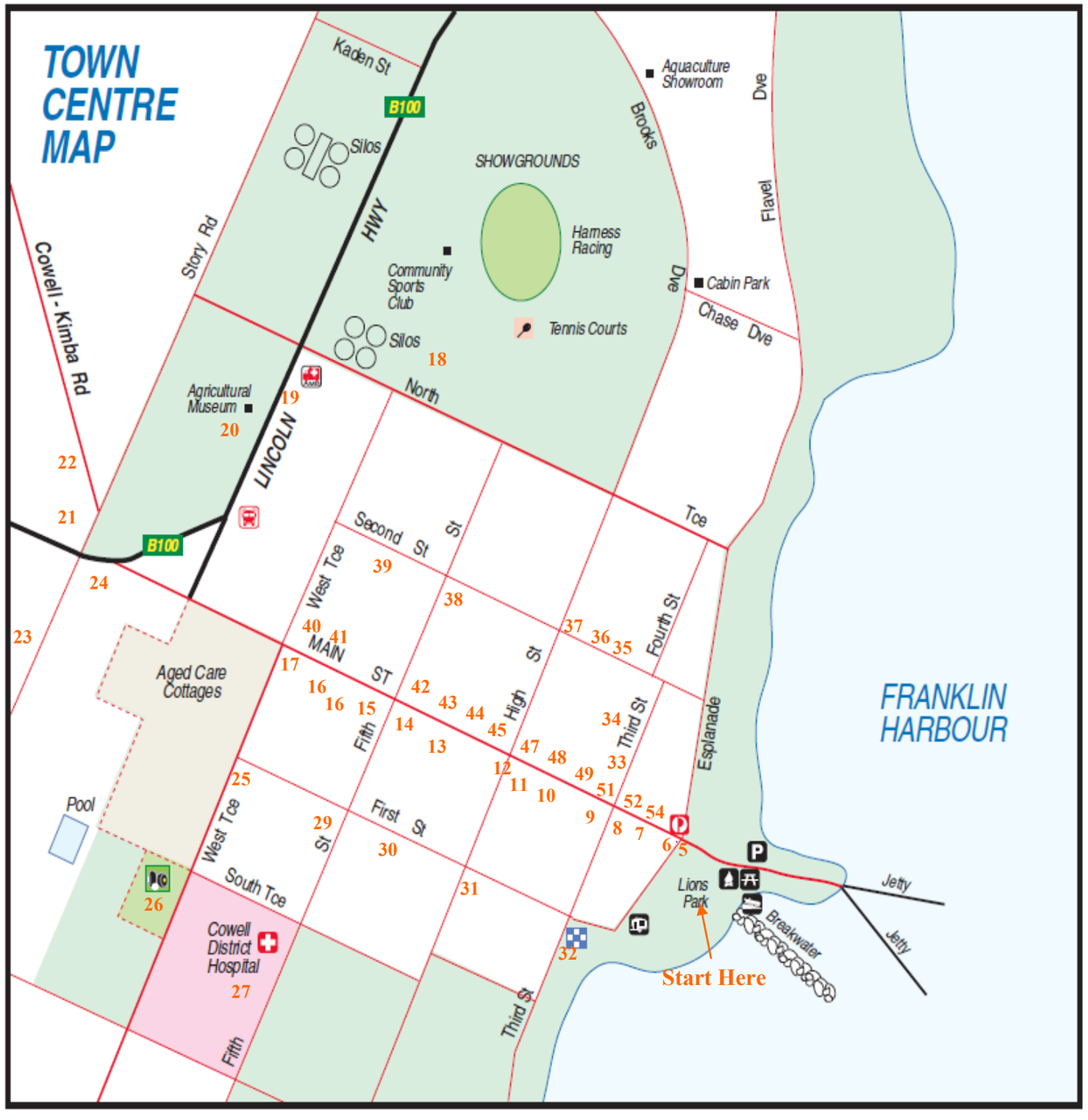
COWELL TOWNSHIP HISTORICAL WALK



BRIEF HISTORY OF COWELL & FRANKLIN HARBOUR

The first recorded sighting of this area was in 1802, when Captain Matthew Flinders reported a large lagoon visible from the masthead of the "Investigator". The "Lagoon" was named Franklin Harbour by Governor Gawler in 1840, after the eminent explorer and Tasmanian Governor Sir John Franklin, who as a young man had been a midship-man on the "Investigator".

Although first settled in 1853, the township itself was not given its present name until 1880, when Governor Jervois named it Cowell, after Sir John Cowell, a brilliant Eng-lish Army Engineer. Until that time it had been known as Lake Flinders, another name conferred by Governor Gawler in 1840.

We would like to acknowledge Barbara Schultz for her contribution towards this Historical Walk

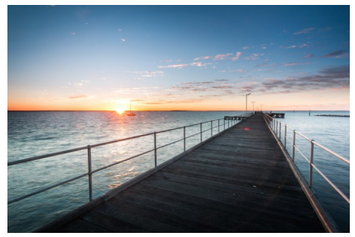
We suggest you start your walk at the Lions Park/Foreshore Area

1. LIONS PARK
Prior to building the first Jetty, this area was known as the "Landing Place". After 1888, it was controlled by Council, who leased land fronting the jetty-truck rail line to agents of wheat buying companies for their stacks, good sheds for wool storage and to hold incoming merchandise until delivery to local stores and outlying districts.
The current park was established by the Lions Club of Cowell and is well maintained by the Council. There are barbecues, shelters, large play area for the children, public toilets and a spacious lawn area which makes the park a popular amenity for residents and visitors.

2. SKATE PARK
Built in 2016, this was a result of some very successful fundraising and hard work by a group of mothers who formed the Cowell Skate Park Committee. A generous donation by Variety the Children's Charity meant this project could be as significant as what you can see today.

3. BEACON
The beacon adjacent to the playground was formerly situated on the end of the jetty.

4. JETTY
Built in 1882 the Government was not interested in upgrading the facilities, so on the formation of the District Council of Franklin Harbour in 1888, tolls on cargo were introduced to finance further upgrades. In 1901 the sea end of the jetty was widened by 200 feet and extended by 300 feet in 1904. The jetty became a very important shipping port. From 1908 the Steam Ship "Rupara" with her magnificently appointed public rooms and accommodation for passengers, called at Pt Lincoln, Tumby Bay, Cowell & Wallaroo, providing a five day cruise called "The Gulf Trip". The last passenger vessel to call at Cowell was the "Morialta" in the mid 1950's.



5. WAR MEMORIAL / GUN
The War Memorial was originally erected near the institute, and unveiled 27 May 1920. It was relocated here in 1981.
The Gun was placed here in 1981. It is a BOFA (1942), primarily an anti-aircraft gun used on ships and land based.

6. FRANKLIN HARBOUR HOTEL (1 Main Street)
The single storey was built in 1881. Mr Edward Speed bought the Hotel in 1897 and a second storey was completed in 1907. Some of the first church services were held in the Hotel prior to the establishment of a church.

7. LANDMARK COWELL (7 Main Street)
This is one of the three shops built and owned by Edward W. Speed in the early 1900's. The site was originally Livestock Sale Yards which stretched from the hotel to the corner. The central shop in the block of shops was first occupied by a chemist, Jeweller & Photographer. The eastern shop was used by a tailor for several years. It has been Dalgety (South Australian Farmers Union) since 1927 (renamed currently to Landmark).

8. BUTCHER (9 Main Street)
This is also one of the three shops built and owned by Edward W. Speed in the early 1900's. Since 1910, it has been the butcher shop.

47. COMMERCIAL HOTEL (24 Main Street)
Built by Edward Speed in 1910. He also owned the Franklin Harbour Hotel, but with the expansion of the district, could see the need for a second Hotel

48. CHEMIST (20-22 Main Street)
Eastern shop was building in 1906, this was erected several years earlier than the adjoining shop. Occupied over the years by Saddler & Harness marker, Fruiterer & Confectioner, Butcher, Eyre Peninsula Tribune Office & printers, Agents for Stock Firm & Oil Company and Farm Machinery Parts
The Western building was building in 1910 and used as the Commercial Hotel Billiard Saloon, Mens Hairdressers & Tobacconist and later years for a variety of shops occupied these premises. In 2013 the pharmacy renovated to merge the two shops into one.

49. DELICATESSEN (18 Main Street)
Built in 1906 as a general store, in 1923 it became a delicatessen and has been so ever since.

50. OPPORTUNITY SHOP & FAMILY WORSHIP CENTRE (14-16 Main Street)
Built in 1905 as a general store and warehouse. In 1917 one side of the shop became a billiard saloon and hairdressing establishment.

51. ELDERS REAL ESTATE & HAIRDRESSERS (10-12 Main Street)
This building was constructed in 1909, it was originally four shops fronting Main Street, & another fronting Third Street. The Cowell branch of Elders (then Goldsborough Mort & Co Ltd) was the first branch on Eyre Peninsula. In 1963 it became Elders GM. There are now arches between shops and the building is disposed as two shops.

52. FRANKLIN HARBOUR INSTITUTE (8 Main Street)
The building was completed by December 1893 and has since been a significant part of the life of this community. The building has been used for: Council Office, Court Office, Social Functions, Theatrical/Musical Performances, and Sunday School & Church Services. By 1911 the original building was inadequate and it was decided to build a second storey. Today the Visitor Information Centre, Craft Shop and Art Group occupy the premises.

53. DISTRICT COUNCIL OF FRANKLIN HARBOUR COUNCIL CHAMBERS (6 Main Street)
In 1912 this was built for and used as a National Bank (banking chamber, strong room, manager's office and residence), by 1928 the commercial Bank was using these premises, in 1941 CWA Rest Rooms occupied the building, in 1946 Goldsborough Mort & Co Ltd and 1963 Elders GM. In 1985 it was purchased by Council and used as Council Chambers.

54. MUSEUM (4 Main Street)
The old Post & Telegraph Office and Post Masters residence was built in 1888. Since 2003 this building has belonged to the District Council of Franklin Harbour , it has been transformed into a Museum, take a look around for a trip back through time to see a wonderful display of the district's heritage.

55. POST OFFICE (2 Main Street)
Built in 1910, a telephone exchange was introduced with 5 subscribers in 1922, progressing to 200 lines, manually operated in 1967. At this time 10 staff were employed at the Post Office. The exchange went automatic in 1979. The Post Office became privately owned in 1998.

36. MANSE (8 Second Street)
Methodist Manse built in 1909, 29 Ministers and 6 Pastors and their families have lived in the Manse, the last leaving at the end of 1993, Now the Minister for this Parish lives in Cleve.

37. PRIVATE RESIDENCE (10 Second Street)
AR Ramsey's house, he was the owner/builder in 1907. Mr Ramsey was a part of a committee to secure a doctor for the district.

38. PRIVATE RESIDENCE (21 Second Street)
Built in 1910 as the home of David McKenzie, MLA. Mr McKenzie had represented the District of Flinders in the House of Assembly from 1899 to 1905. He was a past chairman of Council. He came to Franklin Harbour as it was known then, in 1860, as Oversee as "Wangaraleednie" Station. Later on he grew the first wheat ever harvested in the district. He imported the first reaper & windrower. For forty years between 1917 & 1969, this was the Doctor's Surgery & Residence.

39. 25 SECOND STREET
Old Council Chambers, built in 1896 by James Cleave. These chambers were used for 65 years until deemed inadequate. This site continued as a Council Works Depot until 1996.

40. PRIVATE RESIDENCE (50 Main Street)
First built in 1898 as a four bedroom house, it was enlarged in 1909 and considerably enlarged, the residents offered services as a mid-wife and conducted a Lying-In home.

41. NEWSAGENT (48 Main Street)
Built in the first decade of the 1900's by Mr AR Ramsey, the building has always served as a Newsagent. (in earlier years it also incorporated bakery, grocery, clothing, music, guns, hardware).
The family lived in the house next door (46 Main Street).

42. PRIVATE RESIDENCE (40 Main Street)
This was previously the ANZ Bank, built in 1908. It has been a private residence since 1996.

43. PRIVATE RESIDENCE (38 Main Street)
JJ Stephens Butcher Shops built in 1898, the butchering business continued until 1927, it was then occupied by variously as an electrical shop, chemist, hairdressing, haberdashery and art and craft shop.

44. COWELL COLLECTIONS (30 Main Street)
Built in the early 1900's the small cottage was sold to William Stocker in 1909 who extended it and added another three shops. The western shop became a fruit shop, the middle shop was used by a photographer and the eastern shop was a general ironmongery business. In 1966 the three shops were purchased by Cyril and Joyce Cornelius who used all three as a grocery/goods store until they moved the store to the McFarlane Building (now IGA).

45. LAUNDROMAT (28 Main Street)
This building has been used previously as a Fish Café, Car showroom, Country Furniture Store, Jade Display & Shop.

46. 26 MAIN STREET
Built around an earlier wood/iron shed in1935. At this time the Highway from Port Lincoln to Whyalla came into the Main Street and turned at High Street. This building continued as a garage until 2002. Since it has been used as Kitchen Cabinet makers, jade sales, patchwork/ country décor shop, real estate agent. It is currently used as office space, mechanic and tyre fitting.
Built by Edward Speed in 1910. He also owned the Franklin Harbour Hotel, but with the expansion of the district, could see the need for a second Hotel.

9. IGA SUPERMARKET (11-13 Main Street)
Began as McFarlane Bros in 1898 as General Storekeepers, who in 1911 advertised "everything from a needle to an anchor". All that remains of the original building is a section of stone wall on Third Street and the pressed tin ceiling. The store had several extensions and refurbishments, and functioned as a department store. This business continued in the McFarlane Family for 98 years, the last family operating a supermarket The McFarlanes Store operated a lamson rapid-wire service with a network of wires used to centralize transitions. It looked like a "flying fox" – linking one of the shop counters to the mezzanine office where the one cashier dealt with the sale. The assistant would send the docket and payment on the flying fox, then wrap your purchase in brown paper, and back would come the docket and change.

10. SCHULTZ TWO STOREY (21-25 Main Street)
Built in the early 1900's by Mr John Story Snr on the site of an iron building, which was a flour store and the first building in Cowell. It was let as apartments until the 1930's. It is now a residence upstairs and flats downstairs.

11. BAKERY (27 Main Street)
Built in the early 1900's by Mr John Story Snr. Originally being a Butcher Shop, in 1905 it became the Bank of Adelaide and then the Bakery in 1922.

12. BLACK STUMP
The black stump was a New Year's prank in 1972. The original stump was placed between the two hotels with a sign "Best pub this side of the black stump", and was later burnt. It was replaced by this existing stump.

13. PRIVATE RESIDENCE (37 Main Street)
Cowell School occurred in the western side of this building from 1908 – 1912.

14. FINANCE MANAGERS RESIDENCE (39 Main Street)
Purchased by District Council of Franklin Harbour in 1974 after increasing sophistication of working conditions was noted, Council made a decision to purchase the residence for its Clerk.

15. 41 MAIN STREET
Reuben Deer's Shops, constructed in 1909, occupied until early 1920's by general stores (farming & building supplies, household furnishings). With wider use of cars/mechanics, garage businesses became occupiers until 1970's. In the late 1950's this included a panel beater and spray painter. In the 1980's a diesel engineering firm established in these premises.

16. PRIVATE RESIDENCE (45 Main Street)
Mrs Beinke's Lying-In Home, building in 1917. Mrs Mary Beinke, the midwife, is known to have delivered babies at her home in 1917. But generally it is believed that it operated as a place for country women awaiting births.
Although there was a hospital from 1910, the practice of Midwives and Lying-In Homes continued until the early 1920's.

17. STAR MOTORS (49 Main Street)
Blacksmith & Wheelwright shop, business on this site began in 1896 in a wood/iron shed. It was an agricultural machine & ironworks factory and produced GEO. A Nicholson's Stump Jump Plough (see plough at Agriculture Museum) & PJW Gates. By 1908 Rehn & Turner were constructing & refurbishing buggies, sulkies & wagons along with manufacture of iron gates & cultivator ploughs. Eventually the old building was replaced by a stone building and in 1912 with the advent of motor cars, a garage and Clutterbucks agent began on Main Street frontage. For a period since then the rear area was an engineering workshop. Today the business is a mechanic and fuel supplier.

18. SILOS & SPORTS COMPLEX
The first silo was built in 1961.
The opening of the specially constructed gates at the Pioneer Memorial Oval was held in 1970 and the Complex/Change rooms built in approximately 1964.
6 Tennis courts, doubling as 5 Netball courts were constructed in 1985.
There have been ongoing improvements to this area.

19. AMBULANCE STATION
This was previously the Caltex Service Station. It became the St. John Ambulance Station in 1985.

20. AGRICULTURAL MUSEUM (Lincoln Highway)
Established in 1972. This museum gives a peek into the past farming practices of this district. Of special interest is the Ruston Proctor Steam Tractor donated by Les Hudson, restored by Ross Guthleben.

21. PRIVATE RESIDENCE (Cnr Lincoln Highway & Kimba Road)
In 1908 Mr John Story Snr had this building erected as a Chaff Mill. Haystacks of sheaved hay were built at the rear of the building and a miniature railway line ran from the stack to the main door. The hay to be chaffed was transported to the cutter on a small rail truck. The building has now been renovated as a private dwelling.

22. PRIVATE RESIDENCE (1 Kimba Road)
Built in 1908 for John Story (mill owner) as his residence, it is an eight room bungalow. Note the large underground tank for water storage outside, it had a catchpit for mud from road run-off. Following his death in 1916, his wife Mary used he skills to nurse convalescents in her home.

23. COWELL AREA SCHOOL (42 Story Road)
Due to the rapid expansion of the district it became necessary to provide more space for increased student enrolments, in 1916 SA education Department erected a building consisting of two asbestos rooms, Higher Primary work began in 1922 but was discontinued the next year, then was re-started in 1930 and increased support for the extra classes led to the school being declared a Higher Primary school. By 1936 subject choice had increased which led to three stone rooms being built, these premises were opened by His Excellency the Governor, Sir Winston Dugan on 5 April 1937.
The Headmasters Residence was built in 1912 (46 Story Road).

24. LUTHERAN CHURCH (Cnr Lincoln Highway & Story Road)
This Church was opened in 1968. Whilst this church does not have a lot of history behind it, the bell however does. It was the first bell to be used in a Lutheran Church in Australia, imported from Germany in 1839. In 1943 it hung in a gum tree at Tanunda to serve their congregation. In 1878 it served a mission church at Lake Killalpaninna (Coopers Creek area). In 1925 it served the Cleve congregation until 1966 when the building was sold to the Cowell Christian Assembly and has since hung in its present position since 1968.

25. PRIVATE RESIDENCE (31 First Street)
Mrs Anna Grund's Lying-In Home, built in 1912 by the owner FL Grund. His wife was a mid-wife until 1920 and the front rooms of the home were a maternity home.
Surgery & Home of Doctor RO Fox (1930's), at that time the "waiting room" was a verandah screened with trellis. Later in the day, the dispensed medicines were left in paper bags to be collected from the bench you'd earlier waited on.

26. BOWLS CLUB
The Club was formed in 1956 and the Clubhouse opened in 1961.

27. HOSPITAL (Fifth Street)
County Jervois Hospital built in 1911. The nurses' cottage was built in 1922, with a Public Ward being added in 1928 with money left in the will of the late Rosina Ware (first store keeper in Cowell). Electricity was connected by Cowell Electric Supply in 1929. The name was changed to Cowell District Hospital in 1937 and in the 1940's many farmers brought in loads of stumps to replenish the hospital's supplies, which was credited to their accounts. In 1973 further extensions and upgrading down South Terrace were completed. Extensions and upgrades have continued since to provide the district with the facility we now have.
The first hospital in the district was built in the early 1900's on the Esplanade, for women and children only. This has since been demolished.

28. ST HUGHES ANGLICAN CHURCH (10 Fifth Street)
Built in 1909, Anglican Ministers were the first to minister to the spiritual needs of early settlers, the rear extension was added in 1960.

29. FRANKLIN HARBOUR MASONIC LODGE NO. 56 S.A.C. (23 First Street)
The lodge was consecrated in 1909, this building was erected in 1912
The building was sold in 2002.

30. GOSPEL HALL (17 First Street)
This building was originally the Baptist Church from 1913 – 1925.
It was then the Christ Lutheran Church 1933 – 1966, and then a decision was made to build a larger church.
It has since been used as the Gospel Hall.

31. PRIVATE RESIDENCE (11 High Street, Cnr First Street)
George Nicolson's home, built in 1908 after Mr Nicolson sold his blacksmithing business.

32. POLICE STATION (15 Third Street)
Built in 1911 this was not the first Police Station, but is still presently used as a Police Station and dwelling. The first station was built in 1893 on a block on the Esplanade by Mounted Constable McEwen (now demolished).

33. CURTIS' HOLIDAY RENTAL (6 Third Street)
W.A Crabb's Boarding House operated from 1908. Mrs Janet Clark's Boarding House operated around 1918. This building is currently used as a holiday house.

34. PRIVATE RESIDENCE (4 Third Street)
Built in 1906 as a Coffee Palace, it comprises of 13 rooms. Built by AR Ramsey, his wife ME Ramsey was a Mid-Wife as well as a Boarding House it was a Lying-In Home until 1909. It continued as a boarding house changing owners until it was used as a private residence.

35. UNITING CHURCH (6 Second Street)
Formerly Methodist, opened in 1909. In 1922, the Kindergarten Hall was added at the rear of the church with entrance porch on Western Side. A stained glass window in Memory of AR & ME Ramsey was unveiled in 1932.