

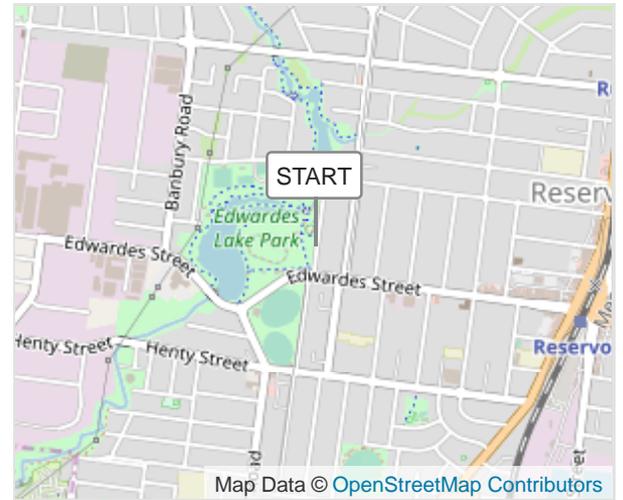


History Ramble 2: Edwardes Lake And Park

ROUTE INFORMATION



LENGTH	0.966 miles
ASCENT	45 ft
DESCENT	42 ft
HILLS	↑ 41.2% ↓ 35.3% → 23.5%
TERRAIN	Off-Road 🌲
START	LAT: -37.714470, LNG: 144.995520



NOTES

Circumnavigation – 1.6km

Terrain: Moderate park pathway with minor undulations

Access: Car-park in Griffiths St. Reservoir train station and catch a bus to the park. Bicycle – direct access.

This is a pleasant and invigorating walk along the pathway around Edwardes Lake, with 8 stops to take in the ambience and history. The walk begins at the Griffiths St children’s playground, near the steam train, then proceeds clockwise. It heads north and crosses the small arm of the lake before turning west. The reverse direction can be taken of course, reading directions from last to first. A popular time for this walk may be Sundays or balmy early evenings, when families and pets are out and about. Any day is a good time to enjoy Edwardes Lake, the second largest urban lake in the Greater Melbourne Area!

In 1853 construction of the Yan Yean Reservoir began, to provide fresh water for the growing population of Melbourne. When it was completed, the natural inclination of the land proved too much for the water pipes near Melbourne so large holding tanks were built in Preston to reduce the water pressure. Up until the 1980’s, there was an irregular overflow from these Preston reservoirs into Edwardes Lake, flushing the lake clean and keeping it fresh. Many changes over the years have altered the integrity of the park and lake. However, a number of historic and contemporary elements remain as a reminder of its origins, including the perimeter plantings and other mature specimens. Some art installations have also been added.

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START IN THE GRIFFITHS STREET CHILDREN'S PLAYGROUND

Stop 1 – The Train

An A2 class No964 steam locomotive engine was purchased by the Preston Council in 1968 for \$640, however the transportation costs were \$2,426. It has however been a popular play space for children ever since. Other play equipment nearby has been continually added over the years.

HEAD WEST STOPPING JUST BEYOND CHILDREN'S PLAYGROUND – BRIDGE JUST AHEAD.

Stop 2 – BBQ Area - A Recreation Lake Created

Have a barbeque if you wish! On Sundays this area can be a little crowded.

Dwyer Edwardes's gift of 34 acres came with conditions – the grounds were not to be fenced, thus open to all & the sale of 'spirits and intoxicating liquids' was prohibited. Many residents wrote letters requesting that a lake be created in this new park. In 1915 Preston Council had a plan for the park produced by the Italian engineer Carlo Catani. The planting of trees began in 1919 and community groups Continued assisted in the beautification of the area in the years following. There are remnants of these plantings on western, southern and eastern boundaries.

From 1951 this has been a popular spot for the annual *Carols by Candlelight*. Among other community events staged in this area is the Kite Flying Festival.

CROSS THE BRIDGE – NOTE DUCKS ON EAST SIDE. STOP WHERE THE PATH LEADS SOUTH.

Stop 3 – Sports on the Rise, Bowling Club & Scout Hall

To the north on the hill is the bowling club and scouts hall. The Reservoir Bowling Club site, on the northern rise, was an additional purchase by the Council in 1958. This was a former stone quarry which was filled in order to build the greens.

The 1st Reservoir Scouts were formed in 1949; the current hall dates from 1959.

HEAD SOUTH TOWARDS EDWARDES ST; AT DEVIATION TAKE LEFT PATH AND WALK BETWEEN WETLANDS AND THE LAKE.

Stop 4 – Boathouse and Exercise Equipment

There are great views of the lake and trees from this spot. Look for the small concrete slip way with overgrown plants. This is a remnant boat ramp from the boating days of the lake. Up until the late 1960s yachting was popular on the lake and continued for many years. However in about 1999 excessive growth of weeds and silting made it impossible. Water skiing also took place on the lake for a short time.

Have a go on the exercise equipment if you wish. The instructions on how to use it are easily visible.

The Preston Fish Protection Society and Angling Club stocked the lake with fish from an adjoining fish hatchery and fishing was a popular pastime in the lake. Unfortunately, around 1980 European Carp was illegally introduced and decimated the other species. Around this time the run-off water from local industry was adding pollutants into the lake. Fishing had to be abandoned in the late nineties.

The Rowing Club first began in 1891 but became inactive when the early brick weir washed away. A new weir and spillway were built in 1919 and the Rowing club reformed. Swimming was also very popular in the newly formed lake, but sadly there was the occasional drowning. The swimming club disbanded in 1983 due to deterioration of the lake.

FOLLOW PATH TO NEXT RECREATION AREA JUST BEFORE THE WEIR

Stop 5 – Exercise area and seating Sit here and take in Melbourne's second biggest lake.

T D Edwardes Senior sailed to Australia in 1829 and purchased land in the 1840s. He spent most of his time as an absentee landlord for the estate. This included two of the most northern Preston lots and stretched between the Merri and Darebin Creeks.

An initial plan for subdivision for leased housing was abandoned as it was deemed too far from Melbourne. Over time the land east of High St was sold. The west of High St was retained for over 60 years by the Edwardes family, until in 1914 Edwardes Park was given to the people of Preston by his son, Thomas Edwardes Dwyer Jnr.

Reservoir suburb

Reservoir remained a sleepy rural hamlet for many decades. The tough volcanic ground was not suitable for mass cultivation. Eventually West Reservoir became the place of pig farms and post war factories, but did not develop into housing until the population/immigration boom that followed World War Two.

Reservoir Rampage – “Battle of Cuthbert St”

During the Great Depression residents were evicted from their homes for rent arrears. Whilst this was not specific to Reservoir, in February 1932 newspapers around Australia screamed the story ‘Batons! Wild Evictions in Reservoir’. It seemed that a crowd of 500, many of them unemployed men, had gathered to witness the merciless process of forcing people out of their homes with nowhere to go. Tempers heated, a number of people tried to intercede to stop the eviction happening, while eight policemen tried to enforce the eviction. Hopelessly outnumbered, the authorities left and a reprieve was granted for fourteen days. H. P. Zwar, a tannery owner, stepped in and helped the many unemployed stay in their homes. This enhanced his reputation and led to a long period as a Preston councilor and eventual mayor, During 1916 the local community planted hundreds of trees. Many of these trees were cut down during the depression for firewood to heat the homes of unemployed people in the cold winter.

CROSS THE WEIR, NOTING SMALL SCULPTURE ON LEFT. HEAD NORTH ONLY A FEW METERS.

Stop 6 – Former Boat Ramp and a Titanic Connection

Here you should find a brick concourse jutting into lake.

Thomas Dyer Edwardes Jnr’s marriage produced one child - a daughter named Lucy Noel. In 1900 she married and became the Countess of Rothes. Her family purchased tickets for the inaugural journey of the steamship Titanic. They sailed from Southampton in 1912 the family had tickets on board the inaugural steamship - Titanic - sailing from Southampton but luckily Lucy’s parents disembarked in France. She continues on together with her cousin and maid.

Apparently, Lucy Noel quickly took charge of lifeboat No 8 and along with Seaman Jones rowed the boat to the safety of the rescue ship Carpathia. Lucy Noel is credited for keeping a level head in face of the terrible calamity thus ensuring the lifeboat passengers’ safety and survival.

RETRACE STEPS A FEW METRES AND HEAD UP THE HILL (GOING EAST) FOLLOWING THE PATH.

You will now pass the sports track and soon come to original entrance. This is four pillars, which originally had timber slats on top. The train, where you began is on your left.

Maybe there’s a little time left to look at the ducks once more.

P Michell, 2019

ROUTE DIRECTIONS

No	Miles	Turn	Directions
1	0.000		Start near 3 Griffiths St, Reservoir VIC 3073, Australia
2	0.020	➔	Stop 1 - The Train Stop 1
3	0.023	➔	Turn right
4	0.104	↖	Stop 2 - BBQ Area - The Lake Created Stop 2
5	0.141	↖	Stop 3 - Sports on the Rise - Bowling & Scouts Stop 3
6	0.171	↖	Keep to the left and walk between wetlands and the lake.
7	0.350	↖	Turn left
8	0.372		Stop 4 - Boathouse & Exercise Equipment Stop 4
9	0.562	↗	Stop 5 - Exercise Area. T D Edwardes Absentee Landlord. Reservoir Rampage. Stop 5
10	0.799	↗	Stop 6 - Brick Concourse, Former Boat Ramp, Titanic Connection Stop 6
11	0.965		Original park Entrance