This chapter commences with a description of the way Aboriginal peoples continued their cultural connection with the land after European settlement, and how the new communities established their own cultural networks.

Of particular interest within the study area is a strong tradition of helping others – needy people in the local community and further afield – through a variety of institutions and groups. Historically reflecting the extremes of wealth and poverty that characterised the early settlement of the study area, this strong theme of charity and philanthropy is woven like a thread through many of the themes discussed in this chapter and is one of the most significant aspects of the culture of the study area today.
HISTORY

10.1 Living as traditional owners

As discussed in Chapter 2, the area that now comprises the Royal Botanic Gardens and Government House (outside the study area) was an important meeting place for the tribes of the Kulin Nation. People continued to gather periodically at this location and in journals by William Thomas (reproduced in Historical Records of Victoria) he wrote that ‘there have been 300 natives of 3 different tribes for near three months near this settlement’. It is therefore not surprising that there are a number of places on or just outside the border of the study area that continued to act as meeting places for Aboriginal people. Throughout the mid-1800s, people often camped on the hill behind Christ Church in what is now Fawkner Park. It was reported the people continued to build mia-mias (temporary shelters) and hunt what game remained in the area. Other camping grounds were reported on the corners of Punt and Toorak roads and St Kilda and Toorak roads (Eidelson 1997:86–87) and Presland (1985:32) wrote that Aboriginal people camped in the vicinity of what is now Chapel Street.
The 300-year-old St Kilda Corroboree tree, literally on the border of the study area at the corner of Fitzroy Street and Queens Road, marks an Aboriginal meeting place. It is thought to have been a place where people gathered to conduct important ceremonial business prior to European occupation and subsequently became a fringe camp. Eidelson (1997:40) describes the location as historically and socially important because it witnessed both the cultural change and ongoing attachment to place that has been so indicative of the Aboriginal experience since the 1830s.

10.2 Worshipping

As McDougall (1985:6) has pointed out, the building of a church in a new settlement was a symbol of permanence and security. In the nineteenth century, Christianity was taken for granted as part of life for most people of Anglo-Celtic origins. Church-going, besides being an essential expression of faith, was also a means of establishing respectability and social ties within communities, and of upholding public morality. Churches were founded before their chapels were constructed, holding early worship services and meetings in private homes, hotels, schoolrooms, and even a bowling alley. Early churches were often built of cheap materials such as timber, while some were prefabricated metal structures, which were replaced with more solid and imposing structures of brick or basalt as congregations grew. Nonconformist Protestants led the way with the earliest buildings. This is perhaps due to the strong lay participation, which allowed local people to take the initiative without waiting for diocesan involvement as was the case with Anglicans and Catholics. Nonconformists also tended to go for plainer, therefore less costly, buildings.

The various denominations were generally markers of social status in the early years of settlement. The Church of England (Anglican) was the church of the establishment, although ‘C of E’ also covered Low Church parishes such as St. Matthew’s, Prahran, as well as people with no particular religious affiliations. People of Scottish origin, including many of the wealthy squatting families, were Presbyterians, and the Catholics were predominantly the Irish poor. Nonconformist Protestants, such as the Methodists, Baptists and Independents, tended to be made up of working-class and lower middle-class English.

For many church members social life revolved around the church. Drinking alcohol and going to the pub were frowned upon by the nonconformist churches until the last few decades of the twentieth century, as was dancing – at least until World War II. Dulcie Wilkie grew up in Malvern East in the 1920s and ‘30s and her family belonged to the Darling Road Methodist Church:

… there was a lot of social life in the church. In fact the church was the fulcrum of your whole life. There was the Ladies’ Guild and there was the Men’s Club, there was the Christian Endeavour. The ladies gymnasium class was on a Monday night, and the men’s gymnasium was another. Choir was Thursday, tennis was on a Saturday. … We had children’s concerts, Sunday school anniversary was a highlight (recorded interview 27 July 2000, MECWA).

The churches were also the social conscience of the community, and most of the institutions concerned with providing care for the needy were set up by churches or church members. This will be discussed further in section 10.3 – Helping other people.

As we shall see, Christian churches were thus extremely influential in founding communities and developing social networks throughout the study area. However, in the second half of the twentieth century falling church attendance and changing demographic conditions were reflected in new uses for some church buildings and in the opening of new churches by immigrant groups.
10.2.1 Founding churches

It was customary for the Colonial Government to make grants of land for churches of the main denominations in each area of settlement. However, as all the land in the west of the study area was sold – mainly to speculators – by 1850, no reserves of land for churches were made in the Prahran municipality. Early residents attended churches just outside the borders in Punt Road and Dandenong Road, or travelled to churches in Melbourne.

The first church to be built in the study area symbolised the founding of community, because it gave its name to Prahran’s main thoroughfare. The small Independent (Congregational) Chapel was opened in 1850, a few months after the first Divine Service was held in Ellis’s cottage. According to Joseph Crook, one of Prahran’s earliest residents:

> The chapel was erected by voluntary subscriptions.
> J. Morrison, brickmaker, of Domain Road, gave the bricks, which he made on his ground near the hotel in that road; Ellis’s gave the stone and undertook the cartage; Westbury, timber merchant, of Bourke street, Melbourne, gave the timber; W. Jennings, of Melbourne, did the brick work; Chamney, Howard and I, the labour and carpentry; my father and brother the painter’s and glazier’s work; the heads of other families contributing cash. The chapel was completed and the Rev. W. Morrison preached the first sermon and opened the building in December 1850 (Crook, 1897).

This was the only place of worship in Prahran for two years, and it was also the meeting place for other community groups. The building, which no longer exists, soon became inadequate for the growing community, and a new bluestone church was built in Malvern Road near Chapel Street in 1858. The Prahran Independent Church founded the Christian Endeavour Movement – a kind of Sunday School for young people, which was adopted by other Protestant churches – and also the Melbourne Bible Institute, a training college for ministers and missionaries, which occupied Armadale from 1941–77 (McDougall, 1985:13–17).

Methodist

The Methodists were also well represented in early Prahran. Services were held in a cottage in the 1850s, before the first chapel, a prefabricated iron building, known as the ‘iron pot’, was erected on the corner of Commercial Road and Margaret Street in 1852. In 1864 a new bluestone church was built on the corner of Commercial and Punt roads. The story of the Prahran Methodist Church continues under the section on the Prahran Mission below. Many other Methodist churches were founded and built throughout the study area as the population grew and the suburbs expanded. Perhaps the most impressive Methodist building was the Jubilee Church in Toorak, which was built in 1886; however, Methodism was not as strong as in Prahran and other parts of the study area (McDougall, 1985:13–17). Toorak people were more likely to be Anglicans or Presbyterians. The Jubilee Church was damaged by fire after it was closed and subsequently demolished in the 1990s.

Other Protestant denominations were represented from the time of early settlement, including the Baptists and the Churches of Christ, both of which pioneered their denominations from the study area. The Baptists commenced worshipping in South Yarra in 1853, and built their first church in Brewer (now Charles) Street. The South Yarra Baptist Church on the corner of Chapel and Wilson streets was built in 1866, and from there the Baptist Union of Victoria was formed. The first Church of Christ in Victoria commenced services in Prahran in 1853. Early services were held in a bowling alley, then the Mechanics’ Institute. The Church of Christ chapel was built in High Street in the 1880s (McDougall, 1985:69–74).
Catholic

Catholics were concentrated in the working-class parts of Prahran and South Yarra. The first Catholic masses were celebrated in Glasgow's Public House in East St Kilda in 1853. A small church, St Mary’s, was built on land granted by the Government on the south side of Dandenong Road in the same year. In 1869 this building was replaced by a larger church designed by William Wardell (who also designed St Patrick’s Cathedral and St John’s Church of England, Toorak). South Yarra Catholics were granted land in Punt Road, opposite Argo Street (outside the study area), but the site was sold and another site purchased in Fitzgerald Street, closer to the working-class houses of the parishioners. St Joseph’s Church was built there in 1888. Catholics from Toorak and Armadale attended St Joseph’s until St Stanislaus’ Church was built on part of the former Toorak House Estate in 1912. Local Protestant families contributed funds, probably so that their Catholic servants could have a church close by. This church was replaced by St Peter’s in 1922, and became the fashionable church for ‘mixed marriages’, that is, between Catholics and Protestants (McDougall, 1985:56–63). Early Malvern was also dominated by Protestants, and local Catholics had no church of their own until the first St Joseph’s was opened in Stanhope Street in 1890 (Strahan, 1989:90; Cooper, 1935:178). The old church became the Parish Hall when it was replaced by the present church designed by A.A. Fritsch in 1908.

Church of England

Although the largest denomination in the early years of Victoria’s settlement, the Church of England was relatively slow in providing places of worship for their members in the study area. Land grants for the western part of the study area for local Anglicans were just outside the study area, in Punt Road, South Yarra (Christ Church) and Chapel Street, East St Kilda (All Saints). At the eastern end of the municipality, in Warrigal Road, the Holy Trinity Church was established on land granted by the Government for Church of England purposes. Land in Glenferrie Road was also reserved for where St George’s Church was established.

St Matthew’s was the first Church of England to commence inside the study area. Services were held in a cottage in 1853, and then in the Church of England Schoolroom in Chapel Street, which became known as ‘St Matthew’s (temporary) Church’. The permanent Church of St Matthew was built in High Street, Prahran, and opened in 1878 (McDougall, 1985:28–30).

The origins of St George’s Anglican Church, Malvern, can be traced to Sunday School classes commenced in the home of Colin Campbell, Haverbrack, in Malvern Road in the mid–1850s. The schoolroom built in Glenferrie Road in 1857 was also licensed for church services, until St George’s Church was built beside it and opened in 1871 (Cooper, 1935:172–75).

The oldest existing church building at the eastern end of the study area is Liddiard Hall, constructed in 1858 from site-fired handmade bricks on the corner of Dandenong and Warrigal roads. This building was the original Holy Trinity Church of England. A larger church building was constructed in 1919 (A Place in History, No.71).
Independent or Congregational Church

One of the earliest churches in the study area was established in 1858 by the United Free Methodist Church on a site in Peel Street, Windsor. It replaced an earlier galvanised iron building on the site that was originally owned by the Independent or Congregational Church. In 1866 most of the congregation decided to join the Congregational Church. In 1977 it became part of the Uniting Church and the final service was held in 1979.

10.2.2 Churches as a reflection of social and economic status of suburbs

The first Anglican Church built in Toorak was St John the Evangelist, founded as a separate parish from Christ Church in 1859. The building, designed by William Wardell, was opened in July 1860 by the Governor of Victoria, Sir Henry Barkly, who would have been the church’s most distinguished parishioner. St John’s Toorak became the fashionable church for Melbourne’s prominent and wealthy citizens and was the church for society weddings (McDougall, 1985:35–36).
The Presbyterians also had a strong presence in Toorak, following early beginnings in temporary buildings in South Yarra and Prahran. Services were commenced in the school hall in Jackson Street, Toorak, in 1868. The Toorak Presbyterian Church in Toorak Road was opened in 1875. One of its founders was Francis Ormond, a wealthy pastoralist and philanthropist who was also the founder of the Workingmen’s College (now RMIT University) (McDougall, 1985:42–46, Malone, 2004:37). The Hawksburn Presbyterian Church was built on the corner of Cromwell Road and Motherwell Street in 1888, but was replaced in 1964 by the Cairnmillar Institute, which, under Rev. Dr Francis Macnab, combined religion and psychology for the treatment of psychiatric patients. The building continued as a church for those who agreed with the new development and in 1984 merged with the Prahran Parish Mission of the Uniting Church (McDougall, 1985:48–50).

The Salvation Army, an evangelical church with a particular mission to the poor and needy, commenced its work in Australia when Major Barker and his wife arrived in Melbourne in 1876. They were responsible for building the Salvation Army’s first purpose-built citadel in Australia in Victoria Street, Windsor, in 1883. This building later became the Prahran Migrant Resource Centre (Cooper, 1924:219; A Place in History, No.23).
Community & culture

The Salvation Army Citadel of 1883, Victoria Street, Windsor (date unknown).
Courtesy Salvation Army Archives. (SLHC Reg. No. 7183)

Greek Orthodox Church, High Street, Prahran.
(Courtesy 2005)
10.2.3 Churches as an illustration of key phases of suburban development

As suburban development spread through the study area, new churches of the major denominations were established as demand arose among the newly formed congregations. The location and building dates of these churches help to illustrate key phases of suburban development. For example, Ewing Memorial Presbyterian Church (now Uniting Church) began meeting in a butcher’s shop off Burke Road, Malvern East, in 1891, at the end of the building boom. However, a permanent church in Burke Road was not constructed until 1906, when the economy had recovered and suburban development of Malvern East re-commenced (Strahan, 1989:86–87). In some cases, buildings were moved around to meet demand: The weatherboard church hall now at 53 Alma Street, Malvern East, began life in about 1890 as a Methodist Church in Glendearg Grove. In 1904 when a new brick church was built, it was used as a Sunday School. In 1928 the front portion of the building including the porch was moved to its present site where it was once again used as a church until a new church was erected in 1958 (Malvern Archives).

10.2.4 Churches as a reflection of changing demographics

Other changes in the churches of the study area reflect the arrival of new ethnic groups. In the 1960s the Greek community purchased the old Baptist Church in Charles Street, Prahran, but it collapsed under the weight of a new roof in 1968. By then Prahran had a second Greek Orthodox Church in the former Mt Erica Methodist Church, bought in 1963. In 1970 the Greek community opened their new purpose-built Orthodox Church of St Constantine and St Helen in Barry Street, South Yarra (McDougall, 1985:64–66).

Melbourne’s small Swedish community did not appear to have any particular attachment to the study area when the Swedish (Lutheran) Church planned to move from South Melbourne to larger premises. Australia’s Swedish community had grown following the introduction of the General Assisted Passage Scheme to Scandinavians in 1952. The property the Church bought was Toorak House, the former nineteenth-century Governor’s residence, which was at the end of its life as a grand mansion for the wealthy. The Swedish Church very likely saved Toorak House from demolition, and what remained of the property from subdivision. The Swedish Church had a tradition of ministering to Scandinavian seamen, and was also a cultural centre for Scandinavians. These roles were continued when the Church opened at Toorak House in 1956 (McDougall, 1985:67–69; Jupp, 1988:810).

The formation of the Uniting Church in Australia, in 1977, from the amalgamation of the Congregational and Methodist Churches and some of the Presbyterian Churches, together with falling church attendances, resulted in a number of redundant church buildings in the study area. Some have been adapted for re-use – the former Prahran Independent Chapel in Malvern Road is now the Chapel Off Chapel Performing Arts Centre.

Convent of the Good Shepherd, Chadstone, in 1985. Demolished to make way for extensions to the Chadstone Shopping Centre. (SLHC Reg. No. 7734)
### 10.3 Helping other people

The study area has a strong tradition of helping others – needy people in the local community and further afield – through a variety of institutions and groups. Many of these were set up by churches or their members, reflecting the needs and concerns of the generation. Many philanthropists and charity workers have lived in the wealthy parts of the study area, and have made their homes available for charity functions. Charity was not entirely the province of the wealthy and working-class Prahran has had its share of charity workers. Among the working class, self-help in the form of mutual societies also flourished.

Though little physical evidence remains of these early institutions, they were important episodes in the history of the community in the study area of helping other people.

#### 10.3.1 Neglected children and ‘fallen’ women

Charitable institutions reflected both the needs and moral attitudes of the era. Of concern in the nineteenth century were neglected children and ‘fallen’ women. Concern over the number of neglected or orphaned children wandering the streets in the years following the gold rushes had led to the passing of the *Neglected and Criminal Children’s Act 1864*, which provided for the establishment of reformatories and industrial schools. This was essentially a crime-prevention measure, designed to train those children perceived to be exposed to a life of crime to become respectable workers. The convent of the Good Shepherd, built in 1883 in Chadstone, was one such institution. It took in girls deemed in need of care and protection, and provided them with academic, domestic and commercial training. Chadstone Shopping Centre now occupies the convent site (Barnard and Twigg, 2004:25; *A Place in History*, No.69).

Perhaps the influence of the rural atmosphere on the edge of the metropolis was considered suitable for such institutions, because the Salvation Army also had their Industrial School for girls at the eastern end of the study area. Belgrave (1215 Dandenong Road) the house built in 1873 for Robert Glover Benson, a long-term Malvern Shire Councillor, was leased to the Salvation Army from 1898 to 1912 (*A Place in History*, No.67).

The Try Boys’ Society, commenced in 1883, was a different approach to the problem of children on the streets. It was founded by Toorak merchant William Mark Foster to give underprivileged boys the opportunity to learn self-reliance through activities such as singing, sport and reading. The club commenced in Foster’s home but soon moved to St John’s Sunday School building. In 1887 the Toorak and South Yarra Try Boys’ Society built its own hall on land in Surrey Road donated by Mrs Margaret Hobson. A similar club for girls was started in 1895. After the Try Society broadened its interests and moved elsewhere its building was used as a gymnasium until its demolition in 1995 (Wilde, 1993:243; Malone, 2000:46–48).
Malvern resident, Councillor and MLA for Toorak Alex McKinley was appointed a special magistrate for the Children’s Court in 1907, serving as its Chairman for twenty years. He was President of the Children’s Welfare Association and had a long connection with the Latrobe Street Mission School. McKinley fought in Parliament for legislation for children’s welfare and the Children’s Court Amending Act 1917 was largely his work. McKinley Avenue in Malvern is named in his honour (Malvern Archives).

In 1885 the Swinborn family, who were Quakers, opened a refuge and training centre for women, mainly ex-prisoners and alcoholics. The centre, called the Elizabeth Fry Retreat, after the English Quaker social reformer, was in Argo Street, South Yarra. It was run by the Swinborns until after World War II, when it was taken over by the Melbourne City Mission. It closed in the 1970s and the site is now the Argo Reserve (Malone, 1998:32–33).

The Methodist Babies Home was set up in 1929 at Copelen Street, South Yarra, by a group of Methodist laymen who wanted to ‘rescue’ neglected children from Melbourne’s slums. It was also the place where babies of single women were kept while awaiting adoption, in an era when single motherhood was not socially or morally acceptable, nor economically possible for most women. The Home was supported by Victoria’s Methodist community. Win Vears remembers the Blue Book scheme, by which small amounts of money were collected regularly from church members:

… you paid threepence or sixpence a week into it. And you just put a pinprick on it. They had young ones at the church doing it, you were asked would you do it. And I collected when I was about twelve years of age for the Blue Book. (recorded interview, 5 July 2000, MECWA)

As social attitudes changed and single mothers were no longer ostracised by society but supported with government benefits introduced in the 1970s, the Methodist Babies Home changed its function and its name. As Copelen Family Services, run by the Uniting Church, the emphasis was on supporting families in caring for their own children, by providing temporary care in nurseries. Eventually it was decided to consolidate Uniting Church family services and locate them elsewhere. In the early 1990s the Copelen Street site was sold for residential development. All that is left of the old Babies Home is a stand of gum trees in the former garden (Vears, recorded interview, 5 July 2000, MECWA; Malone, 2000:12–14).
10.3.2 Institutes for blind and deaf children

There are some large institutions on the doorstep of the study area, which also relate to the theme of helping others. Both the Victorian School for the Deaf and the Royal Victorian Institute for the Blind had their origins in the study area. The first school for deaf people was opened in Peel Street, Windsor, in 1860. Its founder, Frederick Rose, a builder, lived at Oxonia (3 Foster Avenue, Malvern). The Independent Church’s first minister, the Rev. W. Moss took an interest in the school, so it is possible that the school was first conducted in the small Independent Chapel (72 Peel Street, Windsor) that had opened in 1858. The school moved to other sites in Henry Street, Nelson Street and the site of South Yarra’s first Methodist chapel on the corner of Commercial Road and Margaret Street, before it settled on its present site in St Kilda Road in 1866 (Cooper, 1924:212; Malone, 1998:31–32; Crook, 1897; Malvern Heritage Study, p.127; McDougall, 1985:17–18).

The former South Yarra Methodist chapel was then taken over by the newly formed Institute for the Blind, in which Rev. Moss was also involved. After the Institute moved to St Kilda Road, the site was used for the Braille Library, founded in 1894. The building that houses the present Braille and Talking Book Library was built in 1918. Blind people tended to live in Prahran, South Yarra and Windsor, close to the Institute and in the 1930s there was a broom factory employing blind workers (Wilde, 1993:152).
10.3.3 Prahran Mission

Prahran Mission is unique in the study area. It is a church that turned itself into a mission with the sole aim of helping people ‘to live their lives with more resource, dignity and self-respect’ (Malone, 1984:62). The Prahran Methodist Mission was formed in 1946 when the Prahran Methodist Church sold off its property and bought the former Holt’s Chambers, a commercial building in the heart of the Chapel Street shopping centre. The building became the Mission’s worship centre, and also the centre of a huge network of services to the needy. Services included clubs for women and children, craft centres, day nurseries, chiropody and dental services, firewood for the elderly, a cafeteria providing cheap meals for anyone and free meals for the destitute and homeless, an opportunity shop, rehabilitation for alcoholics and drug addicts and support for other people marginalised by society. The Mission became part of the new Uniting Church in 1977, and has continued to introduce new activities wherever needed (Malone, 1984:62–65).

An interesting dimension of the work of the Mission is that it relies on the voluntary services of a large number of people, many of whom are not particularly well-off themselves. Pensioner Bobbie Nugent who worked there as a cook in the 1990s explained:

_There are several kinds of volunteers at the Mission. There are volunteers who have personality problems etcetera, and they take them into the volunteer situation to help them to blend in with people and help handle their daily life. They’re called ‘participant volunteers’. Then there’s volunteers that must do a minimum of eight hours a week, and they’re on a government allowance called a ‘mobility allowance’. And then there’s my kind of volunteer that goes in and that’s it, just do your job. I only do two days now because I’m getting old, slowing down. But I like it because you see people, everybody knows you._ (Recorded interview, 18 September 2000, MECWA).

10.3.4 MECWA Community Care

Another unique home-grown organisation, Malvern Elderly Citizens Welfare Association (now known as MECWA Community Care) was established in 1958 by a group of people concerned for the aged in their local district. Care of the aged had traditionally taken place in the family, and people without family support relied on charity, because governments provided few aged-care facilities. With the support of Malvern Town Clerk Dudley Lucas, MECWA’s founders took on the responsibility of providing meals on wheels, and building and running retirement villages, nursing homes and day centres. Most of its early volunteers were gathered from local churches. They raised money through opportunity shops, lamington drives and social functions. MECWA’s early headquarters were in the newly built Elderly Citizens’ Centre next to the Malvern Cricket Ground (demolished), where volunteers prepared and despatched meals on wheels. Their first opportunity shop opened at 136 Wattletree Road in 1964. MECWA had a number of wealthy and influential members and links with ‘establishment’ people. Under the patronage of people such as former Liberal Prime Minister Sir Robert Menzies, MECWA could attract large donations for their fundraising appeals. The organisation’s first hostel, MECWA House, opened in Warner’s Lane in 1973. Several other aged care facilities followed. MECWA’s activities expanded beyond local boundaries and widened to include services for people with intellectual disabilities. The D.W. Lucas Oval in Dunlop Street honours a former Malvern Town Clerk, and a MECWA founder (Marshall, 1998; _A Place in History_, No.64).
10.3.5 Working-class self-help

*Prahran Mechanics’ Institute*

The workers of Prahran and district had access to a number of organisations which were established specifically by working-class people to promote their own welfare. The Mechanics’ Institute movement was originally a form of self-improvement for working people who had little access to higher education or book learning. As already mentioned, early technical education in Victoria originated in Mechanics’ Institutes, with one of the most successful outcomes in Prahran. The Prahran Mechanics’ Institute commenced in Chapel Street in 1854. It held lectures and debates, and opened its library in 1861. The Institute moved to its present High Street address in 1915. It continued as a library in competition with the Municipal Library, although after World War I the library lost its educational focus (Malone, 1999: 4–5; Wilde, 1993:216–17).

*Friendly societies and the temperance movement*

Friendly societies originated in eighteenth-century England as a way of providing self-help and mutual support among working people. With no state welfare, the societies were an important form of social security. Members made regular contributions of a few pence to a fund upon which they could draw if unable to work because of illness. Funds were also available to pay funeral expenses and support widows and orphans of members. Victoria was the stronghold of friendly societies, probably because of its industrial base. It has been estimated that in 1890 up to one in three people in Victoria came under the protective umbrella of a friendly society (Blainey, 1991:22–23). Friendly societies were well represented in the working-class areas of Prahran and Windsor. The United Order of Oddfellows built a hall in Windsor, which later became a picture theatre, and later still a cabaret. Foresters and other societies were also represented in the area. Although meetings were sometimes held in hotels, friendly societies generally promoted temperance, as sobriety was regarded akin to respectability and prosperity. United Friendly Societies Dispensaries were built in Cecil Place, Prahran and Valetta Street, Malvern.
The Independent Order of Rechabites was the temperance group most strongly opposed to the use of alcohol. One of their main goals was the promotion of total abstinence. Friendly societies built meeting halls, some of which were quite elaborate during the boom years, for their meetings and social activities. Prahran’s Rechabite Hall, the Perseverance Tent No 34 – the Rechabites always called their branches and halls ‘tents’ in honour of a Biblical character who was a total abstainer and tent dweller – in Little Chapel Street was built at the height of the boom in 1889, replacing an earlier hall built in 1871. Perseverance Tent had a strong association with Victorian Premier, temperance crusader and ‘landboomer’ James Munro, who was a Charter Member and Chief Ruler (Malone, 2001:48-9; A Place in History, No.21).
10.3.6 Philanthropists and charity workers

Wealthy Toorak residents have been able to contribute to the community by donating generous amounts of money for various causes inside and outside the study area. Sir Francis Ormond, a wealthy squatter who lived in Ognez (now demolished) in Clendon Road, was the founder and benefactor of the Workingmen’s College in the 1880s, Ormond Hall at the University of Melbourne, and Toorak Presbyterian Church. Sir Sidney Myer of Cranlana, Toorak, was renowned for his generosity during the Depression years, when he funded, among other things, the making of Alexandra Avenue to give work to unemployed men. Generally it was the men who gave the money and the women who did the work. In an age when married women were not expected to have paid jobs – or indeed single women from wealthy families – unpaid charity work became the career of many women. Public charity institutions such as the Royal Children’s Hospital were supported in their early years by the fundraising efforts of ladies such as Dame Elisabeth Murdoch. The Murdoch family lived in Heathfield (now demolished), Kooyong Road, Toorak, where Elisabeth hosted many charity functions, including a fundraising meeting of the local Red Cross branch at the beginning of World War I. The Murdoch family later moved to a smaller house at 39 Albany Road, but Dame Elisabeth’s charity work continued. More recently, Patricia Rayson of South Yarra has been a tireless worker for Red Cross, carrying on the tradition of her mother and grandmother (recorded interview 27 September 2000, MECWA).

Other Toorak ballrooms were venues for charity balls and parties. Isabel Ross Soden, who lived at Mandeville Hall in the early years of the twentieth century, hosted many memorable charity functions (A Place in History, No.27). In the 1970s Bernard Dowd hosted Miss Australia functions at Whernside (Strahan, 1989:59).

10.4 Health and welfare

10.4.1 Hospitals

Although there are no public hospitals in the study area, the Alfred Hospital is just outside its borders, on land donated by Prahran Council. The land was not in the original subdivision plan, but was later ceded to the Prahran municipality for recreation purposes. The Alfred Hospital has cared for and employed many residents of the study area. Consequently, the study area has had a number of private hospitals. This is partly due to the existence of many large houses and mansions that could be converted into small hospitals, and to the large population of wealthy clientele, who were ineligible for public hospital care and could afford private hospital fees. The study area’s largest private hospital, Cabrini, can trace its origins to the small St Benedict’s Hospital, opened by the Sisters of Mercy in the converted mansion Coonil in 1920. When the Sisters moved to their new Mercy Private Hospital in East Melbourne in 1935, they sold St Benedict’s to the Cabrini Sisters, who developed the present modern complex (Priestley, 1990).
Another representative of the small local private hospitals of the earlier twentieth century is the house on the corner of Avondale Road and Auburn Grove, Armadale. This was a private hospital financed by a local doctor and run by a matron, Sister Beeston. The hospital specialised in post-operative and maternity care (Malone, 2005:23).

Other large houses, such as Waiora (321 Glenferrie Road, Malvern) have been adapted for the use of larger institutions. Built in 1886 as Cawood, the house was the home of wealthy merchant Charles Umphelby, then mining magnate Bowes Kelly, before it was taken over for hospital use in 1912. It was run variously as a private hospital and nursing home, before it was purchased by the Mental Health Authority and used as the Malvern Clinic, the first day hospital for psychiatric patients in Victoria. In 1996, Waiora became the home of Very Special Kids, Australia’s first hospice and respite care home for children with life-threatening illnesses (A Place in History, No.43).

10.4.2 Maternal and infant welfare

The study area has the distinction of providing Victoria’s first purpose-built Infant Welfare Centre. This originated from the Prahran Council’s Health Department and its Health Officer, rather than from either of the two influential, but rival, organisations: the Victorian Baby Health Centres Association and the Truby King Association. Council set up a Baby Health Centre in the Town Hall in 1920, and expanded the services to two other sites in Argo Street, South Yarra, and the Try Society in Hawksburn. Council’s new Prahran Health Centre, as it was called, opened in 1923. It focused as much on maternal health as infant welfare, and employed Dr Mary Herring to provide ante-natal care and education. As such it was unique in its time (Wilde, 1993:168–70; A Place in History, No.22).

In Malvern, it seems that Council relied on the advice of a group of Toorak and Malvern matrons – who had formed the Toorak Baby Health Centre in 1920 – to establish their Infant Welfare Services. The centre was first set up under the auspices of the Victorian Baby Health Centres Association in a room in the Malvern Town Hall. The women’s group supported the centre with donations of baby clothes. Malvern’s first purpose-built Baby Health Centre (Barkly Avenue) was opened in 1928 (since demolished). Victoria’s first Director of Maternal, Infant and Pre-School Welfare was Malvern resident Dr Vera Scantlebury Brown (Cooper, 1935:236–9; A Place in History, No.56).
10.5 Preserving traditions and group memories

This theme strongly demonstrates pride of the local community in the study area's history and heritage, and a will to preserve the special nature of its built environment. As already mentioned in Chapter 8, parts of the natural environment of the study area have been saved or rehabilitated because of community activism.

10.5.1 Local history collections

The people of the study area have made a commitment to preserve their history, and both Malvern and Prahran formed strong and active historical societies, with comprehensive collections, many of which are now available on-line via Council’s website. Of special note is the continued use of the Mechanics’ Institute Library as a local history library with a collection that covers not only local districts, but the history of Victoria generally. In High Street, Malvern, Northbrook, the house of failed land-boomer Donald Munro, was purchased by Council in 1945, and used by the Malvern Library. It now houses the Stonnington Local History Collection, and is used for community functions.

10.5.2 Como and the National Trust

In 1954 the sale and subsequent demolition of Werndew, the Toorak mansion built in 1887 by banker Jenkin Collier, spurred into action a number of prominent Melbourne people, who had been watching in dismay as one by one Melbourne’s beautiful and historic buildings were demolished to make way for modern development. The outcome was the formation of the National Trust of Australia (Victoria) founded in May 1956. If Werndew was the spur, Como was the catalyst for the founding of the Trust. Charles and Caroline Armentage’s last surviving daughters were still living at Como, but were having difficulty maintaining the large property. They dreaded the thought of Como’s demolition or conversion into a nursing home, and welcomed the suggestion that it could become the first property of a newly formed National Trust. The sisters agreed to sell Como to the Trust for less than half its value, and also gave a sizeable cash donation to the Trust. Como thus became the flagship and headquarters of the National Trust. It was first opened to the public in July 1956, and has become one of the Trust’s and Melbourne’s most visited heritage sites.

Many early influential members of the Trust were residents of Toorak and South Yarra (Malone, 2004:45–46; Clark, 1996:10–14). For fifty years the Trust has worked to protect historic buildings and the natural environment, and to educate the public to appreciate and conserve Victoria’s heritage. Another Trust acquisition in the study area was the Toorak mansion Illawarra. Many more sites in the study area have National Trust classification. Como and Illawarra demonstrate the opulent lifestyles of the wealthy, and the notions of heritage that motivated the Trust’s founders. The Trust, and the heritage movement generally, has since developed a wider view of what constitutes Australia’s heritage.
10.6 Appreciating and defending the environment

10.6.1 Preserving the natural environment

Although an awareness of the value and beauty of the Australian environment grew in the general community with the nationalism of the Whitlam Government in the 1970s, there were people of an earlier age who worked to defend the native environment. One leading worker and campaigner was Dr Sir James Barrett, a prominent ophthalmologist with the Eye and Ear Hospital and public figure. Barrett was Chairman of the National Parks Association, formed in 1908 and founding President of the Town and Country Planning Association formed in 1914. These associations became part of a lobby group that urged government to reserve areas as national parks. Barrett led by example. He kept his Lansell Road property, Palmyra (later known as Heimath, demolished) as natural bushland and a haven for native animals (Clark, 1986:10; Malone, 2004:12). The long campaigns of Barrett and others eventually bore fruit in the establishment of Victoria’s system of National Parks.

Gardiners Creek

In the study area public interest in the natural environment was stimulated by the threat to the Gardiners Creek Valley from the proposed freeway in the 1970s. However, concern about the effects of inappropriate development upon the creek began much earlier. Burns (unpubl., pp.44–45) describes how Malvern Council set up the Gardiner Valley Improvement Scheme in the 1920s to acquire a continuous strip of parkland along Gardiners Creek, preventing the use of the creek for objectionable factories or poor houses on the flood-prone land, and allowing for the construction of a boulevard road. A continuous strip was not achieved, but we owe the significant parkland along the creek today to the foresight of the early council. This is probably the earliest waterway linear park creation exercise in Melbourne.

When extension of the freeway along Gardiners Creek was proposed in the 1970s, community and council concern led to the establishment of the Gardiners Creek Valley Study which examined many impacts of the proposed freeway construction. The community was represented by the Gardiners Creek Valley Association which was formed in 1977 to preserve the valley and adjacent houses from an extension of the South Eastern Freeway.

The huge public protest over the freeway is noted in Chapter 4 and, although they were not able to stop the freeway, the association and other activists were able to influence the program of restoration of parts of the valley to reflect some idea of the original natural environment. The establishment of the Urban Forest was also a concession to the loss of open space which would have not been gained without community activism (Strahan, 1989:6–12, 255).

When ultimately the road was built as an arterial road, the Country Roads Board paid the City of Malvern compensation for lost parkland and damage to its park facilities. Some of this money, that which was not required for repairing facilities, was spent on landscaping areas of parkland, and the Malvern Valley Plan was established to direct this work.
10.6.2 Recreating the natural environment

In 1979 the Outer Circle Railway land between Gardiners Creek and Dandenong Road was offered to council for low rent by the MMBW and the Railway Construction Board, and in 1980 the Council took this opportunity to propose the development of the land as an ‘urban forest’ (City of Stonnington, 2001:5). The first concept plan was developed by the Forests Commission in association with Malvern City Council and funding from the Department of Sport and Recreation. Planting began in late 1983 with the involvement of Council, contract workers, local schools and community groups. Parts of the original railway ballast and platform verges (of the Waverley Road Station) are still present. W.M. Dane Park adjacent to Heyington Station is a good but rare example of revegetation in a small park in a highly urbanised setting. When the land was proposed for sale and development in the 1990s a group of local residents, including former long-serving Prahran Councillor Bill Dane, strongly objected to the sale of the land and supported its retention as a park. In doing so they protected the large remnant native trees in the park and caused the creation of a little habitat oasis (Malone, 2002:53, 2004:18).

10.6.3 Campaigning against high-rise development

As noted in Chapter 6, there was community opposition to the building of flats, particularly high-rise blocks in the study area from the 1920s, but it was the 1969 ‘Perrott Plan’ that brought Toorak and South Yarra residents out in protest. Patricia Rayson, inaugural secretary Toorak/South Yarra Anti-High-Rise Group remembers:

We moved here in April 1968 and just enjoying settling and getting to know the area and suddenly the Council launched their plans to [allow a] twenty-storey high-rise right along the Alexandra escarpment and fifteen-storey over on that Toorak Road hill. No-one would have had any sun. It’s absolutely horrendous. So out of that we met at Miss Leeper’s home at 11 Kensington Road and formed the group. Tony Sallman organised a meeting in St John’s Church Hall and had John Bailey, a town planner, as guest speaker. St John’s Church Hall was standing room only and Tony Sallman said, ‘now a group has been formed, we need funds to fight this’. And people just dropped money into our hands as they walked out the door, and we walked out of that hall with over seven hundred dollars to start a fighting fund – incredible the reaction (recorded interview, 27 September 2000, MECWA).
The South Yarra Anti-High-Rise Group successfully campaigned for maximum heights of two storeys in residential streets, and led to the election to Prahran Council of people who opposed high-rise development, including Patricia herself. The fight to protect the character of South Yarra and Toorak has been continual, particularly since the raising of maximum building heights in some parts of the area in the 1980s. A number of multi-storey buildings have been allowed along Toorak Road. One example of a compromise between developers and objecting residents is the residential complex that replaced the former Methodist Babies Home in Copelen Street (Malone, 2000:14).

### 10.7 Pursuing common leisure interests

There were other institutions besides churches that indicated the formation of communities and helped define local identity. Early sporting clubs involving men only were formed in the study area in the 1860s. By the end of the nineteenth century many of the sporting organisations in the study area today were already in existence. Sport, like religion, could be a marker of social status, as evidenced by the private tennis courts in the wealthier suburbs of the area, and perhaps the comparative strengths of football and cricket in Prahran and Malvern. Sporting grounds made use of land, such as the creek valley flood plain, which was unsuitable for built development.

Music and dancing also brought people together for both public and private recreation. Again the various forms in which these entertainments took place illustrate the distinctive social groupings within the various communities of the study area. The cinema was also well represented in the study area.

### 10.7.1 Sport

**Football and cricket**

The South Yarra Football Club commenced in 1864 and it played at Fawkner Park (outside the study area) before it was amalgamated with the St Kilda Football Club in 1873 (Cooper, 1924:197–99: www.footypedia.com). Meanwhile, Prahran Football Club was formed in 1886 and was a member of the Victorian Football Association. The club has won several premierships in the VFA and maintained a loyal following by local residents over the years. Toorak Park, developed by Prahran Council from a former quarry pit that supplied the clay for Orrong Potteries, was opened by Prahran Mayor William Davies on 7 October 1893 and it became the club’s home ground in 1899. It hosted the VFA Grand Final from 1935-38 and the 1938 final set an attendance record of 17,000. During 1942 and 1943, when the VFA was in recess, St Kilda Football Club played at the ground after the Junction Oval was taken over for military purposes. Toorak Park is also used for cricket. The Cricket Club Pavilion was opened by Prahran Mayor C. Pickford on 14 March 1925, using money awarded to Prahran by the Victorian Cricket Association for winning three consecutive premierships from 1921-23 (www.footypedia.com; Malone, 2005:4).
In the Malvern community, the cricket club has had a higher profile than its football club. The Malvern Cricket Club was formed by 1862, and was playing on the water reserve in High Street. During the 1870s and 1880s the reserve was developed into a cricket ground, with the grandstand and dressing room constructed in 1879. According to Cooper ‘the most famous cricket match in the annals of the Malvern Cricket Club’ was the match in which the great English cricketer Dr W.G. Grace played in 1888. The match between the English and Malvern teams was organised by the Shire President, Cr A.E. Clarke, who was an influential member of the Melbourne Cricket Club. Clarke promoted the idea to Dr Grace because the Malvern Cricket Ground’s charming surroundings, within the shadow of St George’s Church, would suggest to the Englishmen a likeness to a cricket match on the outskirts of an English village. (Cooper, 1935:104-07)

The Shire President was echoing the yearnings for English village life, upon which Skinner had founded his Malvern Hill Estate over 40 years earlier.

One of the playing fields of the Gardiner Valley has been used for the innovative sport of cricket for blind people. Blind cricket was invented in Melbourne in 1922 and has been played on the ground at 454 Glenferrie Road, Kooyong, next to the Vision Australia Foundation (A Place in History, No.38).

**Bowls**

The study area has some of the oldest bowls clubs in Victoria, but the historian Cooper has made contradicting statements regarding the origins of the first bowling green. In his *History of Prahran*, he stated that the Melbourne Bowling Club, formed at Windsor in 1864 with 182 members, was the colony’s first bowling club. Priestley has also suggested that it was also Australia’s oldest bowling club. However in his *History of Malvern* Cooper described the bowling green set up by William Greaves at the Gardiner Hotel, on the corner of Glenferrie and Dandenong roads, in 1862 as the oldest in Victoria (Cooper, 1924:200, 1935:170-71; Priestley, 1984:233). Meanwhile the Malvern Heights Bowling Club operated at the private residence Kia Ora in Malvern from 1911-18. The Prahran Bowling Club was formed in 1865, disbanded for a few years, and re-formed in 1888. It played on greens in Grattan Gardens, until 1999. Women were not permitted to join the club until 1937 (A Place in History, No.4).

**Horse racing and hunt clubs**

According to Cooper, horse races were held at Mt Erica in the early 1860s, but the Prahran Racing Club began its activities in 1865, on the reserve between St Kilda and Punt roads, the site of the Alfred Hospital. The Prahran Racing Club appears to have been rather short-lived, and probably succumbed to competition from Caulfield.

A leisure pursuit that was almost the exclusive preserve of the wealthy within the study area was hunting. The Melbourne Hunt Club conducted the first hunt of the season at Ranfurline, the property owned by the Hon. William Knox, from 1897 until its headquarters were established outside Melbourne near Cranbourne in the early twentieth century. As we have seen, Ranfurline later became part of Korowa Girls’ School.
Athletics

The Malvern Harriers was formed in 1892 as a men’s athletic club, with a focus on cross-country running. The club centred its activities at the Malvern Cricket Ground, where it had its clubrooms. The Harriers were active in Victorian track and field championships, with an emphasis on team efforts, although some individual athletes such as Dick Crossley, who became the curator at Olympic Park, stand out. Champion miler John Landy was associated with the Harriers, as was the famous, but rather eccentric coach Percy Cerutty. Women were admitted to club competition and committee in the 1970s. Barbara Fay was an early member who pioneered the women’s marathon (Robbins, 1996).

Golf

In 1891 a group of Toorak businessmen, including John Munro Bruce, established Melbourne’s first golf club, the (Royal) Melbourne Golf Club, on an unsold housing estate at Malvern East. The 18-hole course extended across Burke Road from east of Finch Street, through the site of the present Central Park, from Wattletree Road to Waverley Road. The waterholes at Hedgeley Dene were used as water hazards. When the club moved to Sandringham in 1901, the course was taken over by Caulfield Golf Club, which became the metropolitan when it moved to Oakleigh in 1907 (Foster, 1999:51; Malvern Archives).

As we have seen, the Malvern Valley Golf course was developed over many years by the Malvern Council as it acquired land in the Gardiners Creek Valley. The course had its beginnings in 1904 when 18 acres of land in the vicinity of Malvern East Station was secured as the Eastern Recreation Reserve and was finally able to proceed when 70 acres was donated by T.M. Burke from the 1923 subdivision of the Malvern Meadows Estate. Works commenced on construction of the course in 1924, but was delayed by the construction of the Glen Waverley railway in 1928. During the Depression unemployed relief workers were used to help construct the course and the first 9-hole section was opened in 1931. Following the success of this course, it was extended to 13 holes in 1934 and a year later the 18-hole course covering 110 acres opened with facilities at Thornbury Crescent. Much of the course was lost due to the construction of the Monash Freeway, and in 1988 a new architect-designed course was made (A Place in History, No.66).
Tennis

As mentioned in Chapter 8, many mansions and large villas in Toorak and Malvern had their own tennis courts, and their owners were able to enjoy private games with family and friends. Win Years remembers being invited to tennis parties at Carmyle in the 1930s (recorded interview 5 July 2000, MECWA). A number of municipal tennis courts and church tennis clubs were also established throughout the study area. It is, therefore, perhaps no coincidence that the most significant sportsground in the area, nationally, is the Kooyong Lawn Tennis Club in Glenferrie Road.

Unlike the other sports clubs in the study area, it did not originate as a local institution. The Lawn Tennis Association of Victoria was formed in 1892, and the first Australasian Championships were held in 1905 at the Albert Ground in St Kilda Road. Tennis grew in popularity and a larger site was sought. In 1920 the Kooyong site, formerly part of the Moonga estate, was purchased by the association. Facilities were constructed for international matches, and the courts were opened in 1927 by Australia’s first Wimbledon champion, Sir Norman Brookes. Kooyong hosted 34 Australian Championships and several Davis Cup events, before the major international tournaments were transferred to the new National Tennis Centre at Melbourne Park. The association changed its name to the Kooyong Lawn Tennis Club in 1988 (A Place in History, No.28). Kooyong is still a byword for tennis in Australia.

10.7.2 Music, dancing and cinemas

Malvern Municipal Band

The tradition of brass bands originated in nineteenth-century Britain, and was continued on in many suburbs of Australian cities. One of the earliest bands in Melbourne was the Hawthorn Brass Band, formed in 1888. The Prahran and Malvern Tramways Employees Band was formed in 1911 in the home of Charles Snelling. Its name was simplified to Malvern Tramways Band a few years later. The band practised in the former Northbrook stables in High Street from 1932. By 1947 most of its original members, who were tramways employees, had retired or moved away and the band was renamed the Malvern Municipal Band. Over the years the band has achieved considerable success in competitions, but it was also prominent in local celebrations, commemorations and concerts at the Malvern Town Hall, the bandstand in Central Park and other local venues. The band was renamed Stonnington City Brass in 2000 (websites Hawthorn City Band, Stonnington City Band; A Place in History, No.45).

Other music-making – public and private

During wartime people kept their spirits up with community singing in the Malvern and Prahran Town Halls. Lil, a long-time resident of Prahran, remembers that her mother always sat in the same seat for community singing at the Prahran Town Hall (recorded interview 19 July 2000, MECWA).

Private concerts were held in the mansions of the wealthy. Nellie Melba sang at soirees at Como in the 1890s (Fox, 1996). Win Years remembered being invited to a concert at Carmyle in the 1930s:

I had my first long frock when I was about twelve and a half, to go to a concert at Carmyle. You couldn’t go unless you had a long frock. There was a maid in a black and white outfit. And the huge grand piano and the windows that opened out onto the tennis courts (recorded interview 5 July 2000, MECWA).
Dancing – from ballrooms to nightclubs

Dancing has been a popular form of community activity for people throughout the study area during much of its history. According to Cooper (1924:202) the first public dances were held in Prahran in the Royal George Hotel in the 1850s. On one occasion the weight of the dancers upstairs caused the ceiling to collapse onto the bar below. In Toorak and South Yarra the tradition of society balls was carried out in the mansions of the wealthy, many of which, like Como and Toorak House, had ballrooms. An invitation to a Government House ball was an honour anticipated and enjoyed by community leaders, including those not classed as ‘society’ people. Society balls were often the manner in which the wealthy supported charity, while keeping their social circle exclusive. Private balls and parties were also held for the debut into Society of daughters reaching marriageable age. Miss Leila Arnytage’s debut was held at Como during Melbourne Cup week 1894 (Fox, 1996).

Other girls made their debut in balls held in the Malvern or Prahran Town Halls. Dulcie Wilkie was sixteen when she made her debut, partnered by her brother, at the Malvern Town Hall, just before World War II. The debutantes and partners were trained in traditional ballroom dances, and were presented to the Mayor and Mayoress on the big night. In the 1930s the Malvern ‘deb’ set was kept together as a network that raised money for charity, emulating the society ladies of Toorak:

… you joined what was called the YML, the Young Malvern League which was for ex-debutantes and their partners. Mrs Crosbie-Gould [wife of the Town Clerk], started that in 1932 after her daughter made her debut. She thought, ‘All these girls just wander off, they never see each other again.’ So they worked for the Berry Street Foundling Home and the Methodist Babies’ Home. They had dances and fetes and all kinds of things to raise money for them. But dances were our main event. We used to have them in the upstairs room at the Town Hall (Wilkie recorded interview, 27 July 2000, MECWA).

These dances and others in support of various causes continued throughout the war years.

In Prahran a popular dance hall was Leggett’s Ballroom in Greville Street, which opened in 1920. It was neither exclusive nor parochial: people came from all over Melbourne to dances at Leggett’s. After extensions in 1939, it became Australia’s largest ballroom. Leggett’s also provided dancing lessons, and kept up with the latest dance crazes until it closed in 1981. The building was demolished and site became a sports complex and later a residential development (Wilde, 1993:262-64).

While ballroom dancing was eventually to wane, the new forms of popular music in the post-war era and changes to licensing laws led to the emergence of nightclubs and, later, discotheques in the 1970s. The Toorak Café and Cabaret (situated on the north side of Toorak Road approximately where the Longford Cinema now is) was a well known nightclub, which was later known as the Winston Charles, Playboy Club and Claridges. One of the best-known venues of recent times was Chasers in Chapel Street (which opened in 1979), another was Silvers, in the Trak Centre at 445 Toorak Road. Chasers has a long history as a nightclub and cabaret and for a time in the 1960s it was known as the Copacabana, when it was popular with the Greek community.
Community & culture

Bright young things at the Winston Charles nightclub, 1968 (formerly Toorak Café & Cabaret) shown left, (date unknown).
(Slhc reg. Nos. 2274.3 and 8679)
Cinema

In the second decade of the twentieth century moving pictures were a new form of popular entertainment, and the study area’s first theatre, the Royal, opened in Chapel Street in 1911, followed by the Tivoli in Glenferrie Road, Malvern in 1913, the Empress in Chapel Street and the Armadale Theatre in High Street, and several more including the Victory in Wattletree Road in the 1920s. The arrival of the ‘talkies’ in the 1930s brought a new crop of theatres, including the Windsor on the corner of Peel and Albert streets, and the Village Theatre at Toorak Village. None of these theatres is still operating, but a few buildings, including the Victory and the Armadale, have survived with other uses.

The study area had a special association with the cinema, through one of its houses and one of its residents. In 1899, the Salvation Army Film Soldiers of the Cross, believed to be the world’s first full-length feature film, was made at Belgrave in Chadstone, which was the Salvation Army Industrial School at that time. Toorak resident Frank Thring (snr) was the managing director of Hoyts, and also a pioneer film producer in Australia (Wilde, 1993:254–59; Raworth and Foster, 1997:14; Malone, 2005:28; A Place in History, No.67).

10.8 The arts

Although the study area does not have the reputation as an artist’s haunt, such as that enjoyed by Heidelberg or Eltham, a number of celebrated artists, musicians and writers have made their homes in the study area.

Carlsburg (formerly known as Buona Vista) was the home of Frederick McCubbin, from 1909 to 1917, and some of his paintings were of views from his house (Malone, 2000:17). Rupert Bunny lived above the newsagent’s shop on the corner of Toorak Road and Caroline Street, South Yarra, from 1937–1947 (Malone, 1998:10-11). Fred Williams lived above his family’s shop on the corner of Glenferrie and Malvern roads in the 1940s, where he painted his earliest signed and dated work, Backyard Malvern (A Place in History, No.44). Sculptor Karl Duldig worked and ran classes in his studio in Burke Road, Malvern East, from 1953 (A Place in History, No.62).

Thomas Alexander Browne, better known as writer Rolf Boldrewood, had family connections with one of the earliest families to settle in South Yarra, the Forrests. Brown lived and worked at 103 Mathoura Road in his later life in the early twentieth century. Flautist John Amadio lived in the same street at number 88 before World War II (Malone, 2002:56 and 58).

In the post-war period some artists began to use redundant buildings such as old factories and the unused upper floors above many of the old shops and department stores in Chapel Street as studios. One of Australia’s foremost post-war painters, Howard Arkley (perhaps best known for his paintings of suburban scenes in ‘day-glo’ colours) occupied a studio in Chapel Street in the 1970s in the upper levels of the Prahran Arcade building. Reputedly, he is said to have painted graffiti on the walls in his distinctive style.
HERITAGE

The places associated with theme of Community and Culture have historic, social and aesthetic values as they demonstrate the development of communities, their support services and cultural activities over time. These values are sometimes expressed in tangible ways, such as by surviving physical fabric (buildings, structures, trees, landscapes etc.), but are also apparent in the associations and meanings embodied by the place for different communities. This chapter provides a summary of values associated with these places and provides a representative list. For further examples, reference should be made to the heritage studies and reports listed in the bibliography.

Worshipping

Churches are at the hub of the study area’s developing communities. The location and denomination of the churches gives an insight into the spread of different social classes and ethnic groups in the study area over time. The dates and locations of churches mark key phases of suburban development and have become local landmarks.

Churches in the study area were not only places to worship but centres of education and social life – places to meet, socialise, play sport and enjoy music and arts. They were also at the root of many welfare efforts in the study area. Some examples include:

- Founding or early churches – the United Free Methodist Church (66-72 Peel Street, Windsor), former Prahran Independent Church (Malvern Road, Prahran), Liddiard Hall (Holy Trinity Church of England, corner of Dandenong and Warrigal roads, Chadstone), St George’s Anglican Church (Glenferrie Road, Malvern), St Joseph’s Catholic Church (Fitzgerald Street, South Yarra), and St Joseph’s 1890 Catholic Church (now the Parish Hall, Stanhope Street, Malvern)

- St John the Evangelist Church (Toorak Road, Toorak) and the former Salvation Army Citadel (Victoria Street, Windsor) reflect the historic social and economic status of the suburbs where they are located. Another example is the former Hawksburn Presbyterian Church (now Cairnmillar Institute, corner of Cromwell Road and Motherwell Street, South Yarra)

- Churches that illustrate suburban development – Ewing Memorial Presbyterian Church (now Uniting Church) Burke Road, Malvern East, and St Joseph’s 1908 Catholic Church (Stanhope Street, Malvern). The former Methodist Church 53 Alma Street, Malvern, is another example, which is also a rare example of an early timber church

- Churches that illustrate social and demographic changes – Orthodox Church of St Constantine and St Helen, Barry Street, South Yarra, and the Greek Orthodox Church, High Street, Prahran.

Helping other people

The study area is notable for its strong tradition of public and private organisations established to help the less fortunate through self-help and philanthropy. Examples include:

- Buildings associated with charitable societies include the Salvation Army Citadel (later Migrant Resource Centre) Victoria Street, Prahran, Rechabites Hall (Little Chapel Street, Prahran) and the former United Friendly Societies Dispensary (Cecil Place, Prahran)

- Argo Reserve (site of Elizabeth Fry Retreat)

- Braille and Talking Book Library, 31-51 Commercial Road, Prahran

- Former Holt’s Chambers, now Prahran Mission, Chapel Street, Prahran

- MECWA House (demolished), Warner’s Lane, Malvern

- Prahran Mechanics’ Institute

- Grattan Gardens Community Centre, Prahran

- Houses associated with charities and individuals include Como, Mandeville Hall, and Whernside.
The image shows a black and white photograph of a building labeled "cxliv Belgrave at the corner of Dandenong and Belgrave roads, c.1900."
Health and welfare

The study area is notable for the provision of health and welfare services by local councils and private operators. The study area has no public hospitals. Instead, there were a number of private hospitals and welfare institutions which are located in the area’s mansions and, historically, provided services to the wealthy residents. In addition, the former City of Prahran was a provider of a range of innovative health and welfare services to its local community during the early twentieth century. However, many of buildings associated with this theme have been demolished (e.g. Coonil, a mansion formerly part of Cabrini Hospital), or substantially altered or replaced with new buildings (e.g. Prahran Health Centre and Malvern Baby Health Centre). One surviving example is Waiora at 321 Glenferrie Road, Malvern.

Appreciating and defending the environment

- Glen Iris Wetlands
- W.M. Dane Park
- Malvern Urban Forest
- Malvern Valley Parklands.

Pursuing common leisure interests

- Malvern Cricket Ground, High Street, Malvern
- Toorak Park, Orrong Road, Armadale
- Kooyong Lawn Tennis Club, Glenferrie Road, Toorak
- Royal South Yarra Tennis Club, Williams Road, Toorak
- Bandstand (demolished), Central Park, Malvern
- The stables at Northbrook, 1257 High Street, Malvern, rehearsal venue for the Malvern Tramways Band for many years
- Surviving cinema and theatre buildings include the former Victory Theatre in Malvern, the former Armadale Theatre, High Street, Armadale, and the former Waverley Theatre, Malvern East
- Chasers nightclub (former), Chapel Street, South Yarra.

The arts

- Belgrave, 1215 Dandenong Road, Malvern East
- Grantham, (former Bona Vista). 67 Kensington Road, Toorak.