



# Know your suburb ... VICTORIA PARK & EAST VICTORIA PARK

by Dr Geoff Gallop, Member for Victoria Park

## BEELOO COUNTRY

In Aboriginal Australia the Canning River provided the boundary that divided Beelo Country from Beeliar Country. The land to the west belonged to Beeliar tribe, headed by Midgegooroo and his son Yagan.

To the east, stretching from the Swan River to the Darling Ranges and including modern-day Victoria Park was Beelo Country. Writing in the Perth Gazette in 1833 Robert Lyon described Beelo in the following terms;

*"Beelo, the district of Munday is bounded by the Canning on the south, by Melville water on the west, by the Swan and Ellen's*

*brook on the north, the eastern boundary of this district I cannot accurately define. Several of the mountains are numbered in Munday's territories and his headquarters are at Wurerup."*

A name census taken by Francis Armstrong in 1837 recorded 32 individuals as part of the Beelo tribe - 27 adults and five children.

Munday was the acknowledged leader of the Beelo in the early days of the Swan River Colony.

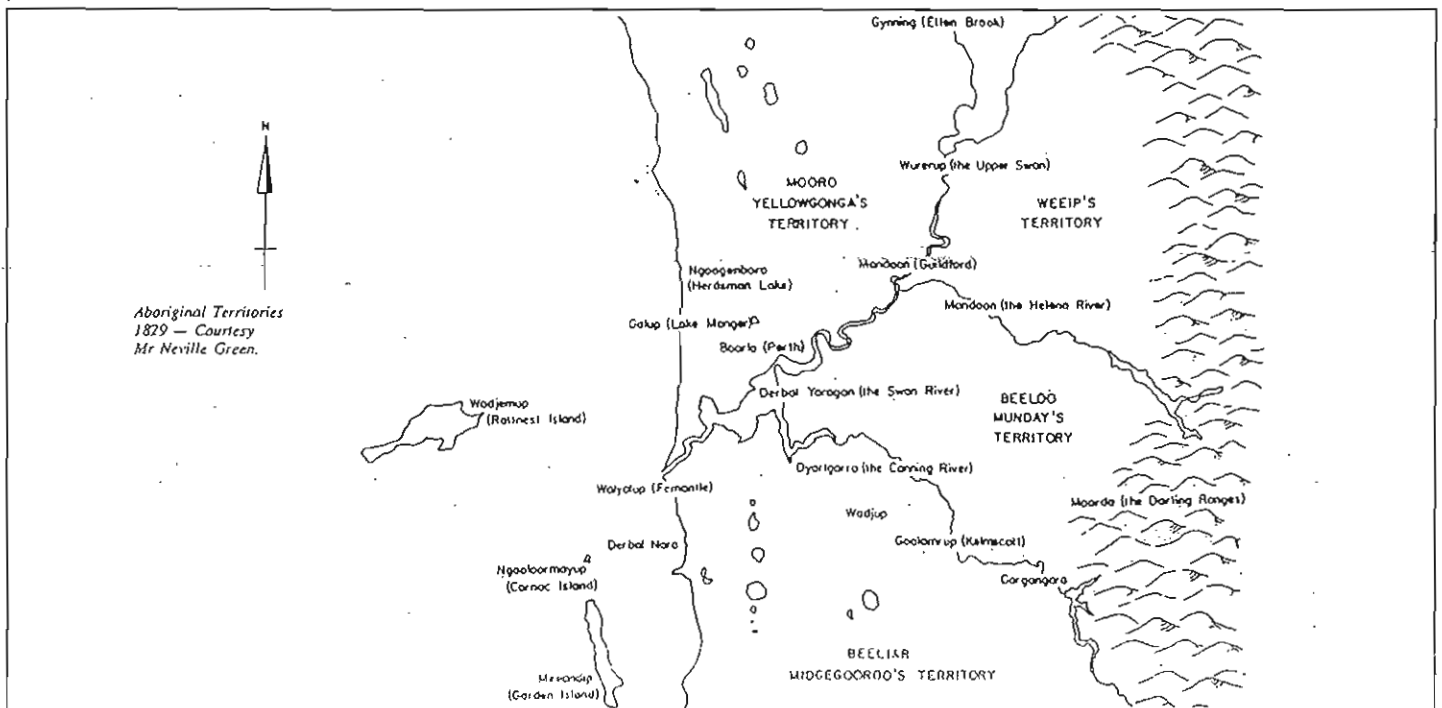
Conflict between the original inhabitants and the new settlers frequently occurred along Canning River as the natural game on which the former depended became depleted. From 1831 to 1838 four settlers were fatally speared and six wounded in the Canning district.

Along with Yagan and Midgegooroo, Munday was

proclaimed an outlaw in 1833, wanted for the killing of Thomas and John Velvick near Bull Creek. Midgegooroo was captured and put to death after being tried and convicted. Yagan was shot dead soon after but Munday survived. Indeed, in 1841 his name appeared in a list of Aboriginal constables published in the Inquirer.

During the nineteenth-century there is occasional reference to an Aboriginal camp at the Victoria Park end of the causeway from which forays were made into the South Perth district.

The first owner of Burswood, Henry Camfield, also refers to encounters with Aboriginies on his property in the north-eastern corner of Burswood and one of the memories of earliest Victoria Park notes the existence of an Aboriginal camp to the West of Berwick Street.



Beelo Country Courtesy Neville Green

# Victoria Park

Today's Victoria Park was the largest portion of a grant of 972 acres (393 ha) made to John Butler in 1831. This Swan location 36 had at its contemporary boundaries the Swan River, Berwick Street to Kent Street and across to Mars Street and then down to the river at Rivervale. It changed hands a number of times until 1887 when subdivision into building lots began.

Before then there were a few houses centred around coach stops on the Albany Road. The Causeway had been first built in 1843 but reconditioned and raised in the 1860's following serious flooding. Albany Road began life as a heavy, sandy track in the 1840's but was upgraded with convict labour using hand sawn cross cut logs.

At this stage Victoria Park had no separate name and identity and was simply part of "Canning" which stretched from Belmont to the Canning Bridge. It is assumed that when the name Victoria Park emerged it was so because Queen

Victoria was still on the throne. Certainly the subdivision of the 1890's was known as "Victoria Park Estate".

With reasonable prices and the influence of the Gold Rushes in the 1890s land began to sell and people settled in Victoria Park. By 1898 the population had reached 1197; Victoria Park having been declared a Municipality in 1897 with Mr Hugh Duncan the first Mayor. The Victoria Park Town Hall was opened in 1899 and it soon became a centre of civic, cultural and community activity. Situated on Albany Road the Town Hall was constructed in stone and brick with a seating capacity of 600.

It has since been demolished to make way for a car yard.

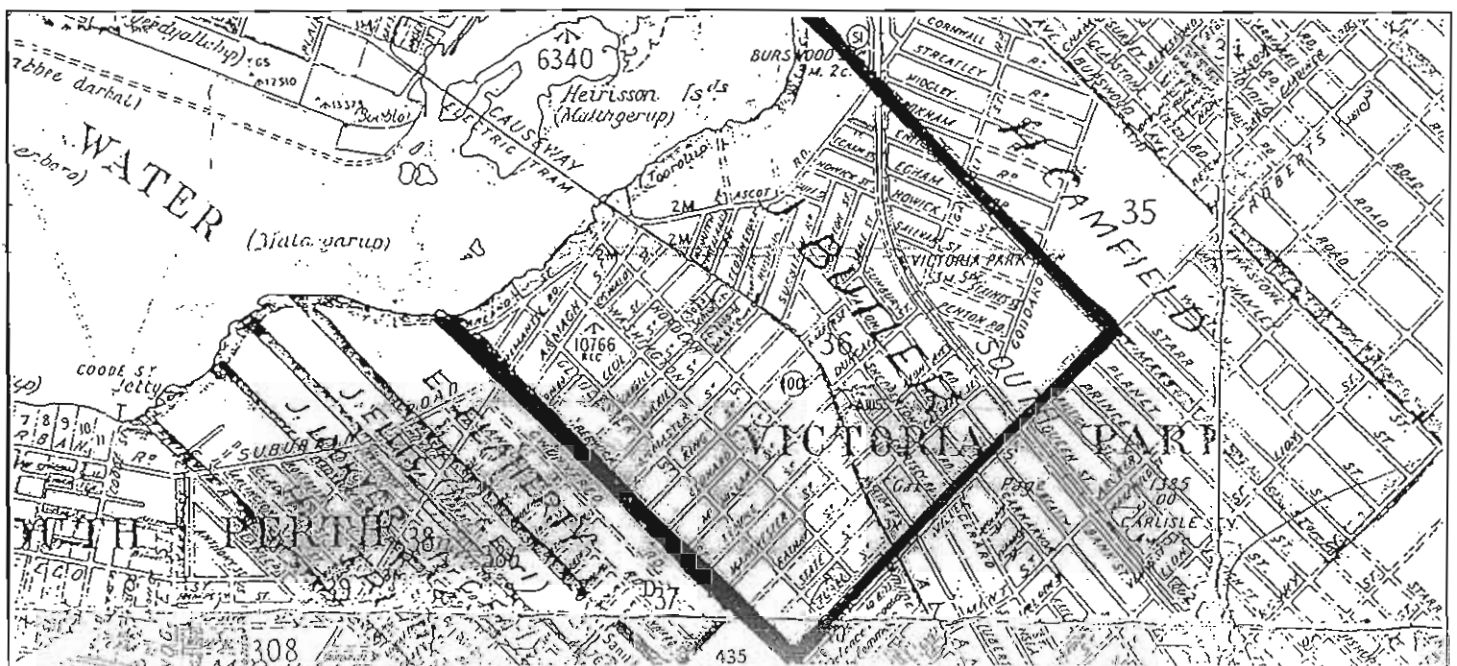
The Broken Hill Hotel - now listed by the National Trust and a local landmark - was constructed in 1899.

The Victoria Park State School (sometimes called Cargill Street

School) was opened in 1894. It was built with bricks with a shingle roof. Miss Elizabeth Julius was the first teacher, beginning with 16 pupils. At first the school was part of the South Perth Board of Education. On Sundays the Protestant churches also used the school's single room for services, each denomination taking turns.

The Church of Transfiguration was built in Harvey Street in 1895 and then moved to Leonard Street in 1922. It was a small weatherboard building which occupied the site of the present Church Hall at St. Peter's. The new Church of St. Peter's was built in 1935.

In 1896 the Methodists built their own galvanised iron church with its two rooms on the site that was to become Hearnstead Furniture Store. In 1911 the block of land was sold and a new church built on Duncan Street in 1912. The Duncan Street Methodist Church was sold and demolished in the early 1970s.



The Catholic Church first celebrated Mass in the Cargill Street State School in 1896. The first church, St Joachim's was blessed and opened by Bishop Gibney in 1899. The following week the first Catholic School opened with an enrolment of 35 pupils. Six Sisters who had only just arrived from Ireland set up the school. Fees were sixpence per week and the Sisters added to this by giving music lessons after school for all students in the district.

Early industries included soap making (three factories), brick making (on the corner of Albany Road and Armagh Street) and furniture making (Hearn Brothers and Stead, later Hearnsteads). Timber cutting and pig farming added to the distinctive rural flavour of early Victoria Park.

As predicted by the local Council the opening of a tram service to Victoria Park in 1905 was a great boost to the district. Indeed the population grew from 1500 in 1906 to 5000 in 1917. After a referendum of ratepayers in 1917 the Victoria Park Municipality amalgamated with the City of Perth. Many years later in 1963 700 residents of Victoria Park and Carlisle unsuccessfully petitioned the Governor for their suburbs to become a separate Council.

By the time of amalgamation Victoria Park had 23 miles of macadamised road, electric lighting, a public library (1903), police station (1906), post office (1912), bowling club (1913 - now the Croquet Club), State Savings Bank (1909) and two hotels (the Broken Hill and Victoria Park).

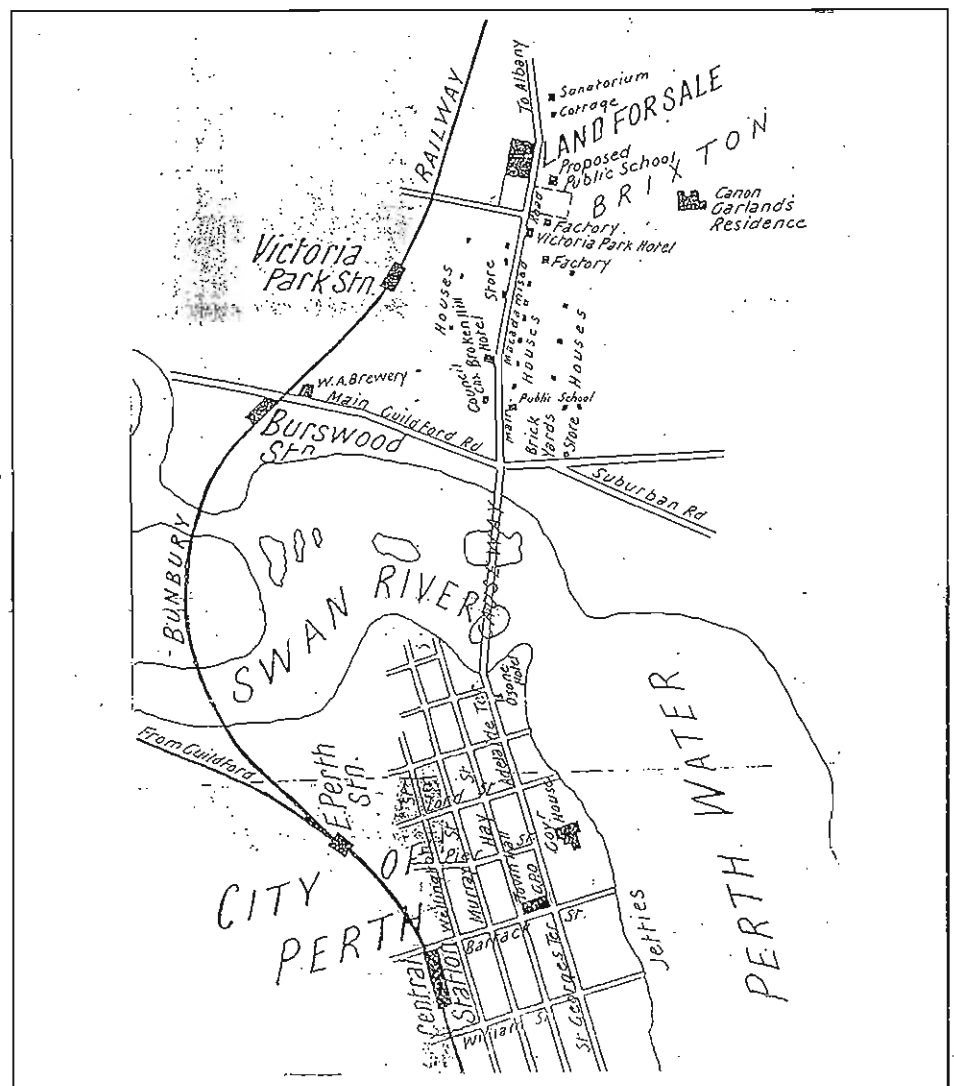
Residential development continued after World War I and following the bitumenization of Albany Highway new retailing

activities provided the central focus for local commerce. A major article in The Western Mail (8 July 1937) described Victoria Park as the largest ward of any municipality in Western Australia and provided an outline history of recent commercial developments.

The following businesses took out advertising space in this special section of the Mail:

- **Hullett's Hardware,**  
881 Albany Road
- **Culligan's Garage,**  
opposite Edward Millen House  
(Cliff Houghton proprietor)
- **Terminus Butchers,**  
968 Albany Road
- **"The Corner Shop",**  
925 Albany Road
- **K Stanley,**  
911 Albany Road
- **Whiteside and Butcher,**  
**Bakery,**  
968A Albany Road
- **Oliver Strang Motors,**  
153-65 Albany Road
- **Harvey Stone,**  
**Newsagent,**  
next to Amusu Theatre
- **Hardware Hood,**  
697 - Albany Local
- **Causeway Service Station,**  
corner Albany & Ascot Roads

**Victoria Park 1912**  
Source East Victoria Park Primary School  
1914-89





Methodist Church Albany Road 1896 Courtesy Uniting Church

Before TV came to Perth Victoria Park was famous for its picture theatres. Pictures were first shown on a Saturday night in the Victoria Park Town Hall - inside during the winter months but outside in the backyard during summer. The Amusu Theatre was built on the site recently vacated by Parry's Department Store and the Savoy, also on Albany Highway opposite Sussex Street. The Amusu was closed when the owners Jimmy

and Jack Johnson opened the Broadway opposite the Broken Hill Hotel. The Johnsons also owned the Cremorne on the junction of Albany Highway and Welshpool Road.

Victoria Park continued to develop in the years following the Second World War, particularly as one of the metropolitan area's major shopping centres. Indeed Albany Highway was the largest suburban shopping centre in the

1950s and early 1960s. Although the number of commercial outlets has increased since the 1960s the regional significance of Victoria Park has declined with the emergence of large planned shopping centres in Cannington, Belmont and Bentley. This competition led to the development of the "Heart of the Park" and the "Park Centre" in the 1970s.



C. G. Trowbridge  
*(West)*



C. J. J. Murray  
*(Central)*



C. C. Lathwell  
*(Central)*



C. W. J. Craig  
*(Central)*



C. J. F. W. Leach  
*(East)*



C. A. R. Thorogood  
*(West)*



Charles Harper Esq. J.P.  
Mayor



C. R. Appleton  
*(East)*



T. Westmoreland  
*(West)*



C. A. Winslade  
*(West)*



W. J. Cohn, C.E., A.R.S.I.  
*(Town Clerk and Engineer)*



C. E. A. Pyman  
*(East)*



W. R. Ramsay  
*(Mayor)*



C. Washer  
*(West)*



C. Alda  
*(East)*

# Victoria Park Municipal Council. 1916-1917

# Childhood Memories of Early Victoria Park

## Swan River Foreshore

The stretch of water between the Victoria Park shore and Heirisson Island (which was much longer at both ends than it is now) was shallow enough for my mates and me to wade across. The water was clear but the bottom was muddy. I once saw two big stingrays there.

## Squatters

On the island on the west side of the Causeway were a colony of squatters, who lived in shacks made from discarded sheets of roofing iron.

Whenever there was a flood the occupants had to move out. Inevitably some did not return and with the passage of time none were left.

The high bridge at East Perth end was a favourite fishing place. We used to sit on the water pipes and catch gardies. No expensive tackle was needed, just a length of bamboo, a few metres of line, a cork float with sweetened dough for bait.

I was always something of an explorer and occasionally used to wander along a narrow

pathway that led up to Heirisson Island in the direction of the Goodwood racecourse.

This was rather an eerie place in those days and none of my friends would come with me. The soil underfoot was hard, black, solidified mud, for this was the delta of the Swan River where it entered the estuary. It was known by the Aboriginies as Yoonderup, the same as the delta of the Murray River where it enters the estuary at Mandurah.

Nothing grew there but clumps of samphire shrub, which in past times was pickled in vinegar and eaten. There was also a scattering of casuarine trees.

## Wilderness

Though only about two kilometres from Perth Town Hall, it was a true wilderness, the silence broken only by the sound of the wind sighing through the few trees and the piping of a bird among the reeds."

J H Turner

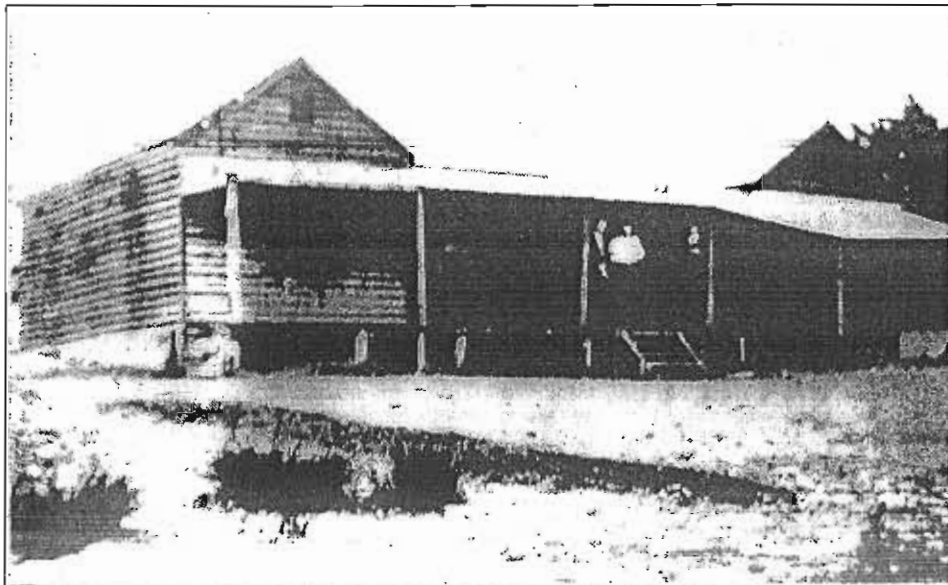
Mr J H Turner moved with his family to Victoria Park in 1911 - when he was 9 years old

## Nature's Provisions

"There was never any shortage of poultry when I was a kid. Bob Curtis from the Red Castle Brewery had a big barn between the brewery and the river, from it ducks and fowls had strayed and made their nests among the reeds and trees on the water front. we would go along the mud path armed with a ging (shanghi) and a pocket full of stones or ball bearings, go home with a nice big duck or fowl, there was always plenty of geese, some fresh, others not so fresh, if we wanted a Peacock or Pea hen, we would go a little further along the mud track, behind the Cement works, for wild ducks, we would go over to the Queen gardens and catch them with a piece of meat or bread on a board with a fishing line attached. Gee: if old Des Ballard had ever caught us. (wack ho): Now: that reminds me, there was never much shortage of fruit in season, for oranges and manderines, Old Mr Mitchell had a orchard down in Geddes Street, (where the La Tenda night club now is). He had a six foot picket fence around it with barbed wire on top, we kids, armed with a crabbing net and a long bamboo, would stand our push bikes up against the fence, stand on the top bar, put the net over the fence underneath the fruit, give it a wack with the bamboo, and lovely fruit was had by all. There is something else I feel I should mention and you will find it hard to believe, from my childhood day, and until about 1936 the water in the Swan River was so crystal clear, we kids would walk along the water pipe that went over the river and when we saw a crab walking along the bottom, we would dive in and catch it with our bare hands, there was no algae anywhere."

Les Edward

Les Edward was born in Kingston Road (now Rushton Road) Victoria Park in 1910. For many years he grazed cows in the district and provided a milk service for the residents



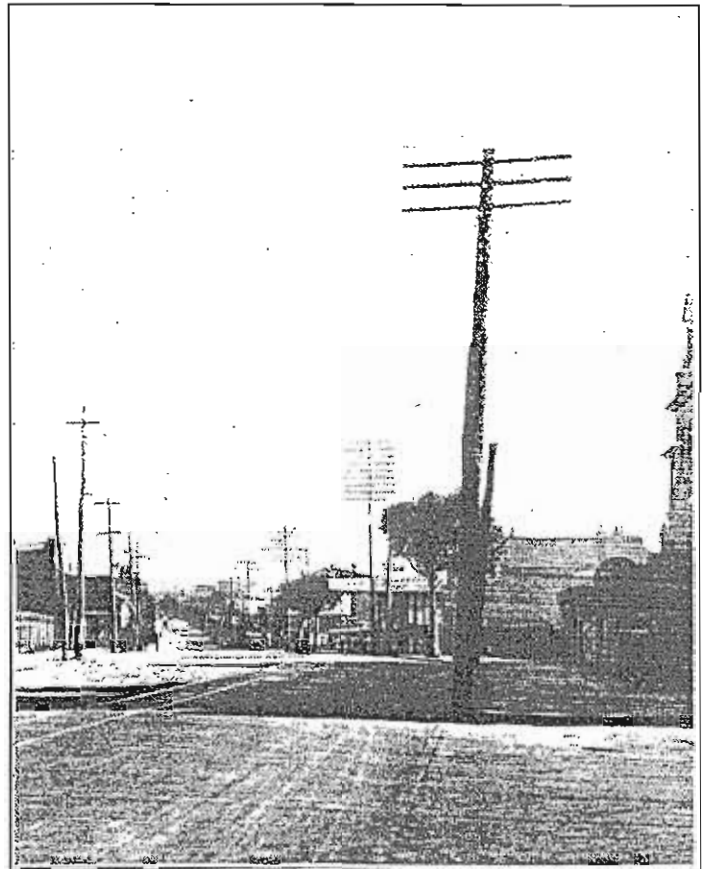
Leonard Street Hall 1930s Courtesy Cliff Warren

# "Albany Road through the Ages"



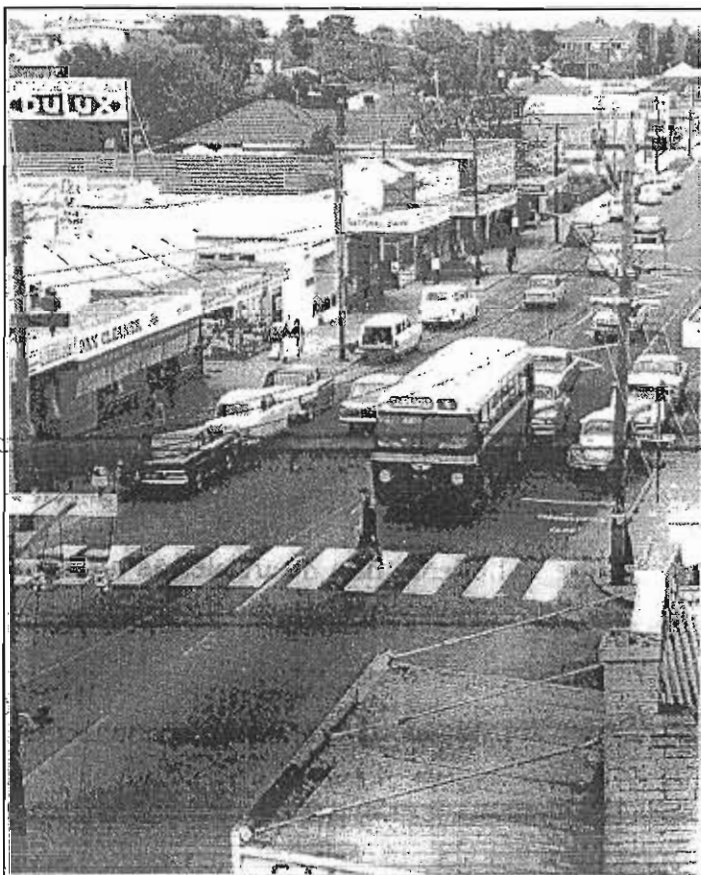
The Two Mile Well, Victoria Park 1889

Source Souvenir of the Centenary of the City of Perth (1929)

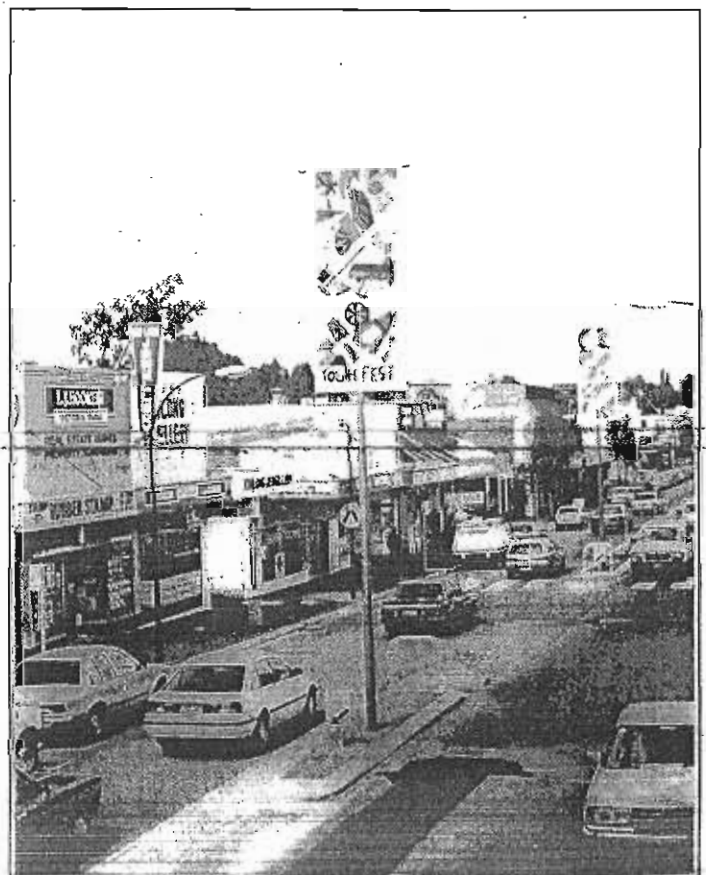


Albany Road 1920s (Broken Hill Hotel on the right)

Source Souvenir of the Centenary of the City of Perth (1929)



Albany Highway 1960s  
Courtesy Wilf Hendriks



Albany Highway today  
Courtesy Wilf Hendriks

# Coaches, Cycles, Trams,



Royal Mail Coach, Perth-Albany 1870-1889  
Courtesy City of Canning Library

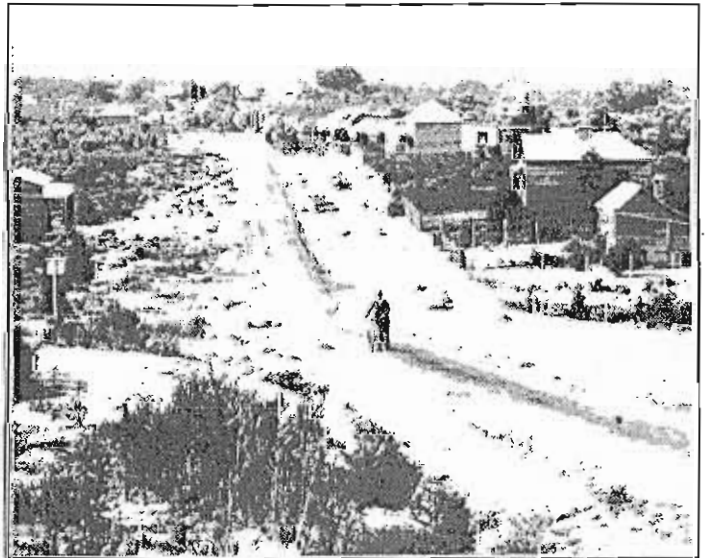
Following the construction of the Albany Road and improvements to the Causeway, coaches regularly passed through Victoria Park going to and from Albany. A bugle was blown so that residents knew the coach was approaching the Causeway. Frank Larter described the coaches in the following terms:

*"It was a real, genuine and authentic coach of the wild west style, with two horses side by side, a coachman with a long whip sitting high up in front, and passengers with him behind the coach and inside it."*

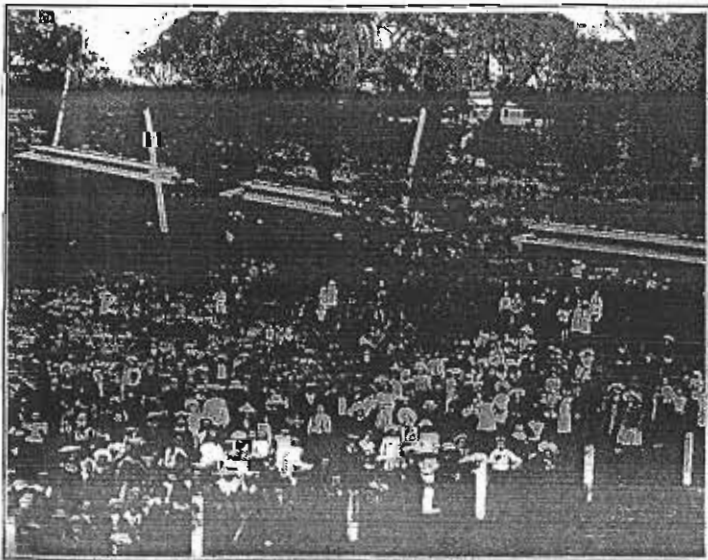
The coach would stop opposite where the Broken Hill Hotel is now situated to allow the horses to drink from a horse trough built above a natural spring.

From 1899 four horse-drawn buses took passengers from the old GPO (now former Treasury Buildings) to this watering trough along Albany Highway. Writing in *The West Australian* in 1950 an early resident recalled this service

*"The fares I forget, but the jolting I remember. The top deck had seats back to back, slatted and hard and uncovered from below and above. Another service - a single decker, ran down Suburban Road past Courthope's Estate, Manning's Dairy, Stiles's Kensington Hotel Racecourse and the Bruce and Douglas properties to Coode Street. The service for the population was a good one. They ran on Sundays, making it imperative for me to attend church when bird-nesting, for instance, was possible."*



Basinghall Street 1912  
Courtesy Ted Butson



Opening Tram Service 1905

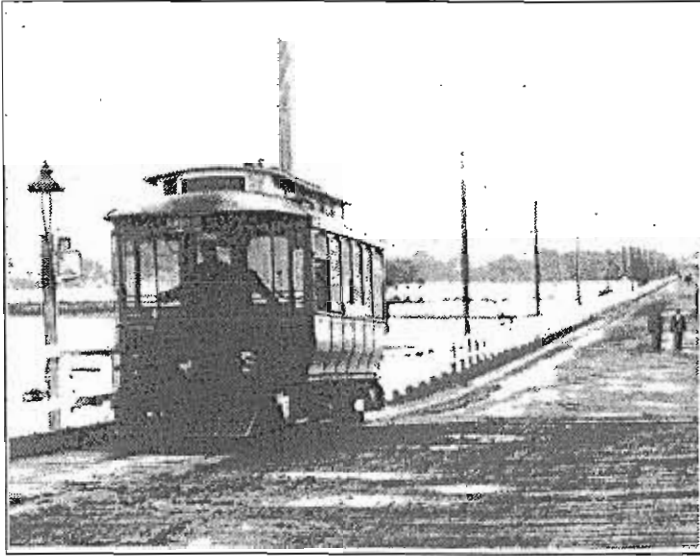
In 1930 Copley and Co's Motor-Car Service was opened between Perth and Victoria Park (Mint Street). The cars were manufactured in Edinburgh and were capable of carrying from 14 to 18 passengers. The inauguration of the service represented a triumph for Victoria Park but proved in practice to be less than desirable. As an early resident observed later:

*"Unfortunately our realisations were not as great as our anticipations, because the buses made such hard work of the hill on Albany Road that they were not very dependable. Some of us came to despise them because they could not do the job as well as the horse-drawn buses. A fire in the garage where they were housed ended that service."*

(*Western Mail*, 8 July 1937)



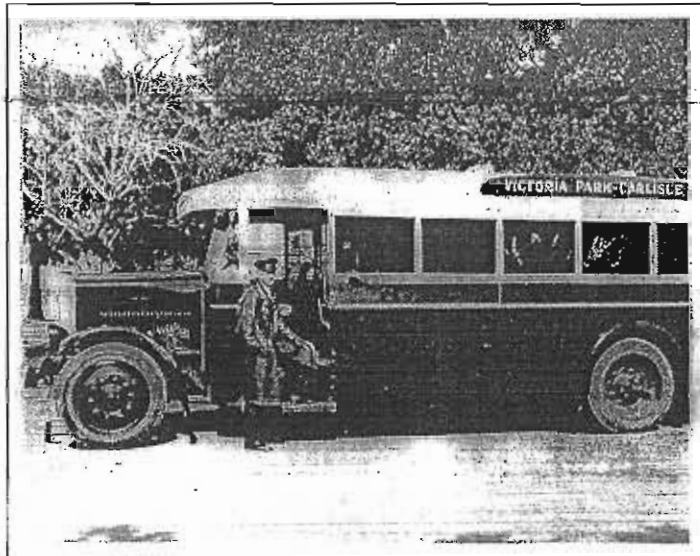
# Trains and Buses



**Causeway Tram**  
*Courtesy Wilf Hendriks*

In 1905 Perth Electric Tramways Ltd began its service from Perth to Mint Street. The service was extended to Patricia Street in 1934 and the Munitions Workers in Welshpool in 1943. In 1950 the service was replaced with Government omnibuses. Travelling across the Causeway was a bumpy affair. Veronica Menzies remembers the tram as "dog boxes" with blinds providing little protection from the rain:

*"When we rattled and bounced over the 'hump' which allowed boats with masts to go under the Causeway, we used to fear we would leave the rails. But somehow we always made it."*



**Victoria Park Carlisle Bus Service**

Also operating in the district from the 1930s was the Carlisle Bus Service inaugurated by Fred White. Older residents would remember the depot in Planet Street, Carlisle. In the 1950s the Carlisle Service ran buses through East Victoria Park and in 1955 extended its service to the new Millen housing estate. The Service was taken over by the MTT in 1958 when there were 13 buses being operated.

Rail came to Victoria Park in 1893 when the South-Western line was opened, firstly to Pinjarra. Stations were built at Victoria Park and Burswood (now Rivervale) in the 1890s and in 1912 a siding adjacent to Haydon's Implements works became East Victoria Park Station (now Carlisle). It has been observed that Victoria Park's "continued growth was closely associated with the railway. (In 1913 Burswood recorded 234921 passenger bookings.) But for the Perth tramway system, the railway's role in attracting development to Victoria Park and the other localities it served would have undoubtedly been greater" (J. Selwood).

Oats Street and Lathlain were added to the suburban network of stations in the 1950s, Lathlain to complement Perth Football Club's move to Lathlain Park in 1959. Today the stations are part of Perth's newly electrified system.

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**TRAM TIME TABLE**  
**VICTORIA PARK & PERTH**  
 From JULY 1st, 1912.

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Magnificent Views.  
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Communication with City by  
**TRAM and TRAIN.**

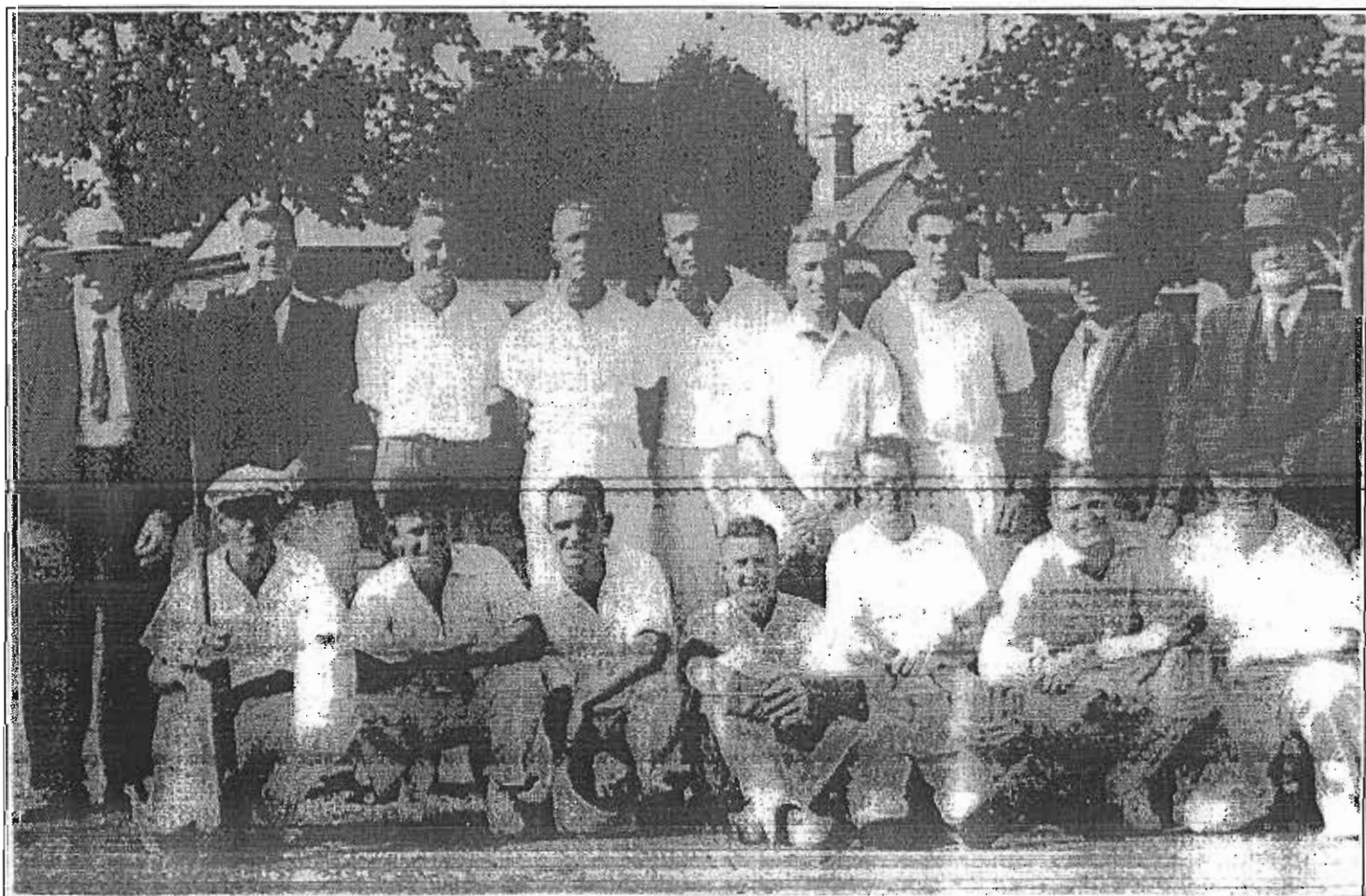
ISSUED GRATIS  
 by the Victoria Park Municipal Council, W.A.

**Tram Timetable 1912**  
*Courtesy Battye Library*

Bicycles have always been a preferred form of transport for many residents of Victoria Park. Today an extensive network of cycleways has added a significant recreational aspect, particularly in the vicinity of the Swan River



Victoria Park Cycling Club at Victoria Park Hotel Courtesy Canning Districts Historical Society



Victoria Park Cricket Team at Raphael Park 1940s? Courtesy Victoria Park Cricket Club  
 The players include A. Reeves, V. Prinderville, F. Willet, R. Lambourne, W. Craig, A. Gervase, J. Craig (Capt.), J. Lucas and D. Mickel

# East Victoria Park

East Victoria Park developed firstly as a southerly and easterly extension of Victoria Park. Blocks to the south and east sold under the names of Bickford Estate, Brixton Township, Canterbury Park, Canning Park, Hillcrest Estate and Balmoral Estate in the early 1900s.

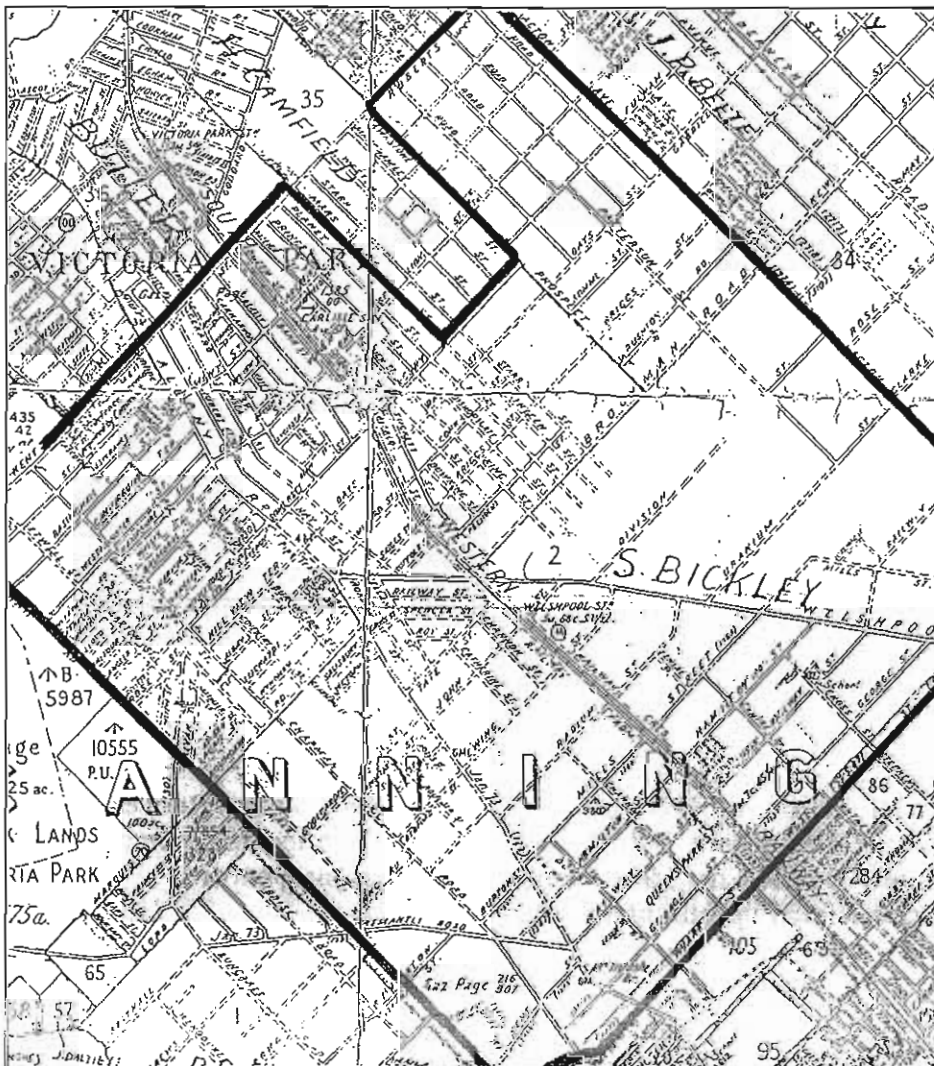
When the Perth Electric Tramways Company extended its line across the Causeway and up Albany Road to Mint Street in 1905 residential development was further given a boost. In 1912 a railway station was built near Mint Street and was soon given the name East Victoria Park. Although the title stayed with the suburb the station name itself was changed to Carlisle in 1919.

The land itself was part of the original grant of 5320 acres (2153 ha) known as Canning Location 2. It changed hands a number of times until being acquired by Henry Manning in 1854 in whose family it remained until 1885 when the Sydney and West Australian Freehold Company purchased it and subdivided it into large lots.

As the population expanded the Victoria Park Primary School in Cargill Street reached capacity and a new East Victoria Park Primary School opened further up Albany Road opposite Mint Street in 1914. The school experienced very rapid growth and by 1927 it was one of the largest Primary Schools in the State.

On the borders of East Victoria Park Mrs Elizabeth Baillie built the Rotunda Maternity Hospital in 1912. In 1920 the Commonwealth Government acquired the site for the use as a satellite of Hollywood Repatriation Hospital. It was re-named the Edward Millen Home and is now on the national Trust's Register of Classified and Recorded Buildings.

In 1934 the tramline, by now run by the Government, was extended to Patricia Street. A further extension to the Munitions Factory on Welshpool Road was opened in 1943. In 1950 the tramline was closed and replaced by a bus service just before the new Causeway was completed in 1952.



The inter-war years saw a build up in the district's social infrastructure. The Baptists built their new Church in Hubert Street in 1915 (now the Ukrainian Evangelical Baptist Church) and St David's Presbyterian Church was opened on Mint Street in 1930. In 1935 a Church Hall and Convent School was built on the current site of the Catholic Parish of East Victoria Park. Two years later and one block away in Camberwell Street the Anglican Church shifted a building from Beechboro to establish St Aidan's Church (now the Millen RSL).

In 1940 the Government established the metropolitan area's second senior high school at Kent Street. Originally the school consisted of one set of brick buildings containing 22 rooms.

Situated in the bush in the vicinity of Jarrah Road and Sussex Street was an orphanage operated by the Methodist



**Brian Courtney and Ted Joliffe on corner of Camberwell Street and Berwick Street 1937**  
*Courtesy Brian Courtney*

Church (now Mofflyn Child and Family Care Services). The orphanage started life as Dulhi Gunyah, run by the Australian Aboriginal Mission from 1909 to 1917. The Methodists purchased the property in 1920 and opened their own orphanage in 1922. It became known as Mofflyn House in 1959.

After the second World War the land to the west of Berwick Street and bordering the Collier Pine Plantation was opened for residential development. What had been bush became housing for many young families. A new community formed with its nucleus around new schools and new sporting facilities. Originally known as "The Millen Estate" it became part of the suburb of East Victoria Park.

The Higgins Park football and cricket ground as well as tennis courts opened in 1964, named after JJ Higgins, Victoria Park stalwart and City Councillor for many years. Football rivalries in the district were intense with junior teams - Centrals (Higgins Park) and East Victoria Park (Fraser Park) battling it out for many years before amalgamating as Victoria Park Junior Football Club in 1990.

The Christian Brothers built Xavier School in 1954 and the State Government established Millen School in 1958. Both became focal points, along with Kent Street Senior High School for the rapidly expanding population of the 1950s and 60s. What was Xavier now forms one campus of the co-educational

Ursula Frayne Catholic College. The College, formed in 1991, unites Xavier and St Joachim's.

New Churches were also built in the 1960s - Our Lady Help of Christians (1962) and Holy Trinity (1964).

In 1977 the East Victoria Park Primary School was demolished and re-established on the old Hawker Siederly site in Beatty Avenue thus making way for the Park Shopping Centre. Six years later the Park Recreational Centre opened its doors opposite the shopping centre.

# BICKFORD PARK

Municipality of VICTORIA PARK

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J.S. Crawford  
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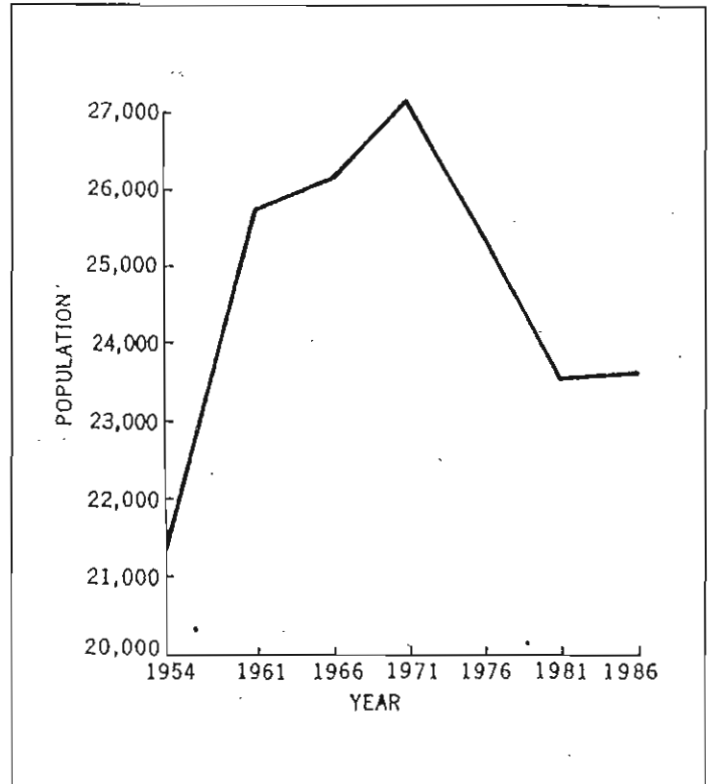
# The Past and Present, Old and New

Victoria Park started its life as a small country town on the other side of the Causeway. Brick yards, pigsties, blacksmiths, timber yards and soap factories occupied land on either side of Albany Road. Its residential potential began realization with the development of the tram system in 1905. In his Cyclopaedia of Western Australia (1912), J. S. Battye predicted a prosperous suburban future for the district, with its high ground "over looking the magnificent stretches of the river".

By the 1930s the suburb's character had taken shape, being described by Philip Masel in 1937 as "a working man's district". He wrote:

*"Land being cheap, the suburb within easy distance of the city and close to the railway sheds and tramway terminus, Victoria Park has become a working man's district. As with every suburb where the population is thick and the inhabitants are in steady employment, it has grown very rapidly into a miniature town, with large picture-houses and imposing hotels, and a shopping centre stretching for two miles on each side of the main highway. A prosperous shopping centre too, where even the smallest stores present a brave array of modern copper-plated window fronts."*

The extensive development of East Victoria Park particularly after the Second World War, did not detract from this description. As Peter Mundy observed in his "History of Victoria Park" a post-war generation settled in East Victoria Park and took up employment in the myriad of industries developing in adjacent Welshpool.



Population census zone 210 1954 - 1986  
(includes Victoria Park, East Victoria Park, Lathlain, Carlisle  
and St. James)

Source: Albany Highway Study, City of Perth

When Australia celebrated its sesquicentennial in 1979 commentators pointed to Victoria Park's suburban maturity. Victoria Park had "grown up" observed Glenyce Chrystal - with its transport service, shopping facilities, and general community infrastructure. She also pointed to the vitality of the community itself, being the first to set up a Senior Citizen's Centre and in the process of establishing a service for homeless youth.

The challenges of a declining and ageing population, increasing traffic flows as outer Perth itself expanded, and an ageing housing stock under pressure as land prices grew all emerged as others spoke of stability and maturity. By the 1980s young couples and young families were moving back into the district, stabilising the population and creating demands for new facilities and services. Modern units, built with the assistance of changed zoning laws, now co-exist with Federation style homes and weatherboard cottages reminiscent of an earlier age.

This co-existence of old and new forms the central characteristic of the district. In facing and planning for the future local decision makers will need to respect the old as well as cater for the new. Already much that is the heritage of the district has been lost.

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# VICTORIA PARK

SWAN RIVER

## SECTION A

For Sale at the Town Hall at 8 p.m.

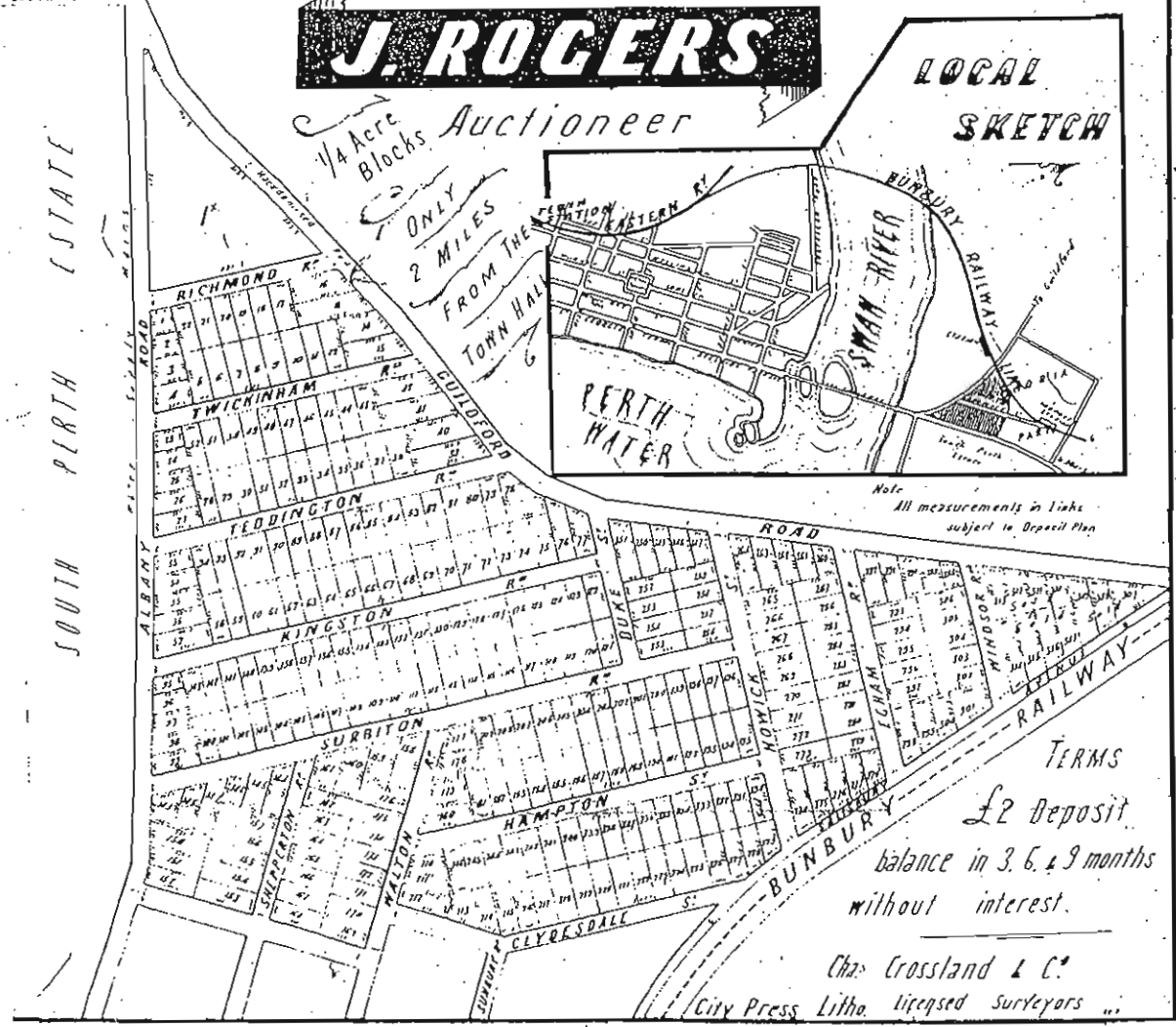
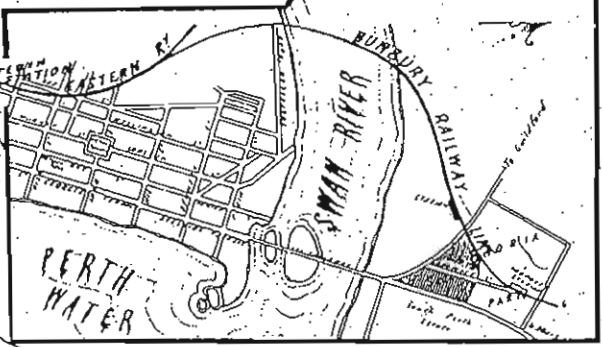
### SAT. 6<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 1892

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Victoria Park section A land sale 1892 Courtesy Peet and Co.

This history of Victoria Park is dedicated to the memory of Joe Higgins (1908-1990)