MELBOURNE HERITAGE WALK

INTRODUCTION

In 1980 the member companies of the Oil Industry met to identify an appropriate project to mark Victoria's 150th Anniversary: one which would reflect the industry's close historical ties with Victoria.

Many projects were considered at that stage. We were keen to select one which did not just benefit Melburnians, but which had an impact throughout the State. Thus the Heritage Walks were selected as a way of reflecting Victoria's extraordinary development over the years. This project consists of a series of plaques featuring historic photographs, located strategically on a route which can be followed through the city.

In addition to establishing a major walk in Melbourne we also chose three country centres – Bendigo, Swan Hill and Port Fairy. The final aspect of our project as a book, "The Streets of Melbourne", which features some unique early photographs of the city.

We are certain that this City Walk will become a popular tourist attraction and school excursion. We are delighted to be associated with it and extend our thanks to the Melbourne City Council, The Royal Historical Society of Victoria, the La Trobe Library and the Mitchell Library, Sydney.

I hope you enjoy the experience of reflecting on a little of Melbourne's history. Through the City Walk the Oil Industry is proud to be a part of it.

Alex Gorrie
Chairman
Oil Industry Committee for Victoria's 150th Anniversary.

LORD MAYOR'S MESSAGE

Melbourne is a busy, friendly, dignified city, offering much to both tourists and locals. It is famed for its wide streets, beautiful parks and gardens, shopping arcades, restaurants, live theatre and many cultural attractions.

With all that Melbourne has to offer today it is easy to overlook its history and development. In establishing the City Walk the Melbourne City Council hopes to introduce tourists and Melburnians to a little of the city's fascinating past. The panels in the City Walk tell their own story. This brochure complements those panels by drawing the attention of the walker to other points of interest along the way.

There are many individuals and organisations whose assistance made the City Walk a reality. To the community-minded companies who have sponsored the Walk, The City of Melbourne extends special thanks. I would also like to acknowledge the valuable co-operation of the Royal Historical Society of Victoria, the La Trobe Library, and the Mitchell Library, NSW.

I sincerely hope that by participating in the City Walk you will capture some of the spirit of Melbourne's unique history and more fully appreciate the city into which it has grown. ·

LORD MAYOR
CITY OF MELBOURNE

A STEP BACK IN TIME

Melbourne was founded in 1835 as a result of competing expeditions organised by John Batman and John Pascoe Fawkner. For two years the settlement was known as Bearbrass, before being named after the British Prime Minister, Lord Melbourne. The first part of the town to be settled was around Batman's Hill, now Spencer Street Railway Station.
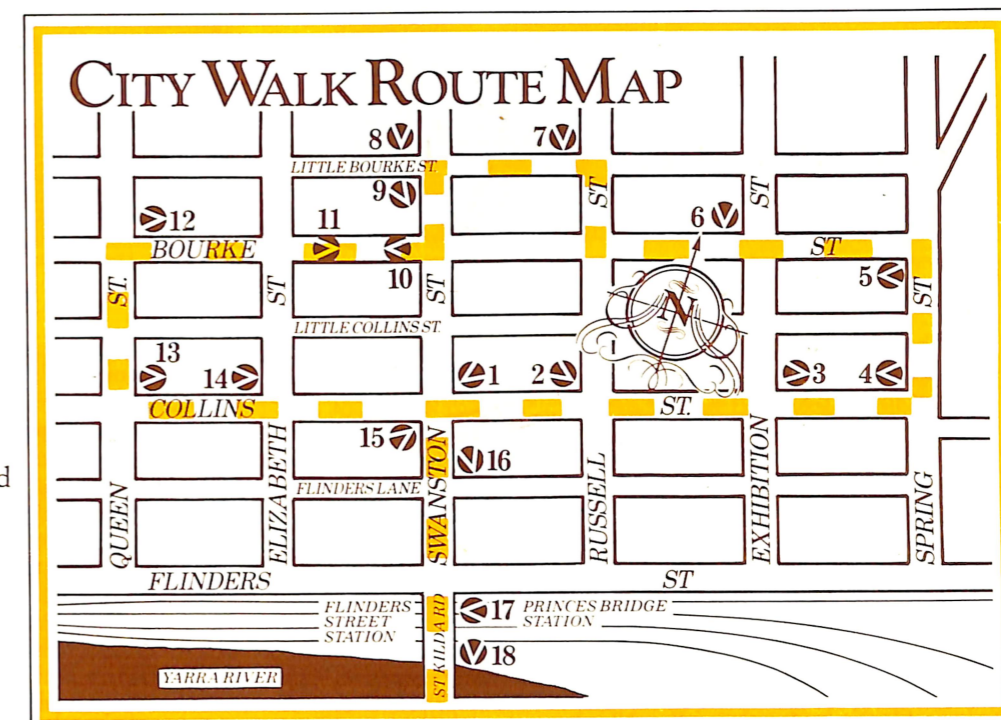
By 1839 the population of the settlement was less than 5000, but the discovery of gold in Victoria in 1851 saw a rush to the young colony and by 1861 Melbourne was Australia's largest city with a population of 130,000.

In the 1880s the city was still less than 50 years old, but was known as "Marvellous Melbourne", a magical boom town. Land prices were sky-rocketing and developers were frenziedly building grand hotels, banks and offices. It came to an end in the 1890s with industrial unrest, bank collapses, bankruptcies, and general financial gloom.

By 1911 Sydney had regained its position as Australia's largest city and Melbourne settled down to become the commercial and financial centre of the nation.

The post 1945 migration of Europeans did much to alter the face of Melbourne, giving it a more exciting, cosmopolitan air, but without changing its traditional charm and elegance.

The City Walk gives a glimpse of earlier Melbourne with photographic panels being sited as near as possible to the original locations. Some of the buildings shown in these old photographs still stand, while others have naturally given way to modern developments. This brochure links the panels in an easy walking tour and draws attention to other points of interest along the way.

CITY WALK ROUTE MAP

TOWN HALL CORNER
c 1893

1 The Melbourne City Walk begins in Collins Street, outside the Town Hall. The building of the original Town Hall began on this site in 1851. A shortage of labour, the result of the State's gold rush in the early 1850s, delayed its completion until 1854. Work on the existing Town Hall began in 1867, the portico being added in 1887. Opposite the Town Hall is the Manchester Unity Building, built in 1932 as a virtual small scale replica of the famous Chicago Tribune Building. Opposite Panel 1 is the Regent Theatre, once one of Melbourne's grandest. Just up from the Regent note the interesting facade of the Mayfair Theatre. Proceed up Collins Street, passing the Baptist Church, built in 1841, with the Corinthian facade being added in 1861. Next to the church is Georges, long regarded as Melbourne's most fashionable department store. Panel 2 is located on the kerb, near the corner with Russell Street.

BURKE AND WILLS
1865

2 Scots Church was built in 1874 and the Independent Church, now the Uniting Church, in 1866. The premises diagonally opposite Panel 2 were built in 1887 as a doctor's residence. In 1916 another storey was added and it was taken over by the Alexandra Club, an exclusive women's club. This section of Collins Street, up to Spring Street, was the fashionable residential area of the early settlement and was dotted with the grand homes of doctors, lawyers and merchants. Some of these earlier homes still remain as banks, shops or offices and this section of Collins Street is still one of the most pleasant city streets to walk. As you proceed up Collins Street you'll notice on your left the white tower of Nauru House. This was built as an investment by the tiny Republic of Nauru, whose lucrative reserves of phosphate are due to run out by the end of the century. Along from Nauru House, at No. 70 Collins Street, is an elegantly simple banking office, built as a doctor's residence in 1867. Cross Exhibition Street to Panel 3, located on the footpath outside the Reserve Bank Building.

COLLINS STREET
1886

3 The foyer of the Reserve Bank features a mural by one of Australia's leading artists, Sidney Nolan. Up from the Reserve Bank at Numbers 52-54 is Melville House, built in 1881 as a pair of 12-roomed three storey houses. Opposite is Collins Place, with its superb glass-enclosed central court and the luxurious Regent Hotel. At 36-50 Collins Street is the Melbourne Club, one of Australia's most prestigious men's clubs, built in 1858. Robert Burke, of the ill-fated Burke and Wills expedition of 1860 was an early member and he perished in the Australian outback owing 50 guineas on his account. Other buildings of note in this section of Collins Street include No. 8, Portland House, built in 1873 as a surgery and townhouse, No. 9, Grosvenor Chambers (1887). The corner building was built in 1876 as a townhouse and was purchased by the Government in 1901 for office space. In 1983 it was incorporated into the modern office complex of No. 1 Collins Street. Panel 4 is located on the kerb outside Anzac House, No. 4 Collins Street.

COLLINS STREET
c 1890

4 Alcaston House on the Collins and Spring Street corner was built in 1928 and was renovated a few years ago to include exclusive apartments. Inner city living is still new to Melburnians, although in recent years an increasing number of residential developments have sprung up in the city. Looking down Collins Street from Spring Street is the Treasury Building, built between 1858 and 1862. It was designed by a 19-year-old Government architect and is now regarded as one of Melbourne's finest buildings, despite the fact that it attracted much criticism when built. From Panel 4 turn left into Spring Street. On the right is Parliament Station, part of the inner city's underground rail system. Across from it is the Windsor Hotel, built as The Grand in 1883. For years it was Melbourne's most exclusive hotel and in the past few years has undergone multi-million dollar renovations restoring it to its former glory. It is an outstanding reminder of the grand hotels that were built in Melbourne last century.
Panel 5 is situated in Bourke Street around the corner from The Windsor.

BOURKE STREET c1900

5 Parliament House was built in stages between 1856 and 1892 and, unknown to most Melburnians, is still not completed. The original plans called for a 45 metre high dome and for north and south wings, but these have long been forgotten. Walk down the Bourke Street Hill to Exhibition Street. In the early days of Melbourne's settlement this part of town was the "seedy" area and home to sly-grog shops, brothels, cheap eating houses and slum dwellings, particularly in the many small lanes and alleys. Exhibition Street was originally named Stephen Street, a notorious brothel area in the 1870s. After a big police clean-up in the late 1870s it was renamed Exhibition Street to celebrate the International Exhibition of 1880 and to impart a new reputation. The Southern Cross Hotel was built in the early 1960s, replacing the famous Eastern Market complex which stood on that corner for almost 100 years. Turn right into Exhibition Street where Panel 6 is located on the western side of the street.

EXHIBITION STREET 1874

6 On the corner, opposite Panel 6, is the State Bank. A plaque on the building boasts more than 100 years of banking service on that site. Walk along Exhibition Street to Little Bourke Street and turn left. Little Bourke Street was once the "heart" of a much more extensive Chinatown than that seen today. Chinese immigrants first came to Victoria in large numbers during the goldrushes and Chinatown became the staging post on their way to the goldfields. Interest in Chinatown was renewed several years ago and it is now being developed as a major tourist precinct. On the left is a cluster of Chinese cafes, shops and professional rooms. No 112-114 is an impressive three-storey building erected in 1888. Continue down Little Bourke Street and cross Russell Street to Panel 7, outside the Exford Hotel.

RUSSELL STREET 1878

7 From Panel 7 continue down Little Bourke Street to Swanston Street. Many small lanes run off Little Bourke Street, housing Chinese cafes and club rooms. In Heffernan Lane, at No 11-13 is the Chung Wah Cafe which has been operated by members of the one family since 1890. On the corner of Heffernan Lane at No. 196 is the Chinese Methodist Church, built in 1879. At No. 200-202 is one of Chinatown's oldest buildings, the Numponsoon building. Built in 1862 it has been used as a meeting place and worship hall for over 100 years. A variety of Chinese food shops are located between here and Swanston Street. Although stocking similar ranges of goods, the stores draw on different clan and regional loyalties for patronage. Cross Swanston Street to Panel 8, outside the State Bank.

SWANSTON STREET 1870

8 Swanston Street, leading to the rail stations and Princes Bridge, is one of the city's main thoroughfares. It boasts few notable buildings apart from the Town Hall and the Manchester Unity Building and was once summed up as being truly Australian with a brewery at one end and the Shrine of Remembrance at the other. On the eastern side is a group of four small shops which have survived since 1904. They are a good indication of the usual building block size in the city around the turn of the century. Walk down to Panel 9, located on the kerb, just before Bourke Street.

SWANSTON STREET 1895

9 Royal Mail House on the Bourke Street corner diagonally opposite, takes its name from the Royal Mail Hotel, which made this site famous. Many hotels existed in this part of town in the last century, serving the needs of Cobb and Co. passengers who arrived or departed from the coach office in Bourke Street. Directly opposite the panel is a building that for many years housed a Melbourne institution, Foy and Gibson. Melbourne had many famous department stores that had served the city for generations, but over the past decade or so they have ceased business or been taken over. From Panel 9, walk to the Bourke Street Mall, where panel 10 is located on the right-hand side.

BOURKE STREET 1905

10 With the opening of the Bourke Street Mall, Melbourne's shopping heart received a further boost. The presence of the Myer Store since 1911 saw this block between Swanston and Elizabeth Streets grow into the city's busiest retail area. Apart from Myer, some of the country's leading retailers are located here, including David Jones and Coles. As you wander around The Mall watch out for passing trams. Although all the shops in The Mall have modern facades at ground level the buildings themselves reflect an interesting range of architectural styles from Victorian to Art Deco. Several arcades run off the southern side of The Mall and are worth a look at, notably the elegant Royal Arcade and the London Arcade. Panel 11 is located outside the David Jones Store.

BOURKE STREET 1860

11 Cobb and Co. coaches once lined up at the site of Panel 11 for departure to the Victorian goldfields and interstate towns. A small plaque on the David Jones building commemorates the significance of this location. The coaches were the lifeline of the early colony, with staging posts dotted throughout Victoria and New South Wales. Next to David Jones is the Myer Emporium, one of the largest department stores in the world. Walk past the GPO and cross Elizabeth Street towards Panel 12 near the intersection with Queen Street.

BOURKE STREET 1868

12 The area of Bourke Street between Queen and Elizabeth Streets was almost exclusively devoted to the horse and carriage trade last century. Today it is a rather bland and modern block and it is interesting to look down this stretch of Bourke Street and compare today's scene with a description from the 1880s: "Here congregate the saddlers, harness makers and farriers and here, too, are the numerous horse bazaars resonant with the clatter of iron-shod hoofs, the cracking of whips, the hum of bidders and the loud voice of the auctioneer ringing through the vaulted mews." Contemplate the fascinating scene it once was and then turn left into Queen Street and walk another block of modern buildings. Panel 13 is located around the corner from Queen Street, in Collins Street.

COLLINS STREET 1870

THE BLOCK c1905

SWANSTON STREET c1900

ST. PAUL'S 1860

13 The area around the Queen and Collins Streets intersection has long been the financial heart of Melbourne. Opposite Panel 13, near the site of the present Stock Exchange, was the Hall of Commerce where merchants, bankers and brokers gathered to exchange the latest prices and financial information. The bank building on the north east corner was built in 1883 in the Venetian Revival Gothic style. The banking chamber, with its rich decoration, is well worth a visit. The Gothic style continued with the building of the Stock Exchange next door, in 1890. This is now part of the bank offices. On the south west corner is Goode House, built in 1892, its architects being instructed that it should be in the Gothic style. The building on the north west corner was built as a banking chamber in 1878 and was refurbished in the early 1980s as prestigious office space. The bank building at No. 335 is worth a visit for its magnificent interior chamber. Panel 14 is located on the corner of Collins and Elizabeth Streets.

14 Just north of this intersection is the elegant facade of the Block Arcade, inspired by the Galleria Vittoria in Milan, and built in 1890. Linking Elizabeth and Collins Streets the Block Arcade has a dignified, old world charm and is well worth walking through. There was a time when the northern side of Collins Street was the only paved footpath in Melbourne and "doing the Block" was a favourite and fashionable pastime. Today's football-loving Melburnians might find it hard to believe but in the 1870s the Saturday games were timed to start after people had finished walking and lunching on The Block. Opposite the Block Arcade in Collins Street is the National Bank building, one of the few 19th century buildings still standing in this part of Collins Street. Also of interest a little further along Collins Street is the mural on Newspaper House, at No. 247. Commissioned in the early 1930s it shows the progress of man in the technological age. Continue along Collins Street and cross to the right-hand side and turn into Swanston Street. Panel 15 is located on the kerb, just around the corner.

15 Opposite Panel 15 is Melbourne's City Square. When opened in 1980 it was Melbourne's first major square, fulfilling a need for leisure-time use by both workers and shoppers. Emphasis in the design of the square was to create a strong visual link between the Town Hall and St. Paul's Cathedral, two of Melbourne's most historic buildings. The predominating surface material is diamond-cut bluestone, chosen because it represents a traditional Melbourne building material, complementary to the bluestone base of St. Paul's Cathedral and of the Town Hall. At the rear of the square, under the Regent Theatre, is an interesting complex of shops and eating houses and the restful Garden Lounge. Panel 16 is located at the edge of the Square, near Flinders Lane.

16 The construction of the City Square opened up St. Paul's Cathedral from the north, a view previously hidden by city buildings. St. Paul's was built in the 1880s and to compensate for its being on flat ground the architects were instructed to make the steeples particularly high. The first St. Paul's was built on the site in the early 1850s, replacing a corn market. The Cathedral has some beautiful Gothic-style wood-carving, fine stained glass and fine reredos behind the high altar of Venetian mosaic. It was the largest building ever designed by William Butterfield, one of England's great 19th century architects. However, he did not come to Melbourne to supervise its construction. From Panel 16 walk along Swanston Street, passing the statue of an early navigator and the man who gave Australia its name, Captain Matthew Flinders.

FLINDERS STREET 1890

17 Panel 17 is located at the wall of Princes Bridge Railway Station, which serves Melbourne's northern suburbs. The Plaza above the station gives a good view across the railyards to the more pleasant aspect of Melbourne's vast gardens. The white tower, just visible above the tree-line is Government House, residence of the Governor of Victoria. If the flag is flying it indicates that His Excellency is at home. The Plaza also affords a good perspective of St. Paul's three spires. Across Swanston Street is Flinders Street Station, one of the world's busiest stations. "Under the clocks" at Flinders Street Station has been a famous Melbourne meeting point for 80 years. Young and Jackson's hotel on the corner is another landmark and has 'graced' the intersection for more than 100 years. The final panel in the walk is located at Swanston Street on the bridge above the railyards.

ST. KILDA ROAD c1900

18 Just south of Panel 18 Swanston Street crosses the Yarra River and becomes St. Kilda Road, one of Melbourne's most attractive boulevards. It is almost a tourist 'must' to take a tram ride along St. Kilda Road to the once fashionable beach resort of St. Kilda. Just over the bridge is the Victorian Arts Centre and Gallery, a definite must.

SOME INTERESTING PLACES TO VISIT

ARTS CENTRE OF VICTORIA AND NATIONAL GALLERY St. Kilda Road. Has the finest collection of art in the southern hemisphere. Hours 10 am to 5 pm Tuesday-Sunday.

SHRINE OF REMEMBRANCE St. Kilda Road. Victoria's monument to men and women who served in the two world wars. It has been built so that a shaft of sunlight illuminates a sunken rock in the inner court at 11 am on the eleventh day of the eleventh month, Remembrance Day.

ROYAL BOTANIC GARDENS. Among the most beautiful in the world. Walk across Princes Bridge and through the Queen Victoria Gardens or along Alexandra Avenue, or take tram No. 8 in Swanston Street or "Saona" Ferry from Princes Walk. Open daily sunrise to sunset.

LA TROBE'S COTTAGE. The Domain, by the Botanic Gardens. Our early settlement's first Government House – containing many original furnishings. Open daily throughout the year. 10.30 am to 5 pm.

ROYAL EXHIBITION BUILDING. First built for the great exhibition of 1880 by David Mitchell, the father of Dame Nellie Melba. It is used for a variety of interesting commercial exhibitions. Nicholson Street, Fitzroy.

FITZROY GARDENS. Site for Captain James Cook's cottage. Open daily 10 am to 4.30 pm A miniature scale model of an English tudor village is another attraction. The Fairy Tree, a tree trunk covered with carvings of animals and figures was completed after four years of carvings by Miss Ola Cohn. Enter from Lansdowne Street or Wellington Parade, East Melbourne.

COMO. Historic Melbourne home. Como Avenue, Toorak. Tram No. 8, Swanston Street, alight at stop No. 30. Open 10 am to 5 pm daily.

SCIENCE MUSEUM OF VICTORIA. Cnr. Swanston and La Trobe Streets. Technical displays, Australia's first car and aeroplane. Hours: Monday-Saturday, 10 am to 5 pm Sunday 2 pm to 5 pm.

NATIONAL MUSEUM, Russell Street. Has a comprehensive range of exhibits, including a good Australian section. Open Monday-Saturday 10 am to 5 pm Sunday 2 pm to 5 pm.

THE STATE LIBRARY. Swanston Street. Contains more than 750,000 volumes, and is one of the largest in Australia. There are comprehensive collections of printed works on Australasia and the South Seas. Reference library open Monday-Friday 10 am to 10 pm Saturday 10 am to 5 pm. Sunday 2 pm to 10 pm.

STATE PARLIAMENT HOUSE. Spring Street open Monday-Friday 10.00 am to 11.00 am and 2.00 pm to 3.00 pm.

TOWN HALL. Corner of Collins and Swanston Streets.

MELBOURNE CITY SQUARE. Cnr. Collins and Swanston Streets. Officially opened by Her Majesty the Queen on 28th May, 1980 to give Melbourne its first official city square.

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