

CHARLTON'S STORY

Charlton's Story begins well before European Settlement when the area was mostly inhabited by the *Dja Dja Wurrung*, also known as the *Jarra People*. Their Country covers a large area encompassing the watersheds of the Loddon and Avoca rivers and many of our waterways and lakes were important fishing, camping and meeting places. Their lives were forever changed after Major Mitchell explored and mapped the area in 1836 and the first squatters later arrived.

In 1844 Robert Cay and William Kaye took out a lease of 96,318 ha at West Charlton and in 1845 they extended their run to East Charlton, an area of 17,000 ha. During this period the district's First Peoples had a semi permanent camp known as Gunyah Flat in an area now occupied by the former railway dam where they lived in gunyahs or mi-a-mias and worked at the East and West Charlton stations during the busy seasons. Many of the districts and landmarks now bear names derived from the *Dja Dja Wurrung* language.

Charlton's first commercial building—a slab and bark wine shanty—was erected in 1863 by Norwegian, John Flug. He later built a store in 1869 and the East Charlton Hotel.

The first bridge over the Avoca River in Charlton was built by James Paterson in 1867. He later went on to build the Methodist Church in 1871.

Charlton was opened up for selection in 1869 and by the mid 1870s much of the land was being farmed by pioneering families, many of them former miners. Most farming communities had their own schools, churches, community halls and sporting clubs.

The railway came through in 1883 and the town prospered. It soon had two flour mills, numerous retail stores, wheelwrights, saddlers, five hotels and sale yards. At its peak in the early 1900s, the population was about 3000.

With the advent of larger farms, smaller families, two World Wars and centralisation of government services lessening opportunities for the young, the population has since declined but is now stable at about 1200 residents.

Charlton is a vibrant multi-cultural community rich in culture and opportunities. Whilst still predominantly a farming town, we embrace those who visit us to enjoy what we have to offer. The *Dja Dja Wurrung* remain connected to their Country and are integral to our continuing story.

16. Charlton Courthouse (8 Camp Street): was built in 1882 and an extra room and judge's room were later added. The courthouse was decommissioned in 1982 and became the home for several community groups. In 2009, a Committee of Management took control of the building, had it renovated and it is now a public gallery and meeting space.

17. Former Wychitella State School Teacher's Residence (36 Halliday Street): The Wychitella State School was originally opened in July 1885 as Woosang North. It was a single room school with 2 rooms attached for the teacher. In 1907 a new teachers residence was erected and served this purpose until the early 1920s when a new school and residence was constructed. The former residence was moved into Charlton as a private home.

18. St Joseph's Church & Presbytery: The first Catholic Church in

Charlton was built in 1875 and was a weatherboard building situated where the current church stands. East Charlton was part of the St Arnaud Parish and priests travelled throughout this area on horseback or by horse and buggy.

The Parish of the Charlton Catholic Church was later established in 1885 and its first parish priest was Father Michael Costello with his brother, Father Pat, as assistant priest. In 1907 the foundation stone was laid for a new brick church. The old church was moved to a new position and the new church was officially opened in 1907. The first presbytery was in Mildura Way, then in High Street in the house built for Dr. Dean. A Presbytery was eventually built in 1922 adjacent to the church. On New Year's Day in 1991 the St Josephs Church was destroyed by fire. Two years later on Palm Sunday 1993, the new church was officially opened.

19. St Joseph's Convent (Cnr Watson & Kaye Street): The old presbytery in High Street was initially used for the Sisters of the Mission, whom Father Kelly brought in to take care of the St Joseph's primary school. In 1930 a large well equipped convent was built, which for a period of time, catered for female boarders to the St Joseph's school. The Mercy Sisters later replaced the Sisters of the Mission until the late 1980s. The convent was sold to private owners in 1998.

20. Bills' Trough: George and Annis Bills shared a love of animals and after their deaths, their legacy was the establishment of a trust for the welfare of animals. The most visible memorial of this legacy was the manufacture of horse drinking troughs. Approximately 700 were produced in Australia. This trough is a rare early model, manufactured in Charlton in 1931 by Mr Sam O'Brien, a local builder and concreter. The troughs were later mass produced in a Melbourne factory.

21. Vale of Avoca: The Vale of Avoca was built by James & Elizabeth Egan in 1878 on the site of an earlier bark hut inn. It was a rudimentary single storey budling until 1926 when it was transformed into a two-storey hotel with 37 rooms. The Vale of Avoca was delicensed in 1942. In 1946 it became the location of a hosiery factory and in the 1950s was converted into accommodation and shops. In 1997 it was fully restored and has since been operated as a Bed & Breakfast



St Joseph's Church c. 1910

22. Dr Wilsons Residence & Private Hospital (1 & 3 Peel St):

Dr William Edgar Wilson was a doctor in Charlton for over 20 years taking up his practice in 1914. In 1923 he built a private hospital (3 Peel Street) and in 1925 built his residence and surgery next door. Dr Wilson left

Charlton in 1936 to pursue further studies. He and wife, Elsie, were held in such high esteem that on leaving they were showered with streamers and rose petals.

23. Edwin Peverill's Residence (24 Currie Street): Edwin Peverill, a farmer, chaff cutting business owner and Shire Councillor, purchased 60 acres on Clifton Hill on his retirement. He built this two-storey residence in 1911. He passed away in 1928 and was one of Charlton's most respected pioneers.

24. Lions Park: The concrete water tower was designed and erected in 1913 by a company owned and operated by Sir John Monash. It replaced an earlier brick water tower located on the eastern side of Clifton Hill. Despite suffering several operational issues in the beginning, it served Charlton until it was decommissioned in 1982.

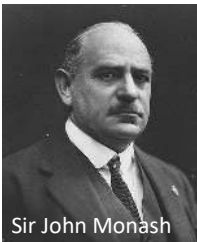
25. Former Lanark Hospital: This hospital was built at the same time as Dr Wilson's in 1923 by Nurse McConnell. She had previously practised at her private hospital located further to the south on Mildura Way. In 1936 Nurse McConnell's and Dr Wilson's private hospitals were purchased to establish a Bush Nursing Hospital. Lanark Hospital was then renovated and expanded to become the Bush Nursing Hospital. It served Charlton until a new hospital was built in Menzies Street in 1965 which was later replaced by a new hospital on the old State School site in Learmonth Street.

26. Ives' Residence & Brick Kiln: The Ives family have a long history of brick making in the Charlton district. They built this cottage (originally only 2 rooms) in 1879 using bricks they made at their kiln on the Tyrell Creek. They later built a kiln near their house and they provided bricks for many of Charlton's buildings including the Vale of Avoca, the first water tower and the Courthouse. Alfred Ives and his wife Mary had a large family of eight, seven of which were born in the cottage.

27. Sir Albert Dunstan Memorial Gates: These gates were erected in 1952 as a memorial to Sir Albert Dunstan, who was the Premier of Victoria for a total of 10 years. Born in the neighbouring town of Donald, he was a very popular Premier and often visited Charlton during his time in office. The local community raised funds to erect the gates and they were officially opened by Lady Dunstan.



Dr William Wilson and nurses in front of his private hospital in Peel St.



Sir John Monash



This brochure was produced by Charlton Forum in partnership with the Charlton Golden Grain Museum.

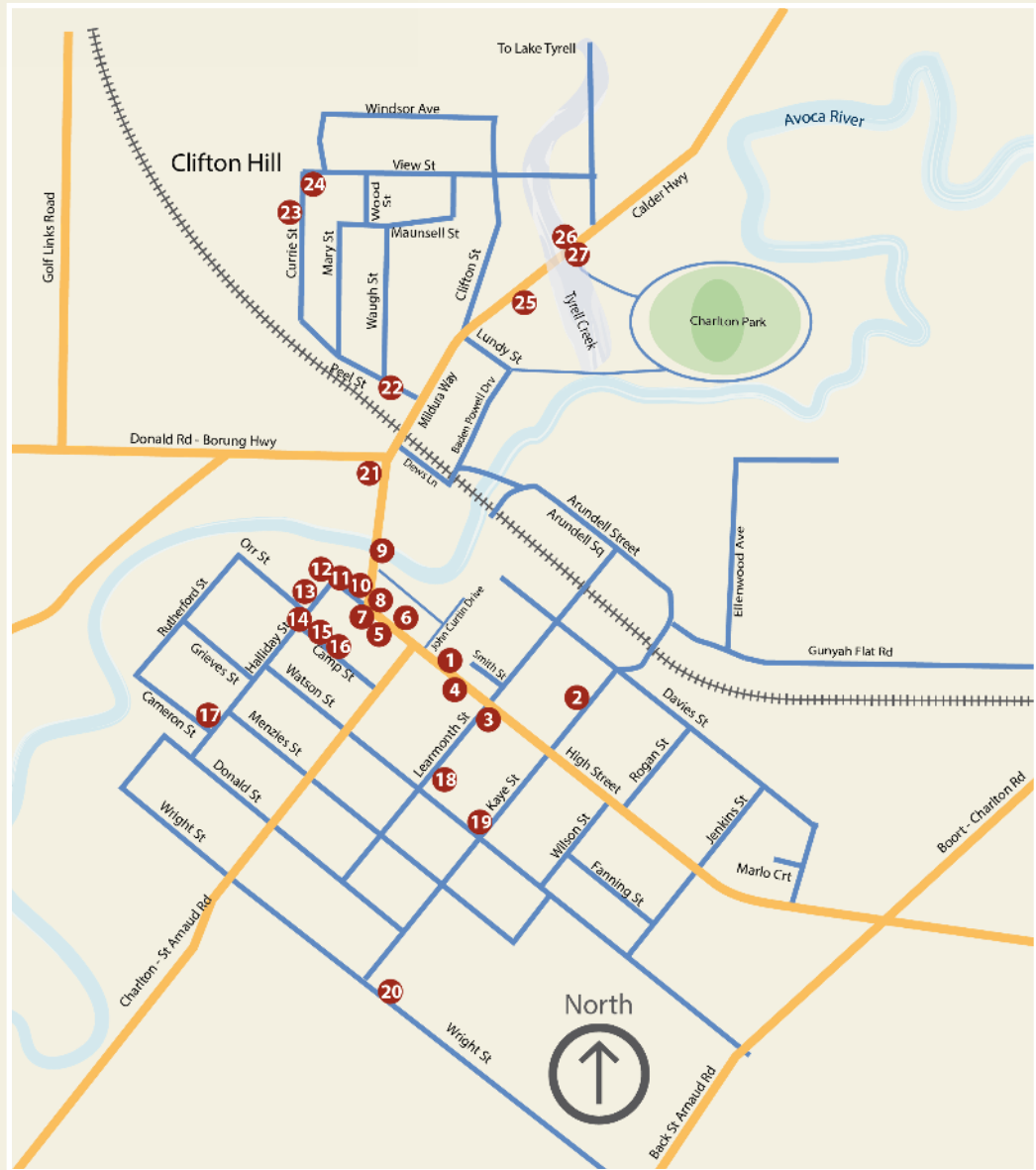
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Self Guided Driving
or Walking Tour

Charlton Heritage Trail

Charlton



1. East Charlton Hotel & Luth's Store
2. Noske Bros. Mill
3. Cricket Club Hotel
4. Charlton Post Office
5. Rex Theatre
6. Globe Hotel
7. The Bridge Store
8. Charlton Medical Hall
9. James Paterson Bridge
10. Elliott Gardens
11. Charlton Golden Grains Museum
12. Charlton Fire Station (*350m)
13. Uniting Church
14. Power House
15. Lions Lodge
16. Courthouse
17. Wychitella S.S. Teachers Residence
18. St Josephs Church & Presbytery
19. St Josephs Convent
20. Bills Trough (*1km)
21. Vale of Avoca
22. Dr Wilson Residence & Private Hospital
23. Edwin Peverill's Residence
24. Lions Park (*1.5km)
25. Former Lanark Hospital
26. Ive's Residence & Brick Kiln
27. Sir Albert Dunstan Memorial Gates (*1.3km)

* Distance from Post Office (No. 4)

1. East Charlton Hotel & Luth's Store: about 100 metres behind the existing supermarket, Charlton's first commercial building, a slab & bark wine shanty, was erected in 1963 by Norwegian, John Flug. Initially Flug erected his tents on the higher ground west of the river but the local squatter ordered him off his land. Consequently, Flug built his camp on the east side of the river and was flooded out three times in the first ten years. As time went on his business flourished. He purchased a number of building blocks in the main street, built a general store in 1869 and the East Charlton Hotel, all of which he sold to Christopher Luth in 1875 for £4000. Mr Luth sold the hotel to Conrad Klug who extended the business over the next 20 years, completely rebuilding it in 1891. In 1929 it was rebuilt as a two-storey building in a Spanish style design.



Klug's East Charlton Hotel, c. 1891

Luth's Store remained in the Luth family for over 100 years. It housed the post office at one stage and was a stop for the Cobb & Co. Coach. It was extended in 1892 and 1907, and rebuilt in 1938. In the 1950s it employed 22 people in seven different departments, including, haberdashery, drapery, clothing, timber and hardware. The original wine shanty built by Flug was used as Charlton's first Police Station from 1874-1878. Luth's then used it as a store room until it burned down in 1897.



Luth's General Store. Note the Cobb & Co. coach parked in front. c. 1875

2. Noske Bros. Mills: This flour mill was built in 1927 for Noske Bros. to replace the mill located on the banks of the Avoca River that they had acquired in 1919. The new Noske mill became one of the largest mills in the state. After 45 years of operation and employing approximately 70 people at its peak, the production of flour at the mill ceased in 1973. The site is now owned by GrainCorp and is predominantly used for grain receivals.

3. Cricket Club Hotel: was built for Mrs Collins as a single story weatherboard hotel in 1875. In 1934 it was demolished and replaced with a brick, two-storey building at a cost of £5500. The owner at the time was Mrs Annie Flockhart who with her husband, Alex, and later as a widow, owned the hotel for 30 years. The highlight for Mrs Flockhart was the visit of the Duke & Duchess of Gloucester to her hotel in 1946.



4. Charlton Post Office: Charlton's first dedicated post office building was in Camp Street. In 1879 a new post office was built at the present location. In 1911 the building was modified to house the telephone service. In 1941 a major renovation took place and the front of the post office was largely demolished and then rebuilt and extended out to the pavement, almost tripling the former floor space. At the time Charlton had 400 telephone subscribers—the highest percentage of any country town in Australia. The year 1981 saw the end of an era when the old party line telephone service closed and the operators hung up their headphones for good due to the introduction of the Telecom automated system.

5. Rex Theatre: The Rex Theatre was built in 1938 for the Keith Brothers of Wychitella with bricks made on site. It opened to the public with the film *A Star is Born*. With a seating capacity of 600 it flourished during WW2 when petrol rationing was in force. In the late 1960s it closed as a theatre until it was reopened in 1973 by siblings Geoff and Joan Edwards. Nearly 30 years later, the theatre was sold to Denis and Steven who restored it to its art deco glory. In 2005 the theatre was purchased on behalf of the community and it is now completely volunteer operated.

6. Globe Hotel: The original Globe Hotel was built in 1874 by John Walsh and replaced the Wool Pack Inn. It was destroyed by fire in 1904 and then rebuilt in brick. In 1939, after floodwaters inundated the building, the owners, Edward & Mary Credlin, demolished the hotel and replaced it with the present building. The Globe Hotel was delicensed in 1970 and converted into offices and flats.



7. The Bridge Store (24 High Street): this building was built as a two-storey building by hawker and storekeeper, Peter Johnson, in 1872. The building included a residence upstairs, a blacksmith's shop and accommodation at the rear. Peter Johnson became one of Charlton's most progressive businessmen and was responsible for building the first post office in 1878, the first courthouse in 1879 and several banks and shops. He died in 1882. The store was taken over by Mr Wylie in 1886 and it remained in the family until 1938. It is one of Charlton's oldest surviving buildings.

8. Charlton Medical Hall (5 High Street): was established in 1874 and this building was erected in 1884 for Mr Joseph Ogburn, a chemist, dentist and veterinary surgeon. After his death his son, J.J. Ogburn continued practising there as a dentist until leaving the district in 1925.

9. James Paterson Bridge:

The first bridge built in Charlton was constructed by James Paterson in 1867. Due to a severe drought, very little water passed under the bridge until the 1870 flood. After fifty-six years the sturdy wooden structure, which had withstood numerous floods, was replaced with a new concrete and steel structure. Erected by contractor Harold Irwin in 1923 it coincided with the upgrade of the Melbourne to Mildura road as a Highway. The old wooden bridge was relocated downstream to become the low water bridge for the next 60 years.



10. Elliott Gardens & Rotunda: the Elliott Gardens were named in honour of Major General H. E. (Pompey) Elliott, who was a WW1 war hero and lived in West Charlton for the first 16 years of his life. A statue of Pompey was erected in 2015. The rotunda was erected in 1926 in memory of Ben Green, a local solicitor and dedicated Charlton citizen. The gardens also contain the WW1 honour board, the Boer War Memorial and the Vietnam War Memorial. The cenotaph was erected in 1923 as a memorial to local Charlton soldiers who gave their lives in WW1. After WW2, additional names were added. The large oak tree was planted in 1921 by Cr Curnow as a memorial to the end of the Great War.

11. Charlton Golden Grains Museum: the museum is located in the former Charlton Mechanics' Institute built in 1883. It held the library and was used as a meeting place for community organisations. When the newly formed Charlton Shire took over the building in 1895, it was extended. With the erection of a new Charlton Shire office building in 1956 the building became the home of the Infant Welfare Centre and later the Soil Conservation Authority, then in 1973, the Golden Grains Museum was established.

12. Charlton Fire Station: The Fire Station was built in 1931 to replace the old 1895 weatherboard fire station which was located at the present Travellers Rest.



13. Uniting Church: the Wesleyan Chapel was built in 1876 and quickly became too small for the burgeoning congregation. A new larger (Methodist) church was constructed in 1885 and the chapel became the Sunday School. In 1924 the brick kindergarten Sunday School Hall was constructed and in 1963 the present brick hall was erected. In 1977 the Methodist and Presbyterian churches amalgamated to form the Uniting Church and services are still held here regularly.

14. Power House: a progressive step taken in 1911 was the installation of an electric lighting plant. Previously the town had been lit by a number of gas lights which were placed in strategic points in the town and lit each night by a lamp lighter. The gas lights were replaced by 34 electric lights which would be turned on from dusk till dawn except for the twelve nights of the full moon. The new company was privately owned. By 1926 there were 300 consumers and by 1948, 585 consumers. In 1955 the town was connected to SEC power and the motors of the Charlton Electric Light Company were switched off.

15. Lions Lodge (Camp Street): originally the site of Charlton's first court house, this building was erected for the Salvation Army in 1885. It was extensively renovated and became the Masonic Lodge in 1891. It is now the home of the Charlton Lions Club.