

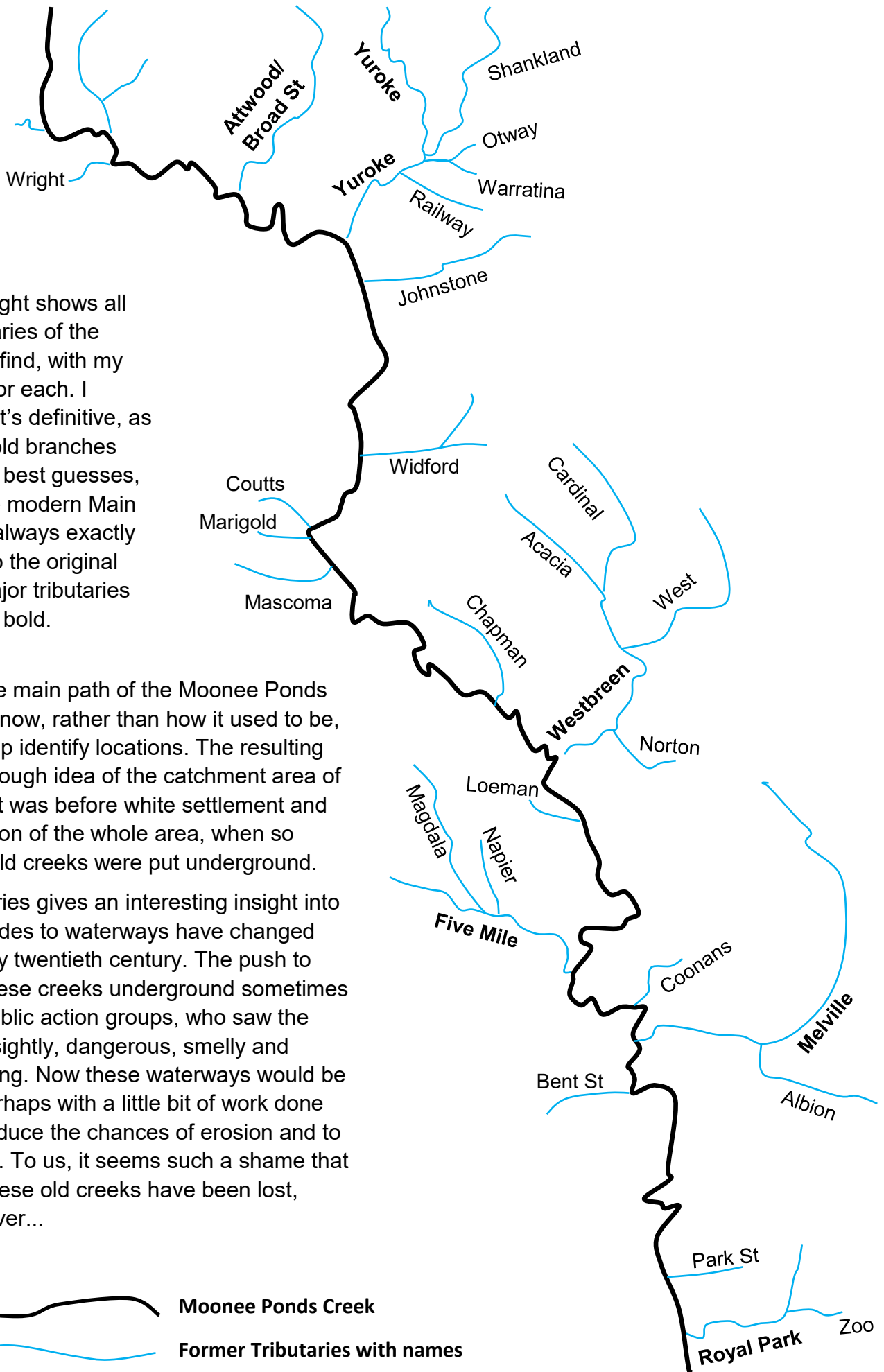
# Down the Drain – Lost Tributaries of the Moonee Ponds Creek

By David Widdowson

## Index

1.	<a href="#"><u>Map of Tributaries..</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>2</u></a>
2.	<a href="#"><u>Introduction.....</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>3</u></a>
3.	<a href="#"><u>Royal Park Creek.....</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>4</u></a>
4.	<a href="#"><u>Melville Creek.....</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>5</u></a>
5.	<a href="#"><u>Coonans Creek.....</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>7</u></a>
6.	<a href="#"><u>Five Mile Creek.....</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>8</u></a>
7.	<a href="#"><u>Westbreen Creek.....</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>11</u></a>
8.	<a href="#"><u>Chapman Creek.....</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>14</u></a>
9.	<a href="#"><u>Mascoma Creek.....</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>15</u></a>
10.	<a href="#"><u>Widford Creek.....</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>16</u></a>
11.	<a href="#"><u>Johnstone Creek.....</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>17</u></a>
12.	<a href="#"><u>Atwood Creek.....</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>18</u></a>
13.	<a href="#"><u>Yuroke Creek.....</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>19</u></a>
14.	<a href="#"><u>Minor Creeks.....</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>20</u></a>

# 1. Map of Tributaries



The map at right shows all the old tributaries of the creek I could find, with my given name for each. I wouldn't say it's definitive, as some of the old branches are based on best guesses, given that the modern Main Drains don't always exactly correspond to the original branches. Major tributaries are named in bold.

I've shown the main path of the Moonee Ponds Creek as it is now, rather than how it used to be, in order to help identify locations. The resulting map gives a rough idea of the catchment area of the creek as it was before white settlement and the urbanisation of the whole area, when so many of the old creeks were put underground.

The entire series gives an interesting insight into how our attitudes to waterways have changed since the early twentieth century. The push to place all of these creeks underground sometimes came from public action groups, who saw the creeks as unsightly, dangerous, smelly and disease-bearing. Now these waterways would be treasured, perhaps with a little bit of work done on them to reduce the chances of erosion and to beautify them. To us, it seems such a shame that so many of these old creeks have been lost, probably forever...

**Moonee Ponds Creek**  
**Former Tributaries with names**

## 2. Introduction

Despair as we might about the concrete-lined drain that is the current Moonee Ponds Creek, at least it is still above ground, which is more than can be said for many of the minor creeks that once flowed into it. These Tributaries have been reduced, in the most part, to underground storm water drains. In this series I will look at these lost Tributaries, including Melville Creek in Brunswick, Five Mile Creek in Strathmore and Westbreen Creek in Pascoe Vale.

So, why were these minor creeks turned into underground drains? Partly it was to create land for housing. But then again many of the old creek beds were turned into reserves or green corridors (eg Salmon and the reserve above the Magdala main drain, Austin Crescent and Dunstan Reserve). Presumably this was because of subsidence risk, and also that such properties would lie at the bottom of valleys and hence be prone to flooding.

But mainly I'd say it was the 19th and 20th century mentality about "tidying up" urban areas. After the suburbs were cleared, these creeks were left as dirt-lined drains, at risk of major erosion after heavy rain. There certainly wasn't the attraction we feel now towards green spaces and water; there was no attempt to beautify these creeks - better just to shove them underground!

## Drain Spotting

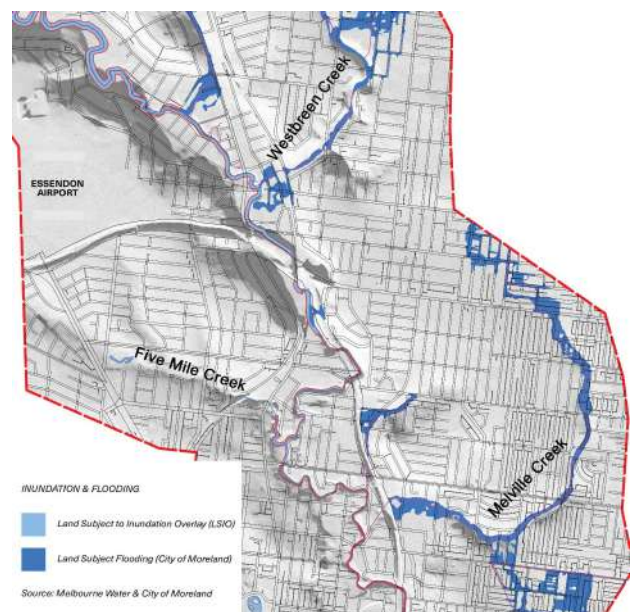
The following images show how we can get some idea of where these creeks once flowed:



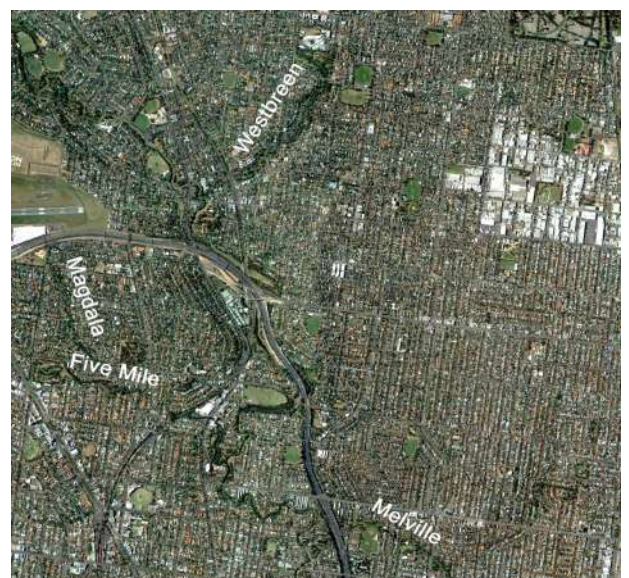
1) From aerial photos such as those found on the [Melbourne 1945](#), here showing Westbreen Creek.



From maps showing where the main drains (MD) currently run. (SES/ Moreland Council).



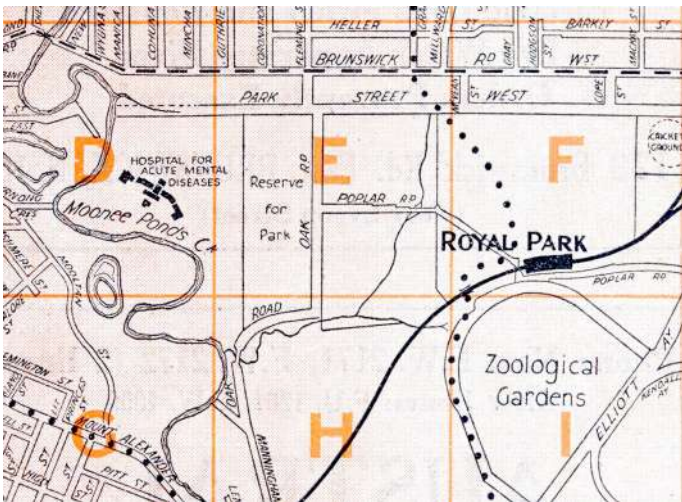
From flood maps and topographical maps, the creeks lay in the lowest part of the landscape.



From vegetation on Google Maps; trees and bushes grow very well in old creek beds! (Courtesy Google Earth)

### 3. Royal Park Creek

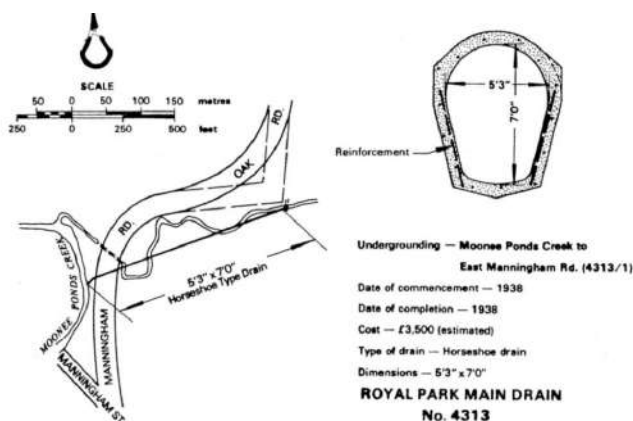
We start with the creek that ran through the northwest corner of Royal Park



The creek appears in many early street directories, such as Morgan's from 1936, featuring two branches, the main one originating north of the dip in Brunswick Road, at Millward Street, just east of Grantham Street; the smaller tributary flowing from the Zoo.



The Melbourne 1945 aerial view shows evidence of both branches, but no sign of the lower section, because that had been turned into an underground Horseshoe-shaped brick drain in 1938:



The MMBW 1981 book has a number of references to further undergrounding - in 1970 and 1977 the Drain was extended from Park Street to Poplar Rd, to allow for the construction of various facilities in this area. Just before this time, the Drain had to be extended to reach the new wide channel of the Moonee Ponds Creek, which had been straightened between Flemington Road and Brunswick Road due to the Freeway construction.

There are some references to the original creek being called "Brunswick Creek", but no primary source has been found to back this up.



Fortunately, the creek has continued to flow from Poplar Road to join the Horseshoe Drain for the best part of the last century. The above image shows how the creek looks today,



This old tributary of the MPC has today taken on a whole new form, with the creation of the Trin Warren Tam-boore Wetlands at the time of the Commonwealth Games in 2006. The modern aerial view shows the Wetlands that have been created to filter water from the lost creek, consisting of an S-shaped treatment pond (at right) and a large storage pond (at left), the stored water being used to irrigate the parklands and sports fields of Royal Park.

It is believed that the old Horseshoe Drain remains under the Wetlands to this day!

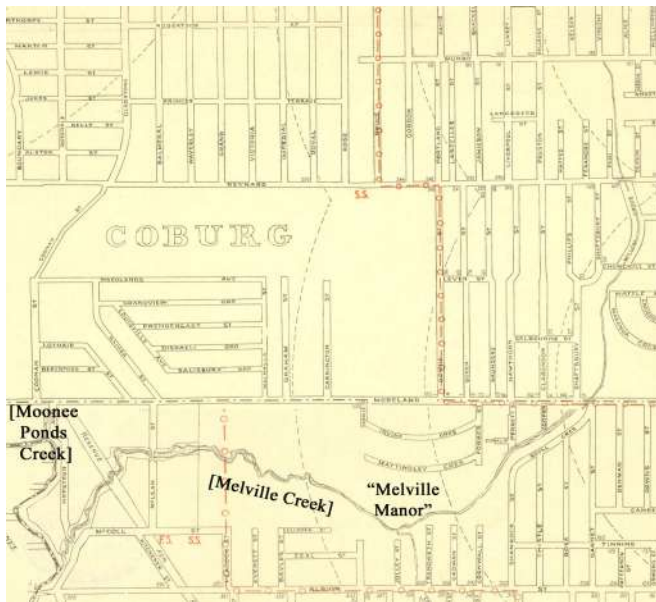
## 4. Melville Creek

Travelling along Melville Road south of Moreland Road, there is a valley you might expect to be carved out by a creek over a period of thousands of years, however there is no sign of such a waterway now. This is where *Melville Creek* - a former tributary of the Moonee Ponds Creek - once ran, until it was ingloriously transformed into Melville Main Drain No 4320 in the early to mid years of the Twentieth Century.

Melville Creek was named after Donald Melville (1829-1919), a Scottish migrant who became a Brunswick councillor and Mayor and finally a Victorian MP (he was one of Victoria's last Ministers of Defence, this being before Federation). Melville owned land in



West Brunswick near the dip in what is now Jolley St, and in 1870-71 built *Melville Manor* there. (A report in the *Coburg Leader* 22/2/1902 complained of stagnant water on Melville's property from a dam used for irrigation and that "the stench was simply abominable"! ). The creek which ran through his land became known as "Melville's Creek". (It should be noted that the name Melville Creek doesn't appear on any map I could find, the only primary references to the name are from newspaper articles in the 1930s. Residents of Coburg who remember the creek say that it did not have a name.)



The earliest comprehensive map of the creek I could find was this Melbourne Metropolitan Board of Works (MMBW) map from 1922. The map shows Melville Creek flowing freely as an open drain or naturally banked creek south of Vincent St in Coburg (I assume that the creek ran along roadways in its upper reaches). The short section east of Jolley St in Brunswick must have been a secondary branch. I have added the approximate location of Melville Manor. It is interesting to note the absence of Melville Rd as a major thoroughfare; it was extended after Donald Melville's estate was sold after his death in 1919, with the tram line added in the mid 1920s. Melville Road may well have been Melville's driveway originally!



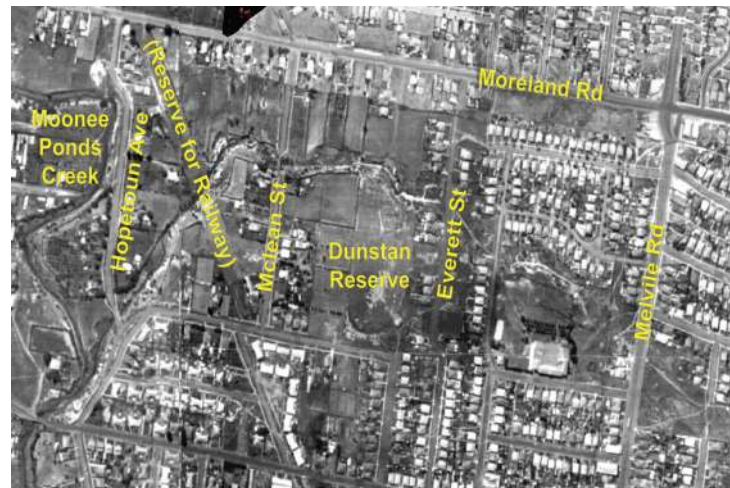
Melville Main Drain (MMBW)

There are numerous reports in *The Age*, *Argus* and local newspapers in the 1930s, referring to the state of the Creek and plans to put it underground. Apparently the creek was very steep sided for much of its path, creating a hazard for people trying to cross. There was especially concern around the Brunswick

Northwest Primary school, with dangers for students mentioned repeatedly. There were also complaints about flooding, scouring of the land and mosquitos.







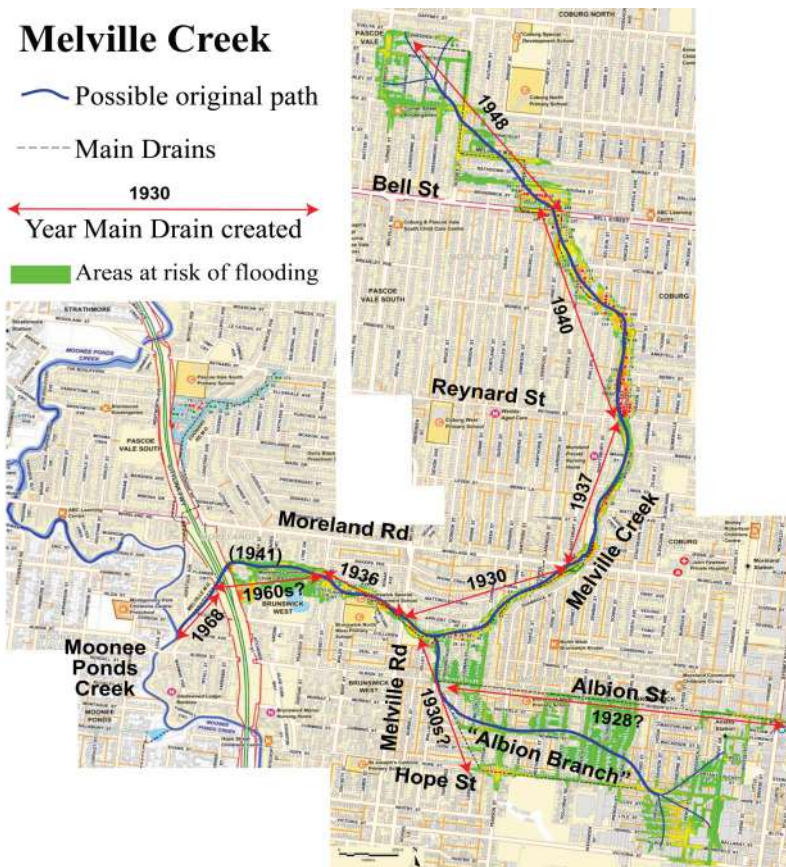
This image of shows a bridge over Melville Creek, (possibly McLean St) showing the extent of erosion in the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century. *PROV* (VPRS 8609 P/0032 Unit 7).



By 1945, the creek had been put underground as far as Everett St, but still flowed freely after this, as shown in this aerial view (<https://1945.melbourne>). Significant scouring can be seen along parts where the creek still flowed; the area around McLean Street had also been turned into a drain, and a narrow bridge can be seen on Hopetoun Avenue. The section marked as "Reserve for Railway" finished up being used for the Tullamarine Freeway!

## Melville Creek

-  Possible original path
-  Main Drains
-  1930  
Year Main Drain created
-  Areas at risk of flooding



This map is a combination of three Flood Maps (courtesy of Moreland Council) showing the location of the Main Drains and my interpretation of where the lost Creek might have once run, based on the drains and areas now most likely to flood. The main branch emerged from the low areas north of Bell Street in Pascoe Vale and North Coburg. The secondary "Albion" Branch began near Hope Street and merged with the main branch near Jolley Street.

Creation of the Melville Main Drain occurred in many stages - I have marked on the map the dates when sections were placed underground. Generally work proceeded downstream, however upper section work would have been needed later as increasing development caused floods to occur more often.

## West Brunswick - Current View

 Melville Creek former path



The current aerial view of the area (courtesy Google Maps) shows that - while some of the creek's path has had houses built over it - numerous reserves and "green corridors" along its path give an indication of where it once flowed (I am not sure about the Mairer Linear Reserve, it still appears on some maps). The West Brunswick Community Gardens also lie over the former creek bed, ensuring good growing conditions!

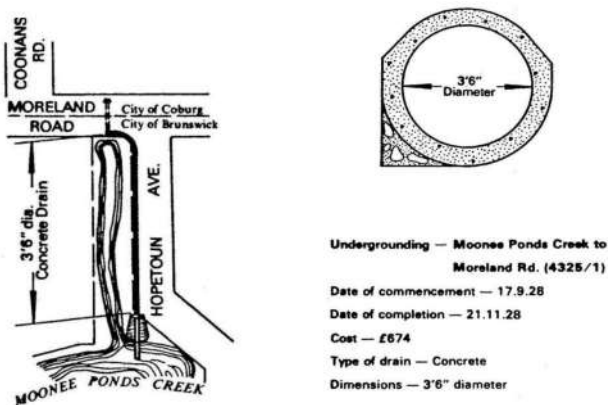
Moreland Council, local Friends and private groups have done a great job in creating Reserves and beautifying the areas the former creek ran. Reading the many articles complaining about Melville Creek in the 1930s made me realise how much our attitudes to waterways have changed in the last 80 years. I suppose areas that might be "daylighted" in the future are from Dunstan Reserve to LD Johns Reserve and, to the west of the freeway, Fraser Reserve. So, perhaps some time in the future, Melville's Creek will once again see the light of day!

# 5. Coonan's Creek

Coonan's Creek was a short tributary of the Moonee Ponds Creek in Pascoe Vale South. A number of features in the area - including Coonan's Hill and Coonan's Road - were named after Michael Coonan, an Irish farmer who owned forty acres of land that was originally part of the Moreland Estate, subdivided in 1858. Coonan's Creek generally followed the line of the original Coonan's Road, finally joining the Moonee Ponds Creek with this impressively eroded gully, named - you guessed it - Coonan's Valley!



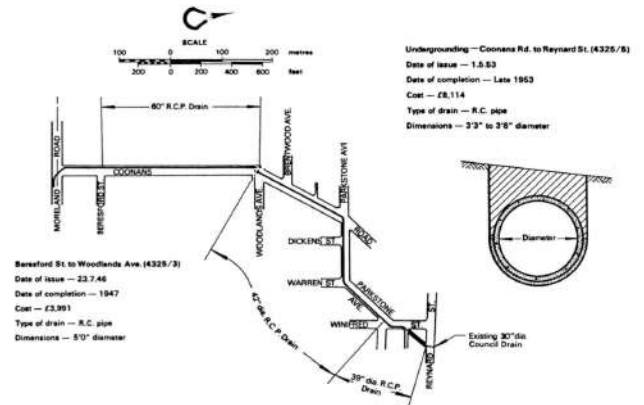
Of course, when it came to undergrounding the creek, the valley was the first to go - it was turned into a drain in 1928, as shown below. Note the original paths of Coonan's Road and Hopetoun Avenue which were both changed when the freeway was built through the area.



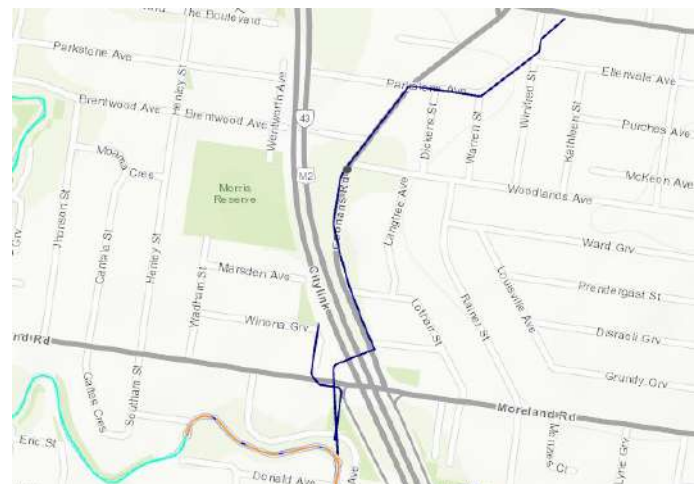
The Melbourne 1945 aerial view shows little development of the area by this time. Some sign of the creek can be seen, where it diverts from Coonan's Road:



Work proceeded on the upper sections of the creek from 1946. The construction work generally followed a pattern, with first open ditches being installed, but then quickly being replaced by underground drains. The following diagrams show undergrounding in 1947 (at left) and 1953. Smaller diameter pipes were used on the upper sections.



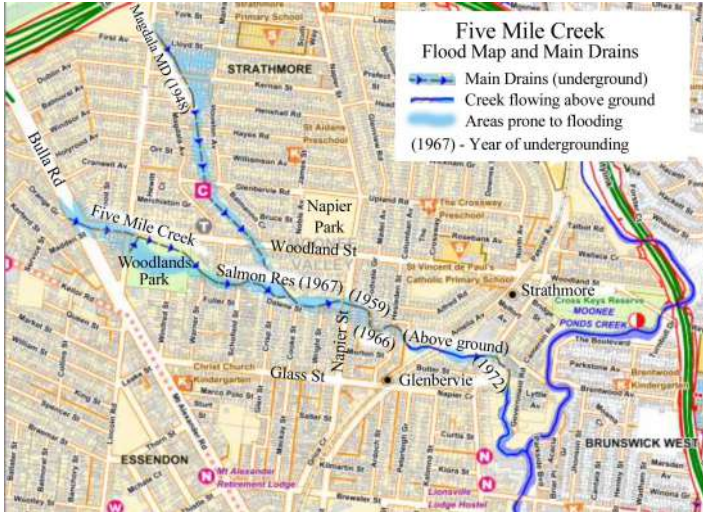
The MMBW 1981 book states: "between Woodlands Avenue and Reynard Street, the watercourse was ill-defined, and floodwaters spread out over the valley floor. In late 1949, complaints were received from local residents concerning flooding and the foul state of the watercourse... by 1951 the watercourse had further deteriorated, particularly in the Reynard Street and Winifred Street areas. The Board's Planning Engineer for Sewers and Main Drains visited the latter area and commented that "The streets are not made, and the drain, having filled up, water spreads over the area forming an insanitary quagmire, receiving drainage from an almost fully built-on area of 150 acres upstream."



This completed the work until the construction of the Tullamarine Freeway in 1968 necessitated the realignment of the undergrounded Coonans Road Main Drain between Moonee Ponds Creek and a point on Coonans Road midway between Lothian Street and Woodlands Avenue, creating the current Main Drain 4325, shown above in dark blue. The only remaining sign of the creek is the pipe where it enters the MPC near the bend in Hopetoun Avenue.

# 6. Five Mile Creek

Where does the water come from for the ponds at Woodlands Park, and where does it go? Why is there a "green corridor" from these ponds to Napier Street, and another one parallel to Magdala Avenue? Why does an open drain suddenly appear just north of Glenbervie Station? And then reappear as a stream in a steep gorge east of Pascoe Vale Road? The answer to all these questions is, of course, **Five Mile Creek**, another lost tributary of the Moonee Ponds Creek, now reduced (for the most part) to Main Drain No 4330.



This modern map of the Main Drains and flood-prone areas gives us an idea of where the creek once flowed. There were at least two branches: the main branch began near Orange Grove in Essendon North (west of Bulla Road), then moved through Woodlands Park towards Napier Street. A secondary branch began in the flat plateau that is now Essendon Airport - eventually becoming the Magdala Main Drain - and joined the other branch in what is now Salmon Reserve. Judging by the topography, perhaps another branch came down from Keilor Road to Woodlands Park.

Unlike Melville Creek, whose name was not well known at the time, the name "Five Mile Creek" was widely known and is old - records can be found featuring the name as far back as 1849. The name is believed to derive from the distance between its meeting point with the Moonee Ponds Creek (now Five Mile Creek Reserve) either to the Yarra, or to the GPO, both of which are about eight kilometres (five miles).



MMBW Plan, early 1900s, shows the path of the creek

Down the Drain: Tributaries of the Moonee Ponds Creek



View of Creek in Woodlands Park, 1920s



Downstream of Woodlands Park, 1920s



Downstream of Napier St, 1920s.



Map of the Creek through Salmon Reserve





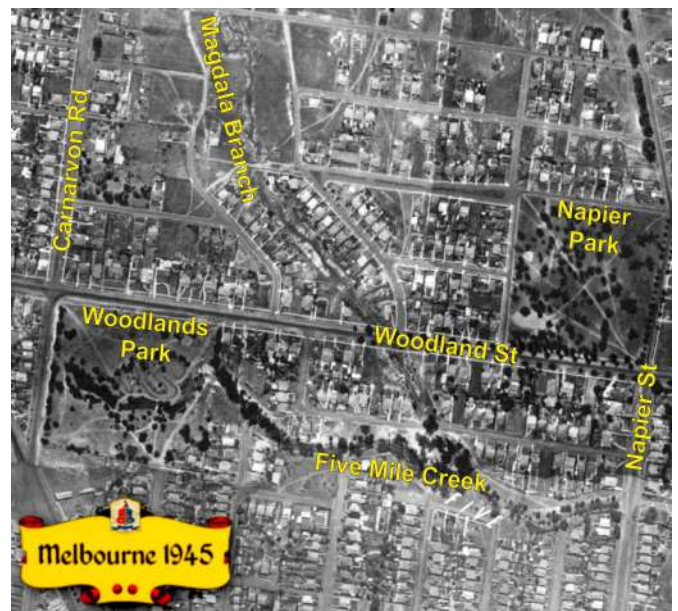
The original state of the creek has been described as a "sequence of vegetated water holes". This picture from before 1930 shows it as a minor stream, small but free flowing. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century the land was mainly agricultural and subject to erosion, which increased greatly due to massive urbanisation in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. PROV (VPRS 8609 P/0032 U7).

Many newspaper reports from the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries refer to the creek, generally in unkindly terms! In 1928 it was said to "have long been a source of annoyance" and that "the locality was menaced by flood waters". Stagnant water was thought to be the cause of "numerous cases of diphtheria" and other diseases.

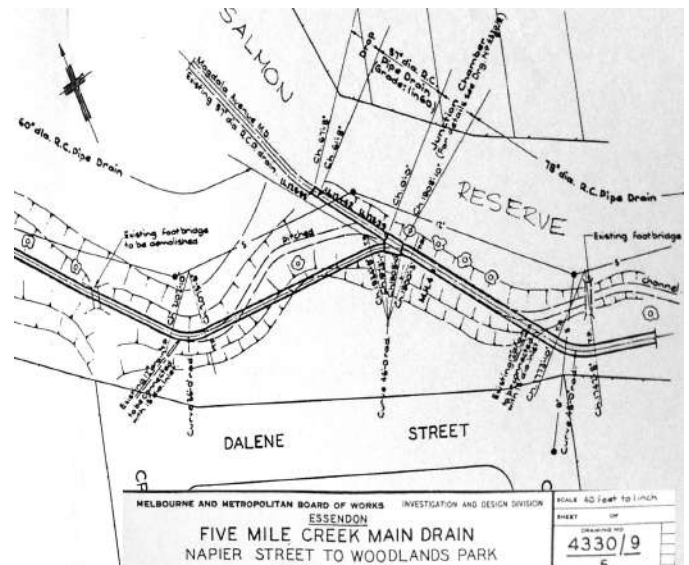
By 1929, the council decided to fix these problems by lining the entire length of the main branch with bluestones to create a free-flowing open drain, the work being completed by 1930. The image at right – taken from the railway line looking towards what is now Five Mile Creek Reserve – shows the result. PROV (VPRS 8609 P/0032 U7)



The section that still flows above ground today north of Glenberrie Station is a remnant of this era. This section is two bluestone pitches wide, with sloping sides two bluestone pitches high and retaining walls set back on each side. It has been deemed significant by the Heritage Council of Victoria for "showing how the natural environment was modified in the interwar period...to reduce the effects of flooding...due to increased run-off from urban development". (Heritage Vic).



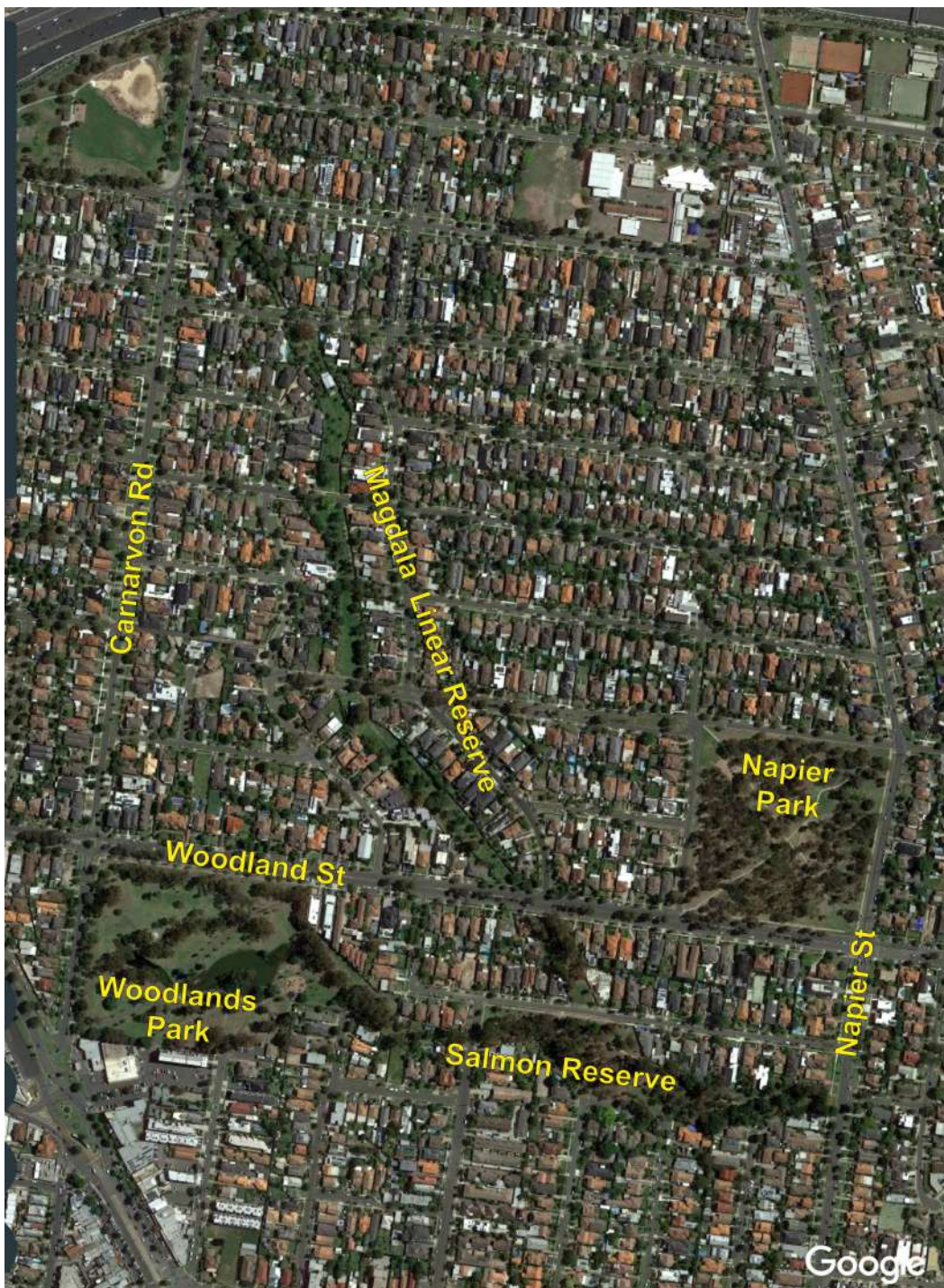
The Melbourne 1945 aerial view shows the main branch of the creek - now a bluestone open drain - under the row of trees from Woodlands Park to Napier Street. The problem now was the Magdala branch; considerable scouring can be seen in this photo, and things were about to get much worse. In 1946 the grass runways at Essendon Airport were converted to concrete, leading to increased runoff into the creek and greater scouring. To fix this problem, the entire Magdala branch was placed underground in 1948.



After 1948 the increased flow of water from the underground Magdala Main Drain emptied straight onto the bluestones in Salmon Reserve. The inevitable flooding that followed - especially in the "Napier Street dip" in 1963 - led to the entire length of the main branch between Woodlands Park and Glenberrie Station being put underground. This MMBW plan from 1966 clearly shows the existing pitched channel that was to be removed (along with foot bridges) and replaced with concrete pipes. Work was completed east of Napier Street in 1966 (the land then sold for housing!) and in Salmon Reserve in 1967.



Five Mile Creek Reserve is now home to a ceremonial rock circle, Babepal Paen-mirring ('Mother's tear' in the Woivurrung language). Launched in 2018, it recognizes a registered site of Aboriginal significance and serves as a space to educate the local community about the importance of the Reserve to the Wurundjeri people. Each grouping of rocks represents the three main Wurundjeri families. From the eye-shaped circle, the tears of Mother Earth flow down to Five Mile Creek.



Current view of the remains of Five Mile Creek, showing the Magdala Linear Reserve that runs from Lloyd St to Salmon Reserve.

Also shows the trees that dominate Salmon Reserve.

## 7. Westbreen Creek

There is good news as we continue to head north exploring the lost tributaries of the Moonee Ponds Creek – more of the creeks are above ground! So whereas Melville Creek was completely undergrounded, Five Mile Creek did manage to preserve some of its middle and lower sections.

Now as we get to Westbreen Creek (in Glenroy and Pascoe Vale), large swathes are still above ground, even if much of the rest of the creek was turned into Main Drain No 4340.



Back in the 1840s, the creek was a popular picnic spot for John Pascoe Fawkner – it ran close by his 800-acre property “Pascoeville”. He was known to show visitors the lyre birds that inhabited a natural fern valley which he called “Blue Bell Dell”. By the late 1800s, most of Pascoe Vale had been cleared for dairy farming, with land around the creek being considered of poor quality, infested with weeds and feral goats.



The name “Westbreen” is believed to derive from the local school which opened in 1923. District Inspector Davies suggested Westbreen as the school’s name, being a combination of the names of two bus proprietors, Weston and Miss Breen (one of her buses appears at left in Bell St). It is not known how widely used the name Westbreen Creek was, it does not appear on any early maps and I could only find one mention of the name in a newspaper before 1954. The name only became official in 2016 thanks to the work of Alex English of Moreland Council.



Pascoe Vale Station in 1890, with the Westbreen creek valley in the background, shows how few houses had been built at the time.



The creek can be seen flowing through this photo from the 1930s, showing how few houses existed at the time. The railway line can be seen at right.

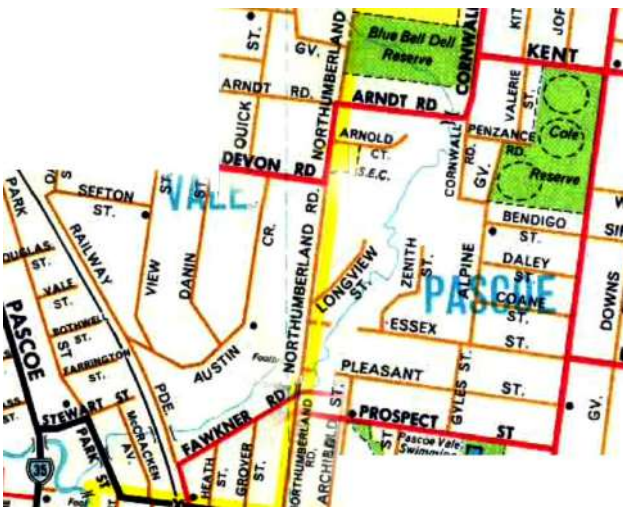


Aerial photos from Melbourne 1945 show how little suburban development had occurred by then; there were few houses as the area was still predominantly farmland. The area marked “Blue Bell Dell” was used as a military dump during World War 2. In the post-war years, from 1946 to 1960, the Westbreen sub-basin became urbanised, at least the part that wasn’t being used as a council tip!

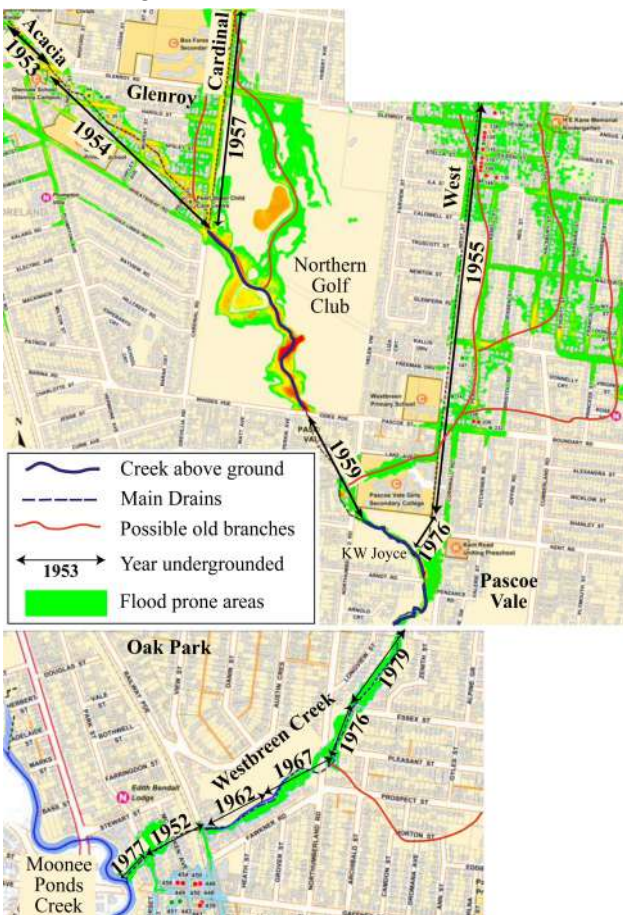
Increased housing development led to complaints from new residents about “mosquitoes, rats and stench”. Residents and “Progress” groups lobbied strongly for the creek to be undergrounded, citing disease and safety concerns, and that flooding was likely to occur, as it did in 1963 and 1978. Interesting to see how “progress” groups once lobbied against nature and now do the opposite!



This MMBW map of the lower reaches shows how the creek joined the Moonee Ponds Creek before it was undergrounded at Park St. Again it is not named.



The First Melways Street Directory from 1966 shows "Blue Bell Dell Reserve" but the creek that flows through it is not named.



Down the Drain: Tributaries of the Moonee Ponds Creek

A modern map of the Main Drains and flood-prone areas (below left, courtesy of the SES) shows the current state of the Westbreen Creek sub-basin. Remaining above-ground sections in the Northern Golf Club, K W Joyce Reserve and Gavin Park have been marked in blue. The sections that were turned into Main Drains are shown with dashed lines – it can be seen there were three main branches of the creek feeding water from the Glenroy/ Pascoe Vale plateau down to the Moonee Ponds Creek. I have labelled these as Acacia, Cardinal and West after the Drains they now supply. Other possible old minor branches are shown in red, based on the Melbourne 1945 aerial photos, flood prone areas, the various remnant valleys, and some speculation! "Lake Avenue", just north of the Pascoe Vale Girls' School, was apparently named after the lake on the nearby Mt Sabine Property.

The various other creek sections were undergrounded on the dates indicated, derived from the MMBW book "Development of the Moonee Ponds Creek Drainage System" from 1981. It can be seen that undergrounding first occurred in the upper parts of the basin where the watercourses were generally ill-defined, most of this work being done in the 1950s. However, creation of these drains then lead to more erosion in the remaining open streams, leading to progressively more of the creek being undergrounded in the 1960s and 1970s, until the final section was completed in Gavin Park in 1979.



The current aerial view, courtesy of Google Earth, shows the reserves that now make up the Westbreen Creek linear park.



By 2007, the creek in K W Joyce looked like this – with minimal landscaping and vegetation – until there was a major effort by the Friends of Westgreen Creek Group (led by Judy Allen, and in association with Moreland Council) to beautify the creek.



In K W Joyce Reserve



Twelve years later, the view is vastly different – a spectacular example of naturalisation.



Underground again, near Zenith St.



Westgreen Creek in Northern Golf Club



Gavin Park



H M Dowd Reserve

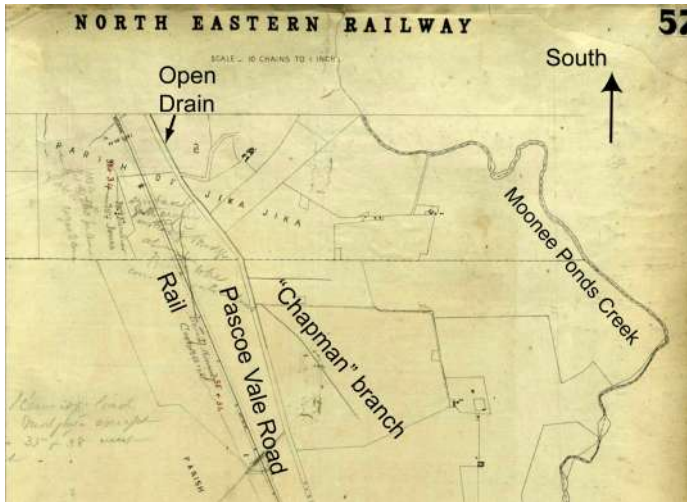


Entering Moonee Ponds Creek

Moreland Council's Westgreen Development Plan (2018) talks of creating new wetland areas in the lower reaches, which would also help to restore more of Westgreen Creek to how it once was!

## 8. Chapman Creek

Driving along Pascoe Vale Road, just north of the Oak Park Swimming Pool, not many motorists would realise that they are travelling in an old creek bed. The landscape does give some clue; it is a narrow valley all the way until Chapman Avenue, when Pascoe Vale Road suddenly climbs up to the Glenroy plateau. This was once a tributary of the Moonee Ponds Creek, until it was turned into the Chapman Avenue Main Drain in the 1950s and 1960s.

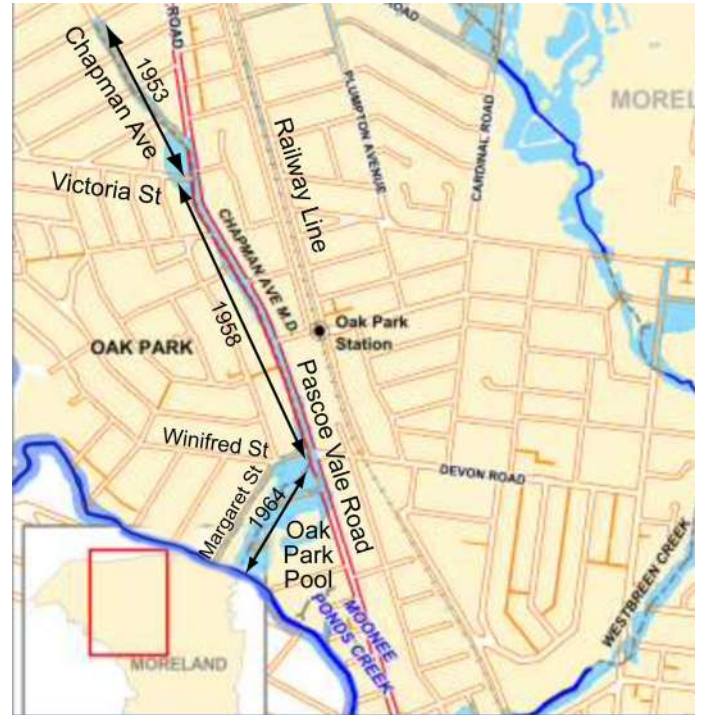


The earliest sign of the unnamed creek I could find was this 1860s map of the North Eastern Railway line (as the Carnegie line was once known). Slightly confusing, as it has south up, it shows the Chapman Avenue branch before that road was put in, and the creek continuing as a ditch on the west side of Pascoe Vale Road. The conversion of creek to roadside ditch must have occurred when Pascoe Vale Road was created in the middle years of the nineteenth century, when it was known as Sydney Road (later as Old Sydney Road).



The 1945 Melbourne aerial view shows that the lower reaches were the only scoured section. Hints of the open channel can just be made out on the western side of Pascoe Vale Road.

By the time of the rapid post-war urbanisation of Oak Park in the middle years of the twentieth century, residents were beginning to complain about the open drain that was "a menace to health, rat-infested, overflowed frequently in winter, and that the increased effluent load [makes] it even more unpleasant during the summer months". Eventually, the city of Broadmeadows agreed to underground the section between Prospect Street and Victoria Street in 1953, and then between Victoria Street and Winifred Street in 1958. Of course this led to increased scouring in the final section, which was put underground in 1964.



A map of the Main Drains and flood prone areas (courtesy of the SES) shows the location of the drain, beginning in Chapman Avenue, continuing down Pascoe Vale Road to Winifred Street, where it flows south west to the Moonee Ponds Creek.



The only modern sign of the old creek bed is a depression next to the west cricket oval at Oak Park Sports Centre. The tributary emerges as a pipe just south of the Margaret Road foot bridge - a sad end for a creek that once carved a valley through Oak Park!

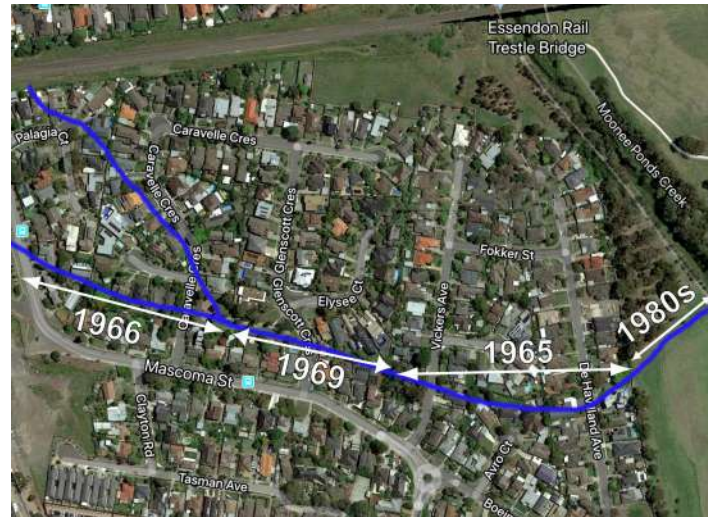
# 9. Mascoma Creek

Just north of Mascoma Street/ Boeing Road in Strathmore Heights lies a small but quite steep-sided valley that hints at another lost tributary of the Moonee Ponds Creek, turned into an underground drain, mainly in the 1960s.



The MMBW 1981 book continues: "In mid-1969, the intervening section of drain between Vickers Avenue and Caravelle Crescent was undergrounded for similar reasons at cost to the developer. In 1976, the Strathmore Progress Association requested the Board of Works underground the drain through the parkland between the rear of houses in De Havilland Avenue and Moonee Ponds Creek for aesthetic and safety reasons - the council was informed that they would be expected to contribute towards the cost of the undergrounding of the drain [as it was] council owned land." So the final section was completed through Boeing Reserve in the mid 1980s.

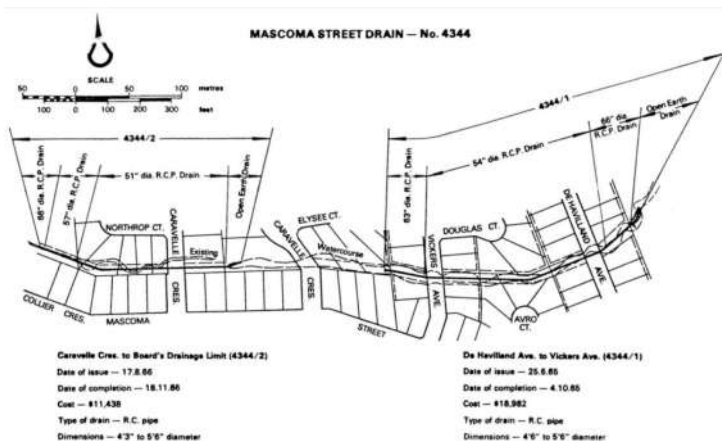
The Melbourne 1945 aerial view shows the minor creek, with a possible secondary branch, flowing from the railway line to the Moonee Ponds Creek. The trestle bridge, built in the 1930s through undeveloped farm land, can be seen at top right.



By the time the rapidly expanding suburbs reached Strathmore Heights in the early 1960s, the creek became an issue for the developers, so:

"Two sections of the Mascoma Street Drain were undergrounded...in 1965-66, at the time that residential subdivisions at Strathmore Heights were being developed. The City of Broadmeadows was emphatic that the drain should be undergrounded, feeling that an open drain would be a hazard to children, and would be aesthetically unacceptable. The underground drain was designed and constructed by the [Melbourne Metropolitan Board of Works, but was financed by the subdivider" (MMBW 1981). Such an arrangement between the MMBW and developers was common at the time.

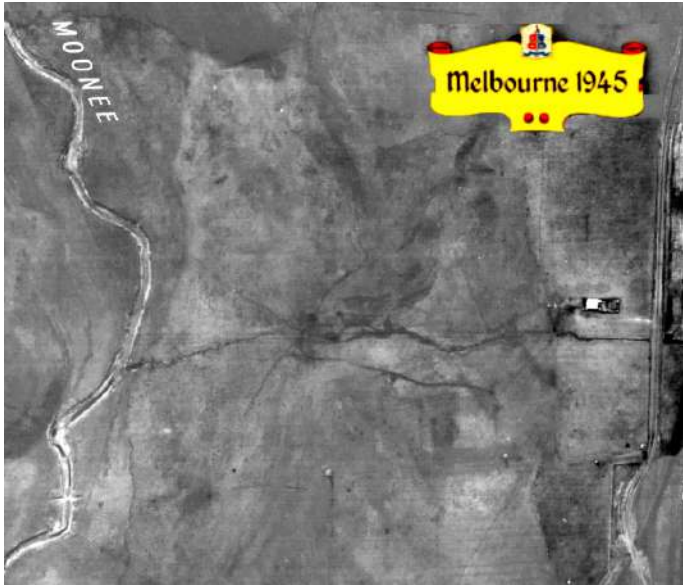
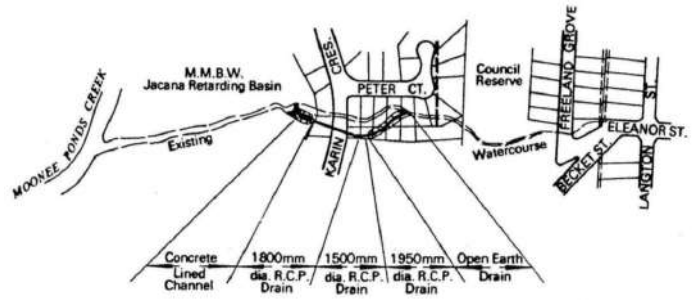
The current view (courtesy Google Earth) has had the path of the old creek superimposed, plus arrows indicating when each section was undergrounded.



This small park with playground between Caravelle Crescent and Glenscott Crescent is the only remaining sign of this minor tributary, now reduced to Main Drain number 4344.

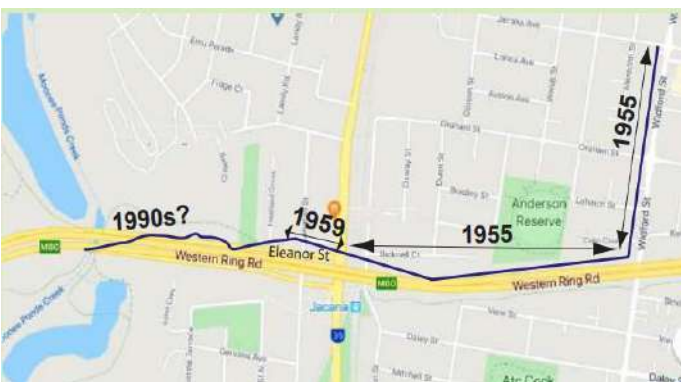
# 10. Widford Creek

Travelling along the Western Ring Road between the Moonee Ponds Creek and Pascoe Vale Road takes you very close to another lost Tributary of the Moonee Ponds Creek, one that became the Widford Road drain, mainly in the 1950s.



The aerial view from Melbourne 1945 shows the original watercourse as it still flowed between the Rail Lines and the Creek, however there is no sign of it on the east side of Pascoe Vale Road. The drain originated in Widford Road (now Widford Street, some time in the 1980s it changed, who knows why!). The MMBW book from 1981 says: "In 1955, the Board of Works undergrounded the section of the Widford Road Drain from Eleanor Street to Jacana Avenue because it was felt that the existing watercourse would be unable to cope with runoff from the Housing Commission's proposed Broadmeadows Estate.

The map above shows an interesting development in the late 1970s with the extra sections undergrounded to allow for residential construction at Karin Crescent. The Board agreed to undertake the work at cost to the developer, and the job was completed in mid-1979, at a cost of approximately \$85,000, but there is no sign today of the development. Peter Court no longer exists and Kerin Crescent is just a stump on the the other side of the Ring Road.



The current aerial view, courtesy of Google Earth, has the original course shown in blue. Significant changes have been made with the development of the Ring Road and the Jacana Wetlands.

The above map shows the section that was undergrounded in 1955, and the dates of subsequent additional works. The MMBW book continues..."During the January 1963 storm, severe erosion occurred along the steeply sloping open section of the drain...Large rocks were scoured from the creek bed and deposited on the culvert grating, and an...embankment constructed by a subdivider was washed away". The final section was probably undergrounded when the Jacana Wetlands were created in the 1990s.



This rather pleasant valley leading down to the Jacana Wetlands (image by Louise Anthony), with its brief open drain, is all that is now visible of this former tributary, now reduced to Main Drain number 4347.



# 11. Johnstone Reserve Creek

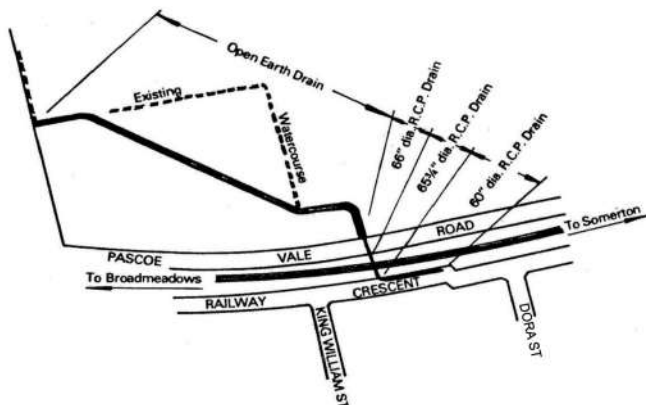
Back in the early 1970s, I remember going to the Broadmeadows tip, when it was located west of Pascoe Vale Road. The valley it was located in was another former tributary of the Moonee Ponds Creek and is now Johnstone Reserve. The drain that was created from it was originally known as the Railway Crescent Main Drain.



The Melbourne 1945 aerial map shows a bit of scouring, and gives some hint of where the creek ran, west of Pascoe Vale Road and the railway.



This map of Broadmeadows from pre-1960 gives a better idea of its path, it is marked "Railway Cr" which could represent creek or crescent.



Most of the work on the upper section started in 1958, when "the Housing Commission requested that the Board of Works should underground the drain along Railway Crescent. The Board agreed to the request, and undergrounded the drain between Dora Street and King William Street and under the Broadmeadows railway line and Pascoe Vale Road. Downstream of Pascoe Vale Road, a new open earth drain was excavated for a distance of 1,000 feet (300m)"

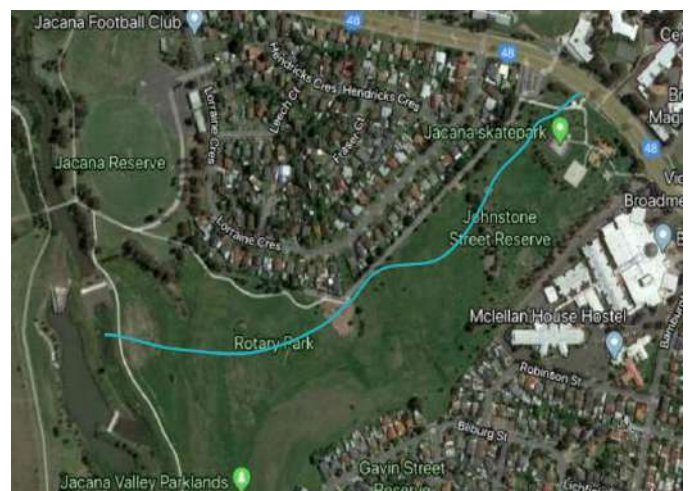
Down the Drain: Tributaries of the Moonee Ponds Creek



The modern flood map gives some idea of the path the creek originally took, starting in Railway Crescent, moving through what is now Broadmeadows Central, then Tanderrum Way to Johnstone Street Reserve. A secondary branch perhaps ran from the east down Johnstone Street.

Note that the Railway Crescent Main Drain now runs west to Yuroke Creek; this diversion drain was "completed in June 1972 - between Pascoe Vale Road and Ripplebrook Drive, an underground drain was installed, while between Ripplebrook Drive and Yuroke Creek a fully concrete-lined channel was constructed" (MMBW 1981).

Wikipedia records that "During the 1970s a major portion of what is now Jacana reserve was a rubbish dump created to fill a valley containing a small tributary of Moonee Ponds Creek", also noting that the nearby Broadmeadows Sporting Club "was opened by Prime Minister Gough Whitlam on 10th November 1975" - the day before his dismissal!



The modern aerial view has the possible path of the old creek marked in blue. Johnstone Street Reserve is the only modern sign of this lost waterway.

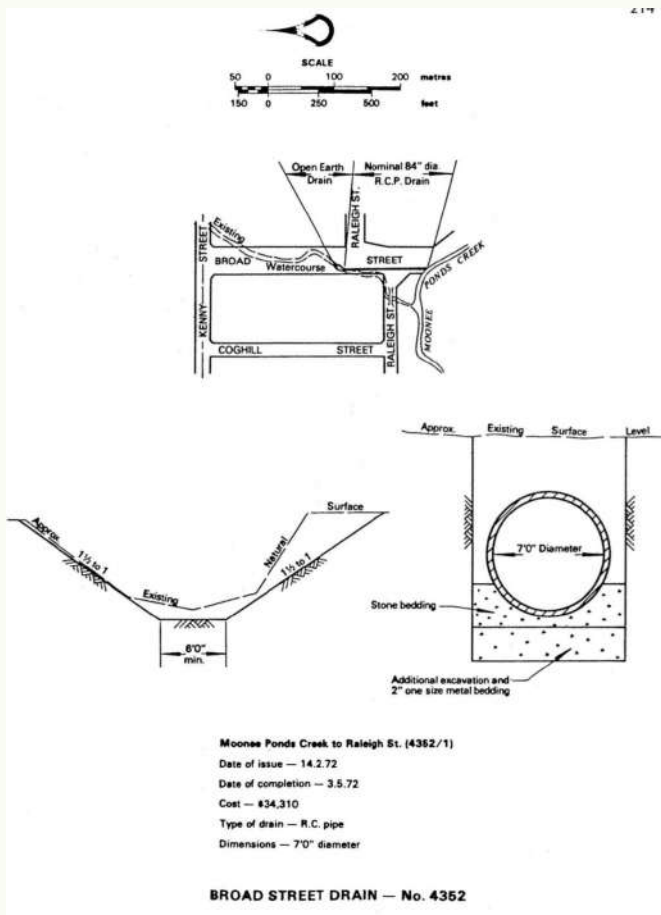
# 12. Attwood Creek/ Broad Street Drain



Attwood, a suburb 18 kilometres north-west of central Melbourne, features a creek that is partially above ground, and partially underground as the Broad Street Drain, especially in the upper and lower sections. The creek begins at Mickleham Road and arcs around to join the Moonee Ponds Creek near the Raleigh Street playground in Westmeadows.

Aerial photos from Melbourne 1945 show two branches of the creek, quite well defined as it makes its way towards the MPC. Where the creek was underground a linear park remains, but the creek still flows freely in the open countryside section.

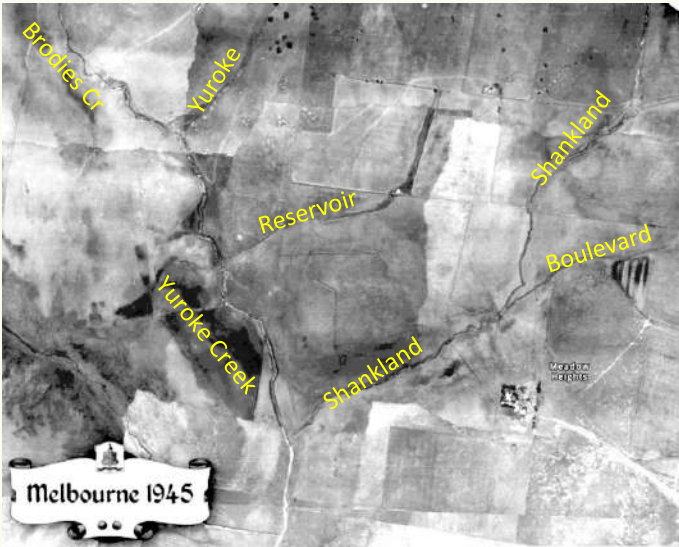
The MMBW book from 1981 (left) shows that only the lower section near Broad Street was done by 1973. The rest was undergrounded in the late 1990s when the land was subdivided for housing.



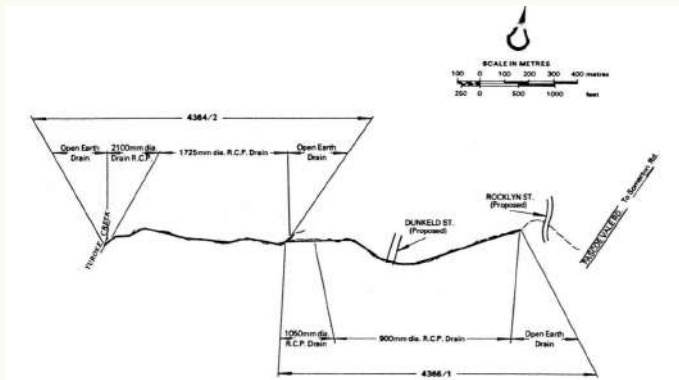
The Google Street View from Chisholm Avenue shows part of the openly flowing section before it is undergrounded.

# 13 — Lost Tributaries of Yuroke Creek

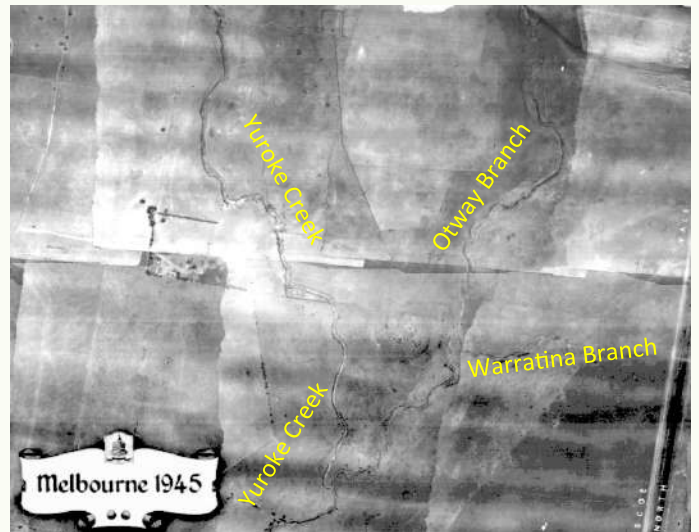
These drains to the west of Broadmeadows are actually lost tributaries of the Yuroke Creek, a tributary of the Moonee Ponds Creek.



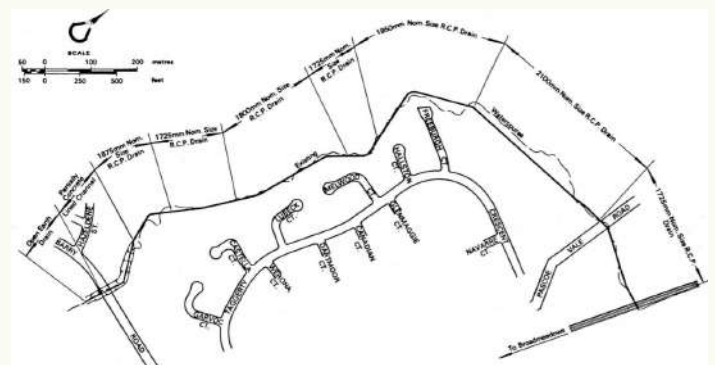
Aerial photos from **Melbourne 1945** show some of the lost branches. The first branch I've called *Reservoir* because it now forms the edge of the Greenvale Reservoir. Shankland has two branches, the top one became the Shankland Drain and is now a linear park, while the other branch became Shankland Boulevard itself. (We've seen this often, how creeks are turned into roads with associated drains to replace the old water course).



This section was undergrounded in the 1970s into the 1980s. The MMBW 1981 book states that "In 1971, a culvert was constructed on the Shankland Drain immediately downstream of Somerton Road. The culvert was required to pass the drain under an embankment that was being constructed to carry the 54 inch diameter Greenvale Reservoir Inlet Pipe. A 69 inch diameter reinforced concrete pipe was installed. At the upstream end, the pipe connected with an existing bluestone culvert under Somerton Road".



Further downstream is the Otway Crescent Drain, however there is no sign of the Otway Crescent it was named after! The Warratina Branch is actually where the Railway Crescent Drain emerges (see 11. *Johnstone Reserve*).

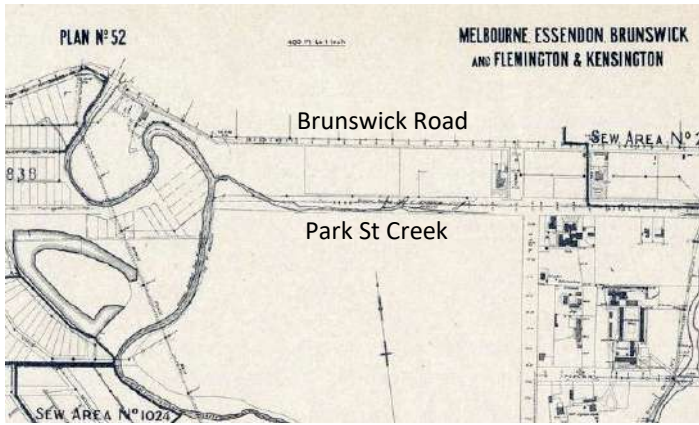


"Between 1973 and 1975, a considerable length of the Otway Crescent Drain was undergrounded in conjunction with the development of the Housing Commission's Broadmeadows Estate." (MMBW 1981)



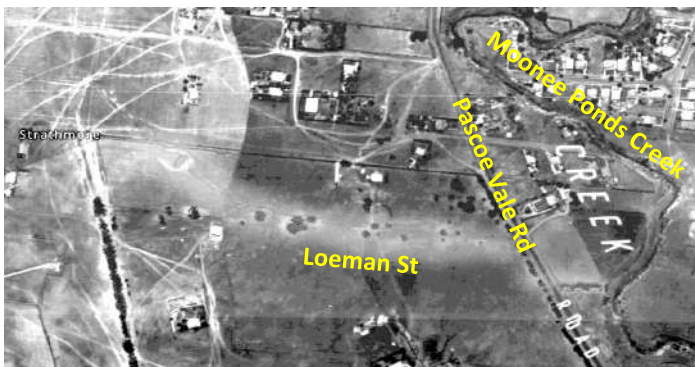
The modern Google Earth view shows how much of this area is now reserves and parkland.

# 14—Minor Tributaries



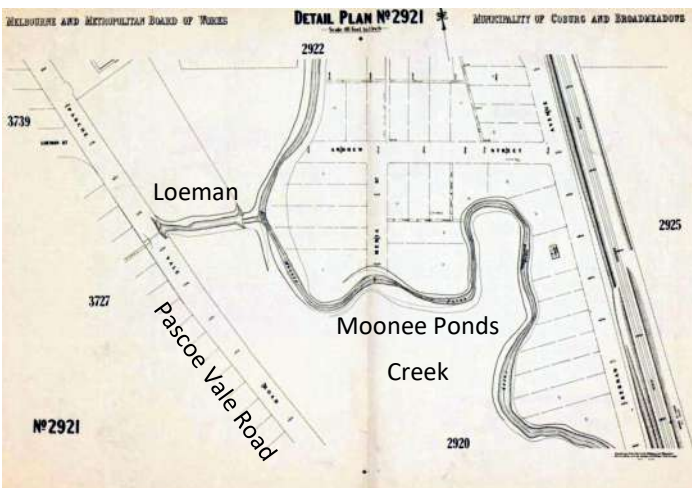
## 1. Park St, West Brunswick

The dip in the landscape just south of Brunswick Road is an indication of this minor creek, which has since become Park Street. The map above shows the old course of the Moonee Ponds Creek at left, with a horseshoe shaped billabong that was originally part of the creek. The minor creek that became Park Street can be seen branching to the East.



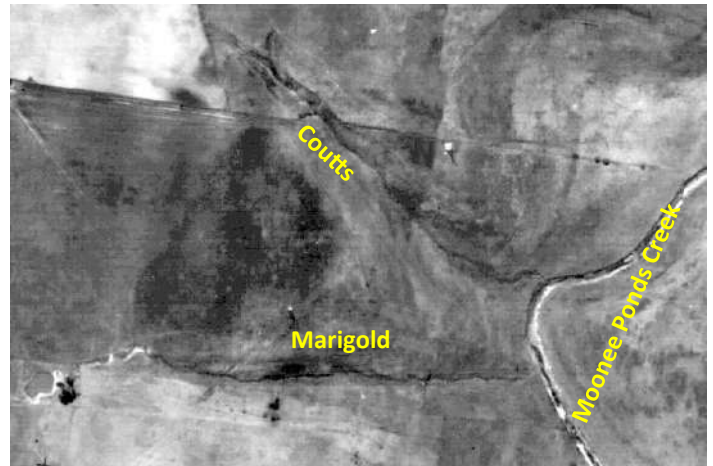
## 3. Loeman Street, Strathmore

The valley this street lies in is an indication of this minor creek, which can be seen in the Melbourne 1945 Aerial view (highlighted above) and which joined the MPC a short distance south of Loeman Street's current location (below).



## 2. Bent Street, Essendon

There is a Main Drain running down Bent Street to the creek, and the slight dip in the landscape indicates that there was a minor creek here, taking the overflow from the ponds of what is now Queen's Park.



## 4. Courtts Reserve & Marigold Crescent, Gowanbrae

There are actually two minor creeks here, the top one started in what is now John Courtts Reserve and the lower one ran just north of Marigold Crescent. Both carved out quite impressive valleys, now obscured in part by the Western Ring Road. The image below shows the Marigold Crescent Valley, as seen from atop the reservoir wall at the Jacana Wetlands, just near the spillway.

