

HERITAGE WALK

OF HIGH STREET, RUSHWORTH

1. MEMORIAL CLOCK TOWER

A project of the local Returned Services League, the Clock Tower was built to commemorate the fallen from the Great War. It was officially opened by the then Victorian Governor, Lord Stradbroke, in 1923.

2. FIRE BELL TOWER

The first Fire Bell was located on top of the original Band Rotunda however many volunteers, across the township, were unable to hear it clearly. When the band Rotunda was rebuilt for the Federation celebrations in 1901, the decision was made to give the bell its own tower in High Street.

It was hand welded at Brideson's Blacksmith shop in Moora Road and brought to the site on bullock drays. There were many problems encountered in setting the tower upright and, in the end, it took strong cabling and a Steam Traction Engine to hoist it into place.

3. MECHANICS INSTITUTE

Built in 1913, it was the second to be built for that purpose. The arrival of the railway in 1890 resulted in some substantial changes to the town. The commercial centre at the southern end of High Street slowly shifted north along High Street and then spread out along Moora Road.

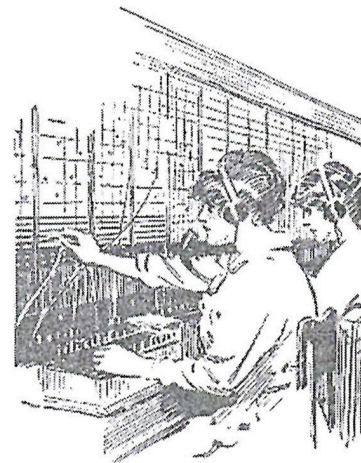


The extension of the railway to Colbinabbin just prior to World War I caused an upset, as shops and buildings had to be demolished to make way for the line.

One of those was the Mechanics Institute, which had been built in 1898. It was destroyed, and then re-built, less than 100 feet away.

4. POST OFFICE

Until 1886, Postal Services in the town had been managed by a local Post master – usually also a shopkeeper – out of their place of business. This purpose built building also became the site of Rushworth's telephone exchange which was established in 1908 with nine



subscribers who could only call each other (they could not call outside of the town).

5. DR HEILY'S HOUSE & SURGERY

Born and educated in Ireland, Dr Heily came to Rushworth in 1865 to locate his brother Digby and found him doing trick somersaults on horseback as part of a circus parade in High Street.

Dr Heily decided to stay and set up a General Practice, which he carried on for almost 60 years. His specialization was midwifery and, during that time, its said that he delivered more than 4,000 babies without the loss of a mother's life.

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH & MANSE

First established on this site in the 1859, the present Church was built in 1892 and the Manse – or residence – at the rear of the property, was built in 1925. Prior to the building of the band Rotunda the Church Bell was used as the first fire bell.

6. RUSHWORTH HOTEL

Built in 1878 by Thomas Wootton, the hotel was originally known as the 'Cricketers Arms'. It may seem to be an unusual name, however, prior to the arrival of

the railway in 1890, the town's recreation reserve was only a short walk away covering much of what is now Station Street. Also, Thomas's two sons, Dick and Harry, were excellent local cricketers – even playing in a district team against the visiting English side, at Benalla.

- RUSHWORTH P-12

The main school building is recorded by the National Trust. It was built of local Rushworth brick in 1872 as school No. 1057 and was extended in 1900 and 1922 to accommodate the growing needs of the township. It's now part of a Prep to Year 12 campus.

- RUSHWORTH CEMETERY

Next to the school is the Rushworth Cemetery which was opened in 1861. Prior to its creation, a smaller, informal cemetery, known as the 'Old Burial Place' was used. The burial place can still be seen at the South end of town, on the road to Whroo.

7. THE WINE CAFE

This vacant block has, for many years, been the site of the Easter Wood Days which raises money for local groups. From the late 1880s through into the 1900s, the building that occupied this site was a Wine Café which, at one point, was owned and operated by Ned Kelly's younger sister Ellen and her husband Walter Knight.

8. SHOPPING PRECINCT

The shops in this area of town benefited greatly from the arrival of the railway to Rushworth in 1890 and the shopping precinct expanded to meet the needs of residents and visitors. On the corner is 'The Arcade', built by the Ristrom's in 1900.

Further along, the present newsagents was built in 1887 as Mrs Rosevear's Yeomanry store and boarding house.

The extension of the railway to Colbinabbin led to the demolition of three shops known as 'The Block' and, further to the back, Taylor's grain store and the site of a proposed flour mill.

9. THE CHRONICLE OFFICE

Rushworth's first local newspaper, The Waranga Echo, was started in 1868 but only lasted for one year. In 1869, Charles Robinson founded the Waranga Chronicle and was its editor and chief journalist for more than 30 years.

The newspaper moved to this purpose built building in 1888. It not only housed the journalists but also the steam powered printing press on which the newspaper was published.

10. MILLER'S STORE

Miller's was the Myer's of its day. Founded by Alexander Miller during the Gold Rush, the Miller's chain of stores had premises in London and Melbourne and across country Victoria. The original store was up on the hill near the Criterion.

This building dates from the late 1800s and includes storage sheds and a cellar that is said to be almost as big as the shop itself.

11. THE EXCHANGE HOTEL

This was originally the site of J.H. Roberts' Exchange Store which, at one time, also served as the Post Office when Mr Roberts held the position of Post master for the town.

In the late 1800s he was successful in his application for a Pub license and it became a hotel. As the Exchange Hotel, the business continued into the

1950s, under various owners until it was demolished to make way for the Shire Offices.

12. THE GLASGOW BUILDINGS

After trying his luck as a miner, John Galloway Stewart, set up a store with David Corbett in 1858, naming it after his birth place of Glasgow.

In 1911, his son, James Burt Stewart, who was born at the residence behind the store, established the present building.



At the time, confidence in the growth of Rushworth was so strong that the foundations were made three feet thick with the expectation that they would have to hold a second storey extension at some point.

The building was divided into a number of shops of offices and, over the years, housed everything from a solicitor, to a bookmaker and a jeweler.

13. O'DONNELL'S STORE

This was the site of Henry Hicks' saddlery and also operated as the Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages while Mr. Hicks held the position of local Registrar. Most people in Rushworth know the building as 'O'Donnell's store' after one its last, and longest serving proprietors, Mrs. O'Donnell. The 'Robur' sign on the side of the building dates from the early 1900s and is a popular background for wedding photographs.

14. THE CRITERION

Its believed that a pub of the same has been operating on this site since the start of the goldrush in 1853. The present bar area was the site of the original weatherboard pub building owned by John Brideson and his wife Hannah.

In the early 1890s the Brideson children mortgaged the property to provides the funds to built the two storey, brick, corner section that you can see today. The new building had a bar at the front (in the present bottle shop) and a billiards room in the west wing.

15. MILLER HOMES

Alexander Miller, who established the Miller store, bequeathed, upon his death in 1914, the sum of 170,000 pounds and requested that annuities be set aside for every



town in which he had a store. The Miller Homes, managed by Trustees of the Estate, were built in 1919 to

provide assisted housing for older residents of the town. They are still in use today.

16. COY & ANDERSON'S BLACKSMITH

Partner's Coy and Anderson ran a mixed business on this site which

extended back along Horne Street. It was a blacksmith's but also a wheelwrights and hired saddles and harnesses. The premises next door—believed to be the present Community House—was known as the 'Coffin House' because the pair were undertakers as well.



17. SHIRE HALL

Built in 1869, the Hall was designed by Bendigo architects Varland & Getzschmann who were also responsible for the Echuca Town hall, the Fortuna building in Bendigo and the Rushworth School.

The building was extended to the West and South in 1883 and was the meeting place and offices of the Shire of Waranga.

The foundation stone of the building was stolen in July, 1868, never to be seen again.

- POLICE CAMP & COURT HOUSE

This entire block was the site of the original Police Camp that was established in 1853 at the height of the gold rush. The first 'lock up' was made from thick tree trunks laid horizontally, to form a rectangle and was known as 'The Logs'.

The first Court House was little more than a cramped wooden hut and, in 1869, when the Shire Hall was opened, the Court, along with its furniture and fittings moved in.

A purpose built Court House was finally completed in the 1870s and today it houses tourist information and displays.

- ST PAUL'S

St. Paul's Anglican Church was built on land granted to the Church in 1856. The original timber Church was replaced by the present building in the 1870s.

- THE WHISTLE POST

The Whistle Post is the only sign classified by the National Trust as an object of interest. Its purpose was to remind the drivers of the steam traction engines that were used for wood carting in the forest to stop and blow their whistles to warn approaching horse-drawn vehicles that they were about to proceed along the narrow part of the road.

18. THOMPSON'S HOTEL

Where the present road meets High Street is the site of Thompson's Hotel which served the Police Camp during the gold rush. It was later owned by the Darby family who added a cordial factory to the building.

19. IMPERIAL HOTEL

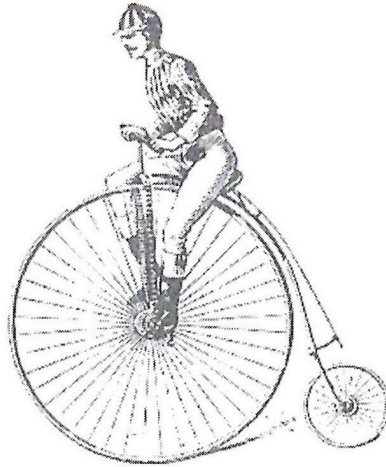
Along with the Criterion, the Imperial is one of the oldest Pubs in the district and it dates from the height of the Gold Rush in the mid-1850s. The building itself is believed to date from the 1858, however, there are reports of a fire which may have led to parts of it having to be rebuilt. The Pub ceased trading early in the 1900s and has been a private residence since that time.

20 & 21 OLD BANKS

(First one) The former Commercial Bank Of Victoria was built in 1883. Next door, was the original Bank Building which began as the Oriental Bank in 1873. The position of both of the older banks at the this end of High Street shows how the town slowly developed and moved down towards Moora Road. Both banks are now private residences.

22. CRACKNELL'S BAKER SHOP

This building is one of the oldest surviving shops in the district, it began as a store in the 1856 and was sold to William Cracknell, the baker, in 1863. During



Cracknell's time a specialty was their hot pies sold to late night shoppers on Saturdays. It is now a private residence.

23. WIGG'S BREWERY

In 1856, Wolton Wigg's established his 'Phoenix' Brewery on this site and continued through until the 1880s when he sold the business to the newly formed Rushworth Brewery Company. The company built an imposing four storey brewery on the site complete

with a tower and flagpole that was 50 foot above the street. Underground water tanks took rainwater from the massive roof and the storage cellars could hold 80 hogsheads of beer (5,400 gallons) more than four times that of the original brewery. It was bought by Mapleback's in 1905 for their 'Diamond' beer brand and, in the early 1900s, as the brewing business declined, the building was demolished for the present store. The slate under the verandah were originally flagstones from the brewery cellar floor.

- BAND ROTUNDA

Wolton Wigg was also responsible for the new Band Rotunda that was re-built for the celebration of Federation in 1901. The original Rotunda, constructed for the Queen's Jubilee, in 1888, was raised up to allow the Fire Brigade's hose and reel to be stored there. The site was also home to Wolton Wigg's first business, a butcher's shop, in 1854.

- BRICE'S ROYAL HOTEL

The Aged Care Hostel stands on the site of another former Rushworth Hotel—Brice's Royal, which was built in 1868. Next door was an Auction Yard which was used as a short cut by those wanting to go from High Street to the Murchison Road. However, they had to be brave to do so at night—the Auction Yard was sometimes used to store bodies prior to Inquests and was rumored to be haunted.

