

A GPS Tour of the Upper Midlands

Collated
by
Campbell Town District High School Students

001 MIDLANDS AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY: The Midland Agricultural Association was formed in 1838 and is one of the oldest in the world. Its formation pre-dates the Royal Agricultural Society of England by one year. The annual agricultural show is the longest continuous running in the Commonwealth.

The far-sighted and progressive graziers from around Campbell Town, Ross and Oatlands who formed the society did so with the aim of improving stock agriculture and the rural economy.

Originally the shows alternated between Campbell Town, Ross and Oatlands, and then in 1854 it was decided to hold it permanently in Campbell Town. The first show was held where the Post Office now stands. In 1867 this site was granted by the government as the show reserve.

The annual Zegna Trophy for the finest fleece is fiercely competed for and the fashion parade draws large crowds.

The gates were erected to commemorate foundation members of the Midland Agricultural Association and to mark its centenary (1838 – 1938).

002 REWS ROW: These buildings were constructed in the 1830's and 40's by George Rew and are known as Rew's Row. Originally there were seven buildings.

Number 18 is believed to have been a stable, which was later converted and Mr Able ran a school from here. It was one of several small schools where students apparently paid a Shilling a week for a basic education.

Another of the cottages was home to the Burford family for years and they named it "Stonehenge", presumably after the ancient ring of stones on Salisbury Plain in England.

Number 20 was once the home of John Palmer, a one-time superintendant of police who achieved fame for the capture of bushrangers James Ogden and James Sutherland in Epping Forest (approx 22 km NW of here) in 1883.

003 OLD ANGLICAN CEMETERY: The earliest burials were in 1827 when Thomas Rawlins and Edward Green (shepherds) were, according to their headstone, "inhumanely killed by the natives".

For the first 30 years, this cemetery was used as a general, non-denominational burial ground and it is believed up to 800 people are buried here. Many convicts and bushrangers are believed to lie in unmarked graves.

A grave belonging to a former slave trader who worked off Sierra Leone in West Africa has ironwork surrounding his grave in the shape of African spears.

004 IVY ON GLENELG: Originally known as 'Dry Cottage', it was built around 1838 by James Hamilton who was a wine merchant and owned and ran Campbell Town's general store.

In 1854 it became the home of Dr Adam Turnbull, the first minister of St Andrew's Church (see waypoint 008).

005 HAROLD GATTY MEMORIAL: Harold Gatty was the son of the local headmaster. Born in 1903, he went on to conquer the world as a navigator. He and Wiley Post took 8 days, 15 hours and 15 minutes to fly around the world in 1931. Awarded America's Distinguished Flying Cross, he was the first Australian to be given a hero's welcome in New York. He also wrote 'The Raft Book' standard issue to all US Marines for WWII.

006 ST ANDREWS PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH: This church was completed and dedicated in 1857. The organ originally belonged to Bishop Nixon, the first Anglican Bishop of Tasmania.

When the scaffolding was removed it was discovered that there was a rope still hanging from the steeple and before the church opened a 'crack' shot (a man named Douglas from the 'Winton' estate) was called in to shoot it down.

The hall in the church grounds was built in 1856 as a Sunday School. It was named after Dr Adam Turnbull who lived in Ivy Cottage (see waypoint 004) and was the first minister of St Andrew's. His daughter Susanna taught Sunday School for more than 50 years and a stained glass window in her memory can be found in the church.

Of interest, the original post and rail fence that surrounded the church grounds was tendered for and won by Alexander Johnson who was 15 years old at the time.

007 OLD HOSPITAL: The historic sandstone constructed old hospital.

008 THE GRANGE: The Grange was built around 1847 for Dr William Valentine. It was designed by convict architect James Blackburn. Dr Valentine arrived in Van Diemen's Land in 1839 and in the following year was appointed Assistant District Surgeon at Campbell Town. He became involved in many other aspects of the town until his death in 1876. He established Turkish baths, acted as Lay Preacher at the Anglican Church, was instrumental in the construction of St Luke's Sunday school, set up a reading room and library and built two pipe organs.

The Grange faces east. You are viewing the back of the house. The front has a semi circular driveway with a herbaceous border edging a former tennis court and croquet lawn, protected by a Macrocarpa hedge. Please respect the owner's privacy and view the house from the south side only.

009 TRANSIT OF VENUS: In 1874 the US Navy sent several teams to various points in the Southern Hemisphere to observe the Transit of Venus. Bad weather meant the team destined for the Crozet Islands could not land and ended up in Tasmania. They actually viewed the Transit from Valentine's Park in Campbell Town. The phenomenon occurs in cycles of 120 then 12 years – the most recent was June 8, 2004.

010 TOURIST INFORMATION CENTRE: Midlands history presented in a Working Courthouse. Phone 03 63811353.

011 ST MICHAELS ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH: Bishop Wilson was responsible for the consecration of this bluestone church, and his coat of arms and initials 'WW' can be found on the south-east wall. The church was built in 1857 and was consecrated in September of that year. The presbytery has been used both as a convent and a day school.

Daniel Connell was baptised here and went on to join the Order of St Benedict. He was the first native-born Australian to take Holy Orders and is buried in the local cemetery.

012 RED BRIDGE: Completed in 1838, The Red Bridge is the oldest bridge on the National Highway. The bricks (more than one and a half million) were made in the town itself. Convict-built to a European design it has needed very little repair work over the years and now carries well over a million vehicles a year.

013 OLD BRIDGE: The old bridge was once part of a causeway which crossed the original course of the Elizabeth River. It was built in 1823 and marked the establishment of the town itself. Still in use as part of a footpath, it is one of Australia's oldest. At one end stands the former Campbell Town Inn which was the town's first brick building, at the other end, Bridge Street, which was originally the main street.

014 OLD GAOL: This was the site of the town's first gaol and courthouse which were in operation from 1828. Campbell Town was one of nine police districts on the island and the area encompassed all of what later became the municipalities of Ross, Campbell Town and as far north as Powranna. Resources were limited – in 1845 the force consisted of one chief constable on a salary of £100 per year, three district constables on £50 per year, four field police officers at 2 Shillings per day and 27 constables on 1 Shilling per day.

The first police magistrate was James Simpson who left in 1834 to follow John Batman (the only native-born Australian to found a state capital city and was one of the few people of his time to attempt to compensate Aborigines for the use of their land) to Melbourne where he became unofficial police magistrate in the fledgling settlement.

The first Anglican rector, the Reverend William Bedford jnr, conducted church services in the courthouse until the completion of St Luke's church (see waypoint 018) in 1839. Three of John Batman's children were baptised here. His brother, Henry Batman, who became Melbourne's first chief constable, was married here in 1834. The Batman's and Simpson are one of many connections that Campbell Town has to early Melbourne.

015 MILITARY DISTRICT: Many of the buildings in this street were originally used by the military and were built around 1830. Number 140 was a watch house with a yard behind it and number 142 was a barracks. Between them used to be a hospital for the constabulary.

Number 144 was also a barracks but with a large communal kitchen at the rear. It later became the home of Police Magistrate Thomas Mason. He apparently liked to muster the convicts often and was known as 'Mister Muster Master Mason'.

016 WESLEYAN CHAPEL: This is where Campbell Town's first Methodist chapel was built in 1839. It was only 40m x 5m and was completed debt free thanks to generous donations from members of the local community. Captain and Mrs Horton of the property 'Sommercoates', where the first organised Methodist services in the area had been conducted were amongst those who gave most.

By 1841 the congregation had grown so large that extra seating was added and finally in 1846 the current building was constructed. It stands directly in front of the old chapel. The second chapel was featured in Hardy Wilson's 'Old Colonial Architecture of New South Wales and Tasmania' published in 1924.

017 OLD SCHOOL: Completed in 1878, the first headmaster was William Crowther Blyth who stayed for 22 years. An avid collector of fossils, he once discovered a perfect imprint of a large scallop shell high in the Western Tiers. His wife was the daughter of a military officer in charge of the native settlement at Oyster Cove and as a child she had often gone swimming with Truganini (the last full blooded Tasmanian Aborigine).

James Gatty was the next headmaster. His son Harold (see waypoint 005) was born on the schoolhouse in 1903.

018 ST LUKES CHURCH OF ENGLAND: John Lee Archer, the Civil Engineer under Governor Arthur, had the plans drawn up for this church and the foundation stone was laid in 1835. It was then discovered that part of the base had been laid down with no foundations and a new contractor was called in to complete the building which was opened in 1839. However, this did not end the problems. It was quickly apparent that the church had been so badly constructed that extensive repairs were needed before it could be consecrated.

Just inside the front gate is the grave of Dr Valentine (of 'The Grange' – see waypoint 008). It is a mark of his standing in the community that his gravestone weighs two and a half tons. The carvings were done on-site.



Midlands Agricultural Society – waypoint 001

Rew's Row – waypoint 002



Old Anglican Cemetery – waypoint 003

Ivy on Glenelg – waypoint 004





Harold Gatty Memorial – waypoint 005

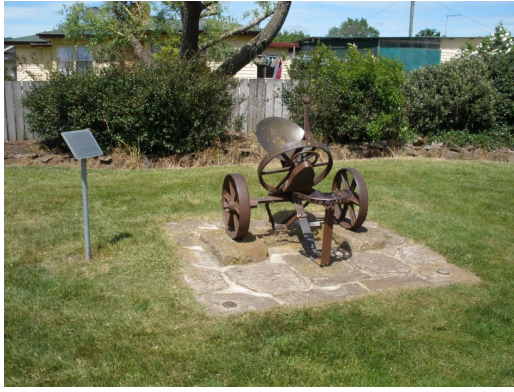
St Andrews Presbyterian Church – waypoint 006



Old Hospital – waypoint 007

The Grange – waypoint 008





Transit of Venus – waypoint 009

Tourist Information Centre – waypoint 010



St Michael's Roman Catholic Church – waypoint 011

Red Bridge – waypoint 012



Old Bridge – waypoint 013

Military District – waypoint 015



Wesleyan Chapel – waypoint 016

Old School – waypoint 017



St Lukes Church of England – waypoint 018