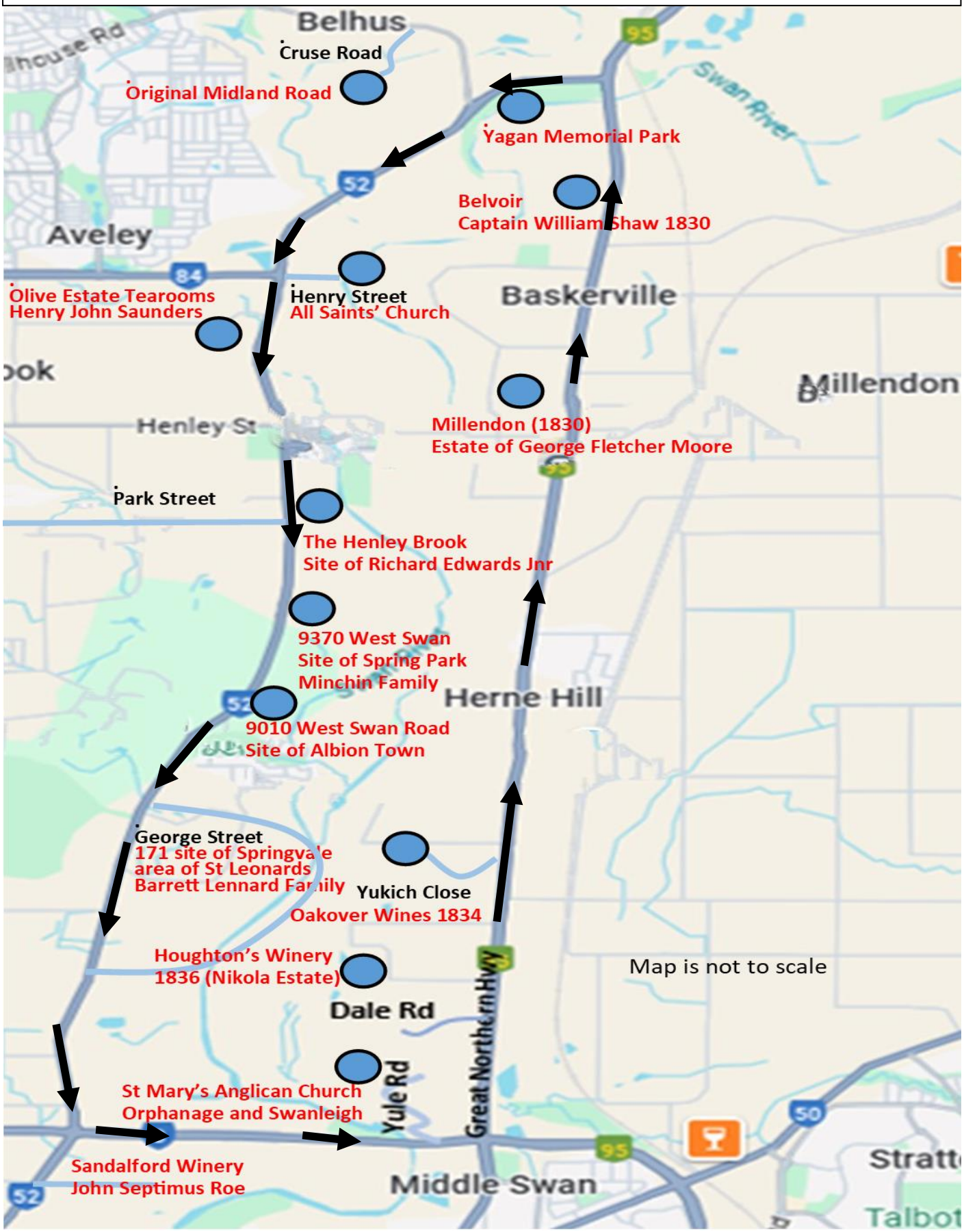
Swan Valley Pioneers Historical Tour



HISTORICAL INFORMATION:

Rev Dr Luis Giustiniani was a learned man, multi lingual but not very fluent in English. He concentrated on and advocated for the aborigines in court and so became unpopular with the settlers and officials and was recalled to England. Giustiniani built the small octagon church of mud brick at Woodbridge (East Guildford) on land given by Governor Sir James Stirling. It opened in 1836 but wasn't completed till 1839. Rev Giustiniani also completed 2 partly built houses on the Mission grant at Middle Swan. He made one his home (The Mission House) and established an Aboriginal Mission in the other.

YAGAN –Information taken from George Fletcher Moore's diaries and letters.

Yagan was a Whadjuk Noongar of the Beeliar people. He was born in about 1795 and was tall, athletic and had distinctive ritual scarring on his right shoulder and back.

As the expanding settlement increasingly restricted Aboriginal access to their traditional food sources, the theft of flour and potatoes and the spearing of pigs and sheep as well as their fires destroying crops led to squirmishes with individual settlers and with the colonial militia. Lieutenant - Governor Irwin attempted to find a solution for the threat of violence hovering over the colony. Stirling and Irwin promoted a ceremonial gathering in St Georges Tce. The occasion on 13th March 1833, was a corroboree on the theme of the kangaroo hunt and Yagan as master of ceremonies conducted proceedings with grace and dignity before an audience of leading citizens.

But violence between the settlers and Noongars recurred after "a wanton murder of an unoffending native" and an attempted break-in to a Fremantle store resulted in the death of Yagan's brother. Immediate retaliation led to two white servants being fatally speared. Irwin declared Yagan and his father, Midgegooroo, outlaws.

Yagan expected to be safe in the Upper Swan but the search for them was relentless. Midgegooroo was trapped and without a trial executed by firing squad. When Yagan appeared at George Fletcher Moore's Millendon property some time later, he quizzed Moore about his father's fate, vowing to kill three whites if his father had been shot.

On 11th July 1833 a group of aboriginal men including Yagan approached some shepherd boys who worked on Henry Bull's prosperous farm near present day Ellenbrook. After friendly exchanges, 18 year old William Keats treacherously shot Yagan and one of his companions Heegan. The settlers discovered the bodies of Yagan, Heegan and the brutalized body of William Keats. In a display of callous barbarity one of the settlers hacked off Yagan's head and the skin off his shoulders and back.

Irwin, who had been criticized for his part in the death of Midgegooroo, returned to England in order to personally justify his actions to the Colonial Office.

Please note: There are many varied stops for refreshment once you turn into Great Northern Highway and later in West Swan Road.

START OF TRAIL: Coming from Guildford on West Swan Rd turn R into Reid highway and then after 2.2kms turn left into Yule Ave:

You are entering the original Mission grant, Aboriginal Mission and later Swanleigh Orphanage.

At the end of the road **is St Mary's Anglican church** built in 1869 and graveyard–the site of a very early Octagon church (1840) built in memory of Lucy Yule by her husband and her father. The present church contains beautiful stained glass windows including the East tripartite window "Suffer The Little Children" installed in 1903. The church is in continual use as a place of worship for the Anglican Parish of Swan and requested frequently for weddings and funerals.

LOOK FOR: 1838 Grave of Lucy Yule –she died after lingering in bed for 4 months after childbirth.

LOOK FOR: Grave of Rev William Mitchell – He was minister of the parish from 1838. (His predecessor Rev Giustiniani was the District Missioner in 1836 –see further information).

Return via Yule Rd and turn left onto Reid highway, then turn left at first intersection onto Great Northern Highway. In 1.5 kms turn Left into Dale Rd – in 0.3kms veer Left for Nicola.

NICOLA ESTATE – was HOUGHTONS until recently. Houghtons was one of the oldest wineries dating back to 1836. Houghtons was known for its colorful history including tales of pioneer Scots, a bushranger and generations of winemaking craftsmanship. Three British army officers purchased this prime piece of land – Thomas Yule (future husband of Lucy Yule), Ninian Lowis and Richmond Houghton. Houghtons was a popular destination for Perth families to picnic in the shady grounds.

Drive back to Gt Northern Highway and in 0.5kms turn left into Yukich Close.

OAKOVER VINEYARD RESTAURANT– Land was originally granted to D MCLeod and transferred to Ensign Dale in 1830 and then to Samuel Moore (brother of George Moore from Millendon) in 1834. This pretty Oakover precinct –homestead, gardens, vineyards, barns, stable etc is very significant to the history of the Swan.

Continue on Great Northern Highway for 2.7kms- see sign for Millendon

MILLENDON- the estate of George Fletcher Moore. He sometimes swam the Swan river to take services at All Saints church. There is a memorial to him near the pulpit in the All Saints church. Later owner was William Padbury. There is an Eliza Irwin sketch of Millendon in the Battye library. G F Moore wrote a "Diary of Ten years Eventful Life of an Early Settler in Western Australia" in which he documents the difficulties of developing his property including labour and food shortages and inflated prices. He also compiled "A descriptive vocabulary of the language of the aborigines". He commenced farming with 34 merinos and 10 lambs. By 1836 he owned 800 fine woolled sheep and had leased a farm at York. He was also a keen explorer. He and Surveyor-General John Septimus Roe were responsible for determining the site of the original Perth causeway.

Return to Great Northern Highway turn Left and continue for 2.7km and turn Left into Memorial Ave

BASKERVILLE HOMESTEAD – was down Memorial Ave. Original estate was William Tanner, then Walter Padbury and Henry Hardwick.

Return to Gt Northern Highway and in 0.4 kms see signs for Belvoir amphitheatre:

BELVOIR 1830s Captain William Shaw of Rifle Brigade arrived on Egyptian Feb 1830. Diaries of Eliza Shaw used to write drama "Swan River Saga" and the book "To be Heirs Forever" by Mary Durack.

Continue over bridge and at the lights turn L into West Swan Road and then Left at signs for:

YAGAN'S MEMORIAL PARK – It is a unique place created to commemorate the life, death, and spirit of the great Nyoongyar leader and warrior.

Leave park and turn Left at West Swan Road -

At large roundabout turn Right into Millhouse Rd and then Left into Cruse Rd and drive short distance to the gravel – this was the original road that passed through Cruse's Mill - some original stones still visible on the private property. The present Cruse Rd was once the main road on the right bank connecting the lower Coulston ford over the Swan River with Cruse's Mill**. The mill area was significant for the first forty years of British settlement** but now almost forgotten because of road changes altering the alignment of the main right bank road to the present line of West Swan Road in 1905. The road and Ellen Brook Belhus Bridge were ungazetted as a public road in 1905. If you went to the end of the gravel road (on private property) you would come to the dilapidated remains of the bridge which was completed by convicts in 1851. The original bridge pylons were 29 feet long and the 'monkey" used to drive them half an imperial ton.

Cruse's mill was built next to a small permanently flowing stream which ran through a narrow valley into Ellen's Brook. The valley was dammed up with an earth wall and a mill-race led from the dam a few hundred yards downstream to the mill building, where the water turned a water-wheel to provide power for grinding. **Cruse's house (1846-1847) still stands as part of one of the most important historic precincts in the Swan Valley.**

Return to the Millhouse Rd roundabout and turn Right into West Swan Road - Continue 2.5 kms to Roundabout with Gnangara Road and Turn Left into Henry St.

This area on the right of Henry St and further down along West Swan Rd is part of HENLEY PARK ESTATE granted to Captain Irwin and Judge Mackie in 1829/1830 and where Barracks for the 63rd regiment were established. Early worship services in July 1831 were held on this estate. In 1860 WH Mackie died at the estate –Lieutenant Colonel Irwin a few months earlier in England. Subsequent owners were Edmund Brockman and Henry John Saunders-look for roads named after them (off West Swan Rd) after your visit to All Saints church.

ALL SAINTS ANGLICAN CHURCH and graveyard– land for the church was gifted by FC Irwin and Judge W Mackie. The first service was held 10th January 1841 –it is the oldest Anglican church that has been a site of continuous worship in WA. (More information available overleaf)

LOOK FOR: Grave of Richard Edwards Snr who built the church. He also built 2 storey homesteads for Irwin and Mackie (Henley Park) and Navy Lt Bull (Belhus).

LOOK FOR: Cruciform Grave of Judge Mackie and graves of other early settlers eg Henry Morley.

Return to West Swan Road passing other parts of the large original Henley Park including the Olive Estate (0.5kms) on the right. In 1895 the estate of Henley Park was purchased from Edmund Brockman by Henry John Saunders Chief engineer of the Midland Railway Company who was once Mayor of Perth. The tearooms are an historic 1927 cottage.

In 1.1 kms 9810 The Henley Brook – Richard Edwards (Jnr) house 1850 is on this site. The Arum Lilly farm was here.

Then in 0.4 kms 9370 SPRING PARK –one of the first rural grants-associated with the Minchin family. It was the property of a yeoman farmer (not gentry). There is a grave of Susannah Smithers in the paddocks nearby (not accessible to general public-but has been photographed). The stable you can see from the road is original but now has colorbond roofing.

On 0.2 kms 9010 ALBION TOWN - Haddrill House 1835 is still on this private site. Family members lived in the last of the brick buildings for 140 years (photo available). Labourers could be hired at Albion town and there was a wheelwright-(Walter Slee).

Continue for 1 km past Black Swan Winery, Forest Rd and Douglas Rd. At George St where Ugly Ducklings Wines is on the corner - turn left:

0.3 kms down 171 George st is the property on the right – original grant was SPRINGVALE then more land was purchased for "Cossington farm" by Edward Pomeroy Barrett Lennard and developed further by his descendants. House is above St Leonards brook. (There is a watercolor of a rebuilt homestead dated 1841). Area was known as St Leonards. Continue down 0.4 kms and turn right into Edward St which leads to West Swan Rd. Continue to traffic lights on Reid Hwy and crossover.

On the left - SANDALFORD WINES The company traces its origins back to 1840 when John Septimus Roe, the first Surveyor-General of the Swan River colony was granted 1250 acres on the banks of the Swan River by Queen Victoria in recognition of his services to the colony. In the same year he planted the first vines at his property which he named Sandalford after an estate owned by his family. However winemaking only became a commercial venture at Sandalford after World War 2.

Additional Information:

ALL SAINTS CHURCH 1841: This beautiful acre of land was given to the Church of England by Irwin and Mackie. Governor Stirling camped nearby and conceived the Swan River Colony from those lofty river banks when he saw the plain covered with magnificent red gums stretching to the eastern hills. He described the local scenery "as beautiful as anything of the kind I had ever witnessed". It remains a beautiful, peaceful area. The choice of this site for the church may also have been governed by the fact that 2 fords in the river were soon in use – one that linked Millendon (George Moore's grant) to Henley Park and another known as McDermott's ford on the Baskerville estate to the north. The church built by Richard Edwards was originally mud brick and shingles (thatch had proved a dangerous fire hazard).

NOONGAR ABORIGINAL PEOPLE:

The traditional land owners the Whadjuk Noongar aboriginal people of the Whadjuk tribe have inhabited the region for over 40,000 years. The cross and plaque at All Saints commemorates their memory . The plaque was dedicated in 1993; the United Nations Year of the World's Indigenous Peoples. According to Noongar beliefs, a Dreamtime Serpent, The Wagyl, once travelled across the country, carving out the Swan Valley and the Swan River and still lives deep within the Swan River today.