

Enjoy some healthy exercise and experience some of the
awe-inspiring beauty of the Croydon area
by joining the
HERITAGE WALK AROUND ALTO
the high-ground of the City of Maroondah

Allowing time to take in the breathtaking views,
you should allow 1 hour to complete the excursion

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File1



Alto Reserve - *(Stop 6)*

START on the northern side of CROYDON RAILWAY STATION (first called Warrandyte Station when opened in 1882.) The surrounding area had been known as White Flats because of the profusion of white wildflowers.

Gregory Lacey owned the land around the station and his suggestion that it be called CROYDON was later accepted. The name came from the English town where his wife had lived, rather than STEEPLE BUMPSTEAD where he had originated.

HERITAGE WALK AROUND ALTO

STOP 1 - 67 WICKLOW AVENUE. This property was originally a guest-house. Along with the holiday-makers, a young returned WW1 soldier, George Holder, enjoyed his evening meals there while he established an orchard over the hill on the main highway.

George was also waiting for his war-bride, Blanche, to come out from England. He had a two-year wait; but in the meantime he walked from and back to his orchard each evening.

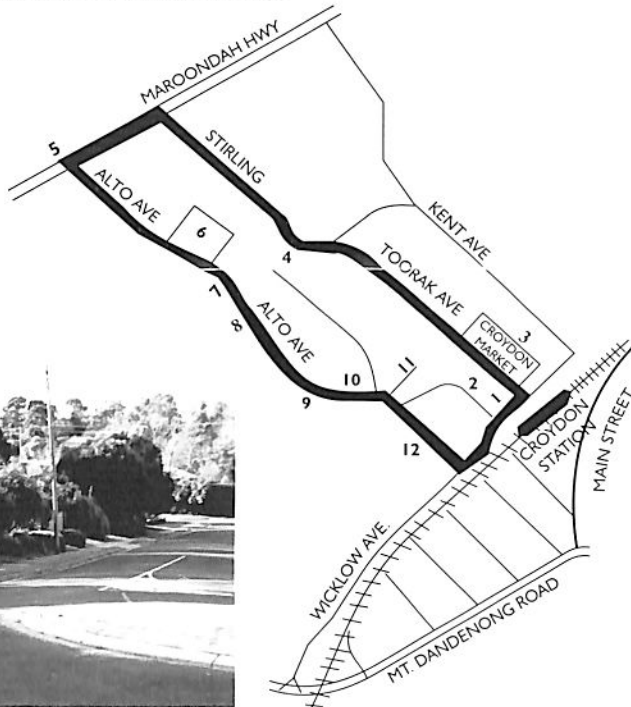
Let's head up the hill, the one and a quarter kilometres to where his orchard stood, in what is now **MAROONDAH HIGHWAY**.

STOP 2 - The present Anglican Church of Saint John the Divine, on our left, was built in 1956, replacing a weatherboard church which had been on the site since 1922.

The land on the right was purchased by another WW1 returned service-man, Allan Brown. Allan started planning a large livestock and produce market in 1920, and his

STOP 3 - CROYDON MARKET commenced trading in 1927. In earlier days we would be hearing the sounds of cattle, sheep, pigs, poultry etc. and occasionally see some livestock escape and bolt for freedom. (Allan's son Max established an Estate Agency.) The Coles supermarket opened in 1982.

STOP 4 - When George Holder walked up the hill to his orchard the area was mostly undeveloped, apart from a few scattered orchards. There had been a clay pit in what is now **STIRLING ROAD**. This had been used by John Looby, who was a brickmaker and the first purchaser of the land in 1873.



STOP 5 - George's orchard was on the far side of the highway. McDonald's now stands on part of the land. Prior to McDonald's a drive-in theatre occupied the orchard site. As we continue along **MAROONDAH HIGHWAY** towards **ALTO AVENUE** we move into **KELLY COUNTRY**. In 1889 Richard Kelly purchased 100 acres stretching from the highway over the hill to Mt Dandenong Road beyond the railway line. Each evening he would close his northern gate where Alto Avenue meets the highway. His homestead "Wicklow Hills" was on what is now **THE TERRACE** on the southern slope, where he also developed an orchard.

STOP 6 -ALTO RESERVE (Photograph on front) After climbing to the highest point in the area take a rest at Alto Reserve and study some of the virgin bush in its untouched state. Richard Kelly's son, Franklin, often argued with his mate, Tony Loughnan, of Loughnan's Hill, Ringwood, as to which hill was the higher. Franklin proved to be the winner, by some 55 feet.

After this break, cross to the other side of the avenue at number 69, **STOP 7 THE GREY SISTERS REST HOME FOR MOTHERS.** It is named "Kewn Kreestha" meaning the Quiet of Christ.

STOP 8 - On your left, overlooking numbers 66-64, look across the Yarra Valley, towards Healesville and the mountain background of the Great Dividing Range in the north-east.





STOP 9 - The views of Croydon and the **DANDENONGS** are spectacular as we move down the slope.

STOP 10 - Number 36 was the home of Mrs Meggs, a noted music teacher. Many children came from near and far to learn to play the piano in her studio.

STOP 11 - THE TERRACE where the original Kelly homestead, "Wicklow Hills", once stood. Bushfires were always a hazard in the bush and the homestead was burned down in 1928.

Enjoy the view as you continue descending Alto Avenue.

Richard Kelly's son, Franklin, made plans for this road through their property, up over the hill to the main highway. He named it Alto Avenue, because of the high altitude. In 1920 he offered seventy allotments reaching from north to south in the Wicklow Hills Estate for sale. Homes began to be built here in the 1920's.



Notes are courtesy of the **CROYDON HISTORICAL SOCIETY**, per the Society's President, Les Hutchinson, 9 Alto Avenue, Croydon. This is one of the early homes. (**STOP 12**).

The Society's **Museum**, situated in the **Croydon Library Complex**, has numerous photographs and artefacts of the early Croydon area, and is worthy of a visit.

Photographs by Jo Laukart, "Treasured Times"
Sponsored by Maroondah Tourism Advisory Board, Maroondah City Council