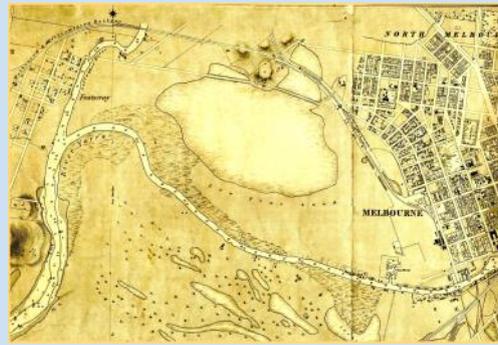
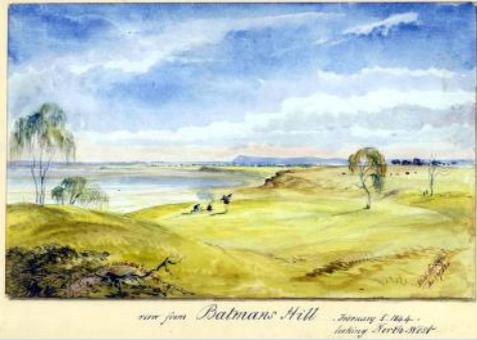




# Ponderings

Seasonal newsletter of the  
Friends of Moonee Ponds Creek  
Summer 2021/22 | Issue 73

advocate educate interpret participate rehabilitate revegetate



**Where the  
Creek once  
ended:  
The West  
Melbourne  
Swamp**



## “Councils don’t make Goat Tracks...”

A Goat Track is defined as a track made by people walking through an area without formal paths — for instance, Strathnaver Grasslands has dozens of them. So, what if you just wanted to make one track instead of dozens? Well it can’t be done, due to council regulations. Paths have to be made a standard width and material, they have to be accessible to all, and besides Grasslands are too environmentally significant to put a path through...

How is this relevant? Well, there are some areas of the creek that could really do with a goat track, but nothing short of a proper path can be put in. For instance I often wondered why they couldn’t just “fill the rut” in the east side track with a bit of gravel to make it all-weather, but if a track is going to be made, it has to be done properly.

I’m not sure what the solution to this is — I can think of dozens of places along the creek where goat tracks could be made, but it seems we goats are going to have to do it ourselves...

David Widdowson, Editor.

Thanks to Anna Lanigan, Rachel Lopes, Julia Cirillo, Nina Franceschi and the RHSV for their assistance.

## CONTENTS

(Click on page title)

<a href="#">Brosnan Crescent.....</a>	<a href="#">3</a>
<a href="#">Chain of Ponds News.....</a>	<a href="#">4</a>
<a href="#">Moonee Valley News.....</a>	<a href="#">5-6</a>
<a href="#">Moreland News.....</a>	<a href="#">7</a>
<a href="#">Waterwatch News.....</a>	<a href="#">8-9</a>
<a href="#">iNaturalist Project.....</a>	<a href="#">10</a>
<a href="#">Tawny Frogmouths.....</a>	<a href="#">11</a>
<a href="#">West Melb. Swamp.....</a>	<a href="#">12-13</a>
<a href="#">Between the Bridges.....</a>	<a href="#">14</a>
<a href="#">Spring along the MPC.....</a>	<a href="#">15</a>
<a href="#">Down the Drain.....</a>	<a href="#">16</a>
<a href="#">Sightings.....</a>	<a href="#">17</a>
<a href="#">MPC History Page.....</a>	<a href="#">18</a>
<a href="#">John Street Reserve.....</a>	<a href="#">19</a>
<a href="#">FoMPC News.....</a>	<a href="#">20</a>

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## Brosnan Crescent Naturalisation

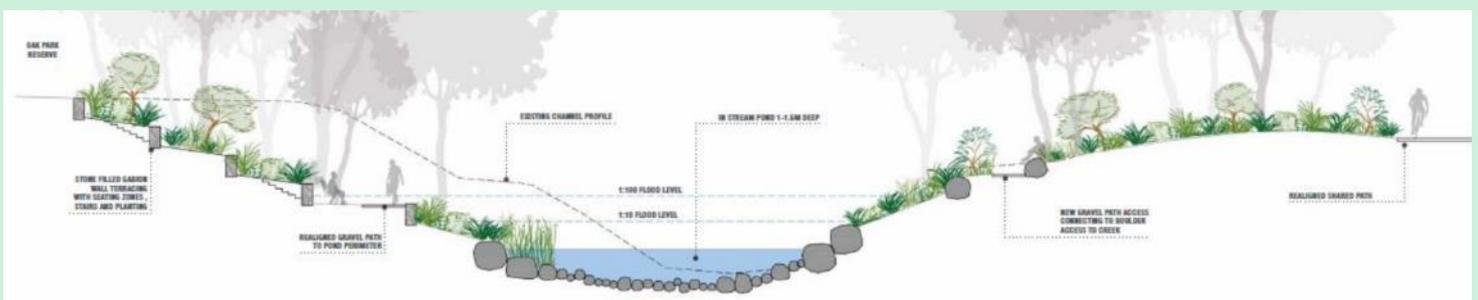


As you will recall, there were three concept designs that were presented to the community during the second phase of engagement, in August and early September of 2021. The most popular was [Design Concept C](#) with 43% of the community preferring this design over the other two options. The installation of the pond at Oak Park was considered the most valuable aspect of this concept design.

Design Concept C includes an upgrade of the creek channel between Ethel Street Reserve and Herbert Street Bridge (excluding Herbert Street Reserve). The design includes 500 metres of removal of the concrete walls and placement of rocks throughout the channel. Design Concept C also includes improvements to Ethel Street Reserve to provide a vantage point down to the creek channel.



Additionally, Design Concept C includes the realignment of the Brosnan Crescent section of shared path, providing a separation of cyclists and pedestrians between Melissa Street and the Margaret Street bridge. Above photo shows staff deciding on the best path for the new track to take.



### Key features include:

- 500 metres of naturalised waterway.
- Installation of six rock weirs.
- Construction of a pond approximately one metre in depth near Oak Park Reserve.
- Opening up the Oak Park (Chapman) stormwater drain in a more natural way.
- Rocks and native revegetation in the channel.
- Bank revegetation and canopy cover.
- Installation of formal seating with bench seats.
- 690 tonnes of concrete removed from side wings and base of pond.
- Separate the bike and pedestrian paths along Brosnan Crescent.

Construction will begin in early 2022.



# CHAIN OF PONDS

Transforming the Moonee Ponds Creek

By Rachel Lopes, Frank Kinnersley and Julie Francis



## Upper Moonee Ponds Creek Shared Trail

We are fortunate to have a shared path or trail for almost all the Creek's length, offering exploration and recreation opportunities along this iconic corridor. However, there are some significant breaks in the trail: the first near Vanberg Road in Essendon, where trail users are directed to the streets, and another north and west of Victoria Street in Westmeadows.

This second gap in the shared path is due to the Mitchell Lasry Quarry, which was operational at the time when the trail was originally constructed. As the area near the creek was part of the work site, it was necessary to go around this section. North of the quarry there are paths, some near the creek, but it is not always clear where best to maintain your journey and connection with the creek.

A project working group has been established as part of the Chain of Ponds to look at this northern missing link. As noted last quarter, the Upper Moonee Ponds Creek Shared Trail Project Group enjoyed a walk on Country and site visit with Wurundjeri Elders, Auntie Gail Smith and Auntie Julieanne Axford, alongside interested parties to explore the sections of the potential and existing shared trails.

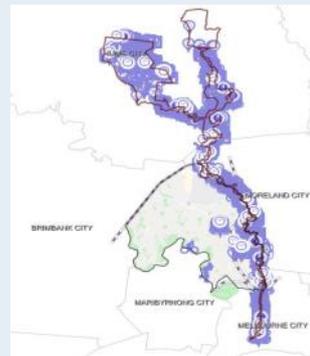
Matt, Melissa and colleagues from Thompson Berrill Landscape Design were part of the walk and site visit. They are currently developing a Concept Plan for review, which will be available in November.



## Westmeadows Meander

This Melbourne Water program is designed to transform several kilometres of concrete/earthen channelised waterways into places that improve liveability, amenity, health and wellbeing benefits for the community in addition to delivering integrated water management outcomes. The Westmeadows project will aim to restore an old 400 metre long meander in the Moonee Ponds Creek that was cut off in the early 1970s for flood mitigation purposes, and has been identified as a priority project for the Chain of Ponds Collaboration.

The restoration, whereby water would resume its flow through the meander, would enhance biodiversity, habitat and local amenity values of the area. Under the proposal, Melbourne Water will invest significant resources into the necessary in-stream works to re-engage the meander, while Council is investigating opportunities to contribute to the community connectivity and amenity outcomes of the project, including a pedestrian bridge across the Moonee Ponds Creek and potential enhancement of the path network.



## Working for Vic — Mapping the MPC Trail

Recently, a mapping team employed by Moonee Valley City Council through the Working for Victoria program spent five days walking in one kilometre increments along the various paths and informal tracks of the Moonee Ponds Creek Trail. In total, the team mapped and catalogued over 2300 different assets along the Creek.

The data can now be utilised to identify and prioritise infrastructure needs, allocate funding, support open space planning, and increase connectivity and access points along the Moonee Ponds Creek.

The team behind the initiative hopes this will be taken up by the Collaboration Group and further developed e.g. interactive website, data verification, collection of new data and linking photos to the existing data set.



## Cross Keys Reserve

Cross Keys Reserve will soon have a new play space, and we would love to hear your feedback on the draft design. The play space design has been developed to include a range of activities to improve skills and development through a variety of play elements for all age groups, from toddlers and young children to older children who might be seeking a more challenging play experience. We are proposing to include the following:

- Natural play elements with rock work, logs and timber steppers.
- A rubber paved bicycle loop with traffic signs and line marking,
- An all-abilities swing harness and basket swing to provide accessible play opportunities.
- A range of tactile and playful elements to encourage collective and imagination play, including interactive flowers, shop fronts and interactive panels with wheelchair access.
- [Have your say—you can provide your feedback by Wednesday, 8 December 2021 by filling out our online survey.](#)
- Or you can attend the community information session on Saturday, 4 December 2021, 12pm - 2pm at Cross Keys Reserve.
- Or you can Email: [parkimprovements@mvcc.vic.gov.au](mailto:parkimprovements@mvcc.vic.gov.au)



## Working for Victoria Crew Extended

We are fortunate to have our wonderful Working for Victoria crew extended until the end of February 2022. They will continue their work helping to improve biodiversity across the municipality. Pictured above: Sandra and Raph staking the newest seedlings in Boeing Reserve.

## Tree Removal and Tawny Frogmouths

In response to community concerns, we have also worked with our Arborist team to review our tree removal process. To help prevent Tawny Frogmouth nesting trees from being pruned or removed during the breeding seasons, we have updated our internal records system to include this information. Thank you to Anna Lanigan for working with us to help improve this process.



## Bollards on Mascoma Street

The Creekside Reserve along Mascoma Street between Strathnaver Reserve and Strathmore North Primary School and around Lebanon Reserve will soon be protected by bollards. This will protect the Reserve from vehicle access, preventing damage to the area.



## BMX and MTB in Moonee Valley

We listened to your feedback from our *Young People Outdoors* survey and heard that you would like improved BMX and MTB facilities in Moonee Valley. Here is what we are now working on, to address the need for purpose-built bike facilities while helping protect our sensitive environment:

- **Fanny Street Reserve bike track upgrade.** Specialist track designers *The Trail Collective* will be developing a design to upgrade the existing bike track at Fanny Street Reserve.
- **Mountain Bike Trail feasibility study.** We have engaged expert track designers *Common Ground Trails* to explore whether a Mountain Bike trail could successfully be located at one of our five shortlisted sites. More details can be found on our **Your Say** page.
- **Pop-up pump track.** A pop-up pump track will initially be installed at Montgomery Park in the coming months. It will then be rotated between shortlisted sites in Moonee Valley. Visit **Your Say** for further details.
- **Managing unplanned jumps/tracks** Council will continue to monitor unplanned jumps/tracks. We will need to remove high-risk jumps and any which impact cultural and ecological sites or any that affect other users.
- [Have your say by clicking here.](#)



## Australasian Grebes in Woodlands Park

As well as our resident cygnets and ducklings, newly hatched Australasian Grebe chicks can be spotted with their parents in the ponds at Woodlands Park. The local community have been wonderful in continuing to be considerate of the new feathered parents.



## Pattison St Pocket Park

A new pocket park is planned for 36 Pattison St, Moonee Ponds, just next to the creek. The site (which now includes an existing house) will soon be demolished and transformed into a new green space funded by the Victorian Government (DELWP) Local Parks Program. The pocket park will provide a green oasis for the community and increase connectivity to the Moonee Ponds Creek Trail. It is envisaged the park will also support and enhance recreational use of the trail by providing a meeting point/end of trip or en-route respite area for cyclists, walkers and joggers. Some of the key features include:

- An arbour to frame the main walkway.
- A curved custom seating spine which weaves through the site.
- A large centrally located shade tree.
- Grassed lawn area.
- Furniture (drink fountain, bins and bike racks and park seats).
- Landscaping and native planting.
- [Have your say before December 10, 2021 by clicking here.](#)





### Westbreen Creek

Along Westbreen Creek, Council has commenced construction of the popular walking route along the east bank through Gavin Park which will complete the gravel circuit track around the naturalised areas of the creek.



### Gavin Park Wetland

There have been a few hurdles with some soil contamination issues, flooding and construction shut downs, but work on Gavin Park Wetland on the Westbreen Creek continues. The wetland shape is now largely excavated and much of the pipework installed. The next stage includes lots of rock installation and clay-lining before the wetlands will be revegetated.



### Vanberg Street Footbridge

Works on the Brunswick West/Essendon bridge crossing have continued to be met with delays but site establishment works have commenced and on-site installation is expected to commence soon.





The Masked Collector....



### Holbrook Reserve Clean up

What a successful clean up morning! The much postponed event finally happened!

The event was organised by Pam Lloyd of the FoMPC and MCMC Waterwatch Co-ordinator Julia Cirillo and was funded by the City of Moreland. Thanks to the fantastic support of FoMPC President John Kavanagh, Moreland councillor Angelica Panopoulos, and quiet achiever the Hon Kelvin Thomson MP (retired) for lending a hand, as well as the Friends and family groups that all put in a massive effort to remove a vast amount of litter from the Moonee Ponds creek banks and water's edge (where safe to do so). The participants met at Holbrook reserve and walked down and upstream collecting litter along the way.

The 26 participants of all ages removed over 43 kgs of litter. Notable Rubbish included:

- 150 pieces of plastic film remnants.
- over 200 pieces of polystyrene
- over 55 aluminium cans (now recycled)
- over 50 drinking straws
- over 20 Spray paint cans used for graffiti
- over 50 plastic drink bottles
- 25 face masks
- over 20 "slurpee" containers
- over 20 bags of dog poo. Very disappointing how many dog owners collect their dog's poo in a bag but then throw it in a bush next to the creek instead of disposing of it in a bin or taking it home!

All these items and the rest will be added to the [LitterWatch Vic data portal](#) so everyone can get a good idea of the types of rubbish that ends up in the Moonee Ponds Creek.

If anyone would like to organise their own clean up day as part of the Friends' activities, I am here to help with safety advice, equipment and data collection tips. Contact [JuliaCirillo@mcmc.org.au](mailto:JuliaCirillo@mcmc.org.au)



Moreland Councillor Angelica Panopoulos and FoMPC President John Kavanagh.



## Volunteers Collect DNA for the Great Australian Platypus Search

In spring this year, MCMC Waterwatch was approached by EnviroDNA and Odonata to participate in a Citizen Science event, the first “Great Australian Platypus Search”.

Platypus appear in all of the eastern States of Australia but are struggling to keep their populations up in most of them. Platypus are classified as Vulnerable in Victoria. Threats to platypus include loss of habitat, drought, climate change and — in urban areas especially — **urban stream syndrome**, the high flows of water from stormwater outputs and the pollutants (detergent, oil, litter) that come into our creeks.

Ecologists have been collecting data on platypus numbers within the Merri and Moonee Ponds Creeks for a number of years but only on an occasional basis. The sampling, involving capture and release using fyke nets, was labour intensive, and could be stressful to the animals caught (even if briefly and carefully) and was not always successful at capturing platypus.

Now there is an easier, cheaper, less invasive way to detect the presence of platypus in waterways and, best yet, Citizen Scientists can collect this information!

[The Great Australian Platypus Search](#) trains volunteers to collect samples from waterways safely and accurately, to detect platypus presence within the last 24-48 hours. Using a large syringe and filters to capture the DNA, samples are taken directly from a waterway and shipped off to the [EnviroDNA](#) laboratory for analysis. Sites all over Victoria have had samples collected by volunteers and schools and we will get the results in 2022.

Waterwatch had 18 volunteers collect samples from 11 sites along the Yarra River, Merri and Moonee Ponds Creeks.



Pictured left and above: Amanda, Brendan & Eleanor Liam and Emily completed the Moonee Ponds Creek sampling near Oak Park and Liam said:

*“It was interesting to see a new creek. For someone who's used to the Merri Corridor, skipping over to the Moonee Valley and realising there's a whole other creekline, with lush stands of vegetation and an old CERES-esque nursery up for restoration was super interesting. The part of the creek we surveyed looked to be in reasonable health, with thick reed beds lining the creek in a way I haven't seen on the Merri, on either side of a very solid basalt stone ford. Hopefully all that stream vegetation means there's a bit of life around, so it will be good to hear the results of the testing.”*



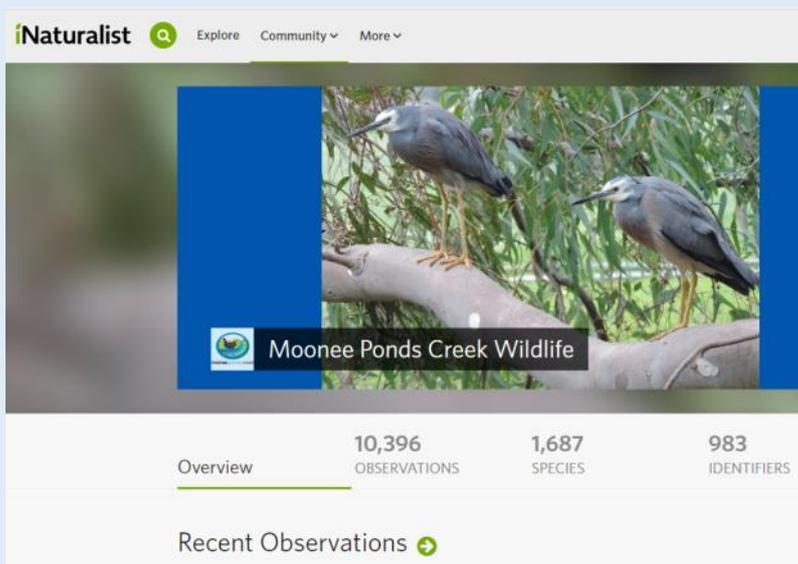
## Calling For Your Expertise!

At Melbourne Water, we want to provide teachers with the highest quality resources. To help us achieve this aim, we are asking teachers along the MPC to [click here to complete this short survey](#).

By filling in the survey, you will help us develop even more fabulous resources for waterway education. The findings from the survey will help guide the development and delivery of our educational resources and programs. Deadline for the survey is 17 December 2021. Questions to:

**Marita Tripp, Melbourne Water**  
[Marita.Tripp@melbournewater.com.au](mailto:Marita.Tripp@melbournewater.com.au)

## iNaturalist and the Moonee Ponds Creek Wildlife Project by Anna Lanigan



Following the October meeting of the Friends of Moonee Ponds Creek, the green light was given to set up a Project that would collate all the observations on iNaturalist within the boundary of the Moonee Ponds Creek catchment. Special thanks to Fin Adamson of Melbourne Water who provided me with the file that gave us the accurate project boundary and to the Chain of Ponds Collaboration Lead Rachel Lopes for her enthusiasm and support.

iNaturalist is described by Wikipedia as “a social network of naturalists, citizen scientists, and biologists built on the concept of mapping and sharing observations

of biodiversity across the globe”. It originated from a Masters project by students at the University of California’s Berkeley School of Information. Now under the auspices of the California Academy of Sciences and later National Geographic, it boasts over 85 million observations from all over the world from over four million contributors.

My involvement with iNaturalist started when funding was withdrawn for the Melbourne Museum **Bowerbird** Project. To his credit, Bowerbird’s curator Ken Walker rescued many thousands of observations on **Bowerbird** when he arranged transfer of the data (with contributors’ permission) to iNaturalist. I’ve been a regular on iNaturalist ever since, so knew that we would have a great starting base for the MPC Wildlife Project.

From the first moment of seeing the Project map, I was excited to find we were on to something well beyond my expectations. The start-up day gathered close to 10,000 observations, with the majority of species represented being the bird and insect populations observed along the creek over the years. Over two-thirds of the observations are Research Grade (that occurs when two or more from the iNaturalist Community confirm the identifications).

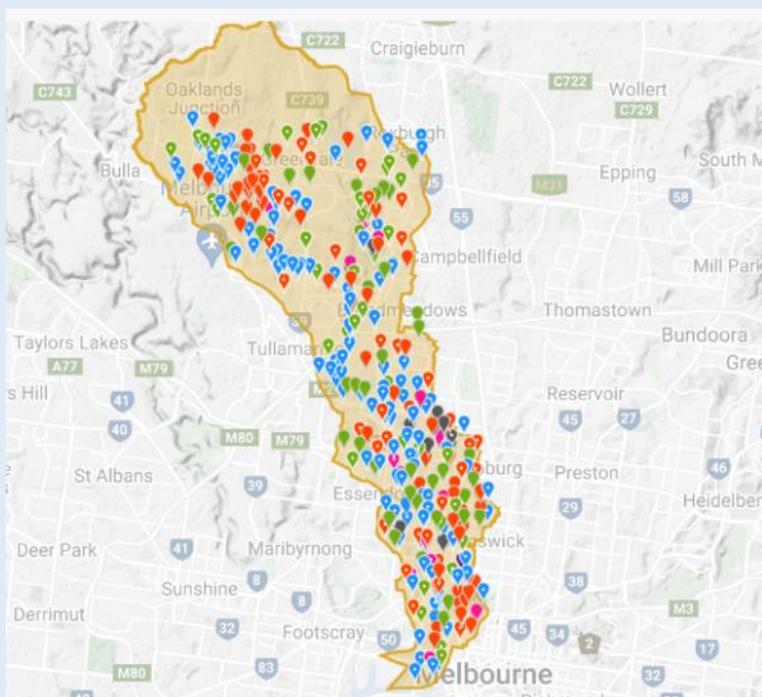
It’s easy to become an iNaturalist contributor. Simply log in to <https://www.inaturalist.org/>

There are no joining fees. During the recent **Great Southern Bioblitz**, webinars were held to introduce the iNaturalist format and provide instructions and guidance to new contributors. An excellent example can be found here:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pb\\_xIFJtPg4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pb_xIFJtPg4)

Even if you don’t contribute to the observations, you can still join iNaturalist and have fun exploring the data finding out what species have been recorded in your own local neighbourhood or in your favourite park. As for the Moonee Ponds Creek Wildlife Project you might be pleasantly surprised when you log into:

<https://www.inaturalist.org/projects/moonee-ponds-creek-wildlife>





## Lights, Camera, Action— Tawny Frogmouths!

During Spring the Tawny Frogmouth families along the Moonee Ponds Creek participated in a BBC *Planet Earth 3* Project looking at their nesting and hunting behaviour in urban settings — with Metropolitan Melbourne being the focus of attention (as reported in Issue 70).

Researcher Miraca Walker from the BBC Natural History Unit in the UK, made several visits to our MPC families in Salmon Reserve, Strathnaver Oval and Napier Park. We also reported nests at KT Smith Reserve and the shared trail near Nursery Corner, among others upstream in Westmeadows. Our families were well on their way to fledging before the camera crews arrived in November, but they really appreciated our help with the groundwork.

An interesting postscript is that as this issue goes to press, at least three of the Tawny Frogmouth families are going for a second sitting. With a wet summer predicted on the news this week, maybe the birds are already aware of a good season ahead for rearing young. They are amazing and I look forward to hearing Sir David Attenborough's dulcet tones completing the scenes.

*Report and images by Anna Lanigan*



# Where the MPC Ended: The West Melbourne Swamp

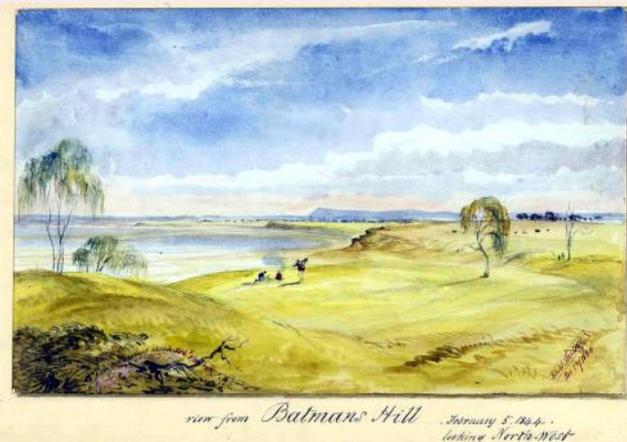
by Ashley Smith for the Royal Historical Society of Victoria, published in Docklands News, October 2021

Once upon a time, the northern part of the Docklands was a lagoon surrounded by a marshy swamp. Up until the mid-twentieth century, the area between North Melbourne and the Maribyrnong River was home to *Batman's Swamp*, also known as the Blue Lagoon, Blue Lake or the West Melbourne Swamp.



This view across the city blocks toward the swamp was taken by photographer John Noone in 1869 from the tower of Dr. Thomas Fitzgerald's house 'Rostella' in Lonsdale Street, near what is now the County Court (where only the iron gates remain). The photograph was one of eight commissioned for a presentation created for visiting British Naval Officers. Whilst the large pool of water is prominent in the background, the foreground also gives us a glimpse of West Melbourne at the time. In the foreground are William Street, as well as the recently -closed Metropolitan Hotel (on the corner of Little Lonsdale Street) and the West Melbourne Common School and Literary Institute (at the bottom of the image).

Before European settlement, the swamp (which received water from the Moonee Ponds Creek before it filtered into the Yarra) was an important meeting site and a resource for the Indigenous peoples of Victoria. The Woi Wurrung would harvest shellfish and hunted game in the area.



Europeans first encountered the Lagoon during the 1803 expedition of the Yarra by Surveyor-General Charles Grimes. James Fleming, who assisted Grimes, wrote in his Journal that, as they climbed Batman's Hill, they spotted a lagoon "in a large swamp between two rivers; fine grass, fit to mow; not a bush in it", with black soil "six to ten inches deep".

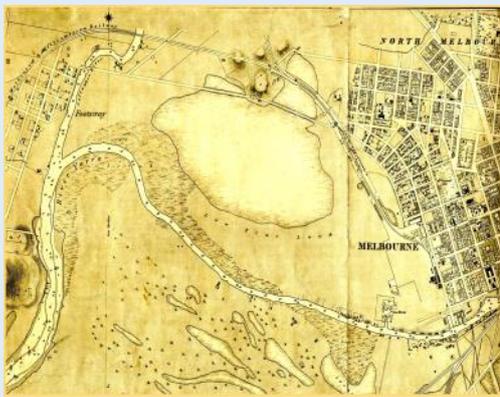


They wouldn't be the last Europeans to admire the ecosystem of this region. In John Batman's initial visit in 1835, he noted in his journal the sight of "1000 quails flying at one time, quite a crowd". Writing in the *Victorian Historical Magazine* in 1912, George Gordon Macrae reported that when he hunted with his father as a child in the 1840s, the swamp resembled "a real lake, intensely blue, nearly oval, and full of the clearest salt water..." surrounded by pigface flowers. It's likely the blue colour refers to the blue clay that rested at the lagoon's bottom. Another local from the early settlement, Albert Mattingley (writing in the *VHM* in 1916) noted the fauna included birdlife such as swans, pelicans, and sea gulls with eels and frogs inhabiting the water.



However, the region didn't stay pristine for long. Grazing animals consumed the plants, whilst abattoirs and noxious industries were built along the Yarra, turning the swamp into a dumping ground for their waste. The consequences would be apparent in the decades that followed.

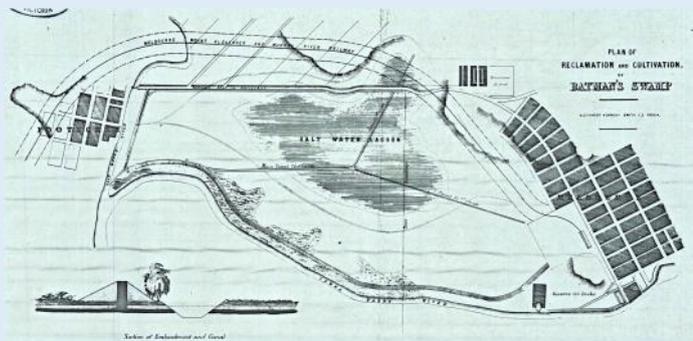
A medical professional going by the alias "Medicus" complained to *The Argus* in 1866 (17<sup>th</sup> February) that the polluted swamp had become a malaria risk, and the stench in dry season was "sufficient enough to poison a whole neighbourhood". They were especially concerned with the effects of the polluted swamp, noting that locals who lived closer to the area were more likely to have catarrh (or excessive mucus in nose and throat) or be overcome by "the most serious forms of intermittent fever (ague), with diseases of the liver and spleen".



## West Melbourne Swamp (continued)

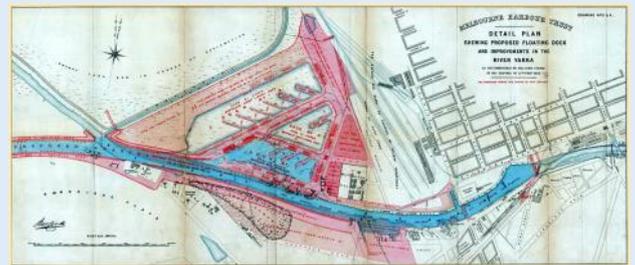
In 1872 and 1873 a Royal Commission (known as the **Low Lands Commission**) was ordered to investigate the low lying lands south and west of Melbourne, including the swamp. Their main intent was to find “the best and most economical application of said lands for commercial and public purposes”. Eventually, noting the expensive cost to convert the land for residences, they came to the conclusion that the swamp would “be enclosed and drained, so as to be made suitable for purposes of recreation as a park or for cultivation or grazing.”

The first works to drain the swamp started in 1877 with hopes of converting the low lands for grazing and the higher portions for market gardens (*Argus*, June 4<sup>th</sup>). *The Herald* (27<sup>th</sup> October) reported that the scheme would involve encircling a 3½ mile portion of the swamp with a canal, with the excavated dirt forming an embankment. All water would flow back into the Moonee Ponds Creek. A pumping station was built at Brown’s Hill, near Kensington, capable of pumping out 6000 gallons of water a minute.



The scheme was completed by late 1878, with *The Argus* (December 23<sup>rd</sup>) reporting that the drained land was “dry” and “ready for successful and profitable cultivation”. However, the market gardens plan was abandoned, with *The Argus* (2<sup>nd</sup> August 1883) suspecting it was because of “the sourness of the ground”, likely referring to the salt still imbedded in the soil.

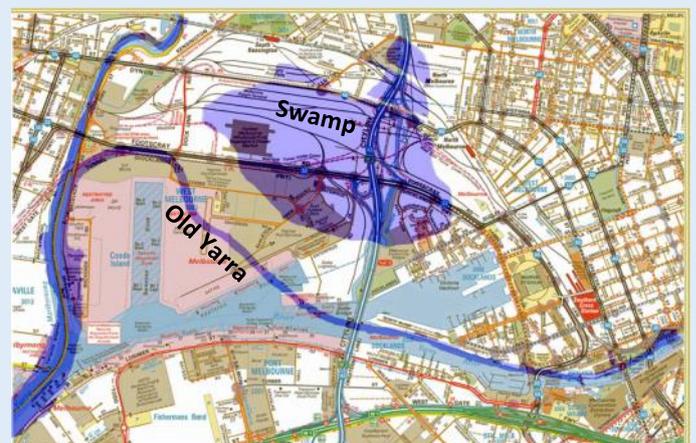
It wouldn’t be the last works done on the area, and in the decades that followed the swamp dwindled away. The Coode Canal, which re-worked the Yarra’s course, reduced the risk of flood into the swamp during times of heavy rain. Further drainage and filling works (especially under the supervision of contractor Michael Walsh in the late 1800s), and construction of docks and industrial works further eroded the swamp, until there were virtually little or no traces of it left by the 1950s.



In the early 1900s, the swamp would become a refuge for the homeless of Melbourne. A series of “Dudley Mansions” were created — F. Oswald Barnett, who took this photograph, campaigned for years for better housing for Melbourne’s poor and homeless. Pressure from people like Barnett on the issues of poverty and poor housing led to the formation of the Housing Commission of Victoria in 1937.

The once vibrant swamp is now paved over with the old wholesale fruit and flower markets, the railways linking to North Melbourne and Southern Cross, the docks and container storage and various industries. It is a sad reminder that the views like the one taken over 150 years ago are no match for progress.

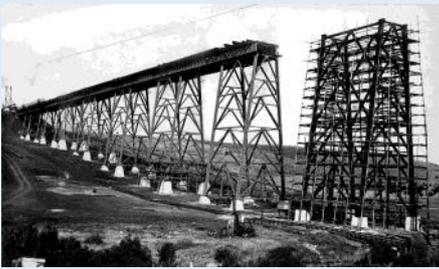
[\(Images and additional material from “The Swamp Vanishes”, a digital exhibition by the Royal Historical Society of Victoria.\)](#)

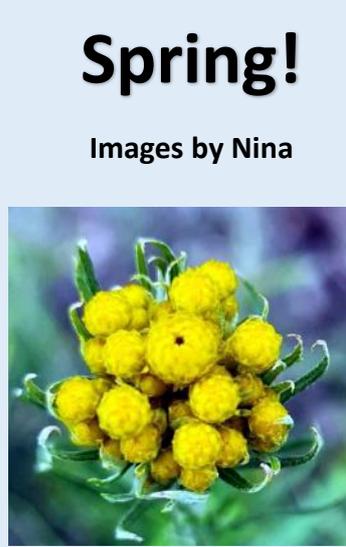


# Between the Bridges — Circuit Walking the MPC

## Part 2—Boeing Reserve to Djirri Djirri, 2.5 to 3km

This time we travel north from Boeing Reserve to Djirri Djirri Reserve, another semi-natural section of the creek. Highlights here include the famous Trestle Bridge over the creek, plus Kingsford Smith Ulm Reserve with its playground and sculpted figures. All paths are bitumen or concrete, except the one from Outlook Drive to Kingsford Smith Ulm. P - Parking. [FoMPC Walking Maps online: 5413](#)





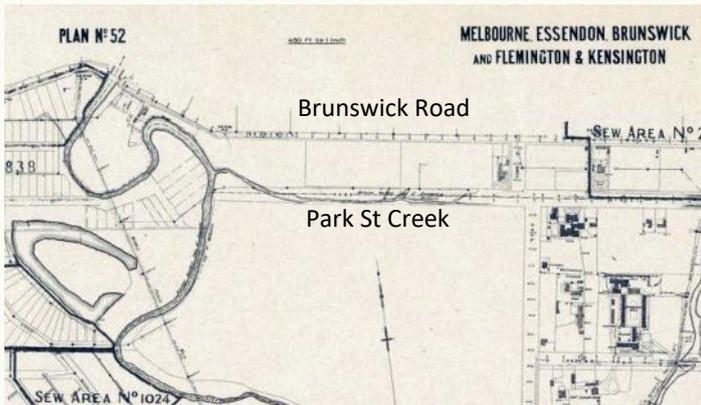
# Spring!

Images by Nina



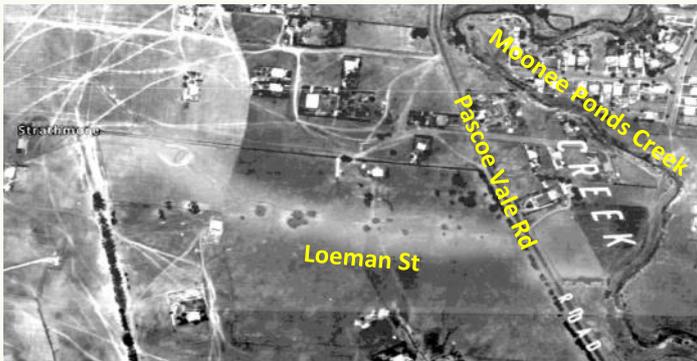
# Down the Drain - Lost Tributaries of the MPC

Part 13 — Minor Tributaries — by David Widdowson



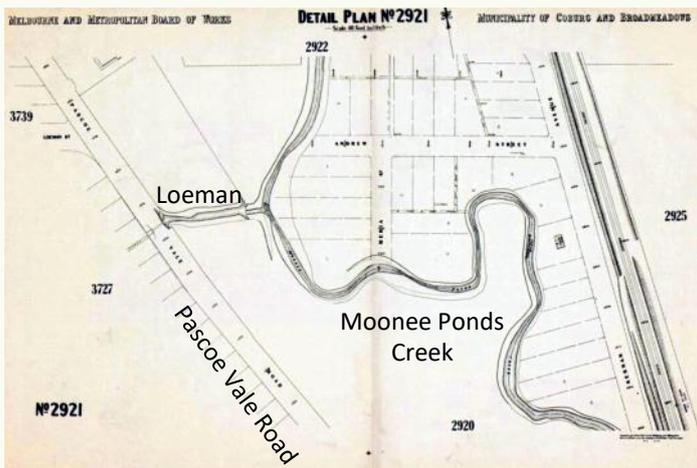
## 1. Park St, West Brunswick

The dip in the landscape just south of Brunswick Road is an indication of this minor creek, which has since become Park Street. The map above shows the old course of the Moonee Ponds Creek at left, with a horseshoe shaped billabong that was originally part of the creek. The minor creek that became Park Street can be seen branching to the East.



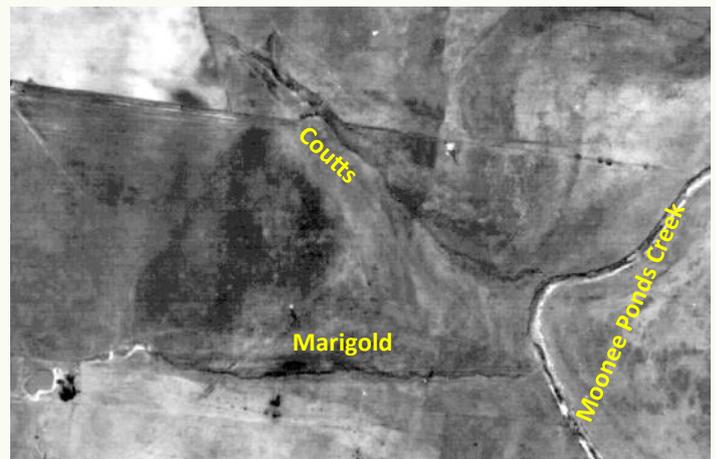
## 3. Loeman Street, Strathmore

The valley this street lies in is an indication of this minor creek, which can be seen in the Melbourne 1945 Aerial view (highlighted above) and which joined the MPC a short distance south of Loeman Street's current location (below).



## 2. Bent Street, Essendon

There is a Main Drain running down Bent Street to the creek, and the slight dip in the landscape indicates that there was a minor creek here, taking the overflow from the ponds of what is now Queen's Park.



## 4. Coutts Reserve & Marigold Crescent, Gowanbrae

There are actually two minor creeks here, the top one started in what is now John Coutts Reserve and the lower one ran just north of Marigold Crescent. Both carved out quite impressive valleys, now obscured in part by the Western Ring Road. The image below shows the Marigold Crescent Valley, as seen from atop the reservoir wall at the Jacana Wetlands, just near the spillway.



*Next time: Final Summary*



Little Pied Cormorant by Dennis Hocking



Little Black Cormorant by Dennis



Long-billed Corella by Dennis



Fan-tailed Cuckoo by Dennis



Red-browed Finch by Dennis



Nankeen Night-Heron by Dennis

# Sightings



Black Swans and cygnets by Anna Lanigan



Australasian Grebes by Maurice Austin



Rainbow Lorikeet by Anna



Blue-tongued Lizard by Poppy Bell



Pobblebonk Frog by Clem de Silva



Echidna by Andrew Haysom



Black-shouldered Kite by Dennis



Superb Fairy-wren by Dennis



Spotted Pardalote by Anna

# MPC History Page

Many road and foot bridges have been built over the Moonee Ponds Creek over the years, here is a selection of old photographs with approximate dates.



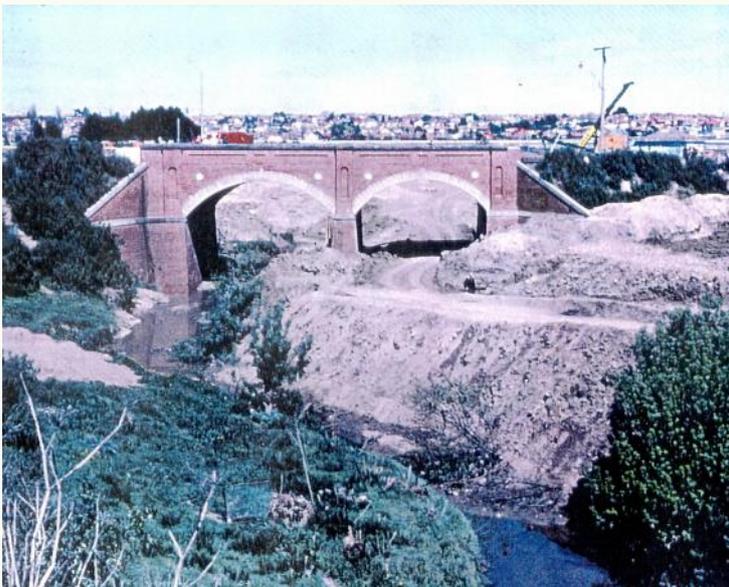
Albion Street Bridge, 1930s



Hope Street, West Brunswick, 1940s



Dawson Street, West Brunswick, 1920s



Victoria Street/ Wilson Street, West Brunswick 1950s



Reynard Street/ Woodland Street, 1960s



Panorama of Albion Street looking west, 1920s

# John Street Reserve, Oak Park

by Carolyn Layton



Who would have thought that for hundreds of people, a little patch of land adjoining the Creek at the end of John Street would make such a contribution to their coping with Covid? During the lockdowns, the use of local parks and reserves increased as people discovered their local treasures. Local resident Vince Aitkin undertook a survey and counted 173 people in three hours using the John Street Reserve as a connection to Oak Park or the waterway corridor.

The Traditional Custodians of this land are the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung. Following colonisation, in 1839 the John St Reserve land was part of a parcel of 709 acres bought by John Pascoe Fawkner. This land along the Creek was separate to the larger acreage he obtained extending across towards the Merri Creek.

Moreland Council—through its Natural Resources Management Officer Lori Arthur—then developed a detailed plan to clear weeds, revegetate the area and provide public access to the Creek. Fellow Moreland Officer, Vince Adreana, then oversaw the implementation of the plan - the site was cleared, paths laid out and a stylish set of stone steps down to the Creek was constructed.



Subdivision of the area occurred after WW2, in the 50s and 60s. Above left, an aerial photo taken in 1965 shows the reserve as bare ground at the end of the street. By the 2000s the reserve at the end of John Street languished as a carpark used by adjoining residents, with an illegal carport, a thicket of boxthorn, weedy trees such as Gleditsia and elms, and only a steep 'goat track' down to the Creek in one corner.

In 2011, when there were grants available for works along the Creek, the Friends of Moonee Ponds Creek proposed reclaiming the Reserve as open space with new landscaping and revegetation.

Since then, there has been a working bee in 2016 to weed and plant and in 2017 the Reserve was given the seal of approval when a pair of White-faced herons chose the tall eucalypt for their nest site, producing 5 offspring in two sittings. In early Spring 2021 the Reserve and nearby areas were weeded, mulched and infill plantings carried out by local John Street residents, Carolyn, Greg & Vince, and supported with plants and mulch from the Council.



Conversations with people using the Reserve have helped us understand how much people enjoy the Creek's parklands, and in particular the area around this Reserve. They often expressed appreciation of the work that has been done here over the years. They especially commented on how valuable the Creek had been in their permitted one to two hour exercise breaks.

We are indeed fortunate to have in our backyard the Moonee Ponds Creek corridor, with its extensive parklands and reserves. Look out for further working bees and consider making a contribution to your local reserve!



Friends of Moonee Ponds Creek Inc

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## FoMPC News by Carolyn Layton, Minutes Secretary

### Lionsville Site update

John reported that he had written to the Moonee Valley Council as directed at the last meeting and had received a detailed response to his questions, including information on the plans and what had been approved so far. He showed the existing and proposed buildings, explaining that one of the planned buildings on the site (Stage 1A) was built and there was approval for the second (Stage 1B). He noted that there had been four extensions of approval so far on the site and buildings need to be completed by June 2023.

None of the five other buildings on the map shown had approval to proceed as yet. John reported that in the application, these buildings are to be four levels high with 24-37 apartments each. John pointed out that the three buildings closest to the creek have the greatest potential for impact on the Creek corridor.

John assured the meeting that the developer would have to advertise these five buildings again in order to receive approval. He said we needed to keep a close eye on any developments. John stated that in his experience when there is a new buyer coming in, as is the case here, there is often an attempt to try for more in the approval process. John also reported that according to the MV Council, the plants removed (raised last meeting) did not require a permit.

## President's Report

John thanked the FoMPC for the privilege of working for the past year with a group of people very committed to the mission of the Friends group. He outlined some of the challenges of the year; with the Covid pandemic resulting, for example in curtailed and delayed activities and having to meet via Zoom instead of face-to-face. John pointed out, however, that the upside had been an increased appreciation in the community of our natural areas including the Moonee Ponds Creek and environs.

John stated that the Group had remained an important and well respected voice in the community. He went on to thank everyone for their generous participation, specifically thanking individual Committee members, Minutes secretary, Ponderings editor, Facebook admin team, Chain of Ponds Lead and the Councils and agencies with whom we work.

John spoke positively about how our members generously step forward when there is a need and he shared his view that much more is achieved when we participate without worrying about where credit goes.



**Making the News**—An ABC news report announcing the \$7 million commitment by the State Government for the Brosnan Crescent Project went to air in October. If you missed the story it is available here: [Moonee Ponds Creek in the News](#).

## Join the Friends of Moonee Ponds Creek for \$20 per year

Help protect and enhance the Moonee Ponds Creek's natural environment. For information and to join, go to [mooneepondscreek.org.au](http://mooneepondscreek.org.au) and complete the membership form, or write to PO Box 54, Essendon VIC

CALENDAR	Event and Location:	Contact/ Link
Monday, 20th December 6.30pm	FoMPC meeting, details to follow	<a href="http://mooneepondscreek.org.au">mooneepondscreek.org.au</a>

Contributions to Ponderings are welcome!

Please send your images and stories to [fompc.ponderings@gmail.com](mailto:fompc.ponderings@gmail.com)