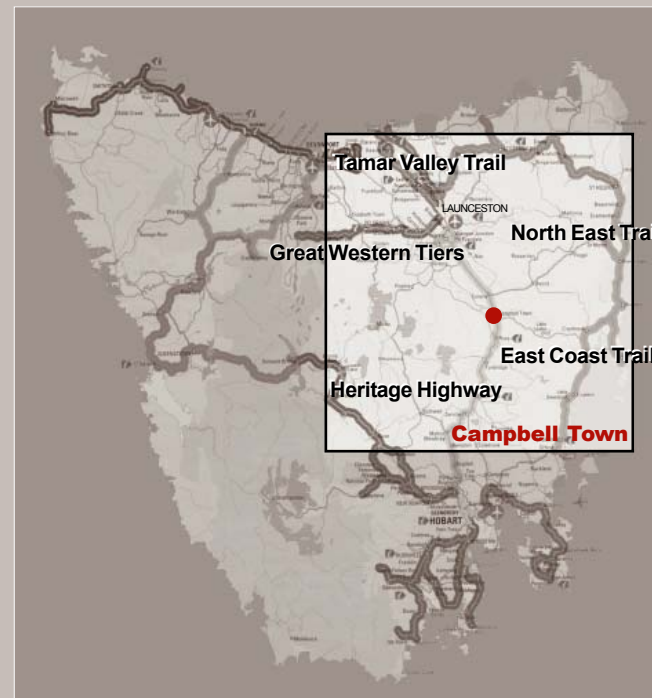


COVER

Campbell Town
historic heart of tasmania

context



VISITOR INFORMATION

Heritage Highway Museum
Court House
103 High Street Campbell Town 7210
Phone / Fax 03 6381 1353
www.....

ACCOMMODATION ENQUIRIES

Phone / Fax 03 6381 1353

river

(stories, fauna, flora, geology...)

fold

river

Elizabeth River

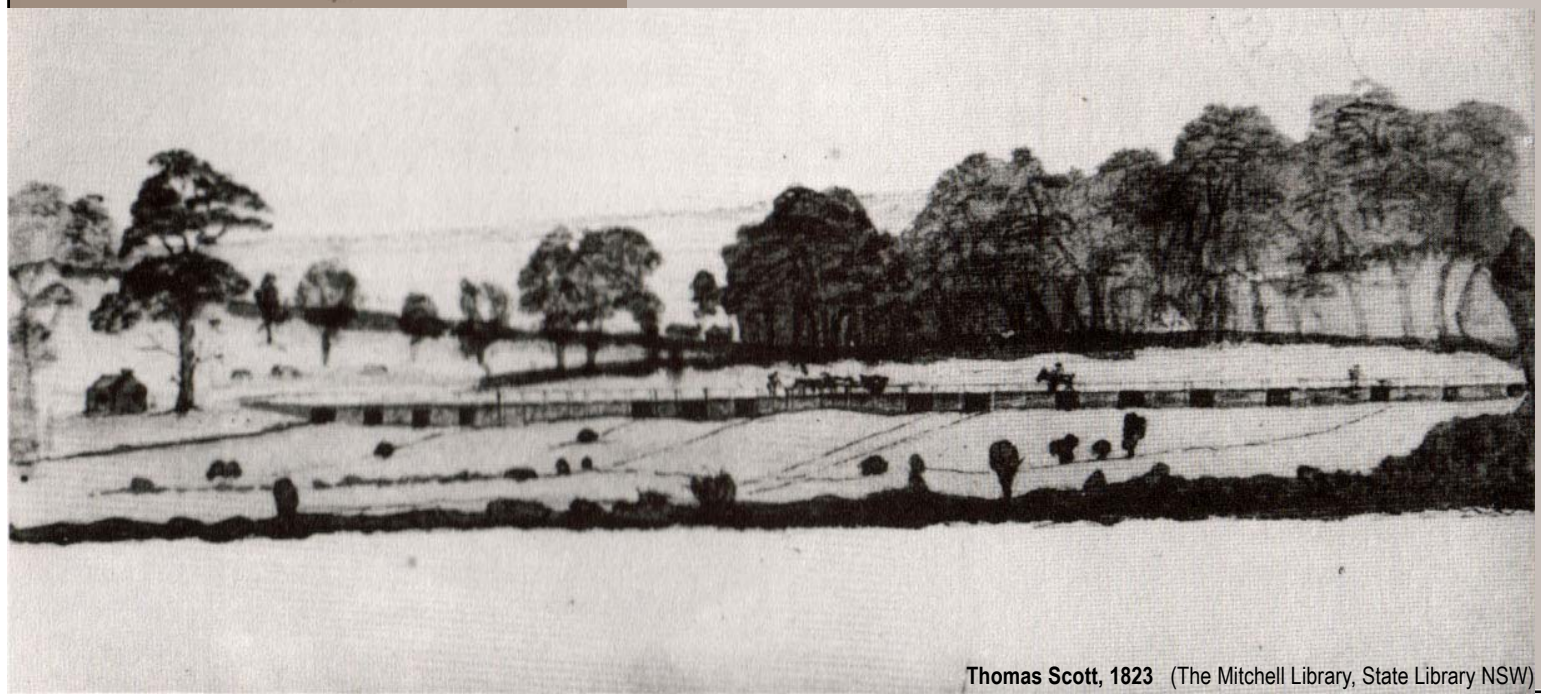
eucalyptus rodwayi, poa labillardieri, virgaflorus, acacia axillaris, melaleuca

Known to the Aboriginal people as *Parndokerner liapinder* (water flowing from the East), the Elizabeth River, near the site of present day Campbell Town was a meeting place on the journey from the East Coast to the Western Tiers.

The Tayaranutapuna tribe inhabited this region and they called the area *Waylata*. The grassy plains of the Midlands were fertile hunting grounds for forester kangaroo and wallaby.

The Elizabeth River flows from the eastern Tiers to the Macquarie River, which eventually joins with the South Esk River, and finally flows through Cataract Gorge and into the Tamar Basin in Launceston.

Originally a seasonal river, which flowed only in the wetter months, it became a permanent river only after Lake Leake was constructed in 1880. Many of the species indigenous to this area can still be found in parts. There are also a number of rare species, such as the Midlands Mimosa (*Acacia axillaris*) still found growing on the banks of various stretches of the river.



Thomas Scott, 1823 (The Mitchell Library, State Library NSW)

Thomas Scott, 1823 (The Mitchell Library, State Library NSW)



First cottage in Campbell Town built in 1821 for constable Thomas Kenton

intro

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map

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map

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more info



Campbell Town

the historic heart of tasmania

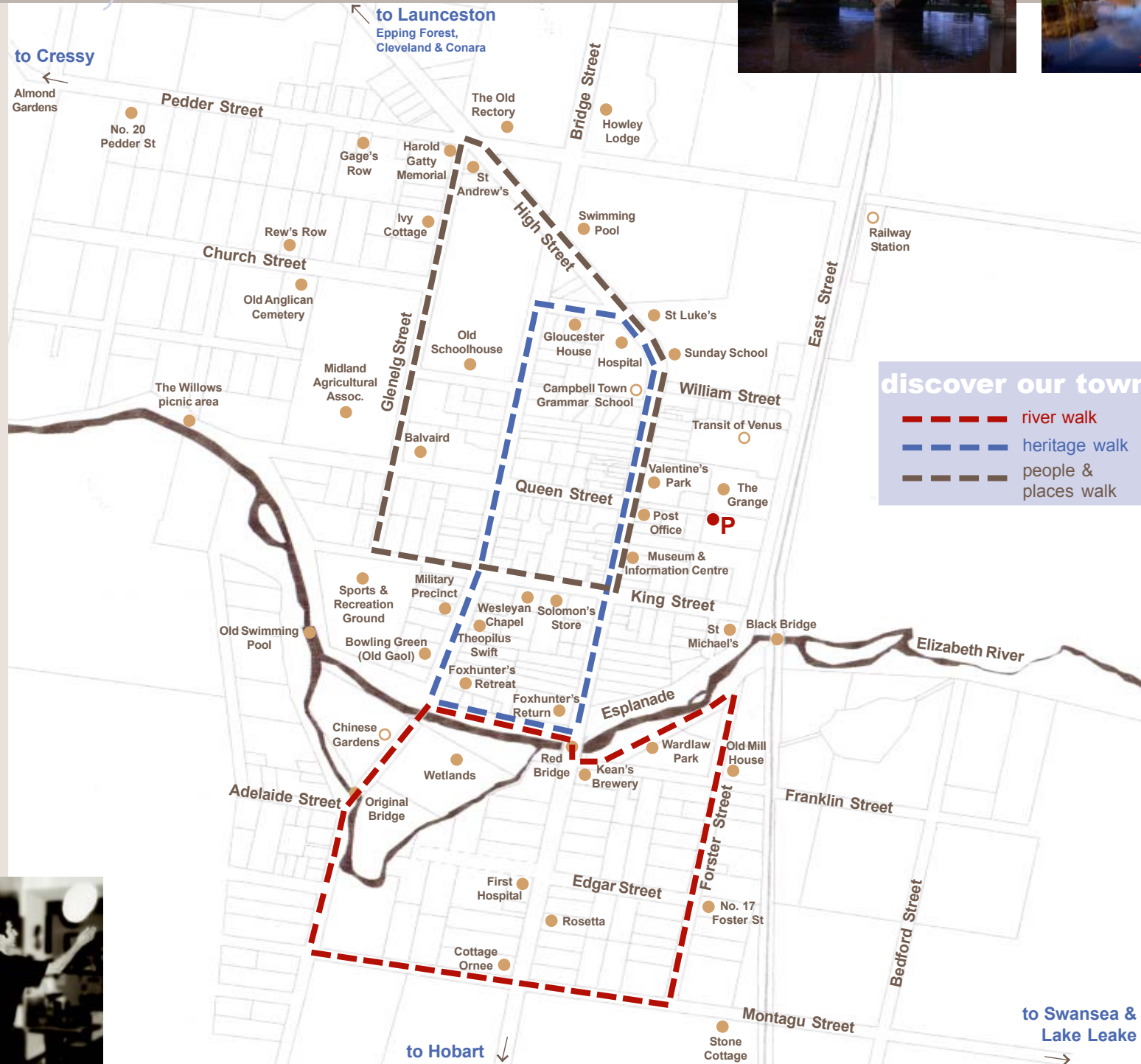
Founded in 1821 by Governor Macquarie – the river and town being named for his wife Elizabeth Campbell - it was one of a string of settlements established to link Hobart to Launceston. Properties in this area produce some of the finest Merino wool in the world and the Midlands region is the main agricultural centre of Tasmania. The oldest continuously held Agricultural show in the southern hemisphere still takes place every June in the showground.

The old bridge was once part of a causeway which crossed the original course of the Elizabeth River. It was built in 1823 and marked the establishment of the town itself. Still in use as part of a footpath, it is one of Australia's oldest. At one end stands the former Campbell Town Inn which was the town's first brick building, at the other end, Bridge Street, which was originally the main street.

The Red Bridge completed in 1838, is the oldest bridge on the National Highway. The bricks (more than one and a half million) were made in the town itself. Convict-built to a European design it has needed very little repair work over the years and now carries well over a million vehicles a year.

The Black Bridge so called because it was made of bluestone, carries the railway through the east of the town. Once a lifeline for the community it opened the market for Campbell Town's main industries - agriculture and timber.

Transit of Venus – In 1874 the US Navy sent several teams to various points in the Southern Hemisphere to observe the Transit of Venus. Bad weather meant the team destined for the Crozet Islands could not land and ended up in Tasmania. They actually viewed the Transit from Valentine's Park in Campbell Town. The phenomenon occurs in cycles of 120 then 12 years – the most recent was June 8, 2004.



photos 1-4 © maria fleischer

Dr William Valentine was one of Campbell Town's most active early citizens. He arrived in 1839 to be the hospital's doctor and became involved in many other aspects of the town until his death in 1876. He established Turkish baths, acted as Lay Preacher at the Anglican Church, was instrumental in the construction of St Luke's Sunday school, set up a reading room and library and built two pipe organs himself. He lived in The Grange, which was built for him in 1847. His interests also included botany and astronomy and it was he who organised the viewing of the Transit of Venus in 1874. His memorial, put up by the community, lies just inside the churchyard and weighs two and a half tons.

Alfred Biggs, the town's schoolmaster, made the first telephone call in the Southern Hemisphere from the Campbell Town Railway Station in 1874. He engineered two telephones from huon pine based on sketches by Alexander Graham Bell. He placed one at Launceston railway station and the other at the Campbell Town station and connected them via the telegraph line. The telephones can be seen at the Heritage Museum.

Harold Gatty was the son of the local headmaster. Born in 1903, he went on to conquer the world as a navigator. He and Wiley Post took 8 days, 15 hours and 15 minutes to fly around the world in 1931. Awarded America's distinguished Flying Cross, he was the first Australian to be given a hero's welcome in New York. He also wrote 'The Raft Book' standard issue to all US Marines for WWII. His distinctive memorial stands on the corner of the Midlands Highway and Pedder Street.

Eliza Forlong left Glasgow, Scotland for Saxony in 1826. She set out alone and on foot to buy the best Saxon Merino stock she could find, with the intention of moving her family to Australia. As she selected her sheep, she placed a collar on each of them and paid a gold sovereign (reportedly carried in the hem of her skirts). She travelled twice more to Europe with her sons selecting stud sheep. The family were granted land in 1829, near Campbell Town and the original bloodlines of her flock in Tasmania still produce some of the world's finest wool.

Thomas Meagher was a leading Irish republican of the time, he was transported to Van Dieman's land in 1849 and frequented the Foxhunter's Return. He married a governess he had rescued from an overturned carriage on the Mona Vale Road. He eventually escaped the colony and became acting Governor of Montana. His wife unfortunately died in Ireland on her way to join him.