A wide-angle photograph of a coastal path or pier extending from the bottom left towards the horizon. The path is made of dark planks and has a metal railing. To the left, there's a rocky shore with white-painted bollards. The ocean is visible on the right, with white-capped waves crashing against a low wall. The sky is filled with large, billowing clouds of various shades of blue and white, suggesting a sunset or sunrise.

MORDIALLOC-BEAUMARIS CONSERVATION LEAGUE

COAST & CREEK

Mordialloc to Beaumaris
Walks and History



Pelicans and black swans take flight at Rickett's Point

Port Phillip is one of Victoria's greatest assets, attracting millions of people to the coastline every year. The narrow foreshore around the bay has decreased in area since it was established in the 19th century but pressures on the foreshore and coastal vegetation are increasing as the population increases.

A third edition of *Coast and Creek* has been prepared in the hope that people will become aware of the need to preserve the foreshore.

We gratefully acknowledge the financial support given by Melbourne Water in making this project possible. Special thanks to Mick Connolly, graphic artist, and Mary Rimington for photographs; to Jeff Yugovic, Biosis; Sandra and Murray Orr and Lee James, City of Kingston NRA Supervisor, for use of material and to MBCL members for their invaluable support.

Third edition of *Coast and Creek* compiled by Mordialloc Beaumaris Conservation League Inc, 2017.

Further information: Email: secretary@mbcl.org.au, www.mbcl.org.au

ESTUARINE WATERWAYS

ORIGINALLY small creeks in the Dandenong Valley discharged water into the Carrum Carrum Swamp which extended from Mordialloc to Frankston, approximately 11,000 acres. The swamp was separated from Port Phillip by a broad sand ridge. Outflow from the swamp to the bay was confined to two outlets – Mordialloc Creek and Kananook Creek.

In 1879 the draining of Carrum Carrum Swamp to allow for farming began. Subsequent housing development on flood-prone land led to Mordialloc Creek being considered primarily a flood control medium. Industrialisation and urbanisation caused serious pollution problems in the creek and in 1975 Mordialloc Creek was considered to be one of the most polluted waterways draining into the bay.

An outcry from Bayside conservation groups led to the Dandenong Valley Authority working to improve water quality. Melbourne Water has superseded the DVA in management of this waterway.

Wetlands offer new ways to treat urban run-off and associated pollutants. CSIRO scientists have found that aquatic plants offer a low cost alternative for removing harmful nutrients and heavy metals. Phragmites (reeds) in the creek help to stabilise banks and also remove nutrients from the water. The reed beds and sandbars provide safe habitat for water birds and other species. Conservation groups have lobbied for the retention of a natural bush setting for the creek and environs. The Swamp paperbark groves opposite the Chute Street boat ramp have been preserved as a remnant of the original swamp vegetation.



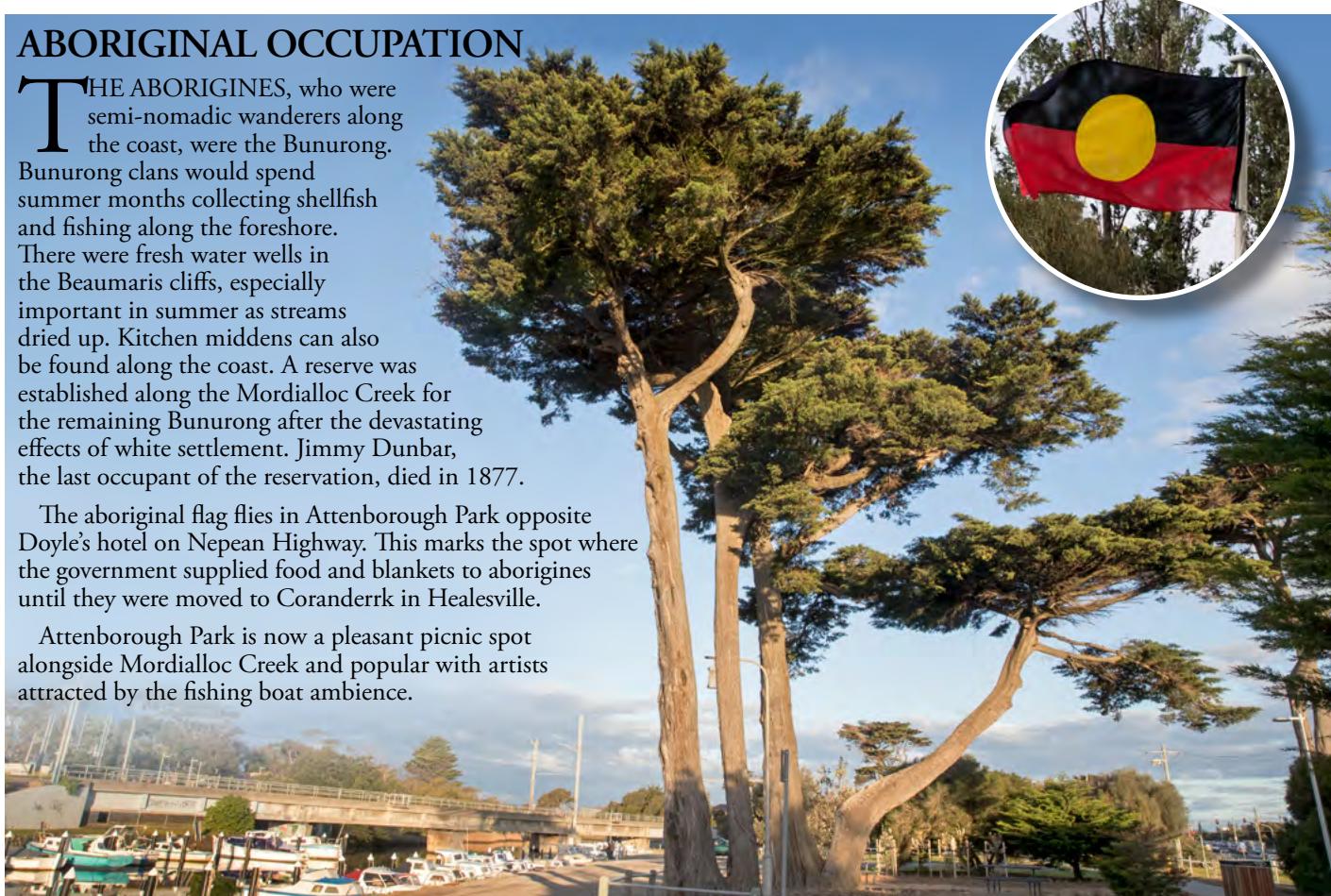
Glossy Ibis, Edithvale Wetlands

ABORIGINAL OCCUPATION

THE ABORIGINES, who were semi-nomadic wanderers along the coast, were the Bunurong. Bunurong clans would spend summer months collecting shellfish and fishing along the foreshore. There were fresh water wells in the Beaumaris cliffs, especially important in summer as streams dried up. Kitchen middens can also be found along the coast. A reserve was established along the Mordialloc Creek for the remaining Bunurong after the devastating effects of white settlement. Jimmy Dunbar, the last occupant of the reservation, died in 1877.

The aboriginal flag flies in Attenborough Park opposite Doyle's hotel on Nepean Highway. This marks the spot where the government supplied food and blankets to aborigines until they were moved to Coranderrk in Healesville.

Attenborough Park is now a pleasant picnic spot alongside Mordialloc Creek and popular with artists attracted by the fishing boat ambience.



YAMMERBOOK NATURE RESERVE

THIS land was once part of the Carrum Carrum Swamp behind coastal dunes, a large wetland and bush terrain between Mordialloc, Frankston and Dandenong; a unique ecosystem that flourished with a wide range of plants and wildlife. Small sections of original swamp remain at Edithvale and Seaford Wetlands but many plant and animal species are now extinct.

The coastal Bunurong people are the traditional custodians of the region between Werribee River and Wilsons Promontory. They lived off the land observing animal behaviour and plant growth to predict food supply. Today descendants of the Bunurong live in our community.

In the past the ecological importance of wetlands was poorly understood. In 1866 the Carrum Carrum Swamp was surveyed then gradually drained for agriculture and housing.

In 1987 Yammerbook Nature Reserve became a flood retarding basin under Dandenong Valley Authority, and then Melbourne Water.

During the 1990s soil was removed to raise the ground level for housing development, however excavations breached the saline water table creating a salty lake with barren banks.

In 2000 Mordialloc Beaumaris Conservation League and local residents initiated restoration of the site with later cooperation from Melbourne Water and City of Kingston. A Master Plan was developed to reinstate a wetland, bush habitat and recreational space. The reserve was officially opened to the public in September 2006 and is now an important link in the habitat corridor between Mordialloc Creek, Edithvale Wetlands and Patterson River.



MORDIALLOC CREEK WALK

1 Mordialloc Pier attracts many visitors. Commence walking towards Nepean Highway. The creek has moorings for 700 boats, some for hire.

2 Lambert Island in the creek houses sea scouts and the Mordialloc Motor Yacht Squadron. Doyles Hotel, originally The Bridge Hotel, is on the opposite bank. It commenced operating in 1873.

3 The old carnival site opposite the island is now called the Hazel Pierce Reserve in memory of a former Mordialloc councillor. Carnival events raised funds for the promenade and band rotunda built in 1925.

4 Pompeis Landing. Walk under the road bridge and emerge opposite Pompei's Boat Building Works. This family business has been building seaworthy wooden boats for over a 100 years.

5 Continue under the railway line and follow the shared bicycle/ pedestrian track through the George Woods Reserve to the footbridge over the creek.

6 Continue along the south bank of the creek and note remnant Swamp Paperbark trees and Phragmites reeds on both sides. Phragmites on the island in the creek provide a wonderful habitat for birds and prevent bank erosion.

7 Pass the Centre Swamp Drain pumping station and follow the creek to Wells Road bridge. On the right, note Brown's Reserve playing fields and Yammerbook saltwater wetland, created on a Melbourne Water flood retarding basin.

8 Cross Wells Road bridge and turn left to commence the return journey through stands of indigenous vegetation planted by Kingston council and Friends of Mordialloc Creek. Note the abundant bird life in the trees and water.

9 Pass the Chute Street boat ramp and rejoin the shared bicycle/ pedestrian path at the footbridge. Alternatively, cross the bridge, turn right and continue past Mordialloc Secondary College, built on land owned 140 years ago by the district's

first European settler Alexander McDonald. Walk through Attenborough Park to the Nepean Highway and perhaps enjoy refreshments at Doyle's Hotel.





White Correa



Kneed
Wallaby-Grass



Drooping Sheoak



Trim Greenhood



Phragmites



Hop Goodenia



Seaberry Saltbush

THE THIN GREEN LINE

Vegetation is mostly remnant or planted indigenous flora but also includes naturally colonised local species.

Four plant communities are found along Mordialloc Creek: Tall Marsh, Estuarine Scrub, Swamp Scrub and Brackish Wetland. The foreshore supports three: Coastal Headland Scrub, Coastal Dune Scrub and Sand Heathland.

Foreshore vegetation has always grown in a fragile fringe along the bay. On one side are windy, salt-washed sand dunes and cliffs and on the other was heathland that has now given way to suburbia. The Mordialloc Creek environs have also faced major urban and industrial pressures, yet indigenous vegetation remains and is home to a wide variety of native wildlife. These survivors make a living connection with our pre-european landscape.



Coast Banksia

THE FORESHORE AND DUNE SYSTEM

THE MORDIALLOC foreshore is characterised by a range of these landforms, varying from the historically significant Beaumaris cliffs and sea ledges with views across the bay to the wide, sandy, safe beach at Mordialloc. These features add variety to the coastline and are attractive to visitors.

While much of the original vegetation has been cleared, remnant patches remain. Significant indigenous vegetation can be observed while on the foreshore walk included on the next page.

Coastal sand dunes are formed when sand deposited on the shore dries out and is blown to the back of the beach. Dune grasses help to hold the sand in

position especially during severe storm surges. and so helps to prevent erosion of the foreshore.

The present day coastal dune system was formed during the last 6000 years. Between Mordialloc and Frankston a coastal barrier was formed behind which lay the Carrum Carrum Swamp.

In 1866, when Rawlinson first surveyed this area, water from these swamps ran either north into Mordialloc Creek or south into Kananook Creek.

Council staff and volunteers continue to carry out regeneration work along the foreshore.



MORDIALLOC TO BEAUMARIS FORESHORE WALK

- 1** Begin at the pier, construction of which commenced in 1869. Site also of the Carnival which raised money to build the promenade and band stand. Mordialloc Sea Baths were demolished in the severe storm of 1934.
- 2** In the Peter Scullin Reserve there is a memorial to the Bunurong tribe. This is also the site of the first white settler's farm and later the first Mordialloc football ground.
- 3** Walk along the promenade until Bay Street car park is reached. This was the traditional site for swimming race-horses from the Epsom Training track. A bronze horse now marks this spot.
- 4** Proceed to the former Parkdale Lifesaving Club house, now a popular café. Enjoy a cup of coffee and watch out for blue wrens in the bushes.
- 5** Continue along the cliff top track or walk along the concrete path on the sand to the promenade at Parkdale Yacht club. Sustenance workers commenced construction of the sea wall and promenade during the depression years.
- 6** On the cliff top between Dixon Street and the Mentone Lifesaving Club is a significant area of foreshore – Red Bluff Heathland with remnant vegetation. The gravel track winds through 70 year-old tea-trees.
- 7** The Mentone Clay Cliffs consist of poorly consolidated yellow-brown clay Red Bluff sands. These cliffs were badly eroded and regraded by the Metropolitan Board of Works in 1972-73.
- 8** Cliffs and adjoining beaches were painted by Australian impressionists and, later Clarice Beckett (1887-1935). She painted from Beaumaris looking across to Mentone. Beckett also painted bathing boxes and boatsheds later destroyed during the 1934 storm.
- 9** The prominent red sandstone cliffs at Beaumaris is the only Australian suburban site where fossils of terrestrial mammals occur with abundant marine invertebrates. Here is the richest find of fossil penguins in Australia and important discoveries are still being made.
- 10** Continue along the track to Table Rock, an historic location for aborigines which once included middens and a fresh water well. Watching swans and pelicans with a cup of tea at Rickett's Point would be a pleasant end to the walk.





BEAUMARIS CLIFFS

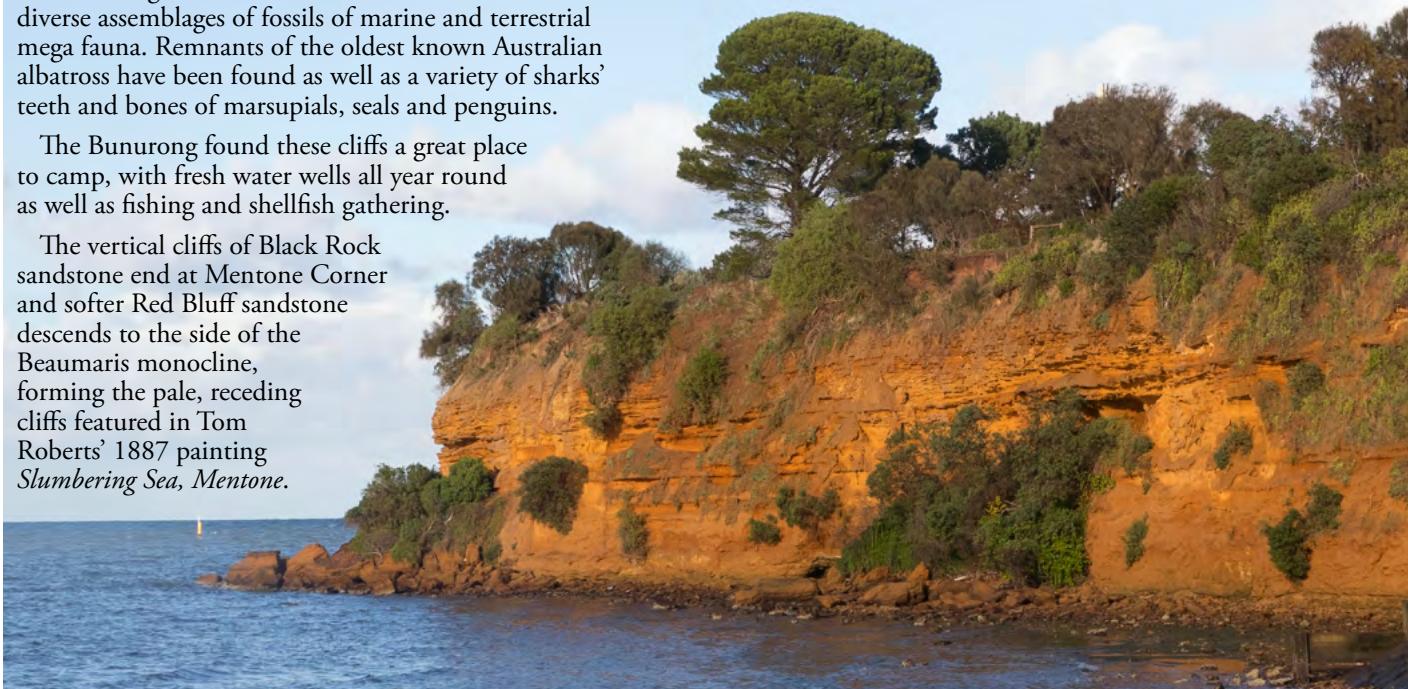
THESE enigmatic red sandstone cliffs are important for their scenic impact and for scientific study of our ancient geology and ongoing fossil finds, some of which date back 5 to 6 million years

The cliffs are listed on the Australian Heritage Database as containing some of the nation's richest and most diverse assemblages of fossils of marine and terrestrial mega fauna. Remnants of the oldest known Australian albatross have been found as well as a variety of sharks' teeth and bones of marsupials, seals and penguins.

The Bunurong found these cliffs a great place to camp, with fresh water wells all year round as well as fishing and shellfish gathering.

The vertical cliffs of Black Rock sandstone end at Mentone Corner and softer Red Bluff sandstone descends to the side of the Beaumaris monocline, forming the pale, receding cliffs featured in Tom Roberts' 1887 painting *Slumbering Sea, Mentone*.

Heidelberg school artists Roberts, Fred McCubbin and Arthur Streeton found these cliffs an attractive subject to paint in the late nineteenth century (as have present day artists). These artists enjoyed camping at Mentone and after a day's painting Roberts wrote, "We returned home during evening through groves of exquisite tea-trees."



ANCIENT TRACES

FOSSILS, each about 5.5 million-years old, gathered from the foreshore (without digging) at Beaumaris and destined for the collection of Museum Victoria. New significant finds to science are emerging every few months. This site is under threat from impending development.



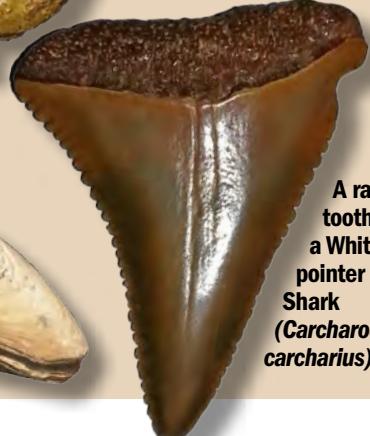
Chambered Nautilus
(*Aturia coxi*)



Eucrassatella
eupontica



Heart Urchin
(*Lovenia woodsi*)



A rare
tooth of
a White-
pointer
Shark
(*Carcharodon
carcharius*)



The largest fossil tooth ever found in Australia, from an ancient relative of Sperm Whales (*Livyatan melvillei*)

Specimens and photographs courtesy of Sandra and Murray Orr.

ACTIVITIES

MORDIALLOC BEAUMARIS

CONSERVATION LEAGUE was formed in August 1969 and campaigns for protection of the local environment through actions to:

- Advocate for protection of the fragile foreshore reserve, native coastal vegetation and habitat.
- Ensure that foreshore amenities are designed and sited so as to preserve the harmony and natural aspects of the coastal environment.
- Encourage the restoration of wetlands to improve the quality of water entering the Bay from Mordialloc Creek.
- Ensure that publicly owned land is not appropriated or exploited for the benefit of commercial interests.



- Oppose inappropriate development, such as high rise buildings on the foreshore and housing estates in flood prone areas.

The League actively seeks to influence decision making processes through participating in community consultation, preparing submissions, letter writing and networking with other organisations involved in revegetation programs along the creek and foreshore.

New members sympathetic to the League's objectives are welcome. Meetings are held on the first Wednesday of the month. Further information: Email – secretary@mbcl.org.au, www.mbcl.org.au/



The Sunny South, Tom Roberts, Mentone, c. 1887. Courtesy National Gallery of Victoria



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MORDIALLOC BEAUMARIS
CONSERVATION LEAGUE

