

Chapter 2

Land and Roads

Last Revised 06/04/2017

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Summary

Summary

The first user of land in The Basin for agricultural purposes was by Rev. James Clow. He held a De-pasturing licence for a run known as Corhanwarabul that included the area now known as The Basin. He pastured stock there as early as 1838.

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

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

From the 10 original parcels of land in The Basin, more than 16 subdivisions have created thousands of residential allotments. One of the first and largest estates opened in The Basin was “Schneider’s Estate”.

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

Distinguished Resident

Alan Small

Allan Small has saved countless lives and homes from bushfires during his involvement in the CFA when he joined in 1967.

Allan became Lieutenant of The Basin in 1971 and in December 1972 he became Deputy Group Officer of the Knox Fire Brigades Group and became Group Officer in 2000. He was The Basin Fire Brigade Captain from 1977 to 1999 and became president of in 1999. In 2004, Alan was a recipient of the Australian Fire Service Medal, awarded by the Governor General. In 2007, he was honoured by the CFA for 40 years service. In 2008, he was named the Knox citizen of the year.

Allan commenced community volunteering in the Scouting movement when his sons joined 15th Boronia Scouts. He became president and was responsible for organising fund-raising, and other administration tasks associated with the position.

Allan’s enthusiasm for helping others also extends to a unique project whereby titanium ring pulls are collected from cans and sent overseas to be used to make limb joints for disabled people. Allan’s passion for this project has inspired many of his friends to join him in his efforts.

Introduction

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

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

Land

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

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

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

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

Watson paid cash for his 102 acres at approximately one pound per acre. Improvements were already then valued at 345 pounds and they included a homestead, outbuildings, some fencing and cultivation. Undoubtedly this land was inhabited well before the sale.

Watson was the first person officially recorded as owning freehold land in The Basin. However, there is no doubt that William Turner was the first resident of The Basin and information from his descendants and in other publications indicates he may have had freehold land and/or applied to purchase land in The Basin, but confirma-

tion of either cannot be found.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Depasturing Licences

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

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

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

Depasturing Licences

stock there as early as 1838. By 1860, this run had been broken up into a number of smaller runs that did not include The Basin.

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

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

Counties and Parishes

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

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

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

When Victoria was first settled, there was no division of land. Division of land into Counties and Parishes occurred in stages as settlement progressed further from Melbourne. Initially, the area now known as The Basin was in the “Port Phillip District” before any Counties or Parishes were created.

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

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

The early division of Parishes in the Counties

of Bourke, Evelyn and Mornington is not known.

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

In, 2017 The Basin is located in the County of Mornington, Parish of Scoresby.

Government

Federal

The Basin has been located in three Federal House of Representative electorates as follows:

Years	Electorate
1901 – 1912	Mernda
1913 – 1948	Flinders
1948 -	LaTrobe

Local

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

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

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

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

The Scoresby riding severed from the Shire of Berwick on 23rd May, 1889 to form the new Shire of Fern Tree Gully (note spelling – Fern Tree not FernTree). Despite blindness, John

James Miller, who lived in The Basin, became first President of the Shire of Fern Tree Gully and was driven about by his son Fred in a horse drawn buggy.

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

Subdivisions and Estates

Subdivisions occur when areas of land are subdivided into smaller residential size allotments. From the 10 original parcels of land in The Basin, subdivisions over the years have created thousands of allotments and in 2017 there are still potential areas to be subdivided.

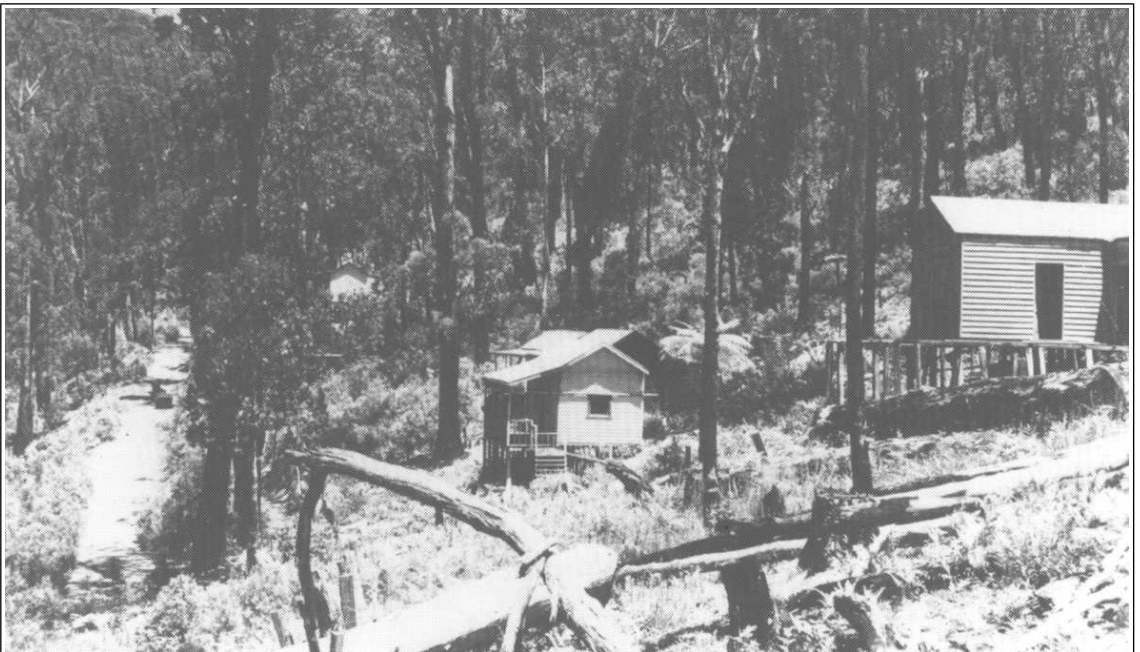
Some subdivisions, usually the larger ones, were marketed through agents as “Estates”. Some subdivisions have been very large and others of little consequence. Agents gave estates glamorous names, and their posters contained glowing reports of the magnificent land and the facilities available. In the early days, radio broadcasts were an added attraction at many land sales, and of course each block was at a give-away price. Sub-

divisions created most of the private roads in an area and these are usually given names that have some local flavour.

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

The 1910's and 20's were the boom period for estates in The Dandenongs and in particular The Basin and Sassafras. The views towards Melbourne from the steep western and northern slopes of The Dandenongs were an attraction for developers. The opening of the 1 in 20 road (Mountain Highway) from The Basin to Sassafras in 1924 helped to promote some of these estates that were located near Sassafras. The Mystic Lake Estate (1926) had a frontage on the newly created 1 in 20 as did the Moulton Estate (1924). An earlier estate called the Front Door Estate (1913) had a frontage on the Coach Road (from The Basin) near Sassafras.

Some early estates were located on the steep and heavily treed western and northern slopes of The Dandenongs. Most of this land was unsuitable for residential development and some of the land on these estates has been progressively pur-



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

Photo courtesy Knox Historical Society

Subdivisions and Estates

chased by the Government and amalgamated with the adjacent National Park.

Schneider's Estate

One of the first and largest estates opened in The Basin was "Schneider's Estate" on Boxing day 1913. The estate was named after the selector J. Schneider who first purchased the 175 acres of land that the estate was carved from. This estate took in part of the district known as "Chandler's Hill", "Schneider's Hill" and extended across Mountain Highway, taking in the Clevedon area and into the area now known as "The Ravine".

This was the largest subdivision ever in The Basin with 640 blocks offered for sale. Unfortunately, the planning of this estate was done in a draughtsman's office and when the block and road positions were marked out it was found they took little account of the terrain. Many blocks were narrow, on very steep terrain and some had creeks running through them. Claremont Avenue and Golden Grove had creeks running down one side of them.

The original poster promoting the land had a small inset map showing a "proposed station" where Boronia station was built in 1920.

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

Sales of land in Schneider's Estate were poor. Close to the First World War and a German sounding name did not help.

A few years later the Schneider estate was renamed the "**Switzerland (Heights) Estate**" and promoted for sale on Boxing day 1917. It is thought that the more neutral sounding "Switzer-

land" had better sales prospects. Also, the area was known by the name "Switzerland" as early as 1905 when it is mentioned in one of Janet Dobson's diary entries.

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

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

Grandview Grove was later renamed Golden Grove.

In the early 1960's, the blocks around the top end of Bayview Crescent, Short Crescent and Hilltop Crescent were reclaimed by the Government and amalgamated with the then Ferntree Gully National Park. The top end of Bayview Crescent, which in the original subdivision ran into Government Road, was terminated near where Hilltop Crescent commenced and Hilltop Crescent no longer exists.

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

In the Claremont Avenue area, land owners were for a while able to use the "Mill track" for vehicle access into the Claremont Avenue area of The Ravine. The Mill track ran between The Basin-Olinda Road and near the intersection of Claremont Avenue and Inverness Avenue. The track was originally constructed across private land for use by the saw-mill that operated in The Ravine in the early 1920's. When the sawmill

closed, the Mill Track was no longer required. Although used for some years by Ravine residents, the track was closed in 1930.

The closing of the Mill Track prompted a few land owners to pool some money and a contractor by the name of Cunningham was hired to form Claremont Avenue from Mountain Highway to Corsair Road with fords across the two creek crossings.

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

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

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

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

The original subdivision had Inverness Avenue coming off Claremont Avenue, running across a creek and winding around alongside Mountain Highway. Tracks were formed over time, but the tracks stopped at either side of the creek crossing in Inverness Avenue. This meant that Inverness Avenue was cut at the creek and residents at the top end of Inverness Avenue had no vehicle access for many years. The first access to the top end was when a track was cut in from Mountain Highway about half way between Alamein and Tobruk Avenues (this track was still visible in 2017). In the 1950's, Council purchased block 581 and this is now the road that connects

Inverness Avenue with Mountain Highway.

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

In 1977 the "Claremont/Inverness Roads Construction Association" was formed. By this time the roads were in a terrible state. To raise finance to improve the roads, a voluntary contribution of \$100 per block was set. Unfortunately, not all residents contributed.

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

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

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

Drainage and road construction of the remainder of the estate as well as maintenance continued over the next few years until once again,

Jock Manson

Jock Manson was an interesting character who lived alone in a pair of make-shift one-room "sheds" in Inverness Ave directly opposite where Alamein Ave meets Mountain Highway.

Jock suffered a major tragedy experiencing the death of all his brothers and sisters (in the order of 6 or more) who were shot to death whilst he sheltered under a bed during the War.

He lived by himself and had a number of goats on his property. He was always approachable, and in fact built many a chimney for the local residents in the New Lake Mystic Estate.

He was often seen walking to Boronia with his Gladstone bag. His house had no floors and was strewn with papers.

Subdivisions and Estates

declining contributions forced the scheme to lapse.

In 1984 the Association requested the Council to convene public meetings to consider full construction of roads in The Ravine. Following planning and time allowed for objections, construction was carried out in 1985/86. The construction included moving the entrance to Claremont Avenue to its correct position directly opposite Toorak Avenue. Previously, the entrance was what is now the driveway into the property on the North corner of Claremont Avenue and Mountain Highway. The eastern end of Golden Grove was constructed with a concrete surface for extra stability where the road follows the creek

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

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

The first Council forming of gravel roads in the area commenced in the late 1950's. Mercia Av-

enue was formed except for a section mid way along its length. The mid section was formed in the late 1960's. Bayview Crescent was formed up to Short Crescent in the late 1950's. The extension of the section of Bayview Crescent past Short Crescent was financed by residents in the early 1980's.

From the middle 1970's there was a rapid increase in residential development in these areas with a consequent deterioration in road quality. Knox Council occasionally graded the roads, but in the late 1970's to early 1980's when grading was needed more frequently, council argued that these roads were private streets and consequently reduced the service.

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

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



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

Photo courtesy Knox Historical Society

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

Nareen Park Estate

This estate opened in the early 1920's just prior to the electrification of the railway line from Ringwood to Fern Tree Gully in 1925. 118 lots in Arcadia, Waratah, Carnarvon and Verbena Avenues and Forest Road, were offered for sale from 35 to 65 pounds.

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

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

Chandler's Hill Estate

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

View Road was constructed in the mid 1980's.

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

fore it occurred.

Ferndale Estate

Ferndale Estate was created on land that once formed part of the Ferndale property owned by James and Emily Griffiths. Soon after they were killed in a tragic level crossing accident, the Ferndale House and surrounding 320 acres was auctioned on 22nd December 1925. It was purchased by Daniel John Gans, Edith Lillian Gans and a Mr Stuart. The official owner being "Daniel. J. Gans".

On 19th November, 1927, land in the "Ferndale Estate" was offered for sale by auction. A large area of land surrounding the house was portioned off and part of the rest of the property was subdivided into over 100 blocks of land.

A magnificent brochure was produced for this auction complete with colour pictures. On a page of the brochure was this colourful wording:

"The Call of the Mountains"

Away from the noise and rattle of the incessant city, above its dust and depressing grime; up in the pure health-giving mountain air, surrounded by natural loveliness, unmolested and unharmed. High breeze-fanned spurs, commanding wide-spread panoramas over hill and dale, right to the ocean. Peaceful grassy slopes with luxurious blackwoods, eucalypts wattles and evergreens, harbouring thousands of birds that fill the air with their sweet-toned melodies. Deep cool gullies with their murmuring crystal streams trick-



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

Photo courtesy Knox Historical Society

Subdivisions and Estates

ling over mossy pebbled beds, twixt vendure-laden banks, with sunny patches percolating through giant treefern fronds above. A perfect harmony of luxury, grandeur, simplicity, loveliness. A haven of rest to crowded minds. A health-giving tonic to weary bodies-inspiring the best within us-crowding out our baser selves"

Free railway passes from Melbourne to Bayswater and free cars from Bayswater to the estate were offered. Bert Piergrosse, the hire car proprietor in those days, received instructions not to take anyone back until 5 pm., even though some may have arrived quite early.

The auction was held on a large levelled area off Mountain Highway. All the trees on the lower side of the area were cleared to provide a magnificent panoramic view towards Melbourne. A large marquee was carefully situated on the levelled area so that the bidders would get a resplendent view around them.

The sale was not a huge success. The rugged nature and steepness of the terrain were a deterrent for most people.

On the 10th February, 1938, Ferndale, complete with the surrounding land (which appears to be the original "Ferndale Estate" land) was auctioned.

In the 1960's, the Government began purchasing land adjacent to the National Park. Most of the land associated with the Ferndale Estate has now been purchased and amalgamated into the Dandenong Ranges National Park.

Eden Park Estate

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Forest Heights Estate

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

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

Prices were from 45 to 100 pounds on 3 pounds deposit. Among the early buyers was a Mr. W. J. Wallis of "Glen Elbourne", The Basin, who later generously handed over two blocks to

the Ferntree Gully Shire in the hope they would be put to good use. His hopes were not in vain as in 1953 the Infant Welfare Centre was built on one and in 1958 the Kindergarten on the other. There was a proposal in 1973 to close off the North end of Conyers Street and use that end as a car park for the Kindergarten and Health Centre. However, this never eventuated.

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

Milleara Estate

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

Reserve Estate

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

Reserve Estate Extension

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

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

Mountain Highway Estate

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

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

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

Wicks for that purpose.

Clevedon Estate

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

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

Cleve Avenue, Ross Street and Clevedon Road were constructed in 1990. Clevedon Road originally ran into Mountain Highway, but was blocked by a gate only accessible by emergency vehicles. Clevedon Road was also blocked between Cleve Avenue and Ross Street.

New Mystic Lake Estate

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

The roads were well formed gravel roads but were never sealed. A section of the estate extended to the lower side of Mountain Highway.

The "Mystic Lake" part of the name was chosen because of the "Lake" that appeared on some foggy winter mornings in the lower reaches of The Basin and surrounding districts. From the elevated view provided from the estate, this fog appeared like a mystical lake. This lake can still be seen on occasions by those with an elevated northern view across The Basin.

There was an earlier estate created between Mountain Highway and One Tree Hill called the Mystic Lake Estate. 222 allotments were offered for sale on 1st February, 1926. Roads in this estate included Alpine Ave, Janesdell Ave, Highview Road and Seaview Avenue.

In the Mystic Lake Estate, a few houses were built at the lower end of Alpine Road but these properties and others were reclaimed by the Government and amalgamated in the National Park.

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

Subdivisions and Estates

Highway sold some of the properties. The natural bush setting of this land attracted much interest – even from people in other countries who had not even seen the land! Many lots were purchased sight unseen. Some lots were totally unsuitable for building being steep, rocky and with creeks running through them.

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

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

The map on page 12 shows positions of the well-developed houses that were once on the es-tate.

The house at position 1 in Tobruk Ave was the Tozers’s home where they lived from the late

1950’s. It was next to a creek with a beautiful wa-terfall and rock ledges. The Tozer family owned the Lower Ferntree Gully grocery store for many years. There was a set of pipes and a pump that drew plentiful water from the creek into tanks for their personal use. The rock falls were a magnifi-cent sight in wintertime. In 2002, the levelled house area, driveway and non-native vegetation were still visible..

At position 2 in Tobruk Ave was the partially completed weekender of Mr Tullock. Whilst a large framed construction and fully roofed, the house only ever had one room completed. This was enjoyed on weekends by the owners, who like others visiting the area, were probably con-tent with the ability to leave the hustle bustle for working life behind for 48 hours of solitude in the Hills. In, 2002, the levelled house area (with chimney ruins) and driveway were still visible.

The house at position 3 in Alamein Avenue was built by Mr. Lou Walker. He was a retired hat-maker and avid motor-cycle enthusiast (many trophies for racing) from Melbourne. His daugh-ter Shirley worked with the Post Office. She suc-cumbed to a fatal accident on her motor-cycle whilst delivering the mail in the local area. She always was fond of motorbikes, and incredibly rode her own Vespa motor scooter down Alamein Ave every day on the way to work. She was also very fond of horses, and Mr Walker bought the adjacent block of land, turning it into a horse pad-dock for Shirley. When married, Shirley, her hus-band and two children lived in the house for a number of years. Mr Walker’s house was demol-ished around 1990 and he spent his remaining days living near the middle of The Basin Town-ship with his Son-In-Law. In 2002, a driveway and non-native vegetation were still visible.

The house at position 4 in Alamein Avenue

Dr. Yoffa

Dr. Annie Yoffa, lived as a hermit in a tent on a bush block on the lower side of Mountain Highway in The New Mys-tic Lake Estate near where Tobruk Ave meets Mountain Highway.

She was part of the Yoffa hosiery family whose knit-ting mills were ravaged by fire in 1963.

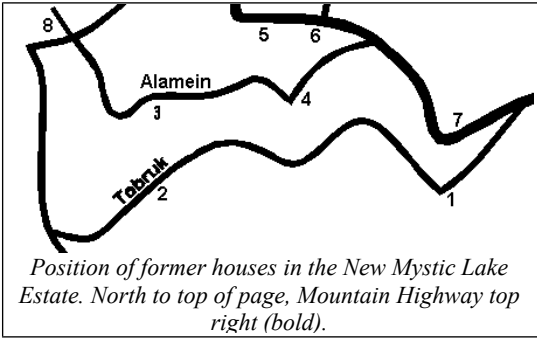
She lived in St. Kilda before deciding to become a hermit, then moved to Mt Martha and then to The Basin. By then she was in her 80's.

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

She was not destined to complete her study as she was battered to death by a psychiatric case who had sought her assistance. She was strangled by Maxwell Victor Jones, who was convicted and ended up in an Ararat institution for the criminally insane. A violent end to a brilliant but pathet-ically lonely woman.

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

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



(lot 61) was built around 1957 by William Pope for his mother Stella Patrone. She lived there alone, on tank water and kerosene lighting/refrigeration up until around 1968 when she fell into poor health. No telephone or electricity was available for many years in that street. She was a keen walker and knew every inch of the One tree Hill foothills. The only company being her dog (Whiskey, then Monty). She would walk to Travis's store or The Basin store or catch the bus to Boronia for supplies. Life was spent cutting wood for heating and cooking over the open fire, walking for supplies, and lots of reading. She enjoyed listening to the radio (battery transistor). Despite one of the best views of the Dandenongs and the viewing of the building of the TV channels, no television ever existed for her in that house. Fire watching and protection of the local area was her mainstay activity in the area, and she was well known and respected for her assistance with the local fire brigade members – particularly during the 1962 and 1968 fires. The house came close to damage during 1962, but due to the efforts of local brigade members, fires were fought off from attacking the Eastern end of the house. The house and property were eventually purchased by the Government and the house demolished.

Opposite the house at position 3 in Alamein Avenue (lot 159), was a block originally purchased by Jim and Beth Tobin. They sold the block to an English couple who, with their young baby, erected a tent as a dwelling. They also erected a tank for collection of water from their tent. Soon after, they abandoned the site and disappeared. For many years the tank could still be seen where it lay half way down the creek bed adjacent the tent site.

The two story house at position 5 on Mountain Highway was owned by a Mr. Meisel from a family of rag-trade retailers who operated a business in the top end of Bourke St (Melbourne) - a men's clothing store called "The American Tailor". The house had a table tennis in the cellar, a huge lounge on the patio overlooking the highway, and a magnificent in-ground pool in the yard. The house had the luxury of an inside toilet, and a second water tank for making hot running water.

The house at position 6 on Mountain Highway was first owned by the Robinson family. The

house was later sold to the Yardley's who moved to Boronia.

The house at position 7 was built by Mr Hook. It still exists and in 2017 is the only house left on the New Mystic Lake Estate.

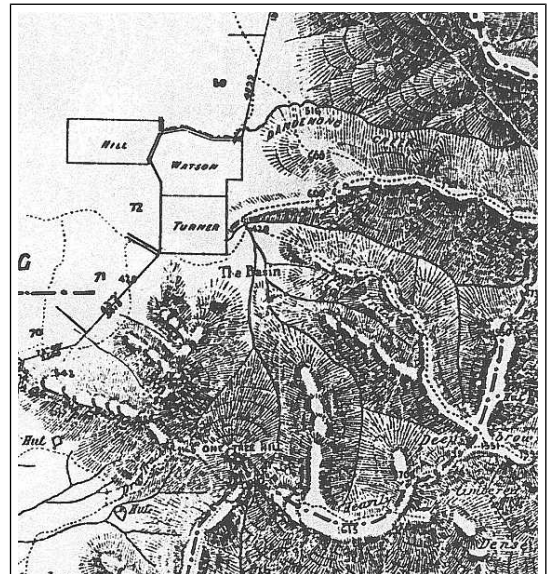
The house at position 8 was a weekender built by Bob and Dot Farish of Footscray.

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

The house at position 2 was partially damaged in the 1962 bushfires, and gutted in the 1968 bushfires. No other house was damaged by the many bushfires over the years.

Apart from the house at position 7, all other properties have been reclaimed by the Government.

Gates were erected in 1994 to bar private vehicle access into the area that was once the New Mystic Lake Estate. For walkers, there are still many visible signs of past development such as levelled cuttings, rock walls, tracks into blocks and some exotic trees.



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

Subdivisions and Estates

Goodwin Estate

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

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

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

Mountain Gateway Estate

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

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

Roads

Early Roads in The Basin

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

The first track to the top of the Dandenongs used by white men was known as the "Bullock Track". It passed through The Basin and was cre-

ated in the late 1840's. It was used by early botanists, settlers and timber workers and followed the route of the road now known as Range Road.

In 1867, the Government instructed John Hardy to survey the Dandenong Ranges with a view to preserving sections of it as a forest. Hardy created a detailed map of The Dandenong State Forest which included details of tracks and huts around The Basin (see map on page.13).

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

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

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

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

William Turner, who was resident in The Basin in the 1850's, was also involved in timber cutting would have known George Holden because they were the only timber cutters in the area at the time.

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

Road and headed up to Sassafras.

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

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

Along the Old Coach Road is a section of track once known as "McClare's Hill" from the property it used to pass through by owned by John McClare. This section of road was annexed from McClares property after a submission to the Minister of Lands by 45 landholders whose properties were above McClares property in and around Sassafras. They were concerned that they had limited access to their properties and that the road from Bayswater should be extended up to Sassafras.

The thick bushland provided excellent cover for illicit stills, one of which was situated near McClare's property. It was a popular stopping point for those on route to the hill tops, as the slope up the hill to McClare's property was very steep and some passengers would have to walk the section.

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

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

The Old Bayswater-Sassafras Road was shown in the first maps of The Basin area in the 1860's. It was most likely originally formed as dray tracks used by the first settlers gaining access to their land. It was used for a time as a coach route to Sassafras. A 1919 map shows this

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

The Basin-Olinda Road is shown on old maps as taking a relatively direct route to Olinda and terminating near the Olinda township. However, it is believed that it was never more than a pack-horse track past Hazel Dell. Around 1921, the section past Hazel Dell was rerouted and constructed as a gravel track to Olinda, crossing and following Range Road for a few hundred metres and terminating opposite the Mt Dandenong Hotel. It was originally known as "Old Shanks Road" but when first constructed it was never finished. In a 1947 newspaper article, The Bayswater Progress Association was seeking co-operation of The Basin Progress Association in the completion of Old Shanks Road to Olinda.

It seems that planning and land purchase for Mountain Highway (first called the 1 in 20 because that was the gradient engineers made the road between The Basin and Sassafras) may have commenced as early as the 1880's. Although the Highway was officially gazetted in 1899, the map of land that J. J. Griffiths purchased from William Tyner in 1888 shows a dotted path of the Highway through the land although this may have been added later. It was A. E. Chandler MLA who originally conceived the idea of a road from The Basin to Sassafras with a low gradient.

Mountain Highway construction commenced in 1920 and was completed in 1925 as a gravel road. It was sealed in the late 1930's. Since then, various sections have been upgraded. When constructing The Basin end of Mountain Highway, screenings were transported up the Cobblestone Road in steel tyred heavy drays. The metal was rolled in using horse drawn rollers pulled by three horses. At the end of road, the horses were hooked at the other end of the roller for the return journey.

Government Roads

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

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

Government Roads

Street and Mountain Highway was upgraded in 1983.

Road Name Changes

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

Mountain Highway was known as Bayswater Road until 1933 when it was Gazetted as a Country Roads Board (CRB) road and past The Basin towards Sassafras was also known as the “1 in 20 Road” because of the road gradient. The Basin-Olinda Road was also part of Bayswater Road.

Boronia Road was known until 1939 as “L. L. Vale Road” after Dr. L. L. Smith, a Collins Street doctor who lived in Vermont. Prior to that it was known as Rourke’s Road after Hugh and Henry Rourke who ran the “Dandenong Creek Run” from 1843 to 1853. At the time, the approximate route of Boronia Road passed through the Dandenong Creek Run.

The section of Forest Road between Wright Street and Mountain Highway was created in the Forest Heights Estate in the 1920’s and was originally called New Forest Road but was later change to Forest Road.

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

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

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

Sources of Information

- “The Basin Centenary booklet” - Ron Ikin.
- “Fire on the Hill, Flowers on the Valley” - Rick

Coxhill.

- “History of Croydon” and “Founder of the Dandenongs” - Muriel McGivern for information on William Turner.

- Interviews with Muriel McGivern for information on William Turner.

- “Story of the Dandenongs” - Helen Coulsen for information on William Turner and early roads.

- “Rural Industries in the Port Phillip Region” - Lynette J Peel for information on Counties and Parishes.

- Knox Historical Society for Estate brochures.

- Current and former residents. In particular, George Grumont for cobblestone road construction information. Frank Parr, Len Herbert and Graeme Linaker for Ravine road information. Bill and Gary Pope for New Mystic Lake Estate information. Jim and Barbara Stephens for general help and information.

- Knox Newsletters for Local Government information.

- Electoral Redistributions - Commonwealth of Australia publication for information on House of Representative Electorates.

- “Tea and Charity” The Life and Times of James Griffiths Tea Merchant and Philanthropist – Volkhard Wehner for information on James Griffiths and Ferndale.

- Land selection records from the Public Records Office for early road information.

Media Items on the Internet

Great Land Sale in the Heart of the Dandenongs!

£15 DEPOSIT
buys a block of magnificent land or

Sassafras

New Mystic Lake Estate
WANTINGA - SASSAFRAS RD. (17th St Road) THE BASIN, SASSAFRAS

Spencer Jackson
The most well known & successful real estate agent in the district. He has a large staff of experienced salesmen and is always ready to assist in the sale of any property. He is also a member of the Victorian Institute of Professional Auctioneers and the Victorian Institute of Real Estate Agents.

Action Wanted on Shank's Road

At the Bayswater Progress Association's last meeting it was decided to seek the co-operation of The Basin Progress Association for the purpose of combined action in seeking completion of the old Shanks Road.

At the Ferntree Gully council meeting on Saturday it was decided to impose the dog tax throughout the shire, and Mr. G. A. Lovell was appointed inspector. A new main road is to be made to Olinda from the Bayswater-road through what is known as the old bullock track. The Government has allotted £200 for the work, which is to be subsidised by local land-interested owners and the council.

Started 26 years ago, it is felt that some effort should be made to complete the road. That portion which is in the Ferntree Gully Shire is metalled and now requires re-metalling and sealing.

From the point near which it becomes part of the Lilydale Shire it is still a bush road, formerly known as the old Bullock Road, which leads to Olinda, terminating somewhere near what is known as the Mt. Dandenong Hotel.

Application by both associations is anticipated, and an early move is to be made to approach the councils concerned.

SHIRE OF FERN TREE GULLY

Unsafe Bridges — Attention is drawn to the reduced load bearing capacity of timber bridges as follows —

— Bridge over Dandenong Creek near Mr Bert Chandler's. The Basin; culvert over drain. Wellington rd, Rowville. west of Stud road. It is recommended that load limits be imposed as follows—over Dandenong Ck 15 cwt per wheel. over culvert 10 cwt per wheel. The replacement of the latter will become urgent if the metal traffic from quarries at Lysterfield continue, and as 48-in reinforced concrete pipes should be used, the work should be done during the summer: estimated cost £80.

The weight limits were approved; bridge at culvert to be constructed; and report to be submitted for reconstruction of bridge at The Basin.

Augusta road Extension, The Basin—This extension, by way of Stuart street to the Forest road appears to be desirable, and should be effected before the required land is built on. It is recommended that lot 38 of lodged plan 11055 be acquired from the owners (Conyers & Harrison).

Left in the hands of the Engineer and Secretary.

AUCTION SALES

Estates Passed In

Ferndale, in the Dandenong Ranges, at Bayswater, for many years the home of the late Mr. and Mrs. James Griffiths, was offered at auction yesterday. The property included 320 acres, a large portion of which had been laid out in gardens. More than £40,000 is said to have been spent on improvements. The house contains more than 17 main rooms, and has its own water, sewerage, and electric supply services.

The highest bid for the property as a whole was £5,750, and for the house with 32 acres was £3,750. The bids were below the reserve, and the property was passed in. The Hilton estate of 22 acres adjoining was also passed in at £550.

The auctioneer was George M. Hume Pty. Ltd., of Manchester Unity Buildings.

HEIFERS SHOT DEAD

OLINDA—Two heifers belonging to Mr. F. W. Stewart, dairymen, were found dead in an enclosed paddock on Shank's road. They had been shot in the head. The police are making inquiries.

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