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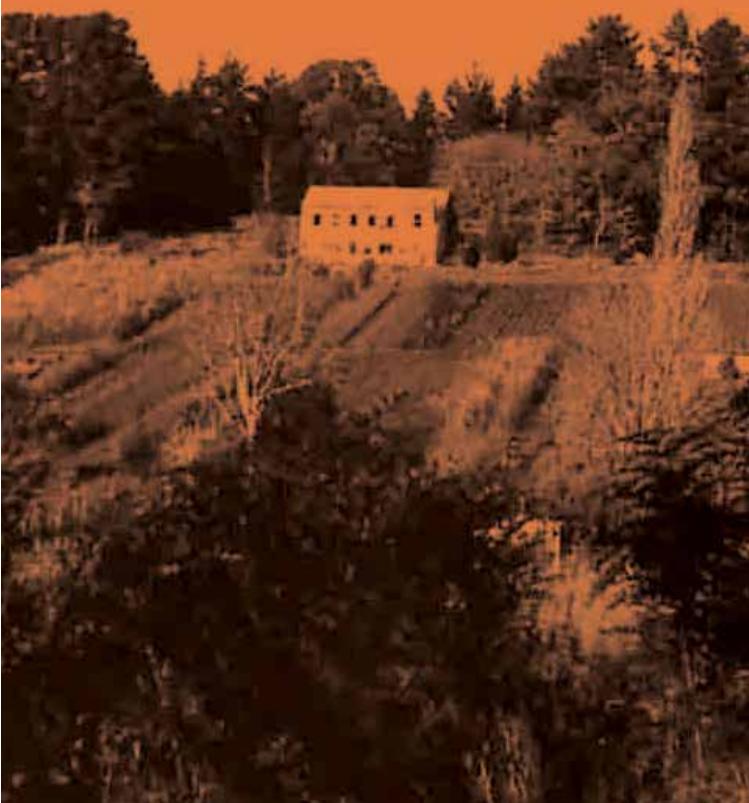
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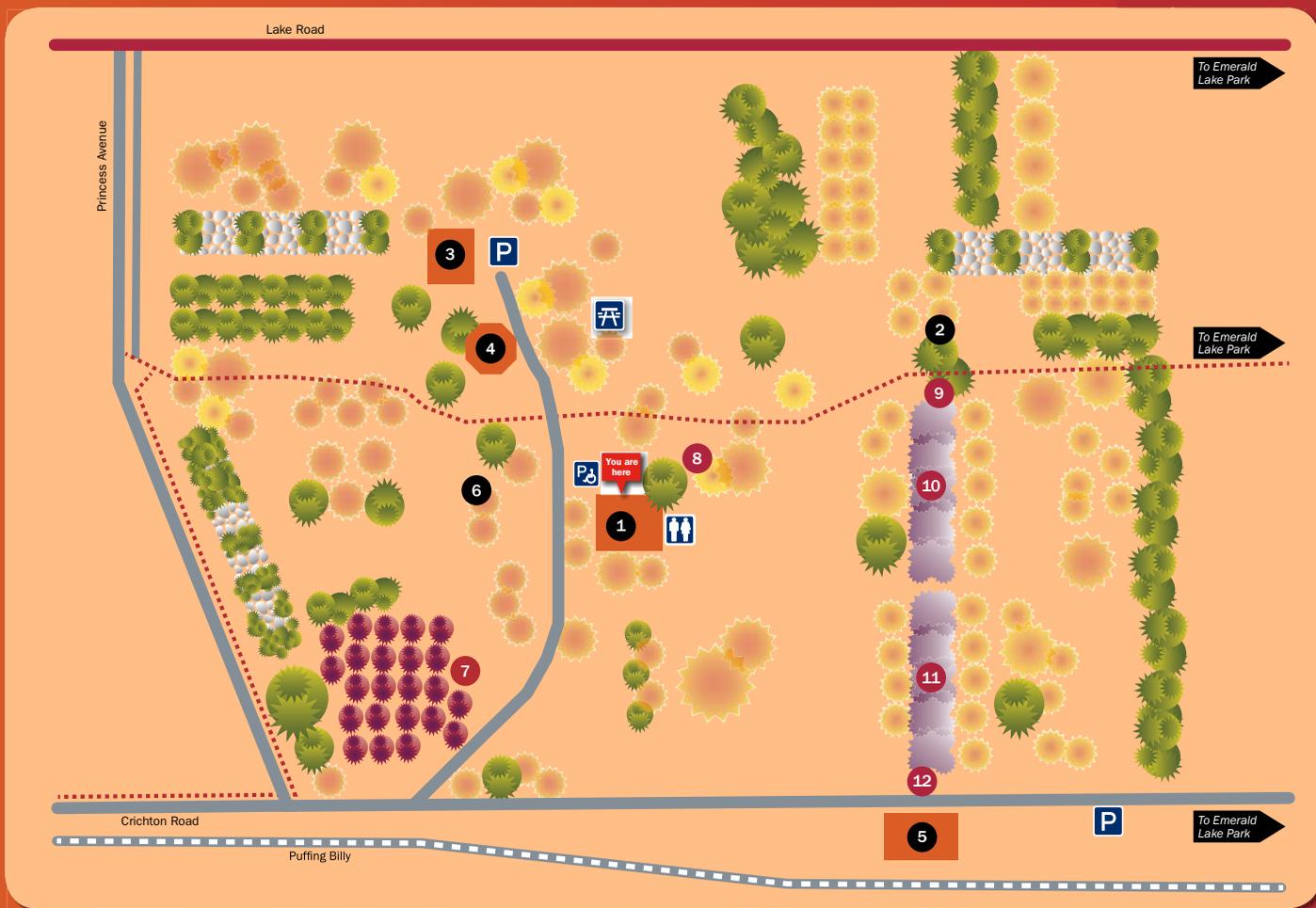
# NOBELIUS HERITAGE PARK

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NOBELIUS HERITAGE PARK

*There are comparatively few plantations and nurseries on the Victorian Heritage Register. The most notable is the former Nobelius Nursery, which was responsible for changes to the natural landscape by providing plants for private and public landscaping. Nobelius Heritage Park is four and a half hectares of public parkland, which is of unique historical and horticultural value to the State of Victoria.*





## Nobelius Heritage Park

|    |                           |                                  |  |
|----|---------------------------|----------------------------------|--|
| 1  | Emerald museum            | Bitumen roads                    |  |
| 2  | Nobelius memorial sundial | Unmade roads                     |  |
| 3  | Linton's cottage          | Emerald-Cockatoo multi-use trail |  |
| 4  | Rotunda                   | Puffing Billy rail line          |  |
| 5  | Packing shed              | Parking                          |  |
| 6  | Gus Rysberg plaque        | Toilets                          |  |
| 7  | Apples                    | Picnic area                      |  |
| 8  | Kiwi friut                | Water treatment gardens WSUD     |  |
| 9  | Knightia excelsa          |                                  |  |
| 10 | Lavender and rosemary     |                                  |  |
| 11 | Salvia garden             |                                  |  |
| 12 | Flax                      |                                  |  |

**The only nationally significant nursery collection identified in Australia that is housed in the same nursery grounds in which it was developed.**

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Telephone: 1300 787 624  
Website: [cardinia.vic.gov.au](http://cardinia.vic.gov.au)

Nobelius Heritage Park in Emerald, is located as a remnant of the once great Gembrook Nurseries.

Gembrook Nurseries known as Nobelius Nurseries was primarily a wholesale business, founded by Carl Axel Nobelius (1851 – 1921) and was operated by the Nobelius family for seventy years. Carl Nobelius is recognized as one of the pioneers of the horticulture industry in Australia; his nursery was the largest horticultural enterprise in the Southern Hemisphere from the late 1800s, and at its peak, exported fruit and ornamental trees to Europe, America, India, Japan and South Africa. Nobelius also supplied exotic trees to municipalities throughout Australia, thereby having a significant impact on the nation's landscapes.

The Nobelius Heritage Park includes plantings of many of the trees that were propagated and stocked by the nursery, including significant trees that are listed on the Victorian Heritage Database. Commemorative plantings and nursery structures also enhance the Park making it one of the Dandenongs' hidden gems.

*This illustrated guide provides information to discover more about the history of the nursery and key features of Nobelius Heritage Park.*



Carl Axel, Emily Nobelius & children



Carl Nobelius

## 1 MUSEUM

Emerald Museum opened in 1981, utilizing a room in the Emerald Hall, but soon the collection outgrew the space and the Museum Committee lobbied for a suitable building to properly store and display the growing collection.

The current Museum, sited within the grounds of the Nobelius Heritage Park was completed in 1993. It is designed to preserve documents, photographs and objects from dust, moisture and importantly fire attack.

The Museum is both an archival repository and display space for Emerald and District histories and has an extensive Nobelius Nursery archive, including ledgers, wage books, stocks records, original nursery catalogues, tools and photographs, many items dating from 1880s onwards. The collection and the park are recognized as of State and National significance.



## 2 THE NOBELIUS MEMORIAL SUNDIAL

The sundial is a memorial to C. A. Nobelius. The obelisk base is constructed of pink granite that was originally part of a stone marking Nobelius's grave in Macclesfield cemetery. The gravestone was damaged by a limb falling from a nearby tree. Rather than attempt to

repair it, the Nobelius family agreed to use of the granite as a memorial in the park. It was originally sited near the rotunda and moved to its current location in 2012 following the construction of the multi-use path the previous year.



## 3 LINTON'S COTTAGE

The two-roomed cottage was constructed in the late 1950s after the Nobelius Nursery was sold to S.J. and I. Linton. The cottage was used both as an office and caretaker's residence.



Later, the building was used for storage and meetings of the Museum and Park Committees of Management whilst waiting completion of the current Museum. It now is the workshop of the Blue Hills Lapidary Group.



## 4 ROTUNDA

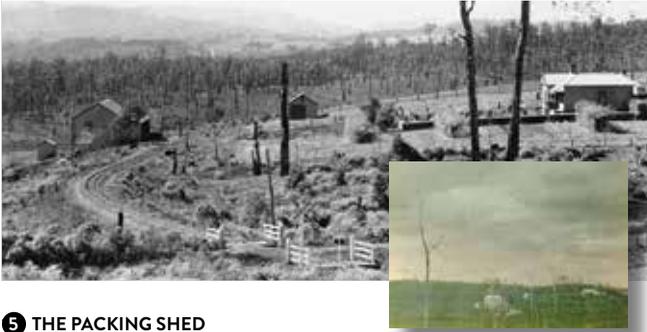
The rotunda commemorates a popular Sunday afternoon pastime in Emerald early in the twentieth century.

brass bands from Emerald and Cockatoo. Occasionally, visiting bands provided entertainment; unfortunately vandals destroyed the original rotunda.

Local residents and visitors would follow a tourist track along Menzies Creek from 'Cascades' guesthouse in Telopea Avenue to A'Vard Park, where they would gather for picnics and entertainment. In 1914 a rotunda was built by Jim Stuart to accommodate

John Currie built this replica in 1996 under the direction of park curator Gus Ryberg. George A'Vard officially opened the new rotunda at a family picnic day in February 1997. Restorative work was carried out in 2011.





### 5 THE PACKING SHED

The Nobelius Packing Shed is situated on railway property and is not part of the park; however it is prominent in the park landscape and was a crucial part of the nursery enterprise.

The railways made land available to Nobelius to construct the shed and siding so the packaged trees could be loaded directly onto railway wagons. The bare rooted trees were lifted from a holding area below the shed and packed in straw, wrapped in hessian and tied with twine

ready for export to many parts of the world.

The timber building was constructed in 1904 and the fireplaces and chimneys added in the 1930s. Below the packing shed was a fumigation chamber where 'at a small cost' consignments could be fumigated before dispatch if requested by the customer. The interior of the shed has been restored and the building is owned by Puffing Billy Tourism, it was restored in the 1980's and is used for special functions and dinners.



### 6 GUS RYBERG PLAQUE

Gus Ryberg (above) was a keen historian and dedicated advocate for the Emerald community. He was an employee of Nobelius family and was instrumental in saving this last remnant of the Nursery, and preserving

it as a public Heritage Park. His effort to establish the Emerald Museum from its inception to current location within the park is a testament to his commitment to conserving local history.



### 7 APPLES

The early settlers, including Nobelius, established orchards for their own consumption and to sell the surplus. Fruit trees, especially apples, were the mainstay of the Nobelius Nursery throughout its history.

By 1909 the nursery catalogue offered 207 varieties of apple for sale. Orchardists in the fruit growing areas of Victoria, Tasmania and Western Australia and numerous retail nurseries were the



main customers, but as the business expanded large consignments of fruit trees were sent to overseas markets. The trees in this plantation are heritage varieties found in Nobelius catalogues, with the exception of a tree known as 'Brookdale'. This variety was planted in the winter of 2001 after being propagated by local nurseryman Leigh Asling from a very old tree from which generations of Emerald children had picked apples on their way to school.



### 8 CHINESE GOOSEBERRY (KIWI FRUIT)

Carl Axel Nobelius noticed Chinese gooseberry (*Actinidia chinensis*) plants on a trip to Japan in the early 1900s. He introduced this vigorous climbing plant to New Zealand where it was first grown in 1910.



The Chinese gooseberry (also known as Kiwi fruit) planted in the park is from the first consignment imported in the 1900s. This significant specimen was planted by Arch Nobelius.



**9 KNIGHTIA EXCELSIA**

This rare Rewarewa or Maori honeysuckle (Knightia excelsia), introduced by Cliff Nobelius from New Zealand is described by the National Trust as an outstanding example of this species, and at 19.5 metres (measured in 1984) is the largest specimen of this tree in Victoria.

The Knightia is adaptable to most soils and positions, and is drought and frost resistant. An evergreen, it grows to a height of 20 metres with a spread of 3 metres. A young tree, a seedling from this specimen, has been planted some 20 metres east of here as a future replacement.



**10 LAVENDER AND ROSEMARY**

Plantations of lavender and rosemary were established in the area that is now Emerald Lake Park near Nobelius station for the purpose of distilling oil for cosmetics.

This enterprise collapsed during WW1, but lavender was grown extensively in the 1930's by Carl Axel's son, Arch Nobelius. The site was moved to where the soil was more suitable to growing lavender, which is the present Lavender Farm Road, located on the boundary of the Cardinia dam reserve.

In the late 1930s Arch Nobelius went into partnership with D'Urban Stuart. Up to twenty local workers were employed to cut the lavender with sickles before Stuart developed a horse drawn mechanical cutter. Lavender and rosemary plantations have existed in Nobelius Heritage Park since the 1980s and are grown for aesthetic appeal and historic recognition.



**11 SALVIA GARDEN**

The Salvia Study Group of the Herb Society of Victoria has been associated with Nobelius Heritage Park since 1990 when a trial plot was established below and to the east of the museum.

Over 200 cultivars, varieties and hybrids - both perennials and annuals - were trialed in the following years with comparisons made to the growth of similar plants in another garden at the seaside suburb of Hampton.

The salvia garden below the Packing Shed resulted from these trials, being established in 2008.

Open days and plant sales are held by the salvia group when members are available to discuss the various plants in the collection.

The salvias are a popular attraction for garden enthusiasts, photographers, birds, and insects.



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## 12 FLAX

Carl Axel Nobelius grew New Zealand flax (*Phormium tenax*) in a plantation of about 100 acres along the creek in the now Emerald Park Lake. This was to secure supply of twine threatened by looming WW1 and used extensively in the nursery business to mark out plant rows and tying bundles of trees packed for transport.

During the cutting and treating season up to 25 people were employed.

A small dam was built to provide water for treating flax fibre and the precedent for the ornamental Lake Treganowan.

A two-storey steam driven mill was constructed below the present causeway across the lake. This mill operated from 1913 to 1926. From here the processed fibre was sent to Melbourne and Geelong to be made into rope and twine. The finished product was returned to Nobelius, any surplus being sold to other nurseryman and farmers.



1890s Nursery at Emerald



Smoke Bush

## OTHER IMPORTANT TREES IN THE PARK ARE:

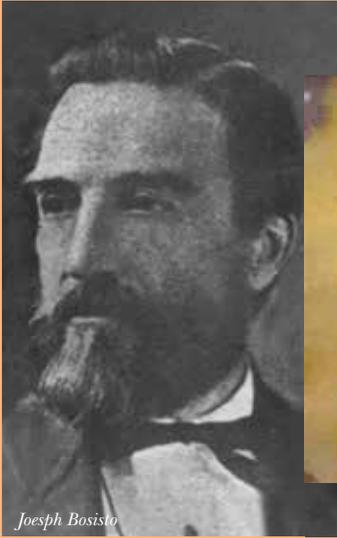
- Irish Strawberry tree (*Arbutus unedo*)
- Copper Beech (*Fagus sylvatica*)
- Purple Beech (*Fagus sylvatica purpurea*)
- Western Red Cedar (*Thuja placata*)
- Tulip tree (*Liriodendron sp*)
- Variegated Tulip tree (*Liriodendron sp*)
- Chinese Holly (*Ilex cornstarch*)
- Illawarra Flame tree - in front of museum (*Brachychiton acerifolius*)
- Conybeare's Cypress (*Cupressus conybearii*)
- Hoop Pine - next to Rosemary plantation (*Araucaria cunninghamii*)
- Smoke bush - top of driveway (*Cotinus sp.*)
- Lombardy Poplar - below museum (*Populus migrants 'Italica'*)
- Variegated Elms - near cottage (*Ulmus minor 'Variegata'*)
- Atlantic Cedar - behind cottage (*Cedrus Atlantic*)
- Liquidambar - picnic area (*Liquidambar styraciflua*)
- Horizontal Elm - near water tank (*Ulmus Galbra 'Horizontalis'*)
- Evergreen Oak (*Quercus ilex*)



Copper Beech



Tulip Tree



Joseph Bosisto

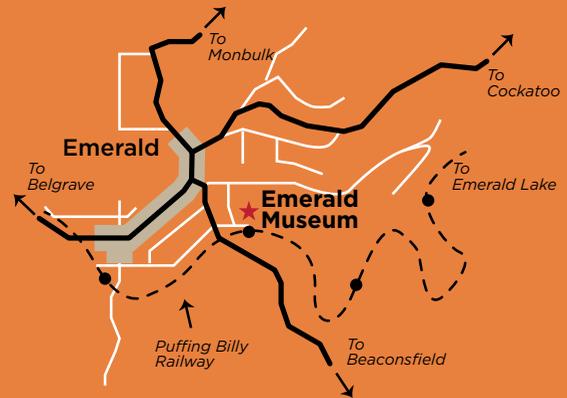
## EUCALYPTUS

Rows of Mountain Ash (*Eucalyptus regnans*) and Messmate/Stringybark (*Eucalyptus obliqua*), planted in the 1980s by Gus Ryberg, commemorate the timber industry.

The Dandenong Ranges were covered in dense forest, and a ready market existed in growing Melbourne for timber use in building, paving blocks, palings, furniture and fuel. The timber was cut by hand and logs hauled to nearby mills by winch and bullock teams providing a source of employment for early settlers.

Camden wollybutt (*Eucalyptus macarthurii*) planted to commemorate the production of eucalyptus oils from the 1870s. Joseph Bosisto, a pharmaceutical chemist, established an experimental plantation of Camden woollybutt (endemic to south-eastern NSW) along the lower side of what is now Lakeside Drive in Emerald and also on land he selected, located at Butterfield Park. Distilleries were at Emerald, Menzies Creek and Macclesfield.

**How to find us:** From Emerald, follow the Beaconsfield Road. Turn left at Crichton Road just before Puffing Billy railway crossing.



*Nobelius Heritage park is open all year round, entrance is off Crichton Rd melway map 127.G4*

*For more information visit:*

*Emerald Museum*

*Opening hours: Sunday 1.30pm - 4.00pm,*

*Wednesday 10am - 3pm*

*Also by appointment and group visits welcome.*

*Not open on total fire ban days.*

*Telephone: 03 5968 2152*

*Email: [enquiries@emeraldmuseum.org.au](mailto:enquiries@emeraldmuseum.org.au)*

*[www.emeraldmuseum.org.au](http://www.emeraldmuseum.org.au)*

The Nobelius Heritage Park is managed by the museum committee, under section 86 of Cardinia Shire Council.

February 2017