

## Yarra valley Aboriginal Sites of Significance

- **Aboriginal sculptures at William Ricketts Sanctuary:** Mt. Dandenong, Melways 52 H10.
- **Coranderrk Aboriginal Cemetery:** Barak Lane, Badger Creek, 300 Kulin graves, Melways 277 K9.
- **Battle of Yering Memorial Rock:** Site of battle between Border Police & Wurundjeri, 13/01/1840.
- **William Barak Memorial at Brushy Creek:** Stone monument plaque and tree, Melways 37 C7.
- **Barnggeong Birthing Site:** At the confluence of Brushy Creek and Yarra is a Wurundjeri birthing and female initiation site where William Barak was born, Melways 24 K6.
- **Gawa Wurundjeri Resource Trail:** 340m bushland walking trail at Watson's Creek with 9 resource markers along the way, Melways 272 D5.
- **Pound Bend South Memorial Rock:** Dedicated to Reserve & 1852 corroboree site, Melways 23 C12.
- **Wurundjeri Stories Walk:** Start at Pound Bend tunnel & follow signage, Melways 23 A11.
- **Pound Bend North Memorial Rock:** Dedicated to Reserve & 1852 corroboree site, Melways 23 C9.
- **Moorrul Viewing Platform in Kangaroo Ground:** Interpretive panels, memorial, Melways 271 E11.
- **Tikalara Park:** Aboriginal living area occupied by Major Newman in 1837, Melways 22 C11.
- **Fish Farms at Finns:** Traditional fish & eel trap area, yabbie & mussel farms, etc, Melways 33 B3.
- **Yingabeal - the Scar Tree at Heide Museum:** Not just a canoe tree, but also a Marker Tree at junction of five Songlines (walking trails), Melways 32 E5.
- **Bolin-Bolin Billabong:** Eel and duck hunting site adjacent to corroboree ground, Melways 32 C8.
- **Bunjilaka Centre:** Melbourne Museum Carlton, 'First Peoples Exhibition', Melways 2B J9.
- **Birrarung Marr:** Celebrating Wurundjeri culture, displays, etc, along riverside walk, Melways 2F K6.
- **Koorie Heritage Trust:** Federation Square, Melb., Interactive displays, souvenirs, Melways 1A P10.

## BOLIN-BOLIN BILLABONG

*The Traditional  
Wurundjeri Gathering Place  
in Bulleen*

Bolin-Bolin Billabong can be found on Bulleen Road Bulleen, adjacent to the Veneto Social Club (Melways 32 C8).

The Bolin-Bolin area is managed by Parks Victoria and in consultation with the Wurundjeri Tribe Council they have placed interpretive signs at regular intervals around the circuit of the billabong, thus enabling you to have a self guided tour of this historic area.

Guided tours are also conducted both separately and jointly by Reconciliation Manningham and the Wurundjeri Tribe Council and you can find out details of any forthcoming tour by contacting Reconciliation Manningham.

*For information on the activities and contact details of Reconciliation Manningham, please visit our website at:*

**[HTTP://WWW.RECMAN.ORG.AU](http://www.recman.org.au)**

*Or contact the Secretary, Jim Poulter, on 9842 3598*



## BOLIN-BOLIN BILLABONG IN BULLEEN



*The Middle Yarra Wetlands*

Bolin-Bolin Billabong is part of larger wetlands extending from Kew through North Balwyn, Bulleen and Templestowe on the south, and Ivanhoe and Heidelberg on the north. Many of the billabongs in this area no longer exist due to systematic destruction by local councils. For instance, the wetlands in Ivanhoe west of Burke Road were 'reclaimed' when the billabongs were used as a council rubbish tip. They were filled up and finally bulldozed over in the 1950's to create the present-day manicured Ivanhoe golf course.

On the Bulleen side north of Koonung Creek, there are also manicured sports ovals, school grounds and the Veneto Club grounds. Bolin-Bolin Billabong therefore represents a vestige of the original wetlands, but ironically in Aboriginal times, it would have had rather the same manicured appearance as today, due to the regular burning off and ecological practices that were observed by the Wurundjeri for countless thousands of years. This meant that there was no undergrowth and the entire Yarra Valley had the appearance of a carefully managed estate, which of course it was.

### *The importance of this area for the Wurundjeri People*

The wetland areas, of which Bolin-Bolin was an integral part, was an important meeting place for the Wurundjeri and their guests from surrounding Kulin tribes from the Port Phillip Bay and Upper Goulburn areas. This was particularly so from mid-February to mid-March each year, when the eels were running and game was plentiful from the kangaroo farms on the river flats and surrounding hills. Kangaroo farms were maintained by regular firing and only allowing trees to grow at 25-to-50-meter intervals. Tribes would be invited to hold discussions on mutual issues of marriage, justice, trade, and land management, while sharing the bounty of Wurundjeri land.

### *1843 - The Last Corroboree*

Following the purported signing of 'Batman's Treaty' on the Plenty River at present day Greensborough in 1835, settlers began to flood in. The Wurundjeri were forced back to traditional camping areas such as Bolin-Bolin which Headman Billibellari sought to have declared an Aboriginal Reserve in 1839. The government refused, so the Wurundjeri asked for Pound Bend in Warrandyte instead. This was agreed to in principle in 1841 with 460 hectares to be set aside. However, it took another ten years before the Warrandyte Aboriginal Reserve was formally gazetted in 1851, before gold was discovered there. Prior to this in 1843, Billibellari organised a corroboree of Kulin Nation tribes to farewell Bolin-Bolin as their main camp.

### *Duck Hunting at Bolin-Bolin in the 1840's*

John Chivers, one of the first local settlers in the area, arrived in 1840 and established a close relationship with the Wurundjeri. When his wife died, the Wurundjeri cared for his two young sons, Willie and Tom, on a daily basis. Tom recounted many stories of his days with the tribe including duck hunting at Bolin-Bolin.

A hunter would stand on the bank of the billabong and in turn, throw three boomerangs which would circle the billabong. He would catch them in turn and throw them again so that the ducks would gaze upward, wondering if they were hawks. Meanwhile another hunter would slip into the billabong with a dillybag and swim underwater out to where the ducks were. From underneath, he would then grab a duck by its feet and stuff it into the bag, repeating the process until they had enough for dinner. Another way of catching ducks was to dig a hole in the side of the riverbank and place worms leading to the hole. A duck would eat its way along the trail of worms and end up inside the hole, only to be trapped, as ducks can't walk backwards.

### *A pleasant lunch to the soothing sound of bagpipes*

In mid-1840, the Wurundjeri warrior, Jagga-Jagga fought a resistance war against local settlers who were hostile to Aboriginal people, burning their paddocks and driving off stock. He was a powerfully-built man with very rugged features and was feared throughout.

A Scotsman, working as a shepherd in Bulleen, was in the habit of serenading the grazing sheep with his bagpipes over lunchtime. One day, with his lunch hanging from a tree branch, he was playing the bagpipes when Jagga-Jagga and a young companion, Winberri, came by. Jagga-Jagga indicated that they were hungry and asked him to provide lunch for them. He did so and as they began to eat, Jagga-Jagga politely requested he continue skirling his bagpipes. On finishing, Jagga-Jagga thanked him for the meal and the pleasant performance and went on his way. The shepherd then hurried back to the homestead, eager to tell the story of his encounter with the famous Jagga-Jagga, the black pimperl.

### *Simon Wonga's Legacy*

When Billibellari died in 1846, his son Simon Wonga, was asked to become Headman although only 25 years of age. Being the son of Billibellari gave him no hereditary right. His capability had been recognised at an early age and he had been assiduously trained. Simon asked the Elders for more time to learn the white man's ways so as to develop a plan for the survival of his people. Wonga managed to organise contract work for his people, one of which was to build the first pub in the Warrandyte goldfield. Knowing traditional tribal life was doomed, Wonga organised a last inter-tribal corroboree at Pound Bend in Warrandyte in March 1852. He finally managed to secure a grant of land at Coranderrk in 1863 which became the most successful Mission in Australia.