

HERITAGE SITES

Take your time to stroll along the stone paved footpaths and corridors while you explore the many fascinating heritage sites the township of Morpeth has to offer.

1 127 Swan Street

The Commercial Hotel took over from the Farmers United Home Hotel which traded from 1865.

Proving a very popular venue for many a visitor to Morpeth the hotel is also famous for having several female licensees over the years including Abigail McKee, Julia Mullens and Eliza Sucker.



2 130 Swan Street

Former **Taylor's Bond Store** with stone stairs leading up from the wharf, was built between the 1850s and 1860s. Caleb Saul, a chemist, worked here and sold the strongest rum in the colony.



3 123-125 Swan Street

Morpeth Court House, now a Museum, bestowed justice from 1862 to c.1950. Being drunk and disorderly earned seven days in the lock-up. The public clock at the Court House was a great benefit because few people had timepieces.



4 107-109 Swan Street

Site of **Duncan Sim and family's iron and brass foundry** from the 1850s to 1926.

Sixty men once worked here casting iron lace, columns, agricultural machinery and domestic appliances.



5 105 Swan Street

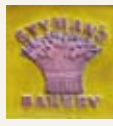
Morpeth Post and Telegraph Office opened in this grand building in 1881 after operating in the courthouse since the 1860's.

Before that, the post office was at today's Illalung Park.



6 99 Swan Street

The sandstone plinths are evidence of a former shop's verandah. From the 1860s to c.1917 **William Styman the baker** used the shop, which was formerly John Portus' Flour Store.



7 97 Swan Street

River Royal Hotel opened in 1876 and catered for shipping and railway workers and passengers arriving at the wharves and station.

Morpeth now has two hotels... in 1867 there were eleven.



8 90 Swan Street

Morpeth Railway Station 1889-1953. The platform is several metres lower at the rear.

Passengers awaited their trains in separate male and female waiting rooms in the station building which has been used by the Public Works Department since 1959.



9 7 Robert Street

Morpeth Trading Post houses old machinery that was part of JG White's furniture and bedding factory.

White and his sons carried on the business from the 1840s until the 1920s.



10 73-75 Swan Street

Marlborough House and its beautiful garden were built for Mary and James Taylor.

The property passed to Dr Bennett, the first of many Morpeth doctors who have lived here. Dr Bennett also had Morpeth's first motorcar.



11 69 Swan Street Workers Cottages.

In the mid-19th century several single storey double cottages in Swan Street housed the families of workers who were employed at the shipping company wharves or on the railway.



12 High St, Cnr of George St.

Morpeth Police Station with residence and stables was built in 1879.

The entrance verandah with seven distinctive arches added architectural richness to the eastern part of the town.



13 36-46 High Street

Morpeth Public School replaced about six early private or church schools.

The first building was erected in 1866. The large allotment once contained a school farm which the children cultivated.



14 41 High Street Former Methodist Parsonage.

The first Methodist chapel and school opened in 1846. However in the 1860s a larger church was needed and the parsonage was built. The parsonage became a private residence in the 1970s.



15 76 High Street 'Earlsdon' is a second-generation Portus family home.

Engineer John Portus Snr. established the region's first central flourmill, which his sons took over in 1855. **The Portus family** were prominent citizens of Morpeth & district.



16 78-80 High Street

Known as **Sim's Cottages**, this duplex dwelling provided accommodation for foundry workers' families. Sim's Foundry made cast iron lace and pillars such as is used to ornament the verandahs of the cottages.



17 85 High Street

The former **Astor Theatre** was previously a church and a school.

The **Astor Theatre** provided a venue for entertainment, from silent movies to cinemascope (1921-1964) as well as fetes, fairs, shows and balls.



18 106-108 High Street **Murphy's House** was built by successful Morpeth contractor and hotelier Mr Murphy.

The elegant two-unit residence with decorative verandahs was first occupied by merchants and businesspeople.



19 110 High Street

Morpeth School of Arts opened in 1863 with ideals about fostering the moral, social and intellectual growth of the community. A committee room here served as **Morpeth Council Chambers** from 1865 to 1944.



20 Tank Street

St James Anglican Church was the spiritual heart of the Morpeth estate granted to EC Close in 1821. Close, a former soldier who fought in the Napoleonic wars, built the church in 1837 as an offering of thanks for his life spared in war.



21 175 Swan Street

Campbell's Store opened here in 1867 and was one of the leading general stores in the northern districts.

Campbell had special tokens made for use instead of money. Today these coins are rare and valuable.



22 171-173 Swan Street

Surgeon's House was built c.1850 for Elizabeth Hillier and her husband Dr Francis Bennett. Her father John owned the land from Green Street to Tank Street and also the old Morpeth Hotel.



23 153-163 Swan Street

Ingall's Terrace of several top-quality shops and dwellings demonstrates Richard Ingall's success as a businessman in Morpeth's heyday. Many specialty shops have traded here since opening in 1862.



24 149 Swan Street

The former **CBC Bank** with manager's residence upstairs was designed by architects Mansfield Bros. and erected in 1889. The impressive building both enriched and reflected the prosperity of Morpeth in the 1880s.



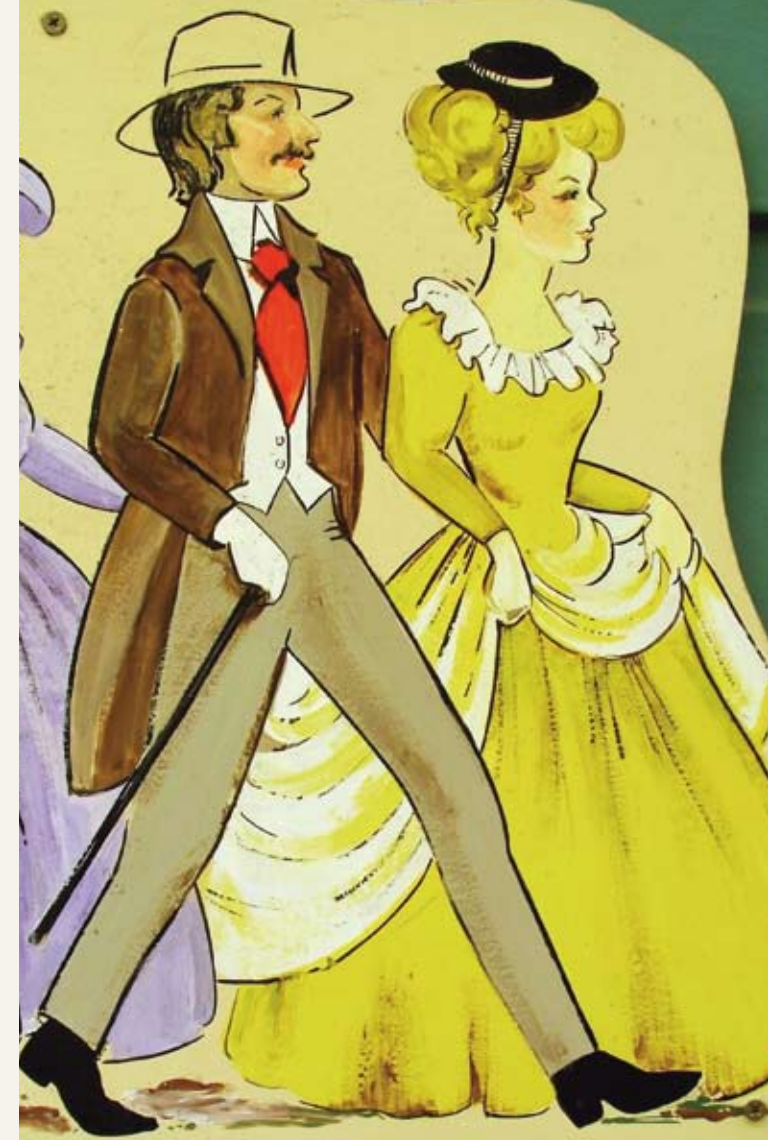
25 148 Swan Street

The historic **Arnott Bakehouse**, at the rear of the 1850s shop, is the bakery occupied by the famous Arnott brothers during the early 1860s. From Arnott's ships biscuits to **Morpeth Sourdough** 140 years later; now another Arnott's bakery operated by descendant Stephen Arnott.



Information contained within this publication was accurate at June 2007. Whilst every endeavour has been made to ensure the absolute accuracy of this information publishers cannot be held responsible for any consequences resulting from misleading or inadvertent errors contained herein.

Photos courtesy of Morpeth Museum, Noel Butlin Archives and Trevor Richards. Many thanks to historian Cynthia Hunter & artists Pam Sinnott and Sandra Burgess.



HERITAGE WALK
& MORPETH

MORPETH

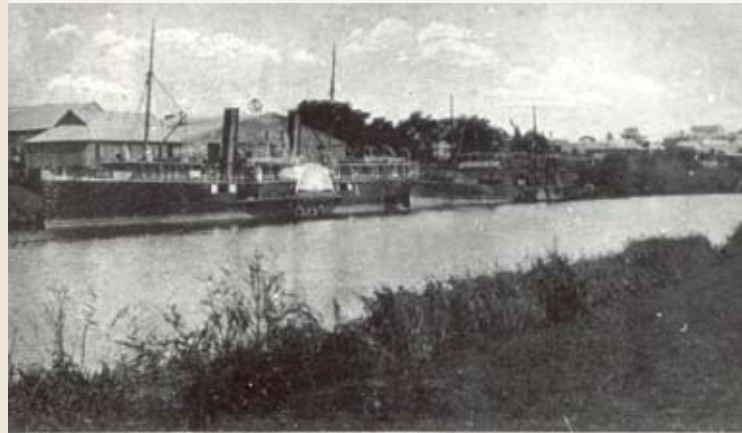
The river port township of *Morpeth* is steeped in history with European settlement dating from early 1800s. Know by its Aboriginal name *"Illalung"* *Morpeth* was part of a land grant made to Lieutenant Edward Charles Close by Governor Brisbane in 1821. Influenced by its desirable location on the Hunter River and the realisation of the area's immense potential, by the 1830s *Morpeth* had evolved from a riverside forest to a frontier town and busy river port. During its time as a major agricultural and industrial hub *Morpeth* contributed to the development of the entire Hunter Valley. Whilst no longer home to primary industry, the *Morpeth* of today continues to thrive with many visitors exploring the township each year.

PRECINCT – 1 *Queen's Wharf*

Morpeth's role as one of the most important river ports in NSW began in the 1820s as a landing place at the limit of ship navigation on the Hunter River. The government built a public wharf here and a road to East Maitland. *Queen's Wharf* was used by settlers, merchants, mariners, timber getters and farmers.

Trade and commerce increased in the 1860s due to a branch railway built from the northern line to the wharf. *Queen's Wharf* closed in the 1920s as motor transport replaced shipping.

The area has now become a place of recreation. Queens Wharf can be found at the bottom of Queens Wharf Road (opposite Tank Street).



Minson Copyright. The Newcastle and Hunter River S.S. Co's Morpeth Wharf and S.S. SAMBO and ANCHOR.

Morpeth is situated on the banks of the Hunter River, about two hours drive from Sydney. In the 19th century, Morpeth was the gateway to the inland and one of the busiest river ports in New South Wales.

PRECINCT – 2 *St James Church*

St James Anglican Church, rectory and former school, built between 1837 and 1845, imparted a Christian focus to the village of Morpeth.

Close, a former soldier built a large home, *Closebourne*, which the first Bishop of Newcastle, William Tyrrell took as headquarters for the Anglican Diocese. Renamed *Bishopscourt*, four subsequent bishops occupied the well appointed residence until 1912. Close built another home called *Morpeth House*, which became part of the St Johns Ministry Centre that opened in the 1920s.

Of great aesthetic value, in the 1890s Bishop Stanton planted the avenue of Brush Box trees between *Bishopscourt* & the church. (Cnr High & Tank Streets)



PRECINCT – 3 *Roman Catholic*

Morpeth's Catholic precinct remains a prominent architectural legacy in the eastern part of town although the first church and school, the first presbytery and the convent are now privately owned.

In the 1860s St Bede's church and a school conducted by Mercy Sisters opened. The first parish priest, who served the Catholic community from 1875 to 1929, was Father Corcoran. A notable memorial over his grave stands in the church grounds.

The new Catholic Church of the Immaculate Conception stands high on the James and George Streets corner: Built in 1898, the tower and tall spire can be seen from a great distance.

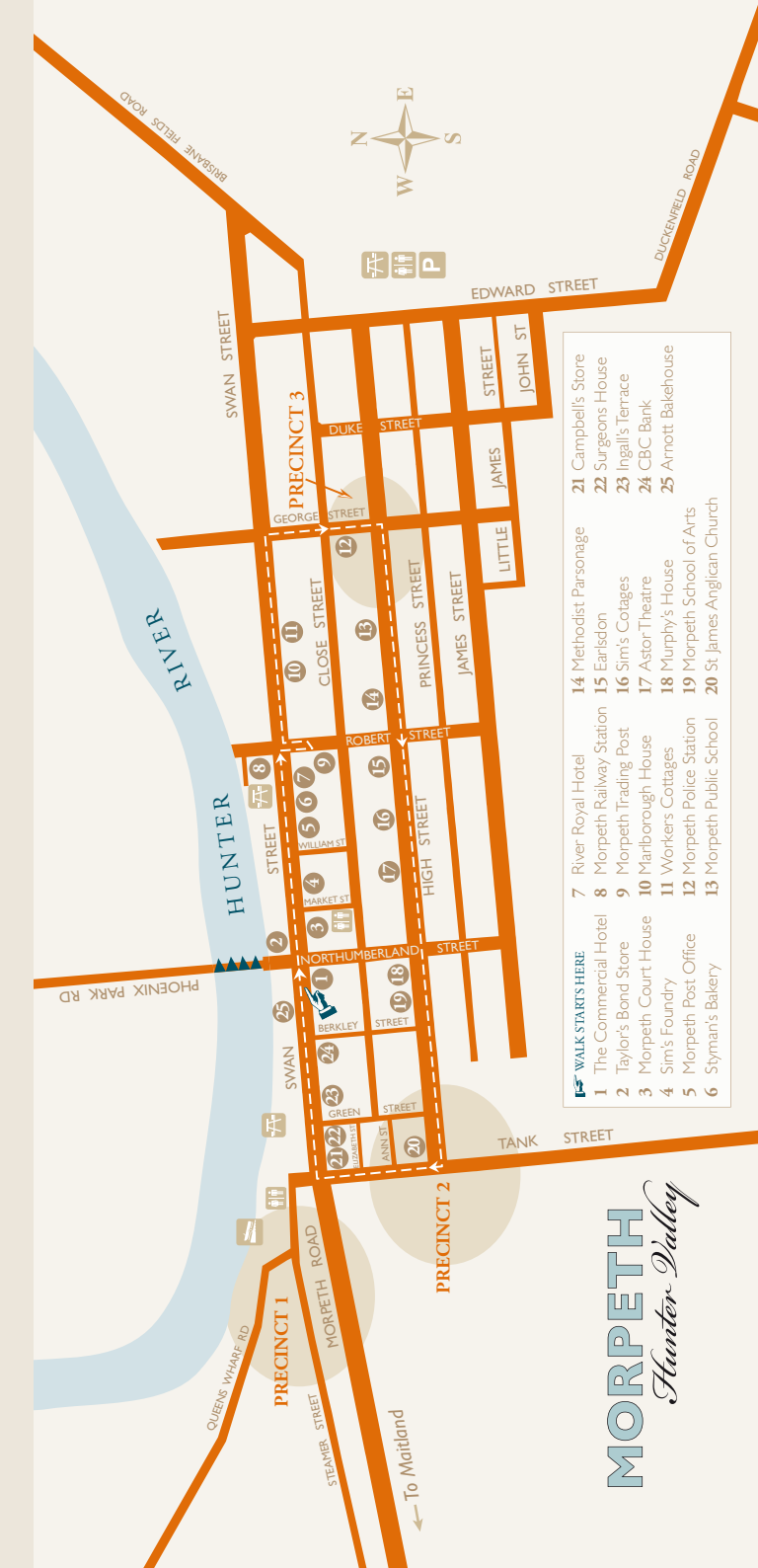
MORE to MORPETH

- In 1873 there were at least 21 storekeepers who agreed to close their stores at 1 o'clock on Saturdays in response to the *'Half-Saturday Movement'*
- Jim Chambers lived in an old cottage on the current Morpeth Pharmacy site. He trained racehorses which were kept in a large shed in the back yard. His best horse, *Posinatus* won the Melbourne Cup in 1913. The horse, when retired from racing, was given to Father Corcoran to ride around his parish.
- Morpeth* was incorporated as a municipality on 1 December 1865. The first work was surveying the streets and footpaths and determining their boundaries. In 1867 the council called for tenders for 2,000 yards of kerbstones and 8,000 yards of gutter stones which were cut from the local quarries.

The *Morpeth Heritage Walk* is an initiative of Maitland Tourism and Maitland City Council.

For further information – Maitland Visitor Information Centre
Cnr New England Highway & High Street, Maitland.
www.maitlandhuntervalley.com.au or 02 4931 2800.

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