

U3A – Northcote History

Time Line Notes

P Michell 2017

Aborigines

Bundoora - Mt Cooper connection. Flints from Mt William (Pylong area);
Merri Ck & Yarra River convergence - corroborees.
William Thomas & Dr McArthur (Arthurton farm) connection with hut.
Last Corroboree (in Northcote) on Northcote Hill vicinity St James church 1865;
Dough & Gladys Nicholls and Aborigines Advancement League.

1835-1880s

Beginning of Northcote as a community. Some early industry but mostly farming and dairying. Hotels (pubs) are rather basic. Most of what we see now dates from 1880s. Croxton Park Hotel becomes epicentre of races and vies with Flemington as a popular sporting venue. Incorporated the Hunt Club which would later use Mill Park for their activities. Many Gentlemen settled in Northcote building substantial dwellings. Significant residents – Francis Ormond (Working Men's College), Nememiah Wimble (Secretary to Lands Dept), Rev Booth, Twentyman (architect), Capt Clarke (Surveyor Gen, Chief Commissioner of Crown Lands)
Initial Population probably in the low hundreds. Increased to 2000 by 1885.

Batman's Treaty supposedly in Westgarth;
First lands sales – Pender & Smith;
Town of Northcote (Lower Northcote – Westgarth) 1853/5.
Wesleyan Church / School (1854)
Land sales;
Basting's P.O (1862) populating of Upper Northcote;
Leeds Dyeworks in Westgarth (1874)
Northcote Brick Co (1882);
Self government – Council (1883)
Leader Newspaper, Town Hall, Cable Tram, Grandview Hotel, Heidelberg Railway (1888);
Whittlesea Railway (1889);
Smith & Sons – Bastings St (1884-);

1890 to WWI (1913)

Major Depression No 2. Economic collapse in Victoria. Building societies close and many banks cease trading. Later there is strong economic growth to WWI. Finally direct rail link to city rather extended journey through Carlton. Many pubs were remodelled/rebuilt during this period all over Melbourne. More council

buildings constructed. The massive construction period leads to vast areas of housing / rental accommodation. This period is a big growth of population. Population around 7600.

Glen Iris Brickworks (1922-1965);
Sutton Tools (1917-1974);
Australian Broom Co – Wilkes Family (1923-1970s)
Northcote Picture Theatre (1912-1960s)
Angus & Co (1914 – 1970s)
Carnegie Library (1911)
Westmoreland's Northcote Pottery (1897)
Northcote Town (1890),

WWI (1914) – WWII (1945)

Alcoholism prevalent particularly with returned soldiers. Post war boom. Beginning of council introduced services – Infant Welfare Centre, Baths, Parks. Doug Nichols joins Northcote Football Club in 1927, becomes greensman at Northcote Park. Population around 20,000.

Northcote Proclaimed City (1914)
Northcote Ice-works (1921-1970)
C A Groves Timber on Merri Ck (1918 -1970s)
Paper Mills in Alphington (1919)
Closure of Yarra Bend Asylum (1925)
Westgarth picture Theatre (1921), Regent Theatre (1925)
Swift's Northcote History (1928)
Northcote Cable links directly to City (1925)
Doug Nicholls connection with Northcote (1927-1950s)
Northcote High School (1928)
Chandler Hwy (later named) opens in 1930
Santa Maria College opens in 1933. Site purchased in 1904
Cable tram ceases (Sept 1945) last in Melbourne
Preston Town Hall used as Allied Command HQ / Signals Corp during WWII.
Drains, Streets, Floods,

POST WAR – LATE 1970s

Seven years austerity post war. Councils still impoverished. Property boom. Post war baby boom. Motor cars became available for the masses eg FJ Holden, Ford Prefect. Television signals decline in cinemas. Many close. Only Westgarth survives beyond 1960s. People start working outside Northcote rather than locally. Transport is easier. Many now have cars or know someone who does. Olympics of 1956. West Heidelberg is Olympic village.

1956 Doug Nichols organises church manse in Westgarth as hostel. Aborigines' Advancement League formed. HQ in Cunningham St. Late 1970s council allocates land in Watt St. State Govt adds extra land. Site opens in 1982.

Alphington and Fairfield join Northcote. After austerity economy booms. However Australian goods are protected. Most things are 'Made in Australia' and expensive. Things 'have to last'. Robert Menzies is prime minister for over 18 years (1939-1941, 1949-1966).

Political unrest with university students Vietnam war.

Population around 43,000.

End of rationing ... general 1948. Sugar 1950.

Mid 1950s many bridges rebuilt giving direct access for motor vehicles – trucks and cars.

Mid 1970s - Beginning of a decline. Many shops along Northcote were looking shabby and neglected. Many would be closed for years. Northcote Brick Co shuts down. This was the period when youth found work relatively easy to get. Baby boomers move into older style houses and renovate.

First traffic lights (1946)

Queen visits area (1954)

PANCH

Electric trams replace buses (1955)

Alphington & Fairfield join Northcote (1962)

LaTrobe University (1967)

Whitlam Government elected (1972)

Northcote Brickworks closes (1977)

1980s on

Begins with decline as tariff reductions close businesses. Many High St shops for rent.

Reagan presidency (1981-9) economics affect worldwide.

Migrants acknowledged by council with additional services. Beginning of increased valuations and rate rises allows council to offer more services until 1994.

Northcote and Preston are co-joined to form City of Darebin in 1994.

May projects and development green-lighted. Gentrification. Revitalisation of Northcote as part of Darebin. Greening of council. Many new parks created over old industrial / waste sites. The young have displaced many of the older migrants.

Town Hall renovated and modernised becomes a theatre centre. Northcote, Westgarth, Fairfield and Alphington and now the places to live in Melbourne with house prices escalating. Many old large building sites are either renovated or demolished to make way for high rise apartments. Especially South Preston (tannery precinct near Junction) and along High St. Cafes and music bars now dominate Northcote Hill. Rise of imported goods and supermarket competition from stores like Aldi lowers cost of living. Not everyone shares in this prosperity. Population around 48,500.

1983/4 – 100th anniversary coincides with Lemon's book and Butler's Heritage Study. Northcote Historical Society growth period (-2000)
PANCH close (1998)
Northcote Town Hall closed (1997) and renovated. Council HQ in Preston.
Town Hall reopens as arts and cultural hub (2004)
Acacia apartments on brickworks site (2008)
Closure of APPM (2012)