



Alstonville Plateau Historical Society hopes you enjoy your walk or drive around our village and that this brochure will answer any questions that may arise.

Originally called 'Duck Creek Mountain', Alstonville was part of many thousands of acres of impenetrable rainforest, extending from the north bank of the Richmond River to the Nightcap Range, between the Richmond and Tweed Rivers. To obtain access to Duck Creek Mountain it was necessary to travel by rowing boat from Ballina to where the Duck Creek Camp was situated – the camp for all who worked on the mountain. From this camp the early selectors had to carry on their backs everything they required – tools, equipment, food and temporary shelter – through the 'Big Scrub', famous for its wealth of great trees including the much sought-after cedar and hardwoods such as teak.

The area was first settled in 1865 by Andrew and Ellen Freeborn and Andrew's brother, Thomas. Andrew and Thomas came separately to Australia in 1855 from Belleek, County Fermanagh, in Ireland. They were following their brother, Alexander, who had migrated to Australia in 1850. The brothers settled first at Broughton Creek near Kiama. In May 1858 Andrew married Ellen Sharpe whose father later became the mayor of Kiama. In early 1865 the Freeborns moved to Ballina and Thomas explored the area known as the 'Big Scrub'. Thomas reported back to Andrew who went up the mountain to see for himself. Subsequently

the brothers walked to Casino and back to register their claim; both received their papers on 21 December 1865. Andrew was given Portion 1 of 60 acres and Thomas, Portion 2 of 100 acres. Within eighteen months other pioneers followed – including the Robertson, Graham, Newbon, Crawford, Elliott, Mellis, Brown, Moore, Cawley, Robb, Mullins, Cooke and Bulwinkel families – and Duck Creek Mountain village started to grow.

In June 1870 John Perry, a local storekeeper, requested the establishment of a post office as the nearest was at Ballina. The local residents asked that the post office be established at John Perry's store. In September 1872 a letter from Perry bore the address, 'Alstonville, Duck Creek'. This was the first reference to the name Alstonville. (Perry's wife's maiden name was Alston and he had called his property after her family.)

The post office was established on 1 October 1872 under the name of Duck Creek Mountain. John Perry was paid an allowance of ten pounds per annum for his postal duties. However, on 1 January 1873, the name of Duck Creek Mountain (population now 150) was changed to Alstonville to avoid confusion with another location of the same name.

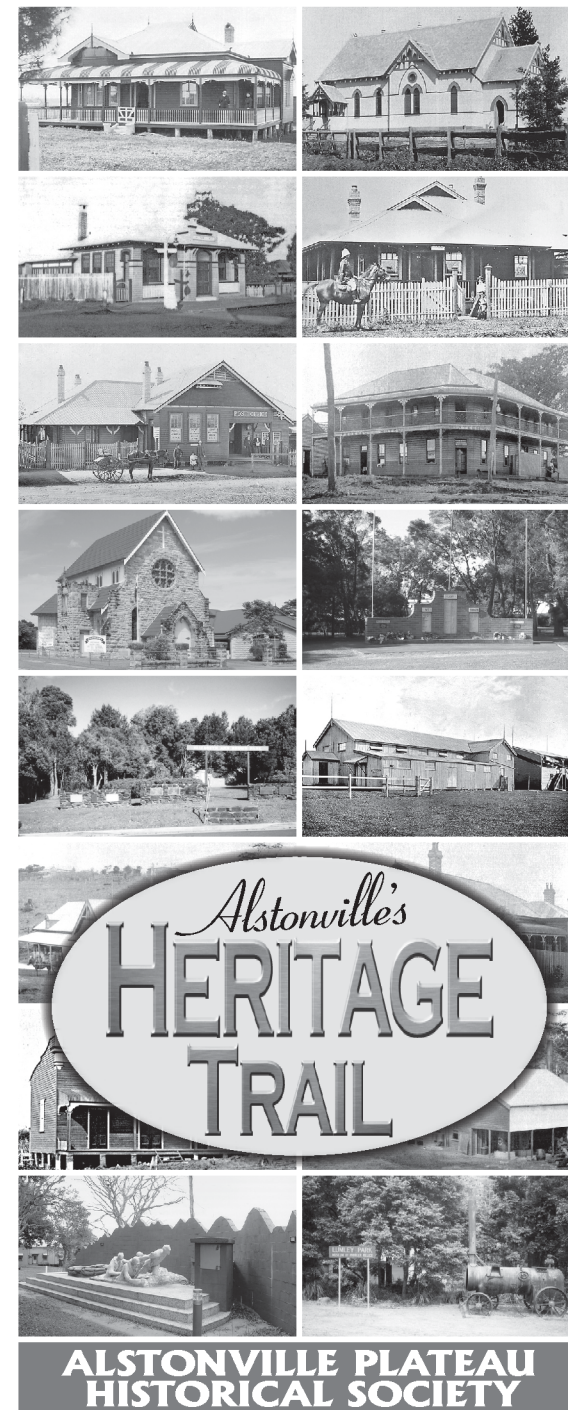
The settlement prospered with many farmers turning their hands to dairying and growing crops in the fertile soil; sugar cane, arrowroot, peanuts, peas, macadamia nuts, avocados, coffee and other tropical fruits. Shops and trades of all kinds were soon in business and sugar mills, butter factories, churches, hotels, community and sporting groups have all played their part in making Alstonville the thriving centre it is today.

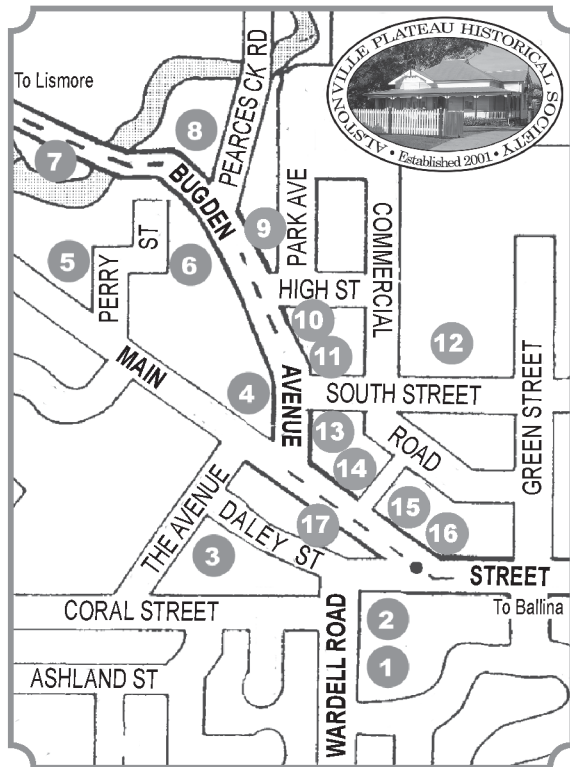
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Alstonville's Heritage Trail

1. Crawford House Museum

The house was built in 1910 by DC Connor & Son of Ballina for Ambrose Crawford, son of one of the first selectors, and is built on part of his father's original selection of 150 acres.

Named after his wife, Olive, 'Olivene' was the family home until 1982 when the family sold the house to Ballina Shire Council with the desire that it would be used for community purposes. This was done until 2003 when the house was offered to the Alstonville Plateau Historical Society for their headquarters and museum.

After restoration, Crawford House Museum was officially opened on 1 October 2004. The historical society opens the house on Fridays, 10 am until 4 pm, and Sundays, 1 pm until 4 pm. Other days by appointment.

2. Elizabeth Ann Brown Park

This land was resumed by Tintenbar Shire Council from the estate of the late Elizabeth Ann Brown who passed away in 1946. Daughter of Charles Bulwinkel, a noted pioneer of the early sugar industry in the area, she married Anthony James Brown, who purchased two allotments when four acres of the Crawford holding was subdivided in 1911, and this land now comprises the park.

In the 1980s the memorial plaques from the Alstonville Showground were moved to the park and the RSL now has Anzac and Armistice services here.

3. St Bartholomew's Anglican Church

The original wooden church was erected at Ocean View, on what is now the Bruxner Highway (Ballina Road) about sixty metres east of the Teven Road junction, and dedicated on 18 February 1896. On 18 October 1905 the church was relocated by bullock wagon to its present site in The Avenue, where it is currently used as an opportunity shop to raise money for Anglicare.

On 20 August 1913 Bishop Druitt laid the foundation stone of the present church on land purchased in 1909 and on 11 March 1915 the dedication of the new church took place. Stone for the church was quarried locally at Ansteys Quarry near Tregeagle and donated by the Anstey family. The stained glass windows are a feature.

The church is listed by the National Trust, the Australian Heritage Commission and Ballina Shire Council.

4. Uniting Church

This church is the third Methodist Church to be built on this site and was opened on 30 May 1909.

The church was designed by FJ Board, Lismore architect, who also supervised the construction carried out by Mr TG Jarman,

building contractor, and the furniture was supplied by Messrs Brown & Jolly, of Lismore. The building is lined with Wunderlich steel sheeting, the dado being of vertical rosewood boards.

A large stained glass window dedicated to the memory of early settlers, James Towner Snr and his wife, Mary, can be seen at the back of the church. The foundation stone was laid by Mrs William Crawford, as an inscription on the north-eastern side signifies.

In June 1977 the union of the Presbyterian, Methodist and Congregational Churches was effected and the three merging bodies became the Uniting Church in Australia.

The church bell, which was originally used by the Melbourne Sugar Company at its mill on Maguires Creek, was dedicated to the 'Glory of God' on 15 September 1894. The bell tower is the fourth one used to hang the bell which is now electronically controlled from the vestry.

5. Courthouse and Police Station

After many years of petitioning the local member, John Perry, by the local Progress Association, Alstonville eventually obtained its own police station. In October 1903 the work on the courthouse and police station was completed and an officer, Constable Dobie, was appointed.

The courthouse was not used until 1910 and in 1913 a telephone was installed – until that time the constable made use of a neighbour's telephone. The station was set on a large block of land, as the duties of the constable often involved impounding stray cattle and horses.

The courthouse closed in the 1960s and this section of the building reverted to a police residence, with the courtroom being used as a bedroom.

The building is listed by the National Trust, Australian Heritage Commission and Ballina Shire Council.

6. St Joseph's School and Convent

In 1919 a house in Perry Street belonging to the Ainsworth family was purchased with the aim of establishing a convent and school. Initially, classes were held in the old wooden church of St Lawrence O'Toole. In the 1920s an annexe was built which was used for boarders. In 1936 boarding was discontinued and the bedrooms converted to classrooms. The Sisters of St Joseph left the convent in 1965 and the teaching is now done by lay teachers. In 1955 a new brick church – Our Lady of the Rosary – was built and the timber church was moved to Lennox Head.

It is impossible to talk about St Joseph's without mentioning the 'Pudding Factory', also located in the church grounds. This was started in 1985 when Father McCarthy began making Christmas puddings to raise funds for the school. Now, Father Mac's Heavenly Puddings are sold throughout Australia and the money raised goes to numerous charities.

The convent is listed by the National Trust, Australian Heritage Commission and Ballina Shire Council.

7. The Old Butter Factory

The NSW Creamery Butter Company opened with due ceremony on 21 November 1900 before a gathering of about 600 people. The factory stood on 1½ acres of land purchased from Charles Bulwinkel and the most up-to-date machinery available was installed.

The factory was successful for a time but



The butter factory in 1909

got into financial difficulties towards the end of 1903. In 1904 a group of local farmers formed a new co-operative, 'Alstonville Co-operative Refrigerating and Carrying Company'.

In 1923 a brick building was built on to the front of the original structure.

The factory changed hands again in 1930 when it was amalgamated with Norco and finally closed in 1947. Since then the building has been used to manufacture caravans, as a peanut processing factory and is currently a furniture store.

The building is heritage listed by Ballina Shire Council.

8. Lumley Park

In 1901 it was originally called the Alstonville Recreation Reserve. In 1917 it was renamed after Councillor Clarence Lumley who had enlisted eighteen months previously and was killed in action.

In 1925 the Alstonville Bowling Club was opened in the park with one green. The bowling club now has other premises in Alstonville.

In 1930 a ladies croquet club was formed and in 1931 a clubhouse was erected and two lawns laid down in Lumley Park. The Governor of New South Wales, Sir Philip Game, officially opened the croquet lawns on 25 September 1931.

In 1934 Ambrose Crawford and friends pressured council and approximately three acres were set apart as a 'Preserve for Native Trees'. In 1970 the first permanent home for Richmond River Historical Society's collection of transport and light industry exhibits was opened in the park.

All that remains of the Recreational Reserve is the old croquet clubhouse and part of the lawn.

9. Former Presbyterian Church

The old church building was the third church built by the Presbyterians in 1939. It replaced a

previous wooden building erected on the same site in 1898.

In the 1990s the Presbyterians sold this building and it is now used by the Alstonville Dance Studio.

10. Tintenbar Shire Council Chambers

Originally built in 1908, the building was used as council chambers until 1977 when the shire amalgamated with Ballina. Over the years it has undergone many changes but inside the visitor can still see the original fire safes and the draughtsmen's benches. Until mid-2007 the building was home to Kolinda Gallery.

The building is Ballina Shire Council heritage listed.

11. Paddy Bugden Memorial

Paddy Bugden is the only Victoria Cross recipient on the NSW Far North Coast. He was awarded the medal for his bravery in France during World War I. At the time of his enlistment Paddy was living with his mother and stepfather who were managing the Federal Hotel.

The site contains two memorials. A simple cross is thought to have been erected by members of the community in 1946. In 1999, on the eightieth anniversary of his death, a new memorial was unveiled by the Alstonville Rotary Club and the Alstonville RSL Sub-branch.

The designer and sculptor was Max Maxted from Nimbin.



The School of Arts (now RSL) hall in 1909

12. Alstonville Showground

The Alstonville Agricultural Society held its first show in 1890 and the Temperance Hall was used as a pavilion. In 1892 an agricultural hall was erected at the showground and was used until 1981, when the present Community Centre was built by Ballina Shire Council.

In 1905 the ring was enlarged and seating provided around the ring. Memorial gates were later erected to honour the soldiers who made the supreme sacrifice in the First World War.

13. RSL Hall

This building was originally built for the School of Arts committee in 1909 and was sited on the corner of High Street and the Bruxner Highway where a garage is today. It was decided in 1917 to move the building closer to the town to encourage more membership. In 1933 the RSL was offered the task of managing the building and in 1950 the ownership of the hall was transferred to the sub-branch.

The Alstonville Plateau Historical Society holds its meetings in the hall on the third Sunday of the month at 2.00 pm.

14. Bank of New South Wales

This bank first opened in a rented cottage for a year and then in a brick shop for three more years.

In 1921/22 the Bank of New South Wales contracted Dayal Singh of Lismore to construct this building which was designed by Lismore architect, FJ Board. It housed a banking



The Bank of New South Wales

chamber and a residence for the manager and was officially opened on 13 April 1923.

During World War II this branch closed on 20 November 1942. After the war the building was sold to the Gough family who lived in the residence but rented the banking chamber back to the bank where it operated until the 1950s. The banking chamber was then used as a surgery by several doctors before becoming an opportunity shop for Maranoa Village for some years. The current owners lease portions of the building to various business people. The words 'Bank of New South Wales' can still be seen on the etched doors and the original bank safe is still in the old banking chamber.

15. Alstonville Post Office

Now a restaurant, this building was Alstonville's fourth post office. The first post office was situated on the main road at Ocean View.

The second post office, built about 1888, was at the corner of the Bruxner Highway and Teven Road. In 1901 the residents asked that the post office be moved to the centre of town and the postmaster, Mr EO Hodgson, had premises built in 1902, west of the Federal Hotel. The fourth post office was erected and was occupied on 13 February 1908 with Mr Hugh McBarron in charge.

Notable changes to the building occurred in the 1980s when the original entrance on the eastern side was filled in and a new entrance formed on the western corner.

In 1997 the post office operations were moved again to bigger premises in the Plaza Shopping Centre.

The old post office is listed as an item of heritage significance on the Ballina Local Environment Plan.

16. Commercial Bank

This building is reputed to have been built in 1896 by local butcher, John Daley. In 1901 he built the Federal Hotel and the family vacated

the cottage and took up residence in the hotel.

In September 1902 the house was leased to the Commercial Banking Company of Sydney and was Alstonville's first bank. At this time some changes were made to the building to accommodate the bank. In 1907 the bank purchased the property from John Daley's widow.

The bank closed and in recent years the new owners, using information from the historical society archives, have painted the building the original bank colours.

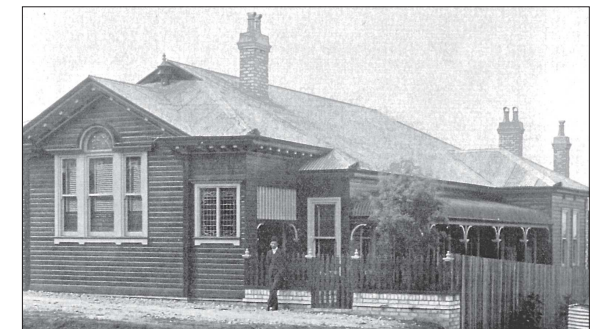
The house is listed on the National Trust Register, Register of the National Estate and the Ballina Local Environment Plan and is now called 'Freeborn House'.

17. Federal Hotel

This landmark opened on 1 June 1901, in the year of Federation – hence the name – and the licensee was John Daley, a local butcher.

The plans for the building were drawn up by Messrs Brown & Jolly, timber merchants, and it was built by Fred Cullen at a cost of £644. Sadly, Mr Daley had to sell the hotel in early 1902 because of ill health. Among the other licensees were the Riley family, and Mr and Mrs R Evans who added a lounge and beer garden in 1951. The etched glass doors in the hallway are a feature.

The building is listed on the National Trust Register, Register of the National Estate and Ballina Local Environment Plan.



The Commercial Bank building, 1908