

KOROROIT CREEK: The headwaters of the Creek rise in the hills around Mt. Aitken, near Gisborne, and flow mainly through farmland across the Western Plains. The Creek enters the Metropolitan area at St. Albans, just north of Ballarat Road, cuts through Deer Park, Sunshine and Altona before reaching the sea at the Williamstown Rifle Range.

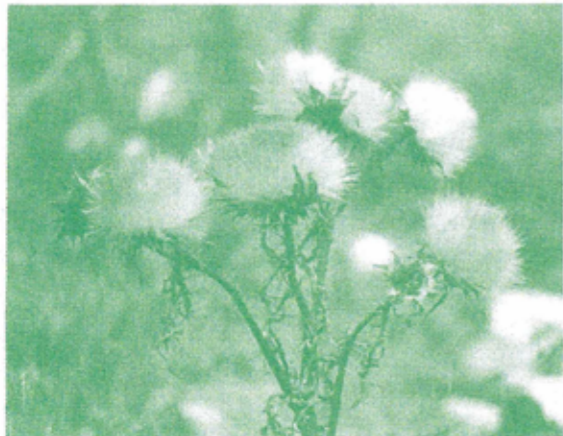
The Kororoit Creek is one of the major streams running through the Western Plains. The name "Kororoit" is thought to be derived from an Aboriginal word meaning male kangaroo. In the 1850s, it was also known as the Tea Tree Creek. Although not immediately remarkable, Kororoit Creek holds many surprises for those willing to explore it.

GEOLOGY: Kororoit Creek is of scientific interest as a classic example of creek formation over a basalt plain.

This plain covers the Western part of Melbourne but not the East. This different geology accounts largely for the different vegetation on the two sides of the city.

The basalt plain was created by volcanic activity about one to five million years ago. The underlying rock is three to four hundred million years old.

The nature of the underlying basalt structure has formed a creek that gains from and loses water to the surrounding underground systems in a way unique to this type of basalt plain, which is one of the largest in the world.

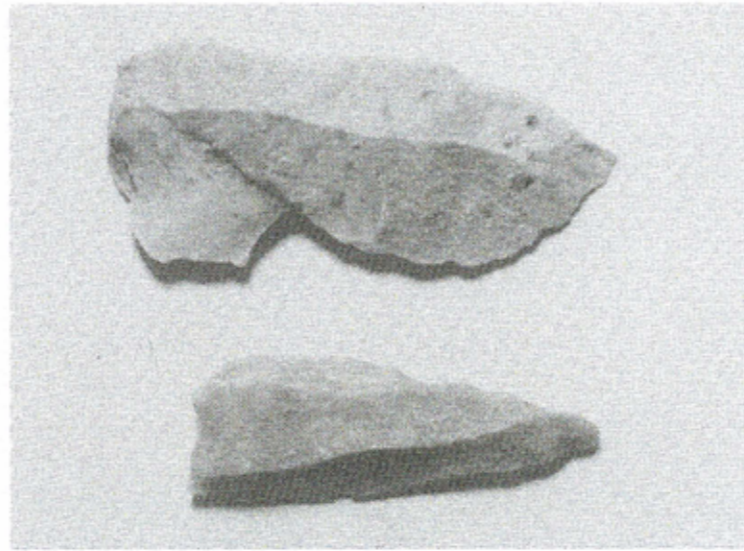


BIRDS: The mouth of the Kororoit Creek, next to the Williamstown Rifle Range, is part of a larger network of swamps, marshes and mudflats in the Altona Region. This wetlands region has only recently been recognised as one of the most important and diverse wetlands for birds both nationally and internationally.

More than 240 species, several rare and endangered, have been identified in these wetlands.

Further Reading: GARRETT, S., LANE, B., SCHULZ, M., & WOOD, K. **Birds of Port Phillip Bay**, Ministry for Planning and Environment, Victoria, Melbourne, 1986.

ABORIGINAL OCCUPATION: Aborigines lived around the Kororoit Creek before the Europeans came. Nearly twenty sites of archeological interest have been identified along the Creek by the Victorian Archeological Survey. These sites are protected by law.



This photo shows a sample of the artifacts found at these sites. It is thought to be part of a spear or harpoon.

Further Reading: PRESLAND, G. **The Land of the Kulin**, Penguin, Melbourne, 1985.

RECENT SETTLEMENT: The earliest graziers around Melbourne, from Batman on, took their flocks west. The Kororoit Creek was an important source of fresh water for the early graziers on these treeless plains.

The Creek was later to be a barrier to the thousands of diggers on their way to the goldfields. These early travellers crossed the Creek at fords which later became places for bridges and hotels as the numbers swelled.

Many of these sites are easily identified as several bluestone bridges still exist and local hotels remain on these original sites. For example the Guiding Star in Brooklyn and the Deer Park Hotel.

The local bluestone used to construct these bridges and hotels was also used as a building material for much of Melbourne. As you walk around the city streets next time, consider that much of the bluestone you are seeing and walking on came from somewhere near the Kororoit Creek.

Further Information: **The Kororoit Creek: A History of Occupation** (Video and School Kit), Melbourne's Living Museum of the West, Melbourne, 1986.

WALK TOURS: Access to the Creek is limited, particularly in the upper reaches and rural areas as it mainly runs through private farmland.

There are, however, many places to walk and things to see by the Creek in the metropolitan area. These can usually be reached by car or bicycle and some by bus.

Four of these spots are described on the map, others can be found with the help of your street directory.

CAR TOURS: A car tour of the middle and upper reaches of the Creek will reveal many surprisingly picturesque scenes.

A three hour drive can take you past quite a few points of interest. Take the Calder Highway north-west of Melbourne. Twenty-five minutes will take you past Diggers Rest to The Gap.

There is a drive-in lookout on top of The Gap where you can stop and look out over the plains.

About two kilometres further on the right is a bluestone bridge, built in 1861. It can be reached by a small dirt road to the right.

Back towards Melbourne three or four kilometres on your right is Mount Aitken Road, just past the Sunbury turnoff. This road crosses three branches of the Kororoit Creek, each with a distinctly different view. You will often see cockatoos, galahs, magpies and rosellas in this area.

About five kilometres along this road is a T-intersection with Blackhills Road. Turn left and follow the Creek down to the Diggers Rest Road. Here you go right for half a kilometre to Holden Road where you turn left. A kilometre along Holden Road brings you back to Kororoit Creek and the remains of an early bluestone and timber bridge.

Continue another kilometre to Leakes Road and turn right. That large hill on your right is Mount Kororoit, the remains of a volcanic cone from the volcanic period that produced the Western Plains.

Another three kilometres will bring you to the Keilor - Melton Road. A two kilometre detour to the right will bring you to another bluestone bridge where you can see some fine examples of red river gums.

Traffic is often heavy on this road and parking is difficult. You may have to park some distance from the bridge and walk back a couple of hundred yards.

Back to Leakes Road and another three kilometres will bring you to the Western Highway. Turn left to return to Melbourne.



Produced by Melbourne's Living Museum of the West, for Melbourne Western Region Commission through the Regional Action Program. Enquiries: 14 David St, Footscray, 3011. Ph. 689-7293.

KOROROIT CREEK



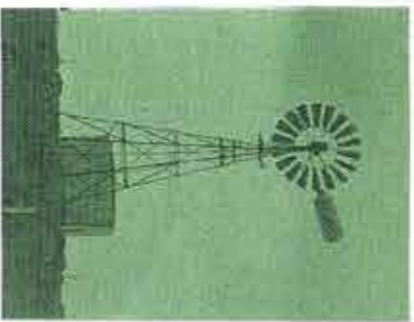
Mt. Kororoit is one of 20 volcanic cones identified in the region from which lava flowed to create the basalt plain. Others are Mt. Cottrill, Spring Hill and Bald Hill.

FEATURES

- 1) Williamstown Rifle Range
- 2) Fishing Village
- 3) Old Williamstown Racecourse
- 4) Mangroves
- 5) Cherry Lake
- 6) Re-Afforestation
- 7) Bluestone Bridge
- 8) Car Park
- 9) Guiding Star Hotel
- 10) Historic MMBW sewer bridge
- 11) Brooklyn Quarters
- 12) Buckingham Reserve
- 13) Site of Swimming Championship (Play Equipment)
- 14) Selwyn Park
- 15) More Park (Play Equipment)
- 16) I.C.I., Australia's first major explosives factory
- 17) Deer Park Hotel
- 18) Linear Park
- 19) Walking Path
- 20) Petrol & Refreshments
- 21) Deanside
- 22) Swamp
- 23) Old Rockbank Hotel
- 24) Army Area
- 25) Bluestone Bridge & Red River Gums
- 26) Mt. Kororoit
- 27) Bluestone & Wood Bridge
- 28) Ruins of Early Bridge
- 29) Sheoak Hill
- 30) Lookout over Plains
- 31) Bluestone Bridge
- 32) Petrol Station & Refreshments
- 33) Mt. Aitken



An early bluestone shearing shed on a property owned last century by W.J.T. Clarke, once said to be the richest man in Australia. The shearing shed is a fine example of its type and is classified by the National Trust. It is part of a larger complex of bluestone buildings on a property called Deanside. Access is difficult as the shed is on private property. For further information ring the National Trust on 654-4711 or the Historic Buildings Council 628-5111.



A classic windmill, one of the many sights to be seen along the Mt. Aitken Road.



This area still retains some of its original character and you can walk for several hours listening to the frogs and watching the water hens. There are many good swimming holes too. However, watch for snakes in summer. Kororoit Creek was once known for its tiger snakes.

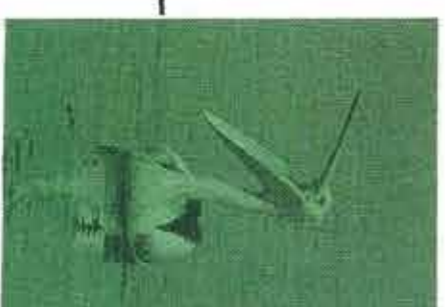
This part of the Creek can be reached from Peterborough Crescent, Deer Park, MEL: 25 B4, or Neale Road, MEL: 25 B3, and several other roads further north in St. Albans.



Several bridges built from local bluestone are to be found on the Creek. This 1860s bridge is just off the Geelong Road, a few hundred yards west of Griese Parade, Altona, MEL 40 G10. There is a car park and picnic ground by the bridge. It can also be reached by taking bus 414, from Prasley Street, Footscray.

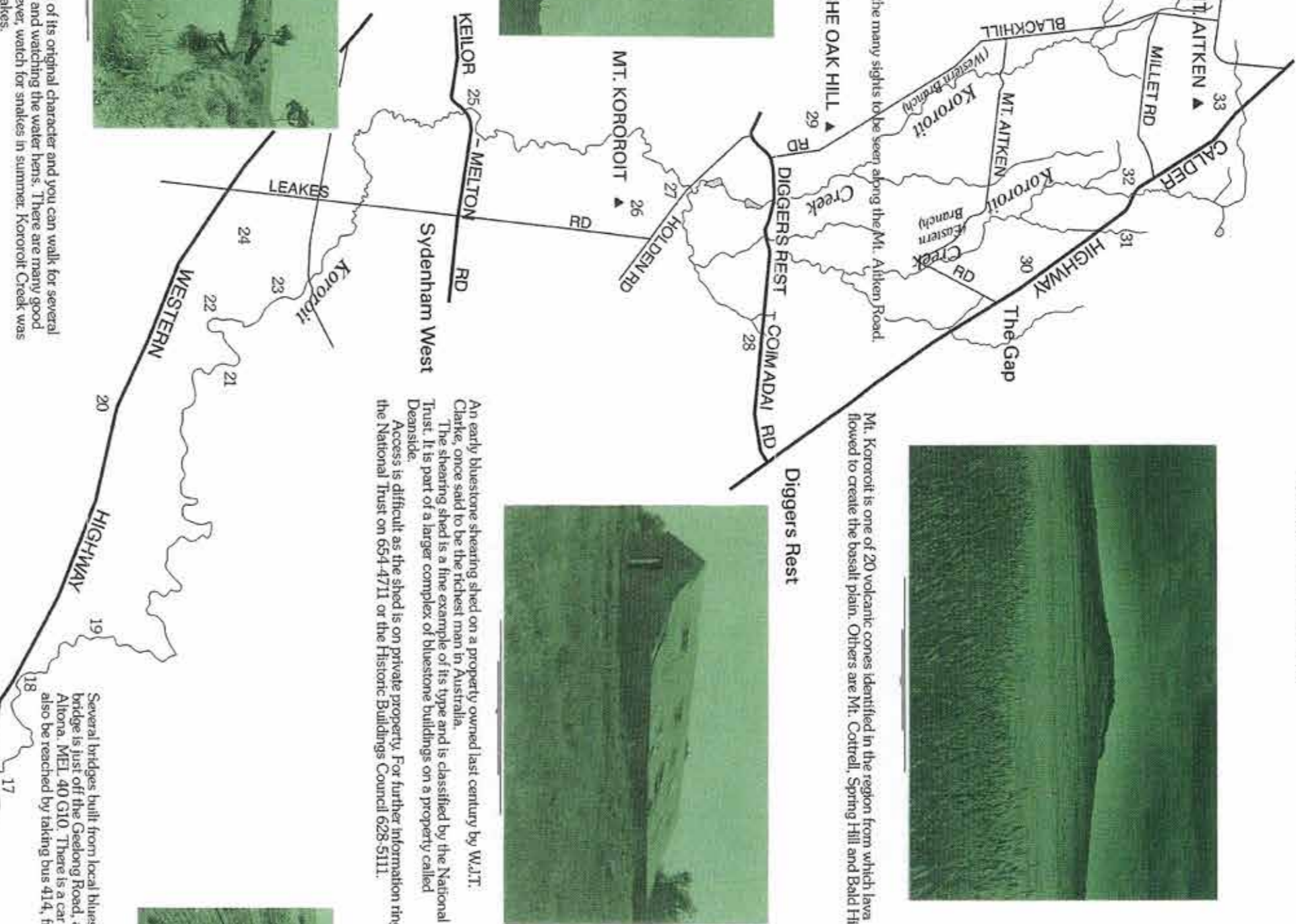


The Sunshine Swimming Club was very active in the 1920s and 30s and part of the Victorian Swimming Championships were held in the Creek near Selwyn Park. One event was the Women's 200 yards Free Style in 1936. Some remains of the pool fixtures can still be seen. Approach from Burnmewang St. MEL 26 D11.



Pelicans may be seen at the mouth of the Kororoit Creek by the Williamstown Rifle Range.

Cormorants, waders, ducks and swans are also common in this area. You can spend a relaxing couple of hours here watching the birds. Access is along Mardock Road, Williamstown, MEL: 25F8 or Racecourse Road, Altona, MEL: 25 C7.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Produced by Melbourne's Living Museum of the West

Note: MEL refers to **Melways Street Directory** 16th edition.

