

RIVER ANGAS WALKWAY



A self guided walk through
Strathalbyn following
the Angas River



Signage along the way will highlight
the significance of the river corridor

A Brief History of the River Angas

The River Angas was named by its discoverers, the Cock and Finlayson expedition of December 1837 for George Fife Angas, Chairman of the South Australian Company at that time. His arrival in South Australia and sponsorship of German migration was still in the future. The river rises in the fertile land north of Macclesfield, and fed by a spring in the centre of the town, joins Goulds Creek from Bugle Ranges at Doctors Creek on "Blackwood Park", the property of the late Sir Ewan Waterman. It was here that Dr John Rankine, one of the founders of Strathalbyn, settled in 1840. The road went along the river valley until erosion forced the deviation up Doctors Hill. Strathalbyn's original reservoir was built nearby in 1935. As the river leaves the hills it passes between "The Lodge" (once the home of Sir Lancelot Stirling) and "Braemer" with "Glenbarr" on Paris Creek, the land of the Rankine family, founded by William Rankine, brother of Dr John. It enters the town of Strathalbyn under the North Parade bridge and flows through the parklands around the peninsula, under St Andrews Bridge and the rail and road bridges at South Terrace, and then on through the plains. Dawson Creek joins the river where it swings around the peninsula. It was named after another pioneer, Col. James Dawson, who was trustee with William Rankine of the subdivision of Section 2600, gazetted by Gov. Grey in 1841. The town was named for Strath – a valley, and Alben – the old name for Scotland. Here we are surrounded by history and it is hoped that the whole area will one day be declared an Historic precinct. It was here that the pioneers, newly arrived from Scotland on the "Fairfield", spent their first night with their stock enclosed on the peninsula. All this area is parklands and was once grazed by cows that owners paid an annual fee. Although there were strong, well kept white picket fences, there were many complaints about cows in the streets. The large trees were planted in the 1860's when Dr Schomburgk gave them to local governments. The central gardens 'Strathalbyn Memorial Gardens' are protected by state heritage listing.

From the southern boundary of Strathalbyn, a little further on from the walkway's end, the river winds on to the southeast, with limestone ridges of Bletchley and Limestone Hill on either side. These were once the coast sandhills when sea covered a great gulf, but in the last million years have hardened into rock. Beyond the slopes that we can see there was once a great area



of Mallee country on deep sand. This was not fully cleared until the 1930's.

From here on the river bed is deeply eroded as it winds its way through alluvial flats to Lake Alexandrina. It passes the village of Willyaroo, once known as New Hamburg, and the site of a tannery, a flour mill and inn.

The village of Belvidere stands where the bridge crosses the river on the road to Milang. The road to Langhorne Creek and Wellington goes to the left, and the river runs between Angas and Lake Plains to its mouth just east of Milang.



The original publication "River Angas Walkway" was conceived and prepared by Nancy Gemmell with the assistance of Nigel Mallen.

This new publication was designed by, and re-edited from the original text, by Frank Caspers. The vignettes are by Nancy Gemmell.

The River Angus walk starts at the Children's Bridge
(Refer to the map inside brochure)



The Children's Bridge (1) was financed by William Richardson of Woodchester in 1919 as a memorial to his wife. Although childless they were concerned that children had to cross the river by a ford and stepping stones to reach school. An exact replica replaced the original in 1978 as the old mortar was crumbling.

You can choose to either walk upstream or downstream. Return along the same track or make your own journey back to town.

Downstream Angus River Walk

Walk along the river edge through the park past the old Weir (2) on your left. This large pool is home to native ducks and water hens and is the site of the famous Rotary Duck Race.

At the top of the bank on the right is an old Road Making Implement (3) which was used to rip up West Terrace

in readiness for bitumen, the first to be laid in Strathalbyn.



Across the road the National Bank (4) building on the corner of Albyn Tce and Rankine St was built in 1867. Albyn Tce was used to film street scenes for the film Picnic at Hanging Rock.



We re-join the path below the weir where you can see an old gum tree which is an Aboriginal Scar Tree (5). Notice the scars where shields have been cut out of the living tree. Canoes were also cut from local trees and floated down to Lake Alexandrina.

The walk takes you beneath St Andrew's Bridge and provides a view of St Andrew's Church (6)



Building of this church began in 1844 and enlarged over the years. A larger tower was built in 1869 as the bell given by Edward Stirling was too large for the existing tower and spire. The clock was installed in 1896. The tower was topped with 4 small spires, two were blown down in 1955 and the others removed. A community restoration fund was established for their replacement in 2001. This church is reputed to be the most photographed in South Australia.

Follow the river edge through Rotary Park, a BBQ area and under the Railway Bridge (7)



The bridge on South Terrace is called Gol-Col-Hoop Bridge after Councilors Gollan, Colman and Hooper. The walk passes beside a very large old Red River Gum framing the fine stone abutments of the bridge. The rivers course would have originally been lined with wattles, tea tree, Christmas bush and native apricots. The largest trees along the river have always been the River Red Gums. Listen to the reed warblers in the rushes. The walk winds its way through the 1.5km reserve, replanted with original native species. Much of the river bank to the right has been built up, changing the original contours. On some steep slopes the native Bluebush still grow. Notice a group of red river gums that have sprung up after soil disturbance.

On your left is the Gasworks Cottage (8)



The Gasworks provided light for the town from 1867 to 1918. The chimney was demolished long ago and the main buildings have been beautifully restored.

A little further along among the rocks is the remains of an old weir. Along this section of the river in the larger waterholes endangered River Black Fish are found. On your right is a backwater lined with gums, once the water-course of the river when it flooded in earlier centuries. On the left are spectacular alluvial cliffs where Rainbow Bee Eater birds nesting holes can be seen. Just beyond this to the left is a low-lying flood plain. Many Red River Gums have been planted to replace the trees that would have once grown here, and many of these damp flats are covered with reeds, such flats (terraces) indicate older river beds.

The walk continues below Fairfield Drive to the Cobb & Co Estate which is the site of the old Cobb & Co Coach House (9). Cobb & Co arrived in Strathalbyn in 1868 where two coaching services operated to and from Adelaide.

Walk back along the track back to the Children's Bridge or take the stairs next to the railway bridge to bring you onto South Terrace. The Heritage Museum (10) is well worth a visit, on the corner of Rankine St and South Terrace.



Upstream Angus River Walk

If you choose the upstream walk cross the Children's Bridge (1) see previous comments

Walk towards the Bandstand (rotunda) (11)



built in 1912, and is still the centre piece for many community celebrations.

Behind the bandstand is the War Memorial (12)



built in 1921. To the right is St Andrews Church (6) see previous comments.

To the left of the bandstand you will find steps - follow the steps down through the gardens and make your way over the footbridge.

Please open your brochure to continue the walk

River Angas Walk Continued...

On your left is the Old Swimming Pool (13) The old pool is just upstream from Dawson Creek where it joins the Angas River. It was decided at a meeting in 1885 that this stretch of water would be set aside for swimming. In 1933 a weir was built and in 1943 the floor was cemented. In 1968 to commemorate the centenary of the Corporation of Strathalbyn it was agreed to build a swimming pool away from the river. The pool was renovated in 2011. (14)

Above the playground under the pines a cairn (15) indicates the site of the St Andrews Church burial grounds, Strathalbyn's first cemetery. Across the road is the Council Chambers and Library, originally the primary school built in 1880.

The bowling greens were established in 1913.

Follow the river and cross the weir type bridge (16) at the bottom of Coleman Tce. Turn left here, and follow the walk along the river passing some waterholes. These pools provide habitat to the endangered Southern Pygmy perch.

Continue on along Stones Lane to the end. Cross North Parade and continue on to North Parade Wetland (17). This site was a natural wetland which was dug out and reshaped in 2009. It is an important storm water retention basin which filters runoff and protects valuable habitat pools below in the Angas River. This wetland was revegetated using local native species and has been managed using minimal disturbance bush care techniques allowing natural regeneration.

Continuing along the river valley on your right is 'The Lodge' (18), home of Sir Lancelot and Lady Stirling until 1950. The land was originally taken up in 1847 by Edward Stirling. During the Second World War 'The Lodge' was used as a Convalescent Depot. The surrounding paddocks were a golf course for many years.

The walk follows the river further on into housing estates.

Walk back along the track (back) to the Children's Bridge and do the downstream section now or another time.

Plants Native To This River Valley

River Red Gum	<i>Eucalyptus camaldulensis</i>
SA Blue Gum	<i>Eucalyptus leucoxylon</i>
Pink Gum	<i>Eucalyptus fasciculosa</i>
Peppermint Box	<i>Eucalyptus odorata</i>
Mallee Box	<i>Eucalyptus porosa</i>
Drooping Sheoak	<i>Allo casuarinas verticillata</i>
Golden Wattle	<i>Acacia pycnantha</i>
Swamp Wattle	<i>Acacia retinodes</i>
Dry Land Paperbark	<i>Melaleuca lanceolata</i>
Red Bottlebrush	<i>Callistemon rugulosus</i>
Yellow River Bottlebrush	<i>Callistemon sieberi</i>
Silky Tea Tree	<i>Leptospermum lanigerum</i>
Sticky Boobialla	<i>Myoporum viscosum</i>
Christmas Bush	<i>Bursaria spinosa</i>
Hop Bush	<i>Dodonaea viscosa</i>
Native Apricot	<i>Pittosporum phyll iraeoides</i>



Birds Commonly Seen In Their Season

Little Pied Cormorant	Rainbow Bird
White Faced Heron	Kookaburra
Black Duck	Welcome Swallow
Eastern Swamp Hen	Yellow Faced Thornbill
Coot	Southern Blue Wren
Silver Gull	Grey Fantail
Crested Pigeon	Willy Wag Tail
Galah	Sulphur Crested Cockatoo
Silver Eye	White Plumed Honey Eater
Little Corella	Yellow Winged Honey Eater
Rainbow Lorikeet	Red Wattle Bird
Musk Lorikeet	Magpie Lark
Crimson Rosella	White Backed Magpie
Adelaide Rosella	Nankeen Kestrel
Red Rumped Parrot	Black Shouldered Kite

Reference Books:

- Old Strathalbyn by Nancy Gemmill
- The Native Vegetation of the Strathalbyn Plains by Nancy Gemmill

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