

Pinkerton Family Time Capsule Opening 8th November 2017 and Family Picnic



Pinkerton Time Capsule; background information prior to event

The Pinkerton Forest Time Capsule is to be opened on Wednesday 8 November 2017.

Plans to celebrate this event are being made by Melton City Council, Western Water, The Pinkerton Landcare and Environment Group and descendants of the Pinkerton Family.

A time capsule was placed under a plaque in Pinkerton Forest, Melton Shire, on 8 November 1992 to mark the culmination of the Surbiton Park and Pinkerton Forest Project.

In 1992, the Melton City Council acquired Surbiton Park, a 400 hectare property adjacent to the Melton Wastewater Purification Plant, for recycling of wastewater and sewage by irrigation on land. The land was farming land but also contained Pinkerton Forest, a remnant old growth Grey Box Woodland, home to indigenous plants and animals and a site of Aboriginal significance. Located on the land threatened with inundation was an 1850's pioneer grave site and cairn belonging to the Pinkerton family, some of the earliest European settlers in the area.

As well as managing the water purification works, the Melton City Council, along with many other local professional, volunteer and school groups, organised for the regeneration of Pinkerton Forest and the relocation of the graves and cairn to an area of high ground within the forest. This was known as 'The Surbiton Park Project'. The forest and graves component was 'The Pinkerton Park Project'.



Original site of Pinkerton family graves, prior to relocation

A time capsule had been placed in the cairn marking the graves in 1931 by the Pinkerton descendants. The family would meet there regularly and picnic at the site of the ruins of the Pinkerton house on the banks of the Werribee River nearby. This time capsule was retrieved in 1992 and a new one placed. The 1992 time capsule had much input from the local community. It is to be retrieved on 8 November 2017.

The area is now owned and operated by Western Water. It is a unique area where one can travel through history and see old growth forest, indigenous flora and fauna, evidence of Aboriginal settlement alongside remains of the first European settlers, signs of subsequent development, farming, urbanisation and industry.

It will be an opportunity for many of those involved in the past, present and future of this site to meet together and to celebrate their endeavours towards the conservation of such an environmentally and historically significant area. An area that has flourished over the last 25 years under the care of both local environmentalists and industry.

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The community celebration will be on Wednesday 8 November. A casual family and friends picnic will be on Sunday 12 November.

Rosemary Fethers September 2017

Opening of memorial cairn and restored Pinkerton family plaque

The plaque was removed by Western Water prior to the opening event on 5th September 2017 and the concrete chamber cut open, supervised by Western Water Environmental Engineer William Rajendram. This was done prior to the official event as it was a time-consuming, noisy and messy procedure as concrete dust flew into the air from the grinding tool. The memorial cairn had been erected beside the family graves.

The grave site was located on the western edge of the Grey Box Woodland, giving the forest its early alternative name of Forest of the Five Graves. However over the succeeding century much of the original forest had been cleared for firewood and to create grazing land. After the farm had been acquired by Melton Shire Council the site of the grave was planned to be irrigated as water became available from the water treatment plant.

It was decided by the family to relocate the graves to the remnant Pinkerton Forest.



William Rajendram (Western Water Environmental Engineer) Nicole Bovezza (Western Water Communications Advisor Community Relations) & Simone Gordon (City of Melton) supervising operations by Western Water employees

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Removal of time capsule



Original time capsule

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Official opening of time capsule

On Wednesday 8th November 2017 the time capsule placed in the memorial cairn in 1931 and 1992 beside the family graves in Pinkerton Forest was opened in a ceremony attended by many dignitaries, reflecting the importance placed on the environmental, cultural and heritage values of Pinkerton Forest by Melton Council, Western Water and the State Government. Over forty people participated in the event. There was even a coffee cart!

Participants included:

- Bob Turner (Melton Mayor)
- Neil Brennan (Western Water MD)
- Don Nardella (State MP for Melton)
- Melton councillors
- Pinkerton family descendants
- PLEG members
- Members of the local community
- Teacher Michael Kilroy and students from Melton Secondary College
- Local media



Driving into Pinkerton Forest



Family and visitors watching time capsule removed from cairn

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Peter Pinkerton, Rosemary Fethers, Melton Mayor Bob Turner & Cr Sophie Ramsey



Peter Pinkerton, Rosemary Fethers, Bob Turner, Ken Hardy, Sophie Ramsey, Neil Brennan

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Family and visitors reading plaque on memorial cairn



Melton Mayor Cr Bob Turner

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Western Water Managing Director Neil Brennan



Lyn Holdsworth (*Friends of Toolern Creek*) Linda Bradburn (*Melton Environmental Education Educator*) Bronwyn Akers (*PLEG*) & Richard Rowe (*PLEG President*)

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Frances Overmars (PLEG) Don Nardella (State MP) Kel Tori (Melton CEO)



New time capsule to be re-inserted into memorial cairn

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Local media coverage of Pinkerton Time Capsule opening

STAR WEEKLY August 29, 2017 4:35 pm by Esther Lauaki

'History unearthed at Pinkerton'



'A time capsule buried by the descendants of one of Melton's pioneering families will be opened in celebration of 25 years of local history.'

The Pinkerton Forest time capsule was placed at the site of the Pinkerton family memorial cairn on November 8, 1992 to mark the culmination of the Surbiton Park and Pinkerton Forest projects.

Melton council acquired Surbiton Park, a 400 hectare property adjacent to the Melton Wastewater Purification Plant, for recycling wastewater and sewage.

The rejuvenation of that land was known as the Surbiton Park project and the relocation of the graves in the cairn was the Pinkerton Forests project.

Pinkerton Landcare and Environment Group president Richard Rowe said a community celebration for the opening of the capsule is planned for November and will include descendants of the Pinkerton family.

He said the capsule contains photos and documents provided by community members involved in the projects in 1992.

"The family would meet there regularly and picnic at the site of the ruins of the Pinkerton house on the banks of the Werribee River nearby," Mr Rowe said.

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“It is a unique area where one can travel through history and see old growth forest, indigenous flora and fauna, evidence of Aboriginal settlement alongside remains of the first European settlers, signs of subsequent development, farming, urbanisation and industry.

“It will be an opportunity for many of those involved ... to meet together and to celebrate their endeavours towards the conservation of such a ... significant area.”

The council is collating a list of documents that capture the essence of the municipality in 2017 for a new time capsule which will be placed in the cairn to be opened in 2042. <http://www.starweekly.com.au/news/history-uneearthed-pinkerton/>; STAR WEEKLY November 14, 2017 2:08 pm by Esther Lauaki '

STAR WEEKLY

‘A peek at Melton's past’

Descendents of a pioneering Melton family helped open a time capsule last week in a celebration of 25 years of history.

Members of the Pinkerton family were on hand last Wednesday to open the capsule containing photos and documents provided by community members involved in two local projects in 1992.

The capsule was placed at the site of the Pinkerton family memorial cairn on November 8, 1992, to mark the culmination of the Surbiton Park and Pinkerton Forest projects.

Melton council acquired Surbiton Park, a 400-hectare property adjacent to the Melton Wastewater Purification Plant, for recycling wastewater and sewage.

The rejuvenation of that land was known as the Surbiton Park project, with the relocation of graves known as the Pinkerton Forest project.

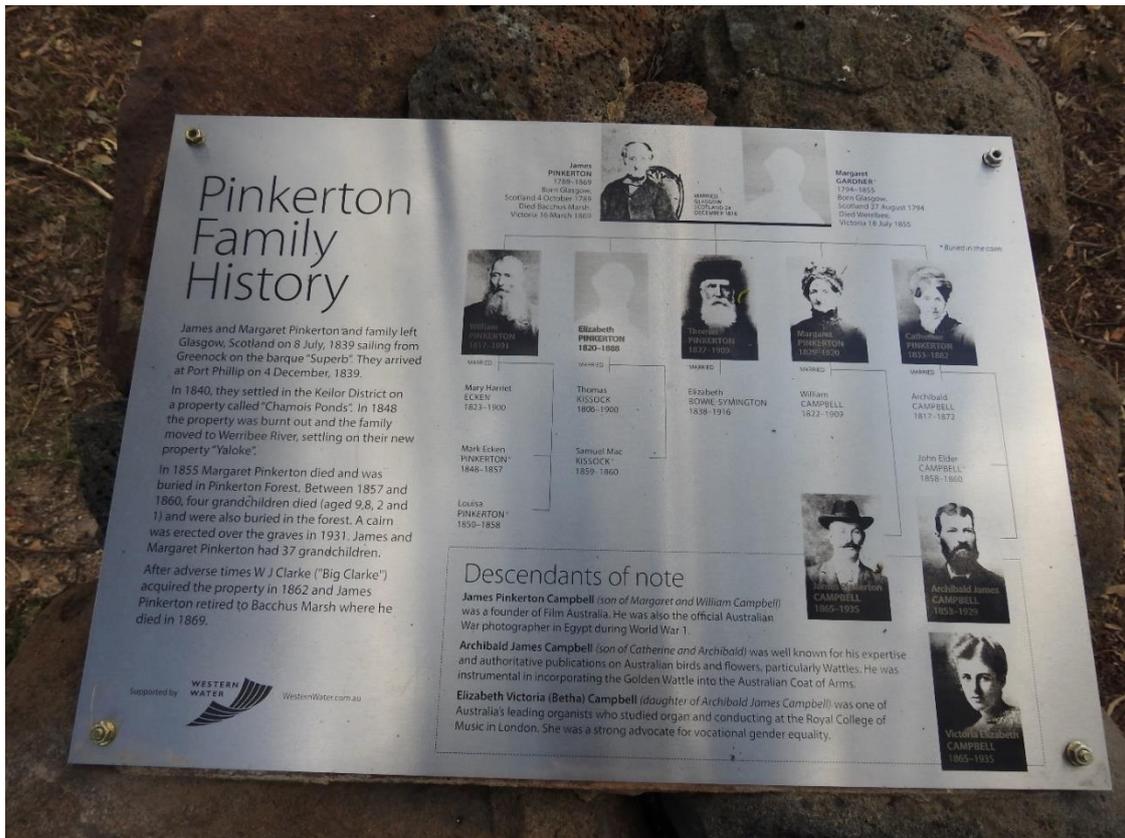
Melton mayor Bob Turner said that the face of the community had changed significantly in the past 25 years.

“Through the items included in this time capsule, we have the chance to better understand what things were like back then,” Cr Turner said.

The council collected contemporary documents that capture the essence of the municipality for a new time capsule that was placed in the cairn. It will be opened in 2042.

“When we buried the new time capsule, preserving current information, images, newspapers, and messages for future generations, I couldn't help but wonder what

future generations will think of us, and how much things will have changed in 25 years," Cr Turner said. <http://www.starweekly.com.au/news/peek-meltons-past> ‘



Replacement plaque at Pinkerton family memorial cairn in Pinkerton Forest



Replacement plaque at entrance of Pinkerton Forest placed in November 2017

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This plaque was placed at the entrance to Pinkerton Forest. It replaced the original plaque that was there for twenty-five years but has been severely faded from long exposure to the sun.

The plaque acknowledges the original owner of the land, the Kurung-jang-bulluk people, the European pioneering family, the Pinkertons, as well as acknowledging the restoration of Pinkerton Forest.

The photos of the White-bellied Sea-Eagle and Diamond Firetail used on the plaque are courtesy of Nora Peters, and the foot hold tree, Daryl Akers (PLEG members).

Indigenous Heritage

For tens of thousands of years before European settlement this area was a place of importance to the local Aboriginal people.

The land on the eastern edge of the Werribee River was the territory of a clan called Kurung-jang-bulluk whose language was Woi wurrung. The name of this clan refers to the red earth of their estate, which was an area between the Werribee River and Kororoit Creek.

The people of this clan and others belonged to the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin Nation. The Kulin view of the world was that it was created by two main spirits – Bunjil (eagle) and Waa (crow) and lesser ancestral spirits in the Dreamtime.

Evidence of Aboriginal life in Pinkerton Forest can be found on the scarred trees used for the creation of shields and containers and one foothold tree for access to food. These trees have been listed on the Victorian Heritage Inventory and are protected by law.'

Pinkerton Forest Project

In 1992, the Melton Shire Council acquired Surbiton Park, a 692-hectare property adjacent to the Melton Recycled Water Plant, for recycling of wastewater and sewage by irrigation on land.

The land was used for farming but also contained Pinkerton Forest, a remnant Grey Box Grassy Woodland, of national environmental significance

A pioneer grave site and cairn belonging to the Pinkerton family, some of the earliest European settlers in the area was located on land threatened with water inundation.

As part of the redevelopment of Surbiton Park, a major archaeological excavation was undertaken to relocate the pioneer graves and historic cairn of the Pinkerton Family to Pinkerton Forest, a reburial of the bodies and a re-dedication of the cairn.

In 1993, Pinkerton Forest Management Group was created by the Melton Shire Council, from this group Friends of Pinkerton Forest was formed.

The group's first task was to erect a rabbit proof fence around most of the woodland. Two percent of the forest was not fenced and was subject to irrigation.

In 1995, Western Water acquired the land from council when it became the responsible authority for water and wastewater services in the Melton region.

In 2007, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed between Western Water and Pinkerton Landcare and Environment Group (PLEG). The MOU is not a legally binding document, but it represents Western Water's commitment to enhancing biodiversity.

Surbiton Park includes two areas of environmental significance

- Pinkerton Forest – 35 hectares
- Werribee River Volcanic Gorge – 54 hectares

PLEG continued the process of restoring the woodland reversing the damage that grazing, wood harvesting, weed invasion and ringbarking had caused over 180 years of farming. Self-sown wildflowers, rare native grasses, trees and shrubs have flourished creating conditions where threatened birds such as the White-bellied Sea-Eagle and Diamond Firetail are now breeding. Members of BirdLife Werribee have undertaken quarterly bird surveys in Pinkerton Forest in association with PLEG for 13 years.

In 2010, Western Water signed an agreement with Melton Shire Council to permanently protect Pinkerton Forest under the Planning and Environment Act 1987.

With State Government and Bird Life Australia funding, Western Water and PLEG are creating a wildlife corridor linking Pinkerton Forest to nearby Mulla Mulla Woodland, known as the 'Pinkerton Link'. This was created from the old sludge paddock. This paddock was full of weeds, due to high nutrient levels in the soil, and is now slowly recovering its natural biodiversity.

Time capsule

During the reburial process in 1992 the original time capsule was retrieved. A new time capsule was buried and had input from the local community on the undertaking that it was to be retrieved on 8 November 2017.

On 8 November 2017, the 1931 and 1992 time capsules were salvaged at a special community event held in the Pinkerton Forest hosted by Western Water and the City of Melton.

During this event a new 2017 time capsule was interred along with both the original time capsules, with the undertaking that they be removed in 50 years, 8 November 2067.

Nicole Bovezza, Western Water 2017

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Pinkerton family reunion and picnic at Yaloke



Family and visitors arriving at Pinkerton Flat

On Sunday 12th November 2017 descendants of the Pinkerton family met at the ruins of the old Pinkerton family homestead, named Yaloke (or Yalloak), beside the Werribee River. Over sixty people participated, some fifty family members and ten members from Pinkerton Landcare and Environment Group and Werribee Wagtails. Some came from as far afield as Sydney. The reunion picnic followed the historic opening of the time capsule placed in the forest by the family in 1931 and in 1992.

Numerous people of several generations, many of whom had never met, shared a common descent from the original Pinkertons who made the long and arduous trip from Glasgow to settle here beside the Werribee so many years ago.

This was possibly the largest group of people to gather at the old homestead site for over half a century. Descendants of the Pinkerton family have gathered at the site from time to time in years past to celebrate the family's settlement in Australia. Several old photographs attest to periodic large family gatherings both beside the homestead site and in the forest beside the old original grave site.

The family also invited the people who had contributed to the environmental restoration of the site over several years, including members of Pinkerton Landcare and Environment Group and Birdlife Australia (formerly Bird Observation and Conservation Australia)

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Bird observers quickly noted the old Wedge-tailed eagle nest in the old Red Gum standing over the river and just in front of the old building. They were also quick to notice the sharp cries of a pair of Sacred Kingfishers that were nesting in the tree immediately beside the eagles' tree. One family member even described seeing a Wombat burrow beside the river! There have been anecdotal reports of a Wombat in the region and only a few years ago Western Water staff reported seeing Wombat droppings by the river. Wombats are found in the Pyrete Forest between Gisborne and Toolern Vale, and are sadly frequently seen as roadkill on Gisborne Road; usually where the road crosses the gully near the intersection of Gisborne and Couangalt Roads. We would not expect to see them so far from the Pyrete Forest but with these recurring reports, who knows?

The site is still known as Pinkerton Flat as a memorial to the Pinkerton family.

The old homestead remains flanked by some of the original Robinia trees (*Robinia pseudoacacia* 'Umbraculifera') planted so many years ago by Margaret Campbell nee Pinkerton in 1852, to shade the homestead. The bright green foliage stands out against muted olive green and greys of the Australian bush, and against the stark basalt of the volcanic gorge. A week or so earlier the trees were festooned with long racemes of ivory-coloured flowers but these were now only visible as faded petals surrounding newly-forming seeds. When in flower, they present an impressive sight against the bright green foliage of the Robinia trees and the background of the dark basalt slope of the volcanic gorge. As family and visitors sheltered from the hot sun in the shade cast by the trees we were reminded why they were planted around the homestead in the first place.

The large permanent waterholes that form the river in this part of the gorge would also have been an attractive feature in this dry landscape. Permanent water would have been a crucial pre-requisite for settlement here.

Dry stone-waller David Long was present to describe the construction of the homestead. David had been contracted by Western Water to tidy up and define the outline of the old homestead. He observed that the rocks used in the construction did not appear to have been worked or shaped in any way. It seemed that the rocks had been gathered then placed together, jigsaw fashion, to form the house structure. He thought that the house may have been constructed rather quickly, perhaps in anticipation of building a larger house in the near future. David believes that this may be one of the earliest buildings in Victoria to have been constructed in this manner. He compared it to several similar stone houses in St Kilda (Scotland!).

Archaeologist Gary Vines, who completed the original Surbiton Park Archaeological Survey of the property in 1992 also participated in the reunion.



Glenys, Peter and Ian Campbell, Bill Strong, Emma and Bryan Campbell sheltering from the sun



Pinkerton descendants at Pinkerton grave

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Pinkerton family reunion at old Pinkerton homestead

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Panoramic view over homestead site shaded by its grove of Robinia trees (photo by Rosemary Fethers)

Before: Pinkerton homestead prior to renovation



Old homestead in 2008, long before present renovations to the homestead

After: Pinkerton homestead after renovation



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Visit to Pinkerton Forest in 2013

On 2nd June 2013 Noel and Rosemary Fethers and Bryan and Margaret Campbell paid a visit to the Pinkerton grave in Pinkerton Forest.



Bryan Campbell examining old hand-hewn wooden stock feed trough



Rosemary and Noel Fethers, and Bryan Campbell beside Pinkerton grave
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Many thanks to Rosemary Fethers and Bryan Campbell for organising the reunion. Also thanks to Western Water and the City of Melton for facilitating this historic event. David Long, the dry stone waller, is thanked too, for his careful defining of the outline of the old home and making it safe, and PLEG members for planting around the site.

Many thanks to the following: Peter Sell and his team at Western Land Services for their efforts contributed during the past couple of years with chain sawing, weeding, watering and cleaning up the site.

Daryl Akers, Honorary secretary

Pinkerton Landcare and Environment Group

November 2017