



Lake Cargelligo

Lake Foreshore Historical Tour

Historical Signs & Stories of Interest
along the Lake's Foreshore



Self-Guided Tour with Maps



Lake Cargelligo Lake Foreshore Historical Tour

Distance: 5.6 Km **Walking Time:** 1hr + 10min **Bike ride Time:** 17min

Commence your tour at the Crn of Narrandera Street & Lake Street near Frog's Hollow Campground (see attached maps)

1 Ochre Pits Sign

The name Lake Cargelligo is a variation of "Cudjallagong" which in the Wiradjuri language means 'Lake'. The area is rich in aboriginal history as the Wiradjuri tribe gathered on the banks of the lake for generation prior to it being discovered by Oxley in 1817.

The Lake was used by the aboriginal people for centuries as meeting places and sources of food and water. Many aboriginal artefacts have been found on the lake foreshores. Ochre from pits was used by the local indigenous population to decorate themselves during corroborees, for aboriginal painting, and for decorating didgeridoos which were a valuable trading commodity.

An aboriginal quarry containing rich yellow and red ochres can still be found at an area on the lake's edge at Frog's Hollow.



Ochre pits can still be found on the lake's edge at Frog's Hollow

2 Sawyer Pit Sign

The village of Lake Cargelligo stands on part of the original Wooyeo Station. The Sawyer's Pit was used for sawing timber logs for the Wooyeo Woolshed which was commissioned in 1873. It was to be located where the current hospital now stands, but in a matter of days a burr cutters wife Mrs Foster discovered gold. The town was then inundated with prospectors and its perimeter grew.

Realising the original site of the woolshed would be within the expanding town limits, the woolshed was erected on its current location (about 5 km out on the Euabalong Road).



3 Lake Cargelligo Water Storage System Sign

In 1902 the main Lake, which use to go some 24 miles to Naradhan, was shortened with a bank and channels were put between the three wetlands and lakes in the system to improve connection.

A regulator was put at the inlet and outlet. This allowed for both the incoming water and the outgoing water to be regulated. For over 100 years the Lake Cargelligo Wetland & Lake system has filtered the water for the Lachlan, been a bird and fish breeding habitat and provided water for downstream, even during drought.



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4 Gold Stamping Sign

On the 13th of April 1873 Mrs Charlotte Foster, a burr cutters wife, discovered gold in Lake Cargelligo while attending to the call of nature. This led to the formation of Fosters Reef Gold Mining Company.

The mine was located at the intersection of Foster and Reef streets and the deepest shaft was 200 feet with drives of 150 feet. Crushing commenced on January 15 1877. Water in the underground shafts and poor veins of gold eventually stopped the mining venture.

Old mine shafts still remain beneath several shops and homes in the town.



5 Sail & Powerboat Club & Sign

After a public meeting on the 17th Dec 1951, the Lake Cargelligo Sailing Club was formed. The club leased the site of the present boatshed and volunteer workers soon had a building erected.

Early boats included mainly V.Js, a 12 foot skiff, VS's, moths and a quick cat. As interest in powerboats and water skiing was growing the club became the Lake Cargelligo Sail and Power Boat Club on March 30 1958.

In 1966 Lake Cargelligo man Harold Miller burst into world prominence when he water skied on his bare feet for one hour nine seconds and set a world endurance record. The club boasts many champions over the years. Renovations were completed in 1981 and the second stage in 1991.



6 Railway Water Pump Sign

The Water was very important in the early days of railway. Steam trains were used until the late 1960s. A train can burn water at the rate of 50 gallons a minute generally had a 20,000 gallon tank. The elevated water tank used by trains at Lake Cargelligo is still standing today. The original water supply came from the lake. The suction pipe of 152mm bore and 30.4 metre long was connected to a Tangye geared type water pump 146mm bore x 229mm stroke. It delivered 19,350 litres of water an hour when working at 50rpm. The 101mm bore delivery pipe was 1.207km long and passed along Johnson Street to the 90kl single tier tank on a steel stand apposite the coal stage.

In 1968 the water facilities were handed over to the Lachlan Shire Council, who in turn gave the pump house the Lake Cargelligo Historical Society. It was removed in February 1971. The pumping plan was written off on August 20, 1972 and is on display in the grounds of the local historical museum.



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7 Liberty Park & Sign

On the 2nd of August 1916 relatives and friends of the Lake Cargelligo servicemen gathered to plant 51 trees dedicated to these soldiers.

In 1919 the first Anzac Service was held in Liberty Park. On the same day the Rotunda, built by the Oddfellows Lodge in memory of their fallen comrades, was handed to the shire council and local Progress Association.

The monument entrance gateway to Liberty Park was erected by Legacy in 2003. A second rotunda (opposite the tourist information centre) was built by Lake Cargelligo Rotary Club in 2003 with volunteer labour.



8 Deadman's Point - "How it got its name" Sign

The story goes that two men arrived in town with no money, no food or swags, just the clothes they were wearing.

After viewing the lake they decided to try and catch some fish and made a fishing line using discarded string they found and a stick.

They fished at the edge of the lake for some time without success and decided they would have a better chance of catching fish from deeper water.

They found some empty kerosene tins and timber saplings and made a paddling raft which they paddled into deeper water.

After some time a heavy wind blew up and the men lost their grip on the raft as the wind tipped them off their raft and blew it away from them.

One of the men couldn't swim and this mate tried to keep him afloat. After some time the swimmer dragged him friend to shore but unfortunately he had drowned.

The survivor walked into town and found the police and told them that there was a dead man "around there". The police asked where and the reply was "there is a lying on the point". Thus it was thereafter known as Deadman's Point.



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While you are at Deadman's Point you will also see 2 other signs of interest:

9 The Wool Wash & Wooyeo Woolshed Sign

The remains of the Wool Wash are evident from Deadman's Point or from a boat.

The Wool Wash was used in the late 1800's and early 1900's to wash the sheep before they were shorn by blade shearers in the Wooyeo woolshed.

The sheep were herded into a pen situated high above the water. When pushed into the water from this height, the sheep were guaranteed to become completely submerged to ensure they were washed thoroughly. The sheep then swam approximately 30 meters to the shore into a cobble-stoned draining pen to dry, before being walked to the Wooyeo Woolshed.

The wool was transferred by horse and wagon to the nearest railhead at Whitton (approximately 200km away).

The wool wash was located near the existing slaughter yards and the property owned by the Stenhouse family is still known as "Wool Wash".

The process evolved to warm water, detergent and eventually became known as wool scouring, the first step in the wool processing industry.

About the Wooyeo Woolshed

The t-shaped 52 stand shearing shed was 300ft long and 30ft wide with a central board and a spacious wool room.

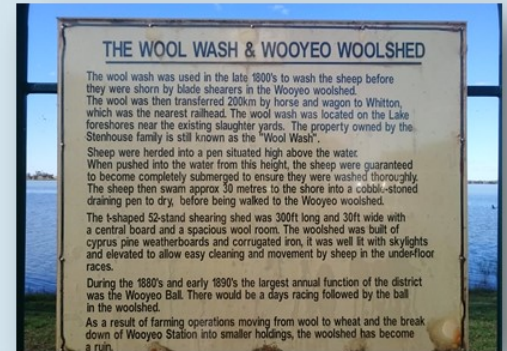
The woolshed was built of Cyprus pine weatherboards and corrugated iron. It was well lit with skylights and elevated to allow easy cleaning and movement by sheep in the under-floor races.

Every year there would be a day racing followed by the ball in the woolshed.

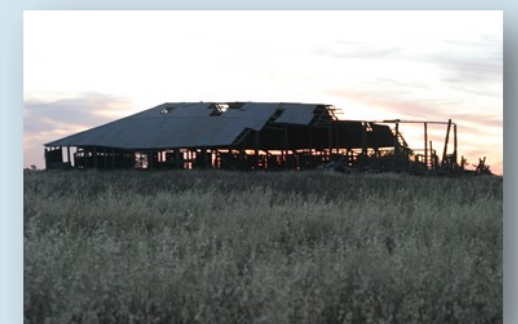
During the 1880's and early 1890's the largest annual function of the district was the Wooyeo Ball.

As a result of farming operations moving from wool to wheat and the breakdown of Wooyeo Station into smaller holdings, the woolshed has become a ruin.

The ruins are on private land approximately 8 Km from the centre of town on the Lachlan Valley Way/Euabalong Road.



The Wooyeo Woolshed ruins on the Lachlan Valley Way/Euabalong Road approximately 8km from the centre of the town of Lake Cargelligo

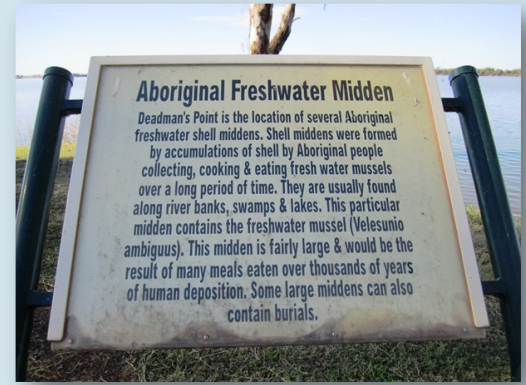


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10 The Aboriginal Freshwater Midden Sign

.Deadman's Point is the location of several Aboriginal freshwater shell middens. Shell middens were formed by accumulations of shell by Aboriginal people collecting, cooking and eating fresh water mussels over a long period of time.

They are usually found along river banks, swamps & lakes. This particular midden contains the fresh water mussel (*Velesunio ambiguus*). This midden is fairly large & would be the result of many meals eaten over thousands of years of human deposition. Some large middens can also contain burials.



Other stories of interest related to the Lake

Chinese Gardens

After the discovery of gold at Lake Cargelligo in 1873 the Chinese came to the district. Many were employed in ring barking and clearing timber, but some set up market gardens on what was to become known as Chinaman's Island. This 35 – 40 acre island one mile from town, ceased to exist when the embankments to contain the lake were completed in 1902.

One man however, known as Chinaman Charlie had a market garden on the river and continued to deliver vegetables door to door in horse and cart until 1945. The Chinese also had gardens on Booberoi Station not far from the homestead. Quince trees and asparagus plants can still be found in the area.



Quince tress & asparagus plants can still be found in the area

Levee Banks

All the work to construct the levee banks was done by hand, horse and dray. The project employed at least 300 local workers.

Between Curlew and the main lake, a large dam (levee bank) was put in across the mouth of an old swamp to prevent water escaping and spreading over a large area.

A similar thing was done on the eastern side of the main lake where a large dam (levee bank) was built that extended nearly half a mile. This prevents water escaping to what was known as Lake Maria and other large shallow depressions.

This allowed the reclamation of thousands of acres of previously marshy land and the establishment of simple irrigation farms.

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Open Air Dance Floor Hall at Robin Caruso Island

On Robinson Crusoe Island in the middle of the lake there used to be a dance floor and a pier for patrons. This was a popular venue for young people until it was rumoured that the dances were getting too "promiscuous" and the dance floor was mysteriously burnt down in approximately 1930.

The music was provided by local musicians using piano accordions and other mobile instruments.

Remnants of the jetty can still be seen in the water at Robinson Crusoe Island.



Robinson Crusoe Island

Maisie

In January 1921 the 35 foot boat "Maisie" arrived from Sydney by rail. Maisie, owned by Harry Aiken, was used to ferry people around the lake. It was also used to transfer revellers to the open air dance floor on Robinson Crusoe Island.

A trip on the MAISIE included a stop at Dan McInnes (Pillinger's) to buy grapes, then on to Joe Harpley's (Nilson's) where you could buy water melons, rock melons, tomatoes and cucumbers. Unfortunately the Maisie sank.



Maisie 1920's

Dam in Lake Creek

In about 1885 a dam 150 feet in length and 14 feet high was constructed by private enterprise in Lake Creek to retain water in the lake which used to dry out in periods of drought. Some parts of the dam can still be seen,

In 1888 a report of the practicability of storing water in the lake pointed out that it could be used for irrigation and distribution down the lower Lachlan. This work was undertaken in 1901 and completed in 1902. In 1913 the Water Conservation and Irrigation Commission assumed control of the Lake Cargelligo works. The present storage capacity of Lake Cargelligo Lake Curlew and Sheet of Water is 29,435 acre feet.

Channels

Under the supervision of Mr H Fleming work began on the Lake Cargelligo water conservation and irrigation scheme in 1901.

The plan was to cut a canal from the Lachlan River to the Sheet of Water, from there to Lake Curlew, then via McInnes' Basin to the main lake.

Lake Creek was also to be deepened to provide an outflow back to the river whenever water was needed down stream. The plan was completed with the exception of connecting McInnes' basin due to Mr McInnes' refusal to his land. The channel was cut around it.



Channel going from Curfew Water to Lake Cargelligo

Map 1.



Deadman's
Point

8

9

10

Map 2.

Lake Cargelligo

McInnes Street

McInnes Street

Uabba Street

Yelkin Street

Lachlan Street

SEE MAP 1 - Track to Signs 1 - 7