

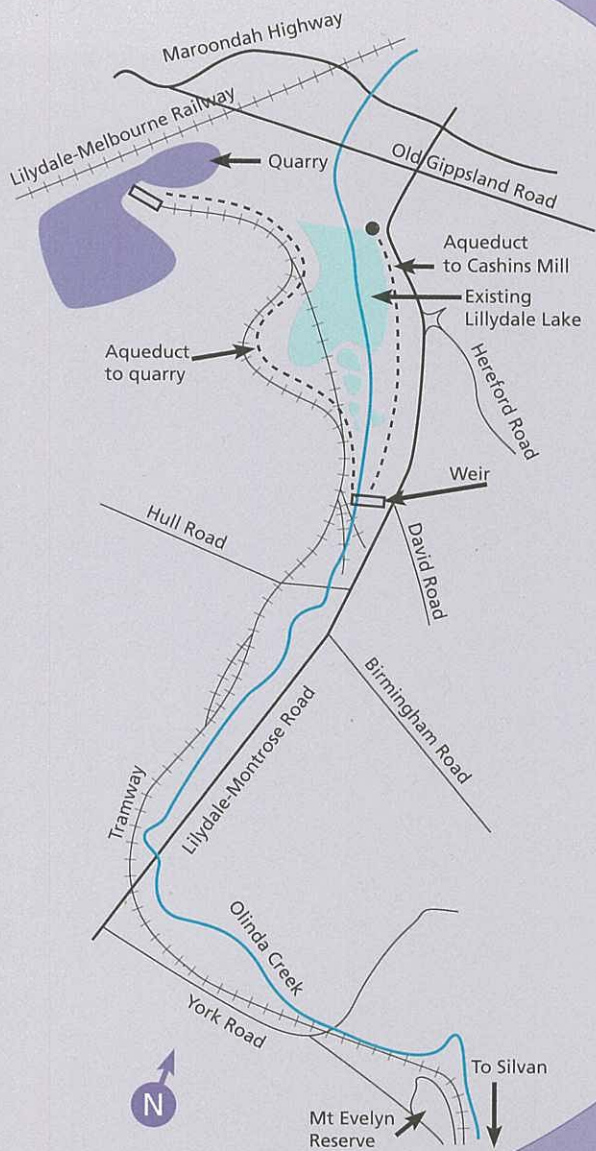
Limestone Quarry



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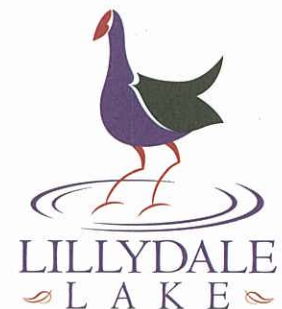
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- | | |
|----------------|----------|
| Existing water | Road |
| Quarry | Creek |
| Tramway | Aqueduct |



KEY



Limestone Quarry

On the west side of the lake you will find the remains of an earthen aqueduct and an embankment that carried a tramway. Both of these were constructed to service the David Mitchell Estate limestone quarry.

David Mitchell, a stonemason of Scottish descent, undertook many business ventures as a master builder shortly after arriving in Victoria in 1852.

He was a pioneer in the use of reinforced concrete in city buildings. His company built many prominent buildings including Scots Church, Masonic Hall, Menzies Hotel and the Exhibition Building.

He then ventured into the manufacture of building materials which included the Victorian Brick Works and Victorian Portland Cement at Richmond. Other ventures included a cheese factory, ham and bacon factory and soap factory at his Cave Hill farm. He also owned St Huberts Estate and grew grapes at Rutherglen and Coldstream.

The limestone quarry was founded in 1878 and still operates as a significant part of Lilydale's industry.

The production of lime requires firing in kilns at temperatures up to 1,000°C. Firewood for the kilns was collected on the lake site and further up the Olinda Creek valley. To transport firewood, a standard gauge (4 ft 8½ inch) tramway was constructed from Cave Hill and extended along the creek valley as far south as Silvan.

Generally, it ran parallel to the open earth aqueduct which supplied water to the quarry operations from Olinda Creek.

Early construction followed the hillside contours until approximately 1925 when the loop was abandoned in preference to an embankment constructed across the flood plain. Most of this embankment was lost in lake construction. A remnant section on the west side of the lake has been preserved as a walking trail.

Two steam locomotives, purchased from the Bendigo tramways hauled trucks into the bush. The tramline was extended as the treeline was cut back.

A driver and assistant and two timber getters operated the tramway while timber cutters and sawers would cut and stack the wood along the tramway. Trucks were left on the outward journey then collected on return. The sidings were constructed to allow trucks to pass each other.

One engine was abandoned and kept for spare parts leaving the other to work the line from the mid 1920s. Hard work and lack of maintenance saw many changes to the structure of the remaining locomotive.

In 1934 the line ceased to operate when coke was introduced as an alternative fuel and road transport took over.

The trucks were left to decay and the locomotive stood idle for some time before being cut up prior to the Second World War. The boiler and a few other parts were used at the quarry and the remainder sold to Japan for scrap metal.

