

**Heritage Overlay No.:** 124

**Citation No.:** 477

**Place:** **Grave, Ruin & Archaeological Site,  
Former ‘Greenhills’ Pastoral  
Station, 36-49 O’Connell Avenue**

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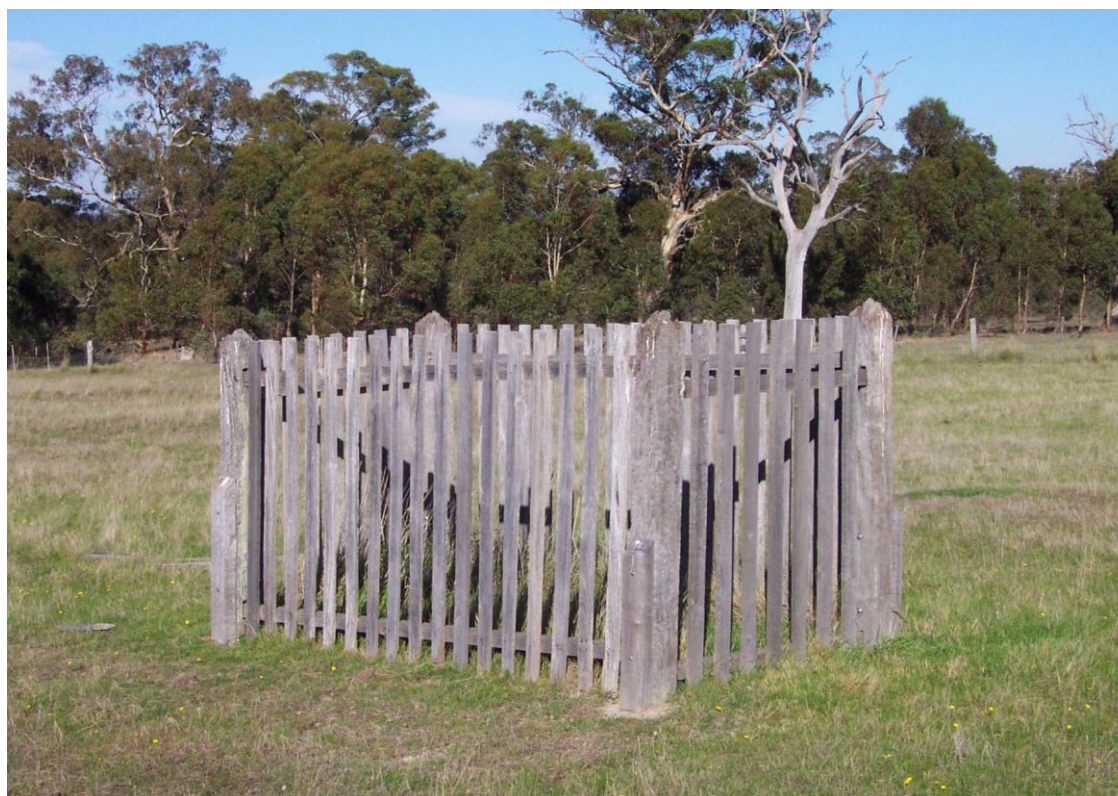
**Other Names of Place:** Formerly part of *Green Hills*

**Location:** 36-49 O’Connell Avenue Toolern Vale (Lot 4 LP 201866)

**Critical Dates:** c.1840s – mid/late nineteenth century.

**Existing Heritage Listings:** ‘Place of Interest’ (Rural Heritage Study)<sup>1</sup>

**Recommended Level of Significance:** LOCAL



**Statement of Significance:**

The grave, ruin and archaeological site associated with the former *Greenhills* pastoral station, situated at 36-49 O’Connell Avenue Toolern Vale, are significant for their association with the early pastoral and social life of the historically important *Greenhills* station, and their potential

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<sup>1</sup> Johnston, C, *Rural Heritage Study: Western Region of Melbourne* (Melbourne Western Region Inc., 1994), p.176

to provide information that might contribute to the understanding of early pastoral life and practices in Melton and Victoria. Historically, *Greenhills* was one of the first pastoral runs and European settlements established in the Shire of Melton. These places are the only known surviving buildings and works dating to the early (mid nineteenth century) era of the property.

The grave, ruin and archaeological site associated with the former *Greenhills* pastoral station, situated at 36-49 O'Connell Avenue Toolern Vale, are historically significant at a LOCAL level (AHC A4, B2). *Greenhills* was a noted early Victorian pastoral property established by John Hunter Patterson, prominent pastoralist and member of the early Port Phillip community, and Victorian MLA and Treasurer in the 1850s. Established very early in 1837, *Greenhills* was one of the first and largest (40,000 acres) runs in the district, and in 1841 the largest population centre in the present Shire of Melton. The station became the basis of the road system and early settlement of the Toolern Vale district, which was initially named after the station. The property was also associated with prominent identities:- John Batman's daughters Eliza and Adelaide who married the station's Collyer brothers; Cr A Macintosh, the first President of the Melton Roads Board; Cr Walter Browne, JP; and other pioneering pastoralists in Victoria's history including George Hyde and George Urquhart.

Although the person whose remains lies in the grave is thought to have been a young woman who died in the late 1840s or early 1850s, her identity remains a mystery. The oldest and most enduring story is that it contains the remains of a Miss Batman, one of John Batman's daughters; another that it was a governess, perhaps a Miss Bateman (sic), who pined away waiting for her sailor love to return; another that it was a Miss Collier (sic), a friend or relative of an early station owner. It is representative of the many unmarked graves on the original *Greenhills* station, and in the area, which remain part of Toolern Vale lore, despite their location being all but forgotten, and their occupants (Aboriginal people, station workers, a government land surveyor, and returning diggers) only generally known.

The grave associated with the former *Greenhills* pastoral station, situated at 36-49 O'Connell Avenue Toolern Vale, is socially significant at the LOCAL level (AHC G1). The grave has always been a part of the Toolern Vale community's lore, and life, its repair having been tended to by both the station owners and the community over the years. Its current state reflects the 'heavily fenced in' grave as it was in the early twentieth century. It was identified as a place of heritage significance to the local community in a community forum held as part of this heritage study.

The ruin and archaeological site associated with the former *Greenhills* pastoral station, situated at 36-49 O'Connell Avenue Toolern Vale, are scientifically significant at a LOCAL level (AHC C2). They have the potential to provide information regarding early pastoral practices, in particular sheep-washing, that would contribute to a wider understanding of the pastoral industry in the Shire of Melton and Victoria.

Overall, the grave, ruin and archaeological site associated with the former *Greenhills* pastoral station, situated at 36-49 O'Connell Avenue Toolern Vale, is of LOCAL significance.

### **Description:**

The main *Greenhills* homestead and associated buildings, gardens, and potential archaeological sites, are situated in 1260-1398 Diggers Rest to Coimadai Road Toolern Vale, Citation 55. Since the subdivision of O'Connell Avenue, the grave, putative sheepwash, and ruins of a cottage, are now on a different address: 36-49 O'Connell Avenue Toolern Vale.

The place includes an unknown grave that has been tended over the years, and the present timber picket fence probably dates to the early 1970s. The four corner posts may be older,<sup>2</sup> but the current state of the fence does not match a description of an earlier one.

About 40 metres east, beside ‘Hangman’s Gully’, is a site comprising large ‘flagstones’ (non-local stone), a drainage channel and pit, scatter of handmade bricks, and ruins of stone fireplace, that could be an 1847 sheepwash reputed to remain on the site.<sup>3</sup> (Note: one informant has a memory of a c.8 m. diameter stone wall being the ‘sheepwash’; it is possible that the present site has been degraded in recent decades.<sup>4</sup>)

Just across the gully is the ruinous remains of the shearers quarters, another rare early remnant of this important pastoral property. It is a large (c.10m. x 4.5m.) masonry (bluestone, local sedimentary stone, and handmade brick) building. Although one corner of this building is about 2 m. high, most of it appears to have been pushed over, and is c.0.5 metres high. This building had a roof mid twentieth century, and was intact to its gables c.1980. It ‘survived’ the fires that virtually wiped out nearby Toolern Vale.

### History:

Explorers and early settlers had passed through the area in travelling between the Geelong, Bacchus Marsh and Sunbury districts. Explorers and early settlers had passed through the area in travelling between the Geelong, Bacchus Marsh and Sunbury districts. *Green Hills* pastoral run was an early and well-known early Victorian pastoral run, and one the very first in the Shire of Melton.<sup>5</sup>

John Hunter Patterson ‘finding the country almost totally unoccupied’ established the *Green Hills* station c.January 1837. Prior to his death in 1859 Patterson was a Victorian MLA (1856-59) and Treasurer.<sup>6</sup> The establishment of *Green Hills* created the first track to the area, from Keilor ‘To Green Hills and Bullangrook’ (Bullengarook).<sup>7</sup> ‘Green Hills’ became the original name of the district and settlement that later became known as Yangardook, then Toolern, and finally Toolern Vale.

The 1841 census is one of the earliest records available in the area.<sup>8</sup> Travelling north from George Greaves’ ‘Wearibi’ station (11 persons), the census recorder came first to the stations of John Watton on the Djerriwarrh Creek (soon to be Simon Staughton’s Exford run, 18 persons), William Pyke (at Melton, 5 persons) and John Aitken (at the Gap, 19 persons).<sup>9</sup> The

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<sup>2</sup> Mr John Beaty, personal conversation, 8/5/2002

<sup>3</sup> Shire of Melton Heritage Study, Stage One: Community Workshop, 7/9/2001

<sup>4</sup> John Beaty, personal conversation, 8/5/2002

<sup>5</sup> A number of those who established runs in the Western District, at Mount Emu near Caramut (at which there was a much larger pastoral run called *Green Hills No.1*), would also appear to have had early association with *Green Hills* at Toolern in some way. That is, Cadden, Hyde, (and maybe Bell), and (later) possibly Urquhart. (Sayers, Bride, *op cit*, pp.281-282, 290-291, 289-299; Browne, *op cit*, p.172)

<sup>6</sup> Starr, J, *Melton: Plains of Promise* (Melton Shire Council, nd), p.76

<sup>7</sup> Land Victoria, Historical Plans: OR K7 and OR K8 (WS Urquhart, 1847); During the goldrush it became part of an alternative route to Gisborne, via the ‘Break-neck’.

<sup>8</sup> *1841 Census, New South Wales* (Port Phillip District).

<sup>9</sup> He is also referred to as a Doctor ‘Dr John Whatton’ (Notes, Melton District Historical Society [by Gail Chambers?]), and in Starr, *op cit*, p.87

largest of the early Melton pastoral stations was the run held by ‘Simeon Cadden in charge for John Patterson’, on ‘Pennyroyal Creek’ (Yangardook, or Toolern Vale Creek), the *Green Hills* station. It which supported 26 persons (‘all free’), including 15 shepherds. Its building was of ‘wood’.<sup>10</sup>

In 1841 Patterson was forced by the financial crisis to sell or lease all his extensive pastoral holdings. George Hyde became the occupier of *Green Hills* 1841-43.<sup>11</sup> Hyde died on 1<sup>st</sup> June 1844, travelling from *Green Hills* to Melbourne. In contrast to Aitken, Pyke, Yuille, Evans, Jackson and the other early squatters Vandemonian ‘overstraiters’, Hyde, like Howey, Coghill, Riddell and Hamilton, had been one of the New South Wales overlanders. An *Argus* article of 1945 suggested that the hills between Sunbury and Gisborne, including the areas of the *Green Hills* and *Mount Aitken* pastoral stations in the Shire of Melton, was an area of pre-eminent significance in the early pastoral history of Victoria. As the meeting place of the two streams of European settlement of Port Phillip, ‘these hills take pride of place in the pastoral and agricultural development of the State...’<sup>12</sup>

In 1843 Patterson was insolvent. His creditors included the Clyde Company, of which John and Alexander Dennistoun, the great Glasgow pastoral agent and finance company, was a major shareholder. It is possibly as the result of a settlement with Patterson that the names J&A Dennistoun then appear on maps (1845-56) in association with *Green Hills*. The name Bell (probably WM Bell, agent for Messrs. Dennistoun & Co.) also appears in association with the 48,000 acre property during this period.

Brothers William and John Collyer (or Collier) were associates of Bell and Buchanan, and appear to have leased or been managers of the property (extending west to near Bacchus Marsh) in this period. In August 1846 William married Eliza Batman, the late John Batman’s third daughter. John married her younger sister Adelaide.<sup>13</sup> This fits other information, that the effectively orphaned Batman daughters – ‘lively intelligent young ladies’ – had been taken in by neighbour John Aitken of *Mount Aitken* station in the 1840s.<sup>14</sup>

At the time of Crown sale c.1856 George Urquhart acquired much of the former squatting estate and began purchasing surrounding allotments that had previously been alienated by the Crown.<sup>15</sup> Around this time the property was renamed Yangardook during this period, but was still referred to locally as *Green Hills*.

In 1861 the *Greenhills* station passed to Alexander Macintosh. In 1869 Macintosh gave notice of an ‘Extensive Clearing Out Sale’ sale over two days in June. Apart from horses, cattle, fowl, farm, dairy and laundry implements etc, there was furniture from nine bedrooms, a schoolroom, office and lobby, and kitchen pantry.<sup>16</sup> The property was purchased by Matthew Ingle Browne

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<sup>10</sup> 1841 Census, *op cit*, Return No.13

<sup>11</sup> Land Victoria: Historical Plan: ‘Roll 11’ (c.1841); Starr, *op cit*, p.76

<sup>12</sup> *The Argus*, 14/7/1945

<sup>13</sup> Starr, *op cit*, p.78; Mr Alan Funston, personal conversation, 10/1/2002. (The Funstons were amongst the earliest settlers at the Gap, and Alan Funston’s father worked and lived on *Greenhills*.)

<sup>14</sup> Lang, John Dunmore, *Port Phillip, or the Colony of Victoria*, (Glasgow, 1853), pp.98-99 ; also Beattie, Stewart K, *The Odd Good Year: Early Scots to Port Phillip, Northern Australia, Gap, Gisborne, and Beyond* (Southward Press, Marrickville, 1999), pp. 50-61; Symonds, IW, *Bulla Bulla: An Illustrated History of the Shire of Bulla* (Spectrum, Melbourne, 1985), p.21

<sup>15</sup> Cameron, ‘Melton Memoirs’ (M&DHS), p.23; ‘Old Melton Times’, (MDHS typescript, author unknown, reproduced from the *Melton Express* 1905)

<sup>16</sup> ‘Notice’ (18/3/1869), M&DHS.

of Welmore near Ross, Tasmania. in that year. His £10,000 mortgage was discharged in 1880.<sup>17</sup>

In 1876 the pastoral activities on *Greenhills* were subject of a report by the ‘Travelling Reporter’ for the *Australasian*’-

‘The Green Hills Estate belonging to Mr MJ Browne is one of the most extensive properties in the district. It is five miles distant from the town of Melton, being the same distance from the Diggers Rest Railway station, the estate extending in a westerly direction to within seven miles of Bacchus Marsh.

It has been occupied by the present owner for about seven years, the whole of the land being devoted to grazing purposes. Both cattle and sheep are kept on the station and a considerable amount of attention is paid to the breeding of both classes of stock. There are about 8000 sheep, mostly merinos which are found to answer better than the long-woolled classes on this property. A trial was being made with Lincolns some few years back, and there are now a few animals of this class remaining, but it is intended for the future to breed nothing but pure merinos. At the last sheep sales in Melbourne some superior rams were purchased which were bred by Mr C. Taylor of Tasmania and also some first class rams – one from the flock of Mr G Dowling, costing 50 guineas. Some of these sheep are of a superior class and several prizes were taken by them in Melbourne. The cattle number about 300 head, a mixed herd, but Mr Browne intends to work into a pure Shorthorn strain, and has for several years been using well bred bulls of that breed. A commencement has been made with a bull bred by Mr R Dawbin, which has left some very good stock behind him. The one at present with the herd is a well bred animal called Kildour which was purchased from Mr R. Mcdougall of Keilor. A number of superior cows were also obtained about three years ago from the herd of Messrs Cobb and Co and their progeny are mostly of a high class. The estate is subdivided into several conveniently sized paddocks and it is Mr Browne’s intention to improve his pasture by sowing the whole of his land with English grasses during the next year or two. About 15 acres are generally under cultivation with hay and green crops for home use, the remainder of the land being pasture. The homestead is a very comfortable one and conveniently arranged, the various outbuildings being of a substantial description. Attached to the residence is a nice garden containing about an acre and a half, which is well stocked with a good variety of fruit trees.’<sup>18</sup>

In May 1888 (soon before his death) MI Browne disposed of the greater part of *Greenhills* estate (which by this time had increased from 5284 acres in 1871<sup>19</sup> to 7020 acres) to Melbourne solicitor William Henry Croker (a partner of Sir Samuel Gillott in the legal firm Gillott, Croker and Snowden). In 1889-90 Croker sold some 4500 acres of this land to DWH (Harvey) Patterson, grazier, sharebroker and mining company director.<sup>20</sup> On it Patterson established the *Melton Park* estate the central western part of Melton Shire.

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<sup>17</sup> Indenture, 18/6/1869

<sup>18</sup> *The Australasian Travelling Reporter*, 25/11/1876

<sup>19</sup> Shire of Melton, *Ratebook*, 1871

<sup>20</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).

The balance of the property, some 2500 acres, with the homestead,<sup>21</sup> was retained by Matthew Ingle Browne and then his son Walter. Walter Browne, and later the ‘Browne Bros’, ‘graziers’, were rated as owners of the property during the early decades of the twentieth century.<sup>22</sup> Walter Browne appears to have had the present weatherboard homestead built c.1903.<sup>23</sup>

At the turn of the century farming was resurgent and, under political, social and economic pressure, many of Melton’s large pastoral properties began to be ‘broken up’. The empires of Clarke, Staughton, and Taylor were divided into share farms or simply sold off, either to the Closer Settlement Board, or privately. Smaller pastoral estates, such as *Mount Aitken*, *Melton Park* and James Roberston’s 3800 acre Upper Keilor estate were also sold off privately or to the Soldier Settlers Board in the early twentieth century.<sup>24</sup>

In August 1922 1674 acres of *Greenhills* was sold in 11 lots ranging in size from eight to 302 acres.<sup>25</sup> Lot 9, the homestead block of 1,100 acres of grazing country (comprising land west of Yangardook Creek) was not offered under auction on this date, but purchased by Hubert Borbidge in c.1923.<sup>26</sup>

In addition to grazing of sheep and cattle, a poultry establishment was conducted on the property by H. Borbidge from 1935 - 1941.<sup>27</sup> Farming seems to have played a larger role in the property around this time: the *Melton Express* of 1936 carried a report of a bad injury sustained by Hubert Borbidge, 24 year old son of Hugh Borbidge, in an attempt to stop a horse team from bolting with a reaper and binder on the property. Surgeons in St Andrew’s Hospital were able to save his leg from amputation.<sup>28</sup>

The property remained in the possession of the Borbidge family until 1983, when it was purchased by Captain John O’Connell. The O’Connell Avenue subdivision was carried out and the property was put up for sale in 1998.<sup>29</sup>

### *Grave*

There have been numerous graves found, known about and lost, on *Greenhills*. The rocks which marked at least one were removed by a later farmer to cultivate the ground, unknowing that they were graves until a government representative came looking for the grave of an early surveyor.<sup>30</sup> Others, until recently visible by mounds, on the Toolern Creek opposite the Funston property, are shown in an early map.<sup>31</sup>

And numerous skeletons found on *Green Hills* have been buried at Melton Cemetery. Some of these were aboriginal remains, who Matthew Ingle Browne had removed to the Melton

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<sup>21</sup> Shire of Melton, *Ratebooks*, 1907-08

<sup>22</sup> Shire of Melton, *Ratebooks*, 1900-1925

<sup>23</sup> Shire of Melton, *Ratebooks*, 1900-1910

<sup>24</sup> Robertson (1903): Auction Notice (Pearson Rowe Smith and Co., and JM Peck and Sons)

<sup>25</sup> Starr, *op cit*, p.78

<sup>26</sup> Mrs Lorraine Gillespie, M&DHS

<sup>27</sup> Sands and McDougall directory entries

<sup>28</sup> *Melton Express*, 4/1/1936

<sup>29</sup> Starr, *op cit*, p.78; *Melton Express*, 16/9/1998

<sup>30</sup> Notes from Lorraine Gillespie, M&DHS (nd)

<sup>31</sup> Land Victoria, Historical Plans: ‘Feature Plan 66 (1866?’); Funston, *op cit*.

Cemetery, and buried in the south east corner of cemetery, south of the Independent section. A grove of self sown Acacia trees marks the site. The cemetery books noted both the burial and the location. Browne bought the grave and paid for the Presbyterian minister to read a prayer. The interment book (lost) indicated ‘bones of aborigines’ but it is not known how many bodies these represented.<sup>32</sup> It is thought that others died ‘coming back from the gold fields, very ill, and just laid down and died, their remains found later.’<sup>33</sup> These may be the graves thought to have been ‘interred where found’.<sup>34</sup>

Others were reputedly on the Melton – Gisborne Road, south of Coimadai – Diggers Rest Road ‘on the Park Paddock side owned by McCorkells’ probably now covered in plantations. This may be the grave, not marked, precise location unknown, reputed to be of a *Greenhills* stockman on the south-east corner of the Toolern Vale crossroads. This is not verified by documentation.<sup>35</sup>

However the best known grave, which can be located with certainty, is that which was fenced by the Melton and District Historical Society in the early 1970’s. It is not however not necessarily the best understood and, except that all parties seem to agree it is a female, dates from the 1840s/early 1850s, and is perhaps a governess, it is not known who is buried there.

The traditional belief in the district is that this grave contains the remains of Eliza Batman, one of two sisters who married the two Collyer brothers at *Green Hills* in the 1840s. Explanations of the location of the grave include that the hillside and valley were a favourite location, and one that she often painted.<sup>36</sup>

In 1927 HG Borbidge, the new owner of the property, wrote to the *Herald* asking if any reader could inform him about the ‘grave heavily fenced in’, which ‘the old people of the district’ call ‘Batman’s grave’.<sup>37</sup> MJ Ryan responded that a lady relative who had lived within a mile of the grave, continuously from 1845 to 1917, had informed him that ‘Mrs Collier was a Batman and her sister, Miss Batman, died and was buried during their residence on the station, probably in the late forties early fifties’. The informant had also advised that there had been ‘a wooden church not far from the grave where the few families of the district attended services’, which, postulated MJ Ryan, may have accounted for the location of the grave, over a mile distant from the homestead.<sup>38</sup> The memory of the church would appear to be supported by the record of Mr Alexander McIntosh later (1869) having donated ‘timber and forms’, which had formerly been used in a ‘place of worship’ on his station, to the new Toolern Vale Common School. A church was no longer needed on *Greenhills* he explained, ‘since the erection of a new church in Melton.’<sup>39</sup> MJ Ryan’s informant was also quite detailed, and apparently accurate, in relation to her history of *Greenhills*’ early ownership.

A letter from John G Gilby rebutted that, two Batman sisters having resided on the property, ‘gave rise in after years to the belief that the lonely grave on the hillside is occupied by one of

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<sup>32</sup> Judith Bilszta, M&DHS

<sup>33</sup> Gillespie, *op cit*; see also ST Gill’s ‘Unlucky Digger that Never Returned’.

<sup>34</sup> J Bilszta (source: Williams’ 1917 history of Bacchus Marsh?)

<sup>35</sup> Ibid; and Judith Bilszta notes, from local informants c.1973-74, including George Robinson.

<sup>36</sup> Funston, *op cit*; John Beaty, personal conversation, 8/5/2002

<sup>37</sup> HG Borbidge, in the *Herald*, 8/5/1927

<sup>38</sup> The *Herald* (nd, 1927)

<sup>39</sup> Toolern Vale State School Centenary Celebrations Committee, *Toolern Vale State School Centenary History 1869-1969* (1969), p.7

the Batman family and apparently that belief still exists'. All of the Batmans are buried elsewhere he advised, adding that the grave:-

‘... is that of a young governess at the station – probably some time in the forties. She had a sailor lover with whom on his visits to the station she used to walk often across the green hillside. He went away to sea for just one more trip and was not heard of again. The young lady waited long in vain for her lover’s return. Before her death she expressed an earnest desire to be buried there.’<sup>40</sup>

The source of this version is not provided, although an undated (probably 1960s or 70s) letter from Isabel Funston mentions a letter ‘JG’ (John Gilby) had printed in the *Herald* in relation to Borbidge’s 1927 inquiry, in which he had said that his information had come from his mother who had lived in the district all her life, and he was sure it was correct. Mrs Funston also recalled the Gilby letter as saying that *Greenhills* ‘was heavily timbered in those days’ and that ‘these lovers had a track they used to walk along’, which was where the girl later asked to be buried. The mystery in this letter is that while she claimed that Gilby said that the girl was a ‘Miss Bateman, not Batman’, she also said that Gilby referred to her as ‘Mrs Collier’s sister’, which would mean that she was actually a Batman.<sup>41</sup> There is a great deal of speculation on the tragic lives of the Batman sisters, and much disputed evidence. There is an Eliza Batman in the Geelong East cemetery, with the right dates, but other records indicate that Eliza and Adelaide Batman died with their Collyer husbands in Scotland decades later. Records also account for the deaths and burials of Maria, Lucy and Pelonamena Batman, all that appears to be known of Ellen (Ellin) Batman is that she died aged 21, in April 1851. The whereabouts of her death or place of burial are not given.<sup>42</sup>

James J Corrigan, another correspondent to the *Herald* debate, suggested that the grave belonged to a ‘Miss Collier, who was a friend (and perhaps a relative) of a family named Macintosh who owned Green Hills station .... Miss Collier contracted a lingering illness, and it was her request to be buried there. Mrs Macintosh was a relative of John Batman.’ Corrigan added a further poignant touch:

‘I have seen graves on sandhills in Western Riverina, and of those who died out west of the Darling. I have seen tombstones huddled together at St Pancras almost in the heart of London. I have seen bodies stitched in canvass go down to the depths of the sea. But perhaps the most lonesome grave of all is that of the forgotten girl who sleeps in the wooded folds of the Green Hills.’<sup>43</sup>

The different stories about the occupant of the grave would appear to have some key points in common:- a young unmarried woman, governess on *Greenhills*, who died in the late 1840s or early 1850s. She may be name unknown, or Ellen Batman, or a sister of the Collier brothers, or perhaps even a ‘Miss Bateman’. The Melton and District Historical Society is inclined to the version that the grave is that of the young governess who pined away for her seaman lover.<sup>44</sup>

Mrs J Funston, whose husband worked on *Greenhills* for many years, wrote in 1961 that the station owners in her time (probably the Borbidges), while not knowing the name of the person

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<sup>40</sup> *ibid*

<sup>41</sup> Letter, Isabel Funston to Lorraine Gillespie (nd).

<sup>42</sup> ‘The Family of John Batman and Eliza Thompson’ (The Batman Family Association); also Lorraine Gillespie’s notes on reasearch ‘John Batman’s Family’ (M&DHS).

<sup>43</sup> *ibid*

<sup>44</sup> J Bilszta ‘Lone Graves in the Melton District’; and Lorraine Gillespie, letter to Mary Tolhurst, 26/9/2000



buried there, ‘always kept the grave in repair’. It is a tradition that was continued when the Melton and District Historical Society repaired the grave fence in the early 1970s. The present owners report that it has been mysteriously repaired within the past few years.<sup>45</sup> Although its exact story remains a mystery, the grave has always been a part of the community lore and life of Toolern Vale and beyond.

There are thought to be four or five other graves, from the 1850-60s era, located in the vicinity of the fenced grave. These pre-dated the gazetting of the cemetery, following which all interments of workers were in graves purchased by Browne.<sup>46</sup>

#### *Sheep Wash and Shearers Quarters*

Being such an early and major sheep property, any remnants of this industry, such as the ruins of the shearer’s quarters, are a significant part of the Shire’s heritage.

If the archaeological site proves to be a c.1847 relic of a sheep washing procedure,<sup>47</sup> they would be of much wider significance than to Melton Shire alone, given the scarcity and poor condition of surviving examples of this once-important activity. Sheep washing was an early pastoral practice, and our knowledge of sheep wash structures is far from complete. A sheep wash would be of very high significance on the grounds of rarity alone, but also because, with ‘breeding’, the question of ‘washing’ (rather than shearing ‘in the grease’) were the two great subjects debated by nineteenth century pastoralists.<sup>48</sup> It would be of considerable archaeological significance for its potential to provide information regarding the early practice of sheep-washing in Victoria.

If the structures relate to early sheep dipping practices they would also be important. ‘One of the major scourges of the early nineteenth century flock masters was scab, which is carried by minute parasites’, writes historian Jessie Serle.<sup>49</sup> Batey’s account of the early settlement in the study area are peppered with references to the problem of scab, which was extremely contagious. Affected sheep were usually individually ‘hand dressed’, the most popular early treatments being a tobacco based concoction, and the terrible sounding ‘corrosive sublimate’. Batey provides a description of the arrangement of the Page brothers’ woolshed on *Glencoe* (Diggers Rest) for dressing scabby sheep.<sup>50</sup>

Although not without detractors, the practice of general sheep dipping was used perhaps as early as the 1840s, and by the 1850s it was becoming a common preventative measure for ticks and other diseases. A dose of arsenic was commonly used in the dip, or sulphur. This latter required heating and mixing, a process which was typically undertaken in ‘a suitable pot or boiler fitted with a tap’. Examples of these pots survive on the former Chirnside properties at Werribee and Mount William.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Mrs Denise Drew, personal conversation, 25/2/2006

<sup>46</sup> J Bilszta.

<sup>47</sup> Johnston, *loc cit*

<sup>48</sup> Allom Lovell Sanderson Pty Ltd and Jessie Serle, ‘Werribee Park Metropolitan Park: Conservation Analysis’ (MMBW, December 1985), pp.115-117

<sup>49</sup> Serle, *op cit*, pp.111-114.

<sup>50</sup> Batey, I, *Pioneers of the Port Phillip District*, 1907, SLV, LaTrobe Manuscripts Collection, p.28.

<sup>51</sup> *ibid*, p 111.

Although outbreaks had to be treated immediately, a pattern of dipping straight after shearing seems to have developed, and in time become entrenched. Other (presumably twentieth century) shearing sheds commonly have concrete sheep-dips adjacent to the shed. It is likely then that there may have been a shearing shed in the vicinity of the archaeological site.

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

*Shire of Melton Historical Themes:* ‘Pastoralism’, ‘Community’

*Comparable Places in Shire of Melton:*

The place compares with other early pastoral properties, particularly with ruinous or archaeological sites, including those of John Aitken’s *Mount Aitken* (Place No.136), WC Yuille (Place No.467, and possibly the former Rockbank Hotel, Place No.317), the former Pinkerton homestead (Place No.264) and graves (Place No.291), and the ruin on *Strathtulloh* possibly associated with Watton’s original station (Place No.283). Place Nos.34, 44, 57, 61 and 81 may also be places associated with the early pastoral industry (possible evidence of shepherd’s huts etc).

Historically it compares with Staughtons’ *Exford* and *Eynsebury* pastoral properties (Place Nos.269, 281), both of which have their original mid and late nineteenth century and outbuildings (in various repair), and WJT Clarke’s *Rockbank* pastoral property (Place No.428).

### **Condition:**

Grave: Good.

Reputed Sheepwash: Archaeological Site.

Building/cottage: Ruinous.

### **Integrity:**

Grave: Continuously upgraded renovated.

Reputed Sheepwash: Unknown.

Building/cottage: Unknown (presumed Fair).

### **Recommendations:**

Recommended for inclusion in the Melton Planning Scheme Heritage Overlay.

Recommended Heritage Overlay Schedule Controls:

External Paint Controls: *No*

Internal Alteration Controls: *No*

Tree Controls: *No*

Outbuildings and/or Fences: *No*.

Other Recommendations:

- An archaeological survey of the place has the potential to provide further information regarding early sheepwash practices and is desirable.



Ruin, reputedly of the former *Greenhills* Station Shearers' Quarters.