

Reference book I used was:

"The Early days of the Ballarat Water Supply"

Author: Commissioner J A Chisholme M B E 1980

This book is available for reference in the B/rat Australiana section annexe of our library.

INTRODUCTORY PAGE

1837 First white explorers to the Ballarat District

1851 September 21st, first Gold Licenses issued

October, first public agitation for a water supply

1854 December Eureka Stockade

1856 January, first Municipal Council meeting in Ballarat

Ballarat West Council had a water sub-committee

First improved water supply, Wendouree Swamp, the bank was raised, pumps and tanks erected, water carts and road were improved

1857 Ballarat East Council was formed, the a water sub-committee. From then on there were occasional of East and West Councils

1858 First piped water supply from the Swamp, pipes were laid from near Wendouree Parade and Webster Street, where the Rockery is, to Sturt Street, near Lydiard Street
December, first piped water was available

1860 January 10th, Joint Water Committee of West and East Councils, met in either Town Hall, usually under the Chairmanship of the Mayor

1861 January 11th, Kirk sold his Dam to the Government of Victoria

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Page 6, taken from "The early days of the Ballarat water supply" By commissioner J A Chisholm.

Due to the insufficiency of water to the swamp, the council and others, were constantly looking for ways of augmenting the supply.

In 1 council meeting, the surveyor was requested to ascertain the levels of the lake Burrumet and the water level of Warrenheip and furnish a report on the probable expense of bringing water into the township (15). (from one or the other.?)

There is also in existence in the town hall a most interesting map of a proposal to bring water in from the north and across Creswick Road in an elevated flume.

Diversion of the "peoples" water from its natural flow down the creek \, caused a protest from some abutting landholders.

It was later given as a legal opinion that the Council could not interfere with the flow.

This came up again at a later date when the Council agreed to increase the flow down Gnarr Creek.

Early in 1857, the miners paper, the Star, in its leader on "the Ballarat water supply" was rather caustic in its comments, "some 10 months since the question of a water supply excited the attention of those interested in such a scheme. In August last, a report was furnished by the Town Surveyor, setting forth in detail the only scheme practical for the present and the future, following which the Council made application to the Government for 7thousand pound. The Government appointed a surveyor to examine the merits of the scheme, he made his report 4 months ago, since when nothing has been heard. Is it that the supply of water to 40,000 people is of little importance? It is high time that something should be done" (I cannot find any trace of the report)

This should be a good opportunity to point out the financial constraints under which the west Council was at that time operating.,

1862 June 1st, Kirks Dam handed over to the Councils of Ballarat.

October, Mr Thomson appointed Secretary to the Water Committee, an Engineer, Mr Palmer, had previously been appointed.

December 8th, a meeting was held of the Water Commission, Cr. Lewis, West Council, chairman.

December 15th, Site for office in Grenville Street reported on (131). The building would cost 750 pound, there was a long discussion. It was decided that an office in Commercial Chamber, Sturt Street, be rented for 6 months.

This meeting seen in the minutes was called The Ballarat Water Commission.

December 22nd, the Ballarat and Ballarat East Water Commission, was composed of 14 people. Cr. Dyte (east) asked, "By what fantasy was the Commission named the Ballarat Water Commission? "

He moved that it be called the Ballarat and Ballarat east Water Commission.

After a discussion, "for the sake of harmony", it was carried (132)

The Engineer was instructed to call tenders for the construction of Beale's

In the joint minute book, the commission is referred to as a Joint Water Committee.

1863 January 5th, held in new offices, Commercial Chambers, Sturt Street.

1863 Beale's Reservoir

1866 The Water Supply Committee was composed of 8 members

1867 Water supply committee was reconstituted, 10 members, Pincott's Reservoir. Kirks was raised

1872 Ballarat and Ballarat east Water Commissioners

1877 Gong Gong Reservoir

1880 The Ballarat Water Commissioners

1891 Wilson's Reservoir

1915 Moorabool Reservoir

1920 The Ballarat Sewerage Authority constituted

1952 White Swan Reservoir

1972 Lal Lal Reservoir, Bungai Dam

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But as I mentioned earlier, the west [69] did agree to ask their surveyor to co-operate. Perhaps they were more aware of the situation as one of their Councillors, Carver, in a letter to the "Star" (70) expressed the view that in his opinion the failure of the supply was, that part of the swamp water "is being drawn through the earth into some of the nearby mining shafts".

Perhaps the reason that the east failed to attend the Water Supply Committee and the subsequent failure of the body was that on the 27th April, 1858, the East Council at its meeting, received a telegram from Mr Humffray saying that the Bill had been lost, and that he recommended the Council to withdraw the tender for the pipes.

In the West Council minutes of the 28th July 1858, there is a letter from the Agents to advise of the arrival of the "Bromielaw" with pipes for the Ballarat water works requesting the Council to receive same at the Geelong Wharf; a matter which had been arranged some two months prior.

On receipt of this letter, the Town Surveyor was instructed to prepare plans for a filter bed at the Swamp and the laying of the pipes.

There are two different sets of plans for the filter beds still amongst the plans at the Town Hall.

Judging by the mud on the later plan, it is probably the design used.

The filter beds were built on the edge of the Swamp, measured 50 feet wide by 30 feet deep, with an entry into the Lake along one west side.

Across the structure, roughly in the middle, was a wall of gravel which acted as a filter.

This filter was later to be ineffective and replaced with wood charcoal.

In a later debate on the value of wood versus animal charcoal, the former being chosen on cost alone. NB Check this sentence.

A settling basin was on the swamp side of the filter a (pure?) (Check this) water basin, from which the water went to the Town via a 9 inch pipe.

During the first 12 months as a municipality, the Council received approx. seven thousand, five hundred pound in the way of Government grant and only 1, 797 pound by way of Town rate.

The balance of the revenue was very small and came mainly from fines at the police court and from rents of the pumps and tanks at the swamp.(18)

In their 2nd year, Government grants amounted to approx. 6,000 pound and the rate 2,000 pound.

The income apart from 682 pound for the construction of the Council chamber in the first few months was spent mainly on the construction of roads for the inhabitants, including one to the tanks to enable water to be brought by cart, more expeditiously to the inhabitants.

The water from the filter beds at the Swamp was let into the pipes for the first time on Tuesday, 14th December (1858)? NB year not stated, need to check this), but only partially.

The water is discoloured as yet and the pipes are leaking.

Regarding the pipes along Sturt Street, these are visible by the oozing up of water from the joints connecting them.

The standpipes and fittings are newly completed and the water will be fit for drinking purposes in a week or so.

It seems strange that there appears to have been no ceremonial turning on of the water, an event so important surely.

The next reference is the consideration by Council, (87), of three tenders for the lease of the stand pipes, plus the pumps at Yuilles Swamp.

The pumps were still near the bank at Gnarr Creek, although the inhabitants of the area were agitating to have them removed to the site of the filter beds because of the bad language, etc., of the water carters.

The successful tenderers were Messrs. Evans and Barker.

Costs :

Standpipe, Sturt and Lydiard Streets	950 pound
Lyons and Sturt Streets	400 pound
Pumps and tanks at the Swamp	200 pound
Totalling	: 1,500 pound
Or the lot for 12 months	1,750 pound

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The Rockery Fountain, near the end of Ripon Street was built on the site of the filter beds.

The surveyor was also instructed to furnish a plan of the stand pipes necessary, with the number required for the Water Works. To finance these works, each member of Council was to give his name as Joint security to the Bank of Victoria for the sum of 3,000 pound (71). By the time that the project was finished, the total cost was reported by the Chairman to be 3,823/5/3 (72)

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A report stated in part,

"In the meantime windows were being smashed in or out, wooden walls torn down, and glass cases, bottles, jars, nuts, oranges, pickles, jams, cakes, furniture, bags of corn, potatoes, trusses of hay, and other stores were being hurled out into the road pell-mell. Women rushed about hysterically, children screamed, police men and water men shouted, and everybody seemed in a state of intense excitement and confusion.

All this time no stream of water was being poured on the fire, for although the Swamp standpipe lay 20 Or 30 yards off, its waters were unavailable.

The Water mans keys were locked up in his station and the spare keys were locked up in the Council Chambers."

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The regulations to control the Lessee were very brief (88)

The lessee to be at his post to supply drays whenever there is a fire, free of cost, and ordinarily from sunrise to sunset, but not Sundays.

The small cock for drinking is to be open at the same time, free. Duplicate keys for the standpipe to be kept at the Town inspectors Office.

The Lessee is to supply (water for horses at a maximum charge of 1 penny per bucket) NB this requires being verified about the horses.

Licensed carters sold this water from Lake Wendouree for 10 shillings a load.

The requirement to keep the key in the nearby Council Office had a serious (and ridiculous) sequel on the night of the 24th September 1859 (89).

The Council Chambers caught fire. It was the largest fire that had ever occurred in the West.

The Chamber plus several shops were destroyed.