T he northern boundary of the City of Stonnington, the Yarra River and Gardiner’s Creek approximate the boundary between the Boonwurrung tribes and their northern neighbour, the Wurundjeri tribes.

The Boonwurrung held a narrow strip that extended as far west as the Werribee River. The Yarra River and Gardiner’s Creek provided the Boonwurrung and Wurundjeri with food including plants, eels, fish, mussels and waterfowls. They were also traditional camping places.

There were inter-marriages between the Boonwurrung and their Wurundjeri neighbours.

The Yalukit-willam clan, whose name probably means ‘river camp’ or ‘river dwellers’ is one of six Boonwurrung clans. The Yalukit-willam clan covered all of the City of Stonnington, with the exception of the small portion east of Gardiners Creek, which is Wurundjeri-baluk (Wurundjeri) people’s land. Yalukit-willam people were also associated with the coastal tract at the head of Port Phillip Bay extending to the east of the Werribee River, and the areas now known as Williamstown, Port Melbourne, St Kilda and Prahran.

In the 1830s the Yalukit-willam clan numbered at least 40 people. They were described as hunter-gatherers who moved around within the limits of their territory to take advantage of seasonal food resources. One of their heads, Derrimut, was an important figure who fostered positive relations with European settlers and the indigenous community.

Throughout the mid to late 1830s the Port Phillip settlement, later to become known as Melbourne, grew steadily on the back of pastoral expansion.

**LANGUAGE**

The language of the Melbourne area is collectively known as ‘Kulin’ or ‘East Kulin’. The ‘East Kulin’ language has three dialects, Boonwurrung, Woiwurrung and Daungwurrung. Linguists labelled these languages Kulin because this word is common to all the dialects and means ‘man’.

### Historic Sites in the City of Stonnington

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SITE NO</th>
<th>SITE NAME</th>
<th>SIGNIFICANCE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Trombin</td>
<td>Waterhole at Royal Botanic Gardens, location of campsites, cremations, Protectorate office and Walpole’s station 1830-1840s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Gardiner Station</td>
<td>Site of Conflict 1838</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Tumuk</td>
<td>Aboriginal campsite during 1840s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>North west corner of Faekleen Park</td>
<td>Camping and corroboree site in the late 1840s and 1850s, camping place of Derrimut</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Chapel Street, Windsor</td>
<td>Known camping site in the late 1840s and 1850s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Lake Como, Como Park</td>
<td>Favourite resort of Aborigines, late 1840s and 1850s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Site of Toorak Hotel</td>
<td>Campsite of Murray, the King of the Yarra Yarra tribe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Forest between Church of England Grammar School and Toorak Road</td>
<td>Campsite of Aborigines in late 1850s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Toorak Road, Chapel Street junction</td>
<td>Aboriginal campsite in tea-tree scrub; used by Aboriginal people visiting from Gippsland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Chapel Street between Dandenong and Commercial Roads</td>
<td>Meeting place and venue for staging corroborees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Site of Mt Erica Hotel, corner Williams Road and High Street</td>
<td>Corroboree site during the early history of Prahran</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>High Street near Malvern Town Hall</td>
<td>Meeting place and venue for staging corroborees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Site of Melbourne High School Playground</td>
<td>Campsite of Derrimut</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Prahran</td>
<td>895 acre site of Government Mission under supervision of George Langhorne, 1837-1839; site of burials and temporary residence of Protectorate officials, 1839</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>South east corner of Port and Commercial Roads</td>
<td>Gathering of Aboriginal people to celebrate the marriage of the Prince of Wales in 1863</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Residence at 403 Port Road</td>
<td>Former home of pro-indigenous activist Helen Baillie 1940s-1970; place of residence of Aboriginal people visiting Melbourne, particularly from the Framlingham community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Kooyong Park</td>
<td>Some 1500 artifacts excavated from Kooyong Park 1975-78 by local resident Dennis Mayor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>East of Anderson Street</td>
<td>Residence of George Langhorne, site of government mission buildings and site of numerous burials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Termeet/Toorak</td>
<td>Residence of Chief Protector George Augustus Robinson from 1843–1852; residence of Barmarren Aboriginal people (1849–1842) and burial place of several Aboriginal people</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

![Map of Stonnington's Indigenous History](image-url)
**KEY PEOPLE**

**GEORGE LANGHORNE AND WILLIAM THOMAS**

In December 1837 the Governor of New South Wales, Sir Richard Bourke, established a Government Mission on a site south of the Yarra, just east of present-day Anderson Street. George Langhorne, an Episcopal missionary from Sydney, was appointed in charge of the settlement. The primary objective of the mission was to provide for the ‘civilisation’ of Aboriginal people.

Derrimut was the head of the Yalukit-willam clan, one of six Boonwurrung clans. The south bank of the Yarra River, from the punt at South Yarra to the Yarra wharf, was significant for Derrimut and the Yalukit-willam clan. In the early years of the Aboriginal Protectorate, Derrimut and his family moved freely around Boonwurrung country often camping near the Yarra Falls and at Troubridge (Gardiniere Gardens).

The Yalukit-willam clan developed a positive relationship with Europeans. Derrimut was closely associated with John Pascoe Fawkner, he often went hunting and fishing with him and was in his employ. The relationship between the two men was so significant that Derrimut warned Fawkner on two occasions of an impending Aboriginal attack on Fawkner’s party which resulted in the attacks being prevented.

In August 1836, Derrimut accompanied Fawkner to Van Diemen’s Land in the ship, The Enterprise, where he was presented to Governor Arthur and presented with a drummer’s dress or uniform, a source of pride among indigenous people.

In 1858, a Victorian Government Select Committee inquired into the condition of the Aboriginal people of Victoria. The Select Committee was told of Derrimut’s despair as the immigrants built homes on his people’s country.

Derrimut was moved to the Benevolent Asylum in North Melbourne in March 1864. One of Derrimut’s last visitors was Fawkner. Derrimut died in the afternoon of 26 April 1864, although his tombstone notes the dates as 28 May 1864. He was 54 years old.

Helen Baillie was a white activist who opened her house in Punt Road as a hostel for Aboriginal people from across the state from the 1890s to late 1950s.

Baillie acknowledged Aboriginal people as ‘the original inhabitants of our land’. She argued that settler Australians had a duty to them.

Writing in 1956, Helen Baillie described her circumstances:

> I am very hard up as I have had so many Aboriginal folk staying in my home. They came up from Framlingham looking for work and I have been keeping them and paying fares while they were looking for work. They have very big appetites and I have a huge food bill… I have only one boy who is doing well. He is in regular work as a builder’s labourer and always pays his board but many of the others are a problem. The boy who is doing well is Jimmie Berg…

Indigenous Elder Jim Berg was a boarder at Helen Baillie’s home during the 1950s. In an interview in 2006, Berg commented that Baillie ‘was a giver, she gave more than she received…everybody who came there looking for assistance one way or another, she gave. . . .

When Helen Baillie died in 1970, Elder Banjo Clarke expressed a desire for a memorial to be built to remember all the good she had done. He recalled her impression of Baillie:

> She could be strict with the blackfellahs living with her too. She would remind everyone of their Aboriginal principles and duties to each other. . . . Miss Baillie did more than anyone I knew of at that time for Aboriginal affairs.

In 1837 the number of Aboriginal people resident on the Mission fluctuated from 30 - 80. When on the Mission, the children and youth were provided daily instruction, however children often left to participate in cultural activities.

By 1838 the mission had become the domain of the Wawurrung people with only a few Boonwurrung and Wathawurrung present. Prevented from hunting on the newly colonised land, some Aboriginal people resorted to stealing potatoes and destroying livestock on nearby land. In 1838, in response to one of these incidents shots were fired at the mission by Police Magistrate Londsdale’s party. As a result of most of the Aboriginal residents left the mission. Langhorne challenged Londsdale’s actions and was dismissed in July 1839.

The mission was closed in August 1839 and Londsdale recommended that the reserve land of 895 acres be laid out in suburban allotments and sold. The land had become valuable and pressure grew to move the mission.

In the 1840s William Thomas, an Assistant Protector of the Port Phillip Aboriginal Protectorate, revealed in his journal that the Boonwurrung and Wawurrung had trouble obtaining game and plant foods in the vicinity of Melbourne after colonial settlement and were suffering from introduced diseases. Thomas wrote to the Governor requesting that the proceeds from the sale of the mission land be used to establish an agricultural settlement for Aboriginal people in his district, this came to nothing.

In 1849, a Select Committee recommended the abolition of the Protectorate heralding a decade of laissez-faire policy and neglect. Thomas was appointed ‘Guardian of Aborigines’ and by 1852 had secured a reserve for the Boonwurrung at Morialta; and a reserve at Warnambool for the Warrambonge. The Boonwurrung continued to visit Melbourne, camping at Fawkner Park and sites in the western end of Stonnington.

**HELEN BAILLIE**

Helen Baillie is seen elsewhere in Kulin placenames, such as Langi Girrak, Langi Will, Larnbouramal Lagoon, Langi Kaal, Langi Logan and Lahuram.

Mernda Road: presumably named after a Wurundjeri placename in the city of Whittlesea, presumably meaning ‘earth’.

Monaro Close: presumably named after the southern NSW Monaro region. The word has several meanings in the literature, including ‘a plain’ and ‘the navel’.

Monomeath Avenue: presumably named after Monomeath, a Boonwurrung placename in the City of Cardinia, meaning ‘pleasant, good, pure’.

Morala Road: meaning and derivation is not known.

Orong Road: possibly a corruption of (Wirung, meaning ‘language, lips, mouth’.

Quambiy Avenue: presumably named after Dhauwurrung placename in the Moyne Shire; quambiy/gawambi is a Woiwurrung word meaning ‘a sleeping place’.

Torrac is a variant of Turrak, the widespread eastern Kulin word for ‘red eye’ or ‘red in lagoon’.

Toronga Road: believed to be an Indigenous place name, however very little is known about its origins. Two meanings are recorded: ‘new, not old, modern’ and ‘fourth’.

Traralga Avenue: presumably named after the Wurundjeri placename in the Pyrenees Shire meaning ‘much rain, wild water, flood’.

Taylala Crescent: possibly named after the western Kulin tjal-tjali tjalinya meaning ‘a sleeping place’.

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Warrac Road: possibly named after wurrwu the Kulin word for ‘mouth, lips, language’.

Warra Road: possibly named after wurrwu the Kulin word for ‘mouth, lips, language’.

Warriwil Road: presumably named after Warriwil, the Dharawal (NSW) word for ‘wild or savage/untrained, wild dog’.

**LANGUAGE HERITAGE IN STONNINGTON TODAY**

Stonnington has numerous street names that have an Aboriginal origin. The following examples demonstrate the possible heritage of Aboriginal street names in the city.

**Derrimut**

Derrimut, at Park by Benjamin Dittenhauf, 1873. Mitchell Library, State Library of NSW.