

CHS acknowledges the Wurundjeri people as the traditional custodians of this area.

Collingwood Historical Society Annual Walk 12 November 2022 Early Abbotsford

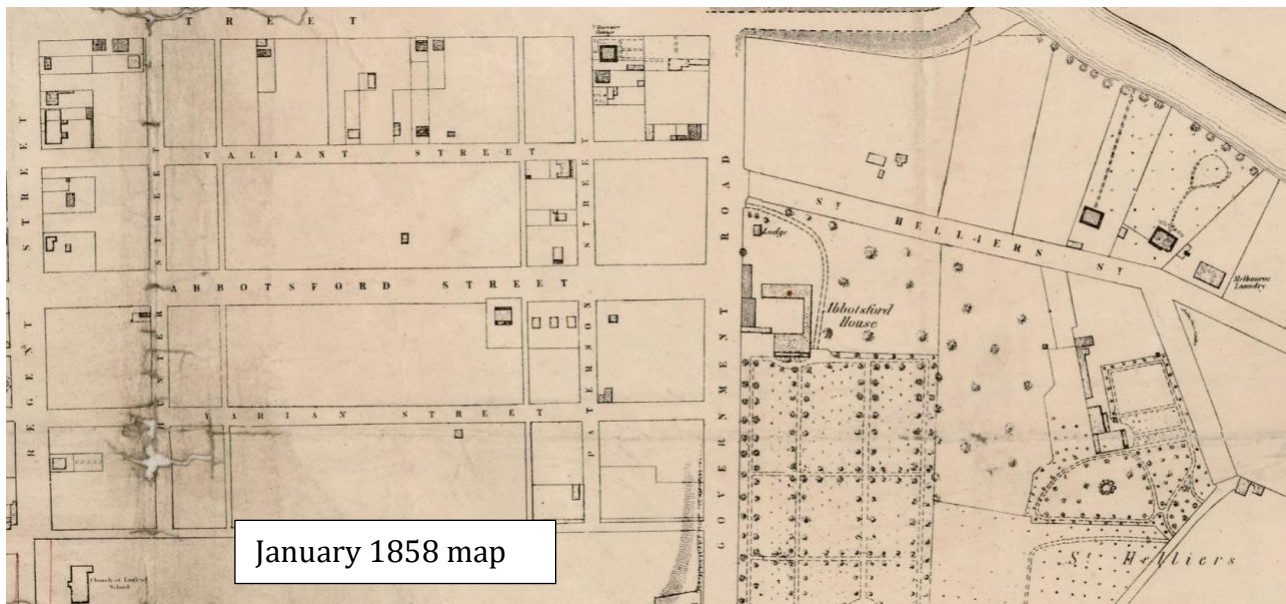
An expanded version of these notes will be put on the website: www.collingwoodhs.org.au

Introduction

This area was home to the Wurundjeri-Willam people long before it was colonised by the British in the 1830s. In 1838-39 land was sold in Portions of about 25 acres each. The section we will cover today includes Portions 64, 76 and 77. Early (1840s) European landholders/residents were [John Hodgson](#) who sold his property to [Edward Curr](#) (*St Heliers*), and [John Orr](#) (*Abbotsford House*). Orr also owned most of the land between Clarke Street and Nicholson Street and began subdividing in the 1850s. Later residents on the north side included solicitor [Arthur Snowden](#) and waxworks proprietor [Max Kreitmayer](#).

From 1863 the Convent of the Good Shepherd occupied an extensive site which was added to over the years. Most of the site was sold in 1975 and is now known as the Abbotsford Convent, which houses, among other groups, the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation.

We will not be touring within the Convent grounds today, but the Abbotsford Convent website has much historical information: <https://abbotsfordconvent.com.au/about/history/> and self-guided tours: <https://abbotsfordconvent.com.au/visit/> including the Indigenous sound trail Ngulu-nganjin (Our Voice).



- 1 Starting point outside 16 St Heliers Street (just east of the car park)

16 St Heliers Street Home Lodge was home to the Kreitmayers, waxworks proprietors, from 1880 to 1909.

- *Follow the path, the Main Yarra Trail, at the far end of St Heliers Street between the Children's Farm and the Convent grounds.*

- 2 By the path by the farm

Collingwood Children's Farm. Established in 1979 for local children on the site of the former Convent farm, now Melbourne's oldest farm.

- *Follow river path almost to Clarke Street*

- 3 Grassed area giving view of Convent buildings

Convent of the Good Shepherd In 1863 nuns of the order of the Good Shepherd acquired *Abbotsford House*, former residence of John Orr, and established a refuge for women in need. They soon added an Industrial School and a Reformatory School for girls and bought *St Heliers*, which had been home to the Curr family. The Convent expanded over the years and many purpose-built structures were added.

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- *Follow river path to Collins (Gipps Street) footbridge* Note Hodgson's punt crossed the river at the end of Clarke St (1840s and 1850s). Note Blind Creek (now underground) joining the Yarra. Warning: steep steps up from river path. *



Punt as painted in 1856

- 4 Midpoint Collins footbridge

View downriver towards sites of *Mayfield* and riverside tanneries and brewery.

- *Walk a little way along Gipps Street*

- 5 200 Gipps Street

200 Gipps Street Former Cyclone Co, wire fencing factory. Built c 1925

SW corner Gipps and Nicholson Street 205 Gipps Street.

Former Harold's Boot Factory Built c 1915.

NW corner Gipps and Nicholson Street. Loosie's Café. A shop since early 1900s, originally a confectioner.

- *Turn right into Nicholson Street*

- 6 Brown's Reserve

This area was poorly drained and not developed until later than the surrounding area. Opposite, you can see the channelled route of Blind Creek between 165 and 167 Nicholson Street

- 7 Corner Marine Parade and Nicholson Street.

197 Vere Street, SW corner of Nicholson Street 'Mavis' café. Built 1890, this was a fruiterer's or grocer's shop for many years, later a milk bar and more recently a café.

NW corner Vere and Nicholson Street the Park Hotel, established 1864.

NE corner Marine Parade and Nicholson Street. A butcher's shop 1888 – 1934, fruit shop 1936 – 1965.

Marine Parade 1850s site of Church of England school and later site of municipal swimming baths, constructed under the supervision of Henry Edmeades Tolhurst, City Surveyor and Engineer and opened in 1895. Site of drill hall opened 1914. All demolished.

- *Turn right into Marine Parade, then left into Hunter Street*

- 8 Intersection of Abbotsford Street and Hunter Street

A typical corner grouping of nineteenth century commercial premises: grocer's shop, draper's, and hotel.

Abbotsford Street, SW corner Hunter Street former Village Belle Hotel and grocer's shop

6-12 Abbotsford Street Houses and corner shop built 1891-92

16 Abbotsford Street former draper's shop owned by Mrs Mary Banko.

- *Turn right into Abbotsford Street*

This was part of John Orr's first auction sale held in December 1852. Blocks were 33 feet wide by 100 feet. Sales were slow and auctions continued throughout the 1850s. Note very few houses on 1858 map.

- 9 Near 38 – 44 Abbotsford Street

38 Abbotsford Street An early timber house more recently clad in bluestone.

40 Abbotsford Street Built and lived in by Thomas Burton Wilson, carpenter, builder, contractor. Wilson was one of the early purchasers of Orr's properties, residing in Abbotsford Street by 1860.

42 Abbotsford Street Built by Thomas Wilson, let to City surveyor and architect Henry Tolhurst in 1883. Wilson moved into this house in the 1880s and remained until his death in 1905.

44 Abbotsford Street (demolished) another of Wilson's houses, residence of his son. Garden at side.

- *Continue eastwards to Clarke Street, turn left.*

- 10 Opposite St Heliers Street

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13 Clarke Street. Built possibly as early as 1860. Residence during 1880s of [Benjamin Tapner](#), architect and later mayor.

29 Clarke Street Yarradale flats Built 1926. Of local architectural significance, one of only a few blocks of flats in the municipality dating from the inter-War period. Displays Arts and Crafts influenced details.

Cnr Johnston Street Former Early Bird Hotel, now Café Vit. There was a brewery behind it in Clarke Street in the nineteenth century.

Northeast corner St Heliers Street. Site of Tolhurst family's house. Present building by 1941 [Henry Tolhurst](#), City Surveyor, bought *Frankfurt House*, (later *Greenhithe*) a two-storey bluestone house with ten rooms, set in large grounds incorporating a tennis court and stables.

By 1941 *Greenhithe* had been replaced by the current red brick building. This was originally constructed as commercial classrooms for St Euphrasia's School, run by the nuns of the Convent of the Good Shepherd.

➤ *End, intersection St Heliers Street and Clarke Street. Coffee or wine at Cam's in the Convent.*

*If you can't climb steps, walk up Clarke Street, turn left into Marine Parade, left into Nicholson Street, and resume the route at Stop 5, 200 Gipps Street.

Abbotsford House, and the December 1852 auction plan

