

A brief journey into our past

Like several other Newcastle suburbs, Wallsend is named after a place in England. The English Wallsend is a small town in Durham, Northumberland. It is situated at the end of Hadrian's Wall which stretched across England – hence the aptly named, Walls End.

Following the establishment of the Newcastle-Wallsend Coal Company's first coal mine in 1860, the town grew rapidly. Commercial buildings and shops were erected to service the needs of the influx of miners arriving from Scotland, England and Wales. The Coal Company subdivided land in and around its 'A' Pit (Cowper, Campbell, Brown, Thomas, Whitton, Martindale, Brooks, Metcalfe, Murnin and Irving Streets) with the first blocks selling in 1860 for 120-160 pounds per acre. In the 1860s, following a period of protracted disputes with management, a group of disgruntled miners began the Co-operative Mine on the present site of Wallsend High School in Macquarie Street. That mine ceased production in 1934 and was the first and only attempt to work a coal mine on the co-operative principle.

During the 1860s the village of Plattsburg, to the west of Wallsend, was settled although Wallsend was by far the more affluent community. In 1874 Wallsend was incorporated and the first council formed with James Fletcher elected Mayor. Plattsburg Borough Council was formed in 1876 with James Birrell elected Mayor. Amalgamation of the two councils occurred in 1915 with the new council being known as Wallsend Municipal Council. This continued until 1938 when Wallsend joined with Newcastle City Council. Cedric Thomas was the last Mayor of Wallsend. Steam trams from Newcastle to Plattsburg replaced regular rail services in 1887. When the line was extended to West Wallsend and Speers Point, it was reputedly the longest suburban steam tram-line in the world.

The push for a hospital in Wallsend started around 1885 and was led by John Summers who organised many public meetings. Designed by renowned architect, Frederick Menkens and constructed on land donated by Newcastle Wallsend Coal Co., Wallsend Hospital was opened in 1893 by the Postmaster General, Mr J Kidd.

There were more than 300 enlistments from Wallsend during World War I with former residents Captain Clarence Smith Jeffries (KIA) and Pt William Matthew Currey both being awarded the Victoria Cross.

After a 64 year history, the last race meeting at Wallsend Race Course took place in 1930. Two years later, the grandstand was moved from this venue to the Crystal Palace Soccer Ground. This in turn became the Wallsend Plaza Shopping Centre with Iron Bark Creek separating the original commercial centre from the new complex.

The 1989 earthquake resulted in the demolition of many century-old buildings, however Wallsend still retains the ambience of its 'coal mining village' years.

Wallsend Heritage Group Inc
meets 2-4pm, the second Thursday
of each month at the Baptist Church,
Cowper Street, Wallsend.

For more information call:
the President Wallsend Heritage Group
(02) 4948 9178

For more historical information contact
Local Studies at Newcastle Region Library
on (02) 4974 5330

**The Wallsend Heritage Mainstreet Study, 1996,
is available for viewing at
Wallsend Branch Library, phone (02) 4955 9484**

This brochure can be downloaded from
Newcastle City Council's website at:
www.newcastle.nsw.gov.au

Historic Wallsend

TOWN CENTRE Walk



The Wallsend Town Centre Walk brochure is
a recognised Newcastle 200 event



Produced by Newcastle City Council for the
Wallsend Heritage Group Inc.
May 2004



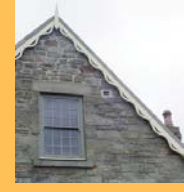
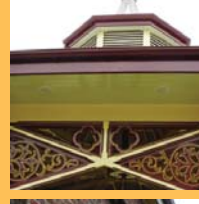
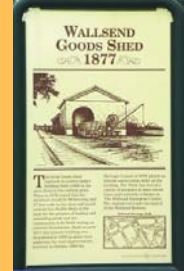
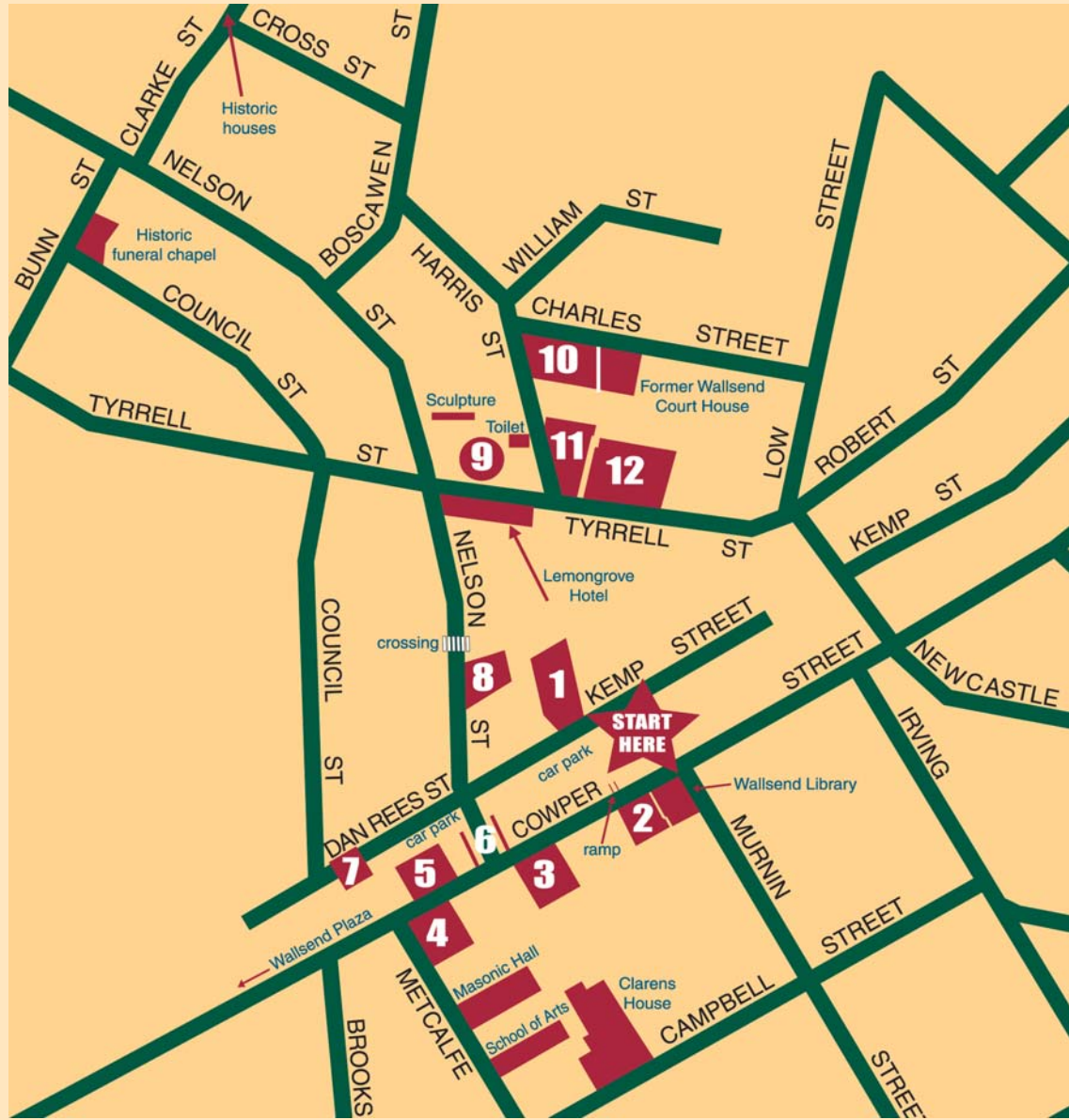
Wallsend Heritage Group Inc.

Historic Wallsend

TOWN CENTRE



Walk



LEGEND * denotes plaque

- 1** *Grapes Inn* c1869: Victorian sandstone building. Land purchased from the Newcastle Wallsend Coal Co. Doors closed to the public during WW1. Final beer pulled 1921.
- 2** *School of Arts* c1880: Second S of A. Pender Bros. West Maitland, Architects. Became Wallsend Council Chambers, RSL Club, Methodist Church (Fellowship House) and Revival Church.
- 3** *Terminus Hotel* c1896: (Original 1885) Replaced Thomas Johnson's 1861 wooden Travellers Rest Hotel. Royal Mail Coach nightly took passengers from here to Waratah Station to board the evening Newcastle Train.
- 4** *Colliery Inn* 1861: (Originally built by Mark Fryar, Lic. April 1861). Miners were paid here. Longest serving publican Joseph Trotter. Rebuilt 1940s due to fire.

- 5** *Railway Goods Shed* 1877: Earlier 1868 'Shed' was timber, built closer to the White Gates. Listed on the State Heritage Register of NSW as an item of state significance.
- 6** *Railway Gates* c1860: Constructed in accordance with the Newcastle Wallsend Coal Co. Railway Act 1859, the 'Gates' have remained a distinctive town entrance.
- 7** *Dan Rees St* (Formerly Kemp St) Elected 1931, President, Wallsend Soccer Club for 12 years. Served on the board of the bowling club and hospital. From 1876 denoted border between Plattsburg and Wallsend.
- 8** *St Andrews Presbyterian Church* 1868: First services 1862 Rev. Wm Bain, held in workshops of 'A' Pit later in Temperance Hall, cnr Macquarie and Boundary Sts. First service here Sunday, 19 January 1868, Mr George Nairn Preacher.

- 9** *The Rotunda* 1888: Area formerly part of Lemongrove Estate. Designed by Bennett and Yoemans. Built by Robert Snowden and George Froome cast iron fluted columns. Mining sculpture: Lyndall Beazley, artist.
- 10** *Police Sgt's Residence* 1885: Listed with the National Trust, well maintained, near original condition with the exception of the removal of two of the chimneys.
- 11** *Post Office* 1882: First Post Office 1861, Thomas Johnson first Postmaster. Request for new building approved 1876. Land part of Lemongrove Estate. New building occupied 25 March 1882.
- 12** *Wallsend/Plattsburg Courthouse* 1877: Site a gift from the trustees of Lemongrove Estate. Completed 1878, foundation stone laid by James Fletcher Jr, as his father Mayor James Fletcher Snr was too ill to attend.

