

THE GLENBURN PRECINCT HERITAGE TRAILS

Welcome to Ngunnawal Country

Aboriginal People - a living culture

For thousands of years and hundreds of generations, Aboriginal footsteps have traversed the banks of the Molonglo River. The Glen Burn Creek and Molonglo River provided a reliable source of water and food for the Ngunnawal people whose connection to this country flowed through all aspects of the environment.

The region is part of a major travel pathway used by Aboriginal people from the sea to the mountains. The Moolinggoolah, a family group of the Ngunnawal people lived in this area, hence the name 'Molonglo'. Surface scatters of flaked and worked stone have been found in the upper reaches of Glen Burn Creek and close to the Molonglo River and are important evidence of Aboriginal occupation and ongoing use of sites in this area.

Early Europeans were chaperoned along the river pathways from Lake George by the different groups whose traditional homelands lay along it. Often Europeans, who also followed these pathways, settled on Aboriginal sites as they were considered ideal locations for European agricultural pursuits, as can be seen with the Glenburn Precinct.

The Ngunnawal People still maintain a continuing connection to Country, culture, lore/law and cultural practices today.

European settlers

In the 1800s, a small rural community existed in this region, with slab huts, shearing/woolsheds, haysheds, a sheep dip, home orchards, vegetable patches and even a school. What remains of this heritage listed precinct demonstrates almost all aspects of 19th century wool production as well as mining and charcoal fuel production.

In 1831, Luke and Mary Colverwell, the first European settlers, came to the area. They settled at 'Dirty Swamp' (later known as Glenburn), just near Glen Burn Creek about two kilometres upstream from where it joins the Molonglo River.

After the passage of the Robertson Land Acts of 1861, which allowed for free selection (to make

land available to much larger numbers of people, not just a minority of wealthy land holders), usually in 40 acre portions, the area developed into a small but thriving rural community. Valuing the education of their children, the community even established its own school – the Kowen provisional/public school – from 1882 to 1906. There was also a railway platform (Burbong) nearby from the late 1880s. Even a small copper mine operated for a short time in the late 1880s.

The residents, a mixture of employees of absentee landlords and generally small landholders, worked hard, clearing and draining the land, planting and harvesting crops, running and shearing sheep and generally trying to survive and improve their lives.

Most settlers lived a subsistence way of life living in small slab homes. They grew their own fruit and vegetables, ran chickens for meat and eggs, slaughtered the occasional sheep and kept a cow or two for milk and butter.

Until the arrival of the railway, supplies like flour, sugar and fencing materials were brought in by dray from Bungendore or Queanbeyan. Farm produce such as grain and wool were transported to market similarly.

The early settlers in the Glenburn area knew how to entertain themselves. They participated in hare drives and many social activities including a bachelors' ball, school picnics, dances and farewell parties.

Despite their efforts, things were stacked against them. Poor soils, pests (rabbits and hares), generally small blocks, drought and bad overall economic conditions took their toll in the late 1880s, 1890s and early 1900s. Properties were consolidated, people moved elsewhere and the community ceased to exist.

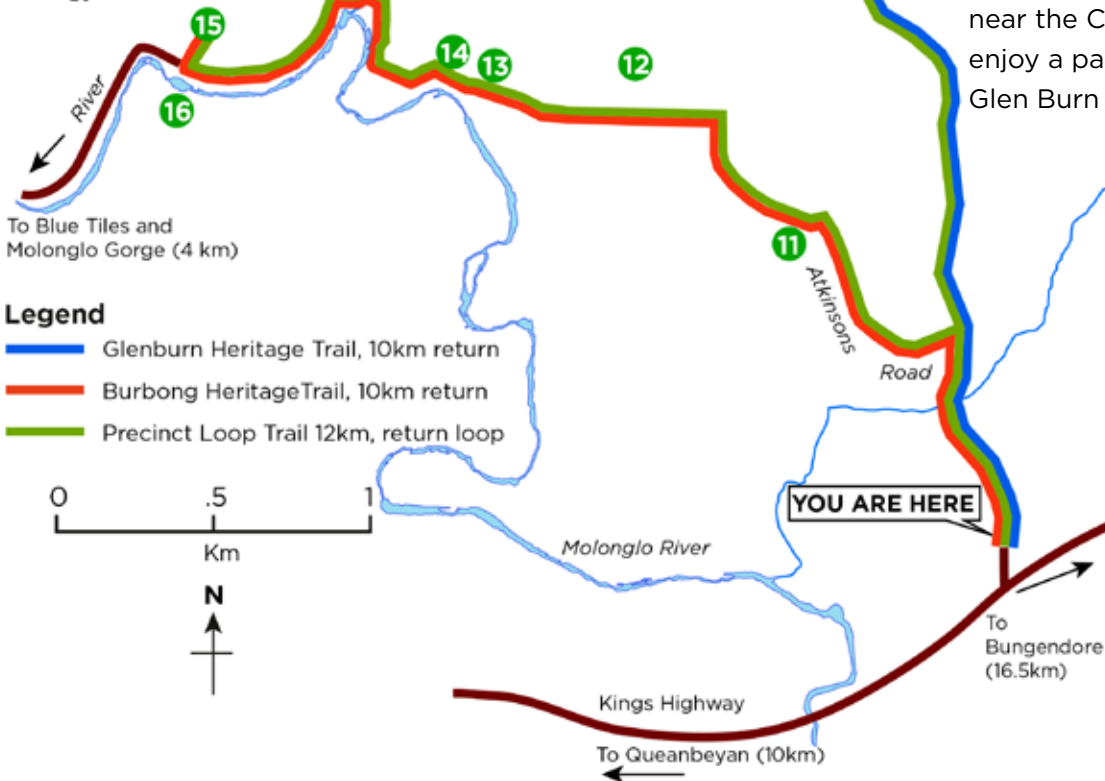
From 1915, properties were resumed by the Commonwealth to form part of the Federal Capital Territory. The planting of pine trees (commenced in 1927) in what is now the Kowen Forest, led to the loss of many early European structures. Some sites remain, primarily because the areas around them were not suitable for pines.

Glenburn sites

1. Glenburn Shearing Quarters
2. Glenburn Shearing Shed
3. Colverwell Graves
4. Glenburn Hayshed Site
5. Glenburn Sheep Dip and Yards
6. Glenburn Homestead
7. Glenburn Hay/Machinery Shed Ruins and Yards
8. Kowen School Site
9. Charcoal Kilns Site
10. Sheep Loading Ramp and Yards

Burbong sites

11. Atkinson Trig
12. Kowen Copper Mine Site
13. Colliers Homestead Ruins and Orchard
14. Curleys Homestead Site and Orchard
15. Coppins Homestead Ruins
16. Argyle Homestead Ruins



Trails for walkers & cyclists

Three signposted trails with informative signs explore the past, linking most of the 16 heritage sites. The trails are mostly on management roads and are suitable for walkers and mountain bikes. All trails are of medium difficulty and a moderate level of fitness is required. Tables and chairs are located inside Glenburn Homestead and in the orchard at Colliers Homestead Ruins. If you move them, please return them to where you found them. From the ParkCare commemorative bench near the Charcoal Kilns Site you can enjoy a panoramic view across the Glen Burn Valley.



John and Catherine Coppin. Photographer and date unknown.

Glenburn Heritage Trail (blue trail) 10km return (3 hours walking, 1.5 hours cycling)

visits most of the Glenburn sites close to Charcoal Kiln Road including the Shearing Shed complex, the Colverwell Graves, Glenburn Homestead, the Charcoal Kilns Site and the Kowen School Site. The return uses a shortcut on Charcoal Kiln Road from the turnoff to Glenburn Homestead.

Burbong Heritage Trail (red trail) 10km return (3 hours walking, 1.5 hours cycling)

The Burbong Heritage Trail turns off Charcoal Kiln Road at Atkinson Road. It visits most of the sites in the Burbong area including some near the Molonglo River. Return on the same path.

The panoramic views from Atkinson Trig across the precinct to the hills on the ACT/NSW border are a highlight of the trail.

Precinct Loop Trail (green trail) 12km loop (approximately 4 hours walking, 2 hours cycling).

For those with more time, this loop passes most of the heritage sites within the Glenburn and Burbong areas, giving an excellent in-depth understanding of the history of the entire area.

This area contains early European structures, ruins, plantings, graves, farm machinery and other sites dating back to the very first days of European settlement in the Canberra - Queanbeyan region.

Please remember

Stay on the trail.

For your safety, do not enter the Canberra International Clay Target Club, adjacent farm or other adjacent private leases.

Logging trucks and other vehicles also use the roads in and around the pine plantation.

There are some creek crossings. Do not cross unless it is safe.

The tracks are exposed so take water and snacks, wear sturdy, enclosed shoes and sun protection.

The area is closed during days of Total Fire Ban.

Dogs on leads are permitted. There may be livestock grazing some areas so please restrain your dog at all times.

Please respect Aboriginal and European heritage sites and objects. It is an offence to remove, deface or otherwise damage heritage places and objects.

There are no bins so please take your rubbish home with you.

There are no toilets so be prepared. Walk at least 100 metres from waterways and heritage sites. Bury the waste.

Protect and enjoy our historic sites

The remains of the early structures and relics in Glenburn Precinct are protected and managed by the ACT Parks and Conservation Service in collaboration with the National Parks Association of the ACT and Friends of Glenburn. Structures and relics are fragile and easily damaged. Please respect the sites so that future generations will also be able to enjoy them. This project is also supported by the ACT Heritage Grants Program.

Further information

Access Canberra: 13 22 81

Website: www.environment.act.gov.au

Glenburn Hare Drive

A large drive took place at Mr John Edmonds Junr's place, on Saturday last when 143 pests bit the dust. At 9.30 o'clock a start was made for the scrub, and by 12.20pm some seventeen shooters and a like number of drivers, were invited to a splendid luncheon after luncheon no time was lost in getting to work again all returned to their homes well pleased with their days sport.
The Queanbeyan Age 27 July, 1901.

People of Glenburn Precinct



John and Sarah McInnes with their two youngest children, Lillian May (Maisie) and Australia Janet (Top), c1888. Both children went to Kowen School. Photographer unknown.



John James and Agnes May Edmonds and children Margaret Jemima, Stanley Augustine and Mabel, 1900. The children were born at Glenburn Homestead. Photographer: Telsa Studios.



Glenburn Hay/Machinery shed and yards, 1947. John James Edmonds is standing in the shed (which is no longer there). Photographer: Arthur Wilson.



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