



The

LITTLE

ZOO

in the

GARDENS



Ballarat Zoological Gardens

1917 - 1957

TIMELINE

1857

The Ballarat City Council applied to the Government to reserve the old police paddock for public gardens.



1857 - 1870

Acclimatisation societies existed across the British Empire to establish familiar exotic plants and animals into new environments.



1873

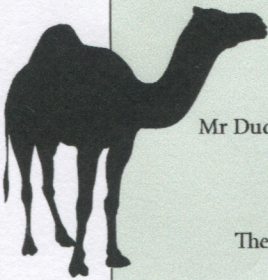
Work started on a menagerie on a quarter acre
"all trenched and fenced to house zoological and ornithological specimens."

1874

Aviaries constructed for birds and wild fowl. Two acres fenced at south end to run deer and kangaroo. Many animals were donated.

1912

Henry Ben Jahn's bequest enabled the establishment of the zoo.



1914

Mr Dudley Le Souef, Director of the Melbourne Zoological Gardens, recommended a collection of herbivorous and native animals.



1917

The Zoo was declared open by The Hon. Chief Secretary, Mr Donald McLeod.
Mr J. Waight was appointed caretaker.

1918

Improvements included donkey cart rides, slot machines and a merry-go-round.

1920s

People visited the Zoo in large numbers. Picnics were popular.

1930s and 1940s

Visitor numbers declined due to the Depression and War restrictions.

1951

The Zoo was leased to Mr G. Langley.

1959

The Zoo was finally closed.

1995

The balance of the Ben Jahn Trust was used for the construction of the Wetlands to
"provide for the aquatic, riparian and indigenous native fauna of the area".




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THE BENEFACTOR

HENRY BEN JAHN

b. 1831 Liegnitz, Silesia, Prussia. d. 28 December 1911

Ben Jahn went to Britain as a young man. On 29 June 1854 he boarded the "Oliver Lang", (a sister ship to the "Marco Polo") in Liverpool, arriving in Melbourne on 23 September 1854 from whence he made his way to the diggings.

In 1856 Ben Jahn, then aged 25, was naturalised in Ballarat. He was working as a gold assayer and jeweller and lived in Grenville Street. By 1864 he owned a shop on the corner of Albert and Lewis Street where he also lived. He invested judiciously in gold mining.



He was a nature student, and was very fond of animals and birds. He indulged in his leisure in long walks through the ranges surrounding Ballarat, and found pleasure in gathering wild flowers for decorative purposes."


[The Age 9 March 1912 p. 14]

Following his retirement, Henry Ben Jahn travelled extensively. On 3 May 1910 he made his will, leaving his entire estate valued at some £10,000 to the Ballarat City Council for the founding of a zoo in the Botanical Gardens at Lake Wendouree, stipulating it be utilised for the purpose of instruction and amusement. In September 1912 his two shops and a cottage in Ballarat West were sold, the proceeds going to the City Council as he intended.

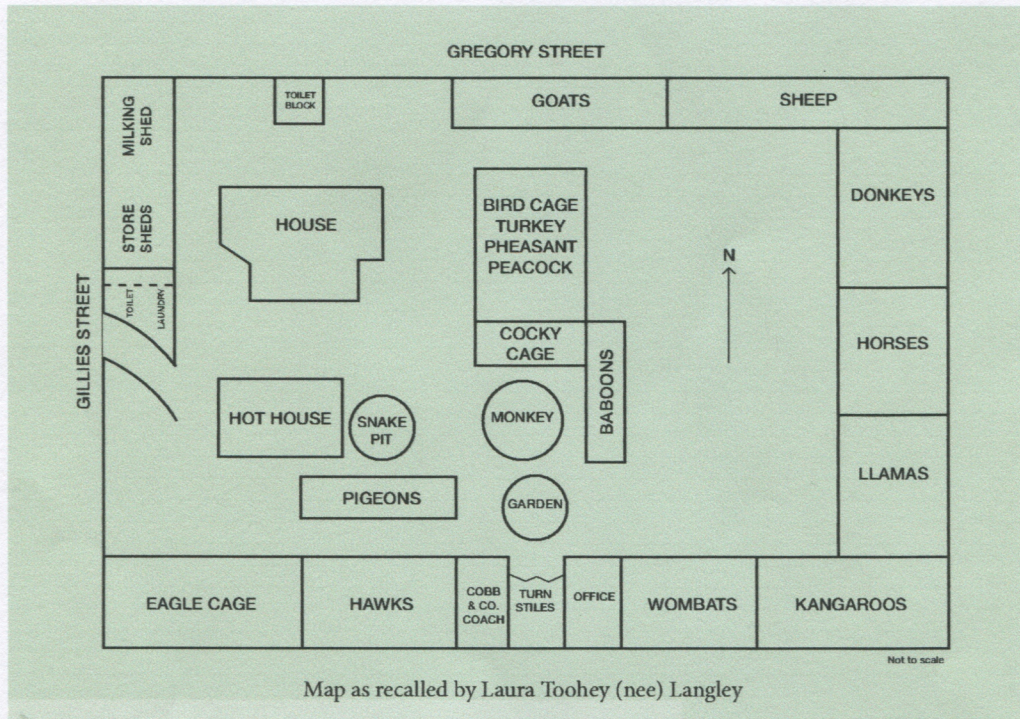
The Ben Jahn Zoo opened on 17 April, 1917.



In 1995, the residue of his estate was used to help fund the re-establishment of a wetlands in the North Gardens Reserve, now known as the North Garden Wetlands.


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HEYDAY



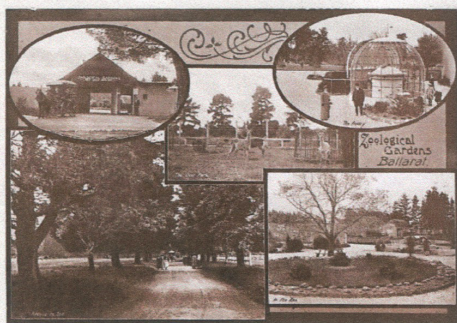
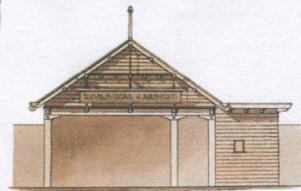
Laura Langley lived at the zoo in the 1950's when her father was the curator.

She wrote of her experiences:

"The Ballarat Zoo was a very good place to visit. There was always plenty to see. The wedge tailed eagles, monkeys, baboons, all sorts of pigeons, peacocks with beautiful coloured tails, turkeys, pheasants, cockatoos and kangaroos. It was interesting when the snakes were on show. My father used to handle them and milk the snakes for their venom next to the snake pit. The glass house showed beautiful fish, carpet snakes and crocodiles; well worth seeing. Wombats were very cute. Their night concrete houses are still there today. You had to be careful the llamas didn't spit at you. The pony rides were very popular."

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PHOTOGRAPHS




Ballarat Zoological Gardens

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THE ANIMALS

ANIMALS ON DISPLAY AT THE BALLARAT ZOO 1917

Kangaroo
Wallaby (Victorian and Tasmanian)
Paddy Melon
Monkey
Wombat
Ringtail Opossum
Bush-tail Opossum
Tasmanian Black Opossum
Native Cat
Guinea Pigs
Tortoise
Emu
Cassowary

Eagle
Swamp Hawk
Blue Crane
Silver-necked Crane
White and Coloured Peafowl
Guinea-fowl
Pheasant
Pacific and Silver Gulls
Bronzewing Pigeons
Common Pigeons
Parrots (several varieties)
Mountain, Black and Wood Ducks
Cockatoo

Laughing Jackass
Spurwing Plover
Stone Plover
Bald Coot
Black Magpie
Owl
Dove
Californian Quail
Curlew
Linnet
Java Sparrows
Swamp Hawk

THE MIDDLE YEARS

Camel
Angora Rabbits
White Rabbits
Coloured Rabbits
Ostrich
Native Companions (Brolgas)
Cassowary (a pair)
Monkeys
Peacocks (a pair)
Kangaroos
Tasmanian Devils
Stump-tailed Lizards (4)
Blue-tongue Lizard
Porcupine (Echidna)
Pheasants (various)
Coloured Peafowl
Canaries (various)
Black Wallabies
Bennet Wallabies
Wombats

White Magpie
Mountain Devils (4)
Bandicoot
Japanese Deer
Hog Deer
Forester Kangaroos
Blue Kangaroos
Dingoes
Donkeys
Flying Squirrels
Tasmanian Wild Fowl
English Pheasant
Mongolian Pheasant
Golden Pheasant
Amherst Pheasant
Mountain Duck
Canadian Geese
Cape Barren Geese
Brown Hawk
Goshawk

Wedge-tailed Eagle
Cockatoos
Spur winged Plover
Curlews
Canaries
Linnet
Java Sparrows
Finches
Mopoke
Stubble Quail
Seagulls
Californian Quail
Owl
Laughing Jackass
Magpie
Several varieties of Parrots
Copperhead Snakes
Brown Snakes
Stump-tailed Lizard
Blue-tongue Lizard

1956

Monkeys
Wombats
Cockatoos (White and Major Mitchells)
Corellas (Short and Long-billed)
Llama
Donkey
Emus (four)
Eagles (two black and four golden)
Hanoakes (three)

Possums (four)
Doves (seven, mixed)
Kangaroo rats (two)
Guinea pigs (six)
White rabbits (five)
Peacocks (ten)
Flying squirrels (eight)
Guinea fowls (two)
Pelicans (two pairs)

Reptiles (102: crocodiles, snakes, lizards, tortoises, walking fish, etc.)
Pheasants (32: golden, silken, mountain ring necks, firebirds, etc.)
Porcupines (two echidnas)
Wild ducks (30 mixed varieties: teal, black, mallards, etc.)
Fairy penguins (105)



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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Ballarat Historical Society

Ann Zoet

Acclimatisation Society

Ballarat Tram Museum

City of Ballarat

**Curator Peter Marquand and the team at the Botanical
Gardens**

Friends of the Ballarat Botanical Gardens

History Group:

*Jennifer Burrell, Kaye Crawford, Stephanie de Boer, John Garner,
Kathleen Hobson, Joan Hunt, Jennifer Leigh-Jones, Zeldia Martin,
Margaret McBean, Nina Netherway, Susan Patterson, Lorraine Powell,
Susan Rattray*



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