



HISTORICAL WALKING TOUR

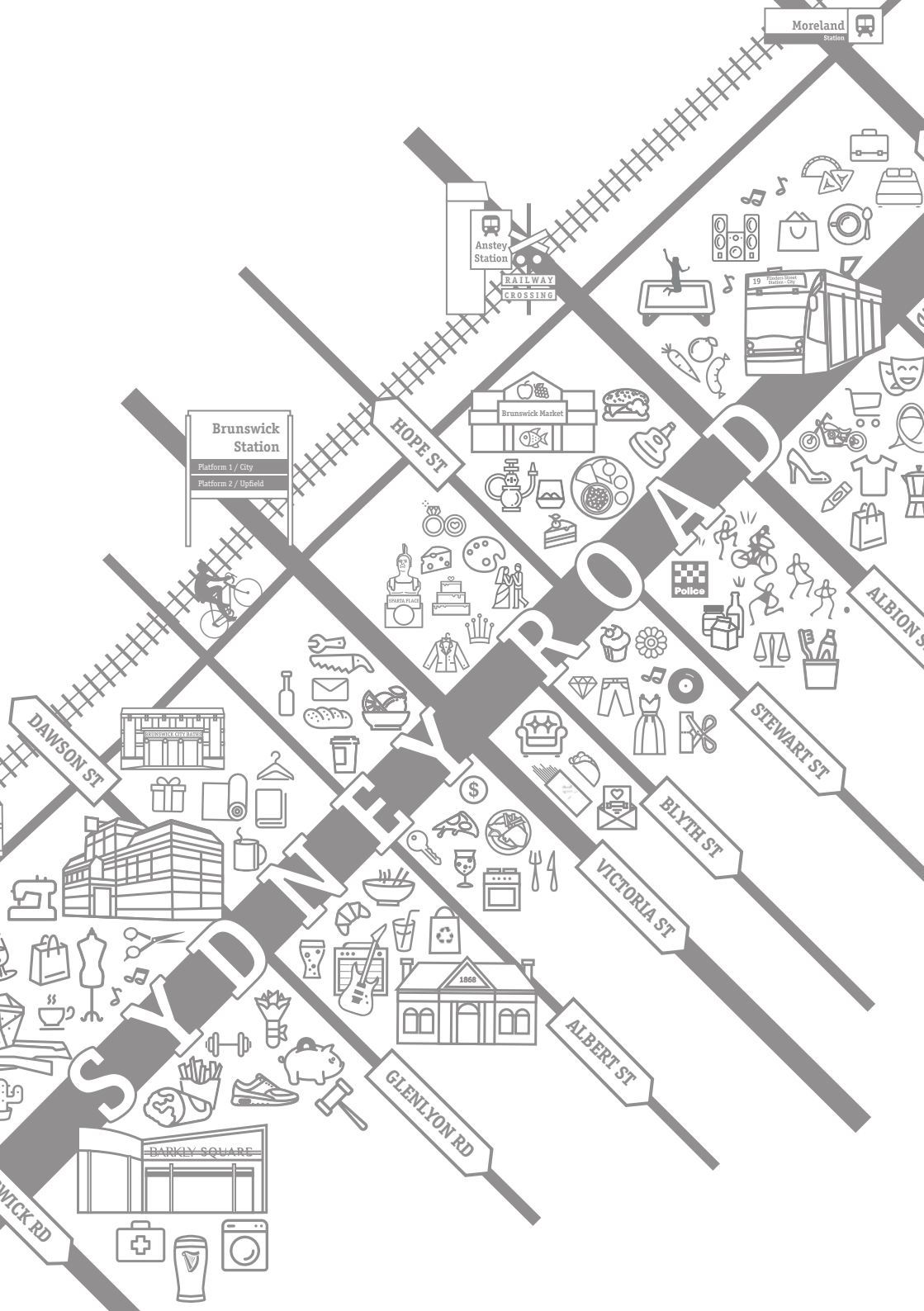
ON SYDNEY ROAD BRUNSWICK

11 & 25 May and 1 June 2024

Victoria Street to Brunswick Road,
along Sydney Road Brunswick



SYDNEY EST. 1992
Brunswick **ROAD**
ASSOCIATION



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 Victoria Street and Brunswick Road.

This series will focus on the hotels of Sydney Road Brunswick, with stops including:

- Duke of Edinburgh Hotel
- Retreat Hotel
- The Cornish Arms
- Phoenix Hotel (now Stay Gold)
- Sarah Sands Hotel (now The Wild Geese)

Sources of information

The information in this booklet was collected by members of the Brunswick Community History Group for its publication *Brunswick's Hotels*, first published in 1991.

Laurie Cunningham and Les Barnes were notable contributors to this book and later editions. A new and revised edition will be published in July 2024.

Hotels have been an important part of Sydney Road since the 1850s, when the road became one of the main routes to the goldfields. They provided food and drink, and also accommodation to travellers.

The Retreat (1842) has the distinction of being Brunswick's first hotel.

The oldest hotel building, however, is the Edinburgh Castle at the corner of Albion Street and Sydney Road. While the other goldrush hotels were rebuilt later, the Edinburgh Castle was not. In the 1930s a new façade was added but the original bluestone building (1854) still lurks beneath.

As Brunswick developed into an industrial suburb, the hotels acted as social hubs for the workers. Quarries and brickworks provided most of the clientele in the late nineteenth century, and later there were textile factories and foundries as well as a growing number of residents.

In the late 1990s to early 2000s most of the hotels changed their character. They had been working class pubs where (mainly) men gathered for a few drinks after work and perhaps a cheap counter meal. By the late 1990s much of the industry had left Brunswick and the area was rapidly gentrifying. Drink driving laws also meant that drinking on the way home from work was no longer such a good idea.

The pubs needed to change in order to survive, and they did this in various ways. Some, such as the Court House, the Cumberland Arms and several others in other parts of Brunswick, were converted into apartments, some re-invented themselves as music venues, and a few installed poker machines.

Fortunately all the nineteenth century hotel buildings in Sydney Road have survived and add much to its historic character. This walk visits some of the pubs along the southern section of Sydney Road.

STOP 1 Duke of Edinburgh Hotel

430-436 Sydney Road, Brunswick

The original Duke of Edinburgh Hotel was built on this site in 1868, with Mrs Ann Hoof as the first licensee.

Female publicans were fairly common at this time. Often they had inherited the licence from a male relative and they managed to combine running the business with bearing and raising a number of children.

Anne Hoof held the licence until 1886, when she moved to be the first licensee of Naughton's Hotel in Parkville, and was succeeded by Felix O'Connor.

The hotel was rebuilt in the 1880s as one of a number of grand three storey hotels constructed in Brunswick during the land boom. The original veranda was removed at some stage and later replaced.

The hotel was on a corner until the old post office was built (closed in 1993 and now The Penny Black). The bevelled corner to the former Bolton's Lane remains.

In 1908 Mrs Mary Wildman took over the licence and the hotel became popularly known as Wildman's. Up until 1967, a specially bottled wine was sold in the hotel bottle shop as Wildman's Special. The pub thrived in Mrs Wildman's day. Brunswick was booming and the area between Albert Street and Victoria Street was known as the Golden Block.

In 1917 the pub was declared 'black' and picketed, after an incident when the landlady's son went down to the wharf during a strike, but Wildman continued to hold the licence until World War Two.

In 1995 the hotel introduced a gaming room with poker machines.



STOP 2 Retreat Hotel

280 Sydney Road, Brunswick

The Retreat Hotel was Brunswick's first hotel, built in 1842 by W F A Rucker as the Retreat Inn. It was a single storey building and Amelia Shaw was the first Innkeeper and licensee in 1842. She was possibly Brunswick's first businesswoman.

The hotel's licence also provided for a weighbridge which served the bullock and horse drays from the stone quarries in East Brunswick.

John Anderson was the second licensee in 1843.

During the goldrush era, the 1850s, the licensee was George Stanway. Stanway died in October 1852 and his widow Catherine took over – until 1862 when she became insolvent. By this time she had remarried and had changed her name to Catherine Clinton.

In the 1860s the hotel was owned by the land developer and member of parliament David Blair, who made over the ownership to his wife Lydia in 1865. During his ownership he made available the land behind the hotel for the newly formed Cricket Club. Best Overend, local builder and architect, donated and erected the fence around the ground. Michael Dawson, who owned a large tract of land west of Sydney Road, donated the pavilion. Later public baths were reportedly on this site – prior to the opening of the Brunswick Baths in 1913.

In about 1879 the name of the inn was changed to Retreat Hotel.

The hotel was rebuilt in 1892 as a two storey building, and it was then that the weighbridge disappeared.

One of the most famous incidents to occur near the Retreat Hotel was the Free Speech Fight of 6 May 1933. Les Barnes recalled that *“One of the free speech fighters climbed on top of a car on to the veranda of the Retreat Hotel and caused a great furore amongst the police. They had to go inside the pub and out on to the veranda to get him. Another man was waiting to buy a couple of bottles after hours and the police caught him and charged him with loitering. He was fined for being at the Free Speech Fight instead of for after hours trading!”*

During the 1980s and 90s the Retreat was managed by the Trikaliotis family, and they developed it as a music venue. It was particularly known for Greek rebetika music.

Paul Kelly performed here during the 1980s. Unfortunately the venue was so full of cigarette smoke that patrons had to get down on the floor to see him!

It was sold in 2003 and there were fears it would be redeveloped as apartments but this did not occur and it continues as a pub and music venue.



STOP 3 The Cornish Arms

136A Sydney Road, Brunswick

The Cornish Arms was one of Brunswick's earliest hotels. It was opened in 1854, by Thomas Manallack, a lucky digger during the Victorian gold rush. Manallack, was one of Brunswick's earliest brickmakers. His Albert Street brickworks supplied the bricks for the 1853 Wesleyan Chapel (demolished in 1888).



Wesleyan Methodists from Cornwall and Yorkshire were prominent in Brunswick in the 1840s and '50s and Manallack was one of these. He was from Cornwall and this is the origin of the name of the hotel. Methodists are teetotallers but apparently his religion did not prevent him from owning a pub.

Thomas Manallack was also notable for having three wives – not all at once and they all died of natural causes. Trinity Street is reportedly named in reference to this. The hotel's first licensee was Henry Ivey (1854) who was likely a relative of Manallack's first wife Jane Ivey.

The original hotel was a two storey rendered brick building, and has the distinction of being the meeting place of the first Brunswick Council on 23 October 1857. The first Chairman of the municipality was Thomas Wilkinson, known as the Father of Brunswick. He was another Methodist and Brunswick was named after his property between Albert and Victoria Streets. Politically he was a 'Whig' and as such a supporter of Princess Caroline of Brunswick – the estranged wife of George IV – and this is the likely origin of the name.

In 1925 the pub was rebuilt in its current form with the distinctive coloured tiles.

In the 1990s licencees, the Rattens, changed the hotel's name to the Rainbow, and altered its character, from a rowdy, bloke-dominated stronghold, to a music venue, with a consequent change in clientele. The name subsequently reverted to Cornish Arms. It has been used as one of the venues for the Brunswick Music Festival.

STOP 4 Phoenix Hotel

133 Sydney Road, Brunswick

This hotel was built in 1866 by Thomas Austin. He was a former Lord Mayor and well known property and land owner. It was he who reportedly introduced rabbits into Victoria. The pub was known as Austin's Hotel.



It was renamed the Phoenix Hotel in 1871 because of its location in Michael Dawson's Phoenix Park estate. There was also a stained glass window in the hotel depicting a phoenix rising out of the ashes.



In the 1880s David Hennessy, owner of a local bakery business, took over the pub and built it up.

It was wrongly believed that the Phoenix Hotel was associated with John Curtin and his mother. The real connection is only a distant one. A Mrs M. Curtin lived there. Her son married John Curtin's sister. The identical surnames have caused the confusion.

In 1959 a man murdered his wife's lover out the front of the hotel.

In 1972 the Storemen and Packers bought the hotel and renamed it the R J Hawke Hotel, after the prominent trade union leader who was to become the Prime Minister of Australia. Gough Whitlam named the pub the R J Hawke in an official ceremony in 1973.

Nick Cecil was the R J Hawke's first owner. In 1986 it was bought by Ben Covis and renamed the Candy Tavern. Rick Watt, a former Collingwood footballer, was the first licensee of the Candy Tavern. In 1992 David Avellinsky became the licensee and renamed it the Paris Tavern to capture the international nature of Brunswick. Since then it has been restored and a veranda was added in 1994.

Later it was renamed The Spot, and in 2011 reverted to its original name, prior to becoming Stay Gold and Ollie's Pizza Parlour.

STOP 5 Sarah Sands Hotel

29 Sydney Road, Brunswick

The Sarah Sands Hotel was built in 1854. There has been quite a bit of mystery surrounding its origins. The first licensee was a Melbourne storekeeper Robert Barry (not David McKenzie Barry, founder of the Hoffman Brickworks company, as commonly believed). It is thought he named the hotel after the ship which brought him to Victoria in 1852 - the Sarah Sands. It is known that Barry, in the course of building the hotel, borrowed money from Charles Sands who may have been a partner of the ship building firm that built the Sarah Sands.

Some confusion has arisen in regards to the hotel's age. The date on the hotel - 1846 - is the date the ship Sarah Sands was launched, not the date the hotel was opened.

The hotel was reconstructed in 1872. At its sale two years later it was described as being built of brick with a stucco finish and slate roof. A fine veranda was added in about 1906, but removed again in 1966. The veranda posts were deemed to be a safety risk.

The hotel was the site of sectarian riots in 1896. Local Orangemen organised a march to commemorate the Battle of the Boyne which had taken place between Catholics and Protestants in Ireland in 1690. The marchers were met by a Catholic contingent and a riot ensued. These events were repeated the following year, at which time it is estimated 30,000 people were involved in the melee.

From 1989-1993 the Sarah Sands was run by Isabella and Rob Phillips. It was a cutting edge and inclusive venue for all genres of music, and audiences travelled from all over Melbourne to see bands that weren't being seen at other venues.

There were performances by many international acts such as Suzi Quatro as well as local acts such as Ed Kuepper and Cosmic Psychos, and local bands Yothu Yindi, Archie Roach and Ruby Hunter. Indie, punk, metal, Irish, rockabilly and folk bands performed there.

They held a monthly womens' night, Freedom, and a weekly Goth night club, Earwigs at Night, as well as Koorie nights and comedy shows.

The Sarah Sands hosted many performances in the inaugural years of the Brunswick Music Festival.

From 1997-2017 the hotel operated as an Irish pub called Bridie O'Reilly's. It was famous for St Patrick's Day celebrations.

In 2017 it was sold and Bridie O'Reilly's closed. The new owners restored the exterior, removed a later extension on the Brunswick Road side and constructed apartments to the rear. After a few false starts due to the Covid pandemic, it re-opened under its original name in 2021.

The Celtic Club took out a five year lease of the hotel in 2024. The ground floor is an Irish themed pub, The Wild Geese, and the upper storey is used by Club members.

The Hotel has had a number of Irish publicans over the years, including the first one, Robert Barry and Margaret Mooney in the 1950s, so it is an appropriate home for The Celtic Club.



Photo taken prior to it being rebuilt in 1872.

The confusing 1846 date had not yet been added.



The hotel in about the 1930s.

The veranda was installed in 1906 and removed in 1966.

On the left we can see the chimney for the cable tram engine house.

A steam engine powered a cable stretching from here to Flinders Street and back to pull the trams along. The chimney has been demolished but the engine house (later Sam's Tyres) remains.

SYDNEY EST. 1850
Brunswick ROAD

BRUNSWICK BALL

THEMED

The Wedding Singer

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