



Wentworth Visitor Information Centre
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Wentworth Trail

www.VisitWentworth.com.au/wentworth-trail



Wentworth Trail

Welcome to the Historic Port of Wentworth.

Commence your trail.

1. The Wentworth Post Office

The present Post Office was rebuilt in 1899.

The architectural features utilised were unusual for this area and make the Post Office one of the most prominent structures in Wentworth. More importantly, it complements the surrounding heritage items of Darling Street and with its picket fences, is a fine example of Wentworth's prosperous history.



2. Crown Hotel

The original Crown Hotel was first opened on 1st July 1861 and was the most ornate structure in the Shire. The two storey brick hotel, now demolished, was surrounded by a verandah and balcony and was elaborately adorned with a cast iron balustrade and frieze. The new single storey Crown Hotel has attempted to imitate some of the decorative elements of the old building.

3. Rendelsham House

Rendelsham House was built in 1882, by and for William Gunn, the first Mayor of Wentworth (the second of his houses named Rendelsham). The dwelling is one of the largest and most impressive in Wentworth. It is also significant for the fact that it has housed some of the town's most important and memorable pioneers. The house has had many uses over the years, including a bed and breakfast, a restaurant, tearooms and is once again a private residence.

4. Captain Sturt Hotel

Originally named the Commercial, the hotel was built by John Leary in 1886 and was only one storey. The second storey was added in 1925 for accommodation and was renamed the Captain Sturt Hotel. The façade remains as a traditional country style pub.

5. Ink Berry Tree

Many years ago, a South Australian man planted the South American Ink Berry Trees in river towns such as Wentworth, Moama, Balranald and Hay. The reason for his action is unknown.

6. Royal Hotel

The Royal Hotel was built by the Felgate family in 1866 and was immediately classed as the best hotel in the district. The single storey structure has a newish brick facade. However, structures at the rear exhibit the original form of the hotel. An outdoor area now overlooks the Darling River. The unused brick building on the wharf frontage was the residential part of the hotel, named The Cottage. This was also at one time The Wentworth Telegraph newspaper office.

7. Model Paddlesteamer Display

Rodney Hobbs has 26 handcrafted Model Paddlesteamers on display, all with a detailed Fact Sheet. Browse through the Memorabilia of a great era in Australian Riverboat history. Wentworth fast became the 'busiest inland port in NSW' with an average of 485 boats recorded at the Customs House per year. Open Wednesday to Sunday 10am-4pm.

8. Wentworth Wharf

The wharf was originally built in 1879 using local timber. It was a major landmark of the town and a hive of industry. Throughout the riverboat era, Wentworth was the busiest inland port within NSW (third busiest port after Sydney and Newcastle). During one week a record 31 steamers were docked at the wharf. The original wharf deteriorated and was demolished in 1983. A similar replica of the wharf, including the little customs office, now stands in its place. Sitting on the wharf is a statue of John Egge, a riverboat captain who came to Wentworth in the 1870's. Originally from China, John Egge operated a bakery, butchery, floating shop and a boarding house during his time in Wentworth and was one of the largest traders on the river.



9. Customs House

The Customs Office was constructed in c1884, replacing the first Customs building (constructed in c1864 and situated on the west side of the Darling River, near the bridge). This building remained an integral part of the busy Port of Wentworth up until the decline of the river trade in the 1890s. A Custom Officer was still operating from this site in 1912. It is now a private residence and during 2001, a commemorative plaque was placed on the house by the Australian Customs Authority.

10. Artback Australia

The first Rate Book in 1879 listed Mr WJ Holding as the owner of this property. In 1881 he developed it by building an iron shed, offices and two shops. Over the years the buildings had many uses. Mr Holding used the office in his capacity as Mayor, Coroner, Deputy Sheriff, J.P., Government Appraiser and as director of River Darling Navigation Co. The Gem Navigation Co was conducted here. Later Murray Shipping Ltd and the Shell Oil Co agencies operated from this corner. Various traders used the premises for a wide variety of purposes. Music lessons took place here and Wentworth's first picture theatre, The Lyric, operated in the main buildings. Adelaide Street has been enhanced by the high heritage value of this property. The building has been refurbished and is now operating as Artback Australia Gallery & Cafe.

11. Tractor Monument

The first tractor monument in the world was established by the people of Wentworth in honour of the TEA20 Harry Ferguson tractors' involvement in the building of the massive levee banks that protected Wentworth against the devastating 1956 floods. The cairn of stones where the monument sits is set at the height which water would have inundated the town if the clay levee banks had not been constructed. "By God and by Fergie we beat the Flood!"



12. Town Hall

The Wentworth Town Hall began life as a Mechanics Institute Hall, built in late 1884. Later it included a library and facilities for films to be shown. The Town Hall has recently undergone restoration and refurbishment and is available for use by the Community. Magnificent hand-carved Honour Rolls that once adorned the walls.

13. Saint Francis Xavier Church

This is the first Roman Catholic Church built along the Darling River and the second church built in Wentworth. The foundation stone for Saint Francis Xavier Church was laid on June 18, 1871, in a ceremony held in pouring rain. The first mass was held in the unfinished Church in the early part of November 1872, by Rev. Matthew Ryan.

14. Saint Francis Xavier Primary School

Blessed and opened in 1925, which was a Jubilee Year, by Bishop Fox. After 115 years of Catholic education in Wentworth, the school closed in December 2006 due to a lack of pupils.

15. The Uniting Church (St Andrews)

The first Presbyterian property was in Cadell Street and extended back to Murray Street. The Manse, one of the earliest brick buildings, was built in 1859. After the Manse was destroyed by fire, the original chimney-stack was converted to a sundial and placed here in the grounds of St Andrews. The brick church of St Andrews was built in c1883. The adjacent building, the Alex and Betsy Armstrong Memorial Manse, was erected in 1929. In 1977 the Methodist and Presbyterian churches merged to form the Uniting Church. After the 1881 Methodist Church in Sandwyck Street was demolished, the Hall was then moved here to St Andrews.

16. Rendelsham (known as the Nunnery)

The first house to be called Rendelsham was built by William Gunn, who was the first Mayor of Wentworth. He lived here until he built the second residence in the centre of the town, again called Rendelsham House. The first Rendelsham House then became Catholic Church property and was used by the local Priest as the

Presbytery. In 1892, it became the Convent, home of the Sisters of Mercy, who established and taught at the neighbouring St Ignatius School (privately owned).

17. Saint Ignatius Catholic School

Catholic schooling began at Wentworth on February 8, 1892, when the Sisters of Mercy answered the Bishop's call to come to the town at the junction of the Darling and Murray Rivers. St Ignatius, a wooden structure located in the convent grounds, was built in 1911 and was the first Catholic High School in the area. The building was used in the 1940's as the infant section of the St Francis Xavier School in Short St. and was eventually closed to the public at the end of 1950. The little school-house was restored by the National Trust and in February 2002, the school building was listed as a local historic building on the State Heritage register (privately owned).

18. Junction Viewing Tower

This steel spiral staircase, opened in 1991, has 35 steps leading to a viewing platform which gives you a great view of the confluence of the Darling & Murray Rivers. The viewing tower was a project initiated by the Wentworth Rotary Club with assistance and funding from Wentworth Shire Council and the Water Resources Commission. If both rivers are flowing, you will notice two different colours merging; the Darling River is clay based and the Murray River is sand based.

19. Murray/Darling River Confluence

The junction of the Murray and Darling Rivers is where the town of Wentworth began. Capt Charles Sturt arrived at the confluence 23rd January 1830, and named the Murray River after recognising the end of the Darling.



James McLeod and a Mr Bates made camp there around 1840 after explorers such as Thomas Mitchell, in 1836, and overlanders, Joseph Hawdon & Charles Bonney, in 1838 opened the way by using the junction as a 'crossing' for cattle and sheep, to begin the "Sydney/Adelaide Highway". Wentworth grew in strength and prosperity during the Riverboat era because of its position at the confluence of Australia's two greatest rivers and the commencement of the grazing industry. The Murray and Darling River system is the fourth largest river catchment in the world – Wentworth is the confluence of all rivers west of the Great Dividing Range.

20. Lockmaster's Residence, Lock 10 and Weir

This brick residence was built (circa 1855) for Dr Emil Renner, Wentworth's first doctor, who arrived from Adelaide on horseback. He was escorted by Hugh Jamieson of Mildura Station and Ned Bagot of Moorna Station, who were concerned for the medical needs of the District. When Dr Renner left in 1870, Joseph Gurney, who operated as a wool fellmonger, acquired the home and it became known as Gurneys. When Lock 10 was to be built, the house was purchased and enlarged to become the home of Mr GF Hickson, Engineer-in-charge of the construction. The house was then named Edith Cottage after Mr Hickson's wife, Edith. Lock 10 is one of 13 locks and 15 weirs situated along the Murray River. The locks and weirs maintain a high water level for navigation and pumping and is intrinsic today as an irrigation source. Situated 830kms from the Murray Mouth, the lock and weir were completed in 1929. The lower pool level of the Boulé designed weir is 28.4 metres above sea level and the upper pool level is 31.77 metres above sea level. The length of the weir, not including the lock is 117 metres. A construction camp was set up opposite the current Lock Master's residence but after construction was completed, the cottages were removed to other areas of Wentworth.



21. The Common

This entire area, bounded by the Murray River and Thegoa Lagoon was once a common. The common was used by town-folk as an area to graze their animals; usually cows, horses and goats. They paid the town council an annual fee for pasturing their stock.

22. Wentworth Cemetery

Many of the district's pioneers are buried at the Wentworth Cemetery including several well-known businessmen including William Gunn and Captain John Egge, a Chinese Riverboat Captain. The occupants have not always rested easily here, as the front fence and some of the graves were moved back to allow room for a road and the building of Lock 10. During floods the cemetery was impossible to get to and funerals had to be boated in. Wentworth Library can supply information on gravesites and also can help with your genealogy queries.

23. Thegoa Lagoon

The Aboriginal people living along the Darling River were known as the 'Barkindji' (or the 'Paakantyi'), meaning belonging to the river. Thegoa Lagoon with its proximity to the river junction was a natural 'meeting place' where Aboriginal people gathered for Corroborees. Take in the natural beauty and learn of the archaeological sites including middens, hearths (fire places), scar trees (canoes, shields and tools have been removed from the River Red Gum Trees) and the marvel at the Boundary Tree. These are remarkable living examples of the Aboriginals' ability to graft branches together to create an eye or ring in the tree. Visible from across the river, they were a clever way of making a tribal boundary. There are bird hides in the area for keen birdwatchers and a great fishing spot on the banks of the Murray River. Pick up the self-guided tour notes available at the Wentworth Visitor Information Centre.



24. Wentworth Military Collection

The Wentworth Military Collection is a must see for the avid military history buff, servicemen and women past and present or anyone who has a connection to the Australian armed forces. This unique collection displays relics, artefacts and militaria from all over the world, with an emphasis on Australian service to our nation. From the 1890 Boer War to Operation Slipper 2012, the collection also displays past and current service issue uniforms and equipment.

25. Old Wentworth Gaol

Built in 1879-1881, the small single storey brick gaol, with bluestone trim, was designed by colonial architect, James Barnett. It was the first of the Australian designed gaols (Hay and Dubbo gaols followed this one). The bricks were made on site from local clay, by Joseph Fritz and the bluestone from Wales was transported from Malmsbury, Victoria. The new gaol replaced over-crowded lock-ups and was utilised until its closure in 1927. After its closure as a gaol, the building was utilised as extra classrooms for the Wentworth Central School until 1963 and today, due to its remarkable condition, is a major tourist attraction. Visitors now enter the building through the Warden's residence. There is a site map available for self-guided tours plus a well stocked gift shop.

26. Wentworth Pioneer Museum

This is an excellent museum supplying the history buff with information on much of Wentworth's heritage. The Rotary Club has collected over 3,000 artefacts and relics covering all aspects on the history of Wentworth. It houses one of Australia's biggest photographic collections on river boats and original buildings in the town. Displayed are replicas and fossils of mega-fauna found at the Perry Sandhills. Open every day by Rotary club volunteers between 10am and 4pm.



27. The Perry Sandhills

According to geologists, the Perry Sandhills originated after an Ice Age (40,000 years ago) and were formed by wind erosion over thousands of years. Skeletal remains of giant mega-fauna (kangaroos, lions, emus, wombats and a giant goanna) have been found here. Replicas of these animals are now on show at the Wentworth Pioneer Museum. Aboriginal tribes used this area to camp and hunt. Evidence of this is still being uncovered as the sands drift. Over the first sand dune,



a 500 year old river red gum tree, known as the God Tree, can be found. Her trunk is buried in the sand allowing you to stand in the canopy of the tree. The Sandhills were used as a bombing range during WW2. The area has been utilised as a backdrop in many films, TV Shows, Advertisements, Theatre/Music presentations and as a perfect spot for a fun family outing.

28. Wentworth Public School -1881 Classroom

Beside the school tennis court the galleried classroom, built in 1881, is an extension of the first National School which opened in 1860. The Wentworth Public School is proactive in the 'Stephanie Alexander Garden' program. The students learn to grow fresh fruit and vegetables and also to prepare and cook meals.

29. St John the Evangelist Anglican Church

The Anglican clergy were the first to visit the Wentworth District. At that time Anglicans attended regular services in the dining room of the now demolished Wentworth Hotel. The Parish of Wentworth was formed in 1871 and Reverend William Cocks organised the building of the church which is believed to be based on an English structure. The materials were brought to the site by barge although locally made bricks were also used in the construction. St John's was the first church erected on the banks of the Darling River. It is Heritage listed by the National Trust.

30. The Rectory

In 1873, after the completion of St John the Evangelist Church, Reverend William Cocks commissioned the neighbouring Rectory to be built. When completed it was reported to be the largest dwelling in the district. The house is one of only a few early brick residences left in Wentworth and is now utilised as a private residence.

31. Wentworth Court House

The Wentworth Court House was opened on 13 April 1880. It took the place of a smaller brick building further up Darling Street, but in the same town block. Made from the local clay bricks it is a magnificent building that has stood the test of time and provides an excellent example of pioneer architecture and design. The Court House has been restored and the original picket fence replaced. It is still used for local court sessions. The National Trust has listed this building as one to be preserved because of its unique history.

32. Fotherby Park

Fotherby Park is a Wentworth Rotary Club project, originally developed to house the Paddlesteamer Ruby. A founding member of Rotary in Wentworth, Frank Fotherby, was the prime mover in Rotary's decision to purchase P.S. Ruby. Unfortunately, he died just prior to the completion of this park, which was then named Fotherby Park in his honour. There are many items of historical significance on display at the Park including:-

i. The Paddlesteamer Ruby

Built at Morgan, S.A., in 1907, she was the 4th paddle-steamer to be called 'Ruby'. She transported passengers and cargo between Echuca, Mildura, Wentworth and Goolwa. After a long and busy life, Ruby slowly fell into disrepair, ending her days as a houseboat at Mildura. Ruby was purchased by the Rotary Club of Wentworth in 1968 and was dry docked in Fotherby Park, as a reminder of the riverboat era. In 1995, the Rotary Club handed ownership to the Wentworth community, in the trusteeship of the Wentworth Shire Council. In 1996 a Restoration Committee was formed. Six years and 1000's of volunteer hours later, Ruby returned to water in a dock pond. Excitement grew as the steam engine became operational. She was all steamed up for her 100th Birthday in 2007. Restoration takes place on PS Ruby at various times. Visitors are welcome on board our steamer to see the progress - you will be amazed!

ii. Wentworth's First Court House - McClymonts Cottage

This old building of drop slab construction and now standing in the park originally stood in lower Darling Street but faced Darling Lane. It was dismantled and rebuilt at its present site as a Wentworth Rotary Club project. Research, conducted by Mr Jeff Whyte, revealed that Simon McDonald, Wentworth's first Police Sergeant, resided in the house in 1860 and it had also been used as a Court House pending

construction of another building in 1863. A monstrous peppercorn tree spreads over the original site of the cottage.

iii. The Man called "Possum"

A life size statue of a man known as 'Possum', who when disgruntled by life during the Great Depression took to living off the land in and around Wentworth. He slept in trees (thus the name), walked many miles, swam the rivers, living the life of a hermit and avoided human contact for some 50 years before his death at the age of 81 years. A proud man, 'Possum' worked for the graziers in exchange for food and clothing, although he would always wait until the folk had left for town before he began his work. He was known to upset some of the property owners when he would let their dogs loose because he felt sorry for them. You can hear his story via voca-phone by placing a coin in the metal box near the statue.

33. Wentworth Brickworks

Three generations of the Buffon family, (Angelo emigrated from Italy early last century), have made bricks at the site. The kilns, which are visually striking structures, are still standing and in good order. These days the business is conducted from their Mildura brickworks site (privately owned).

34. Wentworth Showgrounds Entrance Gates

These gates are said to be from the original Wentworth Bridge, which were thankfully rescued from being destroyed and are now gracing the entrance to the Showgrounds. The old ticket box was also included in the transformation by members of the Wentworth Show Society committee.

35. Hospital and Water Tower

The Wentworth District Hospital commenced operating at this site in 1887. The hospital seemed in isolation but it is thought it was built in this area as protection from infectious diseases. The 'hospital bell' was located on the town side of the river and the hospital warden would row across the Darling to pick up patients when the bell was rung. Many changes and alterations have been made to the hospital over the years. The Water Tower was made by Hudson Bros. Ltd of Clyde, Scotland in 1885 and was transported by ship to Australia. The town's water supply commenced in 1888 and although not in use today, it is a wonderful example of this type of water storage unit. The ladder runs up the middle of the tank, which is an unusual feature. Similar tanks were placed beside the hospitals in Wilcannia and Bourke. The ornate structure is comprised of a tall pre-stressed tower with nine cylindrical iron columns bolted in 4 sections, supporting a water tank with galvanised iron polygonal roof and decorative wrought iron finial.

36. Junction Island

Junction Island is the shoal of land between the Darling and Murray Rivers. Captain Sturt sailed down the Murray on his expedition and arrived at the confluence of the Darling and Murray Rivers on the 23 January 1830. He was confronted by Aboriginals, armed with spears and weapons, at the Junction Sandbar. The four Aboriginals who had befriended Sturt's party on their journey and followed them on foot along the river, intervened and negotiated on Sturt's behalf and therefore the 'intruders' presence was accepted. Captain Sturt named the Murray River on that day, at the point where the two rivers converged. Since the construction of Lock 10, resulting in the increased height of the rivers, the clay bank described by Sturt has seldom been visible since the 1930's. A canoe tree is also located along the trail that leads to the point. Flora, fauna, wildlife and birdlife abound within this island reserve.



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