

## 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, also 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.

## The Wurundjeri Stories Project

This pamphlet was produced by Reconciliation Manningham as part of the Wurundjeri Stories Project which was initiated by Manningham City Council in close partnership with the Wurundjeri Tribe Council, Parks Victoria and Reconciliation Manningham.

This project saw interpretive signage placed around Pound Bend so that visitors can take self-guided walks and better appreciate aspects of Wurundjeri life in this important traditional living and gathering place.

Pound Bend was in fact the site of the last major inter-tribal corroboree (Gaggip) of the Kulin Nation, which is the confederation of central Victorian language groups to which the Wurundjeri and Woiwurung speaking clans belong. Held in March 1852, this event was organised by their highly respected Ngurungaeta (Headman), Simon Wonga. The Gaggip lasted two weeks and all manner of traditional games were played, including the tribal football game of Marngrook, which was a precursor to Australian Rules football.

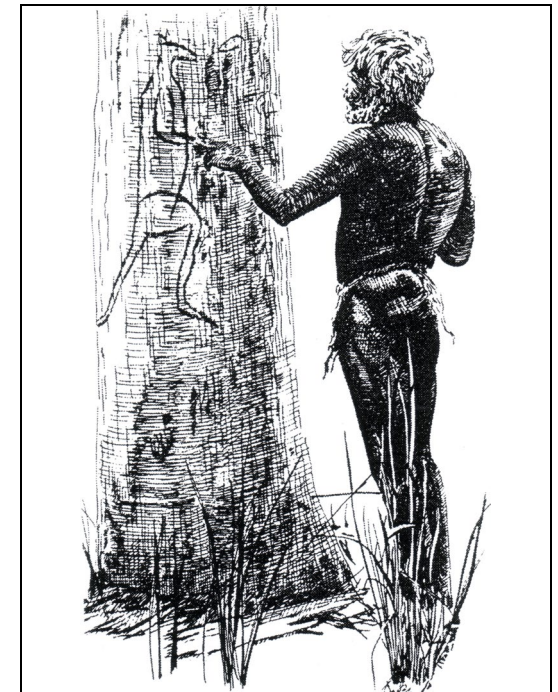
*For information on the activities and contact details of Reconciliation Manningham, please visit our website at:*

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

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



## WURUNDJERI DAILY LIFE at POUND BEND



Tree art (dendroglyphs), rock art (petroglyphs) and landscape art (geoglyphs) were all aspects of the cultural life of Woiwurung-speaking people.

## *A Managed Estate*

In traditional times, each tribe was centred on a water catchment area and managed their estates through intricate firestick farming schedules and strict totemic controls that maintained species balances. Aboriginal population throughout Australia was therefore closely adapted to the carrying capacity of the land in the poorest of seasons. This meant there was no overpopulation, resource depletion, hunger, poverty or wars of invasion and conquest. Plenty was the norm.

Prior to European settlement, all Aboriginal people across Australia therefore enjoyed the highest common standard of living in the world. The Wurundjeri people of the Yarra Valley region in turn enjoyed the highest standard of living in Australia. It took less than two hours of work each day to sustain a family in food and the rest of the time could be devoted to artistic, educational, ceremonial, recreational, family and social activities.

Pound Bend was a central part of the Warrandyte Gorge area of the Yarra Valley. It was rich in food resources, but this abundance was also a product of deliberate design, engineering, and husbanding by the Wurundjeri. This ensured that the natural features of the river system were enhanced by specific engineering that ensured sustainable use of the resources. For instance, at or near the confluence of creeks with the river, natural pools were further excavated to provide the deep water necessary as breeding places for yabbies and blackfish, and sheltering places for eels. The rocks excavated were then added to the adjacent rapids areas so as to provide more extensive breeding and harvesting areas for freshwater mussels. This freshwater mussel farming activity along the riverfront at Warrandyte was clearly evidenced by the middens observed there by the earliest settlers in Warrandyte.

At these rapids areas near deep pools, fish traps and eel traps were set up and evidence of an eel trap in this area is currently still visible at Laughing Waters. The

Pound Bend and adjacent Mullum-Mullum Creek wetland areas were also rich in carefully husbanded bird life. Forest areas on the river flats and hillsides were also cleared and managed by regular firing, but mature trees were kept at intervals of 25m to 50m metres. These carefully maintained parkland areas provided what settlers thought were 'natural' grazing areas for kangaroos, emus, and other game. This specific distance between trees of course provided a convenient distance for stalking game. On the north side of the river, the suburb of Kangaroo Ground was given this name by settlers because the area originally served as a kangaroo farm.

Regular firing promoted soil fertility and the regeneration of food sources such as Myrnong (yam daisies). The woodland copses encircling these more open areas also enabled the harvesting of possums for both food and clothing. Hunting in traditional Aboriginal society therefore did not include a daily or sometime fruitless search for food. They knew exactly where everything was and extracted it with a minimum of fuss or effort.

## *A leisurely life*

Fish and game were cooked in oven pits excavated into rock or into the ground, lined with clay mud and packed with hot coals, heated rocks, herbs, wet leaves and covered with soil. These banquets, known as Kup Murrie, took half a day or overnight before they were cooked. Whilst waiting for these banquets, many traditional games were played, including the children's football games. The two children's games, called Bidi and Parndo equated very closely with today's schoolyard games of 'kick to kick' and 'markers up'. Adults would also use this time to make artifacts, tools utensils or art objects such as bark and rock paintings.

In traditional Aboriginal society across Australia, a great deal of time was devoted each day to education of the young and ecological knowledge and practices were a constant theme.

As children showed particular bents or interests, this was encouraged and nurtured and they were assiduously trained from very early ages in specific vocations such as law, medicine, meteorology, performing arts, artifact manufacture, trade, and diplomacy. In Aboriginal society, knowledge was prized and once knowledge was acquired and demonstrated, it was rewarded with more knowledge.

Being an oral society, great store was placed on memorising and recalling detail, with song being a constant strategy for memorising detail. Children were constantly given memory tests on what they had been told and shown, and only those with the most retentive memories proceeded to the highest levels of education. Eldership was therefore not attained simply by the process of ageing. Age bore respect in its own right but clan leadership was only open to those who had passed through all initiation phases of life and displayed the appropriate character, temperament and diplomatic skills.

As the environment and food resources were so efficiently managed, traditional Aboriginal society was therefore not 'nomadic' as understood by Europeans. It could be accurately described as semi-sedentary. Families within a clan had their own creeks to manage in a specific area and centered their life there. Longer distance travel was therefore usually associated with ceremonial purposes and larger scale inter-clan business. Housing was also more permanent than is usually appreciated and involved igloo shaped turf block constructions that could house a dozen or more people. Many traditional village sites were abandoned after the smallpox plagues brought about by colonization. We are more familiar with the overnight willams that became the norm. Villages of these more permanent types of dwelling were usually found at high ground near the confluence of rivers and creeks, such as at Koonung, Ruffey and Mullum-Mullum.