



# Clarendon Street History Walk



Clarendon Street quickly became the principal business street in the town of Emerald Hill (now South Melbourne). During its 1880s heyday, shoppers flocked to the street. Saturday nights were a highlight, with the shops and hotels open until 11pm and the Emerald Hill Band often performing. Today Clarendon Street is still at the heart of South Melbourne's business and entertainment district – come and explore it.

1. Our walk starts at the Limerick Arms Hotel, originally constructed in 1855 three years after the first Emerald Hill land subdivision. It was rebuilt in 1925.



Limerick Arms Hotel, 1888\*



lamb and potatoes. Wines were purchased direct from Victorian vineyards and aged on site in the shop's extensive cellars. Fresh coffee, roasted and ground on the premises, was also sold.

Purvis Bros, c1905\*

4. At the corner of Bank Street to your left is the former Commercial Bank of Australia (now 'Rokk Ebony'). Diagonally opposite is the Gothic Revival style former English Scottish & Australian Bank (now ANZ). The name Bank Street does not reflect the location of the banks but originates from banks of earth, or traditional Aboriginal mounds, built around ceremonial hilltops such as Emerald Hill.

Corner of Clarendon and Bank Streets, 1889\*



2. Crossing Park Street we come to what was the fence line of the Melbourne Orphan Asylum from 1855 to 1877. This continued for two blocks to Dorcas Street.



Orphan Asylum, 1875\*

Stroll along the west side of Clarendon Street. Most of these shop fronts were refurbished in 1983. Many still display the original entrance floor tiles, pressed metal ceilings and decorative stained glass shop fronts.

3. A prominent shop was Purvis Bros. Grocers at 334, now home to 'The Groove Train'. George Purvis farmed in Woodend, and was well known for producing excellent

5. Continuing along Clarendon Street you will see Mitchell McCabe's, a menswear shop that has been operating from this site since 1901. Its original motto was 'to be well dressed is to be largely armed against unhappiness'.
6. Pause at O'Donnells Lingerie at 298. This vantage point gives you an excellent view of the delightful 1909 row of Edwardian shops across the street which are derived from the designs of the well-known Glaswegian architect and furniture designer Charles Rennie Mackintosh.
7. Progress along this block to the corner of Coventry Street. The Golden Gate Hotel opposite – one of the oldest hotels in Emerald Hill – has had its licence since 1853, the year after the first subdivision of Emerald Hill.
8. Cross Coventry Street and proceed to the corner of Alfred Place. Notice the attractive row of five intact Victorian double-storey terraces across the street.



## Clarendon Street

# History Walk



9. At the intersection of York and Clarendon Streets, the Clarendon Hotel stands across the road on the site of the original Albion Hotel of 1861. It was re-built in its present form in 1889 to the design of prominent architect, William Pitt.

10. Cross Clarendon Street and walk back towards Coventry Street. You will pass 'The Grape Unknown' at 221, formerly the premises of Mr G. H. Taylor, Grocer and Wine and



221 Clarendon Street, c1905\*

Spirit Merchant, who specialised in wholesaling Rutherglen fortifieds to the local South Melbourne hotels.

11. Cross over Coventry Street. The National Australia Bank across the street is a good example of the streamlined modernism fashionable in Melbourne in the 1920s.

12. Cross Dorcas Street and continue until you reach 295. Until the mid-1980s there was still an original hitching post outside this building, formerly a branch of the Bank of Victoria. The original post has been replaced by two reproductions on either side of the approaching Bank Street corner.

13. Looking across Clarendon Street you will see a distinctive row of three shops. The former Glasgow Bakery on the left has a wheat sheaf decorating its pediment. The middle shop bears a wreath ornament and the date of construction, 1876. The pediment of the right hand shop, originally a bookshop, depicts an open book.

Former Glasgow Bakery\*



\* Photographs: Port Phillip City Collection. Photographs 13 and 15: Helen Stitt

Design: Oyster Strategic Design Nov 2006

14. The most intact shopfront in the walk is 303. It forms a pair with 305 and their ornate facades make a decorative contrast to the more restrained classicism that predominates in Clarendon Street.

15. Our walk ends at the Clarendon Pharmacy on the corner of Park Street which was originally one of the Imes family's three dispensaries. Notice the initials in the attractive stained glass window above the doorway.

C.G. Imes window\*



### More information

#### Public transport

This walk starts and finishes near public transport. Trams 112 and 96 will take you into the city or to St Kilda. Tram 1 will take you to the city or to the beach. For further information about public transport please call Metlink on 131 638.

#### Sustainable transport

The City of Port Phillip's Sustainable Transport Unit aims to encourage residents and visitors to walk, cycle and use public transport wherever possible. This trail is part of a series of guided walks and self guided trails that help residents and visitors to discover Port Phillip by foot. It is one of the initiatives of the City of Port Phillip's Walk Plan 2005-2010 that aims to increase walking through improved facilities and programs to reacquaint people with their feet. For more information call ASSIST on (03) 9209 6777 or visit [www.portphillip.vic.gov.au/walking.html](http://www.portphillip.vic.gov.au/walking.html)

#### Local history

This walk provides just a taste of the local history of this area. If you would like to know more there are books available at the Emerald Hill Library. There are also local history displays at the South Melbourne Town Hall that can be viewed during business hours. For more information call ASSIST on (03) 9209 6777 or visit [www.portphillip.vic.gov.au/local\\_history\\_library.html](http://www.portphillip.vic.gov.au/local_history_library.html)