

Wellington HISTORICAL WALKING TOUR

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The traditional Aboriginal Wirathuri people (part of the Wiradjuri Nation) are known to have lived in the Wellington Valley for more than 25,000 years. Many of their descendants still live in and around the town.

The first European to arrive in Wellington was Lieutenant John Oxley, who crossed the Bell River with his party on 19 August 1817. Wellington became the second formal settlement west of the Blue Mountains when a Convict Settlement and Agricultural Station was established 2.5km south of the present-day town in 1823. In 1832 this closed and the buildings were taken over by the Anglican Church Missionary Society and run as an Aboriginal Mission, which closed in 1844.

The first area to be settled was Montefiores Village, named after JB Montefiores who took out one of the earliest land grants in 1831. The Village was on the Cobb and Co coach route to the West, and it had a number of businesses and public houses, including the Lion of Waterloo.

Wellington was gazetted as a town in 1846. After a slow start the population expanded rapidly between the 1870s and 1901, when it had risen to around 3,000 people. The Railway reached Wellington in 1880, which provided easier transport for local produce including wheat, other crops and vegetables.

Wellington has always been noted as an attractive town with a beautiful park. The prosperity of the town and the surrounding district was reflected in its wide range of shops, businesses and amenities.

Wellington has continued to develop and now has around 5800 residents. As well as being a nice place to live, it's a great town to visit, with many interesting places and heritage buildings!

Visitor Information Centre
Freecall: 1800 621 614

Wellington NSW HISTORICAL WALKING TOUR

Information provided by Judith Hiatt, Dorothy Blake and Lee Thurlow, compiled by Lindsey Paget-Cooke. © Wellington Shire Council, 2008.

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1 Cameron Park

The walk starts from Cameron Park, a lovely area bordered by the Bell River. In 1882 the area was gazetted for recreational purposes. The park area was fenced, paths were set out and trees and gardens begun. However, the park in its present form results from work done in 1909 while T H Cameron was Mayor of Wellington. At that time the design was developed, a park gardener was appointed, a picket fence and gates were built, the fountain was added (which was later moved to its current location), and major planting occurred. In 1910 the park was renamed Cameron Park.

The park is classified by the National Trust, and is a lovely place to wander, especially when it's hot. At the north end of the park is a stand of Magnolias, which are wonderful in the Spring. The sunken garden was originally the town's swimming pool. Look out for the Lone Pine, grown from a seed brought from Galipoli.

The granite Cenotaph with its bronze figures was designed by Gilbert Doble, who also designed its setting, including the Victorian funerary mound and the paths radiating from it. The Cenotaph was begun in 1922 and finally completed in 1933. The design is unusual in that it depicts peace rather than war, with the sword lying in the lap of the figure. The bronze Memorial Gates were donated by Murdoch McLcod.



Cameron Park

2 Fong Lee & Co

On leaving Cameron Park, walk north along Nanima Crescent. On the opposite side of the road you will see Fong Lee Lane. Adjacent to the laneway is the site of Fong Lee & Co, an emporium selling a wide range of goods, including clothing, household goods and Chinese herbal medicines. The store was opened in 1879 by Kum Yoon Fong, and from 1896 it was run by the Ling family until it closed in 1936. The Oxley Museum has a fine display of items from both Fong Lee's store and the Ling family.



3 Commercial Hotel

At the roundabout, turn left into Warne Street and walk past the Olympic Pool. The building at the corner of Warne and Raymond Streets is the former Commercial Hotel, built in 1865 and now converted to flats.

4 Kimbell's Bakery

Walk back up Warne Street across the roundabout to Kimbell's Bakery.

Built in 1904 by R M Kimbell as a Bakery and Refreshment Room, this Victorian building is still operating as a café. The original balcony and verandah with their decorative railings, posts and friezes were restored in 1994 with a grant from the Heritage Council of NSW.



Kimbell's Bakery

22 Apsley Building

Turning right into Percy Street, on the left hand side is the Apsley Building, which houses Wellington Library. This opened as the town's bowling club in 1906, and was renovated and converted to its current use in 2005.

23 National Australia Bank

Continue up Percy Street with Cameron Park on your left to the junction with Swift Street. On the corner is the National Australia Bank, which occupies a prominent site in the main business district of Wellington. It was designed by the architect GA Mansfield, and constructed in stuccoed brick with a slate roof. It was opened in 1883 and the interior has been faithfully restored.



Swift House

24 Swift House

A few steps up Swift Street is Swift House, which is a fine example of a two-storey Victorian Italianate house, built of local brick. It was built in 1892 for Dr Charles Rygate, one of the town's most distinguished doctors. It was originally called Hail-lo-aloha.

This is the end of the tour, and you probably feel ready for a coffee, or lunch. Wellington has lots of cafés and hotels to choose from, and you should have no difficulty in finding something tasty!

5 Sacred Heart Infants School

Further up Warne Street on the opposite side of the road you will come to the Cactus Café. In the past this was the site of several important buildings, including the first Presbyterian St Andrew's Church (1882), and then a Drill Hall. In 1930 the present building was erected for the Sacred Heart Infants School, and remained in use as a school until 1998. An unusual Spanish Mission style, very popular in the 1920s and 1930s, it has been restored, renovated, painted and reborn as a popular and attractive café.



Cactus Café

6 Oxley Museum

Occupying a prominent position on the corner of Warne and Percy Streets, the Oxley Museum was designed by the architect J F Hilly. It was built in 1883, and housed the Bank of New South Wales until 1922. The verandah and balcony are both supported by decorative iron columns with wrought iron decorative brackets and friezes. From 1922 to 1966 the building was used as the Catholic Presbytery. In 1967 it was purchased by Wellington Shire Council and became the Oxley Historical Museum, which is open on weekdays from 1.30 – 4pm. Exhibits include objects owned by the Chinese in Wellington, historic hospital and business equipment, and a fine display of clothing.



Oxley Museum

7 St Patrick's Catholic Church

Opposite the Museum you will see St Patrick's Catholic Church. Built of brick with stucco dressing, the church was completed in 1917. Next to the church is the Convent of Mercy, a brick building with decorative ironwork, constructed in 1889.



St Patrick's Catholic Church

8 St John the Baptist Anglican Church

Across the road is St John the Baptist Anglican Church. Built in 1867 this is Wellington's oldest surviving church. The tower and porch were later additions. It is built of brick with lancet windows. The memorial stained glass windows are particularly beautiful. Further up Warne Street, at number 59 – 61, is the Anglican Rectory, which is documented as being the oldest continually occupied private residence in Wellington. Built in 1875 it was fully restored in 1995.

The Catholic and Anglican churches, the Anglican Rectory and the Oxley Museum are all classified by the National Trust.

9 Federation Houses

Continuing up Warne Street, on the left hand side of the road is an interesting group of four Federation houses at numbers 64 to 70. These were erected between 1890 and 1907 by the Kennard Brothers, who built many fine buildings in Wellington. Their original appearance has been retained, giving a good idea of how the streetscape would have looked around that time. The houses on the opposite side of the road were built in pairs between 1910 and 1930, as land owned by the Anglican Church was sold off.



Federation Houses

10 Fire Station

Just before the railway line on the left is the Fire Station. This was built in 1927, the original fire station having been in Cameron Park. On top of the tower beside the Station is the Convict Bell, cast in 1823. This is one of three bells used at Wellington's Convict Settlement to muster the convicts.

11 McLeod's Flour Mill

Across the railway line on the right hand side of the road is the site of McLeod's Flour Mill, built by the Kennard Brothers and finished in 1903. The Mill was owned by Murdoch McLeod, and was a huge commercial enterprise. The milling machinery was manufactured by Henry Simons of Liverpool, England.

In 1906 it is recorded that the Mill had an output of 2,000 sacks of wheat per week. The Mill was destroyed by fire on 29 December 1985, and has been replaced by modern houses. However, McLeod's house 'Logiealmond' still stands on the corner of Warne and Simpson Streets.



12 Hotel Wellington

Turn right into Arthur Street and on the left hand side at the corner of Swift and Arthur Streets is the Hotel Wellington. Built in 1880 in preparation for the arrival of the first train, this large attractive country style hotel was renovated and restored in 1990. Unusual features of the exterior are the turret and bellcote on the roof.

13 Wellington Railway Station

Turn left into Swift Street and Wellington Railway Station is directly ahead of you. The first train arrived in Wellington on 1 June 1880. A ball was held in the railway goods shed to celebrate the event, which was attended



by about two hundred officials and dignitaries. For other townsfolk a steer donated by John Gardiner of Gobolion was barbecued on the vacant block opposite the Post Office. Unfortunately during the ball a railway employee named Everingham was crushed to death while coupling two sleeping cars together.

This Victorian building was constructed of local rose red bricks. There have been extensive alterations to the exterior and interior of the building. The railway complex originally included a Hotel, Institute and Refreshment Rooms, which have since been demolished. The four palms are the only reminder of the prize-winning gardens opposite the Station. The area around the station must have been a hive of activity when all the original buildings were still there and the railway workshops (which closed in 1925) were operating.

The wooden footbridge across the railway is one of only three timber footbridges remaining in the State (the others being in Bombala and Sulphide Junction, Newcastle).



Wellington Railway Station

14 Knuckey's Store

On the corner of Swift and Arthur Streets you will see Knuckey's Store. This was formerly a photographer's studio, and it is believed that the original dark room is still there. It was then run by the Knuckey family as a general store from 1915 until it closed in 2000. The building is on the NSW State Heritage Register.

15 Federal Hotel

Walk along Arthur Street until you reach the Federal Hotel on the roundabout opposite Macdonalds. A typical country style hotel with its iron balconies and locally made rose red bricks, the Federal was built in 1894. At the turn of the century Federation was a very important cause, and was enthusiastically supported. The name of the hotel is proudly proclaimed from its parapet. The hotel stands diagonally opposite the Reinhard building, which was built in 1901.

16 Munitions Factory

Looking left up Maughan Street you will see the TAFE building, which was formerly the town's Munitions Factory. Following the outbreak of World War II the citizens of Wellington raised large sums of money for patriotic funds and invested in war loans. However, they were concerned that nothing was being done towards establishing a munitions factory or military camp in the town. In October 1941 a group of technical officers visited Wellington to investigate the matter, and in July 1942 a munitions factory opened on this site, which operated until February

1945. Employment was given to married women in preference to single women. The building became a Technical College after WWII, providing technical training for men returning from war service.

Continue on Arthur Street across the roundabout and you will find two significant buildings: St Andrews Uniting Church and Wellington Public School.

17 St Andrews Uniting Church

St Andrews was built in 1907 of brick and cement dressing imitating sandstone. The church has two unusual buttresses against the front wall. The building has been extended and renovated internally.

18 Wellington Public School

The Public School was built in 1881, and has recently been refurbished and renovated. Behind the school, in the playground, is the Gould League Tree. Under this elm tree the Gould League of Bird Lovers was founded in 1910. To the right of the building is the 75th Anniversary Gould League Cairn and Garden.

19 Wellington Court House

Retracing your steps to the roundabout and turning left into Maughan Street, the first building on the left hand side is the Wellington Court House. Designed by the architect WL Vernon and built by George Kennard in 1872, it is brick with stone dressing and a terracotta tiled roof. The side rooms and verandah entrance were added in 1912 by Kennard's sons.



Wellington Court House

20 Post Office

Continue down Maughan Street to the Post Office. The original post office was built on the site in 1869. The current extension to the original, opened in 1904, is a fine Edwardian building with timberwork on the verandah and sandstone dressing.



Post Office