

ST GEORGE

Heritage Trail



1. CENOTAPH

The memorial is a sandstone slab on a three-tiered sandstone base. Erected by former Prisoners of War, and unveiled by Colonel Honourable RWC Swartz, Minister for Health, former POW at Changi, Singapore. Each face of the memorial displays plaques dedicated to the veterans of Australia's wars.

Conflicts commemorated

- First World War, 1914 – 1918
- Second World War, 1939 – 1945
- Malayan Emergency, 1948 – 1960
- Korean War, 1950 – 1953
- Indonesian Confrontation, 1962 – 1966
- Vietnam War, 1962 – 1972
- Gulf War, 1990 – 1991
- Somalia, 1992 – 1994

This memorial was moved to this current site in 2005, having previously been located on the corner of Grey and Victoria Streets.

2. ST GEORGE PILOTS MEMORIAL

The St George Pilots Memorial recognises two pilots from St George who flew in World War II, John Jackson and Leonard Waters. Squadron Leader John Jackson flew at Port Moresby and was killed there in 1942. Jackson was the first Commanding Officer of the 75th squadron that had Kitty Hawk fighter planes. He is also the only



Warrant Officer
Leonard Waters

known Australian pilot to have a foreign international airport named after him in recognition of his flying, which saved the Japanese advancement into Port Moresby. Warrant Officer Leonard Waters is recognised as the only known Aboriginal fighter pilot to serve in the second world war. Coincidentally Len's plane was named Black Magic by a previous pilot; this plane now has a port named after it at Riversands Vineyard. Len grew up and raised his family in the St George area and passed away in 1993. He was buried with full military honours in the St George Cemetery.



Squadron Leader
John Jackson

3. ROWDEN PARK

Rowden Park was the location of the first wine grapes to be grown in the St George area in 1862 by Dr Ernest Seidel, who now has a wine named after him at Riversands Vineyards. The first year Dr Seidel attempted to grow grapes he planted 500 cuttings and only 3 struck, the following year he planted 1000 cuttings and 25 struck, nevertheless he continued until he finally had 2 acres of wine grapes. Dr Seidel was the first pharmacist in St George and later practiced medicine. Many years later, Rowden Park was gifted to the Council by Charles Rowden Wippell and now hosts our Bowls Club, cricket fields, tennis courts, football field and skate park.

4. ANDREW NIXON BRIDGE / JACK TAYLOR WEIR

There have been many different bridges constructed over the Balonne River throughout the years. The previous wooden bridge was completed in 1890 with the help of many shearers that were on strike during that period. It spanned the river just south of the existing bridge and was washed away in the 1950 flood. Our current bridge is called the Andrew Nixon Bridge and construction was completed in 1953. Mr Nixon came to St George from Jerilderie in NSW where he was a Blacksmith. It was believed that Mr Nixon shod Ned Kelly's horse during Kelly's hold up of the town in 1879. The Nixon family was also one of the first to the area and once owned the largest property in the shire. He was also involved in the construction of the heritage listed Anchorage Homestead. The construction of the Jack Taylor Weir shortly followed and it was at this time when approval for the St George Irrigation Project was given.



St George Bridge, 1900

5. MITCHELL'S CAIRN

On the 23rd of April 1846, Major Sir Thomas Mitchell reached the spot on the Balonne River which he named St George's Bridge.

He wrote: *"At an early hour we soon came upon the river where it formed a noble reach of water.*

The breadth was uniform, and a vast body of water was a most cheery sight. The banks were 120 yards apart; the course, in general, was very straight, contributing much to the perfection of the scenery upon it. At one turn, denuded rocks appeared in it's bed, consisting of ironstone in a whitish cement of matrix, which might have been decomposed felspar. I at length arrived at a natural bridge of the same sort of rock,

affording easy and permanent access to the opposite bank, and at once selected the spot for a depot camp, which we established in a fine position, commanding long vistas up and down the river. It was in fact a tele-du-pont overlooking the rocky passage which connected with the grass on both sides." There was a cairn and plaque located on the western side of the river, which was erected by the Balonne Shire Council to commemorate the first sightings of the area by European men. This cairn was constructed by the St George Apex Club in the 1960's. Later moved to its current site adjacent to the bridge.



Major Sir Thomas Mitchell

6. ANCHORAGE HOMESTEAD

The building of the Anchorage Homestead began in 1903 and it is estimated to have taken around seven years to construct. Arthur Bennett, credited with many buildings in the district, was the builder. The house is made entirely of local western cypress with imported red cedar trimmings, windows, doors and staircase. Much of the exterior and interior fabric of the house is original, but the kitchen, bathrooms, veranda floors, rear external wall and laundry were derelict, necessitating a huge restoration project which began in September 2016. Unfortunately, no Nixon family furnishings remain. The original gardens had returned to the paddocks, but the resurrected gardens now flourish under the remnant trees that had survived 10 years of neglect. The homestead is a privately-owned dwelling, but visitors are welcome at specified times.

Anchorage Homestead



7. OLD GAOL & POLICE STATION

These two buildings were built in 1892; the building to the left was our jail in the past, while the building to the right was the St George Police Station, which is currently being used as the St George Heritage Centre. These buildings were relocated in 1989 so the new police station could be constructed. The Heritage Centre has a complete blacksmithing shop and a printing press still in working condition.

8. FIRST BRICK HOUSE

This house on the corner of Bowen & Victoria Street was the first brick house with a tiled roof to be built in St George. It was built in 1960 by a local family, and still belongs to the same family today. When the house was built, the family had to cart all the materials themselves, the bricks from Chinchilla, tiles for the roof from Brisbane and the timber was from NSW.

9. ANGLICAN CHURCH

The original church was built in approximately 1889 and was formerly located where the town's swimming pool is today. The first preachers' book is dated from 1897 to 1917 whilst the earliest organist on record was Miss Mona Whyte from 1917 to 1942. The original church was moved to its present site where it is currently being used as a second hand store. The brick church was donated by Mrs Willa Richardson and was opened in 1959.

A deed of grant for two acres of land in Victoria Street was issued in 1875 and the first Reverend J C Coles was appointed the first Vicar of St George.



Anglican Church, 1904

10. THE COBB & CO HOTEL

The Cobb & Co Hotel was formerly known as the Metropolitan Hotel. It was licensed to John Roberts in 1886 and was previously the booking office for the Mungindi Coach. The Metropolitan was renovated from 1914 to 1919 and once advertised electric light, aerated waters, cordial as well as a select brand of wine and spirits.

Cobb & Co Hotel, 1912



11. COBB & CO CHANGEOVER STATION

This building was the original Cobb & Co changeover station for St George. The last Cobb & Co Coach left from this site in St George in 1923 en route to Surat. This building has since been used as a butchery and video shop. A photo that has been enlarged and displayed out the front of the Visitor Information Centre, shows the the Cobb & Co Coach at this site. You will notice the Carbide lights which were unusual for this time.

12. ST GEORGE MEMORIAL HOSPITAL

This residence located at 69 Scott Street was formerly the St George Memorial Hospital and once stood on the hospital grounds, next to the War Memorial. This building was moved in 1975 to this location after the new hospital was built. It was once a private hospital with wards upstairs and administration downstairs.

St George Hospital, 1946



13. 73 ALFRED STREET

This house is over 100 years old and was constructed in the late 1800s, possibly being one of the first houses still remaining in St George. When the house was built, the builder used round timber that had not been milled and left round on the ceiling. The original timber still remains in the house today.

14. CATHOLIC CHURCH

The original Catholic Church building was erected in 1874 and is situated beside the current church on St Patrick's Primary School grounds. The church had a shingle roof and seated approximately 30 people. Mass was celebrated once or twice a year by a priest from Roma who most likely travelled via the Cobb & Co Coach. The first Parish Priest was Fr McCarthy during the later part of last century. The church is now used for a variety of parish and school purposes. The current Catholic Church was built in 1959.

15. ST GEORGE CEMETERY

This is the resting place for many pioneers. A walk through the cemetery tells its own stories of hardship and tragedy. The Amoy Shepherds Memorial is also located at the cemetery and honours the Chinese descendants who left their ancestral homes to earn an income to stave off the famine at home. It is reported that the Chinese came to St George and drove sheep up and down the river. There was a team of 35 growing fruit and vegetables at the Anchorage. Many did not make any money and most, if not all, never saw their families again.

16. OLD NATIONAL AUSTRALIA BANK

This building once operated as a bank 'and' was robbed by a local. They walked in with a .303 caliber rifle, fired a warning shot over the teller's head and left with 283 pounds. The police were called and assessed the situation and then went around to his home in Henry Street where he was arrested. The building has also been used as a solicitors office and is now a hairdressing salon.

17. ST GEORGE HOTEL

In 1877 a liquor licence was granted to William Beaton Anderson for the Tattersall's Hotel. This hotel was situated on this corner where the St George Hotel stands today. 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, the hotel changed hands and became Gredden's St George Hotel. Foot races were held behind the pub on Saturday afternoons. In 1930, the hotel burnt down and was replaced by a new building that still stands today and was renamed the St George Hotel.



St George Hotel, 1904

18. OLD POST OFFICE

The first postal service was established in 1864 with Mr Chase the Postmaster earning 12 pounds per annum. The old Post Office was opened on September 22, 1872. This building is one of the few in



St George Post Office, along the Terrace

town to still have shingle roofing on the window eaves. It is currently being used as a solicitor's office. Prior to that it was also former Senator Barnaby Joyce's Parliamentary office.

19. RIVERVIEW HOTEL

The Commercial Hotel is now called the Riverview Hotel. The first hotel built on this site was destroyed when 15 buildings along St George's Terrace were destroyed by fire in September 1915. This hotel was described as one of the finest Hotels in the state when it opened in November 1916. The building is brick on concrete foundations and features a large balcony facing the river. It was built by Arthur McAllister who started the first formal education in St George. He employed a tutor to teach his five children, and other families sent their children along for a small fee.



Riverview Hotel, 1928

20. AUSTRALIAN HOTEL

This hotel located on the corner of St George's Terrace and Grey Street was once named the St George Hotel and licensed to David Roberts in 1864. Roberts bought the first block of land in the first land sale and built the hotel on it, incidentally it was among the first licences granted for the district. Mr Roberts was the son of a convict shoemaker in Pitt Town, in the Hawkesbury River District of NSW.

David came to our area with his wife Elizabeth Horton and sons Mathew, Mark, Luke and John. David died of asthma in 1868 and was buried in the garden of



The Australian Hotel, 1904

his home, which was built to face St George's Terrace, with a garden of fruit trees behind it. The tombstone was later removed from its original position, but still survives as the town's first memorial and is now situated at the Heritage Centre. The hotel was renamed The Australian during the 1880's. At the time the hotel was an old building, and was built using mud and wattle. In 1890 the mud

walls were up to 2ft thick and 3ft high around the hotel to stop flood water. The old hotel was demolished in the early part of 1939 and the new Australian Hotel, constructed by A D Morris at a cost of 35,000 pounds, was then completed in November 1939. When the new and current hotel was officially opened, it was described as a new era in building. The licensee, Miss D Tuite, entertained 180 guests at the opening party.

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- 7 Old Goal & Police Station
- 8 First Brick House
- 9 Anglican Church
- 10 The Cobb & Co Hotel
- 11 Cobb & Co Changeover Station
- 12 St George Memorial Hospital
- 13 73 Alfred Street
- 14 Catholic Church
- 15 St George Cemetery
- 16 Old National Australia Bank
- 17 St George Hotel
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- 20 Australian Hotel

