

AN INTRODUCTION TO KERIN'S BRIDGE RESERVE, KINGSTON**What is Kerin's Bridge Reserve ?....**

"Kerin's Bridge Streamside Reserve" consists of a seven hectare area of public land on either side of Birch's Creek (also called Bullarook Creek) on both sides of the road to Daylesford 2km north east of Kingston. The map on the back shows the surveyed boundaries of the area. The north and south reserve boundaries correspond reasonably closely to the extensive areas of pine plantations, some of which are 80 years old.

Who is responsible for managing the area, and what can it be used for ?....

The area of public land is one of several small streamside reserves on Birch's Creek, originally reserved in the 1860's for public watering purposes, and as a camping ground by teamsters and wagonners using the former wooden bridge built by Captain John Hepburn. The bridge was built for the convenience of customers at the nearby flour mill built in 1841: the first in rural Victoria and the second in the then Port Phillip District of NSW. The streamside reserve area south of the Creek is managed by the Department of Conservation and Environment; the northern area by the Shire of Creswick. In terms of land use, it is zoned to protect water quality and adjoining land from erosion, maintain the local character of the landscape, conserve flora and fauna and provide opportunities for low intensity recreation. Members of the public have use of and access to the area as long as these values are safeguarded.

This file

What can Kingston Primary School do to look after the area?...

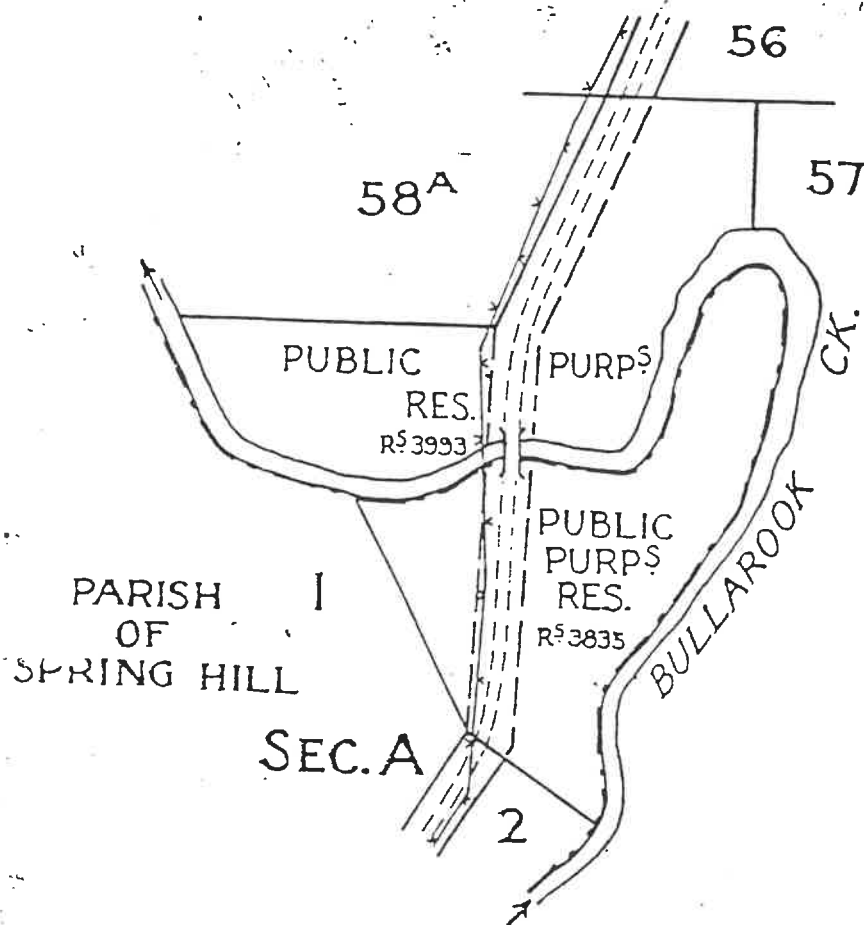
Kingston Primary School applied for and received funding in 1991 for a project under the Ballarat Local Environmental Education Grant Scheme, to use and study the natural and historical features of the area to the benefit of the local school and Kingston Community. The Shire of Creswick and Department of Conservation and Environment have given permission to the Kingston School Council to form a local committee to manage the study and the proposed minor works.

The initial aims are to familiarize the school and community with the area, to involve the students in a range of studies focussed on the area, and to encourage the students and community to begin to look after this small but significant area of public land. The study will include detailed survey and mapping area of its natural and historic features. The planned minor works, in liaison with the Creswick Shire and Conservation and Environment, will include cleaning up rubbish, improving access, designing a nature trail, erecting signs where necessary, preparing a public brochure, as well as some minor tree planting.

1573003

Department of Crown Lands & Survey
Victoria

PARISH OF SMEATON



30 0 50 100 150 200 250
SCALE OF METRES

OFFICIAL



Sources of information:

Most information below comes from public records, including maps and letters available on file at the Lands Office in Ballarat. Some square brackets [] indicate other sources of information; question marks indicate missing or unreadable information. There are a lot of gaps and there are probably a few mistakes. We will keep adding to this as more information comes in. **Please help us!**



As well as historical information, we are interested in receiving any stories and recollections from district residents which relate in some way to the reserve and the area around it., or to people who lived near or used the area. If you can give definite dates, all the better.

If you have not yet seen it, ask the Kingston Primary School for a copy of "An Introduction to Kerin's Bridge Reserve, Kingston", which is a briefer introduction to the reserve, and which answers some commonly asked questions about the area and the School Community project



HISTORY

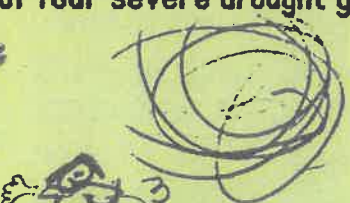
before 1838:

The area was part of the territory of the Dja Dja wurrung people. The local clan group (One of 15 Dja Dja wurrung clan groups of 30-150 individuals) was probably the Turaet Balug, who lived in the area within approximately 15 km radius of Smeaton. The clan group numbered approximately 14 in 1840, having suffered from killings and removal from their lands from Mundy in 1838, and Coghill, Birch and Hepburn 1838-39 [Clark 1990].



15 April 1838:

John Hepburn took possession of "Smeaton Hill", having travelled overland from Sydney with 9000 sheep. The area that forms the northern part of the current Reserve was at the southern end of Hepburn's Smeaton Hill run. One of Hepburn's five outstations of the run was located at the nearby natural lagoon, now known as Hepburn Lagoon. The Smeaton Hill homestead lies 3 km north. Although unknown to Hepburn at the time, 1838 was the second of four severe drought years.



1838:

Within a few months of Hepburn's arrival, a number of other squatters overlanded from Sydney; Buninyong was taken up by Learmonth, the Leigh River by Yuille, with Anderson in between. Petit and Francis took up Dowling Forest. Irvine and Birch took up the "Seven Hills" run on the Bullarook Creek, also called Birch's Creek. The southern half of the Reserve would have been part of the Seven Hills run. Birch's first homestead and sheepyards were where Anderson's Mill is at Smeaton. All these early

settlers except Irvine and Birch were Scots who had come over from Van Diemen's Land (Tasmania). After 1843 Hepburn had the Langdon's cattle station at Mount Prospect on his southern boundary south of Langdon's Creek. [Quinlan 1967].

In 1838 there was no surveyed land or roads. Each station was allowed only one fenced paddock; the square mile of the homestead. One edge of the Seven Hills paddock lies 1km west (downstream) of Kerin's Bridge. The earliest map available of the area , made in 1851, shows a " bush track to Melbourne" near where the current Ballarat - Daylesford road is.

1841:

Hepburn established the first flour mill in rural Victoria (and the second in the (then) Port Phillip District of NSW), approximately 100 metres north of the Kerin's Bridge Reserve's current northern boundary. By 1860 the mill was three storeys high, of locally made bricks and stone, with two pairs of stones and an overshot wheel, grinding 4 tons of grain daily. After Hepburn's death in 1860 the mill was leased by his executors to Baird and Brown of Ballarat. within a month, Smeaton farmers were angered by the low price offered by the new millers and their reluctance to buy local grain. This led to the building of the Anderson Brothers Mill at Smeaton. (NOTE: Until 1860 Hepburn's Mill/Captain's Mill near Kerin's Bridge is sometimes also called "Smeaton Mill". To make matters even more confusing, the former Smeaton Hotel was located on the road west of the Hepburn's Mill). There is a today a scatter of dressed bluestone blocks and bricks where the mill once stood.

The water race to the mill came from Hepburn Lagoon and discharged in Birch's Creek near the NE corner of the Reserve.

The mill site is close to what was then a natural crossing point on Birch's Creek. Early sketch maps show a number of tracks north and south of the creek bunching together at this crossing point in the middle of the current reserve. [Quinlan 1967; Jacobs 1991]

1841-1860's:

Hepburn constructed a wooden bridge at this crossing point in ??? for the convenience of his customers at the nearby mill. Bullock teams used the natural gradient to their advantage with their loads of grain, flour and oatmeal. With the increased gold traffic (after the official discovery of gold at nearby Clunes in 1851), the Creswick-Daylesford mail coaches also used the bridge [Quinlan 1967]. The Smeaton Hotel (mentioned above) was on the west of the road approx 200 metres north of the bridge.

1851:

The Port Phillip District separated from NSW and became the "Colony of Victoria".

1854-57:

Political change in the mid-1850s included land reform, which led to the survey and sale of land previously squatted upon. Land in the Parish of Spring Hill (south of Birch's Creek) was sold between 1854 and 1857.

Land either side of the main street in Kingston was sold in six blocks to a number of small farmers in December 1854. A&C. Birch bought their (already occupied) land south of Birch's Creek, and west of the current road down to Karin's bridge, in 1856-57. Hepburn bought a number of small blocks south of the creek, including the 76 acre block south and east of the current reserve.

The Parish of Smeaton (north of Birch's Creek) was auctioned on Camp Hill, Ballarat on 14 July 1856. Hepburn bought most of it, including the 267 acre block around the Captain's Mill, and several blocks giving access to Birch's Creek 1 km downstream, but his station was now hemmed in by small farms. The current reserve area was one of the few areas not sold.

1854-58:

Creswick Commercial club managed the Creswick Road District, which included the road through the Reserve.

1857:

When Arthur Birch married Annie in 1857, a second house was built adjacent to the Bridge on the Seven Hills Estate: a simple transverse double gable house, moved by traction engine to the Midland Highway, Newlyn in the 1920's or 1930's. (see Heritage Study File No. 498). The land had been sold on 16 June 1857. The Birch brothers sold their estates in 1865 and returned to England.

1859:

'Creswick Road District' proclaimed [Government Gazette, 11 Jan 1859]
John Hepburn elected Chairman at a meeting at the Kingston Hotel, 26 April 1860.

17 ???? 1863:

Public meeting held at Kingston to canvas opinion on proposed division of the District into Wards and Ridings.

7 January 1863:

Shire of Creswick proclaimed, centred on Kingston.

26 March 1866:

Government Gazette temporarily reserved 18 acres north of the bridge "...for watering purposes and as a site from which stone can be procured".

23 June 1869:

Creswick Shire Council requested "...That a portion of land near the Smeaton Mill (= Captain's Mill : Ed.) now a temporary reserve... be proclaimed exempt from occupation under the 14 section of the Mining Statute". It would appear that some persons were using misusing this section of the Mining Statute in order to occupy the reserve (which has no surface gold).

2 August 1869:

Nine acres, forming part of the previously reserved area north of the

bridge, was exempted "...from occupation for mining purposes or for residence or business under any Miner's Right".

13 August 1872:

9 acre area north of the creek and west of the road sold by the Crown to J. S.. Kelly

1883:

New single, semi- circular arch, bluestone bridge built by Creswick Shire Council to replace the former wooden bridge.

The gold embossed lettering on the basalt block at the top of the upstream arch reads:

" Erected in the year 1883 by the Creswick Shire Council.

J. Leishman President; J. Anderson, J. Richardson, J. Rankin, W. Allen, T. Kneale, G. Graves, G. L. Nase, J. J. Robinson - Councillors; W. H. Hobson Engineer; J. Short Contractor".

10 December 1885:

Creswick Shire drew the attention of the Lands Department in Melbourne that the Mining Registrar, Creswick has on several occasions, registered areas under Miner's Rights for persons to occupy portions of reserves:

"...notably the following -1. Con Hanlan for about one (1) acre. Parish of Smeaton South of Allotment 56. Water Reserve Gazetted 1869.

2. Occupier name unknown about a quarter of an acre on water Reserve being portion of allotment ? Parish of Spring Hill."

The Council was concerned that these reserves should be kept intact and that these individuals be removed, as ??? is likely to sully the water supplies for ??? and Allendale and cause inconvenience to the travelling public.

6 February 1886:

Detailed reports were presented by A. A. Bannerman after inspecting water reserves in Parishes of Spring Hill and Smeaton.

On the water reserves that now form Karin's Bridge Reserve, several parties had settled. One, Cornelius Hanlon, had 'back fenced in' about an acre for potatoes, and had built a small weatherboard skillion dwelling. He was in possession of an out of date Miner's Right for 209x209 feet of the reserve at Hepburn's Mill. He was asked to leave in 2-3 months, after his potatoes were dug.

Kerin was asked to shift his fence onto his proper boundary.

On the reserve on the west side of the creek three parties were residing. One, Winifred Welch or West, "...a very old woman said to be 76 years of age.." had a small one room weatherboard house, erected 6 months before by some neighbours. Mr Gore and several....???

The reserve on the east side of the creek "... is much used as a camping ground by teamsters and waggoners and should be kept open for such convenience."

22 March 1887:

Report, again by Bannerman, about an applicant, Robinson, who sought to place a residence on the reserve "between the old and new roads to the bridges across the creek", seeing others were permitted to do so. The applicant "...has a blacksmith's shop &c across the creek rented by him". On the north side of the creek Bannerman found Kerin and Hanlon had not removed their improvements, although they were notified to do. Kerin "...was away from the Colony" in England, and his court case had been held over "till his return".

XX 00000-85
3 May 1887:

cases against Patrick Kerin and Cornelius Hanlon were coming up at the Allendale Police Court. Hanlon, however, claimed to hold a Miner's Right as outlined in Bannerman's letter of 6 Feb 1886, and was deemed by ??? to be entitled to some consideration, having been misled by the original mistaken issue of a right by the mining registrar, and having made considerable improvements to the land.

11 May 1887:

Kerin and Hanlon were separately fined 10 shillings, with 23/6d costs, and were to remove their fencing within 2 months.

8 December 1887:

Hanlon's continuing occupation was again taken to court, and he was this time fined two pounds ten shillings, with 23/6d costs. However the question of compensation was later raised as to the way he had been dealt with.

26 April 1892:

Letter to the Office of Lands and Survey from Clunes Water Commissioners to ask for advice when applications are received or lands are to be sold along any portions of the Bullarook Creek. Lands and Survey advised in reply that all land between Bullarook and Smeaton townships to the waters edge had been sold; "the only Crown land remaining is a Gazetted Water Reserve".

31 October 1906:

Letter from Mr Beasley, Kingston A.N.A. (Australian Natives Association), to the Creswick Shire, seeking permission "to plant trees and otherwise beautify the place" on the reserve near Hepburn's Mill.

5 November 1906:

The Council was favourable to the idea, "provided it is done under its supervision". Council sought advice from Lands and Survey, who saw no objection.

17 January 1912:

Michael Sullivan applies to purchase the south and west part of the

Reserve (under the Mines Act 1890) for a residence, but is rejected by Lands and Survey, as well as by the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission.

12 May 1914:

Creswick Shire writes to the Land Officer, Ballarat. The Council is considering completing the tree planting program, by planting out the area east of Allotment 1" (West of the current Road, south of the Creek), which "...includes the part lately occupied by Michael Sullivan. Sullivan has not resided on the land for some time and the house was moved to Ballarat".

31 December 1929:

Creswick Council makes application to Lands Department for authority to control, for purposes of Public Recreation, the 18 acres north of the Creek and 9 acres south of the Creek. Lands Department notes that it has been controlled by the Shire Council for years, although not formally appointed.

3 June 1930:

Shire of Creswick formally becomes the Committee of Management for two separate Public Purposes Reserves 3993 (9 acres north of the Creek) and 3835 (10 acres south of the Creek), notified in the Gazette of 14 May 1930.

18 July 1973:

SEC power transmission lines erected across the reserve; 5400 square metres excised along its route from the southern part of the reserve; 7000 square metres from the northern part.

20 December 1974:

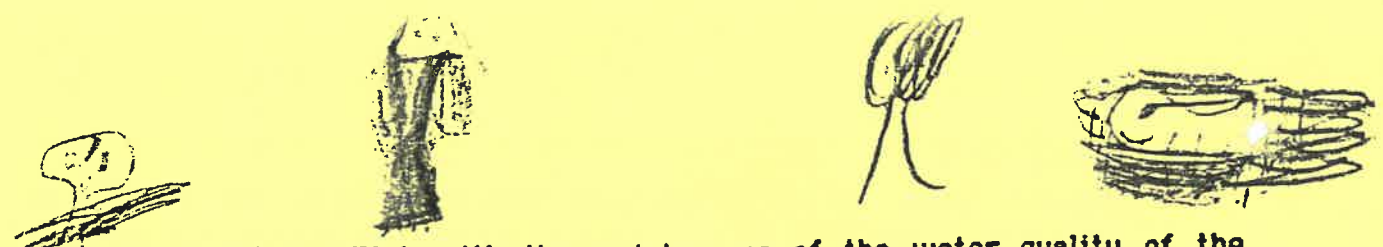
Mr G. Whitty writes to Lands Department seeking permission to graze the reserve area south and east of the road. Referred to Creswick Council.

April 1982:

Land Conservation Council, Victoria, after extensive public consultation, issues final recommendations for all public land in the Ballarat Study Area, including 15 Streamside Reserves. Reserve J6 is marked on the map and listed in the detailed recommendations as "4 ha, being the Public Purposes Reserve (Rs 3835, Rs 3985) adjacent to Bullarook Creek in the Parishes of Spring Hill and Smeaton".

The land use recommendation (still current) is that these areas be used to:


- (a) provide passive recreation such as picnicing, walking and angling
- (b) provide opportunities for camping at the discretion of the management authority if this does not conflict with the maintenance of the water quality of the adjacent stream
- (c) provide a buffer zone for the protection of water quality
- (d) conserve flora and fauna
- (e) maintain the local quality and character of the landscape
- (f) provide grazing, at the discretion of the management authority, if this



does not conflict with the maintenance of the water quality of the adjacent stream, or with (a),(b),(c), and (d) above and that they be permanently reserved under section 4 of the Crown Land(Reserves) Act 1978 and be Managed by the Department of Crown Lands and Survey".

March 14-20 May 1986:

Four platypus (3 female, 1 male) were collected under licence by Monash University, three upstream and one downstream of Kerin's Bridge, to be used in experiments to investigate the physiology of the sensory apparatus of the bill.



1986-87 Mrs Pat Williams and a group of residents from the Kingston District prepares a 12 page booklet, urging the Kingston community to take an active interest in the management of the "the bridge reserves i.e. Karrins Bridge, Smeaton Bridge and Wheelers Bridge.". It included a copy of a letter sent to the Creswick Shire, and detailed maps, suggestions for improvement of each area and other detailed recommendations to Council.


12 April 1988 :

3.507 hectare Reserve area south of the Creek permanently reserved " Conservation of an area of natural interest, " in line with Land Conservation Council Recommendation J 6.

July 1991:


Kingston Primary School Council applies for funds under the Ballarat Local Environmental Education Grants Scheme, to establish the management status of the Kerin's Bridge Reserve area, to familiarize the school community and for students to study the area, with a view to better involve the community in the management of this valuable public reserve.

14 August 1991: Anthea Nichols from the Centre for Science, Mathematics and Technology Education advises the school of a \$250 Local Environmental Education Grant.



1 October 1991:


Kingston Primary School Council writes to seek cooperation of Conservation and Environment, Creswick Council and adjoining landholders to restore, interpret and manage the reserve areas for the benefit of students and the Kingston community, and holds an on site meeting with the Creswick Council Group B Committee, to discuss the project.



13 November 1991: Kingston Primary School receives a letter from the Creswick Council, agreeing with the program for the study and proposed minor works, in liason with the Shire engineer in respect of the sections of the reserve which are managed by the Council, and to liaise with with the Department of Conservation and Environment in respect of the southern portion of the Reserve.

12 March 1991: "Kingston Picnic at Karin's Bridge Reserve" organized by the School Council. The aim is to familiarize and involve the Kingston school and district community in the area, in order to involve them in the planned project.

AUTUMN 1991: A local Committee will be formed to manage the School Community Project, consisting of school and interested community members.



This is a first part of what we hope will be a comprehensive story and extensive community study of the Reserve and the area around it.

Please send any information about the area to Kingston Primary School Council We need your help.

