

ALEXANDRA



RED GATE



HERITAGE
SERIES

THE RED GATE

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HISTORIC FACTSHEET

HISTORIC RED GATE

Name: Red Gate
Location: Perkins Street, Alexandra
Material: Redgum
Established: Circa 1850
Rebuilt: 30 October 2011

The Red Gate replica built 2011 reminds us of the original red painted gate that one passed through when moving through the area. During the early gold rush days the area was even called Redgate Diggings.



In the 1850s a basic track was formed from the quickly expanding city of Melbourne to the newly established gold fields of Jamieson, Woods Point and Enoch's Point. The track ran via Whittlesea, Kinglake and Yea, crossing the Ultima Thule Creek (UT Creek) at a location near the back of the current day Alexandra Library, before following the Goulburn River alignment to the Upper Goulburn District.

Prior to gold being discovered in the area, two large sheep runs occupied the land around present day Alexandra. The Eglington Run to the north was held by Henry Johnson (1858-1881) and the Mt Pleasant Run to the south was held by Donald McKenzie (1861-

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A replica of
the first
Red Gate.



1865) and subdivided into Mount Pleasant A and Mount Pleasant B by McKenzie 1865. After the subdivision, McKenzie held Mount Pleasant A for around six years (1865-1871). He only briefly held Mount Pleasant B (January 1865) before it was transferred to Johnson March 1865 and forfeited by Johnson ten years later in 1875.

During the time that the first survey map was completed of Alexandra by Surveyor John Downey in February 1867, Johnson owned both the Eglington Run to the north and the Mount Pleasant B run and McKenzie the Mount Pleasant A. As was indicated in some early reports, the red gate was located along a fence line separating the Johnson and McKenzie runs.

When gold was found in the Ultima Thule Creek 1865, a small settlement quickly sprung up with a few basic structures including Vining's Hotel (Redgate Shanty) and a

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A replica of the
first Red Gate.

gold stamping machine (on the banks of the UT Creek a little further upstream from the shanty). Later structures included banks, hotels, a blacksmiths and numerous shops and rudimentary dwellings.

As the township developed, it was referred to by a number of unofficial names, including 'Red Gate' and 'Redgate Diggings'. It is believed that the early names of Red Gate and Redgate Diggings were in reference to a red painted gate located along a long chock and log fence, separating two sheep runs. As can be seen in maps later in this factsheet, the fence followed the creek alignment for some distance and the gate was located near the back of the current day Alexandra Library (where the replica gate is now on display).

As early passage between the goldfields and Melbourne City was through this red gate, it likely became a well known reference point for travellers and locals alike. As the period in question relates to a time well before local records were kept, it is not known which farmer built the fence, gate or painted the gate red. It was however reported in an article printed in a later newspaper that directly opposite the Red Gate was Mitchell's shop. No information regarding Mr Mitchell is known.

In August 1867, Alexandra (the locality as referred to in the March Gazette re land sales and as on the May photo-lithographed map) was proclaimed a town. The name was after Princess Alexandra, the Queen Consort of England who had married Crown Prince Edward at the St George Chapel, Windsor Castle in 1863. A statue of Princess Alexandra stands 60 metres from the Red Gate.

It is considered likely that the Red Gate posts at least were constructed from Redgum, an

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Australian Eucalypt known for its strength, durability in extreme temperatures and resistance to rotting. These benefits made it a logical choice for early farmers to use on their pastoral runs. Redgum trees still litter the Goulburn Valley River Flats where they prosper due to the moist ground fed by the river.

In 1968 a Centenary celebration called “Back to Alexandra” was held and a book “The Red Gate” was commissioned by the Shire and written by G.W. Noble. The book was released and all copies sold. The book is now out of print and copies in good condition can bring up to \$100. The book chronicles early Alexandra and mentions the Red Gate.

In 2010, the Shire of Murrindindi commissioned the construction of a replica Red Gate at a location where it is believed the original Red Gate once stood. The gate was built thanks to Councillor Andrew Coller who promoted the idea from as early as 1970. In 2006, the then Murrindindi Historical Society picked up Councillor Coller’s idea, obtained support from the U.T. Creek Master Plan Committee and then the Rotary Club of Alexandra asked the Shire to call a meeting of interested parties in August 2007.

From this came general agreement and a detailed proposal to the Shire from the Secretary Maurie Pawsey. From this a grant was obtained through Rural Development Victoria, a plan was developed, suitable Red Gum gates and fence timber was obtained –Rotarian Robert Chaffe was very involved in this exercise and detailed design of the fencing and gate posts.

During Alexandra's first Spring

The Red Gate

The town of Alexandra was originally known as the Red Gate by early settlers and Red Gate Diggings by gold miners in late 1866.

The Red Gate situated on the banks of the Ultima Thule Creek marked the break in the boundary fence between two pastoral runs.

The plantings of Australian native food plants (bush tucker) along the pathway represent the years the land was inhabited by its traditional owners. This replica of the Red Gate represents early European settlement and the beginnings of Alexandra, as we know it today.

Pre-European	Aborigines of the Kulin nation inhabited the district from the Yarra River to the Alps and north to the Ovens River. The local clan, the Warring-Ilun-baluk (which translates as river dwelling people) spoke the Taungurong language, Daung Warring.
Squatter Era 1840 -	First European arrivals were sheep graziers, following reports in 1836 of the explorers Hume and Hovell.
Gold Era 1860 -	Following gold discoveries in 1860, towns developed at Alexandra and Yea, with smaller settlements around the gold diggings. When gold had petered out by 1880, the towns survived on farmers working small selections.
Timber Era 1890 -	A railway off the Melbourne-Sydney line from Tallarook opened from 1890. Timber mills were established from that time in the mountain ranges. Butter was the staple product, with sheep, lambs and cattle grazing.
Modern Era 1930 -	Tourism, primarily from Melbourne, was established from 1930's based on rivers and new weirs, for caravanning, fishing and water sports. The railway was closed 1978 as industries no longer relied upon it. Tourism continues to be an important industry to Alexandra.

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HISTORIC RED GATE

Carnival, held Sunday 30 October 2011, the replica Red Gate was officially unveiled. A simple sign erected at the site gives a short history of the gate. The gate structure incorporates a bin compound for the Alexandra Library, located beside the gate. It is also the entrance to a small walk around the back of the Library and along a small section of the Ultima Thule Creek (UT Creek).

Today the gate acts as a tourism attractions and a reminder to locals of our past. It is also an entrance way to the small garden and walk established between the Alexandra Library and the Ultima Thule Creek (UT Creek).



Taken during construction of the replica Red Gate August 2010.



HISTORIC FACTSHEET

TIMELINE

1848

Scottish immigrants William Leyden Kerr (born 1820, migrated in 1840, died in 1886) and William Pettett took up the **Mount Pleasant run** at **Eglington**. A “**Chock and Log fence**” fence separating the Eglington and Mount Pleasant sheep runs was built. A gate was placed in this fence-line and was painted red. The gate was built on the banks of the Ultima Thule Creek (UT Creek). The gate was in the vicinity of the current corner of Webster and Perkins street.

If travelling today towards Yea on the old track alignment, you would travel north down the current Grant Street, turn right (east) along the UT Creek near the current library, and travel a short distance to the gate. Once you passed through the gate, you then forded the creek before travelling an almost straight line to the bottom of the Josephine Hill.

1850s

A track from Melbourne to the gold fields of Jamieson, Woods Point and Enoch's Point was formed. The track ran via Whittlesea, Kinglake and Yea, crossing the Ultima Thule Creek in current day Alexandra.

Summer 1865

Educator Charles Long passed through the Red Gate with his family in a Yankee wagon. He reported *"As we passed through the gateway after fording the creek, no houses could be seen in any direction. The last - a slab hut with stringy bark roof - was passed about two miles away."*

Unknown

The Redgate was reported as being located immediately in front of **Mitchell's shop**, one of the first shops in the area.

Unknown

One of the first buildings in Red Gate was a shanty called the “**Redgate Shanty**” by Richard Vining, an early resident of Alexandra.

24 April 1867

Redgate Diggings renamed to Alexandra, after Princess

TIMELINE

Alexandra of Denmark.

30 March 1867

'On reaching the Redgate Township, or rather Alexandra as it is now called'. (The Argus 30th March 1867).

8 July 1867

The area of Alexandra was referenced as McKenzie Diggings.

3 May 1935

C.R. Long jokes about how “Thornton was a respectable village when Alexandra was just a gate.” This was during a “Back to Thornton” event.

c1970

Local identity Andrew Coller first raised the idea of constructing a replica Red gate.

2006

Murrindindi Historic Register (now the Alexandra Historical Society) picked up Councillor Coller's idea and obtained support from the U.T. Creek Master Plan Committee.

11 July 2007

In July of 2007, an article in the Alexandra & Yea Standard mentioned the Redgate concept, whereby a red gate would be constructed to commemorate our towns first name and early pioneer days. The article mentioned how Cr Drew Coller had a strong interest in seeing a replica put in place, and how the MHR had asked Rotary for help. (Alexandra & Yea Standard, 11th July 2007).

August 2007

The Rotary Club of Alexandra asked the Shire of Murrindindi to call a meeting of interested parties which occurred in August. From this came general agreement and a detailed proposal to the Shire from the Secretary Maurie Pawsey. From this a grant was obtained through Rural Development Victoria, a plan was developed, suitable Red Gum gates and fence timber was obtained – Rotarian Robert Chaffe was very involved in this exercise and detailed design of the fencing and gate posts.



HISTORIC FACTSHEET

TIMELINE

April 2010

Artworkz commenced work on this factsheet.

30 October 2011

The Alexandra Red Gate was officially opened 30 October 2011 during the first Alexandra Spring Carnival. The gate was arranged by the Alexandra Rotary Club and the Shire of Murrindindi.

19 February 2013

Artist Peter Matheson died of cancer. Peter is in part remembered for his outstanding pencil rendition of Charles Long travelling on a cart with his father as they passed through the Red Gate. At the time of his death, it was unsold.

June 2016

Significant work was completed on the factsheet to bring it into line with the modern factsheet format and to add important new research.

TOWN NAMES

Mount Pleasant Run at Eglington

1848 *Comprised of two sheep runs*

GOLD FOUND - START OF GOLD RUSH

Pegged and registered June 1866 at the Jamieson Warden's court by John Downey on behalf of Alex McGregor and Sandy Don)

Red Gate

6 December 1866 Population circa 300

Eglington

February 1867 (Downey's Field Book No. 1) Population circa 600

Alexandra

30 March 1867 Population circa 600

Redgate Diggings

24 April 1867, 30 March 1867 Population circa 600

MacKenzie Gold field

30 March 1867 Population circa 600

McKenzie Diggings

8 July 1867 Population circa 600

Mount Pleasant Diggings

1870

ROTARY INVOLVEMENT

By Rob Chaffe, on behalf of Alexandra Rotary Club



After an initial walk around meeting with the Shire Engineer (Eric Loarding) and a landscape design person from the Shire, we confirmed the location and style of the gate and the native sent garden (a place of reflection and connection with the original inhabitants pre European settlement by the banks of the creek).

I then began sourcing durable Australian Red coloured timber to make a traditional wooden gate as used at the time when the Redgate run was occupied. My search led me to a supplier near Geelong, as at the time there was no readily available long lengths of timber of the desirable type available locally.

This contact led to a specialist wooden gate manufacturer, who just happened to have a set of gates that were a return order due to some problems with colour. The company offered these gate to the Shire at a significantly reduced cost, a price that would have made locally made gates too expensive. I contacted the Shire and within two days the order had been confirmed, the gates paid for and they were on their way to Alexandra. After their arrival, I contacted the Shire (through Eric) on regular occasions to have the gates installed, with a number of on-site visits to ensure the location was correctl.

The gates needed a suitable set of posts to be hung from and a fence to simulate the boundary of the squatting runs. Dame Pattie Menzies Centre Inc had to remove a large Redgum tree from The Mount property and generously offered the timber from the tree for the Red Gate Project. One of the Foresters had a small chain saw mill and with my assistance we milled the posts etc on site at The Mount. Arrangements were then made to have the "iron work" for the project completed.

ROTARY INVOLVEMENT

The size of the posts and the need to consider drainage at the site plus the needs of the adjacent properties took some working out. Eventually the current location was agreed to with its associated drainage.

As with most custom projects there were a number of issues that required sorting out before the job was complete, including signage.

Another simple question that did take some sorting was “should the gates be open or closed?” The weight of the gates meant that support had to be provided to balance the load on the gate posts.

The second question was will they stay that way permanently. It was agreed that the gates would be open and secured with heavy locks to prevent inappropriate use while still allowing the gates to be “Opened” on special civic occasions.

The original design included large timber plank seating in the reflection area. The timber was to be iron bark salvaged from dock renovation in Melbourne, however this did not happen and regrettably the lightweight cast metal (late Victorian period way out of sequence with the period of The Red Gate) seating was installed. The native refecton, sent garden was replaced with lawn grass and European plants.

It was great to attend the official opening and experience the gates in operation.

© *Rob Chaffe* 2016.

TRAVELLING THROUGH THE RED GATE

It was about the middle of the Sixties, in the summer of 1865 (I believe) when my father and mother and their two young children, of whom I was one, were driven by a Yankee wagon through the red gate. They had come from Wallan Wallan through Yea.

Our destination was the busy mining township of Enoch's Point, about twenty miles up the Big River from Darlingford, where it entered the Goulburn....

As we passed through the gateway after fording the creek, no houses could be seen in any direction. The last - a slab hut with stringy bark roof - was passed about two miles away.

There was nothing to suggest that we were looking at the site of what is now the central part of a prosperous town, adequately provided with whatever makes for the health and comfort of the inhabitants.

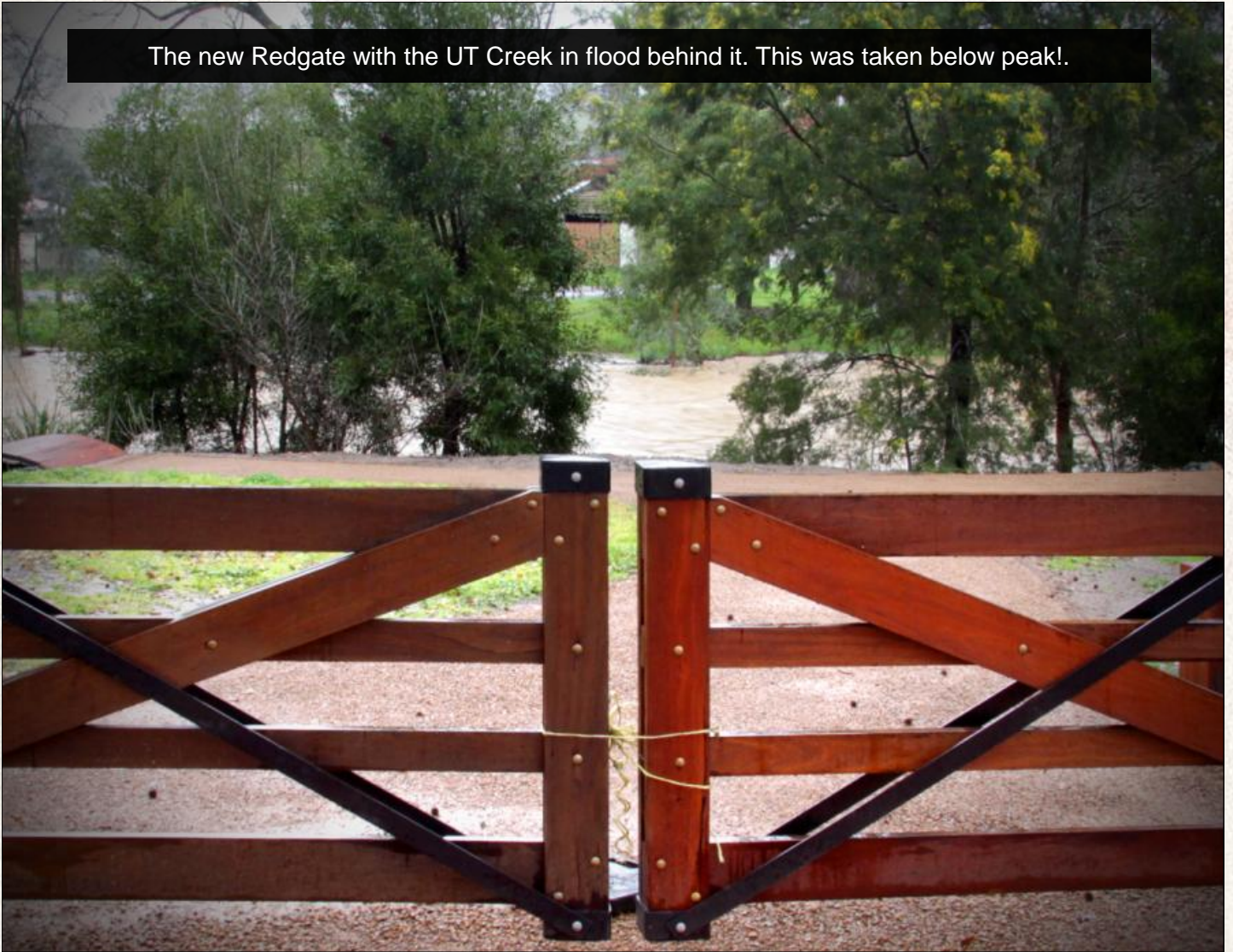
We were on fairly level ground, which soon changed to a slope, up which the track led to a ridge in the distance. The land was well timbered and well grazed. McKenzie's sheep shared the herbage with kangaroos and wallabies.

*Extract from the "Victorian Historical Magazine" 1938
The article was entitled "History of Alexandra" and written by C.R. Long
who once attended some of our local schools as a student teacher.*

HISTORIC FACTSHEET

THE RED GATE SEES ITS FIRST FLOOD

The new Redgate with the UT Creek in flood behind it. This was taken below peak!



“As we passed through the gateway after fording the creek, no houses could be seen in any direction. The last - a slab hut with stringy bark roof - was passed about two miles away”. (Mid 1800’s)

Fording (crossing through) the creek would not have been possible during this flood in 2010.

*Extract from the “Victorian Historical Magazine” 1938
The article was entitled “History of Alexandra” & written by C.R. Long
(who once attended some of our local schools as a student teacher).*

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THE HISTORIC RED GATE



The Red Gate July 2011.

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THE HISTORIC RED GATE



The concept of a Red Gate replica was developed from the ideas of Andrew (Drew) Collier (deceased); a former Councillor of Alexandra and Murrindindi Shire Councils 1980-1987 and 2003-2005

The Red Gate in August 2016.

HISTORIC FACTSHEET

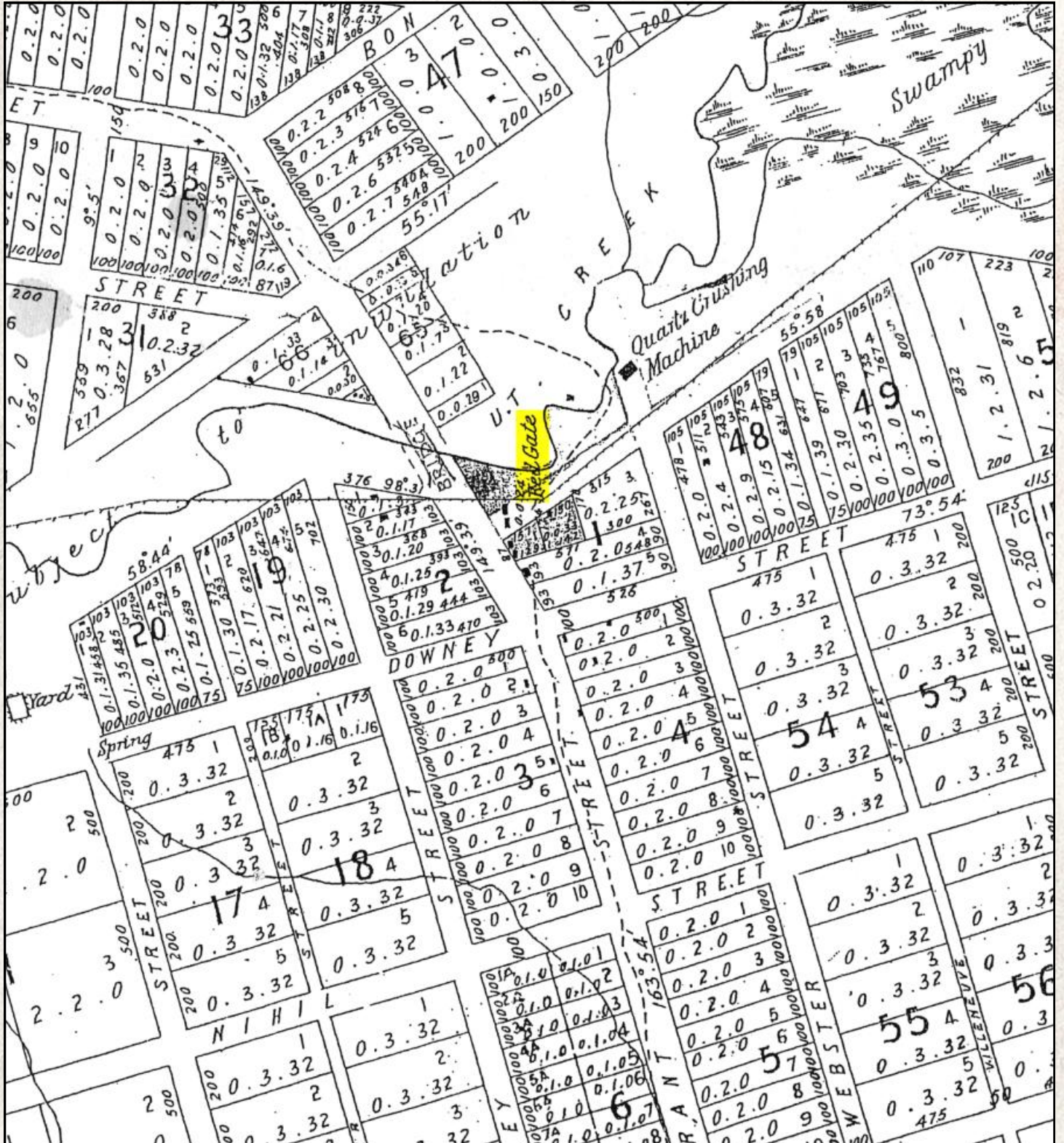
LOCATION OF THE RED GATE



A 1864 Survey Map of Alexandria with the Red Gate marked in.
Map courtesy Rex Tate 2010

HISTORIC FACTSHEET

LOCATION OF THE RED GATE

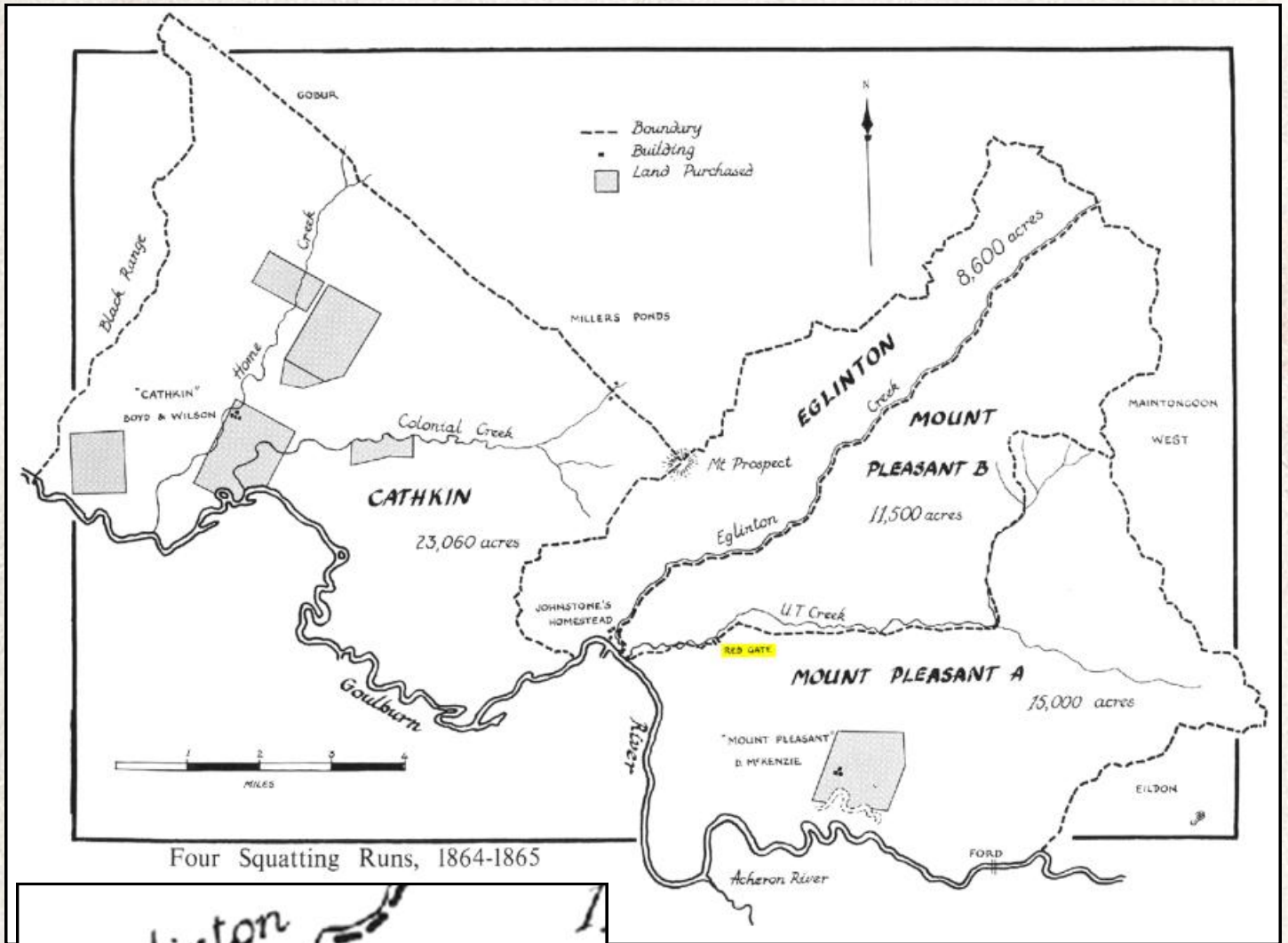


1867 Map of Alexandria with the Red Gate marked in.

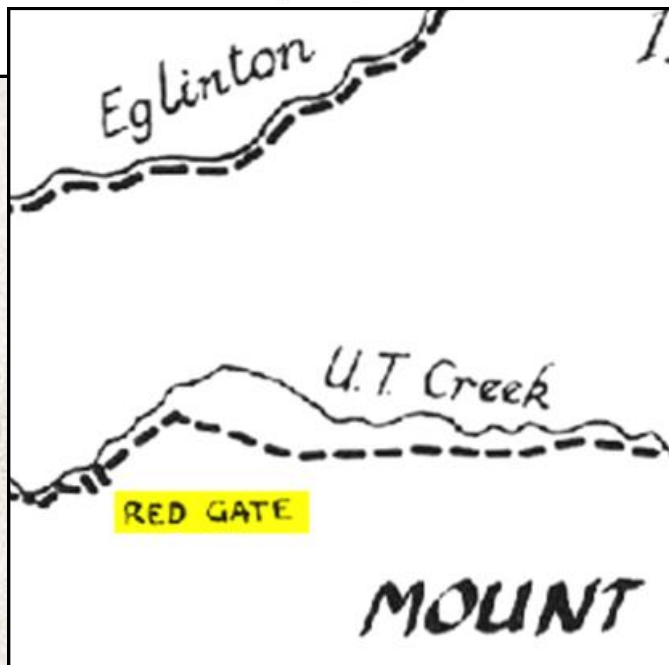
Courtesy Lawrence Hood 2010.

HISTORIC FACTSHEET

LOCATION OF THE RED GATE



Four Squatting Runs, 1864-1865



A 1867 Map of Alexandra with the Red Gate marked in.

Courtesy Kelly Petersen 2011.

HISTORIC FACTSHEET

THE HISTORIC RED GATE



Old Rotary Park display board in 2010 with “Redgate Hotel” just visible.

Alexandra’s Redgate Motel was located on the corner of Nihil and Rose Streets Alexandra and was operated by the Coates family of Alexandra. A replica red painted wooden gate used for advertising purposes adorned the front of the business. By 2010 (well after the family sold the business) the Red Gate was leaning up against a tree at a private residence and later removed to the Alexandra Timber and Tramway Museum. (see next page).

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THE HISTORIC RED GATE



The red gate photographed March 2011, once located at the Redgate Motel.

Courtesy © Ron Cooper 2015.

NEWSPAPERS

MACKENZIE DIGGINGS.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE ARGUS.

Sir, Your paper of the 1st contains a letter, signed "A. Martelli, C.E.," in reference to the distance from Melbourne to Mackenzie's Diggings. The writer may know all about the road *vid* Lilydale and Eltham—I cannot contradict him; but he either knows nothing of or mistakes the distance *vid* Yea. I have ridden from Mackenzie's to Melbourne and back several times, and I am certain the following is nearly correct:—

	Miles.
Mackenzie's to Yea	18
Yea to M'Lellan's	20
M'Lellan's to Whittlesea	18
Whittlesea to Melbourne	24½
	<hr style="width: 10%; margin-left: auto; margin-right: 0;"/> 80½

**I am, Sir, your obedient servant,
J. H. KELSON.
Junction Hotel, Jamieson, April 3.**

The Argus
Monday 8th April 1867
Courtesy National Library Australia

NEWSPAPERS

An Old Kilmoreite.

Mr Richings, an old resident of Taggerty, now proceeding to Queensland, thus gives some of his reminiscences to the *Alexandra Standard*. Mr Richings is the brother of the late Mr John Richings, an old resident here:—

He said that he was a native of Launceston, Tasmania, being born there in 1832. He arrived at Sandridge (now Port Melbourne), in the steamer *Porto Bello*, in 1851, the day before Black Thursday. That memorable day he will never forget. After a short stay in Melbourne, young Richings invested his capital in a general store at Pyalong, and being a good judge of cattle and horses, followed the occupation of a dealer in connection with the store. Horsebreaking he indulged in to a considerable extent, and was known throughout the district as an adept at this business. After three years at Pyalong, Mr Richings sold out at a profit, and entered the carrying trade. At this time £150 per ton was charged for conveying goods to Beechworth and £120 to Bendigo. Determined to try his hand at this work, he commenced to look about for a suitable team of working bullocks. This was no easy matter. It was at Kilmore he bought his team, giving Mr John M'Gowan, of that town, £170 for 12 bullocks. The waggon and other necessary outfit cost a big sum. Proceeding to Melbourne he had no difficulty in obtaining loading. He travelled to Bendigo and Beechworth, the trips occupying from three weeks to a month, and the loading $1\frac{1}{2}$ tons the outside. "I made a pile of money, but misfortune overtook me." His bullocks became diseased, the police shooting them in consequence. At Kilmore he met the late Mrs Richings, she being a daughter of Mr Dunn, a respected resident. He sold out his carrying business,

and removed to the Doogalook Station owned by the late Mr Peter Snodgrass, father of Lady Janet Clarke. Here he followed horsebreaking. Having an idea of the country he moved to Taggerty passing through the Red Gate (known now as Alexandra), which was one vast expanse of sheep country. The historical Red Gate, Mr Richings states, was immediately in front of Mitchell's shop. Not a living soul was to be met with, the town was not even surveyed. The nearest homestead was Eglinton station, owned by Mr Luckie, and afterwards purchased by the late Mr H. Johnson, who previously owned the Mohican Station, Taggerty. One of the first settlers at Red Gate was the late Mr R. Vining, who established a boarding house near the gate. Aboriginals were fairly numerous, their camp being where the post office now stands. Arriving at Taggerty, he made his way to the Government Black Station, managed by Mr Nixon, now resident at Benalla. The manager was pleased to receive Mr Richings and found employment for him. He had nearly 100 blacks under his charge, and in a very short time mastered the dialect and became a favorite. He translated their private business and acted as adviser, interpreter and secretary. Leaving the station, he opened a public house at Little River, and held the license for 10 years. He was the only settler at Taggerty, when a Mr Thompson surveyed the township. The late Mr John Wylie, and Messrs O. Mullens and G. Webb were the first selectors. Disposing of the hotel to the late Mr O. Collins, and the corner blacks known as Ban's Mr Richings selected the Gleudale property which was sold recently.

KILMORE FREE PRESS
THURSDAY 5TH JULY 1906
NATIONAL LIBRARY AUSTRALIA

NEWSPAPERS

A TALK WITH AN EARLY SETTLER.

MR. WILLIAM RICHINGS LEAVES FOR QUEENSLAND.

AFTER FORTY-SIX YEARS' RESIDENCE.

Knowing that Alexandra was about to lose one of her earliest settlers, our reporter interviewed Mr. W. Richings, with the view, if possible, of placing on record the reminiscences of his early life in Victoria, more particularly in this district, where he has resided for 46 years. He was most courteous and obliging, and the short narrative given below will, no doubt, be interesting.

Although a colonist of 55 years, Mr. Richings could not relate any of the stirring events of the early 50's. His was a rough time, but being a smart and active young man, he made good use of his energies. Launching out, he soon found employment and for over 50 years has been an active man. Even at 74 he is able to do a day's work with any man. As a conductor of oxen, he had no equal. He would travel over hill and through flood at places and times when others would not think about it. Mr. Richings has been an eye-witness of the rapid progress of this and adjoining shires. Alexandra, he says, was a vast sheep-run. No roads, telegraph wires, &c., to mark the way; drivers had to do the best they could, and had to know the geography of the country to. He cannot name any person here now that came to the district before he did. After losing his best friend he decided to dispose of his Glendale estate and retire. This having been accomplished, he leaves in a few days for Long Reach, Queensland, where he intends to settle with his son.

During the chat, Mr. Richings said he was a native of Launceston, Tasmania, being born there in 1832. He arrived at Sandridge (now Port Melbourne), in the steamer Porto Bello, in 1851, the day before Black Thursday. That memorable occasion he will never forget. After a short stay in Melbourne, young Richings invested his capital in a general store at Pyalong, and being a good judge of cattle and horses, followed the occupation of a dealer in connection with the store. Horsebreaking he indulged in to a considerable extent, and was known throughout the district as an adept at this business. After three years at Pyalong, Mr. Richings sold out at a profit, and entered the carrying trade. At this time £150 per ton was charged for conveying goods to Beechworth, and £120 to Bendigo. Determined to try his hand at this work, he commenced to look about for a suitable team of working bullocks. This was no

easy matter. It was at Kilmore he purchased his team, giving Mr. John McGowan, of that town, £170 for 12 bullocks. The waggon and other necessary outfit cost a big sum. Proceeding to Melbourne, he had no difficulty in obtaining loading. He travelled to Bendigo and Beechworth, the trips occupying three weeks to a month, and the loading 1½ tons the outside. "I made a pile of money, but misfortune overtook me." His bullocks became diseased, the police shooting them in consequence. At Kilmore he met the late Mrs. Richings, she being a daughter of Mr. Dunne, a respected resident. He sold out his carrying business, and removed to the Doogalook Station, owned by the late Mr. Peter Snodgrass, father of Lady Janet Clarke. Here he followed horsebreaking. Having an idea of the country he moved to Taggerty, passing through the Red Gate (known now as Alexandra), which was one vast expanse of sheep country. The historical Red Gate, Mr. Richings states, was immediately in front of Michell's shop. Not a living soul was to be met with, the town was not even surveyed. The nearest homestead was Eglinton Station, owned by Mr. Luckie, and afterwards purchased by the late Mr. H. Johnson, who previously owned the Mohican Station, Taggerty. One of the first settlers at Red Gate was the late Mr. R. Vining, who established a boarding house near the gate. Aboriginals were fairly numerous, their camp being where the post office now stands. Arriving at Taggerty, he made his way to the Government Black Station, managed by Mr. Nixon, now resident at Benalla. The manager was pleased to receive Mr. Richings and found employment for him. He had nearly 100 blacks in his charge, and in a very short time mastered the dialect and became a favorite. He transacted their private business and acted as adviser, interpreter and secretary. Leaving the station, he opened a public house at Little River, and held the license for 10 years. He was the only settler at Taggerty, when a Mr. Thompson surveyed the township. The late Mr. John Wylie, and Messrs. C. Mullens and G. Webb were the first selectors. Disposing of the hotel to the late Mr. C. Collins, and the corner block known as Banc's, Mr. Richings selected the Glendale property which was sold recently.

We understand it is intended to give Mr. Richings a send-off.

The Alexandra
Redgate mentioned
here in July of 1906.

NEWSPAPERS

The Red Gate.

In 1865 the only noticeable object within sight of what is now Alexandra was the red gate in the dividing fence between Johnson's and McKenzie's runs. The fence ran close to the U.T. Creek, and the gate was almost opposite, where the main road bridge now is. The nearest house to the red gate was Jim Fenton's slab and bark hut on Johnson's Creek (Eglington) and, in the other direction, Mount Pleasant station (Donald McKenzie, owner). One Sunday in the latter part of 1866, two of Donald McKenzie's shepherds (Sandy Don and Alec McGregor) started from Mount Pleasant for Jim Fenton's, where it was generally possible to obtain liquid refreshment. A bullock-dray had gone down McKenzie's Pinch overnight, and as Sandy and McGregor walked up they came to a boulder of quartz that had been crushed by a wheel, and there was the gold sticking all over it. After showing the sample to Mr. John Downey, a surveyor, a claim was pegged out. In a few days a rush set it, and in a week's time Charlie Jones (on tramp from Woods Point) pegged out the "Lucky." At first the locality was called Red Gate; afterwards it was named after the then Princess of Wales.

Alexandra & Yea Standard
Friday 19th April 1935
Courtesy National Library Australia

The Alexandra Redgate mentioned in the Alexandra and Yea Standard April 1935.

Courtesy National Library Australia.

HISTORIC FACTSHEET

NEWSPAPERS

The Naming of Alexandra

Reference to certain documents and plans in the Land Office, Melbourne, has brought to light some facts concerning the naming of Alexandra, which have more than ordinary interest at this time, when a statue of Queen Alexandra is about to be unveiled in Perkins Street. In brief they are as follows:—

A. McGregor and S. Don discovered gold in quartz, on the bullock dray track from Thornton to Yea, not far from McKenzie's homestead, in June, 1866. As they were first discoverers of a goldfield (there being no mining between their find and Yea at that time), they received a reward—to each £75. They named their claim "Eglinton," which was that of a run and homestead (occupied by Henry Johnson, on the Yea side of McKenzie's Mount Pleasant run), and also of a creek (now Johnson's Creek.) Other claims were soon being worked from McGregor's and Don's claim in the direction of the U T. Creek; and there were alluvial diggings along that creek for several miles.

THE NAMING.

The track ran along what is now Grant Street till it came within a few yards of the U.T. Creek, where it turned up the stream and led to a crossing place near the junction of the present Webster and Perkins Streets. There was a chock-and-log fence (the boundary at one time between the Mount Pleasant and the Eglinton runs) along the bank of the creek. In this fence stood a gateway (painted red), through which the track passed not many yards from the turn. The track became, after crossing the creek, almost a straight line to the neighborhood of the present Josephine cutting (so named after Henry Johnson's sister). There was a rush in the second half of 1866 to the Red Gate diggings (that name, contracted to "Redgate" for the field, appearing for the first time in "Bradshaw's Guide" in May, 1867.) Richard Vining erected a small building in the vicinity of the turn of the track from Grant Street up the creek, and other buildings rapidly followed. Thereupon John Downey was instructed to survey a town and a parish. The Shire Hall at the junction of the present Grant

and Perkins Streets is on allotment 1 of section 1.

The title-page of Downey's Field Book, No. 1, runs thus: "John Downey's Field Notes. Survey of the Township of Eglinton on the U.T. Creek, Upper Goulburn River, Surveyed by John Downey, Government Contract Surveyor, Jan., 1867." His finished plan, with the title, "Township of Eglinton, Upper Goulburn River, County of Anglesey," was dated February, 1867. A proclamation in the Government Gazette in the following month (March) begins: "Sale of Crown Lands in fee simple at Alexandra, on the 5th April, 1867." This shows that the name had been changed. Downey's plan has now a slip with the word "Alexandra" on it gummed over "Eglinton."

The new name was that of a Danish princess, the "Rose of Denmark," who, about four years earlier (the exact date being March 7, 1863), had married the Prince of Wales (afterwards Edward VII).

Alexandra & Yea Standard
28th July 1939
National Library Australia

The Alexandra Redgate mentioned in the Alexandra and Yea Standard July 1939.

Courtesy National Library Australia.

HISTORIC FACTSHEET

NEWSPAPERS

The Hospital Opened 68 Years Ago.

Alexandra first came into being as a mining town in 1866, with Red Gate Diggings as its designation. As the miners began to delve into the earth the need for a hospital began to be discussed, and in the middle of the year 1868 subscriptions were invited towards the erection of a suitable building. Nearly £200 was collected and placed in the bank.

The movement, however, lacked momentum, and no further action was taken for about eighteen months, when a building committee was appointed at a public meeting held in December, 1869. It was considered that a comfortable structure could be erected for £400 (£200 local contribution and £200 Government grant). The building committee never held a meeting, and many caustic comments appeared in the local press as to the lack of action on its part.

In June, 1870, another public meeting was held, at which it was decided to dismiss the building committee. The subscribers also held a meeting and appointed another committee, with instructions to provide a suitable building for the treatment of the numerous accidents to which miners were liable.

A wooden building was erected, and on January 20, 1872, the *Alexandra Times* referred to the successful treatment of the first patient and reported that at a meeting of the hospital committee on January 18, 1872, "the secretary was instructed to write to the Government for the £200 promised to Mr. Whitelaw a few weeks ago." Dr. J. Fergusson was thanked for his gratuitous attendance on the patient, and he replied that his services would be freely given to the hospital on all occasions.

The wooden building continued to be used until the year of Queen Victoria's 1888 Jubilee, when a brick ward was erected for male patients. Later, the wooden building was replaced with a brick structure. Mining had ceased to be remunerative, and as the years rolled down the corridors of time more attention was given to farming and grazing pursuits.

Twenty five years ago milling operations in the Rubicon Forest were begun, and have gradually been developed. The disastrous bush fires in the early part of 1939 gave the industry a substantial set-back, but it is now gradually getting back to its stride again.

The hospital continued to provide an efficient service for the district, and during recent years a new kitchen and matron's quarters were erected in brick, together with quarters (also in brick) for the nursing staff.

The "*Alexandra Times*" of July 21, 1871, printed the following paragraph:—

"The *Alexandra Hospital* has now raised its benevolent head on that beautiful hill adjoining the Catholic Chapel. The outside portion of the building is nearly completed. Nothing could be more picturesque than the situation. The first and last glimpses of the sun strike the edifice long before and after they have ceased to enliven and warm the houses in *Alexandra*. The morning and midnight fogs seldom rise to the high ground on which the Hospital is built. The splendid view of hill and dale extending north, south, east and west is not surpassed by anything we have seen in *Victoria*. In the course of about two weeks the contractors will have completed their work. It has been suggested that the opening should be commemorated by some public entertainment which may add to the funds. A grand dramatic and vocal entertainment might be got up by our local talent on the condition that every individual who professes to claim a place amongst us shall take a ticket without coaxing or supposing that he or she is conferring a favor. The individual who refuses to take a ticket on such an occasion is worthy of being amongst the first inmates of the establishment, and treated with so much kindness that he will never again dare to refuse to put his hand in his pocket for so good a purpose."

On August 14, 1871, an entertainment in aid of the hospital was held at the *Eldorado Theatre*. A prologue written for the occasion by Mr. W. Clarke was read by T. Monaghan. The two-act play by Douglas Jerrold, "*The Rent Day*," was given by a company of amateurs. The show concluded with a farce, "*I've Written to Brown*."

Later on, September 29, a grand ball was held (tickets, £1, admitting gentlemen and two ladies.)

Mr. A. G. Moon was the first secretary of the hospital and a Mrs. Stillman the first matron (£52 a year and quarters).

Mr. Drury, P.M., was president of the committee in 1870, and Mr. J. P. Bainbridge president in 1871, 1872 and 1873.

This article references the site of the original public hospital in *Alexandra*, which was also the site of an aboriginal camp of over 100. It starts by referencing *Red Gate Diggings* as the name given to the township in 1866.

Alexandra & Yea Standard

9 February 1940

& 21 July 1871.

Courtesy National Library Australia

Alexandra & Yea Standard

9th February 1940 &

21 July 1871

Courtesy National Library Australia

NEWSPAPERS

"Back to School" at Thornton.

Along the roads where they hurried on childish feet many a time at the summons of the bell, borne now in swift, comfortable cars, they came "back to school" at Thornton,—Robbs and Robinsons, Tossols and Taylors, Nicholases and Barnewalls, O'Rourke and Hemmings, Findlays and Scorahs, Christies and Kennedys, Gilmores and Downeys, Thoms and Wightmans, and many others,—names as closely associated with the district as the Goulburn itself. There was never such a gathering before. The rain fell in torrents, but nothing could damp the ardour of these people. Half their talk was of their adventures in the floods. The same old bell rang out its summons again. At 8 o'clock the school room was full. At 9 it was packed, at 10 there was another room full outside, and at 11, when the early comers were departing for home, they met the stragglers still hurrying along.

There was no set programme. They needed no entertainment. They entertained themselves. Talk and more talk. Who were here? Where were the absentees? Do you remember? Roars of laughter greeted the childhood costumes. May and Flo McMartin in "pinnies" and "buster" bows on their hair, Cr. J. O'Rourke in a galatea blouse, and his sister with a wealth of loose hair long enough to sit on. Norman Robb chewing a lace collar, and a dozen others.

A sparse figure with silvery hair mounts the platform, and a cultured voice addresses the gathering. Mr. Long is again occupying the position he occupied in 1880. An authority on local history, he lets "the cat out of the bag" badly. So Thornton was a respectable village when Alexandra was a gate!

Feminine charm and daintiness still cling to Miss Ryan, as she tells of her first maypole, the first in the Goulburn Valley, and of how she cut up the window blinds at "Juverna" to make the boys long tailed coats.

Both these teachers have climbed high. A third is present, Miss G. Parsons and she shows by her attention to her mother (herself an "old girl" of the school) how she has sacrificed a career for filial duty.

The climax of the evening was the calling of the roll. Thin quavering voices for the early responses, growing stronger as the list came down to the last three or four decades. The calling of the roll occupied a quarter of an hour, and there was a surprisingly large percentage present.

Mrs. R. Dobson unveiled the name of her brother-in-law Mr. D. Dobson, an ex teacher, and hero of two wars, on the honour board.

Somehow he had been omitted when the list was compiled. On a panel of fiddle-backed red gum from one of the trees he often passed, it now occupies a prominent place in the list, and the tense silence which followed the unveiling showed how well he was remembered.

The oldest visitor present was Mrs. McMartin. Nearly 90, this wonderful old lady, was able to take as much interest and get as much enjoyment out of the evening as everyone. Her brother, Sir John Barnewall, was present, though not an old scholar of this or any other school. Yet at 85, his speech was as eloquent as any made, and his cultured bearing, and pleasant manner showed that in this case the "guinea stamp" of rank had not been misplaced. May the "grand old man of the Upper Goulburn" see many more "back to school" nights.

In another room an exhibition of old photographs of school and sport groups, elaborately posed portraits of dead and gone celebrities, even a collection of valentines. In one corner was a collection of relics of an earlier age still, the stone axes and boomerangs of the black tribes. Most interest centred round the painting of the fight in front of Baudewig's hotel, and before the evening was over every figure in it had been identified.

By 2 a.m. the last scholar had left for home, and the evening was ended.

The following were among the old scholars who attended:—

Former pupils present who attended as pupils when the school was opened in 1870—Mrs. O'Rourke, Mrs. Gloster, Messrs J. and T. Tossol.

Former pupils from other places—Mrs Campbell (Ada Scorah), Mrs Longmore (Esther Hemmings), Mrs Jolley (B. Scorah), Misses May and Flo McMartin, Mrs J. Ryan (Barbara Downey), Mrs J. Downey (Queenie Robb), Miss H. Thom, Miss Tossol, Mrs J. Houston (Dorothy Gilmore), Mr T. Tossol, Mr S. Jeffrey, Mrs J. Gloster (Nellie McMartin).

Other pupils of the earlier period of the school who were present—Mesdames Orchard, Parsons, J. McMartin, C. Wightman, Hoban, and Miss Gilmore, Messrs F. and A. Scorah, Henry Robb (sen.), Wat. Robb, W. and J. McMartin, F. Wightman, J. Findlay, Alf Long, H. Gilmore, R. and H. Christie.

Pupils in costume.—Girls—Mrs Ryan, Mrs Downey, Mrs Jolley, Mrs J. McMartin, Misses F. and M. McMartin and F. O'Rourke. Boys—Norman Robb, J. McMartin and J. O'Rourke.

Seventy former pupils answered the roll call on April the 18th.

A joke by C.R. Long, saying how Thornton was a respectable village when Alexandra was just a gate.

ESPLASH
MEDIA
MENTIONS

- 2010 -



ALEXANDRA'S HISTORIC RED GATE HAS ARRIVED!

This is one of only a handful of physical Tourist Attraction additions for the township of Alexandra in the last 20 years. The Red Gate is significant as it creates a strong connection back to our historic beginnings.

“At about a mile and a half from where the creek enters the Goulburn, was a gate that had been painted red, and thus became known as the “Red Gate” to the bullock drivers and others who used the track from the Upper Goulburn Country through Yea to Melbourne”.

*Extract from the “Victorian Historical Magazine” 1938
The article was entitled “History of Alexandra” & written by C.R. Long
Who once attended some of our local schools as a student teacher.*

Congratulations to all those involved in getting this project off the ground. We are a little better off as a community for having this new historic attraction.

OUR HIDDEN MEMORIALS



Illustration Copyright © Peter Matheson 2010.

PETER MATHESON'S 'RED GATE'.

This amazing sketch was produced by Alexandra artist Peter Matheson 2010 before he passed 19 February 2013. Peter was one of the most significant artists to have lived and worked from Alexandra, especially in the area of historic recreation. Peter's works stood out in quality, creativity and his overall skill was obvious in his works. He had great knowledge of art and the art world and demonstrated great range in his works. His sketch (above) of Charles R. Long passing through the Red Gate will be a lasting memorial to the man and to the township of Alexandra. The sketch was based on the writing of Charles Long who wrote:

"It was about the middle of the Sixties, in the summer of 1865 (I believe) when my father and mother and their two young children, of whom I was one, were driven by a Yankee wagon through the red gate. They had come from Wallan Wallan through Yea. Our destination was the busy mining township of Enoch's Point, about twenty miles up the Big River from Darlingford, where it entered the Goulburn.... As we passed through the gateway after fording the creek, no houses could be seen in any direction. The last - a slab hut with stringy bark roof - was passed about two miles away."

Extract from the "Victorian Historical Magazine" 1938 The article was entitled "History of Alexandra" and written by C.R. Long who once attended some of our local schools as a student teacher.

THE RED GATE SIGNAGE





The Red Gate

The town of Alexandra was originally known as the Red Gate by early settlers and Red Gate Diggings by gold miners in late 1866.

The Red Gate situated on the banks of the Ultima Thule Creek marked the break in the boundary fence between two pastoral runs.

The plantings of Australian native food plants (bush tucker) along the pathway represent the years the land was inhabited by its traditional owners. This replica of the Red Gate represents early European settlement and the beginnings of Alexandra, as we know it today.

Pre-European	Aborigines of the Kulin nation inhabited the district from the Yarra River to the Alps and north to the Sheppards. The local clan, the Wurruy-Kulpa-Kulpa (which translates as river dwelling people) spoke the Bungaring language, Burying Wurruy.
Seventeen Era 1841-	First European arrivals were sheep graziers, following reports in 1838 of the explorers Hume and Hovell.
Gold Era 1850's	Following gold discoveries in 1851, towns developed at Koroit and Yea, with smaller settlements around the gold diggings. When gold had petered out by 1858, the towns survived on farmers working small sections.
Timber Era 1850-	A railway off the Melbourne-Edinburg line from Salsburg opened from 1855. Timber mills were established from that time in the mountain ranges. Butter was the staple product, with sheep, herts and cattle grazing.
Modern Era 1850-	Tourism, primarily from Melbourne, was established from 1850's based on rivers and new ways, for canoeing, fishing and water sports. The railway was closed 1978 as industries no longer relied upon it. Tourism continues to be an important industry in Alexandra.

In 2011 the “Alexandra Redgate” received some new tourism signage, though it is hard to compare the basic office memo style sign to the high grade artistic standards now being set by others such as the DSE and Parks Victoria. The 'memo on a stick' sign is sadly also located near the Library bin compound which is regretful for those of us who love heritage and understand the significance of the gate.

Below is a simple concept idea we published in our December 2010 and January 2011 eSplash eMags which highlighted Peter's amazing drawing. Both issues were sent to the Shire. Although it is only a simple draft, something such as this would be far more fitting such a significant historical location and the signage could also honour Peter and his work.

THE ALEXANDRA RED GATE

Illustration by
Alexandra Artist
Peter Mathieson 2010

In the 1850's a track from Melbourne to the gold fields of Jamieson, Woods Point and Enoch's Point was formed. The track ran via Whittlesea, Kinglake and Yea, crossing the Ultima Thule Creek at a location near the current Alexandra Library. Alexandra was originally named "Redgate" because of this red painted gate which allowed passage through the fence separating the Eglington and the Mount Pleasant sheep runs. It was most likely constructed by one or the other of these early generation pioneer sheep farmers.

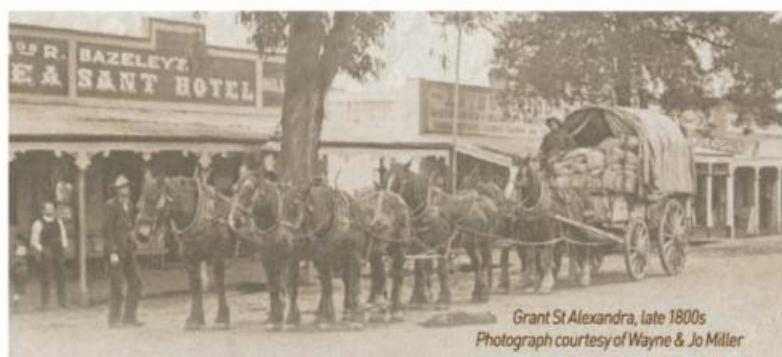
"At about a mile and a half from where the creek enters the Goulburn, was a gate that had been painted red, and thus became known as the "Red Gate" to the bullock drivers and others who used the track from the Upper Goulburn Country through Yea to Melbourne".

Extract from the "Victorian Historical Magazine" 1938
The article was entitled "History of Alexandra" & written by C.R. Long



We passed through the gateway after fording the creek, no houses could be seen in any direction. The last - a slab hut with stringy bark roof - was passed about two miles away". (C.R. Long - mid 1860's)

redgate espresso



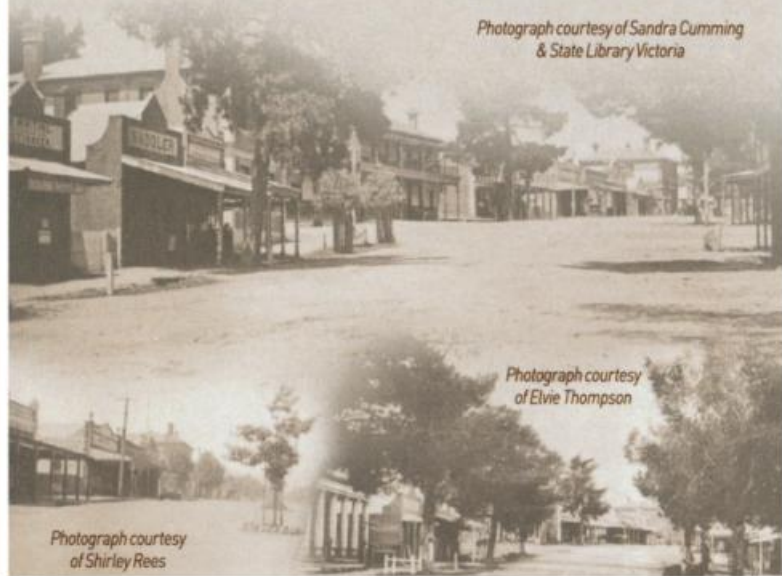
ALEXANDRA formerly known as Redgate

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Alexandra was originally named "Redgate" because of this red painted gate which allowed passage through the chock and log fence that separated the Eglington and the Mount Pleasant sheep runs. It was most likely constructed by one or the other of those pioneer sheep farmers.

When gold was found in the Ultima Thule Creek in 1865, a settlement known as Redgate was quickly established. The settlement included a stamping machine, banks, hotels, the Redgate Shanty, a blacksmiths and other shops. Directly opposite the Red Gate was Mitchell's shop. The "Red Gate" is marked on an old 1864 Survey Map of the district.

Photograph courtesy of Sandra Cumming & State Library Victoria



Coffee | Tea | Hot Chocolates | Cakes
Milkshakes | Fresh Juices
All cakes baked on-site | Free Wifi

73 Grant Street Alexandra

03 5772 3185

redgateespresso@gmail.com

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Tourism is being modernised worldwide, and Redgate Espresso is leading the iPad tourism charge locally. This week they become the first District Cafe to introduce customer iPads loaded with Digital Tourism Resources. Customers can easily email desired resources from the iPads to their own phones or tablets while they are enjoying fine dining at the cafe. They can then carry these resources with them as they travel through our District.

Congratulations Rob and Nikki for taking a big risk, and in the process changing the face of local tourism forever!

This brochure and an article was published in eSplash67 in August 2013.



Artworkz

Serving the community

