



## *Chapter Four*

### **The individual radial routes**

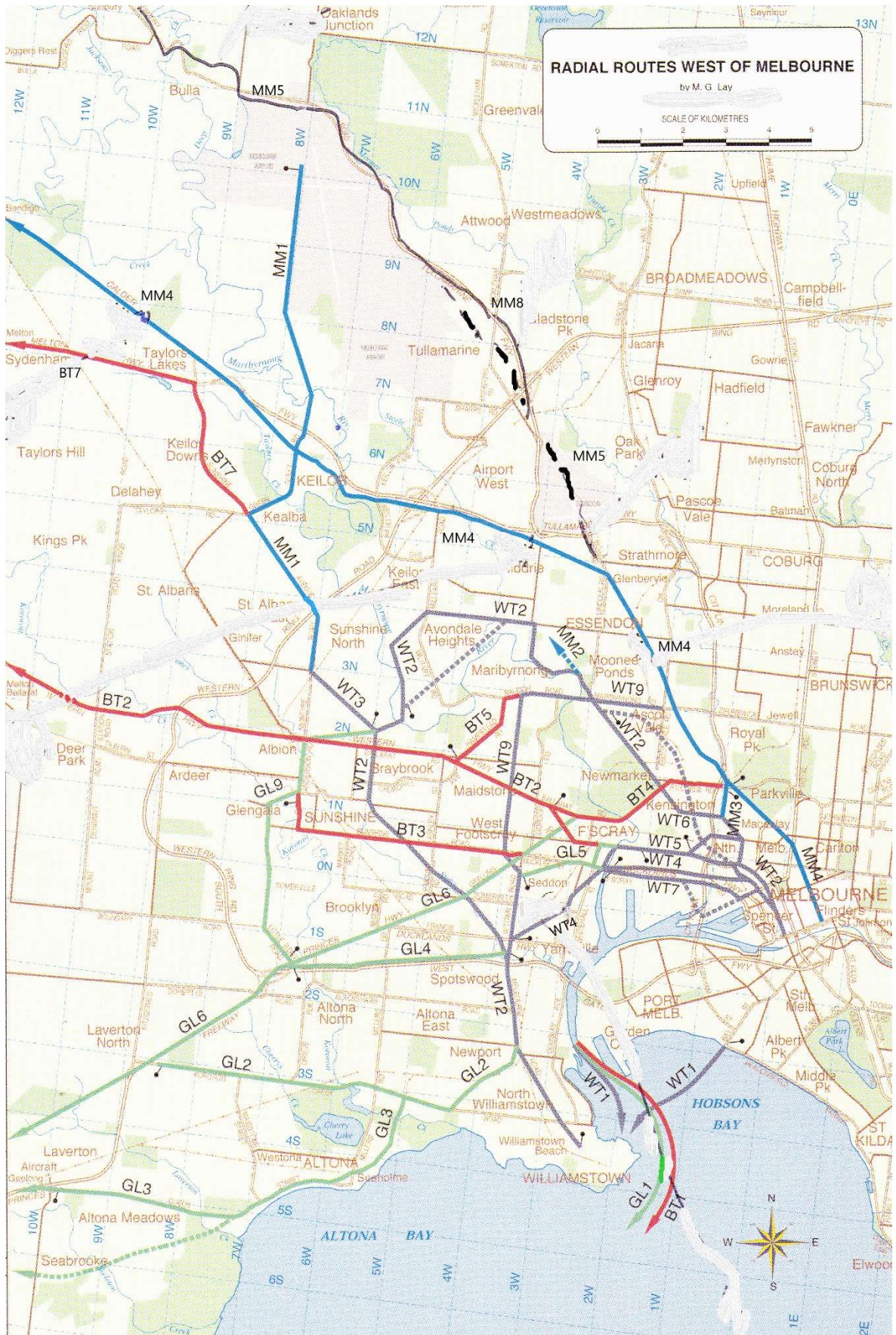
The next three Chapters discuss the major roads in Melbourne's history up to the year 2000. A unique alpha-numeric labelling is used to describe these historic routes to avoid confusing the labels with any of the many systems used over time for coding Melbourne's roads and streets. The individual labels are fully defined in the relevant text. The Chapters contain twelve generic groups of radial routes out of Melbourne, two sets of cardinal routes and one circumferential route.

The predominance of radial routes in the development of Melbourne's roads was discussed in Sub-chapter 3.6. This Chapter's discussion of specific radial routes will progress clockwise around Melbourne, from Williamstown to Port Melbourne, before finishing with the roads along the Yarra. This fits the historical pattern of Melbourne's development which began at the Williamstown and Melbourne anchorages and then favoured the port of Geelong and the western grazing lands, followed by the goldfields of Ballarat and Bendigo. On the other hand, the lands to the west were often less fertile than the lands to the east so development later shifted from the west to the east.

#### **4.1 Routes WT – the roads to Williamstown**

As discussed in Chapter 1.1, European settlement of the Melbourne area began in 1835 when John Batman illegally established a campsite at the downstream freshwater limit of the Yarra, a precedent followed by government surveyor Robert Russell in the following year. Only the smallest of ships could reach the site, and in early 1836 Russell's naval associates moored their ship at Williamstown, making it Melbourne's second European settlement. It is therefore appropriate for the ways between Melbourne and Williamstown to be the opening item in this Chapter.

The eight routes to be discussed are shown broadly in Map 4.1w (some later route sets are less of a muddle and are not shown on separate maps). The location of the WT routes was initially predicated on the swampy ground to the immediate west of Melbourne village (Map 2.3) and the need to provide a way for animal-drawn vehicles to cross both swamps and the Maribyrnong River. The crossing points were at Solomons Ford (route WT2), Keilor (route WT3), Footscray (routes WT4-7) and Ascot Vale (route WT8). The Ballarat Rd crossing at Flemington (route BT2) is discussed in later sub-chapters as it was never a prime Melbourne-Williamstown route.

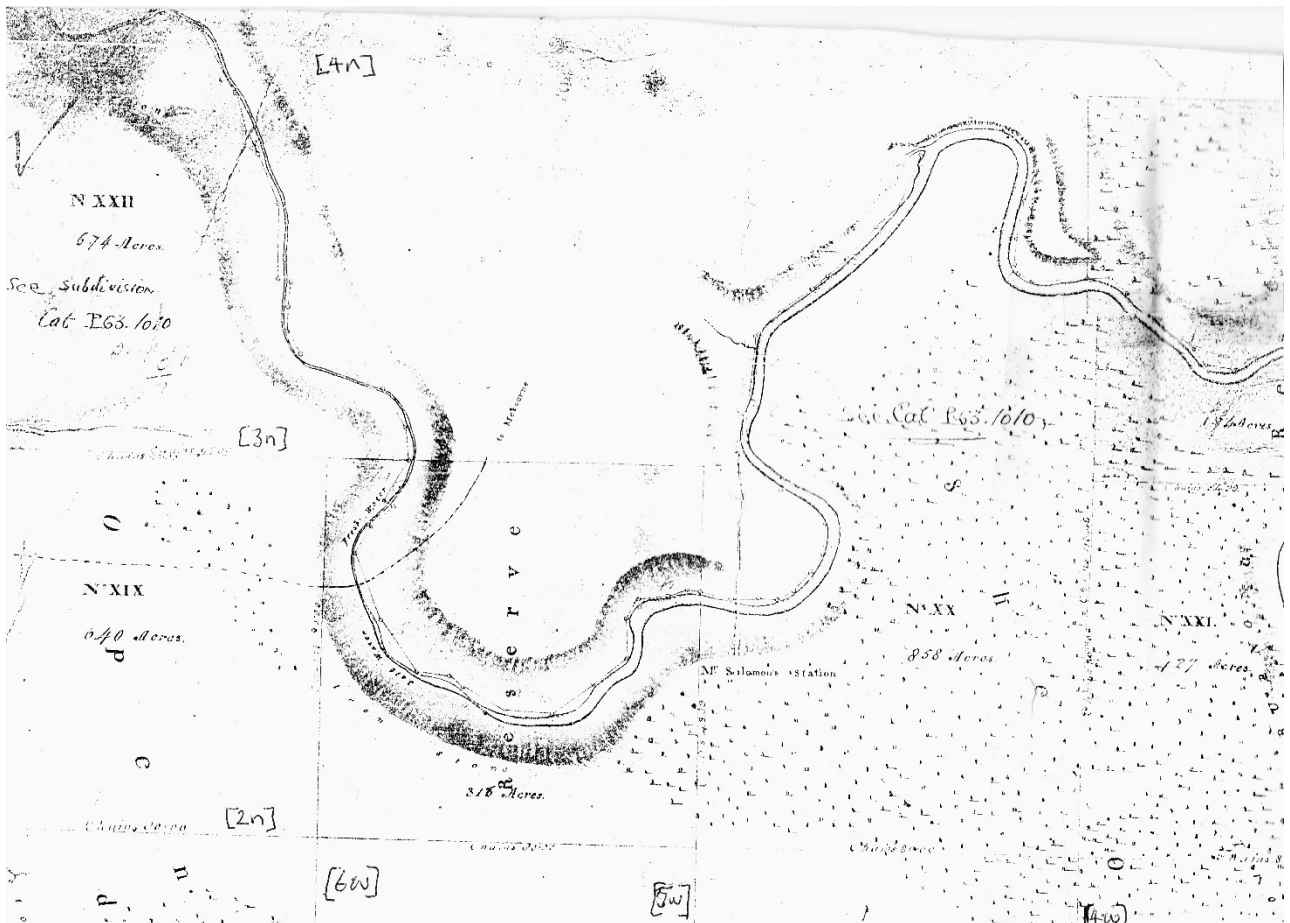


Map 4.1w Key routes to the west of Melbourne

WT1 via the water

In poor weather, travelling by water on small boats was often more effective than travelling by land. There were four such water-based ways between Melbourne and Williamstown:

- (a) The Yarra River linked Williamstown and Melbourne's Queens Wharf (sub-Chapter 1.2). However, the river estuary towards Williamstown was often heavily silted and there was a rocky reef where Yarra (at that time) joined the Maribyrnong River (Map 4.2). Thus, even at high tide the navigable depth of the Yarra was less than 3 m. For about a year from October 1838 a ferry service using the paddle steamer Firefly operated along the route. In 1841 the 18 m paddle steamers Governor Arthur (later called the Steampacket) and Fairy Queen began plying the route.<sup>1</sup> The iron steamer Vesta was operating on this service in 1842.



Map 4.2 Hoddle's 1840 map of the Parish of Cut Paw Paw. The western end of route WT2 from Melbourne to Solomons Ford across the Maribyrnong is shown here. Hoddle 1840a. Not available on-line. Original at PROV.

- (b) Another route used City Rd (route AY3) to reach the Hobsons Bay at Port Melbourne and a landing established there by William Liardet. In 1838 a man called Johnson rowed people in a whale boat to and from Williamstown. He and his co-paddler drowned in that same year and the operation was taken over by John Spotswood. His service was replaced by a formal ferry operation in 1840.<sup>2</sup> In 1853 the steamer Comet and later the Queen's Ferry travelled across Hobsons Bay to Williamstown on a regular service. It became much more attractive in 1854 when train, and then tram, services were operating from Port Melbourne to the city. The ferry service operated until the 1920s.<sup>3</sup>

- (c) As the roads developed, some travellers used the current line of Normandy Rd and Williamstown Rd (route AY2) in Port Melbourne to reach the riverside at place on the left bank at the western end of today's Tiger Drive {-37.840, +144.899}. This left bank location near the [1s] *section line* was known as Cannings Point. From 1837 an occasional ferry then took travellers across the Yarra River to Newport and piers at the eastern end of North Rd and Collingwood Rd (Greenwich Pier) and at the north end of The Strand (subsequently displaced by Newport Power Station). The route on the right bank then used Melbourne Rd (route WT2) to reach Williamstown village, or North Rd and Market St (route GL2) to reach Geelong. From the late 1840s to the 1860s, John Spotswood operated a more regular ferry. A steam-powered chain-cable service called The Connecting Link operated between 1873 and 1890 (Figure 4.1a). The steam-powered "Short Road" paddle ferry serviced the route from 1907 to 1931. It was so named because this portion of Williamstown Rd was originally known as the Williamstown Short Rd (route AY2). It was replaced by a steam-powered chain (actually "cable") ferry in 1974 (Figure 4.1b).
- (d) In recent times the Westgate Punt has provided a regular ferry service for pedestrians and cyclists between a wharf on the left bank of the Yarra at the downstream end of Lorimer St (route AY1) to the Science Works and Spotswood jetties on the right bank and then through the local streets and paths to route WT2.

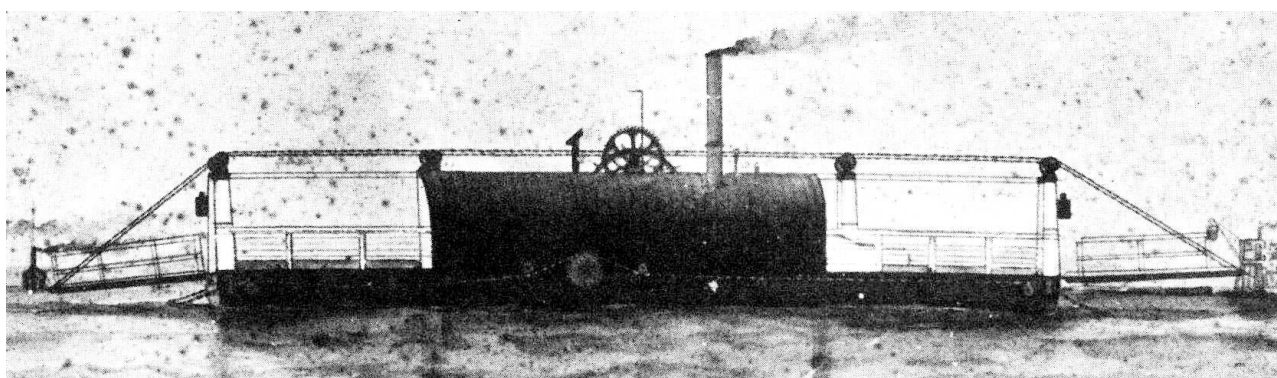


Figure 4.1a Steam-powered chain ferry in 1873 *SLV*



Figure 4.1b Steam-powered cable ferry (the two cables can be seen at the rear of the ferry) crossing the Yarra towards the right bank. Newport Power station is partly visible on the right side of the scene. *The Author*

There is some question about the ferries on particular routes as many (e. g. the Comet) seemed to have plied more than one route, and as Williamstown commentators thought it sufficient to record that they left Williamstown on a journey towards Melbourne.<sup>4</sup> The ferries were sometimes hailed by sending a smoke signal from a fire lit at the ferry terminal (see also Route AY3 and Figure 4.27 below).

Map 4.3 below indicates a route proposed by Ham in 1852 which ran from the left-bank of the Yarra at Queens Bridge through today's Fishermans Bend to a Cannings Point crossing of the Yarra.

## WT2 via Solomons Ford

The initial land route from Melbourne village to all points west was generally aimed at crossing the Maribyrnong River at the southernmost natural opportunity. Initially this was at Solomons Ford, which is located between Avondale Heights and Braybrook [-37.770, +144.851]. Reaching the Ford involved heading north-west out of Melbourne on a seasonal track adjoining extensive swamp lands, keeping on firm ground wherever possible, to then round the bend in Maribyrnong River near Buckley St [4n] in Essendon West. The swamps have been drained and the track no longer exists, however it was shown on Map 3.7, Map 4.2 and on Wells' map of 1840.

The route initially headed north-west, rather than west, out of Melbourne in order to avoid Batmans Swamp. The Swamp and the associated Great Pond and "North Melbourne flats" initially dominated travel in Melbourne's inner west. They are shown in the somewhat fanciful Map 3.2 and much more precisely in Map 4.3 drawn in 1852 and in Map 2.5 drawn in 1855. Map 2.5 clearly shows showing Batmans Swamp, the eastern extent of the west Melbourne morass, the ponds forming Moonee Ponds Creek, and Haines Creek. Hoddle called the area a "*marshy plain*" and in Map 1.1 Russell described it variously as a "*salt lake, at times quite dry*" and as surrounded by "*muddy plains*". Other descriptions varied from "*a real lake, intensely blue, nearly oval*" through to "*a bitter unproductive marsh*". It was also variously called blue water lake, saltwater lagoon, saltwater marsh, winter swamp, and West Melbourne swamp, and – by 1849 – as "*the dismal swamp*".<sup>6</sup> As Melbourne developed, the Swamp turned increasingly into a stinking cesspool. In high rainfall, it drained into the Maribyrnong River opposite Bunbury St. The swamp was permanently drained and filled in 1879.<sup>7</sup> The portion at the end of Moonee Ponds Creek was sometimes called the Great Pond – it was the last of the sequence of ponds along the creek – and later works ensured that it drained directly into the Yarra.

Map 4.3 Ham's 1852 Map of the Suburban Lands of the City of Melbourne. Available at [http://search.slv.vic.gov.au/permalink/f/1c135st/SLV\\_VOYAGER675290](http://search.slv.vic.gov.au/permalink/f/1c135st/SLV_VOYAGER675290). The map shows the position of Batmans Swap, with the Swamp and Great Pond shown joined. Smaller ponds on the Moonee Ponds Creek can be seen faintly shaded). The proposed Road to Geelong (route GL3) did not survive. SLV 821 BJE, Ham 1852.

### (i) *City to Racecourse Rd*

At a spot near Batmans Hill (Map 4.3), early travellers to the west had to choose between:

- \* riskily taking a track between Batmans Swamp and the right bank of the Yarra River to the ferries crossing the Maribyrnong at Footscray near Bunbury St. This way is discussed in route WT4.
- \* conservatively continuing to North Melbourne and beyond on firm ground on the seasonal northern edge of the swamp. This formed the first part of route WT2.

Within the settlement's first year (Sub-chapter 1.1), a vehicular track led out of Melbourne and proceeded north, approximately following the current line of Spencer St along the edge of Batmans Swamp (Map 4.3). The track headed northwest following the last ledge of high ground before the swamp and bordering the high-water extent of the north-eastern perimeter of the Great Pond (Map 3.6). This ledge extended through North Melbourne on a route marked today by the eastern rail tracks to North Melbourne Railway Station and then Munster Tce (Map 1.1, Map 2.3 & Map 3.2). If track conditions worsened due to rising water levels, travellers avoided Munster Tce and used Dryburgh St or even Abbotsford St on a ridge of land, seeking dry ground across the northern edge of the Great Pond. At the other extreme, in dry weather some travellers followed the current Upfield railway track as far as Macaulay Rd (Map 4.3). At this point route WT5 later deviated on a more westerly course.

To the north of Arden St were the "North Melbourne flats" - a swampy alluvial plain whose eastern verge was Munster Tce and its north-eastern verge was the diagonal portion of Macaulay Rd, or Shiel St in wet weather.<sup>8</sup> Central to the Flats was Moonee Ponds Ck, which was often no more than "a chain of ponds" (Map 4.3 & Map 4.4) with the Great Pond<sup>9</sup> discussed above serving as its estuary. Commonly, the Great Pond stopped at its upstream end about 100 m south of Arden St, but in wet weather or high tides, the waters lapped the street. The course of the Moonee Ponds Creek below Arden St is part of the drainage system. Following a flood in 1870 a large yacht was found washed ashore on the diagonal stretch of Macaulay Rd.

Map 4.4 de Gruchy and Leigh's plan of the parishes in and around Melbourne. 1855? Available at [http://search.slv.vic.gov.au/permalink/f/1c135st/SLV\\_VOYAGER673411](http://search.slv.vic.gov.au/permalink/f/1c135st/SLV_VOYAGER673411), SLV. de Gruchy 1855

Further upstream were three more, smaller ponds.<sup>10</sup> The first was about 100 m long, and straddled Macaulay Rd, the second was about 300 m long and crossed both Sutton St and Alfred St (Map 4.4)<sup>11</sup>, and the third lay to the north of Racecourse Rd [2n] in the Debneys Park area.<sup>12</sup> Wedge's 1836 map shows the ponds continuing until well north of Bell St.

The coming of the North Melbourne railway in the late 1850s created a new obstruction that meant that the travellers leaving the city were pushed east onto a route closer to Adderley St. Part of the original iron bridge used in the Dynon St crossing was later incorporated into the concourse of the North Melbourne Railway Station.

In the process, all these sub-routes crossed the Haines St creek, which flowed southwest following the line of Park Drive and Haines St, before emptying into the Moonee Ponds Creek just above Arden St.<sup>13</sup> The Dryburgh St bridge over the Haines St creek was built in 1860. La Trobe's green belt (Sub-chapter 2.3) had kept most of this North Melbourne / Kensington area unsubdivided for many years, and so travellers were able to pick and choose their routes through the good ground. The low-lying parts were sometimes broadly referred to as the Kensington Swamp.

The travellers' next task was to cross the North Melbourne flats and the associated Moonee Ponds Creek. Map 4.3 and many other maps<sup>14</sup> between 1840 and 1855 show a route from Melbourne turning west near the current east - west line of Macaulay Rd to use a creek crossing just north of Macaulay Rd between the first and second of the smaller ponds. Using the diagonal south-eastern end of Macaulay Rd was the shortest link to this crossing but involved leaving the high ground and venturing onto the verge of the swamp.<sup>15</sup> The three segments of Dryburgh St, diagonal Macaulay Rd, and Macaulay Rd west of Boundary Rd today provide a stylised reminder of the early trips around the edge of the great swamp. A timber bridge was built on Macaulay Rd across the Moonee Ponds Creek in the mid-1860s. It has since been replaced by a 5-span reinforced concrete bridge.

After crossing the swampy creek valley near Macaulay Rd, the next immediate travel purpose was to reach a ridge of high ground to the west of the creek. One 1840 route<sup>16</sup> attained the ridge above today's Kensington Railway Station on the current Broadmeadows railway line. It then followed the ridge north (the usefulness of ridges was discussed in Sub-Chapter 2.1(d)). As subdivisions developed, the route then followed Epsom Rd to Racecourse Rd and beyond.<sup>17</sup> The main alternative route headed in a more northerly direction towards Newmarket Railway Station on Racecourse Rd.

As the town expanded, alternative routes left the city to reach Canning St / Macaulay Rd or even Flemington Rd via either King St and Curzon St, Errol St or Leveson St; William St and Howard St; Queen St; or Elizabeth St.<sup>18</sup> Map 4.3 suggests that by that time travellers to the northwest were leaving town via Queen St. King St was enhanced in the 1850s and 60s (Sub-Chapters 7.1&2) and became a popular all-weather exit. Errol St was first constructed in the 1860s. Later, as North Melbourne developed, Elizabeth St beyond Victoria St [1n] became the preferred route and is discussed under route MM4.

As the downstream crossings became impassable in wet weather, travellers could then use Boundary Rd (route MM3, [1w]) or Flemington Rd (route MM4) to cross Moonee Ponds Creek between the second and third ponds, on the line of Racecourse Rd (initially Barwise St east of Boundary Rd) [2n]. If conditions further worsened, they could cross the creek using Melbourne's first vehicular bridge near today's Flemington Bridge Railway Station (see route MM4). This easily-managed all-weather route became a popular alternative to Macaulay Rd, particularly after Racecourse Rd was formally constructed in 1863 (Map 4.3, Map 4.4 & Map 4.6).

At about the same time, tolls were introduced on Macaulay Rd, Racecourse Rd, and Flemington Rd. By then Macaulay Rd was a main route for bringing cattle into Melbourne and was reconstructed in 1864. However, many herds used the surrounding unmade roads to avoid the tolls on Macaulay Rd and Flemington Rd. The first Racecourse Rd bridge over Moonee Ponds Creek was constructed in 1885 and the Newmarket rail bridge raised and extended in 1888. Both were done with Public Works Department support and further increased the appeal of the Flemington Rd / Racecourse Rd route.

#### *(ii) Racecourse Rd to Solomons Ford*

North of Racecourse Rd, the route followed today's Broadmeadows railway alignment north along a ridge to Ascot Vale Railway Station, and then headed across to the southern end of The Boulevard (Map 4.3). By the time the

surveyors and subdividers were finished, the formal route from the right bank of Moonee Ponds Creek followed Macaulay Rd and Epsom Rd to The Boulevard. Epsom Rd (originally also called Macaulay Rd and Racecourse Rd) was formally established as a diagonal between two *section* corners ([2w], [2n]) and ([3w], [3n]). Its angle provided the subdividers in 1840 with properties having ready-made water-access to the Maribyrnong.

After the improved Mains Bridge opened on Mt Alexander Rd (route MM4) in 1849, an alternative route to stay on Mt Alexander Rd until Kent St or, later, Puckle St. Puckle St began where the [2w] *section line* intersected Mt Alexander Rd as Ascot Vale Rd. The route then travelled west on Puckle St and Holmes Rd, linking up with the original route at The Boulevard. The line of Puckle St / Holmes Rd is suggested in early maps but, as it was not a *section line*, it was lost in the 1840s farm subdivision and does not reappear until one of the properties was subdivided in the 1880s to provide an access road to Moonee Ponds Railway Station.

The Boulevard followed the left bank of the Maribyrnong River until the river turned to an east-west alignment near the Buckley St and the [4n] *line*. Indeed, the steep banks of the valley at this point may have forced travellers further north to near today's Buckley St. The route then headed south-west to Solomons Ford which was located at the western end of Canning St (Avondale Heights), between Avondale Heights and the old village of Braybrook (Map 4.3). As Lack notes, the Maribyrnong was "too wide and deep to ford easily below" Solomons Ford which was the river's saltwater limit.<sup>19</sup> The ford location is clearly shown in Map 4.2 of 1840. Joseph Solomon was the local "land-owner". It is said by some that he never visited the property, however others have Solomon and his family as long-time residents of the area, operating a sheep run near Mt Cotterell<sup>20</sup>. The original ford is no longer visible but is now marked by broad stepping-stones providing walkers with easy passage. Jones provides an excellent survey of the ford, which was first encountered by Europeans when it impeded Grimes' voyage up the river in 1803. Grimes was discouraged by the rock-strewn plains and relatively barren countryside and abandoned his search for good land in the area. The ford was occasionally called Clancys Ford<sup>21</sup>. There are suggestions that a ferry might have operated at the Ford.

Buckley St and the western side of Mt Alexander Rd (south of Buckley St) were originally called Braybrook Rd.<sup>22</sup> The ford was a "suburban" focus of early travel in the Melbourne area. For example, on the left bank, Milleara Rd (route KS2) also led travellers from the north to the ford and is probably the ford marked as Brodies Ford in King's logbook of 1837 (see Map 4.8). Steele Creek is the other stream shown in the logbook. See also the discussion in route OL1.

The land on both sides of the ford was held as a village reserve<sup>23</sup> and so was unsubdivided in the 1850s. There is some speculation as to the route taken on the last leg of the journey to the ford, with four possibilities:

- \* The route ran directly from Steele Creek ford to Solomon's Ford, as suggested by many maps such as Map 4.2 and Map 4.8. Indeed, Anderson<sup>24</sup> believes the route went down Steele Creek and along the left bank of the river to near the Riverview Tea Gardens site, and then across country through Avondale High School grounds to the Ford. This sub-route uses Flinders Peak in the You Yangs as its sighting point and was therefore probably the first route. No current roads reflect this alignment, although the 1929 Town Plan (Sub-chapter 3.5) proposed a road along part of this short cut.
- \* As travellers searched for an easy way for their drays, the route possibly went along North Rd (sometimes called North Pole Rd) in Avondale Heights, which had a strong presence prior to the earliest subdivisions (Map 4.4). It then turned south parallel to, but to the west of Thompson St, finally descending the escarpment near Rickard St to use the ford. The riverside terrain on either bank is such that a relatively easy passage between the Avondale and Sunshine plateaus was possible if the river itself could be forded - which might have been the case in periods of low flow. This is the only route shown in Map 4.3, Selwyn's map of 1860 and Australian Army's map of 1922 (1935). Two alternative North Rd routes to the Canning St ford were that travellers:
  - # descended down North Rd to the river bank and continued along the left bank to the ford.
  - # followed Milleara Rd south of the [4n] *section line*, turning west near the Avondale High School grounds to reach the ford. This route is indicated by Map 4.2 and Map 4.3.

There has also been some debate over the location of the ford, but Hoddle's map of 1840 (Map 4.2) has it at the end of Canning St. Jones addresses the controversy caused by some maps (e. g. Clarke's 1849a&b maps and Popp 1979) suggesting that the ford was at the end of North Rd near the west boundary of the Thompsons St Reserve.<sup>25</sup> She refutes that suggestion. There is also a possible ford site at the end of Rhonda St, which has not been mentioned in earlier reviews. Mason's map of 1858 unrealistically shows the ford neatly positioned on the [6w] *line*. Hoddle's Map 4.2 shows the ford in its accepted position at the west end of Canning St.



In his 1837 trip to Geelong (sub-chapter 1.2), Governor Bourke and his party took a day to travel from Melbourne to Solomons Ford. The route, via Werribee, is shown on Arrowsmith's map of 1840.

In 1906 the electric tram service opened from Flemington Bridge, along Racecourse Rd, Epsom Rd, Union Rd, and Maribyrnong Rd to Maribyrnong River.

*(iii) An alternative route to Bendigo*

As travel to Bendigo (route MM3-5) developed in the 1850s a new alternative route to Bendigo left route WT2 near where it turned south-west at the [4e] *section line*. Instead, it headed north at Afton St, avoiding a difficult creek crossing (Map 4.3). The longer routes and river-bank access via The Boulevard are not recognised in subdivisional maps from the 1850s to the 1920s as later subdivision had led to the earlier use of Waverley St [3w] or Vida St.<sup>26</sup> Somewhere north of Afton St, the early Mt Macedon track (route MM2) left the route and headed separately for most points north.

This first part of the route as far as Steele Creek is shown in La Trobe's 1841 plan (Map 3.5) as it served the various routes (such as MM2&3) to the northwest. However, by 1841 the merits of Lonsdale's ferry across Maribyrnong River at Bunbury St in Footscray (route WT4) would have obviated the need to provide for the next portions of this route to Stony Creek.

For the next stage of the pre-ferry journey a simple route to the west arose using Buckley St (Essendon West) which was, conveniently, located on the [4n] *section line*. Between Hoffmans Rd and Rachele St the route originally deviated about 150 m north to find a suitable ford through Steele Creek. This portion is not shown as a reservation in Map 4.3 but was gazetted<sup>27</sup> in 1854 as part of a road "from Mt Alexander Rd to Solomons Ford." Buckley St was a useful part of the route as it was a ridge road with easy grades out of the Steele Creek valley.

*(iv) Solomons Ford to Williamstown*

Returning to a discussion of the primary route described in (ii) above, four major routes started from the right bank of the Maribyrnong River at Solomons Ford (Map 4.2):

- \* south to Williamstown along Duke St [6w], which is this route, and had been advocated by Hoddle,<sup>28</sup>
- \* southwest to Werribee and Geelong via Anderson Rd (route GL9),
- \* west to Ballarat via Ballarat Rd (route BT2 and route BT6), and
- \* northwest to Keilor (originally Keila) and beyond via McIntyre Rd (route BT7 and route MM1).

There may well have been an expectation – evident in maps such as Map 4.4 from the mid-1850s – for a permanent crossing between North Rd in Avondale Heights and Duke St [6w] in Sunshine. Selwyn's map of 1860 and later maps from the 1870s show only a North Rd / Duke St route. However, Duke St was still shown as an undeveloped property boundary in Map 4.4, with Burke St to its east as the developed route south to Ballarat Rd – situation which continued at least into the 1890s (Map 4.5 and Map 4.7). The direction of North Rd plays homage to the route taken by early travellers.

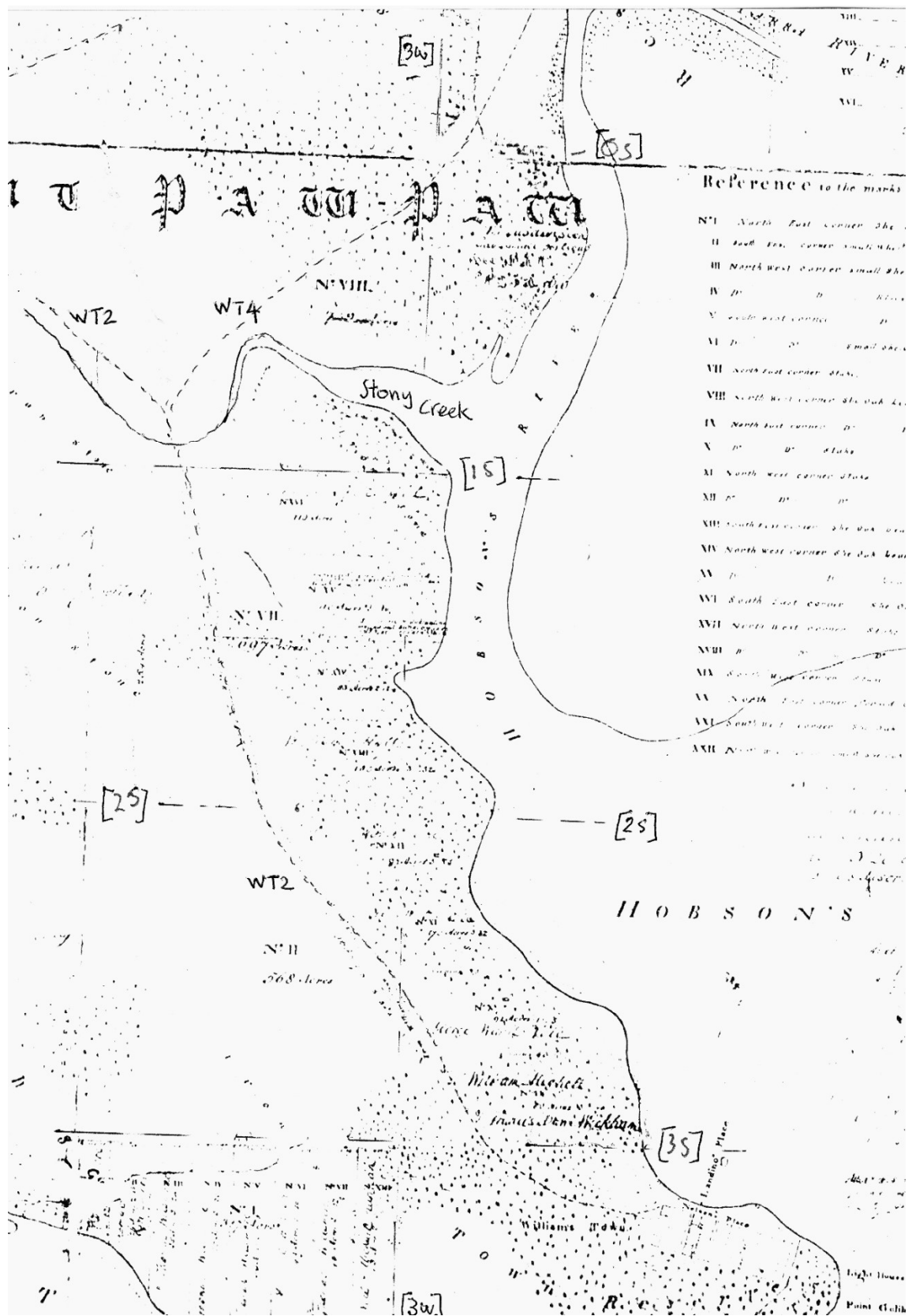
Map 4.5 Department of Lands and Surveys 1876 map of Melbourne and Suburbs. SLV.

[http://search.slv.vic.gov.au/permalink/f/1cl35st/SLV\\_VOYAGER787185](http://search.slv.vic.gov.au/permalink/f/1cl35st/SLV_VOYAGER787185)

Duke St used the [6w] *section line*, which is conveniently on top of the Maribyrnong valley escarpment, to travel south to Stony Creek and travellers could then well have emulated the existing stock route (route OL1), following the creek valley southeast to Williamstown Rd. Traces of this route are now largely lost in the subdivisions but it crossed Stony Creek at an easy crossing point above the tidal zone, probably near Paramount Rd [5w].

Map 4.6 shows the route following down the right bank of Stony Creek until the point where the creek begins to head east and away from Williamstown. Originally, the creek went south to the Melbourne Rd / The Avenue intersection [c4w]. The crossing was at the point where the creek had narrowed markedly providing the lowest practical crossing of the creek before it discharged into the Yarra. By the 1860s the Williamstown railway used the first suitable crossing above the creek's tidal estuary, just avoiding its large and swampy entrance to the Yarra River.

Although the road crossing was forced further upstream, the new site fortuitously had flatter approaches from the adjoining plateaux. The Stony Creek estuary was a significant route determinant (Map 3.5 and Map 4.2) and the fixing of this crossing established the location of both the north - south Williamstown Rd and Melbourne Rd, as shown in Map 4.6. Stony Creek's current alignment in this area is a consequence of the construction of the West Gate Freeway (route GL8).



Map 4.6 Part of Hoddle's 1840 map of the Parish of Cut Paw Paw. The track from Melbourne to the west crossing the Maribyrnong at Solomons Ford is shown. Hoddle 1840a. Not available on-line. Original at PROV.

At this point the route is joined by route WT4 which used the Bunbury St ferry. The subsequent route between Stony Creek and Williamstown is shown in Map 4.6 as a track following the edge of the open plains to the west and the wooded land to the east. It was generally a little to the east of Melbourne Rd. By the early 1840s<sup>29</sup> the surveyors had converted the track into the two straight alignments of Melbourne Rd, kinking at the [2s] *section line* and ending near the [3s] *section line*, before entering the streets of Williamstown village. There is little difference between the track and the final alignment. Conveniently, the alignment is approximately parallel to the riverbank and therefore accommodated the formal needs for subdivided land to maximise the number of allotments with waterfront access (sub-chapter 2.1). Melbourne Rd is shown in its present position in Map 4.7.

Melbourne Rd south of Mason St [2s] is one of the unsurveyed routes in La Trobe's plan (Map 3.5), the 1929 Town Plan utilises it as an existing main road, and the 1954 plan replaces it by a new road along the side of the Yarra. As Williamstown gained excellent rail and sea connections, 19<sup>th</sup> century government policy was to minimise road expenditure. Thus, the southern end of the route remained unformed as late as 1862. Nevertheless, there was a tollgate on the road.<sup>30</sup> The Public Works Department funded the construction of the Stony Creek bridge and its approach roads from Francis St to North Rd in 1879-81. A condition of the grant was that the bridge should "not stop navigation of Stony Ck." In 1961 and 1975 the CRB opened the rail overpasses on Melbourne Rd at Newport and at Blackshaws Rd<sup>31</sup> respectively. The steel beam bridges had been built under auspices of the Level Crossings Fund (Sub-chapter 3.5). Melbourne Rd is now part of Route 37 in the Metropolitan route numbering system.

#### (v) Formalities

Spencer St and King St were the only two Melbourne village roads to later become Main Roads. Dryburgh St and Curzon St were declared Main Roads; the diagonal portion of Macaulay Rd was declared a Main Road in 1994; Epsom Rd in 1990 from Merrett Ave to Langs Rd and in 1991 from Langs Rd to Maribyrnong Rd; Buckley St from Hoffmans Rd to Milleara Rd in 1983; Williamstown Rd to Kororoit Creek Rd in 1983 and Melbourne Rd<sup>32</sup> in 1983.

#### WT3 a detour via Keilor

Many animal-drawn drays and other heavily-laden vehicles could not negotiate Solomons Ford, which had made route WT2 feasible. Heavy rains also made the ford impassable for all but the most nimble of travellers. The alternative was to make a much lengthier journey via the Bendigo road (routes MM3&5). The Maribyrnong River was finally crossed at Keilor, initially using a ford and then a ferry and, from the mid-1840s, using the first bridge over the Maribyrnong.<sup>33</sup> The story of this crossing is told under route MM4.

Once across the river, travellers used Route BT7a (Sunshine Ave and McIntyre Rd [7s]) & (route MM1) to return south to Braybrook, where they rejoined route WT2. In wet weather the route was thus the prime "safe" overland freight route from Melbourne to the south-west and to the west. Indeed, Sunshine Ave is still shown as a straight-line connection to the north end of Duke St and route WT2 in Map 4.7.



3  
 Map 4.7 North-west corner of Department of Lands and Surveys 1892 map of Melbourne and Suburbs. See eastern portion in Map 3.3. Department of Lands and Survey. SLV County of Bourke Atlas (Not digitised)

[http://search.slv.vic.gov.au/permalink/f/1cl35st/SLV\\_VOYAGER699159](http://search.slv.vic.gov.au/permalink/f/1cl35st/SLV_VOYAGER699159)  
[http://search.slv.vic.gov.au/permalink/f/1cl35st/SLV\\_VOYAGER663324](http://search.slv.vic.gov.au/permalink/f/1cl35st/SLV_VOYAGER663324)

#### *WT4-7 through the swamp*

In their search for a usable crossing of Maribyrnong River, travellers using Solomons Ford (route WT2) or the Keilor Ford (route WT3) were forced to follow quite circuitous paths. Such travellers were therefore keen to take advantage of man-made crossings of the river at Footscray. Indeed, in the late 1830s magistrate William Lonsdale had pointed out to his administrative masters that a river crossing at Footscray would be a wise investment as it would shorten the journey to Williamstown or Geelong by 17 km.<sup>34</sup> As discussed below (route WT4), Lonsdale soon acted on his own advice. At various times there were Maribyrnong River ferry crossings at - working upstream - Footscray Rd (route WT7), Bunbury St (route WT4), Dynon Rd (route WT5), Hobsons Rd (Kensington) and Ballarat Rd (route BT4).

Within a short time, the preponderance of travellers from Melbourne to the west had abandoned the routes via Solomons Ford or Keilor for the shortcut provided by the Footscray ferries described in the following three routes.<sup>35</sup>

#### WT4 Yarraside

As shown in Map 3.6, there were a number of early options for an estuarine route to the Footscray ferries. Travelling and, of course, road building in the swampy area was far from simple.

WT4a. The southernmost proceeded along a western extension of Flinders St using a strip of low, flat ground between the right bank of the old course of the Yarra River near today's Coode Rd and the southern edge of the Great Pond (see the description of the pond and Batmans swamp in route WT2). It then followed the strip downstream until the bank became swampy near the confluence with the Maribyrnong. This track was called "Old Footscray Rd". In 1856 a gasworks began operating on the right bank of the Yarra downstream of today's Charles Grimes Bridge, and so a good track for the eastern part of the route from Flinders St existed from that time. This section was formally constructed as Flinders St Extension in about 1905. With the redevelopment of the docks the route was extended further east as North Wharf Road but the abruptly terminated by the entrance to Victoria Dock, opened in 1893. It was possible to cross the Victoria Dock entrance on a pontoon bridge, but the route now linked to the original route just prior to its crossing of Moonee Ponds Creek. In 1978 Footscray Rd was extended south across the Yarra with the construction of the Charles Grimes bridge. To maintain the vertical alignment of the approach roads, the prestressed concrete bridge had a clearance of only 3.9 m at low water and so prevented conventional shipping from proceeding further upstream.

WT4b. As with route WT2, the other more northerly routes between Melbourne and Footscray used Spencer St and turned northwest at Lonsdale St to follow the westernmost ledge of high ground before the swampy estuary. Travellers then chose between descending into the estuary on this route or staying on firm ground and continuing to Solomons Ford via route WT2. The weather would have paid a major part in the decision. The decision point was near where Wurundjeri Way (SR 55) passes under Latrobe St.

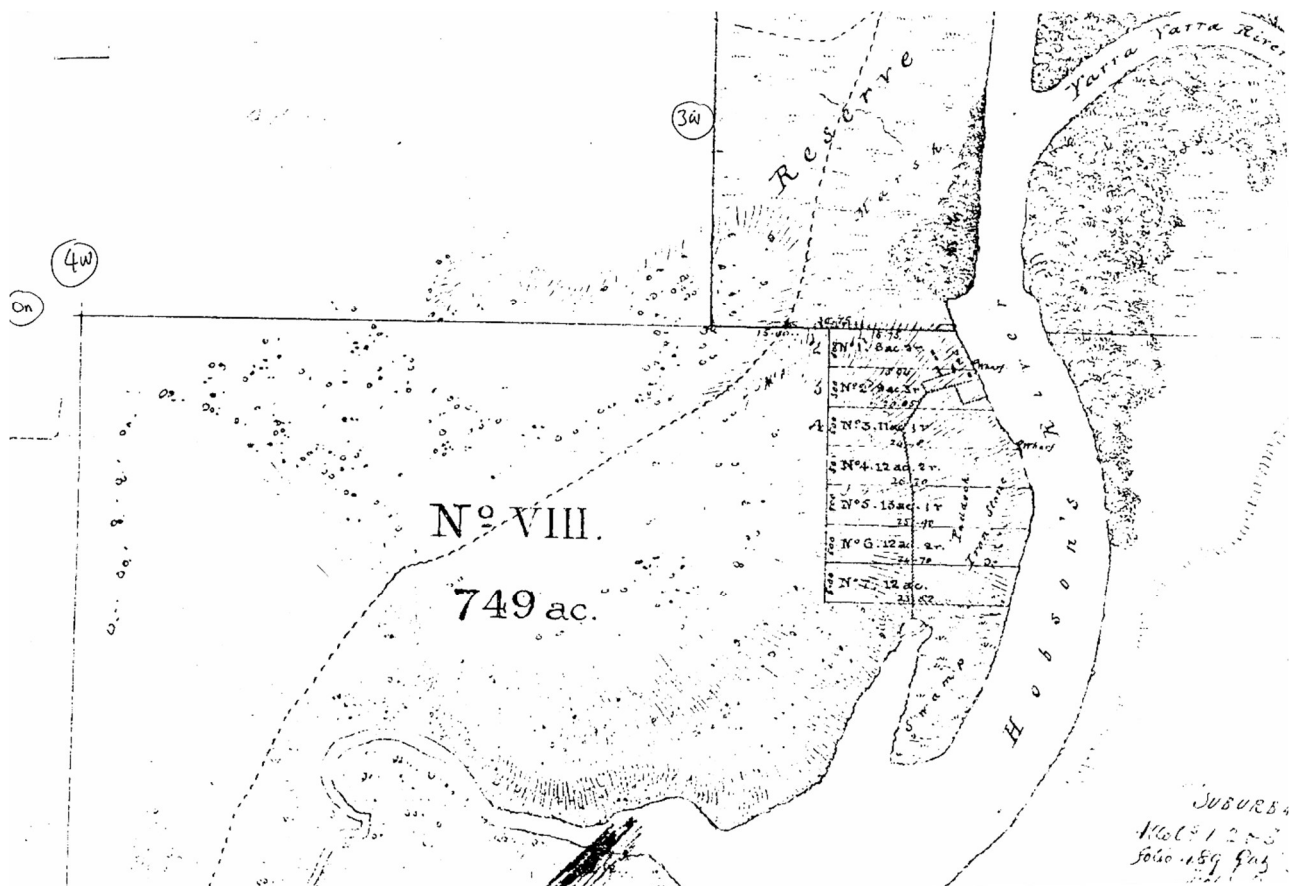
WT4c. A further, secondary, dry-weather route followed a slightly more northern course around the northern edge of the Great Pond (Map 3.6). Indeed, some five different tracks from Melbourne village and passing through or around the swamps to the Footscray ferries are shown in Map 3.6 from the early 1850s. The northernmost route is discussed as route WT5 below.

The routes joined just above the confluence of the Yarra and Maribyrnong Rivers and headed north along the left bank of the Maribyrnong to the line of Bunbury St, 200 m north of today's Footscray Rd (route WT7) and the later site of today's major steel truss railway bridge serving the port area. In 1839, magistrate Lonsdale provided a free user-operated ferry (or punt) capable of carrying a small cart across the Maribyrnong at the foot of Bunbury St.<sup>36</sup> The crossing location was chosen as it was on good ground and upstream of the point where the river widened into a coastal estuary as it joined the Yarra. The various Melbourne ferries were commonly called "punts". It is unlikely that these were "punts", as although being flat bottomed, most were rope-drawn and not propelled by long poles placed on the river bottom.

Before the year was out, Lonsdale was joined by Thomas Watts, who had moved his ferry from Princes Bridge at the centre of the settlement (see route SK2) to service the Geelong trade expected to use this route. Early in 1841, Benjamin Levien established both a third ferry and an Inn - the Victoria Hotel - on the right bank.<sup>37</sup> Levien had been a hotel-keeper in Sydney.<sup>38</sup> The ferry was operated by two men hauling on a rope tied to both banks (This was the most common way of operating the early Melbourne ferries). By 1845 his business was flourishing, although with intense competition.<sup>39</sup>

Footscray village reserve had been established by Hoddle in the original *sectioning* process in the late 1830s (Sub-chapter 2.1). It sat in the southeast corner of the [1n], [3w] *section lines* on the river's right bank and encompassed the ferry landings described in routes WT4-7. The reserve was not laid out until surveyor Lindsay Clarke undertook the task in 1849.<sup>40</sup> Clarke provided six main blocks bounded by Maribyrnong River, Napier St, Cowper St and Wingfield St. Village reserves are discussed in Sub-chapter 2.2.

From the ferry landing at the foot of Bunbury St and within the village reserve, travellers proceeded about 200 m down the riverside to the edge of the reserve at Napier St. Travellers to Geelong headed west-southwest, as described in route GL5 and shown in Map 4.5.<sup>41</sup> Travellers to Williamstown on route WT4 headed southwest to meet route WT2 at the first practical crossing of Stony Creek. The initial route to the crossing headed south through open land along the current lines of Moreland St and Whitehall St (Map 4.2, Map 4.6 & Map 4.8). In doing so, as shown in Map 4.2 it skirted to the west of the large estuary of Lyons Creek in the region of Lyons St, crossing the creek on relatively firm ground, and then to the west of extensive riverside swamps further to the south, all the while keeping to the east of the Footscray escarpment. Extensive quarrying, particularly in the Yarraville area, dramatically altered the substance of this escarpment. Whitehall St was not formalised until Lindsay Clarke's 1849 survey and even in the early 1850s, the village reserve in the area to the east of Nicholson St [3w] and between Hopkins St [1n] and Somerville Rd had not been subdivided.

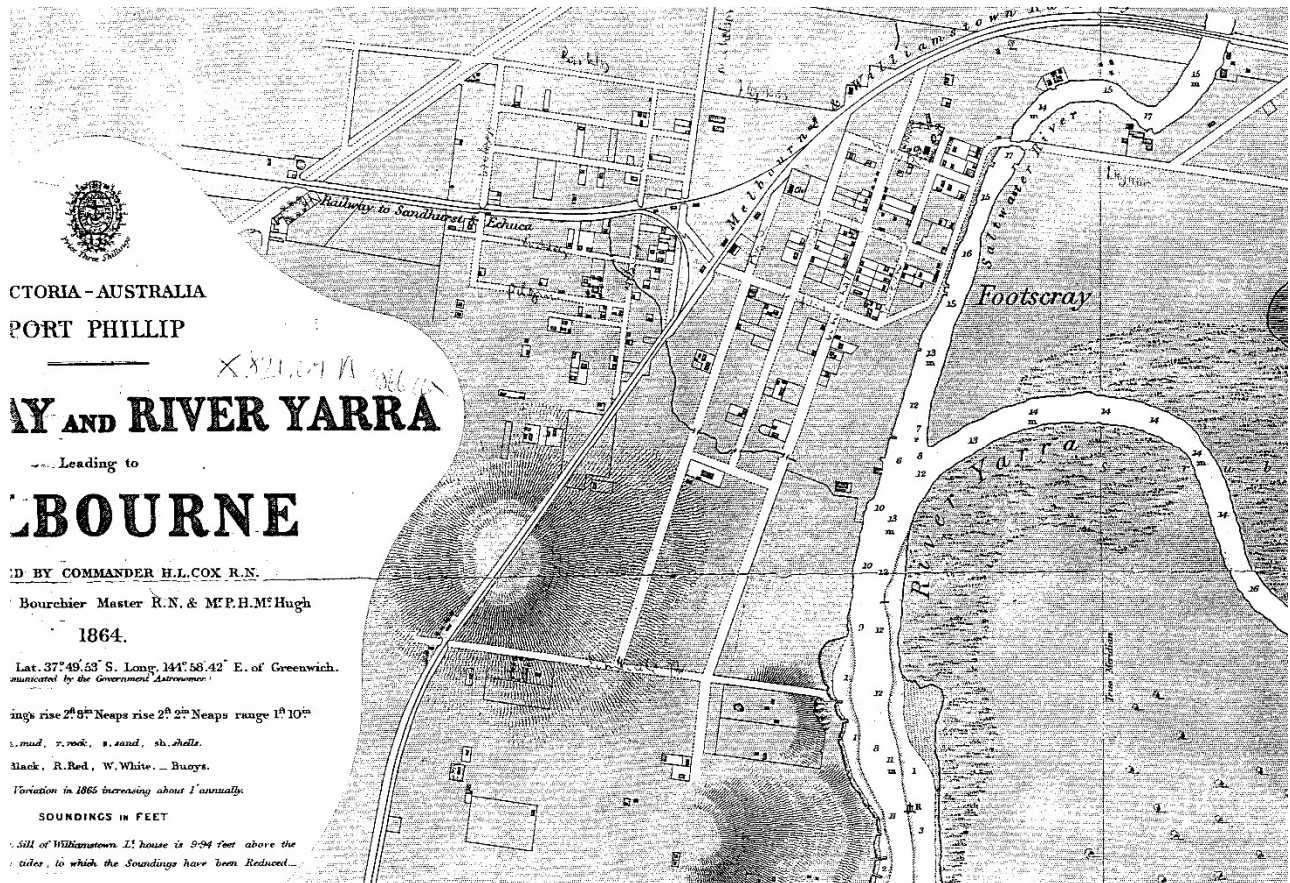


Map 4.8 Hoddle's 1844 map of early Footscray. Plan of 7 allotments in Portion VIII in the Parish of Cut Paw Paw, County of Bourke, October. Sydney Map C/1, #6230. SLV MF. Original held at Public Record Office of Victoria (PROV). <https://bit.ly/3gQC6nZ>

Near the Somerville Rd [0n] / Hyde St [3w] section corner, the route reached higher ground atop the escarpment via a valley in the escarpment and headed diagonally across to the Stony Creek crossing described in route WT2. This was a relatively straight track that passed 100 m southeast of the current Yarraville Railway Station (Map 4.8)<sup>42</sup> allowing the route to skirt to the southeast of a large hill centred on the west end of Berry St (Map 4.9). This portion of the route is now seemingly lost in the subsequent close subdivision of Yarraville.

The initial demand for a land route to Williamstown must have greatly diminished, as no road south of the [1n] section and north of Stony Creek is shown in Ham's map of 1852, although extensive subdivision in the area in 1854 is shown in Map 4.10. Confirming the priority of land speculation over through routes, Pasley's map of 1855 shows a north - south track, but with the railway line and a broad subdivision superimposed over the top. A decade later, Map 4.11 shows (1) the railway line in place, (2) the Francis St, Hyde St, Somerville Rd, Williamstown Rd rectangle subdivided into three north-south blocks, and (3) no trace of the track. Cooke's map of 1873 shows two tracks through the area leading to the Stony Creek crossing. Although the main track had disappeared on the ground, Map 4.5 of 1876 shows sewer pipes along its route. Map 3.3 of 1892 shows a bridge-type crossing at Hyde St and a land crossing at Stephen St. Both connected to an east-west Spotswood Rd on the line of today's Simcock St.





Map 4.9 Portion of Cox' 1864 map of Hobsons Bay and River Yarra leading to Melbourne. SLV X821.09A/1866 COX. The full map is well worth studying.

Map 4.10 Purchas' 1854 map of the "Settled districts around Melbourne in the colony of Victoria". SLV [http://search.slv.vic.gov.au/permalink/f/1c135st/SLV\\_VOYAGER698643](http://search.slv.vic.gov.au/permalink/f/1c135st/SLV_VOYAGER698643)

Map 4.11 Bibbs' 1866 map of the County of Bourke (for the Surveyor-General). SLV 821.1 BJE 1866 [http://search.slv.vic.gov.au/permalink/f/1c135st/SLV\\_VOYAGER701801](http://search.slv.vic.gov.au/permalink/f/1c135st/SLV_VOYAGER701801)

This subdivisional activity in the 1850s and 1860s would have forced many travellers previously on the original route to travel along Somerville Rd [0n] and Williamstown Rd (route WT8). More close subdivision occurred in 1860 and further worsened the prospects for north - south through traffic.<sup>43</sup> As a consequence, in 1867 Williamstown and Footscray Councils created a committee to establish a suitable route from "Geelong Junction" (the Buckley St / Geelong Rd intersection) to Stony Creek.<sup>44</sup> Somerville Rd appears as the main east - west road in Map 4.5 of 1876. This probably reflects the role of the road in the development of this route.

The Stony Creek crossing is discussed in route WT2. South of Stony Creek, Williamstown was and still is reached using Melbourne Rd (route WT2). Curiously however, a "Yarraville and Williamstown Rd" following the line of Hyde St and Douglas Pde is shown in Map 4.12 of 1911, but the map does not indicate how the Stony Creek estuary was crossed.



Map 4.12 George Broadbent's Map of Melbourne c1911. RACV Archival accession 960033

Whitehall Rd was declared a Main Road in 1990, proclaimed a State Hwy in 1994 and is part of Docklands Hwy and Routes MR 35 and 50 in the Metropolitan Route numbering system. Somerville Rd, also MR50, was declared a Main Road in 1990.<sup>45</sup>

#### WT5 via Dynon Rd

The track to Solomons Ford was described as part of route WT2 (sub-chapter c). Route WT5 left WT2 near today's Arden St. In reasonable weather, a number of "dry" weather routes then headed west on a narrow band of land, crossing the Moonee Ponds Creek between the Great Pond on the south and the Flemington Swamp on the north. In the settlement's initial years, Arden St did not exist east of Dryburgh St. After the crude way to the north of the swamp (Map 4.3) had been constructed, in dry conditions travellers could turn west near Arden St using a small ridge to the south of the Haines St creek (Map 3.4). Further upgrades increased the attractiveness of the route in the following decades.

Most of the routes then headed south near the Arden St / Lloyd St intersection on a peninsula of high land formed by a basalt flow and which was an extension of a ridge that runs north-south through Kensington. The various informal tracks then joined in the west within 200 m of the Maribyrnong River (Map 3.2, Map 3.7).

The resulting un-named and uncertain track was first called Swamp Rd. Broadly, Swamp Rd followed the then-current firm ground along the northern edge of Batmans Swamp and was a predecessor of today's Dynon Rd.. Initially, at its western end, most travellers tracked down the left bank of Maribyrnong River to the landing for the Bunbury St ferries (route WT4, Map 3.6). Ferries were already operating downstream (route WT8) and in 1849 Michael Lynch began operating a Maribyrnong River ferry on a new site near the western end of today's Dynon Rd. Later that year he moved his ferry even further upstream to Ballarat Rd (route BT4).

The provision of this new route occurred when a new set of needs was being created by farmers coming to Melbourne from the north and west. Footscray traders were anxious to encourage these users to pass through their village rather than through Flemington (route BT4).<sup>46</sup> The connection provided travellers with access to the markets in North Melbourne, particularly the cattle market<sup>47</sup> in the Victoria St, Peel St, Elizabeth St triangle, the hay market at the Peel St /Flemington Rd/ Royal Pde roundabout, and the “Hay, corn and horse market” (1855) and “Horse, cow and pig market” (1876) on the site of the Royal Melbourne Hospital (Map 3.6). Recall that the roundabout at the top of Elizabeth St and eastern end of Flemington Rd was called the Haymarket Junction. The first Haymarket was actually at the current site of St Pauls Cathedral. It then had an interim move to the corner of Burke St and Exhibition St.<sup>48</sup>

In 1855 a new, competitive ferry began operating across the Maribyrnong at the western end of today’s Dynon Rd. Three years later the crossing was upgraded by the installation of a pontoon bridge. In 1863 Footscray and Braybrook Councils financed its replacement by the “Saltwater Bridge” which was a 9 m wide bridge built of Mt Macedon timber. It had a 3 m river clearance and its 44 m total length included a 26 m centre span. The centre span was a pontoon which could be moved to provide an 11 m opening to accommodate large river traffic.<sup>49</sup> By 1880 the pontoon was ineffective and was replaced by a lift mechanism (Figure 4.1c). An artist’s impression of various stages of this bridge are shown in Figure 4.1d. In less than a decade, the bridge “movement” had become inoperable and by 1891 the now decrepit structure was known as the “Crazy Bridge”.<sup>50</sup> The replacement Maribyrnong bridge was a high-level two-span steel lattice bridge aligned with Hopkins St. Partly funded by the Public Works Department, it opened in 1903 and was named the Hopetoun Bridge after a recent Governor. This was replaced in 1970 by the second Hopetoun Bridge which provided for six lanes of traffic.



Figure 4.1c Saltwater Bridge with lift mechanism for centre span.



Figure 4.1d Artist’s impression of various stages of the Saltwater Bridge up to 1890.

Once across the river and in Footscray, traffic turned south and used a newly established Maribyrnong St along the right bank of the river, before turning west. In 1860 the route was markedly improved by the construction of and then dominated by the operation of the new rail track located to its north and serving the west of the State. Provision was made for Lloyd St to pass through the railway embankments at Kensington. The connection was formally constructed in the 1860s. It is shown as the major route in Stephen's map of 1867.

Dynon Rd was created and developed during this time in a process very dependent on the construction of the railway to Footscray and the gradual draining of the land adjacent to Batmans Swamp and the Great Pond. It is shown formally in Cox' riverside map of 1864 and was still called Swamp Rd until, following work in the area by the Railways at the turn of the century, it was named Dynon Rd after a Railways Commissioner.

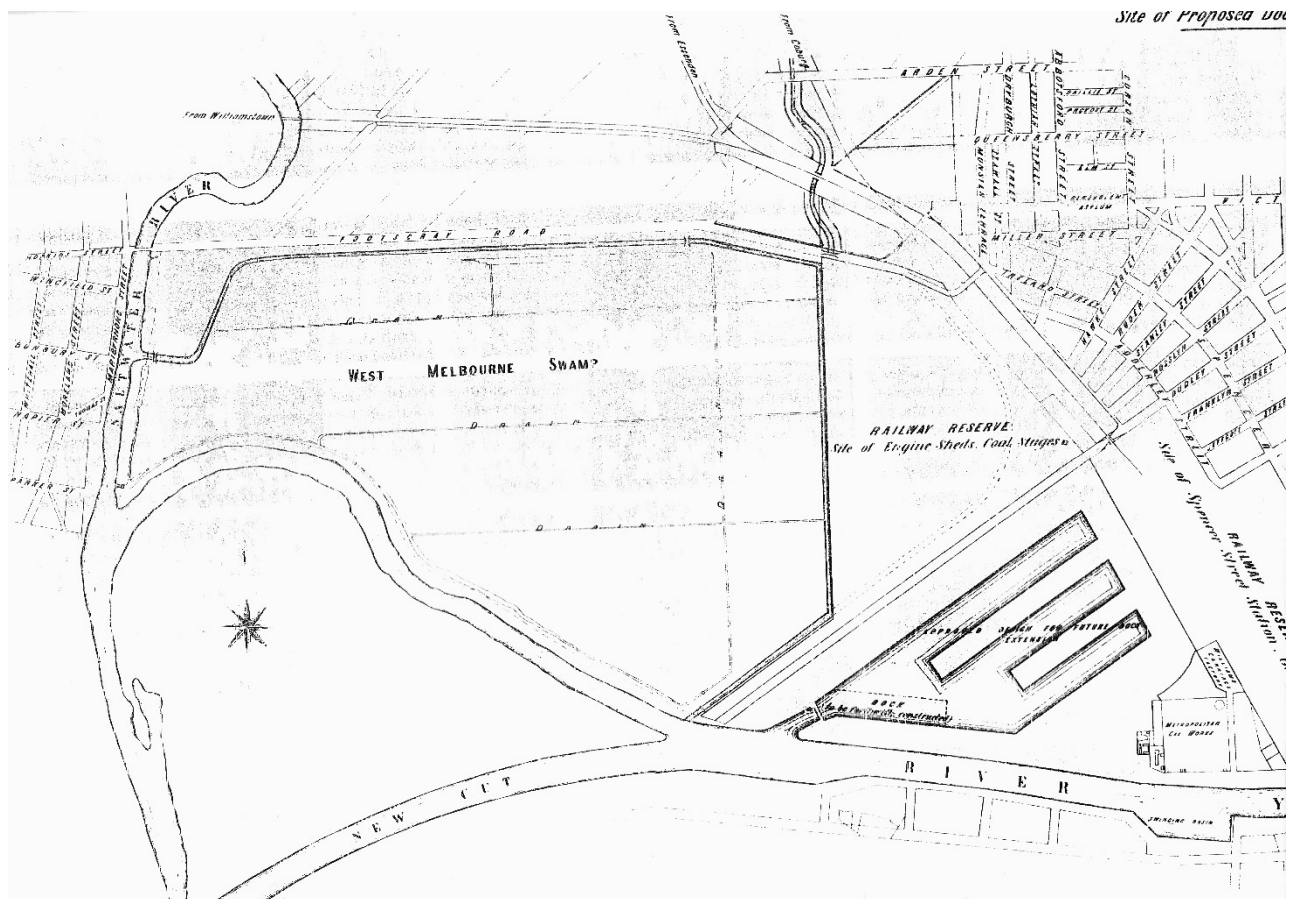
From 1860s the road was under continuous development by the Footscray and Braybrook Councils who saw it as a key to their prosperity. In particular, a great deal of fill was placed, taken in part from four large mounds of high ground just to its north and near the current freight terminal. However, in 1863 Footscray Council actively opposed the south-eastern extension of the route to Flinders St on the basis of cost and because the Council believed that it would divert custom from their area. Instead, Lloyd St was taken under the new railway lines and Moonee Ponds Creek was bridged at Arden St.

In 1877 work commenced on taking Moonee Ponds Creek on its current route straight to the Yarra, rather than discharge into the Great Pond. For many years the new waterway below Arden St was called Rail Canal. Later, new steel bridges were built on this route over both the Moonee Ponds Creek and Maribyrnong River (route WT7).

The road was optimistically called Footscray Rd (before route WT7 was built) or Melbourne Rd, and after 1911 was straightened by surveyors to later become Dynon Rd. To the west, Dynon Rd was specifically aligned along the [1n] *section line* that became Hopkins St across the Maribyrnong. The Footscray railway cutting was not crossed until the Hopkins St bridge was opened in 1872.

At its eastern end the Arden St / Lloyd St route provided an indirect link to the city centre. The direct link firstly required a crossing of Moonee Ponds Creek. A 26 m long iron bridge was constructed in the 1880s. It was only 11 m wide, had very steep approaches, and contributed to flooding in the Macaulay Rd area. The Public Works Department replaced it 1939-40 with the current Moonee Ponds Creek bridge which is a 9 span concrete slab bridge crossing 60 m and 20 m wide. Its 1930s art-deco style is strangely incongruous in the industrial area.

The solution was made even more difficult by the North Melbourne rail-tracks built in the late 1850s. Initially, the route crossed the rail track at right angles (NE - SW) with a bridge built by the Railways in 1885. It linked Dynon Rd to Railway Place, reaching Spencer St via Ireland St and Hawke St. Major action occurred with the completion of the Coode Canal in 1892. The development of the area had been debated from at least the early 1870s with the West Melbourne Improvement League which advocated reclamation of the West Melbourne swamp and associated low-lying lands and other improvements. In 1887 a Royal Commission examined the associated extension of inner Melbourne westward. The Commission had advocated taking Dynon Rd (which it called Footscray Rd) to link with the western end of Ireland St (Map 4.13).



Map 4.13 Plan for the development of Melbourne's inner west, 1887 West Wards Royal Commission. PDF digitised by Parliament of Victoria, [https://pov.ent.sirsidynix.net.au/client/en\\_GB/parl\\_paper/search/detailnonmodal/ent:\\$002f\\$002fSD\\_ILS\\$002f\\$002fSD\\_ILS:23043/one](https://pov.ent.sirsidynix.net.au/client/en_GB/parl_paper/search/detailnonmodal/ent:$002f$002fSD_ILS$002f$002fSD_ILS:23043/one)

Even when the advocated crossings of Moonee Ponds Creek and the railway were provided, traffic was still brought to rest by an ill-considered intersection with Ireland St, Munster Tce and Railway Place. The mess was subsequently improved by taking Dynon Rd through to Spencer St. This work began in 1940 and was completed with the construction by the Railways Department of the road-over-rail bridge in 1968. This is a long, curved steel bridge with 23 spans of 13 parallel lines of steel beams. The spans range from 4 m to 7 m. The alignment - dictated by the needs of the railway system - has tight curves at each end of the bridge,

Tolls were placed on the road in 1860<sup>51</sup> and abolished in 1875. A competitive burst of toll charges on this and adjacent roads is discussed in under route BT4. The main toll-booth was at the Kensington Rd corner. The Dynon Rd route was declared a Main Road in 1860 and in 1994.<sup>52</sup> It was one of the first roads to have a special bike path.<sup>53</sup>

#### WT6 via Macaulay Rd and Kensington Rd

Before Dynon Rd (route WT5) became available, travellers wishing to take advantage of the new ferries providing a downstream crossing of the Maribyrnong (route WT4) could continue on Macaulay Rd. Recall that route WT2 turned off Macaulay Rd and headed to the north near today's Kensington Railway Station. Travellers on route WT6 would stay on Macaulay Rd until Kensington Rd (originally Footscray Rd) which was part of the Epsom Rd water-access subdivision shown in Map 4.5. As shown in the map, this route led down to the left bank of Maribyrnong River. Indeed, many early maps such as Map 3.6, Map 4.3 and Map 4.10 suggest that Kensington Rd was the only route serving the Footscray ferries. The route was longer and hillier than the later Arden St route, so then became a second, weather-dependent choice as it was less prone to flooding.

### WT7 via Footscray Rd

A Royal Commission on the extension of Melbourne west (from Spencer St) in 1887 proposed two ways of travelling to Footscray. The first was a development of Old Footscray Rd (route WT4), which the Commission dubbed Footscray Rd. The second took the Swamp Rd (route WT5) to a Maribyrnong River crossing near the Bunbury St ferries.

Action on a direct constructed route across the Yarra estuary had to await the completion of the diversion of the Yarra by the Coode canal in 1892. The first “New” Footscray Rd then left the northern end of the city, travelling south-west down an extended Dudley St to cross Moonee Ponds Creek where it now enters the Yarra. Further work was done on Dudley St in 1913.

In a similar way to old route WT4, the new route WT7 then followed the right bank of the old course of the Yarra near today’s Coode Rd, proceeding to a new Maribyrnong River crossing at Napier St. (Map 4.5) The crossing was provided by the Swing Bridge<sup>54</sup> which was designed by John Monash in 1892 whilst he was chief draftsman of the Melbourne Harbour Trust. Monash took great pride in the design. The bridge pivoted about a central vertical axis to accommodate the rare ship passage and was the first bridge of this type in Victoria. It comprised steel crossed trusses operating, when swinging, as cantilevers spanning 26 m and tapering from 6 m to 3 m in depth. There was some initial controversy over the bridge deflections.<sup>55</sup> The cantilever pair rotated on an 11 m diameter steel ring supported on four piers in midstream. The total crossing was 60 m (26 + 11 + 26). The bridge opened in 1896 and last swung in 1932. The bridge is shown in Figs 4.1e and 4.1f.



Figures 4.1e & f. The latter shows the Swing Bridge passing river traffic.

The CRB replaced the Swing Bridge with a temporary upstream timber bridge in 1953 and by the current Shepherd Bridges in 1958. It was named after a prominent Labor politician from Footscray<sup>56</sup>. The bridge is SN6150 in the VicRoads system. This latest bridge has three major spans of 22, 27 & 22 m using variable-depth steel beams. The central span is suspended from the two side spans. There are nine lines of beams. The entire bridge has a total of 13 spans, the other ten being of reinforced concrete, and has an overall length of 158 m. The bridge also provides an overpass over both Maribyrnong St and the rail track on the right bank of the river. It suffered serious fire damage from a petrol tanker incident in 1966.

Next, a greatly improved road (the New Footscray Rd) was developed in 1927-9 under the *Melbourne to Footscray Rd Act of 1927*. The original Bill only provided a 1.5 chain reservation, but intense lobbying saw it amended to the 2.5 chain in the final Act. The new route was as far to the north as the North Melbourne railway turning loop would permit and passed through the middle of the remains of the Great Pond on the Moonee Ponds Creek (route WT2), crossing the creek - then called the Railway Coal Canal - on a timber bridge well upstream from its confluence with the Yarra. The bridge was replaced in 1960. The new route eliminated the kink in the previous route that had crossed the creek at its confluence to the south. Today there is a Railway Canal Reserve on the left bank of Moonee Ponds Creek downstream of Footscray Rd.

In 1987 (New) Footscray Rd was duplicated from the right bank of the Yarra to Dudley St, replacing Cowper St and Blyth St in West Melbourne, and in 1991 it was duplicated to Appleton Dock Rd. In 2000, the city end of the route was rerouted to the east of Marvel Stadium and became Wurundjeri Way (Route 55).

Footscray Rd has been a State Hwy since 1994.<sup>57</sup> It is now known as Docklands Hwy and is Route 32 in the Metropolitan Route numbering system.

### WT8 via Raleighs ferry & Williamstown Rd

This route was accessed from the east via either Epsom Rd (route WT2) or Mt Alexander Rd (route MM3-5) leading to Maribyrnong Rd (MR 38) located on the [3n] *section line*. It had been surveyed in 1844 (Sub-chapter 2.3) and was later called Punt Rd. Its way west was stopped by the Maribyrnong River and its continuation across the river would become Raleigh Rd. Joseph Raleigh was a local meatworks owner with operations along Maribyrnong River at Footscray and just downstream of Maribyrnong Rd.<sup>58</sup> In 1855 he began operating a ferry between the western end of Maribyrnong Rd and Raleigh Rd, at the Anglers Hotel site. Thus Maribyrnong Rd was originally called Punt Rd. The route proved an attractive stock route. The ferry was replaced by a pontoon bridge in 1858 and this was then replaced by the first Maribyrnong Bridge in 1867-9.<sup>59</sup> Raleigh's Melbourne Meat Preserving Co. funded the project and George Francis designed the bridge. The bridge had been aligned to produce a minimum bridge length rather than place it on the line of the two connecting roads. In 1910 the local Essendon and Braybrook Councils replaced the bridge with a reinforced concrete bridge, still on the skewed alignment. The 10 m wide bridge was built by the Monier Company under the direction of John Monash. When in 1940 the tram service was extended west across the river to service the wartime munitions factory at Braybrook the tramway had to use its own "temporary" timber trestle bridge placed on the *section line* alignment. A 146 m long replacement bridge was built by the CRB in 1967. It is located to accommodate the alignment of the road and trams and employs seven spans of prestressed concrete beams.

After the route crossed Maribyrnong River, it became Raleigh Rd and then turned south onto Rosamond Rd [4w] and probably continued south along Summerhill Rd and then Geelong St to join Williamstown Rd and route WT2. It could also have turned east off Rosamond Rd at Mitchell St [2n] and then south again on Gordon St to Williamstown Rd, as suggested by Map 4.8 and Map 4.10. Either of the alternatives would then also have used Williamstown Rd. The building of the major rail line along Sunshine Rd effectively terminated the southern connection in 1859. Route BT5 left the route at the end of Raleigh Rd to service travellers to Ballarat.

Williamstown Rd (MR 37) was originally called Harrisons Rd, a name that was still in use in the mid-1940s. It arose from the need created by subdividers for an orderly route to Williamstown through Footscray and Yarraville (see also the discussion in route WT8). There were no roads south of the [1n] *section line* and north of Stony Creek shown in Map 3.6. Events were soon to pass Ham's map by as subdivision was occurring in the area in the early 1850s and a road was indicated along the [4w] *section line*; e.g. at Graingers Rd (Map 4.4 and Map 4.10). However, an adjacent easterly property boundary became the de facto Williamstown Rd. This use of an internal boundary rather than a *section line* was undoubtedly due to both the [4w] *section line* inconveniently running along Stony Creek (near Francis St) and the alternative attraction of Williamstown Rd's Stony Creek crossing discussed above. South of Stony Creek, the remainder of the journey to Williamstown was made on Melbourne Rd (route WT2). For a time, Williamstown Rd through Footscray was also known as Melbourne Rd.

Traffic from either Footscray village and Yarraville (route WT8) also reached Williamstown Rd by the more northerly Charles St and Buckley St (route GL5), or from Flemington via Lynchs Bridge (route BT4).

Maribyrnong Rd, Raleigh Rd and Williamstown Rd were declared Main Roads in 1983.<sup>60</sup> Williamstown Rd had previously been a State Hwy.

## 4.2 Routes GL – the roads to Geelong

As travellers proceeded west, the early routes to Geelong varied, for the land to be traversed was described in 1840 as “*an immense trackless plain, lifeless and solitary*”.<sup>61</sup> The first European to cross the area was probably escaped convict William Buckley who walked from Sorrento to Geelong in early 1804. In 1837, the pardoned Buckley again travelled the route, this time as a constable in a coach carrying Governor Bourke<sup>62</sup> across the stony plain. The Governor used route GL9 for the eastern end of his journey.<sup>63</sup> By 1841 there was a weekly coach service to Geelong.

Geelong was often not the final destination for many travellers, as initially Melbourne was rivalled by the fertile lands to the west, centred on Portland. Indeed, the Melbourne - Geelong Rd was sometimes officially called the “Portland Rd from Geelong”. The name also distinguished it from the main Portland Rd that went via Melton and Ballarat (route BT7). The routes to be discussed are shown on Map 4.1w.

### GL1 via Port Phillip Bay

Despite the Governor’s coach journey, initially by far the preferred way to Geelong was by boat down the west side of Port Phillip Bay.<sup>64</sup> The Aphrasia was sailing on the route from 1841. Many such voyages made intermediate stops at Williamstown (route WT1) and at the mouth of the Werribee River. The best known of the ships was the Edina, built in Scotland in 1854 as a troopship for the Crimean War. In 1888 its operator was boasting that it provided the cheapest trip between Melbourne and Geelong. It plied the route until 1939, carrying up to 800 passengers at a time, although the trade never recovered after 1927.<sup>65</sup> The Edina was then moored as a hulk in the Maribyrnong River until broken-up in 1957.

### GL2-4 via Stony Creek

An early overland route to Geelong used one of the routes to Williamstown (routes WT1, 2,7 and/or 8, Map 4.1w) to reach as far as the Williamstown Rd crossing of Stony Creek. There was then a choice of the following three routes to the western plains beyond the creek.

### GL2 via Kororoit Creek Rd

Leaving Melbourne Rd (route WT2), Map 4.8 shows a straight diagonal road from the [2s] / Melbourne Rd intersection at Newport to the [3s], [5w] *section* corner, turning southwest approximately along the line of today’s Market St. A segment using the eastern end of Kororoit Creek Rd would have better-served travellers coming from Melbourne by water on route WT1. The road stayed north of the low-lying bayside land.

These two alternatives met at about Racecourse Rd, where initially many Geelong travellers would have turned south and used route GL3 and Racecourse Rd with its convenient ford of Kororoit Creek. Indeed, Kororoit Creek Rd in Williamstown was once called Skeleton Creek Rd, acknowledging its early role feeding traffic to route GL3 in Altona.

Route GL2 and Kororoit Creek Rd then continued west along the [3s] *section line* to meet the Geelong Rd (route GL6) at Fitzgerald Rd and the [9w] *section line*. Later, as route GL6 to Geelong improved, this route then became more popular than route GL3. Kororoit Creek was crossed on a bridge built in 1871. The western portion of Kororoit Rd was cleared in 1869. Most of the ground was poor and paving with stone pitching continued for many years. The route is suggested in the somewhat fanciful 1841 Map 3.2 but does not appear at all in the 1853 Map 3.6 of “suburban lands”.

The RCA duplicated the eastern portion of the road between Maddox Rd and Fink St in 1986. It was declared a Main Road in 1941 and is now MR35.<sup>66</sup>



### GL3 southern route via Altona

At its eastern end, this route used the Market St version of route GL2 to reach Kororoit Creek Rd where it then turned south into Racecourse Rd and crossed the Kororoit Creek at a convenient ford, located where tidal influences were minimal. Ham's map of 1853 shows the route and notes "stepping stones", rather than a conventional ford. The crossing was treacherous in poor weather and in 1886 the Public Works Department replaced it with a bridge. South of the crossing, a piece of stone road from 1875 or earlier is preserved as an historical monument in "The Pines" reserve.<sup>67</sup>

GL3a. West of the stepping stones, the route continued along the bayside following Altona Rd, Beach St, Queen St and Blyth St through Altona and Koorringal Golf course to head west along Queen St and then Central Ave near the [5s] *section line*, to meet the Geelong Rd (route GL6) at Hoppers Crossing. Overlander Alfred Langhorne built his house on Queen St in the late 1840s. In recent times, portion of the route has been replaced by Millers Rd and The Esplanade. This western half of the route is not shown on Map 3.6 or Map 4.8 from the 1850s.

GL3b. An earlier "southern" version of the route did not turn west to Laverton and Hoppers Crossing, but continued southwest at the southeast corner of the Koorringal Golf Course to fords across Laverton Creek and then Skeleton Creek near Breezewater Reserve and Merton St [9w] where the creek narrows and is easier to cross. Skeleton Creek was sometimes called Skeleton Water Holes. The route then continued southwest to a crossing of Werribee River at Wedges Ford at a location once called Wyndham. It was subsequently the site of the Chirnside family's 1887 Werribee Park Mansion. Map 3.2 of 1841 covers "*present and proposed lines of road*" and shows a straight line from the Kororoit Creek stepping-stones to Wedges Ford. This proposed alignment did not eventuate, given the swampy nature of some of the ground.

The ford was named after the Wedge family who were sheep farmers at the site. J. H. Wedge had been Government Surveyor in Launceston and became part of Batman's group of settlers. His story is nicely told by Bonwick.<sup>68</sup> Surveyor W. Darke was his nephew and the family also actively pursued cattle runs in Melbourne's southeast.<sup>69</sup> The mouth of the Werribee River was a favoured spot for landing sheep brought from Tasmania.

By 1839 this southern version of the route was well established and serviced by a number of inns. It was the only road to Geelong shown in Map 3.2 and Map 3.5. It is one of the two routes to Geelong shown in Map 3.7 and in 1852 it was denoted in Map 4.3 as "Proposed Geelong Road" continuing east across the Yarra and through Fishermans Bend to the South Melbourne side of the Turning Basin. The proposition implied by these maps never became a reality. Ham's 1853 map shows the route crossing the Werribee River close to the current M1 Freeway crossing and Werribee Park mansion. Darke's map of 1853 labels the route as an "imaginary line." Significantly, the route is shown in Purchas' map of 1853 but not in its 1854 edition. Nevertheless, it is lightly suggested in Mason's map of 1858, taking a more feasible route that is a little further inland, and hence missing some of the swampy land at Altona and Cheetham. The practical version followed firm and relatively flat land beyond the coastal dunes. Finally, it is shown in Bibbs' map of 1856 but not in his 1866 revision (Map 4.11). It was mostly incorporated into private land after 1860 when route GL6 was declared a Main Rd from Footscray to Geelong.<sup>70</sup> There are no longer traces of a route on this southern alignment. However, the three fords of Kororoit Creek, Skeleton Creek and Werribee River are marked on the Army's map of 1933.

This route and route GL6 illustrate a classic dilemma for early travellers. Inland routes such as GL6 were often longer but could take advantage of an absence of tidal flows and tidal swamps and the easy fording of watercourses during low summer flows. On coastal routes such as the southern version of route GL3, tides often made all watercourses impassable for half the day throughout the year.

Millers Rd became a Main Road before 1982. It is now MR41. Queen St and Central Ave were declared Main Roads in 1990.<sup>71</sup>

### GL4 via Paw Paw Rd

This route to Geelong developed after the more southerly routes GL2 & 3 but still dates from the era before subdivision. It was used by travellers on routes that would normally cross Stony Creek at Williamstown Rd (routes WT2, 4 & 8). Instead, these travellers turned west off WT8 a little before the Williamstown Rd crossing of the creek and forded it at its narrower upstream reaches just below Francis St. Its subsequent route to the Geelong Rd crossing

of Kororoit Creek (route GL6) was then remarkably similar to the route taken by today's West Gate Freeway (route GL8). The route must have been well used as it is shown on major maps from 1840 to 1853 (e.g. Map 3.5).<sup>72</sup> The all-weather route also served farmers from the west using Williamstown as their port, as it avoided crossing Stony Creek and crossed Kororoit Creek on firm land far from its estuary.

Once formalised by subdivision, the route began at the Melbourne Rd / Williamstown Rd intersection and headed west along the [1s] *section line* marked by The Avenue, Primula Ave, Paw Paw Rd and the western end of Clelland Rd to reach the current Princes Hwy West (route GL6) at Kororoit Creek (Map 4.3). It probably forded Kororoit Creek at the tongue of flat land near the current public park, which is the remnant of an early reservation for a future village on the south side of the [1s] *section line*.

Much of the route later became a utility reservation for electricity transmission and the Melbourne Outfall sewer from the Spotswood pumping station. The West Gate Freeway (route GL8) now approximately covers this route.

### GL5 via suburban Footscray

In the 1840s, the favoured way to Geelong via Footscray used the Maribyrnong River ferries (routes WT4-7) to reach the landings on the right bank of the river, where conditions were as described in route WT4. Before the arrival of the railway in 1859, the Footscray village grew up around these ferry crossings.

At Napier St travellers to Williamstown parted ways and headed south-southwest on route WT4. Travellers to Geelong had the short-term need to climb the escarpment and begin heading across the plains to the west-southwest. Their route's immediate constraints were to avoid:

- \* to the north, a steep riverside escarpment, and
- \* to the south, crossing Lyons Creek and entering Thomas Hobbs'<sup>73</sup> private property on its right bank.

Before subdivision in the 1850s, the route thus used the left bank of Lyons Creek near Bristow St. It began its easy climb near the east end of Charles St, where Lyons Creek turned north. It then followed a route near Albert St and Walter St onto the tablelands at the top of the escarpment and which ran near the line of Medway St and Arran St.

With subdivision, various local paths through Footscray and up the escarpment further favoured a route near Walter St, as shown in Pasley's careful 1855 map. As it happened, the block of land bounded by Williamstown Rd, Station Rd, Victoria St and Buckley St, remained conveniently undeveloped until the mid-1880s, permitting a number of exploratory shortcuts. Charles St and the rest of the block are first shown in Whitehead's map of 1886.

However, a variety of causative factors then intervened to make all routes through Footscray impractical. The most important of these were:

- \* subdivision between Nicholson St and Victoria St in the late 1850s made no provision for through traffic.
- \* the Footscray railway system - particularly the Melbourne to Williamstown track. The divisive, isolating effect from the mid-1850s of the rail track is dramatically illustrated in Cox's map of 1864. The railway cutting was not crossed until the Hopkins St bridge was opened in 1872.
- \* the opening of Lynch's ferry in 1850, followed by his bridge in 1866, which bought traffic from Flemington via Ballarat Rd (see discussion in route BT4) and drew traffic away from Dynon Rd (route WT5). Similarly, Footscray people from the west of the rail track found it more convenient to reach Melbourne via the indirect Lynchs Bridge route.

This situation greatly inhibited traffic from both the City to the east and from the farms of the western plains travelling through Footscray.

Napier St and Buckley St became the appropriate formal route. However, it is clear from the most casual observation that the obvious east - west route serving Geelong and Williamstown via Napier St, and then under the railway to Buckley St and Williamstown Rd (north of the [1s] *section line*) was never intended by its designers to service through traffic. Both Buckley St and the parallel Pilgrim St were created as narrow local streets and Cox's map of 1864 does not show Charles St - the third in the parallel set - at all. By 1859 Hopkins St - a fourth parallel route - was formed along the [1n] *section line* as a local subdivision boundary. Hopkins St and its western extension as Barkly St would then develop as the natural east - west feeder route, once the railway line was bridged.

The situation encountered was far from simple. Lack describes “a chaotic patchwork of subdivisions and resubdivisions, fuelled in large part by speculation on the impact of the new railway.”<sup>74</sup> The burghers of Footscray well into the 1860s wanted the through traffic to proceed, albeit slowly, through their village, shopping as it went. They opposed any east - west route north of Napier St and so the Hopkins St railway bridge did not eventuate until 1872.<sup>75</sup> The aftermath of these accidental and deliberate events remains evident today.

The development in the 1890s of Footscray Rd (route WT7) placed more Melbourne traffic on Napier St, which was declared a Main Road in 1935, 1939, 1961 and 1983. Buckley St was declared a Main Road in 1983 and is now MR 32.<sup>76</sup> The CRB reconstructed a section of Napier St in 1936 and further improved it in 1939.

#### GL6 via Lynchs Bridge and Laverton

##### (i) *Ballarat Rd (Lynchs Bridge) to Somerville Rd*

Many travellers from Melbourne to Geelong initially began their journey on routes that passed through the Yarra estuary (routes WT4 to 7) and Footscray village (route GL5). On top of the escarpment near the intersection of Walter St and Arran St, Map 3.7 shows that the route to Geelong then followed a navigator’s straight line directed at Flinders Peak in the You Yangs as a sighting point. This line is still found in the alignment of Geelong Rd west of Stony Creek and south of the [Ons] *section line* and Somerville Rd. Incidentally, Flinders Peak was then called Station Peak, and could be sighted from Batmans Hill (Sub-chapter 2.1).

The eastern portion of the route from Footscray was north of Somerville Rd and incompatible with the subdivisions taking place in the 1850s. The subdivisions won, as the need for this segment of the route was greatly diminished as consequences of the impedimentary factors already listed in the discussion of the GL5 routes through Footscray. In particular:

- \* Flemington Rd, Racecourse Rd, Lynchs Bridge and Ballarat Rd (route BT4) took over from the Footscray village routes as the first segment of the Melbourne - Geelong route,
  - \* Geelong Rd was extended northeast from Buckley St to Ballarat Rd, and
- Thus, Geelong Rd north of Somerville Rd was forced away from its original straight alignment from Walter St / Arran St to the Kororoit Creek crossing and onto its current alignment servicing Ballarat Rd and Lynchs Bridge.

For these reasons the combination of Footscray Rd and Geelong Rd never functioned as a major arterial road to the west of Melbourne, despite:

- \* the earnest recommendations of the 1929 Metropolitan Town Planning Commission, and Napier St, Buckley St and Sunshine Rd’s (route BT3) roles as the fourth route in that Plan,
- \* work by the CRB in 1935 to upgrade the Napier St pavement, under its Main Roads metropolitan connectivity powers,<sup>77</sup> and
- \* the MMBW 1954 Town Plan advocating that a key route<sup>78</sup> should run along Napier St, Buckley St and Sunshine Rd.

Of course, today Westgate Freeway (route GL8) provides the main Melbourne - Geelong connection.

Consequently, the early Geelong Rd alignment north of Somerville Rd headed in a somewhat kinked manner from the intersection of Ballarat Rd and Nicholson St [3w] to Somerville Rd (Map 3.6). Map 3.2 suggests a route from Lynchs Bridge to Somerville Rd, presumably as a proposed road. Nicholson St was already established as a subdivision and *section* boundary with land sales to its east prior to 1852. Lynch (see route BT4) had bought the northernmost allotment and Ballarat Rd followed his southern property boundary (Map 4.3). Thus, the north-eastern end of Geelong Rd was fixed by the subdividers and property developers. The alignment was also influenced by early railway reservations.

The current alignment was established after the events of the early 1850s and is a single straight line from Ballarat Rd to Somerville Rd (Map 4.4). The alignment relocation was simple as the land south of the [1n] *section line* was unsubdivided in the 1850s and the small portion north of the [1n] *section line* was in government ownership.<sup>79</sup> The location at which the route crossed Somerville Rd was convenient, as it was just upstream of the point at which Stony Creek descended into a valley eroded into the surrounding plateau. The 3-chain width chosen for the full length of Geelong Rd indicates that it had soon become a major route, probably most noticeably as a stock route serving the markets in Flemington.

So, by the mid-1850s, Geelong Rd from Ballarat Rd through to the Kororoit Creek was largely established in its present form, supplanting alternative routes such as GL5, although the distance west across the plain from the top of the escarpment at Lyons Creek and along early subdivisional roads such as Buckley St and Charles St, to reach Geelong Rd at Stony Creek was less than a kilometre (Map 4.4).

With increased use, the road condition deteriorated markedly during the 1860s, demanding major maintenance. Writing in 1911, the well-known local travel commentator George Broadbent noted that the road “*through Footscray was always rough and dusty*”.<sup>80</sup>

The duplication of the carriageway from Ballarat Rd to Barkly St was completed in 1957, to Buckley St in 1959, and to Somerville Rd in 1967. The CRB built a new steel beam bridge over the rail track at West Footscray Railway Station in 1970-73, under the auspices of the Level Crossings Fund (Sub-chapter 3.5). The previous narrow bridge had been infamously known as “Mt Mistake.” Technically, the public perception had been correct, as the vertical alignment of the pre-1970 bridge had had no transition curve between its straight sections and its circular arcs.<sup>81</sup> One consequence was that the grades on the approaches to the bridge were too steep for many trucks of the era.

This portion of the route is called both Geelong Rd and Princes Hwy and is labelled MR83.

(ii) *Somerville Rd to Kororoit Ck*

The Kororoit Creek crossing was the next key point on this part of the route. The road alignment from Somerville Rd [0n] to Kororoit Creek was explained in (a) above as a sighting point alignment based on a navigator’s straight line directed at Flinders Peak in the You Yangs. As discussed below, at Werribee this alignment crossed Werribee River near The Old Ford St. The Inn there was active in 1839. Hoddle’s 1840 Map 4.2 shows a similar earlier route 150 m north of the current road. Ham’s map of 1852 (Map 4.7) shows that a government surveyor, W. J. Hull, had purchased an isolated 45 acre water-access block astride the route and with the [1s] *section line* as its southern boundary. The [1s] *section line* also - conveniently for its owner - formed the northern boundary of the village reserve discussed below.

A key component of the route was its actual crossing of the Kororoit Creek. The initial track possibly crossed a ford on the line of the Sewer Reserve. However, Hoddle’s map of 1840a and Map 4.7 show the crossing some 200 m downstream near today’s “historic bridge” and in the village reserve. There are four somewhat related explanations for the new alignment.

- \* It was a physically easier crossing than a crossing on the “sighting point alignment” discussed in (a) above. With fords in the basalt plains, the problem was not so much crossing the creek itself but having horse-drawn drays, carts and coaches descending and ascending the sides of the creek valley. It is possible that the only practical way down the steep face of the valley was to leave the sighting point alignment and head south on a gradual grade running along the escarpment face and parallel to the creek.
- \* Hoddle had established one of his many village reserves in the *half section* south of the [1s] *line*, and between the [6w] and [7w] *lines*. The crossing went through the reserve. There are other instances {see High St (route PL4) at Epping} where he specifically instructed his surveyors to deviate an alignment quite significantly to make it pass through a village reserve. A crossing on the sight line alignment would have been outside the village reserve.
- \* The new crossing was consistent with the needs of the westerly alignment of Paw Paw Rd (route GL4) along the [1s] *section line* and may have been first established by travellers on that route.
- \* It reflected Hoddle’s 1840 decision to favour a more southerly crossing of Werribee River at Connors Ford (see (c) below), although this change to the crossing of Werribee River did not come into actual use until 1849.

During the 1840s the alignment through unsubdivided land between Somerville Rd and Kororoit Creek would have adjusted easily to the south to accommodate the changed crossing. With subdivision, the surveyors soon reduced this adjustment to a straight alignment, as can be seen by a comparison of Bibbs’ maps of 1856 and 1866 (Map 4.11). The existing track down the left bank of Kororoit Creek became the north - south leg of Old Geelong Rd. There are suggestions in Foot’s map of 1850b that the north-south alignment might have been adopted to take advantage of a natural cutting in the left-bank valley face. Map 4.11 shows the kink reinforced by subsequent subdivision and Map 4.5 of 1876 still shows the kink. The first Guiding Star Hotel was built in the 1860s. It was originally located on one of the route’s abrupt changes of direction. The current direct route on the You Yangs siting line alignment was built by the CRB as the “Guiding Star Deviation” and opened in 1930. A 3 m deep cutting was needed to provide a maximum 3% grade to the “historic” bridge.

The CRB spray-sealed about 6 km of the road with bitumen in 1925. In 1961 it duplicated the road from Somerville Rd to Cemetery Rd, in 1964 to Millers Rd - including the rail overpass at Brooklyn in 1965, and in 1968 to McDonald Rd where it met a 1955 duplication to Kororoit Creek. The overpass was built by the CRB under the auspices of the Level Crossings Fund. Some duplication was also completed at Brooklyn in 1957.

The downstream creek crossing was initially by a natural ford, enhanced in the 1850s and then - after serious flood damage in 1858 - was converted to a ford-cum culvert in 1860. It was irately described as nothing more than "piles of stone and bits of wood."<sup>82</sup> This collection was replaced in 1866 by the current "historic" bridge, built using bluestone (basaltic) arches in three 7.6 m spans. The bridge crossed the creek at right angles and was upstream of ford and closer to the current alignment of the route. Its parapets were modified by the CRB, particularly in 1919 and then in the 1930s. The "historic" bridge has been preserved and now carries the creekside path. It is registered with the National Trust. The third road line over the creek was created in 1956-57 when the CRB built two new suspended-span reinforced concrete bridges on an alignment of Princes Hwy that is an extension of the Geelong Rd from Somerville Rd on sighting line alignment. The two bridges serve the two carriageways of the road, which had been duplicated east to Brooklyn during the bridge construction. The features mentioned above can all be seen in Figure 4.2. A downstream crossing was later created by West Gate Freeway (route GL8).

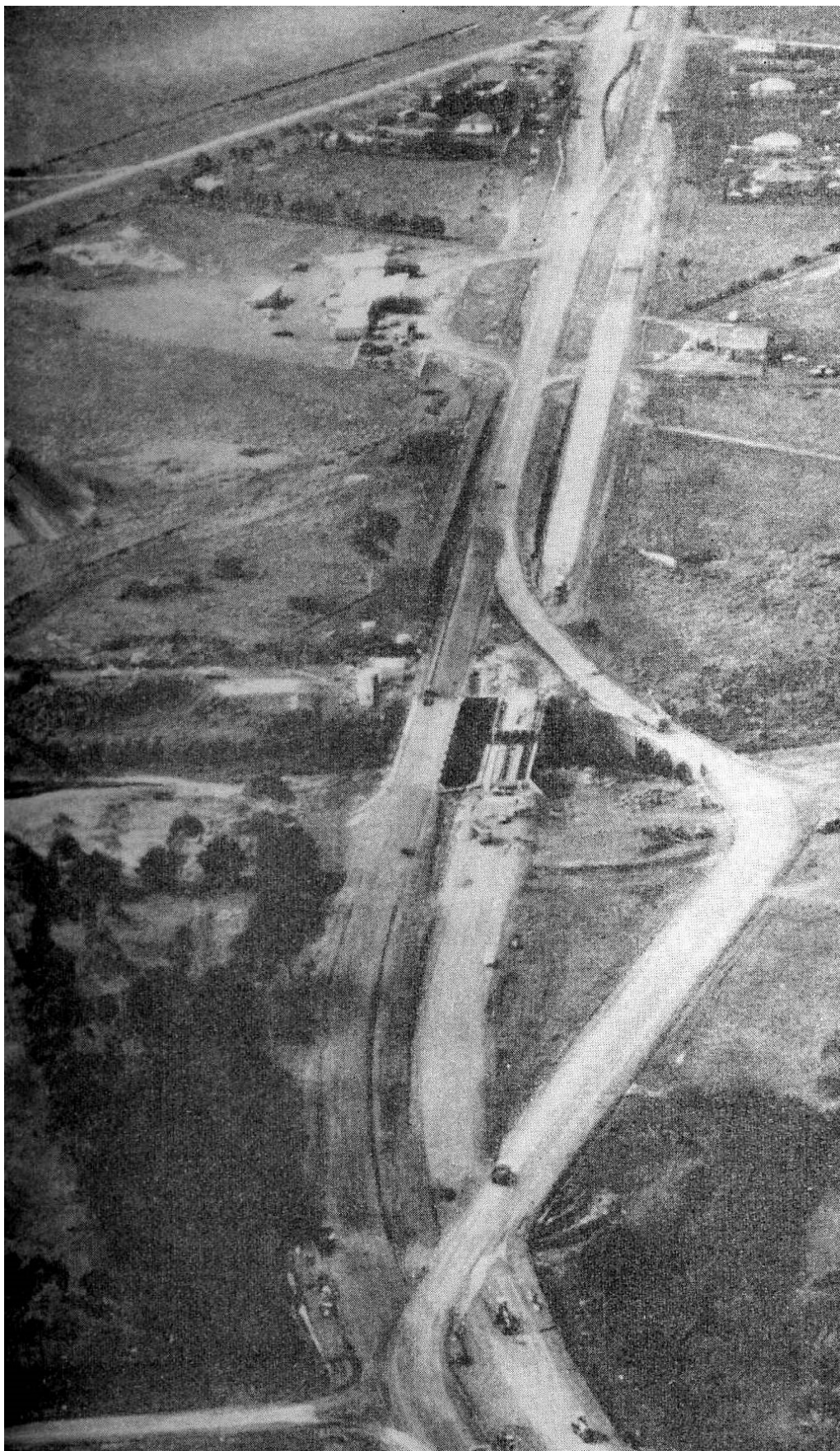


Figure 4.2 1957 photo of the construction of the realignment to replace the old Kororoit Creek bridge *CRB*

Early traffic taking route GL4 to reach Geelong or western Victoria would also have used the original Kororoit Creek crossing.

*(iii) Establishing the Werribee datum*

Fortuitously, the sighting line alignment of the route west of Kororoit Creek stayed north of the wider portions of Skeleton Creek. The major challenge for users of this stage had been to find a suitable crossing of Werribee River. This would then determine the route of the road through the otherwise featureless countryside between Kororoit Creek and Lara. Initially, there were two preferred crossings, as shown on Map 3.2 of 1841. The little-used southern crossing at Wedges Ford near Werribee Park Mansion is discussed under route GL3.

GL6a. The first northern route continued from the Old Geelong Rd crossing of Kororoit Creek on the sighting point alignment discussed in (i) above - sometimes called the "old line of road" - directed at Flinders Peak in the You Yangs and suggested today by the lines of Cyanamid St and Old Geelong Rd in Laverton. It is vaguely marked in association with the Melbourne Outfall Sewer on Department's 1919 map.

GL6b. However, the need for an easier crossing of the narrower reaches of the Werribee River may have led in 1839 to a deviation to the Golden Fleece Inn (later Greenes Inn) where the [6s] *section line* - now Heaths Rd - meets the River further upstream. The track then followed down the left bank of the river to a ford crossing near The Old Ford St above today's Shaws Rd bridge in Werribee North. A rickety timber and stone bridge had been established there in 1838.<sup>83</sup> The exact sites of these crossings are uncertain. It has been suggested that it could have been as far south as the Old Manor House located near #16 Wattamola Ave.<sup>84</sup> Another review supports the Shaws Rd / The Old Ford St location.<sup>85</sup>

Early in the 1840s Hoddle created a town reserve near the current Werribee town centre, although it was not surveyed until 1849.<sup>86</sup> The choice had been motivated by a good waterhole in the small river, rather than by any ease of crossing. It has also been somewhat optimistically claimed that it was the limit of small boat passage from the coast. The first crossing at this location was at Connors Ford near today's Cottrell St bridge. It was operational in 1849. The new crossing was only a kilometre upstream from the current highway location but well north of the freeway crossing. It was two kilometre south of the Old Ford St crossing. A timber bridge with a total length of 45 m was built on the line of Cottrell St and Manly St in 1851. It had a short life, being destroyed by a flood in 1852.<sup>87</sup> A more permanent bridge was designed and constructed in the late-1850s by the Central Roads Board and David Lennox, the well-credentialed bridge designer from Sydney (Sub-chapter 3.3).<sup>88</sup>

The first bridge on the current Princes Hwy alignment was built in 1871 and destroyed by flood in 1891. A new bridge was constructed in 1892 and widened in 1936 and 1966. Initially, it comprised two lines of wrought iron plate girders forming nine 9 m spans carried on 10 m high masonry piers. The girder lines were 5.7 m apart. In the nature of bridges of the time, its alignment objective had been to minimise the bridge span rather than to provide a good traffic alignment and so required traffic to make two right-angle turns. The resulting narrow bridge deck on a difficult alignment did not allow passing on the bridge. In 1936 the deck was rebuilt to provide two 3.4 m lanes and one 1.2 m footpath. Further improvements were made in 1966. It was often referred to as the Synnot St bridge.

*(iv) Kororoit Creek to Lara*

GL6c. Returning to the overall road alignment, the above discussion suggests that in the 1840s the favoured route between Kororoit Creek and Werribee was a northern option that ran close to a straight line between the east - west location of Old Geelong Rd in Brooklyn and The Old Ford St in north Werribee. This is confirmed by maps of the time.<sup>89</sup> However, the discussion has also noted that, by the 1850s, both end points had moved to the south. The Kororoit Creek crossing was now at the historic bridge site and the Werribee crossing at Cottrell St. By the late-1850s the northern and southern routes to Geelong had disappeared and only an alignment directed at the Cottrell St crossing in central Werribee is shown in de Gruchy's mid-1850s Map 4.4.

Immediately across the Kororoit Creek, this central route ran through the park left by the village reserve park. On the right bank of the creek, the route was close to the outbound carriageway of the current freeway (route GL7). To

the immediate west the road was a hundred metres or so south of the current alignment with a further distinct kink to the south between the creek and Dohertys Rd to accommodate a swamp.<sup>90</sup> From the [9w], [3s] *section line* corner at the Fitzgerald Rd / Kororoit Creek Rd intersection the route originally continued southwest on the line of Old Geelong Rd and Rowland Rd in Laverton, Ashcroft Ave in Williams Landing and Old Geelong Rd in Hoppers Crossing. By 1857 the Central Roads Board had formed the road as far as Laverton although this route west of the Kororoit Creek is not even shown in Ham's Map 4.3 of 1852. In 1934 the CRB realigned the intersection of Point Cook Rd [10w] with this road. This was lost in 1939 when the RAAF base at Laverton was being established on a paddock between the railway line and the then main road. The route re-encountered today's alignment at Morris Rd [13w] near the eastern Werribee Interchange on Princes Freeway West (route GL7).

The major deviation of 10 km of the highway south from this original central route between Kororoit Creek Rd [3s] and Morris Rd [13w] occurred in 1939 when Laverton Bypass was built to permit the development of the RAAF airfield at Laverton.<sup>91</sup> This work included a new bridge over the railway line at Laverton Railway Station and coincidentally replaced a railway level crossing at Morris Rd in Hoppers Crossing. A subway at Kororoit Creek Rd permitted explosives trucks travelling between Deer Park and Altona along Fitzgerald Rd and Merton St (once called Explosives Rd) [9w] to avoid crossing the highway at grade.

West of Morris Rd, the original alignment was north of the railway line, connecting to Cottrell St in Werribee. It now crosses the railway line near Morris Rd in Hoppers Crossing to follow the current Princes Hwy (SR C109) through Werribee. Many of the improvements in this length of road are listed under the discussion in Sub-chapter 6.2 of the development of the Princes Freeway West (GL8, SR M1).

Snell records a three-day walk he did in 1852 to survey a route for the Melbourne - Geelong railway. On his trek over the flat, treeless land from Little River to Werribee he "scarcely met a single person all day."<sup>92</sup> West of Laverton, his railway largely followed the existing "road". The railway alignment has not changed and indicates that today's (freeway) route is well south of the original route, as indicated by Old Melbourne Rd in the Lara area.

Apart from the above logical factors, the alignment may also have been a response by the CRB's first Chief Engineer, Arthur Callaway, who was criticised by the Board in the early 1920s because his report on the road went from wayside hotel to wayside hotel. The Board instructed him, in future, not to locate the points on the highway between hotels.<sup>93</sup>

GL6d. The various early routes west of Werribee are well shown in Hoddle's map of 1854. Travellers on this route, and heading to Portland rather than to Geelong, left the route at Werribee, taking a long-lost track to the north of Flinders Peak. The route to Geelong was on a path south of Flinders Peak. From the 1850s, this route headed on a straight alignment for some 30 km, continuing on Cottrell St to Bulban Rd through Werribee West to Manor. The alignment heads for a ford crossing of Hovells Creek near Investigator Ave in Lara. For the earlier northern route, once across Werribee River, the track headed south-west to join the path discussed above.

#### *(v) Formalities*

The route was sometimes known as the "Portland Rd from Geelong". This name distinguished it from the main Portland Rd that went from Melbourne to Portland via Melton and Ballarat (route BT7). It was later called Melbourne Road West and Western Hwy via Colac.<sup>94</sup> However, the Melbourne - Geelong section soon came to be popularly called the Geelong Rd and from 1841 a coach was running regularly between Melbourne and Geelong. The main obstacles were the stretch of road between Werribee and Little River and the generally stony nature of the entire roadway.

The name Princes Hwy was given to the entire national "coastal" route - including Geelong Rd - in 1920 to mark the visit of Edward, Prince of Wales. Although much of route GL6 still exists, it has now been supplanted by the Westgate Freeway (route GL8) and Princes Freeway West (route GL7).

The Central Roads Board commenced funding work on the road in 1853. In 1911, George Broadbent noted that travel on the road was satisfactory as there were many sidetracks that could be taken to avoid hazardous lengths.<sup>95</sup> The first CRB annual report in 1914 stated that Geelong Rd was in need of reconstruction, except a short section near Little River that appeared "never to have been constructed".<sup>96</sup> Contracts were let for work in Werribee in the Board's first year. The CRB annual reports indicate that considerable construction work was undertaken over most of the route



between 1915 and 1917. The 1920 Report states (p3) that the CRB had “completed the Melbourne to Geelong Rd.” In 1926-8 the CRB paved 11 km of road from Kororoit Creek to Forsyth Rd with 50 mm of asphalt and in 1926 spray-and-chip sealed the full 6 km through Footscray and Brooklyn. In 1929-30 the CRB constructed 47 new culverts on the highway between Melbourne and Geelong, mainly to increase the available road width to 12 m.

Between 1937 and 1961 the CRB had an active program directed at widening the highway. In 1955 it gave considerable priority to the task of upgrading the road and began fully duplicating the existing single carriageway over a period that extended to 1962. For example, in 1957 the highway through Brooklyn was duplicated. Under the 1956 Bypass Act (Sub-chapter 3.5) the whole of the road between the Kororoit Creek and Geelong was declared a Bypass. The duplication of the length from the Kororoit Creek to Werribee was completed in 1960. The largest single job was a contract let in 1958 for the construction of some 30 km of road. When the Maltby Bypass (route GL7) was opened in 1961 it created a continuous four-lane divided (dual carriageway) road between Brooklyn and North Geelong.

In 1840 the route near Kororoit Creek was carrying a traffic flow of about 40 veh/d, in 1930 about 1 000, in 1941 about 3 200, in 1946 there was a post-war drop to 2 700, in 1964 about 9 000 with the route then the busiest of Melbourne’s regional routes,<sup>97</sup> and in 1971 the flow had reached 28 600 veh/d.

The route was proclaimed<sup>98</sup> a Main Road from Footscray to Geelong in 1860 (and later in 1914 and 1920), declared a CRB State Hwy west of the Kororoit Creek in 1925 and east of the Creek in 1930, a Main Road from Ballarat Rd to Williamstown Rd in 1934, west to Cemetery Rd in 1941, and east to Ballarat Rd (route BT4) in 1960.<sup>99</sup> All of the route within Footscray was proclaimed a State Hwy in 1960. By 1982 all the Princes Hwy was again a State Hwy (#2500).

#### GL7 the Princes Freeway (west)

See discussion in Sub-chapter 6.2.

#### GL8 via West Gate Freeway

See discussion in Sub-chapter 6.3.

#### GL9 via Solomons Ford

The initial part of the first track “to Geelong” used the standard route to the west via Solomons Ford (route WT2) to reach the right bank of Maribyrnong River at Braybrook. It is shown in King’s maps of 1837a&b produced when he accompanied Governor Bourke overland to Geelong in March 1837.<sup>100</sup> A later version is shown in Map 4.7.

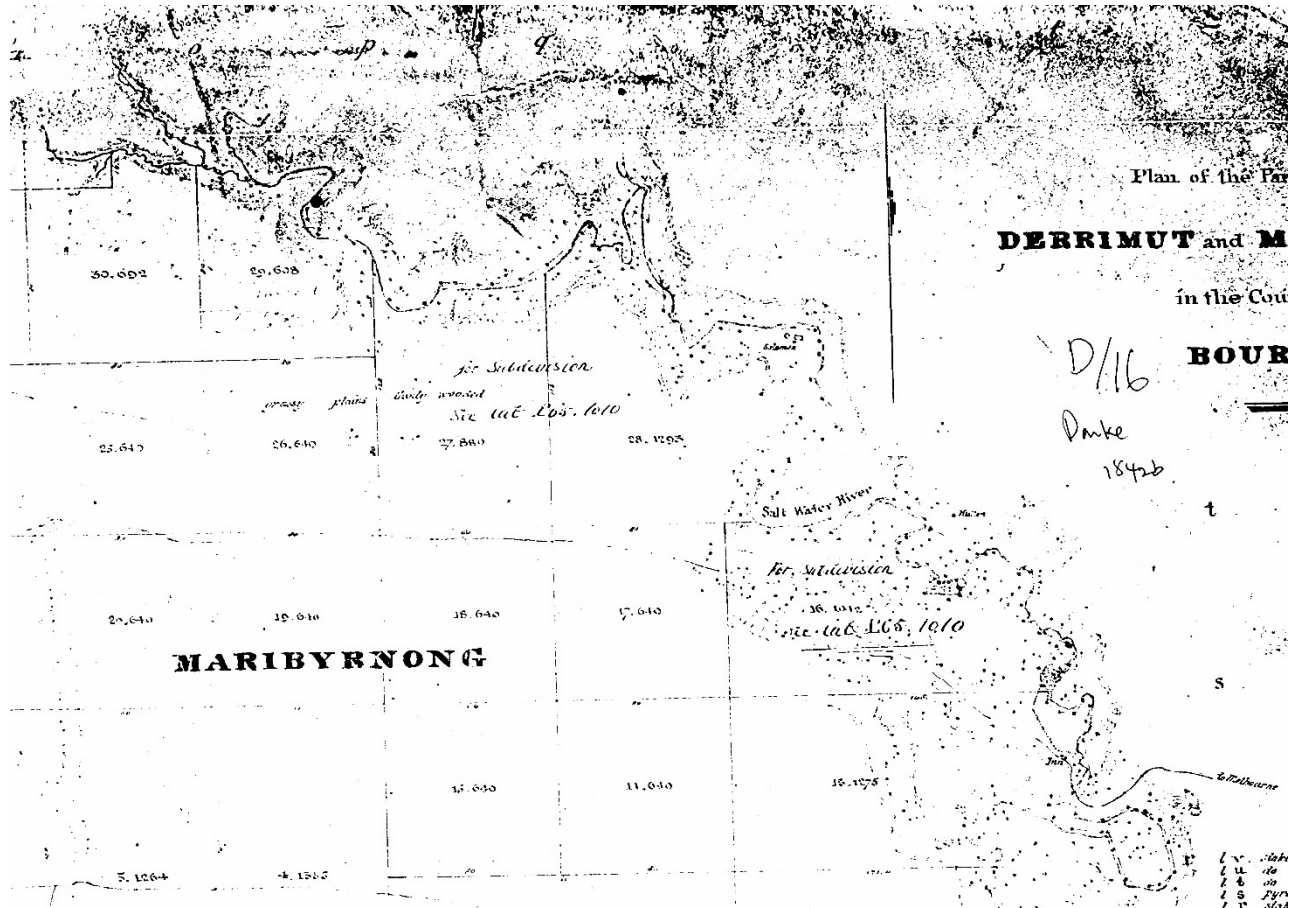
GL9a. From the right bank, most maps indicate a track heading southwest to Geelong via the northern crossing of Werribee River near the The Old Ford St (see route GL6b). Mt Cottrell and Flinders Peak in the You Yangs provided more distant sighting points. Andrew Cottrell was a Tasmanian who brought sheep to the Werribee area in 1835.

King’s map of 1837b shows the intermediate route crossing Kororoit Creek at a convenient ford just upstream of a major waterhole, sighting by two “stony hills” which were Mt Derrimut and, probably, Cowies Hill (or Bald Hill) off Sayers Rd. The waterhole was probably at Selwyn Park (off Forrest Rd) in Ardeer and would have been the most practical southern crossing of the creek before it became much wider. The waterhole was popular with the Koori people as it provided both fish and fresh water.

There are no other Geelong routes shown in Arrowsmith’s map of 1840 or Wells’ map of 1840. Map 3.7 also suggest a crossing in this area. In his 1837 trip, Governor Bourke took a day to travel from the ford to Werribee. Map 4.10 of 1854 shows a similar route, but at Forrest St it then travels some 600 m upstream on the left bank before crossing Kororoit Creek near the north end of Tower St.

GL9b. A minor variant from this route in the flat countryside is shown in Map 4.2 of 1840 which shows a track corresponding to the current Geelong Rd (route GL6) and a route heading due west after crossing the ford. The

next portion of this route appears to be shown in Map 4.14 of 1842 which traces an “old Geelong Rd” that heads southwest near the [7w] line of McIntyre Rd and crosses Kororoit Creek just downstream of its confluence with Jones Creek, near Western Hwy [2n] and a kilometre upstream from King’s crossing. This sub-route probably followed Kororoit Creek through Ardeer before joining King’s route near Mt Derrimut.



Map 4.14 Darke’s map of 1842 being a Plan of the Parishes of Derrimut and Maribyrnong Original held at Public Record Office of Victoria (PROV), <https://bit.ly/3gJWA2U>

Certainly, getting from the ford to Duke St [6w] would not have been a problem, as the land east of Duke St was part of a Braybrook village reserve. To the west of Duke St, the relevant subdivisinal *section* (19) was in private hands but still unsubdivided in the mid 1850s. Nevertheless, the route is not shown in de Gruchy’s property Map 4.4 of the time, no remnants of it can be seen in the modern road network, and Jones even questions its existence.<sup>101</sup>

GL9c. A second variant is labelled as “Proposed road to Geelong” in Clarke’s map of 1849b and appears to head south-southwest towards the Geelong Rd crossing of Kororoit Creek (route GL6). With subdivision and the development of Geelong Rd, this variant of the route to Werribee and Geelong via Solomons Ford appears to have headed south utilising Anderson St on the [7w] line. Recall that route WT2 was heading south to Williamstown on Duke St [6w]. Anderson Rd was shown as a road in Map 3.6 of 1853, but only as a *section line* in de Gruchy’s mid-1850s subdivisinal Map 4.4. Anderson St was later also utilised by travellers from Footscray to Ballarat (route BT3). It would have crossed the Kororoit Creek near Derby Rd and then used Fairbairn Rd and Little Boundary Rd to reach Geelong Rd (route GL6). Fairbairn Rd was not based on a *section line*, as it had been shifted west to provide Kororoit Creek “water-access” subdivisions. It was thus also given a specific road reservation. Little Boundary Rd, however, was a user-imposed short cut.

In 1931 Anderson Rd (MR 41) was one of the few major roads built by the cement penetration method (Subchapter 7.3).<sup>102</sup> It was declared a Main Road in 1990.<sup>103</sup>

### 4.3 Routes BT – the roads to Ballarat

#### BT0 before Ballarat

Ballarat as such did not exist until after the gold rush in 1851. The first travellers passed through the area on the way to and from the fertile lands to the west. However, there is no record of any pre-gold rush tracks west of the Melbourne area.

Map 3.5 of 1841 shows potential travellers heading down the left bank of the Yarra (route WT1) to cross the river at Cannings Point, climb the Newport escarpment, and then head towards Mt Cottrell as a sighting point. Although only a small hill formed from a volcanic cone, the “mountain” was a dominant feature in the flat, treeless plains. This “projected” route would have been near route GL2 and coincidentally cross Kororoit Creek near the “historic bridge” on Geelong Rd (route GL6). There is no evidence that either this route, or its subsequent passage through the countryside from Kororoit Creek to a crossing of Werribee River at Exford near the 200 m high Mt Cottrell, ever became a reality.

The routes to be discussed are on Map 4.1w.

#### BT1 via Port Phillip

Ballarat was on the shortest of the various land routes to western Victoria and Adelaide. However, the stage to Ballarat was not an easy trip and most early travellers had preferred to reach the area by the less direct but easier sea journey to Geelong (route GL1).<sup>104</sup> To reach Ballarat, they then took a track paralleling Moorabool River that, despite traveller preference for the route, was notoriously boggy. If freight were to be carried, the then-preferred land route was the northern route through Sydenham discussed below as route BT7. In 1856, when the rail service between Melbourne and Geelong was nearing completion, it was argued that the best way to Ballarat would then be to take the train to Geelong, and travel across country to Ballarat.<sup>105</sup> Most Ballarat freight already travelled via Geelong and the new rail.<sup>106</sup> Ironically, by 1911 commentators were to note that the road to Geelong (route GL6) was so bad that travellers to the west were journeying via Ballarat (route BT2).<sup>107</sup>

#### BT2 Ballarat via Droop St

##### (i) *Initial stages*

BT2a. Initially, the three preferred routes to the Ballarat area were the sea route (route BT1), a route which had originated from Solomons Ford and stayed on the left bank of Kororoit Creek (route BT6) and a route via Sydenham (route BT7). This, fourth, later route (BT2a) largely covers today’s Ballarat Rd / Western Hwy MR8 route to Melton. It does not appear on early pre-subdivision maps such as Map 4.14 of 1842, was not shown on any map as a pre-existing track between [6w] and [19w] and was not formally surveyed until Darke apparently undertook the task in 1846. Starr 1986 gives this date. I have not located a map of the survey, however Darke’s map of 1840 - the cited version contains many survey notes dated 1847 - gives detailed survey data for the reservation. Even in the 1850s, as a practical route, it remained poorly defined on the ground.

Given the initial merits of the other three routes, route BT2 was probably without any on-ground definition for some years and interest in it remained low, even after the 1851 gold rush.<sup>108</sup> Map 4.3 of 1852 shows no road reservation west of Duke St [6w] and the undated and untitled Roll Map 113 shows no reservation or pre-existing track in the subdivisions to the west. However, a reservation through Derrimut subdivisions is shown in Map 3.6 of 1854. A comparison of Ham’s two maps suggests that the reservation was created when the sections west of [6w] were subdivided and was probably seen as serving the new water-access properties along Kororoit Creek, rather than creating a through road. For example, Hoddle’s map of 1854 indicates most of the then current through routes, but in this region only shows a route on the left bank of Kororoit Creek (route BT6).

In 1861 a delegation from Brooklyn seeking government funding for the route was bluntly told that it was no more than a “parish road” and that the Sydenham route (BT7) was the official way to Ballarat.<sup>109</sup> In 1864 the Sydenham route was still considered the Melbourne – Ballarat Rd. Local pressures to develop the Western Hwy alignment continued to be applied, e. g by local land-owner Rupert Clarke in 1865-6.<sup>110</sup> In addition there was steady improvement in Footscray Rd (route WT4) in 1860 and route WT7 in 1896, Dynon Rd (route WT5, 1860 and 1890) and Smithfield Rd (route BT4, 1866 and 1882), all of which provided better city and market access than did the more southern routes via Sydenham or Solomons Ford. However, by the time the CRB was formed in 1913, the Western Hwy had become the main route to Ballarat. Indeed, the Board commented in its first report (p36) that in 1913 “the Melbourne end in the Shire of Braybrook was practically worn out, but it has now been reconstructed and is in first class condition.” Nevertheless, the Board also noted that, apart from a very small section, there was no published map of the route from Melbourne to Ballarat.

Urquhart’s map of 1847 refers to a track heading southeast from Melton to Melbourne along Western Hwy as “Melbourne to Saltwater via punt.” Most travellers on foot from central Melbourne who ventured on this route first crossed Maribyrnong (Saltwater) River on the Bunbury St ferry (route WT4). Some would then head north following the firm ground on the right bank of Maribyrnong River upstream until they reached the current alignment of Ballarat Rd near the [3w] *section line* and Nicholson St. There they proceeded on a gradual climb out of the river valley to join Ballarat Rd near Nicholson St. On the river flats, they would also have picked up travellers from the right-bank ferry landing at Dynon Rd. The land they passed through was subdivided in the 1840s, introducing a major impediment, and construction of the railway in the late 1850s finally closed this route.

As Footscray village developed and rail crossings were provided, Cox’ map of 1864 shows an alternate route using Napier St, which - after negotiating the rail tracks - joined Nicholson St [3w] to reach today’s Ballarat Rd. No subdivision is shown north of Barkly St [1n] and so the temptation would have been strong in 1864 for a short-cut from the Barkly St / Nicholson St corner along the line of today’s Droop St. Nevertheless, Droop St still does not show in Map 4.11 of 1866 and was only formalised in the early 1870s when it was named after a local publican. The subdivider’s hand results in Droop St beginning at the [1n], [3w] *section* corner and appearing on Department’s map of 1876 as a mere frontage access street. However, the 1896 map in Schwaebisch’s book shows a major route to Ballarat using Dynon Rd, Hopkins St and Droop St.

By 1850 Lynchs ferry provided a quite different access via Smithfield Rd (route BT4) in Kensington. All-weather bridge access became available in 1863 via Dynon Rd (route WT7) - although the railway cutting was not crossed until the Hopkins St bridge was opened in 1872 - and in 1866 via Smithfield Rd and Lynchs Bridge.

#### *(ii) Nicholson St to Kororoit Creek*

The location of Ballarat Rd east of Nicholson St [3w] is discussed under route BT4. Its location west of Nicholson St was determined by a heading just missing Maribyrnong River at Solomons Ford and pointed directly at Melton and a subsequent crossing of the Djerriwarrh Creek. Droop St at 45° ended where it met this Melton line. The slight kink at the Gordon St intersection was driven by the need to accommodate an early water-access subdivision in the northeast corner and by the surveyor’s desire to end at the [2n], [5w] *section* corner (Map 4.3). When the adjacent land was subdivided, the route was yet to become the major way to Ballarat, and so only a narrow road reservation was provided between Geelong Rd [3w] and Ashley St [5w]. The MMBW 1954 Town Plan proposed a deviation to the north – route 12 - to avoid this growing bottleneck.

With subdivision, the route west of Ashley St appears on its present *section line* [2n] course to McIntyre Rd in Ham’s map of 1852. The four key land *sections* between Rosamond Rd [4w] and McIntyre Rd [7w], and between the [1n] *line* and the [3n] *line*, had not been subdivided by 1866<sup>111</sup> and so the absence of a three-chain provision west of Rosamond Rd indicates that at the time the route was still considered unimportant. Thus, only a one-chain reservation was provided for the mile between Duke St [6w] and McIntyre Rd [7w]. The CRB widened this to two-chain in 1940.

Beyond McIntyre Rd, and after crossing Stony Creek, travellers to Melton on the Jones Creek route (Route BT4) would have parted from the Western Hwy travellers. This diversion was initially the preferred route as there is no sign of today’s Western Hwy route west of McIntyre Rd [7w] in Darke’s seemingly thorough Map 4.14 of 1842. As subdivision moved west, the route initially developed to serve local needs. It made a 300 m deviation north at Deer Park to miss a village reserve tucked into a bow in Kororoit Creek and to avoid two additional crossings of the creek.

The chosen location is on the [2n] *line* between Fitzgerald Rd [9w] and Station Rd [10w]. Initially the deviation was sharply kinked at the [9w] *line*, as shown in Map 4.11.

A three-chain reservation was finally achieved west of McIntyre Rd [7w], although this stretch had been partially subdivided by 1854. In 1928 the weekday traffic at Albion railway crossing near McIntyre Rd was about 600 vehicle per day - of these 54 % were cars, 11 % were heavy trucks with solid tyres, 9 % were light trucks with pneumatic tyres, 8 % were horse-drawn light vehicles and 7 % were motorcycles. It was a time of transition for both tyres and motive power.

### (iii) *West of Kororoit Creek*

Initially, many tracks led through the open countryside west of the Kororoit Creek crossing. Indeed, the creek itself turns west near the [2n] *section line* and was the main influence on road location. In 1861 a traveller disappeared when passing through a swampy portion of this part of the route. West of Station Rd and the [10w] *section line*, both creek and route take a north-westerly heading. Early kinks in the highway occurred at *section* boundaries, viz. at the [12w], [13w], [14w], [15w], [16w], [17w], [19w], [20w] & [21w] *section lines*, showing both how the subdividers met their water-access requirements and how the surveyors dealt with the natural curves of the early routes. At about the [15w] *line*, the Kororoit Creek turns to the northwest and the road is also able to turn - at [16w] - on a heading that still follows the creek but joins the eastern end of High St in Melton to join the pre-existing Sydenham route to Ballarat (route BT7) close to Pyke's property on Toolern Creek on the [21w] *section line*.<sup>112</sup> Thomas ("Gentleman") Pyke had arrived in the area in 1842. From [17w], the highway alignment points directly at this Toolern Creek crossing. The route west of Mt Cottrell Rd [19w] is now called High St. Once across the creek and past Pyke's property, High St turns west and heads for the Djerriwarrh Creek crossing. The route west of Djerriwarrh Creek is outside the scope of this book.

BT2b. An early more southerly route left the current route near Hopkins Rd [14w] and took Greigs Rd [3n] to cross Werribee River at Saughton's property and toll bridge [2n]. It then used Exford Rd and Ironbark Rd to follow the right bank of the Werribee River to Ballan and thence to Ballarat. This route was much closer to the Melbourne – Ballarat railway alignment.<sup>113</sup>

BT2c. Another early southern alternative left the track to Melton near Leakes Rd [17w] or later, and passed through Melton South, close to the line of Brooklyn Rd [4n], as this provided a better route to the Djerriwarrh Creek crossing. However, these two more southerly routes were disfavoured as they passed through a forest of hard greybox trees west of Melton. Apart from the physical obstacles, bushrangers were prominent in this area during the 1850s. The route from Sydenham (route BT7) initially joined this route at the Djerriwarrh Creek crossing and later at the Toolern Creek crossing.

The initial crossing of Djerriwarrh Creek was a stone-paved ford a little upstream from the restored bridge.<sup>114</sup> In 1859 and after the initial impact of the gold rush had passed, Djerriwarrh Creek had been bridged by a 6.1 m span sandstone arch bridge, using the same stone source as Melbourne's St Pauls Cathedral and the Old Treasury building. Although of modest span, the bridge is considered to have great architectural merit (Figure 4.3). A toll gate operated at the bridge. The creek crossing was a key reason for a preference for the two northernmost routes. The old bridge is now on the Victorian Heritage Register as H1658 and is also registered with the Australian Heritage Commission. A new bridge was built in 1959-60, leaving the restored old bridge as an isolated relic. The new bridge is a three-span composite welded plate girder structure having both horizontal and vertical curves. The spans are 18 m and the two-lane bridge is 8.5 m wide. Initially there were two routes to Ballarat to the west of the Djerriwarrh Creek bridge. The first followed the current alignment and the second was nearer the proposed freeway alignment. They are beyond the scope of this book.



Figure 4.3 The 1859 Djerriwarrh Creek Bridge on the Old Western Hwy at Melton CRB

In 1984-1987 the CRB built the Melton Bypass as a component of the Western Freeway.

### *(iii) Formalities*

The first coaches along this route to the Ballarat area began operating in 1851. Despite the impetus of the gold rush, Ballarat Rd was often impassable except at the height of summer. In an effort to improve this situation, by 1857 the Central Roads Board had constructed pavement and ten bridges on the city end of the route.<sup>115</sup> The first CRB annual report in 1914 stated that Ballarat Rd had by then been constructed to a “considerable” standard. The CRB had itself undertaken major work between Footscray and Sunshine [7w]. In 1915 it built a five-span beam bridge over Kororoit Creek in Deer Park.

In 1927-8 the CRB asphalted the 4 km of road between Albion Railway Crossing and Kororoit Creek. At the same time, an adjacent 8 km length of road was treated with the spray and chip seal method (Sub-chapter 7.3d). The pre-existing pavement had been composed of cobblestones. The CRB undertook major reconstruction between

Nicholson St and Droop St in 1935-6. The overpass at the Albion railway crossing was built as a steel beam structure by the CRB under the auspices of the Level Crossings Fund (Sub-chapter 3.5) and opened in 1963.

Duplication of the route was undertaken from McIntyre Rd [7w] to east of Kororoit Creek in 1964, at the bridge over Kororoit Creek in 1965, and to Rockbank [16w] in 1967. Largely by a process of carriageway duplication, the road from Deer Park to Melton was upgraded to a freeway between 1965 and 1969. The work was conducted under the Special Projects legislation (Sub-chapter 3.5).

The highway was part of route 5 in the 1929 Town Plan, route 12 in the 1954 Town Plan and route F12 in the 1969 Transportation Plan. The whole route is now Route 8 in the National Route numbering system and it is a component of Federal National Highway system. It was once commonly known as the Footscray Rd to Ballarat and then as Ballarat Rd. It is now known as Western Hwy west of Ashley St and, with some overlap, as Ballarat Rd west of Maribyrnong River. The length between Ashley St and Duke St was originally called High St.

The road west of Kororoit Creek was declared a Main Road in 1870. The new CRB declared portions of the road a Main Road between 1913 (Footscray to Sunshine) and 1915. Other portions were declared Main Roads in 1943, 1938 and 1942. The road was proclaimed a State Hwy west of the Albion railway crossing in 1925, east of the crossing to Ashley St in 1947, to Rosamond Rd in 1960, to Gordon St in 1964. An exception was the 400 m length between Gordon St and Droop St which was not declared until 1980.<sup>116</sup> It was also the portion of the road that carried a tram route – the CRB was prohibited from declaring a road a State Hwy if it contained tram tracks (see Sub-chapter 3.5). The whole route west of Droop St is now a State Hwy (MR8). The High St route in Melton is Route C754 in the State route numbering system.

When the Western Freeway (beyond the scope of this book) was opened it replaced Ballarat Rd / Western Highway west of the [13w] *section line* at Caroline Springs.

### BT3 via Sunshine Rd

Some travellers to the west proceeded from the Footscray ferries (routes WT4-7) to take Charles St or Pilgrim St, and later, Napier St and Buckley St through Footscray village (route GL5). To the west of Gordon St and the [4w] *section line*, their route then continued west along Sunshine Rd (MR32, originally called Sunbury Rd for reasons discussed below). The road is shown as a property boundary between Geelong Rd [c4w] and Duke St [6w] in Map 4.3. De Gruchy's Map 4.4 of the late 1850's shows a full road reservation, except for the first 200 m where the initial link would have been via Geelong St. By this time, Sunshine Rd had extended to Kororoit Creek at Graham St and had been seen as growing into a major arterial road. However, the route never developed for reasons related to the failure of its feeder route (route GL5) through Footscray.

At the western end of Sunshine Rd, travellers could reach Ballarat Rd (route BT2) by proceeding north along either of two established routes which involved right-turns into either:

- \* Duke St (route WT2), prior to encountering Stony Creek (following construction of the railway to Sunshine, this route no longer exists), or
- \* Graham St and Anderson Rd ([7w] & route GL9), just prior to encountering Kororoit Ck. This route is shown as a road in de Gruchy's mid-1850s subdivisional Map 4.4.

These northerly routes then took travellers towards routes to Ballarat (route BT2 and BT6) or to Bendigo and Sunbury (route MM1). The last destination explains Sunshine Rd's original name.

The routes had little appeal, relative to the diagonal short cuts of Western Hwy (route BT2). They were further isolated by the construction of the railway through Footscray and particularly by the Footscray to Sunshine link. Geelong St, Sunshine Rd, Wright St and Graham St to Anderson Rd were declared a Main Road in 1983.<sup>117</sup>

### BT4 via Lynchs Bridge

The Maribyrnong River was a major impediment to westbound travellers. The first two Footscray ferries across Maribyrnong River – at Bunbury St in 1839 – are discussed under route WT4. By 1849 Michael Lynch<sup>118</sup> was operating a third ferry at the current bridge site at Dynon Rd (route WT5). Lynch was a Melbourne publican who had had an interest in the Bunbury St ferry. He later became a wealthy Hawthorn land-owner. These three ferries

primarily served the needs of travellers to and from the areas to the west of Melbourne. Coming from the west, many travellers initially approached the ferries via Ballarat Rd (route BT2).

By the end of 1849 the shrewd Lynch moved his ferry upstream to the end of Smithfield Rd. This had a number of advantages for Lynch:

- \* it used the boundary between two water-access blocks, with Lynch owning the northernmost block. In this location, the Ballarat Rd part of the route is both parallel to the [1n] *section line* – thus aiding the surveyors’ tasks, and as far north as permitted by the steep slopes down to Maribyrnong River.
- \* as shown in Map 4.3 of 1852, the three southern owners could have blocked access to the downstream ferries,
- \* the Smithfield Rd land was cheaper, and
- \* the site serviced the racecourse and meatworks on the left bank of the river, and central Melbourne via Racecourse Rd and Flemington Rd (route WT2 and route MM4).

He partially explained his actions in a newspaper advertisement (Figure 4.4). The ferry was a success and so, at this favourable site, Lynch established his Punt Inn in 1850. His inn became famous as the Pioneer Inn. The Lynch and Watson properties referred to in the advertisement are shown in Map 4.3. The Flemington Inn was near Mains Bridge on Flemington Rd (route MM4).

**Melbourne Daily News**  
7 July 1849  
**Salt Water Punt**

Michael Lynch

Respectfully intimates to the public, that in consequence of the purchased land in the neighbourhood of the above Punt being purchased by the proprietors, and the swamp being impassable, he has made arrangements for the removal of the Punt, in order to accommodate the public, to a part of the Salt Water River a mile higher up, and a little beyond the edge of the racecourse. The arrangement will be completed by Wednesday next, when the Punt will ply between the north bank of the river, and the land lately purchased from the government by the advertiser, adjoining which will be erected a bridge in some years by the government of Victoria, on the road marked out as the leading to Williams Town. The only road from Melbourne to Williams Town, is by the Flemington Inn, through the estate of James Watson, Esq., which leads to the New Punt.

The advertiser wishes to notify the public generally, the settlers of Weirabee, and the inhabitants of Williamstown in particular, that by the contemplated move of the Punt, a considerable distance will be saved, as heretofore, drays were obliged to go around by Keilor, in consequence of the swamp; there will now be a good road from the Punt to the Flemington Inn, and the advertiser intends to keep it clear.

N.B. – For the convenience of crossing cattle, the proprietor has in contemplation to form a bridge by the addition of another Punt.

2 July 1849

Figure 4.4 Michael Lynch’s advertisement for his Smithfield Rd punt.

The long route via Keilor mentioned in the advertisement was route WT3. Lynch’s provision of an alternative route between Melbourne and Footscray had a major and immediate impact<sup>119</sup> on all alternative routes and by 1853 Ballarat Rd east of Nicholson St [3w] had moved from servicing Dynon Rd via route WT5, to its current position servicing Smithfield Rd and Racecourse Rd [2n] and thus the eastern portion of route WT2.<sup>120</sup> The route in Footscray was only one-chain wide, as Lynch’s ferry had neither featured in Hoddle’s grand plan nor attracted significant stock usage. However, local government in Flemington provided land on the left bank, to encourage travellers into the Flemington area. Smithfield Rd and Racecourse Rd arose from subdivisions in the early 1840s (Sub-chapter 2.3).



In 1866 Lynch, mainly motivated by the spectator traffic heading to Flemington horse races, and in the face of much opposition from Footscray and Braybrook Councils, replaced the ferry with his own toll bridge in the form of a drawbridge<sup>121</sup> located some 50 m upstream of the line of Smithfield Rd. The bridge not only aided racegoers but also made Ballarat Rd a viable alternative freight route, particularly as the east side approaches were far firmer than those offered by Dynon Rd.

The competition between Lynch's crossing and the Dynon Rd crossing led the Footscray and Braybrook Councils, who had funded the development of Dynon Rd, to install a toll gate on the northside of the Geelong Rd / Barkly St intersection [1n]<sup>122</sup> and thus tip the total costs of a trip in favour of "their" Footscray routes (route WT5 & WT7). Later in the 1860s, the Melbourne Meat Preserving Company built a third iron-piled bridge between the two competing crossings, so the Councils installed a further toll gate on Ballarat Rd to discourage its use.

Lynchs Bridge was badly damaged by flood in 1870. Footscray Council bought it from Lynch in the following year and replaced it in 1882 with a new timber bridge with a lift span. The Public Works Department provided financial support for its construction and for major maintenance in 1904. After 50 years, the timber was rotting and the lift span no longer operated. In addition, the bridge had been built at right angles to the river to minimise construction cost. However, this created tight bends in the road alignment at either end of the bridge. The CRB in 1936-1939 upgraded the bridge to a composite steel-beam bridge slightly upstream and on a better alignment. The bridge has five 21 m spans with two further 9 m spans concealed in the "abutments". There are six rows of 1.4 m deep plate-girder beams. The roadway was 12 m wide with two 1.8 m footpaths. It was one of the first uses of long timber piles and of composite steel-concrete construction - the latter based on Tasmanian experience. The alignment remained difficult and was a major reason for VicRoads duplicating the bridge in 1992.

The Ballarat Rd component of this route was widened and resheeted with bitumen in 1937 and then duplicated by the CRB in 1964. The route is part of National Route 8 and of Routes 35 and 83 in the Metropolitan Route numbering system. It was proclaimed<sup>123</sup> a Main Road from Melbourne to Geelong Rd (route GL6) in 1860 (and later in 1914 and 1920). It was declared a Main Road in 1938 and a State Hwy (#2500) prior to 1982. The length from Lynchs Bridge to Droop St was proclaimed a State Hwy in 1960. Smithfield Rd was declared a Main Road in 1938 and a State Hwy in 1960 and 1969. Racecourse Rd was last proclaimed in 1995.<sup>124</sup>

#### BT5 via Raleighs punt

Travel from the city to Raleighs Punt and then along Raleigh Rd to Rosamond Rd was discussed under route WT8. Travellers to Braybrook and further west on Ballarat Rd (route BT2) continued on Raleigh Rd to Wests Rd, turned left and followed Hampstead Rd and Mitchell St to Ballarat Rd and route BT2. There was still a sign in June 2000 for west-bound traffic on Raleigh Rd prior to Wests Rd which gives the traveller the option of selecting this route to Ballarat or heading to Bendigo via Cordite Ave and Military Rd.

Some evidence suggests that the initial route did not follow Wests Rd, but was closer to the right bank of Maribyrnong River and utilised Williamson Rd rather than Hampstead Rd.

#### BT6 via Solomons Ford

Pre-ferry or heavy cargo from Melbourne to the Ballarat area sometimes used route WT2 to cross Maribyrnong River at Solomons Ford.

Some travellers then used route GL9 to reach route BT2 to Ballarat at McIntyre Rd [7w]. However, according to many maps such as Map 4.3, most travellers in pre-subdivision times took a route that went west from Solomons Ford on a line near Warwick Rd, continuing across McIntyre Rd (once called Keilor Rd) and Stony Creek. It then turned northwest and followed the left bank of Jones Creek near the line of St Albans Rd, before turning west on to Taylors Rd [5n] near the [11w] *line*. This portion of the route was parallel to the left bank of Kororoit Creek but far enough north to avoid the swamp lands closer to the actual left bank. Many potential routes existed in this area, but possible crossings and their flat approaches are not only swampy but overlain with a red clay that is sticky, slippery and tenuous in its hold on vehicles. Some Kororoit Creek crossings only 20 km from the city centre remain impassable in wet weather today.

The best of these poor crossings was the Beattys Rd crossing of Kororoit Creek [5n, 16w]. The Rockbank Inn operated at the crossing between 1852 and 1870. From there travellers could meet the Western Hwy (route BT2) via Beattys Rd, or even near Leakes Rd [17w] (Map 4.14). The Rockbank Inn also served early travellers diverting south from Melton Hwy (route BT7).

Map 4.14 also shows a track heading south off Taylors Rd to cross Kororoit Creek at the Monaghans Lane ford [13w] and rejoin Western Hwy near Deanside Drive [15w] in Rockbank.

As the shorter Western Hwy (route BT2) developed, these alternative ways lost favour - a preference heightened by the swampy nature of the ground over which they passed. By the mid-1850s they were also largely blocked off by subdivisions and their associated fences. For example, Map 4.11 of 1866 does not show the road as a through route.

#### BT7 via Sydenham

After European settlement, there were originally two land-based ways to the lands west of Melbourne. The first was via Geelong (routes GL2-5) and the second was this route via Sydenham and Melton. It bore a number of names: ranged in terms of increasing destination distance - these were the "road to the Upper Werribee", "road to the Pentland Hills and Upper Werribee", "Portland to Melbourne Road", "Portland Rd", "Portland Bay Rd via Pentland Hills" or even "The north road to Adelaide."<sup>125</sup> Hoddle at times referred to it as the "Keilor to Portland Rd." Indeed, the Government Gazette in 1848 uses "Portland Rd" for the combination of Keilor Rd (on route MM4) and this route (see Map 4.15). The reference to Portland is further explained in the discussion of route GL6.



This route to the west via Keilor and Sydenham was and still is firstly serviced by three Bendigo-bound routes meeting in the Keilor locale:

BT7a. Initially, a route crossed the Maribyrnong River at Footscray or Solomons Ford and proceeded north along the right bank of Maribyrnong River using McIntyre Rd [7w] and Sunshine Ave (routes WT3 & MM1) following the right bank of Taylors Creek.<sup>126</sup> Travellers to Sydenham and beyond then followed the line of the north-western portion of Sunshine Ave. Although the current alignment of Sunshine Ave is sinuous, in the first subdivisions in the 1850s, property boundaries to the east and a track to the west both followed the same straight line as the portion of Sunshine Ave southeast of Aldershot Drive. In fact, 1850s subdivisional maps actually show a road reservation extending in a straight line to the [9w], [6n] *section* corner at Lady Nelson Way and in de Gruchy mid-1850s Map 4.4 the straight line extends as far as the Melton Hwy (or Keilor - Melton Rd) at Taylors Lake. Sunshine Ave is shown as a road reservation in Map 3.6 of 1853. At its south-eastern end Department's map of 1892 still shows Sunshine Ave joining route WT2 at the north end of Duke St [6w].

BT7b. Another route followed the left bank of the Maribyrnong (route MM2 or KS2) and then used the Calder Hwy (route MM3) to cross the river and join the Keilor - Melton Rd at Keilor North, and

BT7c. A final route used Calder Hwy or Freeway (route MM4 or MM6) from Essendon in the east to the Keilor - Melton Rd. This branch is still shown as the main way to Ballarat in Austral's map of 1896.

BT7. By Taylors Lakes these three routes had rejoined as a single route BT7. During the gold rush of 1851 there were active goldfields at both Ballarat and Bendigo. Blainey wryly notes the critical nature of the decision facing gold diggers when, only four kilometres after crossing the Maribyrnong River on today's Calder Hwy (route MM4), they reached a bifurcation of the route at Keilor North<sup>127</sup>. There, travellers had two key destination choices: they could stay on their current path to Diggers Rest and Bendigo or they could head west on this route to Ballarat via Sydenham and Melton. The quandary was even greater as initially there were many local routes to both destinations. Serle<sup>128</sup> describes the gold diggers':

*trudge across the Keilor plains. No more than a track, or a series of tracks hundreds of metres wide, it had been churned up into liquid mud which was often knee deep. Those on foot "crawled like flies across a plate of treacle."*

The route that is the core subject of this item served travellers from Keilor North to Sydenham, Melton and points further west. It was a popular route. When J. D. Lang<sup>129</sup> returned from Portland via the Ballarat area and Bacchus Marsh in 1846 he used this route. Similarly, when Robert Nickle's troops from the HMS Electra and Fantome were sent from Melbourne in late 1854 to quell the Eureka Stockade uprising, they took this route to Ballarat, camping on the first night at Keilor.<sup>130</sup>

*Sections* along the route were first offered for sale in 1840 but none were sold for some years.<sup>131</sup> The route (and a couple of local variants near Melton discussed below) is shown in Darke's map of 1840, was first formally surveyed by Urquhart in 1847, and appears as a road reservation in Map 3.6 of 1853. It is the only road from Melbourne to Ballarat shown in Proeschel's 1853b "Map of the roads to all the mines in Victoria." Its early dominance over the Western Hwy is discussed under route BT2.

The eastern end of the Keilor - Melton Rd follows the left bank of Taylors Creek. Within a few years this length was straightened by the surveyors and the subdividers (Map 4.3 and Map 4.10). Progressing upstream, the creek curves from northwest, west-northwest to north-northwest, and a kink in the linearised road at Sydenham [11w] reflects this curve.

Beyond the [11w] *section line*, the road leads along the [7n] *section line* to near Melton where it left the *section line* to cross the Kororoit Creek and join route BT2 towards the Djeriwarrah Creek crossing. Initially, the route was untamed between the [11w] and [15w] *lines*. The route along the [7n] *line* met Kororoit Creek just past the [18w] *line* and was soon straightened by subdividers. The crossing involved descending into a small but steep-sided valley. Urquhart's map of 1847 shows two fords serving three separate routes.

BT7d. An upstream ford on an earlier route near Highett Rd allowed the traveller to stay on the [7n] *line*, as indicated by today's Centenary Ave in Melton. Darke's maps of 1839 and 1842b (Map 4.14) show the route

continuing west until the [23w] *section line* - now Bulmans Rd; it then curves south to the Djerriwarrh Creek crossing. Map 4.11 suggests that by 1866 the track curved south a little earlier at Coburns Rd [22w].

BT7e. A downstream ford at the location of today's bridge and served a route on the east - west line of today's High St that heads straight for the Djerriwarrh Creek "historic bridge" crossing discussed in route BT2. This route flourished once the creek crossing was developed. It is shown on Map 3.7 of 1849 and Map 4.11 of 1866. High St was then the southern boundary of Melton and was provided for in the 1852 subdivision that created Melton. The original route continued on the line of Sherwin Crt and Melton Valley Drive to meet the east - west High St. The route joined the Western Hwy (route BT2) after it crosses Toolern Creek. An earlier Toolern Creek crossing is a 5 m wide 1920s reinforced concrete bridge with two 4.5 m spans. It has been preserved as a footbridge.

BT7f. Influenced by conditions at these fords, some early travellers preferred to turn southwest at the east end of Beattys Rd [13w] (or even later at Leakes Rd on the [17w] *line*) to cross Kororoit Creek at the Rockbank Inn crossing on Beattys Rd. This difficult crossing and the subsequent route were described in route BT6. The eastern portion of Beattys Rd is not shown in Map 4.14 of 1842 but its non-cardinal nature indicates that it preceded subdivision and therefore probably arose within the next decade as it is shown in de Gruchy's map of the mid-1850s (Map 4.4). Robert Nickle and his troops took this sub-route and stayed at Rockbank Inn on their second night.<sup>132</sup> Connected portions of Beattys Rd are shown in Map 4.16 of 1919.

Map 4.16 Atlas of the County of Bourke Department of Lands and Survey 1919. SLV  
[http://search.slv.vic.gov.au/permalink/f/1c135st/SLV\\_VOYAGER702801](http://search.slv.vic.gov.au/permalink/f/1c135st/SLV_VOYAGER702801)

Some travellers - probably from route MM1 rather than from route MM4 - heading northwest also used the eastern portion of the route as Map 4.14 of 1842 shows a road "from Aitkens Gap" (possibly Craigieburn) using the same track as the Keilor - Melton Rd, until near today's Sydenham Railway Station where their route forked to the northwest on a line about a kilometre southwest of today's Calder Hwy (route MM4).

The BT7 route to Ballarat a major recipient of government funding between 1856 and 1861. It was proclaimed a Main Road in 1860 and 1864 and was still referred to then as the Melbourne - Ballarat Rd.<sup>133</sup> The discussion in route BT2 indicates that by that time BT2 was taking over as the preferred route to Ballarat. Nevertheless, the Sydenham BT7 route was still shown as the major route to Ballarat in Broadbent's map of 1910. Its popularity was prolonged after 1860 when it was possible to travel by train to the Sydenham railway station and then take a coach along the Keilor - Melton Rd to Ballarat. A direct rail service from Melbourne to Ballarat did not occur until the 1880s. In 1998 VicRoads duplicated the road between Sunshine Ave and the railway line and the route west of the line is now duplicated to Sanctuary Rd [13w].

The route was declared a Main Road from the Calder Hwy to the Shire of Melton in 1941. In 1989 the entire route was proclaimed a State Hwy (#2040) and is now MR54.<sup>134</sup>

#### **4.4 Routes MM – the roads to Mt Macedon and Bendigo**

The routes to be discussed are shown on Maps 4.1w & c.

##### **MM1 from the south**

This route was based on the old stock route along the right bank of Maribyrnong River (route OL1) which was used by the initial overland travellers from NSW to the Port Phillip District coming via Mt Macedon and the Maribyrnong River. It was probably the second route between Sydney and its new settlement. In conjunction with the Solomons Ford crossing (route WT2), it also provided an alternative to the better-known ways of accessing the routes to Bendigo such as Bulla Rd (route MM5), and, later, Calder Hwy (route MM4). Mt Macedon was a key part of many trips as it provided travellers in open country with a good sighting point (Chapter 3.6). Mt Macedon is a dominant visual feature and is some 25 km north of Sunbury.

Travellers using the route from Melbourne began on route WT2. Once across Solomons Ford, they then tracked through the paddocks to the west to join routes WT3 and BT3 along McIntyre Rd and the [7w] *section line*. The route took them north until at Sunshine North a re-encounter with Maribyrnong River forced the route to divert to the northwest, using the south end of Sunshine Ave (Route BT7a). Its alignment was then a straight line across the plain to the [9w], [6n] *section* corner Keilor North where route BT7 headed to Ballarat and route MM4 to Bendigo. The northern end of Sunshine Ave now reflects the curves of subdivision.

At the [5n] *section line* some travellers left route BT7 and took today's Green Gully Rd (MR40, originally St Albans Rd) to Keilor, crossing the relatively deep valley of Taylors Creek. Green Gully Rd south of Taylors Creek was a property boundary between water-access allotments. To the north of the creek, it followed the western boundary of the Keilor village reserve.

At Keilor, travellers could connect to the Calder Hwy (route MM4) to Bendigo. Others would continue north on Arundel Rd, which was also a property boundary between water-access allotments and is shown as a road reservation in Map 3.6 of 1853. The route led again to Maribyrnong River, but this time the crossing was relatively easy. A number of simple fords and bridges were used at the site until 1907 when a major timber bridge with nine 6 m beam spans and a 2.7 m width was erected to provide access to a new estate. The bridge had a maximum span of 9.1 m.<sup>135</sup> It was replaced by a concrete bridge in 1989. It was restored in 1978 and remains at the site as a footbridge and is on the Victorian Heritage Register as H1952. Across the river, Arundel Rd continued to McNabs Rd [8w] which is now partly lost in Melbourne Airport. The route then met Sunbury Rd and the Bulla route to Bendigo (route MM5).

The portion of the route from Solomons Ford to Keilor often served as part of a composite route providing early travellers from Melbourne with a reliable all-weather crossing of Maribyrnong River on their way to Williamstown (route WT3) or Geelong (route GL9), when Solomons Ford was impassable.

McIntyre Rd (MR41), Sunshine Ave (MR41) and Green Gully Rd (MR 40) were declared Main Roads in 1990 and 1993.<sup>136</sup>

## MM2 the Mt Macedon track

A major early track to Bulla and Sunbury followed the original route to Williamstown via Solomons Ford (route WT2) to near the Holmes Rd / Waverley St [3w] intersection, prior to the Ford. The route then proceeded across country in a relatively straight north-northwest line towards the Mt Macedon sighting point, joining route MM5 at about the [8n] *section line* (Map 3.6). Indeed, the sighting heading could well have begun when route WT2 left the ridge near today's Ascot Vale Railway Station. This heading took the route along the left bank of Steele Creek until it crossed the creek in the broad valley near Niddrie High School.

It was probably the first route from the new settlement to Sydney, based to the north on Major Mitchell's 1836 journey. The Ryrie brothers William, Donald and James were early settlers and mail contractors and, when the Colonial Secretary in 1837 asked them to suggest the best route for overland mail from Yass to Melbourne, they recommended the Mt Macedon track.<sup>137</sup>

No trace of the route remains south of Bulla. It is shown as the "present track" to Bulla in Map 4.15 of 1847 and was sometimes known as the "Mt Macedon track". It began operating in the days before Mains Bridge gave a more secure crossing of Moonee Ponds Creek via Flemington Rd and Mt Alexander Rd (route MM4) and clearly preceded subdivision. When subdivision began to restrict access, and particularly after a gazettal in 1848, the main route across country to Bulla and beyond became the combined route MM4 and MM5.

There were some variations to the southern portion of the route:

MM2a. As with route WT2, Mains Bridge and then Lennox bridge at Flemington Bridge (see route MM5) encouraged travellers to stay on Mt Alexander Rd until near Kent St, where they turned west to Ascot Vale Railway Station.

MM2b. At the Steele Creek crossing, a branch to the west joined the alternative route to Mt Macedon (route MM4), heading for a crossing of the Maribyrnong at Gumms Corner. In his Map 4.15 of proposed routes to Mt Macedon area, Hoddle labelled this "present route".

\* A branch used Solomons Ford to cross the Maribyrnong and is discussed under route MM1.

\* A branch based on stock route OL2 stayed much closer to running water and is described under the southern portion of route KS2. It proved more able to adapt to later subdivision.

### MM3 to Flemington Bridge Railway Station

As discussed under route WT2, a number of all-weather tracks from Melbourne to Solomons Ford and beyond led first to a ford in Moonee Ponds Creek near today's Flemington Bridge Railway Station. A western track left the original township by Spencer St or King St. It skirted poor conditions by following the high ground along the eastern border of the Moonee Ponds Creek estuarine swamp, in the manner of the first way out of Melbourne (route WT2). Leaving that route near Macaulay Rd, it then stayed on the high ground on the left bank of the creek and headed north on Boundary Rd to the Flemington Bridge ford to be discussed under route MM4. Boundary Rd was the one-mile-south *section* boundary, but should have been subjugated by Moonee Ponds Ck.

A tollgate operated at the Macaulay Rd / Boundary Rd intersection from 1864. Boundary Rd (#5285) was declared a Main Road in 1994.<sup>138</sup>

### MM4 to Diggers Rest and Mt Macedon

#### (a) *City to Flemington Bridge*

The north - south line of Elizabeth St (MR55) ended and Flemington Rd (MR60), on its atypical non-cardinal alignment, began at the [0e] *line* and utilised a small saddle in an east-west line of high ground (Figure 1.3b). Map 4.15 of 1847 notes that presence of an animal "pound and cattleyards" as the main reason for the route to deviate from the *section line* at this point. According to Urquhart's map of 1851a, the point of deviation was well marked by an "old stump". The initial development of Flemington Rd as a route from Elizabeth St to a usable crossing of the Moonee Ponds Creek was discussed under route WT2. In 1851 it was the most heavily-trafficked road in the new State passing the Haymarket now occupied by the roundabout linking Elizabeth St, Flemington Rd and Royal Pde. The Haymarket and the site now occupied by Royal Melbourne Hospital was also Melbourne's major cattle sale yard and animal pound.

The alignment of Flemington Rd led from the "old stump" to the ford through the Moonee Ponds Creek at today's Flemington Bridge Railway Station, although initially there was a kink to the southwest to avoid a brickworks near today's Royal Children's Hospital (Map 4.15). There was also a timber bridge carrying Flemington Rd across Haines Creek near Park Drive. The road's role as a preferred stock route guaranteed its three-chain width. The Central Roads Board began funding macadam work on Flemington Rd in 1853.<sup>139</sup> Removal of a small hill in 1866 provided a more acceptable grade.

Elizabeth St between Victoria St and Flemington Rd is a Main Road (#5046). Flemington Rd was declared a Main Road (#5044) in 1995.<sup>140</sup> Cable trams operated on Flemington Rd north of Abbotsford St from 1890. Melbourne's first long-term electric tram service opened on the route between Flemington Bridge and Puckle St in 1906.<sup>141</sup> The service was extended to Keilor Rd in 1922, from Flemington Bridge to Abbotsford St in 1925 and south into the inner city in 1935.

#### (b) *Flemington Bridge to Keilor Rd*

The tracks to Flemington Bridge (routes MM3 and MM4) converged on the Moonee Ponds Creek ford near today's Flemington Bridge Railway Station. The ford was located at the first firm ground above the marshes associated with the Creek's downstream ponds described in route WT2 (Map 3.6).

In 1839 the ford crossing the Moonee Ponds Creek was replaced when James Patrick Main built a small log bridge, mainly to cater for the significant traffic bringing in the sandstone blocks needed to build Melbourne's churches<sup>142</sup> and other public buildings. It was probably the town's first vehicular bridge and remained its only bridge for a further four years until another was built at Pascoe Vale (see route KS5), also over the Moonee Ponds Creek. (The discussion in route SK2 notes that a bridge was also built in 1839 over the Yarra at Queen St. It only survived for a few months.)

Alfred Joyce described<sup>143</sup> Mains Bridge in 1844 as:

*“a small temporary bridge at the swamp on the Flemington Rd and which had been used by Main for carting stone to the new (Russell St) gaol and the new treasury.”*

Main made major repairs to the bridge in 1849, using funds provided by the government.<sup>144</sup> Lennox played a role in supervising the work on this bridge and later was more closely involved in the construction of a new 7.6 m long laminated timber bridge known as Flemington Bridge some 20 or 30 m downstream in 1851.<sup>145</sup> Jarret’s 1851 sketch shows a neat three-span timber beam bridge and is presumably Lennox’ new bridge.<sup>146</sup> However, when it was replaced in 1868 by the current bridge it was described as *“an old tumbledown collection of logs and timber.”*<sup>147</sup> Tolls were collected at the crossing until 1868.

The new 1868 bridge was designed by George Francis and employed six rows of cast iron columns carrying 200 mm deep riveted wrought-iron girders made by Soho Foundries in Franklin St, Melbourne. The girders span about 6.5 m, giving a total crossing length of 45 m. The current inbound carriageway still uses four rows of the girders and thirty (6 x 5) of the cast iron piers. Only 15 piers were originally placed in 1868, indicating that two widenings have since occurred. Some of the piers are still in service and can be seen from the adjacent bike path. In 1913 the bridge was widened by Monash using the new reinforced concrete technology to produce seven beams. It was the first Australian use of the method to carry rail (tram) traffic. The current outbound carriageway bridge is a prestressed concrete beam bridge built in 1997 as part of the City Link Project (route MM9). The bridge has also sometimes been called the Moonee Ponds Creek bridge or the Mt Alexander Rd bridge.

Beyond the bridge, the route leaves the muddy flat beside the creek by turning to the northwest to find the easiest grade out of the valley. The Flemington Hotel was located on the eastern side of this kink. Initially the Essendon terrain was densely forested.<sup>148</sup> The road passed through a land *section* bounded by Racecourse Rd [2n], Ascot Vale Rd [2w], Maribyrnong Rd [3n] and Moonee Ponds Creek [c1w]. The road permitted the eastern land portion to be subdivided in 1844 into water-access lots. The curved nature of the road through this subdivision indicates that it was strongly established prior to 1844. Nevertheless, the subdividers only provided a one-chain road reservation, indicating that they saw the road then as little more than a local facility accessing pasture lands at Ascot Vale, Moonee Ponds, Essendon and Pascoe Vale. They were probably also influenced by the alternative provided by the nearby Mt Macedon track (route MM2). Hoddle’s 3-chain reservation does not reappear until Fenton St, a kilometre to the north.

Just south of the [4n] *line*, a water-hole at Queens Park was a popular first stop for travellers to the goldfields. Once north of the [4n] *line*, both the Mt Macedon track and this route used Mt Macedon as a sighting point to lead to all points to the north and northwest. These distant points had three attractions as they:

- \* provided the initial route to and from Sydney;
- \* led to the fertile farms of the Campaspe and Loddon rivers; and
- \* were subsequently to lead to the Castlemaine goldfields.

Thus, the route continued to be aligned to a non-cardinal compass direction and remained ungoverned by *sectional* surveying as it cut across and through all the 1850s and earlier subdivisions in surveyor-straightened lengths, never using a *section line*.

The route soon became known as Sydney Rd due to its role in providing an early route to Sydney via Mt Macedon and later the start of alternative Sydney routes via Mickleham Rd (route KS2) and Pascoe Vale Rd (route KS5). It thus provided Melbourne’s third route to Sydney. As its Sydney role quickly diminished in favour of the Hume Hwy (route KS7), the route - in combination with route MM5 - became known as Mt Macedon Rd. The route was specifically planned in 1848 as a replacement for the earlier Mt Macedon track (route MM2) and was gazetted in 1848 as Mt Macedon Rd, running from “North Melbourne to the village of Bulla (Map 4.15).”

In 1851 Mt Alexander (now Castlemaine) was the site of one of the largest of the early gold-strikes. Mt Macedon Rd provided the best route to these goldfields and quickly became known as Mt Alexander Rd. Optimistically, the line to Mt Macedon continued to the gold of Castlemaine and Bendigo.<sup>149</sup> Samuel Brees’ well-known painting of diggers on the way to the goldfields is a view from the first kink in Mt Alexander Rd just past Flemington Bridge Railway Station (Figure 4.5). In 1856 the route was regarded<sup>150</sup> as the “principal road in the Colony.” Moloney<sup>151</sup> graphically describes the road during the gold-rush. An engineer at the time commented that in 1853 traffic on the road “exceeded that of any road in England.”<sup>152</sup>





Figure 4.5 Samuel Brees' painting of the way to the goldfields.<sup>153</sup> The painting is undated but it has been suggested that it was made after Brees had left Victoria.

The route became a ridge road near Ormond Rd [3n] and crossed the [2w] *line* at Pascoe Vale Rd. At this point Pascoe Vale Rd (route KS5) heads north to follow the Moonee Ponds Creek. However, this route continues towards Mt Macedon. The land it passed through became the growing Essendon district with the village rapidly established in the angle between the route and Pascoe Vale Rd. The route's straight alignment through Essendon indicates that this portion was part of the subdivision process and had been used to provide a subdivision boundary. The Public Works Department funded improvements to the rail-over-road bridge near Essendon Railway Station in 1909.

The human story of Mt Alexander Rd has been well told by Frost.<sup>154</sup>

*(c) Keilor Rd to Aitkens Gap*

The route turns northwest onto Keilor Rd at Lincoln Rd [3w]. This corner was a popular coaching station and the Lincolnshire Arms Hotel (which is still operating) was notorious for the range of clientele that it accommodated. Keilor Rd was originally only intended to serve properties at Keilor East on the left bank of the Maribyrnong and is shown on Hoddle's map of 1840b. Traffic not turning onto Keilor Rd would follow Bulla Rd (route MM5). Keilor Rd was not part of the stock movements covered by stock routes OL1 and OL2. Hence, only a one-chain reservation was provided and the provision of a tram service took it beyond the CRB's remit to introduce a 3 chain reservation (Sub-chapter 3.5a). Furthermore, no reservation at all is shown on the early subdivision maps west of the [5w] *line*, and before the road is required to cross Steele Creek, let alone the Maribyrnong River. (A reservation was made on the right bank to service travellers arriving via Solomons Ford - route MM1).

Priorities began to change in 1848 when a ferry and then a primitive bridge began operating across the Maribyrnong River at Gumms Corner. Consequently, the provision of a Keilor Rd link to Gumms Corner at Keilor and the associated crossing of Maribyrnong River greatly increased the usefulness of the route. The link was gazetted in 1848 and an associated gazetted notice from the Colonial Secretary's Office dated 13 April 1848 made the purpose of this road development clear - it was to service the road to Portland via Sydenham and Melton (route BT7). Mt Macedon and points further north were to be serviced by separate expenditure on Bulla Rd (route MM5).<sup>155</sup> The key data is well recorded on Hoddle's Map 4.15 of 1847. The notices sometimes referred to Keila rather than Keilor.

Travellers to Ballarat via Sydenham now automatically took the Keilor Rd turning. However, the traveller to Bendigo and the goldfields was presented at the [3w] *line* with a major choice between:<sup>156</sup>

- \* Bulla Rd, which is discussed as route MT5. It provided the shorter but somewhat more difficult route to Bendigo.
- \* This route, which veered to the left along Keilor Rd to follow Maribyrnong River to Gumms Corner in the manner of stock routes OL2 and OL3. In difficult times, it proved the easier of the two routes. It required just one major water crossing - of the Maribyrnong River at Keilor - and one “minor” crossing of Steele Creek. Once the bridges were built, this route attracted most of the traffic.
- \* The Port Phillip Gazette also called Keilor Rd, Portland Rd and Pentland Rd as it fed into route BT7. The Pentland Hills are the hills beyond Bacchus Marsh that presented a considerable hurdle to travellers to the west.

Keilor Rd heads on a beeline to a suitable crossing of Steele Creek near Rachelle Rd. However, the crossing did not prove simple. When the bridge was being built in 1853, the girders broke and fell into the creek.<sup>157</sup> This calamity and a similar event described below led to Acting Colonial Engineer Brees quickly relinquishing his position in circumstances described further in Sub-chapter 3.3c.<sup>158</sup> A tollgate was later installed at the completed Steele Creek crossing.<sup>159</sup>

The next part of the route between Steele Creek and Keilor Park Drive is now lost under the Calder Freeway (route MM6). It was closely aligned to Fullarton Rd and the Old Calder Hwy, with its sharp kink down to Gumms Corner. The Old Calder Hwy thus traces a route that crossed Maribyrnong River near Gumms Corner, in the presence of another tollgate. In the 1920s this last portion from Milleara Rd to Sunshine Av [9w] was still called Mt Alexander Rd.

The crossing of Maribyrnong River was a key component of the route. The location was first chosen to take advantage of a natural ford near the current Calder Freeway bridge, 300 m upstream from the Old Calder Hwy bridges in Keilor. It was called<sup>160</sup> the “Werribee crossing”, suggesting its early role as an all-weather route to Geelong (routes MM1 and GL9). It was also well-used by travellers initially preferring the right bank of the Maribyrnong River (route KS1). A ferry then operated at the crossing, and a temporary bridge<sup>161</sup> was erected sometime before 1848, followed by a “permanent” bridge in 1848,<sup>162</sup> that was washed away in a huge flood in May 1852. The temporary structure was the first bridge over Maribyrnong River. Note in the discussion of the downstream crossings of the river in route WT4-6 that a pontoon bridge was used at Dynon Rd in 1858.

A more substantial - indeed, quite bulky - Howe<sup>163</sup> truss bridge of kauri pine known as Brees Bridge was built in 1853 (Figure 4.6), only to be equally quickly washed away by a flood and replaced by a new bridge in 1854. More work occurred in 1857, 1860 and 1866, but the bridge remained close to collapse. Brees was the Acting Colonial Engineer (see Sub-chapter 3.2).



Figure 4.6 Brees' Bridge of 1853. Drawing by T S Gill.<sup>164</sup> . The bridge is also shown in a La Trobe Collection painting by Brees<sup>165</sup> reproduced in Cannon 1993, p160-1. It appears to have been a very redundant Howe truss with a (wastefully) very low span/depth ratio.

Continual bridge-building at the site was commercially necessary to prevent travellers to Bendigo being lured away to the alternative routes to the south (via Solomons Ford, route MM1) or north (via Bulla, route MM5). Finally, the inadequate bridge was replaced by the "Old Iron Bridge" or "basket bridge" or "flower-basket bridge" designed by George Browne and erected by Enoch Chambers (Figure 4.7). The "basket" reference referred to the handle-like upper-chord lateral-bracing at midspan. The bridge was completed in 1868. Its primary structure consisted of two large iron beams shaped as rectangular tubes, 2.6 m deep and with 14 mm thick flanges. The beams that each spanned 42.7 m formed a through bridge with the "basket handle" stabilizing the compression flanges.<sup>166</sup> The bridge was financed largely by toll revenue and successfully increased the popularity of the route. The CRB conducted urgent maintenance work on the bridge deck in 1926. The bridge was removed from service in 1964 when a new bridge was opened, but still functions as a footbridge. It is now on the Victorian Heritage Register as H1427 and is registered with the Australian Heritage Commission.



Figure 4.7 Keilor Old Iron Bridge in about 2002 (*Victorian Places copyright*)

Adjacent to the Old Iron Bridge was a depression that carried flows in times of flood. This was spanned by a timber bridge that the CRB replaced in 1928 with a bridge using three 13 m spans of reinforced concrete beams. This crossing was also used as a part of routes WT3 and MM1.

The village of Keilor quickly developed at the site. It was surveyed in early 1850 and soon gained great custom as a stop-over to the goldfields. In 1855 Caroline Chisholm established one of her wooden shelters there to cater for travelling women and children. The route from Keilor village first headed to the northwest corner of the town reserve near the Green Gully Rd intersection and was then governed by the need to keep between the Maribyrnong River and Taylors Ck, and to avoid crossing either. The trip from the city to Keilor along this route was the third of the twelve Melbourne excursions in Out's 1868 Guide.

By 1852 the Chief Gold Commissioner was promoting two routes to the goldfields (and Bendigo).<sup>167</sup>

MM4a. The most significant of these routes via Keilor and Diggers Rest began by tracking alongside Jacksons Creek and Thompsons Creek to Diggers Rest, which was usually an overnight stop en route to the goldfields.

MM4b. Map 4.14 of 1842 then shows a road "from Aitkens Gap" using the same track as today's Keilor - Melton Rd (route BT7), following the bend to the west in Taylors Creek at Keilor North until Parmelia Drive. There, the Aitkens Gap route forks to the northwest on a line about a kilometre southwest of today's Calder Freeway (route MM6). The route stayed west of the Freeway and the Kororoit Creek East Branch. This led to the Mount Aitken sighting point which is about 200 m west of the Munday Road interchange and about a kilometre northwest of Sunbury. This is close to the current Calder route via The Gap and Mt Aitken and was promoted by John Aitken, the original land-owner in the area who had arrived there from Tasmania with his sheep in 1836.<sup>168</sup> Aitken's Gap became

another common over-night stop en route to the goldfields. Some routes headed to the fordable creeks at Diggers Rest and then used a sighting line to Mt Macedon. Such a route beyond Keilor is shown in Map 3.6 of 1853 as a road reservation incidentally providing water-access lots on the right side of Maribyrnong River. The detail of these routes is beyond the scope of this book.

Route choice in this relatively flat country with its deep watercourse valleys was an easy process - stay near water but minimize creek crossings. Needs changed with the discovery of gold. John Sherer was in Keilor en route to the goldfields, when he wrote in October 1852:

*The roads here branch off by fifty or more tracks, every man taking what he believed to be the best or shortest path (to the Mt Alexander goldfields).<sup>169</sup>*

The various Mt Macedon tracks that he had in mind could have ranged from routes MM4&5 via Bulla and Sunbury in the east, to the Gisborne - Melton Rd in the west. Gold diggers struggling with this destination dilemma had already faced an earlier similar dilemma at Bulla Rd, where they had had to decide whether to stay on this route and chance their luck at Ballarat or Bendigo, or take Bulla Rd. Austral's map of 1896 shows the main way to Bendigo proceeding via Bulla Road. The alternate route to Bulla was gazetted as a road in 1848 – a timing confirmed by the way the route cuts across and through all the 1850s subdivisions, never using a *section line*. It was initially known as Mt Macedon Rd and the portion east of the [3w] *line* was discussed above. Another popular alternative route to Bendigo left the Calder Hwy at Diggers Rest and followed Vineyard Rd (MR43) to Sunbury to pick up Bulla Rd to Gisborne.

Major route advocates at the time were the innkeepers who advertised in the Melbourne press, promoting the virtues of whichever route went past their inn.<sup>170</sup>

### *(c) Formalities*

The first Victorian Government established a Central Roads Board in 1853 (Sub-chapter 3.3). As a sop to the gold miners protesting over the cost of their mining licences,<sup>171</sup> the Board immediately began the construction of Mt Alexander Rd between Holmes St and Keilor Rd. Nevertheless, in 1855 citizens presented the government with a 100 m long petition demanding improvements to the road.<sup>172</sup> To help fund this work, a new tollgate was established at Flemington Bridge in 1855. There were nine other tollgates between Melbourne and Castlemaine. Between 1853 and 1857 the Central Roads Board formed the road between Melbourne and Castlemaine and constructed some 23 bridges. In 1853 a daily coach service was in operation between the two cities.<sup>173</sup> The vermilion coaches made a strong visual impact.

In 1926 the CRB placed 3 km of 50 mm asphalt between Matthews Ave and Gumms Corner, and a kilometre of spray and chip seal (Sub-chapter 7.3d) in Keilor. The work continued in later years.

The length of the route west of Tullamarine Freeway was called the North Western Hwy in 1925 and soon renamed the Calder Hwy in 1928, one year after the death of William Calder, the first Chairman of the CRB.<sup>174</sup> Before the opening of Tullamarine Freeway (route MM8), Calder Hwy included the full length of Keilor Rd.

A route comprising Mt Alexander Rd / Keilor Rd / Calder Hwy was shown in La Trobe's plan of 1841, was the sixth route in the 1929 Town Plan, the thirteenth route in the 1954 Plan and part of Route F4 in the 1969 Plan.

The route from Elizabeth St to Castlemaine was proclaimed a Main Road in 1854 and again in 1914 for the route north of Calder Park and Thompsons Rd [9n]. The route from Pascoe Vale Rd to Keilor Rd was declared a Main Road in 1960. The 1934 declaration through Essendon was rescinded in 1937 & 1944. Keilor Rd was declared a Main Road in 1990. With the opening of the Calder Freeway (route MM6), the 1941 and 1960 State Hwy declarations were rescinded from Keilor Rd to Tullamarine Freeway in 1974. In 1994 the route was declared a Main Road from Racecourse Rd to Baroda Rd, and in 1991 to Maribyrnong Rd.<sup>175</sup> Before the opening of the Calder and Tullamarine Freeways, it was in the National Route numbering system. In 1997 the route was declared a Road of National Importance.

### MM5 to Sunbury via Bulla