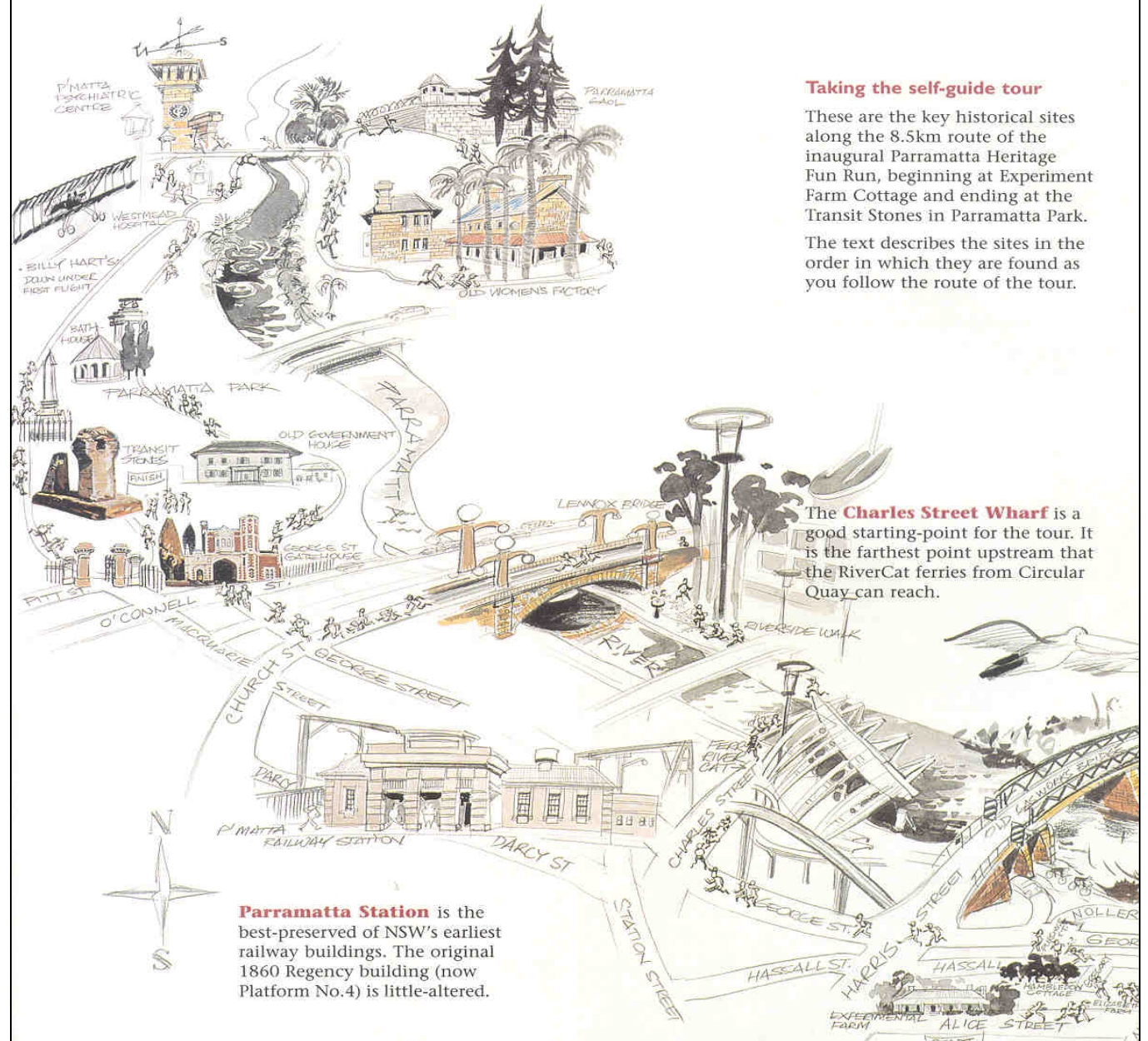


self-guided tour

Parramatta... a heritage of roads and transport





Experiment Farm Cottage stands on the first land grant in Australia. James Ruse was set up on a small farm in 1789 and became self-supporting. By 1793 the soil was exhausted, and Ruse sold his grant to the surgeon John Harris, after whom Harris Park was named, and who built the cottage between 1798 and 1836.

Elizabeth Farm is Australia's oldest cottage. Built for John and Elizabeth Macarthur, it lay on 1,000 acres stretching to the Parramatta River. The main house was built in 1794.

Hambledon Cottage

The 5 large oak trees near **Hambledon Cottage** grew from English acorns planted by John Macarthur in 1817 to celebrate victory at the Battle of Waterloo.

Queen's Wharf was as far up-river as a shallow-draft boat could go. From here, **George Street**, the first planned street in Australia, ran a mile west to Governor Phillip's cottage in the Domain (now Parramatta Park). Originally 205 feet wide, it was the town's main street in the days when commerce relied on river transport.

The **Gasworks Bridge** took its popular name from the Parramatta Gasworks which operated nearby between 1872 and 1880.

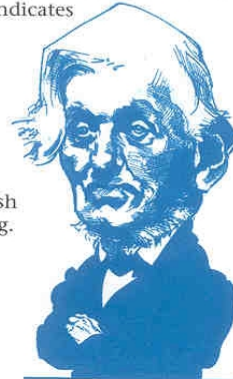
Harrisford housed The King's School until 1836, William Woolls' private school until 1840, and the girls' school Linden House until 1865. It then became the home of the Harris family, who gave it its present name.



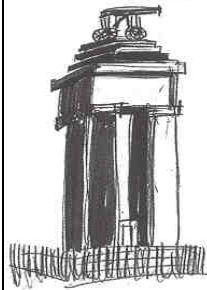
Art works on the **Riverside Walk**, by Jamie Eastwood, give an indigenous perspective of the Parramatta River and its people, leading to a Reconciliation Soundscape on the riverbank.

At the **Heritage Centre**, an exhibition and research centre, the terrazzo floor shows an 1844 map of Parramatta and indicates sites that remain.

Convict gangs of 300 or more, chained together, clanked down the streets to build the **Lennox Bridge** in 1836-39. In 1989, a major outcry defeated a plan to demolish the bridge to ease flooding.



David Lennox



The **Police Cell and Court House wall** are the remains of the 1838 stone courthouse, replaced by a larger building in the 1880s. In 1903 its columns were moved to the Boer War memorial in Parramatta Park.

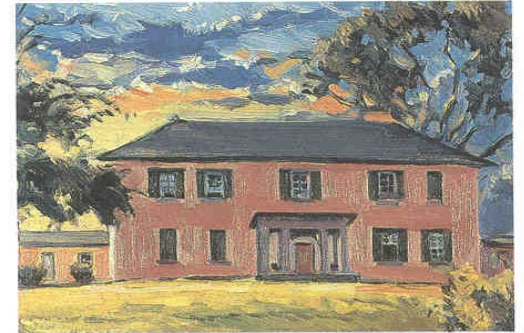
The first **Woolpack Hotel** stood on the site of the present Courthouse. Its vegetable garden became the green for Parramatta's first bowling club. The present Woolpack dates from the 1870s.

Brislington, now a hospital museum, was built in 1821 as an inn by John Hodges. Legend says he won £1,000 at cards, and the eight diamond shapes in the brickwork depict his winning card.

The **George St Gatehouse** cost £590 in 1885. The site has been the main entrance to the park, originally the Governor's Domain, since 1788.



An obelisk commemorates **Lady Mary FitzRoy** and Lieutenant John Masters, killed here in 1847 when their carriage, driven by Governor FitzRoy himself, hit a tree after the horses bolted.



Old Government House is the oldest public building in Australia. The central part dates from 1795, built by Governor Hunter to replace Arthur Phillip's 1789 wattle-and-daub cottage. Macquarie had the house widened and the wings added. The classical portico was designed by Greenway. Since 1855 the building has been a private home, a boarding house, St. John's Grammar School and then part of The King's School.

The **Burramatta Visitor Centre** has displays and exhibitions on cultural and heritage aspects of Parramatta Park, from Aboriginal occupation to the present day.

Governor Brisbane's bathhouse, designed by Francis Greenway, was built in 1823 close to the observatory where Brisbane spent his evenings. Originally an elegant domed building, it was rebuilt as a Gothic pavilion in 1886.



The gardens of **Glengarriff**, built in 1906 for the Superintendent of the Parramatta Lunatic Asylum, Dr Williamson, feature wistaria plants brought by his daughters from Japan.



In the **Cumberland Hospital** are the remains of the Female Factory, designed by Francis Greenway in 1820. Its 1st and 2nd class prisoners served their time spinning and weaving. The block for the 3rd class women, repeat offenders with shaved heads who broke rocks for road fill, still stands.



After transportation ended in the 1840s, the buildings housed the Parramatta Lunatic Asylum.

The first **Parramatta Gaol** was built of wood in Prince Alfred Park, (then called Gaol Green) and was burnt down by inmates in 1799. The existing stone Parramatta Gaol has been used for more than 180 years.

The **Dairy Cottage** precinct is where Irish convict George Salter built a house overlooking the river on his release in 1796.



The **William Ewart Hart** memorial recalls Australia's first aviator. Hart built his own aircraft, and in 1911 took off and landed in front of 500 people at Penrith. The next day he flew to Parramatta Park, reaching 3,000 feet, and landed beside the Dairy. A plaque marks the place today.

The **Transit Stones** were the mounting blocks for the transit telescope of Governor Brisbane's observatory, built in 1822 but demolished in 1876. The small copper marker between the stones marks the base meridian from which Mitchell's 1827–33 survey of NSW was measured.

The founding of Rose Hill

New South Wales' second settlement was founded by Governor Phillip in November 1788. He chose a site on a rising hill he named *Rose Hill*. Convicts were sent there to grow crops, and their first harvest saved the young colony from starvation.

In July 1790, Phillip laid down the lines of a regular town. High Street (now George Street) was laid out as the first planned street in the colony. Quakers Row (later Church Street) was laid out 143 feet wide beginning at the south bank of the river, where Phillip planned a town square to house a town hall and government buildings.

In June 1791 Phillip renamed the settlement:

*'...Par-ra-mat-ta, being the name by which the natives distinguished the part of the country on which the town stood.'**

The name *Rose Hill* survives in the colourful parrot found among the trees, first known as *Rosehiller*, then *Rosella*.



Early travel between Sydney and Parramatta

The first communication between Sydney and Parramatta was by boat. Government regulations applied to the daily services, requiring that *'the boats be furnished with at least four oars, in case the passengers may wish to assist in rowing, and with one mast and sail.'*

Some early roads followed the bush tracks that linked Aboriginal clans. They were of prime importance for travel and barter at corroborees, where food in season such as fish or bunyah nuts were exchanged for tools, spearheads or fishing nets and hooks.

In 1802 Francois Peron, travelling the road to Parramatta, was overcome by its natural beauty:

'A charming freshness, and an agreeable shade always prevail in this continuous bower, the silence of which is interrupted only, by the singing and chirping of the richly plumed parroquets, and other birds which inhabit it.'

*Collins, David; *An Account of the English Colony in New South Wales*, AH Reed Pty Ltd, Sydney

Macquarie the Roadbuilder, 1810–1822

Appalled at the state of the buildings and roads he found, Macquarie set about repairs and plans for new roads. He regarded *'Permanent Roads and Bridges as the first steps to Improving a New Country'*.

Macquarie established five new towns, Windsor, Richmond, Pitt Town, Castlereagh and Wilberforce, and roads were made to link them to Parramatta.

Tolls were collected on major roads to fund their upkeep and repay their cost. Convicts road gangs worked nine hours a day, six days a week.

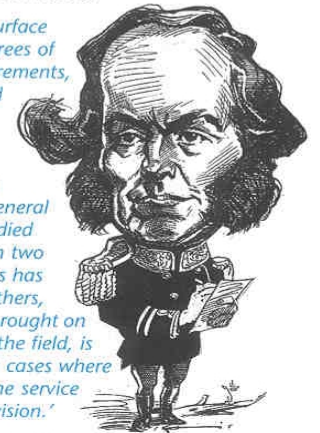
The Sydney–Parramatta Road, with a toll gate at Beckett's Bridge (Granville) was the busiest of these turnpikes. Users returning with empty drays were obliged to carry bricks or logs to fill holes along the way.

Thomas Mitchell, Surveyor-General

With the arrival of Major Thomas Mitchell in 1827, a detailed survey of the colony's settled areas began and continued for six years.

Mitchell divided the 33,180 square miles of the colony into 19 counties. About 900 field maps were drawn, and then fitted together by Mitchell to create three master maps. Mitchell had these engraved onto copper at his own expense for reproduction. In his own words:

'A survey connecting a surface extending across 17 degrees of latitude by chain measurements, tied together and verified by triangulation, exists nowhere else, that I am aware of, on the globe. The fate of the surveyors employed has been in general unfortunate. Some have died miserably, amongst them two of my own sons, madness has deprived the service of others, and premature old age, brought on by constant exposure in the field, is but too apparent even in cases where old surveyors have left the service without any retiring provision.'



Mitchell was knighted for his achievement.

Mitchell's three Great Roads

In 1833 Mitchell reported on the existing road system and recommended improving and extending it to the Hunter River, Goulburn and Bathurst. He surveyed the routes for the new highways: The Great North Road, the Great Southern Road (now Hume Highway) and the Great Western Road.

David Lennox, bridge and road builder

The master mason David Lennox arrived in NSW in 1832, and on Mitchell's recommendation was soon appointed Superintendent of Bridges. His first bridge, the 1833 Horseshoe Bridge on Mitchell's Pass, is the oldest on mainland Australia. It carried all the Great Western Highway traffic until the highway was realigned in 1926.

Lennox's 1839 arch bridge over the Parramatta River at the end of Church Street reinforced the town's central place in the colony's road network. Church Street soon became an important section of the colonial road system, linking Sydney with the farms of the Hawkesbury district.

Steam ferries on the Parramatta River

The first steam ferry built in NSW, *The Surprise*, began on the Parramatta run but did not live up to expectations. However, by 1835 river steamers provided a cheap, convenient means of transport.

With gold discoveries west of the mountains in 1851, Parramatta was at the crossroads in the frantic movement of people and merchandise between Sydney and the inland.

The railway transforms Parramatta

Ferries and horse-drawn coaches were joined in 1856 by the railway from Sydney, which ended at modern-day Granville.

Its early passengers found that, having paid the train fare, they then had to pay the road toll before entering Parramatta.

The extension of the railway to Blacktown in 1860 brought the line through the southern part of Parramatta, cutting the town in two. Buildings were demolished to make way, and the tracks were carried on timber bridges across Church, Marsden and Pitt Streets.

The new line branched off about 400m east of the original Parramatta Terminus, necessitating a new platform which was named Parramatta Junction.

George Street gradually lost its status as the main thoroughfare as businesses moved to Church Street for better access to the rail service and the Sydney-Parramatta-Windsor Road.

The fall and rise of the ferry service

Silting of the river and the introduction of screw-driven ferries, needing deeper water, led to the building of a new wharf about 4 km downstream. In 1881, ferry owner Charles Jeanneret opened a tramway between the new wharf and the town.

The period up to World War I saw the heyday of the 'Picnic Party' outing, with parties of up to 500 journeying by tram and ferry to popular picnic spots around Sydney Harbour.

The ferry service ceased in 1928, due to poor patronage, but the trams continued until 1943.

The railway made Parramatta a reluctant suburb of Sydney. However, for the people of the County of Cumberland, the town remained the district capital. Orchardists and small farmers carted fruit to the wharf and railway station, bringing work for its tradesmen and shoppers to its stores.

In 1988 ferry travel began again, using fast RiverCat catamarans between Circular Quay and the Charles Street Wharf.

The motor transport revolution

Today we have around six cars for every ten people in Australia, putting pressure on planners to ensure smoother traffic flow.

In the 1950s freeways and ring-roads were planned, and improved public transport was seen as an important means of relieving the pressure. The Parramatta CBD was by-passed by James Ruse Drive and Bridge, opened in 1966.

The three new bridges which spanned the river in the 1960s and 70s, together with improvements in the capacity of existing bridges, played an important part in improving the flow of traffic. The last of these, the 1975 Barry Wilde Bridge in Smith Street, completed the city's inner ring transportation plan.

Self-guided tour

This self-guided tour of Parramatta describes a number of significant roads, bridges, wharves and buildings dating back to the 18th and 19th centuries.

You can reach the places on the tour by public transport and on foot. They can be photographed from around their sites, although positions depend on light and river conditions.

Roads and bridges noted in this guide are used for traffic. You should only view them from safe locations.

For more information, contact the Parramatta Heritage and Visitor Information Centre on (02) 9630 3703.



Above: *The Lennox Bridge*, a 27m sandstone arch built in 1836-38 with convict labour.

Cover: *The Transit Stones*, the base point for Mitchell's 1827-33 survey of NSW.

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