

**Heritage Overlay No.:** 068  
**Citation No.:** 177  
**Place:** ‘Kippenross’, 429-455 Bulmans Road

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**Other Names of Place:** N/A  
**Location:** 429-455 Bulmans Road, Melton West  
**Critical Dates:** 1915  
**Existing Heritage Listings:** Identified as being of ‘Local’ significance in Western Region, Rural Heritage Study (M28).<sup>1</sup>  
**Recommended Level of Significance:** LOCAL



**Statement of Significance:**

‘Kippenross’ at 429-455 Bulmans Road, Melton, is significant as a predominantly intact and elaborate local example of a Late Victorian Picturesque style and as an historical legacy of the prosperous horse stud and later hay property established by the Miller, Watt and Robinson families. The underground tank, which has its top removed also contributes to an understanding of the evolution and development of the place, and the use of nineteenth century technology.

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<sup>1</sup> ‘Rural Heritage Study, Western Region’ (Context Pty Ltd, Western Region Commission, 1994), pp.130-131  
*Consultants: David Moloney, David Rowe, Pamela Jellie (2006) Sera-Jane Peters(2009)*

‘Kippenross’ at 429-455 Bulmans Road is architecturally significant at a LOCAL level (AHC D.2, E.1). Although sympathetically extended at the rear, the house demonstrates several original design qualities of a Late Victorian Picturesque style. These qualities include the hipped roof forms, together with the minor gable that projects towards the front and the encircling verandah. Other intact or appropriate qualities include the asymmetrical composition, single storey height, polychrome brick wall construction, corrugated sheet metal roof cladding, two face red brick chimneys with projecting rendered tops, narrow eaves with paired timber brackets, small gabled entrance portico on the verandah, turned timber verandah posts, timber verandah floor, elaborate timber framed doorways with four panelled timber doors and sidelights and highlights (including the decorative glazing featuring fox hot scenes, elaborate timber work, pendant and turned timber finial in the gable end, full length timber framed double hung windows, stone window sills, and the face red brick. The small gabled laundry outbuilding, underground rendered tank and the avenue of Sugar Gums nearby, also contribute to the significance of the place.

‘Kippenross’ at 429-455 Bulmans Road is historically significant at a LOCAL level (AHC A4, B2, H1). It was associated with *Melton Park* estate established by Harvey Patterson, pastoralist and director of BHP, and later with the late nineteenth century movement to ‘break-up’ the large pastoral estates. Through introducing mining bores into the district, Patterson was also indirectly responsible for the discovery of bore water, which was developed by the Melton community into a vital resource in the very dry district. The property ‘Kippenross’ was early associated with Laura Miller, the daughter of Hon. William Pearson, pastoralist, mining investor, politician and horseracing identity of *Kilmany Park* in Gippsland. Her husband Percy Miller was a prominent figure in the establishment of the Melton Sparrow Shooting Club whose membership soon included state, national and international champion shooters. The ‘Kippenross Cup’, awarded to the winner of the Melton Championship shooting team matches, was donated by Miller. Three generations of the Robinson family, Melton’s pioneering hay making farmers, lived on the property, including George Errol Robinson, who served four terms as Melton Shire President, and who died on the way home to ‘Kippenross’ from a Council meeting. A member of the Robinson family served on Council for most years in the twentieth century. GE Robinson’s family donated the President’s Seat – the carved chair used by Melton Shire Presidents since 1966.

‘Kippenross’ at 429-455 Bulmans Road is of social and aesthetic significance at a LOCAL level (AHC G1). The property was identified as a place valued by the community at a heritage study forum.

Overall, ‘Kippenross’ at 429-455 Bulmans Road is of LOCAL significance.

**Description:**

*Kippenross* at 429-455 Bulmans Road, Melton, is set on a large rural site and comprises a large brick home, rear brick garage, small brick laundry outbuilding and an open rendered underground tank. The house is met by introduced brick paved paths and there is minimal garden, apart from open grassed areas and some nearby exotic trees. There is also an avenue of Sugar Gums.

The asymmetrical, single storey, polychromatic brick, Late Victorian Picturesque styled house is characterised by hipped roof forms, together with a minor gable that projects towards the front and an encircling verandah. At the rear are single storey hipped roof additions that reflect the original design. These roof forms are clad in unpainted corrugated sheet metal. Two early face red brick chimneys with projecting rendered tops adorn the roofline. Narrow overhangs with paired timber brackets are features of the eaves.

A feature of the design is the encircling verandah. The main entrance is identified by the small gabled portico outside the front door. It is supported by turned timber posts. There is also an early timber verandah floor.

Other early decorative features of the design include the elaborate timber framed doorways with four panelled timber doors and sidelights and highlights. The two central highlights have fox hunt scenes. The elaborate timber work, pendant and turned timber finial in the gable end and the cream brick quoining and patterning in the brick wall construction represent other early decorative features.

The full length timber framed double hung windows are early, as is the stone window sills and the face red brick plinth around the perimeter of the house.

While the gabled garage at the rear appears to have been introduced, the small gabled laundry outbuilding – also constructed of brick with a corrugated sheet metal roof, appears to be early. The rendered underground tank is also early.

There is a c.250 metre avenue of Sugar Gums along the driveway from Bulmans Road to the house.

## **History:**

### *History of the Place*

#### *The Kippenross Estate*

*Kippenross* is located on Allotment D, Section 14, Parish of Djerriwarrh, an allotment of 156 acres purchased from the Crown by Michael Pender on 20th August 1855.<sup>2</sup>

Houses began to appear along Bulmans Road in the 1890s as Harvey Patterson sold off this portion of Melton Park.<sup>3</sup>

In 1901 the local paper carried advertisements for Cook's clearing sale, which included 'horses, farm plant, posts, pigs, poultry, household furniture.'<sup>4</sup> It is clear then that there was a house somewhere on the property (Allotments C and D, Section 14) at that time.

The property was purchased by Laura Margaret Miller, of Mentone, wife of Percy FM Miller, on 6 December 1901. The purchase included Allotments B and C of Section 12, as well as C and D of Section 14, some 430 acres. Miller renamed the property *Kippenross*.<sup>5</sup>

Laura Miller was the daughter of Hon. William Pearson, pastoralist, mining investor, politician and horseracing identity, of the well-known *Kilmany Park* mansion and station, Bairnsdale district.<sup>6</sup> Percy was the son of Charles Miller, a Waurn Ponds farmer who was also a horse breeder. Percy is remembered as 'Big' Miller, a very wealthy man.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Parish Plan, Parish of Djerriwarrh

<sup>3</sup> Shire of Melton, *Ratebooks*, 1890s; SLV Map 820A, Army Ordnance Map Sunbury, 1916, 1936.

<sup>4</sup> Melton Express, 1/11/1901

<sup>5</sup> Title documents (M&DHS)

<sup>6</sup> Morris, D, 'William Pearson', in Pike, D (ed), *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Vol.5 (MUP, 1984), p427

<sup>7</sup> Jeff Robinson, personal conversation, 19/5/2002

Percy Miller helped establish the Melton Sparrow Shooting Club, whose membership included Luke Hodgson, of Coimadai, who won State Honours and Donald Mackintosh of Mount Cotterell who won Olympic and World Honours in Trap Shooting before retiring to open a gun shop in Elizabeth street. Percy Miller was also a fine marksman. In 1905-06 he became the Australian Champion Trap Shooter. The 'Kippenross Cup', awarded to the winner of the Melton Championship team matches, was donated by Miller.

Laura Miller died shortly after giving birth to her second child, 26 June 1905 and her husband transferred the title into his name. In 1906 Percy Miller, 'farmer', was listed as the owner of Section 12 Allotments B and C and Section 14 Allotments C and D, a total of 482 acres with a Net Annual Value of £193.<sup>8</sup> There is no mention of a house on the property at this time, but the variable nature of rate recording in the Shire does not mean that there was no house on the property; in fact other records show that there was a house on the property. Some senior citizens believe that the stables might belong to this era.<sup>9</sup>

Miller sold 324 acres, comprising Allotments C and D of Section 14 on 26 November 1907 to Albert John Watts, a farmer of Melton, who owned land in the Parish of Kororoit. The balance of Miller's original purchase, Allotments B and C of Section 12 (78 and 80 acres) were disposed of to Raleigh and Hayes. At this stage the *Kippenross* property comprised Allotments C and D of Section 14, at total of some 320 acres.<sup>10</sup>

### *The Present Dwelling*

In September 1910 the local paper carried an advertisement for the sale of '*Kippenross* - 320 acres fine agricultural land. Fine homestead and outbuildings.'<sup>11</sup> The 1911 ratebook entry still lists Watts as the owner, however the name is crossed out and above it is written in pencil the name Scarce.<sup>12</sup> In 1912 Watts advertises a Clearing Sale at which he would sell 'the whole of his horses, cattle, farming plant, furniture and sundries as the property has been let to Mr Scarce who takes possession immediately.' The inventory of items makes it clear that Watts was a serious breeder of draught horses, with a total of 23 horses for sale, including 'four draught mares by Walraki Chief and Sir William' etc. He also had a few cows, a bull and breeding sows.<sup>13</sup>

However the 1912 ratebook still lists Watts (who had retired to Northcote) as the owner of the property, and title information shows that on 26 January 1915 he sold the property to Catherine Robinson, widow of William Robinson of the pioneer hay making family in the Melton district. Significantly, she may have occupied the property earlier, as the family history records that the family bought the property in 1914.<sup>14</sup> Her sons Thomas and William also appear on title.

In March 1915 the *Melton Express* reported that 'Mrs Scarce's new home is nearing completion and will be a substantial adornment to Bulmans Lane.' It was 'an eight roomed brick house erected by Coltman's of Ballarat'.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Shire of Melton, *Ratebook*, 1906.

<sup>9</sup> J Bilszta, interviews with Messrs Geoff Murdoch, Grank Greig, Hugh Barrie, Jeff Robinson; also Roma Garlick.

<sup>10</sup> Shire of Melton, *Ratebooks*, 1907-1910.

<sup>11</sup> *Melton Express*, 10/9/1910

<sup>12</sup> Shire of Melton, *Ratebook*, 1911

<sup>13</sup> *Melton Express*, 13/1/1912

<sup>14</sup> In Starr, *op cit*, p.233

<sup>15</sup> *Melton Express*, 27/3/1915

The ratebook entry for the same year shows that the owner of the same property – ‘318 acres and building Section 14 Allotment C and D, Djerrwarrah’ – is Mrs Catherine Robinson. The NAV was £121. Emily Scarce is listed as occupying tenant of the same property but a pencil notation in this entry reads: ‘Note: Owner now occupier. Brick house erected. Valuation £197.’<sup>16</sup>

It would appear that the attractive ‘brick house’ of eight rooms – the present *Kippenross* house – was built either for Mrs Scarce or Mrs Robinson in 1915. This is confirmed by the increase in value of the property, from £121 to £197 in that year.<sup>17</sup> This was the only brick dwelling constructed on Bulmans Road in the ‘rural’ era.<sup>18</sup> A seven roomed weatherboard house previously on the property had been known as *Greenwood Park*.<sup>19</sup>

Catherine Robinson left *Kippenross* to her son, George Errol Robinson, known as ‘Eb’ Robinson. He was a long-serving Shire Councillor, and served as Shire President 1938-39, 1941-42, 1947-48, 1956-57. His son-in-law was elected in his stead. His family donated the President’s Seat – the carved chair used by Shire Presidents since 1966. From 1900 until 1985 there were only three years when the name Robinson, or another member of the family, was not represented on the Melton Council.<sup>20</sup>

GE Robinson married Lola Campbell, daughter of the Melton Anglican vicar. ‘Eb’ Robinson died on his way home from a Council meeting, and left his estate to his widow. Upon Lola’s death, the farm was purchased from the estate by her daughter, Roma Garlick. Roma Garlick informs that there was evidence of a previous home when she was a child. She believes a house (not the present *Kippenross*) was erected on the property in 1875.<sup>21</sup>

Subsequent owners of the property included Alexander and Roma Slocum and veterinary surgeon Ian Gawler. In 1974 it was purchased by a property development company, Welmac Pty Ltd, and sold that year to the Victorian Housing Commission for a large sum. Left untenanted for a long period, it became prey to vandals and thieves, who removed a number of fittings including two marble fireplaces, plaster ornamentation and windows. After subdivision in 1985 the derelict property was purchased from the Urban Land Authority and restored by the private owners.<sup>22</sup>

Roma Garlick remembers that the eight room brick house had a long hall with decorative plaster ceilings and archways. Ceilings were 10 feet in height and windows were floor to ceiling. The marble fireplaces and mantles were a feature, being white in the drawing room and black in the dining room, supposedly a result of a difference between the builder and the owner at the time of construction.

Among the outbuildings was a large below-ground dairy with the roof line at ground level. A new detached laundry and flat have been built on this site. The original brick laundry

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<sup>16</sup> Shire of Melton, *Ratebook*, 1915. (Mrs Scarce’s son Harold lived on the opposite side of Bulmans Road for a few years.)

<sup>17</sup> Note that the £121 valuation of the 318 acre property is equivalent to the previous value of £193 for 482 acres, indicating that there had been no major improvements to the property since 1906 at least.

<sup>18</sup> Mr Geoff Murdoch (of *Braemar*), personal conversation, J Bilszta.

<sup>19</sup> Mr John Witting, owner, personal conversation.

<sup>20</sup> Starr, *op cit*, pp.232, 265, 269.

<sup>21</sup> Roma Garlick, personal conversation with Judith Bilszta, March 2005.

<sup>22</sup> Rural Heritage Study, *op cit*, p.131.

remains. Remains of an underground tank survive nearby. Bluestone cobbles from the stables have been reused in the garden landscaping.<sup>23</sup>

The large stables behind the property once had associated shedding. Poultry sheds, machinery sheds, men's quarters and other outbuildings were constructed beyond the homestead.

The property was worked as a dairy farm and cropped annually. As part of the Robinson establishment, haymaking was a feature of summer months.

A c.250 metre avenue of sugar gums, extending from Bulmans Lane gate to the house, is all that survives of the ornamental flower garden, large enclosed orchard and vegetable garden around the house.<sup>24</sup>

Of the properties sold from the subdivision of the Melton Park Estate, dwellings (and some outbuildings) on Melton Park, Cornwell Park Stud, Kuloomba, 488 Bulmans Road and 685 Bulmans Road form the basis of separate reports in the heritage study.

### *Contextual History*

#### *The Green Hills Estate*

In the pastoral period, prior to Crown Land sales, the land upon which *Kippenross* is situated, like most of the land in this vicinity, was incorporated into the well-known *Green Hills* pastoral lease. The lease of this estate was founded originally by John Hunter Patterson, acquired by another western district pastoralist George Hyde until c.1843, and afterwards by his creditors John and Alexander Dennistoun, Glasgow pastoral financiers (who were also associated with the Clyde Company). George Urquhart acquired the property c.1856 and began purchasing up surrounding allotments that had previously been alienated by the Crown. In addition of the land he purchased from the Crown, Urquhart purchased thousands of acres of adjacent land purchased by others at the Crown sales.

In 1861 the *Green Hills* station passed to Alexander Macintosh, and in 1869 to Matthew Ingle Browne. In May 1888 (soon before his death) MI Browne disposed of the *Green Hills* estate, of 7020 acres, to Melbourne solicitor William Henry Croker. (Local information, that the property was purchased by Sir Samuel Gillott at £10 per acre, and disposed of to Harvey Patterson in 1889, may also be correct. At the time Gillott and Croker were partners in the legal firm Gillott, Croker and Snowden.<sup>25</sup>) Ingles son Walter retained the *Green Hills* homestead block of some 500 acres until 1927.<sup>26</sup> In 1889-90 Croker sold the 6514 acres of the former *Green Hills* estate to DWH Patterson, described variously in ratebooks as 'grazier', 'gentleman' and 'sharebroker'.<sup>27</sup>

#### *Melton Park*

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<sup>23</sup> *ibid*

<sup>24</sup> Garlick, *op cit*

<sup>25</sup> Notes, Judith Bilszta, M&DHS. Gillott became Lord Mayor, and Victoria's Attorney General before his ultimate disgrace and fall upon allegations of his associations with vice and corruption. (Dunstan, D, 'Gillott, Sir Samuel', in Nairn, B, Serle, G, *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Vol.9, MUP, 1983, pp.12-13)

<sup>26</sup> Starr, J *Melton: Plains of Promise* (Shire of Melton, nd, c.1985), p.76

<sup>27</sup> Shire of Melton, *Ratebooks*, 1895-1897. Unless otherwise cited, information for this paragraph is from documentation of Torrens Application, 26315s, PROV VPRS 460/P000 (2652).

Daniel Whittle Harvey Patterson, born Tooborac Station, Victoria in 1848, was variously a NSW pastoralist, resident of St Kilda, Kew, and New Zealand before retiring to England 1926 where he died in 1931. About the time of his establishment of *Melton Park* he was a director of BHP (1885-1888; 1893-1926). In 1900-1907 he was the chairman of directors of BHP.<sup>28</sup>

Patterson's brothers sent horses to Melton Park on agistment from NSW properties. The family history notes that:

‘Harvey Patterson bought Melton Park Estate at Melton said by Harvey to have been part of their old Greenhills Station, in 1889. The estate then comprised some 7500 acres of freehold land. He sold 2000 acres of this and bred merino sheep, ran a horse stud and cropped the place. He said he had spent a great deal of money in improvements and clearing the land which gave it a park like effect. There were two training tracks on the estate. The flock was based on Tasmanian bloodlines, Gibson and Taylor's studs having provided rams from time to time. He also developed a prize winning stud of Red Poll cattle there.’<sup>29</sup>

A later article on *Melton Park* in *The Pastoralists Review* describes the homestead, established by Patterson in 1889, as being built on the rim of an extinct volcano, now a small lake ‘containing in wet seasons some 10 ft of water and ... almost surrounded with a circular bank’, and with rich soil. The country was:

‘mostly open plains and box timber country. A considerable proportion of the latter have been cleared, but belts of trees have been left for ornamental purposes and shelter for stock. Apart from the green trees purposely left standing, the land is being completely cleared of dead wood and stumps, so as to be fit for agriculture. ... a traction engine is being employed in pulling up old stumps. ... The thorough elimination of the dead timber from among the green trees has given a park-line appearance to the estate.’<sup>30</sup>

‘The rugged range of timbered hills’ stretching across the northern horizon, which formed ‘so charming and picturesque a background to Melton Park’ unfortunately also harboured rabbits and foxes.

The property ran Merino sheep been bred from pure Tasmanian blood. The Melton Park cattle comprised ‘one of the prettiest herds in Victoria’. They were Red Polled Norfolk, famed for their beef and milking properties, being practically Shorthorns without having horns. ‘Mr Patterson has gained most of the prizes offered for this class of cattle at the Royal Agricultural Society’s Melbourne Show.’<sup>31</sup>

The Pattersons’ hobby – thoroughbred horse stud and training – were a major part of *Melton Park*. There were ‘two excellent training tracks on Melton Park’ one of two miles and the other a mile and three-quarters in length. In 1909 there were on the property: ‘some of the most

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<sup>28</sup> *The Argus*, obituary, 15/5/1931

<sup>29</sup> Randell, JO, *Pastoral Pattersons: The history of Myles Patterson and his descendants 1822-1976* (Queensberry Hill Press, 1977). If not in error, the reference to ‘their old Greenhills station’ might be taken to mean that Harvey Patterson was some relation to the original Greenhills developer, John Hunter Patterson.

<sup>30</sup> *The Pastoralists Review*, 16/10/1909, pp.594-5

<sup>31</sup> *ibid*

promising young stock one could wish to see', including 25 brood mares, stallions, foals, and about a dozen horses are in training.<sup>32</sup>

### *Gold and Water*

Patterson, 'connected with the discovery of silver at Broken Hill,'<sup>33</sup> was very interested in exploring for gold nearby his property, in the upper reaches of the Djerriwarrh Creek. He obtained a diamond drill from the Mines Department to search for gold under the volcanic flow, but nothing came of the several bores that were put down on the *Melton Park* property. However, there is said to be an unfilled shaft in the 'Quartz Paddock'<sup>34</sup>; this may now be on the *Braemar* property.

The presence of the bore gave the local community the idea of using it to search for water. The Melton and Braybrook Councils, with the assistance of a local fundraising committee and ST Staughton MLA, hired the drill and put four bores down, the one on Toolern Creek 'Flat' (now incorporated into the Melton golf course) proving to be the most successful. 'The discovery of underground water was of the greatest benefit' to the dry Melton community.<sup>35</sup>

### *The Farming Era*

By the turn of the century farming was resurgent and historical changes were at hand. A new generation of farmers restlessly surveyed the vast pastoral estates surrounding them. In Melton there had long been a belief that the large pastoral estates surrounding the town on three sides 'acted as a check' on both the progress of the village, and employment of landless working men.<sup>36</sup> In 1897 Sir Rupert Clarke mused in Parliament about cutting up 40,000 acres of his estate to lease to dairy farmers. He was under local pressure to make land available for farming, and declared he was keen not to 'disappoint public expectations.'<sup>37</sup> In 1898 the Victorian Municipal Directory entry for Melton Shire made the first of a series of unprecedented reports on movements by the district's big landholders:<sup>38</sup>

'Farming and grazing - Harvey Patterson dividing his estate into farms, by sale and also under the share system. Sir Rupert Turner Havelock Clarke, Bart., has leased a large portion of his estate near Melton for grazing and farming; Mr Harry Werribee Staughton also dividing his estate under the share system ...'<sup>39</sup>

An 1892 map shows that Patterson was the owner of Allotment D Section 14, Djerriwarrh.<sup>40</sup> However Melton Shire ratebooks show that by 1896 Patterson had disposed of approximately 2000 acres in the Parish of Djerriwarrh, the southern part of the estate. The land on which *Kippenross* is situated was one of these. On 12<sup>th</sup> February 1897 John Cook, a Melton grazier, purchased the Allotment C, Section 14, the 160 acre allotment immediately behind *Kippenross*. He had previously acquired Allotment D, fronting Bulmans Road. The whole was then known as *Greenwood Park*.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Pastoralists Review, *op cit*

<sup>33</sup> George Minns, 'Looking Back' (M&DHS Newsletter, January 2001).

<sup>34</sup> Greig, *op cit*.

<sup>35</sup> Cameron, *op cit*, pp.24-25; George Minns, 'Looking Back' (M&DHS Newsletter, January 2001).

<sup>36</sup> Hjorth, Anders, 'Recollections of Melton 1861-67', in M&DHS Newsletter, Feb 2001

<sup>37</sup> *Sunbury News*: 31/7/1897, 7/8/1897, 4/9/1897.

<sup>38</sup> *Victorian Municipal Directory*, 1898, and following years.

<sup>39</sup> *Victorian Municipal Directory*, 1898, and following years.

<sup>40</sup> Shire Map Series, 1892. (SLV Map 821.1A)

<sup>41</sup> Title document (M&DHS)



It is possible however that the *Kippenross* property had previously been leased for farming. From its beginning *Melton Park* had leased out nearby land described as ‘good grass paddocks ... and water for cattle and horses’.<sup>42</sup> This was probably a continuation of a practice that had previously been in place when the land was part of the *Green Hills* station. It is possible that a house was already situated on the property by time it was sold by Patterson in c.1896.

### *History of Underground Tanks*

Underground tanks were a typical component of nineteenth century rural properties in Victoria, and illustrate a form of water collection and infrastructure no longer practised.

Provision of a domestic water supply was critical to the establishment of any rural property that was not beside a permanent supply of water. ‘The first essential was to secure a reliable water supply. Unless the farm bordered a permanent creek ... the selector had to dig a dam for his animals and a well [sic] for the household supply.’<sup>43</sup> Especially in low-rainfall Melton, domestic water storage was critical, and relics of these systems is a key part of the heritage of the Shire. Many underground domestic ‘wells’ (as they are usually called) around Melton are in fact ‘tanks’ which, rather than tapping groundwater, were sealed cisterns for the storage of water from the roofs of buildings.

Underground tanks became only generally necessary in Australia from the 1850s, when increased population and Crown land sales ensured that many dwellings were unable to locate beside a stream. At the same time, as a result of the goldrushes, the mass introduction into Australia of the new product ‘corrugated iron’ made it feasible for ordinary people to be able to channel water into the underground tanks from roofs and guttering.<sup>44</sup> Underground tanks on small properties generally seem to have been located at the rear of the house; this might have enabled the roof runoff from dairy and other nearby farm outbuildings to also feed the tank.

The construction of wells goes back thousands of years, and designs for underground wells and tanks, such as contained in JC Loudon’s *Encyclopaedia of Agriculture*, had been available to English farmers since at least the early nineteenth century.<sup>45</sup> These generally advocated cigar shaped cross-sections, with the domed top being mostly underground. This shape was also used in Australia, but on Melton rural properties they do not appear to have been used on early farms. Instead, the early tanks had vertical walls, and no domed covers. Most appear to have been constructed of local stone rather than brick, and without a low wall (as in romantic images of European wells) to ensure safety. Isolation and cost probably meant that they may have been sunk by the property-owners, at least in the case of early small farms. Examples of such tanks on small farms are the former Scarborough and Moloney properties on Mount Cottrell Road (Place Nos.293 and 292) which were constructed of bluestone in the 1850s and 1871, and for which no evidence of a cover remains. In terms of larger early (1850s) properties, *Glen Elgin* (Place No.39) has a low timber-framed gabled roof, clad in corrugated iron; and the tanks of *Tibbermore* (Place No.392), Mount Ida (Place No.002) and the Diggers Rest Hotel (Place No.067) both have flat corrugated iron covers on raised stone sides. (These covers, and sides, might have been added later, as gradual modernisation of the tanks was common.)

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<sup>42</sup> *The Express*, 21/10/1889

<sup>43</sup> Cannon, Michael, *Life in the Country: Australia in the Victorian Age: 2* (Nelson, West Melbourne, 1978), p.149

<sup>44</sup> Hughes, Trueman, Ludlow, ‘Wells and Underground Tanks’, prepared for the Heritage Council of NSW (nd), *passim*; Cannon, *op cit*, p.150

<sup>45</sup> J.C. Loudon, *Encyclopaedia of Agriculture*, Longman, Rees, Orme, Brown, Green & Longman, London, 1826.

While domes were advocated in early British architectural literature, they appear to have only begun to be built in Australia in the 1860s. At that time there was a growing realisation of the dangers of uncovered wells and tanks in terms of sanitation, as well as safety. Unclean water could wash into uncovered tanks from dairies, and sometimes from cesspits, and vermin also obtained easy access:

‘The typical countrywoman of the early days hardly moved a step from her threshold “to cast away indescribable filth”. The contents of chamber pots, vegetable peelings, grease-laden water – all festered around the hut and blended with the nearby latrine to create a “peculiarly offensive” odour which attracted swarms of flies. Sometimes the fluids soaked through the soil into the well [sic], so that the family suffered from an intermittent “low typhoid” fever whose cause they did not suspect.’<sup>46</sup>

In 1885 *Martins Home and Farm* described uncovered underground tanks and wells as ‘the family rat-trap’.<sup>47</sup> ‘Common infections of the nineteenth century, such as typhoid, scarlet fever, diphtheria (which was known to have proved tragically fatal in the case of Melton’s Kerr, Moloney and Wood families), tuberculosis and gastro-enteritis, spread rapidly in many country towns .... Efficient disposal of human excreta was a major problem.’<sup>48</sup> The connection between water pollution and public health, in particular diseases like dysentery, typhoid and even cholera were beginning to be appreciated.<sup>49</sup>

At the same time, technology was contributing to better health. As long as a bucket was necessary to draw water, it was not possible to cover the tops of tanks, or at best only to provide a rudimentary cover. Once a small and reasonably priced pump became available there was no further need for an open tank. The availability of domestic hand-pumps grew in the 1850s, and by 1860 NSW public buildings (schools and railway stations) specified domes as the standard form of construction for tanks.<sup>50</sup> It is also highly likely that the increasing access to good quality bricks, professional bricklaying skills, and cement, over the course of the late nineteenth century contributed to the proliferation of covered tanks in places like Melton.

The new tanks were still circular in plan, but constructed of brick, with approximately 9 inches of clay puddle behind the brick wall to keep the tank water-tight. The hemispherical dome, or segment of a dome, was also constructed with bricks. Both the interior of the tank, and the exterior of the dome, were cement rendered according to recommended practice.<sup>51</sup> Without internal inspection it is not known whether the cross-section of the tanks typically remained vertical, or cigar-shaped, which were both described in textbooks. Numerous domes in Melton appear to be segmental spheres, rather than hemispheres, and may have spread underneath the surface to a wider diameter tank cylinder, as per the textbooks. The domes were provided with a manhole on top (covered with a concrete cover), of minimum width 16 inches, to provide access for cleaning. Mr Jeff Robinson of Melton West recalls entering the tank on the family farm to repair internal render.<sup>52</sup> The opening also enabled the cool water to be used for refrigeration: perishables and jellies (for setting) were lowered into the water in a bucket.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Cannon, *op cit*, p.151

<sup>47</sup> Cited in Hughes *et al*, *op cit*, p.19.

<sup>48</sup> Cannon, *op cit*, pp.255-6

<sup>49</sup> Hughes *et al*, *op cit*, pp.19-24

<sup>50</sup> *ibid*, pp.32-33

<sup>51</sup> Eg, Albrecht, CE, *Measurements and Dimensions of Tanks and Dams* (Melbourne, Arnell and Jackson [1885?]), pp.30-33

<sup>52</sup> Mr Jeff Robinson, personal conversation, 14/2/2006. This contradicts the Hughes *et al* survey of tanks in NSW, which found that internal render was rare in domestic tanks (pp.55-56).

<sup>53</sup> Hughes *et al*, *op cit*, pp.32-80.

The only known Australian heritage study of underground tanks (conducted in NSW), claims that they were only superseded by the familiar corrugated iron tanks (on tankstands to provide water pressure) in the 1890s, when ‘the galvanised above-ground tank was in widespread use.’<sup>54</sup> In Victoria however Miles Lewis claims that ‘*the corrugated iron rainwater tank was manufactured in Melbourne by the later 1850s, and spread very rapidly despite claims that the zinc coating would poison the water.*’<sup>55</sup> Anders Hjorth’s recollections of Melton in the 1860s state that: ‘*The water supply was very deficient; a few had iron tanks, and some under-ground ones.*’<sup>56</sup> He may however have been referring to the square plate-metal ‘ships tanks’ (shipping containers, usually for foodstuffs, that were designed in Britain for recycling in this manner) that are most usually found these days on larger properties, rather than the larger corrugated steel version that became more common. A survey of remaining underground tanks on nineteenth century Melton properties might reveal the extent to which galvanised iron (or steel) header tanks were used as an alternative. We know that underground tanks continued to be built in the early twentieth century, and that today there are many properties that have both underground tanks (most not in use) and corrugated steel header tanks. As access to hand, petroleum or electric pumps permitted, they may have been used in conjunction.

While domes probably became widespread from the 1860s for domestic use, it cannot be categorically inferred that the absence of a dome means that the tank was built before that time. On the other hand, the presence of a dome does not necessarily mean that the tank was built after this time, as apparently the building of a dome over a tank often took place many years after the original construction.<sup>57</sup> The best assumption that can be made in terms of dating tanks is that, water being essential to habitation, they were built at or very soon after the construction of the original dwelling on a site.

So in the case of this property, it is most likely that the tank was built c.1900. It was probably originally covered with a timber framed gable roof clad in corrugated iron.

Tankbuilders known to have operated in Melton in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries include WA Cecil, Tom Collins (c.1890-1913), and Augustus Schebler (‘known for his workmanship’ according to Collins).<sup>58</sup>

### **Thematic Context / Comparative Analysis:**

*Shire of Melton Historical Themes:* ‘Pastoralism’; ‘Farming’.

*Comparable Places in Shire of Melton:*

Architecturally comparable Victorian Picturesque styled examples in the Melton Shire include the house *Melton Park*, 812 Bulmans Road, Melton (Place No.008). This dwelling is constructed of horizontal timber weatherboard wall cladding and has two steeply pitched gable roof forms, decorative bargeboards and unusual decorative gable infill. Another Victorian Picturesque example of brick construction is Nerowie, Buckler’s Road, Parwan (Place No.305).

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<sup>54</sup> Hughes *et al*, *op cit*. (Austral Archaeology also conducted a study of early Chinese wells on the Koorong, South Australia.)

<sup>55</sup> Lewis, Miles, *Physical Investigation of a Building: National Trust Technical Bulletin 9.1* (National Trust of Australia, Victoria, 1989).

<sup>56</sup> Hjorth, Anders, ‘Recollections of Melton 1861-67’, in M&DHS Newsletter, February 2001.

<sup>57</sup> Hughes *et al*, *op cit*, p.3

<sup>58</sup> Robinson, *op cit*; also Tom Collins memoirs, part of which were reproduced in the M&DSH Newsletter of December 2000.

The dwelling as a steeply pitched gable roof form that traverses the site, together with a slightly projecting gable at one end.

Historically, *Kippenross* is comparable to horse studs, although little if any evidence of this particular use now remains. The oldest remaining and most imposing thoroughbred racehorse stud and training establishment in the Shire was *Melton Park*. Other comparable places include *Emerites Park* (formerly *Stockwell Stud*, and *Callan Park*), Place No.91; the former *Melton Stud*, Place No.183; *Tara Stud*, Place No.239; and *Kippenross*, Place No.177. *Cornwell Park Stud* (Place No.018) was converted to a horse stud in recent decades.

**Condition:**

Good

**Integrity:**

Substantially Intact

**Recommendations:**

Recommended for inclusion in the Melton Planning Scheme Heritage Overlay.

Recommended Heritage Overlay Schedule Controls:

External Paint Controls:	<i>Yes</i>
Internal Alteration Controls:	<i>No</i>
Tree Controls:	<i>Yes – avenue of Sugar Gums</i>
Outbuildings and/or Fences:	<i>Yes – laundry outbuilding &amp; underground tank</i>