

Grade 3-4 students in 2014 made a study of the symbols, patterns and motifs of Kensington -our historical neighbourhood.

Our final work shows the manipulation and abstraction of ideas, symbols, patterns and motifs.

- Students worked in collaborative teams to reflect these ideas in a multimedia art work. This demanded a personal commitment from each team member to work out ways they could modify themselves to be the best group member possible, over an extended time, so that their group functioned effectively and they could get the job done.
- The art work of Bronwyn Bancroft in picture story book, “Why I love Australia” was used to stimulate skills in responding to art works such as: observation, discussion, interpretation, analysis and judgement. This artist study also supported the development of the student’s understanding of the arts elements of balance, emphasis, rhythm and pattern.
- Application of these arts elements balance, emphasis, rhythm and pattern, is clearly evidenced in each groups work and in the overall curation of this exhibition.

**Some of the main motifs and symbols to look out for...**

- Bunjil the eagle, the creator spirit of the Wurundjeri people.
- The way the water ways and landscape of the Moonee Ponds Creek and Maribyrnong River provided good hunting and fishing grounds and the gardening and preserving of the food staple, the yellow yam daisy.
- The history of the way the river was poisoned by early industry including the glue and candle makers, tanneries and abattoirs.
- The way the cattle were driven on foot, through the residential streets of Kensington to stock yards. The first shops, Hardiman’s pub and our school as early buildings.
- The development of Seagull Swamp into JJ Holland Park.
- The freeway built over the Moonee Ponds Creek.
- Other repeating patterns in the neighbourhood such as peppercorn trees, cobble stones picket fences, architectural details on houses and the pattern of the windows on the flats.

# KENSINGTON... A BRIEF HISTORY

## The Creator Spirit- Bunjil

There are some things that are so far back in our history that we can't see for ourselves but we can choose to learn from people who were here before us.

Paying our respects to the first Australians, the Aboriginal people, who believe that their creator is the wedge tail eagle known as Bunjil. The Wurundjeri people know that they belong to the land, they are part of the land and the land is part of them. The Wurundjeri believe there is a place for everyone and everyone has a place.

The Kulin nation has five clans, the group Wojwurrung included the Wurundjeri people who looked after the land that Kensington is built on. Bunjil the eagle, created the land that our neighbourhood and school is built on. Here is one story about Bunjil.

The Time of Chaos

Told by CAROLYN BRIGGS Boonwurrung

“Many years ago this land that we now call Melbourne extended right out to the ocean. Port Phillip Bay was then a large flat plain where Boonwurrung hunted kangaroos and cultivated their yam daisy.

But one day there came a time of chaos and crises. The Boonwurrung and the other Kulin nations were in conflict. They argued and fought. They neglected their children. They neglected their land. The native yam was neglected. The animals were killed but not always eaten. The fish were caught during their spawning season. As this chaos grew the sea became angry and began to rise until it covered their plain and threatened to flood the whole of their country.

The people went to Bunjil, their creator and spiritual leader. They asked Bunjil to stop the sea from rising. Bunjil told his people that they would have to change their ways if they wanted to save their land. The people thought about what they had been doing and made a promise to follow Bunjil. Bunjil walked out to the sea, raised his spear and directed the sea to stop rising. Bunjil then made the Boonwurrung promise that they would respect the laws.

The place the Kulin then chose to meet is where the Parliament of Victoria is now located. They debated issues of great importance to the nation; they celebrated, they danced.

This land will always be protected by the creator, Bunjil, who travels as an eagle.”

# KENSINGTON... A BRIEF HISTORY

## The Wurundjeri-willam People

The Indigenous Australians who lived in the area from Healesville to Kilmore and from Dandenong to Werribee belonged to the Woi-wurrung language and belief group.

Within this was a clan called Wurundjeri-baluk, which was divided into two sub-clans, one of which was the Wurundjeri-willam, meaning 'white gum tree dwellers' and which was further divided into three patriline.

One patriline claimed the area between the Maribyrnong River and Darebin Creek, stretching up to the Dividing Ranges and including the area now known as Moonee Valley. At the time of European settlement the clan-head of this group was Billebellary.

**By 1860, just 25 years after settlement commenced, Victorian settlers numbered half a million. By contrast, the Victorian Indigenous population had declined dramatically from approximately 40,000 to 2,000, and some people believed they were becoming extinct. Those who remained of the Kulin Nation were gathered at Mohican Station near Alexandra.**

**(Linda's Note: If the same ratio was applied to our current school population, in 25 years from now only 20 of our students would be survivors of the white invasion)**

Billebellary's son Wonga was the clan-head of the Wurundjeri. In 1863, Wonga and his cousin Barak led his people in a walk out of the settlement and back to their country at a place near Healesville named Coranderrk (after a tree that blossoms on the river). Wonga and Barak began working with Scottish preacher John Green and they built a thriving economically viable community, turning Coranderrk into a major Kulin settlement

The land following European settlement was destroyed as a hunting fishing ground and as a place to harvest the yam daisy. It was take over as land for farming and the grazing of stock. Some of the plant and animal life has been lost for ever and this drove the Aboriginal people to slaughter sheep to survive.

Aboriginal people only hunted what they needed to eat, and the skins were used to make cloaks and to wrap babies. They respected the animals, the land and the plant life, only taking what was needed and they always gave back to the land.

# KENSINGTON... A BRIEF HISTORY

## The Water Ways.

The Moonee Ponds Creek and the Maribyrnong River have been here longer than the built environment. The Wurundjeri people relied on the Maribyrnong River, Moonee Ponds Creek and Steele Creek for fishing, transport and food.

### **MARIBYRNONG RIVER**

The name 'Maribyrnong' comes from a number of words in the Woi-wurrung language. It is said to be derived from mirring-gnai-birr-nong-'I can hear a ring tail possum'. The river influenced the seasonal movements of the Wurundjeri and another meaning suggested is 'running water'. Foods harvested from the river included fresh water mussels, water birds, fish and edible plants. The river teemed with fish and the eel run occurred in autumn.

In 1991, Aboriginal artefacts were identified along the Moonee Ponds Creek by an archaeological survey team, commissioned by the Board of Works as part of the Moonee Ponds Creek Concept Plan. 31 Aboriginal sites were discovered along the creek, which was part of the territory used by the Wurundjeri.

### **Solomon's Ford**

In 1803, Charles Grimes travelled up the Maribyrnong River and discovered a working fish trap at what was to be called Salomon's Ford. By placing a weir of basalt or woven rushes across a shallow or narrow stream, fish and eels were guided into funnel shaped fishing pots made of woven plant fibre. The ford was an important crossing point for Indigenous people. A scarred tree and quarry site have been recorded in this area; an indication that it was a significant camping site. Located near Canning Street in Avondale Heights, this area of public land is included in a general heritage overlay area and is cited under the Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006

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# KENSINGTON... A BRIEF HISTORY.

## European Settlement.

Kensington is a residential and decreasingly industrial suburb 3 km. north-west of Melbourne. It is commonly associated with Flemington, once being in the Flemington and Kensington borough (1882-1906). Its northern boundary is Racecourse Road, the western boundary is Smithfield Road and the Maribyrnong River, the southern boundary is Dynon Road and the eastern boundary is the Moonee Ponds Creek. Kensington contained the Newmarket saleyards and abattoirs, and in its south there are the Dynon Road railway yards and a small area known as Browns Hill east of the railway yards.

Kensington has a substantial low-lying alluvial area on which the abattoirs were built. **To the east was Seagull Swamp, now J.J. Holland Park.** North of the low-lying area is a basaltic layer, defined by an escarpment at the back of the abattoirs and skirting the swamp to Browns Hill at Lloyd and Radcliffe Streets. Healy's Point Hotel below Browns Hill has frequently had its cellar filled with flood water.

On 30 August, 1856, a Crown grant was made to the Melbourne City Council for cattle saleyards on the south side of Racecourse Road, Newmarket, **and the abattoirs adjoining the saleyard to the south-west. Its most south-westerly boundary conveniently adjoined the Maribyrnong River for the discharge of liquid waste.** The buildings were primitive and unhygienic and were replaced by better facilities between 1898 and 1908. Nearby, on the river bank, there were factories for boiling-down, fellmongery, bone manure and glue.

The cattle saleyards opened in 1859, the year before a railway line from North Melbourne to Essendon began operation, with stations at Kensington and Newmarket. **Although sheep and cattle were driven to the stockyard on the hoof (and used residential streets as stock routes until the 1950s),** the Newmarket railway siding also became active during night hours for holding and delivering stock.

In the mid-1870s Kensington included a small area named Balmoral. Future subdivisions yielded street names with a similar regal flavour, somewhat ironical given the proximity of the proletarian slaughter yards. In addition to the riverside industries there were three tanners, a candlemaker and a chapel with a school. **By then moves were made for a State primary school, and the site in McCracken Street was found and the school opened in 1881.** Commercial and residential development clustered around Racecourse Road and down beside the railway line. McConnell Street, McCracken Street and Rankins Road had several shops, but Macaulay Road had only Hardimans Hotel and three shops. The school precinct had Wesleyan and Anglican churches, and later gained the borough hall.

Flemington and Kensington borough was formed by severance from Essendon and Flemington borough on 17 March, 1882. The borough hall was opened in Bellair Street in 1902, four years before the borough was amalgamated with Melbourne City Council. The Council had run the sale yards and abattoirs for several years.

**Between 1881 and 1890 the State school's enrollment increased from 230 to 700 pupils, and to over 1,000 before the turn of the century. Overcrowding, classes in shelter sheds or pavilions with canvas enclosures, annexes in church halls and the town hall persisted until the 1920s. The peak enrolment was 1,241 in 1913.** It had some notable ex-pupils, including Dr. E. Morris Miller and Hal Porter, who lived in a cottage in Bellair Street with smaller dimensions than described in his "Watcher On The Cast Iron Balcony".

**The abattoirs and saleyards dominated Kensington's life. Newmarket saleyards became a national barometer for stock prices, growing in throughput for export sales after 1904. The peak throughput for sheep and lambs was 6.45 million head in 1944, and the daily record was nearly 146,000 head in 1953.**

**The swamp areas were virtually untouched until the Army established an ordnance depot at the back of the abattoirs in 1941.** Twenty years later the Housing Commission began filling the margin of the Seagull Swamp with high-rise flats at Altona Street. By then upstream flood mitigation works and pumping stations had lessened the risk of inundation. Known as the Macaulay pumping stations, they are near the Macaulay railway station.

Marauding stock in old Kensington were effectively stopped when a stock bridge from the Newmarket railway siding was built in 1964. Within twenty years, however, there was general agreement that time was up for the saleyards and abattoirs, and the State Government began planning the Lynch's Bridge project, replacing the stock facilities with housing and open space. (Lynch's Bridge marked an early crossing place over the Maribyrnong River, joining Kensington to Ballarat road, Footscray.) The project extended to Footscray where the Angliss Meatworks site had similar medium-density housing put on it.

Kensington's Lynch's Bridge development marked the first time that open space was sensibly provided, apart from Holland Park. The Macaulay shopping area had been a struggling precinct for generations, and a Council report in 1987 predicted possible further decline from loss of jobs at the saleyards and abattoirs along with the general decline in manufacturing. Medium-density housing and gentrification of the cottages seem to have proved to be its salvation, although not without much-troubled traffic mitigation works to get heavy trucks out of Macaulay Road.

The Holy Rosary Catholic church and school continue to be notable landmarks in Kensington. The dominant red-brick church looking down Macaulay Road was disposed of by the Anglican Church to the Coptic Orthodox Church. It forms part of an interesting precinct consisting of the State school, a former Methodist church and Sunday School hall and an old Anglican parish hall. Kensington Community High School (1975) has found a site in the Lynch's Bridge housing area.