



The Settlers Track



Walk back in time along the Settlers Track to experience huts, homesteads and other historic sites from the 19th and 20th centuries.

Self-guided walk

The Ngunnawal people welcome you to Namadgi National Park



ACT
Government



AUSTRALIAN ALPS
NATIONAL PARKS



Kosciuszko
Huts
Association
(KHA)



Brayshaws Homestead

In 1903, two of Flora and William Brayshaw's sons, David and Edward, built the hut now known as Brayshaws. There was a second building behind the main structure that was used for extra accommodation and storage.

From 1903 to 1931, the original two-room cottage and skillion was the home of David Brayshaw. He was aged 51 when he moved in and lived there for 28 years, a bachelor with few needs. His near neighbours were his brother Richard at Bobeyan Homestead and the Westerman family at Lons Vale Homestead.

David Brayshaw died from injuries and exposure on 31 August 1931 at the age of 79 after an accident where he fell from his horse. A cairn of white quartz stones collected by Mary Jane Westerman, and placed by her brother-in-law Jim, commemorates the site where his body was found. Newspaper reports of David's death and funeral note the difficulties in transporting his casket along blocked snowy roads to Adaminaby.

After David Brayshaw's death, his house was auctioned off to the newly wedded Ted and Roma Brayshaw who lived there from 1931 to 1935. David Brayshaw had been Ted's uncle.

Ted and Roma's son Tom was born at the cottage in 1933. Roma found life at the cottage spartan, with no stove and only a camp oven for cooking. Roma introduced feminine touches by wallpapering the inside of the cottage with newspaper to keep out the draughts, and white washing the exterior slabs. She also tended and extended the vegetable patch and orchard in the gully below the cottage.

In 1935, Roma's father Tom Oldfield bought the cottage for his other daughter, Iris, and son-in-law Henry Curtis, who moved in with a young son, Norman. The Curtis family lived there for 14 years from 1937 to 1951, raising three more children; Colin, Joan and Janice.

In 1946, new skillion fibro additions were made to the back and front, enclosing the verandah for extra bedrooms, a laundry and bathroom. The extensions were needed for a growing family and because farm workers lived with the family. These additions are now removed. A shearing shed was built up the hill from the cottage in 1937 and extended in 1945. This has also been demolished. The Curtis family owned the property until 1973.

Can you find?

- Small windows reflecting the high cost of glass in early 1900s.
- Newspaper lining to keep out draughts.
- Original wood shingles under the later iron roof.
- Adze marks (horizontal cuts) on the slabs.
- The steel spike outside, next to the chimney that held the telephone insulator connection.
- A line of stones 3 metres from the front verandah which are the foundation of a fibro extension made for shearers.
- Nearby rock piles where the children played.
- The green vegetation 30 metres down the valley, the site of a spring and vegetable garden.
- The shearing shed site is just beyond the nearest clump of boulders.





Tin Dish/Bobeyan Subsidised School

Even with children expected to help with farming from an early age, elementary schooling was considered both necessary and desirable. The problem in remote areas was the lack of schools within walking distance. One solution, established in 1903, was the 'subsidised schools' system with the Government providing classroom materials and a subsidy per student towards a teacher. Parents supplied the school building and furniture, found the teacher and boarded them for free.

Four local families (with seven children in total), petitioned the Government in October 1906 for a school in the local area. The children ranged from six to 14 years and all came from Roman Catholic families connected by marriage. The choice of school site was driven by a location roughly equidistant from all their homes.

For a peppercorn rent, Brayshaw allowed the school to be established on his land. The school was initially in a part of his home. Meanwhile a single room slab school was built across the road, together with a well for water and a long-drop toilet. The teacher was William Gottaas who first boarded at the Westerman's and then lived in a room at Brayshaw's cottage. The school operated from 1908 for only three to four years.

Can you find?

- The stones that formed the fireplace.
- The four corner posts.
- Where the teacher may have stood.
- The site of the toilet about 40 metres up the gully.

Waterhole Hut



Waterhole Hut is one of eight stockmen's huts found in Namadgi. The galvanised iron Waterhole Hut was built in 1939 by Tom Oldfield, his son Jack and Harry Tyrie. The chimney stones were recycled from an older nearby cottage.

The hut at Waterhole was always intended as a basic bush shelter for short term, periodic use by stock workers. It was never intended as

a family home and offered few domestic comforts, originally having only a dirt floor, plain cast iron beds, wall nails instead of shelves and no permanent cooking facilities. Before the hut was built, men camped in tents while tending to sheep and cattle. Jack Feaney was one of the workmen who lived at Waterhole Hut for a prolonged period in 1941 and extended the hut at that time.

The nature of the hut as a focus for work is reinforced by nearby bush timber stockyards that pre-date the hut. The yards built by Jack Oldfield and Alf Peters were used for both sheep and cattle. Sheep drenching was a frequent task. Other work included ringbarking, scrub-cutting and rabbiting.

Can you find?

- The rusty tin which served as a message holder. A similar one is at the door of Westermans Homestead.
- The bush timber frame of the hut.
- The horse holding yard 10 metres behind the hut.
- The sheep and cattle yards about 200 metres up the track. How are they constructed?

Westermans Homestead/Lons Vale

Thomas Bernard Westerman originally took up the land here in 1882 after his marriage to Mary Jane Perry in 1875. Their first home was a mud brick house. They then built a larger wooden structure, calling their home Lons Vale Homestead. They lived there for 52 years raising a family of six children, the youngest of whom was Selena. Thomas's younger brother Jim also lived with them, despite having his own slab cottage further down the creek.

When Bruce Jeffery married Selena Westerman in 1916, he built the wooden cottage you see on the site today, which is the third built at the location. Thomas Westerman was a stonemason and built the chimneys. The old Lons Vale Homestead was demolished in 1935 and Charles Westerman, Selena's bachelor brother lived in the 1916 cottage until 1946, renaming it 'Gundah'.

The site of Westermans Homestead has remnant plantings of exotic trees from a garden and a fenced area containing the graves of two of Thomas and Mary Jane's children. An unnamed infant son was buried here in 1886. In the 19th century, it was not uncommon for stillbirths or infants who died early to be buried on remote properties. Their oldest daughter, Elizabeth, who died of tuberculosis, aged 46, in 1922 is also buried at the site, as it was impossible to transport her body to a cemetery across the flooded river. Her coffin was made out of ceiling boards from the house.

Can you find?

- The message tin at the front door.
- Scalloped barge boards at the gable ends.
- Where the ceiling boards were removed from the main bedroom and remnants of oiled calico substitute.
- Lathe and plaster, also known as wattle and daub, in the kitchen room.
- Foundation stones of the 1880s building visible on the vehicle track between the homestead and pines.
- Graves 150 metres south with wire fence surrounding.
- The sheep dip 40 metres up the valley from the homestead.

The ACT Government and the Kosciuszko Huts Association (KHA) work together to conserve Namadgi's cultural heritage

Kosciuszko Huts Association (KHA)

The KHA is a community group working to retain, restore and re-build the mountain huts that form a unique part of the cultural heritage of the Australian Alps. Much of the information about Namadgi's European settlers and their huts gathered by the KHA comes from the families and workers who lived there. Their generosity in sharing their stories and pictures is acknowledged.

For more details see: <http://www.khuts.org>

Waterhole stockyard



Westermans Homestead

Before



After



European settlement history in the southern corner of the ACT

The Namadgi area was first settled by Europeans in the mid 1830s. Early settlers included Flora and William Brayshaw, who married in 1844 and raised a family of 14 in the Bobeyan Valley. The Brayshaws retained their association with the area for over a century.

The isolation of the valley engendered self-sufficiency and turning a hand to any job needed. People relied on those who lived closest for companionship and help. The distinctions between friends, neighbours and family blurred through marriages over generations.

Australian Federation, and the formation of the Federal Capital Territory in 1911 led to the Commonwealth resuming land from pastoralists and farmers. In 1978, the Gudgenby Nature Reserve was recognised, becoming the Namadgi National Park in 1984, with its boundaries extended in 1991. All grazing and farming was discontinued, but the physical reminders remain.

Brayshaws Homestead

Before



After



Waterhole Hut

Before



PHOTO: D. Kerr

After



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Getting there

The trackhead is reached by driving for 50 minutes south from Tharwa along the Boboyan Road to David Brayshaw's Homestead. About 36 km south of Tharwa the road becomes gravel but is generally still suitable for 2WD.

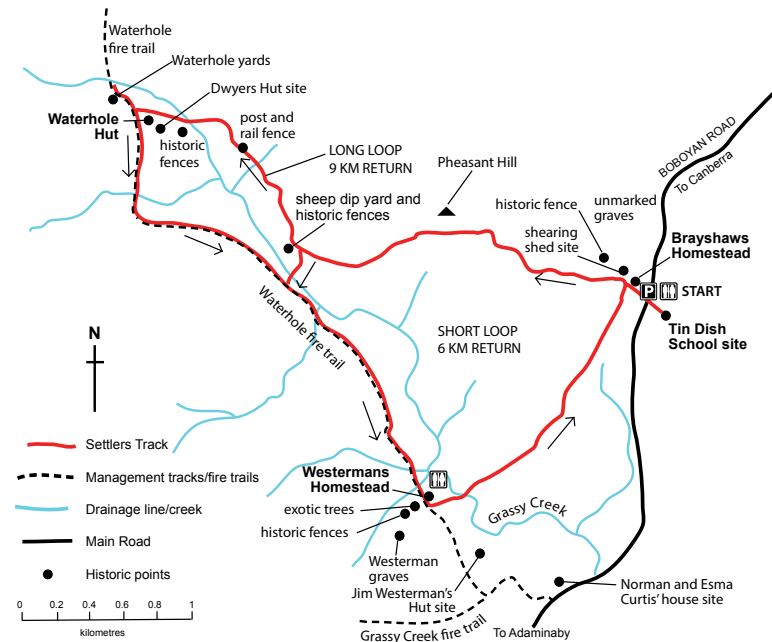
Call in to the Namadgi Visitor Centre for more information and maps of the wider area.

The Settlers Track is a moderate 6 km return walk along a marked trail. There is a longer trail of 9 km that also takes in Waterhole Hut. It is a generally flat walk with gentle slopes. Some short sections of the Brayshaw's to Waterhole Hut track are moderately steep. Seats, toilets and interpretive signs are provided. Follow the track map walking in an anti clockwise direction.

Minimal impact code of conduct

- Plan ahead, thinking about weather, suitable clothing, sun screen, sturdy footwear, safety and expected return time. There is no mobile phone coverage on the walk.
- Bring your binoculars and camera, food and drink, and a basic first aid kit.
- Carry it in, carry it out. Take your litter home.
- Leave your pets at home. They disturb native animals and other park visitors. Be aware there are European wasps in the Park.
- Respect heritage. Cultural sites, huts, and stockyards are links to the past. Please leave all artefacts undisturbed and do not souvenir.
- Got to go? Use a toilet or take a walk at least 100 paces away from waterways. Dig 15 centimetres then cover waste with soil. Toilets are located at the Tharwa Bridge, Namadgi Visitor Centre, Mt Clear campground Westermans Homestead and Brayshaws Homestead.

Map of the Settlers Track



- Stay on track even if it's muddy or dusty. Don't widen tracks.
- Use a fuel stove. Open fires are not permitted in Namadgi National Park.

Map of Namadgi National Park and the location of the Settlers Track



For more insights into Aboriginal and European cultural history, take one of the Canberra Tracks self-drive tours. Brochures are available at: www.canberratracks.act.gov.au

Further Information

Namadgi Visitor Centre
Naas Road, Tharwa, ACT 2620
www.tams.act.gov.au
Canberra Connect: 13 22 81

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