

HISTORICAL WALKING TOUR

ON SYDNEY ROAD BRUNSWICK

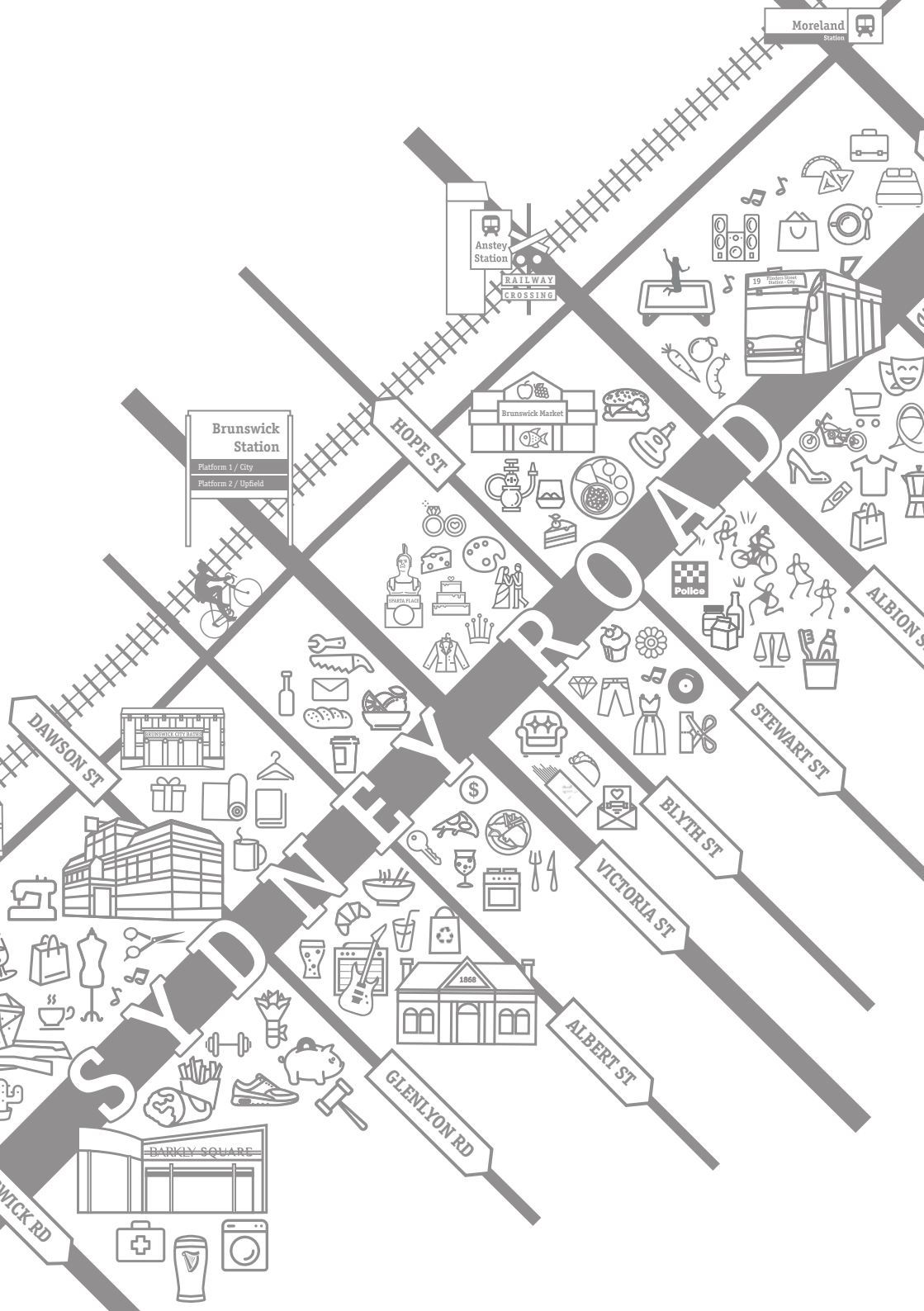


27 July, 3 & 10 August 2024

Merri Street to Ballarat Street,
within 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 Historical Walking Tour.

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

This series will focus on fashion and textiles within the Sydney Road Brunswick precinct, with stops including:

- Former Holeproof factory (Merri Street)
- Brunswick Ballroom
- Eat 24
- Otto and Spike (Victoria Street)
- Bus Stop Shoe Repairs (Victoria Street)
- Hardwick Building
- Bridal Precinct

Sources of information

Research by Elisabeth Jackson and Margaret Fleming, Brunswick Community History Group.

Photographs, unless otherwise credited, taken by Annette Whiter ©BCHG 2024.

STOP 1

Former Holeproof Factory

Corner of Merri Street and Dods Street

The Holeproof factory was the largest of many clothing factories operating in Brunswick during the twentieth century. In 1930 it was estimated that it produced 2 million pairs of stockings annually.

Holeproof Brunswick had its origins in 1920 when Atlas Knitting and Spinning Mills were established in Weston Street. Two of the directors, George Foletta and Andrew Staley purchased the firm in 1921 and renamed it Prestige Limited. In 1924 the pair parted company. Staley, with the financial backing of his uncle and trading as Staley and Staley, set up his own hosiery factory in Merri Street. In 1929 he reached a licencing agreement with Holeproof in the United States to use their name. The following year Prime Minister James Scullin laid the foundation stone for a new five storey factory. The administration of the company was at 204 Sydney Road – just in front of the factory.

The company and the Prestige Mills on the other side of Sydney Road were known for their commitment to employing local residents, especially women. In the 1930s the two companies employed about 1,200 people each. Steady employment in the factories made a big difference to local families during the Depression.

Holeproof also looked after its workers with the provision of a canteen and a company nurse as well as fostering many social and sporting activities for their employees. Holeproof and Prestige paid award wages and conditions were a great improvement on the sweatshops traditionally found in the clothing industry.

In 1963, Prestige and Holeproof merged once again, and the company was acquired by Dunlop in 1968. In the meantime, other Holeproof factories were established in the eastern suburbs.

The clothing industry in Australia was decimated by the removal of tariffs in the 1980s and '90s, and in 2009 Pacific Dunlop decided to cease local manufacturing and move operations to China.

The Prestige factory was derelict by the 1980s when it was destroyed by fire. The Brunswick Holeproof factory had closed by 1979 and in about 2000 the building was converted to apartments. The foundation stone laid by Prime Minister Scullin in 1930 had been moved to Box Hill and then the Nunawading factory. When the latter closed in 2009 the stone was rescued by a former Holeproof employee and, after intervention by Francesca Folk Scolaro of Brunswick Community History Group, was relocated to the foyer of the apartment complex.

Information obtained from: Chapter by Cecile Trioli in Brunswick; one history many voices 1994 pp 127-130, 'Holeproof Brunswick and other mills' by Paul Darragh & Moreland History News no. 9 February 2013.



The Holeproof factory under construction in 1930. Photo from Brunswick Library.



The foundation stone and a photo of former employees in the foyer of the apartment complex.



Undated photo of Holeproof employees.



Interior of the apartments now in the Holeproof building.

This was used as the home of Nina Proudman in the TV series Offspring.

3 apartment photos from Jellis Craig website.



STOP 2 Brunswick Ballroom

314-316 Sydney Road, Brunswick

The first floor room which is now the Ballroom was used in the 1920s and '30s as workrooms for various fashion businesses including dressmakers, milliners, tailors and a dyer. There would have been countless small workrooms all through Brunswick at this time.

In the 1960s the ground floor shops were a Chinese restaurant and Hat Centre milliners. Later the building was used as a Greek club with the dining room upstairs.

In the 1990s the building became Metropolis House - reception centre and restaurant. What is now Choukette was Constantinople Greek cake shop.



STOP 3 Eat 24

373 Sydney Road, Brunswick

This shop was previously a high class dress shop and some of the ornate decoration from this period remains.

From 1946-1951 it was the business of Mrs. Hinda Waisberg, from 1951-1964 it was Helman Modes owned by Hyman Helman and from 1964-1968 it was Darryl Lee Originals Frocks.

Hinda Waisberg and Hyman Helman were both Jewish immigrants. Jewish families dominated the clothing trade in Victoria in this period and they were also a significant minority in Brunswick. There was a synagogue in Lord Street until 1987. The building is now a private residence.

Throughout the earlier decades of the twentieth century this section of Sydney Road was a top shopping destination and accommodated a number of clothing and footwear shops.

In the 1970s the shop was a television, furniture and homewares shop.

The cafe used to be operated by the owners of Alasya Turkish Restaurant near Hope Street, which was established in 1978 as one of Brunswick's first Turkish restaurants.



STOP 4 Otto and Spike

324 Victoria Street, Brunswick

Of the more than 600 knitting mills once found in Brunswick, Otto and Spike is one of the few survivors. The company has concentrated on manufacturing high quality and distinctive items sold in this retail outlet, and at many other places around Australia.

Les Mananov migrated from Macedonia in 1959. He trained as a knitting machine mechanic and met his Sicilian wife at Knitting Mill in Lygon Street, where she worked as a machinist. In the 1960s he started LMB knitwear factory on the corner of Victoria Street and Sedgeman Street in Brunswick, and initially made fabric lengths for other companies. In 1990 the factory moved to the corner of Thomas and Albert Streets, and Les's son Anthony manufactured items for surfwear brands.

As other textile factories closed and the surf brands started manufacturing in China, Anthony launched his own brand named Otto and Spike after his sons. In 2014 the company won a contract to produce AFL jumpers, scarves and beanies. The factory is now located in Cross Street.

The company is still run by the Mananov family. Anthony's wife Kirstie designs the beautiful scarves, hats, blankets and socks while his sister Anne manages the shop.

Information obtained from: Article by Kevin Murray in Brunswick Voice, Spring 2023.



STOP 5 Bus Stop Shoe Repairs

279 Victoria Street, Brunswick

This old style shoe repair shop has been a cobbler's workshop for nearly a hundred years. Prior to that, in the early years of the twentieth century it was a Chinese laundry.

Angelo Condello and his wife Josie took over the shop and opened Condello's Shoe Repairs in 1975, succeeding the previous owner who had been there for over 20 years. Angelo had learnt shoemaking as a teenager in the 1950s in his native Italy.

In 1983 the Condellos became some of the first tenants at the newly opened Barkly Square Shopping Centre. Their business is still there, operated by Angelo's son and other family members.

The Victoria Street shop was renamed Bus Stop Shoe Repairs and was taken over by Angelo's nephew Greg, aged 18 at the time, and he is still there!

Even in today's throw away society there is a place for shoe repairs and the shop also sells new shoes, slippers and shoe related items.

Brunswick once had a large number of shoe factories but they became victims of the tariff cuts in the 1980s.



STOP 6 Hardwick Building

Sydney Road, Brunswick

This heritage listed building was constructed in 1908 for John H. Hooper, a Footscray businessman. The building has an American style steel frame and may have been the first in Australia to use this style of construction. The frame was manufactured in England as Australia did not have a steel industry at the time.

Hooper used it initially as a warehouse and in 1937 it was extended and opened as an emporium. It was a key destination during the hey-day of Sydney Road as a shopping mecca.

Later it was occupied by various retailers including Treadways, Walton's department store and (briefly) Spotlight.

In 2005 the building was purchased by Mariana Hardwick – the doyenne of Melbourne's wedding dress designers. She renamed the building the Hardwick Building and set up her workshop, showroom and shop here. She initially planned to turn the complex into a one-stop wedding destination with an arcade of related shops. These did not succeed.

One of the ground floor shops is now an outlet for Lisa Gorman who did her apprenticeship with Mariana Hardwick.

The upper floor has been converted to offices, but parts of the original steel frame can still be seen on the inside.



The corner of Blyth Street and Sydney Road in the early 1900s showing Hooper Stores in the background.

Photo credit: Brunswick Library.



Bridal Precinct

Sydney Road, Brunswick

Sydney Road has a long history of dressmakers and clothing factories generally, but it was only in the 1980s that this section of the road became the go-to place for brides to be.

Raffaele Ciuca was probably the first of these and she was followed by Elide Valente and her sister who moved their business Bonita Couture from Preston to Brunswick. Elide had arrived from Italy as a 16 year old in 1969 and trained as a dressmaker at Emily MacPherson College.

Ines Colosimo was also an Italian immigrant and opened Croce and Colosimo with her partner Mario Croce in the early 90s. Croce and Colosimo won the Gown of the Year in 2003.

The appearance of wedding dress shops quickly attracted other associated businesses such as florists, bonbonnières, photographers and patisseries.

Information obtained from Brunswick Daily



Photo credit: raffaeleciuca.com.au.



Photo credit: Richard Dobbie.



Photo credit: @bonitacouture (Facebook).

SYDNEY EST. 1850 Brunswick ROAD



The Sydney Road Brunswick precinct is your local to love

Worldly eats, iconic beats, unique shops, abundant health and beauty solutions, and all the professional services you need.

