

# BOGGABRI HERITAGE WALK



A. Shepherd Bakery    T. Watson Bootmaker    I. Pearlman Residence    J. Humphries General Store

## 1a 25 Brent Street

Once the business location of Mr AJ Mason who, in the early 1900's, "built a large store with a modern front". The business was later taken over by Latimer Bros of Latimer's Drapery. Shortly afterwards, this store was destroyed by fire. In 1973 an arrangement of small buildings on the site, an electrical workshop and residence formerly occupied by Mr Jim Braunton (1959-1962), were purchased from the Namoi Shire Council by the Boggabri Historical Society & Museum. In late 1974, a shop building next door, built in the 1950's by Mr Con Kalligeris, Bootmaker, was also purchased by the Society and relocated to the present site. Mr Kalligeris had trained in his native country, Greece, and from all accounts was an excellent orthopaedic craftsman.

## 1b 27 Brent Street

This is the site of Granny McGinnity's first Private Hospital (1888-1908). Granny was mid-wife to the district for many years. The present weatherboard building, built circa 1950, was occupied until 1989 by Mr ED O'Dwyer, Wool & Hide Dealer. In 2002 the building was purchased by the Boggabri and District Historical Society Inc for its historical display.

## 2 77 Merton Street

In 1913, Henry L Tebbutt, a prominent businessman of the town, built this house as his private residence. In the year 1934, it became a private hospital "L' Adventure". Later known as the Cottage Hospital, it functioned as a hospital until 1957 when it again became a private residence.

## 3a Corner of Laidlaw & Caxton Streets (Eastern Side)

Laidlaw Street was Boggabri's first main street, It was "a-buzz" with business activities from the 1870's to the 1890's. In those days it was commonplace to see large mobs of stock moving down the streets of the town and, on one occasion in 1896 a mob of 3,000 sheep was driven down Laidlaw Street.

On this site, Boggabri township's first hotel was built by Mr Mark Turner. This hotel was called "The Australian Arms" and traded from 1862-1870. This was the first block of land to be purchased in the town. Next to the hotel was Boggabri's first bank, the Australian Joint Stock Bank which moved to Merton Street in about 1900.

## 3b Caxton Street (Northern Side)

In 1882, the Caxton Street Drainage System was constructed to carry excess water from West Boggabri to Cox's Creek. It has not outlived its usefulness, in a recent summer storm it ran a "banker" carrying a heavy body of water away from the town.

## 4 46 Laidlaw Street

This is the site of Boggabri's first recorded store, built by Mr Farlow, A Saddler, circa 1863. In 1875 John Humphries took over the site establishing a series of some of Boggabri's earliest general stores (as depicted on the picture above). Isaac Pearlman took over ownership in 1876.

## 5 Corner Laidlaw & Caxton Streets (North Eastern Corner)

The small wooden church on the corner that is now used as a preschool, was built in 1886. It was the original Catholic Church and was used as a church and school until 1918. This building has had three moves in its lifetime. Positioned originally on the site of the current church, it was then moved to Brent St and used as a Parish Hall (opposite the old Presbytery, constructed in 1926.) In 1987 this building was moved to its present position, received a face lift and is a very useful addition to the precinct. A school was built in 1918 on the present school site and served the community until 1965 when the building you see today was constructed. In 1910, Joseph's Convent was built and the Sisters of St Joseph's took up residence. Many Boggabri residents recall very lively music lessons at the convent in the 1950s. The original convent was demolished in 1996 and replaced with the current structure. Boggabri became a parish in 1924 and the brick St Joseph's Church was built in 1939.

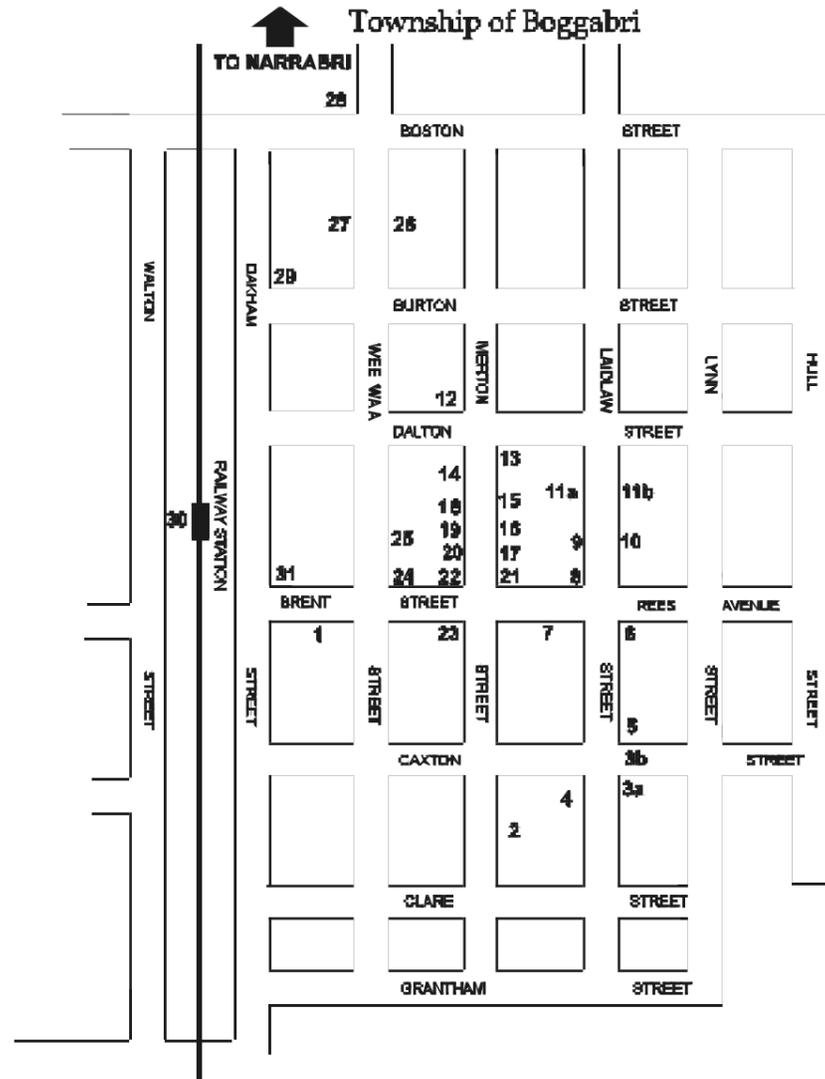
## 6 81 Rees Avenue (corner Laidlaw & Rees Avenue (south eastern corner))

From 1867 to 1878, postal services were provided by Mr James McGregor from his shop in Merton St.

From 1879 to 1881 a combined Post Office and Telegraph Station stood on this corner. Mail was received three times a week. In 1881 the present Post Office was erected. Until 1985, it housed a telephone exchange which closed when automatic phone services were introduced.

## 7 32 Brent Street

A Court House was established on this site in 1877. It was used as a Court of Petty Sessions and Polling Place. The Court House as it stands today was built in 1934, operating until 1974 in that capacity. It is no longer used for judicial matters but has become a community venue for meetings of the University of the Third Age and Presbyterian Church Services.



## 8 Corner Brent & Laidlaw Streets (north western corner)

In 1870, Mark Taylor built the Centennial Hotel on this site. It was a low flat wooden structure with a shingle roof. Catholic masses were celebrated in the parlour of this hotel until the new church was built in 1886. The Royal Hotel replaced the Centennial Hotel in 1909. Built by Laban Guest, it remains much the same as it was in 1909. Conway's Centennial Hall was erected on the northern side of the Hotel and was the main venue for dances and other social functions for many years.. This building had some rooms above the hall proper which were used as hotel staff quarters. This area is now used as a beer garden and car park.

## 9 78 Laidlaw Street

This site was originally used as an Open Air Picture Theatre, which was very popular during the warmer months. In 1936, Mr Laban Guest constructed the present building, calling it the Royal Hall. It was used for screening pictures in winter and other entertainment. In recent years it has been known as The Lions Club Hall and now is home to Tai Kwon Do classes.

## 10 79 Laidlaw Street

In 1876, John Humphries built his second general store here known as "The Exchange". From 1929, with much of the original structure retained, it became the RSL Hall and Clubrooms. With the construction of a new building to house the RSL Club, on the corner of Laidlaw and Brent Streets in 1960, the building was then used by the Boggabri Amateur Dramatic Society and was renamed "The David Barclay Theatre". Sadly it fell into disrepair and was demolished in the 1990's.

## 11a Western side of Laidlaw Street

The earliest Church of England church services were held in the Centennial Hotel from 1857 until 1877 when they moved to the Union Church in Merton St.

The first Church of England Church was built in 1892 and operated until 1960 on the site of the vacant block on the southern side of the Vicarage. The Vicarage was built circa 1948 and the current Anglican Church was built in 1963. Many of the townfolk in Boggabri's early history relied on wells and dams for their water supply and one such dam was present on the site of the current Anglican Church. The church is built on very solid foundations because of the presence of a disused dam on the block. These days, the congregations of the Uniting and Anglican Churches have joined to worship weekly in this church.

## 11b 83 Laidlaw Street (eastern side- opposite Anglican Vicarage)

In the early 1880's the "Good Templars Hall" was located on this site. It is said to have been erected as a club by the Railway workers in this area at a time when the Hotels raised the prices of their drinks. The workers transported their beer supplies directly from Tamworth. From 1900 to 1945 Mr Vincent's "Examiner" Newspaper office was located in the building. From 1945 until it was demolished in the 1980's it was the Church of England Parish Hall.

## 12 Corner Merton & Dalton Street (north western corner)

The influential business owners in Merton Street won the day in about 1896, causing it to be "metalled", thus replacing Laidlaw and Brent Streets as the "Main Street".

The corner of Dalton and Merton Streets was the site of the second Bank of New South Wales between the years 1921 and 1958. From 1958 to 1972 the building housed a Newsagency. It is now a private residence.

## 13a Corner Dalton & Merton Streets (south eastern corner)

From 1901 to 1942 the Boggabri School of Arts was located on the corner of Dalton and Merton Streets, next-door to Boggabri Hardware. It was a place where people gathered to read, play billiards and cards and hold debates. During World War 2 the building was used as a Provost Station (Military Police). The building was severely damaged in a wind-storm and was demolished in 1942. In 1952 a Fire Station was built. It was replaced in 1997 by the present structure.

## 13b 173 Merton Street

Boggabri Hardware was established in 1938 as McKechnie Bros. The interior and exterior of this building retains most of the original features and was operated by members of the founding family until it changed hands in 2005.

## 14a 160 Merton Street

This site is of great significance to Boggabri's history. The Commercial Hotel began trading as a hotel about 1880 as a much smaller, low wooden one-story building known as the "Rose, Shamrock & Thistle". This was destroyed by fire, a fate common to many buildings of the wooden era. The "Rose, Shamrock & Thistle" was rebuilt, and after a short term this also suffered destruction by fire. A third and much larger brick building, most of which remains today, was erected in 1903.

## 14b 160 Merton Street (front northern end)

Since 1906 this shopfront has housed many businesses. Early historic records show that the Commercial Bank opened its doors in this office in 1906, later to be relocated to the building which now houses the café across the street. From the early 1920's until the 1960's it served as a Stock and Station Agency, then as a Dry Cleaning Agency during the 1960's and a Café in the 1980's.

## 14c 160 Merton Street (front southern end – shop closest to public bar)

In 1903 the rear of this was used as a small cottage to accommodate visiting dignitaries. From 1903 to 1970's the shop front closest to the park has housed the businesses of two Stock & Station Agents, (1903 – 1964 Grattan and Co and from 1964 to the 1970's Harris' Stock and Station Agency). The shop closest to the Hotel was, for a while, a Frock Shop in the 1960's and in the 1980's a Fruit Shop. This whole section is now a private residence.

## 15 161 Merton Street

This site today houses a Café and Takeaway shop but it began in 1906 as the Commercial Bank of Sydney. Because of a shortage of building materials at the time, bricks for this building were made locally from a pit a few kilometres west of the town. In 1926 it was purchased by Messrs. Austin & Pratley and was operated as a menswear, radio sales and service store and in later years, with the commencement of television broadcasts, included a television sales and repairs service until the store's closure in 1986.

**16 147 Merton Street**

The origin of this site was as a general store owned by Grainger & Co, founded in the late 1800's. Mr HL Tebbutt joined the staff in 1902 and after a year or two, bought the business and began trading as HL Tebbutt Pty Ltd. A new brick building was erected by Mr Tebbutt in 1938. Some of the original Art-Deco features survive to this day. In its hey day, HL Tebbutt Pty Ltd sold everything from a safety pin to a tractor with the fashions in the lady's department being much sought after for events such as Wean Amateur Picnic Races, the Boggabri Show and the like! The store now operates as a supermarket.

**17 135 Merton Street**

This fine building was known as the Commercial Bank of Sydney from 1926 to 1984 when it became known as the National Bank of Australia. This branch closed in 2002 and now serves as the office of coal company, Idemitsu.

**18a 144 Merton Street**

A Mrs Jones had this building constructed as a hall in Boggabri's very early history. Until the 1940's, it was the scene of many bright parties and various travelling shows. From the turn of the century Boggabri sported a 24 piece brass band that practiced in this hall in the 1930's, under the baton of Mr Norm McGrath. Since its halcyon days the building has had a variety of uses. It has been a storage shed for Tebbutt's store, from 1971-74 it was used as the original Boggabri Historical Museum, and now a newsagency.

**18b 142 Merton Street**

This building has a fascinating history. In the '20's and '30's the local youngsters used to gather here for a hearty three course meal for 2/-. From the '40s to the '80's Mr Les Brazier's hairdressing business and Sports Store operated in this building. It is now part of the Boggabri Newsagency.

**19 138 Merton Street**

This long standing law firm has served Boggabri proudly since the early 1900's. Mr Ron Palmer came to Boggabri in 1946 with his young family and joined the practice. He soon became very involved in the community life and served on Namoi and Narrabri Shire Councils, being Shire President of Namoi Shire for many years. The practice is now run by his son, Hugh, who visits Boggabri once a week.

**20 134 Merton Street**

Banks were plentiful in Boggabri in the early days. This was the home of the AJS bank which merged with the ABC Bank. One of Boggabri's earliest Stock & Station Agents, Jacob & Anderson, has been housed in these premises since 1895, started by Mr Jacob, a former manager of the local branch of the AJS Bank. He was joined by Mr GHP Gilby in 1909. On Mr Jacob's retirement, George Gilby was joined by his son Greg in the business. Both of these men were heavily involved in Boggabri's community life. Jacob & Anderson held fortnightly stock sales in partnership with AJ Shaw and later with Frank Grover until the early 1960's. The Gallen family have owned and operated the business since 1969.

**21 Corner Merton & Brent Streets (South East corner)**

Corner Merton & Brent Streets (South East Corner)  
Bank mergers were commonplace even in the early 1900's. This is the site of the ABC Bank which merged with the Bank of NSW in 1931. The business then moved to the Bank of NSW premises on the corner of Merton and Dalton Streets. Over a number of years, following the move of the bank, the building was occupied by several dentists. It seems that in the '30's one of the dentists would administer the anaesthetic (brandy or scotch) to himself instead of the patient and many a hapless patient left having had the wrong tooth pulled. In 1959 the old building was demolished and in its place the Bank of NSW (Westpac) built the present structure. After the closure of Westpac in 1993 the building lay idle for a short time until Cameron's Pharmacy moved into this building following a disastrous fire that destroyed the pharmacy that was located next door. This building is now owned and operated by Whitehaven Coal. The building at the rear of the Apothecary Garden on the northern side of the Cameron's Pharmacy building was originally part of one of Boggabri's bakeries.

**22 Corner Merton & Brent Streets (North West Corner)**

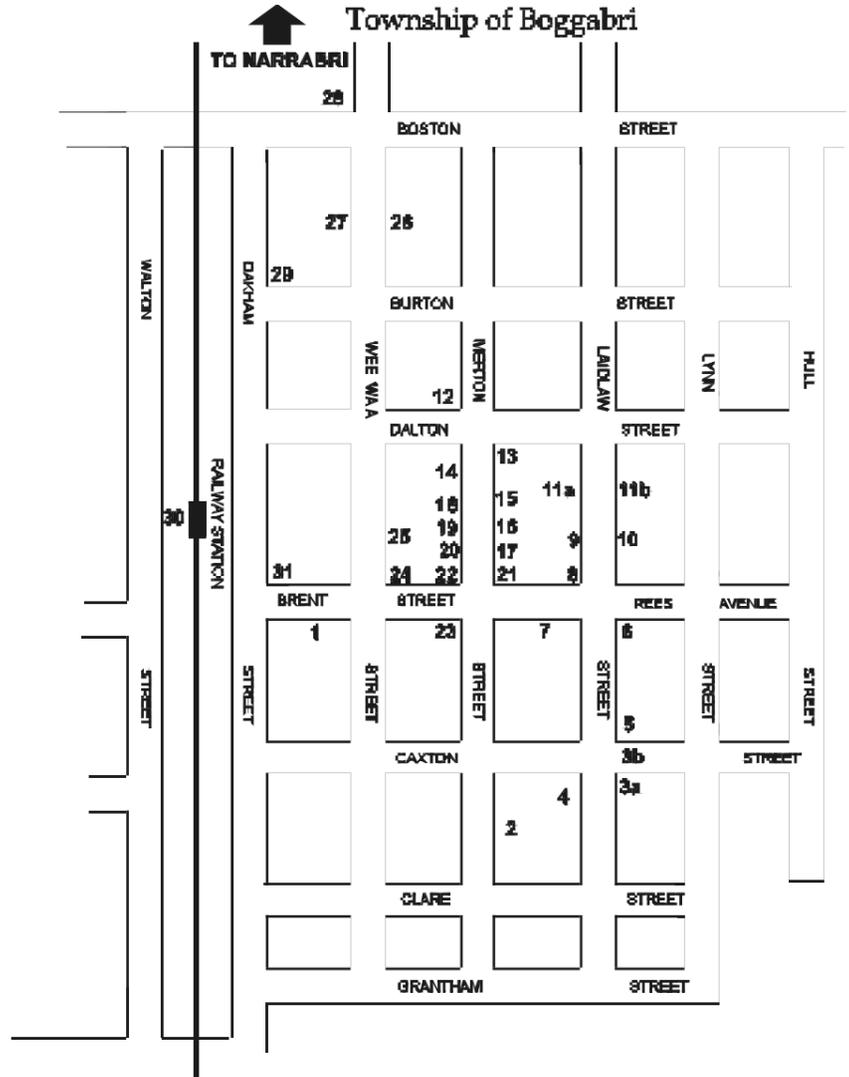
This is the site of Boggabri's first Postal Service and General Store, built in 1860. The Post Office section operated until 1879 when it moved to the site of the present Post Office. In the early 1900's the buildings on this site housed a butchery, bakery, a boot-maker and a green grocery shop. As was commonplace in the early days, this group of shops was destroyed by fire and afterwards the block was used as a mini golf course for some time. In 1969, the current building was purpose built to house CWA Rooms, Baby Health Centre, Library and SES Headquarters. The town clock was erected in 1988 to acknowledge the contribution that Mrs WM McDonald made to the Historical Society in Boggabri.

**23a Corner Merton & Brent Streets (south west corner)**

In 1929 this magnificent granite monument was unveiled in an impressive ceremony by his excellency the Governor General of the time, Lord Stonehaven. 163 men from the Boggabri district fought in the First World War, with 29 of these not returning. To the list has been added the names of those who fought in the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War, Korea and Vietnam.

**23b Adjacent to horse trough**

This trough and Boggabri's first primary school were erected in 1873. The trough was used for many years to water the horses that provided the only means of transport for the school children who lived in the outlying areas and who rode to school each day. In 1882 a new school was erected (the building closest to Wee Waa Street), costing 1,856 pounds 17 and 9 pence. One hundred and forty children were on the school roll at this time. This school still stands today. The main school building (facing Merton Street), was constructed in 1953.



**24 Corner Brent & Wee Waa Streets (north east corner)**

Mr Isaac Perlman moved to this site when Boggabri's main street moved to Brent Street after the coming of the railway. The interior of the building has not changed much since 1908 when the Drapery and Mercery sections were located on the side closest to Wee Waa Street and the Grocery and Hardware sections were located on the eastern side. JC Tindall operated the former section until 1955 while McDonald & Sons operated the latter. In 1955 Mr McDonald bought the entire business and remained in the hands of the McDonald family until it closed in 2005. This building has a National Trust classified listing and recently featured in a Toyota television advertisement.

**25 Wee Waa Street (present park)**

The Lyric Open Air Theatre was built by Mr Wal O'Shea and opened in 1942. This replaced the open air site in Laidlaw Street. Many a summer evening was spent in the canvas deck chairs

under the stars (and sometimes in the rain) with many stories recalled of pranks that the young lads got up to after the lights went out. There were two stores in the front of the complex – one a grocery store and the other a refreshment store. With the coming of television the popularity of this theatre waned and it eventually closed in the late 1960's. It was demolished in the 1980's. In 1999 Mr Jim Johnson was the driving force behind seeing a Federation, Centenary and War Memorial Garden take its place.

**26 125 Wee Waa Street**

Boggabri's soft drink reputation was legendary from the early 1900's until 1986 when this factory closed. In the early days a familiar sight was the Baker family Model T Ford truck travelling the streets delivering cordials. Most creaming sodas were pink, but not Baker's Creaming Soda, it was a lemony-orange and absolutely delicious. This site is now a private residence.

**27 130 Wee Waa Street (across road from Cordial Factory)**

This building was erected in 1902 as a general store. Over the years some of the proprietors have been Messrs Guest, O'Brien, Jones, Eather, Durrant and finally Jim O'Shea. In the early 1990's it operated as a Craft Shop and Tea Rooms and is now known as the Boggabri Tearooms.

**28 Corner of Wee Waa & Boston Streets (north west corner)**

In 1865 when floods washed Mr Sam Baker's Gin's Leap store away he moved to Boggabri and built a General and Drapery Store on this site. The store was later operated by Mr William Grover, who built a large house beside it. The store was demolished in the 1940's and the house burnt down in the 1950's. The block of land was donated by Mr Morris for the development of the Glentakie Retirement Home which opened in 1970.

**29a 129-137 Oakham Street (next to site of Vitalik)**

Messrs Laban Guest, HL Tebbutt, Mick O'Shea and Mrs Sam Stewart were responsible for the establishment of the Boggabri Electric Light Company which provided electricity to Boggabri residents and businesses. It thrived until it was consumed by fire in 1946. An army plant provided the power until the early 1950's when bulk supplies from Tamworth were made available to Boggabri and district residents.

**29b One the corner of Oakham & Burton Streets**

Right on the corner was Tremayne's Flour Mill which was built in 1910. The Mill was an important asset to the town, providing a great deal of employment. It was a great loss when it burned down in 1951. It took this disastrous event to prompt the purchase of a fire engine and fire station for the town. The dome shaped building now known as the VitaLick Stockfeed Factory was originally constructed as a wheat storage shed for the flour mill.

**29c On western side of Oakham Street**

Boggabri was considered one of the leading wheat producing centres in NSW, having the second largest amount of wheat trucked from Boggabri Railway Station in 1938/39. This silo was erected in around 1939 to cope with the large amounts of wheat that were delivered each year. It's capacity is 300,000 bushels

**30a On the Western Side of Oakham Street**

On 18<sup>th</sup> July 1882, at a ceremonial dinner held in the Railway Station buildings, Sir John Robertson, sponsor of the Robertson Land Act 1861, declared the Railway officially opened in Boggabri. With the coming of the railway the business sector moved away from their sites in Laidlaw Street, favouring locations closer to the railway in Brent Street

**30b Oakham Street (eastern side)**

Across the road from the station, the first Railway Hotel, a wooden structure, was built by Mr Albert Eather in the early 1890s. The present brick structure was built in 1906 by Mr Tom Maunder. It is now a private residence.

**31 Corner Brent & Oakham Streets (north east side)**

Mr W Horne was one of Boggabri's earliest and most influential residents. He operated a sawmill on this site from the late 1800's. Many of the houses fronting Oakham Street between Brent and Dalton were built by Mr Horne for himself and his workers. He also built a series of buildings fronting Brent Street, which were used for various purposes over the years. Earliest use of the buildings was for a wheelwright and engineering works. It was later used for travelling shows and boxing matches. Between 1945 and 1957 the building housed the Boggabri Cooperative. It lay idle for several years until the Boggabri Red Cross used it as their Opportunity Shop. In the early 1980's the building suffered severe wind damage and was eventually demolished. The only remains of Mr Horne's existence on this block are the slabs of concrete which formed the Cooperatives steps and a concrete block and tank which were part of the sawmill.