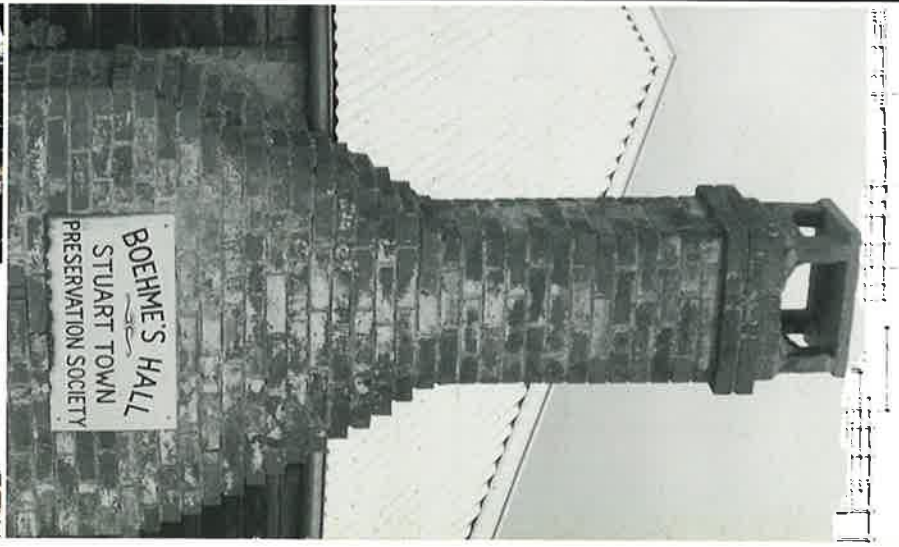
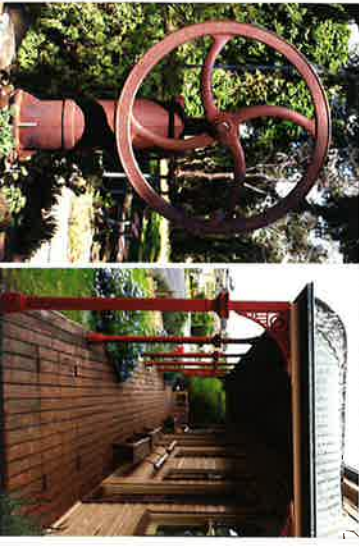




Wellington

STUART TOWN HERITAGE DRIVE

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STUART TOWN HERITAGE DRIVE

This drive leads through the low hills surrounding Lake Burrendong. Much of the area has been cleared for agriculture, but there are places where native vegetation, dominated by box trees or ironbarks, remains. Many outcrops of Devonian limestone can be seen.

The drive takes around three hours, and covers approximately 110 km. It will take longer if you stop for lunch and take time to explore along the way. A side trip to Burrendong Dam and the Burrendong Arboretum will add a further two hours.

Start

The first distance is measured from the Wellington Tourist Information Centre. From there, take the Great Western (Mitchell) Highway towards Orange.

[14.5 km] Take the turnoff on the left to Dripstone.

Dripstone

[6.7 km] The village of Dripstone reached its peak population of 350 during the railway construction in the 1880s. Early industries included lime burning and the production of oxide powders for paint. Limestone (grey marble) was quarried for use in buildings, including major public buildings in Canberra, and three early buildings made of this can be seen if you take a short walk on both sides of the railway track. One building was a butcher shop, another a residence, and another originally a pub, later the gatekeeper's cottage.



Dripstone Butcher

Dripstone was a gold mining area during 1930/40s with over 20 mines in the district, the main mine being Galwadgere Mine. At that time the population of the surrounding area would have been around 500, but it dropped once the railway stopped in the 1970s. It is currently around 50.



Dripstone Pub

[1 km] The Dripstone roads end at Burrendong Way. On one corner is the Catholic Church "St Agnes of The Springs" (Dripstone was known as The Springs until about 1890), built in 1879 from bricks made locally.

Convent buildings were added in 1885, in which three nuns ran a school until about 1900. No remains of the convent school are visible.

Turn right at the church.



St Agnes of The Springs



Burrendong Dam

[9 km] Turn right at the junction of the Burrendong Way and the road to the dam. If time permits, it is worth a detour now or on the way back to visit the dam and the Burrendong Arboretum which contains a wealth of inland plants as well as a rainforest area which is a cool retreat in summer.



Burrendong Dam Spillway

[2.5 km] When you reach Mumbil, turn right at the playground, take the road leading into the village, and stop near the Anglican Church on the left.

Mumbil

Mumbil was expanded to house workers during the construction of Burrendong Dam (1946 – 1967). During this period the population was large enough to require a permanent police presence. Across from the church, with an empty field to its left as you face it, is a house that was once the police station. If you look behind the house through the field you can see a small building directly behind it that was the Sergeant's office and behind that a small building that was used as a cell.

Just before the Church, the curved corrugated iron construction was used to house equipment and machinery during the construction of the dam. The houses on the opposite side of the road were used to house married professionals, such as engineers. A little way up the street past



Several trees

have a closer look, as traffic may be going at speed.

Retrace your steps to Burrendong Way and continue towards Wellington

China.

chimney in the middle. If you cross the track and walk along a few metres you will find an interesting old pub (now residence) painted red.

Return to Burrendong Way and travel towards Wellington. About

400m past the Primary School, take the turnoff to the left to the Stuart

Town cemetery. The cemetery is well worth investigating. There is a

noticeable lack of Chinese headstones, and it seems the remains of

some Chinese buried in the area were later exhumed and returned to

China.

On the return trip, after passing through Mumbil you will come to a

junction where the left fork goes to Wellington while the road straight

ahead continues to Burrendong Dam. Turn left (unless you want to

make a side trip to the dam or the arboretum). About 3.4 km from

the junction there is a large Aboriginal scarred tree on the right hand

side of the road. The very old scar shows where Aboriginals removed

a large section of bark. Such pieces were used for canoes, burials,

cradles and many useful items. Take care if you get out of the car to

have a closer look, as traffic may be going at speed.

On the return trip, you can take a shorter route to Wellington by

continuing straight ahead at the Dripstone junction at St Agnes of the

Springs Church. The road will join the Mitchell Highway – turn right

to Wellington, left to Sydney and Wellington Caves.

Wellington NSW

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Visitor Information Centre

Freecall: 1800 621 614

Information provided by Judith Hiatt, Lee Thurlow and Joyce Williams.
Colour photography by George Dewar. Text by Mike Augee and
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the Church, on the corner of Cudgegong Street, you can see one of the dormitory buildings occupied by unmarried workers.

Return through the village by any of the paved streets to Burrendong Way and head towards Stuart Town, crossing the railway shortly after you leave Mumbil.

[11.5 km] When you reach Stuart Town, Burrendong Way takes a sharp turn to the right towards Orange. At that point turn left and you will find yourself in the main street of Ironbarks, as the town was called in Henry Lawson's time until 1880 when the name changed to Stuart Town.

Stuart Town

Gold was discovered in this area in the 1840s, but the gold rush proper started in 1851, when thousands of men worked the area. From around 1865 Ironbarks became a large gold mining centre. A second gold discovery was made at Mookerawa in 1878, but those veins required tunneling. Subsequent gold operations required dredging (in the Macquarie River), and the times of individual claims and "gold rushes" had passed.

Stop at Moxon Park on your left (which has public toilets) and take time to walk around the main street.

Next to the park is the restored Railway Hotel (1880) which now contains the Post Office and community facilities. Beyond the hotel is an old haberdashery (Crick's Store) and a residence joined together (1894). Across the railway parking area is the Stuart Town Station. Although no longer used, it has been restored by the local people and is worth a look. The XPT train connecting Dubbo and Sydney stops here only on request each day.



Railway Hotel, Stuart Town

On the other side of the street you will see the Ironbarks Hotel, which was originally the "Australian Hotel". Further down the hill from the pub is the School of Arts (1934) which includes the Stuart Town Rural Technology Centre (RTC). If it is open, you can get a very good lunch, tea or snack and good information. The occasional ball is still held in the School of Arts.



Ironbarks Hotel

Across the street from the RTC you will see a former shop (with Kinkara Tea sign) and bakery. Today the only shop, selling fast food, grocery items and petrol, is further down the street.

Returning to the car, turn left at the end of the block (before the Train Station) and follow the road around the bend, where you will see some disused tennis courts on the left hand side of the road. Behind them is "Boehne's Hall" which dates from 1880. It was built by Mr. Henry Boehne as a residence with an attached hall. The hall served as a social centre, theatre and cinema for many years and is still kept up by a local committee. Henry was known as "Doctor" Boehne because he often was called upon to pull teeth and set bones. He owned and operated the Post Office Mine and one of the two batteries (crushing plants) in Stuart Town. Outside the hall is an open-air display of agricultural equipment.



Boehne's Hall



Wellington NSW

STUART TOWN HERITAGE DRIVE

Drive time: 3hrs approx.

Distance: 110 km

QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE

- 1 Turn left to Dripstone
- 2 Dripstone Locality
- 3 Turn right to Mumbil
- 4 Village of Mumbil
- 5 Stuart Town (formerly Ironbarks)
- 6 Mookerawa Goldfields
- 7 Farnham Locality



Retrace your steps and cross the railway track. Here you can go straight ahead up a small hill, where you will find the Catholic Church, St. John the Baptist. Come back down the hill and turn left following signs to the Mookerawa Recreation Area.

On this road you will pass the Anglican Church of St Michael and All Angels on your right. There is a small bell in an external bell tower that is of particular historical interest because it is one of three that were used at the convict settlement and mission at Wellington (1823 - 1840s).

[6.9 km] Watch carefully on your left for the old Mookerawa gold field. If you arrive at the entrance to the Recreation Area you have gone too far!

The ruin of a small, bark miner's shack is visible from the road. This reconstruction was made in Wellington for the town's sesquicentenary (1967) and later transported here. However it was an accurate reconstruction and some detail can still be made out.

There is also a Chinese oven surrounded by a low fence. This was the main area worked by the Chinese for gold, reaching its peak around 1885 with a crowded mass of huts and tents. The diggings can be readily seen in the area.

Return to Stuart Town and continue on the Burrendong Way towards Orange. After 3 km, take the road to the left marked Farnham Road.

Farnham

[1 km] By 1873 the town of Farnham (then informally known as Stoney Creek) was larger than Ironbarks and was well established, having a Post Office since 1836. Prior to the arrival of the railway in 1880 the main settlement of Stoney Creek was situated about 1 km down the creek to the west. The area had several rich tunnel mines and a better source of permanent water than Ironbarks.

Farnham Railway Station opened in 1897 and closed in 1975. There are no remains. The most interesting building that remains is on the right hand side of the road, just beyond where a branch of the road turns left to cross the railway line. The building and its outhouses remain in good shape. It was once an inn, later included the Post Office, and is now a residence.



Farnham Post Office

Continue up the road, which becomes unpaved, for a short distance past a 'no through road' sign. You will come to an interesting group of wooden-slab buildings on the left. These were part of a larger group of buildings that comprised a property originally called Nicholas Farn. They are on private property but can be viewed from the road. The main house of the property was replaced by the current residence many years ago.

Turn around and retrace your route to Stuart Town.

At Stuart Town, instead of turning left to Wellington turn right into Alexander Street. This area was the early centre of Ironbarks, before the focus shifted to what is now the main street. About 200 m from the intersection on the left you will see Yee Lee's old shop. Yee Lee came from China in the 1880s and the present shop was built in the 1930s. His son, Tommy Lee, continued to run the shop for many years after WWII.



Yee Lee General Store

Continue along Alexander Street to where it turns to swing back to Burrendong Way. There is a pedestrian railway crossing and on the other side is an abandoned gatekeeper's house with its brick