

PARKVILLE – PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE

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The following paper was read by Mr. D. Scott at a late meeting of the Parkville Debating Society as the subject is of local interest we give our readers the paper in extenso. Mr. Scott said:

Parkville or Royal Park as it was originally called is a suburb of but recent growth. A few remarks on the subject may be of interest to our audience. In 1870 there was not a house between the Haymarket and the Sarah Sands with the exception of the pound-keeper, Mr. Falstead's and which is still in a good state of preservation in Morrah-street, Carlton Cricket Club pavilion and the residences of the people employed at the Acclimatization gardens and the Royal Park. Parkville proper, if I may so call it, is where the Port Phillip Agricultural Society held their shows. It was little thought at that time that we would be assembled in this building, on the opposite corner to where we are now was the dog pound, the remark 'going to the dogs' does not apply to the residents of Parkville however, as the dogs have gone from us to the sweet savoury Yarra.

Where this house, (Killarney house opposite the Parkville Post Office) now stands used to be the Royal Park fence, but it was removed back to its present position. In the olden days there used to be an immense gully 30ft. deep which was a great annoyance to those who wanted to take a short cut to the park and gardens. This happily is now a thing of the past and every gentle man can escort his lady there in comfort without having to leap from boulder to boulder like a chamois goat, as was the case in the days gone by. It may not be generally known that the Burke and Wills expedition started from the Royal Park on August 20th, 1860, on that memorable expedition. Of the four brave men who started on that day only one, 'King', returned to Melbourne. They were the first white men who crossed the continent of Australia.

In January 1872, the first land sale took place, the upset price being £2 per foot. Most of the land was sold from £4 to £4 15s per foot. The first house built after the sale was one in Fitzgibbon street, now in possession of Mr. Bowman, the next houses being the hotel, which was called the Port Phillip, Agricultural, Craig's, Whitfield's, Foxcroft's and Lemon's.

The next thing was the naming of the streets, some of them having been named, since when further sales took place. There are twelve streets, Sydney road or rather the more aristocratic Royal Parade, Morrah, Fitzgibbon, Wimble, Story, Bayles, Degraives, Park, Benjamin, Gatehouse and Gill streets. As we have so many streets called after councillors they will doubtless look after the interests of Parkville. Since then, the suburb has gone rapidly ahead, and there are now 300 houses, the valuation of which is not less than £250,000. Land is increasing in value every day, and some was sold the other day at £15 the foot.

The residents can say what few if any other suburbs can say—that they have only one public house in their midst, which speaks volumes for their temperance, and this in a population of 2000. This is the only suburb that have not houses built facing rights-of-way. Parkville has now its Debating Club, some of whose members will no doubt take a high position in future political campaigns, especially as we have such an able guide in our worthy president Mr. Sutherland, M.A., Principal of Carlton College.

In 1878 the residents of Parkville subscribed a sum of £,100 to the 'Bus Co. to start a line of 'buses, and it has been one of the best paying lines they have. In 1883 the University Avenue was opened, which brings Parkville into close connection with Carlton. This great boon was brought about almost entirely by the efforts of Mr. W. Downes, your worthy vice-president.

Parkville has now its Telegraph and Post Office, its Cricket Club, which, under the able secretaryship of Mr. Speechly, can hold its own against all comers, and I have not the least doubt that should our services be required we could very easily raise a defence corps. Parkville has now a Sabbath school in connection with the Erskine Church, which has a daily average of 50.

So much for the PRESENT of Parkville, now a few words in conclusion about its FUTURE. In the first place we must get rid of the only blot on our fair fame, and that is the removal of the pig market, which is rather too near to be pleasant. In a few years' time when the trees grow up the drive along the Royal Parade to the Park and past the University and Colleges will be one of the most beautiful about Melbourne.

Parkville will be by that time almost a city, and will have its own grand hall, perhaps not quite as large as the Melbourne Town Hall yet a beautiful place, and will be much patronised by the nobility of Parkville for assemblies socials, &c. The gentle, noiseless, and swift train cars will whisk back and forth to the city, and a visit to our gardens to see the lions will be one of the sights of Australia by all tourists from the dear old country and all parts of the world. Then those who are still residents who are here to-night will have many pleasant chats at what took place in the sweet old days gone by.'