



a hastily prepared text. 'Martin's Alpine Terraces' were housing allotments along what is now One Tree Hill Road east of the Murphy property, at a brisk altitude of 500 metres. 'Alpine' was correct; William Murphy's daughter in a later account told of heavy winter snowfalls. The un-named author of the Guide drew parallels with European alpine resorts to give readers some basis for comparison.

The cable tramway would make this accessible and desirable; it was a good 1.6 km from the proposed head of the tramway to the housing allotments. At the time, this didn't seem unreasonable. The southern hemisphere's first electric tramway opened in Box Hill in 1889; a cable-powered tramway with scenic views a little further out could do just as well.

From boom to bust

The writer also suggested Ferntree Gully rail station should 'be call[ed] Martindale'. Responses of other locals to this impertinence aren't recorded. In reality, all these tramway proposals were stillborn. Booms

inevitably go bust. Melbourne's did in 1891-92.

Martin lost his chance to turn Ferntree Gully into a showplace. He had good company: Sir Matthew Davies, who built 'Highmoor' in Bayswater, and 'Doongalla' mansion at The Basin on the proposed Olinda electric tramway, went spectacularly bankrupt; after lengthy court proceedings, he walked free.

John Martin died in 1936 and was buried at Ferntree Gully cemetery. Margaret Martin outlived her husband by six years and was buried in the same plot. Martin's tramway had long since slipped into the realms of what might have been.

As for Martin's Alpine Tramway, had this improbable project ever come to fruition, someone would have appreciated it. The proposed lower terminus wasn't opposite Ferntree Gully station, but 150 metres south and 500 metres east. Which is directly outside my front door!

Ray Peace

Map of Ferntree Gully, 1888 tourist guide. Martin's Alpine Tramway near centre left. Image 2502a courtesy State Library of Victoria

Opposite: The route planned for Martin's Alpine Tramway as seen from The Glen.

Steep incline cable trams also known as funiculars were built in many countries and many are still running today. Google 'funicular' to see photos and Youtube videos.