

YARRA BRAE

Place No. 262

ADDRESS	7 - 9 Yarra Brae Close Wonga Park	Last Update
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DESCRIPTION	The Yarra Brae property comprises the main house (including entrance gates, garden and water tanks) and the farm complex (manager's house, wood shed, garage, stables, barn, dairy and milking yard, large barn, and other smaller structures).	
	The main house is set on a knoll above the river. It is a cream brick, triple fronted 1940s/50s house, with a glazed terracotta Marseille tiled roof. Wrought-iron gates, a large oak (?) and a low stone wall mark the entrance to the property. It appears to be located on the site of an earlier house, shown in photographs as being a large Edwardian homestead, with verandahs on three sides[6]; interestingly brush appears to have been used below the balustrade rail, a feature also seen on one building at Tod Park.	
	The farm complex is set below the main house. The manager's house is a gable-roofed timber house dating from the 1930s and using the rectangular gable vents which appear common in this locality. The stables are timber-framed, with loose boxes at either end and remnants of a brick floor. Some internal partitions appear to have been altered. The dairy is a brick building with a tiled roof and adjoins an open-sided milking shed. The dairy has been altered, but still retains its three main rooms and some features (such as washing area).	
	The extensive stone walls are also a feature of this property.	
	The location of a feature known as "The Boulevard" - a small cutting created by Clement John De Garis as the start of a boulevard along the Yarra River to Melbourne - was not able to be confirmed.[14]	
Condition	Good	Integrity Minor modifications
Threats	Alterations	Key elements
Designer		

HISTORY	<p>Yarra Brae, one of Wonga Park's large riverfront grazing estates with a history that goes back to the pastoral era, retains a complex of homestead and farm buildings. These mainly relate to the Clifford ownership from 1941.[1] Some of the structures, however, may date from an earlier period.</p> <p>The Yarra Brae site once comprised Crown Allotments 5 and 6, with a total of 1021 acres along the Yarra River owned in the 1850s by Peter Davis, as shown on the Parish of Warrandyte parish plan. By the late 1890s these 1021 acres, together with Wonga Park homestead and 355 acres adjoining it were owned by the National Mutual Life Assurance Company.[2] In 1905, the 1021 acres were leased by Reginald Albert Stock and H. D. Ramsay, graziers. Stock was the brother of the manager and actuary of the National Mutual Life Association.[3]</p> <p>A ripple iron homestead, now gone, similar to one once at Stane Brae, was erected at Yarra Brae at the turn of the century.[4] It is said that this was the third homestead erected on the property.[5] A surviving photograph of this homestead dates from 1940 when Yarra Brae was auctioned. According to the auctioneers, the homestead was "a comfortable eight-roomed house" and the property also included a barn, shearing shed, stables, store space, sheep dip, yard and cowshed.[6] The homestead was burned down in the early 1970s.[7]</p> <p>The Hon. Lewis Clifford (1889-1964), who bought the Yarra Brae property in 1941, was born in New Zealand and educated at Xavier College in Melbourne. He was a director of the Hume Pipe Company and had "big business interests" in South-East Asia. His second wife in 1934 was a daughter of Sir Adrian Knox, a Chief Justice of the Supreme Court. Clifford took a great interest in the Boy Scout Movement, while his wife took an interest in the Girl Guide movement. Clifford succeeded as Baron Chudleigh in 1962 and retired to the United Kingdom.[8]</p> <p>In the early 1940s Yarra Brae and its neighbour Stane Brae and Jumping Creek Reserve were taken over for war service training. The camp was at Stane Brae and the combat training areas on Yarra Brae. According to one account, there were "trench systems, gun emplacements, and a</p>
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substantial rifle range.” It has been claimed that an RAAF camp occupied Yarra Brae.[9] A 1955 article in the district press described the more recent Yarra Brae main house in these words: “In its natural bush setting the Clifford’s house stands high on the hill with a view from every window. It is an interesting house, a winner of a small house competition in America in 1939. It is built to save passage space which can be used more pleasantly in living rooms and its landscape windows admit the maximum of light and air, and always an enchanting view.”

A garden feature mentioned in the same article was a sundial with a wrought iron legend attributed to Sir Bede Clifford, Governor in Trinidad during the Second World War. It is not known if this sundial remains. The main house was described as standing "high on a hill with a view from every window. It is an interesting house, and winner of a small house competition in America in 1939. It is built to save passage space which can be used more pleasantly in living rooms and its landscape windows admit the maximum of light and air, and always an enchanting view".[10]

Between December 1948 and January 1949 the Cliffords allowed their property to be used for a Post-War Pan-Pacific Scout Jamboree. The 1955-56 second Pan-Pacific Scout Jamboree was also held on the same riverside site on the Clifford property. This camp site was called Clifford Park by this time. Some six years later, the 7th World Rover Moot was staged at Clifford Park between December 1961 and January 1962. A disastrous bushfire followed on 16 January 1962 sweeping through Clifford Park, destroying a number of outbuildings, including all the Rover huts, and the Clifford’ garden area, but their recent main home survived.[11]

Apart from the section known as Clifford Park and used for scouting activities, the land use for Yarra Brae has continued to be cattle grazing, dairying, some market gardening and horse agistment. During 1983 the Victorian State Government purchased land along the river frontage of Yarra Brae to be developed as part of the Warrandyte State Park[12]

Creation Date 1941

Change Dates

Associations

Local Themes

Lewis Clifford

5.01 - Squatters, selectors & small farmer

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Yarra Brae, which retains a complex of main house and garden, and farm buildings, has regional significance as one of the district’s large riverfront grazing estates with a history that goes back to the pastoral era. It has historical significance for its associations with Lord Clifford, owner of the property from c.1941. Clifford was a successful businessman and patron of the scouting movement. In the late 1940s and 1950s Clifford provided part of his property (now known as Clifford Park) for scouting activities. In 1983, the Victorian Government purchased part of Yarra Brae, which is now included in the Warrandyte State Park. (Criterion A4, D2, H1)

LEVEL

RECOMMENDATIONS

Heritage Register Listings

Register	Reference	Zoning	Status
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None Specified

Extent

Heritage Schedule

External Paint Controls:	On VHR:	VHR Ref No:
Internal Alteration Controls:	Prohibited Uses:	
Tree Controls:	Aboriginal Heritage Place:	
Outbuildings or Fences:	Incorporated Plan:	Incorporated Plan Details
Description:		

Conservation Management

Extra Research

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- BIBLIOGRAPHY**
- [1] Lilydale Express, 2 Dec. 1955.
 - [2] Shire of Lillydale RB 1898-9 Nos. 1328,1329.
 - [3] Shire of Lillydale RB 1905-6 No.1898 NAV 100 pounds.
 - [4] Discover Wonga Park, Place No.25.
 - [5] Slade MSS.
 - [6] Border Country, p.66.
 - [7] Discover Wonga Park; Place No. 25.
 - [8] Lilydale Express, 2 Dec. 1955; ADB, Name Index vol. 1, p.131.
 - [9] Border Country, pp.66, 68.
 - [10] Lilydale Express, 2 Dec. 1955.
 - [11] A. R. Milne, pp 122, 136-137, 151.
 - [12] Discover Wonga Park, Place No. 25; RS 11, 657.