

HISTORICAL WALKING TOUR

ON SYDNEY ROAD BRUNSWICK

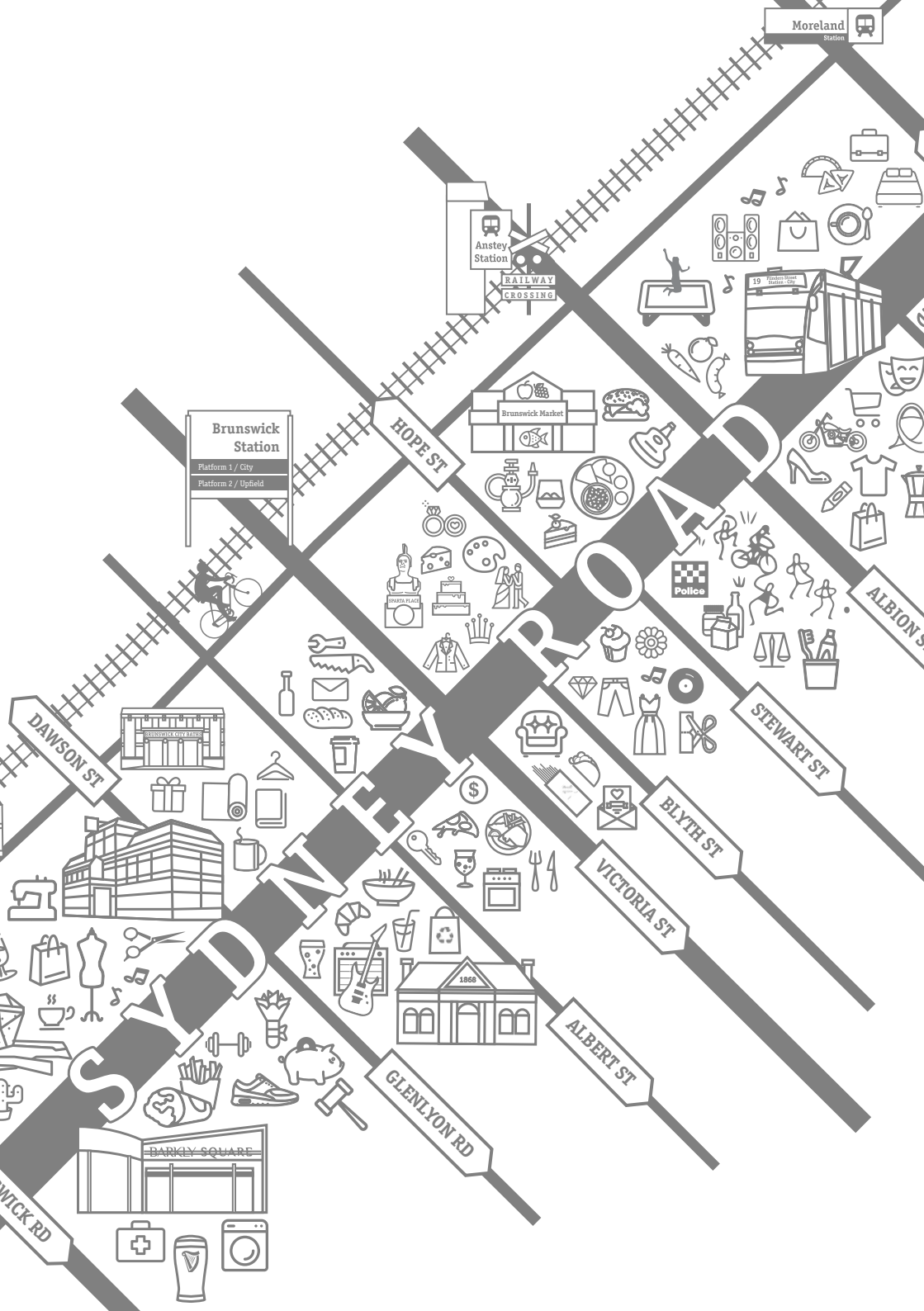


12, 19 & 26 October 2024

Blyth Street to Michael Street,
around the Sydney Road Brunswick precinct



SYDNEY EST. 1992
Brunswick **ROAD**
ASSOCIATION



Moreland

Station



Anstey
Station

RAILWAY
CROSSING

Brunswick
Station

Platform 1 / City

Platform 2 / Upfield

HOPE ST

Brunswick Market

Police

ALBION ST

STEWART ST

DAWSON ST

BLYTH ST

VICTORIA ST

ALBERT ST

GLENLYON RD

BARKLY SQUARE

WICK RD

In partnership with the Brunswick Community History Group, the Sydney Road Brunswick Association (SRBA) welcomes you to this Sydney Road Brunswick precinct Historical Walking Tour.

Led by local experts from the Brunswick Community History Group, tours take a leisurely walk around the Sydney Road Brunswick precinct, exploring locations of interest for a deep dive into the history between Blyth Street and Michael Street.

This series will focus on churches and welfare around the Sydney Road Brunswick precinct, with stops including:

- Brunswick Baptist Church
- The Salvation Army Citadel
- Manchester Unity Lodge (now The Hall at Welcome to Brunswick)
- Wesleyan Church
- St Ambrose Church
- Christ Church
- Brunswick Town Hall
- Brunswick Uniting Church

STOP 1 Brunswick Baptist Church

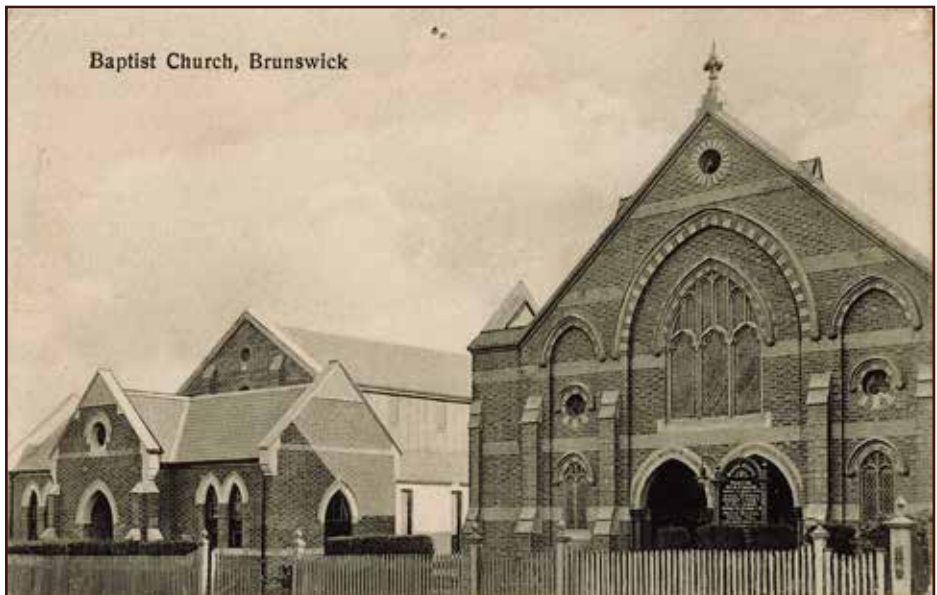
491 Sydney Road, Brunswick

In 1859 George Burton and John Wallis were worshipping at the Wesleyan Methodist Church further down Sydney Road when they decided that the Baptist denomination was more in line with their beliefs.

They began organising services at Burton's house, and in 1861, Burton donated the land on Sydney Road where a small church was built.

This was extended as the services proved very popular, and George continued his generosity, donating more land and 25,000 bricks for extensions to the west.

In 1889, the foundation stone for the chapel was laid and the front section was added. In 1893, a meeting hall and Sunday school were built on the south side of the main church. These can be seen in the photograph, but were demolished in 1966.



STOP 2 The Salvation Army Citadel

256 Albert Street, Brunswick

The Salvation Army was founded in London in 1865 by clergyman William Booth and his wife Catherine, with the aim of providing assistance and religion to residents of the city's slums.

The Brunswick Corps was founded in 1883, and the following year Robert Lord donated the land for a Citadel on this site. Lord was a member of the Salvation Army, a Brunswick Councillor and the owner of a drapery shop on Sydney Road. The present building dates from 1928.

The Salvos have always been active in the provision of social welfare. During the Depression they formed a partnership with the adjacent Brunswick Central State School and would provide meals for the children. This continued during World War Two, when many mothers joined the workforce.



The Citadel in about 1930

During the recession of the early 1990s, the Salvos received Commonwealth Government funding to run training and employment programs. They leased the former bank building on the corner of Sydney Road and Albert Street to conduct this operation. While many protestant churches closed in the 1970s-80s, the Salvation Army in Brunswick remained and still plays an active role in providing free meals, social contact and general assistance to those who need it.

Despite being a much more prosperous suburb these days, Brunswick still has more rooming houses than any other area in Melbourne.

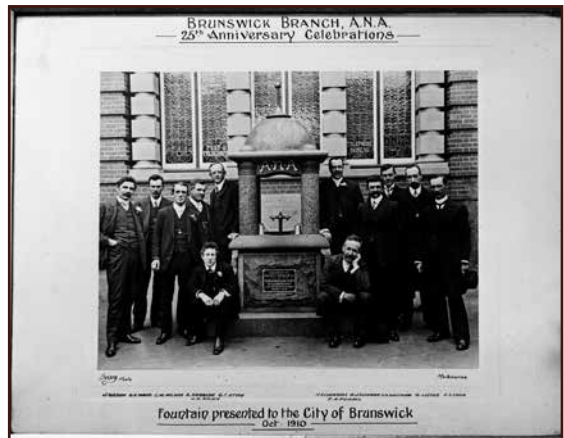
Music has always been important for the Salvation Army. During the 1890s some of the young women from Brunswick joined with others from North Melbourne to form the Austral Lasses Choir, which toured Australia to promote the idea of Federation. The Brunswick band leader in the 1930s was Arthur Gullidge, a well-regarded musician and composer. He and five other band members drowned when they were on board the POW ship, Montevideo, which was sunk by US submarines in 1942.

STOP 3 Manchester Unity Lodge

(now The Hall at Welcome to Brunswick)
400 Sydney Road, Brunswick

The Manchester Unity Order of Oddfellows was established in Manchester during the industrial revolution and provided health insurance and a social club for members. The Brunswick Lodge, The Loyal Rose of Brunswick Manchester Unity of Oddfellows Hall, was established in 1858 and met initially in the Edinburgh Castle Hotel. By 1872 it was able to build its own hall.

As well as housing the meetings of three Lodges, the Oddfellows, the Druids and the Australia Natives Association, the hall became the social centre of Brunswick. Les Barnes reported that 'It became the popular hall for dances and in the 1880s when Sixpenny 'Hops' came into vogue, the Hall sounded to the strains of Strauss waltzes and gallops, and young women breaking the tyranny of the home came with their 'beaux' to dance the circular waltz or swing corners.



The hall also housed meetings of various political parties, and local activist Marj Nunan held a meeting here to campaign for increases in pensions. She later founded the Combined Pensioners Association.

The Lodge was very successful until World War Two. A combination of other social activities, such as movies, and the introduction of more comprehensive and efficient health insurance schemes, spelled the death of the lodges - and the Brunswick lodge closed in the late 1960s. The building was sold and has been used for a variety of purposes since.

The fountain at the front of the former Post Office (The Penny Black) commemorates another Friendly Society, the Australian Natives Association, a mutual friendly society founded in Melbourne in 1871 to provide assistance to white Australian born people. The ANA merged with Manchester Unity in the 1990s to form Australian Unity. It was one of the last organisations to support the White Australia Policy.

STOP 4 Wesleyan Church

350 Sydney Road, Brunswick

The church is the third on this site. The land was originally donated by Thomas Wilkinson – one of the first white landowners in Brunswick and the first Chairman of the municipality. The first church was a simple brick building constructed in 1839.

The present building was completed in 1872. It was designed by Percy Oakden and is an outstanding example of polychromatic brickwork. The foundation stone was laid by local councillor Best Overend. His unusual first name was his mother's surname.

The Sunday School, a magnificent building consisting of a central hall surrounded by two tiers of classrooms, was constructed in 1888 - and at one stage had over 900 students. Both buildings are listed on the Victorian Heritage Register.

The Church and the Sunday School were leased to the Sydney Road Community School from 1972-2022. In 2008 the Uniting Church sold the building to an estate agent who has allowed it to fall into disrepair. Work has started on converting the Sunday School building to services offices. This has been approved by Heritage Victoria and there will be no structural changes to the interior.



STOP 5 St Ambrose Church

287 Sydney Road, Brunswick

Protestants were prominent in the early years of European settlement in Brunswick, and it was not until 1860 that a meeting was held in the then Sarah Sands Hotel to discuss establishing a Catholic Church here.

Michael Dawson is said to have been the first Irishman to settle in Brunswick. He was a wealthy landowner who had the Phoenix Park estate – a large allotment extending from Sydney Road to the Moonee Ponds Creek. He donated the land for the church, and St Ambrose chapel was founded in 1871.

The name is said to have been suggested by Sebastiano Danielli, an Italian macaroni manufacturer who lived in Brunswick, suggesting that the church be named after the patron saint of Milan. Danielli was also the founder of the Don Bosco Hostel and Youth Centre.

The church was designed by J.M. Robertson and was constructed in a number of stages, being completed in the early 1900s. The St Ambrose School started in what is now the Hall, a single-story brick building. The building includes a significant organ and stained-glass windows.

The mansion in Saxon Street at the rear of the church was purchased from the Cornwell family in 1895, and was used as the presbytery until 1969 when it became part of the Trinity College.

St Ambrose became the centre of community life for the large Irish Catholic community in the area. During the 1890s it was targeted by Protestant extremists in actions which culminated in riots outside the Sarah Sands Hotel in 1896-7, as the Protestants conducted an Orange Day march.

St Ambrose was a centre for the anti-conscription movement during the First World War. Future Prime Minister John Curtin was a parishioner and conscientious objector. Archbishop Mannix, a leading anti-conscription campaigner, also had strong links to St Ambrose.

Frank Little, who later became Archbishop was the parish priest at St Ambrose early in his career.

The demographics of the congregation has changed over the years. In the early period it was composed largely of Irish migrants, but since World War Two, Italians and later Vietnamese people have been prominent.

A notable parishioner was B.A. Santamaria who was one of the founders of the Democratic Labor Party, leading to a split in the Australian Labour Party in the '50s.

Photograph of St Ambrose Church on next page.



STOP 6 Christ Church

8 Glenlyon Road, Brunswick

Anglicanism in Brunswick dates from 1850 when the first services were conducted in a house belonging to Mr. and Mrs. Foote.

In 1854, the Brunswick Parish was formally established with Reverend C.P.M. Bardin appointed as Vicar. He conducted his services in a rented hall on Sydney Road until the church was built in 1857. The building was extended at various times, with the tower added in 1871.

It has a number of notable stained-glass windows. Early parishioners included Councillor Joseph George and his wife Sarah, who was the daughter of Methodist Thomas Wilkinson.

The building is regarded as an important example of the 'villa rustica' or Italian country villa style of church architecture, and it is on the Victorian Heritage Register and Register of the National Estate.



Christ Church in around 1907

The Sydney Road Community School now occupies the former church hall and has a new building on the land behind it. The church owns the Lamb and Flag Café on Sydney Road, which is now closed due to construction of the park adjacent, but continues to be used for outreach activities.

STOP 7 Brunswick Town Hall

233 Sydney Road, Brunswick

Local Government in Brunswick commenced with the first Brunswick Council in 1857. From this time, it was closely involved in the provision of welfare services.

In earlier decades this happened largely informally through the Brunswick Ladies Benevolent Society, which was founded in 1858. One of the earliest members was Sarah George – the daughter of Thomas Wilkinson. Wilkinson is known as ‘The Father of Brunswick’, and was the first Chair of the municipality.

Sarah eloped at 17 and married Joseph George who also later became Mayor. Both were pharmacists and had a pharmacy shop, inclusive of post office, near Albert Street.

Sarah is reported to have been the first woman in Victoria to qualify as a pharmacist. She combined running the chemist shop, and her charity work, with giving birth to twelve children and raising the nine who survived.



The Town Hall in around 1907

The Ladies Benevolent Society, later called the Brunswick Benevolent Society, continued until 1994, and for most of this time the wives and daughters of councillors were involved - and often the Mayor of the day would Chair their Annual General Meetings.

Brunswick's first woman councillor, Marian Kermode was elected in 1971, and was active in the Society before, during and after her time on Council. By 1994, Marian and her daughter were two of the remaining five members of the Society.

The Ladies Benevolent Society was very active for most of its 136 years of existence and would raise money to assist families living in hardship. By 1994, other agencies had taken over this role and women were more likely to be involved in paid work, so did not have time for charity work.

From the 1970s, local government took on more of a formal role in the provision of community services. The first Director of Community Services was appointed by Brunswick Council in the early 1980s, and this reflected Council's growing involvement in provision of services for children, youth and the aged.

STOP 8 Brunswick Uniting Church

214 Sydney Road, Brunswick

Presbyterians, like Methodists, were prominent in the early days of white settlement in Brunswick.

The first Presbyterian Church in Brunswick was built in 1855 and was situated at, what is now, 276 Brunswick Road. It was a bluestone building which was later converted into a house. The house now on this site may have been built on the foundations of the original church.

In 1865, the church was donated land by William Dods, in the more central location of Sydney Road, and this is where the bluestone church was built. The church was designed by Charles Webb and is particularly notable for the cream brick spire. The bricks themselves were manufactured in Brunswick by John Glew.

By 1885 the church was too small, so a larger church was built. It was designed by Evander McIver, a local resident, and member of the church. The older church was later used as a school and is now the church hall.



The first Presbyterian Minister in Brunswick was Reverend Allan MacVean who served the area from 1854-1896. A memorial tablet to him is in the church with the epitaph "Faithful Pastor, Sincere Friend, Loyal Colonist".

With the merging of three Protestant denominations in 1977, this church became a Uniting Church. Then in 2005 it merged with the South West Brunswick Uniting Church in Union Street. Extensive renovations were carried out in 2010.

The Brunswick Uniting Church has an active presence in the community. It is particularly notable for its refugee welcome program. The church building has excellent acoustics and is a venue for the annual Beethoven Festival.

SYDNEY EST. 1850 *Brunswick* ROAD

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