



GUNDAGAI

HERITAGE WALK

ARCHITECTURAL



ABOUT GUNDAGAI

For thousands of years this picturesque part of the Murrumbidgee River was an important ceremonial, hunting and crossing point for the Wiradjuri people. By the 1820's British explorers documented this crossing point. Being the main route from Sydney to the newly discovered grazing lands, the Victorian goldfields and Port Phillip (Melbourne), a town soon sprung up which was colloquially known as the 'Crossing Place'. This was despite repeated warnings by the Wiradjuri people of the risk of large floods. Gundagai was officially gazetted in 1840.

On the night of June 24, 1852 the flooded Murrumbidgee raged through the small township, drowning more than one third of the 250 inhabitants, an unknown number of travellers, and destroying 71 buildings. The heroic actions of a number of Wiradjuri men saved many lives. Yarri and Jacky in particular, spent the wild night ferrying men, women and children to safety from the rooftops and branches of giant river red gums. The medallions presented to these Wiradjuri heroes were lost for many years but are now proudly on display in the Gundagai Museum. After the flood there was argument about where to rebuild the town - North Gundagai was chosen as it provided more guaranteed access for visiting officials (e.g. judges) in high rivers. You will notice that many of the old buildings are located on the original main route through town and all are well out of the flood zone.

Rich agriculture and gold mining made Gundagai both prosperous and a centre for bushranging, giving the town a romantic bush appeal that resulted in it becoming a byword for outback towns in Australia. Many outback stories, songs and poems reference Gundagai, including Jack O'Hagan's songs 'Where the Dog Sits on the Tuckerbox', 'Along the Road to Gundagai' and 'When a Boy from Alabama Meets a Girl from Gundagai'. Even the likes of Banjo Patterson were inspired by stories of drovers, bullock teams and bush travellers around Gundagai.

Gundagai is, of course, most famous for its monument to the early pioneers, the iconic Dog on the Tuckerbox, situated on the Hume Highway, 5 miles (8 kms) north of Gundagai.

Gundagai Visitor Information Centre
249 Sheridan St, Gundagai, 2722
(02) 6944 0250
info@visitgundagai.com.au
www.visitgundagai.com.au

/visitgundagai 

#visitgundagai 

Main Street Heritage Walk

1. RUSCONI'S MARBLE MASTERPIECE

Inside the Visitors Centre. Comprising 20,948 pieces of hand cut NSW marble, taking 28 years to complete, the cathedral in miniature was built to showcase the beauty & variety of NSW marble.



2. DAD, DAVE, MUM & MABEL

The early 'On Our Selection' radio series by Australian author Steele Rudd, featured the characters Dad, Dave, Mum and Mabel. The Gundagai connection is through the theme song 'The Road to Gundagai'. Originally placed at the Snake Gully Tourist Complex opposite The Dog on the Tuckerbox in 1981, the sculpture was donated to the community when the Complex closed.



3. THE GREAT RESCUE OF 1852

Erected in 2017 in honour of the Wiradjuri heroes Yarri and Jacky Jacky, who saved the Gundagai townsfolk from the Great Flood of 1852. This world class bronze statue was created by Sculptor Darien Pullen and cast at Meridian Foundry in Melbourne.



4. THE FAMILY HOTEL

Built in 1858, the original sign beside the bar door proclaims 'Fry's Hotel', agents at the time for Cobb & Co. Coaches.

5. NATIONAL AUSTRALIA BANK

Built in 1880, as the Commercial Banking Co. of Sydney.

6. 199 SHERIDAN STREET - 'WAHROONGA'

Built in 1876 for Dr Henry Marshall, who resided and practiced here until his death in 1899, when Dr Gabriel took over the practice.

7. GABRIEL GALLERY

Visit the extensive display of historic photographs. Dr Charles Louis Gabriel, the town doctor in Gundagai from 1887, was also a keen amateur photographer. The photos record the town over a 40-year period. Upstairs at Butcher Roberts Gift Store.

8. GUNDAGAI COURT HOUSE

The majestic building (c.1859), also houses the Boer War Monument, one of the few monuments erected to those who served in the Boer War.

9. OLD GUNDAGAI GAOL

Historic Gundagai Gaol (c.1859) was designed by colonial architect Alexander Dawson. Bushranger, Captain Moonlite was once inmate. A narrated audio of the Gaol, also telling tales of life in a frontier town, is available from the Visitor Centre.

10. ST. PATRICK'S CATHOLIC CHURCH

Opened in 1885, has impressive stained glass windows in the Munich Method, where large glass sheets are painted then fired at 590°C.



11. GUNDAGAI CONVENT OF MERCY

Opened in 1890 by Goulburn Bishop Rev. William Lanigan, D.D. The architect, Mr Spaduchini, took his inspiration from Rippon Lea in Melbourne. Now privately owned.

12. OLD GUNDAGAI POST OFFICE

The Gundagai Post Office was built in 1879. Gundagai had the last official 'pony express' who delivered mail on horseback until 1984.

13. CENOTAPH

War memorial designed by Frank Rusconi to honour the Town's fallen.

14. OLD RAILWAY STATION

Built in 1885 and featuring the only slate roofed Goods Shed in NSW, the Station was restored to its original glory in the 1990's. View displays on the travelling past, together with photos of the restoration.

15. HISTORIC BRIDGES

Prince Alfred Bridge is a unique example of an early timber span bridge. Opened in 1869 it closed to traffic in 1984. The Railway Bridge, built in 1903 extended the railway from Gundagai to Tumut and Batlow.



16. 80 SHERIDAN STREET - 'ARALUEN'

Frank Rusconi completed his masterpiece & first displayed it here.

17. THE OLD MILL

The first flour mill in Gundagai (c.1849). The building was the only major building left in the flood area after the 1852 flood. Converted in 1917 to a freezing works. It was purchased by the Adjungbilly Freezing co. in 1924-25. During the 1930's the main activity at the mill was freezing rabbits for export. Later a wool, hide & skin shop.

18. FLOOD INDICATOR

Records the height of the great 1852 Flood & subsequent floods.

19. GUNDAGAI MUSEUM

Discover the wonderful displays at Gundagai Historic Museum, including the tools used by Rusconi to create his marble masterpiece and Phar Lap's saddlecloth. A highlight of the vast collection is the gorgets (medallions) presented to Yarri and Jacky, the Wiradjuri men whose efforts saved many lives during the great flood of 1852.



20. 116 SHERIDAN STREET - 'SURREY'

Built in 1884 as the private home of Billy Payne, a Cobb & Co coach driver, mainly the Yass to Campbelltown route. Billy constructed the Bridge Hotel at South Gundagai in 1876 and later after selling this hotel in 1880 was hotelier at the Royal Hotel (corner Sheridan and Homer Streets). He also erected several shop buildings in Sheridan Street.

21. NIAGARA CAFE

Opened in 1902 by Greek immigrants, it's been run by the Loukissas family for the past thirty years. John Curtin, Australia's Prime Minister during the Second World War, famously visited late one evening in 1942 for some steak and eggs. This story and other nostalgia from throughout the years are told on the walls in a historical collage.

22. CRITERION HOTEL MURALS

Arnold (Don) St. Claire was a prolific artist who came to Gundagai in the late 1960's. He completed the unique murals inside the Criterion Hotel depicting the great flood of 1852 and bushrangers as payment for his all-inclusive accommodation.

23. GUNDAGAI BAKERY

Believed to be Australia's oldest working bakery, the bakery was opened by a Mr William Bilbo, from Germany, in 1864. Mr Bilbo was a well-respected citizen and one-time Mayor of Gundagai. The building is now owned by a group of interested community members who formed a company to 'save' the bakery, and is leased to the current operator.

24. FRY'S ASSEMBLY HALL

Built in 1881 as an entertainment venue for Fry's Family Hotel (opposite). It was the location of the first Gundagai council meeting in 1889. Converted in 1932 to TW Irwin's Garage, and from 1956 to Hume Motors, owned by Mrs EG Winnett. It was then a plumbing and appliance store owned by TJ Wells.

