

A HISTORY OF HANGING ROCK IN TEN MAPS

Nathan Alexander, Director, Alexander Urbanism. February 2018



William Short, *The Hanging Rock races, Woodend, 1898*

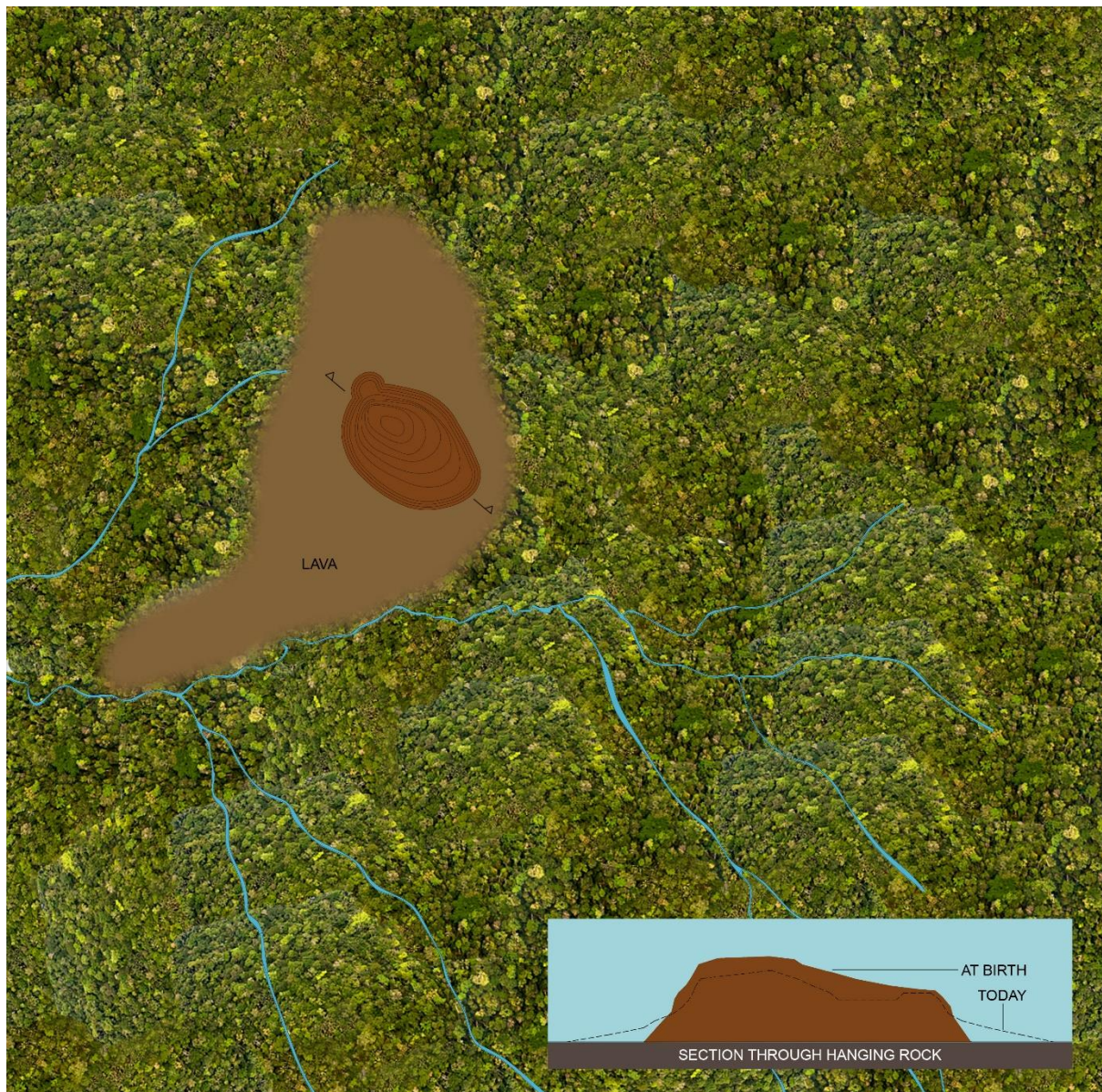
Introduction

For thousands of years, Hanging Rock and the land around it has been a gathering place and a place of recreation. The Rock was born in an eruption a little over six million years ago. The first humans were in the region 31,000 years ago. For many thousands of years, it was near the centre of the territory of the Kulin, and an important meeting place and initiation site for them. The land now occupied by the racecourse was set aside for recreation and stock-watering before 1870. The reserve was expanded to the west in 1884, and to the east in 1992. The first recorded picnic gathering was in 1862, the first horse racing about 1865.

The maps that follow show the evolution of land development at the Rock, the reserve and to some extent the surrounding land. The development includes land use, land division and facilities such as tracks, dams and buildings. With some exceptions, we have not shown tree coverage. In most cases what is shown is based on documentary evidence. Where we have interpreted the data or assumed dates or locations, this is noted.

All data sources are fully referenced at the end of this document. Below each map is a list of the data sources used for that map, if it is the first map in the series to use the data.

Circa 6.25 million years ago: the birth of Hanging Rock



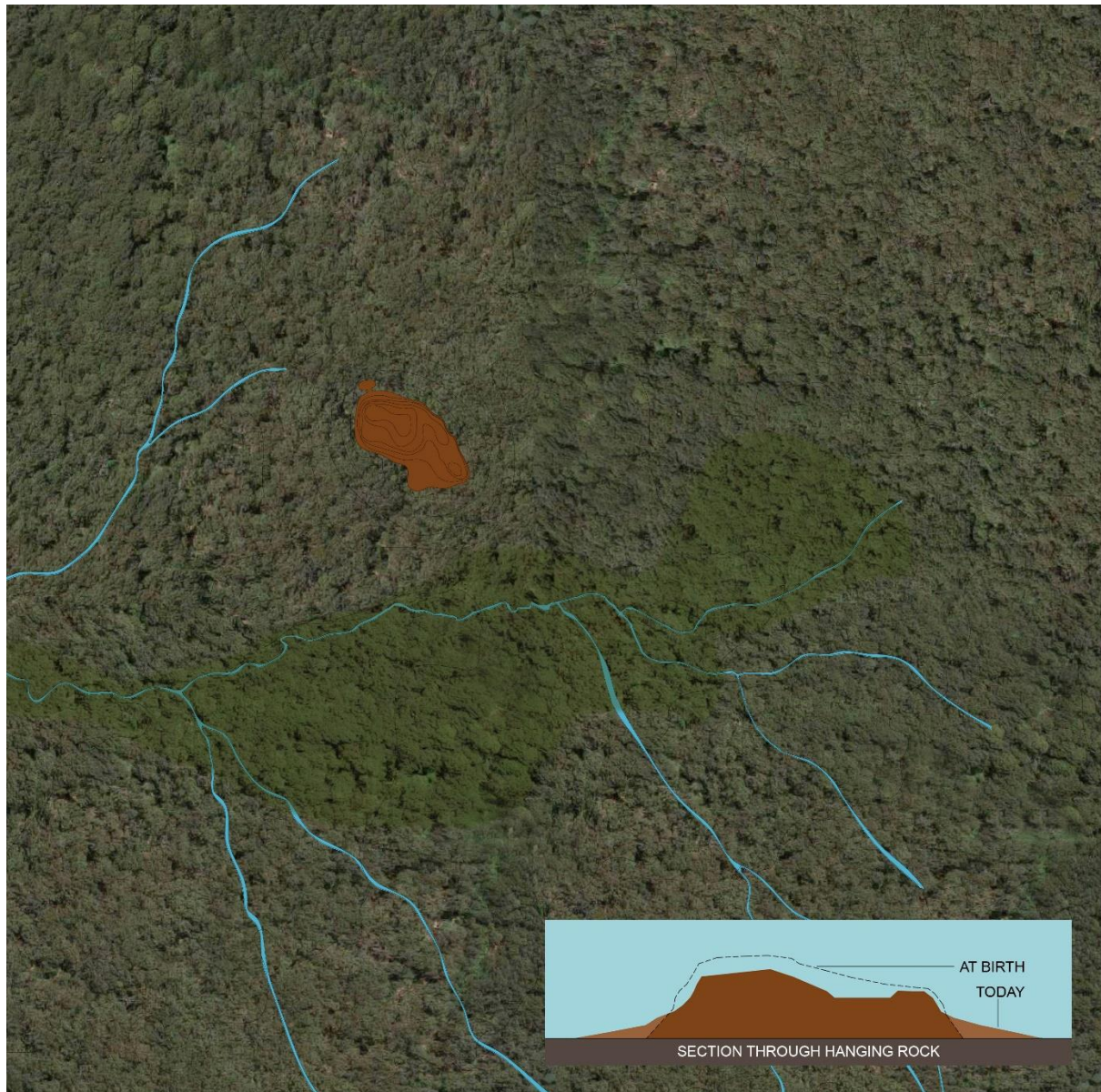
Lava from a magma chamber forced its way through a vent to the earth's surface. Because the lava was so thick, it piled up over the vent as a big lump. Some lava flowed away, but not very far. Camel's Hump and Brock's Monument are two other lava lumps created about the same time.

The climate in southern Australia was changing from a tropical one – warm and wet and only mildly seasonal – towards being temperate, more seasonal and less rain. The forests around the Rock were a diverse conifer-dominated rainforest. Living in the forest were tropical marsupials, such as tree-kangaroos.

Sources

- *Time of eruption: Wellman, 1971*
- *Lava flow area: earthresources.vic.gov.au*
- *Hanging Rock contours and profile: interpretation, based on Alexander Urbanism calculations of the current mass of the Rock and slopes above the surrounding country, and information from Professor David Phillips.*
- *Paleoecology: Bickford, 2017.*
- *Watercourses: Surveyor General's Office 1857 map.*

Circa 60,000 years ago: a natural landscape



After more than six million years, the Rock had eroded to almost its current shape. Humans may not have yet arrived in the region. The climate was now temperate, but wetter than today. The Rock was surrounded by a dense Eucalypt forest, probably similar to that on the south side of Mount Macedon today. The trees were larger on the deeper alluvial soils along Five Mile Creek. Living in the forest were megafauna, including the Marsupial Lion, Diprotodon, and giant kangaroos and wombats.

Sources

- Alluvial soil area: earthresources.vic.gov
- Hanging Rock contours: Alexander, 1985. Origin of contour information unknown.
- Paleoecology and vegetation types: Bickford, 2017.

Circa 65,000 BP to circa 1851 AD: the Kulin's managed estate

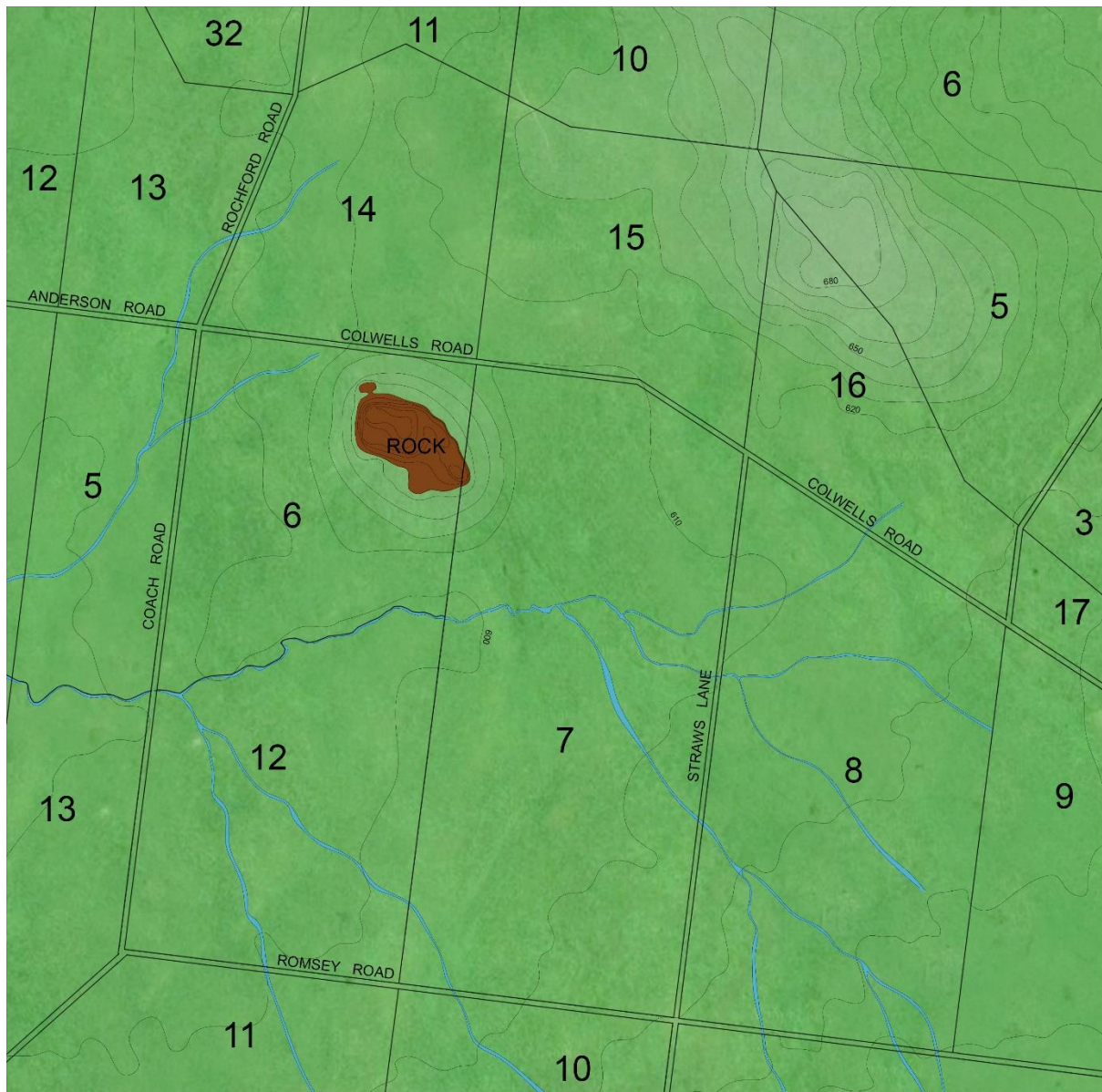


People have been in Australia for at least 65,000 years, possibly 140,000 years, and around Hanging Rock for at least 31,000 years. The Kulin nation was comprised of five tribes, each with their own estates. The Rock was near the centre of the Kulin territory, and near the boundary of three tribal estates. These were the Djadja Wurrung's estate to the west, the Daung Wurrung's to the north-west, and the Woi Wurrung's to the east, across the Great Divide. Over millennia, the Kulin converted the forests around the Rock to grassy hills, open woodland and patches of bush. They manage their lands to produce kangaroos in the grassy areas, possums in the patches of bush, and fields of yam-daisies (Myrniong) on the creek flats.

The Rock was an initiation site for young men. The tribes camped together just east of the Rock at least once a year for ceremonies, marriages and exchange. The campsite was sheltered by the Rock from the westerly winds, the elevated ground gave good views of the country around, and water could be collected from the creek. During droughts, there was water in the well.

- *Earliest evidence for humans in Australia: Clarkson et alia, 2017; in the region: Gallus, 1971.*
- *Contours: land.vic.gov.au, and altered in places by Alexander Urbanism to remove human modification.*
- *Tribal boundaries: assumption, based on watercourse and watershed boundaries. Songline locations: interpretation based on likely tribal boundaries and likely destinations.*
- *Camp location: assumption, based on topography and archaeological excavation of the East Paddock. Well location: Surveyor General's 1857 map.*
- *Vegetation coverage: interpretation, based on Surveyors General 1857 map, Gammage 2012 and the now dead 'Big Tree' being open-grown.*
- *Initiation site: Poulter 2015.*

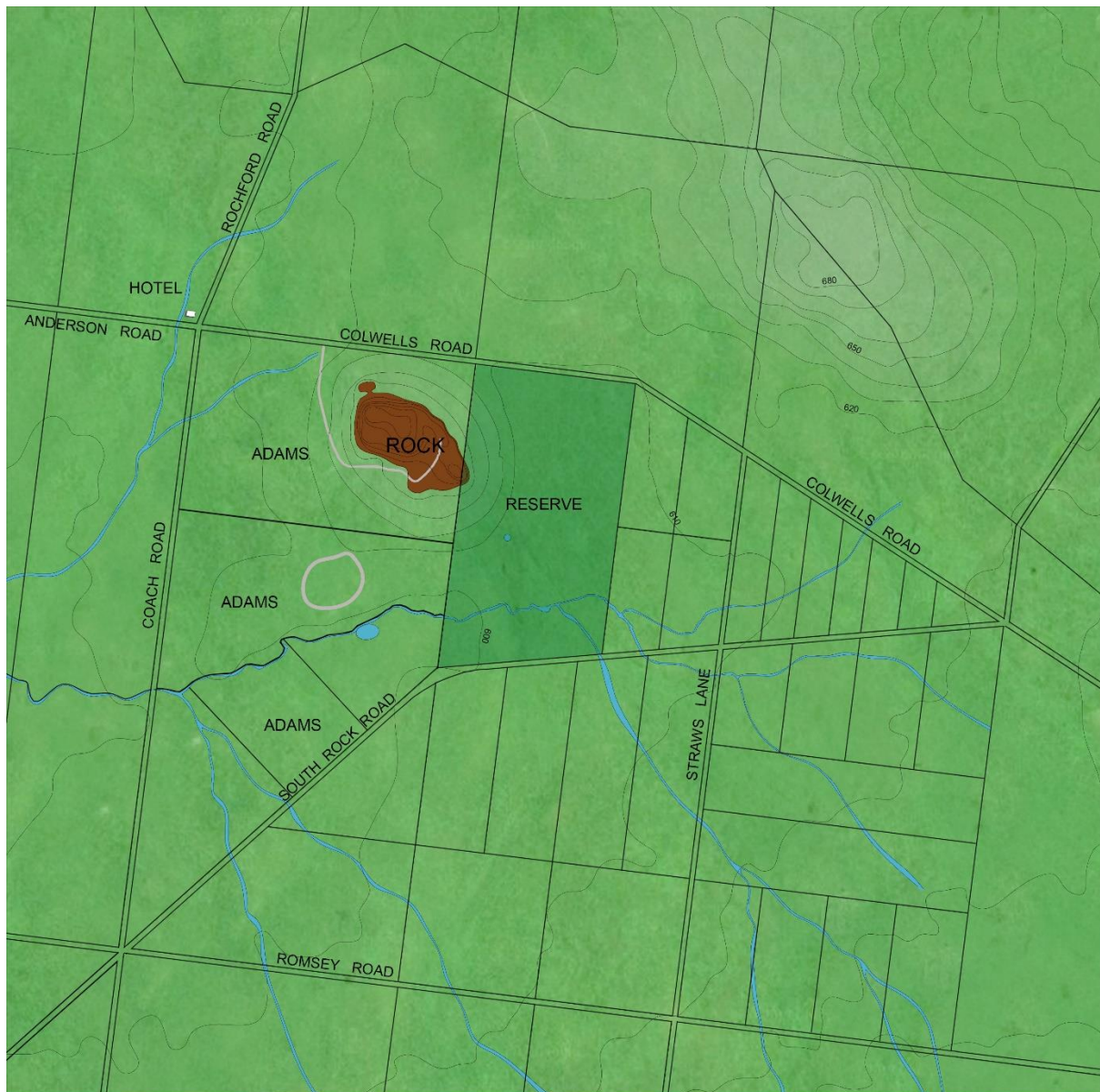
1856-1861: land division and sale



The British settled on the Yarra in 1835, and four years later Edward Dryden set up a sheep run of thousands of hectares in the district around the Rock. About 1856 the Victorian Government surveyed and divided Dryden's run into road reserves and allotments using a relatively regular grid oriented to magnetic north. The boundary between Lots 6 and 7 ran up and over the eastern cliffs of the Rock – an example of desk drafting by the Surveyor General's Office! Once the land division was completed, the government encouraged people to buy or select allotments. Thomas Lloyd James, a Kyneton solicitor, purchased Lot 6, which contained most of the Rock.

- *Land division: Surveyor General's 1857 map.*

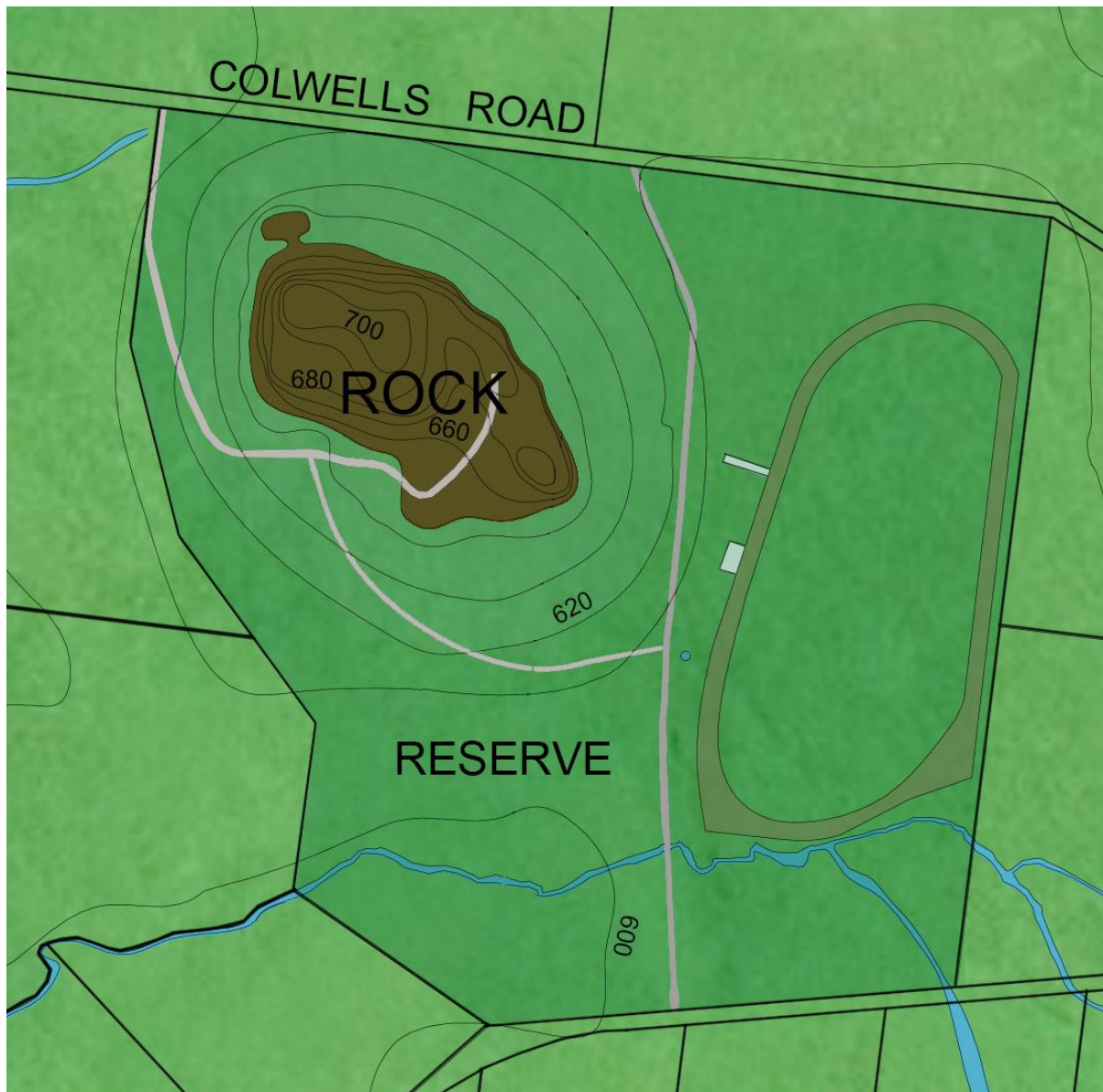
1861-1876: the Rock as a resort



Lots 6, 7 and 8 were subdivided in the early 1860s to create South Rock Road and more allotments. In 1866 William Adams bought a lot at the intersection of Anderson and Rochford Roads, just a few hundred metres west of the Rock, then built a hotel where visitors could eat, drink and stay. In 1869 he bought the Rock and land around it, then proceeded to create a 'pleasure resort' and charged people to enter. To make climbing the Rock easier, he built a carriage track around the west and south slopes and up to the Saddle. He built a lake on the creek, and cleared a rough horseracing track nearby. The part of Lot 7 north of South Rock Road and immediately east of the Rock was retained as Crown land, and gazetted in 1870 as a reserve for the purpose of stock watering and public recreation.

- Carriage drive location: Alexander, 1985.
- Cadastral information, including South Rock Road and land owners' names: Department of Lands and Survey, 1867.
- Subdivision of Lot 6, including Hanging Rock: Adams papers.
- Racetrack location: interpretation, based on Hutton, p. 7.

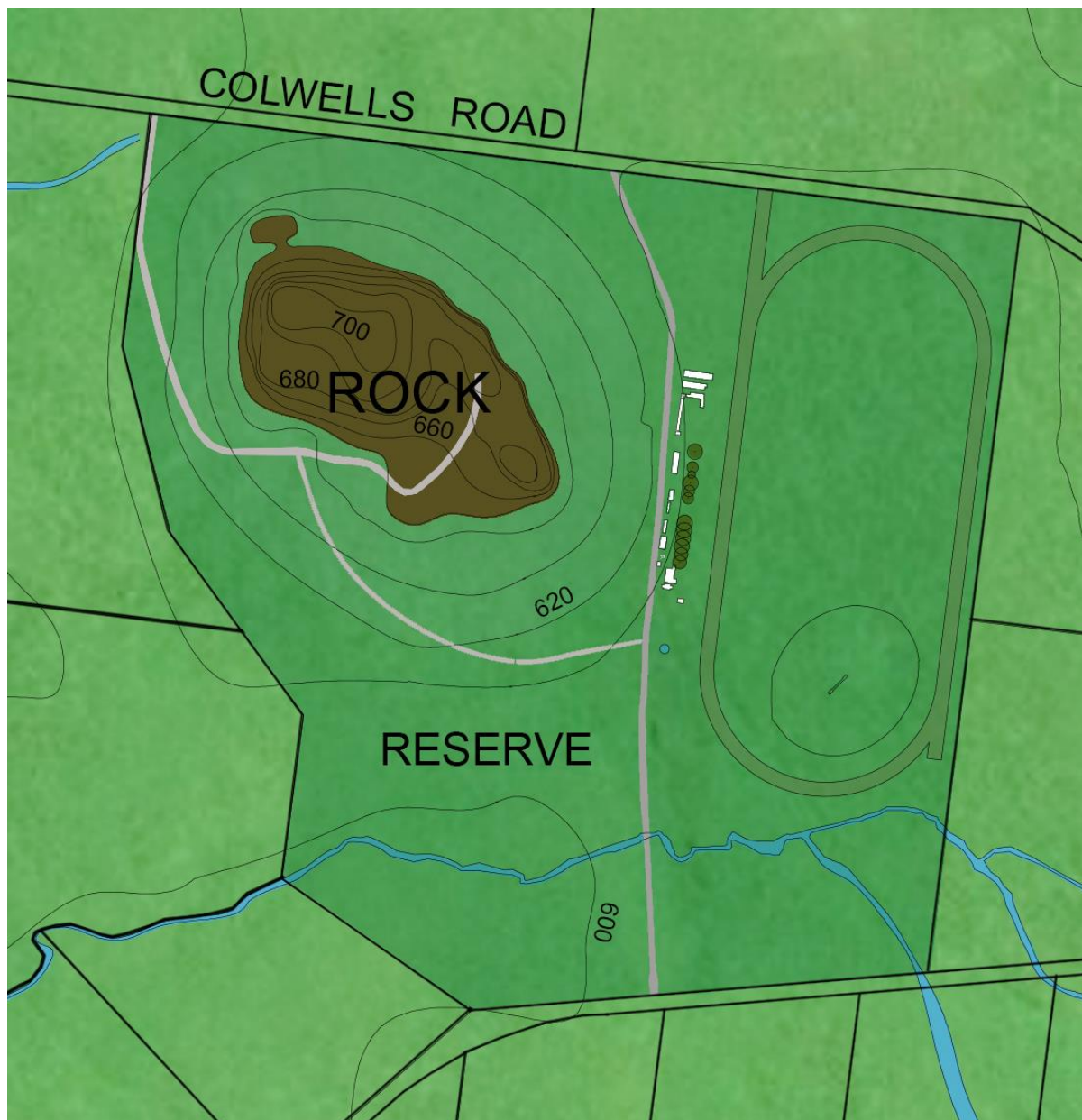
1877-1884: the reserve takes shape



In 1877 a horseracing course was laid out in the reserve, occupying a substantial part of it. A new north-south road was built to provide access to it. Seven years later, in 1884, after public agitation, the Rock and part of the creek flat was purchased by the Victorian Government and the public reserve extended. The boundary was fenced, with five gates.

- 1877 racetrack: Tuxon, 1905.
- Racecourse Road location: LBS survey, 2014.
- Racecourse Road construction date: assumed, based on the need to provide access to the racecourse and associated facilities.
- Resubdivision of Lot 6 to create the reserve's current western boundary: LBS survey, 2014.

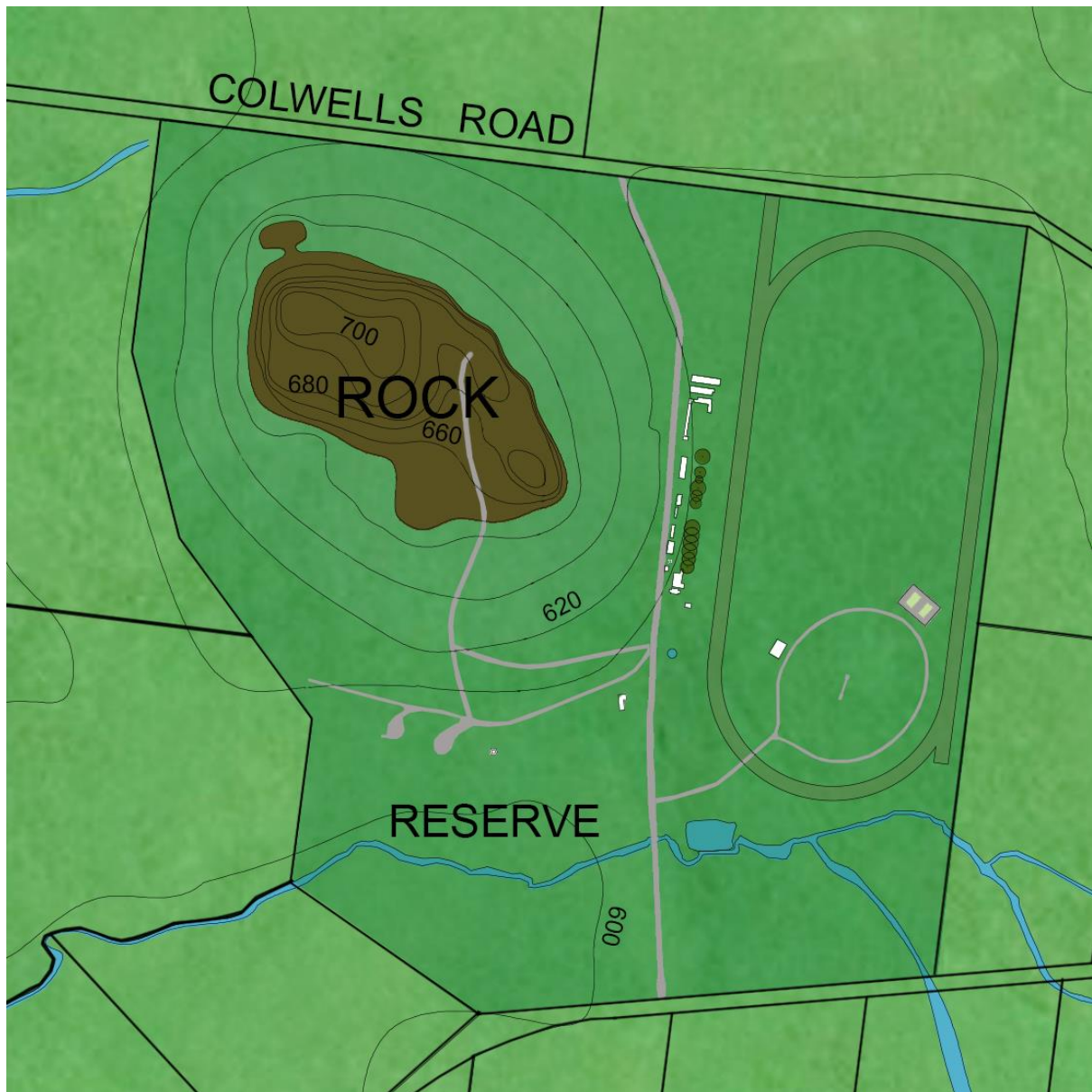
1885-1928: racing's heyday



The two horseracing days every year, at New Year's Day and Easter, became increasingly popular, attracting many thousands of people, even the state's governor. The racecourse was enlarged and realigned in 1910. The race enclosure is filled with sheds and other structures and planted with an avenue of oak trees. A cricket oval was formed within the flatter land at the southern end of the racecourse.

- *Cricket oval: Tuxon 1905.*
- *Racecourse: Tuxon 1905 and LBS survey, 2014.*
- *Racecourse enclosure features: LBS survey, 2014.*

1929-1964: a Sunday drive destination



Shortly after the Hanging Rock Hotel burnt down in 1929, a caretaker's cottage was built in the reserve. People entered from both South Rock Road and Colwell's Road. A track was carved along the south slope, just above the creek flat, so people could park closer to the Rock. A stepped path was built, leading straight up the slope from the parking areas to the new concrete steps, which lead to the rock formation called Hanging Rock.

A clubhouse and tennis courts were built next to the cricket oval.

- *Dam construction date: interpretation, based on size and form.*
- *Caretaker's residence: location - LBS survey, 2014, date – Argus 1930.*
- *Concrete steps construction date – interpretation, based on their appearance.*
- *South slope track: location - LBS survey, 2014, date – assumption, based on the likely age of the concrete steps.*
- *Western track: assumption, based on the likely age of the concrete steps.*
- *Clubhouse construction date: interpretation, based on the materials used.*
- *Tennis court construction dates: circa 1927, based on the Age, 1927.*

1965-1990: the famous Rock

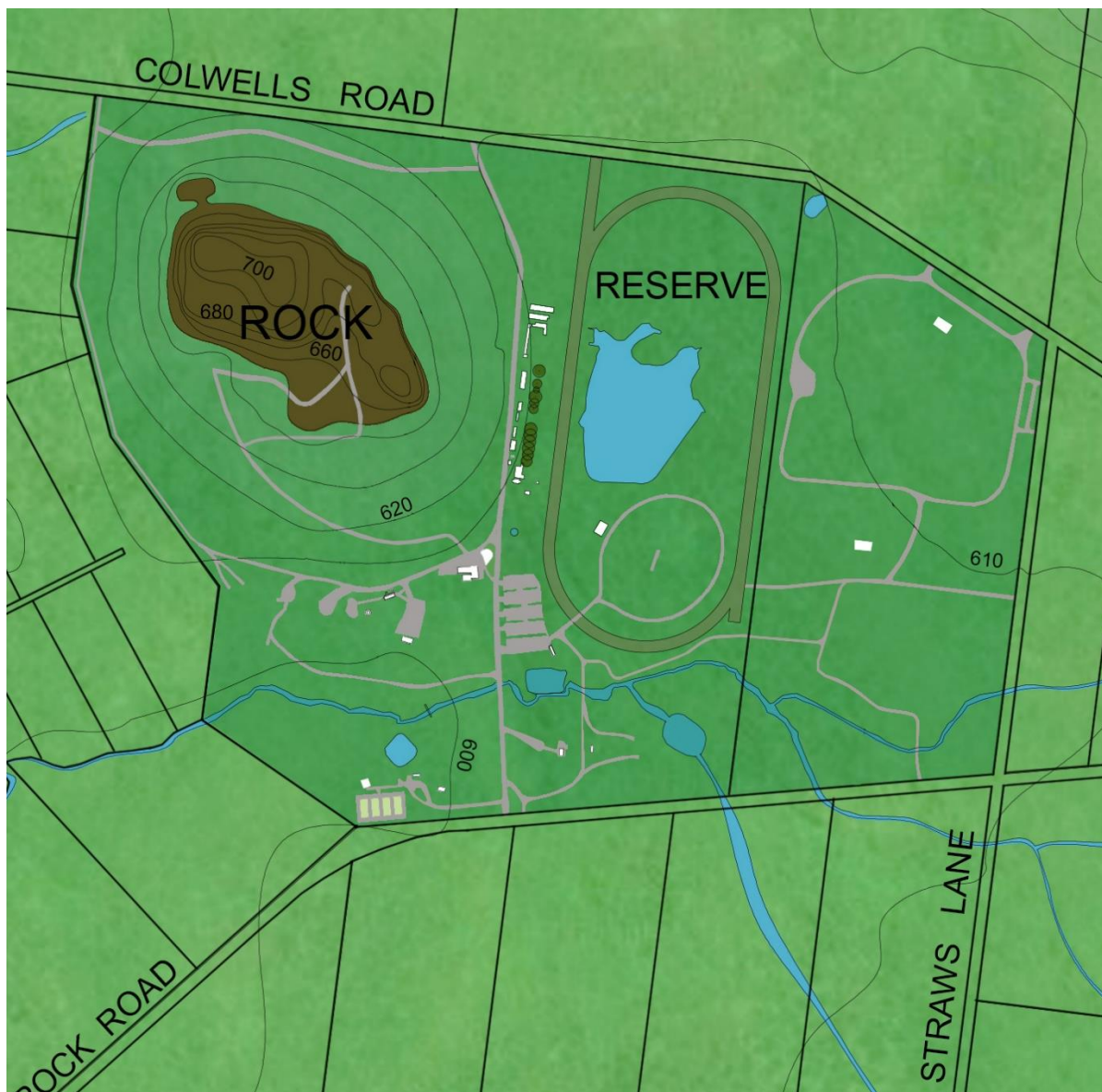


Joan Lindsay's novel, *Picnic at Hanging Rock*, was published in 1967, and the world-famous film of the same name was released in 1975. They led to many more people visiting the reserve. The additional people needed additional facilities - picnic shelters, toilet blocks, new paths, and a new car parking area. The new dam in the middle of the racecourse allowed the grass on the racetrack to be greener on race-days. By the late 1980's the tennis courts by the cricket oval had become derelict.

In 1965 the land between the reserve and Coach Road was divided into hobby farms.

- *Subdivision of lots east of Coach Road: Victorian Land Titles Office, 1965.*
- *New features in reserve, location (except for those on the Rock or on slopes around the Rock): LBS survey, 2014.*
- *Dates of construction of new features in reserve:*
 - *Generator Track - 1975.*
 - *Dam in racecourse – 1975.*
 - *Main car park – c. 1975*
 - *Cricket pitch near café: construction assumed c. 1975 due to material used*
 - *Picnic shelters and toilet blocks – 1978.*
 - *Pedestrian bridge across creek – c. 1978, assumed constructed at same time as shelters*
 - *Turkey's nest dam – c. 1978, assumed constructed to supply toilets*
 - *Western perimeter track – assumed after 1978*
 - *Track north of creek – assumed after 1978*
 - *Realignment of cricket pitch in racecourse: location - LBS survey, 2014, construction date – assumed 1990.*

1991-2018: the Rock today



The reserve expanded east to Straw's Lane with the purchase in 1993 of the East Paddock. This area has been used for concerts. From about 1991 everyday traffic only entered from South Rock Road. The Discovery Centre was built. A new path was constructed up the southern slope to both the concrete steps and the reconstructed eastern end of the Carriage Track. Tennis courts were built in the south-west corner, and two picnic shelters in the East Paddock.

- *New features in reserve, location (except for those on the Rock or on slopes around the Rock): LBS survey, 2014.*
- *Dates of construction of new features in reserve:*
 - *Tennis courts and track to them – c. 1991*
 - *Discovery Centre – 1998*
 - *Extension of Generator Track to Carriage Track – c. 2002*
 - *East Paddock tracks – c. 2012*
 - *East Paddock picnic shelters – 2017.*

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