

## MEET THE GIANTS

### Ancient Gum on Glynburn *by Tiago Miranda*

If you live in Adelaide, this is a tree to see. Among million-dollar houses, old homesteads and farms once subdivided, this was a notorious logging site. Before the settlers, this tree was standing here watching over a vast open forest that occupied the Adelaide grounds within the shore and the hills. Almost located at the foothills, this river red gum has amazing stories to tell. It once grew among other giants outstanding from a smear suppressed tree to a dominant kind. When juvenile, only Aboriginal people watched it grows thanks to their resilience in populating the entire continent developing a subsistence economy by hunting birds, fish and animals and also harvesting edible plants. Due to their nomadic lifestyle, I would imagine they had walked pass this monster several times from different stages of its life.



*Source: T.Miranda 2020*



*Historical plaque / Source: T.Miranda 2020*

Something that nowadays would have been impossible to do as deforestation and soil depredation have compromised the life expectancy of mature trees. Another interesting factor about Aboriginals is that groups were very distinct with their history and culture. At certain times, the different family bunch would come together for ceremonial, social and/or trade purposes, which possibly could occur, even 500 years ago, this site was a prominent assembly point considering that indigenous people preserve nature and respect trees as significant beings and storytellers like themselves. The City of Burnside is a sanctuary to mature and most veteran trees in Adelaide where management is part of an arborist daily job.

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Situated only a few metres from a cycle lane and leaving two steps wide of footpath, Council made an effort to preserve this giant, even acknowledging its potential risk failure over the road and public hazard. Even though in being a heavily-crowned tree and delicate peduncles and pedicels, its importance is way beyond a human life threat. Well-known to be found along rivers, creeks and on flood-plains, made its name on the streets, where water never always is available. Once colonisers arrived, they probably discarded it with no value for timber due to its decurrent form, uneven scaffolding structure and possibly existent cavities. Hopefully, they've also noticed the wildlife presence. Drought has always been a problem for Australia, although records are relatively short and geographically patchy.



Inner canopy snapshot / Source: T.Miranda 2020



Source: T.Miranda 2020

Australia is the land of drought and flooding rains. *Eucalyptus camaldulensis* and several other drought-tolerant species developed strategies to survive certain environmental changes and evolved accordingly. When South Australia was colonised in 1836, a white man walked past this tree several times and built houses underneath, probably appreciating its significance and as a free-settler concept, they were ahead of their time in terms of profit and quality of life. Visiting its canopy shows how much wildlife has passed through there and still thriving as a unique ecosystem. Glad to see that river red gum develops strong wound-wood and possibilities for habitat, showing why it is the most cultivated eucalypt species in the world thanks to its waterlogging and seasonal drought tolerance.