

Shire of Mount Alexander

Heritage Study of the Shire of Newstead

STAGE 2



Section 2

Environmental History

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May 2004

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Section 2

Executive Summary

Thematic Environmental History

Section 3

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Executive Summary

1.0 Introduction

The Heritage Study of the Shire of Newstead was commissioned in two stages between 1998 and 2003 by the Mount Alexander Shire Council. The study area was the municipality of the former Newstead Shire and included (but was not limited to) the towns and rural centres of Campbells Creek, Fryerstown Guildford, Newstead and Vaughan.

Wendy Jacobs, Architect & Heritage Consultant, was commissioned as the principal consultant for both stages of the study. Stage 1 also involved Phil Taylor, Historian; Stage 2 also involved Vicki Johnson, Architectural Historian; Phil Taylor, Historian; Robyn Ballinger, Historian and Dr David Rowe, Architectural Historian, Authentic Heritage Services Pty Ltd.

2.0 Project Objectives

Stage 1

The objectives of stage 1 were to:

- Prepare a thematic environmental history of post-contact settlement and development of the study area;
- Identify all post-contact places of potential cultural significance in the study area;
- Estimate the resources required to fully research, document, and assess the cultural significance of all the places identified in Stage 1;

Stage 2

The objectives of Stage 2 were to:

- Rigorously assess and document the identified places of post-contact cultural significance against the Australian Heritage Commission's criteria. This largely involved the assessment of those potential places identified in Stage 1, together with heritage area precincts
- Review of the Thematic Environmental History;
- Provide recommendations for statutory registers;
- Provide recommendations for a heritage conservation program for the study area;

3.0 Professional Criteria & Basis for Study

The basis to the preparation, identification and documentation of this study was the *Australia ICOMOS Burra Charter (November 1999)*. Assessment of all heritage places within the study area was in accordance with the Criteria of the Register of the National Estate, as prescribed in the *VPP: Applying the Heritage Overlay*.

4.0 Community Consultation

Community consultation formed an essential part of this project, with informal meetings held to meet with community members in Stage 1. Stage 2 involved interviews (in person or by phone) with interested and knowledgeable individuals about the history and developments of particular parts of the study area or particular individual places; visits to historical societies where historical information was gathered; and site visits and follow-up meetings with individuals from Stage 1.

5.0 Results of the Study

Stage 2 of the Heritage Study of the Shire of Newstead has identified and assessed 413 places of cultural heritage significance. Most of these places have been identified in townships and smaller settlements.

Of this total:

- 328 places have been recommended for inclusion or retention as a heritage overlay on the Mount Alexander Planning Scheme (either as individual places or places within a heritage precinct);
- 23 places have been recommended for retention as an individual heritage overlay on the Mount Alexander Planning Scheme (Note HO971 and HO978 appear to relate to the same place);
- 116 places have been recommended for individual inclusion as a heritage overlay on the Mount Alexander Planning Scheme;
- 25 places have been recommended for retention on the Victorian Heritage Register;
- 10 places have been recommended for addition to the Victorian Heritage Register.
- 18 places have been recommended for retention on the Victorian Heritage Inventory (approximately 30 other places on the Victorian Heritage Inventory are within the Castlemaine Diggings Heritage National Park and are not listed separately);
- 31 places have been recommended for addition to the Victorian Heritage Inventory;

All of these places have been assessed according to the Australia ICOMOS Burra Charter (November 1999) (see Section 4 and Appendix 6.02) and the criteria for the Register of the National Estate, as prescribed in the VPP Practice Note: Applying the Heritage Overlay (Appendix 6.07). The total number of places identified also includes (for details of the terms used, refer to Section 4):

- 55 places of contributory significance within heritage precincts;
- 85 conservation desirable places;

5.1 Individual Places

The following breakdown indicates of the number of heritage places assessed, according to their location and level of significance:

Location	Total Number of Places	Places of State Significance	Places of Local Significance	Contributory within a Heritage Precinct	Conservation Desirable Places	Heritage Inventory
Campbells Creek	94	5	47	19	23	1
Campbelltown	6	1	2		3	1
Fryerstown	42	5	25	8	4	3
Glenluce	4		1		3	
Green Gully	5		2		3	1
Guildford	37	3	20	5	9	5
Irishtown	5	2			3	2
Joyces Creek	5	2	2		1	
Muckleford South	6	1	5			2
Newstead	94	1	71	14	8	1
Sandon	10	1	7		2	1
Spring Gully	16	7	3		6	13
Strangways	13		11		2	3
Strathlea	4				4	
Tarilta	5		2		3	5
Vaughan	18	2	7	9		3
Welshmans Reef	9		7		2	1
Werona	4	1	1		2	1
Yandoit Hills	10	2	5		3	3
Yapeen	26	2	20		4	3
	413	35	238	55	85	49

Note that Heritage Inventory places have been assessed as of Local Significance, Contributory or Conservation Desirable in addition to being recommended for addition to the Victorian Heritage Inventory.

5.2 Heritage Precincts

Five heritage precincts were surveyed in the study.

1. Campbells Creek Heritage Precinct
2. Fryerstown Heritage Precinct
3. Guildford Heritage Precinct
4. Newstead Heritage Precinct
5. Vaughan Heritage Precinct

6.0 Heritage Program Recommendations

A. Statutory Registers

- It is recommended that the heritage places identified, assessed and documented according to the ICOMOS Burra Charter (November 1999) and the Criteria for the Register of the National Estate (as prescribed in the VPP Practice Note: Applying the Heritage Overlay) be nominated for the following statutory registers:
 - 116 additional places of individual significance for the Mount Alexander Planning Scheme (outside of heritage precincts). These are in addition to the places already on the Planning Scheme.
 - 10 places for the Victorian Heritage Register. These are in addition to the places already on the Register.

- 31 places for the Victorian Heritage Inventory. These are in addition to the places already on the Inventory.

B. Mount Alexander Shire Policy Review & Implementation

- It is recommended that an amendment to the Mount Alexander Planning Scheme be prepared that makes changes and/or additions to the following municipal heritage policies, as outlined below:
- Municipal Strategic Statement- Heritage (Clause 21.11);
- Local Planning Policy Framework
- Local Planning Policies (Clause 22)
 - Heritage
 - Local Heritage Policy;
Campbells Creek Heritage Precinct
Fryerstown Heritage Precinct
Guildford Heritage Precinct
Newstead Heritage Precinct
Vaughan Heritage Precinct
- **Heritage Overlay**
 - Incorporation of five (5) nominated precinct areas;
 - Incorporation of 136 nominated additional individual heritage places identified in the former Newstead Shire (including those individual heritage places within heritage precincts where controls other than those provided for the precinct are recommended);

Municipal Strategic Statement

- It is recommended that Council review the current Municipal Strategic Statement (MSS) to reflect the outcomes of the Heritage Study of the Shire of Newstead. When preparing amendments to this scheme and before making decisions about permit applications, the responsible authority must take the MSS into account. It is therefore essential that the MSS reflect the Shire's Vision, Objectives and Strategies regarding cultural heritage. The revised MSS should be in accordance with the *VPP Practice Note: Format of Municipal Strategic Statements*.

It is recommended that the revised Municipal Profile include a brief overview of the extent, type and location of the heritage places of cultural significance within the Shire.

It is recommended that the Key Influences section of the MSS briefly examine the potential impacts of commercial, residential, rural, tourism and other developments on cultural heritage in the Shire, and the importance of retaining, enhancing and managing the Shire's cultural heritage as part of its identity. The Key Influences section may also briefly explain the importance of the Heritage Study of the Shire of Newstead as a critical tool in providing an understanding and appreciation of the Shire's heritage assets, together with the importance of continuing the Shire's Heritage Advisory Service to assist both the Shire and owners/managers/occupiers of heritage

places with conservation and new development. Additional funding requirements may also be stipulated.

It is recommended that the Objectives, Strategies and Implementation section of the MSS:

- Promote the conservation and enhancement of places of individual or contributory cultural heritage significance within the Shire;
- Promote the conservation and enhancement of those identified heritage areas of cultural heritage significance within the Shire;
- Discourage demolition of heritage places;
- Promote other measures of conserving and understanding the significance of heritage places through the preparation of Conservation Management Plans and community awareness programs;
- Promote new work for sites and buildings in heritage areas that responds to the character, form, scale and context of its surroundings through innovative design;

Local Planning Policy Framework

- It is recommended that a Local Heritage Policy in Clause 22: Local Planning Policies in the Local Planning Policy Framework (LPPF) of the Mount Alexander Planning Scheme be reviewed. This policy should be reviewed in accordance with the *VPP Practice Note: Writing a Local Planning Policy* and divided into an overall Heritage Policy with objectives and policy statements, and 5 proposed individual policies that apply specifically to those heritage areas within the Municipality. Each individual policy to have its own objectives and policy statements;
- These objectives set out how Council will exercise its discretion in the consideration of planning permit applications. Additional objectives should ensure appropriate protection and control of the significant individual and contributory heritage places and should include (but not be limited to):
 - An explanation of the number of individual heritage policies and the extent of the heritage policies and objectives (as an introduction);
 - A cross reference to the Municipal Strategic Statement in the policy basis, to reinforce the Shire's commitment to cultural heritage;
 - More comprehensive policy basis, based on the information of this Report;
 - Objectives and policies that encourage the retention of significant individual and contributory heritage places;
 - Specific detailed policies on the conservation and retention of contributory places within heritage overlay precincts. An overriding policy could read as follows:
"All heritage places of contributory significance which have been identified and assessed as part of a Heritage Overlay

- Precinct through a process of public consultation should be subject to a Heritage Overlay control in the Planning Scheme. These places have local heritage significance within the heritage area and assist in defining the character of the area”;
- A specific policy on archaeological places, which are automatically protected under the Heritage Act 1995;
 - A reference to all new developments within heritage overlays to be carried out in accordance with the ICOMOS Burra Charter as part of the objectives;
 - Objectives and policies on the conservation and enhancement of heritage places, engineering and street works infrastructure and landscapes;
 - A Demolition Policy that considers the processes required and establishes guidelines for demolition proposals of heritage places;

These additional heritage policies and objectives are required to support the conservation and retention of both the individual and contributory heritage places of cultural significance within the Shire, especially at VCAT hearings. The additional policies and objectives will also compliment and reinforce the specific policies and objectives for each heritage precinct.

Specific Policies for Heritage Precincts (Heritage Overlay Areas)

- It is recommended that the specific objectives and policies provided for each of the nominated heritage precincts (Heritage Overlay Areas) be considered by Council and implemented. The policy basis for each of these policies has been formed from the supporting background for each precinct (including the statement of significance). Together with the policy basis, the objectives and policies (which set out how Council will exercise discretion) should be derived from sound conservation principles.

C. Recommended Planning Scheme Amendment Process

It is recommended that the Mount Alexander Shire Council undertake the following process in order to carry out an amendment to the Planning Scheme as a result of the recommendations of this study, including:

- Implementation of policies and objectives as set out in this report.
- After careful review of the final draft of the Report, the Council should form an independent opinion of the study, consider any alterations deemed necessary and subsequently proceed to public exhibition. It is suggested that an informal exhibition of the study be undertaken prior to the formal planning scheme amendment under the Planning and Environment Act 1987.
- Under the formal planning scheme amendment, if no objections have been received and Council agrees with the Study recommendations,

Council should forward the exhibited amendment to the Minister for Planning requesting approval.

- If Council receives submissions objecting to the planning scheme amendment, it is recommended that Council should not automatically remove the particular heritage place/s from the proposed precinct, but where appropriate, negotiate with the objector. Council should refer objecting submissions to the Heritage Advisor for review and to make comment where appropriate. If an objecting submission cannot be accommodated to the satisfaction of the objector and Council in the Amendment, then the submission should be referred to an Independent Panel (appointed by the Minister for Planning) for assessment. Council will then consider the Panel's recommendations and decide to change the Amendment, adopt it unchanged or abandon it. Unless Council decides to abandon the proposal, the amendment is then sent to the Minister for Planning and Local Government requesting approval.
- It is recommended that the individual heritage places and the five heritage precincts (including the heritage places of individual and contributory significance within them), which have been researched, assessed and developed according to the ICOMOS Burra Charter and the Criteria for the Register of the National Estate (as prescribed in the *VPP Practice Note: Applying the Heritage Overlay*), be nominated for inclusion in the Mount Alexander Planning Scheme, subject to the normal statutory amending processes provided under the Planning and Environment Act 1987.
- It should be noted that the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay in the new format Planning Scheme does not specifically indicate the significance of specific individual and contributory places or list every individual and contributory place. Rather, the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay identifies each of the heritage precincts, together with individual heritage places outside the precincts and individual heritage places within the precincts that may have a varying planning control (ie. external or internal paint controls, tree controls, etc.). Reference to the Heritage Study of the Shire of Newstead for information about each individual and contributory place will be required.
- It is recommended that the extent of heritage controls to all objects and monuments (but not buildings) also apply to an area of 5-10 metres from the object or monument. The extent of the heritage overlay for heritage places ie buildings should be carefully assessed particularly for places in rural areas. Views of the place from the street are important and should be included as part of the heritage overlay where possible.
- It is recommended that a Schedule to the Heritage Overlay be prepared, in accordance with the adopted VPP format (to Clause

43.01), for the five heritage precincts, individual heritage places outside the heritage precincts and individual heritage places within the heritage precincts where the planning controls may vary (reference to each of the heritage citations in the Heritage Study of the Shire of Newstead is required to determine those places to be included on the Schedule). The Schedule should be prepared in accordance with the *VPP Practice Note: Applying the Heritage Overlay*.

D. Additional Planning Issues to be considered by Council

- It is recommended that a briefing paper be prepared (by Council officers) for the consideration of Council. This paper should outline the recommendations of the Study and direction to be undertaken.
- It is recommended that the Town Planner notify the relevant Council staff effected by the outcomes of the former Newstead Study including (but not limited to):
 - Rates and revenue (with regard to identifying the heritage property on the rate data).
 - Engineering (particularly with regard to the recommendations on bridges and street construction details).
- It is recommended that a workshop be provided about the Study and its outcomes, for the benefit of Councillors and key Council officers.

E. Council Heritage Incentives

- It is recommended that the Mount Alexander Shire Council consider developing financial and other incentives to assist owners of places within heritage precincts. These incentives may include (but are not be limited to):
 - Promoting further awareness of the availability of Council's Heritage Advisor, to assist owners of heritage properties with basic advice on restoration, reconstruction, and alteration.
 - Developing a discount rates scheme for owners of heritage properties. This scheme could be used to encourage restoration, reconstruction or refurbishment of heritage places (buildings, streetscapes and areas). It could be the basis of townscape improvement schemes in the towns which form heritage precincts, whereby local traders are actively involved in contributing funds appropriate restoration and improvement projects, such as painting shopfronts, improving signage on buildings, and introducing street furniture appropriate to the period and character of the precinct.

F. Public Awareness Program

- In addition to the exhibition of the Heritage Study of the Shire of Newstead to the public and the formal notification to effected owners, it is recommended that the Mount Alexander Shire Council conduct local information sessions for the benefit of owners effected by the study.

Other recommendations are also provided in the main Report.

7.0 Study Format

The study document is comprised of 3 sections.

Section 1 comprises the main Report (including the study methodology, statistical results, heritage precincts and heritage program recommendations).

Section 2 forms the Thematic Environmental History prepared by Phil Taylor.

Section 3 comprises 4 volumes which contain the heritage citations for each of the individual and contributory heritage places within the study area. Volumes 1 to 4 include location maps and lists of each heritage place.

Shire of Mount Alexander

Heritage Study of the Shire of Newstead

STAGE 2

Environmental History

Phil Taylor

December 1998

Revised May 2004

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CONVERSIONS

WEIGHTS AND MEASURES

In this work imperial units for common measurements are used until 1970 when the present metric system was introduced. The troy system of weight is still the legal measurement of precious metals in Australia. In the text, ounces of gold are in troy ounces (*see below* Troy Weight).

1 inch (in)	=	2.54 cm
1 foot (ft)	=	0.30 m
1 yard (yd)	=	0.91 m
1 chain (ch)	=	20.11 m
1 mile	=	1.61 km
1 ounce (oz)	=	28.3 g
1 pound (lb)	=	454 g
1 hundredweight (cwt)	=	50.802 kg
1 ton	=	1.02 t
1 acre	=	0.405 ha
1 square mile	=	2.59 km ²
1 horsepower (hp)	=	0.746 kW
1 mile per hour (mph)	=	1.61 km/h

Troy Weight

1 ounce	=	31.10348 g
1 pound	=	0.453592 kg

Note: 24 grains (gr) = 1 pennyweight (dwt) and 20 dwt = 1 troy ounce.

MONETARY VALUES

Before 1966, Australian currency was expressed in pounds, shillings and pence (£ s d). The following form is used: £2 13s 6d.

ABBREVIATIONS

AIF	Australian Imperial Force
Cr	Councillor
edn	edition
JP	Justice of the Peace
km/h	kilometres per hour
n.d.	no date
<i>NME</i>	<i>Newstead and Maldon Echo</i>
<i>MAM</i>	<i>Mount Alexander Mail</i>
MLC	Member of the Legislative Council
mph	miles per hour
MS	Manuscript
MUIOOF	Manchester Unity Independent Order of Oddfellows
MUP	Melbourne University Press
NHS	Newstead and District Historical Society
OUP	Oxford University Press
SLV	State Library of Victoria
<i>VGG</i>	<i>Victorian Government Gazette</i>
<i>WT</i>	<i>Weekly Times</i>

1. THE ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

TOPOGRAPHICAL CHANGE

The former Shire of Newstead in the Central Highlands of Victoria has an active geological past that created the basis for its primary and secondary industries. Slates, shales, sandstones and auriferous quartzite laid down in the Ordovician period over 400 million years ago were highly folded and fissured by earth movements. Weathering formed gold deposits in the valleys of fast-flowing streams which continued after the uplifting of the Great Dividing Range about 40 million years ago. About a million years ago and lasting fifteen thousand years volcanic eruptions from vents such as Yandoit Hill and Mount Franklin poured lava along these valleys, covering the alluvial gold with basalt. The ancient alluvial beds became the ‘deep leads’ of the gold mining period and the uncovered deposits, as at Tarilta, remain important Shire assets that provide high-grade quartz gravel for road-making. Subsequent stream erosion created elevated basalt flats, of which Table Hill at Vaughan and the Guildford Plateau are two notable examples. Weathering produced light grey and grey-brown loams of indifferent fertility, but which responded to applications of fertiliser to grow pasture for cattle and sheep, and from the basalt came reddish soils suitable for mixed farming. The Loddon River deposited alluvial soils of good depth and high fertility on its flood plain, especially near Guildford and Newstead.¹

The Loddon is the major topographical feature that shaped the pattern and character of the Shire’s human occupation. Rising east of Daylesford, it enters the municipality from the south-east and winds north and north-west, bisecting it diagonally. Intermittent streams feed the Upper Loddon from a wide catchment area. The more significant of these in the Shire are the Fryers, Tarilta, Campbells, Jim Crow and Muckleford Creeks. The rising waters of Cairn Curran Reservoir in 1956 inundated the junctions of two others, Sandy Creek and Joyces Creek. From a mean average rainfall of 27 inches a year, the thin light soils of the Loddon’s catchment generally do not retain run-off and consequently the variation in river flow is great. In wet years the level rises swiftly and, at roughly twenty-year intervals, it can flood — sometimes, as in 1909, with catastrophic results.² Most watercourses run dry in summer, especially in times of drought, and the Loddon becomes, in the words of a pioneer, ‘a chain of large waterholes’.³

PLANTS AND ANIMALS

The mining industry’s appetite for timber for structures and firewood was voracious. One observer realised in 1855 that within a few years ‘the wood crowned summits of our hills

¹ Brough Smyth, *The Goldfields and Mineral Districts of Victoria* (Melbourne: John Ferres, 1869), p. 103-6; Central Planning Authority/Central Highlands Regional Committee, *Resources Survey: Central Highlands Region* (Melbourne: 1956), pp. 24-34, 83; F. Penman, ‘The Soils of the Catchment’, in Ian G. Forbes (comp.), *The Catchment of Cairn Curran Reservoir* (Melbourne: State Rivers and Water Supply Commission, 1950), pp. 20-2.

² A later example of heavy rainfall in the Shire that led to widespread flooding occurred on 22 October 1934: in 24 hours 565 points of rain were recorded at Fryerstown.

³ *Newstead and Maldon Echo (NME)*, 27 March 1907; *Resources Survey: Central Highlands Region*, pp. 62, 67-74; Forbes (comp.), *The Catchment of Cairn Curran Reservoir*, pp. 27-31, 33, 34. Some evidence suggests that gold mining activities since the 1850s caused silting that in places altered the course of the Loddon.

will look as desolate and barren as the flats and gullies do already.’⁴ Almost fifty years of timber use denuded much of the landscape of its predominantly Box-Ironbark forest cover and by the turn of the century timber was carted from Daylesford.⁵ The Loddon’s massive red gums (*Eucalyptus camaldulensis*) were used extensively in railway sleepers, telegraph poles, fence posts, engine-buffers, bridge planks and culverts. Of the few original specimens that survive Guildford’s so-called ‘Big Tree’, the ‘Pride of Guildford’, is the most notable. By May 1982, the area of remaining bushland was 15,762 hectares, or 38 per cent of the Shire’s total area.⁶

Tree planting for township beautification, as at Newstead in May 1888, or for private or public commemoration introduced exotic varieties. At Vaughan, the French proprietor of the Mont Belot Hotel reputedly planted on the river flat a slip from the willow at Napoleon’s grave on St Helena and the tree eventually marked a popular fishing spot. Poplars planted in the 1870s by the pioneers of Fryerstown served as ‘a reminder of their native land, to provide a touch of nostalgia.’⁷ Cut leaf plane trees were chosen for Guildford’s Avenue of Honor in 1919, while Newstead for its Avenue chose planes and elms. Between 1919 and 1928 local schools established Endowment Plantations of pines on Crown land.⁸

The Aborigines hunted kangaroos and emus along the Loddon valley, as well as possums and native water rats, and they collected freshwater mussels. They also speared fish in the river; a pioneer recalled seeing one specimen about 1862 that weighed 53lbs.⁹ The Loddon was ‘a beautiful river, full of fish’ in the 1850s and 1860s, and angling was a popular pastime among European settlers.¹⁰ Sludge from mining polluted the river and when in January 1907 a Murray cod weighing less than 10 lbs was hooked in Joyces Creek the news sparked a stampede of excited Newstead anglers that ‘almost paralysed’ the town’s business.¹¹ Mining’s decline assisted the recovery of fish stocks in the Shire’s waterways. By 1969 there were popular fishing spots at Muckleford Creek, Green Gully, Joyce’s Creek, Yapeen and along the Loddon from Glenluce to Newstead. Exotic fish were available in Cairn Curran Reservoir.¹²

ASSESSMENTS OF THE ENVIRONMENT

Gold mining stimulated early geological studies. In his *The Golden Colony* (1855), George Wathen drew upon the then incomplete work of the Government geologist Alf Selwyn to provide an analysis of the Fryers Creek goldfield, including Murdering and Chokem Flats. Of the rugged hills surrounding Fryers Creek he wrote: ‘To the diggers they have proved

⁴ *Mount Alexander Mail (MAM)*, 30 November 1855.

⁵ The Sandon and Campbelltown State Forest was proclaimed on 4 September 1871. *VGG*, 10 January 1879, p. 113.

⁶ R.A. Bradfield, (ed.), *Guildford: Some Early History* (Castlemaine: privately published, 1970; 1988 edn), pp. 11, 34; Land Conservation Council, *Rivers and Streams: Special Investigation Report* (Melbourne: September 1989), p. 304; Rowena D. Myers and David J. Elton, *An Assessment of Habitat Significance in the Loddon-Campaspe Region: Report to the Ecological Survey Co-ordinating Committee for the Loddon-Campaspe Regional Planning Authority* (Ministry of Conservation, Victoria, May 1982), pp. 2, 17.

⁷ George O. Brown, *Reminiscences of Fryerstown* (Castlemaine: privately published, 1983), p. 226.

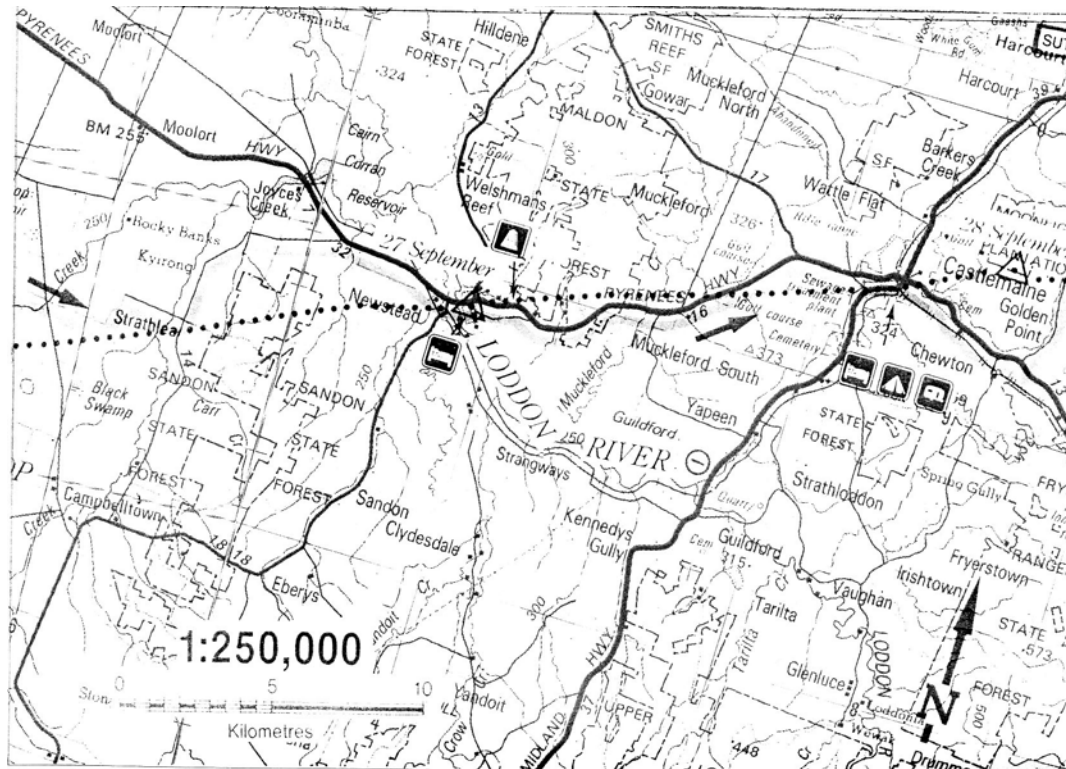
⁸ Doreen James, *Echoes of the Past* (Yapeen Primary School, 1988), p. 57; Bradfield (ed.), *Guildford*, p. 13; *NME*, 24 September 1919; L.J. Blake, (ed.), *Vision and Realisation: A Centenary of State Education in Victoria* (Melbourne: Education Department of Victoria, 1973), vol. 2, pp. 625, 638; *Newstead Echo*, no. 3, October 1995.

⁹ Thomas Martin, ‘The Writings of Thomas Martin’, MS, n.d. [c.1927], in NHS File: Martin, p. 9.

¹⁰ R. Beddoe of the Loddon in 1867, in Back to Newstead Committee, ‘Back To Newstead, October 4-6, 1968: Souvenir Booklet’ (Newstead, 1968), p. 12.

¹¹ Forbes (comp.), *Catchment of Cairn Curran Reservoir*, p. 63; *NME*, 30 January 1907.

¹² Harley W. Forster, *The Central Goldfields* (Melbourne: Cypress Books, 1969; rvsd edn, 1973), p. 79.



Line of Major Mitchell's trail through the Shire of Newstead
 Department of Conservation & Environment, *The Major Mitchell Trail*, Victoria 1990, p.100



The Big Tree, Guildford
 (*Eucalyptus camaldulensis* Dehnh)
 Photograph Wendy Jacobs 1998



Opening of Vaughan Mineral Springs 1912
Newstead Historical Society Photographic Collection



Mitchell's 'Yarrayne' - now the Loddon River (T.L. Mitchell)

treasuries of untold wealth. To the geologists they ... suggest interesting questions as to the circumstances under which these golden deposits were accumulated'.¹³ R. Brough Smyth tackled some of those questions in *The Goldfields and Mineral Districts of Victoria* (1869). His study was more wide ranging with some structural detail about the Campbells Creek, Fryerstown, Guildford and Vaughan goldfields, and the sluicing of Jim Crow Creek.¹⁴

Thomas Smith (1869-1944), a Sandon farmer and amateur geologist, improved on these early geological studies. Smith collected graptolite fossils at 160 sites in an area of at least fifty square miles from Yandoit to Campbelltown and from Werona to Newstead. His work enabled professional geologists to produce more sophisticated appreciations of the region's geological structure, knowledge vital to the mining industry. According to local historian C.C. Culvenor, by 1938 Smith had assisted two graptolite specialists to describe '26 species of graptolites of which 16 were species or forms new to geology. One new species, *Clonograptus smithi*, was named after the collector.'¹⁵

The few botanical surveys note the adverse effects of human industry on the natural environment. The Australian Anchor Plant (*Discaria pubescens*) that Major Mitchell collected at the site of Newstead in 1836 is now difficult to find. The district's orchids that a columnist for the Newstead *Echo* described proudly in 1910 as 'our own plants' now grow only in isolated locations.¹⁶ Other plant species also have become scarce. The Tough Psoralea (*Psoralea tenax*) probably is now extinct in the Castlemaine district and native grasses in the Shire have 'virtually disappeared'.¹⁷

Mineral Springs

Gold mining in the nineteenth century uncovered another of the Shire's attractions. Mineral springs were discovered on Stony Creek south-east of Fryerstown, at Spring Gully, on the Loddon at Vaughan, Glenluce and below Newstead, at Joyces Creek and in a mine at Welshmans Reef. Near Vaughan in 1909, an eight-year-old boy named Jim Paull found a spring in an area that was sluiced the previous year and it was named after him.¹⁸

Only the Vaughan and Glenluce springs were developed. A small reserve was created at Vaughan in 1878 and the spring officially opened to the public in 1912. Tourist facilities were built and, in 1979, a visitor found 'a well-shaded picnic spot to add a memory in any day.' A decade later the reserve was 'run-down'. Local volunteers set to work and over the next three years they cleaned up the area.¹⁹

The three springs at Glenluce, also opened in 1912, had standpipes and hand pumps installed in 1930. A major threat to the springs was dredge mining for gold along the Loddon in the 1920s and 1930s because it released the water's carbon dioxide and polluted

¹³ George Henry Wathen, *The Golden Colony: or Victoria in 1854. With Remarks on the Geology of the Australian Gold Fields* (London: Longman, Brown, Green, and Longmans, 1855), pp. 226, 227.

¹⁴ Brough Smyth, *Goldfields*, pp. 103-6, 136-7, 152, 221, 280, 317, 528, 530, 549.

¹⁵ C.C. Culvenor, *Thomas Smith of Sandon* (Daylesford: Jim Crow Press, 1994), pp. vi, 11, 13.

¹⁶ F.M. Reader, 'Our Orchids', *NME*, 3 August 1910.

¹⁷ Myers and Elton, *An Assessment of Habitat Significance in the Loddon-Campaspe Region*, pp. 2, 17, 32, 33.

¹⁸ Edward and Maura Wishart, *The Spa Country: A Field Guide to 65 Mineral Springs of the Central Highlands, Victoria* (Daylesford: Spa Publishing, 1990), pp. 67, 168, 170-3, 174, 180, 181; Verne Hooper, *Mining My Past: A Life in Gold Mining* (Castlemaine: privately published, 1992), p. 7; James, *Echoes of the Past*, pp. 59-60.

¹⁹ Bill Beasely and John Béchervaise, *Castlemaine Sketchbook* (Adelaide: Rigby, 1979), p. 50, and see also Richard Lee, *Country Roads and Bush Pubs: The touring motorist's guide to rural Victoria* (Hawthorn: The Five Mile Press, 1987), p. 29; *Midland Express*, 13 June 1989. Reports of the work in progress are in *Midland Express*, 13 January 1989, 13 June 1989, 11 August 1992; *Castlemaine Mail*, 7 April 1989, 21 April 1989; *Central Victorian News & Views*, 11 April 1989. See also [Kate Blood], 'Vaughan and Glenluce Mineral Springs Reserve Management Plan' (Department of Conservation, Forests and Lands (Bendigo Region), October 1989).

it. Five springs in the Vaughan area surveyed by E.J. Dunn before 1912 did not last into the late twentieth century.²⁰

The mineral spring at Joyce's Creek was developed by the Joyce's Creek Mineral Spring Committee. About 1937 the spring's immediate surrounds were concreted, seating provided and deciduous trees planted.

Appreciation of the Landscape

Aboriginal oral traditions explained the landscape in mythological terms. Their Dreaming told of one immense mountain ruled over by the eagle, the crow and the bat. The two birds quarrelled and the crow went away. When it returned it brought fire that incinerated the eagle's domain and broke up the mountain to form hills, plains and valleys.²¹

The Loddon valley reminded the first Europeans of home. To Mitchell and Stapylton the grassy site of Newstead resembled 'an English park' or 'the Down country'.²² Their viewpoint was utilitarian, as was Thomas Walker's in 1837 when he saw 'beautiful granite ranges' unsuitable for sheep, thinly timbered, grassy flats that were suitable, and 'no country very suitable for cultivation'.²³ Aesthetic appreciation came later. William Howitt wrote of 'Such glorious prairies, green as emerald, rich as the primeval Paradise.'²⁴ To Joseph Parker in 1846 Campbells Creek was

a scene of beautiful, crystal-like waterholes, which sparkled in the glittering rays of the sun; every water hole was teeming with fish, and flocks of ducks. On the slopes and hills on either side of the creek, stood evergreen trees, with such even regularity, as to lead one to believe that they had been planted by the hand of science, consisting of golden, silver, and black wattle, many of them in full bloom, also blackwood, sheoak and honeysuckle, on which could be seen, in clusters, the large square-headed locusts, with their beautiful silvery wings, giving forth their peculiar chimes of gee-long-gee-long gee's.²⁵

Although gold diggers changed this aspect of the creek drastically, the setting was appreciated on the crowded Fryer's Creek diggings in 1852:

The scenery of this district is really fine, and you can conceive nothing more picturesque than the clusters of tents of every variety in every gully between the mountains; the fine tall gum-trees and the oaks covering some of the hills, others being perfectly bald, with fantastic rocks jutting from their sides — the whole of a uniform brown, contrasting well with the bright green foliage of their fellow-hills.²⁶

'Picturesque' was a word used often by so-called 'lovers of sylvan scenery' to describe the natural beauty of the Loddon valley.²⁷ One popular travelogue noted that the train from Carisbrook 'passes through picturesque country to Newstead ... the centre of a good

²⁰ Wishart, *The Spa Country*, p. 167.

²¹ Intriguingly, although the volcanoes were dormant long before the arrival of the Loddon's Aborigines, another of their legends describes a feud between two mountains. Young Mount Franklin challenged the authority of old Mount Tarrengower, near Maldon, and fired at it stone missiles that fell short. *Where the Volcanoes Roared*. An MANAQ Production for the Australian Television Network, written and produced by Brian Davies, n.d. Telecast by BTV-6 on 18 January 1990.

²² Major T.L. Mitchell, *Three Expeditions Into the Interior of Eastern Australia ...* . 2 vols (London: T. & W. Boone, 1839), vol. 2, p. 278; Alan E.J. Andrews (ed.), *Stapylton: With Major Mitchell's Australia Felix Expedition, 1836* (Hobart: Blubber Head Press, 1986), p. 195.

²³ [Thomas Walker], *A Month in the Bush of Australia. Journal of one of a Party of Gentlemen who recently travelled from Sydney to Port Phillip ...* (London: J. Cross, 1838), pp. 40, 41.

²⁴ Howitt, quoted in E.E. Morris (ed.), *Cassell's Picturesque Australasia*, vol. IV (London: Cassell & Co., 1889), p. 174.

²⁵ Parker, quoted by R.A. Bradfield, *Campbells Creek: Some Early History* (privately published, n.d.), p. 3.

²⁶ Letter from a doctor who also was a miner and a gold buyer, quoted by An Australian Journalist, *The Emigrant in Australia or Gleanings From the Goldfields* (London: Addey and Co., 1852), p. 77.

²⁷ For 'sylvan scenery', see an extract from *MAM*, 13 October 1862, in Bradfield, *Campbells Creek*, p. 40, and for 'the picturesque', see Paul Carter, *The Road to Botany Bay: An Essay in Spatial History* (London: Faber and Faber, 1987; paperback edn, 1988), pp. 242-4.

agricultural district'.²⁸ Another expanded on the theme with the Loddon winding 'through a most picturesque country' and the high land adjoining Campbells Creek rising 'sheer upright, as though cleanly cleft by a Titanic knife.'²⁹ More than a century later Melburnians Bruce and Jeanette Turner visited their weekend house at Vaughan to 'enjoy the relaxing atmosphere of the bush and enjoy the birds, the trees and the river. It is good to get away from suburban life!'³⁰

Appreciation of Shire locations as retreats for rest and recuperation is not a recent phenomenon. In 1857, Campbells Creek was 'Rural retirement undisturbed' and Newstead a place 'to spend a pleasant day'.³¹ Fifty years later a Newstead townsman wrote that 'our hills, dales and gullies are ... of a soothing nature, and a truly inspiring a "dolce far niente" even the most indolent of mortal beings would not cavil at.'³² As at Daylesford, the medicinal properties of Vaughan's mineral springs long have been an attraction, and bushwalking is encouraged with new tracks at Vaughan, Glenluce and in the Fryers Ranges. Remnants of the gold rush may be visited along a 'diggings trail to the sites of Victoria's earliest gold discoveries'³³ within the boundaries of the Castlemaine Diggings National Heritage Park that was declared in October 2002. Visitors now are encouraged to stay longer than a day. After 1967, the Shire embarked on a programme to improve tourist accommodation with a nine-acre caravan park at Welshmans Reef.³⁴ These and other initiatives over the past thirty-six years derive from a long-standing desire to augment tourism by marketing the Shire's natural and human heritage.

²⁸ Andrew Garran (ed.), *Picturesque Atlas of Australasia* (Melbourne: Picturesque Atlas Publishing Co. Ltd, 1886), vol. II, p. 293.

²⁹ Edwin Carton Booth, *Australia in the 1870's* (London: Virtue & Co., 1873-76, Sydney: Ure Smith, 1975 facsimile edn), pp. 89-90.

³⁰ Quoted by James, *Echoes of the Past*, p. 61.

³¹ Quoted by Bradfield, *Campbells Creek*, p. 6; quoted by Raymond A. Bradfield, *Newstead: Some Early History* (Caslemaine: privately published, n.d.), p. [13].

³² *NME*, 3 August 1910.

³³ *Age*, 27 June 1998, p. F38.

³⁴ *Resources Survey: Central Highlands Region*, p. 176; 'Back To Newstead' booklet, p. 43.

2. EXPLORATION AND PASTORALISM

MAJOR MITCHELL

In the spring of 1836, the New South Wales Surveyor-General, Major Thomas Livingstone Mitchell, during his journey to discover new grazing and farmland, made the first professional appreciation of the Shire's natural environment. On his return route to Sydney from Portland Bay, Mitchell led his small advance party across Joyces Creek at Strathlea on 27 September and that evening he camped beside the Loddon on the site of Newstead behind the former police station. Next morning he continued his course ENE on a line followed roughly by today's Pyrenees Highway, past the sites of Castlemaine and Campbells Creek, to camp on Moonlight Flat. A fortnight later his main party under second-in-command Granville Stapylton arrived after following Mitchell's tracks in the soft soil.¹

Mitchell and Stapylton both were surveyors, each man conscious of his role as 'the harbinger of civilization', and separately they wrote detailed assessments of the country 'as if with the eyes of the future.'² To Mitchell it was 'most varied and fascinating' with 'several fine running streams, and forests of box and blue-gum growing on ridges of trapean conglomerate.' This was different to tracts crossed in previous days. Moving closer to the Loddon, he 'entered on a very level and extensive flat, exceedingly green, and resembling an English park.' On this 'verdant plain' Mitchell released his cattle to graze — 'they well-deserved to be the first' — while he explored the immediate area. He collected the Australian Anchor Plant (*Discaria pubescens*), 'a remarkable green leafless spiny bush'. The next morning his Aboriginal guides killed a large white-bellied snake that had swallowed two quails, 'one of them being not quite dead.'³

Mitchell's published description was sufficient incentive for prospective settlers to visit this corner of New South Wales. For his part, Stapylton provided a fitting prologue to settlement when he concluded on 11 October: 'The river frontage and the luxuriant flats on its banks and the splendid Downs to the South & Eastward with the forest ground immediately adjoining would render it a most desirable spot for a grant[.]'⁴

OVERLANDERS AND SQUATTERS

Before Mitchell's main party reached Sydney overlanders departed for the small settlement on Port Phillip Bay founded in August 1835. Joseph Hawdon's party, which included John Hepburn, met Stapylton's group at Gundagai and learned of Mitchell's discoveries. The wheel tracks of his drays were quickly dubbed 'The Major's Line', the overlanders' 'umbilical chord to civilization', and in 1837 eighteen separate parties followed it southwards herding before them more than 25,000 sheep and about 3,000

¹ [Sandra Bardwell *et. al.*], *The Major Mitchell Trail: Exploring Australia Felix* (Melbourne: Department of Conservation and Environment, 1990), pp. 99, 101. It is possible Mitchell's precise route was south of the highway. According to Charles Slee in 1908, his tracks were still visible in 1855 and could be traced east to west from 'Mount Consultation (Campbell's Creek, Bald Hill) to the table-land, down to the point near Leathbridge's house, and over the Loddon a little below the junction of the Jim Crow Creek, thence across the lower end of Green Gully.' *NME*, 4 March 1908 and see 12 February 1908.

² Carter, *Road to Botany Bay*, pp. 119-20.

³ Mitchell, *Three Expeditions*, vol. 2, pp. 278, 279; Andrews (ed.), *Stapylton*, p. 200; [Bardwell *et. al.*], *The Major Mitchell Trail*, pp. 99, 100, 127.

⁴ Andrews (ed.), *Stapylton*, p. 201.

cattle. Many went to Port Phillip, but others stopped en route when they saw promising pasture.⁵

The first sheep runs were large and the boundaries undefined. Alexander Mollison's *Coliban*, taken up in January 1838 which included present Malmsbury and Taradale, extended as far west as Mount Franklin where he had an outstation by 1840. John Hepburn's *Smeaton Hill* included Yandoit Hill for several years after April 1838.⁶ When stock rider Charles Hall arrived on *Glenmona* in 1840, he learned the run stretched forty miles, from Bet Bet Creek to 'near Mount Alexander.'⁷

Subdivisions reduced these large holdings. By early 1841 the boundaries of seven runs segmented the Shire's area. *Tarrengower* was occupied by Lachlan McKinnon in 1839 and included the present townships or districts of Welshmans Reef, Newstead, Strangways, Sandon, Yandoit Hill and Werona. The 'fiery Scot' Captain Dugald McLachlan also arrived in 1839 and took up *Glengower*, the eastern portion of which included Campbelltown, several miles of Joyces Creek and Strathlea. A small portion of Frederick Manton's huge *Cairn Curran*, based at Maldon and taken up early in 1840, included a section of Muckleford Creek and part of South Muckleford. To the north-east James Orr, of *Stratford Lodge*, occupied another small portion in November 1839. William Campbell and Charles Macknight established two runs in May 1840: *Strathloddon*, which encompassed Castlemaine, Chewton, Campbells Creek and Yapeen; and *Bough Yards*, with Guildford, Tarilta, Vaughan, Fryerstown and Glenluce. Colin McKinnon took up the lower reaches of Joyces Creek by early 1841.⁸

At about this time overlander Peter Fryer, the son of a Lancaster farmer, arrived on *Bough Yards* with his newly-wed wife Elizabeth. Employed on the run as a shepherd, Fryer settled in rugged country on a tributary of the Loddon that became known as Fryers Creek. On a flat beside it, he built a slab hut with surrounding verandah that survived at least until the mid-1850s.⁹

South of the Shire, Assistant Protector of Aborigines Edward Stone Parker reserved a large area as a protectorate for the Loddon people. It had *Tarrengower* and *Bough Yards* on its west and north boundaries and included present Franklinford and Yandoit. In June 1840 Parker established his headquarters at Lalgambook, the extinct volcano that Hepburn named Jim Crow Hill and was renamed Mount Franklin in 1843.¹⁰

⁵ John Hepburn, letter, 10 August 1853, in Thomas Francis Bride (comp.), *Letters From Victorian Pioneers* (Melbourne: Government Printer, 1898; Heinemann edn ed. C.E. Sayers, 1969), p. 60; Andrews (ed.), *Stapylton*, p. 231; Marian Aveling and Lyndall Ryan, 'Dispossession', *Australians*, vol. 2, 1838 (Broadway, NSW: Fairfax, Syme & Weldon, 1987), p. 45.

⁶ Ian D. Clark, *Aboriginal Languages and Clans: An Historical Atlas of Western and Central Victoria, 1800-1900* (Melbourne: Department of Geography and Environmental Science, Monash University, 1990), p. 142; Hepburn in Bride (comp.), *Letters From Victorian Pioneers*, p. 70.

⁷ Charles Browning Hall, letter, 6 September 1853, in Bride (comp.), *Letters From Victorian Pioneers*, p. 263.

⁸ R.V. Billis and A.S. Kenyon *Pastoral Pioneers of Port Phillip* (Melbourne: 1932; Stockland Press edn, 1974), pp. 111, 179, 185, 213, 281, 282; Robert Spreadborough and Hugh Anderson (comps), *Victorian Squatters* (Ascot Vale (Vic.): Red Rooster Press, 1983), pp. 97, 156, 164, 180, 186, 188, and see their map p. [362]; Hepburn in Bride (comp.), *Letters From Victorian Pioneers*, pp. 68-70.

⁹ Brown, *Reminiscences of Fryerstown*, p. 8; MAM, 13 May 1856; Hepburn in Bride (comp.), *Letters From Victorian Pioneers*, p. 70.

¹⁰ Aldo Massola, *Journey to Aboriginal Victoria* (Adelaide: Rigby, 1969), p. 88-9. The origin of the name 'Jim Crow' for the volcano and the creek is unclear. Maddicks suggests it was derived from a song and dance tune popular in Sydney in the 1830s with a chorus that went 'Hop a Little./Skip a Little./JUMP JIM CROW'. Hepburn, therefore, arriving from Sydney in April 1838, named the creek Jim Crow after he 'hopped it close to his new holdings'. Alternatively, the range was named Jim Crow by Parker after he 'remarked to a companion that two trees on the ... skyline appeared to be dancing the "Jim Crow" dance.' Henry T. Maddicks, *100 Years of Daylesford Gold Mining History: August 1851 to 1951* (Daylesford Historical Society, n.d.), p. 7.

ABORIGINAL CONTACT

The land the squatters occupied lay in the south-east portion of the *Djadja wurrung* language area. Two of its sixteen clans appear closely associated with the Shire: the *Galgal gundidj* (literally ‘belonging to the forest’), whose approximate location was between Kyneton and Castlemaine; and the *Gunangara balug* (literally ‘Gunangara people’), at Franklinford. Another clan whose range may have included part of the Shire’s north-west portion was the *Liarga balug* (literally ‘stringy bark tree people’) at Mount Tarrengower and Maldon. Charles Hall described the Loddon Aborigines in admirable terms: ‘... I have seen men who might have served as models of symmetry and strength, and whose figures were perfection as regards the animal man. The lubras also here were often found tall, well-shaped, and good-looking’.¹¹

Their numbers were not high. The pre-contact population of the *Djadja wurrung* is estimated at between 640 and 960 and while each clan could number more than a hundred, often there were far fewer. Inter-clan conflict like a massacre of the *Gunangara balug* at Bet Bet Creek sometime in 1833 or 1834 could decimate a clan. In 1841, five years after the arrival of the squatters, there were twenty-six members of the *Galgal gundidj*, whereas the *Gunangara balug* numbered precisely three.¹²

The arrival of sheep on the *Djadja wurrung*’s clan area was a major factor in this population decrease. Sheep learned quickly to use their noses to ‘root up’ the nutritious *moon-nar* tuber which the clans preferred for their carbohydrate intake; after just a year it was noticed the plant was becoming scarce.¹³ The shooting and dispersal of natural game further depleted the clans’ traditional food resources. Early in 1840, Parker reported that ‘a considerable portion of the *Djadja wurrung* country had been taken up by sheep and cattle runs. The very spots most valuable to the Aborigines for their productiveness — the creeks, watercourses, and rivers — are the first to be occupied. Settlers commonly believe that a squatting licence entitles them to exclude the Aborigines from their runs.’¹⁴

With this mood prevalent, conflict between squatters and the local clans appeared certain. Hepburn stated that ‘a hostile feeling did exist’ when he arrived with his sheep in 1838. Aborigines killed a convict named Knight and buried his body on Knight’s Fall, later known as Yandoit Hill.¹⁵ Angus Kennedy, overlanding in 1839 with his father Alexander, reputedly ‘the first to bring sheep across the Loddon’, had his side grazed by a spear in ‘a brush with the aborigines’ near Mount Alexander. On *Glengower* in 1840, Aborigines allegedly murdered the station cook after he served them plaster of Paris instead of flour. The station-owner, McLachlan, set off at once, found a party of Aborigines sheltering at a watering spot later known as ‘The Blood Hole’ and shot them one by one. Confronted with this kind of response Aboriginal resistance, such as it was in the first few years, quickly collapsed.¹⁶

Aboriginal passivity and co-operation were more enduring. Mollison described the “‘Jim Crow” tribe’ of the Upper Loddon as ‘from the first peaceable. They were a small insignificant tribe, frequently spoiled and oppressed by the more numerous and warlike tribes from the Goulburn, Murray River, and westward, who used to carry off their

¹¹ Hall in Bride (comp.), *Letters From Victorian Pioneers*, p. 273.

¹² Clark, *Aboriginal Languages and Clans*, pp. 17, 140, 150, 153, 160, 161.

¹³ Beth Gott, ‘Murnong — *Microseris scapigera*: a study of a staple food of Victorian Aborigines’, *Australian Aboriginal Studies*, no. 2, 1983, pp. 12, 14.

¹⁴ Clark, *Aboriginal Languages and Clans*, p. 142.

¹⁵ Hepburn in Bride (comp.), *Letters From Victorian Pioneers*, pp. 71-4. Knight had spent ‘several days amongst the natives — perhaps weeks’. There was no doubt in Hepburn’s mind ‘that this man was at the bottom of all the mischief’ he encountered when he arrived on the Loddon.

¹⁶ Raymond A. Bradfield, *Our First White Child and The Kennedy’s [sic] of Bowyard* (Castlemaine Historical Society, n.d.), pp. 1, 9; Massola, *Journey to Aboriginal Victoria*, p. 88. Several so-called ‘depredations’ against Europeans in the 1840s were isolated cases, as were two murders of Aborigines, on *Plaistow* in October 1845 and on the Loddon in November 1846, which have cultural explanations: revenge in the first instance and inter-clan rivalry in the second. Michael Cannon, *Black Land, White Land* (Port Melbourne: Minerva, 1993), pp. 22, 82; Clark, *Aboriginal Languages and Clans*, p. 163.

women, &c.’¹⁷ According to Parker, squatters found them ‘particularly peaceable’ in 1840 and ‘extensively employed’ them for eight years without one instance of an ‘outrage’.¹⁸ Their useful work, one squatter explained, chiefly was ‘in cutting bark and at sheep-washing.’¹⁹

Parker’s attempts to concentrate the *Djadja wurrung* at Mount Franklin, where ‘quite a village’ was established by September 1842, achieved only partial success. Among his many difficulties were the encroachment of neighbouring squatters, like William Hunter of *Tarrengower* who drove his sheep onto the reserve and had to be evicted, and Aborigines who came to visit, not to stay. Attached to their vanishing totem sites along the Shire’s creeks and waterways they fell victim to disease and cultural disorientation. Thomas Martin remembered a group that sometimes camped near the Newstead school and begged for food and clothes: ‘they were great cadgers and done well’, ‘catch Opposum and save the skins’, and spear fish in the Loddon, some of which ‘they used to sell ... cheap to get tobacco’.²⁰ Their numbers continued to decline. By 1863, the *Gunangara balug* and the *Galgal gundidj* clans each had one survivor and there were two old men of the *Liarga balug*.²¹

After 160 years of European settlement in the Shire the long Aboriginal occupation is scarcely represented on the landscape. The place names Tarilta, Werona, Yandoit and Yapeen are of Aboriginal origin or derivation.²² Public knowledge of artefacts consists of remains of camp sites at Strathlea that existed at least until the mid-1970s, a 300-year-old eucalyptus reputedly used as an Aboriginal birthing tree at Sandon and reports over the years of stone chips and implements found in the hills at Fryers Creek and in the Yandoit district.²³

PASTORAL LIFE

Pastoralists completed taking up the land early in 1841. About the same time, however, the colony slid into an economic depression that lasted almost until the end of the decade. As the price of wool fell run licences quickly changed hands. In six years, four separate groups of owners held the licence to *Cairn Curran*, three held *Bough Yards* and two *Strathloddon*. William Morrison Hunter acquired *Tarrengower* in 1842 and five years later sold it to Archibald Menzies who employed his brother John on the property, probably as

¹⁷ William Thomas Mollison, letter, 22 August 1853, in Bride (comp.), *Letters From Victorian Pioneers*, p. 257.

¹⁸ Clark, *Aboriginal Languages and Clans*, pp. 142, 143.

¹⁹ Hector Norman Simson, letter, 24 August 1853, in Bride (comp.), *Letters From Victorian Pioneers*, p. 303.

²⁰ Martin, ‘Writings’, p. 8. Newstead pioneers’ recollections of the number of Aborigines at the time are contradictory. Martin recalled they were ‘plentiful’, as did a resident who saw ‘large numbers’ at corroborees on the flat where the Shamrock Hotel was later built. Another pioneer, however, stated: ‘Very few blacks were about when settlement began.’ *NME*, 10 April 1907, 31 July 1907.

²¹ Cannon, *Black Land, White Land*, pp. 22, 247-8; Massola, *Journey to Aboriginal Victoria*, p. 88; Clark, *Aboriginal Languages and Clans*, pp. 150-1, 160.

²² *Tarilta* is either a derivation of *taripta*, a small ‘bog’ of trees, or the word for kangaroo; *werona* means quiet, to soften one’s temper, to quieten; *yandoit* is the verb to travel; and *yapeen* refers to either a green hill or valley, or a corroboree ground. John George Saxton, *Victoria Place-Names and Their Origins* (Clifton Hill: Saxton and Buckie, 1907), pp. 62, 67, 71; Les Blake, *Place Names of Victoria* (Adelaide: Rigby, 1977), pp. 252, 277, 288, 289.

²³ Margaret Lewis, ‘Strathlea: 1839 to 1979’ in Minute Book, “‘Back To Strathlea”, Octber [sic] 27th & 28th 1979’, p. 1; undated and unsourced newspaper clipping in NHS File: Sandon Tavern; Massola, *Journey to Aboriginal Victoria*, pp. 88-9. Massola describes two sites at Mount Franklin and notes that a stone arrangement in the shape of a boomerang, discovered in 1963 on high ground east of Carisbrook, was a major discovery in the region.

manager. Of the original licence-holders by 1850, only Dugald McLachlan on *Glengower* remained in unbroken occupation.²⁴

Among the newcomers were the young Joyce brothers, George and Alfred, who early in 1844 purchased Colin McKinnon's 10,000 acres for the depression price of £50. They named the run *Plaistow* after their father's family home in Essex and on 29 April arrived with 1,200 sheep to take possession of McKinnon's improvements, 'two slab huts, the log yard, fifty hurdles and a watch-box.' The brothers worked hard to establish themselves and gain a measure of self-sufficiency. The low price for wool in the 1840s made it a difficult decade for producers. The Joyces were compelled to boil down their surplus sheep for tallow, 'not an exhilarating spectacle', Alfred recalled. They achieved security of tenure with the Order-in-Council of 1847. The brothers re-established their wool-producing flocks and began to enjoy greater financial rewards. In 1848, they were the first to sell to a new wool buyer, Richard Goldsbrough. Early in 1852, Alfred bought *Norwood*, about eighteen miles west of *Plaistow*, and the brothers dissolved their partnership amicably in June 1854. Their success on *Plaistow* is demonstrated by improvements to their living accommodation. George married in 1846 and, late in 1853, he constructed for his young family a new station homestead of brick with a shingle roof. He also stocked a store and sold goods to gold diggers passing along the road outside his front gate.²⁵

Alexander Kennedy acquired the licence to *Bough Yards* at the time the Joyces arrived. Five years earlier, and on his way to manage Donald Cameron's *Clunes* run, he noticed the rich pasture around the site of Newstead and resolved to return. In 1844, however, the area was occupied. A fellow Highlander and former shipmate, William Campbell, of *Strathloddon*, allowed him to settle on *Bough Yards* and eventually Kennedy owned 10,000 sheep and 5,000 head of cattle. His first home was a 'cottage' on a flat beside Campbells Creek where in October 1845 his 37-year-old wife Margaret bore him a daughter, Jessie, reputedly 'the district's first white child.'²⁶

Although Campbell formally relinquished the licence to *Strathloddon* in May 1841, he retained an interest in the stud flock of pure-bred merino sheep he brought overland from John Macarthur's property at Camden. His passion for the merino and for sheep husbandry widened later to include profitable investments in at least eighteen other runs and he was a major shareholder in several companies. In 1851 he was elected the ultra-conservative member for Loddon in the first Legislative Council where he fiercely promoted the squatters' cause. Eventually he would become 'one of Australia's richest pastoralists' and when he died in England in 1896 his estate was valued at £500,000.²⁷

Campbell's brother-in-law Donald Cameron bought the licence to *Strathloddon* in 1845 and retained it until October 1850 when Campbell formally resumed ownership. The *Strathloddon* head station was at present Yapeen, on the west bank of the creek to which Campbell gave his name. He built his homestead using durable imported materials that included heavy gauge Scottish iron for the roof. In 1854, on a rise east of the creek, the station's bookkeeper, William Mein, assembled his two-storey prefabricated house that he named Marsh House after his family's home at Canobie, Scotland.²⁸

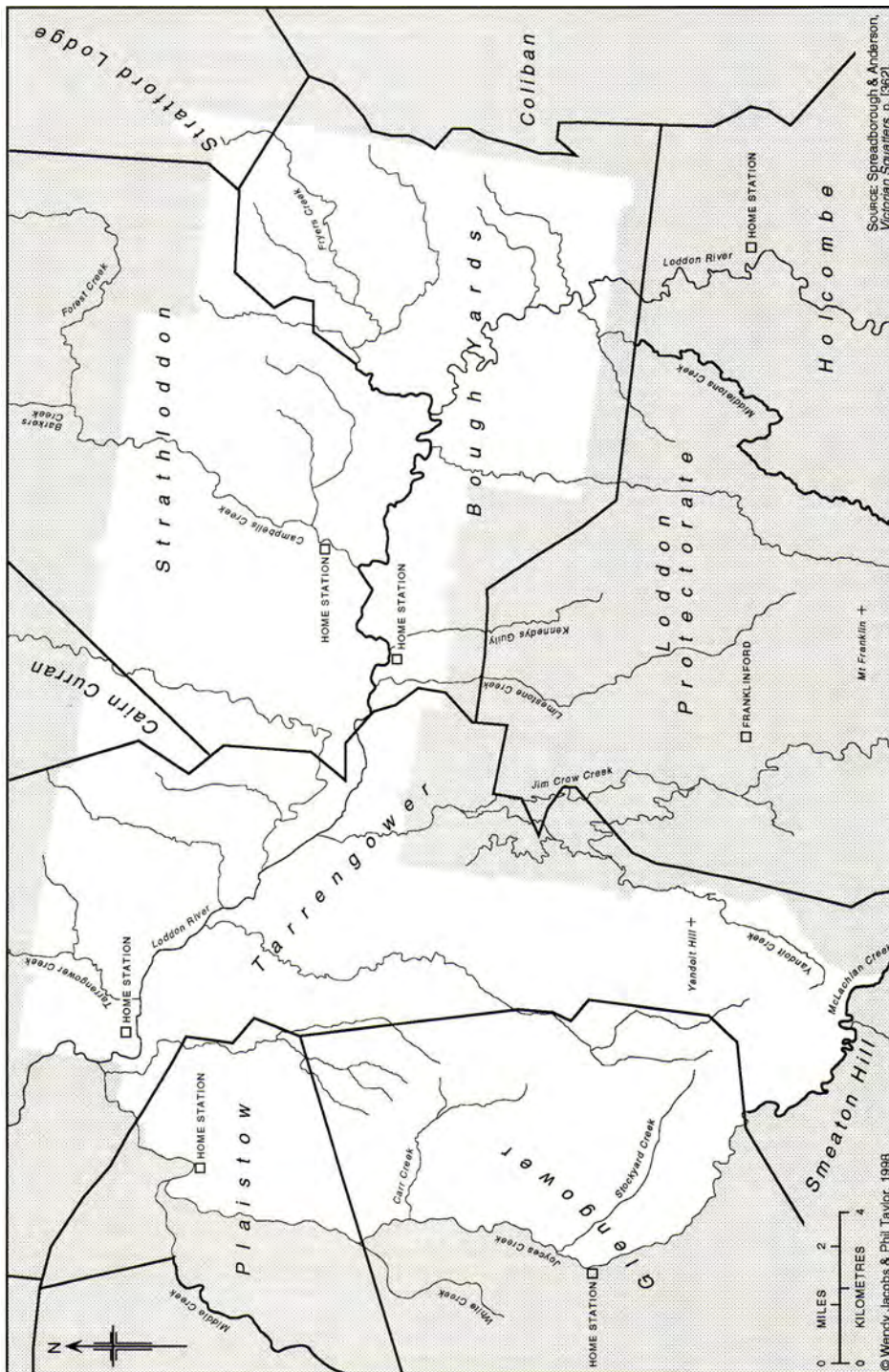
²⁴ William Campbell's pastoral activities were associated with *Strathloddon* throughout this period, but the station's licence changed hands. For the Menzies' occupation of *Tarrengower*, see a research paper by Elizabeth Coady, 'A Story of Early Newstead' (revised and updated, 6 September 2002), in the archives of Newstead Historical Society.

²⁵ G.F. James (ed.), *A Homestead History: being the Reminiscences and Letters of Alfred Joyce of Plaistow and Norwood, Port Phillip, 1843 to 1864* (Melbourne: OUP, 1942. 3rd edn, 1969), pp. 44, 66, 100, 148, 181; *ADB*, vol. 2, pp. 28-9. Improvements to squatters' housing 'were usually stimulated by the advent of women, whether wives, relatives or servants.' Susan Priestley, *The Victorians*, vol. 3, *Making their Mark* (Melbourne: Fairfax, Symes and Weldon, 1984), p. 82.

²⁶ A. Sutherland and R.P. Whitworth, *Victoria and Its Metropolis: Past and Present*, vol. IIA, *The Colony and its People in 1888* (Melbourne: McCarron, Bird & Co., 1888), p. 247; Raymond A. Bradfield, 'Our First White Child' in *Pioneer Women of Castlemaine and District* (Castlemaine: Business and Professional Women's Club [1975]), p. 38. See also Bradfield, *Our First White Child*.

²⁷ Frank Strahan, 'William Campbell (1810-1896)', *ADB*, vol. 3, *1851-1890* (MUP, 1969), pp. 347-8.

²⁸ Bradfield, *Guildford*, pp. 13, 35; Raymond Bradfield, *Castlemaine: A Golden Harvest* (Kilmore: Lowden, 1972), pp. 6, 7; Beasley and Béchervaise, *Castlemaine Sketchbook*, p. 52.



Shire of Newstead: Pastoral Stations c1850

Source: Spearborough & Anderson, Victorian Settlers, p. 362.

© Wendy Jacobs & Phil Taylor, 1998



Graves of a cook, a traveller and a boy at Campbelltown
Photograph Wendy Jacobs 1998



Store, Plaistow Homestead, Joyces Creek,
Historian Philip Taylor, Cr Peter Skilbeck and grand daughter
Photograph Wendy Jacobs 1998

The squatters' station homestead complexes resembled small villages connected by tracks through the bush. Their station improvements, directed towards self-sufficiency and water conservation, helped to foster a rural tradition of survival and self-help. The gold rushes at first compromised this achievement because the prices of commodities and cartage increased and labour became scarce; even Angus Kennedy went gold mining, at Forest Creek, where he earned £900 in three months.²⁹ Alfred Joyce wrote in July 1852 that more isolated squatters felt so disadvantaged that 'most of them have decided upon bringing their sheep down to the diggings and disposing of them, wool and all, for what they will fetch.' *Plaistow* was better placed to attract shearers, yet Joyce's concern about the increase in demand for mutton and 'a fearful decrease' in wool production was sufficient for him to speculate 'the golden fleece will soon be a misnomer'.³⁰

Local squatters contended also with crime. Cattle duffing was profitable. One large gully near Fryerstown was named Slaughter Yard for the cattle butchered there and the meat taken across the range by packhorse for sale at Malmesbury and Kyneton. The squatters responded by forming a Mutual Protection Society to prevent the sale of stolen cattle on the goldfields.³¹

They achieved mixed success in combating encroachments on their holdings. The spread of the diggings and government land sales reduced the area of available pasture on some runs, especially in the Shire's eastern portion. A rush to Pennyweight Flat in May 1854 invaded *Strathloddon*'s pre-emptive right of 640 acres just as it was being fenced and 300 diggers sank shafts that nearly bottomed before the Gold Commissioners ordered them to leave.³² Others mined secretly at night and eventually were allowed to take out a claim for £10.³³ The squatters 'netted a large amount of money', observed a miner, and their practice was adopted by others, especially after 1860 when they purchased choice portions of their runs outright under the Nicholson Land Act. By 1862, most of the land around Castlemaine had 'passed into private hands' and landowners permitted mining on their properties on condition they received a fifth of the gross amount of gold found.³⁴

PASTORAL LEGACY

Physical evidence of the pastoral occupation survives in the former station homesteads on *Glengower* at Campbelltown, *Strathloddon* at Yapeen and *Plaistow* at Joyces Creek. Beside the Joyces Creek–Strathlea Road on former *Glengower* are the graves of a cook and a traveller who met violent deaths about 1840, and a boy who died of natural causes. Mein's Marsh House survives beside the Midland Highway at Yapeen. At a wayside stop further north the Shire of Newstead erected a memorial in 1970 to Jessie Kennedy who died in 1917 and was buried in the cemetery at Guildford.

Names on the map recall the pastoral period: the features Captains Gully, Joyces Creek, Fryers Creek, Campbells Creek, Jim Crow Creek and the Fryers Range; the townships Campbells Creek, Campbelltown and Fryerstown; a district centre, Strathloddon; a parish, Tarrengower; and Cairn Curran Reservoir. Several roads in the Shire's western portion originated in the period before the major changes brought about by the discovery of gold.

Pastoralists began a tradition of primary production that survives in today's mixed farming economy. Pastoralists Alexander Kennedy and his manager Reuban Wright at Guildford, and Donald Campbell at Campbelltown, were community leaders who fostered the establishment of township infrastructures. Subdivision of the runs into allotments

²⁹ Sutherland and Whitworth, *Victoria and Its Metropolis*, vol. IIA, p. 247.

³⁰ James (ed.), *A Homestead History*, p. 133.

³¹ Brown, *Reminiscences of Fryerstown*, pp. 163-4; *MAM*, 28 December 1855.

³² *MAM*, 27 May 1854

³³ Castlemaine Association of Pioneers and Old Residents, *Records of the Castlemaine Pioneers* (Adelaide: Rigby, 1972), p. 199.

³⁴ [J.A. Patterson], *The Gold Fields of Victoria in 1862* (Melbourne: Wilson & Mackinnon, December 1862), pp. 129-30.

enabled selectors to establish the basis for greater agricultural contribution to primary production. The practice continued into the twentieth century. On *Glengower* in 1920, the government bought 10,000 acres for the Glengower Soldier Settlement Estate, subsequently known as Strathlea after Isaac Lees, one of the original soldier settlers.³⁵

³⁵ Lees later was known as Ike Lea. For the earlier spelling of his surname, see AWM 133/L3 and Blake, *Vision and Realisation*, vol. 2, p. 842.

3. GOLD

The Shire encompassed part of the southern portion of the vast Mount Alexander goldfield with its centre at Castlemaine. The early alluvial discoveries on Barkers Creek, Forest Creek, Fryers Creek and Campbells Creek, that generated so much excitement in the spring of 1851 led to an enormous increase in population. Diggers fanned out across the countryside in search for gold. They tested every stretch of ground likely to be auriferous — gullies, roads, surveyed township allotments, even private property. Company mining of deep leads and reefs, especially in the neighbourhoods of the Shire's major gold towns of Fryerstown, Campbells Creek, Guildford, Vaughan, Tarilta, Welshmans Reef and Campbelltown, ushered in a long period of mining activity. It generally was sustained, albeit with several slumps and mine closures when companies exhausted both capital and luck. Nevertheless, the newly established communities rapidly acquired a real sense of stability and permanency. This is reflected in the built environment that constitutes the major part of today's heritage in the Shire.

FIRST DISCOVERIES

Gold was found at several places near Mount Alexander in the late 1840s. In 1847, a shepherd found a handful of small nuggets in a gully along Barkers Creek, but he was ridiculed so he 'threw the gold away.'¹ George Dyer, who worked with Peter Fryer on *Bough Yards*, noticed a 'yellow substance' in the clay of a dam they were building at Red Hill on Fryers Creek and failed to recognise gold.² While scouring sheep in a stream on *Strathloddon*, William Campbell's nephew found enough gold to fill a pannikin. His uncle warned him to keep quiet about it 'lest the people should come and turn up the soil, and the shepherds abandon the flocks.'³ At the time, reliable wealth lay in wool, not gold, and Campbell was preoccupied with sheep husbandry and the preservation of the squattocracy.

Such attitudes changed following the gold rush to California in 1848, especially when the rush to Bathurst in May 1851 caused a sudden labour shortage in Victoria. The following month a hawker named William Aberdeen, who later bought the *Strathloddon* homestead, found gold on Plenty Creek, near Melbourne. At the same time, Campbell revealed his own find of promising specimens on Donald Cameron's *Clunes* station in March 1850.⁴ He was later rewarded by the government as among the earliest discoverers of gold in the colony.

THE RUSH TO THE MOUNT ALEXANDER GOLDFIELD

In the winter of 1851 gold was discovered at the present sites of Daylesford, Ballarat and Bendigo. Four station workers led by John Worley discovered gold on Barkers Creek that

¹ James Flett, *The History of Gold Discovery in Victoria* (Melbourne: Hawthorn Press, 1970), p. 180.

² Brown, *Reminiscences of Fryerstown*, pp. 9, 10.

³ Quoted by W.E. Adcock, *The Gold Rushes of the Fifties* (Melbourne: E.W. Cole, 1912. Glen Waverley: Poppet Head Press edn, 1977), p. 66. Adcock's source is William Kelly's *Life in Victoria* (1859), vol. 2, p. 173. See also Flett, *History of Gold Discovery*, p. 180.

⁴ Flett, *History of Gold Discovery*, pp. 28, 418-19, 421-9; Sutherland and Whitworth, *Victoria and Its Metropolis*, vol. IIA, p. 239. At a Government inquiry in 1853-54, Dugald McLachlan, of *Glengower*, gave evidence on Campbell's behalf that the *Clunes* find was kept secret for so long because the spot was 'in the very heart of Mr Cameron's run, and we all thought it better to say nothing about it.' See a transcript of his evidence in Flett, *History of Gold Discovery*, pp. 423-5.

sparked a small rush in August. By the time an *Argus* correspondent arrived gold had been found 'in abundance' on the Loddon.⁵

Worley announced his party's discovery in a letter to the *Argus* on 8 September, but the news was overshadowed by the first rush to Ballarat. By the beginning of October, however, the astonishing, seemingly inexhaustible wealth of the Mount Alexander goldfield began to reveal itself with more finds along Barkers Creek and at Golden Point on nearby Forest Creek. They proved irresistible to almost every social class: 'Slim shopmen, stout-calved butlers, Government clerks, doctors, lawyers, runaway sailors, deserting soldiers, self-ordained divines, and strong-minded females in ultra-bloomer costume, flocked to Forest Creek like flies round a treacle-butt.'⁶

The area of the diggings expanded to fifteen square miles to accommodate the newcomers and, almost everywhere, they found gold. Early in November, another Golden Point opened four miles to the south on Fryers Creek. One of the first diggers to arrive wrote: 'These diggings are very rich, and the gold is found in plenty close to the surface. One party near us took 132 pounds' weight out of a channel in their claim. We have already got more than 1000 ounces.'⁷ By 12 November hundreds of diggers had converged on Fryers Creek and the Loddon.

At the same time others reached the junction of Barkers and Forest Creeks and moved onto *Strathloddon* station. Shortly afterwards up to five hundred diggers occupied the banks of Campbells Creek where police already had been summoned to prevent men digging up the front garden of *Strathloddon* homestead. A visitor saw 'a crowd of people, apparently scrambling together, and when I got near them I found several hundreds tumbling about and over each other, tearing up the soil with their hands, picking up the nuggets, and placing them in their pockets for safety.'⁸ A nugget unearthed on Campbells Flat weighed over 6lbs, the largest on the field so far and 'a sensation'. Some 'new chums' found 22lbs of gold in a week on Wattle Flat and downed their implements when they had 120lbs. In a month, a party of three found gold to the value of £3,000.⁹

There were 8,000 diggers on the Mount Alexander goldfield in mid-November 1851 with more arriving every day. This eclipsed Ballarat's rush that year and diggers there struck their tents to participate in, as Lieutenant Governor LaTrobe reported, 'renewed excitement'.¹⁰ A journalist explained their departure:

The gold of Ballarat was only to be won by an obstinate contest with great difficulties; whereas at Mount Alexander, in the beginning of December, a pound weight of gold a day was a small remuneration for a party; many secured five or six; and there were instances of as much as fifty being the result of but a few hours' labour. Large quantities likewise were scraped from the very surface. Even where the ore lay beneath it, immediately above and in the fissures of the slate rock, the labour of reaching it was trifling compared with that of Ballarat. A wilder excitement than the first now took place, and a more multitudinous rush to the new diggings, where some 20,000 persons were soon congregated.¹¹

The government's first gold escort from 'the fabulous Mount Alexander' arrived in Melbourne on 19 November with 6,846 ounces and £3,545 in cash. In the next seven months, the escorts carried to Melbourne and Adelaide £2.4 million of gold. The figure did

⁵ *Argus*, 11 August 1851, quoted by David Bannear, 'North Central Goldfields Project: Historic Mining Sites in the Castlemaine/Fryers Creek Mining Divisions.' (Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, North West Area, September 1993), p. 6.

⁶ A visitor to Forest Creek, quoted by Adcock, *Gold Rushes*, p. 66.

⁷ Believed to be David Ham, quoted by Adcock, *Gold Rushes*, pp. 50-1. Flett wrote: 'There is in fact a possibility that Fryer's Creek was opened earlier than Forest Creek.' Flett, *History of Gold Discovery*, p. 190.

⁸ 'A well-known person' in a published letter, quoted by Adcock, *Gold Rushes*, p. 50.

⁹ Flett, *History of Gold Discovery*, p. 190; Bride (comp.), *Letters From Victorian Pioneers*, p. 83n; Adcock, *Gold Rushes*, p. 57.

¹⁰ La Trobe in a dispatch, quoted by Adcock, *Gold Rushes*, p. 51.

¹¹ Australian Journalist, *The Emigrant in Australia*, pp. 56-7.

not include 'considerable quantities' the diggers carried away in their swags and dumped onto the counters of gold buyers in Melbourne, Geelong and Adelaide.¹²

The immediate social and economic effects of the Ballarat and Mount Alexander gold rushes were profound. Alfred Joyce wrote in a letter in July 1852: 'The times are very precarious and stirring for us ... The extraordinary revolution caused in all kinds of trades and occupations is almost incredible; and equally wonderful are the accounts of the fresh discoveries and enormous yields of gold. ... We are looking anxiously forward for the arrival of emigrants from home to supply the present dearth in the labour market, but none have arrived as yet.'¹³

The rush continued and spread northwards towards present Bendigo. In January 1852 the road from Melbourne to Mount Alexander 'resembled one of the great thoroughfares out of London, so full was it of waggons, drays, carts, gigs, equestrians, and pedestrians, proceeding to the diggings.'¹⁴ Diggers arrived from other Australian colonies. South Australians trekked overland; in the Shire, their route went via *Plaistow* homestead, the Loddon and Campbells Creek.¹⁵ John Boundy worked a rich claim at Fryers Creek and returned to Adelaide to sell his gold.¹⁶ A.C. Yandell, also of Adelaide, later recalled that in an abandoned claim at Fryers, he saw a piece of gold weighing 84 lbs and it had 'several pick-marks on it.'¹⁷

Glowing reports of such buried treasure reverberated around the world. The news was received in Ireland by Hugh McNiece who arrived at Campbells Creek in 1852 and later bought a farm at Welshmans Reef; in Scotland by John Kyd who mined at Bendigo and Fryers Creek from 1852 to 1857 then opened a store at Newstead; in Switzerland by Giuseppe Delmenico who mined at Guildford in 1855 and later owned the Guildford Hotel; and in southern China by farmers and farmers' sons who were digging at Fryers Creek in increasing numbers after June 1855.¹⁸ So many came to stay on the Mount Alexander goldfield that in December 1859 the population was 20,893 and 95 per cent were miners.¹⁹ Most earned steady returns and this provided as much guarantee as could be found on a goldfield of confidence in the district's future. Mark Amos recalled that in the three or four years after 1855 when he and his brother mined at Fryers Creek, 'I never got less than £4 a week, although we had many holidays and worked short days. We used to look on our claim as a bank — to draw upon it whenever we so desired.'²⁰

¹² L.J. Blake, *Gold Escorts in Australia* (Adelaide: Rigby, 1978), p. 13; Geoffrey Blainey, *The Rush That Never Ended: A History of Australian Mining* (Melbourne: MUP, 1963, 2nd edn, 1969), p. 34; Adcock, *Gold Rushes*, p. 51.

¹³ James (ed.), *A Homestead History*, pp. 132-3.

¹⁴ A clergyman, quoted by Adcock, *Gold Rushes*, pp. 69-70.

¹⁵ Joseph Pedler, in *NME*, 4 March 1908. See also *NME*, 12 February 1908 and 22 April 1908.

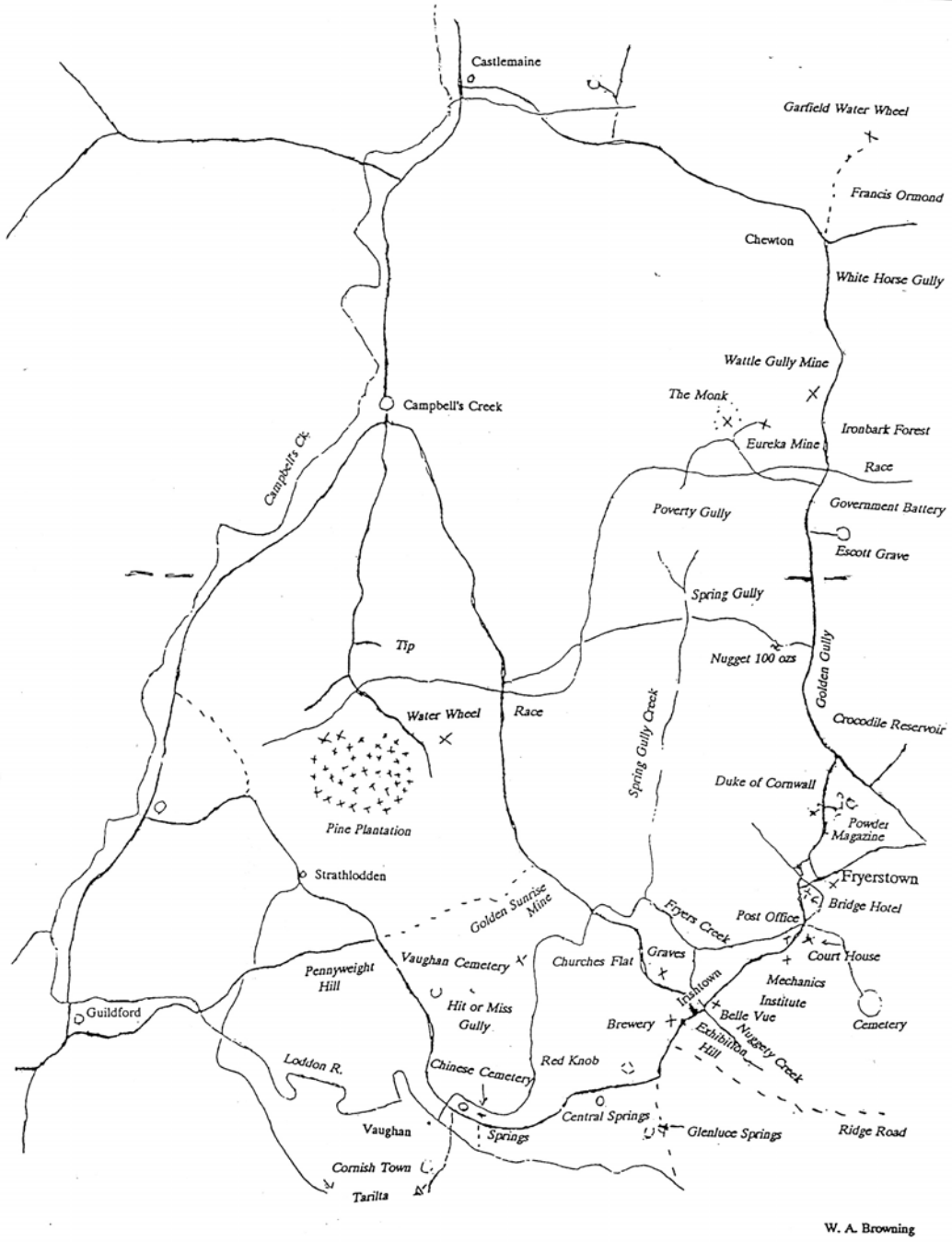
¹⁶ Brown, *Reminiscences of Fryerstown*, p. 142.

¹⁷ *Records of the Castlemaine Pioneers*, p. 21.

¹⁸ Norma Garlick (comp.), 'The McNiece Connection' (1988), NHS File: McNiece, p. [2]; Sutherland and Whitworth, *Victoria and Its Metropolis*, vol. IIA, p. 261; Joseph Gentili, 'The Settlement of Swiss Ticino Immigrants in Australia', in *Geowest* (Occasional Papers of the Department of Geography, University of Western Australia), no. 23, July 1987, p. 41; *Census* (1881), Table VI.

¹⁹ Geoffrey Serle, *The Golden Age: A History of the Colony of Victoria, 1851-1861* (Melbourne: MUP, 1968 edn), p. 389. No women miners were recorded in the 1861 census. See Table XIX: 'Occupation of Females'.

²⁰ Mark Amos in 1884, in *Records of the Castlemaine Pioneers*, p. 183.



Location of places in eastern section of the Shire of Newstead
From Fryerstown by Ruth A Rowe
As told to Constance Browning



Belle Vue Hotel, Irishtown
Newstead Historical Society Photographic Collection.



Vaughan 1868
Newstead Historical Society Photographic Collection.

LOCALITIES

Fryers Creek

When the Fryers goldfield opened early in November 1851 the quantity and accessibility of its alluvial gold amazed and delighted diggers. In Golden Gully men gathered up 10-20 lbs of gold on the surface and ‘about the grass roots’ of their claim before they excavated; indeed, in the first weeks at Fryers, diggers expected to find sufficient surface gold to justify a shaft. The wash dirt was at a depth of between four and eight feet and below this was a layer of quartz conglomerate that had to be hacked through. Finds of ‘fabulously rich pockets of gold’ at Golden Point were legendary. A hollow at the bottom of one seven-foot shaft yielded 300 dwt of gold, and nuggets of up to 100 oz were said to be common. In ten months in 1853, gold weighing 559,308 oz was transported by gold escort to Castlemaine. Unlike some other diggings, Fryers produced its riches for years. Even diggers who modestly believed in their own success were spurred to greater efforts by news of finds of nuggets like one of 600 oz in 1854 and another of the same weight in 1860 that resembled a leg of mutton. The renowned Heron Nugget, 1,023 oz, found near Golden Gully in 1855, was ‘A Monster ... completely eclipsing all former nuggets’. Shaped like ‘a large damper’ it eventually sold in London for £4,080.²¹ In 1865, a boy born the year the Fryers field opened dug down two and a half feet and found a nugget that weighed 190 oz and valued at £739.²²

Not surprisingly, the Fryers field was overcrowded early. Diggers who worked out their claim and newcomers alike were forced to explore nearby gullies where they found more gold. Nuggety Gully yielded large pieces, one in 1856 weighed 111 oz, and German Gully, Mopoke Gully and New Years Flat all were lucrative. Spring Gully, a mile north of Fryers, became a goldfield in its own right. Extensive reef mining at Fryers began in 1855 with the Royal Saxon mine.²³

Campbells Creek

The creek between the junction of Barkers Creek and Forest Creek and the Loddon was rushed immediately after Fryers Creek in November 1851. Eighteen months later the banks along its five-mile course, were occupied by three thousand diggers. ‘Long lines of tents on both sides of the little stream, and the active toil of eager, bustling diggers could be seen from any point of vantage.’²⁴ The creek’s character differed from Barkers and Forest Creeks in that it wound ‘through one long valley, or strath, of considerable width’ with flat-topped hills on either side.²⁵ Areas opened up included Poverty Gully in 1852; Donkey Hill in 1856; and Diamond Hill, Hard Hill, 70 Foot Hill, John-O-Groats, Ranters Gully, Specimen Flat, Cemetery Flat, White Flat, White Hill, Poverty Flat, Cheshires Flat, Campbells Flat, Stockyard Hill and Shicer Hill. Although the best alluvial gold was gone by 1854, a steady worker could live ‘well enough’ by earning £1 a day and saving £4 a week and for this reason one digger judged Campbells Creek ‘the best creek on the Castlemaine diggings.’²⁶ Chinese miners established a large camp at Diamond Gully and in the latter 1850s gradually took over the alluvial workings by excavating large paddocks.

²¹ MAM, 6 April 1855.

²² Adcock, *Gold Rushes*, pp. 61, 70-1; Flett, *History of Gold Discovery*, p. 26; Brown, *Reminiscences of Fryerstown*, pp. 18, 23-5, 26.

²³ Brown, *Reminiscences of Fryerstown*, pp. 25, 26, 27-8, 60.

²⁴ Adcock, *Gold Rushes*, p. 56.

²⁵ Bradfield, *Campbells Creek*, p. 5.

²⁶ Quoted by Bradfield, *Campbells Creek*, p. 5.

There were several mini-rushes, to Donkey Hill in 1856, Diamond Gully in September 1858, Campbells Flat in October 1862, on ground that had been worked before, and to the vicinity of the township in April 1864 where 400 oz was mined in the next five months. Several quartz mines opened, beginning with the Bolivia, east of the creek, in 1857.²⁷

Spring Gully

A tributary of Fryers Creek, Spring Gully was first rushed late in May 1852 and found to be rich in alluvial gold. One party of four earned £200 each in less than a month.²⁸ The gully's upper reaches were known as Rocky Gully and the point where it joined with Cobblers Gully, was Spring Flat, named for its mineral spring. A township, known until 1867 as either Spring Creek or Spring Flat, grew up quickly and at its peak it had a population of several hundred Europeans and a large number of Chinese. Hoskin's Emu Pub and General Store was established in 1855 and a post office in 1861. At the gully's lower end, Cornish miners established a settlement known as Cornishtown. The main road from Fryerstown to Castlemaine wound along Spring Gully, Cobblers Gully and over the conical hill known as The Monk. The Spring Gully mines went deeper than most others, forty feet in Cobblers Gully and about thirty feet on Spring Flat. When puddling machines were introduced, a party could wash 50 oz of gold a week; some deposits reputedly yielded up to a hundredweight of gold to the tub of wash dirt. In 1854, an outcrop of quartz named the Emu Reef was discovered. The Emu Reef Company formed in July 1859 and the reef was worked by various companies.²⁹

German and Mopoke Gullies

A hired party led by Polish Captain John Mechosk began prospecting in German Gully, south-west of Spring Gully, in March 1852 and within three months discovered 'rich deposits' of gold. A rush in June led to more discoveries north in Mopoke Gully, a tributary of Campbells Creek, where there were 200 diggers in October. Shallow shafts were followed by deep lead and quartz reef mining. Several stores opened for business at the entrance to the gullies and by 1855 these became the nucleus of a scattered settlement known as Strathloddon; five years later it comprised thirteen houses and a population of thirty-five. Chinese established a large camp in German Gully about 1858. In 1860, a quartz mill was 'fully employed' crushing quartz from mines on Frenchmans Reef in Mopoke Gully that were worked well into the 1880s. In Mopoke Gully in 1887, the Bendigo and Fryer's Gold Mining Company built a 10-head battery powered by an overshot water wheel. Often the gullies were susceptible to flash floods that poured from the gully openings towards Yapeen.³⁰

Glenluce

Gold was discovered at Middleton's Creek, a tributary of the Loddon, about 1853 when Tom Brown found a 12-oz nugget in Browns Gully. Diggers arrived to work the gully, the

²⁷ Flett, *History of Gold Discovery*, pp. 186, 191, 192; Patterson, *Gold Fields of Victoria*, pp. 122-6; Bradfield, *Campbells Creek*, pp. 5-6, 7-8, 16, 19.

²⁸ L. Murphy, in *Records of the Castlemaine Pioneers*, p. 51.

²⁹ Flett, *History of Gold Discovery*, p. 191; Brown, *Reminiscences of Fryerstown*, pp. 68, 71, 163, 178, 180, 185-6; Blake, *Place Names of Victoria*, p. 242; Hooper, *Mining My Past*, pp. 4, 5-7, 9, 12; Lesley J. Errington, 'A History of Fryerstown Postal Services' (Australia Post, n.d. [c.1976], p. 3; *MAM*, 8 April 1859.

³⁰ Flett, *History of Gold Discovery*, pp. 191, 197, 287, 288; *Records of the Castlemaine Pioneers*, p. 209; James Flett, *Old Pubs: Inns, Taverns and Grog Houses on the Victorian Gold Diggings* (Melbourne: Hawthorn Press, 1979), p. 13; Bradfield (ed.), *Guildford*, p. 18; *MAM*, 18 June 1860, 12 December 1860; *Census* (1861), Table XVIII; Bradfield, *Campbells Creek*, p. 8; Bannear, 'Historic Mining Sites', pp. 73, 267-8; James, *Echoes of the Past*, p. 50.

creek and Sebastopol Gully, named in 1854 after diggers rallied to support Ballarat miners in their confrontation with the authorities. Fighting Gully was named for its organised fist fights. There was a large rush to Middletons Creek in November 1856. Meanwhile, to the north, miners on the Loddon established 'a canvas town' at Warburtons Bridge where a hotel opened, the site marked now by a large peppercorn tree. Another hotel opened at Glenluce in the early 1860s opposite an elevated flat named Racecourse Hill, where horse races were held annually between 1855 and 1866. Miners tunnelled under Racecourse Hill in search of the Loddon Lead; one tunnel in 1864 went 750 feet.³¹ They washed the dirt at Warburtons Bridge and Commissioners Hole and obtained gold of up to 4 dwt per load. By 1865, Glenluce was a mining village with a population of 165.³²

Table Hill

Tunnelling for the auriferous conglomerate of the Loddon Lead beneath the thick basalt on Table Hill began about 1854. Miners drove horizontal tunnels from the east at Vaughan and from the west along Shicer Gully. East slope tunnelling was conducted with 'increased vigor' in April 1859. A German miner expended two and a half years hacking one of his tunnels 450 feet from which he earned 'a steady subsistence'; the returns of others were similar.³³ In December 1860 the Vaughan Gold Mining Company paid dividends to its shareholders of £6 a share a month. Two years later Table Hill yielded 'a constant, if not large supply' of gold that earned a digger an average of £6 a week.³⁴ Mining techniques were different on the southern slope at Kangaroo Flat. Miners stripped the hill of its forest cover, which became the colour of brick dust, and laboriously chiselled perpendicular shafts through more than a hundred feet of hard basalt to reach bedrock.³⁵ In some places they obtained gold 'in abundance', in others the yields were 'positively poor in comparison'.³⁶ Hard work for comparatively small gains, and the water table at 120 feet further to the west, discouraged many Kangaroo Flat miners who departed for goldfields that were profitable.

Vaughan

Gold was discovered in 1853 at the confluence of Fryers Creek and the Loddon known as the Junction. Early that year there was a rush to New Year's Flat, then in July sailor Jack Bastian and John H. Greenwood discovered gold at Sailors Flat. Thousands of diggers rushed to the Junction and spread out into the neighbouring gullies to open Chokem Flat, Murdering Gully, Church's Flat, Butchers Gully and Shicer Hill. Bald Hill was rushed in February 1855 and Kangaroo Flat, a mile to the south-west, the following June. That year the Liverpool and Greenwood reefs were discovered at the head of Sailors Gully. As many as 13,000 diggers reputedly were on the field in the mid-1850s; some say twice that number. Miners based at Vaughan tunnelled beneath the basalt of Table Hill and concentrations of diggers left their mark on the map — Irishtown and Italian Hill. In the 1860s, a party mining the bed of the Loddon at Vaughan earned the equivalent of 25s per man a day. They used a water-wheel six feet in diameter that pumped water from their shaft and powered a small puddling machine. By 1866, there was some quartz mining in the district and one steam-powered crusher. Chinese miners worked one quartz claim on

³¹ For detailed analysis of the Loddon Lead, see F. Canavan, *Geological Survey of Victoria*, Bulletin 62, *Deep Lead Gold Deposits of Victoria* (Melbourne: Department of Industry, Technology and Resources, 1988), pp. 21-4, 35-7.

³² Flett, *History of Gold Discovery*, p. 192; Brown, *Reminiscences of Fryerstown*, pp. 91, 92, 194, 196, 197, 201-2, 204, 214-15; Robert P. Whitworth (comp.), *Baillière's Victorian Gazetteer and Road Guide* (Melbourne: F.F. Baillière, 1865), p. 160; Blake, *Vision and Realisation*, vol. 2, p. 686.

³³ *MAM*, 8 April 1859.

³⁴ *MAM*, 3 December 1860; [Patterson], *Gold Fields of Victoria*, pp. 120, 128.

³⁵ *MAM*, 8 April 1859.

³⁶ *MAM*, 19 August 1861.

New Year's Flat, an unusual activity for Chinese on this goldfield. Nine years later, several quartz mining companies had mines and they used water wheels to drive their crushing plants.³⁷

Tarilta

Gold was discovered at Kangaroo Flat, about a mile south-west of Vaughan, in June 1853. Two years later there was a rush of 7,000 men. Kangaroo Flat arose 'teeming with all the elements of a busy little English town — hotels, restaurants, conveyances, libraries, concerts, balls, quadrille parties, &c.'³⁸ It is said the population peaked briefly at 11,000. The main diggings were on Kangaroo Hill, Ballarat Hill and Table Hill. Returns diminished when groundwater proved a problem. The population decreased to about 500 by 1864 when Kangaroo Flat was renamed Tarilta and proclaimed a township. Quartz also was mined, the ore known as cement being carted to the crushing plant at Strathloddon to yield 2 ½ oz to the ton. A local plant obtained 10 oz to the ton in 1859. Six years later the number of quartz crushers had increased to three and there were three horse-puddling mills.³⁹

Guildford

Originally an extension of the Campbells Creek diggings, the area where the creek joined the Loddon was used in the dry summer of 1851-52 to wash drayloads of miners' dirt carted down from the diggings upstream. After 1854 a township grew up where the track between Castlemaine and Ballarat crossed the Loddon. There was some alluvial mining, although the river was said to be 'not worth a fig, the gold being so leafy and light as to float out of the tin dishes'; mercury was recommended to catch this gold in 'a doughy mass called an amalgam.'⁴⁰ The 'great rush' to Donkey Hill (later Yapeen) in July 1856, however, brought in two thousand diggers in a fortnight. They sank shafts between thirty and sixty feet deep, through ironstone, to obtain an average of 5 oz of gold per load of wash dirt. The first attempts to undermine the basalt on the Guildford Plateau were made in 1852. The Eldorado Tunnel, completed in 1864, drove 3,600 feet under plateau basalt east of the creek from near Kemps Bridge and horsedrawn trucks removed the wash dirt.⁴¹ After 1854, tunnels driven into Table Hill's western slope helped develop a thriving community in Shicer Gully. By 1876, deep lead mining at Guildford was mostly abandoned, although mining on the plateau resumed later. Deep lead mining attracted many Swiss Italian immigrants who became 'specialists in tunnelling.'⁴² Chinese excavated paddocks along Campbells Creek and congregated in a large camp between Guildford and Yapeen.⁴³

³⁷ Bannear, 'Historic Mining Sites', pp. 18, 151, 170-3; Flett, *History of Gold Discovery*, pp. 191, 192; *Pioneer Women*, pp. 52-3; Brough Smyth, *The Gold Fields*, pp. 136-7; *Baillière's Victorian Gazetteer* (1865), p. 391.

³⁸ *MAM*, 2 November 1855, quoted by Bannear, 'Historic Mining Sites', p. 14.

³⁹ Flett, *History of Gold Discovery*, pp. 191-2; Clara Ely in *Pioneer Women*, pp. 53-4; *MAM*, 18 June 1860; Blake, *Vision and Realisation*, vol. 2, p. 667; Blake, *Place Names of Victoria*, p. 252; *Baillière's Victorian Gazetteer* (1865), pp. 373-4.

⁴⁰ *Argus*, 8 March 1852, quoted by An Australian Journalist, *The Emigrant in Australia*, p. 26.

⁴¹ Bradfield (ed.), *Guildford*, p. 22. See also *MAM*, 18 June 1860.

⁴² Gentilli, 'Settlement of Swiss Ticino Immigrants', p. 57.

⁴³ D. Mackenzie, *The Gold Digger: A Visit to the Gold Fields of Australia in February 1852*, in Crowley, *Colonial Australia*, vol. 2, p. 211; Bannear, 'Historic Mining Sites', pp. 16, 18; John Greenwood in *Records of the Castlemaine Pioneers*, p. 140; Bradfield (ed.), *Guildford*, pp. 18, 22; *Argus*, 24 July 1856.

Newstead District

As diggers prospected downstream in search of the Loddon Lead, it was inevitable they would discover further pockets of alluvial gold. Small quantities found near Mingays Crossing, were scarcely enough to generate the excitement of the discoveries upriver. In the summer of 1858-59, Joseph Day built a dam across the river near the junction with Muckleford Creek and installed extensive sluicing works that recovered gold ‘in every dish’.⁴⁴ Three years later a prospecting syndicate sank shafts 30-40 feet to find a lead three claims wide. From it, they obtained 100 oz of ‘coarse and shotty gold’ and they panned 20 oz of fine gold from the river.⁴⁵ The syndicate learned that Newstead’s gold was scattered and comparatively unprofitable. Major finds, such as a 90-oz nugget in 1863, were sufficiently rare to be put on public display.

Due to several small rushes to goldfields nearby, Newstead township serviced a district with a population estimated in December 1858 at more than three thousand.⁴⁶ Green Valley (known as Green Gully by 1901), an extension of the Muckleford field opened in November 1852, was rushed in June 1855 and was ‘the scene of great activity [because] the gully was very rich’.⁴⁷ The main reef was on the Adelaide Road at Muckleford South. The following year gold was found five miles to the south-west in Green Gully, Sandon. In May 1857, rich deposits of gold found along Mia Mia Creek were rushed by ‘hundreds of diggers, and so many holes were sunk it looked like ant-heaps’.⁴⁸ In 1863-64 there was a rush to Pickpocket and Hard Hills. Chinese established a camp with a population of up to three thousand diggers at the junction of Jim Crow Creek and the Loddon near an alluvial mining hamlet named Strangways. Most diggers departed by 1865 leaving a small and scattered population that turned to farming. There were 45 miners at Green Valley, 17 at Joyces Creek and 45 at Newstead. Beginning in 1863 quartz mining expanded with payable reefs at Green Valley (Dudley’s Reef), on the Loddon upstream and downstream of Newstead, and at Sandy Creek. Deep lead mines sank shafts on the western edge of the Guildford Plateau.⁴⁹

Sandy Creek

The Sandy Creek goldfield was an extension of the rich Tarrangower field opened in December 1853 by John Mechosk, the discoverer of German Gully, Fryers. Prospectors working south found gold on Sandy Creek, a tributary of the Loddon, in May 1854. Diggers rushed the field in 1857 and found alluvial gold in ‘great quantities’, although much of it was depleted within a decade. Quartz mining proved a more profitable and enduring mining activity, however, encouraged by extensive and profitable reef mining established at the newly surveyed town of Maldon by 1857.⁵⁰

Glengower

Gold was discovered on *Glengower* station in January 1854. Prospectors investigated Stony Rises, two miles south-east of the station homestead, and found rich gold in October 1859. Oliver Cromwell’s Reef was discovered the following January and three more reefs soon afterwards — Boatswain’s, Sardinian and Christieson’s. Diggers arrived to prospect

⁴⁴ Bradfield, *Newstead*, p. [39].

⁴⁵ *MAM*, 29 January 1862; Bradfield, *Newstead*, p. [39].

⁴⁶ Bradfield, *Newstead*, p. [24].

⁴⁷ *NME*, 11 September 1907.

⁴⁸ *NME*, 31 July 1907.

⁴⁹ Flett, *History of Gold Discovery*, pp. 201, 202; Bradfield, *Newstead*, pp. [4], [35], [39]; *Baillière’s Victorian Gazetteer* (1865), pp. 280-1, 358, 375; ‘Back to Newstead’ (1968), p. 16.

⁵⁰ Flett, *History of Gold Discovery*, pp. 193, 199, 200; Joseph Jenkins, *Diary of a Welsh Swagman, 1869-1894* (abridged and notated by William Evans, South Melbourne: Macmillan, 1975), pp. 8-9.

along gullies east of the homestead and found alluvial gold in Stockyard No. 1, Stockyard No. 2 and Nuggetty. A settlement of about a hundred people living in tents and primitive huts grew beside Joyces Creek. When Donald Campbell bought the run licence from Hugh Glass in February 1866, he built a hotel and the present station homestead.⁵¹ The settlement was renamed Campbelltown. Alluvial gold in payable quantities was gone by the 1870s, but reef mining continued into the twentieth century.⁵²

POPULATION

Diversity and statistics

The discovery of gold attracted a large and ethnically diverse population. In the Castlemaine Mining District in 1859, there were 20,893 people of whom 19,787 were miners.⁵³ Six years later there were 3,232 miners in the Fryers Creek Division that covered 19.5 square miles and almost half of them were Chinese.⁵⁴

Chinese miners numbered over seven thousand between 1855 and 1861 and a large number worked in the Shire. In one week, 8-15 June 1855, three thousand Chinese arrived at Fryers Creek and by the end of the month there were four thousand.⁵⁵ By 1858, Chinese established large camps in Diamond Gully at Campbells Creek, German Gully, Bald Hill at Vaughan and along Fryer's Creek. The largest concentration was between Guildford and Yapeen where there was a camp of at least six thousand in the early 1860s. A visitor wrote: 'The restaurants, the tea-houses, the gambling saloons, the cobblers' stalls, the tailors' shops, were as they are in Canton.'⁵⁶

Other ethnic groups congregated at various locations. Some, such as Poles and Bolivians at Campbells Creek, were transitory, but others lasted longer. Cornish miners congregated at Cornistown in Spring Gully. A major concentration of Irish was at Irishtown between Vaughan and Fryerstown. The Danish settlement at Red Hill, Campbells Creek, was known locally as Copenhagen. Swiss diggers tended to settle at Guildford, while Italians mined at Vaughan.⁵⁷ Ethnic concentrations could change quickly with news of the next rush. Many of the Guildford Chinese, for example, had moved to Maryborough by the mid-1860s.

⁵¹ Donald Campbell worked on the run either as manager or Glass's partner. He died in 1868, aged fifty-four. Research by Liz Coady, of NHS, 19 September 1998.

⁵² Flett, *History of Gold Discovery*, p. 404; Martin, 'Writings', pp. 17-18; *Baillière's Victorian Gazetteer* (1865), p. 159; Billis and Kenyon, *Pastoral Pioneers of Port Phillip*, p. 213; Lewis, 'Strathlea', p. 2; Paul de Serville, *Pounds and Pedigrees: The Upper Class in Victoria, 1850-80* (OUP, 1991), p. 282.

⁵³ Serle, *The Golden Age*, p. 389.

⁵⁴ *Baillière's Victorian Gazetteer* (1865), p. 147.

⁵⁵ Brown, *Reminiscences of Fryerstown*, p. 101.

⁵⁶ [Patterson], *Gold Fields of Victoria*, pp. 134-5.

⁵⁷ A Fryers Creek correspondent wrote: 'The Italians at the Loddon found their tunnel remunerative, and owing to their frugal temperate habits, are said to return more often than any other class with a competence to their own country.' *MAM*, 18 June 1860.

MINING

Alluvial

The most easily won gold was alluvial. It was first obtained by panning in the creeks, then by digging shallow shafts to find the wash dirt of the ancient deep leads. The mullock heaps around these shafts remain at many bush sites identifying an area as an old goldfield, such as Church's Flat, west of Fryerstown, and along the Vaughan–Tarilta Road.

Diggers used several methods to wash away the dirt. Individuals and small parties used cradles. A party of six at Campbells Creek in January 1853 sluiced a water hole in the creek: 'We cut races, fixed sluice boxes [and] made a dam'.⁵⁸ Sluice-box design varied. Some were short and caught gold on slivers of wood, Chinese designs extended 150 feet and Joseph Day's 750-foot-long race at Newstead had 'venetian-type ripples' to which he added mercury.⁵⁹ Sluices required a constant supply of water and usually were located near a creek or the river. Claims further away were supplied by water races, small excavated channels that followed hill contours from a distant supply. John Batey arrived at Fryerstown in 1857 and for the rest of his life he dug 'miles of small water channels around the hills of Fryerstown and Spring Gully, to convey water to his claim.'⁶⁰ Some of Batey's races have survived.

Puddling machines used less water and when powered by a horse could process large quantities of wash dirt. Beginning in 1853 and especially after 1858 puddling became an enterprise in itself. The efficient method enabled old workings and all the subsoil of an alluvial area to be worked profitably. In Spring Gully and Golden Gully, Fryers, three or four men could wash 50 oz of gold a week.⁶¹ Cartage contractors ran a profitable line in transporting wash dirt to a machine with a reliable water supply. At Fryers Creek by 1859, 259 puddling machines served 5,913 diggers.⁶² Six years later most of the machines at Spring Gully were owned by wealthy Chinese merchants in Melbourne who employed hundreds of their countrymen at puddling. The peak of puddling was in the 1860s. Gradually, as most gullies were worked out and water became available for sluicing, puddling declined as a method to win gold. The decline was noticeable at Fryerstown in 1874 and by the end of the 1880s only a few machines remained.⁶³ Ruth Rowe saw one of these about 1899 when she was a child:

I remember especially Mr Small's puddling machine. ... [It] was in the centre of a large hole. The wash dirt was put in around the machine until there was enough dirt and water to puddle. The machine was then set in motion and went round and round. The surface sludge escaped and the rest was tubbed leaving the quartz and gold.⁶⁴

Paddocking was another method to obtain gold. It was intensive and favoured by Chinese diggers, especially along Campbells Creek, to work over old ground. In 1858 a

⁵⁸ Richard Thimbleby in *Records of the Castlemaine Pioneers*, p. 196.

⁵⁹ Bradfield, *Campbells Creek*, p. 19; Bradfield, *Newstead*, p. [39].

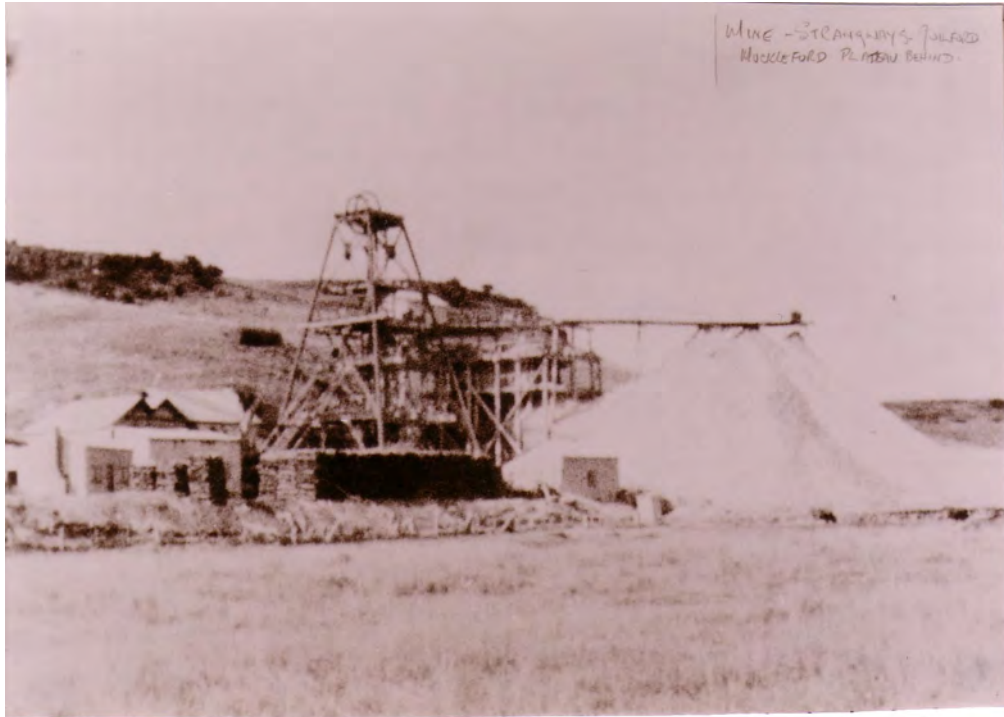
⁶⁰ Brown, *Reminiscences of Fryerstown*, p. 158.

⁶¹ Brown, *Reminiscences of Fryerstown*, p. 68.

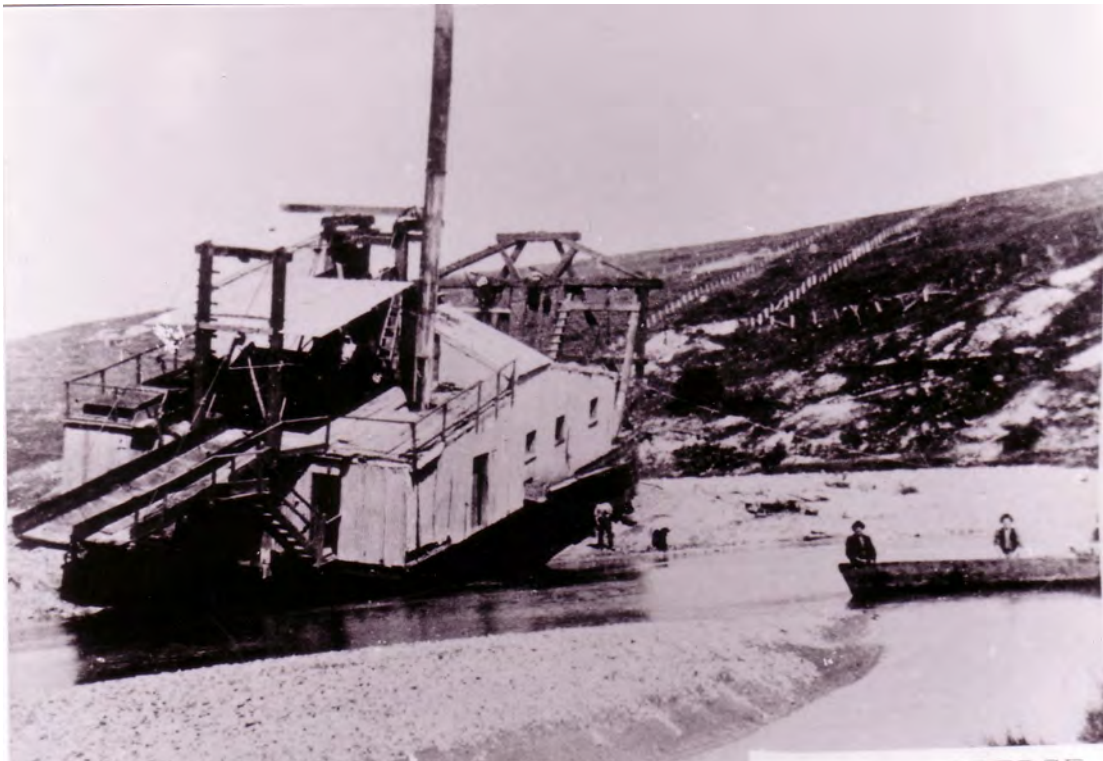
⁶² *Records of the Castlemaine Pioneers*, p. 183; Brown, *Reminiscences of Fryerstown*, p. 71.

⁶³ Brown, *Reminiscences of Fryerstown*, p. 72.

⁶⁴ Ruth A Rowe, with Constance Browning, *Fryerstown* (privately published, 1975), p. 7. This use of puddling machines in the Shire is significant: 'Puddling machines technology is particularly important in the history of Victorian gold mining as the only technology or method developed entirely on Victorian goldfields.' Heritage Victoria Citation H1249.



Mine Site Strangways, Guildford Plateau behind
Newstead Historical Society Photographic Collection.



Vaughan Dredge 1909 after the flood
Newstead Historical Society Photographic Collection.



Mine Dump, Midland Highway, Yapeen
Photograph Wendy Jacobs 1998



Duke of Cornwall Mine, Fryerstown
Photograph Wendy Jacobs 1998

party of thirty men paid Thomas Cockling £230 for a twelve-month lease of an acre of ground opposite the Phoenix Brewery and promised to re-soil the area.⁶⁵ By 1862 a visitor noted that Campbells Creek was ‘almost abandoned ... to the Chinese, whose perseverance in the excavation of vast paddocks is extraordinary.’⁶⁶

Deep Lead

The object of deep lead mining was to locate and exploit the gravels in the beds of the ancient Loddon River and its tributaries.⁶⁷ According to a mining registrar in 1864 these were believed to exist ‘from Walmer, through the Muckleford Valley, and under the basaltic lands known as the Loddon Plains, parishes of Guildford and Strangways, to, and connecting with the deep leads being worked at Guildford, Loddon Valley, and Vaughan.’⁶⁸ The search was complicated by the fact that the Loddon’s course and watershed had shifted twice and some leads were at the 300-foot level.⁶⁹ These required deeper mine shafts, more men, steam-driven pumps to remove ground water and winding machinery. The scale of the operation required investment capital, which is why the first deep lead miners pooled their resources to form co-operatives. Companies commanded greater resources and, when necessary, negotiated with owners of private land for mining rights that could be expensive. Mining of Mein’s Paddock, east of Campbells Creek at Yapeen, in the early 1860s was so successful that another company’s extraordinary bid of £30,000 ‘cash down’ for the rights was refused. In 1865, the Aberdeen Gold Mining Company took up 90 acres of William Aberdeen’s Balmoral Estate in a bid to emulate the success of several earlier tunnel claims.⁷⁰

Mining of the Loddon Lead began in 1852. Bald Hill, at the junction of the Fryers and Loddon deep leads, was rushed in February 1855 and gold was found at about 85 feet. At Butchers, Ballarat and Kangaroo Hills the gravels were at 120 feet. Table Hill was mined intensively from three directions. Wherever possible miners preferred to drive tunnels under the basalt, or so-called ‘trap rock’, to reach the bedrock. Some tunnels were large enough for horses to haul out trucks laden with wash dirt. The Guildford Mining Company’s tunnel in 1860 had a diameter of nine feet.⁷¹

At other locations, such as Tarilta and on the Guildford Plateau, shafts went straight down through volcanic rock for over a hundred feet. As the *Mount Alexander Mail* explained in an editorial: ‘Only those who have been actively employed on such a task can form an estimate of its arduous character; the shafts have to be “chiselled” out, for the ordinary pick too soon becomes blunted by the hard indurated rock it has to encounter.’⁷² There was no guarantee of success. Several mines and tunnel claims proved unprofitable which discouraged investors.

Deep lead mining was abandoned as a major activity by 1876 and the last steam-engine and machinery were removed. The twenty-year search for the Loddon Lead, according to local historian Raymond Bradfield, actively employed an estimated five thousand men and sustained the growth of the townships or hamlets of Vaughan, Tarilta, Strathloddon and Guildford. The search resumed during the 1930s Depression. In 1933 the Guildford Plateau Company employed local men to drive a shaft 125 feet into the Muckleford Fault

⁶⁵ Bradfield, *Campbells Creek*, p. 16.

⁶⁶ Patterson, *The Gold Fields*, p. 126.

⁶⁷ The Victorian Mining Development Act (1928) defined a Deep Lead as ‘... any watercourse or gutter below the surface of the earth containing alluvial deposits at a depth of not less than 100 feet from such surface.’ Forbes (com.), *The Catchment of Cairn Curran Reservoir*, p. 49.

⁶⁸ Mining Registrar T.L. Brown, quoted by Bannear, ‘Historic Mining Sites’, p. 16.

⁶⁹ *Resources Survey: Central Highlands Region*, pp. 26, 67-74.

⁷⁰ *Baillière’s Victorian Gazetteer* (1865), p. 437.

⁷¹ *MAM*, 18 June 1860.

⁷² *MAM*, 19 August 1861.

near Strangways and by the time the mine closed in 1939 the company had obtained 1,922 oz of gold.⁷³

Quartz

Auriferous quartz reefs were the mother lodes of alluvial gold. Apart from knocking off chunks of surface quartz and crushing it with a hammer, as miners did at first, winning payable gold from the reefs was expensive because it required crushing batteries, mining equipment and labour. Large-scale activity by mining companies in extracting gold from quartz, therefore, is a major feature of the gold mining industry in the Shire.

Diggers opposed the first attempts at company mining. 'The digger's life is too free and independent ever to induce him to relinquish it for serfdom', wrote the Fryerstown correspondent of the *Melbourne Herald* in 1853.⁷⁴ By early 1856, however, the scarcity of alluvial gold and the lure of a regular income persuaded some diggers to change their minds.⁷⁵ Many companies formed after the discovery of quartz reefs proved profitable both to their shareholders and to employees.

Cattles, Ferrons and Herons Reefs were three of more than twenty-five reefs discovered at Fryerstown after 1855 when the Royal Saxon Company began mining Herons. The reef was rich for the first twenty feet and it returned payable gold to 300 feet over the next thirty years. Between 1871 and 1884, 6,718 tons of stone yielded 1,493 oz of gold. The Anglo-Australian Gold Mining Company, known as 'the Anglo', also sank a shaft on the Heron which reached 628 feet by 1878. The best gold was at 400 feet where 4,980 oz was extracted. The reef's uneven thickness, of between a foot and ten feet, meant the mine was only moderately successful and, despite a change in ownership, it closed by 1884. Mining companies responsible to shareholders wanting quick results were slow to learn that deeper shafts were no guarantee of profitability.⁷⁶

The Mosquito mine, begun in 1858, reached a depth of 450 feet on a reef that varied in thickness from four to ninety feet. It yielded its best gold at between 100 and 200 feet and in one year alone, 1871, the yield was 43,581 oz. Its owners were the five Rowe brothers, who acquired their mining experience in Cornwall and were renowned as 'the Quartz Kings of Fryerstown'. They invested also in the neighbouring Duke of Cornwall mine and they mined Ferrons Reef.⁷⁷

Other mines at Fryers included the Perseverance, Enterprise, Fryers and Cumberland, all located south of the Mosquito mine on Commissioners Flat. In the mining division, the total value of mining plant in 1865 was £45,200. By then Fryerstown was a major mining centre. Over 100 head of battery stampers worked around the clock and chimney stacks belched smoke from Specimen Hill to Little Nuggety, a distance of four miles. Some companies were highly profitable. Between 1871 and 1881 the New Era Mine produced 23,770 oz of gold valued at £95,000 from which dividends totalled £24,338. But, as the shaft went ever deeper there was less gold and the mine closed in the late 1880s. Not every company was as successful as the New Era, but its fate was common enough.⁷⁸

The Emu Reef at Spring Gully was discovered in 1854 and in the next sixty years it attracted the interest of several companies. The first to be formed issued shares at £100 each, but ground water and a smaller reef at greater depths were major problems that discouraged investors. The last owner, Spring Gully Gold Mining Company, formed in 1893, won payable gold until it closed the mine in 1916. In four years, the company extracted 46,729 tons of ore that yielded 22,340 oz. The Spanish and Cornish mine sank

⁷³ Bannear, 'Historic Mining Sites', p. 18; Bradfield (ed.), *Guildford*, p. 18; Bradfield, *Newstead*, p. [40].

⁷⁴ *Herald*, 10 November 1853, quoted by Serle, *The Golden Age*, pp. 220-1.

⁷⁵ See, for example, William Hay, letter, in *MAM*, 29 January 1856.

⁷⁶ Brown, *Reminiscences of Fryerstown*, pp. 59-60.

⁷⁷ Mark Whitmore, 'The Duke of Cornwall Mine, Fryerstown, Victoria', *Historic Environment*, vol. 2, no. 3, 1982, pp. 5-21; Brown, *Reminiscences of Fryerstown*, pp. 40-3; Frank Whitcombe, 'History of Castlemaine', *WT*, 22 September 1928, p. 5.

⁷⁸ Brown, *Reminiscences of Fryerstown*, pp. 39, 48.

two shafts on a reef five feet below the surface in April 1859 and the company's on-site crusher obtained 15 oz of gold to the ton. Other profitable mines at Spring Gully were Spring Gully No. 1, South Spring Gully, North Spring Gully and the Junction.⁷⁹

Further north a body of quartz 69 feet wide and named the Eureka Reef was opened in 1854 at a hill on the Shire's boundary known as The Monk. The Eureka Mining Company took up several claims and was mining profitably by 1859. Competing companies bought up claims and discovered new lines of reef, such as the Vineyard, which encouraged further development. A mining village was established and work at the mine continued into the twentieth century.⁸⁰

Quartz mining at Campbells Creek began in 1855 on several outcrops on Specimen Hill. The Bolivia Reef, discovered by Francesco Romano, was extensive and rich in gold. The Bolivia Quartz Reef Company used the open-cut method when it began its operations in 1859. The company was bought out by William Clark in January 1861 who floated the Ajax Quartz Mining Association and let the mine to twenty-five tributors for £3,000 and 25 per cent of any gold found over three years. 'The Mighty Ajax' had several owners before it closed finally in 1897. It was then the deepest mine in the district, at 1,100 feet and highly profitable. By 1879, the mine had produced gold to the value of £128,760. Mining of the Cumberland Reef began in 1860 and it was still being mined, on a much smaller scale, as late as 1993. To service the flourishing quartz mining industry five quartz crushing mills were operating by 1865: the Ajax, Bolinda, Cumberland, Nuggetty and Hutton.⁸¹

Other quartz reefs were discovered at Tarilta, Sailors Gully, Green Gully and Campbelltown. Near Werona in 1910, the Harry Lauder Company sank a shaft more than seventy feet on a reef that yielded 'some very rich patches'.⁸² Several lines of quartz reefs that extended from Sandy Creek towards Maldon were worked in the early 1860s. In 1861, the Concord Company installed mining machinery and by July 1862, a crushing machine known as 'The Superb' operated. Within three years Sandy Creek was renamed Welshmans Reef.⁸³ The Byron Reef mine, near Newstead, obtained 'splendid returns' that encouraged new companies to begin reef mining in the late 1870s. By 1902, at least four mines operated — the Lady Brassey, Central Lady Brassey, Brassey's Freehold, and Brassey and Loch's Consolidated — and two had already paid out a total of £50,000 in dividends. In three months in 1907, the North Lady Brassey treated 247 tons of ore to obtain 127 oz of gold. As late as July 1919, J. & G. Annand obtained 141 oz from 10 tons on a new line of reef that earned £1,200 in three weeks. By 1927, however, company mining at Welshmans Reef was 'almost a dead letter' and by 1990 the only mine still operating was Charlies Hope on the northern outskirts of the township.⁸⁴

TWENTIETH CENTURY MINING

The scale of mining in the nineteenth century was not repeated in the twentieth. New technology, however, ensured that as a profitable activity mining did not cease outright and mines at many locations revived during the 1930s Depression. Throughout the period,

⁷⁹ Brown, *Reminiscences of Fryerstown*, pp. 185-9, 190; *MAM*, 8 April 1859, 12 December 1860; Bradfield, *Campbells Creek*, p. 7; Bannear, 'Historic Mining Sites', p. 25.

⁸⁰ Bannear, 'Historic Mining Sites', pp. 100-13.

⁸¹ Bannear, 'Historic Mining Sites', pp. 19, 22, 91-7; [Patterson], *Gold Fields*, pp. 122-6; Bradfield, *Campbells Creek*, pp. 7-8; *Bailliére's Victorian Gazetteer* (1865), pp. 73-4.

⁸² *NME*, 7 September 1910, 28 September 1910, 5 October 1910.

⁸³ The reason for the name change sometime between 1861 and 1865 is obscure. Possibly it marked a new direction in the township's mining industry, from alluvial to reef mining.

⁸⁴ *MAM*, 8 March 1861; *NME*, 13 March 1897, 11 December 1907, 22 January 1908; James Smith (ed.), *Cyclopedia of Victoria* (Melbourne: F.W. Niven, 1903-05), vol. II, p. 409; Bradfield, *Newstead*, p. [39]; *Bailliére's Victorian Gazetteer* (1865), pp. 375, 415; *Victorian Municipal Directory* (Melbourne, Arnall & Jackson, 1880) p. 207; Frederick Nomens, quoted in 'Back to Newstead' (1968), p. 16; Wishart, *The Spa Country*, p. 179.

and in the spirit of the early diggers, some individuals earned their living fossicking for gold. One was Walter Heritage, of Newstead, who died in 1941.⁸⁵

Hydraulic Sluicing and Dredging

Hydraulic sluicing, described as ‘the final chapter in alluvial mining’, was introduced at Fryerstown in March 1898.⁸⁶ Steam-powered water jets hosed gully walls, the wash dirt running through sluice boxes in which mercury captured the gold. When sufficient water was available, Alfred Cox’s jet elevator system gouged gullies and flats, altering the landscape and polluting streams with sludge. Cox sluiced Blacksmith’s Gully at Spring Gully where the remains of his pressure dam are still visible.⁸⁷

Dredges were pontoons or barges powered by a steam-engine. Mounted aboard were hydraulic hoses and suction pumps — the hoses to direct streams of water at gully sides, the pumps to suck up the washdirt and gravel from the stream bed. They could process large amounts of washdirt.

A more efficient modification was the bucket dredge on which buckets were spaced on a continuous belt. The first in the Castlemaine district was christened the *Louise* in 1902:

The dredge was powered by a pair of compound steam engines, 16 hp. Her boiler was 22 feet long, and 8 feet in diameter, her pumps operated a nozzle jet at 45 lbs. per square inch pressure, and put through 7,000 gallons per minute. Her buckets held four and a half cubic yards, and 11 of these were discharged in each minute, under ordinary conditions. ... She had a crew of eleven ... Over the three years, 1907-8-9, she treated 223,580 cubic yards of ground, covered 2½ acres, of an average depth of 15.3 feet. In those three years, she produced 4,024.91 ounces of gold, and paid the shareholders about £1600 per year in dividends.⁸⁸

The *Louise*’s success encouraged the company to construct a second dredge. The clanking and groaning of their machinery as they chewed along Campbells Creek became part of people’s everyday lives. The company ceased operations in 1920 after obtaining 40,000 oz of gold from an area worked over by miners for the better part of seventy years.

Twenty-eight dredging companies and sluicing parties were at work in the Castlemaine district in 1910. They gouged almost every watercourse in the eastern portion of the Shire. Slum found its way into the Loddon, polluting the water for miles downstream. The rewards were substantial. In the first three months of 1910, V. Delmenico, of Guildford, obtained almost 82 oz of gold and, in the same period, the Donkey Gully dredge at Yapeen processed 176 oz from just one acre of ground.⁸⁹ Bart Ford and his sons sluiced away large areas of Spring Gully, including Cribbes Flat the former township’s recreation area, and earned enough to purchase a property with orchards and grazing land at North Harcourt.⁹⁰ The widespread physical damage wrought on the landscape by hydraulic sluicing and dredging is still obvious at many sites around Campbells Creek, Vaughan, Fryerstown and Spring Gully.

Revival during the Depression

The price of gold almost doubled during the 1930s Depression. The number of fossickers in the Shire increased and hydraulic dredging revived. Verne Hooper looked for gold at Spring Gully on the way home from school in Castlemaine and in 1931 found a piece of

⁸⁵ See a photograph of Walter Heritage (1856-1941) with his gold cradle c.1922 in NHS File: Heritage.

⁸⁶ Brown, *Reminiscences of Fryerstown*, pp. 72-3. Evidently there were two hydraulic sluicing plants at Guildford in 1880 which suggests an earlier date for the use of this technology in the Shire. See *Victorian Municipal Directory* (1880), p. 460.

⁸⁷ Karen Twigg and Wendy Jacobs, ‘Shire of Metcalfe Heritage Study’ (December 1994), p. 10; Bannear, ‘Historic Mining Sites’, pp. 122, 125.

⁸⁸ Bradfield, *Campbells Creek*, p. 10.

⁸⁹ *NME*, 20 April 1910.

⁹⁰ Brown, *Reminiscences of Fryerstown*, p. 166; Hooper, *Mining My Past*, pp. 6, 7.

quartz that yielded 6 oz.⁹¹ Former residents, who departed to work elsewhere and now were unemployed, returned to fossick. The Government provided them with a miner's sustenance and basic equipment. Bill Hamilton, raised at Sandon, recalled that when he was a 19-year-old bank teller at Castlemaine in 1931 'a lot of unemployed men in our district would fossick for little pieces of gold in the old mines. We were the only bank that bought gold, and most of these men would come in to sell their gold on Friday afternoon or Saturday morning.'⁹² George Brown, raised at Fryerstown, pooled his limited resources with his father and brother Eric to buy a jet elevator. They started sluicing at Spring Gully in 1931 and soon moved to Red Cliffs at Vaughan, working several years 'with only moderate success.'⁹³ Dredge mining resumed. At Vaughan about 1932 they spoiled the local mineral water and a new bucket dredge that began working Campbells Flat near Yapeen in 1935 could be heard for eight years 'creaking and groaning all night because it never stopped working.'⁹⁴ Several mines re-opened, such as the Freehold at Yapeen and the Golden Sunrise in Hit-and-Miss Gully at Vaughan.⁹⁵ At the re-opened Spring Gully mine on Emu Reef, Verne Hooper, aged 16, learned about 'Black Damp' and experienced water at 200 feet, harsh conditions and accidents.⁹⁶ Mining companies, such as the Plateau, returned to the Guildford Plateau about 1933. The financially hard-pressed Barkla family, share-farmers at South Muckleford, took in miners as boarders at 22s 6d a week, earning sufficient to employ a maid until the mine closed in 1939.⁹⁷

Dredging the Upper Loddon and Jim Crow Creek, 1938–1954

A subsidiary of Gold Mines of Australia, Victorian Gold Dredging Company N.L., decided in 1935 to exercise options it held on 470 acres on the Loddon River at Strangways. Test bores within the titles revealed payable gold of 3.64 grains per cubic yard. The company began operations in July 1938 with a huge steel dredge powered by electricity that could reach the gold-bearing gravels at an average depth of 25 feet. The project's major benefits to the district were electricity connection, in April 1937, and employment. The dredge operated continuously, with three shifts a day, and the high-pitched undulating scream of its winch-operated headline cable 'would go out over the countryside like a wailing banshee'.⁹⁸ Work ended in 1947 and the dredge was dismantled and trucked to Amphitheatre. The dredge treated 19,547,000 cubic yards of gravel to obtain 117,221 ounces of fine gold. The company paid twenty-eight dividends between 1938 and 1947 that totalled over £600,000 and its profits to 1957, when it went into voluntary liquidation, amounted to over £700,000.

In March 1947, Gold Mines of Australia formed the Central Victorian Dredging Company N.L. to mine Jim Crow Creek and the Loddon near Guildford. A new dredge designed for the Jim Crow operation had six cubic foot buckets that dug to a depth of 53 feet. Dredging began in December 1949. The work was said to be 'easy', but the 'torturous' course of the creek contributed to a rise in costs. The company closed on

⁹¹ Hooper, *Mining My Past*, pp. 33, 34.

⁹² William N. Hamilton, 'Recollections', MS, Jenny Wiedermann (ed.), 1985, NHS File: Hamilton, p. [14].

⁹³ Brown, *Reminiscences of Fryerstown*, p. 224; James, *Echoes of the Past*, p. 21. Raymond Bradfield recalled sluicing at Vaughan as late as 1957. Raymond Bradfield, *Castlemaine and District Tours* (Castlemaine: privately published, 1973; 3rd edn, 1983), pp. 37, 39.

⁹⁴ Wishart, *The Spa Country*, p. 167; Bradfield, *Campbells Creek*, p. 11; Marj Rilen in 1988, in James, *Echoes of the Past*, p. 20.

⁹⁵ Norm and Don Osborn in 1988 in James *Echoes of the Past*, p. 21.

⁹⁶ Hooper, *Mining My Past*, pp. 42-8, 51.

⁹⁷ Dave Barkla, 'Memories of the South Muckleford-Strangways District', MS, 1 October 1986, NHS File: Barkla, p. 3.

⁹⁸ A.A.C. Mason (Bert), Mason, 'Dredging for Gold in 1939 at Newstead, Victoria: A passage from the Memoirs of A.A.C. (Bert) Mason', *Australian Institute of Mining and Metallurgy Bulletin*, no. 5, September 1991, pp. 7-9. See also Edgar Ramsey, 'Some Memories of a Lifetime' (Clydesdale, 1972), in NHS File: Ramsey, p. 22.

13 July 1954 after obtaining 30,451 oz of fine gold. The Guildford properties, meanwhile, were withdrawn from dredging reputedly on the advice of the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission which was then building a dam at Baringhup.⁹⁹

MINING LANDSCAPE

The various methods of mining altered the natural landscape. Hundreds of shallow shafts, ringed by mounds of earth, still exist in bushland and open paddocks. Hydraulic sluicing at Spring Gully has left its mark in gouged watercourses. A visitor to Vaughan wrote in 1979 that the 'earth pillars' created by sluicing had aesthetic appeal: 'Warm in its ochre colours and with soft contrasts provided by elms and poplars, the miniature canyons of the eroded landscape are evidence of one of the later phases of gold fever.'¹⁰⁰ A former company executive wrote optimistically of the reclamation of the Loddon above Newstead after dredging ceased: 'Anyone visiting the Loddon Valley today and comparing the part of the valley reconditioned by Victoria Gold Dredging with those parts which were outside our leases, will realise how well this work was carried out. Quite clearly the valley gained greatly rather than lost in agricultural value as a result of the dredging operations.'¹⁰¹ His opinion is not shared by some local people.

The built environment, meanwhile, reveals a rich heritage of the gold rushes and the company mining that followed. Among the more notable are the Duke of Cornwall mine's engine house and powder magazine at Fryerstown, water races at Spring Gully, miners' cottages at Fryerstown, Vaughan, Guildford and Campbells Creek, and a home for a manager and a wealthy mine owner at Fryerstown.¹⁰² A wider perspective includes the townships and settlements, all founded after November 1851.

⁹⁹ G. Lindsay Clarke, *Built on Gold: Recollections of Western Mining* (Melbourne: Hill of Content, 1983), pp. 58-62. A smaller version of the Jim Crow dredge operated by George Heywood worked Porcupine Flat, near Maldon, between 1958 and 1984. The dredge and its area of operations are listed by the Victorian Tourism Commission 'as a prime relic site to illustrate the dredging phase of gold mining in central Victoria.' Research by Liz Coady, of NHS, 19 September 1998.

¹⁰⁰ Beasely and Béchervaise, *Castlemaine Sketchbook*, p. 50.

¹⁰¹ Clarke, *Built on Gold*, p. 61.

¹⁰² In October 2002 a portion of the Shire's eastern area, that includes the Vaughan Mineral Springs Reserve, was included in the Castlemaine Diggings National Heritage Park, an area of about 7,500 hectares.

4. TOWNS AND SETTLEMENTS

The squatters' village-like station homestead complexes did not become the focus of the Shire's urban communities. In almost every instance, the pattern of urban settlement in the Shire was determined by the distribution and availability of gold: where diggers congregated to mine it merchants established their businesses and government officials often set up their camps. Castlemaine, the first significant township in the area, originated in a collection of tent stores established by traders in October 1851 at the previously-deserted junction of Barkers and Forest Creeks.¹ Fryerstown, Campbells Creek and Vaughan had similar beginnings. The steady stream of diggers along the rough tracks leading to the Mount Alexander goldfield also awakened traders to the opportunity of catering to tired diggers *en route*. Crossing points over the Loddon where diggers camped overnight accounts for the origins of Guildford, Strangways and Newstead. Welshmans Reef was both a goldfield and a point of departure for Tarrangower and Mount Alexander.

Since gold breathed life into the Shire's towns their well being relied on the metal's continued availability. Larger townships, like Fryerstown and Vaughan that depended almost exclusively on their mines and support industries, struggled on gamely after their mines closed in the belief their luck would turn. Campbells Creek was more fortunate in having alternative employment opportunities in nearby Castlemaine. Smaller communities fared much worse. Places like Spring Gully, New London, Belle Vue and Mia Mia became mere shadows of their past and vanished almost entirely from the landscape.

As gold gradually declined in profitability the Shire's economic axis shifted from the eastern gold towns to the western farming communities. Newstead, which once sought in vain to be a gold town too, emerged as a prime service and administrative centre. The process of economic change continues today.

CAMPBELLS CREEK

From its beginning as an extension of the Forest Creek diggings in 1851, the township that grew up beside Campbells Creek had its fortunes tied to neighbouring Castlemaine. The main track south followed the creek. Distributed along it in February 1853 were 'long lines of tents' and up to three thousand bustling diggers.² Several stores opened for business on a rise on the track that became known as the Five Flags. The name signifies the multinational digger population and survives today in the Five Flags Hotel that opened with a ball on 1 June 1855.

A visitor strolled along the main road from Castlemaine towards it in January 1856 and noted changes to a settlement barely four years old:

Keeping on the main road, we pass John o' Groats' Hotel, a brick building, judging from appearances ... A little further on, on the right hand, stands the remains of the Shakespeare Hotel, now converted into a ginger beer manufactory' ... On the opposite side of the creek is 70-foot Hill, and a number of others partially worked. ... We pass the Bath Arms, a neat little public house, on the left side, as all the other hotels are. Wheelers Brewery stands on the right hand side, on freehold land, and fenced.

¹ Castlemaine was named by early November 1851, the site's survey was completed a year later and township allotments were sold in February 1853. The Borough of Castlemaine was proclaimed on 23 April 1855. Reputedly the township was named by W.H. Wright, the goldfields commissioner, at the suggestion of William Johnston, a boyhood friend who in 1908 was living at Guildford. A nephew of Lord Castlemaine, Wright spent his youth on his uncle's estate on the Shannon River in Ireland where he became friends with Johnston, the son of a tenant farmer. The two chanced to meet years later at Mount Alexander in the first days of the rush. *Argus*, 14 February 1852, in Bannear, 'Historic Mining Sites', pp. 6-7; *MAM*, 21 October 1908, 26 October 1908; Whitcombe, 'Castlemaine', *WT*, 22 September 1928, p. 10.

² Adcock, *The Gold Rushes*, p. 56.

Beyond that, is Ranters Gully with numerous tents pitched, very few diggers ... The Primitive Methodists are erecting a place of worship. Further on, a Cornishman has two large paddocks down, drained by a horse pump, and two puddling machines. There are 20 Chinese tents on the hillside above the Five Flags. Between the Five Flags and the Oddfellows, on the left stands the Presbyterian church, the most miserable wretched place of worship we have ever seen ... Arriving at the late Anglo-French hotel, we see signs of life once more ...³

Stores built of stone or brick sold a wide range of goods, including boots and shoes and produce from local orchards, and the cottages, such as Duffy's, had 'neat verandahs'.⁴

Quartz and alluvial mining was the town's main industry by 1865 when there were three thousand people in the district and five quartz-crushing mills. The business quarter included eight hotels supplied by the Standard Brewery and, at various times, three other breweries. As well, there were two cordial factories, a plant that made beer from horehound and a tannery, Cunnack's Tannery, on Winter's Flat. In 1862, nine acres were reserved for a recreation ground where there were cricket and football matches and race meetings.

The town was the administrative centre of the Campbells Creek Road Board District, which had an estimated population of 3,800 and about 900 dwellings. The population of the township fell to a thousand by 1880 when the district was noted for its orchards, not its gold. The closing of the Ajax mine in 1897 marked the demise of quartz mining, but alluvial mining revived between 1902 and 1920 when a company installed two dredges on the creek. Another dredge operated between 1935 and 1942. The dredges provided employment, but greater job security lay in Castlemaine at Thompson's Foundry, the Castlemaine Woollen Mill and the Castlemaine Brewery. Campbell's Creek was a 'melancholy' suburb of Castlemaine in 1944. Of its population of about 700, more than 15 per cent lived on pensions.⁵

FRYERSTOWN

The settlement established by diggers on Fryer's Creek in November 1851 was proclaimed Fryer's Town in May 1854.⁶ Surveyors marked out a township site adjoining the Commissioner's Camp and township lots were sold the following October. In February 1856, after many diggers departed to join in the rush to nearby Kangaroo Flat, the local correspondent of the *Mount Alexander Mail* noticed the 'nondescript' town had become 'dull and quiet'.⁷ The following May he reflected on almost five years of change since the first time he saw 'a few solitary tents' and some stores around a shepherd's hut:

Of those ancient days not one storekeeper remains; in place we see a nice comfortable Warden's residence, with a very pretty garden, quite an ornament and pattern to all observers. Then we have our hotels: three years ago the idea of a hotel on Fryer's Creek would have been a wonder. Now we have the Fryer's Town Hotel, a two-storey building, with two jolly landlords and a first rate cook — with their weekly quadrille parties and other amusements, they stand "A 1 at Lloyd's;" then there is the Diggers' Rest, kept by a very old friend ... We have our wholesale stores, our Babylonian warehouses, our cottages, and our villas, to make us complete. We are to have a reading room and a library. Go-ahead Fryer's Town! Advance Australia! A local court — a bench of magistrates — a resident clergyman — and a municipality (which must include the Dog Act), would make the place a rising township, and a desirable residence.⁸

The improvements he anticipated symbolise the resilience and optimism of the Fryerstown community on one of the richest goldfields in central Victoria: a Methodist Church of

³ Quoted by Bradfield, *Campbells Creek*, pp. 5, 6.

⁴ *MAM* correspondent, May 1858 in Bradfield, *Campbells Creek*, p. 7.

⁵ *Baillière's Victorian Gazetteer* (1865), pp. 73-4; *Victorian Municipal Directory* (1880), p. 459; Bradfield, *Campbells Creek*, pp. 27, 41, 47; A.J. and J.J. McIntyre, *Country Towns of Victoria: A Social Survey* (Melbourne: MUP, 1944), pp. 8-9.

⁶ *MAM*, 27 May 1854.

⁷ *MAM*, 1 February 1856.

⁸ *MAM*, 13 May 1856.



Guildford
Newstead Historical Society Photographic Collection.



Newstead, Lyons Street in flood 1904
Newstead Historical Society Photographic Collection.



Fryerstown
Newstead Historical Society Photographic Collection.



Mopoke Gully, Yapeen
Newstead Historical Society Photographic Collection.

stone on Chapel Hill in September; a Court of Petty Sessions appointed the following year and a new court building in 1858; and a mechanics' institute in 1863.⁹

Hugh and Isaac Moore's general store business, the most successful of almost twenty in the town's first two decades, mirrors the township's development. The brothers' first store began in a tent in 1852 on a site that was later the township's main street. In 1857, they erected a large weatherboard building with a zinc roof that gave the town 'added prestige'. Hugh Moore, meanwhile, built the two-storey Fryerstown Hotel for which he owned the licence between 1855 and 1861. Finally, in 1870, the brothers invested in a large, double-fronted store constructed of sandstone in which they employed a staff of twenty-two. They eventually sold the business which passed through the hands of several owners until 1944 when part of the building was demolished and the remnant was included in a private home.¹⁰

Mining lay behind the Moore brothers' prosperity. In March 1861, Eve Tremaine, accompanied by her mother and sister, arrived directly from England to meet her brother Alfred who had been a miner at Fryerstown for six years. She found a township comprised of 'campers tents and large holes as close together as Honey Comb'. Her brother lived in a cottage 'made of wood lined with Calico the floor is made of the bark of Trees with the fire as the Hearth'.¹¹ Eve eventually married Mark Amos, the local Mining Surveyor and Registrar, and their home was a four-room cottage with office attached on a half-acre block that was purchased at the first land sale in 1854. The building survives as the township's oldest and is representative of local goldfields administration quarters.¹²

Remains of the prosperous mines line the road to Chewton, the most obvious being the engine house of the Duke of Cornwall mine owned by the Rowe brothers. Edward Rowe's large sandstone home, built in 1874 at the height of the quartz-mining boom, exemplifies the prosperity of one of the five 'Quartz Kings' of Fryerstown.¹³ The home, in which Rowe employed maids and servants, contrasts with the diminutive miners' cottages nearby.

Fryerstown's decline as a mining centre began early with the gradual departure of the alluvial miners. The boom in quartz mining was over by 1876 and although mines like the New Era continued working into the 1880s their returns diminished and the mines closed.

Beginning in 1859 Fryerstown was the administrative centre of the Fryer's Creek Division of the Castlemaine Mining District. The district's 19½ square miles supported a large mining population — 8,500 in 1856, 5,913 in 1859, 3,232 in 1865 and 1,260 in 1883. The township population declined from 696 in 213 homes in 1861, to 386 in 91 homes in 1891. The decline continued into the twentieth century, despite considerable local sluicing and dredging activity. In the 1920s the coach service to Castlemaine ceased to operate because the business was 'no longer a viable proposition.'¹⁴ By 1975 the township's population was fifty-six and many of the houses were deserted.¹⁵

VAUGHAN

A township emerged as if 'overnight' during the 1853 rush to The Junction where there was a tremendous concentration of diggers. Three years later government surveyors named

⁹ Brown, *Reminiscences of Fryerstown*, pp. 33, 34, 35, 106; VGG, 1857, p. 1355; *Age*, 10 April 1982, p. 21; Errington, 'A History of Fryerstown Postal Services', pp. 5-6.

¹⁰ Brown, *Reminiscences of Fryerstown*, pp. 83, 84, 118-19.

¹¹ *Pioneer Women*, p. 27.

¹² *Age*, 27 May 1972, p. 31; Brown, *Reminiscences of Fryerstown*, pp. 149-50.

¹³ *Castlemaine Representative*, 29 January 1874. See also Brown, *Reminiscences of Fryerstown*, pp. 43, 56.

¹⁴ Brown, *Reminiscences of Fryerstown*, p. 130.

¹⁵ *MAM*, 29 January 1856; *Records of the Castlemaine Pioneers*, p. 183; *Bailliére's Victorian Gazetteer* (1865), p. 148; Brown, *Reminiscences of Fryerstown*, p. 211; *Census* (1861), Table XVIII; *Census* (1891), Table XX; Errington, 'A History of Fryerstown Postal Services', pp. 5-6; Blake, *Vision and Realisation*, vol. 2, p. 638; Rowe, *Fryerstown*, p. 2.

it after Melbourne businessman and parliamentarian Charles Vaughan, a prominent Victorian Baptist.¹⁶

The Bank of Victoria built a branch in brick. In 1855, a busy year for builders at Vaughan, gold buyers C. Ball and his nephew W.H. Welch began a drapery shop in Burgoyne Street for which Mrs Ball imported frocks from London. The business prospered; 'women for miles around would drive into Vaughan to patronise the Store.'¹⁷ The Junction Hotel opened in a calico tent until it was replaced by a weatherboard building. Two other hotels were the Union and the Mont Belot. Rodgers' Aerated Water Factory was in a sandstone building demolished only recently. A cordial factory was near the bridge and a bakery adjacent to Ball & Welch's shop. Vaughan's Wesleyan community built a stone church on the hillside above the town in 1858 where today it survives as 'a picturesque ruin'.¹⁸

After the first rush Vaughan's population declined dramatically to 169 in 1861 with over five hundred in the immediate vicinity. This doubled after tunnelling began for the deep leads beneath Table Hill and Bald Hill. By 1865, the 'village' had a police court and court of petty sessions, a post office, a bank, two hotels and a regular coach service to Castlemaine. Local residences doubled to about three hundred. They were built from local materials: log huts with chimneys made of clay or bark and cottages of mud brick.¹⁹

Vaughan's population might have been considered small, but its central location in the United Shire of Mount Alexander was ideal as the Shire's headquarters and, in 1871, the courthouse became the Shire Hall. As well, the township serviced a populous district. At Bald Hill, James Sinclair opened a store and, in 1856, Benjamin Edhouse a brewery. Nearby was a large and allegedly 'filthy' Chinese camp where the 'stench arising from the heaps of offal' was 'quite intolerable'.²⁰ The Waterloo Hotel opened in 1857 and held lavish banquets and concerts. The same year, half a mile east of Vaughan and past quartz-rich Red Hill, the Shamrock Hotel was built in a locality known as Irishtown. The district's sole Roman Catholic Church was consecrated there in June 1865. Built of brick it could accommodate a congregation of four hundred.²¹

Vaughan had relied on its alluvial gold and deep leads and when these were gone the diggers departed. Sinclair sold his store at Bald Hill in 1861 and moved to Guildford where he opened his London House drapery business. In 1882, Ball & Welch transferred their business to Castlemaine. The township population in 1891 was just 24 and there were 13 inhabited dwellings.²² Clara Ely's recollection of Vaughan about 1905, however, is valuable not only as a personal reminiscence, but also because it retains memories she inherited. Here fifty years are compressed into a single nostalgic view:

From the top of [Bald Hill] you had a splendid view of Vaughan. On the right hand side you could see Cornish town. There were homes and little gardens right along the side of the hill, and houses seemed to be dotted everywhere. Then you came across the road from Tarilta to Vaughan. There were many houses on either side, and Middleton's Grocery Shop, which was burned down. Crossing the bridge on the left hand side, was the Loddon, until you came to a bridge where Fryer's Creek flowed into the Loddon. On the other side of the Creek, and still on your left was Belot's bakery. Next was Merrin's Store, and then, I think, Ball & Welch's. At one time there was a shop where people from the 'Maine could get afternoon tea when tired after shopping at Ball & Welch's. Further on there

¹⁶ *Pioneer Women*, pp. 52-3; *MAM*, 1 February 1856; Saxton, *Victoria Place Names*, p. 64; Blake, *Place Names of Victoria*, p. 268; Kathleen Thomson and Geoffrey Serle, *A Biographical Register of the Victorian Parliament, 1851-1900* (Canberra: ANU Press, 1972), pp. 215-16; *Argus*, 20 June 1864.

¹⁷ *Pioneer Women*, pp. 52, 53.

¹⁸ Bradfield, *Castlemaine and District Tours*, p. 41; *MAM*, 22 June 1855, in Bannear, 'Historic Mining Sites', p. 13; James, *Echoes of the Past*, p. 56; letter, dated 25 January 1979, in SLV Local History File: Vaughan; *Census* (1861), Table XII: Talbot County, pp. 130-2; 'Fryerstown Methodist Church Anniversary: An Historical Summary, 1 December 1963', p. 1. SLV Local History File: Fryerstown.

¹⁹ *Census* (1861), Table XVIII; *Baillié's Victorian Gazetteer* (1865), p. 391; Forster, *The Central Goldfields*, p. 22.

²⁰ Letter, probably in *MAM*, quoted by Bradfield, *Campbells Creek*, p. 16.

²¹ Brown, *Reminiscences of Fryerstown*, pp. 91, 110.

²² Bradfield, *Guildford*, p. 35; *Pioneer Women*, p. 53; *Census* (1891), Table XX.

were more houses and the post office. On the hill behind was the Bible Christian Chapel and the Primitive Methodist Chapel, surrounded by homes. A little further on was the Common School, a good substantial building. Just in front was the Wesleyan Chapel, and then there were homes to the top of the hill. The Roman Catholic Church was a little further on, between Vaughan and Fryerstown. On our right hand coming away from Vaughan, we could see — where the Chinese Cemetery is now — headstones and some white fences. But there were houses everywhere along the sides of the hills, along the Loddon and in the gullies. Roger's Bakery and store were near the bank of the Loddon. There were some good homes along the bank of the Fryer's Creek, and facing the Loddon. There was also the Chinese Camp, with many two-storied Chinese shops. Richards' General Store was near the bridge. ... I think it was destroyed by fire [about 1917] and with it all the Chinese buildings. Across the bridge were Spurling's Butcher shop and the police station, and Mr. Barker's Chemist shop. ... Then there were the Bank and Dr. Malcolm's house, almost opposite Ball & Welch. Further on there were Rodda's Butcher shop, Jackson the Dairyman, the Registrar of Births and Deaths, and an undertaker's and more homes to the top of the hill. Behind there were houses everywhere.²³

Development of Vaughan's mineral springs after the 1960s made the township a tourist stop and weekend holiday retreat.

GUILDFORD

The township of Guildford began with a refreshment tent where the main track to Castlemaine crossed the Loddon.²⁴ The proprietor purchased the site at a land sale in Castlemaine in May 1854 and late in August opened the Guildford Arms Hotel, the first of about twenty-four that traded at different times.²⁵ Two years later 'a fine timber bridge' spanned the Loddon, 'the longest of its kind in the district'.²⁶ On its southern approach, at the corner of Templeton and Russell (later Fryerstown) Streets, Joseph Sherer erected the Guildford Family Hotel which became a major landmark. The township's services to local mining were enhanced by two quartz crushing mills and a cement factory. A soap and candle factory began production in 1855.

By 1861, Guildford was a 'rising township' conveniently located seven miles from Castlemaine on the main road to Ballarat with, it was claimed, 'a constant and never failing supply of water'.²⁷ It was 'a lively little [*sic*] place' with a small and relatively stable population.²⁸ In addition to its commercial centre, there were 30 dwellings and 150 residents. Thirty years later there were 59 dwellings and 236 residents and even in 1970, when the township was a dormitory suburb of Castlemaine, the number of residents was approximately two hundred.²⁹ Pride in the township was evident as early as 1860 when residents objected to Guildford's inclusion in the Newstead Road Board District and some refused to pay their rates. The town was proclaimed a borough in 1866.

Only twenty-two Chinese lived locally in 1861.³⁰ Along the road to Yapeen, beside Campbells Creek, however, was the largest Chinese camp in Victoria with an estimated population of almost six thousand:

²³ Clara Ely at Harcourt in 1975, in *Pioneer Women*, pp. 53-4.

²⁴ Guildford was named after Guildford in Surrey, England, but precisely when and by whom is obscure. For speculation about the town's name, see M.C. Rilen, 'Guildford, Victoria', in Bradfield (ed.), *Guildford*, p. 2, and see Blake, *Place Names of Victoria*, p. 115.

²⁵ *MAM*, 6 May 1854, 2 September 1854.

²⁶ *Bailliere's Victorian Gazetteer* (1865), p. 173. The year the bridge was built is stated variously as 1856 and 'about 1859'. Evidence supports the earlier date. See *MAM*, 18 June 1860; James W. Sparks, *Autobiography of Mr Jas. W. Sparks: Late Town Clerk of the Borough of Chewton: Late Engineer of the Shire of Mt. Alexander* (Yarram Yarram (Vic.): Chronicle Press, 1910), p. 41; and Bradfield (ed.), *Guildford*, p. 19.

²⁷ *MAM*, 8 March 1861.

²⁸ Sparks, *Autobiography*, p. 26.

²⁹ *Census* (1861), Table XXXIII; *Census* (1891), Table XX; Rilen in Bradfield (ed.), *Guildford*, p. 3, and see p. 41.

³⁰ *Census* (1861), Table XII: Talbot County, pp. 130-2.

The Chinese Great Camp at Guildford grew, in regular lines of narrow primitive streets. In the days of its greatest glory, it had its permanent theatre and circus performers, though these were to move to Ballarat, and temples devoted to Joss in every street. The restaurants, the tea-houses, the gambling saloons, the cobblers' stalls, the tailors' shops, were as they were in Canton; there were shops for literature and shops for art; there were scholars to write your letters and interpreters to read them; there were doctors with peculiar rules of practice and medicines to suit. There were several buildings two storeys high substantially constructed of wood, the lower rooms being restaurants and places for simple Chinese gambling, the upper room, aired by a hole in the floor, being a dormitory for the members of the group centred on the particular house.³¹

Most Chinese departed for the Maryborough and McIvor diggings by 1865 and within five years the derelict camp was destroyed by fire. The few Chinese who elected to stay fossicked for gold and turned their talents to a profitable line in market gardening.

Swiss Italians formed another significant ethnic group in the town and were renowned for their tunnelling skills in the deep lead mines. Several went into the hotel business, such as Antonio Danzi at the Skittle Alley, Michele Buzzini at the Railway and Giuseppe Delmenico, who contracted silicosis when a miner, at the Guildford. Costantino and Gottardo Giovanetti opened a restaurant and practised intensive farming. Costantino Tognacca, who arrived in 1860, was a local dairyman.³²

YAPEEN

Local histories usually include Yapeen with nearby Guildford, but the locality has an identity in some ways unique in the Shire. Before the gold rush, the *Strathloddon* station homestead, west of the creek, was the focus for settlement. After 1851, the nucleus of another settlement began on the creek's east bank on the main track to Castlemaine with a general store and shanty. They benefited from the rush of diggers to nearby Pennyweight Flat in 1853 and it was by this name that the locality was known for the next seven years. It was the rush to Donkey Hill in July 1856 that brought in large numbers of diggers and expanded the small settlement at the junction of the tracks to Guildford and Pennyweight Flat. Within days an *Argus* journalist saw 'a long line of stores', 'three large concert-rooms' and numerous tents established.³³ Local diggers built huts with shingle roofs, of which 'Modesty Cottage' on the highway is a surviving example.³⁴ A panorama of Yapeen at the time would include the homestead and the prefabricated iron 'Marsh House' from the pastoral period, diggers' stores, huts and tents, and a Wesleyan church erected in October 1857.

Further changes came when William Aberdeen bought the homestead and its land, erected a stone house for himself, then opened a hotel. Yapeen, an Aboriginal word for the creek's wide valley, was chosen by the post office in 1861. Four years later the village had a smithy, two stores, two hotels, the Yapeen and the Post Office, and a population of two hundred. The population declined by 1874 when the railway arrived and a new Wesleyan Church of brick was erected. Chinese market gardens beside the creek opposite the Methodist church were a feature of the township in the late nineteenth century, but they were 'scoured to a depth of 4ft, a thing hitherto unknown', in the 1909 floods.³⁵ Following a visit by Premier Thomas Bent in 1907, an area of three acres was reserved for a park, named Bent Park. Subsequent population decline forced the church to close in 1965 and it is now a private residence.³⁶

³¹ Forster, *The Central Goldfields*, pp. 49-51. See also [Patterson], *The Gold Fields of Victoria*, pp. 132-43.

³² Gentilli, 'The Settlement of Swiss Ticino Immigrants in Australia', pp. 28, 38, 41, 105; Bradfield (ed.), *Guildford*, p. 24.

³³ *Argus*, 24 July 1856.

³⁴ James, *Echoes of the Past*, p. 24.

³⁵ *MAM*, 21 August 1909.

³⁶ *Baillière's Victorian Gazetteer* (1865), p. 437; *NME*, 20 February 1907, 27 May 1908, 22 July 1908, 2 September 1908; James, *Echoes of the Past*, p. 41.

NEWSTEAD

In September 1906 an engineer reported that flooding at Newstead could have been avoided if the township had been founded on the 'plenty of high ground near at hand'.³⁷ Newstead's origins, however, seem to be associated primarily with establishing a reliable crossing point of the Loddon, than with forming a township and district service centre.³⁸

The earliest known ford was Mingay's or Mingus' Crossing Place, about three kilometres downstream of the present bridge and now submerged beneath the waters of Cairn Curran Reservoir, which had been used by local squatters. Local traffic at the ford increased after the discovery of gold in 1851. Diggers from South Australia, trekking overland to Mount Alexander, passed through along the so-called 'Adelaide Road'; diggers came again in 1853 during the first rush to Muckleford; and they came in their thousands in July 1854 when the rush began to the Maryborough goldfield. A township, named St Andrews, was surveyed at the crossing in June 1854, but by August it had been renamed Newstead.³⁹ Sales of farming allotments nearby on Crown land in 'delightful' country were held in September.⁴⁰ The following April the Newstead Hotel opened at the crossing where a bridge was erected shortly afterwards by Thomas Jones who also established a butcher's shop and bakery. These tightly-clustered buildings, that possibly also included a mechanics' institute, are depicted in a sketch made by Thomas Randall in October 1855.⁴¹

However, despite these promising beginnings at Mingay's Crossing, for some reason a second Newstead township site was surveyed upstream at its present site.⁴² Allotments were sold at Castlemaine in July 1856. By then the proprietors of the Newstead Hotel already had relocated their establishment to the new township site. Their hotel became the nucleus of the commercial centre that soon stretched east along Lyons Street towards rising ground. A primitive bridge and a punt connected this settlement with another, known as the Junction, on higher ground on the Loddon's west bank. After the punt sank finally in July 1860 a strong timber toll bridge provided a more reliable link between the two settlements and it also attracted coach traffic between Castlemaine and Maryborough.

By 1865 Newstead was 'a busy little Place' of about sixty residences and a township population of just over two hundred with another five hundred in the immediate vicinity and perhaps three thousand in the district.⁴³ It was the service centre for quartz mines established nearby at Welshmans Reef, Mia Mia and Green Gully, and for small farms that had their first harvests in 1855. Several local industries were well-established: two flour mills, a bone mill, brickyards, a brewery, a ginger-beer factory, and a biscuit and confectionary factory. Downstream was a sawmill that used the steam engine salvaged

³⁷ Quoted by F.W. Ellis, 'History of Newstead', NHS File: Ellis, p. 2.

³⁸ Details about Newstead's origins have been painstakingly researched by Liz Coady, of Newstead Historical Society. Much of what follows is drawn from her research paper 'A Story of Early Newstead' (2002) a copy of which is available in the society's archives.

³⁹ The originator of the name is obscure. Reputedly, the township was named after Newstead Abbey, Lord Byron's seat near Nottingham, England, which formed the subject of two of his poems, 'Elegy on Newstead Abbey' and 'On Leaving Newstead Abbey'. See *Poetical Works of Lord Byron* (London: Ward, Lock and Co., n.d. [1878]), pp. 528, 548-50.

⁴⁰ *MAM*, 26 August 1854; *NME*, 27 March 1907.

⁴¹ The sketch is reproduced on the cover of Bradfield, *Newstead*; the original is in the Castlemaine Art Gallery collection. For the township survey, see Coady, 'A Story of Early Newstead', p. 1, James (ed.), *A Homestead History*, p. 150, and *NME*, 27 March 1907. Evidently a mechanics' institute hall was built by 27 August 1855 when a meeting was held in it in favour of the Licensing Bill. See a copy of a clipping from *MAM* in NHS File: Mechanics' Institute, although the date, 2 September 1855, is uncertain; holdings of the *Mount Alexander Mail* in the State Library do not include an issue for that date. For the establishment of the hotel at 'Mingus' Crossing-place' and the opening of the bridge at the 'Adelaide Crossing Place', see advertisements in *MAM*, 27 April 1855, 4 May 1855, 11 May 1855, 18 May 1855, 1 June 1855.

⁴² Possible reasons for the township site to be relocated were flooding, silting of the ford and the survey of a new road. This portion of the Loddon experienced a particularly bad flood in September 1855. See Coady, 'A Story of Early Newstead', p. 3.

⁴³ Martin, 'Writings', p. 14; *Census* (1861), Table XVIII; *Baillières Victorian Gazetteer* (1865), pp. 280-1; Bradfield, *Newstead*, p. [24].



Yapeen General Store
Newstead Historical Society Photographic Collection.



Yapeen General Store
Photograph Wendy Jacobs 1998



Welshmans Reef School
Newstead Historical Society Photographic Collection.



Strangways School c1920
Newstead Historical Society Photographic Collection.

from the submerged punt. Lining Lyons Street were the usual businesses common to most towns: a smithy, butchers' shops, a bakery, general store and two hotels. On the north-east corner of Lyons and Panmure Streets in the early 1860s, Richard Rowe established a successful blacksmith, wheelwright and coach building business. An impressive mechanics' institute was erected in brick in 1868. The Shire promoted beautification of the township in 1888 when it planted lines of trees in the streets and reserved three acres for recreation. Kerosene lamps served as street-lights until 1908 when the changeover began to acetylene gas lamps. Electricity connection, first proposed in 1888 and rejected because of the high cost, was made by the State Electricity Commission in 1937 after the decision to dredge mine at Strangways.⁴⁴

Dairying became a prosperous industry in the late nineteenth century and in 1905 a butter factory opened and operated until the 1970s. Further evidence of the town's ability to survive by generating industries came in 1947 when an immigrant Polish couple named Givoni established a glove-making factory in the mechanics' institute.

Beginning in 1860, Newstead was a local government headquarters for 135 years, first as a Road Board District, then, from 1865, as a Shire. After weekly visits from Maldon by a magistrate, and a police court held in the Baptist Chapel, the government built a Court of Petty Sessions on the higher ground at the corner of Canrobert and Wyndham Streets in 1863.

With the exception of the Primitive Methodists, who in 1860 built their Gothic chapel in Lyons Street, the higher ground became associated with government and religion. The one-acre police paddock was the first authority to be established, in 1860, followed by the courthouse, the Road Board office and the Baptist Church in 1863, the Anglican Church in 1868, a police residence in bluestone about 1870, a State School in red brick in 1877 and a new Shire Hall in 1907.

The widespread practice of locating institutions associated with legal and moral authority on elevated sites had another layer of significance at Newstead. The township's high ground preserved them from the deluge that regularly afflicted commerce and labour on the river flats below. But this was to change within two years of the disastrous flood of August 1909. In June 1910, the Shire Council adopted a long overdue, and at the time controversial, proposal of bootmaker Cr Edward Rowe to construct levée banks at the ratepayers' expense. The earthen banks, sown with couch-grass, were completed by a Chinese contractor in April 1911 and since then have protected the township from most excesses of the capricious Loddon.⁴⁵

STRANGWAYS

The junction of the Loddon and Jim Crow Creek, about three kilometres south-east of Newstead, was a landmark for early diggers trekking to Mount Alexander from the south west and from Adelaide.⁴⁶ During the water shortage in the autumn of 1852 the creek was still running and diggers carted their washdirt to it. One digger sluiced the creek bed and earned gold to the value of between £6 and £8 a week. More diggers arrived after the rush to Yandoit in March 1855 and they established a settlement above the Loddon's flood plain.⁴⁷

⁴⁴ *NME*, 22 April 1908, 30 September 1908, 28 October 1908; *Resources Survey: Central Highlands Region* (1956), Table 64: 'Centres Served by State Electricity Commission of Victoria (At 30th June 1953.)', pp. 137-8.

⁴⁵ *MAM*, 23 July 1860; *NME*, 8 May 1907, 22 June 1910; 15 February 1911, 22 February 1911, 15 March 1911, 4 April 1911; biographical notes on Edward Arthur Rowe (1860-1933), NHS File: Rowe; research by Janet Trudgeon, of NHS.

⁴⁶ See John Pedler's account in *NME*, 22 April 1908.

⁴⁷ Brough Smyth, *The Gold Fields*, p. 136; Flett, *History of Gold Discovery*, pp. 12, 402; *MAM*, 30 March 1855, 6 April 1855; Maddicks, *100 Years of Daylesford Gold Mining History*, p. 48; [Patterson], *The Gold Fields of Victoria*, pp. 119, 126. Strangways was named after Brigadier General Thomas Fox Strangways, who on 5 November 1854 had a leg blown off by a Russian shell at the second battle of Inkerman, Crimea. A hero of the Napoleonic wars, the 63-year-old artillery commander achieved immortality for his last words: 'I die at least a soldier's death.' Who named the township and when is not known. A tantalising possibility is

The settlement grew into a township and in 1861 a much-needed bridge was built across the creek. A former resident later recalled that about this time the township was 'larger than Newstead'. There was a bootmaker, carpenter, blacksmith, a bone mill, at least one general store (Mulholland's), a butcher's shop, a hotel, a school and, evidently, a lawyer named Deakin.⁴⁸ A large Chinese camp reputedly grew up nearby in the early 1860s. A Wesleyan church, erected in 1865, was attended by Newstead Wesleyans until they built their church in 1903. Local carters ran brisk businesses until the railway went through in 1874. At that time Strangways was 'a rowdy Place ... drinking and fighting was all the go [and] Pick handles was freely used'. Afterwards, however, the railway line 'took the traffic off the Roads ... things got very quiet ... and the houses vanished away'.⁴⁹ In 1901 the population was ninety-eight.

The rich grazing land along the Loddon was suitable for dairying that helped to raise property values by 1908. At the same time gold mining resumed with a small rush to the Jim Crow downstream of Clydesdale. Strangways revived as a mining centre between 1938 and 1954 when it was made the headquarters of the Victoria Gold Dredging Company N.L. that mined along the Loddon and Jim Crow Creek.⁵⁰

WELSHMANS REEF

The community established in undulating country at Sandy Creek in the mid-1850s was characterised by small-scale cultivation and mining. Early church services were held on George Crockett's farm and within a year of the 1857 gold rush an interdenominational church was built that later became Wesleyan. Soon afterwards, a general store and a hotel opened on the road that connected Sandy Creek west with Maryborough, north with Maldon and east with Castlemaine. In August 1863, Sandy Creek school began with forty-two pupils. Two years later the area's population was about four hundred of which 255 were miners. By then the hamlet was renamed Welshmans Reef, reputedly from a Welsh miner who discovered gold nearby and for numerous Welshmen who settled in the district.⁵¹ Situated almost halfway on the main track between Maldon and Newstead, the hamlet benefited from regular dray and coach traffic between the two centres for its mail and supplies.⁵²

New quartz mines opened in the late 1870s and a second school opened in 1877. The mining revival was brief. The numbers at Sandy Creek school mirrored the decline, from 100 pupils in 1873 to 24 in 1884, and between 1891 and 1965 the hamlet supported just one school.⁵³ Mining remained the main industry until the late 1920s. Fossickers favoured the locality and one or two quartz mines continued intermittently until recently.

A local economy less reliant on gold and mixed farming was made possible by the opening of Cairn Curran Reservoir in 1956. In 1967, Newstead Shire Council purchased

Christopher Jobson about 1856. Jobson was the proprietor of a bone mill at Newstead and he founded another at Strangways. In 1856, his leg was mangled in the wheel of his dray after his horses bolted in Lyons Street and it was amputated by a doctor who journeyed out from Castlemaine. Jobson afterwards wore a peg leg, which sometimes broke through the white-ant infested floorboards of the Newstead Hotel, and perhaps he identified with the Crimean War hero. The incident in Lyons Street is recalled in *NME*, 31 July 1907, and see Bradfield, *Newstead*, p. [13]. Saxton, *Victoria Place-Names*, p. 60; Blake, *Place Names of Victoria*, p. 244; *London Times*, 23 November 1854, p. 4, 24 November 1854, p. 7, 15 December 1854, p. 10; John Sweetman, *Raglan: From the Peninsula to the Crimea* (London: Arms and Armour Press, 1993), p. 258.

⁴⁸ Martin, 'Writings', pp. 17, 19; *NME*, 1 May 1907, 5 June 1907, 4 December 1907, 11 December 1907; Bradfield, *Newstead*, p. [2].

⁴⁹ Martin, 'Writings', pp. 18, 19.

⁵⁰ *NME*, 5 June 1907, 27 May 1908, 30 September 1908; Bradfield, *Newstead*, pp. [10, 39, 40]; *Victorian Municipal Directory* (1901), p. 474.

⁵¹ Blake, *Place Names of Victoria*, p. 276; local knowledge.

⁵² Garlick, (comp.), 'The McNiece Connection', p. [2]; *NME*, 29 April 1908; Bradfield, *Newstead*, p. [12]; *Baillier's Victorian Gazetteer* (1865), pp. 375, 415, 793.

⁵³ Blake, *Vision and Realization*, vol. 2, pp. 673-4; Bradfield, *Newstead*, p. [53].

nine acres adjoining the reservoir. The following year the Shire began developing substantial tourist facilities west of the township.⁵⁴

PRESENT LANDSCAPE

Gold mining defined the Shire's communities and enlivened them. Today it is difficult to appreciate that thousands of people once lived and worked beyond the precincts of the townships in bush or farmland settings. Stores or hotels that met their immediate needs either have vanished or are ruins in some deserted area like Shicer Gully, Mopoke Gully and Spring Gully. Others are now private homes. Former schools were relocated and used for another purpose, such as Welshmans Reef's primary school building that was carted to Castlemaine in 1965. Similar fate awaited some weatherboard halls and churches in agricultural communities.

The layout of the gold townships recall their origins before surveyors arrived to impose order; and some surveyed towns, such as South Muckleford, were so-called 'paper townships' that did not arise as expected. Many imposing buildings now stand oddly in depopulated centres. They represent the confidence of the communities that once supported and used them.

⁵⁴ Wishart, *The Spa Country*, p. 179; 'Back to Newstead' (1968), p. 43; *Castlemaine Mail*, 9 June 1995.

5. LOCAL GOVERNMENT

A major grievance contributing to the Victorian government's unpopularity in 1852 was what Alfred Joyce termed the 'fearful state of the roads'.¹ In response to its critics, the government embarked on a programme of public works with road-making a major item of expenditure. In February 1853, it passed an Act for Making and Improving Roads in the Colony of Victoria. The legislation created a Central Roads Board with one of its chief priorities a road to Mount Alexander. The Act also provided for the election of district roads boards. This, and the Municipal Corporations Act of December 1854, established local government in Victoria.

ROADS BOARDS

Public meetings in the Shire between 1860 and 1862 created three Roads Board Districts each of nine members. The Fryerstown Roads Board was the first, in June 1860.² A major project was the construction of two main roads to connect Fryerstown with Castlemaine, one via Golden Gully and Chewton, the other via Belle Vue and Campbells Creek. The Newstead Roads Board, proclaimed on 8 October 1860, prepared a list of urgent works — mostly roads, river and creek crossings, and a bridge over the Jim Crow Creek at Strangways.³ The Campbells Creek Roads Board District was gazetted on 24 November 1862. By 1865, the three Roads Boards had a combined population of 17,600 and annual revenue of over £7,000.⁴

SHIRES

A new Local Government Act early in 1863 provided for a road district or a combination of road districts to petition the Governor to be created a Shire. Shires had greater status and could borrow money on the security of their rate income.

Immediately after the Act became law, the Newstead Board proposed combining with the Fryers and Campbells Creek boards to form a Shire. There was little response and in June a deputation to the Campbells Creek Board had a cool reception. The following October a public meeting at the Bridge Inn, Newstead, voted to form a Shire. Over a year later, the Board decided to act alone and the Shire of Newstead was proclaimed on 27 February 1865.⁵ The commitment of the councillors was a concern. Only four attended the Shire's first meeting at the Newstead Hotel on 3 April 1865 and five were at the second.

Guildford's simmering dissatisfaction with distant Newstead re-emerged in December 1865 in a controversy over a public urinal the residents declared 'a nuisance' but the Shire Health Officer judged 'clean'.⁶ In November 1866, Guildford was proclaimed a borough

¹ James (ed.), *A Homestead History*, p. 132.

² *VGG*, 1860, p. 1846; Brown, *Reminiscences of Fryerstown*, pp. 126-7, 128.

³ *VGG*, 12 October 1860, p. 1917; *NME*, 4 December 1907; 'Back to Newstead' (1968), p. 26; Bradfield, *Newstead*, p. [12].

⁴ Bradfield, *Campbells Creek*, p. 33; *Baillière's Victorian Gazetteer* (1865), pp. 74, 148, 281.

⁵ *VGG*, 7 March 1865, p. 566; Bradfield, *Campbells Creek*, p. 34; *NME*, 22 January 1908; Bradfield, *Newstead*, pp. [14, 23].

⁶ Bradfield (ed.), *Guildford*, pp. 37-40. William Aberdeen solved the deadlock over the urinal by smashing it to pieces with a sledgehammer. He received a sympathetic hearing at Vaughan court and was fined only a guinea, with £2 damages and 10s costs.

with a mayor and nine councillors, 250 ratepayers, a rate of 1s in the pound and annual revenue of £600.⁷

The Borough of Guildford lasted less than five years.⁸ On 20 June 1871, it joined with the Fryers Road District and the Campbells Creek Road District to form the United Shire of Mount Alexander.⁹ The nine elected councillors held their first meeting on 5 July in the longroom of the Five Flags Hotel, Campbells Creek. By a narrow margin, they decided the Shire's headquarters would be the courthouse at Vaughan because it was more central.¹⁰

The Shire was founded at the height of the quartz-mining boom and a year after the implementation of the 1869 Land Act. It harboured mining interests that competed with a growing number of agriculturalists and horticulturalists, and five townships, founded on gold, that guarded closely their own interests. Population decline, however, dried up its sources of revenue. The number of ratepayers on the roll decreased from 887 in 1875 to 540 in 1914 and in the same period revenue declined from £12,000 to just £1,139.¹¹ This was below the £1,500 limit set by the Local Government Amendment Act of 1914 and consequently the Executive Council ordered the Shire's dissolution. On 1 October 1915, the former Shire was incorporated in the Shire of Newstead that was renamed the Shire of Newstead and Mount Alexander.

The Shire's area of 152 square miles was substantially unaltered for almost eighty years. The name changed again, however; on 24 May 1949 it reverted to the Shire of Newstead. Maintenance and improvement of the road network necessarily remained a major priority. By 1992, the Shire's population had decreased by a third since 1916. Three years later the Shire of Newstead ceased to exist. On 19 January 1995, in a State-wide administrative reform, the government amalgamated it with the City of Castlemaine and portions of the Shires of Maldon and Metcalfe to form the Shire of Mount Alexander.¹²

SHIRE BUILDINGS

Buildings associated with local government in the Shire survive at Newstead and Campbells Creek. At Newstead, the brick Shire Hall erected in Wyndham Street in 1907 'overlooking the town' served as headquarters until 1968 when the Shire built more spacious offices in Lyons Street.¹³ Also surviving is the Newstead Mechanics' Institute where the Shire's offices were located between 1902 and 1907. At Campbells Creek, the former toll house taken over by the United Shire of Mount Alexander in 1871, and the Shire office by 1914, is located on the main road.¹⁴

⁷ VGG, 1866, p. 2626; Rilen, 'Guildford, Victoria', in Bradfield (ed.), *Guildford*, p. 3; Forster, *The Central Goldfields*, p. 79.

⁸ The borough records were stored in an upstairs room of the Commercial Hotel. They were destroyed when fire gutted the building in 1916. Bradfield (ed.), *Guildford*, p. 35.

⁹ VGG, 16 June 1871, pp. 935-6. The Shire's proclamation date was 20 June 1871. The decision made at a meeting of the Executive Council in Melbourne on 5 June was gazetted on 16 June.

¹⁰ Brown, *Reminiscences of Fryerstown*, p. 129. See also Bradfield, *Campbells Creek*, p. 35. The Shire headquarters was at Fryerstown by 1901 and at Campbells Creek by 1914.

¹¹ *Victorian Municipal Directory* (1875), p. 133, (1880), p. 197, (1901), p. 458, (1914), p. 540.

¹² *Victorian Municipal Directory* (1916), p. 546; VGG, 25 May 1949, p. 2965, 19 January 1995, pp. 4-9, and see VGG, 31 August 1995, p. 2323-4; *Midland Express*, 24 January 1995, p. 6.

¹³ *NME*, 9 January 1907, 17 April 1907; 'Back to Newstead' (1968), p. 29.

¹⁴ The Mount Alexander Shire Hall at Fryerstown, a weatherboard building, survived until the 1970s. Bradfield, *Castlemaine and District Tour*, p. 35.

6. TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS

ROADS

Overlanders and squatters followed Mitchell's route across the Shire and part of its course is preserved in the section between Newstead and Castlemaine. Early maps reveal that the tracks between pastoral stations and their out-stations formed the basis of the later road network. The outline of the original main road that went past *Plaistow* homestead still can be seen.

Increased traffic after the discovery of gold made many of these tracks virtually impassable. The worst roads at Mount Alexander were at Fryerstown. When Governor Hotham visited in 1854 the wheel on his carriage collapsed.¹ Several attempts to establish a coach service between Fryerstown and Castlemaine between 1855 and 1857 foundered because of poor roads. The main road between Castlemaine and Maryborough went via Sandy Creek and forded the Loddon below Newstead. 'The road was a veritable quagmire in winter,' John Pedler recalled in 1907, 'and it took bullock and horse teams, waggons drays, &c, all day to do the short distance of about a mile.'² In the winter of 1861 the mud in two chains of road outside the Welcome Inn at Newstead came up to a man's middle.³

Improving the roads was a prime responsibility of the three Road Boards established after 1860. The road between Fryerstown and Chewton, an initiative of the Fryer's Road Board, was completed in January 1862 with culverts, drainage and a cutting on Blacksmiths Hill. An improved road to Campbells Creek was opened the following November.

Despite the increased interest in improving the roads, passenger coaches still had trouble. Even when they were completed the two new roads between Fryerstown and Castlemaine were judged unsuitable for coach traffic.⁴ By the mid-1860s coaches run by several companies connected the Shire's communities with larger centres at Maryborough, Daylesford and Castlemaine. A journey to Melbourne usually began by taking a coach or omnibus to the Castlemaine Railway Station. One stretch of a coach road survives east of Fryerstown.

TOLL GATES, PUNTS AND BRIDGES

Funds towards road construction and improvement were raised by installing toll gates. Two toll gates near the present school at Campbells Creek charged a shilling for any vehicle on the track. The toll gate at the junction of Saw Pit Gully and Forest Creek roads, Fryerstown, raised £270 in 1860, its first year. A new bridge at Strangways in 1867 was financed by a toll. Newstead Shire financed repairs to the Newstead–Castlemaine road after the railway went through in 1874 by erecting toll gates. Disputes at Newstead and Campbells Creek in the early 1860s over the siting of toll gates divided both communities.⁵

¹ Brown, *Reminiscences of Fryerstown*, p. 126.

² James (ed.), *A Homestead History*, p. 132.

³ John Brown, letter, *MAM*, 19 August 1861.

⁴ Brown, *Reminiscences of Fryerstown*, p. 130.

⁵ F. Winkleman, *Historical Sketch of Campbells Creek: A Glance at the Old Days* (Lonsdale Press, 1918), p. 7; Brown, *Reminiscences of Fryerstown*, p. 128; Martin, 'Writings', p. 15; *MAM*, 1 December 1862, 31 October 1863; Bradfield, *Campbells Creek*, pp. 34-5; Bradfield, *Newstead*, pp. [13-14].

A government punt across the Loddon at Newstead began operating about 1855 and stayed in business after a private bridge was built soon afterwards. The punt sank twice in 1857. It was not refloated, but instead a stronger bridge was built in 1861.⁶

The Loddon River, especially when in flood, presented an obstacle to traffic that persists to the present day. Smaller obstacles were creeks and gullies, especially in the Shire's eastern portion. The Roads Boards took over bridge construction from private operators and it consumed a large proportion of their budgets. Some of the bridges built were at Newstead in 1855, July 1856, July 1860, August 1935 (known as the Jenkin Bridge) and as recently as 1990; at Guildford in 1859 and 1884; at Vaughan, Glenluce and Fryerstown between 1860 and 1870; over the Jim Crow Creek at Strangways in 1866; over Campbells Creek at Guildford in 1884; over Joyce's Creek in 1937; and at Campbells Creek in 1862 and 1988. Floods damaged bridges regularly. After the devastating flood of January 1889 the only bridge that remained intact in Mount Alexander Shire was at Fryerstown.⁷

RAILWAYS

The government-built railway from Melbourne reached Castlemaine in October 1862.⁸ It was not until twelve years later, in 1874, that the route to Maryborough was decided. Contractors laid a track through the Shire and established five stations: at Campbells Creek, Guildford, Strangways, Newstead and Joyces Creek.⁹

The experience of riding on a train was new. After the line was completed to Guildford a woman rode on the engine which at 30 mph covered the distance in fifteen minutes pushing in front nine trucks loaded with 80 tons of rails:

I had a private warning not to put my best clothes on. ... I stepped "aboard," as someone called it. ... Anyone who merely travels in a first-class carriage along a well-known line has literally no idea of the novel impressions conveyed by travelling on the engine with the train in front of you, along a line not altogether complete. There is a sort of wavy, undulatory movement of the trucks suggestive of an Ophidian monster ... Up to Guildford it was a succession of curves, shrieking from the engine, steep gradients, whizzing past gates and gate-keepers' houses, and now and then passing groups of enthusiastically [waving] men and boys, wondering women, and half frightened children. ... The wind was strong, the motion rapid, and it took my breath away ... However, we got back into the station safely ... and I left with a very lively recollection of my first ride on the engine. Considerably blacker, dustier, and grimier than I had ever been in my life before.¹⁰

Apart from the obvious benefits of freight and passenger transport the railway provided local employment.¹¹ The possibility of another line in the Shire arose in 1887. Daylesford Borough Council wanted a railway to connect Daylesford with the Castlemaine–Maryborough line at Strangways, Newstead or Guildford to provide a better freight service for agricultural and pastoral produce and supply the mines at Maryborough with timber and firewood. Although official reception was lukewarm it was decided in 1889 the route would be through Yandoit to Guildford. This was hotly debated because every small town nearby wanted the railway to secure its future. The Guildford line was in the 1890 Railways Construction Bill. However, in April 1892 and because of the railways deficit, the government cancelled the line along with proposals for lines connecting Newstead with Allendale, Powlett Hill and Clunes.¹²

⁶ MAM, 11 November 1857; Bradfield, *Newstead*, p. [4]; Coady, 'A Story of Early Newstead', pp. 3, 4.

⁷ Sparks, *Autobiography*, pp. 42, 43; research by Liz Coady, of NHS, 19 September 1998.

⁸ MAM, 16 October 1862.

⁹ *Castlemaine Representative*, 8 July 1874.

¹⁰ 'A Lady Correspondent', *Castlemaine Representative*, 4 February 1874.

¹¹ Edgar Ramsey, 'Some Memories of a Lifetime' (Clydesdale, 1972), p. 19.

¹² Murrell Osborne, *Timber, Spuds and Spa: A Descriptive History and Lineside Guide of the Railways in the Daylesford District, 1880-1993* (Australian Railway Historical Society (Victorian Division), 1978), pp. 14-15.



Stone Culvert, Vaughan Chewton Rd.
Photograph Wendy Jacobs 1998



Former Shire of Mt. Alexander Offices, entry was originally the toll house
118 Midland Highway, Campbells Creek
Photograph Wendy Jacobs 1998



Carter's Boot Factory, which also operated as a Post and Telegraph Office, Fryerstown
Newstead Historical Society Photographic Collection



Guildford Railway Station
Newstead Historical Society Photographic Collection

The Shire's railway stations have closed, but at Newstead the station buildings, platform and goods sheds recall a period when the railway represented the latest in technological achievement that was vital to the Shire's economic development.

POSTAL SERVICES

The government postal service operated at almost every settlement in the Shire by 1865. The Newstead service was 'haphazard' before December 1858 when a twice-weekly service to Castlemaine began operating.¹³ The service between Vaughan and Glenluce lasted a century from 1868, but at Spring Gully the office closed in 1871 after only ten years, an indication of the decline of that mining community's population.

Postal contracts could remain in a family for years: the Carter family, at Fryerstown, held it for forty-nine years and the Knapman family at Glenluce for sixty-six years. Edith Ellis, who succeeded her father, was postmistress at Guildford for almost forty years and Mrs Iskov at Strathlea for forty-one years.¹⁴

TELEGRAPH AND TELEPHONE

The telegraph began in Victoria in March 1854 and large inland centres adopted it quickly. The thin wire strung on distinctive lines of poles took longer to reach smaller communities. A telegraph station opened at Castlemaine in January 1857. Guildford was connected in August the following year when the line to Daylesford went through. Newstead waited until 30 October 1863 for its station, while Fryerstown was not connected until 1872 and Vaughan in 1894. The connection between Newstead and Yandoit was made in 1887.¹⁵

The small local telegraph office usually was at the post office which made it an important centre in any community: 'If things go on in the mining world,' the *Castlemaine Representative* wrote in 1874, '... the axis of the world will want greasing, and a significant palace will supplant the present box in which the public do business with the telegraph master.'¹⁶ In 1910 Newstead wanted a new building for its communication centre and installed within was a telephone 'silence cabinet' for private conversations.¹⁷ Fryerstown opened its first telephone service in 1908 with one subscriber, the local grocer. Yapeen was connected by 1921 with the exchange in Tyzack's Store. Green Gully waited until 1944 for its six-party telephone link and only after local farmers offered to pay the cost of connection and erect the poles.¹⁸

The Strathlea district received its first telephones in 1926. Mrs Lea was the first post mistress and she operated the telephone exchange. Since the new service centre required a name Strathlea was adopted, from the name of the Lea's property. The Strathlea exchange closed in April 1968 when the district was included in a new automatic exchange installed at Campbelltown.¹⁹

¹³ Bradfield, *Newstead*, p. [24].

¹⁴ Brown, *Reminiscences of Fryerstown*, pp. 124, 146, 209-10; Lewis, 'Strathlea', p. 7.

¹⁵ *MAM*, 31 October 1863; Errington, 'A History of Fryerstown Postal Services', pp. 4-5; Brown, *Reminiscences of Fryerstown*, p. 123; *NME*, 7 October 1908.

¹⁶ *Castlemaine Representative*, 29 January 1874.

¹⁷ Biographical notes on Edward Arthur Rowe; *NME*, 21 September 1910. Evidently, Newstead and Daylesford were connected by telephone via Yandoit by February 1908, but at this stage Newstead was not connected with Guildford or Castlemaine. See *NME*, 12 February 1908.

¹⁸ Errington, 'A History of Fryerstown Postal Services', p. 7; James, *Echoes of the Past*, p. 28; Barkla, 'Memories', p. 4.

¹⁹ Lewis, 'Strathlea', p. 7, but see fn, p. 12 above.

7. WATER SUPPLY

The Loddon River bisects the municipality and with its tributaries determined settlement patterns. The pastoralists' home stations were situated beside either a creek or the river as are all the townships and settlements. Water was crucial to the production of gold and it was necessary for the Shire's breweries. Mixed farming required a steady supply for sheep, dairy cattle and irrigation. Yet the paradox remains of a cycle of floods and droughts that disrupts economic activities. Schemes to regulate the supply of water, therefore, were envisioned from the Shire's earliest days and many survive as features on the landscape.

PASTORAL PERIOD

Mitchell reported the strong associations between good grass and water when he crossed the Shire in 1836. Stapylton noted the streams were eroded, but looked in vain for the mountains that could supply such a 'deluge'.¹ Appreciation of the Loddon's large catchment area and the intensity of the region's violent thunderstorms came after settlement. In thirty hours in September 1870 torrential rain generated floods that caused a massive £47,000 of damage in the Fryers Road Board District alone.²

Alfred Joyce appreciated the uncertainty of a regular supply of water and compensated for it. In the mid-1840s on *Plaistow* he designed a mill that was powered in winter by a water wheel and in summer, when the creek was low, by a windmill with sails nine feet across.³

Squatters used the natural watercourses to water and wash their sheep, such as the sheepwash that survives on *Plaistow*, and they scooped dams as security against droughts.

GOLDFIELD SUPPLY

The Loddon and its tributaries provided the water for the diggers during the gold rush. When it dried up, as it did in May 1852, they carted their wash dirt for up to seven miles to creeks still running, then gave up in disgust and departed for other goldfields where water was more plentiful.

Puddling required copious amounts of water. In 1865, a scheme was conceived to build a 13-mile aqueduct from the Loddon to supply the puddling machines at Fryerstown. Constructed by the Loddon Water Supply Company, with shareholders in Melbourne, it was completed late in 1866. The Loddon Water Race had up to ten flumings over deep gullies and ended in a 400-foot tunnel. Shortly afterwards the race was extended to Vaughan and Church's Flat. This new supply revived alluvial mining and the puddling business at Fryerstown. Hydraulic sluicing, however, demanded large quantities of water and in 1902 the Symes brothers re-opened the race for their dredging operations at Fryerstown.⁴

¹ Andrews (ed.), *Stapylton*, p. 200.

² Brown, *Reminiscences of Fryerstown*, p. 128.

³ James (ed.), *A Homestead History*, p. 159.

⁴ Brown, *Reminiscences of Fryerstown*, pp. 167, 211-12.



Vaughan Mineral Springs
Newstead Historical Society Photographic Collection



Crocodile Reservoir,
Crocodile Reservoir Road, Fryerstown
Photograph Wendy Jacobs 1998



Flume over Fords Road, Campbells Creek
Photograph Wendy Jacobs 1998



Cairn Curran Reservoir
Fisherman Road, Welshmans Reef
Photograph Wendy Jacobs 1998

TOWNSHIP SUPPLY

The supply of water for domestic use became critical when mining operations polluted the watercourses. The Crocodile and Spring Creek reservoirs were built in 1861 to supply Fryerstown and Spring Gully. Fryerstown's urban connection was delayed until about 1870 and then was achieved only due to the efforts of local MLA Richard Kitto.⁵ Newstead drew its supply from the Loddon until a township reservoir supplied from Jim Crow Creek was constructed in the 1920s.

WELLS, SPRINGS AND BORES

The ancient deep leads were the former drainage networks and they fill when rainwater filters down to them. In the 1850s and 1860s, when surface supplies were unreliable, underground water posed a problem that at first threatened the future of mining companies. At about a hundred feet ground water poured into mine shafts at a rate of up to four million gallons a day which required mine owners to install expensive pumping equipment.⁶

Brewers used this knowledge. The Belle Vue Brewery commenced business in the late 1850s by drawing its water from deep wells 8-9 feet in diameter lined with stone and sunk on the flats close to their buildings. When filtered through a heavy layer of gravel the supply was abundant, permanent and pure for the production of ale. Brewery wells were destroyed by hydraulic sluicing after 1898.⁷

Wells were sunk for domestic use. On the farm of Peter and Thomas Smith at Sandon in 1913 a neighbour noticed their drinking water was drawn from a well lined with stone and protected above ground by 'beautifully squared red gum slabs' that enclosed a hand pump.⁸

FARM STORAGES

Farmers either scooped dams for the use of their stock or, in hilly country, built an earth bank across a depression and allowed it to fill from surface runoff. The water from Tom Smith's large dam at Sandon by 1911 was used to establish his wattle garden and for experiments with crops of maize and lucerne grown with superphosphate.⁹ At Yapeen in 1912, Sang Yick, known as 'Louie', built a dam which was filled by a water race from a farmer's dam.¹⁰ Bill Hamilton, at Muckleford South, had only one catchment dam when the 1944 drought hit. Afterwards he invested time and money in building more dams, twenty-three by 1970, connected them with drains that ran along the contours of the slopes and irrigated his pastures. 'Most years', he recalled, 'we were able to carry more stock because we had the water.'¹¹ For Dave Barkla, 'Any money spent on water supply is money well invested. The dams that have been built in the last 30 years bear witness to that.'¹²

⁵ Brown, *Reminiscences of Fryerstown*, pp. 150-1; Thomson and Serle, *Biographical Register of the Victorian Parliament*, p. 111.

⁶ *Resources Survey: Central Highlands Region*, p. 69.

⁷ Brown, *Reminiscences of Fryerstown*, p. 97.

⁸ Culvenor, *Thomas Smith of Sandon*, pp. 7-8.

⁹ Culvenor, *Thomas Smith of Sandon*, pp. 7-8, 32.

¹⁰ James, *Echoes of the Past*, p. 38.

¹¹ Hamilton, 'Recollections', pp. [24-5].

¹² Barkla, 'Memories', p. 11.

THE COLIBAN SCHEME

At Vaughan, in the dry summer of 1861-62, water-starved miners told a visitor that should 'a main conduit' from the Coliban River be constructed, 'whole hills would be made to pay, such as Bald, Shicer, [and] Kangaroo, ... while the whole basaltic plain towards Newstead might be tunnelled with advantage.'¹³ Their dream partly was realised in the Coliban Scheme, the government's ambitious and expensive response to water shortages on the Castlemaine and Bendigo gold fields. It began with the opening of the Malmsbury Reservoir in 1870 and part of its system of channels supplied water to communities in the eastern portion of the Shire after 1877. Barkers Creek Reservoir supplied Campbells Creek and enabled the expansion of local orchards and vineyards. Coliban water made hydraulic sluicing possible on an unprecedented scale which, by 1905, contributed to severe silting of the Loddon. In 1955, the Coliban system included 388 miles of channel and 315 miles of pipeline.¹⁴

CAIRN CURRAN RESERVOIR

The characteristics of the Loddon's catchment, limited stream flow and high surface run off, anticipated the establishment of a water storage larger than farmers' dams and township reservoirs. The devastating drought of 1944-45 made a storage not only desirable, but imperative. A storage on the Shire's west would complement the Coliban water in the eastern portion for its domestic, stock, irrigation and town supply.

When the Parliamentary Public Works Committee in October 1944 recommended a dam on the Loddon at Baringhup, Ian Forbes studied the projected reservoir's catchment. He found that 'Erosion ... can be seen in many places ... and often the examples are as bad as may be seen anywhere in the State.' Fryers, he wrote, was 'the worst area' where, after rain, 'the gutters and table drains show high concentrations of silt in the fast flowing water' which found its way into Fryers Creek, Tarilta Creek and the Loddon. Forbes advised the immediate control of surface run off by land conservation measures to secure the reservoir's future.¹⁵

Work on the Cairn Curran reservoir dam began in August 1946. It was officially opened by Premier Henry Bolte on 27 April 1956. The reservoir presented the opportunity for the development of recreational facilities for tourists. Holiday units were built at Welshmans Reef and, in 1967, the first stage of a new caravan park began on the shore of the reservoir west of the township. An added benefit after 1960 was the installation of a turbine that generates two megawatts to be used when irrigation orders exceed 220 megalitres a day — on average between five and eight months a year. The power generated is switched into the grid at Castlemaine.¹⁶

¹³ Patterson, *Gold Fields*, p. 129.

¹⁴ [Jim Keary], *Water Victoria: The Next 100 Years* (Melbourne: Department of Conservation & Environment, 1991), p. 12; Forbes (comp.), *The Catchment of Cairn Curran Reservoir*, pp. 62-4; *Resources Survey: Central Highlands Region*, pp. 67-74.

¹⁵ Forbes (comp.), *The Catchment of Cairn Curran Reservoir*, pp. 9, 55, 58-9, 61, 68-9.

¹⁶ Unsourced newspaper clipping, dated 1 May 1956, in NHS File: Cairn Curran Reservoir; Ivan Smith, Loddon Headworks Manager, Cairn Curran Reservoir, to the author, 2 November 1998.

8. AGRICULTURE

The pastoralists cultivated small areas in the pursuit of self-sufficiency. On *Plaistow*, the Joyce brothers fenced six acres to grow wheat, horse-feed and potatoes.¹ The surplus, however, could not possibly meet the requirements of the gold fields population. With flour scarce and expensive, and wheat realising £1 per bushel, the government in 1854 opened for selection small blocks of Crown land close to the diggings. At South Muckleford, the government surveyed a township and raffled blocks of different sizes 'within a stone's throw of never-failing water.'² Many selectors were former diggers. John Munro, a former wheelwright and miner, bought 118 acres and from 1856 he grew successfully oats and wheat, and he cut hay. On Joyces Creek, west of Newstead, Crown land formerly part of *Plaistow* was surveyed into 20-acre blocks and sold in September 1854.³ George Annand, who had mined at Bendigo for two years, was one of eight selectors who arrived the following month.⁴ At Newstead in 1855, William McNabb took up 80 acres that he later expanded to 300 acres.⁵ A visitor to Guildford wrote that the Loddon and Campbells Creek 'are liable to overflow their banks, so that while the husbandman is indebted to that circumstance for the richness of the alluvial soil he cultivates, it is also an occasional source of peril to his crops.'⁶ This was one of many hardships endured by selectors in their development of the Shire's primary industry.

LAND ACTS

The diggers' demand for land led to the passing of several Land Acts in the 1860s. The Nicholson Land Act of 1860 unintentionally enabled pastoralists to purchase the best land on their runs. At Strathlea, the district was subdivided into small holdings that varied from 20 to 640 acres and many purchasers acted as 'dummies' for the local pastoralist. Few could make the blocks pay, so they worked as miners, timber cutters, drovers or shepherds. Blocks changed hands, although the O'Connor family stayed for more than a century. On his property in the Yandoit hills, Luigi Gervasoni built a two-storey house 'in the Lombard Alpine style' using local stone.⁷

Grant's Land Act of 1865 allowed selectors to take up 20 acres at an annual rent of 2s an acre within ten miles of a diggings; by 1868, this was amended to 160 acres within thirty miles.⁸ Many farms of between 20 and 80 acres were uneconomic due to size and poor quality soil and the selectors eked out a living, dividing their activities between farming and working for the mines.

The Grant Land Act of 1869 provided selectors with the opportunity to purchase blocks of 320 acres that would pay. Men who had mined for twenty years, as well as a few farmers requiring larger blocks, became optimistic selectors in northern Victoria, 'the

¹ James (ed.), *A Homestead History*, pp. 49-50.

² *MAM*, 26 August 1854, 3 March 1855.

³ Bradfield, *Newstead*, pp. [54, 55]; *MAM*, 26 August 1854; *NME*, 27 March 1907.

⁴ Sutherland and Whitworth, *Victoria and Its Metropolis*, vol. IIA, p. 258; *NME*, 20 March 1907.

⁵ *NME*, 17 November 1964.

⁶ Garran (ed.), *Picturesque Atlas of Australasia*, vol. II, p. 293.

⁷ Lewis, 'Strathlea', p. 3; Gentili, 'The Settlement of Swiss Ticino Immigrants in Australia', p. 8; *Bendigo Advertiser*, 28 March 1984, p. 6.

⁸ J.M. Powell, *The Public Lands of Australia Felix: Settlement and Land Appraisal in Victoria, 1834-91 with Special Reference to the Western Plains* (Melbourne: OUP, 1970), pp. 120, 126, and Table 10, p. 125,

lands of Goshen' as a Newstead man termed them.⁹ In 1873, Robert Addley, a former ship's carpenter and miner, selected 30-40 acres at Glenluce and built a large homestead of stone. Alexander Brebner supplemented his freehold block at Joyces Creek by renting 115 acres.¹⁰

SETTLEMENT PATTERNS

The opening up of the land to selectors, beginning with small acreages, has left a settlement pattern characterised by small holdings close to the goldfields in the eastern portion of the Shire and larger holdings further to the west. Later amalgamations of holdings resulted in the larger farms of today, especially in the Shire's western portion. Forested reserves that cover more than a third of the Shire's area were not opened for settlement.

MIXED FARMING

Mixed farming began with subsistence farming on small acreages in the mid-1850s. At Newstead, a Mr Marks had a 10-acre paddock on which he grew hedge plums, wheat, and lucerne for a small herd of cattle. Sections in the annual Newstead Agricultural Society Show, that began in March 1859, reveal the variety of farming activities in the district: livestock, grain, hay, roots, vegetables, dairy produce, poultry, seed wheat and malting barley. At Guildford, Costantino and Gottardo Giovanetti opened a restaurant, fossicked for gold and practised intensive farming using 'every square metre of available soil, as was the custom in their native land.'¹¹ Ruth Rowe recalled that by the turn of the century many people at Fryerstown practised the principles of mixed farming on household gardens.¹²

Cultivation

The Land Acts required part of the selection to be improved by cultivation. Grain crops grown in the 1850s and 1860s included wheat, oats, maize and hay. Malting barley supplied local breweries. Hops was tried, but failed in the soil and climate. In the mid-twentieth century there was a slow change in stock feed from hay to grain. Less hay was required when horses and cattle were phased out. Grain was preferred because it was economical to harvest, store and distribute.¹³

Wheat

Wheat crops planted in the 1840s by pastoralists ensured self-sufficiency in flour. The first selectors, however, were market conscious from the beginning and grew wheat to meet demand for flour on the goldfields. In October 1854 eight farmers, who included Scotsmen George Annand and Alexander Brebner, established an agricultural community named Joyces Creek serviced by a blacksmith, wheelwright and a hotel. Wheat from their second harvest in 1856 was milled at a new mill at Newstead. Early high yields of consistent fine

⁹ Thomas Mackie, quoted by Forster, *The Central Goldfields*, p. 59.

¹⁰ Brown, *Reminiscences of Fryerstown*, p. 198; Sutherland and Whitworth, *Victoria and Its Metropolis*, vol. IIA, p. 259.

¹¹ Charles D'Aprano, *From Goldrush to Federation: Italian Pioneers in Victoria, 1850-1900* (Pascoe Vale South: INT Press, 1995), pp. 84-5.

¹² *NME*, 3 April 1907; Bradfield, *Newstead*, p. [17]; Rowe, *Fryerstown*, p. 5.

¹³ Barkla, 'Memories', p. 7.



Wool bales, Strathlea, 1940s
Newstead Historical Society Photographic Collection



Chinese Gardens, Vaughan
Newstead Historical Society Photographic Collection



Harry Atkin ploughing, near Newstead Butter Factory
Newstead Historical Society Photographic Collection



Timber Cow Stalls, Bassett's Dairy Farm, South Muckleford
Photograph Wendy Jacobs 1998

quality later declined as the soil became exhausted.¹⁴ Farmers learned to rotate their crops in time for the expansion of the industry in the 1870s when farms were larger due to amalgamations, more mechanised and the railway could transport wheat to the coast for export. Fluctuations in the price of wheat, however, bedevilled the industry. Dave Barkla recalled the price fell to 1s 8d a bushel in the early 1930s and bags cost 4s each.¹⁵ Wheat stabilisation schemes after 1939 brought order to wheat marketing and ensured the basis of a profitable industry.

Wool

Produced since the earliest days of settlement and a tradition in the Shire, wool was a major product until comparatively recently. Structures for wool production were established on many farms: wool sheds, sheep yards, shearers quarters and sheep dips. Itinerant shearers were part of farm life. George Duke visited the Barkla farm at South Muckleford in the late 1920s when he was aged about eighty. Other shearers were accompanied by untrained mongrel dogs that hassled the farm dogs and 'you couldn't leave the lunch less than 4 feet off the floor or they'd piss in it or pinch the tucker.'¹⁶ Fluctuation in the price of wool, from 1s a pound in the 1930s to £1 a pound in the early 1960s, and smaller properties when compared with major wool producers in the Western District, required diversification for economic survival. Few farmers grew wool exclusively.

Fat Lambs

It could be said that raising sheep for their mutton had its origin not so much in the pastoralists' drive for self-sufficiency, but in the first months of the gold rush when they sold their wool-producing flocks to diggers for food because of the dearth of shearers. An important component of mixed farming in the Shire, from east of Guildford to Joyces Creek, fat lamb production always was market driven, the sheep numbers determined by the relevant prices of wool and fat lambs, and farm carrying capacities.¹⁷

Dairying

Most families kept one or two cows for domestic use and small dairies were common.¹⁸ Thomas Knowles, at Fryerstown, built his dairy from stones, mud and gravel, and brick dairies survive at Yapeen. More often, farmers sank their dairies underground.¹⁹ Dairies had to be cool places where the milk was set out in basins to allow the cream to rise to the surface. It was then skimmed off and churned into butter for family consumption or into blocks of '5-lb salted' for sale at the market.²⁰ Swiss Italians like Costantino Tognacca, at Guildford, excelled at producing quality butter and cheese.

¹⁴ *NME*, 20 March 1907. For the 'extremely fine' quality grain of Castlemaine district, wheat judged better than from elsewhere in Australia and 'finer oats than Tasmanian exporters can supply', see the editorial in *MAM*, 8 April 1859.

¹⁵ Barkla, 'Memories', p. 3.

¹⁶ Barkla, 'Memories', pp. 1, 10.

¹⁷ For the maximum stocking rates at 'Point View' in the 1950s, see Barkla, 'Memories', p. 7.

¹⁸ A man named Schiles built a dairy at Campbells Creek before the gold rush. Winkleman, *Historical Sketch of Campbells Creek*, p. 3.

¹⁹ James, *Echoes of the Past*, p. 24; Rowe, *Fryerstown*, p. 5; D'Aprano, *From Goldrush to Federation*, pp. 61-2.

²⁰ Forster, *The Central Goldfields*, p. 61. Another method to obtain cream was to scald milk and peel the skin off the top. Ella Rabbage related a tragic accident with scalded milk at Yapeen: 'Mr. Tom Rabbage's grandmother was coming out from the kitchen carrying a big basin of scalded milk, and the little child was holding the door open for her while she came through. Just as she was getting near her, a puff of wind came

In the 1880s, two innovations provided the opportunity to increase the cottage industry in milk products and establish the basis for a dairy industry: the centrifugal cream separator and refrigeration. Farmers formed co-operatives and established creameries where the butter fat was separated and sent away by rail. The farmers fed the skim milk to their calves and soon found another use for it by raising pigs that became a profitable sideline.

Large dairy herds of forty to sixty cows became common in the 1890s. The introduction of the hand separator allowed farmers to collect cream on the farm and creameries were phased out; by 1907 'everybody who is anybody' had a separator.²¹ A butter factory opened at Newstead in 1905 when profitable local dairy production began in earnest. Farmers who had awaited developments decided to enlarge their dairy herds. The Anderson brothers on Park Hill Estate, Joyces Creek, announced in August 1910 that they were 'going in largely for dairying' by beginning with fifty cows and installing ten milking machines.²²

Dairying was profitable in the Shire for the next thirty years, but by the late 1940s beef cattle were more remunerative and the number of cows in dairy herds steadily decreased.²³ The butter factory, drawing its product from a wide area, closed in 1975 and the butter fat of the few surviving dairy farms, such as the Lovitts at Strathlea and the Franzis at Guildford, was sent elsewhere.

HORTICULTURE

Small-scale horticulture began during the pastoral period, but the activity expanded in scale during the gold rush as a useful adjunct to mining. By 1858 Chinese miners established market gardens along the Loddon River between Glenluce and Vaughan and sold their produce at Fryerstown. The gardens flourished, as Ruth Rowe recalled:

One beautiful garden was near Central Springs. Father sometimes bought rock melons or water melons for us there. We used to sit by the spring and watch the Chinese water their vegetables with water pots, tins and buckets as they had no hoses in those days. ... As children we were often afraid of the Chinese, especially when we had to pass close by them on our way to the shops. ... We came to know some of the Chinese gardeners and pedlars quite well. Ah Hoy ... [sometimes] would give us ginger. Ah Yu ... grew licorice root which he would give to the children.²⁴

By late 1860 some of the largest vegetable gardens in the Shire were laid out by Chinese beside Campbells Creek at Yapeen. The gardens were a feature of the township until the 1909 flood scoured them to a depth of four feet.²⁵ Three years later William Showell leased about four acres of his land to Sang Yick who restored production by raising carrots, parsnips, radish, beet root, turnips, swede, peas and beans, as well as small quantities of cabbage, cauliflower, lettuce and tomatoes. He sold his produce from a horse and cart that he drove around the district and at Castlemaine market.²⁶

Gardens not only were a source of food, they also symbolised civilisation and home. A correspondent at Fryerstown wrote in 1854: 'As a proof that the diggers in this district are, in general[,] satisfied with their gains everywhere tents may be seen enclosed with bush fences, and a "wee bit garden" under process of cultivation; the digger here seems much more settled than elsewhere.'²⁷ In this spirit Edward Rowe imported shrubs and trees

and blew the door up against the grandmother and the big basin of scalded milk went all over the child, resulting in her death.' Quoted in James, *Echoes of the Past*, p. 33.

²¹ A former resident in 1907, in *NME*, 6 November 1907.

²² *NME*, 17 August 1910.

²³ Forbes (comp.), *The Catchment of Cairn Curran Reservoir*, p. 45; Barkla, 'Memories', p. 11.

²⁴ Rowe, Fryerstown, pp. 5-6.

²⁵ Bradfield, *Campbells Creek*, p. 18; *MAM*, 21 August 1909.

²⁶ Bradfield, *Castlemaine*, p. 59; Item collected at Yapeen State School by Ross Suter, dated 26 November 1988, in NHS File: Chinese Residents; James, *Echoes of the Past*, p. 38.

²⁷ *MAM*, 26 August 1854.

from England for his new home in the township and he had his garden landscaped. W.H. Taafe at Guildford planted 300 fruit trees, 500 vines, 300 gooseberry trees and 8,000 roses.²⁸

Schools encouraged gardening. At Yapeen between 1913 and 1917, teacher Hugh McCaffrey and his students established a 'beautiful garden'. There were 'flowers as well as vegetables', including 'wheat, oats, pumpkin and carrots', and the school won prizes for its vegetables at the Castlemaine Show.²⁹

ORCHARDS AND VINES

Most householders kept vegetable gardens, a few fruit trees and one or two vines. However, these activities on a commercial scale required land and water. The Land Act of 1862 was one incentive. Clause 47 encouraged applicants to develop so-called 'novel industries', such as citrus fruits and vines.³⁰ A regular water supply, at least in the Shire's east, awaited supply of Coliban water in the 1870s.

Early orchardists made do with the little land and water available. In the early 1860s John Sainsbury was one of the first at Newstead to establish a garden and an orchard.³¹ Williamson's orchard at Sandon won awards at London's Great Exhibition. In the Yandoit district, the Gervasoni brothers experimented with vines. Swiss Italians, like Gaetano Minotti, established a vigneron tradition at Guildford and Italians like Carlo Barassi produced wine in commercial quantities. Shicer Gully was noted for its vineyards, while Yapeen orchardists grew 'Yapeen Favorite' apples, pears, peaches, mulberries, olives, figs and walnuts.³²

The orchards and vineyards for which Campbells Creek would be renowned were established in 1854. Charles Gross planted his orchard in 1855. William Wood, of 'The Digger's Store which he renamed 'The Vine', was one of the first to plant vines. Wood produced bunches weighing up to 12 lbs each and at one stage he sold a ton and a half of fruit with an 'abundance' remaining. William Hobby planted 20 acres of vines at the rear of his store which, together with the fruit trees he planted, were 'celebrated' throughout the district by the time he died in 1881. Fruit from J. Marriott's orchard won awards in England and his nursery provided cuttings for orchards at Harcourt. Other orchardists produced cherries. Orchards at Campbells Creek produced quality fruit for over fifty years until frosts damaged the trees and they were uprooted; some trees lasted until 1935.³³

Vineyards were established at several Shire locations later in the century and the wine industry revived. Newstead Winery began production in June 1994 in the former butter factory.³⁴

BEEKEEPING

Keeping bees was an activity carried out as a sideline to earn extra income. In 1907, the *Echo* encouraged the practice explaining it was a 'good industry, and one that involves but little labor. ... In favorable localities ... the apiarist leads an easy life all the year round.'³⁵

²⁸ Brown, *Reminiscences of Fryerstown*, p. 43; Bradfield (ed.), *Guildford*, p. 22.

²⁹ Mrs Munro, in James, *Echoes of the Past*, p. 12.

³⁰ Powell, *Public Lands*, pp. 90, 92.

³¹ *NME*, 31 July 1907.

³² Bride (comp.), *Letters From Victorian Pioneers*, p. 79; Gentilli, 'The Settlement of Swiss Ticino Immigrants in Australia', p. 68; D'Aprano, *From Goldrush to Federation*, pp. 83-4; Hilltop Cottage, brochure, SLV File: Guildford; James, *Echoes of the Past*, pp. 19-20.

³³ Winkleman, *Historical Sketch of Campbells Creek*, pp. 6-7; Bradfield, *Campbells Creek*, pp. 8-9; *MAM*, 30 September 1881.

³⁴ *Castlemaine Mail*, 9 June 1995.

³⁵ *NME*, 4 December 1907.

One itinerant bee keeper arrived at Newstead in the autumn of 1906 with 200 hives and in the spring departed with them for Wangaratta after harvesting fifteen tons of honey.³⁶ During the 1930s Depression Verne Hooper's father set up hives at Spring Gully for extra income and sold 60 lb tins of honey for £1 each. Thomas Smith kept bees in his orchard at Sandon and observed their behaviour which he reported in *The Australasian Bee Keeper* in 1928. Local farmers continued the practice. In 1976, Ken Pedretti owned hives valued at \$3,000.³⁷

FERTILISERS

The sandy loams common to much of the Shire are of indifferent fertility and were exhausted quickly by the selectors. They tried several methods to restore productivity, such as crop rotation and applications of milled bone. Before 1911 in Garibaldi Gully, Sandon, Tom Smith experimented successfully with crops of maize and lucerne grown with superphosphate.³⁸ These methods entered general farming practice from the 1930s onwards when subterranean clover fertilised with superphosphate went far towards soil regeneration. Farming techniques that relied on scientific knowledge of land use improved yields and almost doubled carrying capacities.³⁹

MECHANISATION

Pioneer farmers used traditional methods and technology to sow and harvest their grain crops. The work was labour intensive and justified only when prices were high. The introduction of new technology, however, enabled farmers to expand acreages and increase production.

Thomas Martin participated in the transition in the Newstead district in the early 1860s. Previously, and accompanied by a boy following behind with the seed, he hand-sowed harrowed ground for 6d an acre, covering about twenty-four acres a day. At harvest, a dozen contracted men used sickles to cut the grain stalks and tie them in sheaves. The introduction of machinery like the reaper, Martin wrote, 'done away with the sickel' and cut ten acres a day 'easily', and even more 'if they had a change of horses'.⁴⁰ Harvest workers continued to bind the stalks into sheaves and stooked them to dry. After a few days, a thresher and its complement of about eighty men arrived. The machine, powered by horses or steam, was parked beside the stooks and extracted grain from the ears and cleaned it, pouring the wheat into bags and shooting the straw into piles. Skilled straw stackers then used an elevator to stack the straw — it was 'the hottest job' — while other men sewed the bags. In the 1870s, a combined reaper and binder converted a crop into bagged wheat and sheaves bound with wire.⁴¹

Threshers, drawn at first by bullock teams, toured farms for almost ninety years, providing seasonal employment for local men. Muckleford farmer Samuel Woodman designed and built his thresher about 1858 and it was a familiar sight at Shire farms during harvest. He purchased an American machine and added improvements, and at different

³⁶ *NME*, 4 December 1907.

³⁷ Hooper, *Mining My Past*, p. 30; Culvenor, *Thomas Smith of Sandon*, pp. 5-6, 8; Francine Heagney, 'What Were the Effects From the Sandon Tornado?' Year 10 School Assignment, n.d., in NHS File: Tornado — Sandon, 1976, p. 9.

³⁸ Culvenor, *Thomas Smith of Sandon*, pp. 7-8.

³⁹ Barkla, 'Memories', p. 11.

⁴⁰ Although the stripper was invented in South Australia in the 1840s, it was not used south of the Divide in Victoria because the wheat stalks rarely were sufficiently dry and rigid in the comparatively moist climate. Instead, rotating blades on the American reaper cut the stalks at the base. J.B. Hirst, 'Farming', in Graeme Davison, J.W. McCarthy and Ailsa McLeary (eds), *Australians* (Broadway, NSW: Fairfax, Syme & Weldon Associates, 1987), vol. III, 1888, p. 156.

⁴¹ Martin, 'Writings', pp. 12-13; Priestley, *The Victorians*, vol. 3, p. 89.

times he operated steam-powered threshing plants.⁴² Woodman's competitors exemplify the expansion of grain-growing in the Shire: Walker, Munro, Jobson and Stewart at Newstead, and Westons at Guildford. Westons travelled extensively, as far north as Bendigo. Hector Weston, who toured for fifteen weeks with his father about 1900, earned over £53 in wages at 4d an hour.⁴³ Jobson's two steam-powered English machines established a new record on St Patrick's Day in 1864 when they threshed and dressed 1,529 bushels of wheat in eleven and a half hours.⁴⁴ Dave Barkla fondly recalled the improved threshers of the early 1930s — steam traction engines weighing almost twenty tons and operated by twelve men. He could 'almost smell the steam-oil-hot aroma of the old engines and again hear that unforgettable blast of the whistle 3 times a day'.⁴⁵ New machinery like harvesters and pick-up balers put threshers out of business; one of the last to operate was Westons in 1946.⁴⁶

The replacement of horses by tractors was made between 1920 and 1950. Dave Barkla's father moved the family onto his farm at South Muckleford in April 1925 and ploughed his land traditionally:

The soil was ploughed by 2 or 3 furrow mouldboard ploughs, drawn by 6 Clydesdale horses yoked tandem. My old Dad ploughed 120 acres of virgin ground, huge crabholes with 6 horses in a 2 furrow. Two acres a day was about average going. To level off the ground was a massive task, achieved by a 16ft x 7ft frame of 4in x 3in and 4in x 4in timber, drawn along by 6 draughts.⁴⁷

He soon bought a 4-furrow plough and a steel-wheeled McCormick tractor to pull it, speeding ploughing considerably. Bill Hamilton sold his horses after the drought in 1945 and bought a Fordson that he used to scoop his dams.⁴⁸

Machinery replaced agricultural labourers and horses, and reduced the necessity to grow oats, but it required investment and maintenance that helped turn farming into a major business. The transition was complete by the mid-twentieth century. A farmer and his small family maintained a farm many times the size of the first selectors' blocks using a fraction of the labour. After her marriage in the late 1950s Amanda Barkla shared in the work with her husband Dave on their 712-acre farm at South Muckleford where they raised their family:

... I learnt to handle the Fordson tractor. I made a few "blues" but I soon learnt by my mistakes. Driving with the header wasn't too bad but it was a different tale with the binder, I even learnt to sew bags and stook and toss a sheaf of hay. ... [W]hen things were a bit tough ... David and I decided to shear our own sheep. Oh boy, what fun the first year. We took ages to get them shorn. Twenty five a day and we were both flat out all day. We took our two youngest to the shed ... The little ones used to curl up in the wool for their sleep.⁴⁹

SOLDIER SETTLEMENT

The principle of fostering the settlement of the yeoman farmer, one of the guiding lights of the Land Acts of the 1860s, was revived during the first world war to assist the repatriation of volunteer soldiers.⁵⁰ In 1920 and 1921 the Soldier Settlement Board bought 10,000

⁴² Jenny Bottcher and Evelyn Pavlis, 'Remarks Relating to the Woodman Family of Muckleford' in NHS File: Woodman; Sutherland and Whitworth, *Victoria and Its Metropolis*, vol. IIA, p. 263.

⁴³ Rilen in Bradfield (ed.), *Guildford*, pp. 4-6.

⁴⁴ Bradfield, *Newstead*, p. [7].

⁴⁵ Barkla, 'Memories', p. 2.

⁴⁶ Rilen in Bradfield (ed.), *Guildford*, p. 6.

⁴⁷ Barkla, 'Memories', p. 1.

⁴⁸ Barkla, 'Memories', p. 3; Hamilton, 'Recollections', p. [24].

⁴⁹ Mandy Barkla, 'My Life at Point View', MS, in NHS File: Barkla, pp. 2-3.

⁵⁰ Marilyn Lake, *The Limits of Hope: Soldier Settlement in Victoria, 1915-38* (Melbourne: OUP, 1987), Chapters 1 and 2.

acres of the *Glengower* estate. Blocks of equal value, but of varying size, were allocated to ex-Digger applicants. The first to be settled on the Glengower Soldier Settlement Estate were Jim and Ted White and they were followed by about fifteen others. About 1927, the Strathlea Road was improved, a section at a time. The soldier settlers encountered many of the problems of the selectors over sixty years earlier. The experience was sufficiently disheartening for seven men to depart and be replaced by the board.⁵¹

THE VICISSITUDES OF LIFE ON THE LAND

Weeds and Pests

Increasing awareness of the problems posed by introduced plants and animals accompanied the change in land use from mining to agriculture. Thistle, ‘a troublesome weed’ in 1857, spread along Campbells Creek threatening to become ‘an impenetrable scrub’ on the flats and an ‘evil’ in the district. An enterprising Campbells Creek brewer made beer from horehound leaves, but other weeds were not recycled as easily. As late as 1993 at Sandon there were infestations of St John’s wort thistle and blackberries.⁵²

Weeds spread despite earnest control measures. A government ‘eradicator’ at Campbells Creek was ineffectual because money to employ more men was unavailable. Newstead Shire Council took a firm stand by employing a thistle inspector who prosecuted landowners under the Thistle Act — until he was retrenched in 1875 due to lack of funds.⁵³

Caterpillars destroyed crops flooded by the Loddon in July 1864 less than three days after the water subsided. The ‘sparrow pest’ was so bad in July 1887 that Council demanded legislation to force people to destroy them ‘by poison or otherwise.’ In 1905, rabbits and mice were in plague proportions. Mice at Sandon were ‘playing sad havoc with haystacks’ and were ‘climbing the apple trees and eating the fruit.’ Thousands of rabbits were destroyed in a ‘weekly holocaust [*sic*]’ by trapping or by being yarded and killed in enclosures. The work earned some men up to £4 a week in skins, but with no apparent effect on the rodent’s numbers.⁵⁴

Bill Hamilton experienced pests on his parents’ farm at Sandon and, after 1932, on his 300-acre farm at South Muckleford. He combated rabbits by trapping them for their fur in the 1920s and for food in the 1930s until the introduction of the poison 1080. He also contended with blow-fly strike in 1927 and grasshoppers that in one day in 1936 ate a ten-acre paddock of lucerne until ‘there was nothing left. They even ate the roots.’ Twenty years later foxes and stray dogs capable of killing forty lambs a night forced him to yard his lambing ewes in the woolshed to increase the percentage of lambs reared.⁵⁵

Natural disasters: droughts, floods and bushfires

European settlers appreciated only slowly that natural disasters were a normal product of the region’s climate and topography. Droughts of particular severity occurred in 1861-62, 1902, 1907-08, 1914, 1944-45, 1957-58, 1967-68 and 1983. Images of drought were indelible. ‘We had to light the lamp at three o’clock in the afternoon because we could not see inside for the red Mallee dust’, recalled Edgar Ramsey of the 1902 drought, ‘it was the worst one I remember’. Dead cattle ‘stuck in the mud’ of the dry Loddon at Glenluce in 1914 left ‘an everlasting impression’ on 7-year-old George Brown. In the summer of

⁵¹ Lewis, ‘Strathlea’, pp. 2, 7;.

⁵² *MAM*, 25 December 1857, 10 January 1862; Bradfield, *Campbells Creek*, p. 47; *Midland Express*, 6 April 1993. For stinkwort spreading at Yapeen in 1910, see *NME*, 26 January 1910.

⁵³ *NME*, 1 April 1908, 27 May 1908, 1 July 1908.

⁵⁴ Powell, *Public Lands*, p. 114; *NME*, 12 April 1905, 19 April 1905, 7 October 1908.

⁵⁵ Hamilton, ‘Recollections’, pp. [21, 25].

1944-45, Bill Hamilton fed reject apples and wheat grain to his starving sheep and he resolved to build more catchment dams on his property.⁵⁶

As the years passed the number of severe floods increased. Their regularity had one curious effect at Yapeen: householders installed slate floors, or they scrubbed bare boards white, because floodwaters ruined floor coverings. When John Williamson arrived at Newstead in the 1850s, however, he lived on the Loddon's west bank 'without being endangered by floods, although the river was very high at times'. He attributed 'big floods' to silting of the river bed by mining, an observation confirmed by a mining engineer in 1906.⁵⁷ The following year the *Bulletin* reported: 'Some of the poor farmers at Newstead have placed themselves in such a position that they are afraid to pray for rain lest the Lord should harken [*sic*] to their petition and flood them out.'⁵⁸ Particularly heavy floods occurred in 1855, 1860, 1868, 1870, 1889, 1906, 1909, 1934, 1973 and 1983. The worst struck on the night of 19-20 August 1909 when torrential rain dumped 307 points onto the Shire, 141 points of it in an hour and a half. The Loddon swelled to a raging torrent, washing away roads, bridges and fences from Fryerstown to Joyces Creek. For days afterwards everything was at a standstill. Roads and tracks became impassable. Ballast sluiced from the railway line made it unsafe for trains and, in any case, the railway bridge at Strangways subsided, while the one at Joyces Creek was destroyed. A newspaper reporter wrote: 'All that country between the Loddon and Fryers Creek is under water, being an inland sea, as far as the eye can reach.' Nobody, including survivors of the previous worst flood in January 1889, had experienced anything like it.⁵⁹

Windstorms, although rare, were another challenge posed by nature. Edgar Ramsey recalled one that struck on an afternoon in 1902: 'One of my brother's [*sic*] was standing behind the door which burst open and knocked him flying under the table, blew the fire up the chimney and it took four of us to shut the door again and hold it there. By that time one end of the house was pushed out about six inches; frightened hell out of us all.'⁶⁰ A tornado provided the worst experience when it struck Sandon from the north-west on the afternoon of 13 November 1976 and devastated the countryside. Winds travelling an estimated 450 km/h knocked over trees 'like match sticks', wrecked fences, shattered windows and killed a couple sheltering in a car.⁶¹

A combination of high temperatures, and tinder dry grass and scrub often resulted in widespread bushfires. Alfred Joyce recalled fires that neared *Plaistow* during the hot, dry summer of 1845-46.⁶² The benchmark for devastation and ruin, however, was 'Black Thursday', 6 February 1851, when the 'roar of flames may be said to have been heard throughout the land' and parched leaves and ashes fluttered onto decks of sailing ships fifty miles out at sea.⁶³ Closer settlement resulted in more fires caused by house fires spreading to neighbouring scrub or by discarded bottles.⁶⁴ During Christmas 1857 twenty-one bushfires blazed for over a week. A correspondent at Campbells Creek wrote:

⁵⁶ Ramsey, 'Memories', p. 9; Brown, *Reminiscences of Fryerstown*, p. 195; Hamilton, 'Recollections', p. [24].

⁵⁷ *NME*, 10 April 1907; Ellis, 'History of Newstead', p. 2. Another pioneer had a different recollection: 'The river in winter was a raging torrent, and often overflowed its banks. It is stated that the water has reached up to where Mr. C. Atkin's residence now stands, showing that danger from floods was as great then as now.' *NME*, 27 March 1907.

⁵⁸ Quoted in *NME*, 23 January 1907.

⁵⁹ James, *Echoes of the Past*, p. 24; Brown, *Reminiscences of Fryerstown*, p. 169. For reports of the flood, see *MAM*, 20-23 August 1909 and *NME*, 27 August 1909.

⁶⁰ Ramsey, 'Memories', p. 9.

⁶¹ Judith Culvenor, in Heagney, 'Sandon Tornado', pp. 8-9. A cyclone struck Sandon and Strangways in January 1897. *NME*, 9 January 1897.

⁶² James (ed.), *A Homestead History*, pp. 65-6.

⁶³ Adcock, *The Gold Rushes*, p. 20; Jenkins, *Diary of a Welsh Swagman*, p. 139.

⁶⁴ '[T]he bottom of an ordinary glass bottle may act as a focus, and concentrate such an amount of heat on small dry sticks as to ignite them, and thus originate a large conflagration.' *MAM*, 25 December 1857.

The heavens glowed like a furnace in the directions of the fires and presented an awful appearance. ... By a slight effort of the imagination, it would be easy to fancy oneself in the centre of a vast manufacturing district, with innumerable furnaces vomiting forth from their stony throats dense volumes of undecomposed carbon.⁶⁵

The real threat of summer bushfires became part of people's lives. Major conflagrations were infrequent, especially after the forming of rural fire brigades during the second world war. Guildford Brigade member Frank Passalacqua recalled fires that burned 'for days'.⁶⁶ One of the worst occurred in 1969 when a fire swept through Campbelltown.⁶⁷

LANDCARE

The Sandon-Werona Farm Advance Landcare Group was established in 1992. The group's objective was to learn how to identify problem areas and use appropriate control measures; plant trees; control erosion, especially by controlling rabbits; improve pasture by setting up trial sites with appropriate sowing methods and various pasture species; and controlling weeds such as blackberries and St John's Wort thistle.⁶⁸

CULTURAL LANDSCAPE

Over 140 years of agricultural practice has left its mark on the rural landscape in cleared paddocks, catchment dams with windmills, fences and clusters of farm buildings. Clearing dramatically increased soil erosion. The 'delicately poised gully banks, great blocks of which can be pushed down with one's foot', that Ian Forbes saw in the late 1940s are in many paddocks.⁶⁹ Stone fences, a collection of fruit trees or a solitary chimney mark the site of a farmhouse. At Strathlea, Tullys Gully and Carrs Creek are named after pioneer families, as are lanes named from adjoining land owners, such as Luxfords Lane and Mezzinis Lane.⁷⁰ On many properties early farm machinery is parked out of the way, rusting slowly in the open. In some areas, such as Green Gully, the farm complex was abandoned for modern buildings erected nearby. The original farmhouse, smithy, dairy, generator hut, and stables and machinery sheds constructed from local timber, remain as tangible remnants of the enterprise and ingenuity displayed by several generations devoted to the pursuit of farming.

⁶⁵ *MAM*, 25 December 1857.

⁶⁶ *Castlemaine Mail*, 13 December 1996, p. 5.

⁶⁷ Ramsey, 'Memories', p. 25.

⁶⁸ *Midland Express*, 6 April 1993.

⁶⁹ Forbes (comp.), *The Catchment of Cairn Curran Reservoir*, p. 56.

⁷⁰ Lewis, 'Strathlea', p. 6.

9. SECONDARY INDUSTRY

Secondary industry was carried out on the pastoral holdings with the production of butter and cheese, the treatment of hides and the milling of wheat. The gold rush created a need for a range of services, some connected with the mining industry, others with the growth of townships and the expansion of agriculture. The blacksmith's forge was crucial to any town. It was the centrepiece of services connected with horse care and the manufacture of tools, implements and vehicles. Cribbes Flat was named after the local blacksmith, 'the sound of [his] hammer as he worked on horse shoes or other jobs on his anvil, would ring all around Spring Gully.'¹ Bakeries and butcher shops were other essential services. Other early secondary industries established in the Shire included breweries, aerated waters factories, flour milling, chaff cutting, brick making, coach building, butter production and, later, clothing manufacture. Extractive industries related to forestry, such as timber cutting and charcoal production, began as services to the mining industry.²

The transition from mining to agriculture, and changing technology, marked the demise of many industries and the creation of new ones. Smithies, for instance, converted to motor vehicle garages and fewer were required. Improved transportation and marketing caused the phasing out of local butcher's shops and bakeries. What once was manufactured locally was brought in by rail or road from larger centres. While these changes were, and continue to be, economic realities they effectively contributed to the reduction of the number of township services and decline in population.

MANUFACTURING

Breweries

As early as March 1852 Fryers Creek was notorious for its 'sly grog selling'.³ Vigorous policing was tried, but the Licensing Act of 1853 proved more effective by making licenses valuable: £100 for a public house, £50 for a wine and spirit license, £30 for a tent that could sell only ale and porter.⁴ This and the high cartage costs from suppliers in Melbourne presented an opportunity for local businessmen. It is not surprising that among the first brewers were hotel proprietors.

There were at least thirty-five breweries in the Colony when Wheelers Brewery began production on Winters Flat, Campbells Creek, probably late in 1855. It was named the Phoenix by 1858 and shortly afterwards the Standard, the name by which it is best known. The Standard Brewery was profitable in its early years. The owners bought the Bath Arms Hotel and renamed it the Standard. They erected a new brewery in 1862 and the manager forwarded a cask of ale to newspapermen in Melbourne. The response came in lines of doggerel in *Punch*:

I feel I ail less each glass,
Fresh health as I drink it comes o'er me!

¹ Hooper, *Mining My Past*, p. 7.

² *Resources Survey: Central Highlands Region*, pp. 21-2.

³ La Trobe to Grey, 2 March 1852, in Clark, *Select Documents*, vol. 2, p. 31.

⁴ Brown, *Reminiscences of Fryerstown*, p. 83.

I seek not for Byass or Bass
With beer of this Standard before me.⁵

Despite this dubious seal of approval, the Standard encountered financial difficulties by 1863 and it was auctioned. The new owners, a group of Castlemaine businessmen, modernised the plant and resumed production.⁶

Wheeler's competition was FitzGerald's Brewery at Castlemaine and within a year another competitor entered the market. Benjamin Edhouse opened a brewery near his store and inn at Bald Hill near Vaughan in 1856, advertising his ale and porter at £7 a hogshead. Orders flooded in. Having tested the market he extended the premises, named it the Loddon Brewery and in 1857 resumed production. Edhouse's gamble paid off. The brewery flourished for the next four or five years. Edhouse strived for perfection in the art of brewing. He experimented, unsuccessfully, with cultivating hops and he offered a gold medal for the best malting barley at the Newstead Agricultural Society Show in 1860.⁷

The Standard and Loddon breweries were followed by seven others: Shepherd's (renamed the Victoria in 1864), on Shepherds Flat, and the Alliance, at Fryerstown, both in 1858; the Belle Vue, near Fryerstown, in May 1861; Walders at Fryerstown, in August 1862; and three more at Campbells Creek, Anderson's (renamed Kinkeads and later the Imperial), McBride's, and the Crown. Most of these breweries had ceased production by the 1880s. The market had declined and larger competitors at Castlemaine, Ballarat and Melbourne provided inexpensive ale by rail.⁸

As well as manufacturing, the breweries had a social role. They joined with the hotels in organising sports programmes on public holidays. The Belle Vue's upper storey was the venue for the MUIOOF's annual ball. After 1869, the building was used for a year as a school, then as an entertainment centre known as Walders Concert Room that had a stage and seating for an audience of up to four hundred.⁹

Softdrink

One of the first businesses at Golden Point, Forest Creek, was 'a ginger beer establishment'.¹⁰ A range of drinks was produced locally — ginger beer, aerated waters and cordials. Paulson and Stanton bought the Shakespeare Hotel at Campbells Creek about 1855 and converted it to a factory that produced ginger beer and cordial for more than sixty years. Two other cordial and aerated waters factories in the township were owned by C. Archer, and Coombes and O'Keefe. By 1860 at Vaughan, Rodgers' Aerated Waters Factory was in a sandstone building with a cellar and near the bridge was a cordial factory. About the same time at Newstead a hotel proprietor named Allen opened a ginger beer factory that regularly won prizes for its products at the Newstead Show. By 1880, a factory owned by R. Marks produced soda water in the township.¹¹

⁵ Quoted by Bradfield, *Campbells Creek*, p. 46.

⁶ Winkleman, *Historical Sketch of Campbells Creek*, p. 10; Bradfield, *Campbells Creek*, pp. 6, 16, 44, 47; Flett, *Old Pubs*, p. 14.

⁷ Brown, *Reminiscences of Fryerstown*, p. 94; Bradfield, *Campbells Creek*, p. 46; Bradfield, *Newstead*, p. [17]; Bradfield, *Castlemaine and District Tours*, pp. 37, 52.

⁸ Brown, *Reminiscences of Fryerstown*, pp. 90, 92, 95-6, 97-8, 120-1; Bradfield, *Campbells Creek*, p. 47. Joseph Day, the former lessee of the Newstead punt, reputedly built a brewery in 1862 on the site of his bakery in Lyons Street. For some reason the brewery never went into production. Day converted the building into the Ship Inn, which later became the Crown Hotel. According to a pioneer in 1907, Day's original intention for the building survives in 'the queer little upstairs room which juts up from the roof.' *NME*, 24 April 1907, 31 July 1907; Bradfield, *Newstead*, p. [14].

⁹ Brown, *Reminiscences of Fryerstown*, pp. 90, 95-8, 120-1; Blake, *Vision and Realisation*, vol. 2, pp. 626, 638.

¹⁰ Melbourne *Argus*, 14 February 1852, quoted by Bannear, 'Historic Mining Sites', p. 2.

¹¹ Winkleman, *Historical Sketch of Campbells Creek*, p. 10; Bradfield, *Campbells Creek*, pp. 5, 45, 47; *Victorian Municipal Directory* (1914), p. 541; James, *Echoes of the Past*, p. 56; Bradfield, *Castlemaine and*

Soap

Early in 1868, in a tunnel of the Ajax mine at Campbells Creek, Alfred, Duke of Edinburgh, watched men mine gold-bearing quartz by the light of hundreds of candles. At Forest Creek in October 1852 a candle cost 1s 6d, as much as a pound of ‘very scarce’ sugar. Soap, too, was scarce. Apart from domestic use, soap mixed with camphor made ‘opodeldoc’, a liniment for the treatment of bruises, that in 1854 cost 3d an ounce in England, but between 3s and 5s an ounce on the goldfields. Tallow was used to grease machinery.¹²

William Spinks and Samuel R. Suffern met the great demand for tallow products. In August 1855, they established a soap and candle factory at Guildford on the flat behind the present post office. It was the first secondary industry in the township and it prospered. Spinks and Suffern formally dissolved their partnership on 31 May 1858 and Spinks took on a new partner, Israel Kirkpatrick, a 25-year-old soap-maker from Belfast, Ireland.¹³

Castlemaine merchants Beckingsales opened a branch of their store at Guildford in August 1862 and soon afterwards bought the soap factory. Beckingsales increased production and successfully marketed their leading product Guildford Soap throughout the colony. There was one setback, in 1909, when floodwaters five feet deep swirled through the building, washing away 20 tons of salt, damaging soda in the vats and flinging large barrels of tallow around the yard. The *Mount Alexander Mail* ran headlines: ‘GUILDFORD WASHED OUT — WITH SOAP’, ‘AMONGST THE SOAP AND SODA’, and ‘DISSOLUTION OF SALT’. Beckingsales recovered, but in 1937, after eighty-two years in production, the factory closed.¹⁴

Brickyards

Alfred Joyce noted in 1847 after viewing a neighbour’s new stone home, ‘we must find some easier and cheaper method — clay bats, or bricks, or something of that kind’. The Joyce brothers chose bricks and by 1862 *Plaistow* had a ‘Substantially built’ homestead in brick.¹⁵

Bricks were expensive and in short supply until local brickyards opened. The bricks in Campbells Creek’s first brick building, the John O’Groats Hotel, cost £1 each. D. Kenny advertised in February 1856 that he had 50,000 bricks ‘of the first quality for Sale, and ready for delivery in a few days.’ With bricks supplied by T. Ford and J. Gilmore, the number of brick buildings in the township increased.¹⁶ Bricks carted to Fryerstown in the 1850s cost an exorbitant £5 15s a thousand. About 1858, local diggers George Williams and John Martin formed a partnership and opened a brickyard that provided both employment and ‘progress in the right direction’. Their bricks cost no more than £3 a

District Tours, pp. 38, 41; Martin, ‘Writings’, p. 3; *Baillière’s Victorian Gazeteer* (1865), pp. 280-1; Bradfield, *Newstead*, p. [8]; *Victorian Municipal Directory* (1880), p. 207.

¹² Bradfield, *Campbells Creek*, pp. 5, 48; Mrs Charles Clacy, *A Lady’s Visit to the Gold Diggings of Australia in 1852-53* (Patricia Thompson (ed.), Melbourne: Lansdowne Press, 1963), p. 98; William Howitt in 1854, in Crowley, *A Documentary History of Australia*, vol. 2, p. 244.

¹³ Colin Kirkpatrick (comp.), ‘Kirkpatrick Family Tree’ (MS, September 1988, in NHS File: Kirkpatrick), p. 1; Rilen, ‘Industries in Guildford’, in Bradfield (ed.), *Guildford*, p. 4, and see p. 50; *MAM*, 2 June 1858.

¹⁴ Text in a display about Beckingsales at Castlemaine Art Gallery; *MAM*, 21 August 1909.

¹⁵ Alfred Joyce to his parents, letter, 8 June 1847, in James (ed.), *A Homestead History*, p. 67n, and see pp. 190, 194; *Tarrengower Times*, 16 May 1862; *MAM*, 16 May 1862.

¹⁶ Brick buildings at Campbells Creek between 1856 and 1858 included the first Primitive Methodist Church, Hobby and Husted’s store front, Caigon’s Dispensary and house, Duffy’s cottage, Stevens’ house and ‘The Digger’s Store’. Winkleman, *Historical Sketch of Campbells Creek*, pp. 6, 14; Bradfield, *Campbells Creek*, pp. 6-7, 44.

thousand and production continued long after 1879 when ‘Bricky’ Martin became the sole proprietor.¹⁷

Flour Mills

After the sales of Crown land at Joyces Creek in 1854, the production of grain awakened the need for local flour mills. Three built at nearby Newstead became ‘a feature’ of the township.¹⁸

In 1856, D.E. Johnstone and Company built a mill at the Junction, on the corner of the Joyces Creek and Maryborough roads. A man named Alcock, later a billiard table manufacturer, bought it and then sold it to John Blyth in 1859. Blyth appointed Christopher Jobson manager and the mill became a familiar landmark in the 1860s. In 1869, it burned to the ground along with Jobson’s residence in a spectacular fire.¹⁹

John Kyd, a Scottish immigrant, and his partner James Mackie, a former shepherd and a digger at Fryers Creek, opened a general store at the Junction in 1857 that survives as a private home. They also owned a 340-acre farm where they grew oats, wheat and hay. In 1859, they built beside their store a bluestone flour mill with a distinctive tall, round, brick chimney stack. The partnership subsequently dissolved, Mackie taking the store and land, and Kyd the mill. Fire badly damaged the building in 1866 and again in 1879, then destroyed it about 1882. The chimney stack remained until it was felled about 1906. The bricks and most of the foundation stones were used in the new Methodist Church completed in September 1907.²⁰

The Victoria Flour Mill was erected in Layard Street early in 1869 by James Sheehan whose brothers owned flour mills at Kyneton, Dunolly and Avoca. The mill complex comprised a three-storeyed bluestone structure, bluestone stables and a residence in brick with bluestone foundations and flagging. While an engineer installed the steam-powered machinery and three pairs of stones, the enterprising Sheehan started filling the floors with wheat. Soon afterwards, a fire started in the mill and spread to a shed filled with wheat; the buildings were saved only by a hastily organised bucket brigade.²¹ For almost forty years Sheehan’s mill processed all types of grain and made several kinds of meal. He had it repaired and improved between 1883 and 1885, but, in July 1907, after Sheehan died, it was put up for auction but failed to reach the reserve. The fittings and the roof were sold in 1914 and the shell stood derelict for almost sixty years. In the mid-1970s, an entrepreneur bought the building and had it renovated. It re-opened as The Lion and Piper Restaurant. Today the building is a private home.²²

The only other mill in the Shire was at Guildford. In 1862, T. Oscroft advertised that he owned a steam chaff cutting and corn bruising mill in the township where oats, maize and wheat could be crushed at 4d a bushel.²³

¹⁷ Winkleman, *Historical Sketch of Campbells Creek*, p. 6; *Records of the Castlemaine Pioneers*, p. 166; *MAM*, 22 February 1856; Brown, *Reminiscences of Fryerstown*, pp. 142-3; Errington, ‘A History of Fryerstown Postal Services’, p. 6.

¹⁸ A former resident in 1907, quoted in *NME*, 6 November 1907.

¹⁹ *NME*, 3 April 1907, 3 July 1907; Bradfield, *Newstead*, p. [5]; Lewis and Peggy Jones, *The Flour Mills of Victoria, 1840-1990: An Historical Record* (Flour Millers’ Council of Victoria, 1990), pp. 155-6.

²⁰ *NME*, 24 April 1907, 6 November 1907, 2 September 1908; Sutherland and Whitworth, *Victoria and Its Metropolis*, vol. II, p. 261; Bradfield, *Newstead*, pp. [6, 54]; Jones, *Flour Mills*, p. 156.

²¹ Martin, ‘Writings’, p. 6.

²² *MAM*, 8 January 1869, 27 April 1869; *NME*, 7 August 1907; *Victorian Municipal Directory* (1880), p. 207; Brian Sheehan, letter, dated 28 February 1996, in NHS File: Sheehan; Bradfield, *Newstead*, pp. [6, 30]; Jones, *Flour Mills*, p. 156; *Age*, 19 July 1975, 10 December 1983 (Real Estate section).

²³ *MAM*, 22 August 1862. The evidence for Oscroft’s mill is slender and little is known about it. Local historian Raymond Bradfield wrote in a letter in 1988: ‘To the best of my knowledge, there was no mill, or proposal to erect one, at Guildford.’ See Jones, *Flour Mills*, p. 158.



Newstead Flour Mill
Newstead Historical Society Photographic Collection



Newstead Butter Factory
Newstead Historical Society Photographic Collection



Former Cordial factory,
Midland Highway, Campbells Creek
Photograph Wendy Jacobs 1998



Givoni Mills
Lyons Street, Newstead
Photograph Wendy Jacobs 1998

Biscuits

Alexander McPhee established a large biscuit factory near the Loddon Leads Hotel at the Junction, Newstead, in December 1862. He imported the latest steam-powered machinery from the US that processed two tons of mixture a day. It produced biscuits in any desirable shape, each batch taking ten minutes to cook. McPhee boasted he could supply 'the widest variety of biscuits always available, in any quantity, for the Trade, wholesale or retail' and the biscuits competed well 'with the imported article'. Local baker William Sutherland bought the factory from McPhee early in 1865. Sutherland expanded the range of products by baking bread and making confectionary. Continuing the tradition of using American technology he ordered a 'stylish' delivery cart with leather suspension from the Cobb & Co. coach factory at Castlemaine. The biscuit factory had ceased production by 1895.²⁴

Creameries

The creation of a local dairy industry from a cottage industry in milk products was due to two factors. The first, was government encouragement after 1888 in the form of subsidies to co-operative dairies and bounties on butter exports. The second, was new technology. The centrifugal cream separator, a Swedish invention, produced 50 per cent more cream in hot weather than the traditional method of settling. Farmers formed co-operatives and established creameries. By 1894, the Sandon Creamery, operated by Das Rowe, was at the farm of the Shire Secretary, J.C. House. Rowe tested the cream for its butter fat content and then sent it by rail to Melbourne or to the butter factory that opened at Kyneton in 1891. The journey was made possible by refrigeration, another innovation promoted by the government after 1888. The introduction of the hand separator, however, made creameries unnecessary because farmers could separate the cream on their farms and send it to the butter factory.²⁵

Butter factories

Butter factories improved butter production by setting uniform standards and establishing consistent quality. A butter factory reputedly operated at Guildford in the 1890s.²⁶ In 1902, Frederick Nomens proposed a co-operative factory for Newstead. His idea lay moribund until 1904 when a farmer decided to establish his own factory. Nomens' proposal was revived in the Newstead Co-operative Butter and Cheese Factory Co. Ltd that issued 2,000 shares at £1 each. The factory began production on 17 June 1905.

The company supplied local markets as well as exporting overseas. The government freezing works classified Newstead butter 'superfine' and first class. In London, after the company exported 115,750 lbs, it was judged 'very fine quality butter indeed'. The factory developed a reputation for fair dealing and good prices. By July 1907 the number of suppliers increased to 410, some from as far away as Donald and Birchip. The steady increase in production over two years wore out the machinery, so the directors installed new and larger plant and output increased from nine to fifteen tons a week. Even at this rate the company supplied less than a fifth of its orders. Its future prospects appeared bright with the promise of 'unlimited expansion' in exports to Britain.²⁷

Newstead prospered. Suppliers were paid fortnightly so they had ready cash to spend. Land values increased. On Park Hill estate, land that cost £9 15s an acre in 1902 was worth more than £20 an acre five years later and the rise was attributed to the butter

²⁴ MAM reports in Bradfield, *Newstead*, pp. [5-6]; *Baillière's Victorian Gazetteer* (1865), pp. 280-1; *Victorian Municipal Directory* (1880), p. 207, (1901), p. 473; *NME*, 3 July 1907; 'Back To Newstead' (1968), p. 16.

²⁵ Hirst, 'Farming', pp. 163, 164; Sandon Creamery (leaflet prepared by NHS) in NHS File: Sandon.

²⁶ Bradfield (ed.), *Guildford*, p. 24.

²⁷ MAM, 18 July 1907; *NME*, 9 January 1907, 27 May 1908.

factory.²⁸ The *Echo* wrote in January 1907: ‘Our butter factory is earning so much money that the directors seem at a loss what to do with it.’

Previously we looked to the mines to make things [move], but they have been a dead letter. The butter factory has been the mainstay of the town and district without doubt. Close on £20,000 has been paid during the past six months to dairymen and trade in a good many branches in the town has felt its beneficent influence. There is hardly a house vacant at present and soon we will see a new brick Methodist church and a brick shire hall in course of erection.²⁹

Even in the 1908 drought, that halved dairy herds and the butter factory’s profits, the directors paid shareholders a dividend of 6 per cent, a bonus of £10 to employees and £96 to suppliers.³⁰

Farmers gradually reduced their dairy herds in the late 1940s in favour of beef cattle. In 1965, the factory won the Victoria Shield by topping its section, Butter Class 9, against Longwarry and Trafalgar. The number of suppliers continued to fall and in 1967 the amount of butter fat supplied was three per cent less than when the factory opened. Production ceased in 1975 and the building became a depot.³¹

Leather Products

Alfred Joyce believed a blacksmith and a shoe-maker were essential on *Plaistow*, ‘one to shoe the man, the other his beast’.³² A similar thought occurred to Alexander McLean and George Levi Carter who both noticed a market for footwear among thousands of diggers on the gold fields. McLean, a shoemaker from Inverness Shire, Scotland, opened his shoemaking business at Spring Gully after May 1852 and operated it for the rest of his life.³³ Carter established his boot factory at Fryerstown in 1853. Several years later he sailed to London and bought the latest in leather-working machinery. He demolished the factory building and its attached residence and erected new buildings in 1870 that survive in the township. In the late 1960s, the Swan Hill Pioneer Settlement bought his machinery and made it part of a static display.³⁴

A Polish immigrant couple named Givoni established a work room at Newstead Mechanics’ Institute in 1947 and employed Ron Passalaqua, of Guildford, to make leather gloves. Orders increased and the Givonis eventually employed twelve glove-makers. The factory moved to Castlemaine in 1967.³⁵

Other Industries

Richard Rowe, a carpenter and wheelwright from Cornwall, opened a blacksmith’s shop at Joyces Creek in 1859. Within a few years he bought William Ibbotson’s smithy on the north-east corner of Lyons and Panmure Streets, Newstead, and began building vehicles — buggies, coaches and wagons. The business was profitable and lasted almost fifty years. When Rowe retired, his sons William and Thomas took over the business as W. and T. Rowe. They sold it to Hawkey and Skate in April 1908 and the new owners continued the coach building tradition. About 1920-21, they built a ‘big waggon’ for the Barkla family,

²⁸ *NME*, 9 January 1907, 23 January 1907.

²⁹ *NME*, 9 January 1907. See also a summary of the company’s financial success over two and a half years in *NME*, 12 February 1908. Each half-year showed a profit.

³⁰ *NME*, 22 July 1908.

³¹ *G & N Co-operator*, 6 May 1965, p. 1; ‘Back to Newstead’ (1968), p. 36.

³² James (ed.), *A Homestead History*, p. 92.

³³ Brown, *Reminiscences of Fryerstown*, p. 157.

³⁴ Brown, *Reminiscences of Fryerstown*, pp. 145-6; Joe Blake, Education Officer, Swan Hill Pioneer Settlement, letter to the author, 11 August 1998.

³⁵ *Castlemaine Mail*, 7 May 1993. Peg McMahon, ‘Fashion that started with gloves’, unsourced and undated newspaper clipping in NHS File: Givoni.

of South Muckleford. Some of Hawkey and Skate's vehicles survive in the district. A 'Fairy' buggy restored in the 1970s was exhibited at the Castlemaine Market Museum. The business, meanwhile, was sold to Harold Rintoul. The building was demolished in the 1930s.³⁶

Other local industries included a tannery attached to a store at Fryers Creek in 1853 owned by Michaelis Hallenstein, Cunnack's Tannery at Campbells Creek in the 1860s, and a paint factory at Newstead that lasted until the 1930s. Thomas Goodridge's proposal in 1884 for an explosives factory at Newstead probably never went beyond the planning stage.³⁷

FORESTRY

The Shire's forests today are medium-aged and young, which suggests their exploitation by people and destruction by bushfires in the past.³⁸ The 'patches of Fine timber' that Stapylton saw in the Shire in 1836 were used during the gold rush for pit props, shaft linings, poppet heads, firewood and buildings, or they were cleared for agriculture. By 1881, 74 per cent of people's homes in the Shire were constructed of wood.³⁹

William Westgarth viewed timber as a 'prime necessity of life and business', but when he visited Castlemaine in 1857 he was surprised to learn that most building timber was carted in. Split shingles for roofing brought from Mount Macedon sold for £8 a thousand and 'even the Baltic timber could be brought to Castlemaine cheaper, measure for measure, than the inferior timber from the adjacent forests.'⁴⁰ Local red gum, however, was a prized construction timber and fuel.

Sawmilling

Few sawmills operated in the Castlemaine district when Westgarth visited in 1857. Overheads were high and when local timber was depleted, additional supplies had to be carted from afar.⁴¹ The banks of the Loddon near Newstead had a major resource, as a pioneer recalled: 'Huge red gum trees grew all over the flats'.⁴² By 1860, they were being exploited by a small sawmill downstream where 'all timber was cut by hand, one man below the log and the other on top.'⁴³ After the punt sank for the last time, the engine and part of the machinery were salvaged and installed at the mill. The processed timber had local uses in the Joyces Creek bridge and in township buildings. The mill was advertised for sale in December 1862 and presumably it ceased production shortly afterwards. Years later, another sawmill operated for a time near the Newstead railway station.⁴⁴

Other small sawmills evidently operated in the Fryers Range. Ruth Rowe recalled of Fryerstown at the turn of the century:

³⁶ R.J. Rowe, 'The Three Families of Richard Rowe', in NHS File: Rowe (Richard); *NME*, 31 July 1907, 29 April 1908, 19 August 1908; Bradfield, *Newstead*, pp. [8, 28-9 (photograph)]; Barkla, 'Memories', p. 1.

³⁷ Whitcombe, 'Castlemaine', *WT*, 22 September 1928, p. 5; Brown, *Reminiscences of Fryerstown*, p. 121; Winkleman, *Historical Sketch of Campbells Creek*, p. 13; Bradfield, *Campbells Creek*, pp. 27, 45; *NME*, 30 September 1908; Liz Coady, of Newstead Historical Society, to the author.

³⁸ Myers and Elton, *An Assessment of Habitat Significance in the Loddon-Campaspe Region*, p. 2.

³⁹ Andrews (ed.), *Stapylton*, p. 200; Land Conservation Council, *Rivers and Streams*, p. 36; *Census* (1881), Table VIII. The figures for Mount Alexander Shire and Newstead Shire are combined.

⁴⁰ William Westgarth, *Victoria and the Australian Gold Mines in 1857 ...* (London: Smith, Elder and Co., 1857), p. 234.

⁴¹ Westgarth, *Victoria and the Australian Gold Mines in 1857*, p. 234.

⁴² *NME*, 27 March 1907.

⁴³ John Williamson in 1907, in *NME*, 3 April 1907.

⁴⁴ Martin, 'Writings', p. 14; Bradfield, *Newstead*, p. [4].

Woodcutting was an important industry, supplying building needs and also the great amount of timber needed in the large gold mines. Men went miles into the bush to cut down huge trees. Both dry and green timber was used. My father worked at cutting wood which was used to shore the mines.⁴⁵

Harvesting the bush continued well into the century. During the 1930s Depression timber workers near Yapeen cut sleepers for the railways.⁴⁶

Charcoal production

Although the timber on the slopes around Fryerstown generally was of poor quality, it was perfectly suitable as fuel for boilers and to make charcoal to fire blacksmiths' forges. Charcoal was preferred to coal or wood because it gave off greater heat. Charcoal burners were specialists who earned a living from their skill.⁴⁷ Some lived in the bush with their families, such as Billy Middleton who sold charcoal at Fryerstown for up to 1s a bag. The Bertalli family, at Strathlea, made charcoal that they sold to mines as far away as Clunes until about 1913.⁴⁸

⁴⁵ Rowe, *Fryerstown*, p. 5.

⁴⁶ James, *Echoes of the Past*, p. 19.

⁴⁷ The process of charcoal making is described in Brown, *Reminiscences of Fryerstown*, pp. 174-5.

⁴⁸ Lewis, 'Strathlea', pp. 5-6.

10. COMMUNITY LIFE

LAW AND ORDER

A digger wrote early in 1852: 'At Ballarat there was peace, unity, and security; but at Fryar's Creek [*sic*] these desirable qualities are reversed, and quarrels, dissensions, bloodshed, and danger of the direst description reign supreme.'¹ Fryerstown's notoriety as a crime centre in the 1850s called for vigorous policing and it was no accident the first Police Court and Court of Petty Sessions in the Shire were established in the township. Several gangs of bushrangers operated in the neighbourhood. The most notorious was Charles Russell, known as Black Douglas, whose gang of up to ten men bailed up stores and ambushed diggers on the roads until they were caught in 1854.² A lessening in the incidence of crime and a change in its character accompanied the establishment of agricultural communities.

Police

Police established camps soon after a goldfield opened. In 1853, Gold Commissioner Thomas Heron recommended the removal of the police camp at German Gully to the junction of Fryers Creek and the Loddon 'as the population is increasing there.'³ Two constables were based at the Five Flags Hotel until June when a camp was established on Oddfellows Hill; later it moved to a site on the main road. The first police camp at Newstead was on the Loddon's west bank until it moved to a one-acre site on the hill in July 1860.⁴

Gaols came later. At Fryerstown, troopers chained their prisoners to 'the old gnarled box trees' that survive near the mechanics' institute until a gaol of rough logs was built in 1858.⁵ The officer-in-charge at Newstead is said to have handcuffed prisoners 'to his bed-posts' before a lock-up of corrugated iron was built. Prisoners escaped from it until a more secure gaol arrived in May 1864. A prefabricated lock-up also was erected at Guildford.⁶

Several sites in the Shire are associated with law enforcement. The Big Tree at Guildford reputedly was where troopers camped in May 1859 during their pursuit of three bushrangers.⁷ Former official police residences survive as private homes at Campbells Creek and Newstead. At Fryerstown, the original weatherboard building was the centre of a dispute in 1990 when it was threatened with demolition.⁸

¹ Quoted by An Australian Journalist, *The Emigrant in Australia*, p. 73.

² Adcock, *The Gold Rushes of the Fifties*, p. 72; *Records of the Castlemaine Pioneers*, pp. 198-9; Brown, *Reminiscences of Fryerstown*, p. 19, and see pp. 21-2.

³ Brown, *Reminiscences of Fryerstown*, p. 15.

⁴ Winkleman, *Historical Sketch of Campbells Creek*, p. 9; Bradfield, *Campbells Creek*, pp. 37-9; *MAM*, 23 July 1860; *NME*, 27 March 1907, 6 November 1907.

⁵ Brown, *Reminiscences of Fryerstown*, pp. 15, 16, 227. The lock and bolt from this gaol are displayed in Castlemaine museum.

⁶ *MAM*, 16 July 1863; Bradfield, *Newstead*, p. [35]. A site for police purposes was reserved at Guildford on 8 September 1892. *VGG*, 9 September 1892, p. 3591.

⁷ Bradfield (ed.), *Guildford*, p. 34.

⁸ *Midland Express*, 6 March 1990, 17 August 1990.

Courts

The Fryerstown Mining Court was proclaimed in June 1856 with the District Warden, Thomas Heron, presiding. There was a delay in electing the court's nine members, however, and that year it was replaced by a Mining Board, with jurisdiction over the entire Mount Alexander gold field, with members elected from gold field localities. Civil cases after July 1857, when Heron was promoted Police Magistrate, were heard by a Court of Petty Sessions. Several temporary locations were used until a weatherboard courthouse was completed in Castlemaine Street in April 1858. The court dealt with cases from Taradale, Vaughan and Guildford and remained in session until May 1916. The Commissioner of Public Works, G.D. Langridge, opened a new courthouse in brick on the same site on 17 September 1880, 'a great day in Fryerstown's history.'⁹

Elsewhere, a courthouse was built at Vaughan where by 1865 there was a police court and a court of petty sessions. Cases at Campbells Creek were heard at Castlemaine. In the Chinese camp at Guildford, a Chinese judge named Tom King presided over a Court of Petty Sessions. At Newstead, a Court of Petty Sessions began in 1861 following a public meeting. Cases were heard at several venues: the Baptist Chapel, which a townsman characterised as 'A Sacred Police Court', and the Roads Board's meeting room. Late in 1863, the government built a brick courthouse at the corner of Canrobert and Wyndham Streets where cases were heard for over a century.¹⁰

The Fryerstown and Newstead courthouses survive. The government sold the Fryerstown building in 1930 and it became a private residence. The Shire took over the Newstead building and leased it to a youth group. In 1987, the Newstead and District Historical Society converted it to an archive and museum.¹¹

RELIGION

Law enforcement was necessary for secular order on the gold fields, but the greater fear was that without restraint the 'unholy hunger' for gold would sink Victoria into barbarism.¹² While a need to provide urgent pastoral care for diggers motivated clergymen like Joseph Waterworth to hold church services at Spring Gully and Mopoke Gully in November 1852, the government provided its own incentive to increase the practice of Christian worship so that men did not 'neglect the spiritual interests for the spirituous'.¹³ The Church Act of 1853 increased State aid to religion fivefold. The Act's general thrust became the 53rd clause of the Constitution in 1855 which increased the annual sum to £50,000 'to promote the erection of buildings for public worship, and the maintenance of ministers of religion'. The money was apportioned to Christian religious denominations according to their number at the previous census. The clause also encouraged the practice of setting aside land for churches.¹⁴

⁹ Brown, *Reminiscences of Fryerstown*, pp. 29-36.

¹⁰ *Baillière's Victorian Gazeteer* (1865), p. 391; James, *Echoes of the Past*, p. 58; *MAM*, 8 March 1861, 16 August 1861; Bradfield, *Newstead*, p. [34]; *NME*, 8 January 1908; 'Newstead & District Historical Society Souvenir Booklet' (1988) in NHS File: Newstead and District Historical Society.

¹¹ Brown, *Reminiscences of Fryerstown*, p. 35; *Age*, 10 April 1982, p. 21; *The Gazette*, 26 October 1989, p. 5; *Castlemaine Mail*, 16 August 1996, p. 3

¹² C.M.H. Clark, *A History of Australia*, vol. IV, *The Earth Abideth For Ever, 1851-1888* (MUP, 1978), p. 19.

¹³ Archibald Michie in 1852, quoted by J.S. Gregory, *Church and State: Changing Government Policies towards Religion in Australia; with particular reference to Victoria since Separation* (Melbourne: Cassell, 1973), p. 51.

¹⁴ 'Fryerstown Methodist Church Anniversary (1963); Gregory, *Church and State*, pp. 50-4.



Police Lock Up , Guildford
Newstead Historical Society Photographic Collection



Fryerstown Court House
Photograph Wendy Jacobs 1998



Sandon Catholic Church
Photograph Wendy Jacobs 1998



Uniting Church, Newstead
Former Methodist Church. Marriage of Eve Booth and Chris Connell 1920
Newstead Historical Society Photographic Collection

Denominations

In 1891, 30 per cent of the Shire's 4,265 people were Methodists who adhered to the Wesleyan, Primitive Methodist or Bible Christian divisions of the movement. Anglicans were the next largest group at 28 per cent, while Presbyterians and Roman Catholics each made up 15 per cent, and other Protestants, undefined or of no religion comprised 12 per cent. Almost two-thirds of the Methodists were in the Shire's more populous east, reflecting the concentration on the gold fields there of miners from Cornwall, Wales and the industrial north of England. The Anglicans and Roman Catholics were distributed evenly, with pockets of Catholics at Irishtown, Guildford and Sandon. Almost three-quarters of the Presbyterians, many of whom were farmers or businessmen, were in the west, especially around Newstead.¹⁵

Almost every community in the Shire erected a church. At Welshmans Reef, the wooden church built early in 1858 was available to 'all protestant worshippers'.¹⁶ For the population of six hundred at Fryerstown by 1879, there were three Protestant churches, Wesleyan, Anglican and Presbyterian, and within a mile a Roman Catholic chapel.¹⁷ Churches of established denominations preferred elevated sites, some of the best examples being at Fryerstown, Vaughan, Yapeen, Guildford, Newstead and Sandon. Non-conformist churches tended to favour locations in main thoroughfares close to their adherents, such as the Primitive Methodist chapels at Newstead and Campbells Creek.

The churches countered strong competition from hotels, where mostly men congregated. The evils of strong drink spurred the creation of young people's temperance movements like the Band of Hope. Its meetings in the Primitive Methodist chapel at Newstead were 'a great centre of attraction for the young [folks] ... [who] made the walls ring with their temperance odes and glees.'¹⁸

Occasionally, church communities disagreed. In the early 1860s, the large number of Gaelic-speaking Scottish Highlanders at Newstead objected when the Presbyterian minister introduced a harmonium to the services. They declared it 'a chest of Whistles' and for a time held their own services in Gaelic in a barn.¹⁹ Newstead's Anglicans in the late 1890s evidently felt neglected by church leaders. Before a new minister restored confidence, the congregation dwindled to the point where 'a dozen at the morning service was a large number, and so were twenty at the evening service.'²⁰

Church Buildings

Wesleyans were particularly active after a gold field opened. They held services in the open on Chapel Hill, Fryerstown, in October 1852, in canvas tents at Spring Gully in 1854 and Donkey Gully in 1856, under a tree at Welshmans Reef about 1857, in a barn at Strangways in the early 1860s and in the school at Werona in the 1870s. James Jenkin conducted services in his home at Joyces Creek soon after he bought land in 1855.²¹

Wesleyans also were quick to erect church buildings. Their first at Fryerstown, in March 1855, was of timber and they built a second in September 1856 that served as a hall when they opened their brick church in the Gothic-early English style in December 1861.²²

¹⁵ *Census* (1891), Table VIII: 'Summary of Shires, pp. 48-9. The figures for Mount Alexander Shire and Newstead Shire are combined.

¹⁶ Joseph Pedler, in *NME*, 29 April 1908.

¹⁷ Errington, 'A History of Fryerstown Postal Services', p. 6.

¹⁸ *NME*, 6 November 1907.

¹⁹ Martin, 'Writings', p. 10.

²⁰ *NME*, 5 June 1907.

²¹ 'Back to Newstead' (1968), p. 23.

²² Brown, *Reminiscences of Fryerstown*, p. 106; *Census* (1861), Table XII: Talbot County, pp. 130-2.

There were 191 Wesleyans at nearby Vaughan in 1861. They erected a timber church in 1855, followed by a building in stone in 1858 and one in brick in 1865. Wesleyans followed a similar pattern at other places with churches at Welshmans Reef in 1859, Campbells Creek in 1862, Green Gully by 1863, and Strangways in 1865.²³ Newstead's Wesleyans preferred to attend the churches at Green Gully or Strangways.²⁴ Joseph Waterworth, 'as lovable as he is zealous', held Wesleyan services in a tent at Donkey Gully in 1856. The first church in 1857 accommodated seventy-five worshippers, but within three years another building was needed to seat almost twice that number. When the population declined, the district's Wesleyan community decided to consolidate and erect a brick church at nearby Yapeen. Two hundred people attended the laying of the foundation stone on 21 January 1874. The new church opened on 21 June at a cost of £520, but the diminishing congregation took forty-two years to clear the debt.²⁵

Adherents to the Primitive Methodist connexion, numerous in England's Midlands especially among miners, established a Sunday School at Campbells Creek in March 1855 and built a wooden church at New Year's Flat. The following year, in Ranters Gully at Campbells Creek, they erected 'a neat, substantial brick structure'. The congregation built a new church at the corner of Main Road and Princes Street in December 1862 for which it collected almost £1,000.²⁶ The Primitives built a church near Red Hill, Fryerstown, which the Bible Christians, a division with many Cornish miner adherents, took over in 1861.²⁷ At Newstead, the Primitives held their first services at the home of William Ibbotson, the local blacksmith, who offered a site for a chapel for half the price he paid for it. The building opened on 30 November 1860.²⁸ The Primitives at Sandon held their services in a canvas church until someone 'stole the roof'. Local builder Nicholas Williamson then erected a building in stone that opened on 18 May 1864.²⁹

In 1903, the year after the passing of the Methodist Union Act, a new parsonage was built at Newstead for the first resident Methodist minister, Reverend C. Fowler. A brick Methodist church that could accommodate two hundred worshippers opened on 18 September 1907 and was 'a splendid ornament to the town'.³⁰ Welshmans Reef's Methodists celebrated the jubilee of their church in May 1908 and capped the festivities with a new building. Three months later the church at Spring Gully that had opened in June 1855 closed due to a falling number of worshippers.³¹

The Church of England conducted services at Fryerstown in 1853 and laid the foundations for a brick church in January 1855. All Saints officially opened on 27 January 1861 when over half the township's population was Anglican and they invited all denominations to the first wedding in April. Guildford's Anglican church was consecrated the following November. Anglicans at Newstead held their services in the Roads Board meeting room until the consecration of their brick All Saints Anglican Church in August 1868.³²

²³ A site for a Wesleyan Church at Guildford was reserved on 29 July 1867. *VGG*, 6 August 1867, p. 1447.

²⁴ *NME*, 5 June 1907. According to Bradfield, a Wesleyan chapel was erected at Newstead in 1863, but another report states 'it was unique that no Wesleyan church was ever built [at Newstead].' Compare Bradfield, *Newstead*, p. [10], and *NME*, 5 June 1907.

²⁵ [Yapeen Methodist Church Trustees], *A Service of Thanksgiving: To mark the cessation of services after 109 years of worship and witness at Donkey Gully and Yapeen* (pamphlet, 28 November 1965), pp. [1, 2].

²⁶ Winkleman, *Historical Sketch of Campbells Creek*, pp. 12, 13; Bradfield, *Campbells Creek*, p. 21.

²⁷ 'Fryerstown Methodist Church Anniversary'; Rowe, *Fryerstown*, p. 4.

²⁸ Contemporary newspaper report (unsourced) in NHS File: Primitive Methodist Chapel. See also Martin, 'Writings', p. 5; Bradfield, *Newstead*, p. [10]. *NME*, 3 April 1907.

²⁹ *NME*, 3 April 1907; 'Nicholas and Esther Williamson: The tree of descendants of Nicholas and Esther Williamson (1812-1994) who arrived at Port Adelaide, South Australia, on 23-8-1849 in the "ELIZA"' (c.1994), in NHS File: Williamson Family, p. [4].

³⁰ 'Back to Newstead' (1968), p. 24; *NME*, 5 June 1907, 18 September 1907, 25 September 1907.

³¹ *NME*, 6 May 1908; Brown, *Reminiscences of Fryerstown*, pp. 184-5.

³² Brown, *Reminiscences of Fryerstown*, p. 109; *MAM*, 8 March 1861; *Census* (1861); Bradfield, *Newstead*, p. [11]; Bradfield (ed.), *Guildford*, p. 51; *NME*, 5 June 1907; Ellis, 'History of Newstead', p. 3.



Fryerstown State School 1899
Newstead Historical Society Photographic Collection



Tarilta State School 1900
Newstead Historical Society Photographic Collection



Newstead School 1899
Newstead Historical Society Photographic Collection



Welshmans Reef School 1924
Newstead Historical Society Photographic Collection

Other denominations with smaller congregations demonstrated similar zeal erecting church buildings. The Presbyterian Church of Victoria formed in 1859, the year of the first Presbyterian service at Newstead in McPhee's barn. The congregation moved quickly to erect their church, St Andrew's, on the west bank of the Loddon in 1860 and today it is one of Victoria's 'older surviving brick churches'. Fryerstown's Presbyterians erected their wooden church opposite the Anglican Church in 1861. The Roman Catholic communities at Irishtown and Guildford built brick churches; the small community at Irishtown collected £400 to build St Patrick's in 1865. In the west of the Shire, Roman Catholics erected a 'fine brick building' on a rise at Sandon in 1883, the district centre of Roman Catholicism, and another at Newstead in 1910.³³

Churches for Baptists at Newstead and Bible Christians at Campbells Creek and Belle Vue have not survived. Population decline and improved transport made it more difficult for congregations to retain their clergyman or maintain their building. Only a few of the many churches built in the Shire survive intact as places of public worship. Some wooden churches, like the Methodist Church at Welshmans Reef, were relocated for other uses; others, such as the Presbyterian Church at Fryerstown and a church at Strathloddon, were demolished. Expensive brick churches either were demolished, as was St Patrick's at Irishtown in 1956, or sold to become private residences.³⁴

EDUCATION

When Victoria separated from New South Wales in 1851, it inherited the parent colony's dual system of education. Public education was divided between the Denominational Board and the small National Board. The government changed this unwieldy and expensive dual system with the Common Schools Act of 1862. The Act imposed strict conditions on schools wanting to be eligible for State-aid. The direction of this reform found its fullest expression in the Education Act of 1872 with its provisions for free, compulsory and secular education, and the new Education Department's construction of State Schools throughout rural Victoria.³⁵

The dramatic increase in population brought about by the gold rushes and the lack of educational facilities on the gold fields caused concern. Church schools in 1855 educated 80 per cent of the Colony's children. Small private schools under National Board supervision also flourished. Beginning in September 1852, the National Board promoted education on the gold fields with wholly funded tent-schools. One was pitched on Adelaide Flat, near Chewton, another at Fryers Creek and a third at Campbells Creek.³⁶ In 1854, a Board inspector established his headquarters at Forest Creek.

Schools and Buildings

Several townships in the Shire experienced the three phases of public education. At Campbells Creek, Margaret Miller established a private tent-school south of the Five Flags in September 1853 where she taught forty-nine children whose parents paid between 1s 6d and 2s 6d a week. The National Board registered the school the following February. In March 1856, the Board partly funded a weatherboard building. Churches established

³³ Martin, 'Writings', pp. 5, 10; *NME*, 3 April 1907, 10 April 1907, 10 August 1910, 14 December 1910; Bradfield, *Newstead*, pp. [9, 11]; 'Back To Newstead' (1968), p. 21; Miles Lewis (ed.), *Victorian Churches* (Melbourne: National Trust of Australia (Victoria), 1991), p. 139; Brown, *Reminiscences of Fryerstown*, pp. 107-8, 110; Ebsworth, *Pioneer Catholic Victoria*, pp. 373, 377-8; Ellis, 'History of Newstead', p. 3.

³⁴ *NME*, 3 April 1907, 31 July 1907; Bradfield, *Newstead*, p. [10]; Bradfield, *Campbells Creek*, p. 22; Brown, *Reminiscences of Fryerstown*, pp. 108, 110; 'Back to Newstead' (1968), p. 23; James, *Echoes of the Past*, p. 46.

³⁵ Blake, *Vision and Realisation*, vol. 1, pp. 28, 30-1, 41, 46; B.K. Hyams and B. Bessant, *Schools for the People? An Introduction to the History of State Education in Australia* (Melbourne: Longman, 1972), p. 49.

³⁶ Blake, *Vision and Realisation*, vol. 1, p. 33.

two denominational schools in the township by 1857, one by Primitive Methodists and the other by Presbyterians and both became Common Schools. The National School became a Common School in 1862 and, after the Education Act a decade later, it absorbed the two former denominational schools. The suddenly overcrowded classrooms signalled the need for a new building, but parents disagreed about the site until they voted in 1877 for one on the main road. The government erected a new brick building, that could accommodate 300 children, and it survives substantially unaltered and still in use.³⁷

Goldfields Commissioner Wright reported in October 1853 that although children comprised over 13 per cent of the population in his district, their elementary education was scarcely provided for by the few tent-schools and too few teachers.³⁸ Furthermore, education was not compulsory, and the itinerant nature of the goldfields population counted against a stable learning environment. Private schools were established at Fryerstown in the early 1850s, Pennyweight Flat near Yapeen in 1858, Guildford in 1858 and another in 1861, Tarilta in 1860, and at Newstead in the mid-1860s. There were Denominational Schools at Fryerstown in 1853, Spring Gully in 1855, Vaughan in 1856, Sandon in 1859, Joyces Creek in 1860 and Strangways in 1862. National Schools were formed at Fryerstown in 1852, Pennyweight Flat near Yapeen in 1858, Newstead in 1859, Churches Flat and Guildford in 1860, Tarilta in 1861, and Green Gully in 1863. Common Schools were created at Yapeen, Spring Gully in 1862, Welshmans Reef and Strangways in 1864, Glenluce in 1865, Captains Gully in 1866, Joyces Creek in 1870, and Muckleford South and Weronia in 1871. After 1872 most existing schools converted to State Schools, but two new schools were built at Strangways in 1873 and others were established at Sandon in 1875, Newstead and Welshmans Reef in 1877, Yandoit Hill in 1878 and Strathlea in 1924.³⁹

The standard of school accommodation varied greatly. Some tent-schools had blue cotton linings that made them dark in winter and hot in summer. The Churches Flat school opened in 1860 with 'no floor', although 'the building was a neat wooden structure.' Many single teacher schools like the one at Glenluce were one-room timber buildings that were unlined. Guildford's one-room school was lined, with calico, but it was replaced in 1868 by a more substantial structure in brick. The school at Captains Gully was built with slabs lined with canvas and it had a shingle roof, 'the most miserable State school I have ever been in' wrote a visitor.⁴⁰ Building designs after 1872 promised better conditions. In the new brick school at Newstead, 'Each room is amply provided with window light and ventilators, so as fully to conserve the comfort and convenience of the children.'⁴¹

The opening of a new school was a great civic occasion. Thomas Martin recalled the Tea Meeting that opened the Anglican school at Strangways in April 1862 when 'the school was Packed with People' and the Newstead Brass Band played.⁴² Two parliamentarians arrived by train to open Newstead State School in October 1877 and afterwards attended a banquet in the mechanics' institute.⁴³

No secondary school was built in the Shire. Children went to Castlemaine after the founding of the high school in 1910 and the technical school in 1916. Bill Hamilton, aged thirteen in 1924, caught the train from Newstead; six years later Verne Hooper walked the six miles from Spring Gully. Yapeen children rode their bicycles. Often there was a headwind and one former student recalled she failed French because it was always first lesson and usually she was late. By 1947, a school bus service connected the two

³⁷ Blake, *Vision and Realisation*, vol. 2, pp. 624-5; Winkleman, *Historical Sketch of Campbells Creek*, p. 12; Bradfield, *Campbells Creek*, pp. 49-53. The sources disagree about several factual details.

³⁸ Bradfield, *Campbells Creek*, p. 49.

³⁹ Blake, *Vision and Realisation*, vol. 2, pp. 611-853; Brown, *Reminiscences of Fryerstown*, pp. 112, 115, 184-5; Ebsworth, *Pioneer Catholic Victoria*, pp. 364-5, 371; Bradfield, *Newstead*, pp. [40-2, 50, 51, 52]; Bradfield (ed.), *Guildford*, p. 8; *NME*, 6 November 1907; Lewis, 'Strathlea', p. 8. The list is not exhaustive.

⁴⁰ Quoted in Blake, *Vision and Realisation*, vol. 2, p. 752.

⁴¹ *MAM*, 9 October 1877. Blake, *Vision and Realisation*, vol. 1, p. 33, vol. 2, pp. 752, 774; Brown, *Reminiscences of Fryerstown*, p. 115; Bradfield (ed.), *Guildford*, pp. 8-9.

⁴² Martin, 'Writings', p. 15.

⁴³ *MAM*, 9 October 1877.

Castlemaine secondary schools with Newstead, Strangways and Guildford. Children at Campbelltown, meanwhile, travelled by bus to Maryborough. The Shire's seven remaining schools had a combined enrolment of less than three hundred. After further closures at Welshmans Reef in 1965 and Fryerstown in 1967, a threatened merger of Yapeen with Guildford and Campbells Creek in a cluster in 1993 was avoided after parents protested.⁴⁴

Mechanics' Institutes

The mechanics' institute movement long preceded the gold rushes. Its origins lay in the English liberal middle-class ideal of achieving social harmony by encouraging intellectual, social and moral self-improvement among the masses. Mechanics' institutes flourished in Victoria. In many places the institute's library was the only source of publicly available reading matter and their halls were centres for social activities.⁴⁵

The importance of a mechanics' institute to a township's sense of progress is illustrated by Newstead's institute being established within a year of the first land sale in 1854.⁴⁶ Its members met in the longroom attached to the Bridge Hotel.⁴⁷ By 1864 the institute evidently no longer was functioning. It reformed in 1866 and the young men, 'thirsting for knowledge', decided to erect a 'fair building' in brick that opened on 17 December 1868.⁴⁸

The laying of the foundation stone of Fryerstown's Mechanics' Institute, on 7 April 1863, was accompanied by 'great celebrations'. The building not only was a centre for self-improvement, it was a memorial to the tragic heroes of the day who died at Cooper's Creek twenty-two months earlier. The Burke and Wills Mechanics' Institute officially opened at a 'sumptuous banquet' for 163 people on 26 August 1863. It replaced the longroom at the Cumberland Hotel as the township's social centre.⁴⁹

Another mechanics' institute officially opened at Joyces Creek on 19 March 1902 with a concert and a ball. When the hamlet ceased to exist in the 1950s the building was used as a barn, then was relocated to Maldon.⁵⁰

For an annual membership of 10s the institutes provided sorely needed facilities for adult education. At Fryerstown, George Carter gave public lectures on astronomy, a subject he taught himself. A reading room became available in February 1864 and by 1879 it housed a thousand books. Newstead's institute began with 400 books — 'not mere trash, but books of sound worth', serials and newspapers. By 1908, the library consisted of 600 books and the committee appointed a librarian.⁵¹

Use of the institutes for social occasions increased. Late in 1891, the Fryerstown committee arranged for renovations that increased the hall's length and width, and added a stage and two anterooms. Concerts in the larger hall always ended with a maypole, Ruth Rowe recalled. A new floor in 1930 helped to make Fryerstown a popular centre for dances.⁵²

Newstead's institute was particularly associated with aspects of the township's social, political and economic history. The building was dilapidated by 1896 because its mortgage

⁴⁴ Hamilton, 'Recollections', p. [9]; Hooper, *Mining My Past*, p. 33; James, *Echoes of the Past*, pp. 13, 14; *Resources Survey: Central Highlands Region*, Table 76: 'School Bus Services', p. 157, and Table 83, p. 168: 'State Primary Schools', p. 168; Ana Lamaro, in *Castlemaine Mail*, 13 August 1993.

⁴⁵ Hyams and Bessant, *Schools for the People?*, pp. 28, 29, 41-2, 55; John Barrett, *That Better Country: The Religious Aspect of Life in Eastern Australia, 1835-1850* (MUP, 1966), pp. 159, 199-201

⁴⁶ The foundation stone for the Castlemaine Mechanics' Institute was dedicated on 10 May 1857.

⁴⁷ Copy of item from *MAM* (dated in error 2 September 1855) in NHS File: Mechanics' Institute.

⁴⁸ *Tarrangower Times*, 19 December 1868. See also *MAM*, 27 October 1866.

⁴⁹ Brown, *Reminiscences of Fryerstown*, pp. 84-5, 131-5. In 1862, Castlemaine citizens erected an obelisk, fifteen metres high, as their memorial to Burke, formerly a policeman in the town, and his companions.

⁵⁰ Newspaper clipping (unsourced), in NHS File: Mitchell; information provided by Peter Skilbeck.

⁵¹ Brown, *Reminiscences of Fryerstown*, pp. 132, 146, 159; Errington, 'A History of Fryerstown Postal Services', pp. 5-6; *Tarrangower Times*, 19 December 1868; *NME*, 9 September 1908; *Victorian Municipal Directory* (1901), pp. 473-4.

⁵² Brown, *Reminiscences of Fryerstown*, p. 134; Rowe, *Fryerstown*, pp. 11, 16.

consumed most profits. Successful fundraising in 1900 liquidated the debt and paid for alterations. For five years it housed the Shire offices. By 1907, locals boasted the building was 'one of the best in the country'. Now functioning primarily as the township's public hall, it was the venue for meetings, concerts, dances, performances by touring parties like the Lynch Family Bell Ringers and screenings of the latest cinematograph productions, and it had a skating rink. An honour roll in wood was mounted on an interior wall in 1919. In 1948, the hall was used as a work room for making leather gloves. Renovation costs were prohibitive by 1959, so the committee transferred ownership to the Shire to obtain government grants. Today, the 130-year-old building continues to function as the township's public hall.⁵³

NEWSPAPERS

The *Mount Alexander Mail* began publication at Castlemaine in 1854. Every nearby township had a correspondent who reported local news regularly and often minutely. The broadsheet also carried local advertisements and summaries of important colonial and overseas stories. Copies were available in the mechanics' institutes. Two other newspapers published at Castlemaine also reported local news. Mrs Wheeler began the *Castlemaine Representative* in March 1870 and it ran for several years.⁵⁴ Another local newspaper was *The Leader* that was issued by 1888.⁵⁵

The *Tarrangower Times*, printed at Maldon, served the Shire's western communities until the *Newstead and Maldon Echo* started as a weekly in 1896. It lasted seventy-two years until the illness of the proprietor, A.M. Hurse, forced the newspaper to close with its last issue on 13 February 1968. For most of its life the *Echo* operated from a small, distinctive weatherboard building in the heart of the township's business quarter near the bridge. It rarely missed local events, but the flood in 1909 was an exception. Floodwaters a foot deep in the office 'was the reason why THE ECHO didn't echo on Wednesday', explained the editor.⁵⁶ Sometimes the *Echo* risked an opinion. In 1907, it criticised the successful directors of the butter factory for their parsimonious treatment of shareholders. In 1982, the *Echo's* building and machinery were removed to the Swan Hill Pioneer Settlement where it is now a working display.⁵⁷

HOTELS

Gold field Hotels

Hotels often were the first businesses to trade on a gold field, usually opening in a 'refreshment tent'. Before the Licensing Act of 1853 many of these establishments sold 'sly-grog' until closed by the police. Proprietors often diversified to offer a range of services. In German Gully, Strickfuss attached a general store, as did Hoskin at Spring Gully at 'The Emu Pub and General Store' that he opened in 1855. Joseph Waterworth ran a general store within his Commercial Hotel at Guildford. According to local historian

⁵³ *NME*, 28 May 1902, 5 June 1907, 22 July 1908, 9 September 1908, 30 September 1908, 23 November 1910, 14 December 1910; 'Back to Newstead (1968)', p. 41; *Victorian Municipal Directory* (1914), p. 554; *WT*, 23 October 1968, pp. 56-7.

⁵⁴ Thomas Carte in 1883 in *Records of the Castlemaine Pioneers*, p. 166. Carte was a machinist on the *Castlemaine Representative*.

⁵⁵ Sutherland and Whitworth, *Victoria and Its Metropolis*, vol. IIA, p. 238.

⁵⁶ *NME*, 27 August 1909.

⁵⁷ *NME*, 9 January 1907, 6 November 1907; Joe Blake, Education Officer, Swan Hill Pioneer Settlement, letter to the author, dated 11 August 1998.



Shamrock Hotel, Newstead
Newstead Historical Society Photographic Collection



Cumberland Hotel, Fryerstown
Newstead Historical Society Photographic Collection



Delmenico's Hotel, Guildford
Newstead Historical Society Photographic Collection



Black Duck Hotel, Campbelltown
Photograph Wendy Jacobs 1998

George Brown, at Fryerstown in its first twenty years there were up to twenty hotel/store combinations that sold alcohol, general merchandise, groceries and meat, and most were licensed gold buyers.⁵⁸ As well, T. Walder, at Fryerstown, brewed his own ale in his complex at the foot of Breakneck Hill. At Guildford, the proprietors of the Guildford Arms, Fealey and Sherer, built a bridge across the Loddon. In 1872, the Exchange Hotel at Fryerstown was the depot for Hinds coaches.

In the early years of the gold rush so-called 'grog-shanties' and 'beer shops' were commonplace, but some proprietors sought higher status for their establishments. They improved their premises to justify the renewal of their licence before the Licensing Bench. J. Rogers, of the Bull & Mouth at Tarilta, claimed in 1855 his new hotel was 'first class, large, and extensive ... where every accommodation will be found well furnished.' It catered for 'families, ladies and gentlemen'.⁵⁹ At Fryerstown, T. Rimmington turned the Cumberland Hotel into the 'classiest' in town and held concerts and banquets in a longroom that became the local social centre.⁶⁰ During the Pennyweight rush of 1858 on *Strathloddon*, 'perhaps the last major episode of digging around Castlemaine', William Aberdeen opened a hotel he named Balmoral Castle where nightly there was dancing and 'entertainments' that sometimes included the gold rush singer Charles Thatcher.⁶¹

Other similarly motivated publicans pursued a specialist reputation. At Campbells Creek, Henry Sutcliffe had a Tea Garden at his Eagle Tavern and he sold Sweet Briar seedlings.⁶² The Five Flags Hotel, owned by James Hooper and managed by Henry Hawson, opened with a ball in June 1855. When Giles Church bought the hotel the following year he built a concert hall and held balls, dances and 'select quadrille parties' that were so successful a larger concert hall was required by 1864. The hotel also was made available for public meetings, lodge meetings, occasional church services, coroner's inquests and, for several months in 1860, a police station. In 1871, the hotel's longroom was the venue for the first meeting of the United Shire of Mount Alexander.⁶³

The Guildford Hotel, one of twenty-four that operated at various times in the township, acquired a similar reputation for its music hall, billiard room, quoit matches and, later, its bocce court. At the Belle Vue Hotel, John Holmes and his wife catered for entertainment evenings, lodge meetings and the lodge's annual ball in the second storey of the Belle Vue Brewery. The Waterloo Hotel at Vaughan had a large concert room that was a renowned social centre in which the Loddon and Fryers Race Club held lavish banquets after successful race meetings. Another speciality was Plumpton greyhound racing, promoted by Frank Stephens at his Bath Arms Hotel, Campbells Creek. Behind the hotel in 1864, R. Gravenor released three thousand rabbits he bought from the Barwon Park Estate, then let loose after them 'dogs of all breeds ... bull terriers, kangaroo dogs, greyhounds, cockers, etc.'; the winner was a mongrel 'without a hinch of breed in 'im'.⁶⁴ In 1864 John Clayton was refused renewal of his licence for the Red Lion Hotel at Fryerstown because allegedly the premises were used for 'immoral purposes'.⁶⁵

Hotel names often suggest the expected clientele. The first licenced hotel at Fryerstown was the Diggers Rest. Elsewhere were the Travellers Rest, Railway, Curriers & Tanners, Miners Arms, Farmers Arms, Butchers Arms, Freemasons' Tavern, Skittle Alley and Golden Quoit. The Anglo-Australian in Golden Gully took its name from the nearby mine

⁵⁸ Brown, *Reminiscences of Fryerstown*, p. 118.

⁵⁹ *MAM*, 28 December 1855.

⁶⁰ Brown, *Reminiscences of Fryerstown*, pp. 84-5.

⁶¹ Flett, *History of Gold Discovery*, p. 193; Flett, *Old Pubs*, p. 14; Bradfield, *Guildford*, pp. 22, 51. The Balmoral Castle Hotel was not located in the former *Strathloddon* station homestead, as some reports state; it was either in the two-storey stone homestead that Aberdeen built nearby in 1854 (which, confusingly, he also named *Strathloddon*), or in a third, as yet unidentified, building.

⁶² Bradfield, *Campbells Creek*, p. 45.

⁶³ *MAM*, 1 June 1855, 14 September 1855, 4 July 1856, 5 August 1856; Bradfield, *Campbells Creek*, pp. 37-8; Brown, *Reminiscences of Fryerstown*, p. 129.

⁶⁴ From a report in *MAM* in Bradfield, *Campbells Creek*, p. 43.

⁶⁵ Brown, *Reminiscences of Fryerstown*, pp. 86, 90, 91.

and the Standard at Campbells Creek from the brewery. Ethnic groups featured. Cornish miners at Fryerstown frequented the Corner Hotel. Swiss Italians attended Filippo Martinoja and Enrico Giacomazzi's L'Antica Elvetica Hotel in Shicer Gully or the William Tell at Strathloddon. At Irishtown, the Shamrock was noted for its ale at 3d a glass and its fights. Considering the 'endless broils' in Chinese camps between Cantonese and Fujianese, there is no mystery about the ethnic group favoured by the Canton Hotel at Campbells Creek.⁶⁶ On the other hand, there were the All Nations, at Campbells Creek and run by Mrs Annie Ah What, and the British Queen at Vaughan with Ah Wing the proprietor.

Rural Hotels

Shanties, hotels and taverns were established on the tracks to the diggings and in some instances they were the nucleus of later communities. Sandon's tavern, between the Mount Alexander and Jim Crow diggings, was built about 1853. Two years later Beard, J.D. Jones and Friedlich erected their Newstead Hotel at Mingay's Crossing on the Loddon. The hotel provided 'every accommodation' that included 'Wines and Spirits ... Private Apartment ... A substantial Lock-up Slab Stable. Hay and Corn always on hand; also a Paddock for the convenience of Draymen, etc. etc.'⁶⁷ Nearby, Thomas Jones established a butcher's shop, bakery and grog shanty combination that competed with the Newstead. After May 1855 he erected a makeshift bridge and offered 'every convenience for the comfort of parties travelling on this road ... Good beds, stabling, and provisions at moderate charges.'⁶⁸

Rural hotels offered a range of services similar to hotels on the goldfields. After Charles Marsden took over the relocated Newstead Hotel late in 1856 it became the focus for public meetings and the venue for the first meeting of the Roads Board. Marsden also operated the 'substantial log bridge', 227 feet long, that J.D. Jones and Beard built across the Loddon about August 1856 and he established a slaughter yard that provided meat to butchers at Newstead, Joyces Creek and Welshmans Reef.⁶⁹ Thomas Richardson enlarged his Bridge Inn in 1863 for public meetings and the Prince of Wales Light Horse sponsored the opening ball. The Crown Hotel and the Welcome Inn both were staging posts for coach lines. After the railway arrived in 1874 the Railway Hotel catered to travellers and to buyers at the nearby saleyards on sale days. The Strangways Hotel had a large hall attached where the proprietor held the ball that ended the Newstead Show and the Oddfellows' anniversaries. In 1863, Smith's Green Valley Hotel hosted Tea Meetings that raised funds for the local school. At Joyce's Creek, where many Scottish farmers settled, the annual Caledonian Ball was at Alex McDonald's Caledonian Hotel where musicians played the bagpipes and a fiddle. By the twentieth century at Yapeen, Tyzack's hotel-general store combination housed the post office and the telephone exchange.⁷⁰

⁶⁶ Kathryn Cronin, *Colonial Casualties: Chinese in Early Victoria* (Melbourne: MUP, 1982), p. 39; Bradfield, *Campbells Creek*, pp. 12, 19.

⁶⁷ *MAM*, 27 April 1855.

⁶⁸ *MAM*, 11 May 1855. A pioneer's anecdote about Thomas Jones and his rival J.D. Jones at the Newstead Hotel cannot be confidently fixed at either of the township's early sites, but it does provide an amusing insight into the competitive practises of rival hoteliers about 1855-56: 'He [*i.e.* Thomas Jones] sold firewater that would kill on sight, warm your chest all the way down, and cause you to see snakes and blue devils by the score. When the lucky diggers were returning from McKinnon's rush (near Maryborough) and Back Creek (Talbot), Jones would "lamb them down." When all their "dust" was gone he would transport them over the river (there was no bridge in those days) in a bullock waggon and leave them at the other Jones' door as "returned empties.'" *NME*, 7 August 1907.

⁶⁹ *NME*, 8 May 1907, 22 April 1908; *MAM*, 27 August 1856.

⁷⁰ Bradfield, *Newstead*, pp. [11-16, 50]; *NME*, 15 July 1907, 22 April 1908, 22 July 1908; James, *Echoes of the Past*, pp. 28, 43.

Hotel Buildings

Few hotels survived into the twentieth century. Fire destroyed the original Guildford Arms in 1857, the Balmoral Castle at Pennyweight in 1861, the Maid and Magpie at Joyces Creek, the Waterloo at Vaughan, the Vine at Campbells Creek in 1876, the Emu at Spring Gully in 1885, the Cumberland at Fryerstown in 1894, the Railway at Guildford in 1907, and the Newstead in 1930. Several hotels were victims of mishap, such as the small Tarilta Hotel that burned to the ground after someone threw a fire-cracker at the front door.⁷¹ Some, such as the Sandon Tavern, were converted to private homes, while others like the Racecourse at Glenluce decayed to ruin. The Five Flags and the Guildford are examples of hotels that continue to trade in their original buildings that are substantially intact.⁷²

Temperance Organisations

Opposition to hotels and the trade in alcohol came from temperance organisations like the Independent Order of Rechabites and the Band of Hope. Some public men opposed liquor, such as squatter pioneer Angus Kennedy and Cr Edward Rowe. Kennedy was a Rechabite and at his funeral in 1900 ‘about fifty juvenile members preceded the hearse to the Cemetery.’⁷³ At Fryerstown, the Band of Hope and the Temperance Choir held regular meetings and so did Newstead’s branch of the Band of Hope at the Primitive Methodist chapel. The strong centre for Rechabite activity was Campbells Creek where Welcome Lodge Tent No. 200 was founded about 1863. By 1880 the Lodge had built a hall on the main road and within the next fifteen years it absorbed Lodge No. 119, formed at Guildford in November 1869.⁷⁴

PUBLIC HALLS

Since hotels and mechanics’ institutes provided venues at most centres for public meetings or social activities, the Shire’s early communities erected few public halls. About 1856, Nicholas Williamson built the hall at Sandon that the Shire later took over. The hall served the community for over 130 years until it fell into disuse and disrepair.⁷⁵ At Joyces Creek, the tennis and cricket clubs erected a hall in 1901 and it was used for social evenings.⁷⁶ Evidently, these two buildings were the only early, purpose-built public halls in the Shire.

Other facilities became available for community use well after the turn of the century. Efforts to build a hall at Guildford after 1901 were stymied by so-called ‘red-tapeism’, although the government offered small grants and the Shire at one stage called for tenders. In 1922, the Loyal Strathloddon Lodge bought a timber building which it renovated and made available to the community. It was demolished in 1956 and the Lodge donated the site to the Guildford Progress Association which built the present hall.⁷⁷ At South Muckleford, the brick school that opened in October 1871 closed in 1927 due to declining numbers. The local progress association converted the building into a hall where there were carpet bowls and euchre nights. By 1973, it was maintained by a committee of trustees.⁷⁸ In the latter twentieth century, community centres assumed some of the civic

⁷¹ James, *Echoes of the Past*, p. 61.

⁷² Other hotels may include the Black Duck at Campbelltown and the Crown at Newstead.

⁷³ Bradfield, *Our First White Child*, pp. 10, 13; *MAM*, 18 October 1900.

⁷⁴ Rowe, *Fryerstown*, pp. 8-9; *NME*, 6 November 1907; Bradfield, *Campbells Creek*, p. 23; Bradfield (ed.), *Guildford*, p. 17; *Victorian Municipal Directory*, 1880, p. 459.

⁷⁵ Don Cameron, ‘Williamson Family Newsletter’, vol. 3, September 1997, p. 1; *Midland Express*, 23 June 1992, p. 1.

⁷⁶ Newspaper clipping (unsourced) in NHS File: Mitchell.

⁷⁷ *NME*, 31 July 1907, 11 September 1901, 2 September 1908; Bradfield (ed.), *Guildford*, pp. 14, 15.

⁷⁸ Blake, *Vision and Realisation*, vol. 2, p. 738; Barkla, ‘Memories’, p. 5.

functions of the old public halls. Centres were opened at Campbells Creek in 1994 and at Newstead in August 1996.

LEISURE

A favourable climate, a higher standard of living and easy access to parklands encouraged active leisure pursuits. Sunday was a day of rest on the goldfields. Diggers went to church, cleaned up around their tents, visited friends or played sport. Chinese miners, meanwhile, gambled 'at almost every hour of the day and night.' Italians played bocce, known as 'Butch' at Guildford where a bocce court was installed at the Guildford Hotel.⁷⁹ The year was sprinkled liberally with religious and public holidays that were celebrated with processions, picnics, athletic afternoons or bonfire nights. On Pioneers' Day, Fryerstown's citizens took a train to Melbourne. Special events like coronations and the end of wars were particularly memorable. Early pursuits like fishing and shooting soon gave way to scratch matches between teams, then to organised competitions that demanded fenced recreation reserves and accompanying buildings like grandstands, toilet facilities and stall enclosures. The *Echo* reported in 1908: 'Newstead shire, for the size of it, can probably boast of more recreation reserves than any other municipality in the State. In Newstead alone there are four. Yapeen folk lately got the disease, and must be in fashion, and the epidemic has spread to South Muckleford.'⁸⁰

Sport

Many sports were popular. Publicans promoted pigeon-racing and pigeon-shooting — not necessarily in that order, coursing, wrestling bouts 'in the Devon and Cornish styles' and athletic events like foot racing and hurdling. One wrestling competition at Fryerstown in 1856 had so many contestants it lasted three days. Prizefights were illegal and often the police broke them up. In December 1856 at Campbells Creek, three hundred spectators watched a fight that went to seventy rounds and at the finish both men were 'unrecognisable'. Dogfights too were popular. Many of the Shire's Scots attended Highland Games at Castlemaine, while Old English Games were held at Newstead. According to Thomas Martin, 'The maine Sports was Quoit Matches and skittles'. William Gaffney, proprietor of the Guildford Hotel in the 1860s, sponsored quoit and skittle competitions at which teams from Newstead competed.⁸¹

Organised team sports began early. The popularity of cricket is further evidence of the large number of English people on the goldfields and even as late as 1881 the proportion of English-born in the Shire was 18 per cent.⁸² The Campbells Creek Cricket Club played matches against teams from other townships as early as January 1856. In March 1862, a recreation ground of nine acres was reserved and improvements by 1864 included a grandstand that could seat two thousand — 'the biggest outside Melbourne', public conveniences, a ladies saloon, entrance booths, publicans' booths and fruit stalls. The new ground encouraged other sports. A football club formed in May 1864, race meetings were held from March 1867 and mixed sports from the following December. At Fryerstown in February 1860, five acres on Graces Flat was reserved for a cricket ground and the club joined a district competition.⁸³ By the turn of the century cricket, football and tennis clubs competed in competitions across the Shire. Recreation grounds also were venues for

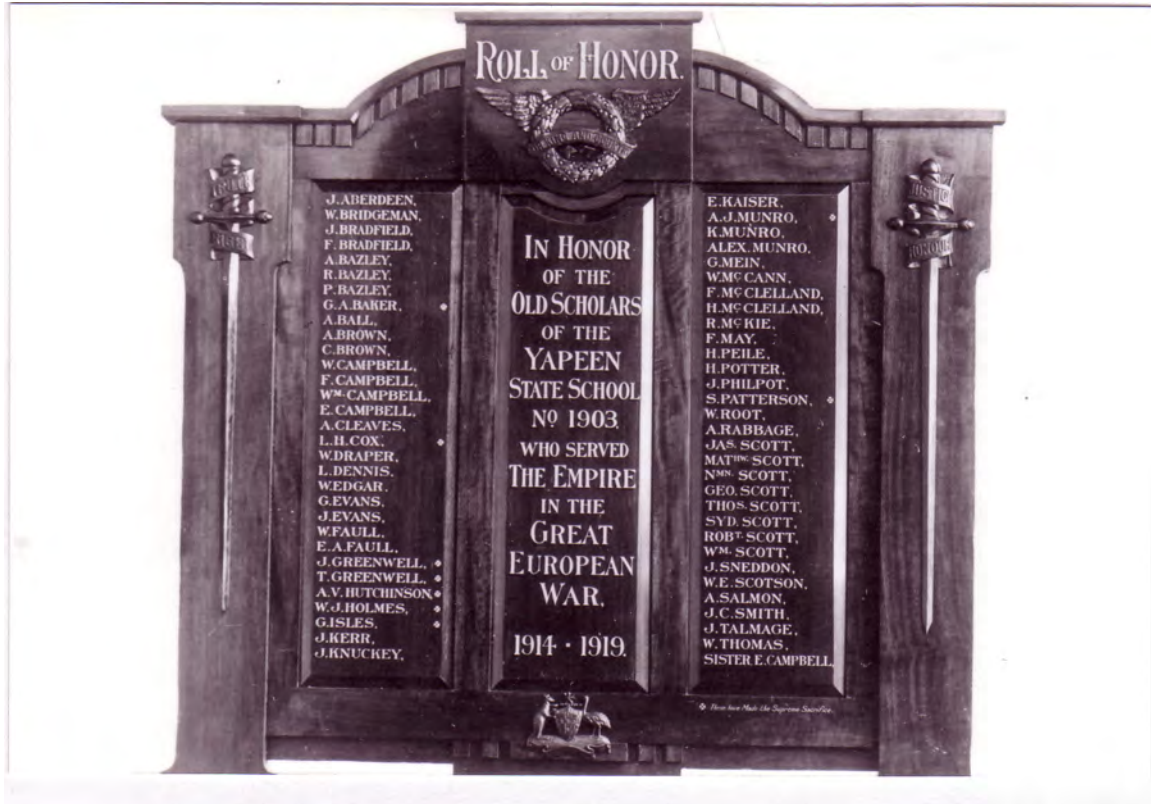
⁷⁹ Mrs Emerson, in D'Aprano, *From Goldrush to Federation*, p. 83.

⁸⁰ Serle, *The Golden Age*, pp. 79, 364-5; *MAM*, 25 December 1857; *NME*, 22 July 1908.

⁸¹ Brown, *Reminiscences of Fryerstown*, pp. 138-9, 140; Bradfield, *Campbells Creek*, p. 43; Martin, 'Writings', p. 16; Bradfield, *Newstead*, pp. [36, 37-8]; Bradfield (ed.), *Guildford*, pp. 29, 32.

⁸² *Census*, 1881, Table VI: Summary of Shires — Showing the Birthplaces of Persons, Males and Females in each Shire.

⁸³ *MAM*, 1 February 1856, 25 December 1857; Brown, *Reminiscences of Fryerstown*, pp. 136-8.



Roll of Honour from Yapeen State School
 Photograph Phil Taylor 1998



Newstead Mechanics Institute
 Newstead Historical Society Photographic Collection



Rotunda, Campbells Creek Sports Ground
Photograph Wendy Jacobs 1988



Burke and Wills Memorial Mechanics Institute, Fryerstown
Photograph Wendy Jacobs 1998

Agricultural Society Shows and ploughing matches. At Newstead, the show was in March and the ploughing match in July.⁸⁴

Horsereading proved a durable sporting activity that began early. A challenge race between two horses at Racecourse Hill, Glenluce, on 26 April 1854, inspired the forming of the Fryerstown and Loddon Race Club that held annual meetings until 1867.⁸⁵ By then, race meetings at more central locations attracted crowds of punters. Beginning on New Year's Day 1856 several thousand attended a three-day meeting on Table Hill, Guildford. A reporter wrote, 'It is impossible to find a spot more conveniently situated for racing sports'.⁸⁶ Racing carnivals at a track laid out beside the present highway at South Muckleford were popular in the 1860s.

The Shire's premier racecourse was at Newstead where annual meetings were held by 1860 and 45 acres were reserved for racing in October 1864.⁸⁷ Thomas Martin recalled that 'The maine holidays was the Races we used to have large turns out there was several Racy men in the district which kept good horses'.⁸⁸ Newstead Jockey Club formed in the 1880s and the Governor-in-Council approved new regulations for the racecourse in March 1890. By 1909, the township boasted 'one of the best race-courses outside the metropolis' with three meetings a year that increased to six by 1927. In 1969, however, the club lost its licence and although it protested — 'Where else in Victoria is there a town the size of Castlemaine, which regards Newstead as the local track?' — it was disallowed.⁸⁹

In the twentieth century new sports like croquet, lawn bowling, golf, badminton and more widespread playing of tennis required playing areas. Reverend Patmere sponsored a croquet lawn in the grounds of the Newstead Anglican church in 1924. The local bowling club formed in June 1951. It installed lights for evening events in January 1954 and built a clubhouse in 1956. Another bowling green was established at Campbells Creek. Community swimming pools with filtration were constructed at Campbells Creek and Newstead. Newstead's pool, half Olympic size, had its genesis at a meeting on 29 January 1946. Constructed by Bruno Grollo, it opened on 14 December 1963.⁹⁰ Water skiing and power-boating on Cairn Curran Reservoir during the past forty years are outdoor leisure activities unimagined in the nineteenth century.

Bands and band rotundas

Although brass bands were common in Europe, the brass band movement began in northern England in the late eighteenth century. The musical combination was particularly suitable for open-air performance and cultivation by amateurs. In Victoria, brass bands were associated with Welsh immigrants, especially miners.

The Shire's first band formed at Vaughan about 1860 and a rotunda that was built later survives in the mineral springs reserve.⁹¹ The Fryers Creek Brass Band, formed in January 1862, attracted 'many volunteers' and its twenty performers were considered better than the Castlemaine Rifle Band. Members of Newstead's Fife and Drum Band, formed shortly afterwards, had 'nice uniforms made bright Red coates & Cap and bright steel buttons

⁸⁴ *MAM*, 27 July 1860; Winkleman, *Historical Sketch of Campbells Creek*, pp. 10-11; Bradfield, *Campbells Creek*, pp. 40, 42, 43; Bradfield (ed.), *Guildford*, pp. 11, 33.

⁸⁵ Brown, *Reminiscences of Fryerstown*, pp. 201-4.

⁸⁶ *MAM*, 28 December 1855.

⁸⁷ *MAM*, 15 June 1860; *VGG*, 8 November 1864, p. 2498.

⁸⁸ Martin, 'Writings', p. 12.

⁸⁹ Ces Kuhle, 'Memories of Newstead Racecourse, 1947-1969', *Castlemaine Historical Society Newsletter*, vol. 6, no. 5, June 1992, pp. 1-6; *NME*, 19 February 1909, 24 February 1909; 'Back to Newstead, 1968', p. 50. The caretaker's residence at the racecourse formerly was the gatehouse at the Newstead Railway Station. It was acquired by the trustees in 1907 for £20. *NME*, 25 September 1907.

⁹⁰ 'Back to Newstead', 1968, pp. 42, 47; *NME*, 26 January 1965; Newstead Swimming Pool Committee Minute Book, 1945-1963, in NHS File: Newstead Swimming Pool.

⁹¹ A 'very efficient German band' played at Fryerstown on 24 March 1856, but whether it was a local band is not known. See *MAM*, 28 March 1856.

down the front.⁹² Guildford had its band by November 1863. The bandmaster in 1906 was Antonio Vosti who wrote poetry and reputedly once played with the famed Sousa Brass Band in the United States.⁹³

The brass band movement reached its peak at the turn of the century. By then the local band was ubiquitous, playing at sporting meetings, concerts, processions and public meetings. Moonlight concerts were a popular form of entertainment. When twelve acres were declared a Crown Reserve at Newstead, the sixteen-piece Newstead Brass Band, under the leadership of J. Malthouse, judged it a suitable site for a band rotunda, 'the best beauty spot our village can boast of'. Hexagonal in shape, the rotunda had all-weather shutters and a conical roof sheeted with galvanised iron. The official opening on 17 March 1905 was a moonlight concert attended by several hundred people.⁹⁴

NATIONAL PARTICIPATION

Wars

Support of the British Empire and its wars began early in the Shire. In September 1855, the Five Flags Hotel held a ball for the widows and orphans of soldiers and sailors who died in the Crimea. Strangways probably was named after a British artillery commander killed at the battle of Inkerman in 1854. After the outbreak of war in South Africa in 1899 at least eight men from the Shire, and four born at Newstead and living at Lake Boga, enlisted in Victorian and Australian contingents, or the Scottish Horse. Local people supported Australia's involvement in the first world war. Hilda Mein recalled Yapeen's 'abundant' social activities of dances and fundraising. At least 189 men from the Shire enlisted and thirty-four died on active service abroad. Dave Barkla's recollections of the second world war are of food and petrol rationing, fund-raising dances at the former South Muckleford school, making camouflage nets and preparing food parcels: 'The times when one of the guys you knew was reported missing, or killed in action, really brought the realism and tragedy of it all to us and petty shortages would be forgotten for a while.'⁹⁵

MEMORIALS

The practice of erecting memorials began with the Burke and Wills Mechanics' Institute at Fryerstown in 1863. Several war memorials commemorate the loss of local men in the first world war. At Newstead, an avenue of eighty-three cut leaf plane trees was planted on the Maryborough road and opened on 18 September 1919.⁹⁶ The same year an avenue of plane trees planted at Guildford was marked by a pillar of Harcourt granite inscribed with the names of 74 men, of whom fifteen died. A granite pillar was erected outside the Campbells Creek State School. On 12 November 1921, the Newstead and District Soldiers' War Memorial, an obelisk, was unveiled near the railway station. Other war memorials took the form of honour rolls and two are mounted on the interior walls of the mechanics' institute.

⁹² Martin, 'Writings', p. 15.

⁹³ *MAM*, 6 January 1862, 10 January 1862, 27 January 1862; Bradfield (ed.), *Guildford*, pp. 7, 19. Evidently a symphony orchestra formed at Guildford in the early 1900s.

⁹⁴ *NME*, 22 March 1905. See also *NME*, 11 January 1905; *Newstead Echo*, no. 3, October 1995; *Castlemaine Mail*, 17 January 1992.

⁹⁵ *MAM*, 14 September 1855; Peter Stevenson, letter to the author, 31 March 1998; Hilda Mein, in James, *Echoes of the Past*, p. 43; 'Roll of Honor, 1914-1919. Residents of Newstead and District Who Enlisted For Active Service Abroad', in Newstead Mechanics' Institute; *NME*, 8 May 1918; Barkla, 'Memories', pp. 5-6.

⁹⁶ *NME*, 24 September 1919. For news items concerning the debate, see *NME*, 9 July 1919, 16 July 1919, and 22 October 1919. On the avenue's 76th anniversary about forty-five volunteers from Newstead's Historical Society, Garden Club and Woodworkers' Guild replanted nine of the trees. *Castlemaine Mail*, 22 September 1995, p. 13. Several of these trees were replaced in 2003.

At Yapeen, a Roll of Honor was unveiled at the school on 6 December 1919 with the names of 62 men, nine of whom died.⁹⁷ Names of second world war dead, fewer in number, were added to existing memorials. The Yapeen community, however, erected a memorial to two local men in Bent Park.

Other memorials were to the pioneers. C. Daley, of the Royal Historical Society, unveiled a memorial cairn to Major Mitchell near the Crown reserve at Newstead on 8 October 1936.⁹⁸ A memorial to Jessie Kennedy, Yapeen district's 'first white child' who died in 1917, was unveiled at a wayside stop north of Yapeen in 1970.⁹⁹ Pioneers of Welshmans Reef were commemorated by a memorial installed at the cemetery. A large Welsh flag draped the tablet for the unveiling on 30 October 1988.¹⁰⁰

CEMETERIES

The first cemeteries were established on the pastoral stations. The earliest known cemetery in the Shire was on *Glengower* in 1840 and it contains the graves of the station cook, murdered by Aborigines, a traveller savaged to death by McLachlan's guard dogs and a boy who died of natural causes.¹⁰¹ Another cemetery was established on *Plaistow* and in 1892 it became Joyces Creek Cemetery. The turmoil of the gold rush obliterated the graves of other pioneers.¹⁰² A body discovered hanging from a tree at Campbells Creek in the spring of 1846 lent its name to Grave Street in the early years of the township, but the locations of the grave and the street are now lost.¹⁰³ Several isolated graves exist from the gold rush period. A well-known example is on Specimen Hill, north of Fryerstown, of Elizabeth Escott and her 15-year-old daughter Fanny who died in 1856.¹⁰⁴

Funerals often were memorable. Ruth Rowe watched many when she was a child in the 1890s:

Six black plumes adorned the horse-drawn hearse for an adult's funeral. When a child died the plumes were white. The driver was dressed in a frock coat and sat on the top in a box seat draped with black cord and tassels. Members of a Lodge were given extra ceremony. For an Oddfellow's funeral the men would walk beside the hearse in their Lodge aprons trimmed with crepe. Relatives wore crepe on their hats and a band on one arm. Black was always worn. When a Chinaman died the Chinese would light fires and hold a feast on the grave to frighten away the demons.¹⁰⁵

Communities mourned the highly esteemed. The funeral in 1871 of the discoverer of Cattles Reef was the largest seen at Fryerstown. The largest funeral at Newstead by 1908 was of the doctor's wife, noted for her 'artlessness and ingenuous happy ways', who died of peritonitis a week after giving birth. Unusual requests were carried out. At Campbells Creek in 1864, Dr Hardy was accorded a military funeral, the township's first, and his horse was shot at the graveside.¹⁰⁶

Campbells Creek Cemetery was laid out in three divisions, Church of England, Presbyterian and Roman Catholic, and the first burial was in March 1853. Three years

⁹⁷ James, *Echoes of the Past*, p. 48.

⁹⁸ *Castlemaine Mail*, 9 October 1936. See also 'Major Mitchell's Centenary', *VHA Magazine*, vol. xvi, no. 2, November 1936, p. 76.

⁹⁹ *Midland Express*, 14 November 1995, p. 19.

¹⁰⁰ [E.W. Pitts], *A Memorial in Memory of the Pioneers of the District, Sandy Creek/Welshmans Reef* (Australian Natives' Association, [1989]), p. 4.

¹⁰¹ Lewis, 'Strathlea', pp. 1-2.

¹⁰² Graves in the *Strathloddon* station cemetery at Yapeen were removed to Newstead Cemetery in the 1870s. Bradfield, *Castlemaine and District Tours*, p. 45.

¹⁰³ Bradfield, *Campbells Creek*, p. 4.

¹⁰⁴ *Pioneer Women*, p. 7.

¹⁰⁵ Rowe, *Fryerstown*, p. 20.

¹⁰⁶ Brown, *Reminiscences of Fryerstown*, p. 38; *NME*, 8 July 1908; Winkleman, *Historical Sketch of Campbells Creek*, p. 9.

later Castlemaine Borough took over the 40-acre cemetery and transferred remains from its cemetery 'with all due decorum and solemnity, and in the presence of many witnesses'.¹⁰⁷ There were between 1,200 and 1,300 interments by October 1857. A fifth were Chinese, victims of mining accidents and illness, and the following year the trustees opened a Chinese section and erected a funerary oven. Deaths of infants and children demonstrate the prevalence of disease on the gold fields or the lack of skilled medical care. Sextons developed the cemetery grounds by planting trees, shrubs and flowers, digging drains and repairing footpaths, 'Beautifying what was originally a comparatively barren spot.'¹⁰⁸ By 1918, the interments numbered more than twenty thousand.¹⁰⁹

Other communities established their cemeteries by forming cemetery trusts, and applying for reserves and government grants. A cemetery already was established at Church's Flat in 1854 when Robert Bamber died, his grave marked by a 'finely incised headstone'.¹¹⁰ Newstead's cemetery began with the appointment of the trustees in July 1859.¹¹¹ A trust formed at an interdenominational meeting at Fryerstown in September 1859 applied for a reserve of fifteen acres and the first interments were in 1860.¹¹² The opening of the Vaughan General Cemetery that year caused the closure of the local so-called 'Chinese cemetery'.¹¹³ Guildford's Trust formed at a meeting at Gaffney's Hotel in November 1863 and waited eight years for the first burial, of Swiss miner Vincenzo Canevascini.¹¹⁴ At Welshmans Reef, the first burials date from 1872. Sandon's Roman Catholic community established a cemetery that catered for Catholics from a wide area.¹¹⁵

¹⁰⁷ Bradfield, *Castlemaine*, p. 30.

¹⁰⁸ *MAM*, 3 January 1862.

¹⁰⁹ Bradfield, *Campbells Creek*, p. 39; Winkleman, *Historical Sketch of Campbells Creek*, p. 8.

¹¹⁰ Béchervaise, *Castlemaine Sketchbook*, p. 50; Bradfield, *Castlemaine and District Tours*, p. 36.

¹¹¹ *VGG*, 12 July 1859, p. 1443.

¹¹² *VGG*, 22 November 1859, p. 2483; Brown, *Reminiscences of Fryerstown*, p. 111

¹¹³ James, *Echoes of the Past*, p. 56; Bradfield, *Castlemaine*, p. 59; *VGG*, 13 April 1860, p. 669.

¹¹⁴ Bradfield (ed.), *Guildford*, p. 17; Gentilli, 'The Settlement of Swiss Ticino Immigrants in Australia', p. 31.

¹¹⁵ *NME*, 31 July 1907, 4 September 1907, 22 April 1908, 4 March 1908; Bradfield, *Newstead*, p. [15].

CONCLUSION

Resonances of the past pervade the Shire's countryside and townships. The old general store at Yapeen, brand new in the hectic 1850s, is now found 'in a tangle of nostalgic shrubs and weatherboard. The low verandah is heavy with rust. A television antenna crowns the external chimney. The place cannot possibly last, but yet it continues adding to its score of more than 120 years.'¹ Parts of the landscape continue to bear unmistakable signs of the gold rush when the ground appeared 'as if it were rooted all over by hogs ... turned inside out, entrails uppermost ... Not a tree was left standing, nor a blade of vegetation was anywhere to be seen'.² Forest cover has returned to the hills and the places of great activity, like Church's Flat, are deserted.

Change in the Shire is as natural and about as predictable as the Loddon and at each stage of change people try to capture a past that has just slipped away. The correspondent who knew an embryo goldfield at Fryers Creek noticed in 1856 it had changed almost beyond recognition; his 'ancient days' of memory were a mere five years earlier.³ In 1889, another correspondent wrote wistfully of Fryerstown's decline and described in detail 'one succession of idle machinery and solitary chimney stacks'.⁴ A former Newstead resident returned in 1907 after an absence of almost fifty years and noted 'Many changes'. Most noticeable was 'so many strangers have come to the place that, when on a visit, we feel almost strangers ourselves'.⁵ Raymond Bradfield felt this sense of alienation in 1988 at Guildford where 'the population has, in later years, been augmented by people without previous family ties in our district. ... Guildford is gradually being re-populated, assuming the character of a dormitory township'.⁶ Dave Barkla saw similar changes at South Muckleford where in the 1970s smaller holdings were established nearer the highway: 'Few people can exist entirely off the land today and now there are truckies, factory workers etc. with their few acres run more or less as a hobby.'⁷

Many residents today believe the second world war marked a turning point for change because of population loss. While the population declined 14 per cent between 1933 and 1947, this was part of an on-going trend since the gold rush. The greatest change occurred between 1891 and 1933, when the population almost halved. By 1992, it was 2,770, the same as in 1921 and 13 per cent more than in 1933.⁸ What had changed by 1947, was an ageing of the population since 1921 and increased use of motor cars. Cars eliminated horses as a means of transport and, as with trains in the nineteenth century, the technology seemed to accelerate the pace of life. Edgar Ramsey, aged 84 in 1972, believed the car was 'the biggest menace to human life nowadays ... [and.] with so much speed on the roads, seems the big majority of people are in a hell of a hurry to get to the cemetery.'⁹ The car brought large neighbouring centres closer. In 1948-49, many Shire people shopped at Castlemaine and used local retail outlets only for their day-to-day requirements.¹⁰

¹ Béchervaise, *Castlemaine Sketchbook*, p. 50. The store became a licensed premises in 1864.

² William Kelly, quoted by E.E. Morris (ed.), *Cassell's Picturesque Australia*, vol. IV, p. 175.

³ *MAM*, 13 May 1856.

⁴ *MAM* correspondent, quoted by Bannear, 'Historic Mining Sites', p. 208.

⁵ *NME*, 6 November 1907.

⁶ Bradfield (ed.), *Guildford*, p. 41.

⁷ Barkla, 'Memories', p. 11.

⁸ *Census* (1881), Table VIII; *Resources Survey: Central Highlands Region*, Table 27: Population, 1891-1954, p. 87; *Victorian Municipal Directory* (1992), pp. 789-90.

⁹ Ramsey, 'Memories', p. 27.

¹⁰ *Resources Survey: Central Highlands Region*, Table 58: Retail Sales and Establishments by Municipalities, p. 126. See also the conclusion, p. 27: 'This town [*i.e.* Castlemaine] benefits from the trade

By 1954, only twenty retail establishments remained in the Shire and thirteen were at Newstead.¹¹

The increase in population in the 1970s and a reawakened consciousness of things Australian marked another change: increased public awareness and knowledge about the Shire's past. Older residents and recent arrivals have co-operated in valuing the remnants of the past. This fostering of a growing awareness of the Shire as a rewarding heritage destination augurs well for the future.

of persons residing in the Shires of Maldon (retail sales per person of £61), Metcalfe (£76), Newstead (£52), and Creswick (£65).'

¹¹ *Resources Survey: Central Highlands Region*, Table 57: Classification of Retail Shops, pp. 124-5.

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AWM	Australian War Memorial
CVD	Central Victorian Dredging Co. N.L.
GMA	Gold Mines of Australia Ltd
MAM	<i>Mount Alexander Mail</i>
NHS	Newstead Historical Society
NME	<i>Newstead and Maldon Echo</i>
SRWSC	State Rivers and Water Supply Commission
VGD	Victorian Gold Dredging Co. N.L.

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MAPS

Parish maps and township plans formerly in the possession of the Shire of Newstead are in the archives of the Newstead and District Historical Society. The archive's other maps, including copies, have been added by the society's researchers and by donors. Among them are the original plans drawn up for the Victorian Gold Dredging Company and the Central Victorian Dredging Company for their operations on the Loddon and Jim Crow Creek. The following maps are of particular interest:

- Agricultural Reserve, Township of Newstead, Parish of Tarrangower, 11 Mile S.W. from Castlemaine.* Surveyor General's Office, Melbourne, 3 August 1854. Scale: [3.3. cm = 20 chains].
- Plan of Country Lands, Upper Loddon Plains on the Middle Creek and Joyce's Creek in the Parish of Rodborough and County of Talbot,* (signed) Hugh Fraser, 27 February 1858. Scale: [2.5 cm = 20 chains].
- A Plan of Plaistow Station Loddon in the Licensed Occupation of Joyce Brothers.* n.d. Scale: [6.2 cm = 1 mile].
- Suburban and Countrylands on the River Loddon in the Parish of Tarrangower [sic],* (signed) John Turner, Assistant Surveyor, 8 July 1854. Scale: 4 inches = 1 mile.
- Survey of the Eastern and central [parts?] of the Loddon River together with a tributary which rises at Mount Alexander.* Date: 'about 1848'.

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