

# HERITAGE PLACE

**NAME OF PLACE:** COLERAINE SHOWGROUNDS

**ADDRESS/LOCATION OF PLACE:** Glenelg Highway COLERAINE

**STUDY NUMBER:** 032

**HERITAGE OVERLAY NUMBER:**

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**OTHER NAME/S OF PLACE:** COLERAINE RECREATIONAL RESERVE, KOROITE PRE-EMPTIVE RIGHT

**PRECINCT:** Coleraine

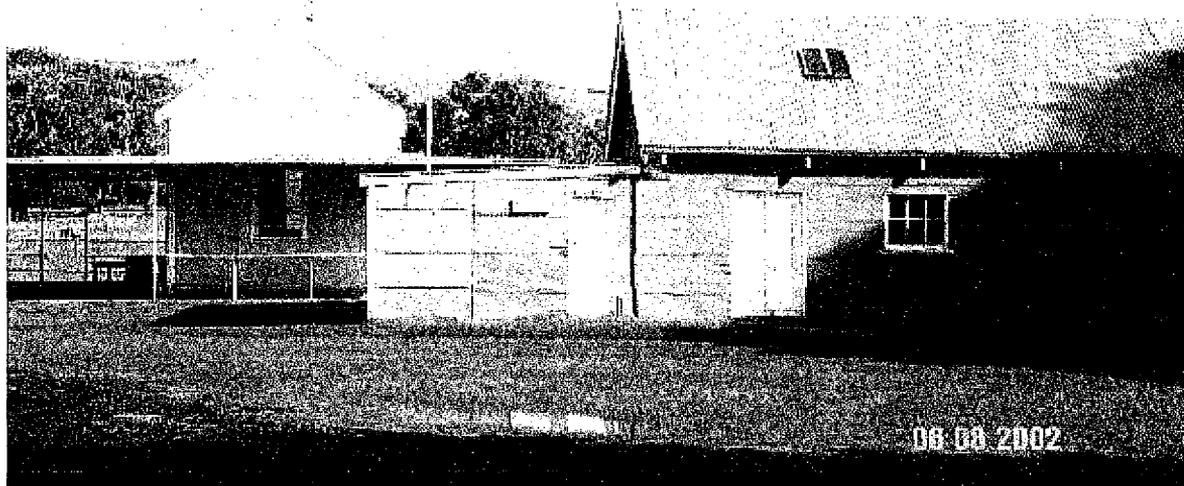
**LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA:** Southern Grampians Shire

**ALLOTMENT:** none **SECTION:** none **PARISH:** PARISH OF COLERAINE

**ACCESS DESCRIPTION:**

CFA 430J 19; VicRoads 228 B9; located on the south side of the Glenelg Highway on the western edge of Coleraine township.

**SIGNIFICANCE RATING:** Local



Coleraine Showgrounds, Office and Luncheon Hall, Glenelg Highway

**Image Date:** 6/08/02

**EXTENT OF LISTING:**

To the extent of: 1. All the buildings and all of the land within the Gazetted Showground Reserve as indicated on the Parish of Konong Wootong plan, 1922.

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## **PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:**

The Coleraine Showground is situated approximately 1.75 kilometers north west of the township of Coleraine, located on the Glenelg Highway. The land on which the Showground Reserve stands was originally part of the Koroite Pre-emptive right, owned by several important pastoralists. The showgrounds extend south towards Bryant's Creek for approximately 1.5 kilometers. The site is bounded by Cameron Street to the east, and is fenced in corrugated iron for the most part. Within the showground there are a number of structures which relate to the annual Pastoral and Agricultural (P. & A.) Society show. These include a large oval showing ring in the centre of the site, a sheep/pig display shed, a poultry shed, cattle/horse stalls, a kiosk, luncheon hall, display hall, office and various other small buildings. There are also several mature Cupressus macrocarpa (Monterey Cypress) planted between the show ring and the cattle/horse sheds to provide shelter. These trees are in fair condition, although some are becoming senescent and dangerous.

The showground has been sited carefully on the Glenelg Highway. The location of the showgrounds at the western entrance of the town on the main highway is balanced by the location of the racecourse on the eastern entrance to the town. The siting of the reserve is also important, as it is located on a flat piece of land surrounded by rolling hills. In 1939, the Coleraine Albion reported on the Coleraine Pastoral and Agricultural show, commenting that "The showgrounds... picturesque position, made an ideal setting, surrounded by hills clothed in green pastures, relieved with the golden colour of the capeweed flower" (CA 19/10/39, 03).

## **HISTORY:**

The land on which the Coleraine Showgrounds now stands was first leased from the Crown in 1849 by C. J Whyte, formally licenced as Koroite Station (P.B 299). The location of the reserve is in the heart of the 640 acres of pre-emptive right (Department of Lands & Survey, 1862).

Prior to licence being granted in 1849, there is some dispute regarding the first European occupant of the land which came to be known as Koroite run. The Coleraine Centenary Celebrations (Centenary Committee, 5) state the land was originally claimed by John Bryant while he was accompanying his brothers-in-law (the Henty's) on their second trip to Muntham. The booklet goes on to describe how Bryant took up a small station on the creek to the east, called by the natives "Coroit", and the name was later changed to "Koroite". The Coleraine Centenary Celebrations booklet was published in 1939, and it refers to the remains of the original Koroite Homestead site being marked by some old fruit trees which Bryant planted, on the north bank of the creek, just south of the showgrounds.

According to historical documentation regarding pastoral ownership and pre-emptive rights, the land on which the Showgrounds reserve is located was first occupied by the Whyte Brothers, as part of the very large Konongwootong Run (Billis & Kenyon, 230). When Konongwootong was broken into smaller runs in July 1845, one of the brothers (C. J Whyte) took ownership of 8000 acres of land and named it Korite (ibid.). The land was Gazetted on 23rd February 1849, although it had been licensed 12 months prior (Spreadborough, 1983). C.J Whyte held the Koroite run until 1851, when it was purchased by John Norman McLeod and his partner (and brother in law) George Frederick Read. McLeod and Read held the Koroite run until 1852, when it passed into the ownership of their father in law, Alexander Patterson (Billis & Kenyon, 230). Patterson only held the land for two years, until 1854, when the ownership passed to John and Francis Egan (ibid.).

It is not known if any improvements were made, or buildings constructed on the land prior to the Egan's ownership. It is certain that by 1855, substantial improvements had been made, and the 'Plan of Suburban Lands adjoining the Township of Coleraine, County Dundas' for that year shows Koroite P.B 299, owned by Francis Egan as being a substantial homestead complex. The plan includes a garden, hut, woolshed, sheepwash, ford and several fences and tracks. John Egan had already purchased several other runs in other parts of Victoria in partnership with his brother Michael and John Leahy, as well as by himself. As Francis Egan is the only name which appears on the 1855 Suburban Lands Adjoining the Township of Coleraine, it

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seems likely that although the run was held in the name of both brothers, it was Francis who resided at the property and had most control. John and Francis Egan only held Koroite for two years, until February 1857 when it was sold to Stephen George Henty, one of the Henty Brothers who are famed for being the first pastoralists in Victoria.

When the 1855 plan showing Francis Egan's Home Station, Koroite is super-imposed over a modern day plan of the Showgrounds Reserve, it is clear that the original Koroite Woolshed would have been located on the south west corner of the reserve, and the original homestead and garden were located just beyond the south east corner of the reserve, towards Bryant's Creek. None of the elements of the 1855 Koroite Homestead complex fall within the Showgrounds Reserve.

The next owner of Koroite, Stephen George Henty was the fifth son of the Henty family famed as being the first settlers in Victoria. Stephen was born in Sussex 1811 and arrived in Western Australia in 1829 (Shaw, in Forth (ed.) 66). S. G Henty established the famous Merino Downs, as well as being a prominent land owner in and around Hamilton, and described as 'Portland's leading merchant' (ibid., 66). Between 1852 and 1864, Stephen George Henty owned the pastoral runs of Ardachy, Kadnood, Koroite, Mt. Sturgeon Plains North and Mt Sturgeon Plains South, Strathfillan, Talangour, Wando Vale B, and Bongmire (with William Learmonth) (Billis & Kenyon, 81).

Henty was considered to be a very important local man, a member of the Legislative Council from 1856-1870, commissioner of the State Savings Bank, President of the City and Suburban Investment company. He died in Tarrington in 1870 (Shaw, in Forth (ed), 66). It is not known whether Henty made any improvements to the pastoral run during his ownership from 1857-60).

In June 1860, John Cameron purchased Koroite Station from Henty. John Cameron with his brother Donald (later known as 'Morgiana Cameron') were the first leaseholders for Mount Sturgeon Plains (1849 - 1851), which Stephen George Henty went on to purchase after disposing of Koroite to Cameron in 1860 (Billis & Kenyon). Little is known about John Cameron, he seems to have been overshadowed in history by his more famous Cameron brothers and relations. Cameron sold Koroite to John McKinnon in 1864, and by 1865, it was listed in Bailliere's Victorian Gazetteer as "Koroite Home Station (Co. Dundas); on the Koroite {Bryant} Creek, 1 mile N.E of Coleraine; occupier, McKinnon, J; area 2 300 acres; grazing capacity 2 300 sheep" (Whitworth, 213). Although John McKinnon is formally listed as the owner of Koroite from 1864 (Billis & Kenyon, 230) he is not listed in this publication as one of the property owners. This may be an oversight, or he may not have owned any other pastoral properties at this time.

The Wannon Shire Centenary states that McKinnon sold Koroite Station to William Swan, who incorporated the land into his larger Konongwootong run (McGaffin, 27).

The Showgrounds Reserve was Gazetted around the turn of the Century. It is not known why this land was chosen, or who owned the land at this time, but there has always been a strong focus towards the Pastoral and Agricultural society within the Coleraine and surrounding districts. The local P & A show still continues, and the competitive exhibits have changed little since the 1930s or perhaps earlier. An article written in the Coleraine Albion (19/10/39, 3) to celebrate the Coleraine Show details competitive exhibits of: Light Horses, Ponies, Draught Horses, Cattle, Sheep, Pigs, Dogs, Poultry, Cookery, Farm and Diary produce, Handwork, Floral arrangements and Scholastic work. The tradition of displaying new equipment to assist primary producers, or to make life easier for their families still continues; in 1939, the exhibits included a one-man woolpress and a 35 gallon separator by Ronaldson Tippet; a variety of seedings [sic] displayed by nurserymen Messrs. Hughes Brothers; Home light plant washing machine and a variety of motor vehicles. Current shows still exhibit new products and inventions, as well as demonstrations of how things were done in the past, such as the annual steam engine exhibition.

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It is thought that the buildings located within the Showgrounds Reserve were constructed between 1925 - 1935 by local members of the Coleraine Pastoral and Agricultural Society.

## **THEMATIC CONTEXT:**

Theme 3: Developing local, regional and national economies

3.5 Developing primary production

3.5.2 Breeding animals

3.5.3 Developing agricultural industries

Theme 5: Working

5.8 Working on the land

Theme 8: Developing Australia's cultural life

8.5 Forming associations

8.14 Living in country and rural settlements

## **CONDITION:**

The Coleraine showgrounds are in fair condition.

## **INTEGRITY:**

good degree of integrity to the Interwar/post WW2 period.

## **STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:**

What is significant?

The Coleraine Showground is situated approximately 1.75 kilometers north west of the township of Coleraine, located on the Glenelg Highway. The land on which the Showground Reserve stands was originally part of the Koroite Pre-emptive right, owned by several important pastoralists. The Showgrounds extend south towards Bryant's Creek for approximately 1.5 kilometers. The site is bounded by Cameron Street to the east, the north south and west boundaries are defined by a fence of corrugated iron. Within the showground there are a number of structures which relate specifically to the annual Pastoral and Agricultural Society show. These include a large oval showing ring in the centre of the site, a sheep/pig display shed, a poultry shed, cattle/horse stalls, a kiosk, luncheon hall, display hall, office and various other small buildings. The buildings were constructed in the early part of the twentieth century by members of the local Pastoral and Agricultural Society, from corrugated iron and local timbers.

How is it significant?

The Coleraine showgrounds is of historical and social significance to the township of Coleraine and the Southern Grampians Shire.

Why is it significant?

The Coleraine Showgrounds are of historical significance to the township of Coleraine for its early history as part of the Koroite Pre-emptive right, owned by a number of important local pastoralists, including the Whyte Brothers, C. J Whyte, Stephen George Henty and William Swan. They are also significant for their social associations with the Pastoral and Agricultural society. Pastoral and Agricultural Shows have always been a very important social focus for country people. The Coleraine Show has had a long standing association and recognition throughout the Shire since the 1850s as an important local institution, where local people were able to gain recognition for their produce and skills, where new products were exhibited, and as an important local event on the social calendar. The showgrounds provide an important community meeting place, serving as the venue or clubrooms for a variety of community groups and the local people. The success and popularity of the Coleraine Show demonstrates the continuing strong pastoral and agricultural focus of the local community, and the importance placed on this.

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## COMPARISON:

SSG 0243 Balmoral Show Grounds, Balmoral-Harrow Rd, Balmoral

## EXISTING LISTINGS:

## HERITAGE STUDY RECOMMENDATIONS:

Include in VHR  Include in RNE  Include in Local Planning Scheme

No Recommendations for Inclusions

## REFERENCES:

Author	Title	Year	Page
	Victorian Men of the Time	1878	26-7
Allan McCulloch	Encyclopedia of Australian Art	1977	108-9
Centenary Celebrations Committee	Coleraine Centenary Celebrations, October 7 to 14 1939	1939	5
Coleraine Albion	'Coleraine's Record Show - Fitting Climax to Centenary Week' (19/10/1939)	1939	3
Department of Lands and Survey, Melbourne	Special and Country Lands, Parish of Konong Wootong, County of Dundas	1862	
Department of Lands and Survey, Melbourne	Konong Wootong, County of Dundas	1922	
Don Garden	Hamilton A Western District History	1984	
G. McGaffin	The Wannon Shire Centenary 1872-1972, A Brief History of the Shire of Wannon	1972	24-5
Jessica Sutherland	Personal Communication 20/11/02	2002	
Leon Goerge Stubbings, in Gordon Forth ed.	Biographical Dictionary of the Western District of Victoria	1998	66
Paul de Serville	Pounds and Pedigrees	1991	305, 511
R V Billis and A S Kenyon	Pastoral Pioneers of Port Phillip	1974	var.
Robert Spreadborough & Hugh Anderson	Victorian Squatters	1983	
Robert. P. Whitworth	Bailliere's Victorian Gazetteer and Road Guide, containing the most recent and accurate information as to every place in the colony	1865	212
Surveyor General's Office, Melbourne	Plan Suburban Lands adjoining the Township of Coleraine, County of Dundas	1855	