

Kallista

The name Kallista, meaning "most beautiful", was well chosen, since all roads to the township pass through enchanting scenery, and nearby gullies are the natural haunt of lyrebirds. Kallista was originally known as "South Sassafras", due to its geographical situation on the Sassafras Creek south of the parent township, but increased settlement in the 20s led residents of the era to seek a new name. George Gilmour, J. G. Roberts, and schoolmaster R. Peel were prime movers in the change, the former offering a prize to the person submitting the most suitable name. Miss Easlaugh, friend of the Roberts family and a teacher of languages, won the contest with her suggestion, "Kallista", derived from the Greek word meaning "most beautiful". On 1 April 1925 Mrs. Squire Kennon of *Chestnut Hill* cut a satin ribbon stretched across the main road. It bore the new name and the ceremony was performed to the accompaniment of lines from *Romeo and Juliet* declaimed by J. G. Roberts.

Land at South Sassafras was taken up by free selectors when the area was thrown open for settlement in 1893, and today the Gilmour, O'Donohue, Taylor, Emberson, Gleghorn, Heath and Grant families are the only selectors' families still represented.

George Gilmour, former head gardener at Cole's nursery in Belgrave, was the first selector of land in present Kallista. In 1893 he began clearing land at the north-western corner of Monbulk Road and Clematis Avenue and a year later planted an orchard, later again establishing the nursery today conducted by a son, Allan O. Gilmour. Geo. Gilmour's holding originally included the triangular piece of land today bounded by Monbulk and Patch Roads and Church Street, now the site of the Kallista bakery and other business premises, and this was known in the early days as "Gilmour's Corner".

Wm. Anderson of Tecoma, who worked at the nursery about 1900, recalls that a fire of that era raged for nine days and burnt out the whole of Kallista, reducing the nursery to a mass of charred tree stumps. In the same fire Gilmour threw a stack of palings from a shed in an effort to save them but—such is the caprice of a bushfire—the stack was destroyed and the shed remained unharmed.

Jas. O'Donohue, Sen., took up a block of land on the Graded Road soon after the settlement opened. He was then employed as engine-driver on a Yarra dredge and returned to his selection only at weekends, although later he worked in the same capacity at the early jam factory at Fern Tree Gully. Jim O'Donohue was best known, however, as forest ranger and pioneer of the network of tourist tracks which traverse Crown lands, while he also deserves mention as discoverer of a giant tree in the Sherbrooke Forest, which measured 66 feet in circumference. When her husband and four sons enlisted in the First War, Mrs. O'Donohue was left with six children under the age of 16 years. Today several members of the family remain in the district. Denis ("Dooley") O'Donohue of Kallista tends some 40 miles of tourist tracks within the Shire, as his father did before him. Two brothers, James, Jun., and Les O'Donohue, are well known in Belgrave.



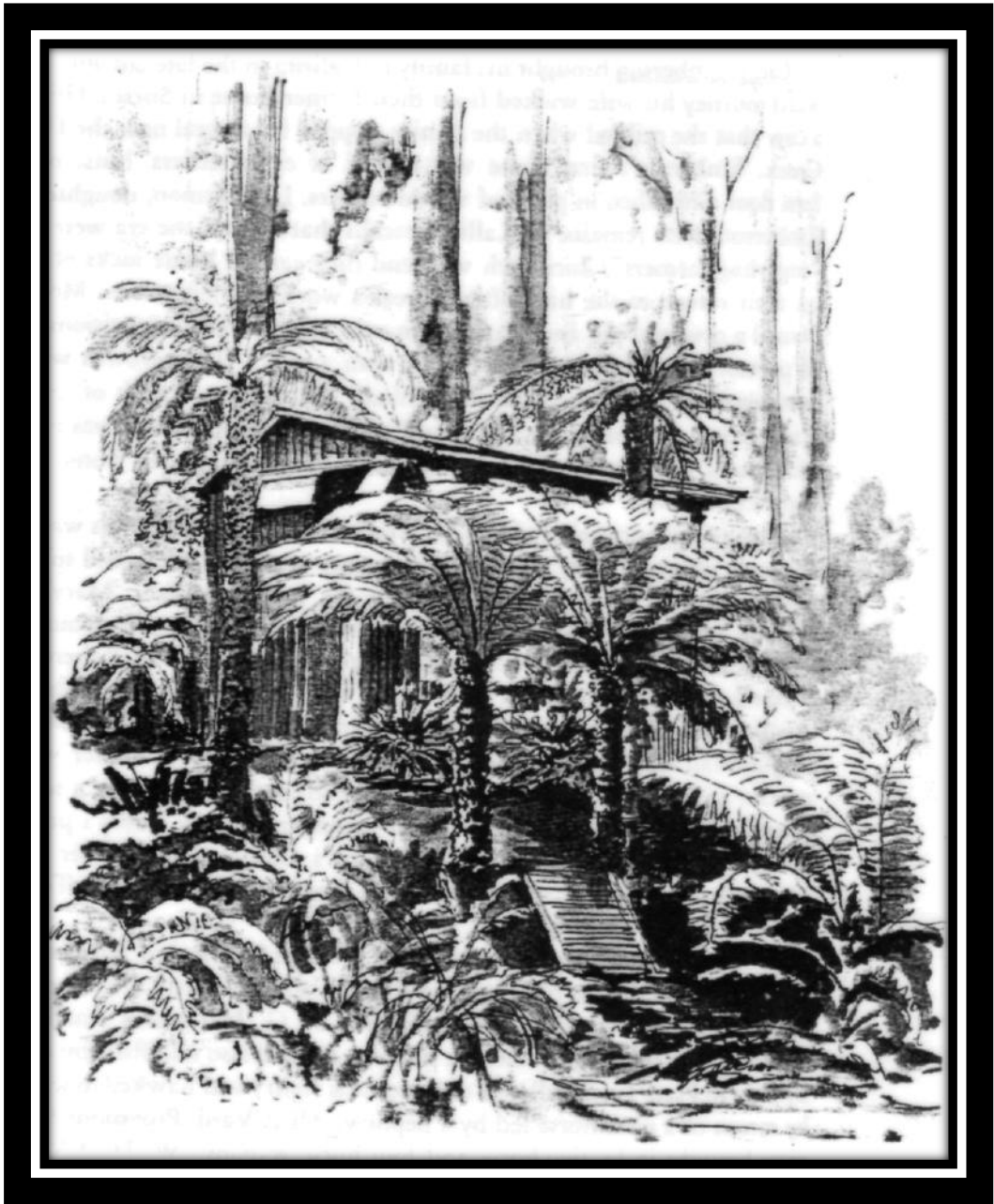
John Taylor, for whom Taylor's picnic ground is named, selected land above the Sassafras Creek on Monbulk Road and today a son, Arthur Taylor, remains in Kallista while two other sons, Charles and George, conduct a Belgrave timber business begun during the 20s in association with a friend of their schooldays, Jas. O'Dnnohne, Jun. Today the Taylor brothers recall the days when their mother walked to Fern Tree Gully along a blazed track strewn with fallen logs, a toddling child dragging at her skirts, and returned with a heavy sack of provisions. In those days, too, lyrebirds scratched in the forest near settlers' homes.

Chas. Emberson brought his family to Kallista in the late 90s and on the outward journey his wife walked from their former home in Surrey Hills, leading a cow that she milked when the family stopped for a meal near the Dandenong Creek. Emberson's first home was typical of early settlers' huts: bark walls, fern floor and calico in place of windows. Mrs. L. Charman, daughter of Chas. Emberson, who remains in Kallista, recalls that men of the era were known as "sugarbag farmers", since each weekend they carried home sacks of provisions on their return to the hills after a week's work in Melbourne. Most families owned a cow and pig and managed to exist on the weekly provisions and crops of potatoes sown in holes dug hastily with a pick. Undergrowth was so thick between the Emberson home in Monbulk Road and a branch of the Sassafras Creek lying west of that road below Kallista township, that it was necessary to blaze trees growing in the 400-yard stretch separating their home from vital supplies of water.

Roger Gleghorn selected land in present Gleghorn Road. This was known in the early days as "Mary's Lane", since a lass of that name is said to have gone a-visiting there o' nights. Fortunately for her reputation, Mary's surname remains anonymous! The name of the road was changed by the Council in 1912 as the result of a petition sponsored by Roger Gleghorn. A son, Robert Gleghorn, selected the adjoining block and today his widow remains on the property. Another son, John, and Les Gleghorn also lived in Kallista. Thomas Heath, an Englishman who had previously settled in Adelaide, was another well known selector and he and his wife were largely instrumental in having a school established at Kallista. Wm. Grant, former manager of G. W. Selby's property, *Mt. Selby*, selected land beyond present Cook's Corner and in later years built *Grantulla House*, from which Grantulla Road derives its name. Today a son, J. Grant, lives in the district.

W. H. A'Vard, former proprietor of a butter business in Balaclava, selected land on the south side of Gleghorn Road, Kallista, shortly after the settlement opened, and a few years later took over F. G. McIntosh's small store and butchery, where rum was sold as a sideline. A'Vard also sold fish sent each Friday by train to Fern Tree Gully (if the price was right) and hawked to settlers' doors by means of a pack-horse led by a nephew, Alf A'Vard. Provisions for the store were brought in by two-horse and four-horse wagons. W. H. A'Vard, an ex-Navy man of some education, enjoyed reading the classics and named the home near Cook's Corner, to which he retired in later years, *Micawber*. On his journeys to and from the city, A'Vard visualised the possibilities of providing tourist facilities at the entrance to Sherbrooke Forest between Kallista and Belgrave and it was due to his influence that a son, Edw. A'Vard, purchased the original allotment on which existing *Micawber Park* was subsequently built.

Today two sons and a nephew remain in the district. They are Geo. A'Vard of Emerald, well remembered as a bullocky; Norman A'Vard, Boronia; and Alfred A'Vard, Belgrave.



In the early days a big stump standing behind the present school on the old road from Iklgr.ivic farmed the accepted meeting place for settlers. Here D. Andrade left a loose bag en route to his home on Hall's Track, and early settlers walking to Ringwood placed stones on the stump as a sign that they had passed. The stones were removed on their return as an indication that each had come back safely. If a stone recognized as belonging to a particular settler remained on the stump too long, anxious neighbours organized a search for the overdue traveller.

D. Andrade opened the first store in the district on his selection above The Patch and later F. G. McIntosh opened a butcher's shop and grocery in present Royle Avenue. When McIntosh ceased trading about 1905 a neighbouring selector, W. H. A'Vard sold meat and groceries from his property. Later Wm. Terry, son of the Belgrave pioneer, built a one-roomed store on the main road in the vicinity of the property now owned by Lionel Smith. A larger store was erected opposite Gleghorn Road and burnt down in 1920 on the night that L. F. Read arrived to take stock prior to purchasing the business. Read, undaunted, sold groceries from a nearby garage until able to build the present Kallistra store. F. T. Le Juge opened a bakery in Kallista during the First War and the business was later purchased by R. Wiley and later again by J. Graham, both of whom—together with breadcarter W. Coleman—were well known locally.

Until the late 20s Kallista residents were served by Monbulk road services but at that time John Green, Sen., began a Kallista-based service in company with John Delaney. The firm, whose garage (afterwards destroyed by fire) stood opposite the head of Gleghorn Road, continued to operate until the business was bought by U.S. Motors in 1933.

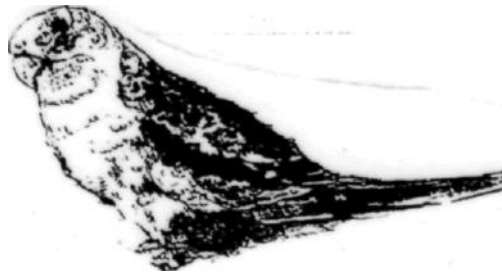
D. Andrade, early carrier of mail and provisions, began the first mail service in Kallista with a loose bag left at "the stump", later deposited at McIntosh's store. A post office was established in Wm. Terry's slab store about 1905 and since that time the post office has been located at the local store. L. F. Read has been postmaster since 1920.

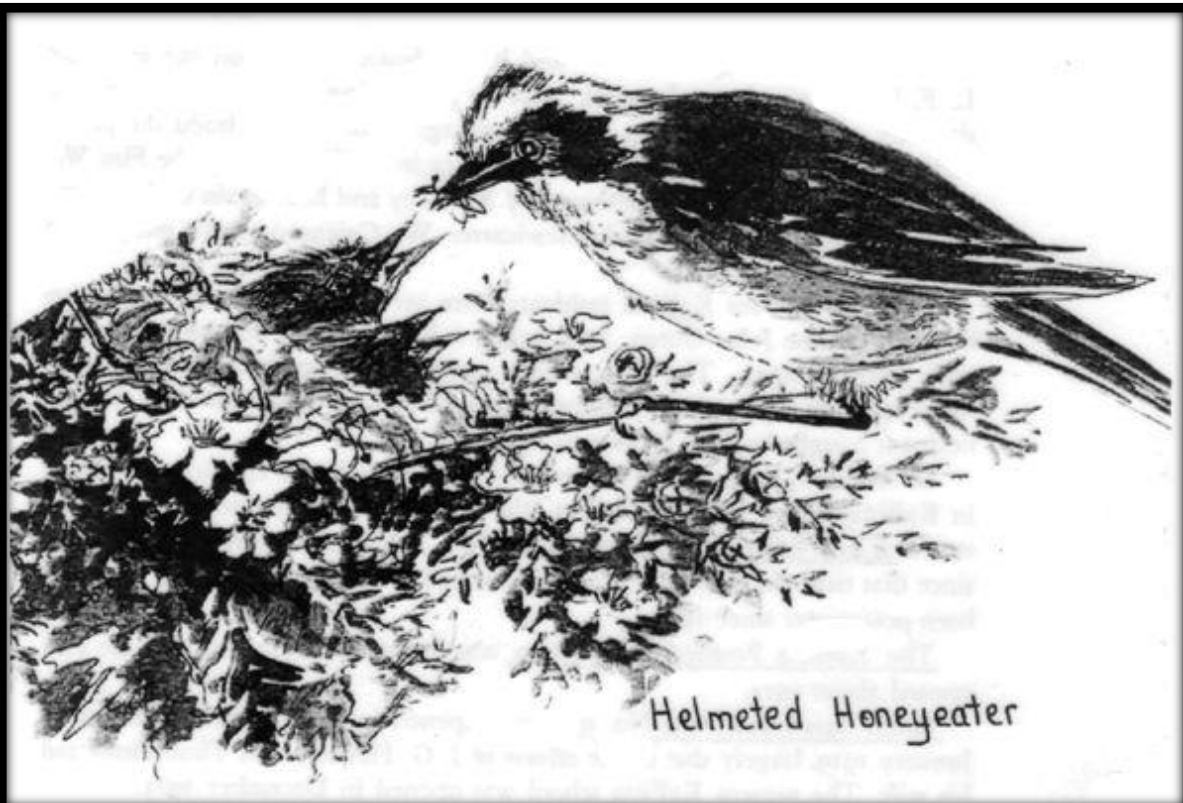
The Kallista Progress Association was formed about 1910 and the Hall opened about 1914.

South Sassafras School No. 3993 was opened in the Mechanics' Hall on 19 January 1919, largely due to the efforts of J. G. Hartney and Thos. Heath and his wife. The present Kallista school was opened in December 1923.

With the opening of the Kallista Church of England on Christmas Day 1921 services were transferred from the hall. Rev. G. Garnet Shaw was the first minister to the parish, returning from 1932-38. Mr. and Mrs. L. F. Read and R. O. Cowey are the only original members still worshipping at the Church.

Methodist services began in the Mechanics' Hall in 1925 and two years later a Church Hall was built at the corner of Ivy Street on a block given by Miss M. E. Galagher of Belgrave. In 1953 the building was moved to a site in Monbulk Road.





Helmeted Honeyeater

A number of distinguished people have been drawn to live within sight of the forest at Kallista. Among the best known was foil a Garibaldi Roberts of die Melbourne Tramways, who in 1910 made his home on land near Beagley's Bridge purchased from the original selector W. Thompson. A house known as *Sunnyside* was erected on the property, then being developed as a berry farm by a son, Frank Roberts, who lost his life, in the First War. J. G. Roberts purchased ten obsolete omnibus bodies from the Tramways Board and these he transported to South Sassafras and furnished for the use of his many friends. C. I. Dennis was the most celebrated of these and it was at *Sunnyside* that he wrote *The Sentimental Bloke*, dedicated to Mr. and Mrs. J. G. Roberts. There is no doubt that Garry Roberts was responsible for the publication of this famous work in book form, since he invited Dennis to live at *Sunnyside* (lie slept in one of the omnibuses) and persuaded him to build a novel around some verses already published in the *Bulletin*. Roberts paid Dennis an allowance on condition that he completed one piece of writing each week. The Roberts family relinquished *Sunnyside* in 1933 and a year or two later the house was destroyed by fire. *Locksley Flats* were later erected on the Crescent Road frontage to the estate, the original home being further up the hill, and today one weather-beaten omnibus remains as a reminder of literary history made on the spot.

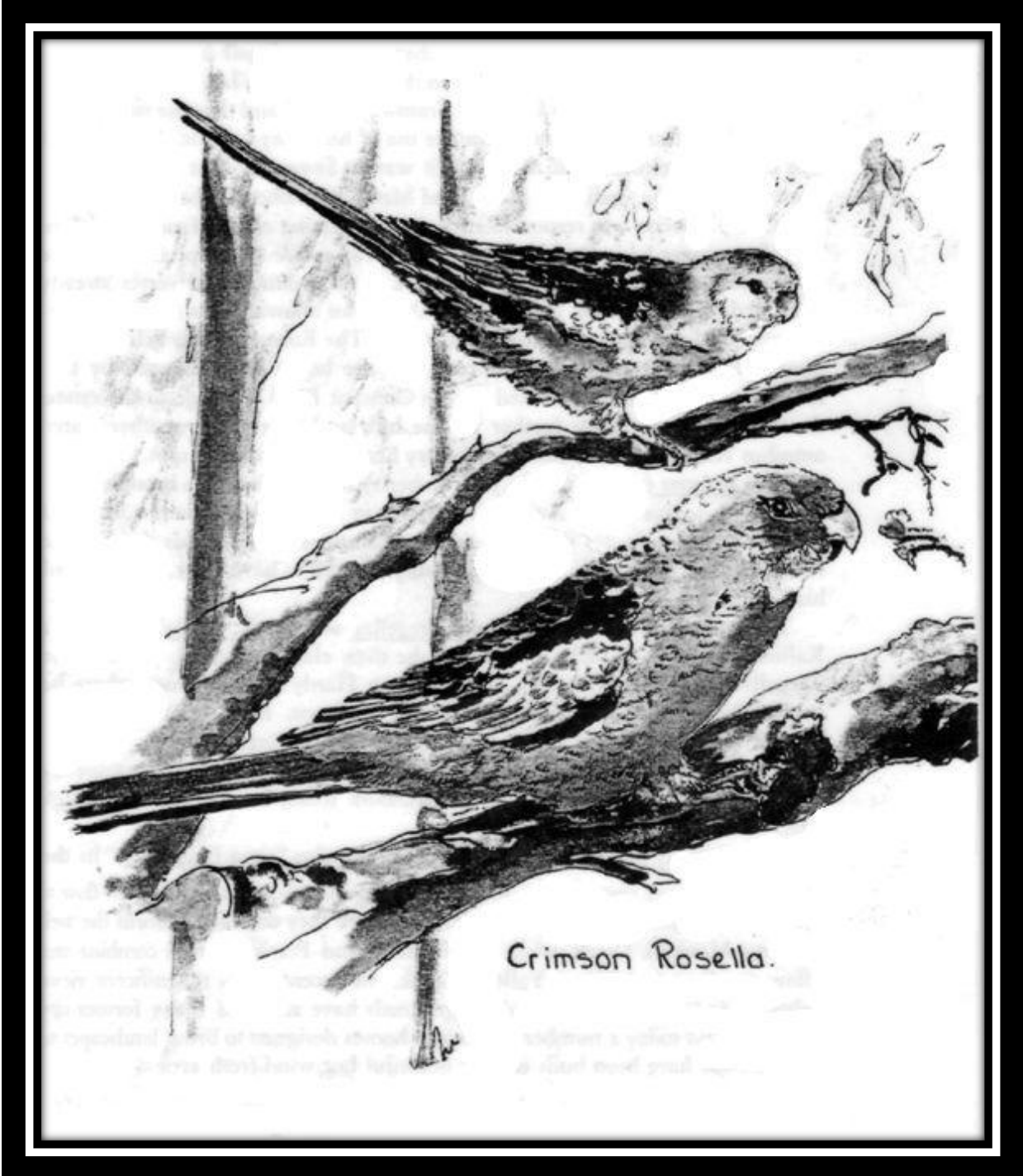
Tom Roberts (no relation to J. G. Roberts) was another who brought fame to Kallista. This noted Australian painter in oils made his home in Royle Avenue in the early 205 where he remained until the time of his death some ten years later. His work, *The Pink Cottage*, is said to have been a painting of his Kallista home.

Two noted ornithologists, Thos. Tregellas and R. T. Littlejohns made Kallista the scene of early research on the then elusive lyrebird. About 1920 Tregellas made his home in a hollow log in Hardy's Gully, from where he studied the habits of these shy inhabitants of the forest. Both men took the first successful photographs of lyrebirds in the Sherbrooke Forest.

In 1949 the Lands Department granted the Council permissive occupancy of 12 acres of State Forest east of the Monbulk Road, known as Coles Ridge Reserve.

Kallista today—still ringed by bushland—remains "most beautiful". In the nearby forest the two streams known as Falls and Clematis Creeks still flow to join Hardy's Creek at the Trestle Bridge, where they combine to form the well known Monbulk Creek, while the Sassafras and Perrins Creeks combine and flow north to the Woori Yallock Creek. In recent years magnificent views obtainable from Grantulla and Ridge Roads have attracted many former city dwellers and today a number of modern homes designed to bring landscapes to the fireside have been built in that beautiful but wind-fresh area.





KALLISTA TEA ROOMS
Lot 1 Monbulk Road
Kallista 3791