

NATIONAL TRUST (ACT) MONTHLY HERITAGE WALKS MARCH 2020 UPDATE

Hi everyone

The coronavirus precautions have resulted in the postponement of all National Trust (ACT) Monthly Heritage Walks until further notice, and we understand a similar postponement of the Canberra and Region Heritage Festival.

Our Monthly Heritage Walks will be back! We don't know when yet, but you can keep in touch, as these Updates will continue to arrive in your email each month.

Carry on Walking...

The good news is that Heritage Walking does not have to stop. You don't have to lock yourself away completely, not yet anyway, unless of course, you are self-isolating because you have returned from overseas, have tested positive to COVID19, or are awaiting test results. You can walk alone or in a small group maintaining a social distance of 1.5metres, so easy enough to maintain a conversation. You should also maintain a safe distance from other walkers. There are plenty of uncrowded places where you can do this in the ACT, particularly on a weekday. The weather is great for walking now, and will be through to at least November when we may well already be back to a regular Monthly Heritage Walks program.

So here are some ideas for do it yourself Walks with a heritage flavour:

At present it is OK for most of us to go outside. But you should keep up to date with the latest advice from ACT Health – what you should and shouldn't be doing to keep yourself safe:

<https://health.act.gov.au/about-our-health-system/novel-coronavirus-covid-19/protect-yourself>

Check out these great brochures which will guide you through 20 different areas in the ACT and introduce you to their history and heritage:

<https://www.nationaltrust.org.au/heritage-tour-brochures/>

Canberra Tracks – a great resource. Check out the references section for each Track for more information:

<https://www.canberratracks.act.gov.au/>

Want more information about heritage listed sites in these and other ACT areas?

https://www.environment.act.gov.au/heritage/heritage_register

You can search the list of places on the ACT Heritage Register by suburb. Find out what is listed near where you live. Click on the listed place name and get more detail about the site, its history, and why it is listed. Heritage places that are on Commonwealth land in the ACT are listed on the Commonwealth Heritage List (CHL). Most of these are shown on the above site (see under the suburb of Acton for example). There is usually a lot more information about CHL places, including bibliographies.

There are also places in the ACT which are on the National Heritage List:

<https://www.environment.gov.au/heritage/places/national-heritage-list>

Get out there!

While we can't invite you to join our Heritage Walks at present, we can suggest where you might like to go to look and learn more about ACT history and heritage. We'd like to keep this feature going each

month until things get back to normal. So if you have any suggestions for heritage related walks do get in touch at heritagewalksact@gmail.com

A couple of excellent walks for March (it is so green out there just now!):

Mount Painter:

<https://australianhiker.com.au/trails/mount-painter-summit-walk-act-3-7km/>

This is an excellent walk to do now as it is so green after the rain and there are wildflowers and birds around. The start point is where the cycle path passes under Bindubi Street (off William Hovell Drive). Do follow the instructions in the link above, and follow the road and formed path to the summit, avoiding the badly eroded informal path you will see on your left as you approach the mountain. There are wonderful views across Canberra and the Brindabellas - pick a clear sunny day. There are some excellent interpretation signs which identify the mountains etc you can see, explain how this area relates to early settlement, and how through the hard work of Friends of Mount Painter over many years it is slowly being rewilded. This is a fine example of how local initiatives have improved and raised awareness of our natural heritage. People do care about our heritage – enough for many to work tirelessly to protect it. Mount Painter is an example to us all.

Weston Park:

This is an easy, flat, loop walk on the cycle track/pedestrian path around the edge of the peninsula, about 3km. It can be busy here at weekends with family groups enjoying picnics and BBQs along with great views of Lake Burley Griffin and Black Mountain, but really quiet at other times.

Read about the history and heritage values of this park at:

https://www.environment.act.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0009/195444/297.pdf

Park at or near the Yarralumla Nursery and walk back to Weston Park Road which leads towards Black Mountain. Cross the road and follow the cycle path northwards along the eastern side of the peninsula. As you enjoy the great views of the Lake and this lovely park, contemplate the fact that there was serious talk some years ago about turning this area into a suburb. Admire the wooded slopes of Black Mountain from the end of the peninsula, continuing on the path southward towards Yarralumla Nursery. You will notice exotic pine trees along the Lake edge. These trees were planted by Charlie Weston and his men, nearly 50 years before the Lake was filled in 1964. He knew exactly where the lake edge would eventually be, as surveyor Charles Scrivener's plan to have the lake surface at 1825 feet about sea level had been adopted. Eventually on your left you will see the fence around Yarralumla Nursery, established by Charlie Weston in 1915 to grow trees for the new city, a task it still fulfills. A little way along, behind the fence you will see what looks like a wooden shed. Look closely and you will see that it is a shed on metal wheels. This is one of the original mobile offices that would be towed out to an area where street trees were being planted. As an important reminder of that era, it deserves to be preserved. Further along the fence you will see some buildings with red painted corrugated iron roofs. These are the original nursery offices, from 1915, still in use. Read about the history and heritage values of the Nursery at:

https://www.environment.act.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0009/195444/297.pdf

Monthly Heritage Walk Reports

For photos of our walks see our Facebook page: www.facebook.com/HeritageWalksACT

Please help us to publicise our walks by adding comments on our Facebook page.

Sunday 23 February 2020: HERITAGE WALK 36: Two Bridges and a Lake

A pleasantly cool and smoke free morning greeted walkers at Regatta Point to explore this familiar area with two members of Engineering Heritage Canberra. At Commonwealth Avenue bridge Graeme Kelleher, who had been a Supervising Engineer during the bridge's construction nearly 60 years ago, outlined the construction methods with the aid of photographs taken at the time. Walkers were surprised to learn that the Molonglo River originally flowed north of the bridge under what is now the northern abutment, and not under the bridge itself. He explained that the bridge had been constructed with a gap between the two carriageways which permitted the later addition of a public transport corridor. This could still be used to carry light rail across the Lake. A leisurely walk along the lakeside brought us to Kings Avenue bridge. We learned that entirely different construction methods had been used to those at Commonwealth Avenue. Examination of construction era photos gave non engineers an appreciation of the complexities of these Lake crossings that Canberrans have long taken for granted. Walkers also learned that these iconic, elegant modernist wonders, and the rest of Lake Burley Griffin outside of the central basin still had not been afforded heritage protection despite efforts over more than 20 years.

Keep safe

Mary Johnston and Trevor Lipscombe, Walks Organisers

We respect your privacy. If you don't wish to receive these Monthly Updates please let us know at heritagewalksact@gmail.com