



Darebin Parklands Discovery Trail

Use these notes in conjunction with the Darebin Parklands brochure map.

1. ▲ DCMC Environment Centre

The DCMC environment centre houses historical and aerial photo displays, information sheets, a wide variety of brochures, natural exhibits and a water-testing laboratory. The offices accommodate the Darebin Parklands Rangers, Darebin Creek Co-ordinator and assistant plus a Waterwatch officer.

2. ▲ Darebin Creek Shared Trail

The original shared trail running along the western edge of the Park was constructed in 1991, with the section going through the Park being built in 2004. Incomplete in sections, the trail will eventually join the Main Yarra Trail.

3. ● Old Steam Shovel Counterweight

These huge pieces of red gum were found in 1983 when the old tip site was being remodeled and the original steam shovel operator visited the park. He showed the ranger where the steam shovel was buried (just south of the duck pond). Unfortunately, rust had ruined most of the old machine but the counterweight survived and was moved to its current location in 1985.

4. ● Ivy Cottage Homestead site 1870

'Ivy Cottage' was the dwelling of then highly-regarded member of the community John Sharp Adams and his wife Maria Barton. John Adams operated the Alphington General store, owned large parcels of land in the area, and was a long-serving member of the Heidelberg Shire Council. Adams lived at the cottage while his large farmhouse 'Rockleigh' was being built near the corner of Separation St and Yarana Rd. To the east of the cottage stood a coach house and stables. These stables were used in the

production of the 1906 Ned Kelly film – Australia's first motion picture. Both buildings were demolished in 1956.

5. ▲ Spiritual Healing Trail

The Spiritual Healing Trail is a gift from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community as a gesture of reconciliation. The trail was conceived by the Darebin Aboriginal Reconciliation Working Party with the approval of the Wurundjeri, the traditional custodians of this land.

6. ■ Basalt Tessellated Pavement

This Tertiary basalt outcrop was formed around 800,000 years ago due to lava flows from several volcanoes near Beveridge 40 kilometres north of Melbourne. The lava flows moved along existing streambeds and filled old stream valleys, creating new paths for the Darebin Creek. Weathering and erosion over the years has exposed this basalt tessellation.

7. ▲ Snake Grass Wildflower Area

The Snake Grass wildflower area was typical urban wasteland, covered by Artichoke Thistle, Briar Rose, Blackberry and worst of all Chilean Needle Grass. The area was so thick with weeds that when Darebin Parkland rangers originally burned the site, they were surprised by the number of basalt rocks scattered throughout the area. These rocks inspired the DCMC to reclaim the site, and in 1997, with funding from Darebin City Council and Parks Victoria, over 25,000 grasses and wildflowers were planted. The fenced area is a direct seeding exercise using varieties of native grasses. This ongoing project is a favourite with the rangers.

**The first stop of the Spiritual Healing Trail is in this area.*

8. ● Mulberry Avenue 1860

The Mulberry Avenue trees are Black Mulberries (*Morus nigra*). They were planted around 1860 by Chinese market gardeners working for John Sharp Adams. Olive trees and an olive grove on the nearby slopes were also planted around the same time.

Mulberry Avenue was a part of the old Cobb & Co wagon track and leads onto the floodplain where the track then leads to the creek crossing near the Sidney Clifton Bridge. More Mulberry trees are centrally located on the floodplain.

9. ■ Donaldson Creek Confluence

The Donaldson Creek begins west of the corner of Banksia Street and Waterdale Road Bellfield, and for more than 40 years has been piped underground down to Della Torre Crescent Ivanhoe, where it returns to its natural form. Donaldson Creek is the southern most tributary along the Darebin Creek catchment, and now serves as stormwater infrastructure servicing Ivanhoe and Bellfield.

10. ■ Silurian Outcrop 1& 2

There are several significant outcrops of sedimentary rock throughout park. This rock is of the Silurian period. In ancient seas, 430 million years ago, fine mud and sand sediments were laid down horizontally and slowly developed into rock. Eventually pressures under the earth pushed these rocks to the surface resulting in the dramatically different landform on the Ivanhoe side, as compared to the volcanic Alphington side. The darker layers are made up of iron oxide, with the layers being like tree rings in allowing geologists to age the rock. Silurian rock produces excellent caves, with several small examples in the large escarpment

further down stream. The Wurundjeri people occasionally used these caves for shelter when passing through this area.

11. ■ Billabong Formation

The formation of a billabong usually takes thousands of years but, as a result of the urban expansion and ever increasing stormwater flows and flash floods, this section of the Darebin Creek is changing by the year. Water always tries to find the fastest path to its final destination. In this case floodwaters flow too rapidly to go around the 90° bend, and instead have eroded a path straight across the floodplain. As the floodwaters race through this section, tonnes of rock and sediment deposited on the original creek bed eventually closing off the bend, further increasing flow over the floodplain and thus establishing a new path for flowing water. At the downstream end, deposited sediments close off the old creek path and isolate it as the new creek path flows freely. This isolated area now becomes a billabong, also known as an oxbow lake.

12. ● Market Garden Site 1860

Remnants of the market garden and orchards remain, with the central mulberry trees, quince, plum and Almond trees scattered along the lower floodplain near the creek. The orchard also contained Apple, Pear, Loquat, and Orange Trees. Maize, Tomato, and Peas were grown on the floodplain and transported to market in Melbourne by horse and cart. Heidelberg Shire records show that the market gardeners successfully obtained a special licence for the use of 'night soil' (human waste) as a fertiliser on the floodplain. Cider and olive oil were produced by John Adams, who won a prize for his oil. Most of the orchards were cut down for firewood during the Depression of the 1930s. A vineyard was also on this site, until the *Phylloxera* disease destroyed the vines in 1890.

13. ● Historical Weirs 1860

Remnants of two bluestone weirs can be found in Darebin Parklands. The first is just downstream of the Palm tree and the second, which still diverts water during floods, is 50 metres downstream of the

Sidney Clifton Bridge. The weirs were constructed around 1860 and were used to irrigate the market gardens, citrus groves and apple orchards on the floodplain.

14. ● 1933 Workers Cricket Pitch

Still existing are the remnants of an old cricket pitch constructed by the quarry workers in 1930s during the depression. The area at that time had no trees, except for willows along the edge of the creek.

15. ● Ellis Stones Gum Tree Walk

In 1973–74 pioneer Australian landscape architect Ellis Stones became actively involved in Darebin Parklands and supervised the first community planting with volunteers from the Rockbeare Conservation Group (now the Darebin Parklands Association). Ellis Stones designed the original Rockbeare Grove entrance, which unfortunately the only surviving tree remaining is a Rose She-oak. This selection of Eucalyptus trees is known as the Ellis Stones Gum Tree Walk as a tribute to his contribution and support in assisting the Rockbeare Conservation Group in establishing the Darebin Parklands. Roosting Tawny Frogmouths are regulars to these trees and a keen eye can observe the birds on branches close to the trunks.

16. ● Sidney Clifton Bridge 1978

In 1978 a group of volunteers from the Rockbeare Park Conservation Group helped construct the footbridge across the Darebin Creek. Ivanhoe resident and founding Rockbeare Conservation Group member, Sidney Clifton was a lecturer in mechanical engineering at Melbourne University, and with the help of other volunteers, he built the wooden formwork for the bridge in his lounge room. The formwork was then carried down to the creek site and concrete poured late afternoon. Volunteers finally finished the bridge by the light of kerosene lamps. Future Deputy Prime Minister Brian Howe and Local MLA Bruce Skeggs formally opened the Clifton Bridge 5th August 1979. The Clifton Bridge is one of only a few bridges in Victoria licenced to be submerged.

*The second stop of the *Spiritual Healing Trail*.

17. ■ Silurian Crossover outcrops

These Silurian sandstone outcrops are unique on the Alphington side of the creek, as most of the western side of the Darebin Creek is strictly volcanic basalt.

The creek at Darebin Parklands is known as a 'lateral stream' because its flows between two different types of geology, meaning that the creek usually signifies the change in geology.

18. ● Cobb & Co Wagon Track

The Cobb & Co wagon track was established in the mid 1800s and planted with pine trees by the Heidelberg Roads Trust in 1853 to help wagon drivers locate the creek crossing. Pine trees were selected because they are a fast-growing tall tree, and with their darker foliage can be easily identified from a distance. The Cobb & Co track crosses the creek and then goes up through Mulberry Avenue. These pine trees are on the Heidelberg Significant Tree Register. The two varieties are *Pinus radiata*, the Monterey Pine, and *Pinus canariensis*, the Canary Island Pine.

19. ● Old Rangers Hut 1980

This original Ranger hut was built by Rockbeare Park Conservation Group volunteers and opened by the Premier of Victoria Sir Rupert Hamer on 16th November 1980. It is now the Darebin Parklands nursery and planting depot.

20. ▲ Ivanhoe Wetland 1992

In 1973 the original wetland was bulldozed by the Melbourne Metropolitan Board of Works outraging residents who then formed the Rockbeare conservation group to stop the destruction. The wetland was designed in 1982 with money donated by Australian Paper Mills and was moat shaped with a small island. Various works undertaken to improve its habitat value over the next five years had with limited success. In 1992 Melbourne Water funded the Darebin Parklands Management Committee to completely renovate the wetland and re-design it for environmental education

excursions and for wildlife habitat. The adjacent creek ford was constructed to enable trucks to remove the excavated material up onto the tip site area. The wetland is now habitat for Southern Pygmy Perch, Long Neck Tortoise, Southern Water Dragon, Tiger Snakes, and Peron's Tree Frog, Southern Brown Tree Frog, Spotted March Frog and a variety of waterfowl.

**The third stop of the Spiritual Healing*

21. ▲ Crossing Stones 1984

Power for the North East sewage pipeline distribution station was installed in 1984 under this part of the creek. The Crossing Stones were constructed by the Melbourne Metropolitan Board of Works during these works.

**The fourth stop of the Spiritual Healing*

22. ● Firemen's Memorial 1968

Two Metropolitan Fire Brigade firemen were fatally burnt fighting a fire that started in the Alphington tip on 1st March 1968. The firemen were fighting the escaped tip site fire on the lower floodplain when a wind change forced them to head back toward Rockbeare Grove. Within sight of the truck, both men were trapped in an old wire fence and a large patch of prickly Gorse, which ignited and critically burnt both men.

23. ▲ Pobblebonk Pond

Pobblebonk Pond was funded by Banyule Council and constructed in early 2007. It has been designed to filter litter from Ivanhoe stormwater flows as well as serving as frog habitat. It is hoped that the Pobblebonk Frog, also known as the Banjo Frog, will colonise this wetland along with other significant frog species.

24. ● Hurstbridge Rail Bridge 1933

The original single rail line to Heidelberg was constructed in the late 1800s, but as the population grew so did the need to update the single rail track into a two-line track. The bridge was constructed in 1933, although it wasn't until the late 1950s that the second line was installed.

25. ▲ Mt Puffalo viewing hill 1998

A play on words, Mt Puffalo (Mt Buffalo) was constructed in 1998 from 90,000 cubic metres of material excavated from the Domain tunnel under the Yarra River. It offers 360° views of the CBD, Mt Dandenong Ranges, Kinglake Ranges, Kew and Surrey Hills.

**The final stop of the Spiritual Healing Trail is here.*

26. ▲ Tip Water Treatment System

The ever-improving treatment system collects water (leachate) from beneath the tip site to prevent it entering the Darebin Creek, and then aerates it and strips heavy metals and excess nutrients from the water through a system of bio-filters. This water is then pumped through a bio-swale, and then into three wetlands before either being retreated or used to irrigate the northern end of the Park. The Parklands treats an average of 2 mega-litres (2,000,000L) a year.

27. ● Old Tip Site

This area was used as a diary farm from the 1850's to the 1900's, then from 1912 to 1965 the site was quarried for bluestone (another name for basalt) which was extracted and crushed to make blue metal aggregate for local road construction. The quarry hole extended to Wingrove Street to the south, and north to the picnic area, where the current amphitheatre indicates the excavation edge. From 1965 to 1975 this site was leased to Northcote City Council and used as a domestic rubbish tip. Now that this large hole is filled with waste, water from the underground water table seeps into the site and mixes with the waste. This wastewater is what needs to be treated before it reaches the creek.

28. ● Old Quarry Wall

This basalt rock outcrop is a remnant of the northern end of the bluestone quarry. This area was mined in the late 1940's and early 1950's. The lake is known as the Duck Pond and is filled via an underground spring created through quarry works in the 1950's. Quarry workers opened up the southern end to allow seeping

water to be pumped out of the Duck Pond area into the Darebin Creek. This natural amphitheatre area, with an earth stage and power supply, now serves as the Parklands' main activity and festival centre.

Please contact the Darebin Creek Management Committee if you would like any further information on the Darebin Parklands or any of the features described in these notes.

Ph: (03) 9499 3486

e-mail: info@dcmc.org.au

or visit our website at:

www.dcmc.org.au