

# Know Your 'Hood

This project mines the local history memories of your streets to find stories for walkers. It introduces you to your predecessors, their lives and pre-occupations and the ways your neighbourhood has been shaped

## Albert Street, Brunswick and Westbourne Grove, Northcote:

This walk begins at the western end of Albert Street and heads east, crossing one of the northern suburbs much loved features, the Merri Creek, before continuing eastwards up Westbourne Grove to Ruckers Hill and High Street, Northcote. You'll meet butchers, steeplechasers, potters, Rechabites, the 'Salvos' and the Sumners, the Cain politicians, nuns and a photographer as well as a number of regular folk and see how the physical landscape along this single stretch of neighbourhood in the inner north has changed in extraordinary ways.

### Part 1 Albert Street:

1. 'The very best part in all Brunswick'
2. 'The stiff jump being across the drain in Albert St'
3. The Potters Street
4. Noah's Ark
5. 20th century snapshot of Albert Street
6. 253 Albert St, 1903, the Rechabites
7. The Sedgman legacy
8. The students, the 'Salvos' and the sick
9. Stony Park and the Brunswick Electrical Station

### Part 2 Westbourne Grove:

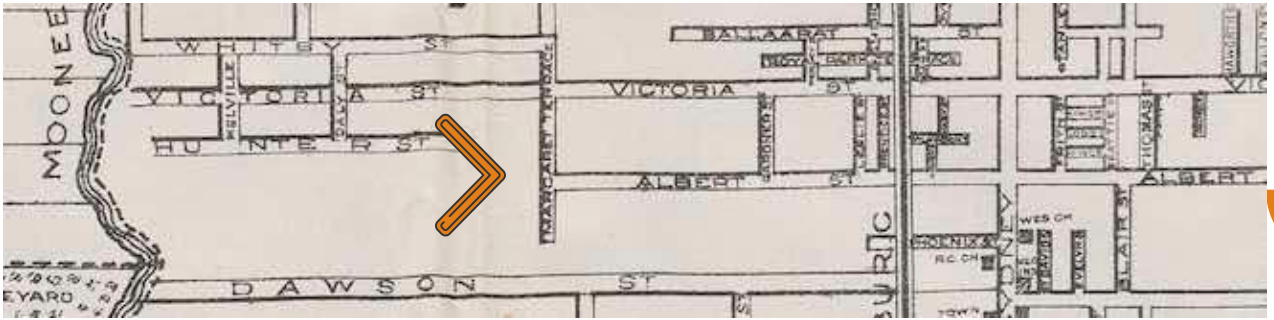
1. Merri Creek, 1830s
2. Northcote High School
3. Little Sisters of the Poor, 1884
4. Bellevue Park Estate and Westbourne Grove, 1880s
5. The Westbourne photographer
6. St Joseph's Church
7. Private loans from a private house
- 8 Comrade Nelson and the Rechabite Hall
17. Rucker's Hil, and High Street, Northcote.



# Story Route



Albert Street (west) to Albert Street (east)



Albert Street (east) to High Street, Northcote



You can start at the western end of Albert Street, Brunswick and follow the road east (top map).

When you reach the Merri Creek follow the creek path south past the Brunswick Electrical Station, cross the Creek, meander along Sumner Avenue and turn left at St Georges Road next to Northcote High School. Cross at the traffic lights and continue heading east all the way up Westbourne Grove to Ruckers Hill High Street (bottom map)

You can, of course, take this route in the opposite direction if you read the stories from last to first.

Length: 5.11 km

Difficulty: Easy, but a slight hill up Westbourne Grove

## Albert Street 1839

# 'The very best part in all Brunswick'



Mr Edward De Carle, Auctioneer, advertised 'the very best part in all Brunswick' sometime during the 1850s. He implored potential purchasers not to 'lose the opportunity of securing a piece of land in the best part of the most improving township in Victoria' alongside Sydney Road, which was 'the great main road of the colony'.

Brunswick had been surveyed and subdivided in 1839 into large lots with frontages to a north-south track named Pentridge Road (Sydney Rd), and the Moonee Ponds Creek to the west or Merri Creek to the east.

The first purchasers of land on either side of the Pentridge Road were James Simpson, Melbourne's first Magistrate and 'the best liked man in the province', and Thomas Wilkinson, journalist, Member of the Legislative Council for Portland, Methodist pioneer, first chairman of the Brunswick municipality in 1857 and first mayor in 1867. They both quickly subdivided their land, marking out Carmarthen (Albert) and Llandilo (Victoria) Streets across both their blocks.

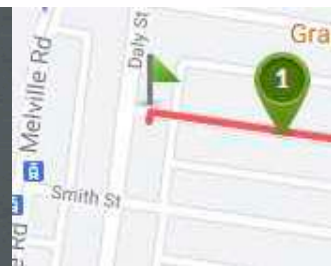
What became Albert Street was the final point of Sydney Road when it was first pegged out in the 1839 survey. In 1852 the Pentridge Stockade was built and prison labour constructed Sydney Road south from Pentridge to Blyth Street, while private contractors built the last section between Blyth and Albert Streets, including the bit on De Carle's plan.

De Carle himself was working as an auctioneer at least into the 1860s and had an office at 78 Elizabeth Street in the city.

#### Sources:

Text – Chris Johnson, 'Brunswick's Historic Environment', Brunswick's Stories and Histories, p.7-8; C.A. McCallum, 'Simpson, James (1792-1857)', Australian Dictionary of Biography; 'Wilkinson, Thomas', Re-member, People in Parliament, Parliament of Victoria

Image – 'The very best part in all Brunswick', A.W. Schuhkrafft, machine printer, 185?, State Library of Victoria Map Collection.





## 'The stiff jump being across the drain in Albert Street', 1850s

In 1907 Benjamin Cooke, a long time Brunswick resident, published 'Brunswick Fifty Years Ago' in the Coburg Leader':

“ Going south from Stewart street, Joyce's paddock, thickly covered with large timber, afterwards the site of the Brunswick Race Course - now Blyth Street - the stiff jump being across the drain in Albert Street, the straight run home being 200 feet north of Blyth street and parallel to it. These were the days of steeple-chasing, and I think Mr Abbott, the well-known auctioneer, was the winner of the last event held there. ”



The Cooke family was certainly familiar with this pocket of Brunswick. Around the time Benjamin wrote his recollections he was living further up Sydney Road but his son, Benjamin Jne, lived in Albert Street and had an auctioneering and valuation office just round the corner at 386 Sydney Road.

Mr Cooke's memory is corroborated by a Sporting News report in the February 1856 edition:

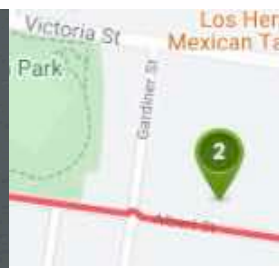
“ Steeplechase at Brunswick. A large number of persons assembled at Brunswick on Saturday to witness the various racing events... The principal race... was the steeplechase, for which three horses started and which was won, after a close contest, by Mr Abbott's b.g. Nugget... Mr Watson's b.g. Doctor led over the first four fences and then surrendered the lead to Nugget, who, after a beautiful run with Peter Simple, landed the winner by about a length and a half.' [b.g. - bay gelding]

”

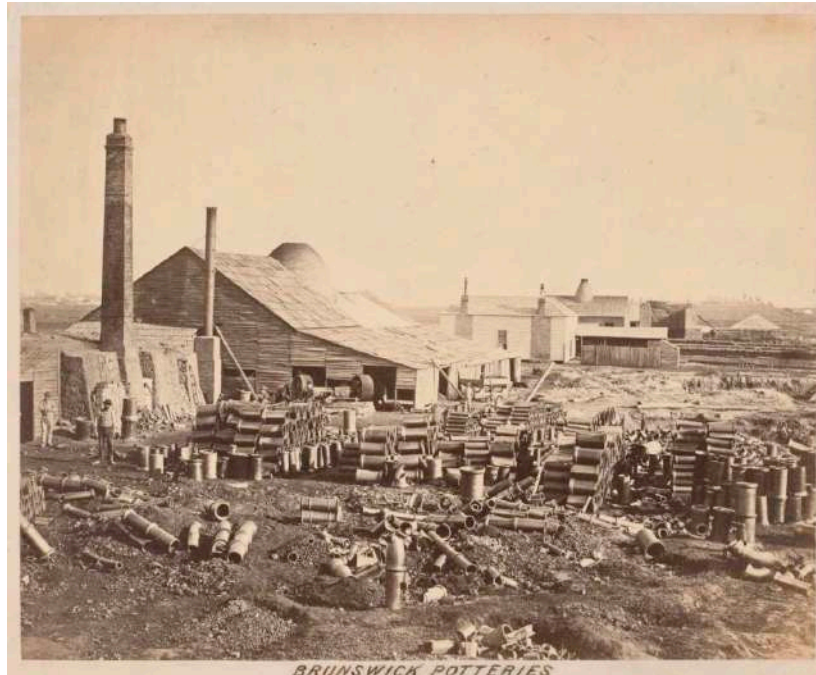
#### Sources:

Text – B. Cooke, 'Brunswick Fifty Years Ago', Coburg Leader, October 1907, p.3; 'Sporting News', The Argus, 11 February 1856, p.5; Sands & McDougall street directories.

Image – Henry Thomas Alken, 1785-1851, British, Scenes from a steeplechase: Taking a Hedge, ca.1845, Oil on canvas, Yale Centre for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection, B2001.2.52



# The Potters' Street



Alfred Cornwell, a civil engineer from Cambridge, England established Cornwell's Pottery in Albert Street west in 1861. His business grew to employ 120 workers and produced flower and chimney pots, all kinds of terracotta work, pipes, and bricks of all sizes at the rate of 120,000 a week. Cornwell's filled the block between Albert and Phoenix Street, which became its official address. In 1865 Cornwell received a medal from the Dublin Exhibition for his glazed earthenware. His successful business lasted over one hundred years until overseas imports became too much to contend with.

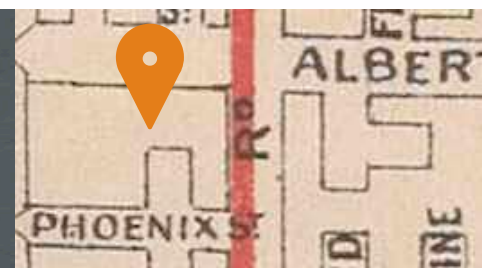
This 'was an era of expansion for Brunswick. From a town strung out along Sydney Road, it now spread to the side streets. Albert, Victoria and Barkly Streets had half a mile of small brickyards on each side. Hoffman's [neighbours of Cornwell] grew to a mammoth size and was employing 400 workers by 1890.'

Brunswick was the heart of the brick making and clay works industry; in 1895 in Albert Street west alone there were eleven brickyards and terracotta, brick and tile works. In 1965, after Cornwell's closed, there were none.

A fire on 21 April 1885 was quickly put out with little damage to the building when a local fireman saw smoke coming from its roof. One fireman was seriously injured. However, none of Cornwell's workers were hurt because every one of them was at the 8-hour Day demonstration to appeal for better working hours!

#### Sources:

Text – Dennis O'Hoy, 'Working class gold', Brunswick: one history many voices, p.108-109; S&M directories; Les Barnes, 'Irish in Brunswick', Brunswick Stories and Histories, p. 85; 'Fire at Brunswick', The Argus, 22 April 1885, p.6  
Image – Brunswick Potteries 1866. State Library of Victoria Picture Collection, accession # H649



## 'Noah's Ark' - Albert Street in the 1850s

In his article 'Brunswick fifty years ago' in which he described the steeplechase Benjamin Cooke snr also wrote of his neighbours. Here are his recollections of Albert Street, starting with the north-west corner of Sydney Road where Mr Britton lived and whose

“ building, which stood on high blocks, was known as Noah's Ark. During flood times this part was like a lake and spoken of as the swamp, and in season was a splendid locality for shooting snipe, plover and other game. ”



The caption to his illustration read: 'Dodds's Paddock, Sydney Rd, Brunswick, looking north from Albert Street 60 years ago' (c.1857). The word 'Butcher' is on the shop's street front.

There were Kelly's and Cornwall's potteries and a number of other brickyards and then farms between Sydney Rd and Moonee Ponds Creek. The butchers Charles and Ebenezer Rossiter had the shop on the south-west corner of Sydney Road (shown above), and one in Weston Street and a stall at the Meat Market in Elizabeth Street in the 1870s. By 1890 Rossiter's had been taken over by the carpenter John Crook and in the 1920s the Bradley Brothers, fishmongers, were there. Others at this intersection in the 1850s included the grocer Mr Blyth and Mr Overend's 'timberyard ironmonger's shop, also undertaker's department'. Mr Overend stretched down Albert Street and, beyond him all the way to the Merri Creek, were farms and small holdings.

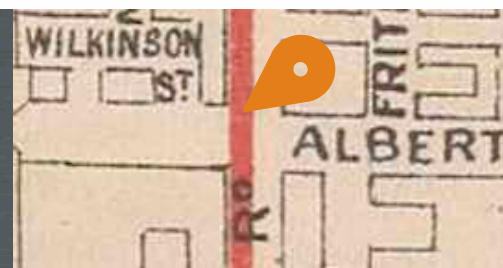


“ The early pioneers had all the disadvantages of a new settlement to contend with; roads had to be formed and made, storm waters provided for. The roads were soon cut up into a terrible state, when the surface was broken, the wheels would sometimes sink to the bed of the axles; bullock teams, wagons and horse drays being continually stuck in the mud, and it was no uncommon thing to see twelve or fourteen horses put on to help to pull a wagon out of the bog - the foot of Lobbs Hill being especially bad. Teams generally travelled in company for mutual help and protection. ”

Source:

Text – B. Cooke, 'Brunswick Fifty Years Ago', Coburg Leader, 5 October 1907, p. 3; Sands and McDougall Directories

Image – in F.M. Straw, 'Pioneers of Brunswick in 1839', The Argus, 9 September 1922, p.11; Central Brunswick, 1866. State Library of Victoria Picture Collection H140 (looking south from the intersection)





## Albert Street - 20th century snapshot

The street's feel and appearance changed over the decades, particularly in the years after World War 2 as Europeans migrated to Australia to establish new lives. While every name in the street directory had an Anglo ring up until the 1950s, by 1960 the Robinsons, who had been in the street since at least the 1930s, were now neighbours with the Bachrachs [#s 89 and 91], Christopher Zimbekis was living next door to John Davis [#s 367 and 369] and the McEwans and Staniscias were also part of the new mix all along the street. Industry and manufacturing, for decades a part of life in Albert Street, grew enormously after the war, but has subsided equally fast in recent decades. Ann Stuart remembers in the 1950s

“ In every street there seemed to be factories humming away from eight to five. Whistles sounded for "smoko" and lunch breaks. We relied on the clock.”

In 1960 Albert Street went as far as Pearson Street in the west and Lygon Street in the east. Here is a sample of listed occupations, community groups & industries in Albert Street in 1960. As numbers may have changed since an occasional side street is shown to assist with locating them:

### North side:

Pearson Street 387-9 Specialised Vibrated Concrete Co, cement goods manufacturers;  
375 Municipal tip;  
319-23 Melbourne Board of Works, storage  
307 Dobbie Bros Thermometers factory  
303-5 Burroughs Wellcome & Co. chemists, manufacturing;

Henry St 301 H.Gordon, cabinet maker  
299 Ormsby, brake service;  
295a Great Northern Homing Club;  
291-3 Railway Hotel;

Wilkinson St 277-9 W.Ragg, sheet metal worker  
261-7 Tosol Fashions, frock manufacturers;

Sydney Road 259 Mrs Mack, confectioner  
257 L. Mackay, boot repairer;  
253 Rechabite Hall;  
235 Brunswick City Angler's Club  
231 Penzes & Besky confectioners;  
227 D.S. Yealland shoe repairer;  
221 S. De Grazia fishmonger;

Thomas St 191-9 Theme Hosiary, distributors & Yoffa Hosiary knitting mills  
167-9 Di Salvo, confectioner;

Trafford St 163-165 Rosa & Marangoni butchers  
139 Mirralike Photos;  
129 Norling, Denniston clothing manufacturer;  
113 M. Geary fuel merchang  
95 Baylis clothing manufacturer

Lygon St 87 Silman Hosiary Pty Ltd

### South Side:

322-32 Stokes & Sons electorplate manufacturers  
308-14 Council depot & weighbridge  
300-4 Woolworths, bulk store  
290-4 Lassica clothing manufactuerrss  
284-88 Servian Machine Tools & Wee Folk clothing manufacturers  
282 Grummett & Son motor engineers  
276 L & B Tucker, fruiterers  
274 Pettigrews storage  
272 J Pirronello, knife manufacturers  
246 William chung confectioner  
230-32 Brunswick Domestic Arts School  
196 Mrs F Warr, grocer  
170 S& R Linger, frock manufacturers  
116-18 T. Bunn, bottle merchant  
112 Mina Creations, clothing

Pearson Street

Sydney Road

Blair Street

Lygon Street

## Rechabite Hall - 253 Albert St - 1903

The Independent Order of Rechabites (IOR) was formed in 1813 in England, named after a teetotal Israelite sect founded by the son of Recab. In 1866 a Rechabite Tent (branch) opened in Brunswick and they built this hall in Albert Street in 1903. The IOR was part of a wider temperance (abstinence from alcohol) movement and it also played a critical social role in the days before paid sick leave, workers' compensation and other benefits helped to keep families from completely going under. Members paid a small fortnightly contribution to receive free medical care for their family, funeral benefits that avoided the indignity of a pauper's burial and sick pay if needed.

Within a few years of opening 'the vexed question of the propriety of dancing was responsible for a lively and protracted meeting... only one lady was present, but ... reinforcements arrived. The debate turned on the important question as to whether dancing should be permitted... One speaker... said



“ of course they have a game of honey-pots (laughter) the ladies to the centre, then the gents grab their partner ”

Eventually they prohibited dancing at Rechabite events but they couldn't agree whether or not to charge non-Rechabites renting the hall from them.

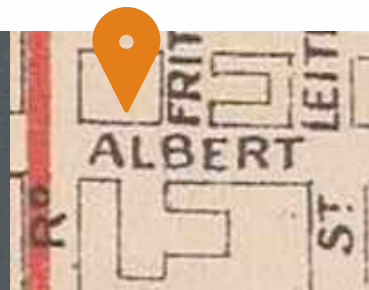
The Rechabites were a large community group in this area. In August 1900 'About 1500 junior members of the Lodge and State school children of the district... marched with torches from Park-street along Sydney-road to Blyth-street, whence they returned to the town hall, where a limelight entertainment was given, illustrative of temperance work.'



The old hall is now occupied by the Pallaconian Brotherhood of Melbourne and Victoria "Leonidas" who also hold social evenings, dances, dinners and other events for the Greek community, including this Greek dancing workshop in October 2019:

### Sources:

Text – Marj Glew, 'The Temperance Movement', Brunswick's Stories and Histories, p.21; Roland Wettenhall, 'Australia's Friendly history', Pursuit, The University of Melbourne; 'Rechabites at Brunswick', The Age, 28 August 1900, p.7; 'Dancing prohibited. Brunswick Rechabites decision', The Argus, 18 September 1908, p.6  
Image – Victorian Places, Brunswick and Brunswick City, victorianplaces.com.au; Pallaconian Brotherhood of Melbourne and Victoria, Facebook





# The Sedgman Legacy

## 247-249 Albert Street

It is thought a local carpenter named Michael Sedgman probably built these cottages on the corner of Frifth Street in the mid-1860s. Sedgman used what was a common architectural treatment in the 19th and early 20th century of cutting the timber cladding for the front of the house in such a way that it resembled blocks of stone.



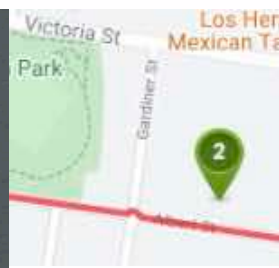
“ By the mid 1860s Brunswick was becoming quite dense and, while some of the original grand mansions were still on show, there had been considerable sub-division and building of workers' cottages that were much smaller but solid and well built. These cottages are a good example of this era. ”

Sedgman himself lived further up on the corner of Albert Road and Sedgman Street, which was itself named after this large Brunswick family. His grandson was the great Australian tennis player Frank Sedgman, winner of 49 career titles including many grand slam tournaments in the singles, doubles and mixed doubles.

#### Sources:

Text – Chris Johnston, 'Large estates to subdivision', in Brunswick: One history many voices, p.78

Image – Google Maps



## The students, the 'Salvos' and the sick

### The former Central State School

In 1872 Victoria was one of the first jurisdictions in the world to make schooling free, compulsory and secular for every student up to the age of 15. This prompted the establishment of new schools all over the state. The Brunswick Central School opened elsewhere in Brunswick the following year but moved here in 1877 into one of 600 Henry Bastow designed schools built across Victoria after the Education Act was passed. It grew quickly to over 1,100 students in the 1890s and became a teacher training school with their Infant School Course at the Teachers College.



This photograph, taken in 1915, is of a sloyd class [manual dexterity and skills such as woodworking], a subject that was part of the general curriculum in the 19th and first decades of the 20th century.

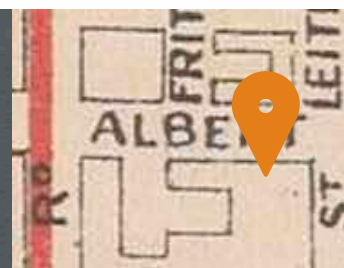
The Brunswick Central State School and the Brunswick Salvation Army citadel were neighbours and friends for years; during World War 2 the 'Salvos' established a canteen in their building to give the children hot meals at lunch time because so many mothers were doing shift work. In return the large and loud Army brass band used the wide open school grounds to rehearse.

Years later, large enrolments brought about by post-war immigration put pressure on the Education Department to upgrade the buildings. In 1972 the school was bulldozed and replaced with a pre-cast concrete structure developed by the Housing Commission, but it remained as the Brunswick Primary School (without the Central by now). Within a decade or so enrolments declined, the school merged with Brunswick East Primary in 1996, the 1970s concrete buildings were demolished, and the site was sold for development as a housing estate.

The Central school was also taken over by the Health Department during the Spanish Flu epidemic in 1919. It 'was quickly made use of and cases were coming in daily... The difficulty of an ambulance had been got over by Mr Holloway, the City Electrician, placing one of their motor wagons at the disposal of the hospital, and his son had taken several cases to the hospital, not only in the day but at all hours of the night.'

#### Sources:

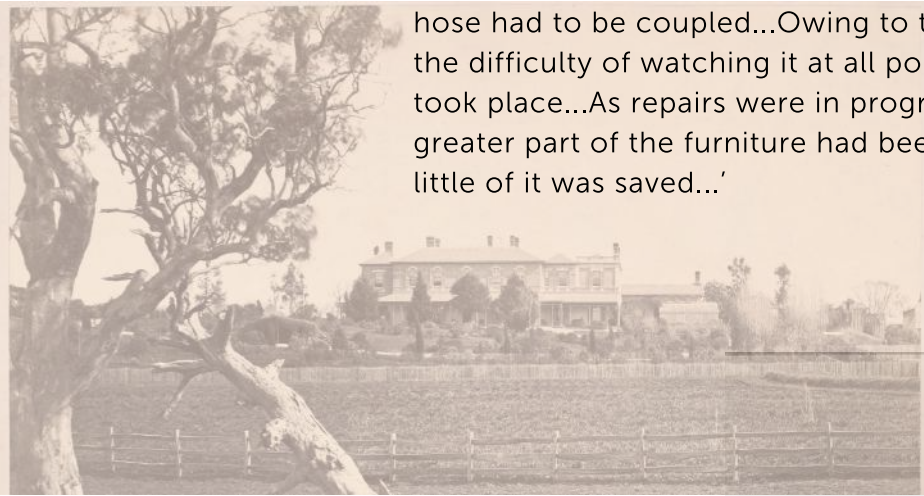
Text – 'Brunswick Primary School: then and Now', Learning from the Past, 2016, p.2. 'the Influenza Outbreak', Brunswick and Coburg Leader, 14 February 1919, p.5  
Image – Sloyd Class, Brunswick Central State School 1915. Museums Victoria Collections. <https://collections.museumsvictoria.com.au/items/1689763>. Accessed 22 July 2020



## Stony Park and the Electricity Station

Theodotus John Sumner bought 120 acres of land adjacent to the Merri Creek in the 1850s and built Stony Park, a two-story brick villa with 21 rooms. He and Sarah had seven children and they grazed cattle on the property. He was a significant figure in Brunswick, contributing towards the construction of the East Brunswick Methodist Church and providing land for the Mechanics Institute on the corner of Sydney Road and Glenlyon Street. Theodotus died in 1884 and a year later the villa burnt down.

The fire was described in The Argus newspaper as having 'began in the laundry chimney and spread very quickly on a windy day. Both the Nth Fitzroy and Brunswick fire brigades fought the fire for the whole day but the house was completely destroyed. Crowds of larrikins had gathered...the pressure of water was very low and in order to make use even of the nearest plug, 1,500ft of hose had to be coupled...Owing to the large area covered by the house and the difficulty of watching it at all points, a considerable amount of pilfering took place...As repairs were in progress in the ground floor of the house the greater part of the furniture had been removed to the upper story, hence but little of it was saved...'



Theodotus and Sarah's son-in-law, James Grice, rebuilt the home in what their granddaughter Maie Casey (the Baroness, aviator and author of 'An Australian Story) described as a '

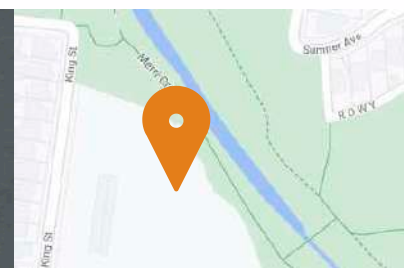


“British Italianate’ style that ‘rose from the ground with extravagant gusto’ and was likely to have been ‘a distorted echo of the earlier house where her [mother’s] childhood had been spent’.”

When Sarah died in 1929 her home was bought by the Marist Brothers for a monastery and boys school. In 1937 it was subdivided into the Sumner Estate and the State Electricity Commission’s new Brunswick Power Terminal Station on King Street, which was built in 1939. This Station, one of 41 across Victoria, receives electricity from high voltage power stations and converts it to low voltage electricity before distributing it to homes and businesses across the region.

### Sources:

Text – Sue Nicholson, 'Mapping Brunswick' in Brunswick: One History, Many Voices. P.50.; Maie Casey, An Australian Story 1837-1907, Sun Books, 1962, pp.33 and 36; Fire at Brunswick', Argus, 30 January 1885, p.7; Jane Bathgate, 'A history of the Merri Creek', Brunswick's Stories and Histories, p.18.; 'Brunswick Terminal Station', Moreland City Council, <https://bit.ly/2OTvhER>  
Images – "Stony Park" Brunswick home of Mrs S Sumner', State Library of Victoria Picture Collection, H 93.64/30; 2nd <https://sitingwriters.org/2020/03/30/stony-park-mansion/>





# Merri Creek



For a brief time the Merri Creek was named Lucy's Creek after John Batman's daughter but the local Woi wurrung people knew it as the Merri Merri Creek, which described its extremely rocky nature. It is one of five major tributaries flowing north south, 60 km from the Great Diving Range to the Yarra River east of Dights Falls in Collingwood.

The Wurundjeri-willam, a Woi wurrung (language group) clan lived along this Creek and between the Moonee Ponds and Darebin Creeks. When the Europeans arrived in the area and the two groups began a shared history they were led by a man named Billibellary.

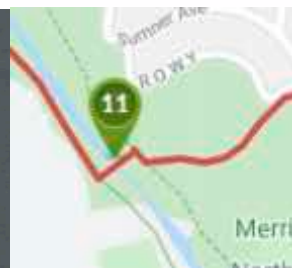
The Merri Creek has had a turbulent history since Europeans arrived with considerable pollution, some reshaping and vast changes to its banks, flora and fauna. Most of the Creek from the Yarra River to Campbellfield has been realigned, used to backfill the Brunswick quarries, had levee banks constructed to prevent floods, and been levelled or regraded to establish sporting facilities.

This Creek was once:

“ abundant with native grasses, herbs and trees ranging from yellow box, wattle, blackwood, tea tree, hakeas, grevilleas, bottlebrush, kangaroo grass, seasonal wildflowers. It flowed along rocky gorges and open flood plains from what is now Heathcote Junction to Yarra Bend. It could almost completely dry up in some seasons but also had the capacity to run into a raging torrent capable of taking with it everything from litter and flood to horses, carts and bridges. Living amongst the flora and in the creeks were possums, birds, bandicoots, flying squirrels, platypus, fish and eels.”

#### Sources:

Text – Jane Bathgate, 'A history of the Merri Creek', Brunswick's Stories and Histories, p.16; 'Merri Creek' Darebin Heritage, <http://heritage.darebinlibraries.vic.gov.au/article/397>; Merri Creek Management Committee, Sites of Geological Significance, 2.3 Modifications to the Merri Creek Valley and Channel, <https://bit.ly/270zXbG>.  
Image – 'Merri Creek', Henrietta Pilkington, ca. 1863, State Library of Victoria, H1437



# Northcote High School

John Cain snr was largely responsible for founding Northcote High School while John Cain jnr (both Labor Premiers of Victoria) was an alumni.

The school opened in 1926 and was one of the first six co-educational schools in Victoria.



When Preston Girls High School opened two years later Northcote moved to this St George's Road location and became a boys' school, remaining so until the 1980s when it began to enrol girls. It officially became a co-educational school in 1989.

In 1933 the Victorian Government increased school fees to offset its educational expenditure. Victoria, like the rest of the world, was in the grip of the Great Depression. But so were the families of Northcote High School and many parents could not afford the fees of two pounds a term. Between 1930 and 1934 enrolments dropped from 516 to 406 and Year Ten students halved in number. They were of an age where their ability to earn money outweighed the importance of an education.

The Education Department insisted fees be paid. The school demanded the money. And the parents pleaded for exemptions or a period of grace.

quite unable to pay any fees... The present depression has brought me down to zero

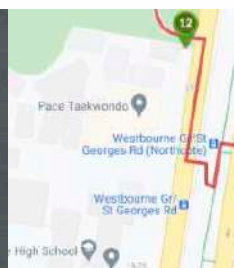
... about three years out of work... You will agree with me under the circumstances I have done very well to have covered Stanley's fees to date.

our present position (working part-time on reduced wages) will not allow me to pay for Keith's school fees.

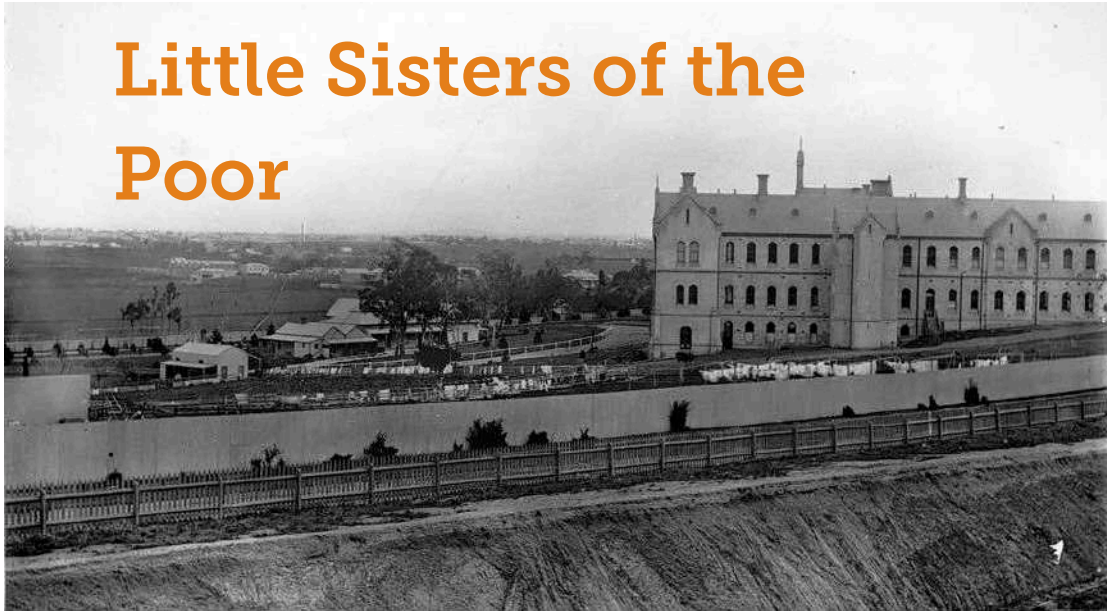
The files of these and several other children were closed. Annotated against their names on the front cover were the words 'Left School'.

#### Sources:

Text & Image – Karin Derkley, 'The present depression has brought me down to zero', Provenance, PROV 2008, accessed at <https://bit.ly/2CPDkOm> (July 2020)



## Little Sisters of the Poor



“The property is ... on a hill on a beautiful position, not far from the sea which makes it doubly agreeable to feel the sea breezes ... surrounded by ... the pipe track (now St Georges Rd), Plant Street (now Hawthorn Street), Hartington Street and Westbourne Grove. There are in the neighbourhood two villas and we are facing lovely fields with a view of Mount Macedon. The farm is in good order. The house is small and has only two rooms, but the outer buildings are adequate, a stable for horses, a dairy for cows, lofts for hay and straw, a good grape vine and a few fruit trees. Two sides of the property are fenced off in a rustic wall made of stone; the rest is a simple barricade of wood that does not go all the way around.”

This was how the two English and six French nuns from Marseilles' Order of the Little Sisters of the Poor found their new home in Northcote in the early 1880s. Archbishop Gould had invited them to come to Australia and establish St Joseph's home for the care of the aged poor. They soon needed a much larger home and Melbourne architect Leonard Flanagan designed a three-story French Medieval style building on the highest part of the site. In 1890 it began accommodating the destitute over the age of 60, but was not completely finished until 1909.

In the early 1930s there were more than 250 residents and 24 sisters. for aged care. In 1962 some of the land was subdivided to sell smaller lots, although the building itself was extended the following year so that married couples could live together and in 1973 a new wing became a home for retired priests. The main building came to be owned by the Greek Orthodox Church and renamed the Axion Estin Greek Monastery. They wanted to redevelop the site to provide for 36 townhouses but the application was rejected by Darebin Council and the site was subsequently added to the Victorian Heritage Register in 2002. Today St Josephs has 51 beds.

#### Sources:

Text – 'Little Sisters of the Poor', Darebin Heritage

Image – View of the convent of the Little Sisters of the Poor from Dr Thomas Beckett's house in High Street, Northcote, opposite the Town Hall. Museums Victoria Collection

<https://collections.museumvictoria.com.au/items/795727> Accessed 22 July 2020





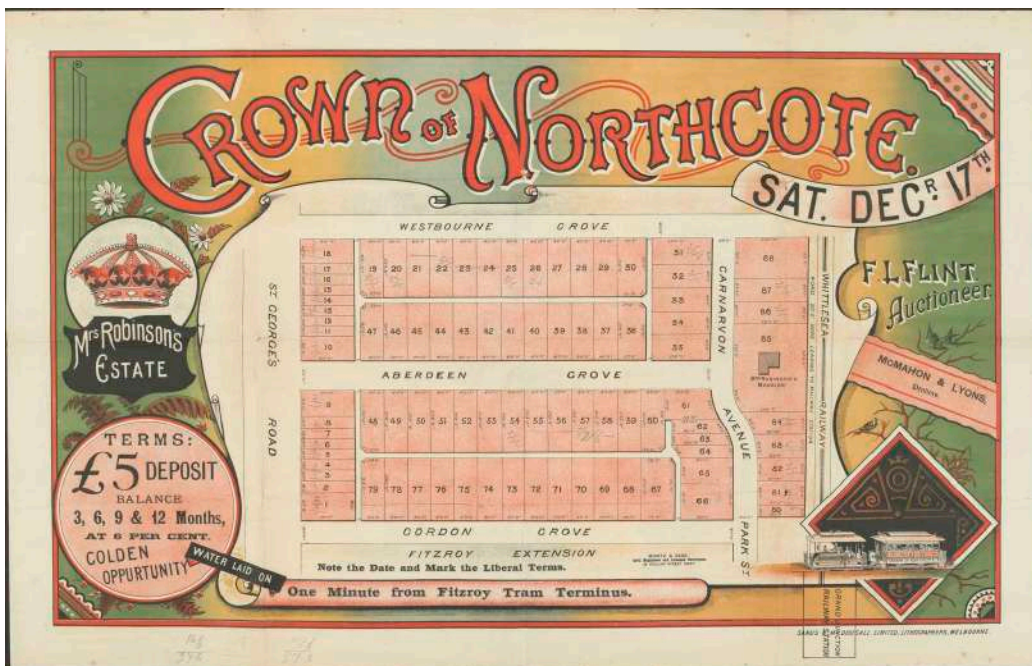
# Westbourne Grove & Bellevue Park Estate, 1880s

Westbourne Grove, Hawthorn Road, Bastings Street and Mitchell Street were created in the early 1840s after a subdivision of William Rucker's insolvent estate by the Union Bank. Westbourne Grove was further subdivided in 1884 and, despite 'boisterous and inclement weather' Fraser and Co Auctioneers had 'a successful sale on the ground' on 26 January of

“ all 93 allotments of land in Bellevue-park, Northcote: Westbourne-grove, 26 allotments ... James-street, 54 allotments. Total L9,090 14s 4d

”

Part of Bellevue Park, adjacent to High Street, was bought in 1885 for Northcote Borough's civic precinct. The original Town Hall was adjacent to James Street. On the north of Westbourne Grove only Samuel Johnson, John Alford, Lizzie Baines and Job Godby lived between Henry and Herbert Streets, and farmer William Brown where the Little Sisters would soon be. Opposite Farmer Brown Mrs Robinson was the only resident between the railway and St Georges Road.



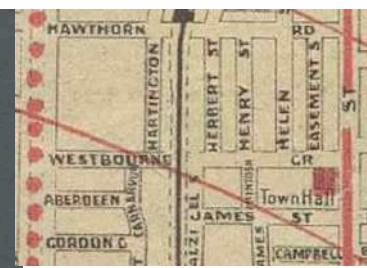
She and Leonard Robinson, a Collins Street draper and silk merchant, bought 'Turret House' from merchant Norman Guthridge in about 1860. During Westbourne Grove's subdivision she held fast for a couple of years before selling in 1887 to John McMahon, Chairman of the St George's Road League.

McMahon subdivided his 'Crown of Northcote' estate, with the well-known 'Mrs Robinson's Mansion' shown between the railway and Carnarvon (Park) Street, and it soon began to resemble the Ruckers Hill of the future; its rurality was quickly discarded and it began to resemble a thriving urban township.

Source:

Text – 'Westbourne Grove', Darebin Heritage; 'Commercial Intelligence' column, The Argus, 28 January 1884, p.4; Sands & McDougall Directories; Andrew Lemon, The Northcote Side of the River

Image – 'Crown of Northcote', Sands & McDougall Limited, Lithographers, 1887?, State Library of Victoria



# The Westbourne Photographer

## 91 Westbourne Grove



The Beckett's had just settled into 91 Westbourne Grove before their fifth and last child Kathleen was born. Thomas Beckett came from England as a ship's surgeon in 1885 with his wife and established a medical practice in Charlton to the north before moving to Westbourne Grove. In his spare time he was an amateur photographer and loved taking pictures of his family and neighbourhood,

These are his children in the back garden at home in 1894 and the view towards Melbourne from his upstairs verandah in 1892.



By 1900 he was living in a more prestigious property at 180 High Street, opposite the Town Hall (now replaced by the Inthanon Thai Restaurant) and it was there that he built his first x-ray apparatus to pioneer the use of x-ray in private practice. His work would soon promote him to the position of head of the X-Ray Department at the Alfred Hospital in 1901.

The family moved to Sth Yarra to be closer to the Hospital and to his medical practice in Albert Street, East Melbourne. Although lauded for his expertise was pioneering work in radiology and poor Beckett spent the last fifteen years of his life in pain, eventually losing an arm, fingers and the tops of his ears to radiation. He died in 1937.

#### Sources

Text – 'Thomas George Beckett, 1859-1937', Darebin Heritage; Sands & McDougall Directories; 95 Westbourne Grove, Northcote', Darebin Heritage; Andrew Lemon, The Northcote side of the river  
Image – Taken by Thomas Beckett. Museums Victoria Collections. His children in the back garden at 91 Westbourne Grove 1894, MM 8208; view of railway bridge from his verandah at 91 Westbourne Grove, Northcote, November 1892, MM 8197; accessed 22 July 2020





# St Joseph's Church

## 140 Westbourne Grove, 1917



THE ROSE SERIES P. 3434  
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INTERIOR OF ST. JOSEPH'S CHURCH, NORTHCOTE, VIC.

The Church opened in March 1917 with a grand and combined Northcote and Thornbury choir of 55 singers. The program included Haydn's No. 1 Mass in B flat, Rossini's *Inflammatus* by 'Miss Ruby Bond, a local lady possessed of an extraordinarily powerful and pleasing voice'; Mascherano's *Ave Maria*; Handel's *Hallelujah Chorus*; the *Stabat Mater* and the *Benediction Service*.

With a congregation of about 900 and a ceremony that went from 10:30am to 7:30pm this was a major event in the Northcote calendar at the time and the *Preston Leader* claimed 'seldom has a more excellent performance been heard in Melbourne or suburbs'

#### Source

Text – St Joseph's New R.C. Church, *Preston Leader*, 10 March 1917, p.4

Image – Interior of St Joseph's Church, Northcote. Rose Stereograph Co. State Library of Victoria Picture Collection, H32492/4750





## 'Private loans from a private house' 155 Westbourne Grove 1916



Harry Ireland, Private Financier, was advertising in all the local papers between at least 1913 and 1918 prepared to lend money to 'any lady, householder or worker' and 'to any person in permanent position'. He offered 'usual low interest. No increase on account of WAR'. and 'Mrs Ireland personally interview ladies'. With an office at their 'private home' at 155 Westbourne Grove, and hours from 8am to 10pm every day including Saturday it may well have been lucrative business.

While this advertisement was for a general loan he also offered them for the Melbourne Cup - 'Back your fancy. Don't miss your chance' and was 'prepared to negotiate Xmas loans'.

The Irelands lived here for about ten years before moving to High Street in the late 1920s.

rSource:

Text & Image – Advertisements (various), Heidelberg News and Greensborough and Diamond Creek Chronicle, 11 March 1916, p.3, Sands & McDougall Directories



## Comrade Nelson & the Rechabite Hall cnr of Eastman Street, 1901



Once the Northcote Political Labor Council [P.L.C.] decided they needed to attract larger numbers they moved their monthly meetings from 'Comrade Nelson's' home in Herbert Street to the Rechabite Hall in Westbourne Grove round the corner.

They were still seeking members many years later when, at a meeting in 1912, the Northcote branch decided to enter 'upon a vigorous propaganda with a view to induce unionists in the district to become members of the P.L.C. ...Unionists as a whole... we find are very slow to see the all importance of political actions. If we can bring them to life, Jika Jika will be soon won for Labor.'

Their vigorous propaganda proved successful. Jika Jika was won by the Labor candidate Henry Beard, who held it from 1904-1907. He was replaced by the Liberal/Nationalist candidate James Membrey who held it for ten years. But in 1917 John Cain regained the seat of Jika Jika for Labor and held it until his death in 1957, including throughout two terms as Premier of Victoria [as well as a first term of just 4 days in September 1943]. Jika Jika ever since remained a Labor seat until it was abolished in 2006.

[The image is of the Political Labor Council Victoria outside Trade Hall Council, Carlton 1916]

### Source:

Text – 'P.L.C. Reports. Northcote', Labor Call, 1 April 1909, p.10 and 11 April 1912, p.7; Robert Murray and Kate White, 'Cain, John (1882-1957)', Australian Dictionary of Biography; 'Jika Jika Province', Wikipedia  
Image – P.L.C. Political Labour Council Victoria 21.4.16, State Library of Victoria Picture Collection, H41266



## Ruckers Hill, High Street, Northcote



Rucker's Hill was originally known as Upper Northcote, as opposed to Lower Northcote (now Westgarth). When the Union Bank forfeited the land from the insolvent William Rucker in 1842 'it held on to it waiting for a fortuitous moment. This came in 1853 with Melbourne's great boom years resting on the wealth of gold. The land was subdivided and Westbourne Grove, along with Hawthorn Road, were developed to the west of High Street, although ending in dead ends.'

In 1933, during the Northcote Borough's jubilee celebrations the souvenir official programme announced that

“ *This being the Jubilee Year of Northcote, the citizens are agreed that there should be a fitting commemoration of the event. In the period Northcote has advanced from little more than a village to a flourishing and well-equipped city... If a resident who left in 1883 could come back now, the change would surely strike him as magical...* ”

Source:

Text - Context, Darebin Heritage Study, Vol 1 Thematic Environmental History; Lemon, Northcote side of the River, p. 39

Image - Ruckers Hill, Catherine Forge Photography

Northcote  
Town Hall -  
Stop 31