 1893, Watts & Co, London, 1909, pp. 71, 80, 101, Figure 30. The source or identity of the 'Australian from Western Port' is not known. Diamond, Jared, 1992, op.cit. pp. 15-20.
254. Bonwick, James, 1863, op.cit. p. 18.
255. Jagga Jagga was another name for Billibillary and his two brothers, based on the name they each signed to Batman's Treaty. Bonwick's assertion that Simon Wonga was at the signing was questioned by Gary Presland, personal conversation, 2015.
256. Murrundindi, personal conversation, 1997. Shirley, op.cit. 1984, pp. 46-65.
257. Smyth, Brough, Vol I, 1877, op.cit. pp. 464-5. Wer-raap (Wirrarap) is a shaman or sorcerer.

258. There are three undated images of 'Eliza' / 'Old Lizzie' / 'Queen Lizzie' of the Mordialloc Tribe by Fred Kruger in the State Library, one of which shows 'Queen Lizzie' with two young girls, presumably relations. Georgiana McCrae also drew a painting of a young part Aboriginal women she labelled 'Eliza'. The relationship of these undated images and that of 'Peter and Eliza, Western Port tribe', also held in the State Library and the original photograph labelled 'Old Jimmie and Eliza' held at Harewood is open to speculation.
259. Joy, S., *The Search for the Beaumaris Cemetery, Victoria, 1855-1865*, pub S Joy, 1995, pp. 61-86. Tuberculosis was unknown before white settlement. See Georgiana McCrae's journal, May 16 1843, in McCrae George (ed), 1934, op.cit. p. 82.
260. Neither Toolumn nor Pin-der-brig was mentioned in Thomas' first (1839) census, even though he stated at the 1861 inquest that he had known Pin-der-brig as a child. See Cannon, Michael, 1983, op.cit. pp. 603-7. Of the males, 8 were listed in 1863: Der-re-mut, Mon-ga-ra (Mr Man), Kan Kan (Adam Clarke), Tu-ardeet (Peter), Tal-ler-ul-gat Snr (Tommy), Tal-ler-ul-gate Jr (George), Bur-dull-gu-ram (Billy) and Yam-mer-book (Big Jimmy). Of these only Derrimut was listed in the 1839 census, again pointing to the incompleteness of Thomas' 1839 data.
261. Ben, Brett, in *Land of the Lyrebird*, C'ttee of the South Gippsland Pioneers' Assoc (eds), Gordon & Gotch Ltd, Melb, 1920, p. 382. (H.L.).
262. "G.R.F.", *Reminiscences of Early Dandenong*, 1935, p. 138. (H.L.). William Thomas' mention of Yamerboke with a lubra in his journal in August 1839 and with a 'fresh lubra from Gippsland' his 1861 census suggests that this was Jimmy's third marriage.
263. Information from death certificates.
264. "G.R.F.", 1935, op.cit. referencing Robert Burns poem 'Address to the Unco Guid, or the Rigidly Righteous', "ongauns" – on goings. Elsewhere in his book "G.R.F." refers to Peter (rather than Billy) as being among the last four remaining Bonurong in Dandenong.
265. Lyall, William, 13 March 1975 journal, original in La Trobe library, (transcript supplied by Ken Lyall in H.L.)
266. Ryan, Lyndall, 1996, op.cit. pp. 217-20.
267. Eliza and Jimmy Dunbar's death certificates; Charlie Hemphill, whose sister, Dottie (Margaret), married William Lyall Jr, records visiting 'King Billy' in the Alfred Hospital at the time of his decease. Letter to *The Age*, 1934, in Florence Lyall's scrapbook. (H.L.); Low, Tim, *Feral Future*, Penguin Books, Melbourne, 2001, p. 13, suggests that *Echinococcus granulosus*, the tapeworm that causes hydatids may have been introduced much earlier with the dingo.
268. The Illustrated Australian News, 14 May 1877, p. 74.
269. Barwick Dianne, 1998, op.cit. p. 125-44; Smyth, Brough, Vol I, 1878, op.cit. pp. 386-7; Mitchell, Major T.L., *Three Expeditions into the Interior of Eastern Australia* 2nd ed, T. & W. Boone, London, 1839, p. 344; (H.L.), Tonkin, Daryl & Landon, Carolyn, *Jackson's Track: Memoir of a Dreamtime Place*, Allen & Unwin, Melb, 2012, p244. For round stones as symbols see Jung, Carl, 1964, op.cit. pp. 207-27. Beyond circumstantial evidence and comments made by Murrundindi, I cannot say that there is any connection between the stones and Aboriginal people.

PART 3: DOCKIN'S DESCENT

1. Mickle, Alan, 'Lyall, William (1821-1888)', entry in *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Pike, Douglas (ed), Melb Univ Press, 1974, pp. 114-5.
2. John Mickle to James Fairbairn Esq 16 Jan 1858 and William Lyall to Richard Philpott 16 Jan 1858, from Lyall letter book; O'Rell, Max, *John Bull & Co. The Great Colonial Branches of the Firm*, Frederick Warne and Co., London, 1894, p. 53. (All H.L.).
3. Lyall, William to Richard Philpott, Jan 1858, letter book, op.cit.
4. Wikipedia, 2015, op. cit, *Boreoeutheria* & related articles. Unravelling mammalian relationships is currently an area of active research with theories being formed, debunked, and then reformed as accumulating data from molecular biology and fossil evidence converge.
5. Edwards, Elwyn *The Encyclopaedia of the Horse*, RD Press, Surrey Hills, 1994, pp. 9-13; Flannery, Tim, 2000, op.cit., pp. 38-54.
6. Bird, Eric, 1993, op.cit. p. 5; Hulbert, Richard, 2001, op.cit. pp. 188-223.
7. Budiansky, Stephen, 1998, op.cit. pp. 143-69.
8. Hulbert, Richard, 2001, op.cit. pp. 212-220, 226-41, 307; Bird, Eric, 1993, op.cit. p. 5.
9. Hulbert, Richard, 2001, op.cit. pp. 5-23.

10. Budiansky, Stephen, 1998, op.cit. pp. 21-3; Edwards Elwyn, 1994, op.cit. pp. 10-24.
11. Hulbert, Richard, 2001, op.cit. pp. 31-3; Low, Tim 2001, op.cit. p. 9.
12. Wood, Eric, 1995, op.cit. p. 9; McKie, Robin, 2000. op.cit., pp. 122-5; Edwards, Elwyn, 1994, op.cit., pp. 13, 215-221; Flannery Tim, 2000, op.cit., pp.174-205; Wells, Spencer, 2002, op. cit. pp. 111-44, Menzies, Gavin & Hudson, Ian, 2013, *Who Discovered America?* pp. 192-4.
13. Edwards, Elwyn, 1994, op.cit. pp. 14-25; Collier, William Francis, *History of the British Empire*, T. Nelson and Sons, London, 1871, p.10. (H.L.)
14. See earlier discussion and Diamond, Jared, 1998, op.cit. p. 329.
15. Ryan, William & Pitman, Walter, *Noah's Flood*, Simon & Schuster, New York, 1998, p. 171.
16. Budiansky, Stephen, 1998, op.cit. pp. 33-50.
17. The Koran was included in the c. 1918 inventory of the Harewood library, it was no longer there in the 1990s but has subsequently been replaced.
18. Anonymous, *Figures and Facts or, Chronology for Schools*, George Robertson, Melbourne, 1867 (H.L.) While reasons given for the flood might differ, Aboriginal oral history aligned more closely with current day interpretations. Groves, Colin, From Ussher to Slusher, from Archbish to Gish: or, not in a million years', *Archaeol. Oceania* 31, 1996, pp.145-151; Jung, Carl, 1964, op.cit. pp. 143-178; Edwards, Elwyn, 1994, op.cit. pp. 16-33; Bonomi, Joseph, *Nineveh and Its Palaces*, Ingram, Cooke & Co., London, 1853, pp. 358-401. (H.L.).
19. Wood Eric, 1995, op.cit., p. 16; Collier, William Francis, 1871, op. cit., pp. 9-10; Thierry, Augustin, *History of the Conquest of England*, Vol 1, David Bogue, London, 1857, pp. 1-4 and Hume, David, *The History of England*, Vol 1, A.J. Valpy, M.A. London, 1834, pp. 1-4. (later three, H.L.) Acculturation is the transfer of culture and ideas rather than physical items.
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21. Anonymous, *Sacred History, in the Form of Letters: comprising from the appointment of Joshua to the death of David*, Oliver & Boyd, Edinburgh, undated but with 'A. Lyall, Merri Creek, 1850, written inside the front cover, pp. 174-283; *The Holy Bible*, op.cit., Psalms and Song of Solomon. (Both H.L.).
22. Russell, Valerie, *Shetland Ponies*, Whittet Books, London, 1996, pp. 7-18 citing M. Platt of the Royal Scottish Museum.
23. Arnold, Edwin, *The Light of Asia or The Great Renunciation being the Life and Teachings of Gautama, Prince of India and Founder of Buddhism*, Truber & Co., London, 1887. (H.L.)
24. Cunliffe, B, *The Extraordinary Voyage of Pytheas the Greek*, Penguin Books, London, 2002, pp. 116-133; Beloe, William, *Herodotus, translated from the Greek with notes and life of the author*, Jones and the Temple of Muses, London, c.1850 (H.L.); Rhys, Ernest, *Aesop's Fables, an Anthology of the Fabulists of all Countries*, J.M. Dent & Sons, London, c. 1880, 'F. Lyall's' written inside the front cover. (H.L.).
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27. Edwards, Elwyn, op.cit. pp. 202-7. Menzies, Gavin, 2002, op.cit. pp. 163-4, citing Antio Pigafetta, *Magellan's Voyage*, trns R.A. Skeleton, Folio Society, 1975, p. 50.
28. *The Koran*, Rodwell, J.M. translator, 1861, Jones, Alan (ed), 2001. *The Koran* was listed in the 1917 inventory of the Harewood Library but was no longer present in 1992.
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30. Simon Wonga quoted by Bonwick, 1863, op.cit. p. 70; Bell, Dianne, 1993, op.cit. pp.182-226.
31. Weekly Scotsman, c 1880. The Lyalls. Undated photocopied extract in the Harewood Collection.
32. Lyall crests included a swallow, volant, p.r.r.; motto "Seulo et honeste." a sword, p.r.r., hilt and pommel, or, motto, "Forti non ignavo." or a unicorn's head erased, motto, "At all times God me defend." or a cock, with a motto, "An I may."
33. Weekly Scotsman, c 1880. op.cit.

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35. Menzies, Gavin, 2002, op.cit. p. 166 and passim.
36. Ibid, pp. 322-30, 128-9, citing Chiu Thang Shu, quoted in J. Needham, *Science and Civilisation in China*, Vol. 4, sec. 20, Cambridge UP, Cambridge, 1954, p. 274; Diamond, Jared, 1998, op.cit., p. 413.
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40. 40 Dickens, Charles, ibid, pp. 316-7; Corner, Miss, *The History of Scotland: from the Earliest Period to the Present Time, adapted for youth, schools and families*, Dean and Son, 1900, 106-34; *The Holy Bible*, 1855, op.cit. Collier, William Francis, 1871, op.cit. pp. 136-9. (All H.L.)
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43. Whyte, James Christie, *History of the British Turf from the Earliest Period to the Present Day, Vols I & II*, Henry Colburn, London, 1840, pp. 43-93, 385, passim. (H.L.) Dunlop, Robert & Williams, David, 1996, op.cit., pp. 354-5, 362; Encyclopaedia Britannica, Fens, entry in Vol 4, 1988, p. 727.
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46. Edwards, Elwyn, 1994, op.cit. p. 203; Parsonson, Ian, 1998, op.cit., p. 2; Bonnemains, Jacqueline, *Les Artistes du "Voyages de Decouvertes aux Terres Australes (1800-1804): Charles-Alexandre Lesueur et Nicholas-Martin Petit*, 1989, Museum d'Histoire Naturelle du Havre, Figure 32 Cavalier malais a Timor. Gravure de Lambert d'apres un dessin de Petit. MHNH, coll. CAL n°1700-4 p. 42; Bonnemains, Jacqueline et al, 1988, op.cit., pp. 135-180.
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48. Scott, Sir Walter, 1814, cited by Russell Valerie, 1996, op.cit. p. 26.
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LYELLS AND LYALLS: SCOTS WITH PRINCIPLES

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55. Mickle-Lyall, Margaret, 1907, op.cit. Lord Ripen's regulations discontinuing free land grants were actually proclaimed in January 1831, before John Lyall left Britain.
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57. Ibid, p. 56.
58. Ibid, p. 58.
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61. Ibid, p. 441.
62. Darwin, Charles, 1859, op.cit. pp. 370-1. Some of Darwin's material came from collaboration with Charles Lyell (from a geological perspective) and William Hooker (regarding the global distribution of plants). Darwin's theory would be twisted and used as justification for the very abuses to indigenous animals and people that he decried.
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64. Mickle-Lyall, Margaret, 1907, op.cit. p. 8.
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72. McCrae, Georgiana, 6 Feb 1844 to 22 Feb 1844, journal, in McCrae Hugh (ed), 1934, op.cit. pp. 107-13.
73. Ibid.
74. Ibid, pp. 142-3.
75. Letter from George Gordon McCrae, Arthur's Seat, March 1845 published in Hugh McCrae (ed), 1934, op.cit. p. 142.
76. Howitt, Alfred, 1904, op.cit. pp. 700-5. Kulin counted using the five fingers then points along the arm and head to number 16 on the crown of the head and then down the other side.
77. Lyall-Davis Mary, 1993, op.cit. pp. 17-8.
78. Lyall, William to Annabella Brown 9 Dec 1848, copy supplied by Ken Lyall (H.L.).
79. Annabella's pantaloons and William's wedding vest (the latter on loan from Fisherman's Cottage, Tooradin) were at Harewood on the occasion of the Lyall family reunion on their 150th wedding anniversary in January 1999.
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81. Shaw, A.G.L., *A History of the Port Phillip District, Victoria before Separation*. Melb Univ Press, Melb, 1996, pp. 207-10.
82. McCrae, Georgiana, 1841, in McCrae, Hugh (ed), 1934, op.cit., pp. 176-9; Strutt, William, *Opening of the Princes Bridge*, original drawing in the Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales.
83. Lyell, Charles, op.cit., 1853; Marvell, Andrew, Creation, in *The Beauties of English Poetry, Selected for the Use of Youth, and Designed to Inculcate the Practice of Virtue*, E. Tomkins (ed), Henry Bohn, London, 1852, p. 166. 'A. Lyall, Merri Creek',

written inside the front cover; Anonymous, *Sacred History*, op.cit. 'A. Lyall, Merri Creek, 15th June 1850' inside the cover. (All H.L.) Howitt, Alfred, 1904, op. cit. pp. 381, 387, 484, 500.

EUREKA

84. Hargreaves, Edward, *Australian and its Goldfields*, Ingram & Co, London, 1855, p. 86; Sidney, Samuel, *The Three colonies of Australia: New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia; Their Pastures, Copper Mines & Gold Fields*, Ingram, Cooke and Co., London, 1853, 324-56. (Both H.L.).
85. Serle, Geoffrey, *The Golden Age, a history of the colony of Victoria 1851-61*. Melb Univ Press, Melb, 1977, p. 11; Lyall, William, diary 1851-2 (combined) original diary in the La Trobe library, copies of partial transcripts by Ken Lyall and Bertha Ricardo in the Harewood Collection; Lyall, William, stock book, 1861. (H.L.)
86. Ibid, Lyall bought Martin and Moors property on 28 April 1851, the Crystal Place was opened 1 May 1851.
87. Searle, Geoffrey, 1977, op.cit. p. 9-36.
88. McCrae, Georgiana, 1 Oct 1851, journal, in McCrae Hugh (ed) 1934, op.cit. p. 184. 'Phthisis' was another name for tuberculosis.
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90. William Lyall to James Lyall 4 Oct 1852. Reprinted in Lyall Family News Oct 1993, p. 13-4.
91. Serle, Geoffrey, 1977, op.cit. pp. 40-1, 46-59.
92. La Trobe Charles, Report to Sir John Pakington 1853, cited in Serle, Gregory, 1977, op.cit. pp. 106-7.
93. William, Lyall, journal, 1853, op.cit.
94. Wannan, Bill, 1981, op.cit. pp. 93-8, citing G.H. Wathen, *The Golden Colony*, 1855; Ricardo, Bertha, 1956, op.cit. p. 7.
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96. Ibid.
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99. William, Lyall, journal, 1854, op.cit.
100. Ibid, Feb 1854.
101. Ibid, 28 Feb 1854.
102. Ibid, March 1854.
103. Ibid, May 1854.
104. Letter 'T' calligraphy from *Guidebook. The Tower, its History, Armouries & Antiquities* (undated) facing picture & p. 85; Gilbert R., *Plain directions for modelling in leather; founded on long practical experience*, London, 1854, 'F. Lyall' written in pencil on the cover, Mrs Wm Lyall written in pencil and ink on the cover page. (H.L.).
105. Mickle, Margaret, 1907, op.cit.
106. William, Lyall, journal, September 1854, op.cit.
107. Lyall-Davis Mary, 1993, op.cit. p. 33. Books that date from this stay include *The Ladies Work-Book, containing instructions in Knitting, Crochet, Point-Lace, & c.*, John Cassell, London, undated but 'A. Lyall, Balmakewen, 9th March 1855' and later 'To F. Lyall' written inside the cover; Clarke, Hyde, *A Grammar of the English Tongue, Spoken and Written; for self Teaching and for Schools*, John Weale, London, 1853, 'Balmakewen, 15th November 1854' written inside the front cover. (Both H.L.)
108. Mickle, Alan, 1953, op.cit. p. 43.
109. Serle, Geoffrey, 1977, op.cit. pp. 161-9; Clark, C.M.H., *A History of Australia Vol IV*, 1978, pp. 61-83. Read, Peter, *Haunted Earth UNWS*, Sydney, 2003, pp. 33-4. The term 'sacred' does not necessarily imply the presence of a spirit, 'inspired' does.
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