

# St George Region Pub Trail

The St George Region is rich in history especially being a main thoroughfare for the Cobb & Co mail coaches. It is because of this that the ever-growing number of public houses, fondly known as shanties, were dotted all over the shire. We would have loved to capture the history and stories of every single one of these establishments, but the number far outgrew the time and space allocated for such a trail.

So here the focus fell on the existing buildings still standing with all their historical character.

The Brisbane Courier Mail of 1864 wondered at the provision of five public-houses for a town of two hundred people, including the children.

*"Truly, we must be fond of our beer. I daresay the time may come when we shall have a school or a church, or a mechanics' institute, or school of arts, or something of that sort."*

1. Australian Hotel (St George Hotel)  
96-98 St George's Terrace
2. Riverview Hotel (Commercial Hotel)  
80-82 St George's Terrace
3. St George Hotel & Motel (Tattersalls)  
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4. Cobb and Co (Metropolitan Hotel)  
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5. St George RSL/Memorial Club  
105 Alfred St
6. The St George Sports Club  
(The St George Bowling Club)  
84-86 Victoria St
7. Nindigully Pub  
Sternes St
8. Francis Hotel (Borgers Thallon Hotel)  
16 Pine St
9. Two Mile Hotel (Racecourse Hotel)  
355 Carnarvon Highway
10. Dirranbandi Hotel (Commercial Hotel)  
40-46 Railway St
11. The Dirran Pub, Old Moey  
(Telegraph Hotel) - 25-29 Moore St
12. Hebel Hotel (Commercial Hotel)  
30-34 William St
13. Bollon Hotel (Great Western Hotel)  
30 Main St

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*Grab a copy of our Town maps for a closer look at each town from the Visitor Information Centre.*

## 1. Australian Hotel (St George Hotel)

📍 96-98 St George's Terrace

The licence for the St George Hotel on St George's Terrace was issued to David Roberts and is the site on which the present Australian Hotel stands. The St George assured 'Good stabling, plenty of forage and a steady groom always in attendance'.

David Roberts transferred the St George Hotel to James Cavanaugh in November 1871 to allow him to build a new hotel, The Pine Tree Inn further along St George's Terrace. The hotel was renamed The Australian by Maurice Goldstone around 1880. At this time the hotel was an old building and was built with mud and wattle walls (grass and mud).

Maurice died suddenly in 1881 and his business partner, John Brigston continued to manage the hotel. In 1890 mud walls were built up to 2ft thick and 3ft high around the hotel to stop flood water. John owned the hotel until his death in 1909.

The lessee from 1899 was Maurice Cussen and the newspaper reported in 1904 that Mrs Cussen managed a modern concrete hotel (later described as adobe) with a bar, coffee room, billiard room and home to most travelling representatives for the major pastoral companies. In 1936 the hotel was transferred to Queensland Brewery Ltd. In 1935, the Queensland Government initiated a new Licencing Commission which updated the hotel building regulations to improve the facilities for tourists including hot water to bathrooms and water service to bar sinks to allow the washing of glasses. The old hotel was demolished in the early part of 1939 and the new Australian Hotel, which still stands today, constructed by A D Morris at a cost of £35000, opened on 15 November 1939 and was described as a new era in building. The licensee, Miss D Tuite, entertained 180 guests at the opening party.



## 2. Riverview Hotel (Commercial Hotel)

📍 80-82 St George's Terrace

When Arthur Macalister applied for the renewal of his liquor licence for the Commercial Hotel in March 1871, he described the hotel as containing three sitting rooms and five bedrooms, exclusive of those required for himself, his wife Catherine and three children. Macalister died in 1898 and the property was transferred to his wife Catherine, Samuel McCalla and the local butcher, Charles Wippell.

Burnt down in 1910 and later rebuilt, the hotel was described as one of the finest hotels in the state when it opened in November 1916 with a building of brick on concrete foundations with the stone being sourced from a local property. The hotel featured a large balcony facing the river, the ground floor including a coffee lounge, scullery and servery, kitchen and dining rooms, with shops and a billiard saloon, the upper level having a parlour and bedrooms.

It was noted that the old Cobb & Co. stables at the rear of the hotel were still in existence when the hotel was again offered for sale in 2015. The hotel ceased operating in June 2014 due to drought and economic downturn. It is now accommodation, predominantly housing seasonal workers in the horticultural industry.

## 3. St George Hotel & Motel (Tattersalls)

📍 1 Henry Street

In 1877 a liquor licence was granted to William Beaton Anderson for the Tattersalls Hotel, another of the earliest settlers. He too, built his hostelry on St George's Terrace on the corner of Henry Street, opposite the old Post Office. In the days of establishment and for many years thereafter it was 'within a minute's walk of the banks, Post Office and Telegraph Offices it was advertised as a first-class family hotel. It is said that water for the hotel was brought up from the river in a large barrel drawn by horse. A cottage attached to the main hotel building, Anderson's Cottage, provided extra space for entertainment such as the Bachelors' Ball in October 1878, where to the tune of the harmonium about twenty couples danced until the National Anthem was played at 4am.

As well as a hotel it was also a coach stop for passengers who could have a bed and meal. This location was where the Balonne Shire Council held their first meeting in 1903, after the Shire was gazetted from the Ula Ula Division. In 1914 it burnt down and was rebuilt. The hotel changed hands and became the Gredden's St George Hotel. Foot races were held behind the pub on Saturday afternoons. In 1930, the hotel burnt down again and was replaced by the building that still stands today and was renamed the St George Hotel.

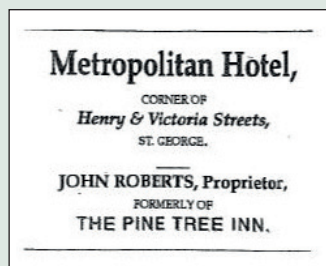
15 March 1873 The Dalby Herald wrote:

*"We have another hotel in the course of construction here, to be called Tattersall's this will make the fifth in our small town. I am very much afraid that the outside public will be of opinion that there are not many Good Templars amongst us."*

## 4. Cobb and Co (Metropolitan Hotel)

📍 105 Victoria Street

The original hotel known then as the Metropolitan Hotel began trading in 1886 and was previously the booking office for the Mungindi Coach. Licenced by John Roberts, the son of David Roberts who initially ran the St George Hotel (later the Australian Hotel). The Metropolitan was renovated from 1914 to 1919 and once advertised electric light, aerated waters and cordial as well as a select brand of wine and spirits. In later years the hotel was renamed The Cobb and Co.





## 5. St George RSL/Memorial Club

📍 105 Alfred Street

The St George Sub-Branch of The Returned Soldiers and Sailors Imperial League of Australia was formed as a memorial to support war veterans on 7 December 1919.

In 1955 the St George Memorial Services Club was formed and entered into a lease agreement to operate the licenced club. In the same year the building was constructed and declared open by his excellency Sir John Lavarack, Governor of Queensland.

The RSL as it was known by the locals was a popular family club, hosting pool and dart competitions, regular raffles, sport sponsorships and many functions, including ANZAC Day commemorations.

It closed in 2007 to be reopened in early 2009, then in September 2016 the committee decided that it was no longer economical to operate the club. The building was sold at auction in 2018 and is presently used as a Community Wellbeing Centre.



## 7. Nindigully Pub

📍 Sternes Street

Nindigully was a staging post for the mail run between Moonie and Yarrawa in 1862. Its location on a Moonie River crossing, along a major stock route between Goondiwindi and St George led to the establishment of a public house.

Established in 1864, the hotel was a Cobb & Co. Coach change over station from the late 1800s to the early 1900s and holds the longest continuous licence in Queensland.

In 1863 Thomas Bradford successfully applied for a licence for a 'house and appurtenances... situated at Nindigully (how it was originally spelt) containing two sitting rooms and four bedrooms (these bedrooms remaining to this day), exclusive to those required for the use of my own family.'

This hotel was to be called Nindigully Hotel. In 1876 John Rogers obtained a licence and renamed the hotel to Travellers' Rest Hotel. William Reynolds took over the licence in 1880 and changed the name to Sportsman's Arms. In 1907 the original hotel was then owned by Miss Sarah Noble who built a store and retained the hotel as accommodation.

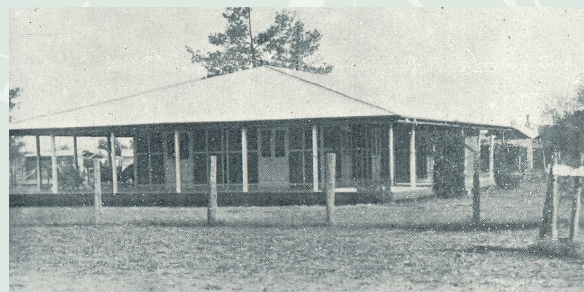
There were seven other licence holders between 1880 and 1911.



## 6. The St George Sports Club (The St George Bowling Club)

📍 84-86 Victoria Street

The St George Sports Club was initially used as the town's bowling green, its original name being The St George Bowling Club and later also known as the Gentlemen's Club.



The inaugural committee promptly acquired an acre of land on the corner of Victoria and Scott Streets, and erected the front portion of the club house, which was used as a billiard and writing room. It opened as the St George Club in 1912. At this time ladies were not allowed on the premises except for special occasions where they could enter from the back.

The game of bowls did not attract sufficient numbers to warrant its continuation beyond the first two years and all attempts to maintain the greens were subsequently abandoned. However, notwithstanding reduced support during the period of depression, it carried on under the name of St George Club with a great measure of success. The membership roll, which commenced with less than 20, expanded over the years and the last count before closure reached a peak of 140.

In 1978 the back section of the club caught fire; however, the front of the club remains as the original structure. The tales of the club boasts massive round card tables where the men would play all night and day gambling all sorts of things from money to livestock.

They say the men would then drive home as they were too drunk to walk.

The Club closed in 2009 and the community organisation Care Balonne utilised the space as a community hub from 2014 until 2019.

## 8. Francis Hotel (Borgers Thallon Hotel)

📍 16 Pine Street

Thallon was gazetted in 1911 and development soon followed, stores opened and a hotel was built to cater for the employees of the railway line which had arrived from Talwood. The town, which was originally known as Bullamon, was named after the Commissioner of Railways Mr J F Thallon.

The first hotel on this site was established by John Martin Borger, who applied for a licence in September 1911 for the railway to Thallon which was completed in October of that year. The Borgers Thallon Hotel opened for business in 1911 and was described as comprising of two sitting rooms and seven bedrooms, exclusive of those required for his wife, four children and their servants. Stabling accommodation of four stalls was also provided. The property was subjected to a number of leases in the subsequent years, including Queensland Brewery Ltd in 1918, which later owned the hotel. In 1927 the property was brought by Harold Francis and the name changed to Hotel Francis. The hotel burnt down in January 1941. During that time it was owned by Ida Francis and leased to Mr Imeson. It was rebuilt, predominantly constructed from locally milled timber and continues to be the present two-story hotel on site.

Named after one of the early licensees Paddy Francis, you'll find the original blueprints of the hotel displayed in the dining room along with many other historical photographs capturing Thallon's past.

Prior to completion of the building, it was purchased by Mrs Mary Ann Haines, previously of Mungindi, naming it The Grand Hotel when it opened in April 1911. It contained 17 rooms and was described as being beautifully furnished and lit by acetylene gas. The combination of the hotel and store made the Gully a prosperous centre. Mrs Haines ran the hotel for 17 years, returning to Mungindi in 1929.

There were another four licence holders until 1929 when the licence was transferred to Lawrence John Sternes who saw the hotel name change to Sternes Hotel. The licence was then held by Darcy Collin Sternes. The new proprietor Lawrence John Sternes, who also managed the adjacent store, built a new wing to the hotel. The new work included a modern bar, dining room, bathrooms and a concrete cellar. The newspaper reported it had electric lighting throughout.

In 1960 Charles Karel Kotyza became the licensee with the name of the hotel being changed to Nindigully Hotel on September 14, 1961.

There were then another 6 licensee holders on record to date.

The film Paperback Hero was filmed at this very pub giving Hugh Jackman his big break, the boomerangs from the set still remain.

It is now a popular spot for locals and travellers to have a beer, set up camp or enjoy their famous road train burger.





### 9. Two Mile Hotel (Racecourse Hotel)

📍 355 Carnarvon Highway

Established in 1908 as the first business for Mungindi, the appropriately named Two Mile Hotel, being two miles north of Mungindi was formerly known as the Racecourse Hotel built by T. Robinson, though the first recorded licensee was Leslie L.M. McGee in April 1914.

The pub was destroyed by fire in December 2009 being rebuilt and reopened in 2011. The lacquered mahogany bar with charred shrapnel embedded in it are the only remnants of the fire that destroyed the original hotel.



### 10. The Dirran Pub (Commercial Hotel)

📍 40-46 Railway Street

The Dirran Pub was initially established as the Commercial Hotel in 1915 and was strategically located opposite the Railway Station. It burnt down in 1919 and was rebuilt as the larger two-storey building which today forms the core of the current hotel which was completed in June 1920 with 29 rooms. In 1925 Arthur O'Toole purchased the hotel and in 1926 undertook major renovations and refurbishing. A lockup motor garage was built as well as a large private bar and public bar, coffee and dining rooms were given special attention.

Ten years later, O'Toole moved to Dalby and the Dalby residents were informed in the local press of the great improvements he had made while in Dirranbandi, spending £4000 on improvements to the Commercial Hotel. The hotel was offered for sale in June 1955, at the time of sale the

hotel boasted 17 bedrooms, both private and staff quarters, a modern kitchen and bathroom facilities. It was described as the best hotel in the centre of a rich pastoral district.



### 12. Hebel Hotel (Commercial Hotel)

📍 30-34 William Street

The land for this hotel was acquired by George Lonsdale Donaldson in 1886. While the exact date of the hotel's establishment is uncertain, it was first mentioned in a news article in 1889. Although the ownership remained with Donaldson, J Stevens was the publican from around 1908, after this time management and ownership changed regularly.

The Hebel Hotel is likely the oldest building in town, playing the role for the town as a stopping place on the stock route between Queensland and New South Wales.

It is widely claimed that notorious bushrangers Dan Kelly and Steve Hart from the legendary Ned Kelly Gang resided in the Hebel area under assumed names and that they frequented the Hebel Hotel. The influence of the Kelly Gang was so strong that Hebel was once known as Kelly's Point. It wasn't until the early 1890s that the name changed to Hebel, most likely after a local German family residing in the town, Nobel Van Hebel is said to have played a role in staging the Cobb & Co. Coaches.



### 11. Dirranbandi Hotel Motel, Old Moey (Telegraph Hotel)

📍 25-29 Moore Street

In 1878 the Telegraph Hotel at Curriwildi (Parish of Dirranbandi) containing 'two sitting rooms and five bedrooms, was licenced to William Richardson'.

Built around 1916 of fibro-cement and wood, it was the property of J.C Portus. Sadly, the hotel was destroyed by fire in February 1932.

A newspaper article at the time stated 'A fire destroyed the Telegraph Hotel, situated on the corner of Richardson and Moore Streets, early last Friday morning. The fire had a strong hold when discovered and there was no hope of saving anything as a strong easterly wind was blowing with insufficient water supply. The shire hall across the street and a cottage next door at times were in immediate danger of catching fire'.

Today's existing motel was said to have been built in the 80s known then as the Dirranbandi Motel. It is fondly known to locals today as The Old Moey.



### 13. Bollon Hotel (Great Western Hotel)

📍 30 Main Street

This location has been occupied by a hotel since at least 1879 when Grant Stack purchased this and the adjacent land in the first land sales of the township. It was named the Great Western Hotel and was a simple slab structure with a bark roof, which likely existed prior to the lands sales. This hotel burnt down in 1855 causing the death of an elderly resident. It was rebuilt by John Piper, the publican at the time, previously of St George. January of 1903 saw another fire which burnt down the hotel along with a neighbouring store. The hotel was rebuilt again and named the Royal and was also a staging place for the Royal Mail Coaches.

The Royal Hotel then burnt down in May 1951, destroying the adjacent Cleveden and Piper's store and residence along with Khan's newsagency.

The cottage at the rear and the other adjacent cottage to Khan's newsagency were saved by a bucket brigade. Again, this fire caused the death of a resident. By the end of the year there were calls for a new hotel as there was no accommodation in Bollon. It then took until 1953 for local businessman W Devereaux to commission an architect to design a new hotel.

While this is the fourth hotel on the site, dating to 1953, the site has had continual use as a hotel for more than 130 years and continues to be a place of social activity for residents and visitors.

