

# LAKE WENDOUREE

Ballarat Victoria Australia



## LAKE WENDOUREE

Many generations of local residents and visitors have fond memories of pleasure trips to the lake. It has long been a social centre of family and community life in the district.

The old world charm of the area makes it an increasingly popular venue for family reunions, rallies and gatherings of all kinds. Half a million visitors come annually to major events such as the Australia Day celebrations and the Begonia Festival, as well as to enjoy picnics & barbecues.

All age groups can enjoy strolling the bluestone paths in rustic Fairyland and experiencing the natural beauty and the ever-changing light on the water of Lake Wendouree. Views across the water of magnificent sunsets or the distant volcanic cones of Mt Warrenheip & Mt Buninyong are framed by mature Elms, Oaks, Pines and Willows.

## FISHING

In 1870 the Ballarat Fish Acclimatisation Society was formed in order to stock the lake with a variety of fish to provide sport for anglers. A windmill once pumped lake water to the nearby Fish Hatchery.

Lake Wendouree has enjoyed the reputation of being one of Victoria's most popular inland fishing destinations. Since the turn of the century the Department of Fisheries and Wildlife has managed the stocking program.

In recent times the annual release of Brown Trout has been consistently around 6000 with occasional supplementary releases by the Ballarat Fish Acclimatisation Society. The fish most commonly caught are Trout and Redfin.

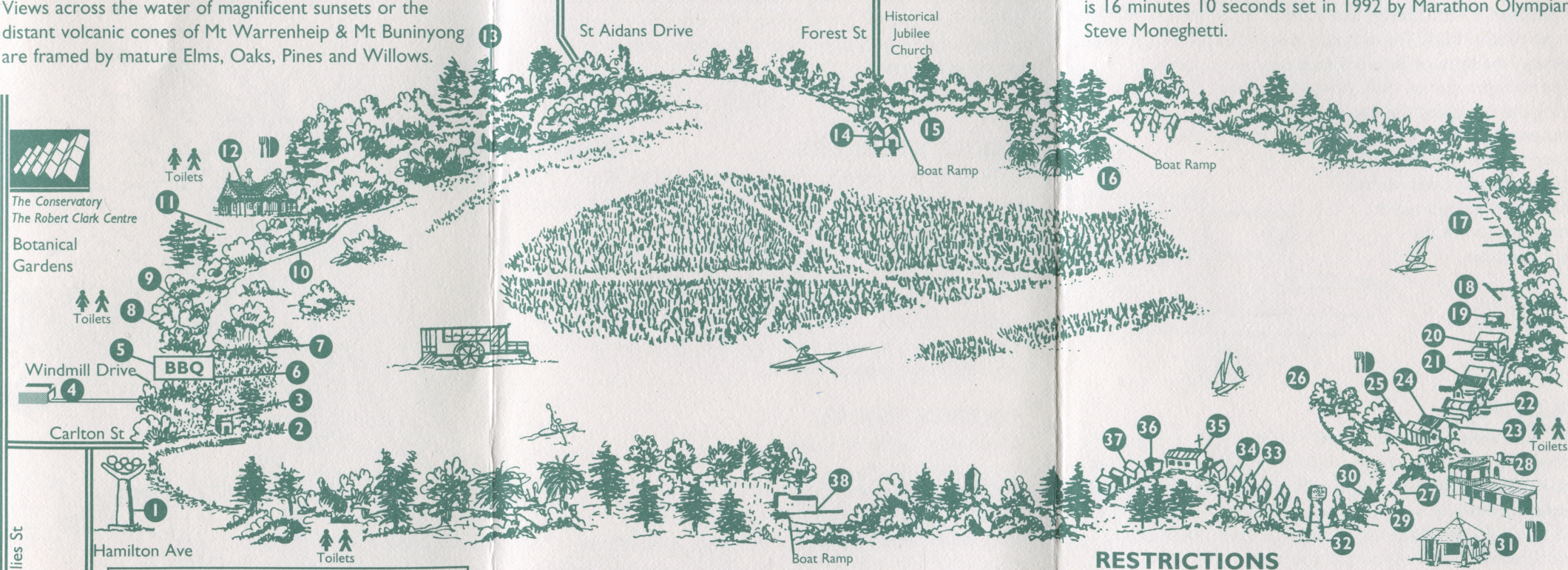
## SPORT

Boating has long been an important sport and leisure activity on Lake Wendouree which hosted the rowing, kayaking and canoeing events for the 1956 Melbourne Olympics.

The Lake Wendouree Aquatic Association coordinates a full calendar of regattas and other sporting events which include: yachting, rowing, canoeing, kayaking, sailboarding & swimming, as well as cycling, athletic and triathlon events.

The track around the lake provides an interesting 6 km challenge to walking, cycling and running enthusiasts who complete the circuit in their thousands each week, irrespective of the weather.

For serious athletes, the record for running the 6 km course is 16 minutes 10 seconds set in 1992 by Marathon Olympian Steve Moneghetti.



### LAKE FAST FACTS

- LOCATION: 120 km west of Melbourne
- SURFACE AREA: 238 hectares
- CIRCUMFERENCE: 6 kilometres
- MAXIMUM DEPTH: 2 metres
- CAPACITY: 3,860 megalitres
- FORESHORE AREA: 16 hectares
- HEIGHT ABOVE SEA LEVEL: 450 m

### WATER QUALITY

Monitoring indicates excellent water quality. However in summer, fluctuating levels of contamination have been detected in localised areas close to the shore where swans and other waterbirds congregate. For this reason, and because of the possibility of foreign objects on the lake bed, swimming is not recommended.

### RESTRICTIONS

There are a number of restrictions on activities around the lake. Most importantly:

- dogs must be kept on leads at all times
- horse riding is forbidden
- power boat speed limit is 8 km per hour



Enquiries regarding Lake Wendouree should be directed to:  
**City of Ballarat**  
 Telephone: (03) 5320 7444 or Fax: (03) 5334 3131

## • **GUIDE TO LAKE FEATURES** •

1. The Olympic Rings (1956)
2. The Spit - end of rowing course
3. Waterlily Lagoon - silt retardation trap
4. Ballarat Tramway Museum (1971)
5. Windmill Drive picnic area
6. King Edward Pavilion (erected 1911)
7. Fish Hatchery Pump House
8. Ballarat Community Adventure Playground
9. Bandstand (erected 1921)
10. Begonia Princess Ferry
11. Almieda Pavilion (former penny arcade 1907)
12. Lake Pavilion - kiosk, restaurant (1890)
13. Fairyland Wetland Walk (interpretation signs)
14. Ballarat High School Boatshed
15. Ballarat Grammar School Boatshed site
16. Durham Point
17. Start of the 2000 m rowing course
18. Fly Fishing jetty
19. Overflow to Gnarr Creek - water level control
20. Ballarat City Rowing Club (1871)
21. Wendouree (1884) Ballarat (1861) Rowing Club
22. Ballarat and Clarendon College Boatshed
23. Ballarat Canoe Club
24. Golden City Steamer Museum
25. Gill's Restaurant
26. View Point (constructed 1881)
27. George Tonner Pergola 1925 (rowing pioneer)
28. Lake View Hotel (established 1875)
29. Ned Williams Stone Memorial 1900 (aquatic sports)
30. Rockery (built 1904) - old filter beds
31. Edgewater Cafe - Kiosk
32. Yuille's Monument
33. Girl Guides Water Activities Centre
34. Sea Scouts
35. Ballarat Yacht Club (established 1877)
36. Greenbank's Weed Cutter Shed
37. Ballarat Fly Fishers' Club
38. St Patrick's Point - St Patrick's Boatshed

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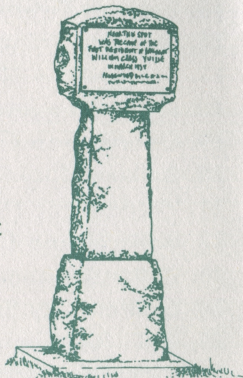
## HISTORY OF LAKE WENDOUREE

The plaque on the monument opposite Pleasant Street school states, 'Near this spot was the camp of the first resident of Ballarat, William Yuille'. In the autumn of 1838 the young Scotsman drove his flock of sheep to the shores of the reedy swamp which was first known as Black Swamp because it was dark with thickly growing reeds. To the miners it was known as Yuille's Swamp.

A squatter's diary of 1850 records that there were many Kooris camped around the swamp and by a little stream that ran down from it. Hundreds of kangaroos and emus fed on the grassy plateau.

The name Wendouree comes from the aboriginal word 'wendaaree' which means 'go away'. A story is told that when William Yuille asked an aboriginal woman the name of the swamp, that was her reply. When Ballarat was first surveyed in 1851 by WS Urquhart the swamp was named Wendouree.

Lake Wendouree was originally a stream which flowed to the west, but a lava flow dammed it on three sides & it now drains to the east, into the Yarrowee River.



## WATER SUPPLY AND INDUSTRY

In 1851 a dam was built across the lake outlet and several times the bank was raised to provide Ballarat with a permanent supply of water.

In 1858 a pipe was laid underground from the Rockery to the Water Works in Sturt Street opposite the Town Hall. From the standpipe, carters filled their wagons with lake water and sold it on the goldfields down on the flat.

Industries were set up around the lake - bluestone quarries at View Point and St Patrick's Point, two flour mills, a lemonade factory, plant nurseries and four large gold mining companies. Deep leads under the lake were mined until 1875. Thirteen hotels were located on Wendouree Parade which was first surveyed as a road reserve in 1855. The Lake View is the only one which remains.

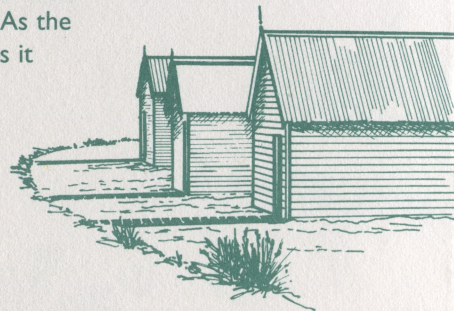
## CREATION OF A LAKE

An underground pipeline from Kirk's Reservoir, installed in 1860-61, provided the first constant source of supply to retain the lake's water level. However, in the early 1860s there were only a few square metres of clear water on 'Wendouree Swamp', and in order to hold the first aquatic sports in 1864, members of the Ballarat Rowing Club cut a course through the reeds with scythes.

Prisoners from the Ballarat Gaol cleared a path around the lake and enclosed it with a hedge and a picket fence, the last of which was removed in 1928. The old gums were felled and English trees, reflecting the taste of Ballarat's founders, were planted.

In the drought year of 1869, the lake bed was cleared by burning the reeds and the bed itself was deepened.

A causeway was built from the eastern shore to the gardens to section off wildlife and water sports areas. As the embankment was porous it disintegrated when the rains came again.



## WILDLIFE

The reed beds and islands provide sanctuary for a variety of wildlife. In one day a keen bird watcher could expect to see at least 40 different species of birds. Of the recorded 166 species, the most commonly seen waterbirds are Black Swan, Pacific Black Duck, Dusky Moorhen, Swampen, Coot, Musk Duck, Great Crested Grebe, Silver Gull and Little Pied Cormorant. Information boards at the Fairyland Wetland Walk provide details about species and habitats.

About one hundred native water-rats are scattered around the shore and are sometimes seen in Fairyland at dawn and dusk. The diversity of pondlife is rich and attracts numerous school groups making visits for environmental science field studies.

Audio visual kits of plant and animal life are available for school and public display from the Ballarat Field Naturalists Club.

## LAKE ECOSYSTEM

Lake Wendouree is one of the few urban lakes in Australia which is ecologically sound. Its biological health can be attributed to the lakeweed which reduces the effects of harmful urban sediments flushed into the lake after heavy rain. The reed beds decrease turbidity thus maintaining areas of clear water.

While the native weed (Water-milfoil) and reeds (Tall Spike-rush) perform these natural functions biodiversity is assured.

However, to prevent the lake from reverting to a swamp and to cater for the wide range of recreational water sports, a seasonal weed cutting regime is necessary.



## PADDLE STEAMERS

In 1865 the first steamboat was launched and by 1870 boating became almost a 'mania' with complaints made about the dangerous racing and constant whistling.

The 108-year-old Golden City Paddle Steamer is the only survivor of a fleet of 15 steamers which ferried passengers from View Point across the lake to the Botanical Gardens and provided moonlight cruises with singing and dancing. Some of the nostalgia of that bygone era can still be experienced with a ferry ride on the Begonia Princess.

## VINTAGE TRAMS

Double-decker horse-drawn trams began carrying visitors to the Botanical Gardens in 1887.

The volunteers of the Ballarat Tramway Museum have preserved fifteen trams and memorabilia from Ballarat's tramway era. The vintage electric tramway operates Saturdays, Sundays and all public holidays from 12 noon to 5.00 pm.

Attracting twenty thousand passengers each year, it is one of Ballarat's most popular tourist attractions.

