

HERITAGE ASSESSMENT REPORT

NAME: Lynedoch Vale Tree

PLACE: 26481

ADDRESS: 1311 Barossa Valley Way, near Lyndoch SA 5351

HISTORY



Lyndoch Vale Tree, Barossa Valley Way near Lyndoch showing side of tree facing the road.

Source: Googlemaps, 2018

Colonel Light's discovery and subsequent exploration of the area around Lyndoch Vale (1837 & 1839)

Colonel William Light explored the area around Lyndoch on three separate occasions and sketched a number of different landscapes. The nominated tree was sketched during his first expedition to the area and the following is a brief description of that journey based on diary entries made by Light each day. On 11 December 1837, Light, Fisher, Jas Fisher, Morphett, Samuel Stephens and others set out from Adelaide to explore the countryside to the north-east of the fledgling city with the aim of identifying a northerly means of communication between Adelaide and the Murray River. After travelling about 18 miles over the plains in a north-north-easterly direction, they made camp on the bank of a river, later identified by Dutton as the Para River. The following morning the party commenced travel again at 6am and journeyed across a boggy flat and up some low hills. By 10:30am they had reached the Mete Watte River (Gawler River), where they lunched until 3pm before following the river for a further 3 miles and establishing camp for the night.¹

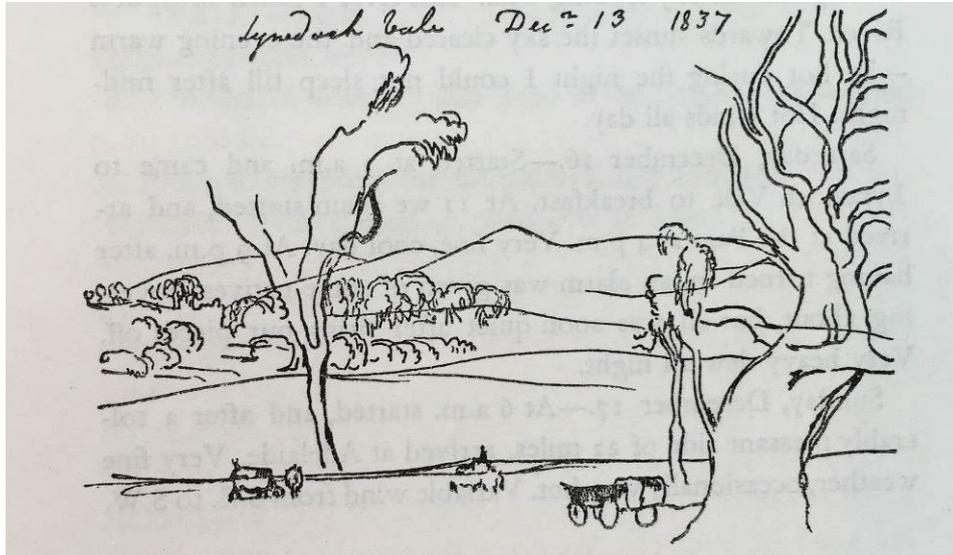
The party set out again at 6am on 13 December and travelled in a north-easterly direction over 'high undulating ground' for approximately 6 miles. They then descended into a little plain where they stopped at 9:30am beside a 'small river running in a tortuous form from the eastward' (probably the North Para River). They rested until 2pm and then continued east by

¹ William Light (1962), *The Discovery and Naming of the Lyndoch Valley: 1837*, (Aldgate: The Pump Press), pp.1-2.

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south encountering 'bad ground in the hills with many boggy parts', which was very difficult for the bullocks. At 5pm Light and his party entered 'a beautiful valley which I named Lynedoch Vale after my much esteemed friend, Lord Lynedoch'. The party camped in Lyndoch Vale that night and Light took the opportunity to sketch it and two distinctive forked trees.²



Light's sketch of Lynedoch Vale 13 December 1837

(tree right foreground is the tree that most closely resembles the nominated tree).

Source: Light, *The Discovery and Naming of Lyndoch Valley: 1837*, p.3.

On 14 December, the bullock cart and men remained at Lyndoch Vale while Light, Fisher, Fisher, Morphett, Berkeley, Stephens and Hancock rode up the highest hills returning to the camp that evening. The purpose of the trek was to trace 'as far as we could the imagined communication with the Murray to the N. Eastward.' The party returned to camp after finding that the Mount Lofty Range did not end in a plain of the type anticipated by Light but continued as a lower range that was 'nothing equal to that near Mount Lofty.'³

On 15 December the party travelled north-east by east for approximately 10 miles, again having to rest throughout the best part of the day due to the exceedingly hot and windy weather. It was agreed to 'give up the journey and return' to Adelaide. The return journey was accompanied by cooler weather and took only two days to complete, the party arrived in Adelaide on 17 December.⁴

The South Australian Company commissioned Light to undertake a Special Survey of 4000 acres around Lyndoch Vale in January 1839. On the second day of the expedition Light collapsed after 10 hours in the saddle. While he was unwell, he was able to make a number of pencil sketches of the area that evening. The survey party returned to Adelaide soon after. Light made a third trip to Lyndoch Vale in May-June 1839. The expedition had the same aim

² Light, pp.2-3.

³ Light, pp.3-4.

⁴ Light, p.4.

as the earlier 1837 expedition – to identify a northerly means of communication between Adelaide and the Murray River. This time, rather than ride, Light travelled in a spring cart. They reached Lyndoch Valley on 2 June and camped at Light's Pass on 4 June where again Light sketched the area and noted in his diary that he was satisfied they had determined the best road to the Murray. They left on 7 June and arrived back in Adelaide on 9 June at which time Light was extremely unwell.⁵ He passed away at his home at Thebarton 6 October 1839.⁶

Light was a reasonably accomplished artist and supplemented his income by selling some of the sketches and watercolours he painted. The Art Gallery of South Australia has 11 landscapes drawn/painted by Light in its collection. The State Library of South Australia also has a couple of original sketches and watercolours and a number of reproductions of Light's artworks within its collection. The landscapes painted by Light and held by the Art Gallery and Library depict various aspects of the exploration and early settlement of South Australia including the landing site at Glenelg, site for Adelaide and early settlements including Port Adelaide, Encounter Bay (including the whaling station), Yankalilla, The Para, Gawler Range, and the area north of the Para Pass.

Early Artwork depicting South Australia

Many of the early colonists painted, sketched and drew the South Australian landscape. Historian and Curator Christine Finnimore has argued that some of the earliest artworks produced in South Australia were painted specifically to send back to the UK as a marketing device to sell the fledgling colony to prospective colonists. Others drew to record their new environment and lives in much the same way that we would now take photographs. The Art Gallery of South Australia holds a number of artworks in its collection that depict the early South Australian landscape, including works by John Michael Skipper (late 1830s-1840s), George French Angas (late 1830s-1840s), Samuel Calvert (c1850s) and Alexander Schramm (c1850s).⁷

Previous Heritage Surveys of the Barossa Valley

The Barossa Valley has been the subject of three heritage surveys. The first, *Barossa Survey* was authored by G Young, I Harmstorf and D Langmead in 1977, the second, the *Barossa Valley Heritage Study* was prepared by Lester Firth and Murton Pty Ltd in 1981 and finally, *The Barossa Council Heritage Review* by McDougall and Vines in 2001. While all three note Light's exploration and naming of the Lyndoch Valley in December 1837, none identify the nominated tree.

Significant and heritage-listed trees

⁵ Geoffrey Dutton (1971), *Founder of a City*, (Adelaide: Rigby), pp.278, 283.

⁶ David F Elder (1967), 'Light, William (1786-1839)', Australian Dictionary of Biography, ANU <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/light-william-2359> [accessed 24 October 2018].

⁷ Christine Finnimore (1998), 'The Art of Selling Colonial Land in South Australia', *The Journal of the Historical Society of South Australia*, 26, pp.5-20.

The South Australian Heritage Register contains a number of entries for trees and while most have been locally-listed, there are a number that are State Heritage Places. A selected sample of State heritage listed trees include:

- Old Gum Tree Site, MacFarlane Street, Glenelg North (SHP 10547). Supposed site of proclamation, confirmed as a State Heritage Place in 1980 prior to current criteria.
- River Red Gum Tree, road reserve Glynburn Road, Kensington Gardens (SHP 13991). Confirmed as a State Heritage Place 1989 prior to current criteria. However, the tree was identified as having heritage significance in the 1987 heritage survey of Burnside due to its size and because it was 'a mature tree long before the colonization of Australia.'
- Former Fauldings' Eucalyptus Plantations, Kangaroo Island (SHP 14739) Fauldings' plantation is a rare relic of one of the plantations, unique to Kangaroo Island, which once served this widespread industry in the early twentieth century. Confirmed as a State Heritage Place in 1995 under criteria (c) and (g).
- Silvicultural Reserves (1989 & 1900), Stagecoach Lane, Kuitpo (SHP 25921). Important aspect of the development of the State's forestry industry and are remnants of a period of silvicultural experimentation. Confirmed as a State Heritage Place 1999 under criterion (a).
- River Red Gum, 3 Douglas Street, Millswood (SHP 14123). Confirmed as a State Heritage Place in 1989 prior to current criteria. However, Unley Heritage Research Study prepared by McDougall and Vines in 2006 identified the tree's heritage significance under criteria (a) and (d). The tree is a remnant of the original vegetation in the area; is evidence of the natural history of the Adelaide Plain; is a fine example of the occurrence of River Red Gums along the tributaries, creeks and rivers flowing from the foothills and across the Adelaide Plain, and in particular, the Brownhill Creek.
- War Memorial Oak, Creswell Gardens, North Adelaide (SHP 26348). Planted 29 August 1914 to commemorate the outbreak of World War One.

The National Trust of South Australia has also identified 9 trees that are over 150 years old and considered of significance to the State. The Trust's list does not include the nominated tree at Lyndoch Vale. Their significance is related to three themes that include: planted by notable or prominent early South Australians; early plantings of exotic trees; and, native trees that were culturally modified by Aboriginal people.

Heritage Significance of the Lyndoch Vale Tree

The potential State heritage values of the Lyndoch Vale Tree are considered under each criteria in turn:

(a) it demonstrates important aspects of the evolution or pattern of the State's history;

Sketches and watercolours drawn/painted by the first settlers to South Australia are an important historical record of the early colonisation and exploration of the new colony and are objects that demonstrate the evolution of the history of South Australia. Light was one of

many people who recorded the 'discovery' and settlement of South Australia through artistic means. Others include John Michael Skipper (late 1830s-1840s), George French Angas (late 1830s-1840s), Samuel Calvert (c1850s) and Alexander Schramm (c1850s).

Light drew the Lyndoch Vale tree in 1837 when he was exploring the surrounding area in search of a northern means of communication to the Murray River. Light subsequently visited the area on two other occasions and it was not until his last expedition in 1839 that he decided upon the best route. Due to the number of possible routes taken by Light it is impossible to state with any certainty that the nominated tree, which is located next to the road, is the tree in Light's drawing. In addition, while the sketch itself demonstrates the evolution of the State, the tree, if it were the subject of his sketch, does not.

It is recommended that the nominated place does not meet criterion (a).

(b) it has rare, uncommon or endangered qualities that are of cultural significance;

The Lyndoch Vale tree is most likely a River Red gum (*Eucalyptus Camaldulensis*). River red gums are a prolific species of tree that grow along South Australian waterways, and as a type, could not be considered to be rare or endangered. The fact that the tree may have been drawn by an early colonist is also not particularly rare, as this is a prominent South Australian tree species that has been featured in many drawings and paintings. Therefore, the tree is not a rare, uncommon or endangered example of its species or depiction in early colonial art.

It is recommended that the nominated place does not meet criterion (b)

(c) it may yield information that will contribute to an understanding of the State's history, including its natural history;

The Lyndoch Vale Tree is one of many Eucalyptus trees that once grew in the Lyndoch Valley before it was cleared for agriculture and in particular viticulture. Despite the extensive clearing of the area, there are still many mature Eucalyptus trees that grow along the waterways and roads in the area. There are also many documentary sources that yield information about the cultural and natural history of Lyndoch Vale. Therefore, the tree is unlikely to yield information not already known or available from other sources that contribute meaningfully to the understanding of South Australia's cultural and natural history.

It is recommended that the nominated place does not meet criterion (c).

(d) it is an outstanding representative of a particular class of places of cultural significance;

The Lyndoch Vale tree is one of many Eucalyptus trees in South Australia and specifically the Lyndoch Valley that has been alive since before colonisation. Located next to Barossa Valley Way, the tree has been trimmed over the years to ensure that it does not impact on vehicular traffic. Therefore, as the growth of the tree has been modified to accommodate traffic requirements and it has not been allowed to grow into its natural form, it is not

considered to be an outstanding representative of a Eucalyptus tree. Similarly, while some trees are highly pruned and clipped to achieve a particular form, the nominated tree has been trimmed with only road safety in mind and does not represent an outstanding example of a highly manicured tree.

It is recommended that the nominated place does not meet criterion (d).

(e) it demonstrates a high degree of creative, aesthetic or technical accomplishment or is an outstanding representative of particular construction techniques or design characteristics;

The trimming of the Lyndoch Vale tree has been undertaken for road safety reasons and not aesthetic considerations. Therefore, as a trimmed tree it does not demonstrate a high degree of creative, aesthetic or technical accomplishment. As a natural living thing, the tree is also not an outstanding representative of construction techniques or design characteristics.

It is recommended that the nominated place does not meet criterion (e).

(f) it has strong cultural or spiritual associations for the community or a group within it;

There is no evidence to suggest that the tree has a strong, special or enduring association for the community or a group within it that would be considered to be of significance to the State.

It is recommended that the place does not meet criterion (f).

(g) it has a special association with the life or work of a person or organisation or an event of historical importance.

Colonel William Light sketched Lyndoch Vale including a number of trees on 13 December 1837, when camping one evening during his exploration of the area in search of a northerly route to the Murray River. While the nominated tree may be the tree he sketched that evening, there is no conclusive evidence that it was this tree and not another. Light's discovery of Lyndoch Vale is historically important to South Australia. The Special Survey that was completed in July 1839 enabled the settlement of the area and establishment of one of the State's earlier vineyards by Joseph Gilbert in the 1840s. Light was a prolific artist who recorded some of South Australia's earliest scenes including the first settlements at Holdfast Bay and the City of Adelaide, events that are of great significance to the State. It is these events and scenes that have particularly strong associations with Light's work, rather than the establishment of Lyndoch Vale that occurred after his death.

It is recommended that the nominated place does not meet criterion (g).

IMAGES



Mature Eucalyptus trees on Barossa Valley Way, September 2018

Source: DEW files



Lyndoch Vale tree, September 2018

Source: DEW files



Lyndoch Vale tree showing girth of trunk, September 2018

Source: DEW files



Lyndoch Vale tree, September 2018

Source: DEW files



Landing Place, Glenelg, William Light, 1837

Source: AGSA



Commencement of Colonization in South Australia, William Light, c1837.

Source: AGSA



Lynedoch Valley, looking towards the Barossa Range, painted by George French Angas, 1849. The nominator has suggested that 'Light's tree' is depicted in this painting and if that is so it is most likely the tree centre-left of the image.

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