

Ken Widdowson

---

**From:** gregory day [timeismusic@bigpond.com]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 17 July 2013 6:27 PM  
**To:** Ken Widdowson  
**Subject:** Re: Gadabanud Society & Environment

Sorry Ken...here is the article below....

all the best,

g

## **Gadubanud society in the Otway Ranges, Victoria: an environmental history**

Lawrence Niewójt

*The Otway Peninsula is probably the least known Victorian tribal area, as 19th century records are virtually silent concerning its aboriginal inhabitants.*

– DJ Mulvaney, 1961

Nearly 50 years since Mulvaney's archaeological research at Aire River, local historians have ventured little beyond cursory statements regarding the Gadubanud people of the Otway region. Though scholars acknowledge the long-term Aboriginal presence in the area, the dearth of documentary sources has deterred sustained inquiry into the history, economy and enduring relics of pre-contact Aboriginal society. While past attempts at 'ethnohistory' presented surveys of what little information could be gleaned from official papers, to date there has been no attempt to move beyond these brief (but informative) summaries.<sup>1</sup> Circumventing the perceived roadblock posed by an exhausted documentary record, we can gain a more nuanced understanding of Aboriginal presence in the Otway region by broadening the range of research questions we are prepared to investigate and employing an expanded set of evidentiary materials. A synthesis of the diverse lines of inquiry pursued by archaeologists, earth scientists, ecologists, historians and geographers enables us to gauge the scale and magnitude of past Aboriginal interventions in the landscape. Approaching old sources with a fresh eye for detail and analysis, we can reconstruct the cultural landscape created by the Gadubanud people prior to their disastrous encounter with Europeans in the late 1840s.

The Gadubanud people, residing at various nodes of settlement throughout the Otway region, adapted the land and altered the distribution of ecological communities to best serve their needs. The risks inherent in a subsistence economy were contained and spread geographically using a sophisticated system of land management. Furthermore, a pattern of semi-nomadic movements linked inland, estuarine and coastal occupation sites that were known for their high food yields and provided dietary variety throughout the year. The reconstruction of the Gadubanud's settlement and land use patterns in the Otway region of Victoria – despite the absence of a detailed documentary record – validates Robin and Griffiths' declaration that 'much Aboriginal history is environmental history' and emphasises the potential utility of interdisciplinary approaches in this area of research.<sup>2</sup>

Fig 1. The traditional territory of the Gadubanud people and the approximate location

of various clans

Source: Clark 1990: 189. Reproduced with the permission of Professor Ian D Clark.

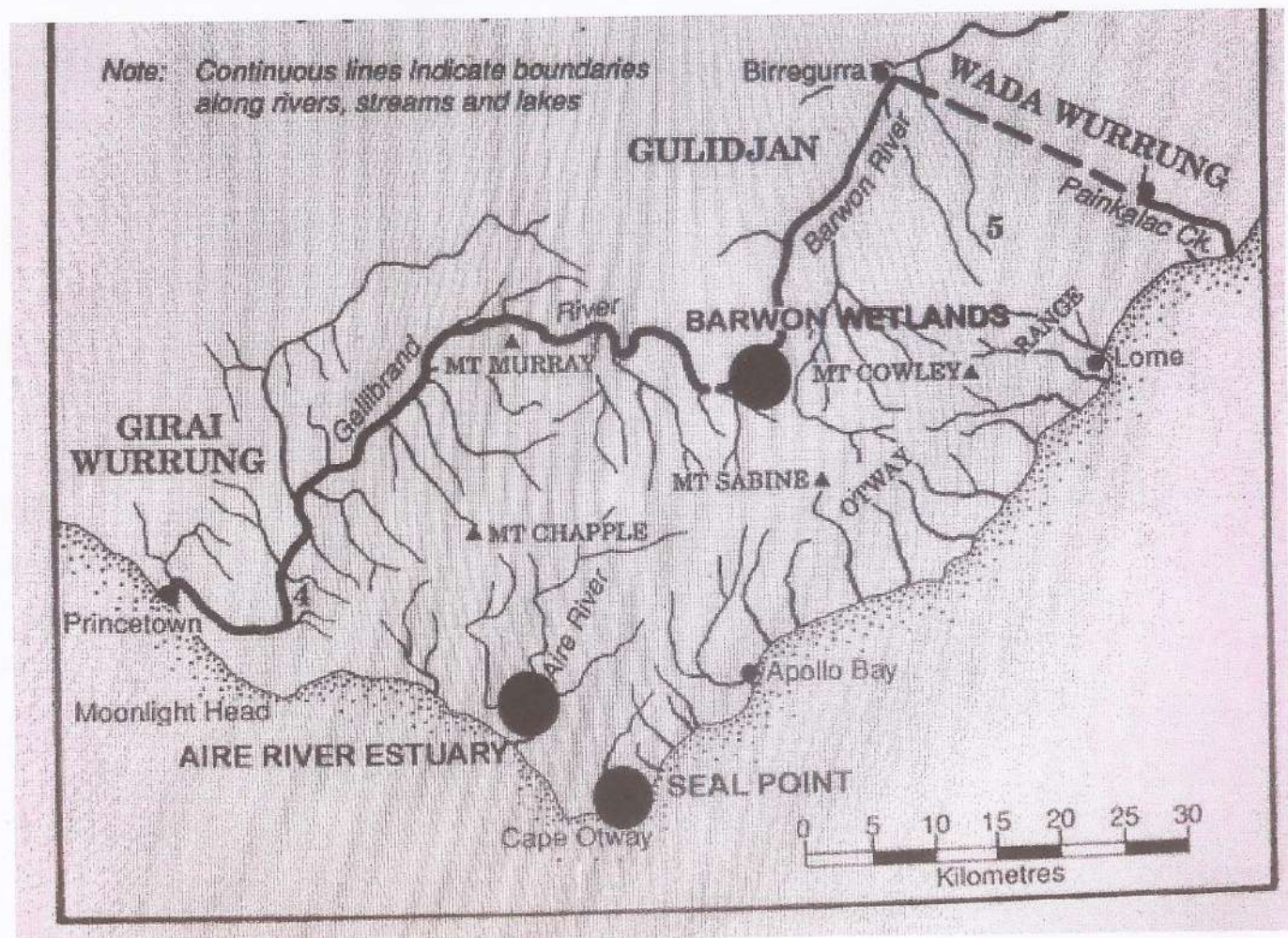
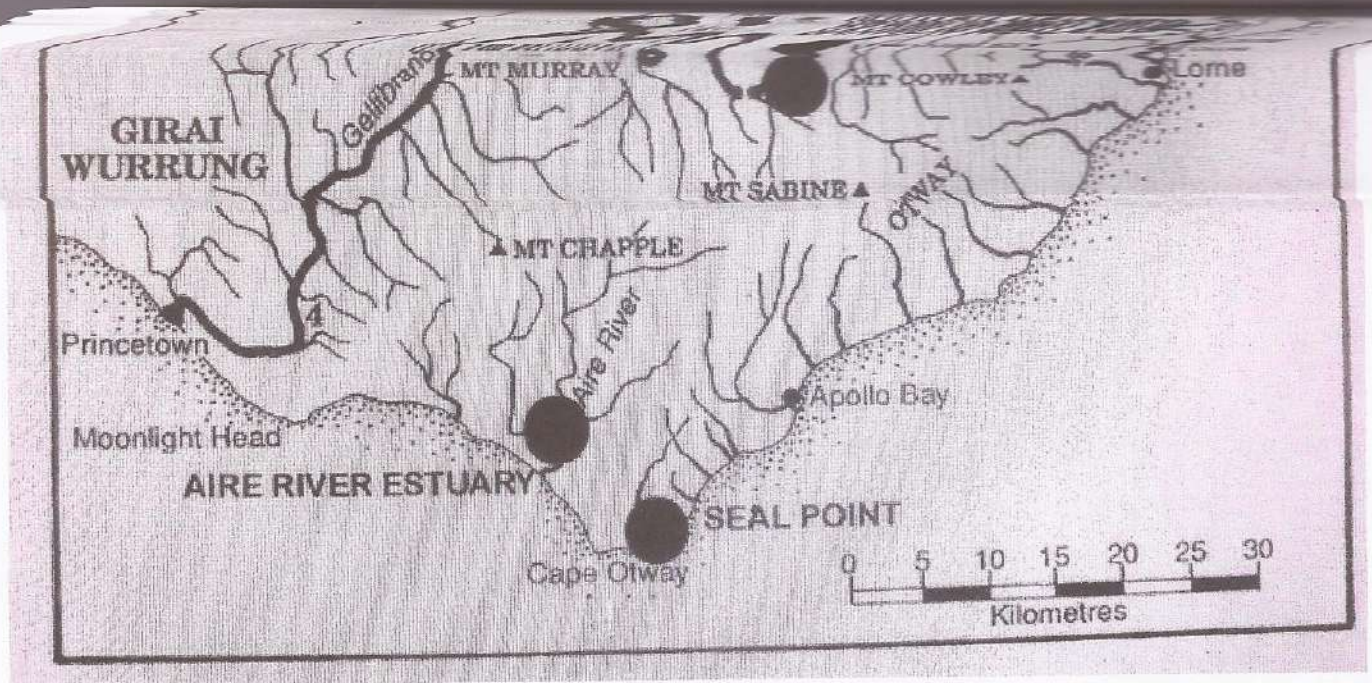
### The Gadubanud people in the written record

Hemmed in by a rising ocean that stabilised about 7000 years ago, the uplifted sedimentary rocks of the Otway Range run from north-east to south-west at an elevation of about 500 metres above the sea. A few isolated peaks reach up to 675 metres, and at many points along this coastline bare mountains and tree-clad ridges plummet dramatically into the sea.<sup>3</sup> In the north, the narrow belt of foothills merge with the undulating volcanic plain that is the definitive feature of Victoria's Western District. Littoral plains are found only at Apollo Bay and further west, but even these flat stretches of coastal terrain do not exceed five kilometres in width. Vegetation within the traditional territory of the Gadubanud people varies from heath on the sea cliffs, to dunes near the Cape, open forest on the eastern slope, wet sclerophyll forest in the mountains and tracts of rainforest along some watercourses and mountain gullies (see Fig 1). Highly productive ecosystems, such as the wetlands found at the base of the northern foothills (at the headwaters of the Barwon River) and the numerous river estuaries of the coastal zone, provided a vast food supply and a range of options regarding the seasonal sequence, frequency and intensity of harvesting.

Although they were rarely recorded beyond their country, the Gadubanud maintained complex ties with other Aboriginal groups and were known to have close linguistic and familial connections with their northern neighbour, the Gulidjan people of the Lake Colac area.<sup>4</sup> They avoided the primitive sheep stations that rapidly spread across the volcanic plains of the Western District after 1837, and shunned the company of heavily-armed European settlers. As a result, comparatively little is known about their social organisation, leadership, customs, language and traditions. What follows is a brief summary of what the documents tell us about these people.

The modern name given to these people derives from the work of James Dawson, who recorded the Cape Otway language group as 'Katubanuut' and claimed that this meant 'King Parrot language' in the local dialect.<sup>5</sup> These people were closely associated with the Gulidjan who resided in the vicinity of Lake Colac, but were considered to be 'wild blacks' by both the Wathaurong to the north-east and the Girai wurrung to the west.<sup>6</sup> Their presence was first recorded by Chief Protector Robinson in 1842 when he met three Gadubanud people at the mouth of the Hopkins River (near present-day Warrnambool) and received details of four clans that resided on the western edge of the Otway Ranges: three lived at the Cape Otway peninsula and one was said to reside north of Moonlight Head.<sup>7</sup> One of these clans was said to belong to Bangurer, which was noted as the local place-name referring to Cape Otway.<sup>8</sup> Later that year, an unconfirmed report blamed the Gadubanud for the removal of food and blankets from an outstation, and in 1844 they were suspected of killing 'a white teenage boy'.<sup>9</sup> In 1853, a letter from George Armytage to Superintendent La Trobe identified a fifth clan associated with the Gadubanud people. The 'Yan Yan Gurt tribe' was said to reside at the east head of the Barwon River, 12 miles south-east of Birregurra, near the base of the Otway Ranges.<sup>10</sup>

Dawson also noted that the Gadubanud residing at Cape Otway were linguistically affiliated with the Djargurd speakers of the Warrnambool area.<sup>11</sup> Their meeting with Robinson – which took place over 50 kilometres beyond the western boundary of their traditional territory – is the only confirmed record of the Gadubanud people beyond their homeland. With respect to the great meetings held in the Western District near Caramut, Dawson noted that 'None of the sea coast tribes attended the meetings at Mirraewuae, as they were afraid of treachery and of an attack on the part of the others'.<sup>12</sup>



This level of insularity was highly unusual in Victoria, where trade links and marriage ties amongst Aboriginal groups were known to span hundreds of kilometres. On 2 April 1846 Superintendent La Trobe, on his third and final attempt to reach Cape Otway, met with seven Gadubanud men and women in the valley of the Aire River before trekking across the open grasslands to his destination.<sup>13</sup> Also in April 1846, the squatter Henry Allan made an unsuccessful attempt at a north-south crossing over the mountains, guided by two Aboriginal women from the Wesleyan mission at Buntingdale. In the northern foothills of the Otway Ranges, on the upper reaches of the Gellibrand River, he found an unoccupied Aboriginal camp. On his return trip through the area, he revisited this site and found a large number of implements that had not been there before.<sup>14</sup> At Cape Otway, in July and August of 1846 the contract surveyor George Smythe encountered a group of Aborigines consisting of one man, four women and three boys.<sup>15</sup> They killed a member of his surveying party, and in late August 1846 Smythe returned to the area on a retaliatory expedition with a retinue of several Wathaurong warriors from the Geelong area. Armed with muskets and tomahawks, Smythe and the group came across seven Gadubanud at the mouth of the Aire River, which they attacked and killed.<sup>16</sup> After this August 1846 massacre, a final note regarding the Gadubanud people appears in the colonial press. On 4 January 1848 an article in the *Geelong Advertiser* reported a conflict between two Aboriginal groups near Port Fairy. Two men were killed in the attack, among them 'a man who belonged to the Cape Otway tribe, the last of his race'.<sup>17</sup>

These chance encounters with the Gadubanud people point toward an extremely low resident population in the Otway region at the time of contact. No more than eight members of this language group were ever seen together at one time, and the sum of all recorded individuals would yield a total number of 26 people (3+7+8+7+1). This total indicates a remarkably tiny group size for a vast territory stretching from Painkalac Creek (near Aireys Inlet) in the east to the Gellibrand River that flows west of the mountains. With over 100 kilometres of coastline yielding shellfish, the presence of several wetlands and productive estuaries, and the plant foods available both in open land and potentially acquired through trade with neighbouring groups, it would be reasonable to suspect that the region's 'carrying capacity' would have encouraged the flourishing of a far greater population. Evidence from the archaeological record, historic coastal survey maps and an assessment of regional food resources suggest that the pre-contact population of the Gadubanud was far larger than indicated in the documentary record. These alternate sources of evidence point to the existence of a sophisticated resource management regime and movement corridors that were maintained through the selective deployment of fire to generate a specific type of landscape mosaic. While it is impossible to produce a precise figure for the historical population of the area, a survey of the potential food supply suggests that, rather than the 'tens' of Gadubanud people recorded in historical documents, we should begin to adjust our thinking to accommodate the 'hundreds' that once lived in the **Otway region**.

### **Regional food resources**

Under the management of the Gadubanud people, the Otway region yielded a food supply that was diverse, conveniently accessed and organised in a flexible manner so that surplus, rather than scarcity, was the norm. In general, spring and summer were the seasons of greatest abundance, while winter was the leanest season. The ability of Aboriginal society to make full use of nature's bounty was noted by James Dawson, finding that in western Victoria 'Articles of food are abundant, and of great variety for everything not actually poisonous or connected with superstitious beliefs is considered wholesome'.<sup>18</sup> As a result, differences in taste and cultural approaches to sustenance need to be kept in mind when considering the carrying capacity of Australian environments and the efficacy of various land management regimes.

Fig 2. Major settlement nodes of Gadubanud society

Wetlands, such as those found near the outlets of the Gellibrand and Aire rivers, provided a fine variety of foods. Fish, eels, waterfowl and bird's eggs added much protein to the diet yet responded to exploitation with a high rate of annual regeneration.<sup>19</sup> In the region's lakes and wetlands, particularly those at Gerangamete, Irrewillipe and Chapple Vale, food was reliable and easily accessed. Some reports from the Western District noted the means by which wetland foods were procured. Dawson was told that 'Swans are killed in marshes, by the hunter wading among the tall reeds and sedges, and knocking the birds on the head with a waddy'.<sup>20</sup> Clark and Heydon's work on Aboriginal placenames confirms the importance of waterfowl in local diet. Their dictionary lists the Aire River estuary's Gadubanud name as Gunuwarra, which translates to mean 'swan'.<sup>21</sup> Fish were commonly caught at night, the technique being that 'A fire is lighted on the bank, or a torch of dry bark held aloft, both to attract the fish and give light'.<sup>22</sup> Consumption patterns could be adjusted to favour foods that were 'in season', thereby conserving resources that had become scarce or were in a state of recovery. The abundance of eels in local marshes, found both on the coast and in the northern foothills of the Otway Ranges, would have meant that the Gadubanud people had no need to join other tribes for the corroborees that took place at the Western District lakes during the autumn season eel harvest.

Fishing in the tidal estuaries could also produce a substantial protein source, an ideal supplement to the large volume of starchy tubers growing in the shallows and at the water's edge. Species such as *water-ribbons* (*Triglochin procera*), *the club-rush* (*Scirpus maritimus*), and the rhizomes of the *tall spike-rush* (*Eleocharis sphacelata*) were commonly found throughout the region and provided decent nourishment.<sup>23</sup> The water-ribbon could be found in the swift-flowing streams on the Otway coast, in lakes, swamps or floodplains. Plants can yield over 200 starchy tubers, with each root up to 5 cm long and weighing 0.5-2.5 g.<sup>24</sup> The attraction of the Gellibrand and Aire River estuaries was heightened by their sheltered topography, and at the same time they were located within easy walking distance of the ocean. At these sites, a diet of starchy plant foods could be combined with animal protein unique to freshwater and marine environments without requiring elaborate group movements. At Aire River, archaeologists found that molluscan remains of larger intertidal marine species and freshwater mussels were present along with the remains of parrot-fish, more extensive 'indeterminate fragments of fish', and snails.<sup>25</sup>

William Buckley's memoirs provide a detailed set of observations on the use of some Otway wetlands. On one of their wanderings in south-western Victoria, Buckley's mob was invited to take part in an exchange of tuber roots for eels. The groups were to meet at a place called Bermongo.<sup>26</sup> Located at the headwaters of the Barwon River, the marsh was teeming with eels. When they arrived for the exchange, prepared with woven baskets full of starchy tubers, they found a large congregation of about 80 men, women and children.<sup>27</sup> Though Buckley does not name the group involved in the exchange with his Wallarranga mob, it is very likely that they were dealing with the Yan Yan Gurt clan, the only clan of the Gadubanud people known to live on the north side of the range.<sup>28</sup> The exchange emphasises the long-distance character of trade connections in the Aboriginal economy and the strong desire for dietary variety. This event also bolsters Dawson's claim that many varieties of fish were part of the Aboriginal diet and that the tuupurn eel was 'reckoned a very great delicacy'.<sup>29</sup>

Several kilometres to the north of this site, Buckley experienced threat of attack when his group stayed at the Gerangamete swamp. In his description of this incident, in which it is clear that the group had resided at the swamp for some time without invitation or permission, he stated that his mob was threatened with attack in a night-time ambush but managed to flee safely. Though he did not give a name for the group that forced them away from the

wetlands, the level of fear communicated in his account suggests that these fierce protectors of the marshes had a history of hostility with his mob.

Fleeing the scene of their illegal squatting, they covered several kilometres in the darkness of night and reached the top of Sugarloaf Hill within a few hours.<sup>30</sup> This movement rate indicates that open forests covered this part of the range and that fire was regularly deployed to clear undergrowth. It is likely that this trail was originally blazed by the Gadubanud and was similar in form to the 'native path' taken by La Trobe in 1846 from Moonlight Head up into the forested mountains.<sup>31</sup> Burning would clear ground and help establish the gaps in the canopy that was necessary for navigation by moonlight. The presence of burnt and unburned tracts, characteristic of a landscape mosaic within the Otway forests, is further evinced in Buckley's account. From Sugarloaf Hill, with a good view of the coast, the group split into two and Buckley led his cohort to a place near the seaside *which he* called Kirkedullim. While only a few hours were required to travel from the swamp to the main ridge of the coastal range, the trek to the sea required them to wander for several days until they made a lengthy halt at his favoured spot on Painkalac Creek. Enjoying the warm summer weather on the coast, Buckley noted that the group had access to plenty of freshwater and sustained themselves by catching fish.<sup>32</sup> The windward side of the eastern Otway Range, especially the elevated, wetter areas, possessed no signs of being subjected to frequent burning. For the Gadubanud, this was the remote edge of their territory.

The rock platforms of the Otway coast also proved to be an important food procurement zone, allowing access to shellfish at low tide. Even today, heaps of deposited shells persist as lasting reminders of Aboriginal food harvesting, and these middens are occasionally found in close proximity to tidal estuaries. At Seal Point, located on Cape Otway peninsula, archaeologists discovered 'all the features of a semi-sedentary seasonal (warm weather) base camp'.<sup>33</sup> Across Bass Strait, on a similar stretch of coastline in northern Tasmania, research has shown that 'Shellfish contributed about half the total flesh weight throughout the whole occupation'.<sup>34</sup> Though shellfish alone could not make up a diet, such an easily obtained source of protein added variety to food consumption patterns and could be relied upon as the main source of nutrition at certain points in the year.<sup>35</sup>

However, food procurement in the coastal zone had distinct seasonal limitations. In the years prior to European settlement in western Victoria, William Buckley spent considerable time living on the coast near present-day Aireys Inlet. He found that his exposed hut on the coast was subjected to 'dreadfully cold and tempestuous' weather in winter and that the shellfish supply became very scarce and difficult to collect during this period.<sup>36</sup> Environmental scientists have noted that the rough weather and huge swells characteristic of the Southern Ocean in winter would have made food harvesting in rock pools and ledges a dangerous task with a very low probability of success.<sup>37</sup> The food scarcity experienced by Buckley during winter compelled him to migrate inland. Episodic shifts away from the coast would have allowed natural regeneration of the food resource,<sup>38</sup> minimised the environmental impact of shellfish harvesting, and satisfied a strong desire for dietary variety.<sup>39</sup> A journey over the mountains to the Barwon River eel marshes would have been a sensible response to the onset of seasonal change. Wintering on the leeward slopes of the northern foothills posed many advantages, not the least being the abundant timber available for the perpetual campfire.

Beyond marsupials, the Gadubanud exploited a wide range of animal protein sources. These included: native rats and mice, snakes, lizards, frogs, birds and their eggs.<sup>40</sup> Possums provided sustenance in addition to a fur pen that could be fashioned into a warm cloak. Hunting was most easily performed at forest edges largely due to the combination of good visibility, adequate cover in the re-growth vegetation, and proximity to the habitats of the pursued game. These factors would encourage attempts to burn out patches and establish a well-indented forest perimeter that maximised edge spaces. In general, the forests were less

suitable environments for the pursuit of game as undergrowth reduced visibility, hampered movement and established barriers that could interfere with thrown spears. These factors severely constrained the utility of wet sclerophyll forests as a food procurement zone.<sup>41</sup> With regard to hunting in areas along the sea coast, the presence of a rich marine mollusc food resource provided incredible flexibility in the frequency and intensity of game hunting so that this activity was guided by taste and dietary choice rather than absolute necessity. In the more open woodlands of the northern foothills, a completely different set of game animals could be found, including: eastern grey kangaroo, red-necked wallaby, common brushtail possum, sugar glider and fat-tailed dunnart.<sup>42</sup>

Vegetables were a crucial component of the food supply. In western Victoria, plant foods were known to have comprised at least half of the diet. Crops of tuber plants such as the *murnong yam* (*Microseris lanceolata*) were maintained through landscape burning. This yam could grow in forest clearings and was favoured by Aborigines because of its sweet, milky, coconut-like flavour. Although physical transplant from one site to another could be performed, the wind-borne seed was known to colonise clear ground. The activity of digging for roots aerated soil patches and encouraged further seed germination.<sup>43</sup> In Victoria we find 218 species of edible roots that could have been incorporated into the Aboriginal diet. High in carbohydrates and available year-round, the root crops grow in dense clusters so that 'a large amount of food can be collected in a relatively small area'.<sup>44</sup> This spatial concentration poses a problem for researchers: small yam patches and the process of harvesting could go unnoticed in the documentary record. Residing on the Bellarine Peninsula, William Buckley mentioned that there were long periods when his mob subsisted almost entirely on roots dug up by the women, while 'men procured opossums occasionally'.<sup>45</sup> Readily available and encouraged by the burning of clearings, in the eastern Otways tuber and yam patches were known to occur along corridors frequently travelled by Buckley's Wallarranga mob.

The signs of yam cultivation may still be witnessed in the region today. Following the 'Ash Wednesday' fire of February 1983 at Anglesea, in the spring local residents witnessed 'a phenomenal flowering of tuberous perennials'.<sup>46</sup> By contrast, nearby unburnt areas exhibited quite sparse flowering of perennials. A ten-year study of recovery from this fire showed that most of the flowering species were herbaceous, and these declined in the following years as the forest regrew and the canopy closed.<sup>47</sup> Subject to systematic burning in the past, the maintenance of these herbaceous species for food would have required burning at three-year intervals to hold the forest in an arrested stage of fire recovery and ensure an optimal supply of starchy tubers.<sup>48</sup> In this way, fire deployed in the eucalypt woodland of the eastern Otways established a multifunctional landscape.<sup>49</sup>

Burning maintained the open structure of the forest, allowing continued use of the movement corridor in addition to ensuring good yields of vegetable crops. Furthermore, this flexible system of land management could easily accommodate changes in population by altering fire frequency and physically enlarging yam fields. The tending of herbaceous plants in this manner ensured that foods could be harvested and consumed without the need for storage facilities, and the patchy landscape pattern possessed characteristics that were also conducive to game hunting. Fresh re-growth after a burn enticed animals to graze the open paddocks, while the interspersed visual barriers, aural suppressants, and ease of pedestrian mobility worked to the advantage of the hunter.

Although the thick forests were associated with a scarcity of food and the difficulty of its procurement, even there the Gadubanud could find something good to eat. While the closed-canopy rainforest complex offered little food, the more extensive wet eucalypt forests were markedly more productive. Indeed, though drier climatic conditions since about 4300 BP encouraged a shrinking of the rainforest complex and concomitant expansion of the eucalypt communities, this differential productivity could have motivated Aboriginal burning and the

hastening of localised transitions. Ashton's long-term *study of the mountain ash* (*Eucalyptus regnans*) in central Victoria sets out several positive qualities of the wet sclerophyll forest complex. Older stands would suppress undergrowth – easing movement and increasing visibility – and encourage the growth of ferns that could act as a habitat for game, particularly wallabies.<sup>50</sup> The pith of bracken fern (*Pteridium esculentum* Forst.) was also edible. Studies have found it to possess a higher carbohydrate content than the potato, and so the harvest of this resource may have prompted specific trips into the forest.<sup>51</sup> This foodstuff would have been a convenient source of nutrition for journeys across the mountain range and expeditions into the forest in search of the raw materials needed for the manufacture of trade goods. The discovery of pulping tools at the Seal Point archaeological site suggests that the Gadubanud residing there made intermittent use of tree ferns as a source of carbohydrates.<sup>52</sup>

The land-based economy of the Gadubanud people was predominantly geared toward the procurement of foodstuffs that would sustain their society. Lacking many of the conceptual constraints that limit the modern-day diet, the Gadubanud found sources of nutrition in many types of environments that make up the Otway region: coast, wetland, estuary, forest and grassland. Ongoing adjustments in the timing and intensity of harvests provided for the long-term sustainability of food resources, and the lack of dependence on any one particular food allowed a dynamic society to cope easily with the vagaries of climate and mitigate against risk of resource failure. The skilful deployment of fire encouraged the development of a complex landscape mosaic that arranged resources in a convenient manner, replenished root crops and opened up the movement corridors that linked cultural points of interest. Under Aboriginal management, the Otway region could yield enough food to sustain a population that **numbered in the hundreds.**

### **Settlement distribution, communication corridors and landscape burning**

Given that the Gadubanud economy was overwhelmingly focused on feeding its population and not the production of trade commodities, the investigation of regional food resources has helped confirm the existence of three important settlement concentrations in the Otway region: the Aire River estuary, Cape Otway and the wetlands found along the Barwon River. The locations of Gadubanud camps noted by George Augustus Robinson, William Buckley, and George Armytage exhibit a tight correlation with highly productive food procurement zones and significant archaeological deposits (see Figs 2 and 3).

#### **Fig 3. Distribution of archaeological sites in the Otway region**

Source: Richards 1998: 36. Reproduced with the permission of Aboriginal Affairs Victoria.

An archaeological study, released in 1998, encompassed the Otway Ranges and the entirety of the Gadubanud territorial area.<sup>53</sup> In total, 276 Aboriginal archaeological sites were recorded in the study area.<sup>54</sup> 'Archaeological density', corresponding to the number of artefacts found per square kilometre, was calculated to be highest at a distance less than five kilometres from the ocean, whereas the mountainous zone (containing the wet sclerophyll forest and cool temperate rainforest) was found to have the fewest occupation sites.<sup>55</sup> Pre-European population distribution was summarised in the following statement:

Late precontact period Aboriginal occupation of the Otway Range appears to have been concentrated on narrow strips along the peripheries of the Range. The central core of the range, including the upper slopes and the plateau, was also visited and exploited by Aboriginal populations but on a much lesser scale than the ecotonal



Most archaeological sites mentioned in the study contain stone artefacts or flaked stone implements. Flint artefacts, which could only have been produced at a few known coastal locations, are usually found within three kilometres of the ocean. At Aire River, Mulvaney found hundreds of stone chips, flakes and artefacts in two rock shelters. The overwhelming majority of these were made of flint, likely sourced from the 'irregularly shaped nodules of flint cast on the beach' near Cape Otway.<sup>57</sup> The latest archaeological study identified two additional sites where flint artefacts were found on the northern side of the Range, approximately 18 kilometres inland, near the present-day community of Forrest.<sup>58</sup>

The discovery of flint artefacts, of coastal provenance, near the headwaters of the Barwon River (East Branch), suggests the existence of a trans-Otway movement corridor. This track linked the people of the coast with their brethren at the northern wetlands, a food harvesting zone so important that it once attracted Buckley's mob from their distant base on the Bellarine Peninsula.<sup>59</sup> While the discovery of artefacts made from coastal flint suggests a northward direction of travel, there is little doubt that a track kept open by frequent burning would encourage traffic in both directions.

The route chosen for this trans-Otway track would have deliberately expedited the process of crossing the mountains in order to minimise the length of the journey and its physical strain on the traveller. The main ridge of the Otway Range receives an average annual rainfall in excess of 1800 mm, with 60–65 per cent of this precipitation falling in the May–October period.<sup>60</sup> Scheduled to coincide with the eel harvest, an autumn crossing of the mountains had a high probability of experiencing rain. This would make for a cold, wet journey from the coast to the marshes, and so a winding track would be both impractical and highly undesirable. For the Gadubanud, this forest landscape was also imbued with superstitious significance for it was said to be the domain of spiritual beings, and known for its roving packs of wild dingoes.<sup>61</sup> These considerations, as well as the need to account for the movement barriers found in the Otways – dense undergrowth, steep topography, enormous fallen trees, leech-infested forest gullies, incessant rains and thick mud – worked to channel traffic to only a few possible routes.

Fig 4. Running north–south, the Elliott Zone is characterised by a series of parallel valleys that would have provided the most direct route over the Otway Range. Source: Medwell 1977: 29. Reproduced with the permission of the Royal Society of Victoria.

An examination of topographical data alongside studies of regional geomorphology offers several potential north–south routes over the mountains. Of prime significance is the 'Elliott Zone', a geological shear zone that transcends the main ridge of the Otway Range in a north–south alignment (Fig 4). This zone is marked by a series of parallel valleys (and watercourses) on the coastal face of the range and, on the north side, the relatively straight trough followed by the Barwon River as it flows across the volcanic plain.<sup>62</sup> From the coast following Skene's Creek, Wild Dog Creek or the east branch of the Durham River (west of Apollo Bay) would allow pedestrians to reach the top of the main ridge directly. Regardless of the valley used in the ascent, once atop the ridge the trekkers would need to aim toward Mount Sabine and, just before reaching the pinnacle, they would veer northward once more and descend toward the Barwon River valley along the back of a spur ridge. Marching down this ridge, the Gadubanud would reach a point requiring the crossing of a stream. Only two kilometres beyond the ford they would find the first eel marsh at the headwaters of the Barwon, the Bermongo recorded in Buckley's memoir.

But which route did they take? The Barham River valley route would have been an unlikely choice for pedestrian traffic due to the greater (east–west) distance covered and the steep nature of the final ascent to the ridge. The gentler ascent and shorter length of the Skenes Creek and Wild Dog Creek routes made them significantly more appealing, and the watercourses marking these paths were easily accessed from the coast. Nearly identical in distance and structure, either one of these routes could have been used by the Gadubanud. However, evidence dating from the start of European occupation in the region suggests that Wild Dog Creek was the favoured route over the Otways.

At the end of the 1840s, when William Roadknight came to establish a cattle run on Cape Otway peninsula he crossed the mountains using the valley of Wild Dog Creek and made the remainder of his journey westward along the coast. William and his son Thomas expended a great deal of effort widening this track into a ‘good sound Dray Road’. In a letter to Superintendent La Trobe, Roadknight described the process of discovering and cutting this route. He acknowledged that their success was directly dependent on ‘the local knowledge acquired by my son during this arduous undertaking’.<sup>63</sup> The Gadubanud people also maintained the coastal movement corridor, as landscape burning between Apollo Bay and Seal Point had established easily-traversed grass and heath vegetation on the undulating hills that lead to Cape Otway.

In March 1849, Superintendent La Trobe used a track to cross the Otway Ranges and reach the sea at a point east of Apollo Bay. Although he did not specify, it is most likely that he followed the Wild Dog Creek track charted by Roadknight only a few years earlier. He noted:

It is a rough track, but still it is one, – 50 miles wholly in the forest, a basin in the higher portion of the range 12m. through, – is entirely filled with Fern Trees of great beauty.<sup>64</sup>

This movement corridor could only have been opened with the systematic blazing of the trail. The rough state of the track reported by La Trobe highlights the prolonged absence of fire: vigorous undergrowth had begun to fill in the open spaces.

The discovery of a vast area of fern trees in an elevated portion of this high-rainfall region gives a sense of the vegetation change initiated by landscape burning. Fern trees tend to establish themselves in clearings and may grow quite thickly along forest edges. Their proliferation atop the mountains would have required the removal of any pre-existing closed canopy forest cover, likely the rainforest complex marked by the myrtle beech tree species. The ferns would then take over these discrete clearings or form the understory beneath an open-canopy eucalypt forest community. La Trobe’s description of the ‘entirely filled’ basin omits mention of tree cover, suggesting that either the area was devoid of trees or that the coverage was not particularly significant. In the Otway Ranges, both the myrtle beech and mountain ash trees could grow up to be imposing giants with trunks several metres in diameter – the type of forest feature that tends to elicit commentary – and so the lack of comment about this aspect of forest structure gives a strong indication that the vegetation communities had been transformed through the deployment of fire. A decade earlier in Tasmania, George Augustus Robinson remarked on the fern trees found in areas recently burnt by Aborigines and noted their abundance along a ‘direct road for the natives’ that led to the Tamar River.<sup>65</sup> Most certainly, the proliferation of fern trees La Trobe found atop the Otway Range did not get there by accident.

On the coast, we can gauge the effects of Aboriginal fire use and land management practices from a survey map produced by George Douglas Smythe in 1846. Created in preparation for the lighthouse construction project at Cape Otway, Smythe chronicled the vegetation and

forest communities found along the coast, documenting a cultural landscape that had been transformed by the fire-stick (Fig 5). The large timber forests had been left to occupy the highest, most inaccessible terrain whilst the frequent pedestrian traffic between Cape Otway and the Aire River was eased by the removal of heath scrub and its replacement by grass cover. In such a zone of good soil, high rainfall and proximity to vigorous forests, the appearance of grassland and the stark boundary with the forest signals that this landscape mosaic was shaped and kept in place by the regular application of fire to the land. By manipulating the seasonal timing, intensity and frequency of fire deployment the Gadubanud people were able to reconfigure vegetation communities and structure a landscape that fulfilled their needs for sustenance and unhindered mobility along high traffic corridors.

More information regarding the application of fire to the region's forests has recently emerged from the study of sediment core samples taken at Chapple Vale, Aire Crossing and Wyelangta. The data collected from swampy patches at Aire Crossing (near the top of the Aire River basin) and Wyelangta were both found to be in the midst of cool temperate rainforest stands that have experienced little significant change from roughly 9000 years BP.<sup>66</sup> Largely unmanaged by fire, both sites possessed low charcoal readings. At Wyelangta, scientists found such floristic stability that they believed 'the site may be the first identified glacial refugium for rainforest in Australia'.<sup>67</sup> The sediment record from Chapple Vale, a swamp site located on the western slope of the Otway Range, exhibited a sudden and sustained rise in charcoal levels from around 2500 BP. Researchers concluded that the 'substantial increase in charcoal' must have been the result of frequent fire and that this 'may have had substantial influence on the vegetation from this time'.<sup>68</sup> However, the appearance of so much charcoal in the sediment record was not attributed to Aboriginal fire management. Instead, the authors of this study maintained that climate was 'a major controller of vegetation change to sclerophyll communities' at this site.<sup>69</sup>

Fig 5. Portion of map drawn by GD Smythe in 1846 during the course of a survey in preparation for the construction of a lighthouse at Cape Otway.

Source: Public Record Office of Victoria, CS32-1 Aire River to Cape Patton.

Other studies of long-term environmental change in western Victoria have attributed vegetation change to anthropogenic burning. When researchers examining the Holocene sediment record at Lake Wangoom found reductions in wet forest pollen taxa and higher representations in grass species (Poaceae) they attributed change to the fact that 'effective precipitation was lower than the previous two interglacials, although it also may be a product of anthropogenic burning in the region'.<sup>70</sup> Favouring ridges for movement corridors across the Otway Range, it is unlikely that the Gadubanud would have deployed fire near swampy gullies found at Wyelangta and Aire Crossing. The significantly lower elevation of the Chapple Vale site, and its proximity to the Gellibrand River, may have played a role in the extension of regular burning to this locale over 2000 years ago. Moreover, the timing of this change in fire pattern fits the wider sequence of Aboriginal population shift from the plains of western Victoria southward toward the forest hinterland and coast.<sup>71</sup> This evidence points to the extension of Aboriginal fire management to the western slope of the Otway Range prior to the outright shift of population and land use practices to the coast, and certainly well before the 1420 BP first occupation date recorded at Seal Point.

In May 1847, the westward extension of the coastal survey by Robert Hoddle generated a picture of the Aire River estuary as an important site of economic activity for the Gadubanud people. Hoddle's map provides a detailed view of this settlement area and the ways in which specific land use decisions were inscribed in the land (Fig 6). Thick forests protected the northern and eastern flanks of the basin so that a large proportion of the valley was shielded from gales, and yet timber required for fuel and shelter material was kept close at hand. A

well-defined boundary between an open wetland–grass shore complex and forest was undoubtedly maintained by fire. Selective burning also generated a well-indented forest edge that could serve as a habitat for animals, while the stark transition between open land and tall forests made these trees susceptible to windfalls – a useful means of toppling large trees and harvesting wood fuel in an age when only stone axes seem to have been available for this task. The patchwork mosaic encouraged through selective burning allowed for low-lying vegetation, mainly heath and grassland plains, to take hold near the coast where pedestrian movement was channelled.

Atop the outcrop that divides the estuary from the sea, a conspicuous configuration of ‘good grass’ and ‘she-oak timber’ marks a paddock used for hunting kangaroos and wallabies. When the marsupials had been lured onto the grass, the hunters would be able to spear the animals from behind the cover of she-oaks with a high probability of success. The placement of this visual barrier on elevated ground allowed for superior visibility of the surrounding terrain, while a spear thrown downhill could cover more ground and maintain a higher velocity. Even if a first attempt at spearing the animal missed its mark, the cul-de-sac formation chosen for this paddock allowed easy blockage of the isthmus, thereby forcing the spooked marsupials toward the marshes where their movement rate was severely constrained and they faced little chance of survival. While there may have been times when the Gadubanud lit fires at forest edges to flush out game into the paths of hunters, the use of fire to concentrate feed in paddocks of fresh grass and arrange visual barriers in the landscape allowed for a more predictable procurement of meat protein at Aire River.<sup>72</sup>

**Fig 6.** Portion of map drawn by Robert Hoddle in May 1847 during a coastal survey. Source: Public Record Office of Victoria, CS33 Gellibrand River to Aire River.

Archaeological investigations at Aire River provide additional detail about Gadubanud land use and economy. In 1960, John Mulvaney excavated two rock shelters located on the north side of this outcrop, overlooking the wetland. Radiocarbon dating of charcoal deposits yielded a base occupation date ranging from 325 to 415 BP, and the rapid accumulation of debris – over six feet in depth over the period of occupation – attested to the site’s popularity.<sup>73</sup> Food debris found on site included: marine shellfish; kangaroo, rats, birds, fish, seals and abalone. This collection of remnants indicates that both coastal and estuary-based animal protein were consumed by the people residing at the Aire River, and indeed access to this wider range of foods must have heightened the appeal of this locale. In 1979, IMF Stuart followed up Mulvaney’s investigation with a detailed survey of the Aire River valley. Seventy-three archaeological sites were recorded in the study, finding that ‘The vast majority (64) of these sites are shell middens, but they also include 6 lithic scatters, 2 rock shelters and one isolated artefact’.<sup>74</sup> Local abundance of certain species made food procurement in the Aire River area a simple task: on La Trobe’s third attempt to reach the Cape in April 1846, in the vicinity of this estuary, he and companion Henry Allan feasted on shellfish for breakfast before pushing on to their destination.<sup>75</sup> The dietary preferences indicated by the food debris found at the Aire River archaeological dig were similar to those later exhibited at Seal Point. Subsequently, a shell midden discovered nearby in a rock shelter at Moonlight Head was found to be occupied between 1030 BP and 180 BP. This was likely a favoured spot of the Ngarowurd gundidj clan identified by GA Robinson’s Gadubanud informants.<sup>76</sup> This archaeological find extended the known period of Aboriginal presence on this portion of the Otway coast and underscored the locale’s significance as a settlement node.<sup>77</sup>

While the linkages between the Aire River and Cape Otway settlement nodes are quite clearly evinced in the coastal surveys and La Trobe’s discovery of a cleared path between these two locations in 1846, it is probable that alternate movement corridors also existed in the Otway region. A more direct route connecting the people of the Aire River estuary with

those of the Barwon eel marshes, circumventing Cape Otway, would have had a marked utility for the Gadubanud people. Proof that a movement corridor along the main ridge of the Otway Range may have linked the Gadubanud's northern and western clans first appeared in La Trobe's journal. Approaching the Cape from the west, his entry for 1 April 1846 noted that at Moonlight Head they came upon a trail 'where taking a native path to the left we had gone up into the ranges'.<sup>78</sup> Focused on reaching the site of the future lighthouse, La Trobe and his guide did not follow this path, instead choosing to continue along the coast to Cape Otway. In 1928, the headmaster of the school at Lavers Hill (located on the main ridge of the Otway Range, several kilometres north-east of Moonlight Head) found three stone axe heads left behind by the Gadubanud people. Reporting on this five decades after the discovery, his son noted that the artefacts were found 'beside a soak or spring 100m to the north of the present Great Ocean Road' and he posited that 'people used the site because of the close proximity of water to a main trail along the ridge, making descent into the more thickly vegetated gullies unnecessary'.<sup>79</sup> Since such a path would be kept open with regular burning, the axes were not used for felling trees. More likely, they were used to notch tree trunks so that hunters could climb up and capture possums. Trail blazing had the added benefit of encouraging the growth of wattle trees, whose gum was edible. Gum was harvested during the autumn by cutting notches in bark to let the gum exude, where 'It is then gathered in large lumps, and stored for use'.<sup>80</sup> It would have been a convenient source of sustenance during a trek over the mountains in time for the eel harvest on the north side of the range. Though there is a great deal of uncertainty regarding this particular path through the Otway forest, there are good reasons why the Gadubanud would have deposited axes at rest stops along the route between the Aire River and Barwon wetland settlement nodes.

The arrival of Europeans in the Otway region during the late 1840s led to the violent disruption of Aboriginal society and ended a long-standing system of land management. With the cessation of burning practices, surface vegetation could experience rapid 'thickening' and hinder pedestrian movement. West of Cape Otway, in April 1846 Superintendent La Trobe walked along the coast at a comfortable pace, utilising the corridors cleared by the Gadubanud. He moved quickly across this part of the region, requiring one day to reach the Gellibrand River from the Allansford station, another to walk between the Gellibrand and Johanna rivers, and a final one to reach Cape Otway.<sup>81</sup> Only three years later, in March 1849, La Trobe and his party encountered much difficulty and marched at a considerably slower rate of movement. The landscape had not been burnt; the coastal heath grew wild, scrub took hold in places it had not been allowed previously to grow, and the vegetation thickened. The 20 to 25 miles from Apollo Bay to Cape Otway were completed with relative ease along the numerous beaches, but west of the Cape he found the travel much more strenuous:

The 40 or 50 m. from the Cape to the Gellibrand was not achieved without a good deal of exertion, a great deal more indeed than on my first excursion, for it was found quite impossible to follow my old track, and it was not until the fifth day that we managed to fight our way through that terrible scrub, and across the precipices of Moonlight Head to the camp where the horses were awaiting us.<sup>82</sup>

In the absence of the fire-stick, the character of coastal vegetation changed rapidly. Where La Trobe had required two days to move between Cape Otway and the Gellibrand River in April 1846, only three years later the very same journey required five days. In this way, the disruption of Aboriginal society came to be expressed in the land: heath and scrub thickened, the landscape mosaic began to possess less defined boundaries between vegetation communities, well-tended environments began to build up fuel loads and wood debris. In January 1851, the Black Thursday fires swept through western Victoria and incinerated great swaths of the Otway forest.

## Conclusion: the reconstruction of an Aboriginal cultural landscape

The Gadubanud people of the Otway region cared for their country and their imprint could be witnessed in the cultural landscape they created. The reconstruction of patterns of settlement, land use and communication requires a patient engagement with studies produced in a diverse set of disciplines ranging from the earth sciences to geography and archaeology. The identification of past geographical patterns allows us to piece together the decisions and constraints dealt with by generations of Aboriginal land managers that led to the development of a distinct cultural landscape. Knowledge about the land-based economy, the distribution of population and the food sources utilised by the Gadubanud people can help us protect the Aboriginal heritage of this region, guide future development away from areas of cultural and archaeological significance, and highlight the ways in which environmental constraints guided land use by Aborigines and later European occupants of the Otway region.

Fire was an important tool utilised by the Gadubanud people. It was essential for clearing movement corridors along the coast and through the forest, and allowed them to generate a complex landscape mosaic that increased the variety of foodstuffs located within walking distance of key settlement areas. For them, the Otway region was indeed a living larder. By alternating patches of high and low fire fuel this mosaic enabled the geographical spread of risk across their territory in the event of unexpected wildfire. Landscape complexity equated with food security in that the health and longevity of their people was ensured should there happen to be a localised collapse in the food resource. Working on the other side of the Bass Strait, Bill Gammage found a similar situation amongst the Aborigines of Tasmania: 'With patches spaced over many miles, their resources were more drought, flood and fire evading, more certain, than those of farmers'.<sup>83</sup>

### Acknowledgments

The author would like to thank Nicholas Brown, Bill Gammage, Tom Griffiths and Jock Galloway for helpful comments on an earlier version of this paper.

### References

#### Newspapers

Geelong Advertiser

#### Secondary sources

Ashton, DH 1976, 'The development of even-aged stands of *Eucalyptus regnans* F.Muell. in Central Victoria', *Australian Journal of Botany* 24: 397-414.

Beaton, JM 1985, 'Evidence for a coastal occupation time-lag at Princess Charlotte Bay (North Queensland) and implications for coastal colonization and population growth theories for Aboriginal Australia', *Archaeology in Oceania* 20(1): 1-20.

Blake, LJ (ed) 1975, *Letters of Charles Joseph La Trobe*, Victoriana Series No 1, Government Printer, Melbourne.

Bowdler, Sandra and Harry Lourandos 1982, 'Both sides of Bass Strait', in *Coastal Archaeology in Eastern Australia*, Proceedings of the 1980 Valla Conference on Australian Prehistory, Australian National University Press, Canberra.

Bride, Thomas Francis 1898, *Letters from Victorian Pioneers*, Heinemann, Melbourne.

Clark, Ian D 1990, *Aboriginal Languages and Clans: An Historical Atlas of Western and Central Victoria, 1800-1900*, Monash Publications in Geography No 37, Monash University, Melbourne.

- 1995, *Scars in the Landscape: A Register of Massacre Sites in Western Victoria 1803-1859*, Aboriginal Studies Press, Canberra.

- and Toby Heydon 2002, *Dictionary of Aboriginal Placenames of Victoria*, Victorian Aboriginal Corporation for Languages, Melbourne.

Dawson, James 1881, *Australian Aborigines*, George Robertson, Melbourne.

Douglas, JG 1978, 'Aborigines in the Ranges', *Victorian Naturalist* 95: 222-225.

Flood, Josephine 1989, *Archaeology of the Dreamtime*, 2nd edition, William Collins, Sydney.

- Gammage, Bill 2008, 'Plain facts: Tasmania under Aboriginal management, *Landscape Research* 33(2): 241-254.
- Gill, Edmund D 1976, 'The Aborigines and coastal processes in Western Victoria', *Artefact* 1(1): 31-39.
- 1978, 'Paleoecological changes in Victoria and Bass Strait as a backdrop for the marsupial megafauna and Aboriginal colonization', *Artefact* 3(2): 67-75.
- Goff, Beth 1982, 'Ecology of root use by the Aborigines of Southern Australia', *Archaeology in Oceania* 17(1): 59-67.
- 2005, 'Aboriginal fire management in South-Eastern Australia: aims and frequency', *Journal of Biogeography* 32: 1203-1208.
- Harle, KJ et al 2002, 'A chronology for the long pollen record from Lake Wangoom, Western Victoria (Australia) as derived from Uranium/Thorium disequilibrium dating', *Journal of Quaternary Science* 17(7): 707-720.
- Horton, David (ed) 1994, *The Encyclopaedia of Aboriginal Australia*, Aboriginal Studies Press (AIATSIS), Canberra.
- Le Griffon, Heather 2006, *Campfires at the Cross: An Account of the Bunting Dale Aboriginal Mission at Birregurra, Near Colac, Victoria 1839-1851*, Australian Scholarly Publishing, North Melbourne, Victoria.
- Linforth, DJ 1977, 'The climate of the Otway Region', *Proceedings of the Royal Society of Victoria* 89(1): 61-68.
- Lissarrague, Amanda 2006, *A Salvage Grammar and Wordlist of the Language from the Hunter River and Lake Macquarie, Muurrbay Aboriginal Language and Culture Cooperative*, Sydney.
- Lourandos, Harry 1980, 'Change or stability? Hydraulics, hunter-gatherers and population in temperate Australia', *World Archaeology* 11(3): 245-264.
- Mannino, MA and KD Thomas 2002, 'Depletion of a resource? The impact of prehistoric human foraging on intertidal mollusc communities and its significance for human settlement, mobility and dispersal', *World Archaeology* 33(3): 452-474.
- Massola, Aldo 1962, 'The grinding rocks at Gellibrand', *Victorian Naturalist* 79: 66-69.
- McKenzie, G Merna and A Peter Kershaw 1997, 'A vegetation history and quantitative estimate of Holocene climate from Chapple Vale, in the Otway region of Victoria, Australia', *Australian Journal of Botany* 45: 565-581.
- 2000, 'The Last Glacial Cycle from Wyelangta, the Otway Region of Victoria, Australia', *Palaeogeography, Palaeoclimatology, Palaeoecology* 155: 177-193.
- 2004, 'A Holocene pollen record from cool temperate rainforest, Aire Crossing, the Otway Region of Victoria, Australia', *Review of Palaeobotany and Palynology* 132: 281-290.
- Medwell, GJ 1977, 'Palaeocurrent directions in Otway Group sediments, Otway Ranges, Southeastern Australia', *Proceedings of the Royal Society of Victoria* 89(1): 27-50.
- Meehan, Betty 1982, *Shell Bed to Shell Midden*, Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies, Canberra.
- Morgan, John (ed) 1852, *The Life and Adventures of William Buckley*, Archibald Macdougall, Hobart.
- Mutwaney, DJ 1961, 'Archaeological excavations on the Aire River, Otway Peninsula, Victoria', *Proceedings of the Royal Society of Victoria* 75 (1): 1-15.
- Parkinson, Eleanor 2005[1863], *Journal of an Expedition to Cape Otway in 1863, 2nd edition*, Apollo Bay and District Historical Society Apollo Bay, Victoria.
- Presland, Gary 1982, *An Archaeological Survey of the Otway Forest Region*, Environmental Studies Series, Ministry of Conservation, Melbourne.
- Richards, Thomas 1998, *A Predictive Model of Aboriginal Archaeological Site Distribution in the Otway Range*, Occasional Report No 49, Aboriginal Affairs Victoria, Melbourne.
- Robin, Libby and Tom Griffiths 2004, 'Environmental history in Australasia', *Environment and History* 10: 439-474.
- Scarlett, NH 1977, 'The Aborigines of the Otway Region', *Proceedings of the Royal Society of Victoria* 89(1): 1-5.
- Stuart, IMF 1981, 'Ethnohistory in the Otway Ranges', *Artefact* 6: 79-88.
- Stuwe, J 1994, 'The role of fire in ground flora ecology', *Victorian Naturalist* 111: 93-95.
- Wark, MC 1996, 'Regeneration of heath in the Northeastern Otway Ranges after the Ash Wednesday fires, February 1983', *Proceedings of the Royal Society of Victoria* 108: 121-141.

1 Scarlett 1977: 1-5; Stuart 1981: 79-88; Clark 1990.  
 2 Robin and Griffiths 2004: 456.  
 3 Gill 1978: 67-75.  
 4 Le Griffon 2006.  
 5 Dawson 1881: 2.

- 6 Addis cited in Clark 1995: 119.
- 7 Clark 1990: 190-191.
- 8 Robinson cited in Clark 1990: 190.
- 9 Horton 1994: 397.
- 10 Armytage in Bride 1898: 175.
- 11 Dawson cited in Scarlett 1977: 2.
- 12 Dawson 1881: 3.
- 13 Blake 1975: 18.
- 14 It is suspected that the tools found by Allan were manufactured at a set of 'grinding rocks' found on Lardner's Creek, one mile upstream from its junction with the Gellibrand River. There, the basalt of the volcanic plains forms large outcrops near slabs of sandstone that had been exposed by the rushing water, and the grooves on its surface signify its importance as a site of production where basalt 'blanks' were manufactured into sharpened axe heads that could be used or traded. See Massola 1962: 66-69.
- 15 Clark 1995: 119.
- 16 Geelong Advertiser, 29 August 1846, 'The Late Slaughter of the Cape Otway Blacks'.
- 17 Geelong Advertiser, 4 January 1848, 'The Blacks'.
- 18 Dawson 1881: 18.
- 19 Lourandos 1980: 249.
- 20 Dawson 1881: 93.
- 21 Clark and Heydon 2002: 92. Further study of archival materials may yield additional insight and, potentially, a salvage grammar and wordlist similar to recent work completed in the Hunter River and Lake Macquarie areas of New South Wales. See Lissarrague 2006.
- 22 Dawson 1881: 95.
- 23 Scarlett 1977: 3.
- 24 Gott 1982: 62.
- 25 Mulvaney 1961: 3-7.
- 26 There is a high probability that this site was located near the present-day community of Barramunga, in the area now flooded by the West Barwon reservoir. See Clark and Heydon 2002: 25.
- 27 Morgan 1852: 66.
- 28 Armytage in Bride 1898: 175.
- 29 Dawson 1881: 19.
- 30 Morgan 1852: 121.
- 31 Blake 1975: 18.
- 32 Morgan 1852: 122.
- 33 Lourandos 1980: 250.
- 34 Flood 1989: 179.
- 35 Meehan 1982: 31-39.
- 36 Morgan 1852: 36.
- 37 Gill 1976: 31-39.
- 38 Mannino and Thomas 2002: 467.
- 39 At Seal Point, evidence shows that dietary variety was provided in situ, with the remains of seals, possums, wallabies, and fish found at the middens alongside a large number of 'sandstone pestle-mortar type' tools used for pulping plant fibre. See Bowdler and Lourandos 1982.
- 40 Flood 1989: 90.
- 41 Scarlett 1977: 4.
- 42 Richards 1998: 7.
- 43 Gott 1982: 64-65.
- 44 Gott 1982: 60.
- 45 Morgan 1852: 47.
- 46 Gott 2005: 1205.
- 47 Wark 1996: 121-141.
- 48 The herbaceous species which were staple foods on the Basalt Plains, located northwest of the Otway region, were also known to require frequent burning in order to maintain a maximal food supply. Tussock grassland (*Themeda* sp.) unburnt for three years provides few gaps on which non-grass plant species can germinate or thrive. See Stuwe 1994: 93-95.
- 49 McKenzie and Kershaw 1997: 566.
- 50 Ashton 1976: 397-414.
- 51 Gott 1982: 64-65.
- 52 Bowdler and Lourandos 1982.
- 53 The latest survey report addressed the fact that there had been 'little systematic archaeological study within the Otway area as a whole'. All previous findings were compiled into a single dataset and supplementary fieldwork was completed to address spatial gaps in coverage. See Presland 1982: 4.
- 54 Richards 1998: xiii.
- 55 Richards 1998: 49.
- 56 Richards 1998: 63.
- 57 Mulvaney 1961: 1.
- 58 Richards 1998: 40.
- 59 Morgan 1852: 66.
- 60 Linforth 1977: 61.
- 61 Dawson 1881: 89.
- 62 Medwell 1977: 28-30.
- 63 Letter of William Roadknight to Cj La Trobe, reproduced in Parkinson 2005[1863]: vii.
- 64 Blake 1975: 36.
- 65 Gammage 2008: 251.
- 66 McKenzie and Kershaw 2000: 177-193, 2004: 281-290.
- 67 McKenzie and Kershaw 2000: 189.
- 68 McKenzie and Kershaw 1997: 577.
- 69 McKenzie and Kershaw 1997: 579.
- 70 Harle et al 2002: 718.
- 71 This sequence of land use extension from more arid inland areas to the coastal hinterland during the Holocene era is similar to that identified by Beaton in Queensland. See Beaton 1985: 1-20.
- 72 Bill Gammage has noted the existence of similar wallaby trap formations in Tasmania. See: Gammage 2008: 251.
- 73 Mulvaney 1961: 1-15.
- 74 Stuart cited in Presland 1982: 4.
- 75 Blake 1975: 18.
- 76 Clark 1990: 189.
- 77 Richards 1998: 10-12.
- 78 Blake 1975: 18.
- 79 Douglas 1978: 222.
- 80 Dawson 1881: 21.
- 81 Blake 1975: 18.



F&DHS DOCUMENT ARCHIVE

Title: FORREST STONE

ARTEFACT - Aboriginal Sites

Source: Aboriginal Affairs Victoria

DOC: 0124



AAV/862 Part 4

11 August 1998

18 AUG 1998

Mr Ken Widdowson  
7 Martin Street  
SOUTH MELBOURNE VIC 3205

Dear Ken,

### FORREST STONE ARTEFACT

Thank you for reporting to Aboriginal Affairs Victoria (AAV) the item which you thought may have been an Aboriginal artefact. As I suggested during our meeting on 6 August 1998 the piece does not show any definite characteristics used by archaeologists to identify Aboriginal flaked material. After microscopic examination of the piece it was concluded that it had not been modified as the result of Aboriginal alteration. It is more likely that the fracturing has occurred as a result of motor vehicle interference. It was noted that the stone is of a material that flakes easily when struck or put under pressure, thus mimicking Aboriginal flaking techniques.

For your information I have enclosed some extracts from:

Gary Presland 1982 An Archaeological Survey of the Otway Forest Region. *Victoria Archaeological Survey Occasional Reports Series. No. 8.*  
(out of print)

Ian Clark 1990 *Aboriginal Languages and Clans: An Historical Atlas of Western and Central Victoria, 1800-1900.* Monash Publications in Geography No. 37.

There is another AAV publication on the way by Thomas Richards called *A Predictive Model for Aboriginal site distribution and density in the Otway Range.* AAV Occasional Report No. 49 which will be available in approximately 2 months time. I have also enclosed the current AAV Publications List which may be of some interest to you.

Once again, thank you for taking the time to notify AAV of this possible Aboriginal stone artefact. I still have the item in my possession and I will return it if you request me to do so. Please do not hesitate in contacting me on (03) 9412 7436 should you have further queries regarding this matter. If you find any other archaeological sites or artefacts which you believe to be of Aboriginal origin please contact Mr Jamin Moon (Site Registrar) on (03) 9412 6827.

Human  
Services



Peoplefirst

Incorporating Aboriginal Affairs

Yes be  
9412 7399

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Rochelle Johnston". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the typed name.

ROCHELLE JOHNSTON  
Project Archaeologist  
Heritage Services Branch

98\_0176

M O N A S H U N I V E R S I T Y



AUSTRALIA

MONASH PUBLICATIONS IN GEOGRAPHY



Number 37

**Aboriginal Languages and Clans:**

An Historical Atlas of Western and Central Victoria, 1800-1900

**IAN D. CLARK**

## GADUBANUD

The ethnohistoric record of the people who spoke this language or dialect is very thin, and linguistic data is practically non-existent. Several early commentators on Aboriginal ethnohistory went as far as to suggest the Otway Ranges were uninhabited. Hugh Murray (18/8/1853 in Bride 1983:103), an early squatter in the Colac district, believed the Gulidjan country radiated around Lake Colac, except in the south, where the extensive Cape Otway Ranges were not populated by any 'tribe'. Brough-Smyth endorsed Murray's sentiments, and believed the Otway forest was, for the most part, probably unknown to the Corangamite and Colac people. His grounds for this belief were largely environmental.

The labour attendant on a march through this densely-wooded district would not have been undertaken but in the pursuit of enemies, and it would never have been chosen by any savage people as a permanent abode. The rains of winter and the thick fogs of autumn and spring would have been fatal to the younger members of the tribes. ... That the coast tribes could and did penetrate many parts of this area is not denied, but it is scarcely probable that any tribe would live in the denser parts from year to year (Smyth 1878:34).

The common thread in both Smyth and Murray, is the suggestion that the Otways were in some way associated with the Gulidjan.

The earliest and only reference to this language's name is contained in Dawson's (1881:2) ethnography, where he recorded that the Cape Otway language was named Gadubanud, 'Katubanuut' in his orthography, meaning 'King Parrot language'.

### Clan organization

Some information on the clans of the Gadubanud has survived in the 1842 journal of G.A. Robinson. Whilst on an expedition to the Port Fairy district, Robinson visited the mouth of the Hopkins River, and met with

three Cape Otway people. His ethnographic notes of this expedition contain the data on four clans. Other than their names and general location, nothing is known about the social organization or leadership of these local groups.

### External relations

According to Addis (30/12/1843 in HOC 1844:283), the Gadubanud were considered to be 'wild blacks' by the Wada wurrung. In December, 1845, Superintendent C.J. La Trobe attempted to reach Cape Otway from the west coast beginning from Henry Allan's station at the mouth of the Hopkins River where he engaged 'Tommy' of the 'Coast tribe' to accompany his party. Near the Gellibrand River, La Trobe recalled that Tommy was 'frightened and restless', presumably because the 'wild blacks' were known to be in their immediate vicinity. The implication of this is that the Gadubanud were considered Mainmait (see Appendix), or wild, by the Girai wurrung to the west and the Wada wurrung to the north-east. Tindale (1974:205) has suggested that the language name Gadubanud was used by the people to the west and may have been a derogatory term. Murray's and Smyth's assumption that the Otways were in some ways associated with the Gulidjan tends to be supported by this information.

Hebb (1970:219) considered the Cape Otway people to be an 'off-shoot' of the Gulidjan from information contained in an article in *The Age*, of January eighth, 1887.

Up to the close of the last century the Cape Otway territory was uninhabited. About the beginning of the present century - the precise year, of course, cannot be given - a young man of the Colac tribe committed a murder, and to avoid vengeance he had to fly. Instead of seeking doubtful safety in some neighbouring tribe, he had made up his mind to make a dash into the unknown country lying between Colac and the sea. Accompanied by his lubra, he crossed the ranges, and set up for himself. There were plenty of opossum and wallabi, and he found no difficulty in making himself

comfortable. Soon afterwards he was joined in his Alsatia by two refugees from justice. The nucleus of an independent community was thus formed, and by the time the first white settlers arrived, in 1835, the Cape Otway tribe numbered thirteen individuals. They were, as may be easily imagined, the most savage among savages, and after a time they made the discovery that mutton was better than kangaroo. Some squatters pushed their way towards the source of the Barwon, so as to come within the range of the Otway tribe, and the consequence was that several shepherds and hutkeepers were murdered. It was impossible to follow the tribe into their fastnesses, where they were free from reprisals ...

There seems little reason to give this story any credibility. The writer considered the Otways were only populated by thirteen individuals, forming one group in 1835. This was contrary to information given by Robinson (1842 journal) that there were at least four clans in this region.

With regard to dialect affiliation, on the basis of Mathews' suggestion that there was a single language spoken from the Glenelg River to the Gellibrand River, and Dawson's statement that there were four distinct languages in south west Victoria - Djab wurrung, Wada wurrung, Gulidjan, and Gurngubanud (Djargurd wurrung or Dhauwurd wurrung are acceptable alternatives) - it could be inferred that Gadubanud is a dialect of Gulidjan. The ethnographic record would support this inference, however as Bannister (1976) and Dixon (Working files) have pointed out, in the absence of any language data that can be definitely attributed to this region, this must remain unverifiable.

#### Relations with Europeans

##### The Gadubanud in the 1840's:

E.B. Addis (HOC 1844:283), the Commissioner for Crown Lands for the County of Grant, in his annual report for 1843, noted that in the previous year two instances of "incursion had been made by a tribe of which little has hitherto been known, further than the natives here [that is, Geelong], call them

the 'Wild blacks', and that they inhabit the coast range of forest towards Cape Otway. In both instances they robbed an outstation of food and blankets, but did not use any savage violence".

Foster Fyans (Itinerary SLV Ms 7557) noted in his itinerary that in September, 1844, he visited the sea coast to investigate the murder of a thirteen year old boy by the 'Cape Otway Tribe'.

We can learn something of the Cape Otway Aborigines from the accounts of visits to the Otway region by three Europeans in 1846; Superintendent La Trobe, G. D. Smythe, and Henry Allan.

In 1845 and 1846 La Trobe made three attempts to reach Cape Otway, the first attempt via the east coast was abandoned on account of the difficulty of the terrain, the second was attempted from the west coast. La Trobe travelled to Henry Allan's station near the mouth of the Hopkins River, where he engaged 'Tommy of the coast tribe' to join his party. On the fifth day of December, 1845, they left Allan's station and travelled along the coast, and passed Keenan's station, recently deserted since the murder of a shepherd by the blacks, camping in the evening by a small rivulet, two miles beyond the mouth of the Gellibrand River. Tommy was frightened and restless. The following morning they set off through the heath and scrub, at the back of Moonlight Head, and went into the forest. Led by Tommy they followed a native track for many miles through the scrub, until the trail apparently ended, and after many attempts to find a route forward, they had to return to Allan's station. On their return between the Hopkins River and Cudjee Cudjee Creek, La Trobe noted 'the wild blacks were reported on our track'. La Trobe tried again in late March, 1846, and accompanied by Henry Allan, reached the Gellibrand River in a day. The following evening they camped at the mouth of the Johanna River. On April, 2, they had their first view of the valley of the Aire, and descending to the coast, they hit upon the trail of the 'wild blacks', seven men and women. They reached the Cape and

returned to Allan's station.

George Douglas Smythe, a surveyor contracted to survey the coast, was in the Otway region in July and August of 1846. Smythe's field notes (in Stuart 1981:82) record his account of the events that saw the murder of one of his surveying party by some of the Otway Aborigines. On the 25th of July, from a camp site near Blanket Bay, on the eastern side of Cape Otway, Smythe set out to survey the Aire River. En route his party fell in with one man, four women, and three boys who had been seen at his tent a few days previously. The man and one of the boys showed Smythe the nearest way to Gunna-waar Creek (Airedale), and Smythe gave them a note to give to his coxswain at Blanket Bay, which directed him to give the Aboriginal people some flour. On the 31st Smythe returned to learn that Conroy, one of the men he had left in charge of the tent at Blanket Bay, had been murdered on the 26th. After burying Conroy, Smythe returned to Melbourne to organize a retaliatory expedition, which took place in late August. Smythe was accompanied by several Barrabool Aborigines (Wada wurrung balug). At the mouth of the Aire River, Smythe came across seven Otway Aborigines, and attacked and killed them. The only record of this transaction is a report in the *Argus* of September the first, 1846.

Stuart (1981) has made mention of the distorted accounts of Smythe's attack, which have only further confused the ethnohistoric record. A report in *The Age*, of January 8, 1887, reprinted in Hebb (1970:219), dates the attack as occurring in 1841, and stated that two members of the surveying party were murdered. It mentioned the fact that the expedition had been sanctioned by La Trobe, who authorized Smythe to exercise his own judgement. According to the article in *The Age*, the Otway people were asleep when they were attacked, and were all killed with the exception of a young woman, who was found crouching behind a tree. This woman is supposed to have been taken to Melbourne where she was adopted by the Jagga Jagga (Woi wurrung) tribe. Mulvaney (1962:7) and Mas-

sola (1969a:39; 1969c:49) have added to the distortion by stating that Foster Fyans and the Native Police were involved in the attack. According to Massola (1969a:32) in 1848, one of the two women who survived this massacre, who lived in Warrnambool, divulged that the European member of the surveying expedition was killed because he had been interfering with one of the Aboriginal women. Hebb (1970:212) adds to the confusion with his account of another massacre that took place in 1847 near the Aire River. In this account the blacks had killed a shepherd on one of the stations to the south of Colac. In return, the squatter, Captain Fyans, Captain Addis, and a few friendly blacks, went in pursuit of the murderers. Finding their trail, they followed it till they came upon a party near the Aire River. After attacking the party, a boy and a girl belonging to the tribe were captured and taken back to the squatter's home where he determined to rear them into useful members of society. The boy was later killed by one of the 'friendly blacks', who had taken part in the slaughter, so as to prevent him from avenging his father's murder.

The third account of a European attempt to cross the Otways was that of Henry Allan's April, 1846, attempt to cross the ranges from north to south. He left Tuckfield's Buntingdale Mission station, near Birregurra, with two Aboriginal women as guides. Entering the ranges, on the 26th of April, he came across an unoccupied 'blacks camp', which he returned to two days later to find a large number of implements (Allan n.d. in Stuart 1981:83). Stuart considers Allan's notes suggest the location of the campsite was on the Gellibrand River.

Bonwick (1970:25) writing in 1857, noted that it is a dozen years since Henry Allan had fallen upon some blacks near Curdies Creek and gained from them some intelligence regarding two white men who had lost their way among the ranges. One had subsequently died in the hills, and the other, an elderly man, had lived for some time with the tribe, sharing the mia of an old chief. He was told that in the absence of the old chief, the

white man was killed by some young men who were jealous of the favour shown toward him. Allan was satisfied that the two men were Gellibrand and Hesse. Unfortunately Allan's account has never been confirmed. It would seem that Bonwick's account is a version of Allan's excursion to Cape Otway in April 1846 in the company of La Trobe.

Other than this ethnohistoric evidence, which demonstrates that the Otway Ranges were indeed inhabited, the same conclusion can be drawn from archaeological sites of recent dates that have been discovered on the east side of the mouth of the Gellibrand River and at Apollo Bay.

With regard to the population of the Otways, Stuart (1981) is of the opinion that the region had been depopulated by 1846. He considered that six years of direct contact with Europeans and twenty years of intermittent contact were bound to have disturbed the traditional ways of life and must have reduced the population.

#### Dialect boundary:

According to Chadzynski's (1981) analysis, the boundaries of the Gadubanud language best illustrate the association of tribal boundaries with divisions in topography, vegetation and climate.

The common boundary between the Kolakgnat and the Katubanut follows the course of the Barwon River across the extensive alluvial fans to the foothills of the Otway Ranges. The tribal boundary then runs parallel to the configuration of the main ridge running south-west below the 300 metre contour which marks the division between the lower drier parts of the ranges and the higher wetter altitudes. The contour also marks the vegetational and climatic divisions on the ranges, with the change from dry open forest to wet open and closed forest on the higher wetter sites. The boundary continues along this south-westerly trend until it reaches the divide of the streams flowing into the Gellibrand River, and turns south towards the sea, around the lower part of the western tip of the ranges; the boundary reaches the coast near Lion Headland.

The northeastern boundary of the Katubanut has not been clearly established although its general location has been estimated by Tindale (1974). Tindale's positioning of the boundary however conflicts with the close association of the other boundaries of the Katubanut in that it cuts across the northeastern end of the ranges. As the other boundaries lie just below the 300 metre contour, and considering the association of the tribal territory of this group with the wet forested area of the Otways, the location of the boundary slightly northeast of Tindale's is possibly more correct ...

The boundary on this consideration therefore extends from the Barwon River around the 300 metre contour and its associated ecological and climatic boundaries to the sea. The broad valley and extensive swampland through which the Painkalac Creek flows could possibly have been the site of the boundary near the coast as it marks the most prominent physical division in the area, and is also associated with vegetational changes; from forest on the northeastern slopes of the Otways to coastal scrub, and swampland vegetation in the valley.

Katubanut territory covered the Otway Ranges and an extensive coastal area; including the Cape Otway Peninsula. The limitation of this tribe to a single physiographic division differs to the other tribes (Kirrae, Kolakgnat), however consideration of the environment reveals a considerable degree of local diversity ... (Chadzynski 1981:45, 46, 58).

Vegetation within the Gadubanud boundary varied from heath on the cliffs and dunes to Cape Otway and dry open forest on the eastern slope. Its climate was characterized by the high rainfall of up to 2000 mm on the higher areas and 1000 mm on the coast; temperature variation was less marked however and coastal temperatures were generally higher, which presented the coastal area as a more favourable environment in all seasons.

**Description:** a language comprising at least five clans located in the rain forest covered plateau and rugged coastline of the Cape Otway peninsula.



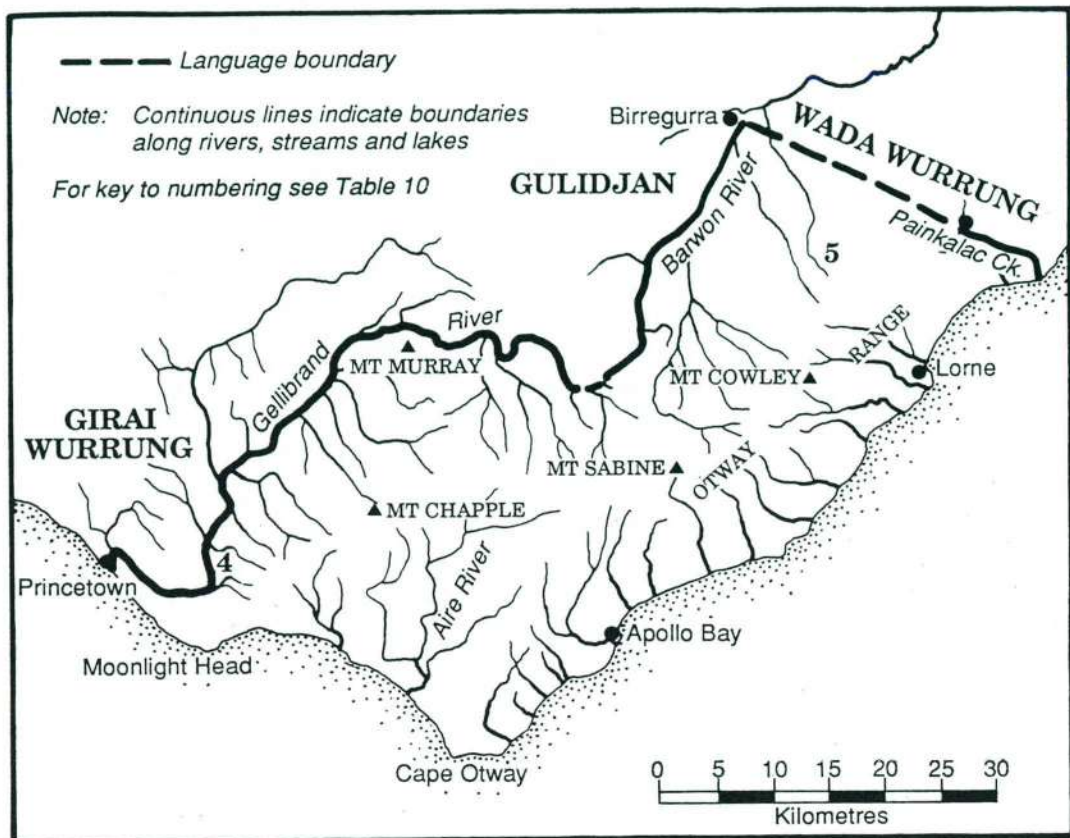


Figure 7: Gadubanud Language Area & Clans

Table 10: Gadubanud Clans

No.	Clan name	Approximate location
1.	Bangura gundidj	Cape Otway
2.	Guringid gundidj	Cape Otway
3.	Ngalla gundidj	Cape Otway
4.	Ngarowurd gundidj	North of Moonlight Head
5.	Yan Yan Gurt clan	'Yan Yan Gurt' station, east head of the Barwon River

**Variants:** 'Wild blacks' [so called by the Wada wurrung according to Addis], Pallidurgbarrans, Katubanuut, Cape Otway tribe, Otway tribe, Mirrynong tribe, Katubanut, Gadabanud [according to Scarlett 1977 one of seven dialects of the Djargurd language].

#### NOMENCLATURE CHOICE AND MEANING

**CHOICE:** Gadubanud/Katubanut

**MEANING:** 'Katubanuut' = 'King Parrot language' (Dawson 1881:2); 'banuut', 'banott' = tongue (Dawson 1881).

#### GADUBANUD LOCATION

- Cape Otway., Dawson 1881.
- Rain forest covered plateau and rugged coastline of Cape Otway peninsula, probably centering on Apollo Bay., Tindale 1974:205.
- see Scarlett 1977:map.
- see Barwick 1984:map.

**Sources:** Addis in G.B.1844:283; Fyans Itinerary 21/9/1844 [SLV Ms. 7557]; Buckley in Morgan 1967:78; Dawson 1881:2; Bonwick 1883:431; Hebb (1888) 1970:184, 219, 223; Tudehope 1962:235; Miller Ms. [RHSV 00075]; Duruz 1974:3; Tindale 1974:205; Brown 1975:113; Scarlett 1977:1; McLeod 1981:10; Barwick 1984:118.

#### *Clan name, Variants, Location, Discussion, Sources.*

#### 1. BANGURER GUNDIDJ

(Bang u rer conedeet)

**Location:**  
- at Cape Otway.

- Discussion:**
- a) Statement of evidence: the sole reference to this clan is in Robinson's 1842 journal.
  - b) Clan location: at Cape Otway.
  - c) Meaning: literally means 'belonging to Bangurer'. *Bang u rac* = Cape Otway (GAR Jnl 22/3/1842); *Bang u rer* = Cape Otway (GAR Jnl 6/4/1842). Hence a locality name.
  - d) Clan head: unknown.

e) Moiety: unknown.

**Source:** GAR Jnl 6/4/1842.

#### 2. GOR REENG IT GUNDIDJ

(Gor reeng it conedeet) Cape Otway tribe, Cape Otway blacks )

**Location:**  
- at Cape Otway., GAR Jnl 6/4/1842.

- Discussion:**
- a) Statement of evidence: the sole reference to this clan is in Robinson's 1842 journal of his visit to Port Fairy when he met with two clans people.
  - b) Clan location: at Cape Otway.
  - c) Meaning: literally means 'belonging to Gor reeng it'.
  - d) Clan head: unknown.
  - e) Moiety: unknown.

**Sources:** GAR Jnl 6/4/1842.

#### 3. [NG]ALLAR GUNDIDJ

(Allerconedeet, Al lar conedeet bur, Al le conedeet, Aller.cone.deet)

**Location:**  
- Cape Otway., GAR Jnl 23/3/1842.

- Discussion:**
- a) Statement of evidence: This clan is referred to by Robinson in his 1841 report and his 1842 journal of his journey to Port Fairy. The 1841 report was written after the Port Fairy journey, and this explains the occurrence of this clan in the report's appendix. Robinson met with one clan member: *Toin toin bur nin*, alias Salty. According to Dixon (1980:121) most Australian languages do not permit a vowel at the beginning of a word - an initial consonant must be added - in this instance 'ng' before 'a'.
  - b) Clan location: Robinson's data gives only the general location of Cape Otway.
  - c) Meaning: 'belonging to Aller'.
  - d) Clan head: unknown.
  - e) Moiety: unknown.

**Sources:** GAR Rpt 1841 App; GAR Jnl 23/3/

1842, 6/4/1842; GAR papers vol.65.

4. [NG]ARROWURT GUNDIDJ

(Arro-wurt conedeet)

Location:

- beyond Allan's N of Moonlight Head [Cape Otway], GAR Jnl 24/3/1842.

Discussion:

- a) Statement of evidence: The sole reference to this clan is in Robinson's journal of his 1842 visit to Port Fairy. He does not record the names of any clan members. On the basis of Dixon's (1980:121) statement that most Australian languages do not permit a vowel at the beginning of a word - an initial consonant must be added - in this instance 'ng' has been added before 'a'.
- b) Clan location: North of Moonlight Head.
- c) Meaning: 'belonging to Arrowurt'.
- d) Clan head: unknown.
- e) Moiety: unknown.

Source: GAR Jnl 25/3/1842.

5. YAN YAN GURT clan

(Yan yan gurt tribe)

Location:

- 'Yan-Yan-Gurt' station, 16000 acres on the E. head of Barwon River, 12 miles S.E. of Birregurra.

Discussion:

- a) Statement of evidence: George Armytage, a settler at 'Ingleby', on the Barwon River, near Winchelsea, in a letter dated 6/10/1853 to La Trobe, identified four tribes that occupied the Barwon River, from the sea to its source:
  - i. Indented Head tribe, corresponding with Bengalat Bulluk [Wada wurrung].
  - ii. Barrabools Hill tribe, corresponding with Wada wurrung balug [Wada wurrung].
  - iii. Colac tribe, possibly the Birregurra clan [Gulidjan].
  - iv. Yan Yan Gurt tribe, [Gadubanud].
 On the strength of this reference, there is a clan at Yan Yan Gurt, however its name is not known.
- b) Clan location: at Yan Yan Gurt, on the east head of the Barwon River, twelve miles south-east of Birregurra.
- c) Meaning: unknown.
- d) Clan head: not identified.
- e) Moiety: unknown.

Source: Armytage in Bride 1983:175.



VICTORIA ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY  
OCCASIONAL REPORTS SERIES  
number 8



AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY  
OF THE OTWAY FOREST REGION

A REPORT TO THE  
ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES DIVISION,  
MINISTRY FOR CONSERVATION, VICTORIA

by Gary Presland

Ministry for Conservation, Victoria  
July 1982

### Previous archaeological work

There has been little systematic archaeological study within the Otway area as a whole. Aboriginal shell middens, some of which contained stone artefacts, were noted on the coast near Cape Otway more than 100 years ago (Etheridge, 1875:3-4; Smyth, 1878:II,234) and artefact collectors have been active for many years within the study area (eg. Mitchell, 1949; Douglas, 1978). These activities have resulted in the accumulation of a large number of Aboriginal stone artefacts of many types in the collections of the Anthropology Department, National Museum of Victoria (see Appendix 2). These include large unifacially and bifacially flaked choppers and chopping tools (ie. tools made on both cores and flakes) and ground stone tools, most of which were collected in isolation rather than as components of larger sites.

Small chipped stone artefacts have been collected also in large numbers from coastal sites in the study area. Most common in this group are the more easily recognisable formal tools such as geometric and crescentic backed blades and bondi points, (Mitchell, 1949: 151-5). Such artefacts are generally diagnostic of the Late Prehistoric period in south-east Australia, from about 6000 to 1500 years ago, and have a widespread distribution in Victoria.

Away from the coast, a small number of Aboriginal sites were recorded by Massola (1962, 1966), particularly in the region of the Gellibrand River and on the plains to the north of the ranges (see Appendix 1 for a complete list of all recorded sites in the study area). Some of these sites are of particular importance because they are of types which are rare in the region, and because they provide evidence of a past Aboriginal presence in the uplands of the study area. A number of isolated large stone tools (axes and chopping tools) have been found in the forested areas.

More recently, a detailed site survey of the Glen Aire valley was undertaken by I. Stuart (1979) as a result of which 73 sites were recorded. The vast majority (64) of these sites are shell middens, but they also include 6 lithic scatters, 2 rock shelters and one isolated artefact. In addition to that study a number of sites have been recorded on the coast by VAS staff in recent years.

Archaeological excavations have been undertaken at only three sites within the study area and all of these are in coastal environments. From his excavation of two rock shelters at Glen Aire in 1960, Mulvaney recovered a large number of stone and bone artefacts and a variety of mollusca and mammalian bone remains, Shelter 1 yielded relatively little cultural material, but Shelter 2, which was subsequently dated to 370<sup>±</sup> 45 years BP, provided considerable evidence of the coastal economy practiced by the prehistoric inhabitants (Mulvaney, 1962). The paucity of formal stone tools - there were none in Shelter 1 and at most eight in Shelter 2 - plus the relative abundance of bone tools, led Mulvaney to suggest a deterioration of stone working practices in favour of organic material in the most recent period of Aboriginal prehistory.

At Seal Point, to the east of Cape Otway, Lourandos (1976) excavated a large shell midden with which was associated a group of circular depressions, thought to be the remains of hut pits. Large quantities of flaked stone were recovered and included retouched artefacts. In addition, there were numerous double ended bone points and a greenstone edge-ground axe (Lourandos, 1976:188). An economy based on rock platform shell species and fish, with some exploitation of land mammals, was indicated by the faunal remains.

At Moonlight Head a stratified midden deposit in a rock shelter was excavated by the Division of Prehistory, La Trobe University in 1979-80. To date no detailed results of this work have been published.

The emphasis of previous archaeological work in the study area has been on the coastal sector. As a result of this bias, there is very little evidence for the Aboriginal exploitation and/or occupation of the inland parts of the region. Such evidence as does exist, isolated finds of stone artefacts and a few occupation and manufacturing sites, confirms that the resources of the forest were certainly utilised, but the extent and nature of Aboriginal occupation of the upland interior remains unknown.

Reconstruction of Aboriginal tribal boundaries as they were at the time of European arrival in Australia suggests that the study area is comprised of territory occupied by two groups (Tindale, 1974:205). One of these, the *Kolakngat*, inhabited the Colac area and extended south to the coast to the

east of Cape Otway. There is little known about the second group, called *Katubanut*, except that they are referred to by other tribal groups as the 'wild blacks' and they lived in the high country of the Otway region and along the adjacent coast, centred on Apollo Bay.

## METHODS AND SOURCES

### Historic sources

Because of its generally rugged landscape and thick vegetation, the Otway region was not settled by Europeans as early as many areas to the west and north, and it was not until the mid 1840s that concerted efforts were made to penetrate the study area. Exploration at that time was stimulated by the urgent need to build a lighthouse on the southern coast of Victoria. During this earliest period of contact, observations on the indigenous population were few and brief, merely noting the presence of Aboriginals or evidence of their having been in the area.

Governor La Trobe made three visits to the Glen Aire - Cape Otway region in 1845, 1846 and 1849, and on the second of these saw a group of seven Aboriginals in the Aire valley. Other sightings within the study area were made by G.D. Smythe in 1846 while surveying the coastal area, and in the same year Henry Allen, a settler on the Hopkins River to the west, saw an Aboriginal campsite in the vicinity of the Gellibrand River. These earliest accounts have recently been synthesised by Iain Stuart (1979: 17-22; 1981:79-88) in a study of the prehistory of the Glen Aire region.

Later accounts of the Aboriginals of the area, made at a time when only a remnant of the original population survived, suggest that while the Aboriginals frequented coasts and plains around the Otway Ranges, lack of resources, difficulty of access and superstition kept them out of the higher and more densely forested interior (Dawson, 1881:50; Hebb, 1970:219). Excursions into these areas would have been made, however, in order to gain resources such as wood for 'bundit' spears which were traded to other tribal groups (Dawson, 1881:88) as well as stone from quarries such as that near Gellibrand.

Because of the rapid disruption of Aboriginal groups within the Otway area following European intrusion there was little opportunity for later settlers to make first-hand observations of Aboriginal activity in the study area. A Wesleyan school and mission to the Aboriginals was set up in 1839 on the Barwon River near Birregurra but lasted only six years. During this time however, Francis Tuckfield, one of the missionaries, kept a journal which contains valuable information on the Aboriginals who came to the station. Although these people were mostly from the area to the north of the Otway ranges and seemed to regard the inhabitants of the ranges as 'wild blacks' (Addis, 1844:283), the journal is one of the few sources of first-hand information on Aboriginals in the immediate vicinity of the study area.

#### Local informants

During field work a number of local residents were interviewed in order to collect information about locations within the study area that might be worth investigating during a more intensive survey at a later date. This information is summarised for future reference in Appendix 3. Two of the sites recorded in this study were pointed out by a local resident, Mr Kurt Veld.

#### Field investigations

(a) Aerial survey. Prior to commencing field operations the study area was inspected from the air, using an Highwing Cessna 172. The purpose of this was to locate areas within the forest where there was sufficient ground surface exposure to allow effective pedestrian surveys. The object of this exercise was to carry out as complete a coverage of the study area as possible and later to select localities suitable for investigation to provide representative sample of different physiographic zones present.

Approximately three hours flying time was required for this exercise during which all major areas of exposed or disturbed ground in the uplands were located. These exposures, caused by clear felling of timber, quarrying activities, farming and natural erosion were marked on 1:100 000 scale base maps along with notes to aid re-location on the ground. In



## REFERENCES

- Addis, E.B. (1844) Colonies, Australia. British Parliamentary Papers, 8:283
- Coutts, P.J.F. (1981) Coastal archaeology in Victoria. Part 1. Proceedings of the Royal Society of Victoria, 92:62-80
- Dawson, J. (1881) The Australian Aborigines. George Robertson. Melbourne.
- Douglas, J.G. (1978) 'Aborigines of the ranges'. Victorian Naturalist, 95:222-225.
- Etheridge, R. (1875) 'Observations on the sand dunes of the coast of Victoria'. Transactions and Proceedings of the Royal Society of Victoria, 7(IV):2.
- Hebb, I. (1970) The History of Colac and District. Hawthorn Press. Melbourne.
- Lourandos, H. (1976) 'Aboriginal settlement and land use in south western Victoria: a report on current fieldwork'. The Artefact, 1(4) 174-193.
- Massola, A. (1962) 'The Grinding rocks at Gellibrand'. Victorian Naturalist, 79:216.
- Massola, A. (1966) 'Notes on Aboriginal antiquities of the Colac area'. Victorian Naturalist, 83: 125-136.
- Mitchell, S.R. (1949) Stone Age Craftsmen. Tait Book Co. Melbourne.
- Mulvaney, D.J. (1962) 'Archaeological excavations on the Aire River, Otway Peninsula, Victoria'. Proceedings of the Royal Society of Victoria, 75(1):1-15.
- Smyth, R.B. (1878) The Aborigines of Victoria ... John Ferris. Melbourne.
- Stuart, I-M.F. (1979) 'A Site survey and settlement pattern study of the Glen Aire valley, Otway Ranges, Victoria'. Unpublished B.A. (Hons) Thesis, La Trobe University.
- Stuart, I-M.F. (1981) 'Ethnohistory in the Otway Ranges'. The Artefact, 6(1&2):79-88.
- Tindale, N.B. (1974) Aboriginal Tribes of Australia. University of California Press. Los Angeles.
- Tuckfield, F. (n.d.) Journal. Manuscript in La Trobe Library, Melbourne.



**ABORIGINAL  
AFFAIRS  
VICTORIA**

## *Publications List*

### **CULTURAL HERITAGE *RECORDS* SERIES**

- 1 The mound people of Western Victoria: A preliminary statement (reprint) ..... \$12.50
- 3 Guide to recording archaeological sites in Victoria ..... \$ 5.00
- 5 Journals of George Augustus Robinson, January to March 1840 ..... \$ 7.50
- 6 Journals of George Augustus Robinson, March to May 1841 ..... \$ 7.50
- 7 Aboriginal engineers of the Western District ..... \$10.00
- 8 Victoria Archaeological Survey activities report, 1977/78 ..... \$ 5.00  
*Contains reports on archaeological excavations at the Keilor site, near Melbourne.*
- 9 A preliminary investigation of Aboriginal mounds in north-western Victoria ..... \$ 7.50
- 10 Victoria Archaeological Survey activities report, 1978/79 ..... \$ 7.50  
*A collection of reports with an emphasis on field investigations in the Murray Valley. Also includes papers on Aboriginal stone arrangements in Victoria, and on Aboriginal occupation of the Southern Mallee.*
- 11 Journals of George Augustus Robinson, May to August 1841 ..... \$ 7.50
- 12 Aboriginals and rock art in the Grampians, Victoria ..... \$10.00
- 13 Cultural resource management in Victoria, 1979-81 ..... \$ 7.50  
*Contains summary reports on numerous surveys and excavations, including those carried out during the 1979/80 summer field programme at Mallacoota. Also includes papers on the assessment of significance for Aboriginal archaeological sites, and on cultural heritage management in Victoria.*
- 14 Coastal archaeology in south-eastern Victoria ..... \$10.00
- 16 Aboriginal rock art in the Grampians (reprint) ..... \$19.50

### **CULTURAL HERITAGE *OCCASIONAL REPORTS* SERIES**

- 4 An archaeological survey of Lake Wahpool and Lake Timboram in north-western Victoria (D Bell, A Ross and R Silcox) ..... \$ 7.50
- 5 The prehistoric rock art sites of Victoria (R Gunn) ..... \$10.00  
*(Available for bona fide research purposes only)*
- 6 An archaeological survey of the Mornington Peninsula, Victoria (H Sullivan) ..... \$10.00
- 7 An archaeological survey of the site of the Mitchell River dam (G Presland) ..... \$ 5.00
- 9 An archaeological survey of Sullivans Bay, Sorrento (P J F Coutts) ..... \$ 7.50
- 12 The Cave of Ghosts (R G Gunn) ..... \$ 7.50
- 13 Bunjils Cave (R G Gunn) ..... \$ 7.50

14	An archaeological survey of Mallacoota township, East Gippsland (S Simmons) .....	\$ 7.50
15	An archaeological survey of the Melbourne Metropolitan area (G Presland) .....	\$ 10.00
16	Mt Pilot (R G Gunn) .....	\$ 7.50
17	Langhi Ghiran (R G Gunn) .....	\$ 7.50
18	Garden Range (R G Gunn) .....	\$ 5.00
19	An archaeological survey of Jack Smith Lake, South East Gippsland ..... (K Hotchin & P J May)	\$ 5.00
20	An archaeological investigation of the Point Cook Metropolitan Park, Port Phillip Bay, ..... Victoria (K Geering & P J Hughes)	\$ 5.00
23	An archaeological survey of the You Yangs, Victoria (N van Waarden) .....	\$ 7.50
25	The Dandenong Police Paddocks 3 volumes (M Fels & D Rhodes).....	\$ 7.50#
26	The Sydenham Corridor: A cultural heritage study (H du Cros) .....	\$ 7.50
27	The Western Region, Melbourne Metropolitan area: An archaeological survey (H du Cros) ...	\$ 10.00
28	The Otways region archaeological study, stage 1 (H du Cros) .....	\$ 7.50
30	Analysis of the lithic assemblage from the Keilor archaeological site (C Burke) .....	\$ 7.50
32	The Ngurai-illam-wurrung rock well at Whroo (R G Gunn) .....	\$ 7.50
33	Dandenong Creek and Patterson River, Melbourne: An archaeological survey ..... (D Rhodes)	\$ 7.50
34	An archaeological survey of the Barmah Forest (T Bonhomme) .....	\$ 10.00
35	Lake Condah project: post-contact archaeological component (J Penney & D Rhodes) ....	\$ 7.50
36	Lake Condah project: Aboriginal archaeology resource inventory (A Clarke) .....	\$ 7.50
39	The Werribee Corridor: An archaeological survey of Aboriginal sites (H du Cros) .....	\$ 10.00
40	The Plenty Valley Corridor: An archaeological survey of Aboriginal sites (I Ellender) .....	\$ 10.00
43	The City of Doncaster and Templestowe: Archaeological survey of Aboriginal sites .....	\$ 10.00 (I Ellender)
45	Berwick-Pakenham Corridor: Aboriginal archaeology (L Smith) .....	\$ 10.00
46	An historical and archaeological investigation of the Loddon Aboriginal Protectorate Station and Mount Franklin Aboriginal Reserve (D Rhodes) .....	\$ 10.00
47	The history of Ramahyuck Aboriginal Mission and a report on the survey of Ramahyuck Mission cemetery (D Rhodes) .....	\$ 17.50
48	Gunbower Island Archaeological Survey (D Rhodes) .....	\$ 10.50

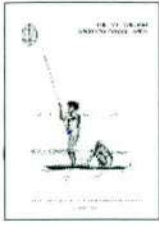
### GENERAL INFORMATION

Readings in Victorian Prehistory vol 2: The Victorian Aboriginals 1800-1860 .....	\$ 10.00
Memoirs of the Victoria Archaeological Survey vol 2: Papers presented to ANZAAS 1977. ... <i>The papers in this volume include a review of Aboriginal archaeology in the Discovery Bay area, S.W. Victoria, and a report on investigations into the use of volcanic glass as a tool-making material by Victorian Aboriginal people.</i>	\$ 2.00
Victoria's First Official Settlement, Sullivans Bay, Sorrento .....	\$ 5.00

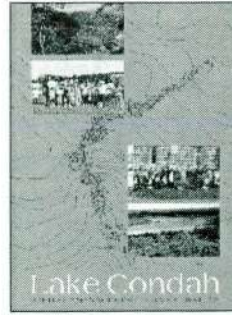
# PRICE SHOWN IS FOR EACH SEPARATE VOLUME

• PRICES SHOWN DO NOT INCLUDE POSTAGE

## OTHER CULTURAL HERITAGE PUBLICATIONS



**Mount William  
Archaeological Area**  
(14pp booklet) \$ 1.00



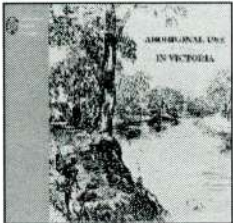
**Lake Condah: Heritage  
Management Plan &  
Strategy** (388pp) \$15.00



**Aboriginal  
Bush Tucker of  
the Murray Basin**  
(16pp booklet) \$ 3.00

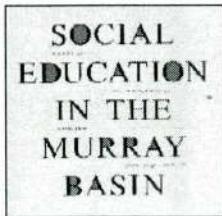


**Aboriginal People  
in the Environment**  
(32pp booklet) \$ 3.00

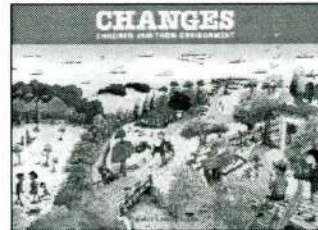


**Aboriginal Use of  
Water-related resources  
in Victoria**  
(16pp booklet) \$ 3.00

## TEACHING AIDS



**Social Education in  
the Murray Basin**  
A guide for the  
development of  
curriculum from prep  
to year 10.  
(42pp booklet) \$ 3.00



**Changes.  
Children and their  
environment**  
A collection of fifteen  
Black Line Master  
activity sheets, for use  
in the first years of  
school (prep to  
year 2). Intended as a  
resource for teachers  
using the curriculum  
guide *Social  
Education in the  
Murray Basin*.  
(32pp booklet) \$ 3.00



**Southern Murray  
Basin Heritage Sheets**  
A set of 16 sheets dealing  
with specific types of  
cultural heritage sites.  
Intended as a resource  
for teachers using the  
curriculum guide *Social  
Education in the Murray  
Basin*. \$ 5.00

## CULTURAL HERITAGE PAMPHLETS



**Mt William  
Quarry: Aboriginal  
stone axes**  
Free



**The Aboriginal  
Cultural Heritage  
of Melbourne's  
Western Region**  
Free



**Doncaster and  
Templestowe,  
Aboriginal sites of  
archaeological  
significance**  
Free



**The Aborigines  
of the Bellarine  
Peninsula**  
Free



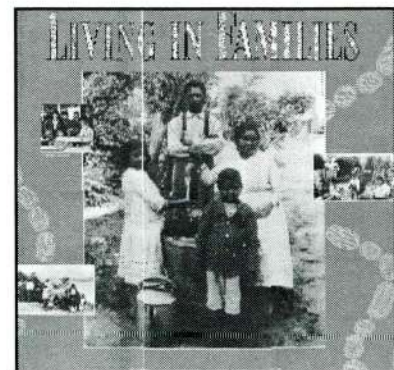
**Lake Condah**  
Free



**The Aborigines of the  
Mornington Peninsula**  
Free



**Historical  
archaeology of  
the Murray Basin**  
Free



**Aboriginal sites  
on private  
property**  
(A4) Free

## CULTURAL HERITAGE MINI POSTERS

### Aboriginal Scarred Trees

Site identification mini poster 1 (A4) Free

### Aboriginal Mounds

Site identification mini poster 2 (A4) Free

### Aboriginal Freshwater Shell Middens

Site identification mini poster 3 (A4) Free

### Aboriginal Flaked Stone Artefacts

Site identification mini poster 4 (A4) Free

### Waterways and Lifeways: Aboriginal archaeological investigations along the Barwon River

Size: 841 mm x 594 mm Price: \$ 5.00



**AAV'S Heritage  
Services Branch**  
(A4) Free

## CULTURAL HERITAGE POSTERS

All posters are in full colour and are printed on quality art paper.

**Victorian Aboriginal Plant Foods: Modern & Traditional Uses**

Size: A1  
(841mm x 594mm)  
Price: \$ 5.00

also available:

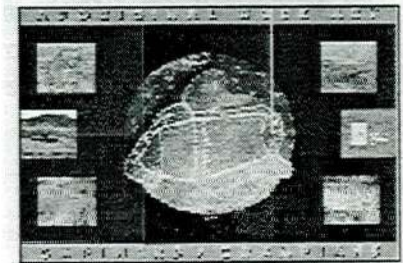
**Victorian Koorie Plants and Their Uses**

Size: A1  
(841mm x 594mm)  
Price: \$ 5.00



**Aboriginal Rock Art - Gariwerd/Grampians (set of 2)**

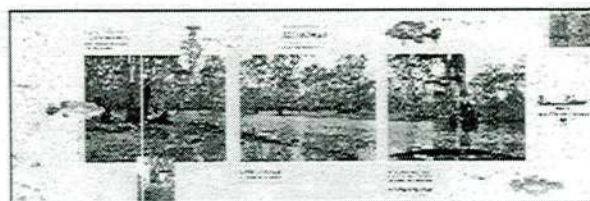
Size: A2  
(594 mm x 420mm)  
▼ Price: \$ 10.00



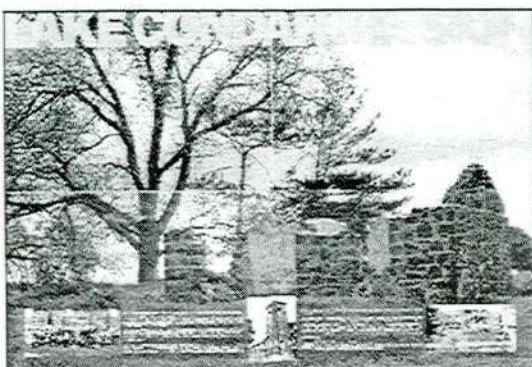
◀ **1993 International Year of the World's Indigenous People (set of 3):** from far left to right: "Living with the land", "Living in families" and "Living the culture" Size: 594mm x 594mm Price: \$ 10.00

**Aboriginal use of the Murray River and its Floodplain**

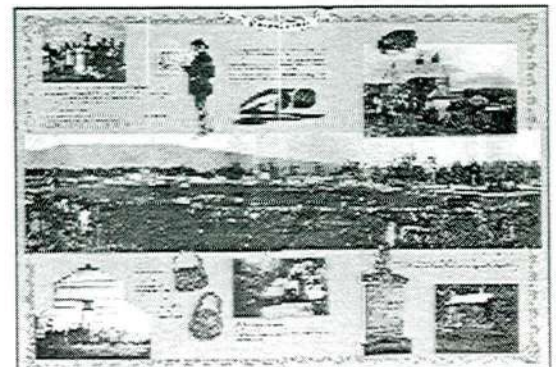
Size: 940mm x 320mm  
▶ Price: \$ 5.00



**Lake Condah Aboriginal Mission** Size: A1  
(841mm x 594mm)  
Price: \$ 5.00 ▼



**Coranderrk Aboriginal Station** Size: A1  
(841mm x 594mm)  
▼ Price: \$ 5.00



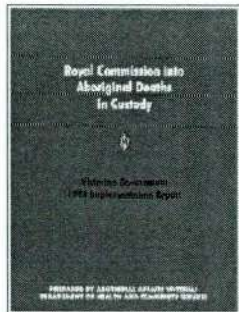
## OTHER ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS VICTORIA PUBLICATIONS



**Aboriginal Justice Advisory Committee (Victoria). Response to the Victorian Government 1994 Implementation Report**  
(booklet) Free



**Evaluation of the Aboriginal Employment Strategy 1991-1994 for the Victorian Public Sector** (booklet) Free



**Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody. Victorian Government 1994 Implementation Report**  
(booklet) Free



**Aboriginal Affairs Victoria**  
(pamphlet) Free



**ABORIGINAL  
AFFAIRS  
VICTORIA**

# *Publications Order Form*



NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

POSTCODE: \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

PUBLICATION (number & short title)	QUANTITY	COST

◆ **POSTAGE RATES: \$2.50 for posters**  
**\$2.50 for the first 3 books**  
**\$5.00 for 4 books or more**

SUB TOTAL: \_\_\_\_\_

POSTAGE: \_\_\_\_\_

TOTAL PAYMENT: \_\_\_\_\_

Cheques/money orders to be made payable to: "Department of Human Services"

Please send order form to: Aboriginal Affairs Victoria, Library, Second Floor, 115 Victoria Parade, Fitzroy 3065

Cheque **MUST** accompany order form. Payment on invoice may be arranged by request

For further enquiries: telephone (03) 9412 7156 or fax (03) 9412 7601



F&DHS DOCUMENT ARCHIVE DOC. 0295 Date.....

Title..... CULTURE..... 65

..... ABORIGINAL HISTORY.....

Subject Category... CULTURE.....

Key Words.....

..... ABORIGINAL BURIAL.....

**The Brisbane Courier, Tuesday 12 September 1865  
page 4**

The *Geelong Advertiser*, in giving the following account of the burial of a blackfellow, doubts if the remains of any one of the same race ever had so much respect shown to them. It says:-"A funeral procession of an unusual character was witnessed in the town of Colac on Thursday, at the funeral obsequies of Coc-co-coin, King of the Warrion tribe of aborigines. There was quite a procession of mourners. The body of the old king was conveyed on a cart – the property of the tribe – a gift from the Government; then followed as chief mourners Coc-co-coin's three sons, Jacky, Jerry, and Dicky; after these came Jim Crow, Gellibrand, Tommy, Johnny, and three lubras. Then came a carriage, the property of a neighboring squatter, in which sat the widowed lubra of the deceased. Then followed a long line of horses and conveyances, with farmers, tradesmen, and others with whom the deceased had long been a favourite. The body was interred in the cemetery, the Rev. M. Cottrell reading the funeral service. The *Register* observes that the remnant of the tribe is well cared for, a brick house being set apart for their use, and their wants are well supplied."

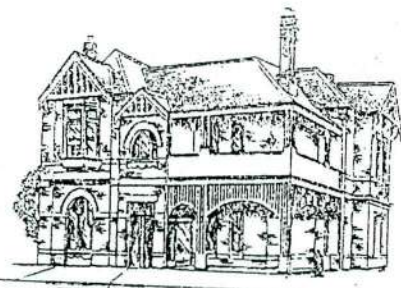
**The Maitland Mercury & Hunter River General  
Advertiser, Wednesday 10 March 1852, page 4  
Destruction of Wheat at Colac -**

A gentleman from Colac yesterday informed us that the inhabitants of that township were thrown into a state of great excitement, on Sunday morning last, in consequence of a disturbance which took place on that day between a person named Collins, a farmer, and his wife. It appears that after the dispute, the wife lighted a firebrand, proceeded to the wheat stack, and while she held a knife in the direction of the lookers-on in the one hand, set fire to the wheat with the firebrand in the other, defying any one to come near her. It is calculated that the quantity burned was worth 200 pounds. The woman was subsequently captured, and taken to the watch-house, where she will no doubt receive her reward. The same gentleman informs us that the crops, which are good, are all gathered in in that part of the country. –  
*Geelong Advertiser*

**The Brisbane Courier, Tuesday 23 April 1878, page 3**

A very sad accident occurred (says the Melbourne *Argus*) on the night of the 12<sup>th</sup> instant, about 7 o'clock, near the Dean's Creek bridge, not far from Colac. Mr. John Roper, manager to Mrs. Corbet, and Mr. John James, manager to Messrs. Robertson Brothers (states the *Colac Times*), were riding home together from Colac, after a day's trip to the township, when just as they had passed Mr. Dempsey's farm, Mr. Roper, who was riding more swiftly than Mr. James, came into a collision with a horse ridden by Mr. Archibald Cook, of Irrewarra. Both horses were at their utmost speed, and the shock was a fearful one. The animals were dashed into the air, and fell heavily on the ground, with their forelegs locked together. Mr. Cook himself was greatly hurt, and was brought at once to Colac, but Mr. Roper was taken up apparently dead, with a terrible gash on his forehead. Mr. Cook's horse was killed on the spot, and Mr. Roper's severely injured. When assistance was procured, it was found that Mr. Roper was quite dead, his neck being apparently dislocated. It appears that Mr. Cook was on his right side of the road, and that at the moment of the collision both riders spoke. The darkness of the evening, and the rapid pace at which Mr. Roper was riding, prevented the possibility of them seeing each other.

## Quinn Funerals



*Helping you through life's  
journey.*

61 Corangamite Street

Colac

Ph 52312052

C.H Dec 2<sup>nd</sup> 1892

# TOOHEY - NEYLON

## A FASHIONABLE WEDDING.

The town of Beac presented a gay appearance on Wednesday morning, the cause of all the excitement being the marriage of Miss Katie Neylon, eldest daughter of Mr and Mrs Michael Neylon, with Mr Walter J. Toohey, solicitor, of Melbourne. The ceremony, which was solemnised by the Rev. Father Nelan, assisted by Frs Torpey and Moriarty, took place in the Roman Catholic Church. Evidence of the high esteem in which the young lady and her people are held, many acts of kindness and benevolence having marked their course of life, was borne out by the large attendance which graced the church and grounds. The building was decorated on a scale of magnificence never before attempted in Beac. From the street to the church door a long line of carpet was laid down. Inside the sight was a beautiful one. Three large bell arches, composed of flowers and ferns of the choicest description, were erected in front of the altar, while floral bells were suspended with snow white ribbons from the centre of each of the structures. On either side were arches of smaller dimensions made up with ferns and flowers, in the centre of which were prettily depicted "K.N." and "W.T." the initials of the bride and bridegroom respectively. The altar was artistically draped with buttercup liberty silk; a large number of pot plants being strewn thereon. The bride herself looked charming. She was attired in white duchesse satin, richly trimmed with Irish white point lace (specially procured for the occasion) and ostrich plumes. Her wreath was composed of heather and orange blossoms, while a real lace veil matched with the remainder of the attire. Among

the jewellery worn by the bride was a handsome diamond, the gift of the bridegroom. A very pretty shower bouquet completed the costume. Miss Neylon was given away by her father. The bridesmaids were the Misses Kate Toohey and Nellie Neylon, and they wore buttercup surah, with picture hats to match and shower bouquets of buttercups and ferns. The two train bearers, Miss Cleo Mickel, niece of the bride, and Miss Toohey, were dressed in white liberty silk with buttercup sashes and hats to suit, each carrying a crook beautifully trimmed with buttercups and long streamers. After the due solemnisation of the ceremony and Mr and Mrs Toohey had been "made one," an adjournment was made to "Stoneyhurst," where a champagne breakfast had been prepared. The health of the bride and bridegroom was proposed by Fr Nelan in felicitious terms, during the course of which he referred to the many amiable qualities of the bride. The toast was responded to in an able manner by Mr Toohey. Owing to the death of Mrs Neylon's brother, which took place that day, the ball which was to have been held in the evening had to be postponed. The bride and bridegroom left by the evening train on their honeymoon, conveying with them the best of good wishes. They proceed to Sydney, from thence to Tasmania, returning to their future residence at Hawthorn. The bride's travelling dress was a grey Eton costume with everything to match. The presents were of a magnificent description, and far too numerous to particularise. The carriage arrangements were entrusted to Messrs Scott Bros., of Colac, who discharged the duties with their usual ability.

## Bakers Delight Colac

Safeway Complex, Bromfield St, Tel: 5231 6460

Open 7 days!

7am - 7pm

**Bakers Delight**  
YOUR LOCAL BAKER

## COLAC

**CAMERA CENTRE** P/L

**148 Murray Street**

**COLAC. 3250**

- Quality 1 hour processing
- Enlarging and copying
- Cameras and accessories

**MANAGER:**

**Bob Baillie**

**Ph: (03) 5231 1646**



F&DHS DOCUMENT ARCHIVE

Title. *OUR PRECIOUS.....*  
*HERITAGE*

Source. *ABORIGINAL HERITAGE*

DOC. *0178*.....



[Culture & history introduction](#) | [Language groups & clans of central south west Victoria](#) | [Timeline](#) | [Sorry](#)

## Gudabanud

The Gudabanud are the people of the Otway Ranges — a thickly forested mountain Range that faces across the Tasman Sea. There were at least five clans.

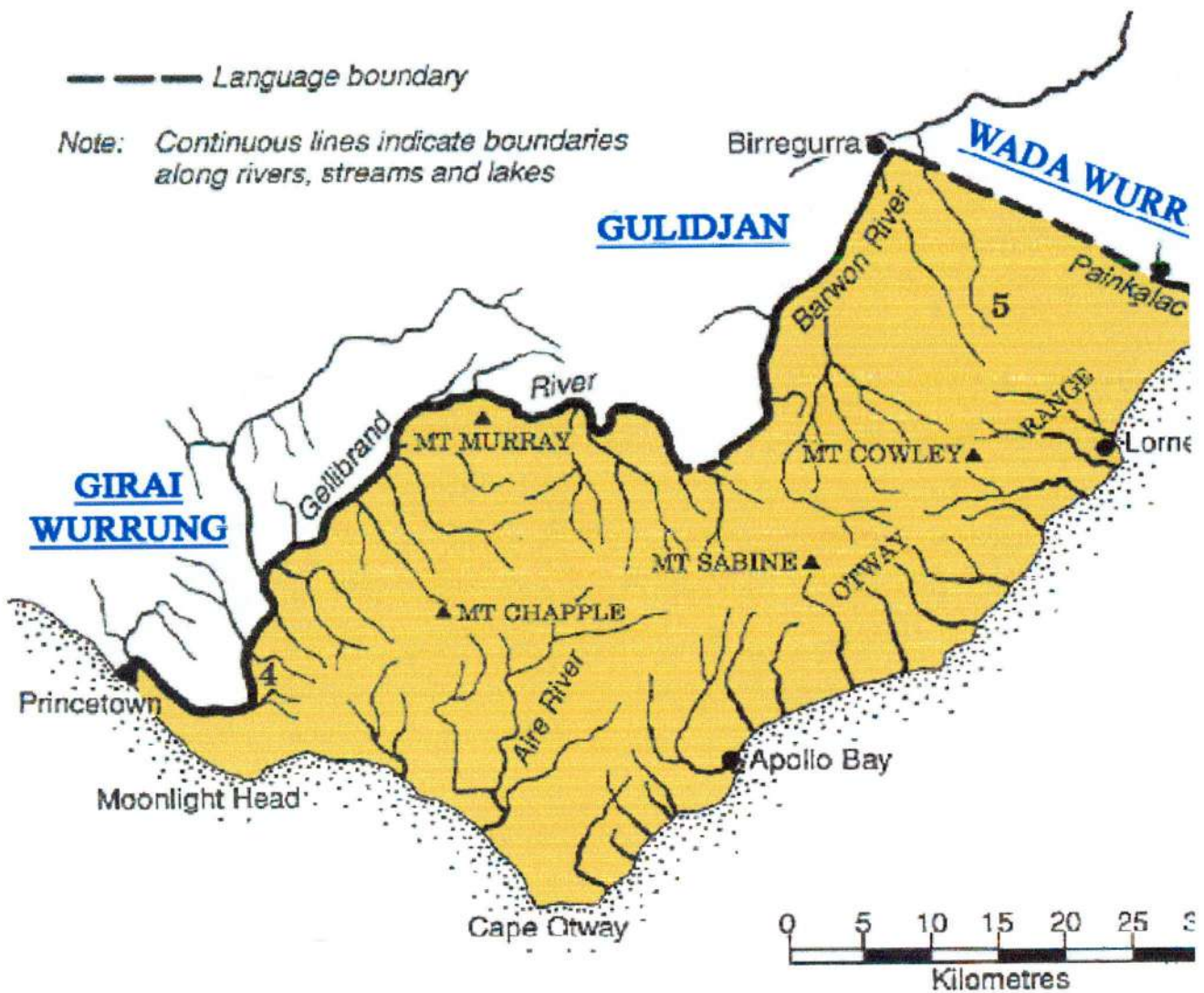
### Alternative names and name spellings

Katubanuut, Gurngubanud, Pallidurgbarrans, Cape Otway tribe, Otway tribe, Mirrynong tribe.  
Pronunciation note: The 'G' in Gudabanud is pronounced somewhat like a 'K', the final 'd' sounds so 't', and the final 'u' is pronounced 'oo'.

### Language

Gudabanud means "King Parrot language". Nothing is known of the vocabulary, the grammar or its other languages.

### The lands of the Gudabanud



The numbers on this map indicate the approximate locations of *clan estates*. The entire landscape was a mosaic of clan estates. Through intermarriage and other alliances people were able to access land and resources far beyond their own estates. Access to land and resources was negotiated through discussion, marriage, ceremony and adherence to law.

It is possible that there were more clans than listed here.

This map is derived from [Clark \(1990\)](#)

**Clans**

No.	Clan name	Approximate location
1.	Bangura gundidj	Cape Otway
2.	Guringid gundidj	Cape Otway
3.	Ngalla gundidj	Cape Otway
4.	Ngarowurd gundidj	North of Moolight Head
5.	Yan Yan Gurt clan	'Yan Yan Gurt' station on the eastern tributaries of the Barwon River

**Relationships with other tribes**

It is likely that the Gadabanud language and culture were significantly different from those of the Wada Wurrung to their east and the Girai Wurrung to the west.

Their relationship with the Gulidjan of the plains north of the Otway ranges is not known.

**Beliefs and laws**

There is no published information about the beliefs and social organisation of the Gudabanud.

### **Way of life**

Little was recorded by settlers of the way of life of the Gudabanud.

Their territory included the woodlands and forests, streams and rivers of the Otway ranges and the south, including the estuaries and associated wetlands of waterways such as the Gellibrand, Aire Rivers.

The streams and rivers would have provided fish, freshwater crayfish and freshwater clams. Woodland forests were a source of game such as wallabies, bandicoot and possum, of many plants species with tubers or bulbs, and of insects such as witchetty grubs. In the wetter forests, a sago like starch was a staple of tree ferns. The estuaries were abundant sources of fish, water-fowl and their eggs. And numerous shell middens along the coast demonstrate that shellfish were extensively exploited.

### **History**

The earliest record of the Gudabanud is in the 1842 journal of George Augustus Robinson (the 'Chieftain of the Port Phillip Aboriginal Protectorate'). A few encounters with explorers are recorded from the early years. Several of these accounts describe violent clashes where a number of Gudabanud were killed and property destroyed. There are no historical records of the Gudabanud being present in the Otways after 1842. The absence of written records is not proof of their extinction and there are Aboriginal people in the area who trace their ancestry to the Gudabanud).

### **Bibliography**

[Clark \(1990\)](#)

Aboriginal Languages and Clans: An historical atlas of western and central Victoria

F&DH DOCUMENT ARCHIVE

Title... ABORIGINAL HISTORY

1861

Source... BIRER. HISTORY.

DOC... 0338





A recent visitor to our Centre put forward an interesting suggestion. In travelling to various country towns he had noticed that signposts often carried the names of service clubs or services available in each town but rarely listed names of other significant

people or events. He asked us to draw up a list of "Famous sons or daughters of the Birregurra district", preferably people who had achieved fame at State, national or international levels.

After a few minutes some of us came up with the following list. Can readers please add other names, with a brief reason for the names' inclusions? We realise that this could be controversial in that people could ask, why A and not B? So this is your chance to include B as well. We will not be putting the list on public signposts, but will keep a record of it at 45 Main Street, with the opportunity for others to be added.



Above: Marjorie Lawrence

Marjorie Lawrence (singer), Mary Glowery (medical missionary who may be canonised), Firth McCallum, Alan Rowarth, Jock Farquharson and Lachlan Henderson (all footballers in VFL and AFL teams), Susan Swaney (vet and published author), Catherine Ellis (ethnomusicologist, professor), Wendy

Harmer (comedian), Charles Sladen (Premier of Victoria), Tom Darcy (Victorian Minister for Lands and Water Supply), Arthur Godfrey (Brigadier in the Australian Army), Dennis family (early breeders of Polwarth sheep) and Bernard Barrett (State Historian for Victoria).

Can we also claim the cast of the *Henderson Kids* television series filmed here in '1984-85? If so, Kylie Minogue, Ben Mendelsohn, Paul Smith and Nicholas Eadie were at least short-term residents.

We look forward to hearing from readers with comments, corrections or additions.

We have downloaded from the internet sections of various reports of the Central Board for the Protection of the Aborigines in the Colony of Victoria from 1861 onwards. William Dennis and his brother Alexander were the local representatives on that Board, and the Report includes brief sections from their reports. However more detailed accounts of materials they



Above: Charles Sladen

issued to local Aborigines have been made available to us by the late Norman Dennis who allowed us to make transcriptions from original farm ledgers held by the family.

In December 1861 their stores included 3 bags of flour, 2 bags of sugar, one chest of tea, 10 pounds of tobacco. This list is typical of the items for the following years, with additions of soap, "pilot jackets", trousers, "panikens", camp kettles, dresses, shirts, "billys", oatmeal, rice, petticoats, etc.

Other pages of the ledger list the distribution of these stores on particular dates, in some cases naming the recipients. For example, on May 14, 1862, 3 coats, 3 shirts, 3 waistcoats and 3 trousers were issued to King, Yamawing and Dickey. Then on July 27, 1864 Gellibrand, Alice, Jerry, Dickey, Kitty, Sarah, Robert each received a blanket. On May 22, 1865 Jim Crow, Gellibrand, Yamwing, Billy and Jackey each received a blanket and shirt. (Note. The variations in spelling are as they appear to be recorded, although faults in transcribing may also account for some of them.)

A third item of interest consists of several pages of photocopied materials (supplied from Nancy Mawson's collection) of the stages gone through by residents of the Wensleydale district in fighting to obtain government approval for the establishment of a Sate School there. One of the lists contains names of prospective pupils supplied by their parents. For example, of the Hager family there are John August (aged 11), Martha (9½), Louisa (8), Anne (6½) and Henry (5). They lived one mile from the proposed school site. Other families were Bartlett (six children), Spry (one), Reeves (one), McConachy (five) and many others.

All of the above materials may be seen at the Historical Centre at 45 Main Street.

**Our next meeting at 45 Main Street will be held on Friday 3rd June at 10.30 am.**

## TRENCHES & HOLES

Trenching, Post Holes, Shed Footings,  
3.5 Tonne Excavator,  
General Earthworks  
**LARGE OR SMALL AREA**  
Ph: 0427 672 945. AH: 5267 2945

## TELE CLEAR

TV ANTENNA SYSTEMS  
SUPPLIED AND INSTALLED  
UHF-VHF-FM-AMPLIFIERS  
DVD-VIDEO AND TV TUNING  
**PHONE: 5236 2059**  
12 JENNER STREET BIRREGURRA

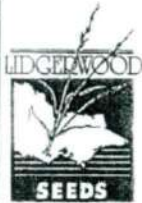
CJ & DE

### Hutchinson Birregurra

Incorporating Lorne Tours

### CHARTER HIRE & DRIVE BUSES

John & Patricia Hutchinson  
45 Roadknight St., Birregurra. 3242  
Ph. 03 5236 2210 Mob. 0418 523 393



## LIDGERWOOD SEEDS PTY LTD

3810 Cape Otway Road,  
Birregurra. 3242  
Telephone: (03) 5236 2015  
Fax: (03) 5236 2383

## Rural Landscape – Dents Pty Ltd

Earth Work, Tree Works  
Site Prep, Scrub Removal  
Trenching, Tree Felling & Removal  
Post Holes, Rubbish Removal  
Drainage & Dam Cleaning  
Pipe Works

Barry: 0437 077 834  
Nick: 0417567540 5232 1808



## Birregurra Post Office (Rural Transaction Centre)

Hours of Business: Monday to Friday 9 a.m.—5.30 p.m. (We don't close for lunch) Not Open Saturdays Telephone: 52362105 (A/Hrs 52362105)

Online 'CARD' banking is available for most banks and financial institutions.

Payments accepted for over 200 organisations such as Incitec Pivot, Citylink, RACV, VicRoads etc.  
Centrelink and Medicare Easyclaim booths installed.

We also provide—Internet, Fax, Photocopying and Laminating services.

After hours—accounts (with cheque) may be posted with the regular mail post free and a receipt will be forwarded.

6 star energy ratings and 6 star service

Local, accredited energy rater  
servicing the region  
New homes, relocations and significant  
Extensions

For information contact Bruce St Clair  
on 52363231, 0435 892 799 or

[www.effectivethermalsolutions.com.au](http://www.effectivethermalsolutions.com.au)



## Pennyroyal Raspberry Farm

Mike & Katrine Juleff

115 Division Road, Murroon

Victoria Australia 3242

Telephone: 03 5236 3238

Email: [mkjuleff@pennyroyal.com.au](mailto:mkjuleff@pennyroyal.com.au)

PYO Berries & Teahouse  
In Season

B & B Accommodation

## MATHEW SILVEY PLUMBING

Mobile: 0417 342 531

Email: [matsilvey@bigpond.com](mailto:matsilvey@bigpond.com)

Specialising in: Hot & Cold Water Services, Roofing,  
Spouting & Downpipes, Drainage,  
Stormwater, New Homes & Renovations

Licence No. 47995

## Birregurra Transfer Station

Scouler Street, Birregurra

Sunday 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

First Friday of each month 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

www.

# webstyle

.com.au

Website design

MOB 0429 362 195

Digital imaging

AH 5236 2194

Computer repairs

firefly 8236 2372

Computer upgrades

Mark Blacket

TV or video to DVD

Birregurra

Hardware/software

[mark@webstyle.com.au](mailto:mark@webstyle.com.au)

buying advice

F&DHS DOCUMENT ARCHIVE  
Title: *Aboriginal History*  
*in OTWMS*  
Source: *The Colac Herald*  
DOC: *0123*

# Few traces of original district settlers

by Karen McCann

To the first European settlers claiming a stake in the land down under, the native Aboriginals may as well have been animals.

English settlers poisoned the Aboriginal water holes, and often poisoned food, before handing it to the natives.

Aboriginals were hunted down, children were buried, others had their hands cut off.

In the old barbaric days of colonisation, these events were merely games to the English settlers. Games that were not immune to brutal massacres.

No evidence, apart from a few protected Aboriginal sites, are left to remind us of those who walked the

district many years before us.

Geelong Wathaurong Aboriginal Cooperative chairperson and Koori Trevor Edwards believed there were no surviving descendants of the Colac and district Koori tribes.

Mr Edwards said Europeans brought murder and disease to the Colac and district natives, wiping out their existence.

He said Kooris now living in Colac had belonged to other tribes.

Hundreds of years before the settlers moved to the area, the Koori tribes were located across the region, with the Gulidjan tribe located around Lake Colac, in four separate clans.

The Gulidjan clans spoke their own unique language, and were situated at Beecac,

Birregurra, Winchelsea and Lake Colac.

The Gulidjan were blamed for the murders of missing explorers Gellibrand and Hesse, and several of the clan were killed in retribution by a settler party in 1837.

In reaction to the European invasion of their lands, the tribe raided newly formed stations.

The settlers retaliated, pursuing the clans, and defeating them, in the process destroying their rugs, weapons and huts.

Three years later a mission station was formed in Birregurra for the Gulidjan clans, however feuding over the missionary by two clans saw the mission abandoned in 1848.

Ten years later only 19 Gulidjan were believed to have survived

the European settlement of the district.

Over those years, there were only three documented murders of the native Gulidjan tribe in the Colac area.

In 1839 two Europeans murdered an Aboriginal man near Lake Colac, and one month later at Gerangamete two Europeans murdered one Aboriginal.

A year later another Aboriginal person was killed reportedly by "white persons".

Mr Edwards said other district tribes included the Kolacnagat tribe heading the area from Colac to Apollo Bay, and from Colac to Lorne was the Katubanut tribe.

"There are no known descendants, to my knowledge, of those tribes."

He conceded that with the colonisation of the area, Aboriginals

were forced from the land, often joining other neighbouring tribes which frequently resulted with in-tribal fighting.

"Most of the massacres occurred in the Western Districts from the Warrnambool region to central Victoria...some very big massacres occurred."

"A common thing was to poison the water holes, to poison food, bread, and then give it to the Kooris."

"The Europeans treated them like animals."

"It was murder on a large scale. It was nearly an accepted practice by the colonies...those were very barbaric days."

Mr Edwards said he grew up in a happy environment with his parents at the Framlingham Aboriginal Reserve.

Following five years

there, Mr Edwards said his family were forced off the reserve, because they were not "full blood Aboriginal".

"We have had to fight very hard to establish ourselves," he said.

Being neither black nor white has often worked against Mr Edwards, who conceded he has experienced racism in Geelong.

"I couldn't understand why I was being prejudiced against."

A combination of the current political system, including its make-up of John Howard, Pauline Hanson and the memories of past atrocities have caused an increasing bitterness amongst Kooris, Mr Edwards said.

"There seems to be a lot of bitterness. I think the bitterness is for the previous suffering of grandparents, and parents."

Mr Edwards said in the last 30 years, many Kooris had received education and in the process had discovered the relatively undocumented carnage.

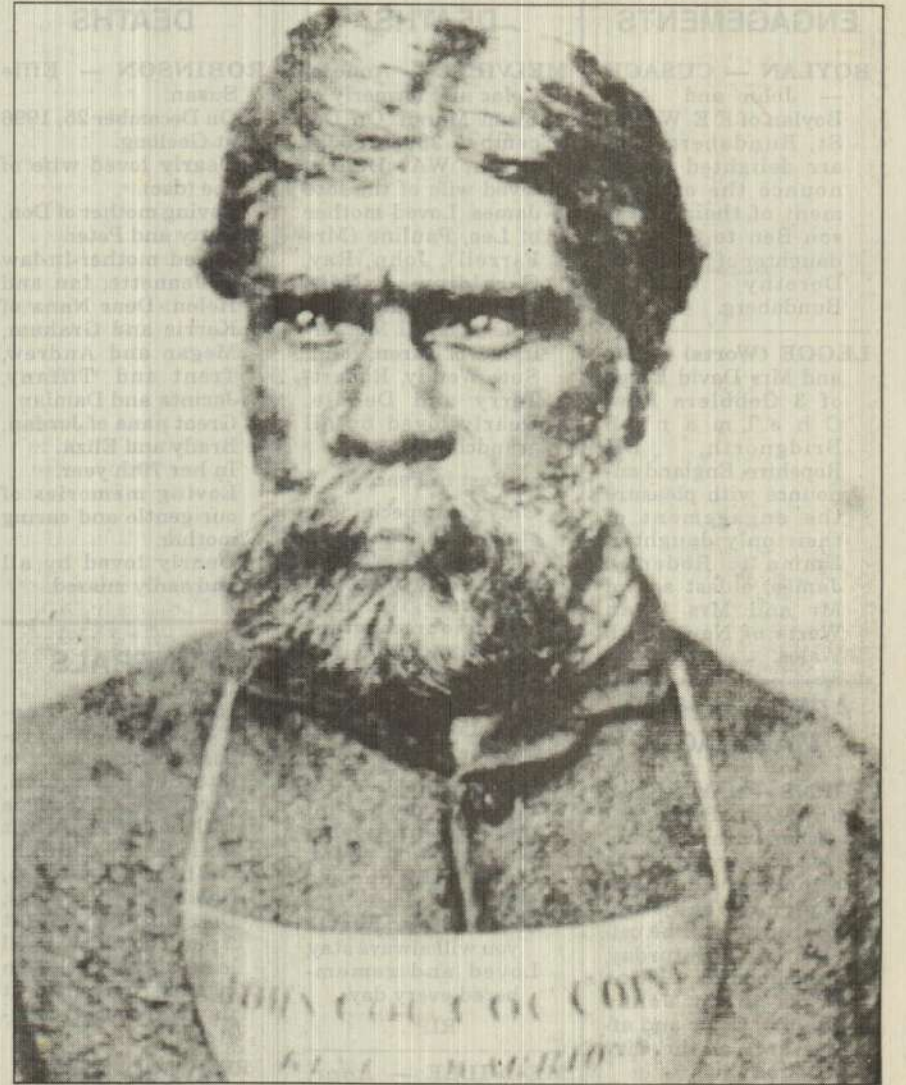
"Under the Howard Government now, the situation has moved back 50 years."

"The Pauline Hanson situation hasn't helped our cause. The lady is unfortunately totally ignorant of a lot of the cultural differences."

"I do say personally, that Australian people are probably more prejudiced than the British people who have come out here, in a sense, in the last 40 to 50 years."

"I have found that myself."

"It is a total lack of understanding of the cultural differences," he said.



King of the Warriors, King Co-Co-Coine, was one of the last Kooris of Colac's Gulidjan tribe when he died in 1902.

## Framlingham maintains Aboriginal culture

by Karen McCann

In the late 1880s, European settlers rounded up local Warrnambool Aboriginal tribes, and established a mission that consisted of tin and bark shacks for shelters.

Now the Framlingham Aboriginal Trust, the institution has survived past adversity and is instead looking towards a future of self-sufficiency.

Framlingham Aboriginal Trust administrator Jeremy Clark said part of

the Australian assimilation policy was designed to protect Aboriginal welfare, by placing the Kooris "somewhere out of the road".

It was a history of friction. Mr Clark said wars ensued and Aboriginals were forced from their land by white settlers.

One war near Port Fairy lasted for several years.

"Then in the 1940's houses were built on the place. The assimilation act came in, and the half-cast act and so forth," he said.

After Framlingham became settled, the community were

once again asked to move so the development of an Agricultural College could go ahead.

"They tried to encourage people to move off the place."

"They offered people houses in Warrnambool, and the people refused to move, so the college was never built and the people stayed here without rations or assistance," he said.

In 1971, the Framlingham Aboriginal Trust was recognised through Commonwealth legislation, and a portion of their land (which had been

taken away over the years) was handed back.

"There were more bad times to come."

"People were forced off the place because of the white blood in them."

"There was a lot of pain and suffering, but a very strong community existed in the way that they stuck together and survived."

It was also a time when children were taken from their parents and placed into orphanages.

Aboriginals fought body and soul for their homeland, and in the majority of cases, lost their fight.

Many of today's ancestors of the native Aboriginals are left to question why there are no monuments to their war heroes, as there are Australia war heroes, and even European and American war heroes in Australia.

They query why this period of barbaric history has been predominantly undocumented in Australian history, and to a large extent, simply swept under the carpet.

The wars were brutal, and the following losses even more so. However the Framlingham community has managed existence

despite all of the grief and agony.

"It is a very strong community, we have been very politically active over the last 25 years. We have been instrumental in a lot of the Aboriginal policies."

From the Framlingham Aboriginal Trust have come their own heroes, mainly sporting legends.

In the late 1800's the first Australian cricket team that ventured to England was Aboriginal and included Kooris from Framlingham.

And in the boxing arena, the family of Lionel Rose, also lived at

Framlingham.

With around 90 to 100 people now living at Framlingham, 12 houses cater to their sheltering needs, making it its own little town.

Mr Clark said the Trust was now looking towards ecotourism ventures, and in the next few years, financial self-sufficiency.

"We would like to not receive any more funding from the Government, and move towards economic enterprise and self-sufficiency, and hopefully through the next few years this will happen," Mr Clark said.

## Kawarren slip poses hazard

From Page One he had travelled extensively in Australia and believed the erection of

the stop sign without any traffic lights was not in the code of practice.

"The shire erected traffic lights when there was a road slip near the Beechy Bak-

ery and VicRoads erected them on the Princes Highway when they were putting in a new bridge over the Birregurra Creek."

He said he had contacted the shire and VicRoads about his concerns and he had been told traffic lights could not be erected because of concerns about vandalism.

"I'm sure residents in the area would be only too happy to keep an eye on them to see they weren't damaged."

Mr Grounds said the shire had applied to VicRoads to have the slip repaired but VicRoads had told him they were waiting for funds from the State Government.

He said he had contacted Member for

Polwarth Ian Smith about the situation and was told the application for funding had to go through the "process".

"Mr Smith's office got on to VicRoads who came and put up another sign."

"If they believe it's a safety issue they should be putting up traffic lights, not more signs and they should be getting on and fixing it up as it's been three months already."

Mr Grounds said tourists using the road during the holiday season would add to the danger of the situation as they would be unfamiliar with the traffic hazard.

Council and VicRoads officers were unavailable for comment.

## Garbage collection changes

Time schedules for garbage collection throughout Colac Otway Shire have been altered by the Christmas / New Year Holiday period and all residents are encouraged to note these changes which may affect them.

From Monday, December 23 until Friday, January 3, all collections will be the day

prior to the normal collection day.

For example, if you normally have rubbish collected on a Monday night, it will be collected on Friday for the next two weeks.

Tuesday collections will be carried out on Monday mornings; Friday collections on Thursday etcetera with no collections on New Year's Day.

All waste collection services will resume normal operation on Monday, January 6, 1997.

## Recycling campaign

Australians sent each other around 260 million greeting cards and envelopes this Christmas.

To ensure that many of these are recycled, the environment group Planet ARK is once again running the annual 'Cards 4 Planet Ark' greeting card recycling campaign.

Between January 1 and 31, cards will be collected nationally at Coles, Video Ezy and The Body Shop.

Planet ARK is encouraging all Australians to bring in their unwanted greeting cards and envelopes and deposit them in the 'Cards 4 Planet ARK' recycling bins.

The cards will be collected by Australian Paper Recycling at the end of January, and turned into a variety of new paper products, ranging from envelopes to manila folders and cardboard packaging products.

Now in its fourth year 'Cards 4 Planet ARK' has collected over million cards and envelopes for recycling, according to Planet ARK's executive director Jon Dee.

"We estimate these cards have so far provided 200 tonnes of fibre for new paper products, which is a great



Planet ARK supporter Kate Ceberano is encouraging all Australians to recycle their Christmas cards this January.

achievement for everyone who has taken part in the campaign to date."

About 25 million cards and envelopes are expected to be received at the 800 collection outlets during this

January's campaign. To help give the environment a happy new year, Planet ARK is also encouraging people to recycle their milk cartons, magazines and steel cans at home this Christmas.

## Last call for nominations

Nominations for 1997 Australia Day Awards are being called and close on January 6.

Colac Otway resident who has a noteworthy contribution to the community during the 12 months or has done outstanding service over a period of 12 months or is over 25 years of age is eligible

for nomination for the Citizen of the Year. Nominations are also being called for younger members of the community (under 25 years) for the Young Citizen of the Year Award.

A Community Service Award will be presented recognising significant contribution to the community and a Sporting Service Award for outstanding contribution to local sport of

sporting associations. Organisations and individuals are invited to nominate a member of the community who is eligible and deserving of recognition through the Australia Day Award program.

The recipients of the 1997 categories will be presented with their awards at council's Australia Day celebrations on January 26 at Colac's Memorial Square.

**Colac Auto Centre**  
 Prices Hwy, Colac West — PH: (03) 5232 1616 LMCT 8343  
 AH: Rick Hillin (03) 52 31 1229 or (0419) 58 3731, Darryl Williamson (03) 52 31 2091, Jim Monaghan (03) 52 31 5380

**1989 TOYOTA TARAGO DX VAN**  
 (DVI 569) 7 seater, only 51,000 kms, A/C, 5 speed  
**\$17,990**

**1995 NJ MITSUBISHI PAJERO GLX**  
 (NHB 956) 2.8 litre turbo diesel, 5 speed manual, 40,000 kms, side steps, bull bar, tow bar, A/C, one owner  
**\$36,990**

**CHRISTMAS SPECIALS**

**'91 RB NISSAN PATROL 4WD**  
 (ELT 153) 7 seater wagon, 6 cyl. engine, 5 speed, air conditioner, power steering, excellent condition  
**\$24,990**

**'94 NISSAN PULSAR Q HATCH**  
 (FKV 440) One owner, only completed 24,000 kms, P/S, 5 speed manual  
**\$18,490**

**'92 VP COMMODORE WAGON**  
 (NIC 494) Automatic, air conditioning, power steering  
**\$20,990 \$19,990**

**★ 1995 VR COMMODORE "SS" SEDA ★**  
 (NAW 861) 185 kW V8 engine, only 35,000kms, auto, A/C, local owner, immaculate  
**\$34,990**

**1992 VP HOLDEN COMMODORE S/WAGON** (NIC 494) Auto, air cond, p/steer \$19,990  
**1991 TR MITSUBISHI MAGNA EXEC SEDAN** (EON 406) 5 speed, air cond, p/steer \$16,990  
**1986 FORD LASER GL HATCH** (ESQ 247) 5 speed, 1.6 litre \$9990

**MITSUBISHI PAJERO 4WD V6** (DRV 167) Air conditioned, power steering \$19,990

**1995 TS MAGNA EXECUTIVE SEDANS** FROM 25,000 to 40,000 kms, auto, A/C, P/S, 4 and 6 cylinders S/N 5810, 5624, 5714, 5852 **\$19,990**

**★ 1992 MITSUBISHI VERADA EI SEDAN ★**  
 (EYX 688) 3.0 litre, MPI, 6 cylinder, automatic, air conditioning, power steering, one owner, only completed 59,000 kms.  
**\$19,990**

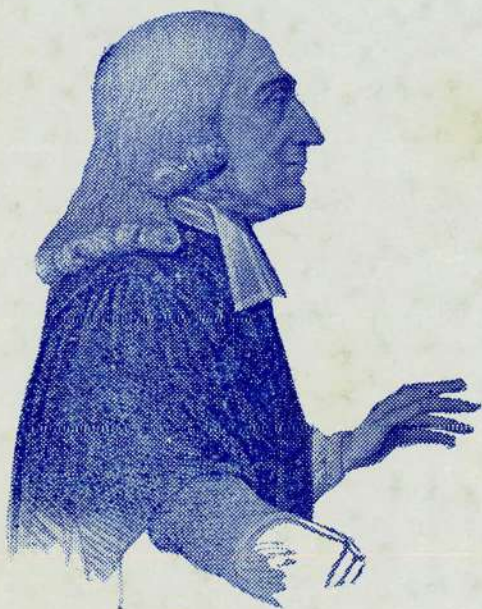
F&DHS DOCUMENT ARCHIVE DOC 0283 Date.....

Title BUNTINGDALE HISTORY

Subject Category.....

Key Words BUNTINGDALE  
BIRREGURRA

# Heritage



A JOURNAL OF THE METHODIST HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
OF VICTORIA

September, 1956

Vol. 1 No. 2

# Heritage



A JOURNAL OF THE METHODIST HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
OF VICTORIA

September, 1956

Vol. 1 No. 2

## REVEREND FRANCIS TUCKFIELD'S MAGNIFICENT FAILURE AT BUNTING DALE

An Address given by Mr. G. W. Greenwood, of Silvan, to the Methodist Conference Historical Luncheon on Friday, 24th February, 1956.

---

Job 3: 25 — *"I was not in safety, neither had I rest, neither was I quiet; yet trouble came"*.

With a feeling of humility and deep emotion, I thank you for the privilege and opportunity of speaking to you here today. Here at Wesley Church before me, stood my great-grandfather, Rev. Francis Tuckfield; my grandfather, Rev. Henry Greenwood, a missionary to Tonga and an early President of this Conference; and my father, Mr. E. W. Greenwood, M.L.A. (1917-29). The light grows dim but it has not quite gone out.

In the formative years of the Methodist Church in Victoria, Rev. Francis Tuckfield and his family were a great influence for good, and the inspiration for the building of churches where none stood before. Three sons, James, Francis, and John, became ministers, and the four daughters married ministers—Sarah (Rev. John B. Smith), Caroline (Rev. Henry Greenwood) and founder of the Women's Auxiliary for Foreign Missions, Emily (Rev. George Schofield), and Mary (Rev. William Rule Jones). Two grand-daughters married ministers, and a great-grand-daughter, my sister, is the wife of Rev. L. T. Ugalde. Few circuits in Victoria have not, at some time, been guided or influenced by a Tuckfield or a descendant, even to the fifth generation.

On my Mother's side were Caleb Burchett, the Methodist pioneer at Poowong, several ministers, Sunday School superintendents and church organists. I'm not quite sure whether I should feel greatly uplifted or overwhelmed with such an ancestry, but it does explain my historical interest. There is fascinating biographical material in both families awaiting a searching and agile pen. To keep my enthusiasm within bounds, I have always kept before me Oscar Wilde's quotation:—"A man who boasts about his ancestors confesses that he belongs to a family better off dead than alive".

As a boy, at my grandmother's knee, I first heard and wrote down the story she told me of her father and her husband. Many here today will remember her twilight years at Ringwood and Box Hill. One night



in 1949, while living at Nalangil, near Colac, I heard a 3GL broadcast on the arrival of the ship *Larpen*; and Rev. Francis Tuckfield and his wife featured in a play written for the occasion. Out came my exercise book and to my surprise and delight I found that I was living only a few miles from the old mission station at Bunting Dale and the settlement of Larpen (named after the ship). My interest, aroused anew, started the research that brings me here today. Yet much remains to be done, as I have only sipped from the wells of information available.

The aborigines have disappeared lamentably in Tasmania and remain but a handful in Victoria and greatly reduced in numbers elsewhere; they suffered fear, suspense, hunger and death with the coming of the white man. In elaboration of this finding, read Professor Scott's "Short History of Australia", where he says: "The evidence is conclusive that the wrong doing was on the side of the whites". Matthew Flinders noted in 1802 that the Port Phillip natives knew what firearms were for. No wonder, for only a few months earlier the *Lady Nelson* fired a broadside at them at Bowen's Point following the unnecessary example of earlier explorers elsewhere. Before any world court, it would seem that no finding is possible but that the white race was guilty of murder and manslaughter, with no mitigating circumstances. If the habitation and isolation of the natives had been left inviolate, their race would have remained much as it was then. Settlement preceded missionary endeavour; the reverse would have brought salvation in every sense of the word. In other lands the native inhabitants resisted the coming of the white settler and prospered, but the aborigines of Australia, the pacifists of their time, fled to the bush and perished.

On the brighter side, let it be stressed that, in Port Phillip, from the dawn of settlement, such men as John Batman, Dr. Alexander Thomson and Henry Reed made a valiant effort to help and protect the welfare of the aborigines. As a result, in April, 1836, Rev. Joseph Orton came over from Van Diemen's Land (as Tasmania was then called); and to him alone must go the credit for the establishment of the Bunting Dale Mission. He obtained two missionaries in England, and after a journey to Sydney he obtained a government grant of land and an annual grant of £500 for expenses and £150 for stipends. Government aid for churches had been introduced in October, 1836, and remained until 1870.

Francis Tuckfield, whose name is inseparable from the history of Bunting Dale, was one of these missionaries recruited from England. A native of Cornwall, he was born in the parish of Germoe on 10th May, 1808. There were six children in the family, but only Francis became an active member of any church. In his youth he was a miner and a seasonal fisherman, and at the age of seventeen he became a

Christian and a member of St. Erth's Wesleyan Chapel after he had prayed for guidance in a deserted mine. For six years, plodding along with the peculiar walk characteristic of a number of his descendants, he was an active local preacher who never missed an appointment in the circuit of Gwennap. Recommended to the Cornwall district meeting as a candidate for the ministry, he passed the usual examinations and was accepted as a probationer on trial. For two years he was one of the earliest students at the Hoxton Theological Institution, under Rev. Dr. Hannah. At the 1837 Conference he was selected with Hurst as a missionary to the aborigines, in response to Orton's urgent pleadings.

On 13th October, 1837, he was married to Sarah Gilbert in the St. Erth's Chapel, near the Cornish town of Hayle. His bride was leader of the Ladies' Class at the chapel and her father led the Bible Class. In the first year of Queen Victoria's reign, Francis and Sarah boarded the sailing ship, *Seppings* (397 tons), at Gravesend. With them were the reverends Hurst, Sutch and Wilkinson, and their wives. Only Sutch ever saw his native England again, retiring there as a supernumerary.

The missionaries arrived in Hobart on March 17th, 1838 — four months and a week after leaving England. Hurst was too ill to go on, but Tuckfield and his wife sailed for Port Phillip on June 30th, and after a trying voyage arrived there on Friday, July 20th. That grand Wesleyan pioneer, Mr. J. Witton, met them on the beach and persuaded them to return to the ship while he hastened back to prepare a welcome by his fellow members of the Wesleyan Methodist Society. A service was planned for the Sunday, but when Tuckfield came ashore again there was no one to greet him. However, shortly afterwards, Witton, J. J. Peers and the others arrived on the scene, and you can imagine the excited conversation as they walked to the settlement. Tuckfield's first service in Melbourne was aptly preached on the text 1 Corinthians 15: 3.

Tuckfield soon proceeded to Geelong, where, in Dr. Thomson's parlour at Kardinia, on the south side of the Barwon, he conducted the first service by a minister (Psalm 84: 11). Dr. Thomson, John Batman's catechist, was a broadminded Presbyterian who came to Sydney in 1831 on the same ship as Rev. Joseph Orton. One hundred years later, Rev. Dr. Atkinson and Rev. T. Stanley conducted a service on the same site from the same text in the presence of some of Tuckfield's and Thomson's descendants.

Rev. Orton, District Superintendent, acting as forwarding officer, sent on to Geelong the stores required for the mission station, including two large pre-fabricated houses. Meanwhile, Tuckfield made contact with the aborigines and began journeying inland in search of a mission

site, often accompanied by William Buckley, the escaped convict, who acted as interpreter. After rejecting Indented Head as a possible site, Tuckfield selected an area of land on the Barwon River near Birregurra, principally because it was in a central position bordering on three or four tribal hunting grounds, and had excellent soil and ample water supply. To confirm this choice and to contact the natives, Hurst (who had recently arrived as Superintendent Minister) and Tuckfield set out with settlers who were in search of pastoral holdings, to ride around the coast from Geelong to Portland. Near Apollo Bay the rugged cliffs and dense undergrowth forced them to abandon the trip. In a futile attempt to reach Lake Colac through the Otway Forest, they were forced to leave their horses behind, and after a most anxious night in the bush Tuckfield brought Hurst safely back to the beach, from where the party walked around the coast to Geelong. The whole journey occupied sixteen days.

A further trip through the Western District to the Grampians finally convinced them that Tuckfield's original site was satisfactory. In April, Orton confirmed this choice and the site was named Bunting Dale in honour of Rev. Dr. Jabez Bunting, the gifted leader of British Methodism. Tuckfield always called it Bunting Dale and not Buntingdale, and for that reason I prefer the former usage. The site selected was about  $4\frac{1}{2}$  miles along the present Birregurra-Forrest road, and lay between the road and the Barwon River, with an additional area on the far side of the river. A farm named Mission Banks occupies part of the site, but the adjacent farm named Buntingdale was not part of the original holding.

When Orton returned to Geelong from a visit to the site on June 1st, he charged some white settlers with ill-treating aborigines. Later, Hurst repeated the charges but La Trobe, after an inquiry, pronounced that the evidence was mainly hearsay or foolish boasting by the settlers, and ordered Hurst to apologize. Unfortunately Hurst was the least informed and experienced of the three ministers and least able to defend his charge.

Orton hurried to Sydney to persuade Governor Gipps to grant the site and the squatters were ordered to vacate sixteen square miles forthwith. In response to protests from his term-long enemies, the squatters, he reduced the area of the mission site to 640 acres but ordered that no settler was to come within 5 miles of the Station.

Hurst took charge in Geelong while Tuckfield prepared the mission site. The Tuckfields now had two children, Sarah and James, both born in Geelong. The youngest child was only three weeks old, yet on August 15th the diary records:—"Having packed all our goods, Mrs. Tuckfield, children and myself started for the Mission Station and reached in safety as far as Mr. Thomas Austin's at St. Leonard's Hill

(Winchelsea) by 7 o'clock, where we were kindly received and entertained." This was Mr. Austin's home prior to Barwon Park. August 16th:—"Through Mercy we have reached our destination without sustaining any injury, not however without passing through difficulties and being the subject of fear. About five miles from the Station we were bogged in passing a creek, the water being a foot deep and mud soft. The cart wheels sank and also the horse, which laid us under the necessity of carrying Mrs. Tuckfield and children on my back through the water, after which the servant and I drew out the cart and horse with great difficulty." Next day the overseer, Williamson, arrived "with the bullocks but no dray and with the painful intelligence that the tables and chairs were broken."

Only two days after their arrival, Sunday, August 18th, "Mrs. Tuckfield and myself commenced teaching . . . they are attentive and manifest powers of mind capable of receiving instruction of any kind". Some scientific minds are only discovering this now and make much of their great discovery.

On September 18th Tuckfield anxiously left his wife and young family alone on the station and set out for Hobart to attend his ordination service at the District Meeting. Hurst and Tuckfield travelled together by the brig "Henry" to Georgetown and then by gig, conducting services at the stopping places on the road to Hobart.

After an absence of nearly a month they returned to Melbourne. On October 23rd, Tuckfield wrote: "Mr. Peers has brought us in his carriage as far as the Werribee and Mr. Hurst and myself walked the other 30 miles, arrived at Dr. Thomson's, Geelong, between nine and ten at night, much fatigued, but glad to hear of my dear family so well". Hurst remained in Geelong, but Tuckfield, on a horse borrowed from the good doctor, hurried back to Bunting Dale.

By December, Tuckfield was greatly concerned at the inter-tribal murders. The Colijan tribe (Colac) in turn were greatly disappointed to find that the missionary could not protect them and would not lead them into battle against their enemies. When the wife of a Colijan native was murdered by the Waddowro tribe, Tuckfield wrote disgustedly of the Aborigine Protector, Mr. Sievwright, who "pretends to punish in lesser crimes, but when spoken to respecting capital crimes, he appears to know not what to do."

On December 16th the arrival of the Dantgurt tribe brought further trouble. Without understanding fully what was happening, Tuckfield sat with the natives at a meeting between the tribes, while young girls were exchanged as wives. When the new arrivals demanded supper, Tuckfield ordered Williamson to feed first those who had attended the mission school that day. The Dantgurts took up their spears, Williamson

took up a gun and Tuckfield put an unloaded pistol in his pocket. "I went to the man who took up the first spear and asked him what he took up the spear for, and looked hard in his face. He said he was angry but his anger was then all gone." With courage, faith and an unloaded pistol, he calmed them and then fed them. Late that night, a corroboree was held, and Tuckfield hastened from his bed and again quietened them. Anxiously he sent his overseer next morning to Geelong to urge Hurst to come. He then ordered all the natives to leave the station, quietly telling the Colijans to return when the others had gone. While supper was being served, the Waddowros saw the smoke and returned. Williamson hastened back, but Hurst did not appear until Friday, December 20th. He stayed one night and then left Tuckfield to solve the difficulty alone. Hurst made amends before God and his fellow men later, but it was an unpardonable action by the superintendent; or perhaps the blame lay with those who chose a man unsuited for a pioneering role. On the other hand, far less blame can be levelled at the female servant and the bullock driver who chose that moment to desert the Mission Station.

On December 14th Tuckfield wrote his report for the Wesleyan Missionary Society in London, in which he gave a lengthy description of his work so far, the tribal feuds and the aboriginal weapons. Two slab huts, he said, had been erected and the aborigines were taught in the open air. And so a troublesome year, a year of severe drought, drew to its close.

## 1840

At Bunting Dale, Tuckfield showed signs that he felt the task might be beyond him. January 1st: ". . . it seems to me that I have scarcely done anything. My engagements have been so very numerous (preaching appointments in Geelong and Melbourne) that nothing seems to be accomplished". Understandable loneliness came to him and his wife, but he still wrote "To Him who never slumbers or sleeps, we look for protection and strength". The arrival of the Leigh tribe only aggravated the inter-tribal hostility. Some relief was felt when Tuckfield realised that the aborigines had no aggressive feelings towards himself and family, but he welcomed the return of Williamson with another white man. "We are three whites now, which is a great relief". Disturbances occurred nightly, but on January 20th the Colijan tribe attended the church service, and Mr. Sievewright, on his way back from Port Fairy, was "much pleased to hear them sing the Doxology"—of all things!

In his report dated 29th January, Tuckfield told of his eyesight being so troubled with ophthalmia that "for some considerable time I could scarcely read a chapter in the Bible"; Dr. Clerke, Colonial Assistant Surgeon in Geelong, provided the cure. The report also announced "that Mr. and Mrs. Hurst joined us in our work last Friday". The report ended: "Our work is a scene of toil, difficulty and danger, but God is with us and we are happy".

In this report Tuckfield showed that he had discovered the major mistake in the selection of the site, for he urged that unless each tribe retained its own tribal grounds "we shall have to deplore the utter extinction of the race". Even today this is not fully realised, for only recently I heard a missionary from Arnhem Land state that he had every reason to believe that, with the discovery of uranium and bauxite, many of the Aboriginal Reserves would be moved elsewhere.

Tuckfield found his own solution. He planned to live and travel with his chosen tribe—the Colijan. This he did, for the Mission site was completely deserted. In a letter to his parents dated June 11th, Tuckfield deplored that he had received no letters from home for just on two years. "I think much of you, my dear Parents, sister and brothers, but not one letter can I have from any person".

Anxious for the future welfare of the aborigines, he persuaded Geelong pastoralists and citizens to send a memorial to Gipps urging that there should be tribal reservations staffed with Christian missionaries and trained agriculturalists. They suggested the protectorate system had failed. Gipps agreed, but after four months Tuckfield saw no sign of a change of policy: "The blood of the black man is pouring forth and reeking up to Heaven and in the midst of this complicated state of affairs, we behold fresh systems introduced without reference to Christianity" (Protectorate Aboriginal Stations). That lengthy report—six letters—is well worth studying today by all interested in the welfare of the aborigines.

In October, Tuckfield received another setback. The mission house, which they had only just occupied, was destroyed by fire. He forced his way through the window into his study, but only managed to throw out his diary and one other textbook; amongst his greatest losses were his twenty notebooks of lectures taken when he was a student in London. The aborigines gathered around and loudly lamented the scene of destruction. Hurst made his house available to the Tuckfields while he attended the District Meeting to seek a replacement.

On December 7th, Tuckfield again sought medical aid from Dr. Clerke for an ulcer which was rapidly spreading on his face and had persisted for nearly twelve months.

On December 12th a Dantgurt native was murdered on the station to end a year of disappointments and disturbances.

The loss of the mission house brought a letter of sympathy from Rev. Nathaniel Turner, district superintendent. In reply, on February 17th, Tuckfield thanked him and then took the opportunity of supporting Hurst's application for a transfer to circuit work. Rev. Skevington, who had taken up a temporary appointment at Bunting Dale, also expressed the wish to go on to his original posting to New Zealand. Hurst had welcomed his arrival as an opportunity for getting away from the mission station, but Skevington rebelled at thus being made use of. Tuckfield's one concern was the effect that two such resignations would have on the future existence of Bunting Dale. His one critical note was when he suggested Hurst should have brought the matter up himself before the previous District Meeting. In all humility, he expressed his lack of experience for taking over the superintendent's appointment and urged Turner to come to Bunting Dale to give him "the benefit of your long experience, or send someone who has had some".

The first Melbourne Wesleyan quarterly meeting was held in Rev. Orton's home on January 25th. No doubt Tuckfield found there that, if anyone could help, it was Orton himself. On February 22nd he wrote: "I deeply regret that my Superintendent cannot enter into the aboriginal department with greater comfort and happiness to his own mind. He is making some efforts to get out of it. I do not feel at all discouraged in my own mind, but believe that by patient perseverance and in humble dependence upon the Divine blessing, these wanderers of the woods will be gathered into the fold of Christ".

Rev. Samuel Wilkinson arrived on March 9th from Sydney as first resident Wesleyan minister in Melbourne. Three of the four missionaries who set out together from England—Hurst, Wilkinson and Tuckfield—were thus re-united in Port Phillip. Wilkinson arrived on the barque *Australian Packet* with Judge Willis, who filled the first judiciary appointment. Tuckfield sent a letter of greeting and invited him to visit Bunting Dale.

Still brighter news followed, for in the next mail came the first letters from home. Almost at once, on March 25th, he wrote in reply a letter describing their new six-roomed mission house, which had cost £52 for materials and labour plus £12 living expenses for the two builders.

Restored in mind and spirit, Tuckfield set out on April 2nd for Lake Colac to search for his Colijan tribe, which he found on the property of Mr. Hugh Murray (the pioneer of Colac). The journey took 5½ hours with an unbroken horse in the dray. The aborigines welcomed

him with joy, but refused to return to Bunting Dale until they had revenged the death of one of the tribe. Three weeks later Tuckfield tried again and found them at Captain Pollock's run. Next day he accidentally wounded his hand when his gun unexpectedly discharged. What persuasion failed to do, this mishap achieved. After the natives had cried and scratched themselves in sympathy, they readily agreed to return to the mission. Hurst drove Tuckfield to Geelong to get urgent medical attention from Dr. Thomson for the fractured bone and wound. On their return, the natives were waiting to greet them, and regular school lessons for the children recommenced. When Orton arrived on May 3rd he was agreeably surprised and delighted. He wrote: "There were in attendance seventeen boys and twelve girls under the care of Mr. Tuckfield . . . their vocal performance was pleasingly correct (again the Doxology!). At command they all knelt and I prayed with them." Hurst and his wife and Mrs. Witton returned to Melbourne with Orton, but Skevington faithfully remained at his post with Tuckfield. The Colijans persuaded both of the missionaries to accept aboriginal boys as "adopted" sons. On Sunday, May 9th, Tuckfield recorded: "I have been much delighted this evening with the children whilst marshalling and catechising them. They can answer several important questions on subjects of Theology in their own language".

At Bunting Dale the aborigines were encouraged to build their own huts, but they could not understand Tuckfield's opposition to polygamy. Great joy and thankfulness to God came when one native boy stood up and, before all assembled, uttered a prayer to the Great Spirit that he "might open the door of His house, that all who were there present might enter in and remain with Him for ever".

The Hursts returned on May 15th, and the Bullokber tribe arrived a week later, making 150 natives on the station. It took more than a hundredweight of bread to provide breakfast after the morning service. The missionaries enlarged their adopted families and Hurst accepted two boys. They hoped to teach these boys the English language and Christian customs so that they might become agents for good amongst their tribe.

On May 31st, Rev. Wilkinson arrived to find Bunting Dale had "the appearance of a bustling village". Tuckfield accompanied his friend to Geelong, where they collected subscriptions and selected a site for the first Wesleyan Church. On his return Tuckfield wrote that he was amazed to find, in each tribe, men who claimed they could fly "contrary to the general established laws of Nature". Furthermore, he related how a Medicine Man had confirmed to the tribe that there was a Heaven, and that he had been there.

On June 10th natives returned from Geelong with the mail and stores



and reported that strange tribes were approaching, seeking revenge. The mission aborigines appealed to the missionaries "to send for the soldiers" or to somehow explain to these tribes that their Chieftain had died from natural causes and not because of any act of superstition practised towards him. Two days later the tribes arrived and, on Sunday, June 13th, noise and confusion reigned. A number of natives fled, but 280 answered the summons of the morning bell. The wonguims were thrown, signifying the commencement of hostilities. All day Tuckfield faced them and went amongst them trying to pacify them. Just after tea, prior to the missionaries' own night service, murder was done and revenge achieved. After the usual exchange of girls for wives, the tribes departed.

But the mission station had received a crushing blow from which it never really recovered. The Colijans had again lost confidence in the missionaries as protectors, and they took their departure, leaving behind only the adopted boys. With bitterness Tuckfield wrote in his diary: "The local government is laid under a moral obligation to take some practical measures for the better protection of the aborigines within the settled districts."

He took his family to Geelong, where he left his wife in the midst of his friends. Next day he had planned to ride to Melbourne for the opening of the new Collins Street Chapel, but his horse had broken its halter and disappeared. By mail cart he travelled to Melbourne, where, on Sunday, 27th June, he preached the first morning service (Psalm 27: 4). The pipe organ was the first used in any church in Victoria and is still in use in Wesley Church.

Never slow to make the most of a golden opportunity, Tuckfield visited La Trobe, who invited him to make recommendations for the future conduct of the mission station. At that moment, if not before, Tuckfield decided to abandon Bunting Dale and start again with a tribe completely divorced from contact with the white settlement. His only remaining problem was how to frankly admit to others that Bunting Dale had failed. In so doing, he very nearly lost everything.

Finding no room on the mail cart, he had to travel back by the uncomfortable vessel, *Governor La Trobe*, sleeping on deck, wrapped in his opossum skin rug. Having heard Rev. Lowe preach in Geelong on Sunday morning, July 4th, he spent the afternoon seeking new adherents at "a shore village about a mile from town", but was disappointed in finding that nearly all were Roman Catholics. That evening he conducted a service in David Fisher's store-room, and the congregation was so large that he at once requested the appointment of a minister to Geelong.

Meanwhile, that same day La Trobe paid a surprise visit to Bunting Dale. He confirmed for himself Tuckfield's verbal report, but on his return to Geelong he told Tuckfield of Governor Gipps's new plan to assign aborigines as servants or labourers to settlers who required them. La Trobe was somewhat set aback when the missionary vehemently opposed this solution.

On July 26th, Tuckfield wrote an impassionate plea to his parents to become Christians, but so far as I know he failed in this mission. After the birth of a son on July 30th, the family returned to Bunting Dale, where at once Tuckfield set out to search for his missing tribe. Dredge, an Aboriginal Protector, and later the first Wesleyan pastor appointed to Geelong, accompanied him on one journey. On September 16th, Tuckfield gave evidence in the first trial of an aboriginal for inter-tribal murder, but Judge Willis dismissed the case against Bon Jon for want of jurisdiction. Tuckfield, again disappointed at official inaction, wrote: "He has now joined his own tribe and I confess I know not what will be the result." This was soon forthcoming, for Bon Jon was killed at a corroboree.

Tuckfield's October report is of tragic interest because Rev. Orton took it with him on his ill-fated voyage home to England on the ship *James* early in 1842. (Three outstanding Wesleyan pioneers died at sea while homeward bound—Orton, Dredge and Daniel Draper). Orton, perhaps influenced by Tuckfield's changed outlook, undoubtedly carried reports that caused the London Missionary Society to consider closing down Bunting Dale as soon as possible. The final disappointment came when even the adopted sons deserted the missionaries. Letters began appearing in the press condemning the public waste of money; and indirectly they helped Tuckfield in his plan to move on to new pastures. Bunting Dale, in his mind, was dead and buried and he spent his time encouraging the building of the first Wesleyan church at Geelong.

The story of Bunting Dale might well have ended there, but from the beginning of 1842 events will show that it was then that the whole episode was lifted into one of highest Christian endeavour, earning for Tuckfield enduring remembrance and gratitude.

## 1842

The severe depression brought about a severe crisis in the pastoral industry. Pruning of public expenditure became the popular theme. An audited statement, dated 8th May, 1841, reveals that the Government stipend to Hurst and Tuckfield was £150 each and a £630/13/6 subsidy for working expenses, being equal to contributions from elsewhere. The one important point was that the grant was conditional on the mission continuing to function at Bunting Dale.

No doubt you will be amused by a letter he wrote at this time to his sister, Margaret, who wanted to emigrate to Australia. He urged her to stay with her parents while they lived. If she then decided to come, she should take note: "You must know that Ministers in these Colonies, as well as at home, move in a very respectable sphere and are sometimes associated with persons of the highest rank; and for the sister of a minister to come out as a common emigrant or servant would be talked of all over the place and it would tend to lessen the respectability of his character". Margaret didn't come! This may explain Rev. James Royce's reference in the "Spectator" of 27th September, 1901, to a photograph of Tuckfield showing the reverend gentleman in top hat and frock coat and carrying a portmanteau!

Tuckfield carried on an interesting correspondence with Rev. B. T. Tiechelman, Lutheran Missionary in South Australia, on technical matters and common problems. As late as 1898 a paper was read before the Australian Association for the Advancement of Science, by a Mr. Carey of Geelong, in which acknowledgment was made of Tuckfield's vast and lasting pioneering work in the study of the aboriginal language.

Early in 1842 he again wrote to La Trobe on selecting a new mission site. On 26th March the Lieut.-Governor replied: "I avail myself of your proffered services with great satisfaction . . . for the good of the aborigines. It is my wish that you would proceed at once to the aboriginal station on the Goulburn, and thence to the junction of that river with the Murray, on an experimental visit to that important locality, in order to obtain personal information on the character of the tribes frequenting it, with a view to deciding upon the propriety of forming a Mission Station there at an early period."

A further note, so delightfully human, followed a few days later: "Mrs. La Trobe wishes to beg your acceptance of a cheese and a loaf of white sugar as an addition to your little stores, being the only things which she can lay her hand on which may be useful to you in case of indisposition or on a pinch. Pray take them as a sign of good will at least."

Tuckfield set out at once and, after a journey lasting nearly seven weeks, he reported to La Trobe most enthusiastically that he had found an ideal site. He then wrote to Rev. McKenny, Chairman of the N.S.W. Wesleyan District, urging the support of the approaching District Meeting. For good measure he concluded: "I am sorry to inform you that we have not a single black on the Station . . . and I fear our present Mission is a complete failure . . ."

A strictly formal reply dated 8th July came from La Trobe. Time passed, and Tuckfield impatiently but understandably wrote to McKenny again on August 2nd, saying he would call on La Trobe to obtain the latest information on his way to the District Meeting. On August 18th

he sent a full report, including a copy of the correspondence, to the secretaries of the Wesleyan Mission House, London. The nearest approach to vindictiveness in any of his writings and so strangely out of character, occurred towards the end: "Mr. Hurst, it would seem, has lost his faith, and has grown tired in the aboriginal department . . ."

In Geelong he conducted the first Sunday School Anniversary and public examination of the scholars, and with him were six boys from the mission.

### 1 8 4 3

Tuckfield, back at Bunting Dale, received the shattering news that the Governor and the District Meeting had rejected his proposed move to a new site and had ordered the closing down of the mission forthwith. Tuckfield, with infinite courage and unquenchable faith, faced alone the opposition of both the government and the church. Hurst had been appointed to circuit work and Skevington had died while preaching in the pulpit.

A lesser man would have accepted defeat, but Tuckfield decided to make Bunting Dale succeed. On 6th August he wrote to London: "I have not been able, for one moment, to bring my mind to suppose that the Committee will as yet abandon this Mission and give it up in disgust and despair because the work has not prospered as we would wish. . . . If the Wesleyan Missionary Society, under these circumstances, quit the field . . . I tremble for the consequences". Thus he appealed to the church "Privy Council" to over-ride the decision of the District Meeting. He cut the expenses to £350 per annum and opened a subscription list to purchase ewes to help make the Mission self-supporting. The very pastoralists who a year before demanded its closure, now supported him keenly. Dr. Thomson and Mr. Dennis, from Warncoort, near Colac, proved loyal and faithful friends. The former acted as adviser and handled the finances ably; later he did the same for Rev. Dr. Lang when the doctor sought land for Protestant immigrants.

E. B. Addis, Crown Commissioner of Lands, visited the Mission and found Tuckfield busy teaching the younger natives; he advised La Trobe on December 30th that the experiment was worth continuing. Better still, the Missionary Society gave Tuckfield an encouraging and forthright consent and made further funds available. The District Meeting, remaining antagonistic, urged further consideration in London and withdrew all interest and financial support.

The greater the obstacle, the greater the effort; and we can only thank God that such devotion has always been typical of the highest and the best in His service. We should not only be uplifted ourselves

to face our own problems, but should resolve that the story of such men as Tuckfield and 'Flynn of the Inland' should be told to succeeding generations. Their voices should never become silent.

#### 1844

If the church leaders failed him, at least his Geelong friends rallied to his need. A petition and memorial to the N.S.W. District Chairman came from the inhabitants of Geelong who stated that "the Mission has secured a considerable degree of public confidence and approbation". The Quarterly Wesleyan Meeting in Melbourne joined the chorus of protest. And McKenny, the Sydney chairman, remained steadfastly immovable and expressed in a letter to Tuckfield "his sorrow for the steps which Brother Schofield and you have taken with a view to the continuance of Bunting Dale Mission." By return mail Tuckfield replied: "If I have erred it has been an error in judgment for I feel that I could not have done or said less in this matter and left the Mission with a clear conscience." Warming to the task, he went on: "I felt as if Bunting Dale could not be given up for it appeared to me that the God of Missions was at work upon the minds of the people, respecting it". As for the Geelong memorial, "the plan was suggested and entered into by the people as if they were inspired from above". This fighting letter from a fighting man concluded: "I think if the District Meeting abandons the Mission before the mind of the Committee is again known, it will incur a most awful responsibility. What! Must Methodism, upon which the eyes of the Christian world are fixed, and concerning which the highest hopes are entertained, sink into oblivion like the numerous other establishments of the great Australian Land! Surely not!"

18  
59  
In his June report Tuckfield joyfully advised the secretaries of the Mission House, London: "It is a matter of thankfulness to Almighty God that at no former period did this Mission present such an encouraging character as it does at present" and went on to quote the Scripture "When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him".

He now felt that the mission with its flock of ewes, crops of wheat and clover pastures (the latter introduced by him into Victoria), would not only become self-supporting but would have a surplus to pass on to similar mission stations. The Government grudgingly gave a final donation of £150, but Tuckfield took the matter completely into his own hands, forestalling any attempt by the N.S.W. Legislative Council or District Meeting to close the mission down by taking out a grazing licence for the mission site in his own name. Thus Tuckfield, the missionary, became Tuckfield, the grazier, but ever remained Tuckfield, the good shepherd.

In October torrential rains caused Lake Colac to overflow into the Barwon River—an early indication of the present day “creeping lakes” in this area. The aborigines were afraid to cross the flooded river to obtain much-needed flour, and Tuckfield paddled across in a bark canoe. On the return journey the canoe capsized into the turbulent stream; but Tuckfield swam to safety, clinging to the stores in a keg tied to his body.

### 1 8 4 5

On January 24th Addis again reported to La Trobe that good progress was being made in teaching the aborigines animal husbandry and agriculture.

Cruelty towards the aborigines was again manifest when nearly all the natives encamped at Aire River were shot by aborigine troopers, under the command of Captain Fyans, who retaliated for the murder of a surveyor at Blanket Bay.

### 1 8 4 6

That fiery Presbyterian personality, Rev. Dr. Lang, so well known for his opposition to the flow of Irish migrants that threatened, as he put it, to turn Victoria into a Papal Colony, still found time to represent Port Phillip in the Legislative Council of N.S.W. After visiting Bunting Dale he stated: “I desire to speak of Mr. Tuckfield in terms of sincere regard as an able, zealous and indefatigable missionary. If the isolation scheme should not succeed in his hands, as I fear greatly, it will not be from any fault on his part.”

Tuckfield, in his report, showed signs of disappointment and doubt that the moral and spiritual condition of the natives had effected any measure of improvement. As the handful of his Colijan tribe dwindled further in numbers, so his confidence in the ultimate success of the mission began to waver.

Bunting Dale had become a large and efficient grazing property. On the site he now had 2,000 sheep, 120 head of cattle and an additional 3,000 sheep on grazing tenure. He suggested the opening of a school about 50 miles distance from the mission and the appointment of a school teacher.

On the 25th October, Tuckfield conducted one of the opening services of the Yarra Street church, part of the wall of which still forms a portion of the present building. Earlier, Dr. Thomson laid the foundation stone, Tuckfield giving the address.

## 1847

For nine months the natives practically deserted the Mission. When they congregated at the Mission they were fed, clothed and educated from the proceeds of the farm. An innovation was the employment of an European to cook meals for the native children. However, only ten children attended the school, which still lacked a teacher. Up to that time, overseers known to have been employed at Bunting Dale were Williamson, Merrick, Captain Bowden, O'Farrell and Wright.

## 1848 - 51

The Government at last found a means by which Bunting Dale could finally be crushed. Tuckfield was notified that his grazing licence had been cancelled, leaving him no alternative but to abandon his cause. His last rearguard action was to secure an extension of time until the end of 1850 in order to dispose of the stock. With bowed head he accepted the appointment as Wesleyan minister in Geelong. He felt that he had failed and, ever afterwards, was most reluctant to talk of his experiences. For that reason the field was left open for cruel critics, and scant justice has been done. A magnificent failure certainly it was, but no man fails when he labours so long, so well, and so faithfully.

The total cost of Bunting Dale, including Government subsidies, was approximately £9,200. In 1851 the Mission site was finally subdivided, and on 26th August the agricultural portion was sold by public auction in Geelong. Proceeds from the estate were used to help establish churches throughout the colony, one church being at Belfast (Port Fairy) where Tuckfield had previously inspired the building of the first church. Bunting Dale, alas, has now completely vanished. On 6th February, 1851—Black Thursday—when most of Victoria was ablaze—the last remains of the Mission were destroyed.

If you measure a man's worth by the memorials erected to his memory, then we can indeed be thankful for the achievements and ministry of Rev. Francis Tuckfield. At Birregurra, in the foreground of the Methodist Church, is a stone cairn engraved: "This cairn commemorates the founding of the Buntingdale Mission by the Rev. Francis Tuckfield, August, 1839, and was unveiled by J. L. Tuckfield, Esq. 26th August, 1939. R. H. Howie, M.A., B.D., Minister." A short distance away, in the porch of the magnificent bluestone Church of England, is the old mission bell, still being used to call the children to Sunday School. The Beal family, who occupied the farm known as Mission Banks on part of the original site, took the bell to their home at Lorne. In 1938, it found its present hallowed corner,

The Yarra Street Methodist Church has a plaque which reads: "On the 28th June, 1849, the good ship "Larpen" arrived in Corio Bay from London having Fever on board. The late Rev. Francis Tuckfield, then Pastor of the Church (at Geelong), visited the ship and saw the state of the passengers. As Good Samaritans, he and his wife generously received a number of the sick into their home, and in divine ways strewed on their path garlands of Faith, Hope and Charity. At the 56th anniversary of their landing, the surviving passengers advised the erection of this Tablet to record the Christly act.

1906  
James Oddie }  
Benjamin Bonney } Passengers  
William Williamson — Pastor.

St. Erth's Chapel, Cornwall, has an exact replica of this tablet, erected in 1906. Amongst the passengers on the *Larpen* was our beloved Dr. W. H. Fitchett, then a boy aged four.

This narrative is concerned mostly with Bunting Dale, but as Tuckfield's ministry extended far beyond its boundaries, I would like to briefly outline the remainder of his life. In 1850 he left Geelong and accepted an appointment to the Sydney North circuit, with York Street as the principal chapel. His Geelong friends presented him with the "finest watch in the Colony". From January, 1853, to 1855, he was Superintendent of the Hunter River circuit from Maitland to Newcastle.

At West Maitland, Sarah, his beloved wife, who had faithfully and devotedly shared the hardships and loneliness at Bunting Dale, died on June 6th, 1854. Tuckfield was left with the task of caring for and bringing up a large family:—Sarah, Francis, Caroline, Emily, John and Samuel Pascoe. Undoubtedly influenced by the advice of Rev. Robert Young, the other son, James, had been sent to boarding school at the Wesleyan College, Auckland. In 1856 Tuckfield returned as minister to the church of his ordination—Melville Street, Hobart. The Hobart folk and church rallied to his assistance, but Tuckfield found his unenviable task lightened by the devoted friendship of Mary Stevens and her parents, who were well known by all travelling Wesleyan ministers at Rosetta Cottage, O'Brien's Bridge, Glenorchy (Tas.). When he found that Mary was willing to marry him, Tuckfield returned to Sarah's grave in West Maitland and there, in meditation and prayer, sought God's guidance. He married again on 5th January, 1857, the Rev. John Smithies conducting the ceremony. Mary soon won the affection and respect of her step-children and welded the broken links into a united Christian home. There were four children of the second marriage.



After a ministry of two years he moved to New Norfolk and laboured there until ill health forced him to withdraw early in 1860. He came back to his beloved Geelong where, as his son James wrote, "father rested four years but preached every Sunday". It is to be regretted that, during his absence, the settlement which had been known as Tuckfield until at least 1855 was renamed Drysdale.

Perhaps influenced by the great revival that swept Victorian Methodism in the early 1860's, Tuckfield pleaded for another church. In 1864 he was appointed to Portland where, in earlier years, he had been the first minister to conduct a service and administer the sacrament. His ministry there lasted little more than a year. After attending the funeral of a Sunday School scholar on a bitterly cold day, a severe attack of bronchitis and pneumonia set in. He arose from his sick bed to conduct his last service on the following Sunday. The text could not have been better chosen: "For surely there is an end; and thine expectation shall not be cut off." He was buried with all honour in the Portland cemetery, and a simple tombstone was erected over his grave. At the suggestion of a correspondent in the *Western Times*, a memorial tablet was erected in Portland church: "Sacred to the memory of Rev. F. Tuckfield who after a long and faithful ministry finished his course with joy, October 21st, 1865, aged 57 years. This tablet was erected by members of this congregation in token of their deep affection for a beloved pastor through whose exertions this building was commenced, but who was not permitted to witness its completion."

Tuckfield, like Abou Ben Adhem, could surely say: "Write me as one that loves his fellow men". His was a life of true Christian adventure—a mission to the nation which unfortunately passed out with an ebb tide of Methodism. When Bunting Dale died, something worthwhile in the mission and evangelism of Methodism died in Australia. Our task is surely to return to the work so nobly begun and continue erecting the edifice until it reaches heavenwards.

As a lasting epitaph, and one which no words of mine can enhance, may I return to the knee of my grandmother. Beneath a photograph of Rev. Francis Tuckfield, in an old copy of the *Spectator*, I found penned by her hand: "My dear Father—a faithful minister of Christ".

## Acknowledgments

I gratefully acknowledge the assistance I have received from Mr. C. A. McCallum, the chief librarian of the Melbourne Public Library: the Mitchell Library and the Methodist Historical Society in Sydney: many ministers, laymen, relatives and friends: and your chairman, Rev. Dr. C. Irving Benson, who urged me on when I felt I could not continue with my task. Much of my information has come from Tuckfield's diary, and letters and reports, the files of the *Spectator*, and from historical books and articles, including those by the Reverends J. B. Smith and William Blamires and Dr. Benson, and from writings by Isaac Hebb, the Colac historian and blacksmith and Sunday School teacher. Time and space alone prevent a more detailed list.

In addition to the sources mentioned above, only two other relics remain, to the best of my knowledge: the old mission bell at Birregurra, and a bible presented to Tuckfield by the North Sydney circuit in 1853.

## METHODIST HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF VICTORIA

---

### OFFICERS

President: Rev. C. Irving Benson, O.B.E.

Vice-President: Rev. E. H. O. Nye, A. T. Latham,  
C. A. McCallum, J. A. V. Oldmeadow, J. E. Poppins  
Hon. Secretary: Rev. V. T. L. Roberts, Wesley College,  
Prahran, S. 1

Hon. Treasurer: Allan J. Dixon, 76 The Eyrie,  
Eaglemont, N. 22

Editor: Geoff Blainey, 84 Outer Crescent, Brighton, S. 5

---

### AIMS OF THE SOCIETY

- To promote the study of the history of Australian Methodism.*
  - To provide means by which members may meet for lectures and discussions and the commemorations of important historical events.*
  - To acquire a central room where historical records may be housed.*
  - To urge all circuits and churches to preserve historical records.*
  - To publish a journal at regular intervals.*
- 

*Membership:* Life members, £5; annual members, 7/6 or £1 for three years. Members receive a free copy of all the society's publications for the year.

