

Discover TARADALE

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MECHANICS INSTITUTE



TARADALE HALL



QUARTZ BATTERY



TARADALE MINERAL SPRINGS RESERVE



TARADALE VIADUCT



TARADALE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Supported by a

 Mount Alexander Shire Council
 community grant

A project of Taradale Community Forum Inc
 Design & Illustration by Lou Endicott

Taradale is on lands of the Jaara Jaara people as members of the Dja Dja Wurrung community. We acknowledge them as traditional custodians of the land and waters and pay our respects to their elders, past and present and future.

To discover more of Taradale visit
www.taradale.vic.au



KEY

- | | |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Mechanics Institute (i) | 6. Taradale Viaduct (i) |
| 2. Former Taradale Post Office (i) | 7. Barkly Park |
| 3. Mineral Springs Reserve (i) | 8. Railway Station (i) |
| 4. Taradale Hall (i) | 9. King Billy Bridge |
| 5. Taradale Primary School (i) | 10. Quartz Battery |
-
- HISTORIC FORMER TARADALE BUILDINGS**
- | | |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| H1 Pattersons Corner (i) | H3 Dorman's Store and Bakery (i) |
| H2 Law and Order Precinct (i) | H4 Commercial Hotel (i) |
- (i) Historical information board at this location
- YOU ARE HERE

TARADALE
 CULTURE • COUNTRY

approx. 200 m
 (note: map not to exact scale)

A Tour of Taradale

Welcome to Historic Taradale

EARLY BUILDINGS IN HIGH STREET

High Street Taradale was a busy trading precinct in the Gold Rush era. Early photographs such as at **Pattersons Corner (H1) (i)** show many two storey shops and merchants. Buildings now demolished include: **Berry's Beehive Store (1864)** on the corner of Roderick St. Next door was the weatherboard **Church of Christ**. It accommodated 200 people, closed in 1929 and was later demolished. **St Paul's Presbyterian Church (1865)** seated 400 people. The **Faraday Street Law and Order Precinct (H2) (i)** included the Police Station (later the Water Bailiff's house), the Court House and the Solicitor's House. This became the Mining Registrar's House. **Dormans Store and Bakery (H3) (i)** sold everything from work tools to jewellery, homewares, stationery and fresh produce. It was operated from 1906-1954 by a total of ten members of the Dorman family plus others. **The Freemasons Hotel (c1860)** was on the corner of Jackson St. It became derelict and was demolished in the 1970's. **The National Bank** operated from 1859-1922. In later years it became part residence. It burned down in 1991. **The Commercial Hotel (H4) (i)** was a busy Cobb and Co change station. Cobb and Co boasted a more comfortable ride than the opposition and took half the time but cost a month's wage. A groom had to prepare five horses for each of the four coaches daily.

Note: H1 – H4 denote historic former buildings

1. MECHANICS INSTITUTE (i)

Mechanics Institutes were established across Victoria for the education and recreation of tradesmen. Upon opening in 1862 the current building was known as the Taradale Athenaeum. The words Library and Reading Room were visible in the early photos of the frosted glass windows. By 1882 over 3700 people visited the Mechanics Institute annually. In later years it had other uses such as a polling booth, craft shop, venue for card games, meetings and a workshop. It survived fire in 1927 and was repaired after a motor vehicle impact 1989. The Taradale Historical Group Inc has been located at the Mechanics Institute since 1992. The building was fully restored in 2011.

2. FORMER TARADALE POST OFFICE (i)

The Taradale Post and Telegraph Office was built c1861 to accommodate the rapidly-growing communications needs of the Town. By 1870 it was handling 39,000 letters and 17,500 newspapers a year. With this volume of mail it had to move opposite to a two storey bank building (now demolished) until the 1920's, when it reverted back to its original small building, now 120 High St. Note the well-worn stone step on this virtually unchanged building.

3. TARADALE MINERAL SPRINGS RESERVE

The Mineral Springs Reserve, on Back Creek, is one of Taradale's greatest assets. Gazetted in 1888, it features secluded, leafy areas combined with beautiful open spaces, and a mineral water pump with sodium magnesium bicarbonate water. The Reserve provides toilet facilities, a free, undercover barbecue area and seating throughout the park. The Taradale War Memorial is also located here. A creatively designed children's playground was constructed in 2016 and is a major attraction for local and visiting families. A prominent display board near the pavilion shows the main walking tracks in and around Taradale.

4. TARADALE HALL (i)

The original Oddfellows Hall was built in 1860 with a front door and two windows. Later, as it became a centre of social activities, the building was altered to increase floor space. In 1926 The Golden Age Hotel next door was destroyed by fire causing damage to the Hall. The official 'Switching On' ceremony of electricity in Taradale was at the Hall on June 3rd, 1950. This public building is still serving the community well and has been upgraded in recent years.

5. TARADALE PRIMARY SCHOOL (i)

The school opened in 1855 with 27 students as a National School built at a cost of £450. It has operated continuously since, making it one of the oldest schools in Victoria. In 1864 the school was assigned its number, 614. In 1874 the current main building was constructed by the Department of Education to accommodate an increase in students from mining families. Enrolments peaked at 205 in 1877. During this period children as young as two years and eight months old were enrolled. From 1875, night classes were held for male students aged 12-25; predominantly miners. Enrolments fluctuated through the 20th century. Recent years have seen a surge in enrolments with many new families moving to Taradale.

6. TARADALE RAILWAY VIADUCT (i)

This imposing structure, listed on the Victorian Heritage Register, was constructed between 1858-1862. It rises 36 m above Back Creek and is 198 m long. Pay disputes and strikes and even a march to Woodend in 1861 marked worker dissatisfaction and at least four men died during construction. In May 1933, framed steel trusses were erected to reduce the stress on girders by the heavier locomotives. Workmen decorated the viaduct with festooned arches for the first train to travel through while twelve hundred people attended and celebrated the opening in October 1862.

7. BARKLY PARK

Barkly Park is situated to the east of Taradale Viaduct. Originally comprising 108.5 acres (44 ha) annexed from the survey paddock, it was reserved for public purposes in January, 1858 and gazetted as a park in October, 1861. In approximately 1935 the Park was reduced to 38 acres (15 ha) and a nine-hole golf course was constructed. The Taradale Golf Club hosted regular matches and an annual championship, the last of which was held in 1958. Two 'Royal Oaks' were planted in the Park in 1863.

8. RAILWAY STATION (i)

The line from Kyneton to Bendigo was opened for passengers in October 1862 and for goods in March 1863. The bluestone buildings consist of an office, waiting room and a two-storey residence. The goods shed is of unique design with fine details. The ornate verandah was demolished in the 1960's despite local objections. Taradale Station is a substantially intact example of an early high-standard Victorian Railways building. It is now privately leased.

9. KING BILLY BRIDGE

At the end of Wickham Street, leading to Hoods Track you will find King Billy Bridge. The bridge was constructed c 1880 and was originally the site of the Achilles Gully Footbridge. It was restored in 1996 by volunteers from the Taradale and District Walking and Landcare Group.

10. QUARTZ BATTERY

The corrugated iron shelter belies the powerful equipment inside. The Taradale Quartz Battery was established in 1932, being works moved from their original site in Maldon for the Proteus Gold Mining Company (Picken and Dorman's North Phoenix Mine). The equipment was designed to crush four tonnes of ore per shift and was closed in 1957. A viewing point at the rear allows the crushing equipment to be seen.

EARLY YEARS

Taradale is a small town in Central Victoria nestled in a valley on Back Creek close to its junction with the Coliban River. Major natural attractions include stunning views across hills and valleys, walks on historic designated tracks and an abundance of seasonal wildflowers. The traditional custodians are the Dja Dja Wurrung people. The first non-indigenous people established the Town in the 1840's. The Town was named after the home of geologist Sir Roderick Murchison, Tarradale House in Scotland. On 8th August 1864 Taradale was proclaimed a Borough.

THE GOLD RUSH

Gold was discovered in Victoria in 1850. In 1851 the Victorian Government offered a reward of 200 pounds to anyone finding gold within 200 miles of Melbourne. This led miners to explore Central Victoria. The Gold Rush was to last until the late 1860's. At its peak it is estimated to have attracted an average of 6,000 diggers a week from all over the world to Victoria. The journey from Melbourne to the goldfields was not easy for many after three months at sea. The paths they took were often the same ones that indigenous Victorians had taken for millennia and it was only with indigenous help that some were able to make it to their destinations. "After great difficulty we were happily enabled to complete a bargain with two of the natives, Djadjawurrung guides, to put us upon a track that would lead us to Forest Creek. For this piece of service we would almost have given all the gold we had." (John Sherer, The Gold Finder of Australia, 1853)

A PERIOD OF GROWTH

Taradale grew as the goldfields grew. Primary industry developed hand-in-hand with mining as the rapidly-growing population needed an abundance of food and supplies. Taradale's infrastructure developed quickly. The Taradale Post Office opened on 1st March 1856. The original Mechanics Institute opened in 1860. Taradale Primary School opened in 1855, while the Courthouse was built in 1856 and Taradale Hall in 1860. Taradale's greatest landmark, the Railway Viaduct over Back Creek was constructed between 1858 and 1862. By the 1890's Taradale boasted 23 hotels and 40 liquor licences servicing the 2,000 Europeans and 3,000 Chinese in the Town. High Street was bustling with the merchants needed to supply building materials, explosives, victuals, fodder, food and more.

20TH CENTURY CHANGE

As gold petered out, so did the population. Much of Taradale's streetscape was removed in the 1930's. Two storey buildings were demolished for bricks and iron to use in other parts of Victoria. In 2008 the Calder Freeway bypassed Taradale. Some lamented the loss of passing trade, but the opening of the freeway allowed Taradale to thrive in its own right. Taradale now has a population of 500 and offers a busy General Store/Fuel Station/Post Office plus wine, coffee and art outlets. Taradale has recently undergone streetscape improvements and tree planting as part of a Mount Alexander Shire Council upgrade. Welcome to Taradale. We acknowledge the traditional owners, the Dja Dja Wurrung people and we recognize and appreciate the work of our forebears in building the Town we have and the country we share.

(i) Historical information board at this location



This map has been created in memory of Olive May Penno 16.05.1928 – 04.08.2020

