

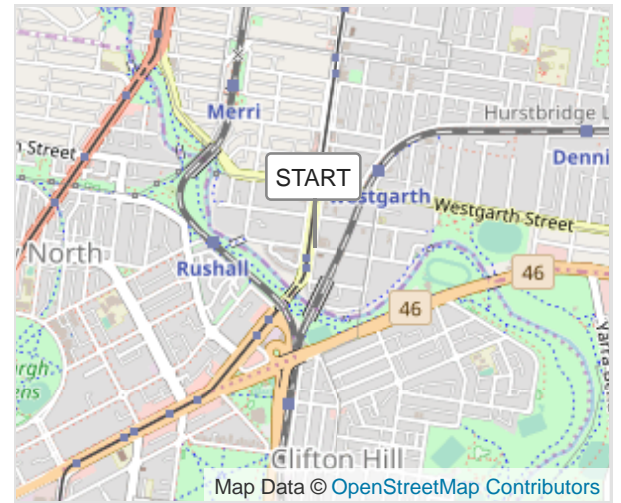


History Ramble 3: East Westgarth

ROUTE INFORMATION



LENGTH	1.001 miles
ASCENT	45 ft
DESCENT	32 ft
HILLS	↑ 52.9% ↓ 29.4% → 17.7%
TERRAIN	Road A
START	LAT: -37.783400, LNG: 144.996510



NOTES

Route: Begins at All Saints Church and ends at former Sutton Tools.

Terrain: Paved footpath. Some gradients.

Easy Access: No.86 Tram – Walker St stop

A relatively short stroll packed full of early Northcote history, from the beginnings of High St through remnants of past glories and a parade of building styles in East Westgarth.

The area between Westgarth St and Merri Creek was the original gazetted village of Northcote - land was sold in the 1850s and houses built soon after. Within a decade of this establishment, another area was settled on top of Northcote Hill and it became clear that the population center would be on the hill. The original area became known as Westgarth around 1912, though it continued to be known as Lower Northcote, Northcote South, Northcote Bridge for some years after.

While mostly residential there has been some industry in the area over the years, including a large dye works and dry cleaning factory, the Exhibiton Boot Co, the Sutton Tool & Gauge (a precision machine tool company) and an extensive plant Nursery.

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START AT ALL SAINTS CHURCH, HIGH ST

High St: Former Plenty Rd. Part of the 'Hoddle Line', a north-south axis that was used for early Melbourne maps. A cable tram ran up to Dundas St from 1890.

LOOKING SOUTH DOWN HIGH ST TO THE MERRI CREEK

Just over the Merri Creek there used to be a railway line crossing High St. A Railway bridge was built in 1925. The road underneath the bridge dips because double-decker buses replaced the cable trams in 1940. Electric trams did not arrive until 1955.

All Saints Church (1859). One of quite a number of early surviving buildings, typical of an early English parish church. The bluestone blocks were quarried at Bacchus Marsh.

Rockeries (1905-7) & **Twin Cannons** (1884/5): Vestiges of the rockeries substantial plantings announcing the entrance to Northcote. Encouraged by the Northcote South Pioneers Assoc. Two cannons came to Northcote in 1913 from the South Channel Fort.

HEAD NORTH AND TURN RIGHT INTO WALKER ST

24 Walker St (1861). Former Police Station with slate roof; a police reserve had been part of the original allocation of land to the Northcote Township. Built in 1861, it was then moved west of railway line in 1877.

Train Line (1877 / 2009). Cross the railway line safely. The 'Nowhere to Nowhere Railway Line' ran from Fairfield Park to Clifton Hill was only for speculative housing development. For over 130 years the track between Westgarth and Clifton Hill was a single track.

34 Walker St (c1870) In 1856, William Henry Dennis bought this site and took over an extensive bluestone quarry located between Heidelberg Rd and Merri Ck. He had connection with All Saints Sunday School and was one of the dynastic family of councilors in Northcote including his sons W J and Samuel.

A plaque, on the corner of Urquart & High Sts, commemorates Councilor S Dennis.

TURN RIGHT INTO ROSS ST, HEADING SOUTH

9 Ross St is a Federation weatherboard (c1915) (west side). Symbol of the rising sun – the birth of a new country post Australian Federation. Diagonally opposite was the former extensive property of Alfred Dyson's Nursery. Alfred lived at No 20 - '*Dysonia*', which is now a set of flats.

HEAD BACK UP ROSS ST, GOING UPHILL

32-42 Ross St (corner of Walker & Ross Sts- east side). Here you can see a set of speculative Victorian single-fronted brick cottages (1880s). The brick is unusual in Northcote as the houses are mostly timber houses. In the 1870s there was just one house on west side that belonged to Michael Flynn, a merchant.

50 - 52 Ross St (east side). In 1857 this was owned by Edward J Witton, who was a land dealer and had a large property bounded by Cunningham St and Short St.

Cunningham's were an early family with dairy/school on the corner of Westgarth St and Cunningham St. The north side still has some very old surviving houses.

TURN LEFT INTO CUNNINGHAM ST AND HEAD TO THE RAILWAY.

47 Cunningham St (c1866). This is the oldest surviving houses in this tour. Richard G Westlake a sail maker, first lived here until 1890s.

51 Cunningham St (c1860s) was formerly 'The Lawn', now flats. Francis Burdett and his wife, Catherine Mary, lived here from the 1870s. They initially owned most of the block. The Exhibition Boot Co (in Westgarth St) is at back of their land.

55 Cunningham St (c 1880s). 'Stawell'. Around 1914 C.A. Howden an estate agent lived here. His son – Capt. H C Howden received the military cross in Jan 1917 and died later at Gallipoli.

TURN AROUND AND RETRACE YOUR PATH

56 Cunningham St. (c 1950s) Lady Gladys Nicholls House: Site of former church manse connected with All Saints Church and Sir Douglas Nichols (1906-1988) an Aboriginal who made his name in football and then as a clergyman and activist. He lived at the Northcote Football Ground in the 1940s and 1950s.

Lady Nicholls House for Aboriginal Women; the Aborigines' Advancement League was established here in 1958.

CONTINUE EAST ALONG ROSS ST

52 Cunningham St (1880s). This double fronted brick terrace belonged to Joseph Wigg, a Melbourne tobacconist, gold mine investor and land speculator. He died in 1928 leaving an estate of almost £11,000.

67 Cunningham St (1870s). Grand triple fronted Queen Anne style house. Early residents include surveyor G R E Steane, Walter Napier and Henry Small

69-71 Cunningham St (late 1880s). Ornate arched front windows of these paired brick cottages.

79 Cunningham St (late 1870s) 'Bend Creek Villa'. Wide triple block. Between this and Mayville was an orchard. Thomas R Kimpton, miner then merchant. Mark Rubbo, of Readings Bookstore, lived here.

88 Cunningham St (1880s), Lonsdale Nursing Home. At one time this was Cr Ralph Candy's home. Described town hall architect G R Johnson as "on old hand at designing Town Halls". Enough left of the original structure to remind us of the grand mansions of Northcote.

85 Cunningham St (late 1850s) 'Mayville'. Built of bluestone, this is the second oldest house on this tour. John May, builder, was an early settler in Northcote and also built No 3 East St. May lived here till his death in 1901. Then a family named Copperthwaite lived here; it is said that the house at the back was built by Copperthwaite for his injured son from WWI.

OVERLOOKING MERRI CREEK – TUNNEL AND PAST QUARRYING

Standing on the rise, beneath is the former Northcote Tunnel. Older residents remember it being guarded during WWII. Dates from much earlier. Possibly providing water for a well for the two May properties.

TURN AROUND AND HEAD ALONG EAST ST

Oldis Gardens & Northcote Park; you may want to linger here. This was the only park when the council was formed in 1883. Cr Albert Oldis died as Mayor in Jubilee year 1933. Trees identifiable from 1904 plantings include a Blue Atlantic Cedar, Palm, Sugar Gum and Oaks.

TURN LEFT INTO WESTGARTH ST, HEADING WEST ON THE SOUTH SIDE

Westgarth St: named after William Westgarth who encouraged German settlement in Melbourne in 1850s.

75 Westgarth St (1960s), William T Onus Hostel. Joan Rosanove, famous divorce lawyer, lived in a house here in 1924-1933. The current purpose-built hostel was named after William T Onus (1906-68) an aboriginal elder, artist, political activist and film actor.

80 Westgarth St. Robert McLeish lived here around 1914. He was the first manager of Northcote Picture Theatre and a later significant person in cinema exhibition in Australia.

Former **Exhibition Boot Company** (1872-1917). Between Railway & Ross St, Catherine Mary Burdett supervised the building of a new 'modern' factory and transferred the company from Fitzroy in 1902. She was a large employer, with the factory and a retail network of 12 stores.

Former **Northcote South Railway Station** (1877 – 1912). The original station was on the southern side of Westgarth St; you can still see the gravel remnants of the east platform.

46 - 52 Westgarth St, former Lawrence/Leeds Chemical & Dye Works (now apartments). In 1874 William Lawrence established an oil-cloth factory in Cunningham St. By early 1900s his nephew Robert had taken over and the business expanded further, becoming the largest dye works in all of Melbourne. It operated here for some 120 years, moving from this site in the 1990's.

Westgarth shopping strip (north of Westgarth St). The start of one of Melbourne's long shopping strips. Development occurred along the western side of High St during the 1880s, in the 1920s/30s on the eastern side. That delay was due to the ill-fated railway that was meant to link Westgarth to Grand Junction Station on St Georges Rd. The last Toll Gate of Northcote was south of Westgarth St.

TURN LEFT INTO HIGH ST – HEADING SOUTH

42 High St (1882). Henry Toenies, dairyman, constructed this house. Beside the house (on south) is a stone driveway leading to the rear stables and coach house - connected with the original dairy.

38 High St c1900, 'Durham'. Joseph Wigg, Cunningham resident and land developer, owned the land

26-36 High St (corner of Cunningham St). Former Sutton Tool & Gauge (1933-64), purpose built for the drill bit and precision machine tool company. Later Baker & Taylor Engineering; they had an almost monopoly supplying Australian drill bits until the 1990s. The Sutton family lived in Northcote. In 2001 the building took on a new life as apartments.

ROUTE DIRECTIONS

No	Miles	Turn	Directions
1	0.000		Start at All Saints Church Start
2	0.013	→	Turn right onto Walker St
3	0.013		24 Walker St - Police Station
4	0.091		Turn right to stay on Walker St
5	0.114		34 Westgarth St - Dennis house
6	0.173	←	Turnright onto Ross St
7	0.173		9 Ross St - Federation House with rising sun / diagonally opposite #20 foamier 'Dysonia' (head back up Ross St)
8	0.199		32-42 Ross St - crnr Walker St - Victorian terrace cottages
9	0.249	↓	50-52 Ross St - former Witton house Witton House
10	0.307	→	Turn left onto Cunningham St
11	0.307	↓	47, 51, 55 & 56 Cunningham St (Head east along Cunningham St) Cunningham st houses
12	0.368		57 Cunningham St - Wigg house
13	0.418		67, 69-71 Cunningham St
14	0.421		88 & 79 Cunningham St - Candy house & Bend Creek
15	0.500	←	85 Cunningham St - Mayville / Overlook Merri Ck
16	0.541	↘	Turn right
17	0.559	↙	Oldis Gardens Oldis gardens
18	0.566	↗	Turn right towards East St
19	0.596	↖	Turn left towards East St
20	0.602	↖	Slight left towards East St
21	0.615	↖	Turn right onto East St
22	0.620	←	Turn left onto Westgarth St/State Route 38
23	0.696		75 Westgarth St (opp). Former Exhibition Boot Co. Boot Co
24	0.895	←	Westgarth Shopping Centre
25	0.908	→	Turn right onto Little High St
26	0.930		42 High St - Toenie house
27	0.953		38 High St - Wigg house
28	0.984		26-36 High St - Former Sutton Tool & Gauge. Sutton Tools