

What a find

281

Owen Owens,
bootsalesman, commenced
business from this site
in 1885



Historical Walk

bridge rd richmond



Bridge Road Richmond Historical Walk

Compiled by Claire Levi & The Richmond Historical Society



You have probably come to Bridge Road to shop – and why not?

It is an area renowned for great shopping. But are you aware that this road has a history dating back to 1837 – just two years after the European settlement of the colony of Victoria?

The first land sales took place on 1 August, 1839. It's hard to imagine that Bridge Road was once so rural as the trams rattle by and the cars stream past.

The rural past and the developing community that was Richmond were reflected in the types of shops that were established along the road. The many clothes shops and cafes once housed an amazing variety of businesses from hay and corn stores, groceries, tin smiths, hotels, factories and butchers to surgeries.



This walk is designed in conjunction with building plaques and larger signs. Its intention is to give you a glimpse into the development of a street with a long history.

Although the walk is not designed to take a specific direction, this guide is arranged to start from the corner of Hoddle Street and Bridge Road.

The walk is approximately 2km long and would take 1 hour and 30 minutes to complete.

Urban Arts Square

You are standing in what was once the Melbourne Tram and omnibus Company's Cable House.

All that remains are the red brick walls against one of which a sculpture stands.

2-4 Bridge Road (cnr Punt Rd)

(Admiral) Napier/Office Hotel

Named after British naval hero Admiral Sir Charles Napier, this handsome early Richmond hotel was first licensed on 20 September 1854.

Only one pub remains in this section of Bridge Road but once there were eight.

55 Bridge Road

The buildings you are standing in front of are modern and in respect of many of the building sites in this strip of road, building was relatively recent.

Prior to the first building, this site was vacant land being part of the estate of William Highett.

He was an influential man in both the affairs of Richmond and the colony of Victoria. His mansion, 'Yalcowinna', eventually became subsumed into the Epworth Hospital.

70 Bridge Road

Mountain View Hotel

When the first licensee, Thomas Ambrose, applied for his licence on 7 June 1871, the hotel was still not completed; the application was postponed and the licence finally granted on 5 July.



72 Bridge Road (cnr Rotherwood St)

This “threepenny dram-shop”, established from a “philanthropic desire” that Richmond’s poor and needy might not be debarred from the luxury of indulging in a drop of “chain-lighting” (gin), was first licensed on Michael Hegarty on 12 July, 1965.

90 Bridge Road (cnr Verity St)

Despite two petitions lodged against it, a licence for the Bay View Hotel was granted to the owner John Holmes, saddler, on 27 May 1874.

John Dodgshun, one of the main objectors, considered the house “entirely unnecessary”, there being two licensed grocers, three public houses and a wine shop nearby.

Dodgshun’s objections was slightly suspect, since “he had bought a mansion opposite and did not want the air polluted by a public house”.

124-6 Bridge Road

In this site stood a blacksmithing forge. It is difficult to imagine, but there were once several forges in the street.

As horses were the main form of transport, businesses were established that serviced that need: forges, stables, saddleries and feed stores.

Two doors from here, at 141 Bridge Road (cnr of Lennox Street), is a shop that sold saddles until the early 1970s.



132 Bridge Road (cnr of Lennox St)

This was once Toole Bros grocery store and is one of the few three storey buildings in the street. This building is a reminder of the economic boom of the 1880s when Richmond, and indeed all of Melbourne, was experiencing massive growth. Grand buildings were erected to demonstrate their owners’ wealth, as a result of the gold rushes.

137 Bridge Road

You are standing outside the premises where Martha Needle committed murder for which she was hanged. Martha Needle, her husband & three daughters moved to Richmond in 1885.

The eldest daughter died in 1885 and Martha’s husband followed in 1889. The second eldest daughter followed in 1890 and the youngest the following year. During this time she made friends with Otto Yuncken – a saddler who had premises at 137 Bridge Road. Martha moved in as housekeeper in 1892.

By May 1892 Otto and Martha had become engaged. His brother, Louis, opposed the union and by August 1893, he was exhibiting peculiar symptoms, Louis was dead by May, 1894. The symptoms were misdiagnosed and so a post-mortem was not carried out.

Then a second brother, Herman started to become ill. The doctor was puzzled by the symptoms, and asked Otto to keep a sample of the next vomit. Traces of arsenic were detected. The arsenic was obtained from a readily available source ‘Rough on Rats’.

Having become suspicious, the police and Herman set a trap for Martha whereby she would make him a cup of tea. It was taken and analysed and found to contain enough poison to kill five men. At this the other bodies were exhumed and traces of arsenic were detected in each. However, Martha was only convicted for Louis’ murder.

After a four day trial, Martha was hanged at the Old Melbourne Goal on 22 October, 1894 at 30 years of age.



West Richmond

< To the City



14

15

16

17

18

61

19

20

21

Hoddle St

Lennox St

Church St

Copin St

Burnley St

Bridge Road

Richmond

Swan St



Public Toilets



Public Car Park (fee payable)



Tram Line



Tram Stop

Tram Routes

- 48 Docklands - Bridge Road - Nth Balwyn
- 75 City - Bridge Road - East Burwood
- 78 Prahran - North Richmond
- 79 St. Kilda Beach - North Richmond

Trains

Epping & Hurstbridge lines

Train Stations

- West Richmond
- Richmond
- East Richmond
- Burnley

138-144 Bridge Road

Wustemanns Buildings

These four buildings remain from a block of seven. They were built for Wustemann and his name is contained in part of the architectural detail on the grandest facade of all. The second storey of this group of shops are representative of Edwardian commercial buildings.

166 Bridge Road

On the left hand side of the interwar shopfront window is a mirror advertising Reynella wines. This building was a wine shop for many years from 1912-1962/3.

168-176 Bridge Road

Love and Pollards

This large building was once a department store which began trading as a drapery. Called Love and Lewis and then Love and Pollards, it was a Richmond institution. The building was constructed in the early 1900s.

Love and Pollards closed in 1973 and the building was refurbished in 1995.



177 Bridge Road

The large building with three shops on the ground floor was once the National Theatre established in 1911 by Thomas Hodges.

194 Bridge Road

This building is the former Australia Hotel, previously known as the Start and Garter. It was a popular watering hole for the locals and visitors.

Behind the hotel in a small stable, Joseph Bosisto began to distil eucalyptus oil. This was only site on which Bosisto had a factory. The distinctive parrot brand is still available today.

241 Bridge Road

This shop is the site of the Richmond Australian newspaper office. The paper was established in 1858 and ran until 1919.

243-247 Bridge Road

Robert Dickason emigrated from England having served a coach building apprenticeship there. In 1856, he had two staff but by 1888 the staff averaged thirty. The large factory made landaus, broughams, phaetons, brougham-hansoms, mourning coaches, hearses and buggies. Dickasons of different generations operated the coach building business from 1856 until 1928.

246 Bridge Road (cnr of Church St)

Commercial Hotel

First licensed in 1959 to Charles Stewart. The licence was cancelled in May 1862 when the licensee, Thomas Le Sauteur, became insolvent.





254 Bridge Road (cnr of Church St)

Grapes Inn / Vine Hotel

Apparently first licensed in 1853 to Richard Murphy as the Grapes Inn. The original “ambitious” brick and wooden structure was badly damaged by fire on 8 Jan.

The hotel was rebuilt and relicensed as the Vine on 17 Apr. 1955. The hotel has undergone many alterations since those days. In 1889, “beautifications” included a “pretty arbour” at the back, covered in trellis work and greenery.

288 Bridge Road (cnr Lyndhurst St)

Town Hall (Club) Hotel

On 12 Aug. 1871, the Richmond Australian reported that ex-Councillor John Sheedy had bought land in Bridge Road where he intended to erect a public house. Sheedy made many attempts to license this hotel.

Residents having petitioned that a further hotel was not required, as there were already five licensed houses in the immediate area. Also, local manufacturers said the hotel would interfere with business by leading astray the young lads they employed and making it difficult to employ respectable females.

The licence finally was granted to lessee Patrick Prendergast on 21 Dec. 1875, owner Mr Sheedy having retired from the fray.



372 Bridge Road (cnr Coppin St)

Spread Eagle Hotel

Robert Allan’s luxurious new Spread Eagle, replacing a “decaying” weatherboard building sited further east, was opened with some ceremony on 14 Dec. 1885. Designed by leading Richmond architect J.A.B. Koch, it featured “the most modern ideas of comfort and convenience”. Mrs Mary Allan, an experienced and financially astute hotel proprietor, took over the licence in 1888 and retained it until her retirement in 1914.

470 Bridge Road (cnr Neptune St)

Dover Castle

William Andrew Hay’s first two applications for a licence for this “new house” in early April 1870 were refused, due to lack of adequate accommodation. Hays apparently added the required extra rooms, for the licence was finally granted on 27 Apr. 1870. A new brick hotel of 11 rooms was built on the site in 1878. Hays held the licence for some 15 years, until his death on 17 Aug. 1885.

527 Bridge Road (cnr Burnley St - North Side)

Royal Oak Hotel

First licensed to owner Robert (‘stuttering Bob’) Love on 7 July 1866, the original two storey brick hotel was destroyed by fire on Historical Walk 17 3 Apr. 1872. Later that month, Eliza Antisell, the wife of the then licensee, ex-policeman Richmond Antisell, was summoned by Love as having threatened “to burn the bl-y place down”, and was conveyed to Melbourne Gaol. The hotel was rebuilt by early June.

642 Bridge Road (cnr Westbank Terrace)

Bridge Hotel

On 30 Apr. 1870, an application by Edmund Cotter for a transfer of the licence for the Bridge Hotel “to the neighbouring premises recently built by him” was granted.

This hotel, the present Bridge, has had a chequered career over the years, One licensee George Clark, who “had a rough time of it”, the larrikins who frequented the neighbourhood – a constant problem in Bridge Road because

of the lack of adequate police protection.

On 9 March 1882, Clark was struck over the head with a stick by an “erratic” patron and to repel his assailant, he fired a shot from a small pistol he kept and hit the man in the leg.

The wound was minor, but the injured man, Henry Jones, died as a result of blood poisoning. The coroner’s jury committed Clark for trial on a charge of manslaughter; he eventually was found not guilty and discharged.

Clark was admonished from having had the pistol on the premises.



649 Bridge Road (cnr River Street - North Side)

Amora Hotel Riverwalk

Richmond’s newest hotel, a four-star luxury complex, opened on 10 May, 1991. The Metro stands on the site of the old cable-tram shed and incorporates the facade of that historic building in its design. The landscaped gardens of the O’Connell Reserve, with the recently erected rotunda, slope down to the Yarra River and make a pleasant resting-place to end this walk.