

Mark Wetherham

Royal Park as historical text of Melbourne. How has the development and history of Royal Park reflected and paralleled social attitudes towards the environment and Melbourne's historical development?

Royal Park, Melbourne's largest inner city indigenous parkland, is a "reserve set aside for the public advantage and recreation."¹ Originally an area of 1040 hectares reserved by the Colonial Government in Sydney at the request of Governor Latrobe, the Park has now been reduced to 188 hectares (excluding the zoo)², with areas being excised for Princes Park, the cemetery, the University, the zoo, rail and tram ways, housing and various institutions which I shall discuss later. The park now houses various sporting facilities, recreational spaces, institutions, roads and sporadic patches of remnant vegetation, which make for a strange mix. It is difficult to conceive of Royal Park in terms of natural habitat (unlike, for instance, Studley Park), particularly given the encroachment of human-made forms, or in terms of beauty in a traditional aesthetic sense, (unlike the Botanic Gardens), given its relative neglect. Yet the Park's continued existence signals its perceived value from a town planning perspective, and it is increasingly regarded as an important, if degraded, environment, in need of conservation and revegetation.

Without attempting to write a complete history of Royal Park from its inception, I believe that an examination of the Park's history provides an interesting and instructive context in which to analyse environmental attitudes and Melbourne's historical development, which are of course inter-linked and inseparable. Thus I intend to look selectively at aspects of Royal Park's history in a roughly chronological manner and discuss their ideological origins. Australian attitudes towards the environment have impacted upon, and been influenced by, our 'nation-building' project. For example, the invaders construction of Australia as terra nullius was integral in fostering the notion that Australia was an alien land that had to be controlled and made productive. Andrew Garran wrote in his preface to the The Picturesque Atlas of Australia of 1888; "Australia has no part in the early history of

¹ Sanderson, W.A., "Early history of Royal Park", op cit., Victorian Historical Magazine, vol.14, no.3, May, 1932, pp.109.

² City of Melbourne, "Royal Park Masterplan Review: Issues Paper", April 1997, pp.5.

the human race or in the development of its civilisation".³ From the Park's foundation on Woiworung land, to the establishment of the Experimental Farm and the Zoo, through the years of institution-building and war to the present, with renewed Council interest in the future of the Park, various ideologies and imperatives have been invoked in order to justify change to, or excision from, the Park. These ideological currents have, of course, been reflected at a broader, societal level.

Understanding natural historical contexts, argues Cronon, is important in countering the cultural determinism of recent history. What is essential, he believes, is a recognition of "a dialogue between humanity and nature in which cultural and environmental systems powerfully interact, shaping and influencing each other, without either side wholly determining the outcome."⁴ This essay then will discuss some of the environmental and cultural determinants upon Royal Park's and Melbourne's histories, identifying environmental impacts upon our psyche and ideological influences upon the environment. I think that it is important to emphasise the inter-relatedness and endogeneity of ideological and environmental influences. However for practical, map-making purposes I shall attempt to identify distinct strains of influence (in particular the attitudes of the invaders, the attempts to gentrify the landscape and utilitarianism), in the hope that they will not be considered exhaustive or mutually exclusive.

The surface features of Melbourne that we know today have all been formed in the last 5000 years, since the increased rainfalls and sea levels have stabilised with the end of the ice age.⁵ What is now Royal Park had probably been underwater until this period. When excavations were conducted for the railway cutting in the late 1880's fossilised fish and shells were found, suggesting "a time when the sea washed the bases of the hills in the Park and filled the Experimental Farm Valley."⁶ Thus there is a thin layer of soil in the Park, that rendered later vegetation loss semi-permanent. The Greater Melbourne area was (and some argue is) owned by the Kulin nation, a confederacy of four tribes that spoke similar languages. Presland writes that "The area

³ Garran, A., Picturesque Atlas of Australasia, pp.i.

⁴ Cronon, W., "The Uses of Environmental History", op cit., Environmental History Review, Vol.17, no.3, 1993, pp.13.

⁵ Presland, G., The Land of the Kulin, 1985, pp.7-9.

⁶ Sanderson, W.A., "Early history of Royal Park", pp.130.

selected by the first settlers for the village of Melbourne was precisely the place most favoured for inter-tribal gatherings”⁷, both cultures valuing the geographical features of the region. The thinly timbered grasslands of Royal Park had probably been cultivated over a long period of Aboriginal ‘firestick farming’.

Sanderson contends that the first European visitors to the present site of Royal Park were the explorers Batman, Buckley and Wedge. Wedge travelled through the area in September 1835 and ‘discovered’ land “of excellent quality and fine grass, the gum and other trees attained a large size, but few of the former were of any utility for building purposes”.⁸ Thus began the process by which the Kulin were dispossessed (a process augmented by Batman’s ‘treaty’), and their land appraised for its resource value, a familiar story Australia-wide. The invaders generally ignored the beauty of the land, preferring to concentrate on what it might offer a growing colony in need of raw materials. Baron von Mueller, the Government Botanist, director of the Botanic Gardens for many years, and one of the trustees of Royal Park until 1873, wrote of “a Mountain Ash capable of supplying 23 miles of fencing, including posts, or 666 dray loads of 1 1/2 tons each.”⁹

As early as 1844 the Royal Park site had been earmarked for parkland, however it was at least ten years before the Park was officially reserved. The Superintendent of the Port Phillip district, LaTrobe, recommended that the Park be set aside to “provide lungs for the city”¹⁰, as part of a forward-thinking plan to reserve a green wedge. In May, 1854, when “the ground was well grassed, and in places there was thick scrub. Native fauna were still in evidence, and the aborigines held an occasional corroboree”¹¹, the area to the east of Sydney Road (now Princes Park) was proclaimed parkland, and it is assumed (in the absence of records) that LaTrobe also approved the reservation of Royal Park. Woiworung lived in the vicinity of the Park into the 1880’s.

⁷ Presland, *The Land of the Kulin*, pp.32.

⁸ Wedge’s notes, op cit.. Sanderson, W.A., “Early history of Royal Park”, pp.111.

⁹ Von Mueller, op cit. *The Herald*, Feb.25, 1933, “The Glory of Australia’s Trees”

¹⁰ Sanderson, W.A., “Early history of Royal Park”, pp.109.

¹¹ *ibid.*, pp.112.

As well as serving LaTrobe's 'air-cleansing function', parks were an institution that had grown out of Enlightenment thinking, and were intended as a place for the productive use of leisure time, for the promotion of health and well-being and the improvement of intellectual and moral standards through scientific observation and instruction.¹² According to an English 'Select Committee on Public Walks and Rational Recreation', "the public park would be a highly regulated, ordered and visible terrain."¹³ The public park would also serve to abate class difference and conflict; "by bringing the community together in the shared space of the park or garden, ignorance and hostility between different sections of the population would be replaced with bonds of esteem and respect."¹⁴ Such philosophies obviously influenced the Park's trustees and nearby residents, who at the time of Burke and Wills' departure from the Park in 1860 complained that the Park was "practically in a "state of nature" and "desired that improvements should be made as had been the case with the Park lands south of the Yarra"¹⁵.

When researching this essay at the State Library and Public Records Office, I was struck by the fact that almost every index containing Royal Park had the sub-headings: proposals for improvement or beautification, and proposals for excision. Throughout its history, many have regarded Royal Park as either an eyesore, which fails to reach its full potential as a Park, or as a source of cheap real estate. It is important then, I believe, to examine these 'attributes' of the Park in some depth, particularly given that both have an ideological basis that is instructive in discerning Australian attitudes towards the environment over time.

Improvements, to those recently arrived, usually took the form of altering the landscape so that it suggested more familiar (ie. English) surroundings. Eric Rolls summarised the colonists' response to the alien landscape with his title 'More a New Planet than a New Continent'. Royal Park was not immune to such alteration, with indigenous trees and grasses giving way to sporting fields or exotic species. Fences and band-stands were erected, undulations levelled, roads cut and English Gardens

¹² Wyborn, T., "Melbourne's Pride and Glory- 150 years at the Royal Botanic Gardens", op cit., Victorian Historical Journal, vol.67, no.1.

¹³ *ibid*, pp.22.

¹⁴ *ibid.*, pp.22.

¹⁵ Sanderson, W.A., "Early history of Royal Park", pp.113.

cultivated. Keith McKenry believes "the early Victorian settlers and administrators held that there was no intrinsic beauty in the Australian landscape, and that wherever possible the environs of town and home should be improved so as to resemble those of the distant mother country."¹⁶ As late as 1933, as the Council was about to assume control of the Park, Alderman Stapley, 'chairman' of the Parks Committee, suggested that "something be done to considerably enhance the beauty of Royal Park by planting it with trees and modelling it after the manner of Richmond Park, near London."¹⁷ However attempts to 'reverse nature' are probably epitomised by the Acclimatisation Society's Experimental Farm, which proceeded from the premise that Australia was only 'half-furnished'.

The Zoological and Acclimatisation Society existed, in various forms, from 1857, establishing modest Zoological Gardens in the Yarra Park and then temporarily in Albert Park and the Botanical Gardens. However with the 1860 gift of 25 alpaca llamas, the Society decided to apply for the use of Royal Park. This application had two significant effects. Firstly, the Minister of Lands handed over daily control and administration of Royal Park to a group of Trustees, all of whom were members of the Zoological Society, and attempted to permanently reserve the Park for zoological purposes¹⁸. This raised considerable protest, particularly from the Town Clerk, E.G. Fitzgibbon, who defended the park from numerous attacks during and after his involvement with the Council (coining the recently revived slogan 'Hands off the Parks'). Fitzgibbon complained that the Park had already been reserved, and that by granting trusteeship to a non-elected body, the public was losing control over its parkland. He also "deeply regretted that the wisdom and liberality of the Government (in proclaiming the park) have in some instances been rendered abortive by subsequent alienations of portions of the most beautiful reserves."¹⁹ The Zoological Society was given free reign over its activities in the Park, a right which they refused to relinquish (and which is still evident today as the Zoo's car-parks and proposed Capital Works projects disregard blue-prints for the Park). Secondly, and probably more importantly, a precedent had been set in excising parts of the Park at the behest

¹⁶ McKenry, K., "Parks to the People", *Victorian Historical Journal*, Vol.49, no.1, Feb. 1978, pp.23.

¹⁷ *The Argus*, 1933- unknown date (in newspaper clippings file at PRO).

¹⁸ Government Gazette, Victorian Parliament, 1862, Order in Council, March 10.

¹⁹ Fitzgibbon, E.G., Letter on behalf of City Corporation, 24 April, 1862, op cit., Sanderson, "Early history of Royal Park", pp.216.

of interest groups. As I shall discuss later each excision made the Park more vulnerable, as it reduced the 'value' of the Park and fragmented a general 'role' or 'purpose' of the Park in the eyes of planners and the public.

The Acclimatisation Society's goals, as stated at the inaugural meeting in 1861 were "the introduction, acclimatisation and domestication of all innoxious animals, birds, fishes, insects and vegetables, whether useful or ornamental."²⁰ The trustees enclosed an area of 50 acres for the Zoological Gardens in the present site, though many of the introduced animals were given free reign in the park. As Sanderson writes, "Hares, which soon became plentiful, and several varieties of English birds were liberated in the outside Park for acclimatisation purposes."²¹ By the late 1860's interest in acclimatisation was waning, and from 1870, with Albert Le Souef's appointment as honorary secretary to the Zoological and Acclimatisation Society (a position he was to hold until 1902), creating a Zoo of 'international standard' became the priority.²²

In August 1920, the Trustees made what could appear to be a watershed decision. They decided that "native rather than European trees be planted."²³ The same decision however was made eleven years later²⁴, which suggests that the predilection for planting exotic species had not completely disappeared. The Bush poets, Henry Lawson and Banjo Patterson and the painters McCubbin, Heyson, Roberts and other members of the Heidelberg School had fostered an appreciation of indigenous Australian landscapes, that flourished with the burgeoning post-Federation Nationalist sentiments. As The Herald joyously reported in 1933; "Our native trees are wondrous in their variety, their interest and their beauty. As the impressionable observe and study them, however humbly, they tremble to the love of their homeland and rejoice in their heritage."²⁵ By way of comparison, St Hubert, reflecting on our 'nevergreens' in the late 1830's wrote "they are not deciduous, but for all that there is little verdant about them, their foliage is the most sombre hue, and very ill-calculated to inspire the

²⁰ Objects of the Victorian Acclimatisation Society, op cit. Gillbank, L.R., "The Acclimatisation Society of Victoria", Victorian Historical Journal, vol.51, 1980, pp.261.

²¹ Sanderson, "Early History of Royal Park", pp.218.

²² Decoursey, C. The Zoo Story, pp.22

²³ Chronology of Development in Royal Park, 1844-1933, found in Lands Department Files, of unknown origin.

²⁴ *ibid.*

stranger with a favourable opinion of the fertility of the country.”²⁶ The need to re-create England had obviously diminished, and if Australians were still uncomfortable with ‘untamed bushland’ (and thus demanded a highly landscaped Royal Park- a wish that has not altogether disappeared), at least they had come to accept the potential aesthetic beauty of the vegetation.

The second recurring theme in the history of Royal Park concerns attempts by developers, interest groups, Government bodies etc., to be granted part of the Park for their own ends. The Park, which initially occupied 2560 acres, would inevitably be under threat in a city that was growing as quickly as Melbourne did. When the Corporation applied for the reservation of the Park in 1850 Melbourne’s population numbered less than 23,000. With the onset of the goldrush Melbourne’s population had grown to 140,000 by 1861, 207,000 by 1871, and 282,000 by 1881²⁷. Over the same period the Park shrank to 680 acres by 1857 and then to 479 acres by 1882.²⁸ The initial, tentative reservation included the land now occupied by the University, the Cemetery, Princes Park and the suburbs of North Melbourne and Carlton, which were carved out of the parkland. As Dunstan writes, “these pragmatic decisions undermined the green belt vision LaTrobe had for the city, and laid the basis for the Government to look upon these lands as a resource.”²⁹ The provisional, uncertain nature of Government legislation for the Park meant that the borders were continually under revision, and it wasn’t until 1876, when management of the Park became distinct from that of the Zoo, that the Park was permanently reserved (though this did not prevent further alienation).

Australia, it is argued, has a particularly strong utilitarian tradition, which historian Keith Hancock argued, is characteristic of colonial immigrant settlements.³⁰ Bentham’s utilitarian ideas pervaded governance at every level, from industry protection, compulsory education, and payment of Members of Parliament to the Land Acts. The early land Acts in Victoria provided for selection, settlement planning, and, of particular interest to Royal Park, the sale of Crown Land. It was (and is) the

²⁵ The Herald, “Glory of Australian Trees”, Feb. 25, 1933.

²⁶ St Hubert, pseud., op cit reading guide, pp.61.

²⁷ Garden, D., from lecture, “Industrial and Urban Pollution”, April 21, 1997.

²⁸ McKenry, K., “Parks for the People”, Victorian Historical Journal, Vol.49, no.1, Feb. 1978, pp.23

²⁹ Dunstan, D., Governing the Metropolis, pp. 104

utilitarian tradition that was invoked by those attempting to alienate (or to use a popular term in 1930's Council debate, 'filch') public land. Competing interests and claims have been at work on the Park since its reservation, and as mentioned earlier, each excision has provided a precedent for further alienation.

In practice, utilitarianism obviously requires an arbiter to assess claims; control of Royal Park has been vested in different authorities over time, each with varied priorities, attitudes towards the Park, and operating under various pragmatic constraints. For instance the Trustees of 1870, when faced with the problem of the native trees dying out, were hamstrung by their lack of funds. Sanderson explains that replacing each tree cost 4 to 5 pounds due to the gravelly soil, however at this stage the only regular revenue the trustees received was from the lease of cricket pitch and sporting licences.

Moreover the ideological environment that prevailed assumed that Parks were for gentle recreation and that the Australian bush was unattractive. It is little wonder then that concerted attempts to maintain the indigenous vegetation were abandoned and that "the native timber was subsequently thinned to allow spaces for playing cricket, football, and other games, and for military reviews."³¹

The influence of the problem of the lack of funds to manage the Park cannot be underestimated. At this time, the Park received no City Council funds as it was under the jurisdiction of the trustees, overseen by the Board of Land and Works. However "as the Park is situated within the City, the trustees have not participated in substantial grants which have been made by Parliament for Parks and Gardens outside the City of Melbourne."³² The size of the Park rendered it expensive to maintain, and thus it was not surprising, if lamentable, that in 1868 the Government sold a wedge of the Park for residential development along Sydney Rd, to the dismay of the trustees. The story is a familiar one, with the Board of Land and Works offloading responsibility to government institutions. Garran writes in his amazing The Picturesque Atlas of Australasia of 1888 of the encroachment of the powder magazine built in 1860, "a 'calf-lymph vaccination farm', a commodious edifice devoted... to

³⁰ Hancock, W.K., Australia, passim.

³¹ Sanderson, "Early History of Royal Park", pp.118.

³², *ibid.*

the shelter of the destitute, and an Industrial and Reformatory School... for herding together the little waifs and strays of society under one roof.”³³ The alarmingly rapid growth of the colony developed previously unforeseen needs, and the vast expanse of Royal Park, which was no longer on the fringes of the city, proved an attractive prospective site to house these institutions. Moreover, the haphazard development of the suburbs, some of which (eg. Collingwood and Richmond) were extremely heavily populated, had rendered vacant land scarce, thus the Government was more easily able to justify excising parts of Royal Park ‘for the people’s interest’.

And yet while Royal Park was gaining value in the eyes of prospective developers and occupants, it was continually treated poorly, and was at various times a dumping ground for human’s waste, human waste and surplus European saplings. Bernard Barrett writes of the use of Royal Park as a disposal site for two hundred loads of night-soil per week in the mid 1860’s . “An increasing stream of fetid drainage ran from the depot within range of the new houses”³⁴, until the Park (let alone the locals) could no longer cope with the volume of waste. Similarly, the newspapers of 1930 keenly followed a story concerning the dumping of soil from the West Melbourne cemetery (upon which was established the markets), in the Gatehouse Street Reserve, which was objected to by residents on the grounds that “obnoxious effluvia were arising from it in early morning and late evening”³⁵, and that no respect was being shown for the deceased. Mrs. Iris Bradley reported seeing a “full skeleton and two skulls” on the 18th of March.³⁶

Perhaps the best on-going examples of the utilitarian tradition and approach to the environment within Royal Park can be found with regard to the building of railways and roads. Roads had existed within Royal Park since the surrounding areas were ‘settled’. The original roads were no more than dirt tracks for a horse and cart, however travellers became accustomed to being able to take short-cuts across the Park. Difficulty arose due a lack of Government or City Corporation planning; carriage and freight cart drivers would begin to use a particular route, and it would soon become known as a road. When the Zoo was established, internal roads were cut,

³³ Garran, A., *Picturesque Atlas of Australasia of 1888*, pp.240.

³⁴ Barrett, B., *The Inner Suburbs: the evolution of an industrial area*, pp.77

³⁵ *The Age*, 12 March, 1930.

and the Park was "divided into a number of large paddocks."³⁷ The growth of West Brunswick from the turn of the century and the advent of the motor car presented new threats to the Park, with the car completely changing the nature of the intrusion of roads and parking areas in the Park. West Brunswick residents wanted a direct road to Melbourne; as Councillor Holbrook stated in 1934 (sounding like a champion of VicRoads) "those who talked of alienation were selfish. A growing population was striving for direct means of reaching Melbourne."³⁸

This particular proposed road, traversing the Park from West Brunswick to Flemington Road (roughly following the present tram route) was a source of on-going dispute. In 1940 a West Brunswick resident wrote to the Age; "Those advocating a road through Royal Park belong to that class of selfish, lazy motorists, who would not walk over the street if they could ride... the heritage has been stolen more than sufficiently in the past"³⁹, and signed the letter PUBLIC SPIRIT FIRST. Plans for this road were abandoned, though other roads, in particular Elliot Avenue, Macarthur Road and Gatehouse St became major thoroughfares, while recommendations in the 1984 Masterplan to convert Elliot Ave/Macarthur Rd into a tunnelled road underneath the Park have thus far been ignored. The existence of roads in the Park has been accepted as a fait accompli by council planners, the polity, and probably the majority of the 20,000 plus motorists who drive through the Park each day⁴⁰. Parkland provides a cheap, if short-sighted, site for road works. As a 1960 Board of Works official told the press at a mooted road launch, "multi-lane highways through residential or industrial areas means higher acquisition costs. Parkland is cheaper, although road construction there is not as easy."⁴¹

In 1883 work began on the construction of the Coburg (now Upfield) railway, and then a year later permission was granted to excavate another cutting underneath Sydney Rd to connect the existing railway with the Outer Circle Line through Princes Park. The line opened in 1889 and closed only 16 years ago. The railways,

³⁶ The Argus, 18 March, 1930.

³⁷ Sanderson, "Early History of Royal Park", pp.118.

³⁸ The Age, "Royal Park Road", July 19, 1934.

³⁹ The Age, Feb.28, 1940.

⁴⁰ Melbourne City Council, "Royal Park Masterplan Review, Issues paper, April 1997, Table 3, Changes in two-way traffic volumes, pp.29.

⁴¹ The Sun, Sept. 20, 1963.

particularly where the cuttings existed, further segregated the Park, and upset many of the residents. "The decision to call the station Royal Park instead of Zoo Gardens was a bitter blow. The great damage to the Parklands was deplored."⁴² The railways were bound to change the nature of the Park, however were deemed necessary to connect the outer suburbs with the city. As James Munro, one-time Premier and a notorious land speculator said in the Legislative Assembly in 1870; "As long as everyone wanted Governments to provide railways, and no-one wanted direct taxes, then the Park could be considered to remain under threat."⁴³

The Victorian Government and the Board of Land and Works, as custodians of the Park until the Council assumed control in 1933, were responsible for numerous excisions of land for the use of governmental bodies or institutions, which were often justified by appealing to the 'national interest'. For instance in both World War One and Two the Army excised parts of the Park on the recommendation of the Victorian Government. In World War Two "the armed forces occupied the entire area bounded by Flemington Road, Gatehouse Street, The Avenue and Elliot Avenue... The R.A.A.F. occupied the Manningham Street section until 1944, and a rifle range was set up between the railway line and the camp."⁴⁴ Considerable construction took place in the years of occupation, which lasted in one form or another until 1961. Migrants gradually replaced the soldiers as the Park was used for emergency housing. There seems to have been little objection to the use of the Park for military purposes. No doubt it would have appeared most unpatriotic to oppose the 'war effort' though with peace and the arrival of migrants came ten years of 'vigorous protest' against "the slur on Melbourne's parklands. In fact, the Council had at one stage to tell the inhabitants not to hang out their washing in the view of the residences in The Avenue"⁴⁵, which seems either to suggest a racially-motivated unwillingness on the part of the residents to share 'their' parklands with the newly arrived immigrants or a limit to the extent that residents were prepared to lose parts of the Park for non-recreational purposes (or a combination of both these factors). Decisions to excise areas for use by the Commonwealth Serum Laboratories, the West Brunswick Tramway, the CSIRO and

⁴² Chronology of Development in Royal Park, 1844-1933.

⁴³ Munro, J., op cit. Dunstan, D., Governing the Metropolis: Politics, Technology and Social Change in a Victorian City: Melbourne, 1850-1891,

⁴⁴ Melbourne City Council, "The Melbourne City Council's Administration of the Park 1933-1984, pp.27.

the Children's Hospital however proved relatively uncontroversial, suggesting that there was some consensus that the need for these institutions and facilities outweighed the impact on the Park, and that they increased the utility of the people.

The multifarious policies and interest groups that have been at work on Royal Park since 1854 have rendered it an environment completely re-made by human intervention. The Park reflects 140 years of anthropocentric activity and yet its status as "one of Melbourne's most significant natural environments"⁴⁶ has been continually prized. In this essay I have argued that there have been arbitrary distinctions between what has been regarded by the authorities and the people as an acceptable use of the Park. Any proposed major change has depended (and depends) for its success on its ability to appeal to the ideological currents of the time, be they the pioneer mentality of forging a society, a home-sick English sensibility, the utilitarian tradition, or contemporaneously an appeal to an awareness engendered by the environment movement of the importance of maintaining and restoring (ie revegetating) the land, and preserving 'natural environments'. Thus the state of the Park has been wholly determined by attitudes towards the environment; Royal Park is a living text of environmental attitudes (as are all human-modified environments).

Royal Park's future is unlikely to deviate from the established pattern of attempted excision, popular opposition or consent and arbitration by a centralised body. Currently Royal Park is being mooted as a prospective site for a Commonwealth Games village, while public transport services to the Park have been reduced, inevitably increasing the need for car-parks. Meanwhile VicRoads have registered interest in joining the Eastern and Tullamarine Freeways, a route through the Park being the preferred option. What will change, however, are human environmental attitudes, and perhaps, if we continue apace with environmental destruction, human environmental needs. From an anthropocentric perspective, the value of the Park and its biological functions will only increase as open, natural environments become rarer, and populations grow. Unfortunately, so too will pressure for development. A more biocentric, ecological approach would prohibit further development of the Park and encourage attempts to restore and encourage natural

⁴⁵ *ibid.*, pp.28

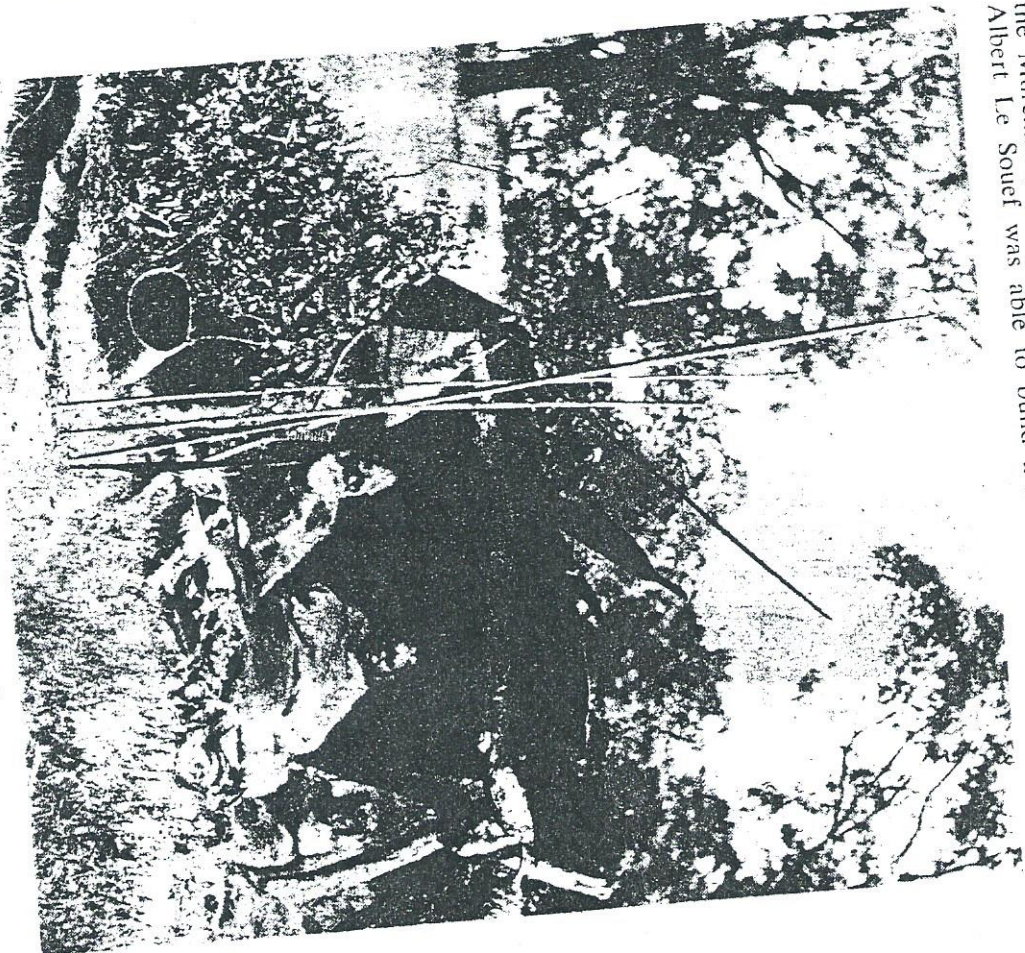
habitat. While acknowledging the influence of corporations, whose success is, at some level, dependent on the exploitation of natural resources, the environmental attitudes of the populace, and the subsequent appropriation by the polity of these ideas, will largely determine the way in which parklands and other environments, natural or otherwise, are treated. As Sanderson concluded, in his 1932 history of Royal Park; "May we hope that, before long, the powers that be may be able to provide for the more efficient (and wise) administration of the old Park, so as to make it a reserve of which the inhabitants of our great city and future generations may be justly proud."⁴⁷

⁴⁶ Melbourne City Council, "Royal Park Masterplan Review, Issues paper, April 1997, pp.5.

⁴⁷ Sanderson, "Early History of Royal Park", pp.139.

An approach was made to the Society by the Coffee Gardens Society to have a series of Continental concerts at the Zoo. A number of recitals was given in 1886. Some years earlier it had been decided to engage the services of a good band for Sunday afternoon recital during the summer. Eventually the Sunday band recital became a normal practice, while in later years jazz and other bands were used.

Having spent much of his young days with the aborigines on the Murchison, where his father was in charge of the native reserve, Albert Le Souef was able to build a native encampment, "an exact



Native's camp in the area in August, 1888

representation of what the homes of the natives were when the white man first arrived in Victoria". Exhibitions of spear and boomerang throwing were given in conjunction with this exhibition. Another of the old attractions at Royal Park for many years were the life-size wooden reproductions of both dipododon and palorchestes, the former a wombat-like animal and the latter a giant kangaroo. They stood as Zoo exhibits for forty years.

Transport comes in for comment, as it affects the gardens at various times. A sketch of the outer circle railway was shown at a council meeting on 28th June, 1875, but later when the work was in progress there was so much strong comment that the line had been taken past the western side of the gardens, with the station nowhere near the main gate. The decision to call the station Royal Park instead of Zoo Gardens was a bitter blow. The great damage to the parklands from the railway cuttings and banks was greatly deplored. There was a strong move to alter the route from the west side to the east of the Zoo, which nearly succeeded, but the present route eventually prevailed, despite public meetings and agitations from many sources.

With some expectations the railway gates were officially opened on 1st November, 1884, but the day's takings were only seven shillings and sixpence. There was a later complaint that, probably with the provision of cheap excursions, the railways were taking people away from Melbourne on Sundays, and so adversely affecting the gate takings. The advent of the electric tram in Melbourne in 1920 helped improve gate receipts considerably.

The building of the Brunswick tramway in 1886¹⁷ was greeted with enthusiasm. Albert Le Souef was deputed to ask J. Clapp, Managing Director of the Omnibus and Tramway Company, if they would provide a horse tram spur line from Sydney Road to the Zoo. This was agreed to; tenders closed on 9th September, 1889; and the line was opened early in November, 1889, despite the inevitable letter to the editor decrying "the squandering of public moneys" on the enterprise. It was indeed a sad occasion for children when, during the police strike in Melbourne in 1923, a glare in the sky announced the burning of the old horse trams. They were never replaced, and the rails were later taken up.

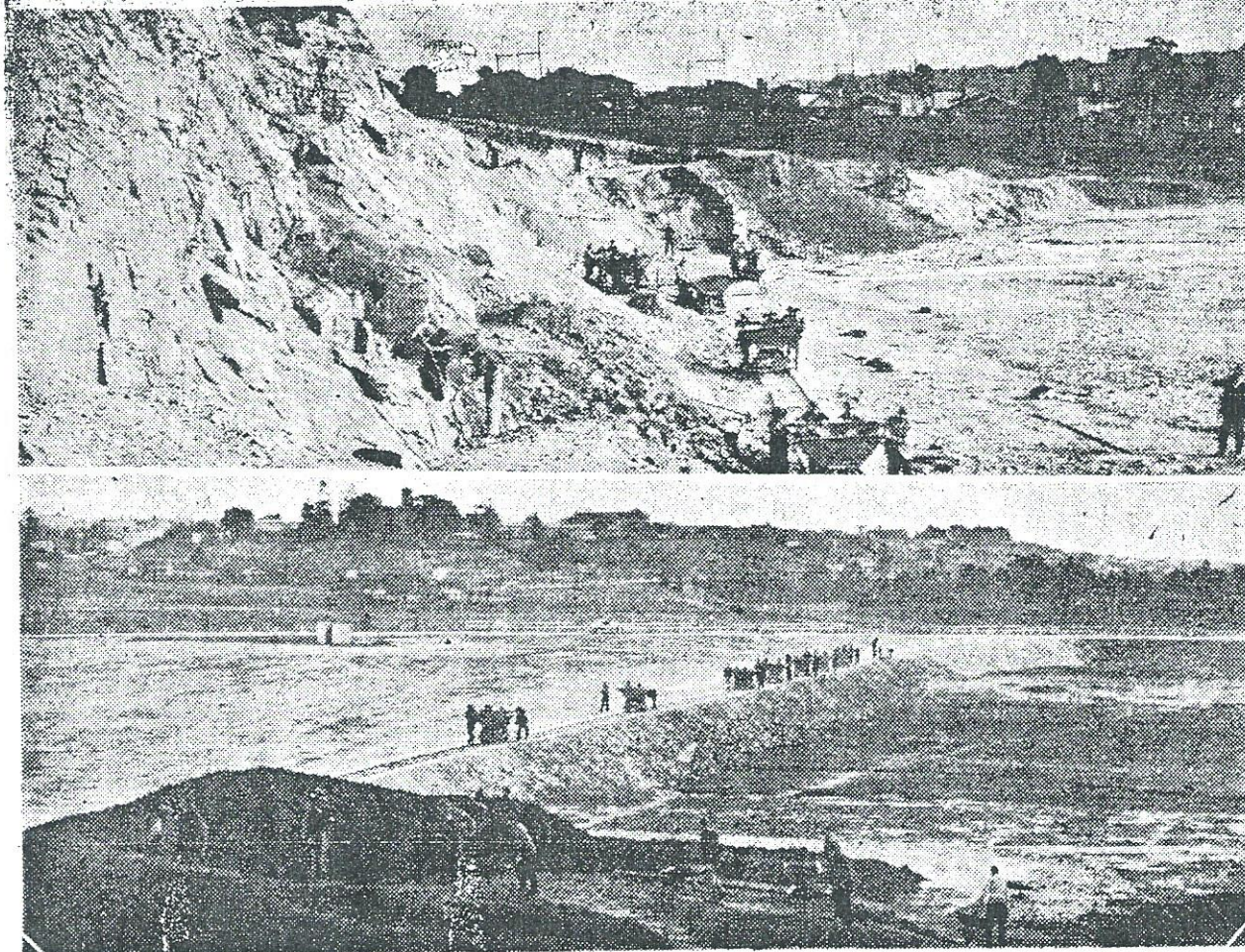
Mention is made of the auction sale of the Sydney Road frontages to Royal Park on 21st January, 1868. It was agreed that the Government be allowed to sell the land provided portion of the funds were expended in Royal Park.

¹⁷ Vol. 5, p. 143.
¹⁸ Vol. 6, p. 196.

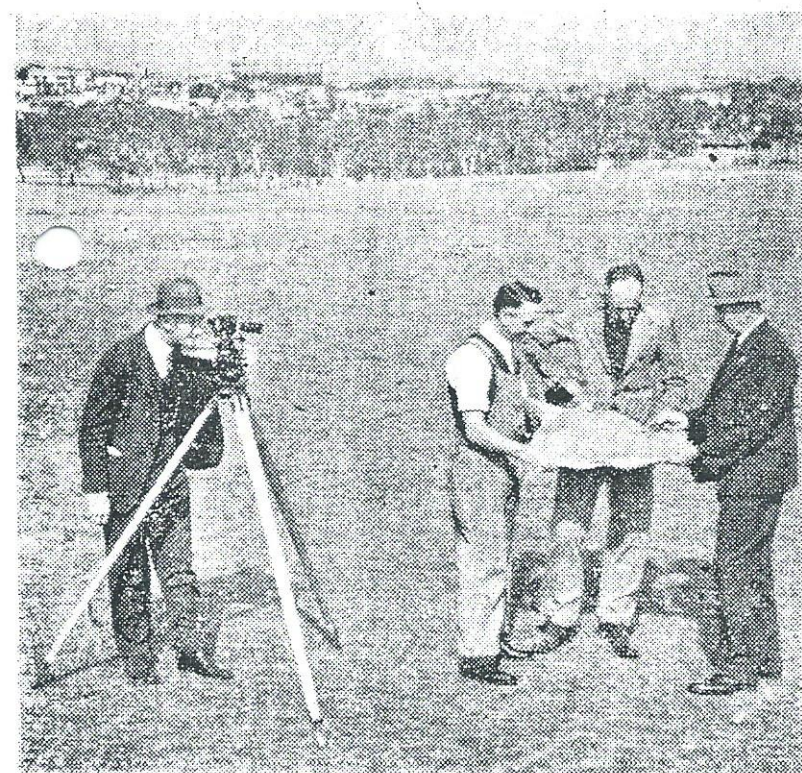
Photographs

in where better than when (Le Souef's) "entertainment" or act.

SPORTS ARENA IN ROYAL PARK

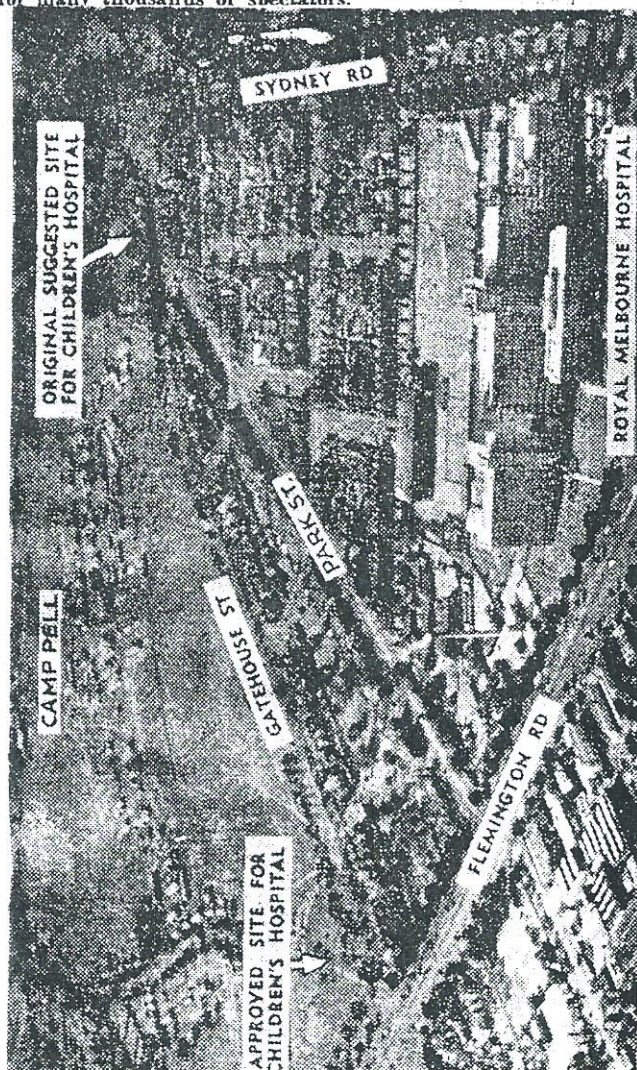


A large sports arena is being prepared at Royal Park. The top picture shows the hill, which will be graded and terraced to provide a natural gallery. Earth from this hill is being used to fill in the low-lying ground in the lower picture. The ground is being prepared under the direction of the City Council parks and gardens committee. According to the officials of the council there will be room for many thousands of spectators.



"THE AGE" 23. 4. 40

Surveyors at work yesterday on the site of the new military camp to be erected in Royal Park on an allotment set aside by the City Council.



THE 10-ACRE SITE AT PARKVILLE where the new Children's Hospital will be erected. Formerly it had been decided to acquire only eight acres of the parklands area. It will be at least 12 months before the work is started.

Royal Park Homes Today



HERALD 13/3/44

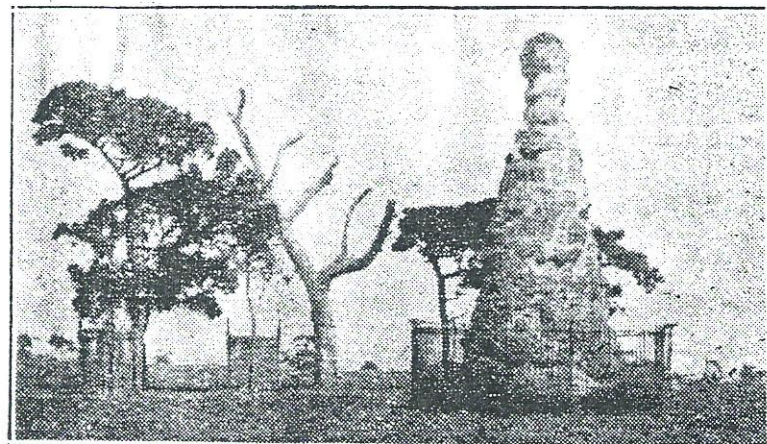
Sun, 7/11/39.

INSPECTION of Royal Park today showed that from Flemington Road, along which the Royal Family probably will drive to and from Essendon aerodrome next year, there was a most unregal view of Camp Pell.

This collection of drab, converted Army huts is still being used as an emergency housing settlement.

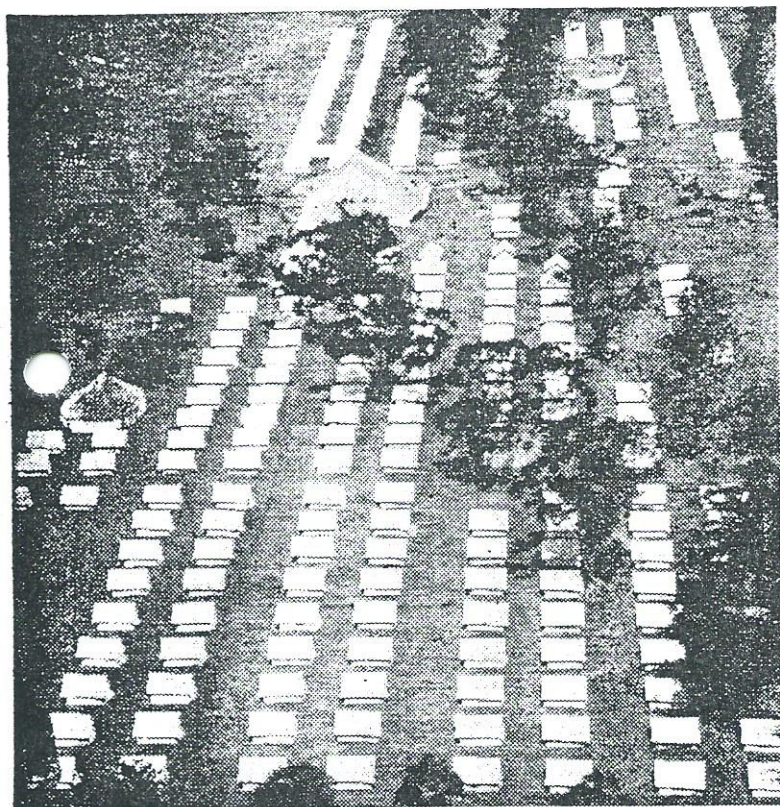
● There is a glimpse of the homes in the picture above, which shows youngsters from the settlement playing cricket.

SUN 7/11/39
2-3-35



A VIEW OF SPACIOUS ROYAL PARK, an A.I.F. camping ground during the war, where the King's Jubilee review will be held on Monday. The Burke and Wills cairn is in the foreground.

A CITY OF CANVAS has been built at Royal Park in the past two days for Victorian Seventh Day Adventists, who will begin their annual camp there on Tuesday. This aerial view shows some of the tents, which will be installed with electric light for the duration of the camp.

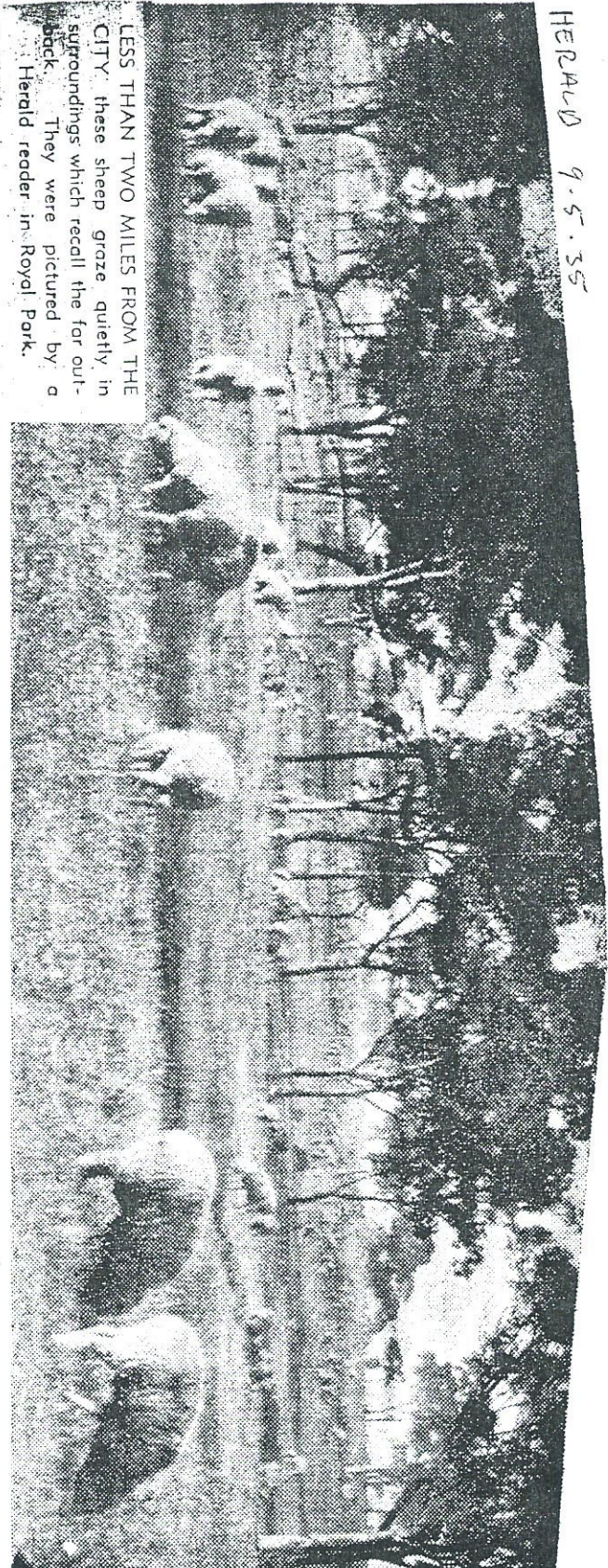


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8/4/38

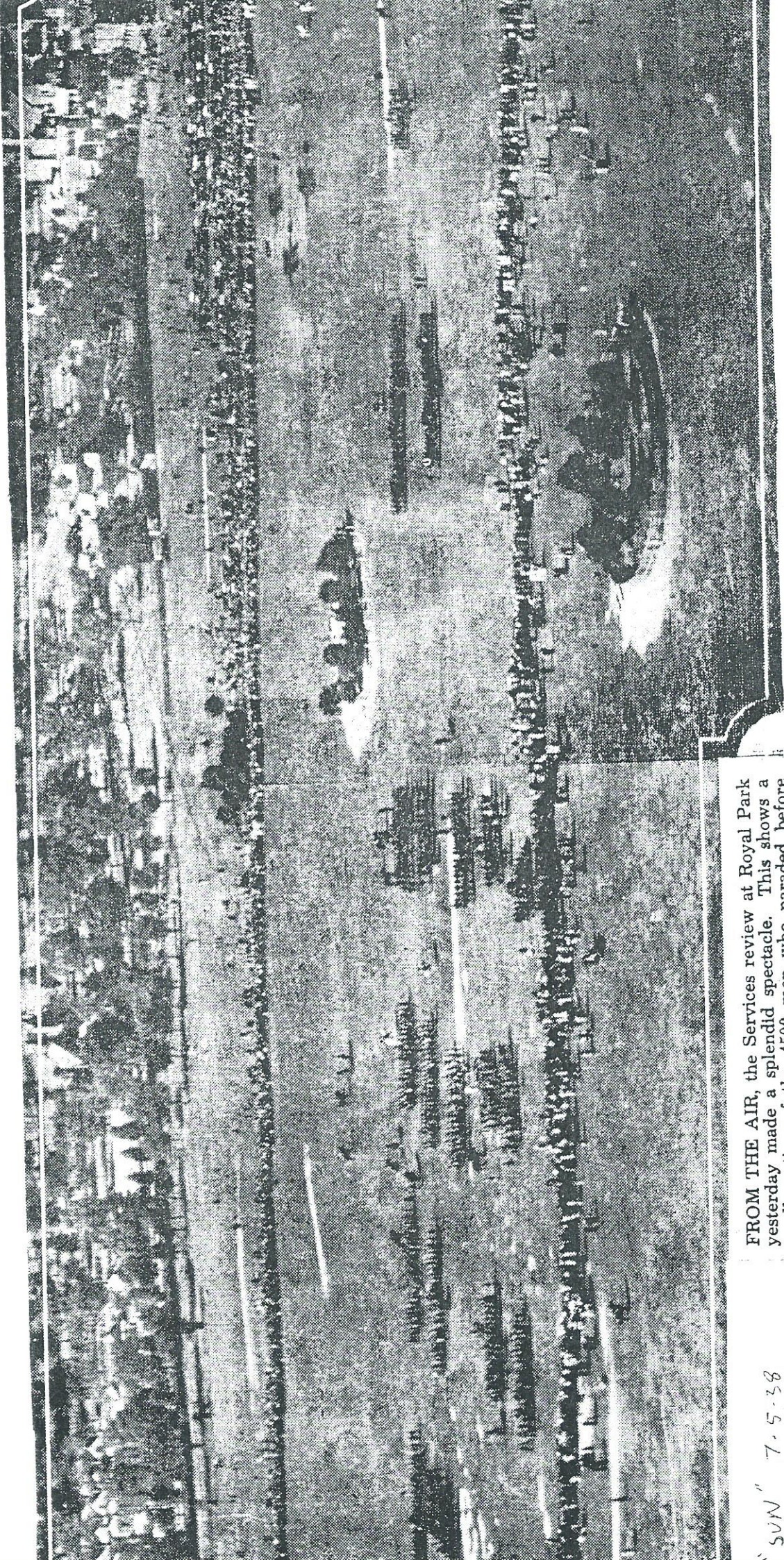


THIS DRAIN WILL divert the Moonee Ponds Creek at Royal Park, where the old bed will be filled in for construction of the City Council's recreation park. Here is today's picture of the drain, which is concrete lined, and will run beneath the park when completed.



LESS THAN TWO MILES FROM THE CITY, these sheep graze quietly in surroundings which recall the far out-back. They were pictured by a Herald reader in Royal Park.

HERALD 9-5-35



FROM THE AIR, the Services review at Royal Park yesterday made a splendid spectacle. This shows a small section of the 4500 men who paraded before 20,000 spectators.

"SUN" 7-5-38

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