

NATIONAL TRUST of AUSTRALIA (ACT)

A heritage tour of
**COMMONWEALTH
& KINGS PARK**

CANBERRA CENTRAL PARKLANDS

A SELF-GUIDED WALKING TOUR



NATIONAL TRUST

CONSERVING AUSTRALIA'S HERITAGE

LISTED PLACES IN

COMMONWEALTH & KINGS PARK

-  1. Commonwealth Avenue Bridge
-  2. Waterloo Bridge Stone and Plaque
-  3. Captain Cook Memorial Globe & Water Jet
-  4. Japanese Cherry Tree Grove
-  5. Lake Burley Griffin Scheme – Institution of Engineers Plaque
-  6. National Capital Exhibition
-  7. Walter Burley Griffin Terrazzo
-  8. Arizona Cypress
-  9. New Zealand Trees
-  10. Stage 88
-  11. National Bonsai and Penjing Collection of Australia
-  12. Mulwala Hostel Site
-  13. Commonwealth Avenue Geological Site
-  14. Archbishop's Residence
-  15. Canadian Flagpole
-  16. Citizenship Place Memorial
-  17. Bicentennial Time Capsule
-  18. 'Two Figures'
-  19. 'Earthwork'
-  20. Commonwealth Park
-  21. 'Kangaroos'
-  22. 'Seated Lady'
-  23. 'Dance of the Secateurs'
-  24. Nerang Pool
-  25. 'Untitled'
-  26. Stone Fort

-  27. Amphitheatre
-  28. Underpass
-  29. Children's Play Sculpture
-  30. Lily Pond
-  31. R.G. Menzies Walk
-  32. Lake Burley Griffin
-  33. Murray's Bakery site
-  34. Pioneer Women's Memorial
-  35. Stanley Melbourne Bruce Memorial
-  36. Sybil Howy Irving Memorial
-  37. Battle of Trafalgar Memorial
-  38. Commemorative Oak
-  39. Gallipoli Reach
-  40. Kings Park and Rond Terraces
-  41. Blundells Cottage
-  42. National Emergency Services Memorial
-  43. Merchant Navy Memorial
-  44. H.M.A.S. Canberra Memorial
-  45. Aspen Island
-  46. National Carillon
-  47. National Police Memorial
-  48. Kings Avenue Bridge

THEMES IN THIS BROCHURE



Structures & Historic Buildings



Memorials & Commemorative Plaques



Significant Places & Plantings



Sculpture & Artworks



1. COMMONWEALTH AVENUE BRIDGE

Prior to the building of the Kings Avenue and Commonwealth Avenue Bridges, there were several crossings over the Molonglo River. However, these access points were not always reliable and the national capital required permanent bridging structures. A timber bridge was the first to be built on this site in 1916. This bridge suffered damage during the 1922 flood and was replaced with a wooden truss bridge with longer spans supported by concrete piers and readied for traffic by 1924. In the following year flood waters rose again resulting in the need to reinforce the bridge with an additional truss. This work was completed in time for the first sitting of Parliament in Canberra in May 1927. As Canberra developed and the realisation of an ornamental waterway for central Canberra came to fruition in the late 1950s, the fourth and current bridge was approved and under construction by early 1961. Designed by Maunsell & Partners, the Bridge was first crossed in November 1963, nearly a year ahead of the filling of Lake Burley Griffin. Innovative for its time, the dual carriage concrete structure features concealed lighting and other design elements. The bridge soon became a monumental crossing to the Parliamentary Triangle area and provides an excellent walkway to view the Lake and mountains.



2. WATERLOO BRIDGE STONES & PLAQUE

These granite stones once formed part of the original Waterloo Bridge built across the River Thames, London in 1817. The bridge was replaced in 1942. Britain presented Australia and other Commonwealth countries with stones from the bridge to foster historic links between the nations. In 1963 the stones were set in the northern abutment of Commonwealth Avenue Bridge.



3. CAPTAIN COOK MEMORIAL GLOBE & WATER JET

In 1970 Australia celebrated the Bicentenary of Captain James Cook's exploration of the east coast of Australia. This globe depicts Cook's Pacific voyages and was designed by Walter Bunning of Bunning & Madden, the architectural firm who also designed the National Library of Australia building across the Lake. Bunning also advised on the design of the water jet inspired by its famous counterpart on Lake Geneva. The vertical jet plume extends upwards to 147 metres.



4. JAPANESE CHERRY TREE GROVE

A gift from the people of Japan presented during a visit in 1980 by Japanese Prime Minister Ohira.



5. LAKE BURLEY GRIFFIN SCHEME – ENGINEERING AUSTRALIA PLAQUE

This bronze plaque commemorates the design, development and construction of the Lake scheme as a National Engineering Landmark. It was erected by the Institution of Engineers, Australia and the NCA for the Centenary of Federation in 2001.



6. NATIONAL CAPITAL EXHIBITION

As the plans for the Lake and its associated bridges progressed, the National Capital Development Commission (NCDC) believed there was a need to encourage public interest in modernising Canberra. What was required was a viewing podium placed near the Canadian Flagpole, now the beacon for the area's development. A planned visit by Queen Elizabeth II and the Duke of Edinburgh spurred the Commission into action and its architect, Gareth Roberts, designed the octagonal building which featured a viewing platform, exhibition space and restaurant. Completed in time for the royal visit on 11 March 1963, the kiosk became a popular stop for locals and visitors. Originally conceived as a temporary structure to view the rising waters of the river to a lake, the Commission decided to retain the structure and created a permanent exhibition. The National Capital Authority (NCA) added an extension in 2000 housing the National Capital Exhibition featuring the story of Canberra and the Canberra for Business Event Centre. The original kiosk building contains a restaurant with indoor and outdoor seating, with magnificent views over the Lake and its surrounds. A plaque commemorating the inauguration of Lake Burley Griffin by R.G. Menzies is located on the Lake side of the building.



7. WALTER BURLEY GRIFFIN TERRAZZO

An exact replica created in terrazzo by David Humphries in 2000, is a feature outside the National Capital Exhibition (no 6).



8. ARIZONA CYPRESS

Lady Bird Johnson, the wife of U.S. President L.B. Johnson, planted a cypress tree at this location in October 1966 during their controversial visit at the height of the Vietnam War. The tree had to be replaced several times after acts of vandalism.



9. NEW ZEALAND TREES

A grove of trees were planted on this site as a gift from the New Zealand government. Only the Totara trees survived.



10. STAGE 88

Located at the heart of Commonwealth Park, Stage 88 has become the setting for large-scale ceremonies and events. Given to the people of Canberra as a Bicentennial gift by the federal government, it was officially opened by the Prime Minister Robert J. Hawke on 12 March 1988. Philip Cox, Richardson, Taylor and Partners were the architects under the direction of the NCDC.



11. NATIONAL BONSAI & PENJING COLLECTION OF AUSTRALIA

This display of trees and forests in miniature, grown and created by Australian bonsai and penjing artists, is housed in an architect designed facility which was formerly the Caretaker's Cottage in Commonwealth Park. The collection will move to the Canberra International Arboretum and Garden when it opens to the public.



12. MULWALA HOSTEL SITE

When the federal government began to move public servants from Melbourne to Canberra after World War II and as development of the national capital took on more prominence, the need arose to provide quick and simple-to-erect housing. Former war-time buildings from Mulwala, New South Wales were dismantled and moved to this area of Commonwealth Park, located near some of Weston's original plantings. Known as 'Mulwala House', the hostel was ready for occupation in 1947. Despite the call for its removal to make way for the new Commonwealth Gardens (Park) demolition did not take place because of controversy until the end of 1969. In 1997 the NCA erected a commemorative plaque at the northern entrance to the Park.



13. COMMONWEALTH AVENUE GEOLOGICAL SITE

One of Canberra's significant geological sites identified by the ACT National Trust. This sedimentary layer provides a window into the limestone base of the region hence the first Europeans calling it 'The Limestone Plains'. It is situated on the rise above Commonwealth Avenue adjacent to the Archbishop's Residence (no 14). The best view is from Commonwealth Avenue.



14. ARCHBISHOP'S RESIDENCE

As the reality of a national capital in Canberra gradually came into being post federation, the Christian churches in Australia sought prominent locations for their cathedrals. After a protracted negotiation between the government and the denominations, the Catholic Church was granted land situated above the northern bank of the Molonglo River, today in the north-west corner of Commonwealth Park. By 1925 the site was already known as 'Cathedral Hill' and a large celebratory gathering took place on the site in the form of a Pontifical High Mass in 1927. While no monumental cathedral adorns this prominent site above Commonwealth Avenue, the Presbytery for the future cathedral was built and is the residence for the Catholic Archbishop. It is not open to the public. The building was part of the winning design for the cathedral and associated buildings by Sydney architect, John D. Moore. The foundation stone of the Catholic Cathedral – St Christopher's at Manuka – was laid in 1938



15. CANADIAN FLAGPOLE

This impressive flagpole was crafted from a single spar of a British Columbia Douglas Fir tree measuring 40.2 metres in length (three metres is in the ground). It was offered to Australia by the Canadian Deputy Prime Minister, C. D. Howe, during his visit in 1955 with the express request for it to be erected at a suitable and prominent location to foster and promote the bond between Australia and Canada as part of the Commonwealth. Its placement at Regatta Point, already a featured name in the local landscape, was a bold step in the creation of a significant central park at this site, later to be gazetted as Commonwealth Park. Although the delivery of the pole from its Canadian home to Australia was handled swiftly; due to quarantine and logistical issues its installation took two years. The official handover took place on 20 November 1957.



16. CITIZENSHIP PLACE MEMORIAL

Featuring a timeline of Australia's citizenship story, this memorial commemorates the 60th anniversary of the first citizenship ceremony which was held in Canberra in 1949. Citizenship Place at the Lake foreshore forms part of the R. G. Menzies Walk. It was unveiled by the Governor-General Quentin Bryce on 26 January 2009.



17. BICENTENNIAL TIME CAPSULE

Sealed and buried on 26 January 1988, this capsule was the initiative of the *Canberra Times*, Australia Day Canberra Committee and the NCDC. Its contents feature a letter from Prime Minister Robert J. Hawke, a short history of the newspaper and a letter from its editor, as well as a letter from the Commission. Numerous other mementos are included in the 1.5 metre glass capsule to be opened in 2088.



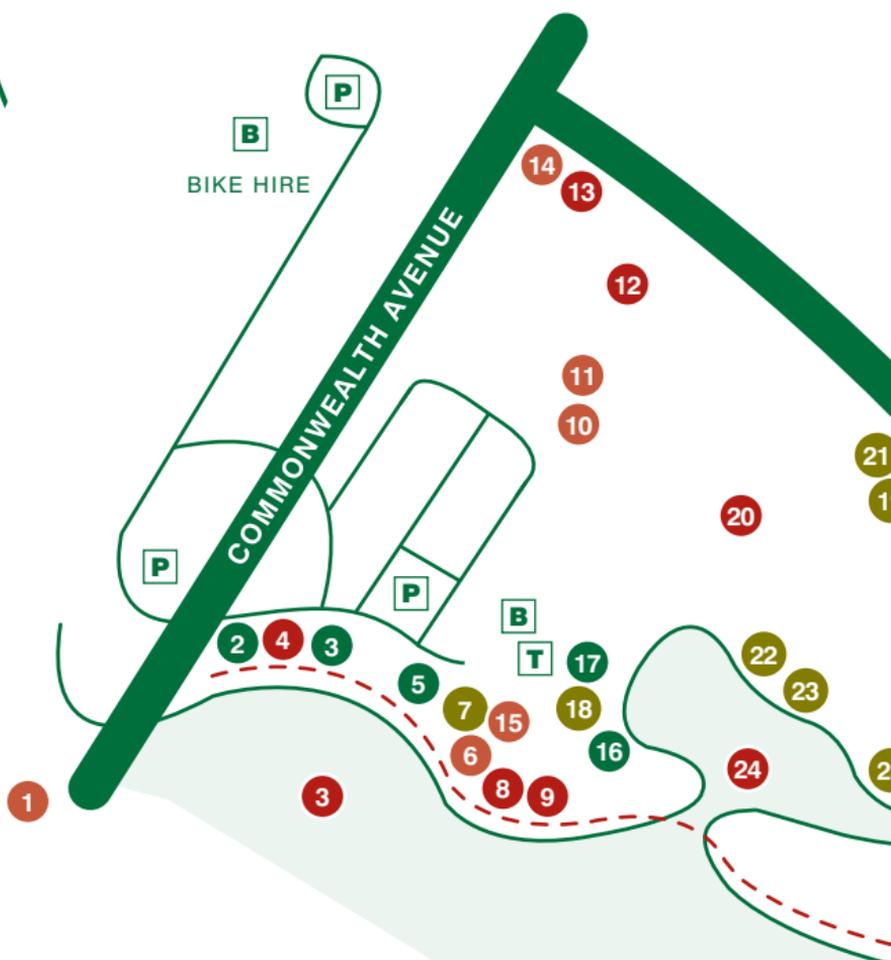
18. 'TWO FIGURES'

A walk through the Rhododendron gardens leads to a bronze and enamel sculpture by renowned sculptor, Dame Barbara Hepworth. Created in 1968 this abstract piece is one of only several of her artworks located in Australia.



19. 'EARTHWORK'

One of the major events to be held in Commonwealth Park was the Australia '75 Arts Festival. As part of the festival the Park hosted exhibits depicting the craft of modern sculpture making. Established sculptor, Bert Flugelman, participated by burying his artwork made of six polished aluminium tetrahedrons. Flugelman remarked that if he explained why he was putting the piece underground "the whole point would be lost". Another of his tetrahedron style sculptures is on display in the National Gallery of Australia's sculpture garden.



KEY

- B** BBQ
- P** Parking
- T** Toilets

THEMES

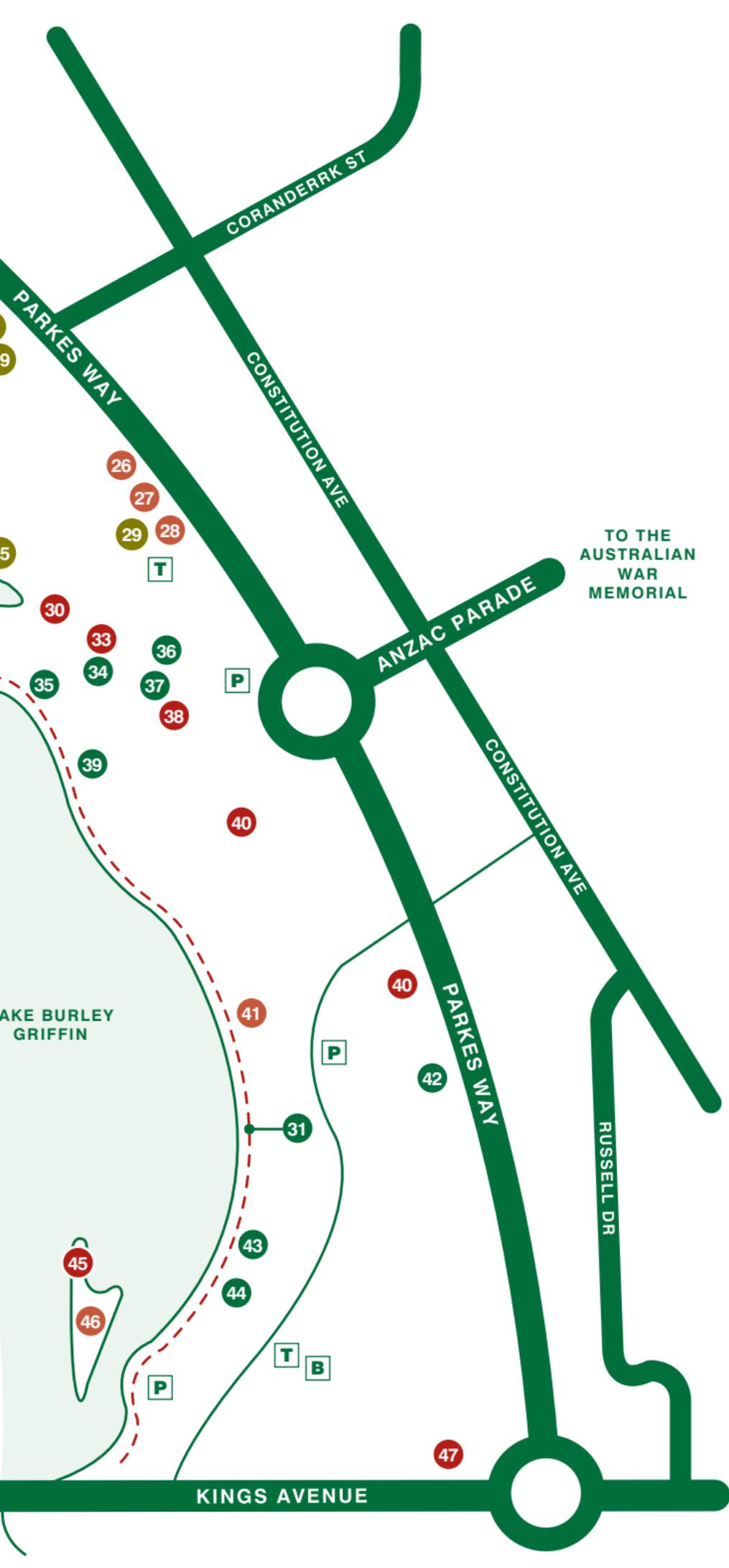
Structures & Historic Buildings

Memorials & Commemorative Plaques

Significant Places & Plantings

Sculpture & Artworks





CORANDERRK ST

PARKES WAY

CONSTITUTION AVE

ANZAC PARADE

CONSTITUTION AVE

PARKES WAY

RUSSELL DR

KINGS AVENUE

TO THE AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

LAKE BURLEY GRIFFIN

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20. COMMONWEALTH PARK

Conceived as a prominent location for a future central parkland, the area today called Commonwealth Park was once known as Central Park, then Commonwealth Gardens. The Park was gazetted on 21 November 1963 at the same time as Kings Park and several other places in the vicinity, such as Regatta Point and Nerang Pool. Plantings in the park began with Charles Weston who was the officer in charge of landscaping the national capital from 1913 until 1926. By the time he left his position his tree plantations, mainly conifers, overlooking the Molonglo River were well established and a solid beginning for a landscaped lakeside parkland. When Lindsay Pryor took on the role of Parks and Gardens Superintendent in the mid-1940s he built upon the foundation work of Weston. Central Park, as it was known, took on a new look from 1949 at the instigation of Pryor and his vision for a public landscaped parkland. When the NCDC was established and the creation of Lake Burley Griffin formulated, attention returned to the design and development of Central Park. A master planning process took shape and Dame Sylvia Crowe designed the Commonwealth Gardens creating a unique city garden landscape incorporating horticultural aspects, children's play areas, tranquil glades, waterside walks and bush environments (no 31). The Park is the home of Canberra's annual spring flower festival – Floriade – as well as the venue for large-scale public events and happenings. Its memorials and commemorations provide a location for peaceful and reflective visitation as well as a reminder of the ACT's past and the development of our nation.

Public art in Canberra's urban environment was one of the platforms of the NCDC's building program. Apart from the many memorials, and commemorative plaques and places, Commonwealth Park is also home to numerous sculptures and artworks. The NCDC initiated art works in the Park and included large sculptural pieces such as the Captain Cook Memorial globe and water jet (no 3).



21. 'KANGAROOS'

Situated at the edge of the Mirror Pond are a bronze kangaroo and her joey created by the lost wax process by Canberra artist, Jan Brown (1981).





22. 'SEATED LADY'

Sitting on a stone this elegant bronze created by artist Herman Hohaas stands at the crossroads of two pathways north of Nerang Pool.



23. 'DANCE OF THE SECATEURS'

Appearing to float at the northern edge of Nerang Pool is a multi-coloured tubular sculpture by Bruce Radke (1988).



24. NERANG POOL

An early feature of the proposed development of Commonwealth Park, this pool was first described as an Aquarium Pond by Griffin in 1918 and then on the 1961 plan prepared for the NCDC by British town planner, Sir William Holford. Construction of the Pond began a year later at the same time as the installation of the Lily Pond, with the Stream Valley (no 30) added later. These features are an integral part of the water replenishment system for the Park. The name Nerang is derived from an Aboriginal word meaning 'little'.



25. 'UNTITLED'

In 1991 Floriade included a sculpture competition. This flock of winged birds on stalks by Alan Gaurir won first prize.



26. STONE FORT

Designed to celebrate the International Year of the Child in 1979, this play structure features towers and tunnels built out of stone. Seen as a sculpture as well as a playground, the Stone Fort remains a popular children's play area.



27. AMPHITHEATRE

This open-air theatre located by the Lily Pond was designed as part of the nearby children's play areas. Seating up to 300 children this amphitheatre has been used during events such as the Canberra Festival and other local celebrations. In 1996 the mural was created as part of the federal government's L.E.A.P (Landcare Environment Action Program) scheme and funded by the NCA. The first mural on this site was painted by Heather Ellyard and replaced by other mural artists over the years.



28. UNDERPASS (PEDESTRIAN TUNNEL)

Constructed to provide access under Parkes Way, this is one of the several entrances to Commonwealth Park. Its muralled walls match that of the Amphitheatre (no 27).



29. CHILDREN'S PLAY SCULPTURE

Situated in a prominent spot by the Lily Pond (no 30) this popular children's play sculpture was created by artist David Tolley. The stark white inter-connecting large-scale artwork has continued to attract children to climb all over it since it was installed in 1970. Its placement at the Lily Pond echoes the notion of 'the Children's Shore' created by Dame Sylvia Crowe, the designer of Commonwealth Park (no 20).



30. LILY POND, STREAM VALLEY & MARSH GARDENS

Although Commonwealth Park (no 20) had been under development for many years, first with plantings by Charles Weston and then Lindsay Pryor, intensive design work only began under the direction of the NCDC in the late 1950s/early 1960s.

William Holford & Partners with Sylvia Crowe Associates spearheaded the way with a master plan project in 1965. Dame Sylvia Crowe will be remembered for her imaginative and inspirational design of the Park of which the Stream Valley and the Marsh Gardens are just one water feature complete with stepping stones, pools and shrubs in a tranquil setting. Under the leadership of Harry Oakman, the NCDC's landscape architects played a significant role in developing Crowe's design: Richard Clough was responsible for the design and construction of the Rock and Stream Valley and Margaret Hendry the Marsh Garden.





31. R.G. MENZIES WALK

Connecting both bridges and stretching across both parks, this walk commemorates former Prime Minister Sir Robert Menzies. The walk recognises his commitment to the development of Australia's national capital to initiate the 'ideal city' as originally conceived by Canberra's winning designers, Walter Burley and Marion Mahoney Griffin. By creating the NCDC in 1957, Menzies set in place the legislation and funding to ensure the growth of modern Canberra.



32. LAKE BURLEY GRIFFIN

An intrinsic feature in the design and construction of a new national capital city included an ornamental water element. Charles Scrivener (Scrivener Dam is named in his honour) championed the Yass–Canberra site for its ability to provide such a waterway. Created by damming the Molonglo River, Lake Burley Griffin was officially inaugurated on 17 October 1964 by Prime Minister Sir Robert Menzies. Walter Burley Griffin's winning design for Canberra centred around two axes – water and land. The water axis covered the length of the lake. Although his plans included the lake, it was not until Menzies directed the NCDC to create it as a centrepiece of the city that it became a reality. Consisting of three basins, east, central and west, Lake Burley Griffin is 9 kilometres in length with a total of six islands and 40.5 kilometres of landscaped foreshores. Any evidence of Aboriginal occupation along the river banks would have been destroyed by the early settlers in the area. However, the rising of the dammed river also destroyed European settlements. Properties and hillsides, good grazing and lucerne growing land along the riverbanks, the truss bridge at Commonwealth Avenue and the Acton grandstand gave way to the flooding of the Molonglo River forever changing The Limestone Plains landscape.



33. MURRAY'S BAKERY SITE

This stand of English elm trees are remnants of the site of the former bakery run by the Murray family. Following his life on the goldfields at Bredbo, John Murray, originally of Collector, leased this land from the Church of England in 1908. The Aleppo Pine trees which circled the home and bakery site have not survived. Although the bakery and store was destroyed in a fire in 1923, the elm trees stand as a reminder of an early European occupation site associated with introduced plant species.



34. PIONEER WOMEN'S MEMORIAL

A commemoration of the work of women in the creation of our nation, this stone seat and plaque, designed by landscape architect, Margaret Hendry, was erected by the National Council of Women (ACT). It was unveiled by Lady Hasluck, wife of the Governor-General, Sir Paul Hasluck, on 2 September 1972.



35. STANLEY MELBOURNE BRUCE MEMORIAL

This sign tells the story of the career of Viscount Bruce of Melbourne, Prime Minister from 1923-1929. During his term he contributed to the first phase of government development of Canberra as the nation's capital. As the only prime minister who is buried in Canberra, this sign commemorates the scattering of his ashes on Lake Burley Griffin following his death in London in 1967. This sign is the terminus for the 'ACT Pioneers Cemetery Track' – part of the *Canberra Tracks* network of self-drive heritage trails.



36. SYBIL HOWY IRVING MEMORIAL

A plaque set on a stone, detailing the services of selfless volunteer, Sybil Howy Irving, features in this wisteria-laidened pergola dedicated to her life and work. Designed by Denton Corker Marshall and Richard Clough, it was unveiled by Lady Cowen, wife of the Governor-General, Sir Zelman Cowen, in 1979.



37. BATTLE OF TRAFALGAR MEMORIAL

An English oak tree was planted on 21 October 2005 to commemorate the 200th anniversary of the Battle of Trafalgar. This memorial was sponsored by the Navy League.



38. COMMEMORATIVE OAK

This English oak grown from British acorn seeds presented by the British High Commission in 1962, was the first of many overseas gifts to Commonwealth Park. It was planted by Princess Marina, Duchess of Kent, in September 1964.



39. GALLIPOLI REACH

This portion of the foreshore between Nerang Pool and Aspen Island was named 'Gallipoli Reach' on Anzac Day 1985 to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the Anzac forces landing at Gallipoli during World War I. At that time the Turkish government named the landing site 'Anzac Cove'.



40. KINGS PARK & ROND TERRACES

Gazetted on 21 November 1963 the Kings Park is named in honour of four English Kings: Edward VII & VIII, and George V & VI. Situated at the eastern end of the Canberra Central Parklands, the park is associated with large-scale national memorials, such as H.M.A.S. *Canberra* Memorial (no 44), National Emergency Services Memorial (no 42) and the National Police Memorial (no 47). It also features historic Blundells Cottage (no 41) and the National Carillon on Aspen Island (no 46 & 45). Located between these two parks are the Rond Terraces extending Anzac Parade to the lake shore.



41. BLUNDELLS COTTAGE

Canberra's European history is on display at this stone cottage dating to c1860. This unique lakeside heritage building is a surviving example of a tenant farmer's home situated along the banks of the Molonglo River. Originally part of the Campbell family's 'Duntroon' estate, the home was occupied first by William and Mary Ginn followed by George and Flora Blundell who lived here for 60 years. Blundells Cottage is a museum depicting the life of the early pioneers of the Limestone Plains.



42. NATIONAL EMERGENCY SERVICES MEMORIAL

A sculptured memorial dedicated to the thousands of men and women who serve and have served in emergency service organisations throughout Australia. The design by Aspect Melbourne, landscape architects, won a national competition. The memorial incorporates a three-dimensional frieze reflecting the diversity of emergency personnel and their experiences.



43. MERCHANT NAVY MEMORIAL

Dedicated to the services of the Merchant Navy and those who died in World War I and II. The memorial was unveiled by the Governor-General Bill Hayden on 7 October 1990.



44. H.M.A.S. CANBERRA MEMORIAL

Commemorative plaques adjoin this memorial dedicated to H.M.A.S. *Canberra*. It was erected by the ACT Chapter of the Naval Historical Society and unveiled on 9 August 1981 by the Chief of Defence Force Staff, Admiral Sir Anthony Synnot. The *Canberra* was sunk during the battle of Savo Island on 9 August 1942.



NOTE: New national memorials are planned for Kings Park and surrounds. In commemoration of the service and sacrifice of Australians who died in World War I & II a memorial will be erected on the eastern and western edges of the Rond Terraces. The Australian Peacekeepers Memorial will be situated outside Kings Park on Anzac Parade next to the Australian and New Zealand Memorial.



45. ASPEN ISLAND

Gazetted on 21 November 1963, this is one of three artificial islands created when the central basin of Lake Burley Griffin was formed. It is named after the Aspen tree, a popular and widely distributed species from North America, and is accessed by a footbridge from the foreshores in Kings Park. The National Carillon (no 46) is located on the island.



46. NATIONAL CARILLON

A gift from the British Government to the people of Australia in celebration of the 50th anniversary of the founding of the national capital, the Carillon tower was designed by Cameron, Chisholm & Nicol and measures 50 metres from the ground. It is located in Kings Park on Aspen Island. During a royal visit in April 1970 Queen Elizabeth II accepted the Carillon on behalf of the Australian people. The inaugural recital was played by John Douglas Gordon for whom the connecting footbridge is named. As one of the world's largest carillons, the National Carillon consists of 55 bronze bells cast in England by John Taylor & Co. Recitals are held regularly and is used for special occasions and celebrations.



47. NATIONAL POLICE MEMORIAL

Unveiled on Police Remembrance Day, 29 September 2006 the memorial and its associated honour roll acknowledge all Australian police officers who were either killed or died on duty since the first days of policing in Australia. The national design competition was won by Fairweather Proberts Architects with Urban Art.



48. KINGS AVENUE BRIDGE

Opened by Prime Minister Sir Robert Menzies on 10 March 1962, the Kings Avenue Bridge, along with the Commonwealth Avenue Bridge, forms part of the design concept of the Lake scheme. It also acts as an entranceway to and from the Parliamentary Triangle, as well as being an integral part of the area's north and south thoroughfares. Designed by Maunsell & Partners (who also designed Commonwealth Avenue Bridge) construction work on the dual carriageway, pre-stressed concrete bridge began in 1959 and predated the filling of Lake Burley Griffin by several years. Its completed structure visually foreshadowed the Lake scheme and its companion bridge. Its incremental span depth leading upwards towards the centre of the bridge adds to its overall design quality. Apart from its significance as a bridging superstructure, it is an artistic feature of the eastern section of the Lake when viewed from Commonwealth Park.

Acknowledgements

Many sources were used in the preparation of this brochure including:

John Gray's *A park for a nation: the story of the evolution of Commonwealth Park*, RAIP&R (ACT region), 1996
and *Review of Commonwealth Park 1913 to 1993*, ACT Heritage Council, 1994.

The National Capital Authority's website:
www.nationalcapital.gov.au

Dr John Gray has a long association with Commonwealth Park, not only as part of his public service career since the early 1960s as a landscape architect, but also as a proponent of the Park, its beauty and amenity. We thank John for his assistance in the preparation of this brochure.

Research: Dr Margaret Park



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