

Macleay Valley Heritage Trail



A Project of the Rotary Club of Kempsey West Centenary of Rotary 2005

July 2007

In 2005 the Rotary Club of Kempsey West celebrated the Centenary of Rotary, a world wide service organisation.

To celebrate this occasion, the club has provided a number of information boards about the history of the Macleay Valley and the influence of the Macleay River on this valley.

The first of the information boards can be found at Riverside Park, adjacent to the Kempsey Traffic Bridge. Ample parking is provided near the park.



In obtaining the information we have relied on the resources and photographic memorabilia of the Macleay River Historical Society. This brochure was referenced from information available from the Kempsey Shire Library and the Macleay Valley Historical Society adjacent to the Kempsey Visitor Information Centre.

The heritage signs are to be found at:

Riverside Park—The Dughutti People, the Macleay River and early Kempsey

Frederickton—The Regattas

150 metres into the village. The Heritage sign is located in front of the first house on your left in Toorooka at the intersection of Toorooka Road and Will Willi Roads. (To get to the Toorooka crossing and the Peter Mainey Bridge, turn left and proceed 1 km along Willi Willi Road.)

Toorooka

In its heyday 140 people worked at the Upper Macleay Co-operative. Across the road from the sign there was a golf course on the hill to the right and 3 tennis courts.

Return to the Armidale Road and turn left towards Bellbrook. On your right you will pass the turn off s to Millbank and Taylor's Arm. 8.1 klm along the Armidale Road on your left is a look out (Kilmore's Cutting) with a view up the Macleay River. A further 8.3 klms along the Armidale Road you will pass the turn off on the right to Nulla Nulla Creek, the birthplace of Slim Dusty, David Gordon Kirkpatrick. There is an information site at his homestead, 12 klms from the Armidale Road along Nulla Nulla Road). From the Nulla Nulla Road turnoff travel 2 klms to Bellbrook where the Heritage sign is beside the CWA Park diagonally opposite the Bellbrook Hotel.

Bellbrook

Bellbrook was placed on the National Trust in 1978 and the National Estate in 1981. Bellbrook is a record of the type of urban area created to service farming and timber getting in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The town was laid out in 1892 and gazetted as Bellbrook. There is no access to private homes however, there are two pleasant parks for a stopover in Bellbrook.

Retrace your drive to West Kempsey and turn left into North Street (SES and Rural Fire District on your left). Continue along North Street, across the North Coast Railway Line along into Second Lane and onto the Pacific Highway. Turn left and continue to Frederickton. Just past the Macleay River Hotel at the end of Macleay Street (Pacific Highway) turn immediately right into the designated Boat Ramp Reserve adjacent to the Dairy Farmers' Factory. The Heritage sign for Frederickton is located here.

Frederickton

Frederickton was the site of a ship building enterprise before the town was established in 1857. Frederickton was a 'river town' with the economy centring around shipbuilding, timber getting and pastoral pursuits, including the growing of sugar cane. A government wharf was situated at this park while a punt ran from East Frederickton to where the current boat ramp is located. Other wharves allowed the unloading of cream cans and logs for the nearby sawmill.

To continue the trail, turn right onto the Pacific Highway and travel 6.3klm to the Smithtown turnoff and travel into Smith-

town. Turn right into the village, then first turn left to head to the Historic Wharf and Ferry precinct for the next sign.

Smithtown

Was one of the four main river villages and the centre of a huge dairying industry and dominated today by the Nestlé Factory. (A short diversion can be made around Smithtown to Nestle Factory).

From the wharf area turn left in to Croad's Esplanade and follow this scenic drive along the Macleay River to the South West Rocks Road where you turn right and travel a further 5.8 klm to South West Rocks Rotary Park. This park is at the old ferry crossing and looks across to Jerseyville. It is a popular boat launching area so please park well clear of the boat ramp.

Jerseyville

Was the main service area for the Lower Macleay and South West Rocks and was the first port on the river after crossing the Macleay River bar.

On leaving the Park turn right and travel across the Jerseyville Bridge.

(A side trip can be made to South West Rocks and the historic Trial Bay Gaol).

Take the first turn right past the Fisherman's Co-operative. This turn will take you down to Jerseyville Wharf where the fishing fleet is moored. Return to the South West Rocks Road and proceed over the small bridge and follow the Kempsey Road through Kinchela (where there is a turn off to Hat Head and Hat Head National Park) to Gladstone. Turn right into Memorial Avenue then left into Kinchela Street to stop at the Gladstone Memorial Park for the final sign.

Gladstone

CSR Pty Ltd operated the Darkwater Sugar Mill at the junction of the Macleay and Belmore Rivers. It closed in 1872.

You can then travel back to Kempsey along the South West Rocks Road or follow Belmore River Road which turns to the left before the Belmore River Bridge and goes to Crescent Head. For those people travelling from South West Rocks it is suggested to do the trip in reverse for a pleasant day's outing.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS: *The Rotary Club of Kempsey West would like to thank the Macleay River Historical Society, Kempsey Shire Council and the Coastline Community Foundation for their support in realising this community project.*



Euroka Lookout—Early Agriculture
 Belgrave Falls—Border Police Station
 Willawarrin—The Stockmen of the Macleay
 Toorooka—The Dairy Industry
 Bellbrook—The Cedar Industry
 Smithtown – Historic Wharf
 Jerseyville – Old ferry crossing site
 Gladstone – The Gladstone Memorial Park

From the Visitor Information Centre travel along the Pacific Highway to the Kempsey Traffic Bridge. Veer left after the traffic bridge at the traffic lights and turn left into John Street, and then left into Eden Street to Riverside Park where there are three signs.

The Macleay River

A brief outline of the Macleay Valley and the influence of the river on the people who lived here.

The Dunghutti People

Traces of the early history of the Dunghutti people who were living here at the time of the arrival of the European settlers.

Early Kempsey

Outlines one of the early milestones after the settlement by Enoch Rudder in 1836. His house was built on the hill directly across the river from this sign.

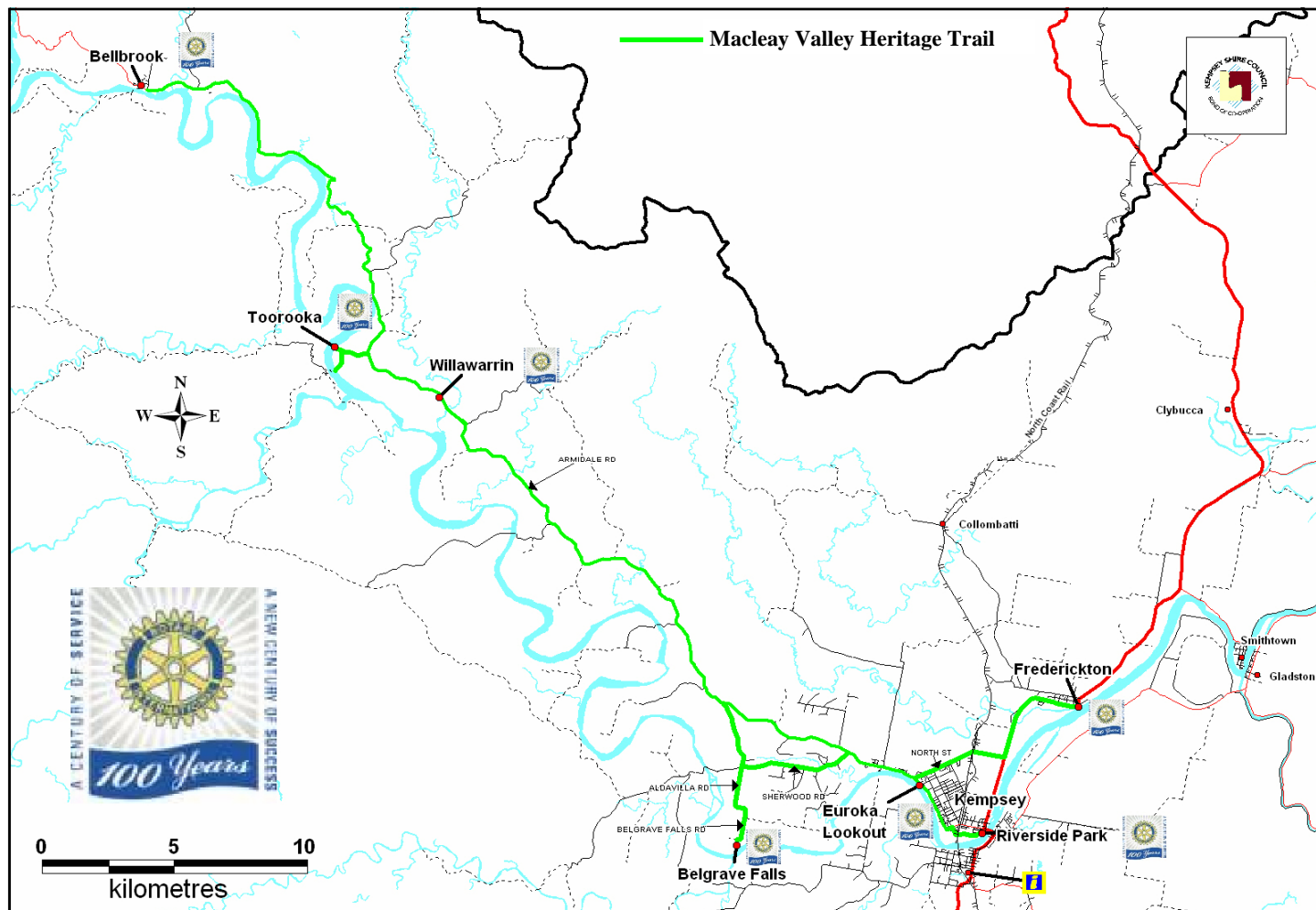
Maritime Heritage Trail—walk downstream from the signs and follow the signs about the vessels that plied the Macleay River

Take the exit adjacent the Riverside Public Toilets and turn left into Eden Street. Continue along Eden Street following the river and under the Railway viaduct. Continue and follow the sweeping bend right which leads into Tozer Street. At the next intersection, Tozer and Elbow Streets turn left into Elbow Street. Follow Elbow Street and turn right into River Street. Continue along River Street which follows the river passing on your right the West Kempsey Cemetery and Kempsey District Hospital. One block past the hospital pull over to the left opposite the Leith Street intersection to the Euroka Lookout.

Euroka Lookout

The lookout looks across the Macleay River towards the hills. These rich alluvial flats were once covered with brush forest. After clearing by European settlers the flats provided ideal growing conditions for maize, beef and dairy cattle.

Proceed along River Street to Sherwood Road and turn left into Sherwood Road. Continue, passing on your left Ronella Drive, Airport Road and The Ponds Way. Turn left at the crossroads into Aldavilla Road passing the Mid North Coast Correctional Centre on your left. At the next junction turn right into Belgrave Falls Road and continue to the junction with Wards Road for the



Belgrave Falls sign. The Macleay Historical Society have a cairn here that tells about the Border Police Station.

Belgrave Falls

There are no falls on the river at this point but there was a ford which was used by early groups coming from the Port Macquarie settlement. The area was originally surveyed for the township of Kempsey and boasted the headquarters of the Border Police until 1847. The sign is at the junction of Belgrave Falls and Wards Road. (There is no wet weather access to the river)

Retrace your route back to the cross roads of Aldavilla, Link and Sherwood Roads. Cross over Aldavilla Road and continue along Link Road passing the Stuart McIntyre Dam on your right. At the intersection of Armidale Road and Link Road turn left into Armidale Road. Continue towards Willawarrin for 18 kms, passing on your left the turn offs to Turners Flat Bridge

and Temagog Bridge where there are pleasant picnic spots beside the river. As you enter the village of Willawarrin you will pass the entrance to the Willawarrin Sportsground on your left. In the Sportsground is a tribute to 'Abbey' the famous Australian Stockhorse. The next sign on the Heritage Trail is situated beside the Willawarrin Hall.

Willawarrin

Until a name change in 1899, Willawarrin was known as Lower Hickeys Creek. The first bridge was built over Hickeys Creek in 1881. St Johns Catholic Church was built in 1896 while St Thomas's Anglican Church was erected in 1906. The local hall was used for many notable travelling shows such as Slim Dusty and Barry Thornton.

Continue approximately 8.7 kilometres along the Armidale Road to the turn off on the left to Toorooka Village (1.1 kms). The Upper Macleay Dairy Factory (Private) is situated