

Over the years memorials and other installations have been placed at Picnic Point. Two World War One field guns one of which was a 115 mm howitzer were placed there from about 1920 until 1947.<sup>36</sup> A bronze memorial to a puppy who led the Toowoomba Pipe Thistle Band in the Carnival of Flowers procession was erected about 1959. A camera obscura was built in 1967 and dismantled in 1992. A fifteen metre water tower was built in 1966 and floodlit for the first time in September 1967.<sup>37</sup> This engineering structure has fine sculptural qualities and is an art form in its own right.

Development and improvements to Picnic Point include the refurbishment of the old quarry site. The old quarry face was remodelled into a waterfall and plantings and landscaping now grace this old scar at its base. This project was sponsored by the Carnival of Flowers Association in 1965.<sup>38</sup> A rockery garden designed by Toowoomba landscaper Cec. Swenson in association with the Council Parks and Gardens was constructed below the kiosk site in 1980 by the combined Rotary Clubs of Toowoomba.<sup>39</sup> New lookout platforms were constructed by Toowoomba Rotary and Lions Clubs in 1990 and 1991.<sup>40</sup> The latter have been associated with the Park for many years occupying a site at the entrance.

A most noteworthy achievement of the Toowoomba West Lions Club was a twenty-five year project of transforming four hectares of lantana wilderness at the Point into parkland estimated to have cost \$250,000 over the life of the project.<sup>41</sup> Much volunteer community labour has been invested in these improvements and facilities at the Point. Extensive landscaping and development of the Tobruk Drive slopes and graded bushwalking tracks demonstrate the present Green Revolution and the importance and appeal of the natural environment to the local and wider community. These installations, developments and improvements to Picnic Point make it quite clear that the local community is a major stakeholder.

It is believed that the first Anzac Day commemorative dawn service in Australia was held at Picnic Point and this is perhaps its strongest community association. It was of a secular nature. In 1920 local returned soldiers, George Harrington, Bill Lightbody and others after placing floral tributes on the graves of their fallen mates adjourned to Picnic Point, toasting them with a drop or two of rum, until the first rays of dawn appeared in the east. Early commemorative services included a bugler who sounded the Last Post and Reveille and was conscripted from the ranks of the local Cadet Corps.<sup>42</sup>

Community values of Picnic Point were put to the test about 1992 when re-development of the existing Picnic Point function rooms and kiosk complex was mooted. An unrestricted high rise tourist complex was proposed for the Reserve. The local and wider community clearly demonstrated that the Point was regarded as a special place with special values and associations.

A less obtrusive and more sympathetic development that did not interfere with the natural features, ambience and aesthetic of the place was then approved by Council.

## **8.2 Redwood Park**

Redwood Park assumed its present form in April 1911 when an area of about 500 acres was gazetted for park purposes.<sup>43</sup> Prior to that it had been part Helidon Run, the Toowoomba Town Common and Toowoomba's Pasturage Reserve. For well over one hundred years it has been a special place for Toowoomba residents, environmentalists, Toowoomba Council and government officials.

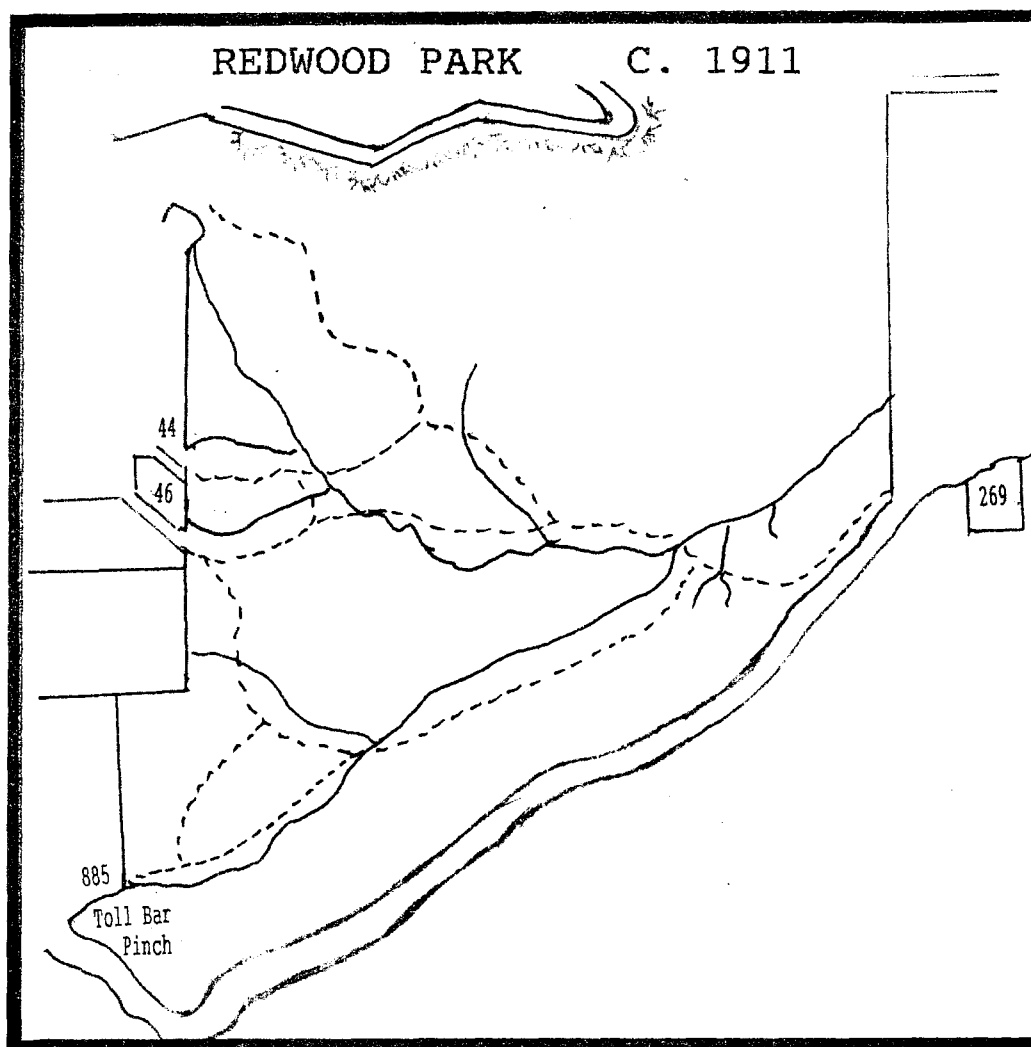


Figure 15. Sketch showing tracks and trails in Redwood Park c. 1911.

In 1888 when there were moves to alienate escarpment lands a petition was circulated and sent to the Minister for Lands. It contained about 260 signatures of the menfolk of Toowoomba. The subject of the petition was the reservation of 2,000 acres of land, some of which contained the present Redwood Park. These gentlemen wished to leave some evidence for future generations that we were alive to their interests ... we must insist that it be vested in trustees, men of probity and honour, by absolute deed so that it may remain an inheritance of this town. The petition was promulgated by James Thornloe Smith, the engineer who had drained the Toowoomba Swamps the previous decade.

They wanted the land to be conveyed in perpetuity to the Municipal Council in Trust for the inhabitants of Toowoomba and District and devoted solely to the purposes of a public park.<sup>44</sup>  
 {See 6.6.4 Toowoomba Town Common}

Although the subject of the petition was 2,000 acres of land between The Pocket and One Tree Hill, Redwood Park is the largest part of that land which has survived as a large public recreational parkland Reserve.

In 1910 the area to be gazetted the following year as Redwood Park was declared a sanctuary for native birds.<sup>45</sup> Honorary rangers were appointed. Two rangers who made significant contributions to the preservation and conservation of the natural environment of Redwood Park were solicitor, E. Bernays and medical practitioner, Dr. Thomas Price, both residents of Toowoomba. Bernays was appointed under the *Native Birds Protection Act 1921* by June 1921 and Price in December 1922 under the *Animal and Bird Acts 1921*.<sup>46</sup> Price took a keen and active interest in the preservation of native birds and animals. His home *Geeumbi* was on the escarpment in South Street.<sup>47</sup>

Bernays advised Council about Queensland Government legislation that would protect the animals and birds of the district, particularly those whose habitat was the escarpment parks. Until 1921 they appear to have been bird sanctuaries only and on his advice the birds and fauna became protected under the *Animals and Birds Act of 1921*.

Prickly pear was reported in the Toowoomba district from as early as the eighteen-seventies.<sup>48</sup> It infested the escarpment in epidemic proportions by the turn of the century. The dilemma it created reached crisis point early in the nineteen-twenties. Much of the escarpment land where the pear took hold was high rugged slopes with ridges and hills making some of it inaccessible. Its infestation was so widespread that the State Government set up a Commission of Inquiry about 1923 and legislation was passed to assist Local Government Authorities to deal with it.

Council leased Redwood Park and under the terms of the lease it could still serve to depasture the town cattle. Proceeds were to go to the eradication of noxious weeds and upkeep of the Range Road. Needless to say the cattle did a fine job of eating, trampling and spreading the weeds and their seeds. Some bird species also played a part in its spread. The conditions under which Council had to lease escarpment parklands in their trust were often impossible to fulfil particularly with regard to eradication of the pear. About 1921 legislation was passed that made it a condition of lease that the land be completely cleared of pear and other noxious weeds in the first year by the lessee. Between June 1920 and April 1921 three lessees walked away from their lease in Redwood Park. Other noxious weeds that blighted the Redwood Park landscape were lantana which had a hold along the water courses, lawlor vine and Bathurst and noogera burr.

As Honorary Ranger Bernays kept a watchful eye on the escarpment parks. He followed up the Foreman-of-Works report made in December 1921 that the pear was increasing at an alarming rate in Redwood Park. Much of it was visible from the Toll Bar Road and drastic action was needed if it was to be done at a reasonable cost. If Council supplied him with poison and apparatus he was willing to do the work himself if it was to be done at once. At this time treatment was by injection of arsenic in solution applied by a pear gun. Council ordered arsenic by the ton to treat the problem in the district.

After inspection of escarpment parks in 1924 70 acres of Redwood Park was found to be heavily infested. It was thought it would best be dealt with by infesting with cochineal insects. Four cases of the CHICO strain were forwarded to Council. It continued to be a serious pest until 1928 when the cactoblastis beetle that was introduced to eradicate the problem proved its worth. Infestation was then gradually overcome.<sup>50</sup>



Illustration 19. View of Redwood Park from Picnic Point showing the 'old unused two chain road'.<sup>49</sup>

Bernays also interviewed lessees on his weekly patrol of the Reserves. His mission as protector of birds in the words of a disgruntled lessee was to prevent boys from 'putting salt on their tails'. This lessee had a reputation as a pugilist and threatened Bernays with 'reprisals of a primitive tho' British nature' when he thought the zealous ranger had overstepped his mark. Bernays was known to take poison with him on his patrols and with the aid of his pocket knife treated patches of the pear.

The plight of the unemployed during the Depression inspired a group of public-spirited Toowoomba citizens to establish a rest camp in Redwood Park for spent and weary souls who passed that way. It became known as the Eagle's Nest and was known Australia-wide. Here the unemployed and the destitute victims of the Depression were able to stay a while to rehabilitate. The main benefactors of the camp were Dr. Price and Mark Harrison.

The following article by Hector Ferguson of Toowoomba was published fourteen months after the Eagle's Nest Camp began. The ethos and humour of the times is expressed in the following eye witness account when the camp operated:

*Midway up the mountains, sheltering on a ledge beneath the towering heights of the Toowoomba Range, just off the Toll Bar Road, is the swagmen's rest camp - the Eagle's Nest. Here the weary wayfarers of the roads find a haven of refuge, food, and lodging.*

*Realisation also that here, at any rate, is tangible evidence that 'kindness is anothers trouble' is not mere poetic fancy, but a concrete fact in daily demonstration.*

*Situated on the site of an old unused two-chain road which opens off the Toll Bar, The Eagle's Nest, with its buildings, gardens and grateful occupants, stands as a*

*monument to the benevolence and good will of the generous-hearted individuals who conceived the idea of providing shelter and food to unfortunates who, by stress of circumstance, are compelled to go 'Waltzing Matilda' on the roads of Queensland. All credit is due to Toowoomba's philanthropic hospital matron and medico who were responsible for the establishment of The Eagle's Nest a little over a year ago.*

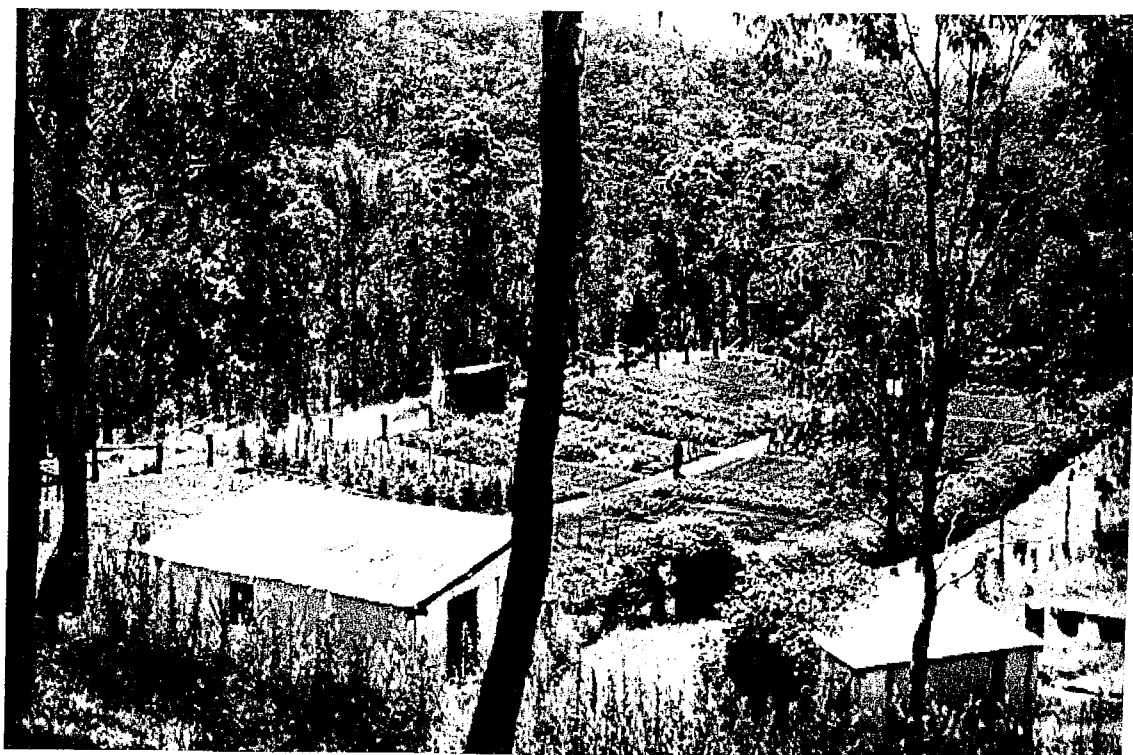


Illustration 20. Eagle's Nest Camp in the early nineteen-thirties.<sup>51</sup>

*A sign on the Toll Bar Road invites the swagman to enter, and he is made welcome by the man in charge, Mr. Downs, a returned soldier, and the permanent camp commandant of the rest home. No one is turned away if it is at all possible to accommodate him, and as many as 28 have been admitted at one time. At time of writing, there are 15 men in residence, and all are loud in their appreciation of the food and bunkhouse provided for them. In contrast to the weary weeks of roughing it on the wallaby track.*

*The men are permitted to remain at the camp for from three to 10 days but there is no hard-and-fast rule laid down in this respect. It depends on the circumstances.*

*The only demands made on the guests are to conform to the rules promulgated by the swagmen themselves.*

1. *Men staying must abide by the man in charge*
2. *No intoxicants are allowed to be brought into camp*
3. *Be sanitary, and clean, and keep the camp tidy.*

*The great majority realise the importance of these simple laws, and observe them to the letter.*

*The buildings, built by the men, consist of a bunk-house, where the arrangement of the placing of the portable mattresses are reminiscent of barrack life; a small library and gramophone; a cook's galley, which includes a stove; dining hut, with store rooms attached; fly-proof meat house; a bakehouse which is as novel in construction and operation as it is ingenious and efficient; shower and latrines, which bear the arresting notification that cleanliness is essential; cow shed (three cows are kept); fowl house and the very orderly 'orderly room' - the Commandant's dug-out, which as would be expected from this disciple of sanitation is 'wondrous neat and clean'.*

*The garden, enclosed with netting, is about half an acre in area, and contains every kind of vegetable. Cabbages, potatoes, cauliflowers, pumpkins, beans, carrots, white turnips, swedes, tomatoes and beetroot are being used at present, and with true professional touch the rotation of vegetable crops ensures a constant supply throughout the year.*

*The small water reservoir which supplies the garden, domestic needs, and ablutionary requirements is fed by a spring high up on the mountain side, and water is conveyed to the camp by a pipe line with taps in convenient places.*

*All bread used at the Eagle's Nest is baked by Mr. Downs, who also built the bakehouse, where only wheat meal is used. Wheat is gristed privately in Toowoomba. The approximate cost of a 2 lb. loaf is 2 and 1/2 pence and it is good bread. Butter is also made at the camp.*

*Tea, sugar and meat are supplied by the generosity of the promoters, augmented by the business men and public of Toowoomba. The Matron of St. Andrew's Private Hospital receives and distributes gifts for the welfare of the inmates. Working trousers are always in demand, as the wardrobes of the swagmen are often scanty, particularly the nether garments.*

*The men who take advantage of the shelter offering are not compelled to work during their stay, but usually get firewood and do any necessary work of the camp. An agricultural plot under maize, lucerne, oats and pumpkins is gradually being extended. Most of the guests prefer to help in some way to mark their gratitude and appreciation. Since the inception of The Eagle's Nest, 14 months ago, over 600 men have passed through the camp.*

*They include university graduates, professional men, artisans, labourers, sailors, and some genuine dyed in the whiskers bagmen. The latter, true to their traditions, show neither appreciation, gratitude nor the desire to work.*

*"We are all roads scholars from the school of adversity," wrote one traveller as a description of the men on the track in the book supplied to the camp commandant for the purpose of recording the names and occupations of the patrons who register. The addresses left by the travellers range from Sydney to Perth and from Melbourne to Cairns.*

*"The memory of the Eagle's Nest will ever remain in my mind as a bright light shining through a dark night of despair" wrote one wayfarer, justly appreciative of the hospitality and treatment received.*

*"We get some odd ones here at times" said Mr. Downs, "and they provide us with plenty of fun while they remain." "That", pointing to a caption decorating the dining hut wall, "is the work of one of the last 'ones' we had." The slogan on the wall reads 'Don't be downhearted but eat like Helen B. Merry'.*

*One guest - incidentally, a former master of languages of one of the English public schools - was enthusiastic regarding the laws of cleanliness, after reading the notice, that he promptly took a bath in the water trough, which is reserved for watering the cattle.*

*Visitors are welcome to inspect the Eagle's Nest at any time, and will recall and remember afterwards with a new significance that familiar line 'Kind hearts are more than coronets'.<sup>52</sup>*

There were other camp sites in Redwood Park during the early nineteen-thirties. John Evans was a shearer and a man on the road. In 1933 the 'sheds' he got from the Darling Downs graziers were so small he could not afford a room so he bought a tent and fly and camped in Redwood Park. Thinking he would be asked to move on he sought permission from his friend Frank Bullcock M.L.A. to camp in the Park. He did not know where to go if they turned him out as he was *too old now to be carrying my swag. I have made a little garden and am trying to grow a few vegetables.*<sup>53</sup>



Illustration 21. Eagle's Nest Camp showing living quarters in the early nineteen-thirties <sup>54</sup>

People rallied in support of the real victims of the Depression years in their own ways. An altruistic gesture worthy of record was a gift of land to Council. Mrs Gill of Taringa, Brisbane gave a little over 37 acres for the use of the unemployed during the Depression. Her offer was accepted by Council. The land is beyond East Street and is Portions 35 to 37, 41 to 46 parish of Taylor, County of Churchill and adjacent to Redwood Park.

Over the years the Eagle's Nest camp site became overgrown with lantana and privet and concealed beneath its mantle. In 1994 the site of the camp became part of a special project to aid the unemployed.<sup>55</sup> Twelve unemployed under the direction of archaeologist, Dr. David Biernoff carefully and systematically cleared and unearthed the site. The camp layout and items found there were recorded. No structures remain. Nonetheless, the physical evidence of this place adds to the cultural significance of the Park. Redwood Park is part of the ecotourism of the escarpment and it was planned to include Eagle Nest Camp as an historic walk.

The move to stock Redwood Park with native fauna and birds may have been initiated by Hon. Ranger, E. Bernays. He was diligent in his attempts to conserve and restore the natural attributes of Redwood Park. He wrote to Toowoomba City Council in November 1922 suggesting Council call for donations of native animals and birds to stock Redwood Park. Donated animals had been released in a Warwick Reserve. Should Council proceed he would attend to their release and establishment in the Park.<sup>56</sup>

The idea of a fence to enclose part of the Park as a protection against dingos and/or dogs was suggested early in 1923 by the Darling Downs Birds and Animals Protection Society.<sup>57</sup> They solicited the support of Toowoomba City Council and the Department of Agriculture and Stock who administered animal and bird protection Acts. Approaches were also made to the Department of Public Lands by Council and Tom Roberts, M.L.A. to acquire the three and three quarter miles of wire netting necessary to make the enclosure on their behalf. At that time netting was available to graziers at concessional rates to make marsupial proof fences under the *Marsupial Proof Fencing Acts*. Under the Act there was no provision for fencing to be supplied for public uses and the Society was advised accordingly.<sup>58</sup> A dingo patrol tent was erected in August 1925 on the eastern boundary of Dr. Price's residence, *Geeumbi*, at the top of South Street.<sup>59</sup> It is not known if others were erected along the escarpment. About this time plantings of trees may have been made in the Park by Council.<sup>60</sup>

The idea was raised again in 1936 once more with the idea of stocking the enclosure with native birds and animals and encouraging birds to nest there.<sup>61</sup> In 1939 John Duggan M.L.A. approached the Minister for Lands on behalf of Council for a grant of £1000 for a bird and animal sanctuary to be created in Redwood Park. He drew the Minister's attention to the new Range road then under construction and its ability to induce a greater number of tourists to Toowoomba. He shrewdly pointed out that the Department had recently supplied one mile of chain wire netting to enclose the Lake Clarendon Reserve and submitted that the proposed bird and animal sanctuary at Toowoomba had stronger claims upon the generosity of the Department.<sup>62</sup> No doubt he was referring to the excision of land from Redwood Park that was dedicated for the new Range road. Duggan then shot a letter off to the Co-ordinator General explaining that the proposed sanctuary was adjacent to the new Range road and trusted that he would in keeping with the general policy of the Main Roads Commission assist with beautifying the approaches along the road to Toowoomba.<sup>63</sup> The Commissioner visited Toowoomba to discuss the matter the following year.



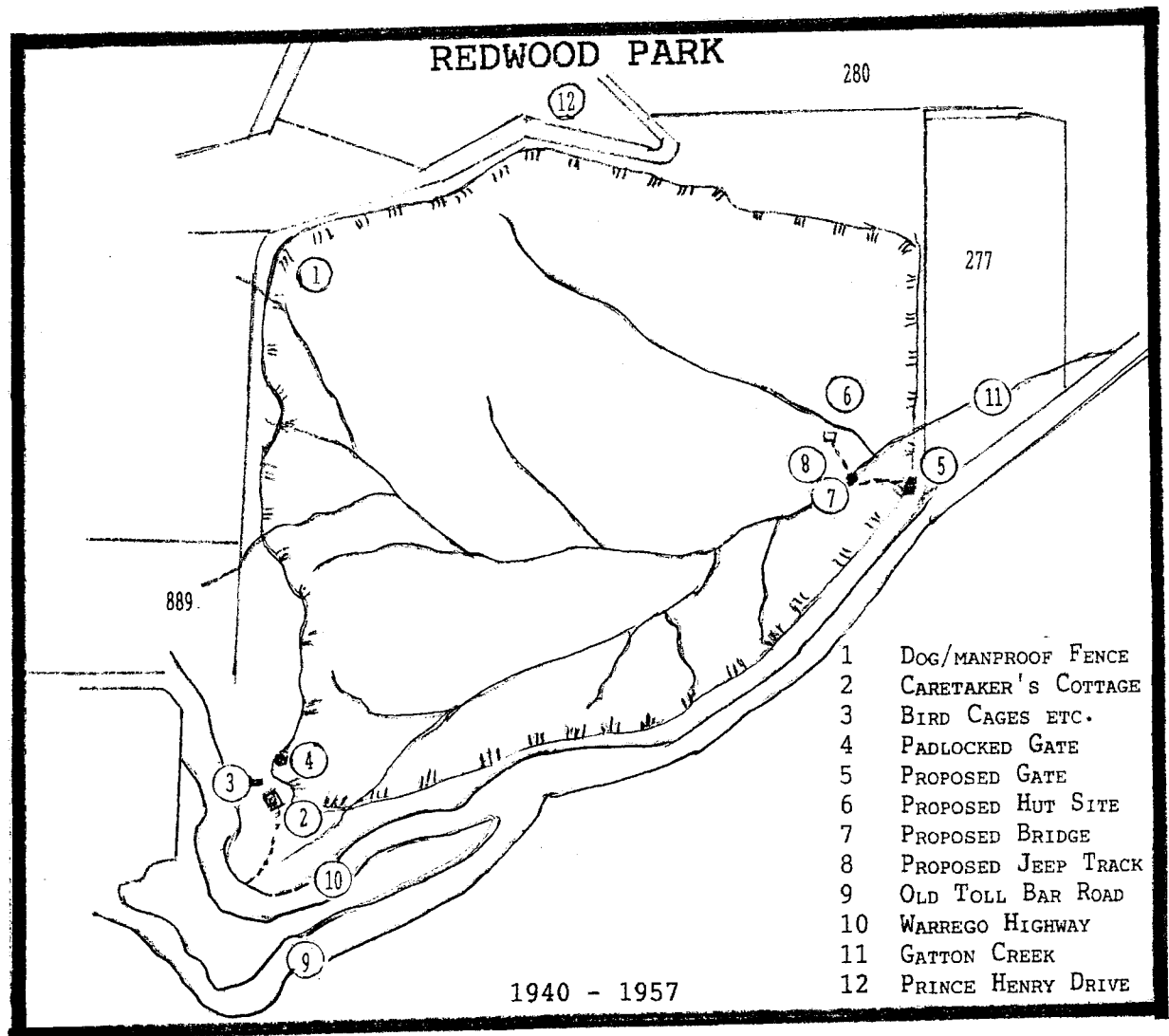


Figure 16. Sketch of Redwood Park 1940 - 1957.

By April 1940 the Department of Lands had no objection to fencing the area nor to having a curator's house on site. The dog/man-proof fence was built at this time.<sup>64</sup> The zoo in Queens Park closed about 1941 and the animals were probably released into the enclosure.

In 1951 the Park was used as an animal and bird sanctuary under the control of the Toowoomba Council. The large area that had been fenced in contained various species of animals and birds indigenous to Australia. The Park also possessed very good scenic qualities and was often used as a picnic spot by local residents and tourists.

By this time material improvements had been made to the Park. There was a caretaker's dwelling and sewerage and lighting plant valued at £1,200 in the south-western corner of the Park. The fence which was incorrectly called a marsupial proof fence was then valued at £2,690. Two sanitary conveniences had been installed and bird and animal cages erected in the vicinity of the dwelling. Water was piped to the area from Council mains and a metalled track

had been constructed to this area. The purpose for which the cages were used has not been found.

At that time the Park was intersected by the Darling Downs Highway and the Main Roads Commission had allowed Goulding's Log Cabin Service Station to be erected on part of the land dedicated as road.<sup>65</sup>

The Park was heavily timbered with mountain gum, stringy bark, cedar, iron bark, box, bloodwood, wattle and undergrowth. The grasses were coarse natural grasses with some small patches of blue grass in the gullies and on the banks of Gatton Creek. Most of the area was heavily infested with lantana and because of the density of its growth the Ranger was unable to carry out a detailed inspection of the whole area.<sup>66</sup>

The caretaker's dwelling, outbuildings and the animal and bird cages were removed in 1955. The sanitary conveniences remained. By 1957 the metalled track had fallen into disrepair and was almost impassable to vehicular traffic.<sup>67</sup>

From 1954 to 1956 Mrs. A. Barta, a horse breeder leased a small area in the south western part of the enclosed area to run horses.

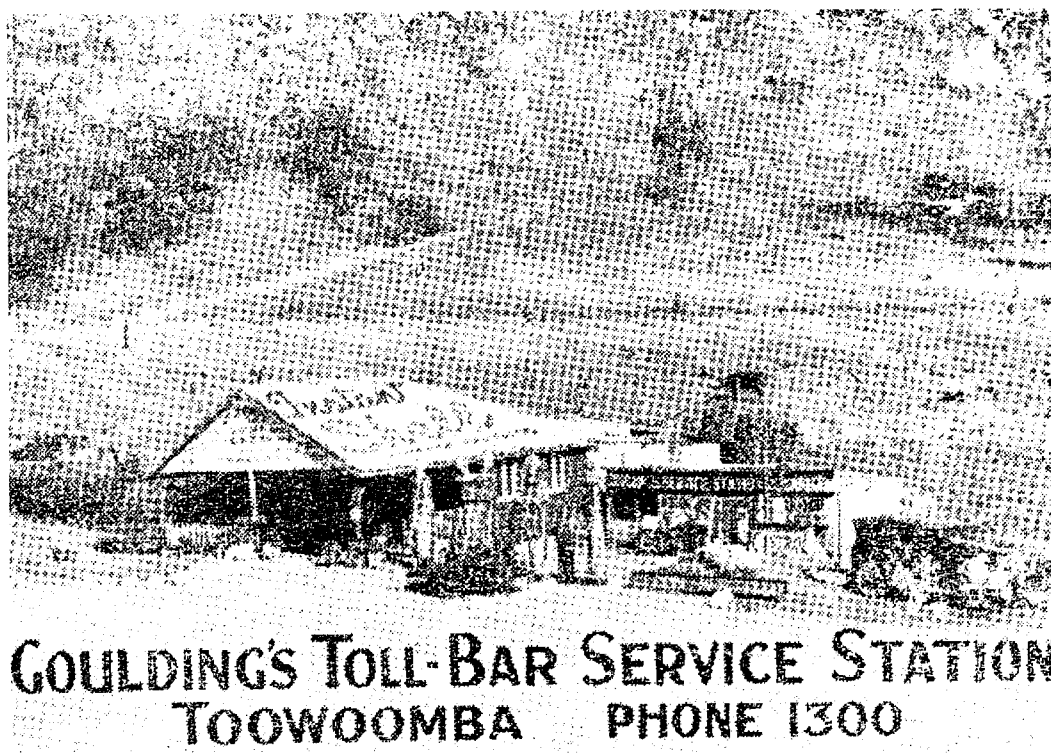


Illustration 22. Goulding's Toll-Bar Service Station c. 1937.<sup>68</sup>

In 1957 an application was made by the Officer Commanding the Toowoomba based 25th Battalion, Lt. Col. Dodd to carry out military training projects in the south-eastern part of the enclosed area of the Park. If permission was granted the facility would be used several times a year. The proposal was welcomed. This would improve the Park, be a decided advantage and would not in any way interfere with the use of the Reserve.

Four of the five proposals appear to have proceeded.<sup>69</sup>

Firstly, a gate was to be constructed in the south-eastern corner of the Reserve and it was to be padlocked. The gate was to be of solid construction and made in the same dog/man-proof manner as the fencing. The Reserve was not used much by the public and it was most unlikely that this part of the Park would ever be required for public use.

Secondly, a narrow jeep track from the gate entrance for about half-a-mile across the creek to the operations area was to be cleared. This track would be by necessity only about 8 feet wide. When clearing the way for the track only small and useless timber would be cut down.

Thirdly, it was proposed to bridge the narrow creek by constructing a rough, narrow, light bridge. This would require two girders measuring six to eight inches and round timber decking sufficiently strong to allow jeeps, trailers, equipment and troops to cross. The amount of timber required for this purpose would be negligible and any timber cut would be done so under the strictest supervision.

The Land Commissioner was of the opinion that timber felled when clearing the 'jeep and low level foot bridge' should attract no royalties and could be used for the project. The track and bridge would be of benefit to the Park Reserve in case of fire and convenience of the public when using the Park.

Fourthly, a sawn timber and fibro hut about ten feet square for storage purposes would be constructed.

A proposal to construct a small stone weir about 2 to 3 feet high and about 8 feet wide across the narrow creek was abandoned.

In 1959 an application to establish a caravan park in the Park was not approved.

Some excisions have been made of the original land set aside for the Park. At the time of gazettal in 1911 the total area was said to be about 500 acres. Council constructed a scenic road which traversed the northern boundary of the Reserve in 1934.<sup>70</sup> At that time about eight acres were dedicated for this purpose bringing the total Park area to about 492 acres.<sup>71</sup> Redwood Park was further reduced to 473 acres in 1940 when nineteen acres on its south-western flank was dedicated to the new Range road.<sup>72</sup> Other excisions have been made.<sup>73</sup>

In 1968 after an approach by Miss H.P. Cameron to the Land Commissioner two roods of land on the south-western boundary of the Reserve was sold to her for \$5 for inclusion in her adjacent freehold land, Portion 885. After survey her application to open a new road was successful. This land bounded by Curtis Street on the west and the Old Toll Bar Road on the south was then subdivided, chopped up and sold.

The dog/manproof fence fell into disrepair. In the late nineteen-sixties dogs were able to enter the former enclosure and there was concern for the wildlife there. The Wildlife Preservation Society took notice. In June 1971 they decided to develop Redwood Park's scrub and forest land. Their aim was to create a National Park over a five year period. The group planned to introduce koalas, possums, wallabies and kangaroos. There were already many bandicoots in the Park. A licence was granted to the Toowoomba district branch of the Wildlife Preservation Society to improve the Reserve. New walking tracks were officially opened on 24 July 1988. Friends of the Escarpment Parks preserve the public interest in this area today.

Persons and communities associated with Redwood Park: John Thornloe Smith, M.L.C.; John Duggan M.L.A.; Hon. Ranger, E. Bernays; Dr Thomas Arthur Price; Mark Harrison; Matron, St. Andrew's Hospital; Vernon Redwood, Councillor, after whom the Park is named; Darling Downs Birds and Animals Protection Society; Work and Goodwill League of Toowoomba (1930); Wildlife Preservation Society; Friends of the Escarpment Parks. There may be others.

### 8.3 Jubilee Park

Jubilee Park took its modern form in March 1911 when about 700 acres was set aside as a Reserve for Park Purposes. Like Redwood Park it had been part Helidon Run, Toowoomba Town Common and Toowoomba's Pasturage Reserve prior to gazettal. It was leased to Charles Octavius Sharp and under the terms of the lease it could still serve as a pasturage for the ratepayers of Toowoomba. Horses could graze for 1/- per head per week and cattle for sixpence. Bird life was protected in the Park from 1910.

Prickly pear was the scourge of the escarpment parks before lantana. Bathurst and noogoora (sic) burr also invaded Jubilee Park at this time. Eradication was the lessee's responsibility under the lease. Despite regular treatment the tenacious pear was difficult to kill. It gained hold in the most inaccessible places. There was dense pear growth east of the quarry boundary and Precipice Gully where lawler (sic) vine, heavy timber and big rocks surrounded it. A strip of land from Winchester's Track to the head of Precipice Gully was heavily infested. The adjacent Rifle Range Reserve was overgrown with lantana and Sharp thought there had been no attempt at any time to check it. A part of Jubilee Park in the early nineteen-twenties was also known as Lantana Gully. The most difficult patches to get at were the north-west corner in and near a very steep gorge and the eastern side of an inaccessible cliff on the edge of Katoomba Plateau. No sooner had Sharp treated the pear than the burrs appeared.

Towards the end of 1922 Sharp poisoned an area of fifteen acres of thickly scattered pear. The stacking and burning of this pear took two men six days to complete.

He was able to keep the pear down with regular poisoning. Even so, in 1924 after inspection of the Park Land Ranger Childers doubted if it would ever be permanently destroyed. At that time there was also a stubborn patch on a cliff near Katoomba Plateau adjoining the Park on private property. At the end of 1924 the situation was desperate. The Prickly Pear Commission began to subsidise two thirds of the cost of eradication. The Commission's preferred treatment was by poison, injector apparatus and atomisers. To obtain subsidies Council had also to undertake systematic clearing of the pear on roads and reserves. This treatment seemed to hold it in check