

Step back in time

Cities are made up of histories and memories as much as they are made up of their physical environments.

This walking tour gives a patchwork glimpse Liverpool's past, revealing a city that has undergone constant change, development, and demolition.

The traditional custodians of the land in Liverpool are the Cabrogal Clan of the Darug Nation. The land was also accessed by peoples of the Tharawal and Gandangara nations. Stories, rock art, stone artefacts and other sites across Liverpool provide evidence that First Nations peoples have been here for up to 50,000 years.

This history may seem hidden in the sprawling urban landscape of Liverpool's CBD, but every place in Liverpool lives in the legacy of living Aboriginal history.

Liverpool was declared a Macquarie Town in 1810. Nestled between the mountains and inner-city Sydney, Liverpool became the growing colony's food bowl. Over many decades, the landscape was transformed from Eucalyptus woodlands to idyllic pastures. Declared a city in 1960, today, Liverpool is a fast-growing urban city centre. Shopping malls, high-density living, and highway bypasses have now been built alongside its ancient rivers and open parklands.



Start at Liverpool Railway Station.

Allow about two hours for this walk.

There are places to eat and rest along the way.

4 Liverpool Weir

The Weir can be accessed from the stairs descending the left-hand side of Lighthorse Bridge to Lighthorse Park.

In 1810, Governor Macquarie declared the head of the Toggerai-Georges River "fit for the purpose of a town". The river became a water highway with Liverpool acting as an inland port. Ships were sent from the weir down the river all the way to Botany Bay, carrying wheat, wool and timber from the surrounding districts.

Built by convicts in 1836, Liverpool Weir effectively separated the intertidal zone where fresh water turned to saline sea water, allowing colonial farmers to use the river for irrigated crop growing.

Construction of Liverpool Weir impacted Aboriginal use of the river as a means of transport and a communication channel. The Weir also gradually changed the ecology of the river upstream, as fish and other life forms were prevented from moving freely to feed and breed.

In the twentieth century, the Weir became a popular place for recreational swimming and fishing, and in the late 1920s and 1930s there was even a life-saving club. Over time however, several bull shark attacks, extensive sand and gravel mining, industrial pollution and natural disasters altered the geography of the river and made it unsafe for swimming.



Fishing at Liverpool Weir, 1991. Reference number: HL002175-3.

1 Liverpool Railway station

The railway to Liverpool was originally completed in 1856, but the main station and brick Railway Goods Shed (located behind the bus depot) were constructed in Victorian Gothic style in 1881.



Station platform, 1913 (HL002243)

2 The Toggerai-Georges River

For thousands of years the Cabrogal clan of the Darug Nation lived on the western side of the Toggerai-Georges River in Liverpool. This river and the Yandhai-Nepean River provided a natural boundary between the Darug and the neighbouring Tharawal. Each group had its own defined area and was a separate population, speaking a different language, but these rivers provided an important corridor for mobility, communication, and economic and cultural interaction.

River systems were central to the Aboriginal way of life. The Cabrogal ate the cobra (cabra) grub found near the Toggerai-Georges River and Cabramatta Creek. Aboriginal women gathered shellfish, yams, fruits, roots and small game. Fish traps were set among creeks and rivers. Mullet and bass were captured on multi-pronged fish spears. Men also caught eels, platypus, yabbies, mussels, tortoises and water birds. Running river

water was also used to prepare food as many vegetables were poisonous without careful preparation. Burrawang (Macrozamia), for example, had to be soaked in running water for several days before being ground into flour and baked as flat cakes.



The Toggerai-Georges River photographed by Samuel Wood, ca. 1928

3 Holsworthy Railway Bridge

The concrete pylons traversing the Toggerai-Georges River above Liverpool Weir are all that remain of the old Holsworthy Railway Bridge. It was built during World War I to service the army base at Holsworthy and prisoners of war (POWs) worked on the project.

Did you know?

The POW camp at Holsworthy was the largest internment camp in Australia during World War I. The camp held between 4,000 and 5,000 internees, most of whom were of German descent. Prisoners were interned without trial, often without knowing their "crime", and without the knowledge of their families.



Holsworthy Bridge photographed by Samuel Wood, ca. 1928

5 Memorial Avenue

Memorial Avenue has been re-invented many times. This part of Liverpool once formed the social centre of the city and included many important buildings that have since been demolished or re-located, including Liverpool's first fire station, first Town Hall, Ashcroft's Quality Butcher and the Commercial Bank.



Ambulance Station photographed by Samuel Wood, ca. 1928



Liverpool Fire Brigade, 1936 (HL002537).

6 Memorial School of Arts

Very few public buildings remain from the inter-war period in Liverpool. The most significant is the Memorial School of Arts Building, established in 1924 as a soldier's memorial.

In December 1922 the proposed plan for the Memorial School of Arts was described in the Sydney Morning Herald. "The building ...will be erected in High Street, the main thoroughfare of Liverpool... On the ground floor there will be a wide vestibule, a library, and large reading and supper rooms. The first floor, which will be reached by a broad staircase, will contain a large billiard-room, cardroom, and a room for small meetings."

Schools of Arts, or Mechanics' Institutes, were originally conceived to improve trade skills and enrich the lives of the working classes – socially, morally and intellectually. Mechanics' Institutes paved the way for technical education, adult and continuing education, museum and library services. The Library Act of 1939, which provided free public library services, contributed to their eventual demise.



Library Interior of the Memorial School of Arts, 1956 (HL000522-3)

LIVERPOOL HISTORY

Walking Tour

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This brochure was produced by Liverpool City Council's Heritage Services Team. If you have questions or information to share about the history of Liverpool, get in touch!

Liverpool City Library

Local Studies email
localstudies@liverpool.nsw.gov.au

Library Email
library@liverpool.nsw.gov.au
Library Plaza,
170 George Street, Liverpool, NSW 2170
02 8711 7177

Liverpool Regional Museum

Cnr Congressional Drive and Hume Highway,
Liverpool NSW, 2170
02 8711 7126
liverpoolregionalmuseum@liverpool.nsw.gov.au
Instagram @liverpoolregionalmuseum

Gandangara Local Aboriginal Land Council

64 Macquarie Street, Liverpool NSW 2170
02 9602 5280

Deerubin Local Aboriginal Land Council

(02) 4724 5600
Reception@deerubin.org.au
Level 1, Suite 3, 295 High Street
Penrith NSW 2750

Tharawal Local Aboriginal Land Council

Level 6, 33 Argyle St, Parramatta NSW 2150
02 9689 4444
media@alc.org.au

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7 George Street

8 Macquarie Mall

George Street, colloquially known as Sari Street, and Macquarie Street are the social centres of Liverpool. When Westfield Shopping Centre opened in 1991 and Macquarie Street was closed to traffic in 1994, the social and economic layout of Liverpool's city centre was dramatically altered. However, local businesses still thrive and proudly represent the diversity of Liverpool's multicultural community.

Crowds gather here daily to enjoy coffee on the sidewalk, play chess or dominoes at communal tables, and browse the many vegetable shops, jewelry stores, bakeries, butchers and more. Mannequins in colourful saris sparkling with beaded trim and gold braid fill at least a dozen shop windows. Aromatic spices waft down the street from Udaya Spices, an enormous shop full of Indian groceries and homewares. Market gardens in Bringelly, Rossmore and Austral grow the wide variety of fresh vegetables, herbs, fruit and flowers that supply many of the greengrocers on the main strip. These market gardens, and the different produce they grow, reflect the waves of migration to Liverpool from around the world including Croatia in the 1950s, Germany in the 1960s, Malta and Lebanon in the 1970s, Vietnam in the 1980s and China and Italy over many decades.



Macquarie Street looking south, photographed by Samuel Wood, ca. 1928.

15 The Old Courthouse

Believed to have been built around 1820, the Old Courthouse has been by necessity a multi-purpose building. It has been used as a schoolhouse, courthouse, a place of worship and a town hall. Early maps show that in about 1811 a soldiers' barracks stood on the corner, and during the convict years the building was used as a gaol. In 1928 the Barracks were removed, and the building became a Police Station and Courthouse. The interior of the building still retains an early courtroom with cedar fittings. After the Courthouse moved to George Street in 1972, the building housed the Community Aid and Resource Centre until 2002. Today the building is undergoing restoration.

16 Liverpool Primary School

The first 'public school' in Liverpool was erected around 1811 on the site now occupied by the Liverpool Senior Citizens' Centre on Bigge Street. The first rendered brick schoolhouse on this site was erected in 1871 to the design of the Government Architect George Allan Mansfield. Other buildings were added throughout the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries.



School grounds, ca.1900 (HL000384)

9 Saint Luke's Anglican Church

St Luke's Anglican Church is the oldest Anglican church in Australia. It was designed by Colonial Architect Francis Greenway and built using convict labour. The foundation stone was laid by Governor Macquarie in 1818. It is a colonial Georgian building, and surviving portions of the original church include the nave, tower window and door.



Centenary of St Luke's Church, 1919 (HL003061/1)

10 Liverpool Pioneer's Memorial Park

This park was originally St Luke's Church Cemetery, the major burial ground for the district for nearly 150 years. The first colonial settler buried here was Richard Guise on April 18, 1821. If you wander through the park, you will find the names of many of Liverpool's prominent early settlers. The cemetery was divided by religious denominations but there was also a section left for unmarked non-denominational, pauper and asylum inmate graves.



Liverpool Pioneers' Memorial Park, 2017

11 Bigge Park

Bigge Park was originally the town common, Bigge Square, and the centre of early Liverpool. Surrounded by the Courthouse, Asylum and Hospital, it was a leisurely space for recreation used by patients and residents alike. It extended to Scott Street until the railway line was built in 1856. As it was directly opposite the Courthouse, Bigge Park was the area once used for the punishment of convict criminals. Stocks, gallows and whipping triangles are known to have been erected in the park, and as many as four people in a day have been hanged here. Today there are several memorials in the park which speak to Liverpool's military history.



City of Liverpool Regional War Memorial Plaque at Bigge Park, 2019

12 Liverpool College of TAFE

Liverpool College of TAFE was Liverpool's first official hospital. Designed by Francis Greenway, it was built by convicts around 1822-30. Over time the building has grown, reflecting its changing purposes. Originally, the site was known as Liverpool Asylum and was run by the Benevolent Society until 1862. From 1862 until 1933, the building became the Liverpool Asylum for the Infirm and Destitute, run by the New South Wales Government. In 1933 the site became the Liverpool State Hospital and Home and in 1961 it re-opened as Liverpool College of TAFE.

Did you know?

Liverpool's first make-shift hospital is thought to have been a tent set up by the river in the 1790s.



Main entrance, 'Poor House', circa 1875, Government Printing Office 1 – 05904. Original negative held by State Archives & Records Authority of New South Wales.

13 Hilda M Davis Senior Citizens Centre

14 Dr James Pirie Community Centre

Today Liverpool is home to one of the highest concentrations of Australia's recent arrivals, and to many culturally and linguistically diverse communities. The Hilda M Davis Senior Citizens Centre was opened by Prime Minister Gough Whitlam on 25 August 1973 and has been a focal point for many migrant communities to meet ever since.

The Dr James Pirie Community Centre was built in 1948 as a memorial to the notable local doctor. The center included a Baby Health Care Centre and space for other community activities vital to supporting Liverpool's growing working-class community at the time.



LIVERPOOL • NSW •

Self Guided History Walk

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| 1. Liverpool Train Station | 9. Saint Luke's Anglican Church |
| 2. The Toggerei-Georges River | 10. Liverpool Pioneers' Memorial Park |
| 3. Holsworthy Railway Bridge | 11. Bigge Park |
| 4. Liverpool Weir | 12. Liverpool College of TAFE |
| 5. Memorial Avenue | 13. Hilda M Davis Senior Citizens Centre |
| 6. Memorial School of Arts | 14. Dr James Pirie Community Centre |
| 7. George Street | 15. The Old Courthouse |
| 8. Macquarie Street | 16. Liverpool Public School |

Walking Route ——— Additional Walking Route ———