



Malvern Town Hall Walk October 2017

Start under the Malvern Town Hall portico in Glenferrie Road Malvern

Land northeast of the present Malvern Town Hall was first sold in 1854, when the roads now known as Glenferrie, Malvern and Tooronga Roads and High Street, were first surveyed. Glenferrie Road was initially known as the Hawthorn Road, or the Richmond to Brighton Road, then in 1857 it was renamed Barkly Road, after the Governor Sir Henry Barkly. Later it was named Glenferrie, named after Peter Ferrie's property that was close to Gardiner's Creek.

Land on the corner of High Street and Glenferrie Road had been reserved for a Shire Hall, courthouse and library in 1878. The Hon. Alfred Deakin, Minister for Public Works, laid the foundation stone of the Malvern Shire Hall, designed in 1885 by architects Wilson & Beswicke. Additions to the Shire Hall in 1890 included the northern tower, used by the fire brigade as a lookout tower and an extended Glenferrie Road facade. A brass plaque can be found at the base of the main tower commemorating the presentation of the Town Hall clock in 1891 by Shire President, Cr Alex McKinley. Alex was the proprietor of several Melbourne newspapers including Punch and The Bulletin. He was appointed a special Magistrate for the Children's Court, and he was also President of the Children's Welfare Association.

In 1926, the Town Hall was altered again when architects Hudson & Wardrop, designed a new Council Chamber, Mayoral Rooms, Main Hall and a Supper Room. They also added the front portico and extended the High Street facade.

Walk North to the laneway between the Town Hall and the Police Station and stop, halfway along the laneway

The present Malvern Police Station, and the Court House featuring two coats of arms, were built in 1929 replacing an earlier single storey, Victorian-style house on the site. The Magistrates' Court, at the rear of the police station, closed in 1978.

Walk along the laneway to the side of the Malvern Cricket Ground

The Malvern Cricket Ground is the home of the Malvern Cricket Club formed in 1859, the Malvern Lacrosse Club established in 1903, and from 1922-1976 it was also the home of the Malvern Harriers which had been formed in 1892. In June 1888, the Malvern Cricket Ground was used as the testing site of the first Australian-made motor vehicle, the Thomson Steam Car manufactured in nearby High Street, Armadale. During the 1920s, screens were put up around the Cricket Ground so that Hubert Opperman could train on his Malvern Star bicycle away from prying eyes!

The original timber pavilion, built in 1878, was replaced in 1925 by the present pavilion, named after Charles Franklin Lansbury, a Malvern lacrosse club president, secretary and treasurer, who played for the club between 1922 and 1946. The present pavilion was designed by architects Hudson & Wardrop. 'Northbrook', built in 1890, can be seen across the oval.

Return to Glenferrie Road, turn right and proceed north to St George's Church. Walk over to the church entrance

In 1865 Samuel Merrett was appointed the architect for St George's Church. The foundation stone was laid by Sir William Stawell, the Chief Justice of Victoria. In 1921 Lord Stradbroke, the Governor of Victoria who resided nearby at 'Stonington', laid the foundation stone of the St Martin's Chapel within the Church. St George's features encaustic tiles manufactured by the local Malvern firm, Cawkwell's Tile Works. The vicarage, east of the Church, was originally built in 1869, and then extended in 1897 to include the first floor. The foundation stone of the Church Hall was laid by Sir William Clarke in 1891.

Return to Glenferrie Road, turn right and proceed north to Sorrett Avenue

Note the plaque at the base of the large elm tree on the corner.

Walk along Sorrett Avenue

'Nerrena' was a seven-roomed brick house erected before 1856 for English-born surgeon, (Sir) James Palmer on a large piece of land that extended between Glenferrie Road, Haverbrack Avenue, High Street and Spring Road. Nerrena means 'a distant view'. After moving to Melbourne from Sydney, Palmer became a cordial manufacturer and wine merchant and in 1845/6 he was the Mayor of Melbourne. He also served on the New South Wales and Victorian Legislative Councils. In 1866, Charles Washington Umphelby purchased 'Nerrena', and to mark the birth of his second daughter Ethel, he had a line of pine trees, eucalypts, red roses and geraniums planted along 'Nerrena's' carriageway. He also planted an elm tree on each side of the entrance gates at Glenferrie Road. This driveway was later to become Sorrett Avenue. Sir Keith Officer, an Australian Ambassador in Paris, whose mother was commemorated by the planting of the elms, requested that a plaque be placed at the base of one of the trees.

In 1881, 'Nerrena' was purchased by Donald Wallace. In 1887 he renamed the property 'Sorrett'. In 1887, the main carriageway was subdivided and Sorrett Avenue was created. The remaining seven acres, together with 'Sorrett', were later sold to Fredrick Throssell who subdivided the estate. Two large homes, 'Fairlight' (formerly 9 Northbrook Ave) and 'Northbrook' (behind Malvern Library) were constructed on part of the remaining seven acres. Around 1908, 'Sorrett' was sold to solicitor, Arthur Robinson who subdivided the portion of the estate fronting Spring Road, creating Chilcote Avenue.

Robinson re-named the house 'Chilcote' and sold the remaining three acres to Sir Alexander Stewart who renamed the property 'Kinnoull', after Kinnoull Hill near his family home in Scotland.

One well known resident of Sorrett Avenue was Frederick William Kitchen, the youngest of three sons of John Kitchen, a former grocer and candle maker from England. Soon after John arrived in Melbourne in the 1850s, he commenced making candles and within thirty years, became Australia's chief manufacturer of candles and soap. John's son, John Ambrose, managed the business side of the family company, J Kitchen & Sons whilst Frederick, who started in the business at the age of 13, became a director. In 1962 the company merged with Lever Bros. forming Lever and Kitchen which merged with Rexona in the 1990s.

Most of the Italianate-style villas on the south side of Sorrett Ave were erected between 1888 - 1890. All the timber Victorian-style houses on the north side have been demolished.

Walk back along Sorrett Avenue to 1 Sorrett Avenue, a bluestone property on the north side of the street

1 Sorrett Avenue, a gothic-style house, was erected in 1889. It was constructed of basalt with cement detailing. The house features a castellated parapet, steeply pitched slate gable roof punctuated with Tudor-style chimneys, and gable ends with open trusses and finials.

Return to Glenferrie Road, turn right and proceed north to Haverbrack Avenue. Turn right into Haverbrack Avenue

It would have been a very rustic setting in 1854 when Colin Campbell erected his new home 'Haverbrack' on 20 acres of land. Campbell was a pastoralist, politician, author, educationist and cleric. Campbell erected a small pre-fabricated iron house. This early house featured solid iron doors, corrugated iron walls and a wooden shingled roof. 'Haverbrack' was probably constructed in Britain, dismantled, every component labelled, then packed into crates and shipped to its new rural location in Malvern. 'Haverbrack' was used as the district's first Sunday School. In 1849, the house was sold to Robert Singleton, the Secretary for the Railways. Singleton had amassed a considerable fortune, having discovered the reef that started the Royal Standard gold mine at Wood's Point, Victoria. The Singleton family owned the property until it was demolished in 1935.

Stop outside 2 Haverbrack Avenue

The Rt. Hon. Sir Robert Gordon Menzies, Prime Minister of Australia from 1939 to 1941 and again from 1949 to 1966, the MHR for Kooyong and the founder of the Liberal Party, lived at 2 Haverbrack Avenue, with his wife, Dame Pattie Menzies from 1966 until 1978. The house has had a number of alterations and was demolished in 1922.

Walk east along Haverbrack Avenue

Land was sold as part of the subdivision of the Haverbrack Estate in 1915. The sale notice stipulated that 'on the frontages in Glenferrie Road, and also Haverbrack Avenue, not more than one brick house shall be erected on any allotment, and shall not cost less than £800'. Very few of original homes in Haverbrack Avenue remain today.

Continue walking east along Haverbrack Avenue. Stop at the corner of Spring Road

Despite being one of Malvern's earliest government roads, the only development along Spring Road before 1902 was the school, the public gardens, a Wesleyan church and 4 small weather-board cottages at the northern end (now demolished).

Walk east along to the end of Haverbrack Avenue. Turn right and walk south along Spring Road to the corner of Chilcote Avenue, walk along Chilcote Avenue

'Sorrett' was located on the site of what is today the De La Salle College's Kinnoull campus. Archbishop Daniel Mannix opened Kinnoull as the preparatory school for the De La Salle boys school in 1954. In 1967, one hundred and twelve years after it had been built, the original home on the site was demolished.

Return to the corner of Chilcote Avenue and Spring Road. Turn right, stay on this side of Spring Road and walk along stopping opposite Malvern Central School

Classes for Malvern Central School, established in 1875, were held in the old courthouse and the schoolhouse at St. George's Church. The school began on this site in a two-roomed building. The Park Street infant school was opened in 1915 on the opposite side of the park. Year 7 and Year 8 classes first commenced in 1926. The older girls attended Armadale Primary School for cooking and sewing and the boys went to nearby Gardiner Central School for woodwork. By 1927 the school had an enrolment of 1196 students.

Continue walking south along Spring Road, cross to the pond opposite

This site was identified as a water reservation from 1856. The natural spring, used by the Wurundjeri people, supplied the developing suburb with water before the Yan Yean water supply scheme being implemented in 1869. In 1885, when the government intended to auction the land, a public protest caused it to be secured for public use. The public reserve, which included 8 acres of land, was associated with the community life of Malvern, and especially so with the amusements of the villagers in the form of local sports meetings, moonlight concerts and cricket matches.

In 1888, Malvern Shire Council approached Thomas Pockett, a gardener of some note, 'to prepare a plan of a sandy barren waste with a view of converting it into a municipal garden'. Pockett had been working at 'Kenley' in Kooyong Road, where he won the first prize of 3 guineas offered by the Horticultural Society of Victoria, 'for the best arranged and best-kept gentleman's garden within four miles of the Melbourne G.P.O.' After relinquishing his position at 'Kenley', Pockett was appointed Curator of Malvern's Gardens, a position he held for thirty years.

From 1888 over twenty years, Pockett laid out Malvern Gardens with serpentine paths, no straight lines or formal angular beds. A row of English Oaks was planted on each side of the drive which extended through the centre of the gardens. Palms, elms and flower beds were also planted. At this time Pockett was achieving world acclaim in the breeding and growing of Chrysanthemums, and displays of his prize-winning blooms became a feature of the gardens.

Pockett's original design included a fish pond where, above artistic grotto work designed by Charles Robinette, a handsome fountain was installed. The current fountain is a recent replica.

The official opening of the Gardens by Duncan Gillies M.P. took place on December 12, 1890. The ceremony was performed when a gold key, set with a heart-shaped opal, was used to open the massive wooden gates, which had been locked with silver and gold chains. In 1911, the Governor, Sir John Fuller proclaimed Malvern a City. The gardens included an oriental-style jarrah pavilion, a tea kiosk, built in 1924 and from 1931 a new entrance in Ascot Street.

Return to High Street, and proceed west. Cross Northbrook Avenue and continue to the driveway, just before Malvern Library. Follow the driveway to the front entrance to 'Northbrook'

'Northbrook', now the home of the Stonnington History Centre, is an Italianate-style home of seven main rooms, ballroom and brick stables. It was designed by architect Charles D'Ebro for Donald Munro in 1888. In the same year, Munro subdivided a portion of the estate fronting High Street and created Northbrook Avenue. Donald was an Auctioneer, a Malvern Shire Councillor (1891-1903) and Shire President (1895/96). In 1929, the land surrounding 'Northbrook' was subdivided and in 1945, the Malvern Council purchased 'Northbrook'. The mulberry tree, near the porch, grew from a cutting taken from a tree planted in Priory Park, Malvern, England by noted playwright George Bernard Shaw. The Northbrook Art Garden, surrounding the house, was completed in 1990. Stonnington City Brass, formerly the Prahran & Malvern Tramway Employees Band and Malvern Municipal Band, formed in 1911. The band have practised in the 'Northbrook' stables, on the west side of 'Northbrook', since 1932. Malvern Library was opened in 1958.

Return to High Street