

# HERITAGE PLACE

**NAME OF PLACE:** MUNTHAM HOMESTEAD COMPLEX

**ADDRESS/LOCATION OF PLACE:** 4876 Glenelg Highway CARAPOOK

**STUDY NUMBER:** 001

**HERITAGE OVERLAY NUMBER:**

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**PRECINCT:** Carapook

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA:** Southern Grampians Shire

**ALLOTMENT:** CA2 **SECTION:** 9 **PARISH:** PARISH OF CARAPOOK  
PTCA1

**ACCESS DESCRIPTION:**

CFA 429 B66; VicRoads 72 A3; located off the Glenelg Highway on the north side immediately to the east of the intersection with Muntham Lane and overlooking the valley of the Wennicott Creek.

**SIGNIFICANCE RATING:** State



Muntham Homestead Complex, Glenelg Highway, Carapook. Homestead Complex viewed looking north fro

**Image Date:** 19/03/02

**EXTENT OF LISTING:**

To the extent of: All the buildings including the homestead, the red brick barn, all other nineteenth century outbuildings, the garden, the parkland plantings, minor structures and works and all of the land included in the original pre-emptive right.

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## PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:

The Muntham Homestead complex is located on a steep hillside overlooking the valley of Wenicott Creek and facing eastwards. The original homestead, built before 1847 and probably by 1840, remains at the centre of the present dwelling. Many important details, such as iron bars over the windows, survive. The slab hut has been extended several times to form a picturesque, symmetrical single storey timber cottage. The corrugated iron roof contains attic rooms, which were the original staff accommodation. The original cellar survives and is said to be made from sods. The service wing at the rear dates from the later 19th century.

At the rear of the homestead there are several important outbuildings. Immediately behind the house is the 'schoolroom', a small single storey timber building. The largest is a barn built from red bricks fired on the property. The date of its construction is uncertain but it may date from as early as the 1840s. It has been extended twice.

The remains of a substantial garden surround the homestead. Three elements survive from its earliest period, the original drive which leads up from the valley, the circular lawn in the centre of the carriage way and four trees, being two mulberries (*Morus nigra*), a pear (*Pyrus comminus*) and an unknown *Crataegus* species. It may be that paths and other works from the original garden survive underneath the mid-nineteenth century extensions to the original slab hut. There are also important later plantings of a variety of exotic trees, primarily elms, cypress, hawthorns and oaks.

## HISTORY:

The Muntham squatting run was, with Merino Downs and Sandford, amongst the very first to be established inland from Portland in the mid-1830s. It was associated with the Henty family, and in particular with Edward Henty, the patriarch of the family until the later nineteenth century. It was named after 'an old well-groomed estate near Worthing' in England and regarded as the chief station of the Henty family (Bassett, 489).

Muntham was taken up by Edward Henty as Portland Bay Run No. 132 in 1837, consisting of 57 300 acres, carrying 3000 cattle and 20 000 sheep (Billis & Kenyon, 256). Bassett quotes James Henty (Bassett, 531), Edward's brother as noting that in 1846 "at Muntham, everything was done regardless of expense". Many early visitors or nearby landholders recalled Muntham in the mid to late nineteenth century as 'the home of pure horse-flesh, cattle, and sheep; it was open house, where lively people gathered to dance and play cricket, to race and to hunt' (ibid.). However, the property was never a major residence of the family, but was managed for them by a series of managers or overseers. The irregular attendance of the Henty family may be one reason why the complex did not develop into a grand estate in the way other some early squatting runs matured, such as Murndal.

The most important manager was Cuthbert Fetherstonhaugh Junior (Bassett, 531-2). He writes at length about Muntham in his rollicking memoirs, *After Many Days*, published in 1917. Fetherstonhaugh was a son of the Police Magistrate in Hamilton from 1854. Through his father, Fetherstonhaugh was associated with a group of Anglo-Irish gentleman in the Hamilton area who were well educated, well paid and well respected. He was also a very close friend of the poet, Adam Lindsay Gordon. Both young men were excellent horsemen, were co-founders of the Coleraine Racing Club and established the famous Coleraine Steeplechase, perhaps the pre-eminent horse race in the Western District.

The house has developed over the years from the original cottage, and when James Henty visited the property in 1846 he stated that "...all the buildings, house, garden and woolshed etc., seem very complete and appear

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to have been erected without much regard to expense" (Bassett, 519). This would indicate that many of the outbuildings date from this time.

Much of the fabric of the original house survives including some interiors. Built of timber like the first cottage, the several additions have created an asymmetrical villa, perched on the hillside overlooking the valley of the Wenicott Creek. Outbuildings, including an important early brick barn, were built at the rear. A garden seems to have been part of the complex from the beginning to provide both an aesthetic setting and some self-sufficiency in fruit, vegetables and other food. Important trees survive including the remnants of an orchard. The colonial artist, Thomas Clark depicted the whole in the 1870s in a view looking up the valley towards the homestead, which idealises the pastoral landscape. The view is little altered today.

## **THEMATIC CONTEXT:**

Theme 3: Developing local, regional and national economies

3.5 Developing primary production

3.5.1 Grazing stock

Theme 5: Working

5.8 Working on the land

## **CONDITION:**

The homestead is in very good condition and the barn is in good condition.

## **INTEGRITY:**

Excellent degree of integrity

## **STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:**

What is significant?

Muntham Homestead Complex is located on the Glenelg Highway approximately 15kms north-west of Coleraine on the side of Muntham Hill overlooking the valley of the Wennicot Creek. The squatting run, Muntham is one of the three first runs taken up in the Western District, all by the pioneering Henty family of Portland. Muntham was directly associated with the patriarch of the family, Edward Henty, said to be the founder of Victoria. The run was originally extremely large, being 57,300 acres (23,000 hectares) in extent when first registered but subsequently 3,200 acres (1280 hectares) after the implementation of the Land Selection Acts. Although the run was used for stud cattle breeding as much as for the production of wool, Edward Henty prided himself on holding onto a significant merino sheep stock line, although opinions on the merit of his stock varies. He held the squatting lease until its cancellation in 1866. Henty, who lived permanently in Portland, relied on managers or overseers. One of these, Cuthbert Fetherstonhaugh, was a famous horseman and close friend of the poet, Adam Lindsay Gordon. He wrote extensively about Muntham, Coleraine, Gordon and horseracing in his autobiography, 'After Many Days'.

The homestead complex has always been sited on the southeast face of Muntham Hill overlooking the Wennicot Creek and the road from Hamilton to Casterton. The important colonial artist Thomas Clark painted this view as early as 1874, and the pastoral ideal shows an already substantial house, a well-developed garden, and cattle and sheep grazing on the alluvial flats. The original homestead and its several additions survive with a series of outbuildings at the rear. The most important of these is the barn built of red brick, of uncertain date (possibly the late 1840s) built no later than the mid-1850s. The complex is enhanced by the remnants of an extensive garden which has evolved from the 1840s and includes an orchard and service yards as well as the formal front garden with its circular lawn and drive. The homestead complex is in excellent condition and retains a very high degree of integrity.

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How is it significant?

The Muntham Homestead Complex is of historical, cultural and architectural significance to the State of Victoria.

Why is it significant?

The Muntham Homestead Complex is of historical significance as one of the three earliest squatting runs in the

Western District and for its long association with Edward Henty, said to be the founder of Victoria. It is of further historical significance as an important reminder of a past way of life. This is because the homestead complex did not develop and change to the extent of some of the other very early runs and, consequently, Muntham provides an important contrast to such places as Merino Downs and Sandford, both owned by the Henty family, and Murndal, still owned by the Winter Cooke family. Muntham homestead complex is of cultural significance as the subject of art and literature, which elucidates the values, and lifestyle of the nineteenth century pastoral period. It is of architectural significance for its extensive range of early pastoral buildings, particularly the homestead and the barn, which provides an important comparison with other, further developed and much altered early squatting runs. The homestead, although extended, is one of the earliest structures in Victoria. The complex is enhanced by its garden setting, also beginning at least in the 1840s and, more generally, its broader landscape context.

## COMPARISON:

023 Murndal Homestead Complex, Murndal Rd, Wannon

**ASSESSED BY:** AEN

**ASSESSMENT DATE:**

10-Sep-01

## EXISTING LISTINGS:

## HERITAGE STUDY RECOMMENDATIONS:

Include in VHR  Include in RNE  Include in Local Planning Scheme

No Recommendations for Inclusions

## REFERENCES:

Author	Title	Year	Page
Alexander Sutherland, ed.	Victoria and Its Metropolis, Vol. 2A (facsimile ed.)	1888	53-4
Cuthbert Fetherstonhaugh	After many days: being the reminiscences of Cuthbert Fetherstonhaugh	1918	
Gordon Forth, editor	The Biographical Dictionary of the Western District	1998	65-6
James Bonwick	Western Victoria, its geography, geology and soil conditions	1858	var.
Margaret Kiddle	Men of Yesterday	1961	var.
Mamie Bassett	The Hentys, an Australian Colonial Tapestry	1962	var.
Mamie Bassett, in Douglas Pike, ed.	Australian Dictionary of Biography, Vol. 1	1966	531-4
Paul de Serville	Pounds and Pedigrees	1991	304-5,
R V Billis and A S Kenyon	Pastoral Pioneers of Port Phillip	1974	256