

**Heritage Overlay No.:** 082  
**Citation No.:** 220  
**Place:** Melton Valley Golf Course

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**Other Names of Place:** N/A  
**Location:** Yuille Street, Melton.  
**Critical Dates:** 1848-1855 (Pyke settlement) to mid twentieth century (establishment of Golf Club)  
**Existing Heritage Listings:** Western Region Heritage Study (Pykes Graves).<sup>1</sup>  
**Recommended Level of Significance:** LOCAL



**Statement of Significance:**

The Melton Valley Golf Course, Yuille Street, is significant for the variety of locally important historical themes and events that are associated with the place, and with the remnant fabric which represents some of these events.

The Melton Valley Golf Course, Yuille Street is historically significant at a LOCAL level (AHC A4, B2). The links retain unique evidence of some important themes and events in the history of Melton. The 1850 and 1855 graves and headstones of the Pyke brothers, whose

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<sup>1</sup> Walker, M, Johnston, C, Boyce, C, ‘Melbourne Western Region Heritage Study: Evidence of Change’ (Melbourne Western Region Commission, 1986), p.259

pastoral station on Toolern Creek (then ‘Pennyroyal Creek’) was the foundation of the settlement of Melton. Evidence survives, in the form of remnant road pavements and domestic trees and underground tanks, of the original street pattern of Melton, before this flood-prone area was largely abandoned in favour of the higher land, mainly to the west of Yuille Street. Lynch’s Cottage, Melton’s first hospital, established by the locally revered Hannah ‘Grannie’ Watts’, was historically a highly important domestic building on these streets. Archaeological evidence may also exist in relation to other properties for which historical documentation exists, notably the Melton Hotel, the first hotel in Melton, and the place of the first meetings of the Melton Roads Board (Shire Council) and the first court proceedings in the district. Other sites include those associated with notable local farming and community identities such as Hornbuckle, Minns, and Cecil, such as underground tanks, and cacti. Archaeological evidence of sites of other former places (eg the first ‘Combined Church’, shops and a Temperance Hotel) that have also been referred to in local historical literature may survive.

The links also has associations with events and themes for which no physical evidence is likely to survive, but which are nonetheless historically significant at the local level. The links now incorporates the former Town Common, which accommodated the first Melton school, and the first church building in the town (the combined Protestant church), and the Gun Club, in which international shooters Donald Mackintosh, and Hector Fraser were nurtured. The area of the links was also the original site of other important sporting events in the town, including horse-races, holiday athletic and cycling sports meetings, coursing events, and hunt club meetings.

A *Pinus radiata* locally known as the ‘dairy pine’ marks the site of the most successful of the extremely important bore water exploration ventures in the 1890s; this was later the site of a milk cooler.

The Melton Valley Golf Course, Yuille Street is of social and aesthetic significance at a LOCAL level (AHC E1). Numerous sites on the links were identified as places significant to the Shire in a Community Workshop.

The Melton Valley Golf Course, Yuille Street is scientifically significant at a LOCAL level (AHC C2). The site has the potential to provide archaeological information that assist in the understanding of early settlement in the town of Melton. The site also has a high potential to provide educational interpretation regarding the history of Melton.

Overall, the Melton Valley Golf Course is of LOCAL significance.

### **Description:**

The Melton Valley Golf Course is situated to the east of the town, in the area bounded by Yuille, Street, Melton-Gisborne Road, Yuille Street, and High Street. It is situated along both sides of the Toolern Creek, and extends to the small back creek that runs north-south opposite the Civic centre.

The area consists of the golf links, clubhouse and associated facilities. The part of the place west of the Toolern Creek once consisted of early streets subdivided as part of the Melton town: Sherwin, Walton, Pyke, Pinkerton and Bryan streets. The golf course retains some exposed road pavement associated with some of these former streets, notably Sherwin Street.

Remnants of several houses built in the area also survive: notably a small fig tree (*Ficus carica*) and underground tank near the clubhouse, and a nearby Monterey cypress in poor condition. There are reputedly several underground tanks remaining, and Minns house and

Cecil's cacti are remembered by many.<sup>2</sup> A full survey of the links would likely identify such remnants. Archaeological evidence might also remain of the Melton Hotel, Lynch's Cottage (Melton's first hospital) and other former places. Similarly, the site of Melton's first church, the 'Combined Church' was on the corner of Sherwin and Bryan Streets.

An old map of the town shows that the Melton Hotel (the Old Melton Hotel), which was the town's first hotel, and the scene of the first meeting of the Melton Roads Board (the precursor to the Shire Council) was situated on the golf course, on the boundary of High Street approximately 105 metres east of Yuille Street.

To the east of Toolern Creek are the graves and headstones of William Pyke (died 1850), and George Pyke (died 1855).

A Monterey pine (*Pinus radiata*) tree near High Street marks the location of an important bore, whose now demolished windmill and tank were partly paid for by public subscription in the 1890s. This later became the site of a milk cooler.

### **History:**

#### Places Associated with the Site Prior to the Establishment of the Golf Links.

The golf course is sited on land long associated with the local aborigines. Signs of their activity can be seen on many of the river gums lining the Toolern Creek. Both shield and canoe trees can be found in the quiet confines of the creek which, until recently was a free flowing stream with native fauna and flora in abundance.

The course is also the first area of land taken up by European settlers in the district. Three of these settlers, William, George and Oliver Pyke are buried on the east bank of the Toolern Creek within the Golf Course confines. Their tombstones are now maintained by the Golf Club.

The land later became known for its association with the Minns family who arrived in the mid 1850's and established a dairy farm on the land, which was by that time owned by WJT ('Big') Clarke.

Towards the end of the nineteenth century, Thomas Hornbuckle acquired the property, a man held in high regard by local residents for his contribution to community affairs. Later, Mrs Sarah Nixon, a granddaughter resided here for much of her life. Sarah's house was the nucleus of the present clubhouse

The part of the golf links to the west of Toolern creek comprised the majority of the land first subdivided by the Crown.<sup>3</sup> While some was alienated at the first Crown sales in 1853, much of it was not sold until the 1860s and 70s, and some not until the 1890s.<sup>4</sup> Situated between the Toolern and smaller creek, the land was prone to flooding, and so languished while the western part of the town became the centre of business and residence.

#### *Places Associated with the Township*

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<sup>2</sup> M&DHS Notes 'The Township on the Golfcourse' (nd).

<sup>3</sup> Plan of the Village of Melton (15/4/1852); Parish of Djerriwarrh (1859).

<sup>4</sup> Township of Melton, Parish of Djerriwarrh

The sites of the Minns and Cecil occupations are marked on an 1892 map.<sup>5</sup> Minns was one of the early occupants of the land, and the Minns family has featured significantly in the history of Melton. Cecil was also a significant early landholder in this area.

An underground tank, from which the dome was removed in recent years, beside the small fig tree near clubhouse may be associated with the Hornbuckle / Nixon Estate. Hornbuckle was a significant figure in the history of the town.

*Lynch's Cottage.*

Another place for which archaeological evidence may survive is Hannah Watts' 'Lynch's Cottage' hospital/house, formerly situated on the corner of Yuille and Sherwin Streets.

The Toolern Vale / Melton midwife and nurse Hannah 'Grannie' Watts, after whom the nearby Hannah Watts Park is named, is one of the most honored historical figures in the Shire. Joan Starr dedicates a chapter of her history of the Shire of Melton to her:- 'No pioneer woman is better known or remembered with pride around Melton than Hannah Jane (Grannie) Watts.'<sup>6</sup>

Watts helped into the world most of the babies who are now Melton's senior citizens. Her midwife vocation began when she volunteered to help the ship's doctor *en route* from Ireland to Australia: The doctor was much impressed by her natural ability as a nurse, and Watts continued to serve the community as a midwife and 'bush nurse' through her long and eventful life.<sup>7</sup> 'Many tales are told of her deeds, and many people have cause to thank her,' relates Starr.

After many years of voluntary service in the 1890s Watts established herself as a professional midwife at Lynch's Cottage, which in 1911 was officially registered as Melton's first hospital. Until the development of Base Hospitals in regional towns, most small country towns had a private hospital established by a midwife. These were the norm until after the Second World War. The midwifery profession, once widespread and crucial in rural society, is now effectively redundant, its former achievements largely forgotten and uncommemorated.

Although she could not write, signing all documents (including her 1919 will) with a cross, Grannie Watts arranged to keep a meticulous record of her practice. Her 'book' in 1917 listed 290 births that she had attended since 1886, as well as surgical operations, and assistance to visiting doctors with preparations for burial. The last entry, of the birth of Thomas Watts Minns, was only two months before she died on 21<sup>st</sup> October 1921, at age 90. Granny's 'book' became famous locally as an impeccable genealogical reference in a time when births were not always officially registered.<sup>8</sup>

Many of the Melton families that descend partly from Granny Watts also feature prominently in Melton history, including: the Hogg, Burns, O'Donnell, Kennedy, Jongebloed, Tarleton and Tolhurst families.<sup>9</sup> Hannah's Hogg grandchildren included William Hogg, Superintendent of the Victoria Police Force, and 'champion cyclist' Tom Hogg.<sup>10</sup>

The *Gisborne Gazette* report of Hannah Watt's funeral in 1921 indicates the regard in which she was held in the local community:

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<sup>5</sup> Shire Map Series, 1892: No.25: Township of Melton

<sup>6</sup> Starr, J, *Melton: Plains of Promise* (Melton Shire Council, c.1985), p.88

<sup>7</sup> *loc cit*

<sup>8</sup> *ibid*, p.98

<sup>9</sup> *ibid*, pp. 89, 91-92, 93, 96.

<sup>10</sup> *ibid*, pp.165, 199

‘On Friday 21<sup>st</sup> October passed away one of Melton’s most interesting and honored residents in the person of Mrs Hannah Watts, familiarly and affectionately called Grannie Watts.

The deceased lady who had reached the patriarchal age of 90 years has been identified with the district for 63 years during which time she nursed several generations of Melton citizens, while in the absence of medical aid residents looked to Grannie as their doctor, philosopher and friend. Hundreds in fact we might say thousands of people held the deceased in veneration. In the hour of trouble, sickness or death the striking personality of Grannie was always to be found bringing comfort and consolation to the afflicted. A woman of great energy and determination combined with superior intelligence, Grannie conquered difficulties that would have made many falter...’<sup>11</sup>

The *Gazette* noted the immense (for tiny Melton) cortege that accompanied her remains to the Melton Cemetery. The 51 buggies plus horse riders were ‘a testimony of the respect in which the deceased was held’, it said, concluding that:

‘Deep sorrow is felt throughout the district at the passing of Melton’s grand old lady, and the death leaves a void which it will be hard to fill.’

Several photographs of Lynch’s Cottage have been reproduced in local histories, one with Grannie Watts standing outside her ‘maternity’ hospital.<sup>12</sup>

#### *Associations with Early Township Facilities*

Both the original Melton school and the combined Protestant church were timber structures built on the creek flat, on the ‘Common’, which is now part of the golf links. There is unlikely to be any relic of these places beyond their sites.

Melton’s first hotel, called the Melton Hotel (or later the Old Melton Hotel) on High Street, was made quickly of poor handmade bricks during the goldrush, and eventually collapsed.<sup>13</sup> Apart from being the town’s first hotel, it was the place of the first meetings of the Melton Roads Board (the precursor to the Shire Council), and the site of the first court proceedings in the area. An early map shows the hotel comprising four buildings situated on the golf course, on the boundary of High Street approximately 105 metres east of Yuille Street.<sup>14</sup> It is doubtful if any new development occurred on this site, and archaeological evidence of the hotel may survive.

Other places might exist. Two sites referred to in Melton and District Historical Society material include the ‘shops where Chas Jones property is’, and ‘Temperance Hotel on Leyland distribution block (Crown grant to JE Barrie 1865).<sup>15</sup> However no other documentary reference to these sites has been found.

#### *Sporting Associations*

Other community events of which there will be no physical fabric remaining are those associated with sport.

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<sup>11</sup> *The Gisborne Gazette*, 28<sup>th</sup> October 1921. See also the *Melton Express*, 29<sup>th</sup> October 1921.

<sup>12</sup> Pollitt, JH *An Historical Record of Melton* (Shire of Melton, nd), p.35; Starr, *op cit*, p.99

<sup>13</sup> Starr, *op cit*, p.43

<sup>14</sup> Lands Victoria, Put Away Plan M101 (1857): ‘Plan of Town Lots in the Township of Melton’.

<sup>15</sup> *ibid*

The present Melton Valley golf links was the focus of the embryonic community's first sporting events; hunt club meets, then the first 'publican' horse race meetings, and then town sports and athletic meetings. Collins relates that 'Pykes Run', the site of the Melbourne Hunt Club meetings, 'was also the place where the Races were held and the Sports Meeting.'<sup>16</sup> The publican Ryan had purchased the site from Henry Pyke, and later sold it to WJT ('Big') Clarke. Minns recounted that: 'Still later, athletic sports, cycling and pony races were held annually in Clarke's paddock (later Nixon's) on Keilor Road.'<sup>17</sup> The Melton Express describes the first racecourse, in the 1856-58 period, as beginning 'where the Old Melton Hotel stood, thence by Carberry's, Cecil's, then over the hill where the Presbyterian Church stands, finishing up where the Gun Club pavilion stands'.<sup>18</sup> This is mostly situated in the ground of the present golf links.

Cameron also described the area as 'the sports paddock'.<sup>19</sup> In the time of Hornbuckle's ownership (around the turn of the century), his 'Mowbray' (now the golf course) was also used for greyhound coursing.

By the 1880s Melton was a 'wonderfully energetic place in all its movements', certainly in relation to sport.<sup>20</sup> In 1880 a football team, and then club, was formed.<sup>21</sup> Each New Years Day ST Staughton hosted the Melton and Werribee cricketers and spectators to a match on the *Eynesbury* lawn.<sup>22</sup>

By 1870 the golf links were no longer the scene of Melton's horse-racing events. The Melton Racing Club had been formed and was holding regular meetings on a proper racecourse, complete with grandstand, on Ballarat Road west of the town.

The town's other holiday sports meetings had also moved elsewhere by this time. Early in 1900 the present Melton Recreation Reserve, on the south side of the highway and creek, was created and the Caledonian and the ANA sports meetings were held there.<sup>23</sup> It was gazetted in 1907, but had probably been used for sports purposes prior to this.<sup>24</sup>

The Gun Club was also formed in the late nineteenth century. Shooting was a particularly notable Melton sport: in the early twentieth century the district produced two international champions - trapshooters Donald Mackintosh, and Hector Fraser.<sup>25</sup> Noted gentleman sportsman JO Inglis also attended Melton gun club meetings.<sup>26</sup> Percy Miller (of *Kippenross*), also instrumental in establishing the 'Melton Sparrow Shooting Club' at this time was also a fine marksman, and donated the Kippenross Cup to the winner of the Melton championship team matches.<sup>27</sup> In 1901 the club erected a corrugated iron pavilion (donated by HW Staughton and Captain Staughton) on that part of the present golf links known then as 'The

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<sup>16</sup> 'Reminiscences of Melton, from the Memoirs of Mr Tom Collins' (M&DHS Newsletter, 20/12/2000)

<sup>17</sup> 'Mr George Minns - Looking Back' (MDHS typescript).

<sup>18</sup> Starr, *op cit*, p.211

<sup>19</sup> Alex Cameron, 'Melton Memoirs', typescript, p.12

<sup>20</sup> Robert Macdonald, 'A History of Melton', typescript held by MDHS, c.1969, p.11

<sup>21</sup> *ibid*

<sup>22</sup> Cameron, *op cit*, p.20; Murray, E, *The Plains of Iramoo* (self-published, 1974), pp.107-108

<sup>23</sup> Collins, *op cit*.

<sup>24</sup> Parish Plan, Parish of Kororoit

<sup>25</sup> Cameron, *op cit*, pp.13, 20

<sup>26</sup> Cameron, *op cit*, p.20

<sup>27</sup> J Bilszta, M&DHS.

Commons'.<sup>28</sup> When the golf club moved to its present 'commons's site in 1931, the gun club pavilion became the golf clubhouse. This was demolished some time after the new clubhouse was built in 1965.<sup>29</sup>

### *The Water Bore*

'The discovery of underground water was of the greatest benefit' to the dry township and district.<sup>30</sup>

In the 1890s Harvey Patterson of *Melton Park* displayed an interest in searching for gold under the volcanic flow in the Djerriwarrh Creek - Coimaida area. 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, water was struck, and Mr ST Staughton MLA suggested to the Shire Council that bores be put down in different parts of the Shire. Staughton offered to pay for the bore hire if Council provided the wood for the steam engine.

After a meeting of ratepayers the Council was approached to put some bores down. Council passed a special rate of 3 pence in the pound, and a committee of three councillors and three ratepayers were appointed; Alexander Cameron collected about £70 for the venture. The Mines Department stipulated that it must be officially presumed to be searching for gold.<sup>31</sup>

Four bores were put down – one at Toolern Vale near Robinson's *Creighton*, one on McCorkill's road, one near the Masonic Temple and the fourth on the Toolern Creek 'Flat' (now incorporated into the golf course) which proved to be the most successful. The Council assisted by taking it over and providing a pump and well in June 1892. Braybrook Council contributed £10 to it and local residents £337-12-6. After it was demolished by wind in November the Council replaced it with a heavier one.

The bore provided 'good mineral water' which stock would run towards. The site (1 acre, 2 roods, 37.5 perches) on which the bore is located was gazetted as a Water Supply Reserve in 1899.<sup>32</sup> By the 1920s it had apparently fallen into little use, as Council sold the pump etc for a few pounds, to the disappointment of some residents.<sup>33</sup> Later on a milk cooler was erected on the site.

There is now no evidence visible of this bore/windmill (east of the flat) that provided good clean water to the town, and was probably used later for the milk cooler.

All that remains is the tree known locally as the 'Dairy Pine' which marks the site of the former milk cooler, near the High Street boundary.

### History of the Melton Valley Golf Club

The original Melton golf course and club was established in 1927 by the then Melton Station Master Mr W Dunne. Golf was played on a few holes laid out on railway land at Melton South until 1931 when new links were laid out on the former Common on the west side of the

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<sup>28</sup> Macdonald, *op cit*, p.14

<sup>29</sup> Johnson, M, *Melton Valley Golf Club, 1932-1982*

<sup>30</sup> Cameron, *op cit*, pp.24-25; George Minns, 'Looking Back' (M&DHS Newsletter, January 2001).

<sup>31</sup> Starr, *op cit*, p.257

<sup>32</sup> Parish Plan, Township of Melton

<sup>33</sup> Cameron, *op cit*, pp.24-5

Toolern Creek, north of the Highway. The Club was re-named the Melton Valley Golf Club and was officially opened by the Shire President George Coburn in June 1932. Among the leading members of the new club were the Greig and Swan families who had established an 8 hole golf course on their adjacent *Melton Park* properties, Miss Smith of *Strathulloh*, John Wallace of Rockbank, handicapper, and several prominent business people of the small township.

The 12 hole golf course proved very popular with both men and women and was used every week until the beginning of the Second World War when it was closed.

In 1948, moves were made to re-open the course. A public meeting was called and a vote taken to reform the club. A blacksmith's shop in High street was rented for £2 a year to serve as a Club house. This was later vacated for the old Gun Club building at the eastern end of Unitt Street and was used throughout the 1950s and early 60s when the Shire agreed to assist the upgrade of amenities.

Following many appeals to Council, the Shire made available additional land on the west side of Toolern Creek to facilitate the construction of a 12-hole course, which opened in 1972. Members and friends contributed the labor required which reduced the cost of the development.

By 1975, the Club was able to unveil its 18-hole course, which is in use today. Facilities included a watering system, which permitted the establishment of greens, and a clubhouse with members' amenities.

Club management developed further facilities as the population of the district increased during the late 1970s and early 80s. A greenkeeper was employed and later golf professional was engaged to provide lessons for both senior and junior members.

The redesign of the Western Highway and connecting roads greatly affected the layout of the course. The loss of four holes together with alterations to a further two followed the opening of the Centenary Avenue extension across the northern edge of the course. This resulted in much negotiation with the Country Roads Board and the Shire from May 1982 to 1988 when the present 18-hole course was opened. Present facilities include a clubhouse, golf shop, parking and watering system.

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

*Melton Historical Themes:*

'Pastoralism'; 'Community'; 'Farming'; 'Water'; 'Transport'.

*Known comparable examples:*

There are no comparable places in the Shire of Melton.

### **Condition:**

Good



**Integrity:**

The Pyke graves are substantially intact, but most other places are damaged/disturbed relics of former places.

**Recommendations:**

Recommended for inclusion in the Melton Planning Scheme Heritage Overlay.

Recommended Heritage Overlay Schedule Controls:

External Paint Controls:	<i>No</i>
Internal Alteration Controls:	<i>No</i>
Tree Controls:	<i>Yes: the 'Dairy Tree', and small fig tree associated with a former house.</i>
Outbuildings and/or Fences:	<i>Yes: the fence associated with Pykes Graves</i>

**Other Recommendations.**

Before deciding on a planning permit application, the Responsible Authority must consider:

- A detailed heritage survey (including archaeological investigation) of post-contact cultural heritage fabric (including former residences and road surfaces associated with the early town) is to be undertaken, and a conservation policy adopted for the place. This should include interpretation of various historical places and themes that have played out in the golf course.



*Fig Tree and (new) concrete top of underground tank associated with former house, believed to be that of Hannah Watts.*



*The 'Dairy Tree' near the High Street boundary marks the site of the former Melton water bore, and the later milk cooler.*