Moss Vale Walk

A self-guided walking tour of the historic town of Moss Vale in the Southern Highlands of NSW

Distance: 3.5km (approx.)  Duration: 1.5 hours (approx.)
The present town of Moss Vale is situated on land that was originally granted to Dr Charles Throsby (surgeon, settler and explorer), William Hutchinson (emancipist and confidant of Governor Macquarie) and John Waite (servant of Dr Charles Throsby).

Dr Charles Throsby was the first grantee in the Moss Vale area and he settled on his original 1000 acre grant to the east of the Old Argyle Road (now Argyle Street) in 1819. It was here that Governor Macquarie visited him in 1820 and suggested the name of Throsby Park for his estate. Dr Throsby’s nephew and heir, Charles, built the fine homestead still standing on the Throsby Park estate east of Moss Vale.

Subdivision of Moss Vale commenced in 1863 following the confirmation of the Great Southern Railway alignment. When it arrived in 1867, the railway station in Moss Vale was originally called Sutton Forest North but in 1877 it was renamed Moss Vale.

The town was named for Jemmy Moss, an ex-convict servant of Charles Throsby who lived in a hut on Throsby’s land on what is now Spring Street.

In the 1880s, tourism to the area, enabled by the easy access from Sydney the railway provided, was boosted by its proximity to the Governor’s country residence at ‘Hillview’ in Sutton Forest.

This walk was developed by Wingecarribee Shire Council in the year of Moss Vale’s sesquicentenary in 2013. It focuses on the historic central commercial, residential and civic areas of the town and its history. Most of the properties on this walk are in private ownership and should only be viewed from public spaces. Please do not enter private property without the prior permission of the owner.

The following sources are acknowledged in the production of this walk and brochure:

- Moss Vale Sesquicentenary Logo created by and used with permission of Margaret J. Mapperson.
- Berrima District Historical and Family History Society (BDHS).
- Peter Freeman Pty Ltd. 2006. Moss Vale Conservation Areas Study.

Please contact Council’s Heritage Land Use Planner on (02) 4868 0830 to report any historical inaccuracies in this brochure.

Map of Points of Interest

1. Diamond Jubilee Park and Fountain
2. Former Post Office
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18. Moss Vale Public School
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20. Kalaugaran House
21. Argyle Street
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24. Shop
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28. Council Chambers (Throsby Manor)
29. Whyte’s Shop
30. Station Master’s Residence
31. Railway Cottage
32. Howard’s Rotary Hoe Memorial
33. Electricity Substation
34. Railway Station
1. **Diamond Jubilee Park and Fountain**
The fountain, by Mt Gibraltar quarries and stone merchants Loveridge and Hudson, was installed to mark the Diamond Jubilee (or ‘Record Reign’) of Queen Victoria in 1897. The park was upgraded in 2008 and the fountain moved to its present location. The photograph of the Post Office below shows the fountain in its original position.

2. **Former Post Office** 249-251 Argyle Street
A post office was established in Moss Vale in 1867 but it was not until the opening of this building on 15 December 1891 that the postal service had a permanent home. In 1899 a letter carrier was appointed and 20 letter boxes were installed. Telephonic communication with Sydney and intervening places was established from the building in 1905.

3. **J.M. Alcorn Memorial** Argyle Street adjacent to the Post Office
When respected local doctor prominent citizen Dr John Macquarie Alcorn died in 1936, the Returned Soldiers organisation suggested a memorial be erected in his honour. A clock to be placed over the existing Queen Victoria fountain was designed by Bowral architect Harry Sheaffe (who also designed the Bowral War Memorial) and unveiled on 6 February 1938. The fountain was moved in 1985 from under the clock to its current location.

4. **Hotel Moss Vale** 340-346 Argyle Street (opposite)
In 1866, Martin Larkin, who previously held a licence for the Briars Inn at Bong Bong, obtained a licence for the Moss Vale Hotel, the first licensed premises in the new town. From 1869 the building was known as the Terminus Hotel and later the Royal. The present hotel was built in the Inter-war period and is locally known as the “Pink Pub” despite no longer being pink.

5. **Former Theatre** 348-354 Argyle Street (opposite)
Built in 1881 as Cullen’s Hall, it began showing pictures from 1907, became King’s Pictures from 1915 and was called Mack’s Theatre from 1920. It ceased operation as a cinema in 1966 and the following year was converted into a shopping arcade.

6. **Court House** 356-364 Argyle Street (opposite)
Designed by George McRae, government architect, the Court House was built in 1923 in the Interwar Georgian Revival style. Further additions were made by Cobden Parkes in 1945. The Court House has become the local judicial centre since the closing of Bowral Court House in 2005.

7. **Leighton Gardens and Pavilion** Argyle Street
In 1905 a small paddock adjacent to the railway was leased from the Railway Commissioner for use as a park on the instigation of Mayor and dentist Dr Henry Leighton Jones, after whom the park was named. The pavilion was installed in 1910. Today, it’s known for the autumn colour of its roadside London Plane Trees and its spring floral displays, especially tulips. The park was refurbished in 2013.

8. **Railway Overbridge** Argyle Street
A prominent element in the Argyle streetscape is the railway overbridge. When the railway was being built between Moss Vale and Marulan in 1867-1868 as a single track, the crossing over Argyle Street was by via a low level timber beam bridge. In 1887 the timber bridge was replaced with a single track wrought iron truss bridge. When the line duplications were planned around 1910 a new double track bridge was designed. By then the change over from British to American bridge technology was complete and American style steel Pratt trusses were standard for large span railway bridges. The current bridge, opened in 1917, was built to accommodate engines of double the weight of contemporary engines and for higher speeds, meaning that it has remained relatively unchanged since then.

9. **Central Hotel** 439 Argyle Street
The original Central Hotel was established on this site in 1878 as Tattersall’s Hotel and in July 1891 changed its named to Central Hotel. The present hotel does not resemble, except in scale, the earlier hotel that featured a hipped roof and post-supported balconies and verandahs.

The walking tour begins at Jubilee Park adjacent to Post Café in the former Post Office at the northern end of Leighton Gardens, Argyle Street.
10. St Paul's International College 463 Argyle Street
In 1891 the Dominican nuns purchased Elm Court, former residence of the Hon. Alexander Campbell M.L.A., to establish a school. The school, called Mount St Mary's Dominican Convent, opened in March 1891. The main convent building was built in 1901 and the site has been used for religious and educational purposes since then. It has also been known as Elm Court, Aurora College, and is now called St Paul's International College.

11. School of Arts 471 Argyle Street
The School of Arts organisation was established in 1890 and the foundation stone for this building was laid in November 1891 on land donated by G. R. Campbell. There was a library also established with the building and it was moved to a new building at the rear in 1893. In June 1945 Council took over the library and it was later moved to the Civic Centre on the corner of Elizabeth Street and Kirkham Street on 26 February 1971.

12. Former CBC Bank building 478 Argyle Street (opposite)
Built in 1888, this Commercial Bank building was designed by highly regarded bank architects, Mansfield Bros, and built by Gee & Lusted. The site was used as both the bank and manager’s residence and a brick store room/coach house with a slate roof is still located at the rear of the building. The collection of important commercial buildings in this part of town demonstrates that the southern end of Argyle Street was the commercial hub in the 19th century development of the new town.

13. Victorian Shops 480-486 Argyle Street (opposite)
Henry Thomas Toose built these substantial Victorian style shop shops in 1885. They are one of the first two storey masonry buildings in town. Its side wall and verandah can be seen to the left of the cottages photo at the top of the next column taken in the mid-1880s.

14. Argyle House 479 Argyle Street
A Victorian Georgian style building (unusual in Moss Vale) built as a hotel in 1878 by William Walker. Walker failed to obtain a license and sold it to the English Scottish and Australian Bank in 1879 who used it until 1957.

15. Jimmy Moss Inn 481 Argyle Street (opposite corner)
Originally built in 1868, it was used as Moss Vale's first Post Office and a produce store. The Carrier's Rest Hotel moved to this site from the shop 2 doors north of the CBC Bank building in 1873 and became known as the Commercial Hotel. It changed its name in 1966 to the Jimmy Moss Inn after Moss Vale's namesake, Jimmy Moss, a respected servant of Charles Throsby. Moss owned a cottage on Throsby land in Spring Street.

16. St Joseph’s School Room Waite Street
This timber weatherboard school room was used as a school room at least from the time the site was acquired by the Dominican nuns in 1891. It is not known whether the building was built at this time or dates from an earlier period. It might have been used as the school room connected with the St Joseph Convent School run by the Sisters of St Joseph at Kalaugan House (see item 20) in the 1880s.

17. St John's Church of England 16 Waite Street
This church was built in two distinct halves: the original church, which can be seen at the rear from Browley Street, was opened on Christmas Eve, 1881; and the dark brick end facing Waite Street was built as an extension in 1930 as a memorial to those who served in World War I. The Church also had a fine rectory built in 1905 in Browley Street (entry now off Wyatt Street). The rectory was a focus for church community gatherings and events, particularly from the 1920s until the 1950s. The rectory has been in private ownership since the early 1980s.

18. Moss Vale Public School 12 Browley Street
This one acre site was given for the purpose of a school by John Morrice M.L.A. (who bought the ‘Browley’ land from Hutchinson) in 1867, building commenced in 1868 and the school officially opened on Monday 28 September 1868. Over the years the addition of new buildings and the alteration of previous buildings show the changing needs of education in Moss Vale in its nearly 150 year history.

19. St Andrews Presbyterian Church 7 Browley Street (opposite)
This painted weatherboard church was built in 1879 by James Linklater and has been in continuous use for more than 130 years.

20. Kalaugan House 24 Browley Street
The house was built around 1848 (which predates the subdivision of the private town of Moss Vale) and was reportedly leased by the Sisters of St Joseph (some say as early as the 1860s, but certainly from the 1880s) for use as a boarding school. It may have been used as the St Joseph Convent School. It is probable that the St Joseph School Room (item 16) was used for classes and the house for boarding students. The house also reputedly hosted Mother Mary MacKillop (Australia’s first saint) on her visit to Moss Vale in 1884.

21. Argyle Street
When Moss Vale first developed, Argyle Street on the southern side of the railway was the commercial hub, ending at around the Yarrawa Street. This commercial history can be seen in some of the buildings, such as items 22, 23 and 24, below.
22. **Coach House** 10 Yarrawa Street (opposite)
Built in 1899 by Thomas Brownlow, this former Coach House has been modified for a number of commercial uses including a garage, service station, carpet warehouse, paint shop, and furniture and antiques shops but it is currently being converted for residential use.

23. **Worker's Cottages and former Shop and Cottage** 574-580 Argyle Street (opposite)
This is an attractive and relatively intact group of 3 timber cottages of similar era side-by-side that demonstrate typical styles of early development in Moss Vale. They may have been used for residential and/or commercial purposes, and the cottage on the left hand side (no. 574-576) has had a shopfront addition to one side and has been used as a baker's shop, butchery and laundry from the early 1900s.

24. **Shop** 561 Argyle Street
This Victorian era-purchased build is unique in Moss Vale. In the late 1800s it was a chemist's shop, then auctioneering offices. In the 1920s it was Kurrajong Tearooms and Sutton's General Store and hairdressers. Its side painted wall advertisements contribute to its landmark status, although the advertisement on the southern wall dates from the 1960s when ETA margarine was first produced in Marrickville in Sydney.

➤ **Cross Argyle Street and turn right into Spring Street.**

25. **Uniting Church** 566 Argyle Street (opposite corner)
This church, built by the Methodists in 1888, replaced an earlier primitive church in use in 1881 (and which might have been erected earlier). This church was extended in 1914 and further extended in 1937.

➤ **Turn right into Spring Street.**

26. **Spring Street**
This area was part of the earliest subdivision and sale of blocks in Moss Vale which occurred in 1863 in anticipation of the railway, which opened in 1867. The namesake of Moss Vale reportedly lived in this street. The street contains a mix of Victorian, Edwardian, Inter-war and post-war architecture, including:

- **Victorian Semi-Detached Cottages** (nos. 6-8, opposite)—
These symmetrical semi-detached cottages are unusual in Moss Vale.
- **No. 11**—The site of the cottage of Jemmy Moss, employee of Throsby and Moss Vale namesake. Ashenden (no. 15)—Although not visible from the street, this late 19th century house sits on a large lot of over 2 acres which once belonged to former solicitor Bennington Haille Paine.
- **No. 21**—Attractive Victorian era weatherboard cottage.

➤ **Cross Railway Street, continue through the railway tunnel and turn left onto Throsby Street.**

27. **Throsby Street**
Named for the Throsby on whose original land it sits, this street is within a heritage conservation area and includes a number of fine homes interspersed with more modest worker's cottages. The settlement of the street and the type of architecture was influenced by the Council Chambers at the western end of the street.

28. **Council Chambers (Throsby Manor)** 1A Throsby Street
The Moss Vale municipality was officially formed on 14 September 1888, although the Moss Vale and Sutton Forest Progress Committee had been in operation since 1881. Elections were held in 1888 and nine aldermen were elected. N.H. Throsby was elected Mayor. The building of the Council Chambers commenced in 1890 and was completed the following year. It is a fine example of Victorian Free Classical architectural style. Throsby's name is inscribed with the establishment date on the parapet.

29. **Whyte's Shop** 426 Argyle Street
This shop was opened by the Whyte family in 1922 when they moved their business, which had been operating in Moss Vale since 1895, to this site. Also significant are the rear tailor's work room and the modern mural on it.

➤ **Turn right into Argyle Street; walk along until you reach the Station Master's Residence just beyond the former Post Office.**

30. **Station Master's Residence** 247 Argyle Street (opposite)
The Victorian Gothic style Station Master's residence, built in 1869, is of State Heritage significance as the last remaining large picturesque ‘Gothic’ style residence of its type. Along with the 1867 railway station platform building, the Station Master's Residence was built to a standard design from the office of Railway Commissioner at the time, John Whitton.

31. **Railway Cottage** 239A Argyle Street (opposite)
This house was used as the Station Master’s cottage subsequent to the Gothic Station Master’s residence, and is unusual in its use of concrete drop slab construction which was rarely used by the railways for residential buildings. It was built around 1920 and features an original outhouse toilet in the rear yard.

➤ **Walk through to the rear of the Old Argyle Square development on the corner of Valetta Street.**

32. **Howard's Rotary Hoe Memorial** rear, Old Argyle Square, 244 Argyle Street
It was on this site that McCleary's engineering works took on apprentice and engineering student Arthur Clifford Howard who had the idea at the age of 16 for a power tillage machine. In 1922 Howard registered his rotary hoe venture as Austral Auto Cultivators and took over the McCleary’s site for production of his machine. He gained international success and acclaim and this site was outgrown and production moved to Parramatta in 1927. This memorial to this enterprising man was installed in 1987 with the assistance of Bicentennial funding and features two of the early implements built in Howard's factory here in the 1920s.

![McClerey's Engineering Works c.1920 (BDHS)](image)

➤ **Return to Argyle Street.**

33. **Electricity Substation** (opposite Valetta Street)
Moss Vale was the third town in the Colony to have an electric light system after Tamworth and Young. A private company. Wood and Co., won the tender to provide electric lighting to public streets and private homes in 1899. In 1909, Council took over the electric light plant. This substation was built as a cottage distribution station in 1936 by Wingecarribee Shire Council (hence the WSC inscription in the frieze). It was decommissioned circa 2006.

➤ **Cross to Daleys Way and walk along to the Railway Station.**
34. **Railway Station** Bay Street

The original single line railway opened as Sutton Forest North on 2 December 1867 and was later renamed Moss Vale in 1876. The earliest main platform building was a single storey structure built in 1867 and lengthened in 1882. It was altered in 1889 to include the Governor's Waiting Room. The two storey refreshment room building was built in 1890. Many of the other buildings and structures on the site, including the booking office, signal box, platform 2 buildings, footbridges and awnings, were constructed in the period from 1914-1917. The station is the only Australian example of railway buildings containing Vice Regal facilities and having been developed partly to provide these facilities.

Take the footbridge over the railway line back to Diamond Jubilee Park.

*End of walk.*