

15. Alongside is the **West Kempsey Post Office**; it opened in 1879. The builder was Mr. Staynor. Walls are brick construction with timber verandahs. Iron has replaced the slate roof. Notice the distinctive chimneys made of unrendered brick with arched brick cowls. It is now a private post office.

Look across Elbow St. to the shopping centre. Here are some fine old buildings. See the:

16. **Great Northern Hotel.** Edward Lumley applied for a licence for this hotel in 1886. Built of brick, the hotel had twenty six rooms with servants' quarters, large balcony and electric bells. Five rooms are now available for guests.

Cross Elbow St. at pedestrian crossing, turn left and walk to the corner and turn right into Kemp St. Continue on to GUIOOF building. This lodge was built by:

17. **The Grand United Independent Order of Oddfellows** in 1882. The land was donated by Sydney Verge and is the only structure in the district with timber arches. The hall was the centre of entertainment, for instance the records show that in 1883 the hall was let to Miss Morton for skating at 15/- (\$1.50) a night. It is now the Arts Council Centre.

Retrace steps, go over pedestrian crossing and turn right.

The West Kempsey Primary School is the site of one of the first National Schools; it opened in 1860. The old school has been demolished.

18. See **Police residence** on the corner. This building was part of the Police Station complex and built as the Sergeant's residence. Note the ventilators in the walls showing a crown. This denoted it was government property and built before federation. The house is now a private residence.

Turn left into Sea St. and walk to:

19. **Court House.** The first Court House was built at Belgrave Falls in 1847, but moved to West Kempsey in 1859 and was used as both Court House and Police Station. This Court House was built in 1876 to the design of James Barnet. The contractor was George Worboys. Walter Vernon completely altered the design in 1897. The builders then were Manning Bros. of Kempsey. The cedar fittings made by William Harvey and Son were removed in the 1960s but the beautiful eight-panel cedar door remains at the entrance. Inside the Court House is a handsome hand carved coat-of-arms above the canopy. It was the work of James Cunningham. The coat-of-arms facing Sea St. is also a splendid example of hand skills not often seen today.

20. **Police Station.** This site has been used continuously since 1859 for either Court House or police buildings. The far building was originally the Court House and Lock-Up

Keeper's residence and in 1948 became the Police Station. Remodelling in 1983 altered the look of the old building but the brick shell is the 1864 original.

Cross on the pedestrian crossing outside Police Station and look across at:

21. **The Railway Hotel.** First known as the Court House Hotel, it was built by Robert Masterton in 1885. The two storey structure with accommodation for six guests stood in the town's football field and sport's ground. In 1914 the future of the hotel was threatened when railway surveys showed the premises would have to be demolished to make way for the railway line. The building was allowed to remain and with the coming of the railway three years later, the hotel became one of the busiest in Kempsey. The old building, which extends to the end of the saloon bar, was incorporated in a new building constructed in 1922.

Your car should now be in sight - at Stop 1.

Information for items mentioned in this 'Walk in History' may be found at The Macleay River Historical Society Inc. Museum and Resource Centre



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MACLEAY RIVER HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC.

is a resource centre and promotes the study of local history. The centre houses material such as maps photographs, textiles, documents and files on the history of early settlers.

Museum open 10am - 4pm

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KEMPSEY SHIRE COUNCIL
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HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC.



step back in

time



Walks in History

WEST KEMPSEY

MACLEAY RIVER

This is a footpath walk only. Except for public buildings, you do not have permission to enter gardens or houses

To find West Kempsey, travel via Belgrave St. over railway crossing, turn right at the roundabout and veer right again into Kemp St. Suggest you leave your car in front of Anglican Church or in railway car park.

Heritage Listed Items

1. All Saints Anglican Church first opened for divine service on Sunday 7th June 1892. The foundation stone was set by Mrs Sydney Verge in 1883. The cornice spire was added in 1913 and the vicarage built in 1925. The church is an example of gothic architecture and resembles rural English churches.

Stained glass windows above the altar tell the valley's early history. Sydney and Elizabeth Verge dedicated two windows to their respective parents. One is in memory of architect John Verge and his second wife Mary and the other in memory of John and Auburn Dixon.

Cross Kemp St. to:

2. The Railway Station. The first train came to Kempsey in 1917. The historical marker attached to the wall of the waiting room was placed there by the Macleay River Historical Society. The refreshment room was included in the two storey section - the top storey was the manager's residence. Portion of the long timber counter is still in use in the luggage room. The Station Master's residence is the cottage near the Railway Hotel.

Retrace your steps across Kemp St. Turn right and walk straight ahead over pedestrian crossing in Marsh St. to Catholic Church and associated buildings.

3. Also called All Saints, the old Catholic Church is now used as a hall. The slate roof has been replaced by iron. It was built in 1880. The present church was built in 1922 (note the foundation stone - words are written in Latin and the date in Roman numerals). Next door is the Convent, part of which was the Presbytery until 1911. The first Sisters were the Sisters of St Joseph in 1884. The Sisters of Mercy arrived in 1900. The Convent is home to the Sisters who live in Kempsey.

Turn back and go right into Marsh St. Walk downhill past the Catholic Presbytery. This building was erected in 1911. Cross Sea St. stay in Marsh St. until you see:

4. The old Private Hospital at no. 40. This house was built by Thomas Horwood for George Savage, son of Thomas Garner Savage, an early storekeeper in the town. It was the first house to be built on brick piers; it had its own water reticulation and was one of the first houses to be lit by acetylene gas. Nurse Kirkpatrick opened Down Private Hospital here in 1922. Nurse Adelaide McCarthy took over in 1926 and renamed the hospital Kirkwood. Sister Phyllis Tyrell continued to run the hospital from 1930.

Look across the street to the West Kempsey Primary School. This was built in 1972. An historical marker is in the front garden.

Continue on to:

5. 28 Marsh Street. The imposing home was built in 1906 for Richard Avery who was a boat builder. The builder was W. Hefron. There were ten rooms and it stood on a hectare of ground. In 1913 midwife Nurse Kirkpatrick leased the

premises and opened Hollywood Maternity Hospital. She operated Hollywood for two years. The name Hollywood transferred to hospitals in Forth St. and later in Short St. Nurse Kirkpatrick was a legend in her time and devoted many years to improving the health of mothers and babies. She was the grandmother of Country Music Singer, Slim Dusty.

Retrace your steps to Sea Street, turn left and walk as far as Wide Street. From here you can see:

6. The Showground on the hill. The first show was held on this ground in 1887. The Pavilion was built by Jacob Healy and cost \$1400. The Pavilion has been extended and renovated but has a heritage listing. The Agricultural and Horticultural and Industrial Association was formed in 1881. The Showground is listed with The National Trust and Historic Houses.

If you do not care to walk to the showground, turn left into Wide St. On the corner see the:

6. Band Box Theatre started as the "new" Band Hall after the previous one in Verge St. was washed away in the 1949 flood. By early 1959 the building was under construction, with voluntary labour working on materials donated by local businesses. The final work of roof framing, interior lining and painting, was paid for by Council. The hall was opened in 1959; in 1962 an extension housed the National Fitness classes. The hall became available for lease in 1970 and became the home of the Combined Singers, now known as the Kempsey Singers. Members put in tiered seating, made a stage, refurbished the kitchen, foyer and auditorium, turning the hall into a splendid little theatre. They have been producing musicals and plays here since that time. In early 1980 the Mayfair Theatre closed in Kempsey; since then the Bandbox is hired by a local resident, who screens films in the theatre.

Continue up the hill in Wide Street and see examples of early Kempsey houses, especially numbers 45 and 38 Wide Street.

7. No. 45 was built as a residence at the turn of the century. Builder James Murphy lived here. The owner has preserved the timber valances and scalloped barge boards as well as the bow window and coloured glass sidelights.

8. No 38 William Lewis Caldwell built this house and leased it to bank managers. He called the house "Llewdlac" (Caldwell spelt backwards). The iron lace on the verandah bears the date 1890, however the house was built later. William Caldwell arrived on the Macleay in 1897 as manager of Foley's Butter Factory

Walk to the end of Wide St. Turn left into Tozer St. and see:

9. Uniting Church. This church was built in 1953. The former Methodist Church in Belgrave St. was destroyed by floods in 1949/50. Materials were salvaged and used in the construction of this church. The pipe organ was recovered and restored. Foundation stones were set by Frank O. Secomb and the Rev. Wesley Tredennick.

Continue down hill in Tozer St. Cross Hudson's Lane and Marsh St. until you come to:

10. West Kempsey Hotel. West Kempsey Hotel was built in 1865/66. It is the oldest hotel in the town. The first licensee was Henry Weingarth. When first built, guests arrived on horseback or in horse drawn vehicles; a groom took the horses and stabled them in a building behind the hotel. The original hitching posts and rails have been removed. The building once boasted twenty-eight rooms. Nine are still used as guest rooms.

Turn left into Elbow St. and see the shop next to the laneway.

11. This shop is known as Murphy's Bakery. Perce Murphy opened a bakery in 1911. He learned the baking trade from C. Hazzard who owned a bakery in Elbow Street.

12. Tilbrooks Store. Albert Tilbrook operated a general store in this building. From 1950 to 1957 the building was the PMG District Telephone Office until a new automatic exchange opened in West Kempsey and the office moved into the exchange building. It then became the broadcasting studios for Commercial Radio Station 2KM now 2MC. It was the office of State National Party MLA Bruce Jeffery and, on his retirement, Andrew Stoner MLA retained the building. It was built in 1920s

13. This two storey building was built in 1921 as the West Kempsey Branch of **The Commercial Bank of Sydney.** It is a simple structure with portico, parapet and concrete pilasters. A feature is the fluted awning that covers a side entrance. The building now houses Government Offices.

Continue down Elbow St. and see the next large building.

14. Built by Jacob Healy originally for **The English, Scottish and Australian Chartered Bank,** it opened in 1889. It was regarded as one of the most handsome buildings north of Sydney. The timbers were cut on the Macleay, cedar for the staircase and counter fittings. The building was the office of The Land Board, then the Forestry Office and is now occupied by The Department of Land and Water Conservation. The elaborate iron lace and the balconies have been restored. Three panels of the iron lace on the back western side are original, having been preserved by the MRHS.