

REDCLIFFE: Bricks and stables

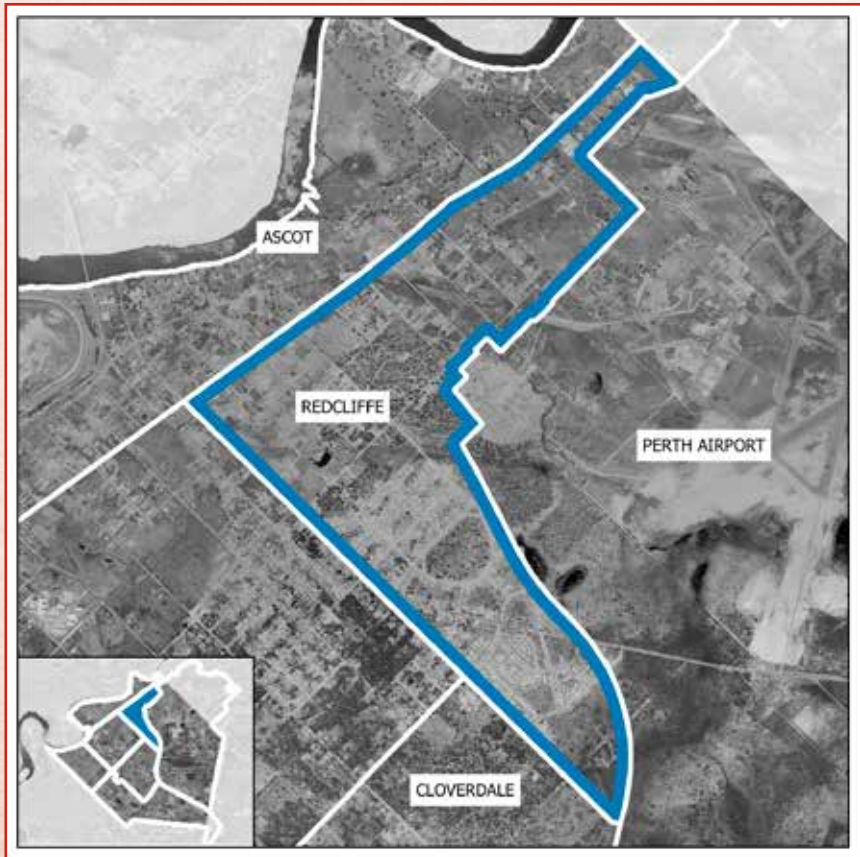


Redcliffe is bounded by the Great Eastern Highway, Tonkin Highway and Epsom Avenue, and Perth International Airport.

The story of its name is unclear. Some claim it was named after steep red clay deposits that lined the banks of the Swan River when settlers first arrived. Others claim Captain Mark Currie

named his house here Red Cliff after his ancestral home.

Modern Redcliffe is a mix of residential, semi-industrial and retail buildings. The suburb is scheduled to gain a railway station in 2020 as part of the Forrestfield-Airport Link.



1829 Beginning of the Swan River Colony with the arrival of the *Parmelia*, carrying Governor James Stirling and the first settlers.

1830 Location 28, 1000 ha, is assigned to Captain Mark John Currie, who calls his new estate Red Cliff.

1833 Red Cliff destroyed by fire. Only bare brick walls remained.

1860s Convict camp established at Depot Hill, Redcliffe, for building local roads. Slices of jarrah cut to construct the Great Eastern Highway.

1896 Sugars' Brickworks founded on the banks of the Swan River, close to the present Tonkin Highway bridge.

1897 Disappointing subdivision of Redcliffe Estate. Very few sales.

1899 First elections for the new Belmont Road Board (an early form of council).

1904 *Invercloy* (later known as Nulsen Haven) built in Redcliffe for John Wilkie.

1906 Construction of *Tampina*, now the last remaining early grand house in Redcliffe.

1908 Opening of Redcliffe School.

1913-14 Redcliffe Public Hall built on the corner of Fauntleroy Avenue and Guildford Road (now Great Eastern Highway).

1922 Successful auction of subdivided sites in Redcliffe Estate. The suburb begins to grow.

1935 Guildford Road changes name to Great Eastern Highway.

1960 Belmont Road Board becomes the Shire of Belmont.

1979 Belmont becomes a City and the Council moved offices from Great Eastern Highway to Wright Street, Cloverdale.

1988 Opening of Redcliffe Bridge across the Swan River to carry the Tonkin Highway.

1991 A new suburb, Ascot, originally part of Belmont and Redcliffe, is officially established.

2003 Demolition of Redcliffe Public Hall.

1800 – 1910

1910 – 2005

A day to remember



Redcliffe State School (1939, Betty Burke)

On Monday 20 September 1908, a new State School was officially opened in Redcliffe. Nearly all the residents of Redcliffe turned out, as well as a number of neighbours, in honour of the occasion.

The new school was located off the main road, at the corner of Fauntleroy Avenue and Henderson Avenue (now Dunreath Drive). At this junction a triumphal arch was erected, adorned with foliage, flowers, and bunting. Above the arch was a panel with a painting of a black swan, with the motto 'Advance Redcliffe' underneath.

Passing under the arch all the school's fences had been decorated with palm fronds. The school itself, made of brick with a weatherboard enclosed verandah, was decorated outside and inside.

The Minister for Education, Frank Wilson, formally declared the school open, to the accompaniment of cheering. He said it was particularly pleasing to see the school erected less than twelve months since one had been requested.

Inside the school, the ladies of the district had provided a banquet, and the tables were covered in all kinds of delicacies. More palm fronds and flowers of every possible colour decorated the tables.

After feasting, the crowd moved out to the school grounds for the inevitable photographs. Sports for both children and adults were then carried out, to the accompaniment of music supplied by the Railway Band.

From grapes to caravans



William Clayden is the man in the centre of the group (1922)

One of the most prosperous settlers on the Redcliffe Estate was William Henry Clayden, whose property was famous for producing superb currents and raisins. He also had other fruit trees, and the family later added melons to this range.

William was a carpenter who worked for the Railway Department and lived in Midland Junction, but spent his weekends and holidays on his Redcliffe property. Mrs Clayden and her son, also called William, lived on their block. The young man did most of the work himself. In all he had 8.5 hectares, with five hectares under vines and one under lemon and peach trees.

The Claydens would dry the fruit on racks at the Redcliffe property, pack it and send it to Perth for sale. The crates would probably have been carried on a horse and cart by William himself.

In 1922 the younger William, aged 22 at the time, was interviewed by a *Sunday Times* journalist, who took a walk with him through the vines. "Do you find this a profitable business?" asked the reporter.

"Oh, yes," replied William. "Of course the price varies a little, but the season before last we took off two tons of dried fruit to the acre from four-year-old vines, and all this fruit was dried on the block."

In later life, William remembered that some of his Italian neighbours had a hard life in Redcliffe, living in housing that were little more than humpies.

When he retired in 1967, William moved to Quinn's Rock and leased land on the beach front from the Wanneroo Shire Council where he built a successful caravan park.

Shopping in Redcliffe



Jenny Karniewicz on Hay Street (DATE?, need to confirm which one is Jenny)

When Jenny Karniewicz (b.1935, née Kot) was five years old, she was woken up in the middle of the night with a gun to her head and ordered by Russians soldiers to pack up and leave Poland. Jenny, her sister and her mother spent ten years in refugee camps before arriving in Western Australia aged fifteen.

Jenny's future husband, Leopold Karniewicz, had been living with his

family in Dunreath Hostel near Perth Airport, before they built a house in Coolgardie Avenue, Redcliffe. Jenny came to live there when she married Leopold in 1958.

In 2013, Jenny was interviewed for Belmont Museum about her early experiences of living in Redcliffe:

For shopping I went with my husband in the car. There were quite a lot of shops along the Great Eastern Highway: there was a butcher, greengrocer and grocer shop. There was a Greek fellow that had just about everything. Now there's nothing except electric mechanics and the rest are gone. Where there is a big liquor store, that was a huge greengrocer and grocer.

When the supermarkets came, all these little shops had to close, except the Greek one, and he didn't have so much and his prices were higher. Where the IGA is now, used to be Charlie Carters. I was working at the stage so my husband used to pick me up after work and we used to go and do most of our shopping, groceries there. But we knew a Polish butcher who used to open for us. We would go, two families, and he would take us to the shop on Thursday night.

When we came here, it was either polony or salami. And then the Italians started to come, then the Chinese, and the food in Perth changed completely.



Emmy Milner (née Dekens) at home (c.1960, Emmy Milner)

New homes for new Australians

After World War II, the State Housing Commission built many homes in Redcliffe to successfully house scores of families. The new residents included returned soldiers, people unable to afford a home without some help, and Aboriginal families.

Many of the new home owners in Redcliffe were 'New Australians', who often built their own residences, usually building after work and over the weekend. Neither money nor construction materials were easy to come by. However, it was usually found that including some beer with an order would secure the necessary building supplies. Building these homes was a family and community effort, with everyone playing their part.

Although money was tight, adornments such as leadlight windows were still

installed. These attractive windows might be the only embellishment on otherwise plain and simple architecture.

Individual plots in Redcliffe were large enough for each family to build a home, grow vegetables, maintain fruit trees, have chickens for fresh eggs and meat and keep a cow for milk, butter and cheese. The residents would supply other members of the local community with such produce. What could not be grown or made would be supplied by peddlers that passed by the front gate selling bread, fish and ice.

Children had their part to play in making Redcliffe. They spent their spare time moving cows from one part of the bush to another, chipping mortar from second-hand bricks and even mixing concrete to make building blocks for the new homes.



72 Central Avenue, Redcliffe (1950s, oral history)

Making a home

In 2013, as part of the City of Belmont Oral History Project, Rasma Rusling, along with her mother, was interviewed about her memories of her father building houses in Central Avenue and Bulong Avenue, Redcliffe:

Dad was working as a cabinet maker in Maylands. He would come home from work. Mum would have tea on the table for him. He'd be out in his workshop because he had a workshop at the back of the house there making furniture. He was making furniture for just about everybody in the area.

So just about every house in this area has got a bit of my dad's workmanship. He was always available. There was always people there— "Hey, can you do this? Can you do that? Can you make that?" He was working until two or three in the morning and getting up and going off to work and coming home again.

The Latvians used to help each other to build their houses all the time.

We moved from Central Avenue to Bulong because my parents just wanted a bigger and better house.

Dad built the new house. Dad did all the joinery, all the windows and put in plumbing. My brother and I and mum, we dug all this foundation out as kids. This house is built out of second hand bricks. I as a kid sat there and chiselled them.

When they demolished buildings in Perth, you could buy second hand bricks really cheap. But you had to clean them because they had mortar on them. But it was a fairly soft mortar. It was more like a lime mortar the old building around Perth. So we had like Tomahawks made up.

We worked our butts off around here. We sat there and chiselled these second hand bricks. We all worked. Everybody worked.

The last of its kind



Stables at Tampina (M0406-01, need copy from Museum)

Tampina is the last remaining early grand house in Redcliffe. It is a magnificent brick and iron residence constructed around 1906. The place was the home of racehorse trainer John Frederick Gary Robinson, and originally had stables which were unusual for being hexagonal.

Like many houses from this era it was constructed from locally made bricks. The building boom following the gold rush resulted in a number of brickworks being established in the Redcliffe area, using clay from the banks of the Swan River.

Another consequence of the 1890s gold rush was an increase in the crowds attending Ascot, and there was more money to spend and gamble. It was

not unexpected, then, that a large number of trainers and jockeys were attracted to the area.

By 1904 there were thirty-five trainers in the district. In 1903, horse trainer Ernest McKeon purchased land from the Redcliffe Estate subdivision. By 1906, he had built a house and stables on the site. In 1908, *Tampina* was bought by trainer John Robinson, who gave the house its name.

Tampina was occupied by the RAAF during World War II, as the operation centre for the nearby aerodrome. Between 1956 and 1965, the place was used as a hostel for disabled children. Today it is used as offices.



30 O'Neile Parade, Redcliffe (nd, M0008-01)

Yesterday & Today

If you live in Redcliffe, you'll probably know many of the road names and those of the parks. But do you know the history behind those names?

Brearley Drive: Major Norman Brearley founded West Australian Airways Ltd in 1921, and was issued with the first civil pilot's licence in Western Australia. In 1927, Brearley opened the Perth Flying School at Maylands.

McKeon Street: Named after Ernie McKeon, a jockey and trainer since the late 1890s, and later a Belmont Councillor.

Miller Avenue: Recognises the contribution of the Miller family to the racing industry, including Jimmy Miller who rode Au Fait to victory in the 1927 Perth Cup.

Smiths Avenue: Louisa and Henry Smith lived in this street—at number 48—before it was even a made road.

Towton Street: George Towton, better known as King Towton, was a trainer and dominant personality in Belmont's racing scene. He was also a Councillor from 1906, and one of those who called for the creation of the original Belmont Roads Board.

“The new house took us about twelve months to complete. We spent the weekends and any other spare time we had on building it. Usually we would order a load of timber from Millars in Victoria Park. The timber was bought by a dray pulled by two huge draught horses.”

William Clayden.



Each part of the coat of arms symbolises an aspect of the City of Belmont.

The kiln and stack represent brick making and the cog is a symbol for industry. The wings symbolise flight and the airport, while the horse is the racing industry. The green stands for public space; silver, the sky; and blue is the Swan River. The black swan is the State emblem, and the ducal coronet around its neck symbolises Belmont's relationship to WA.

For further information please contact the Belmont Museum
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