

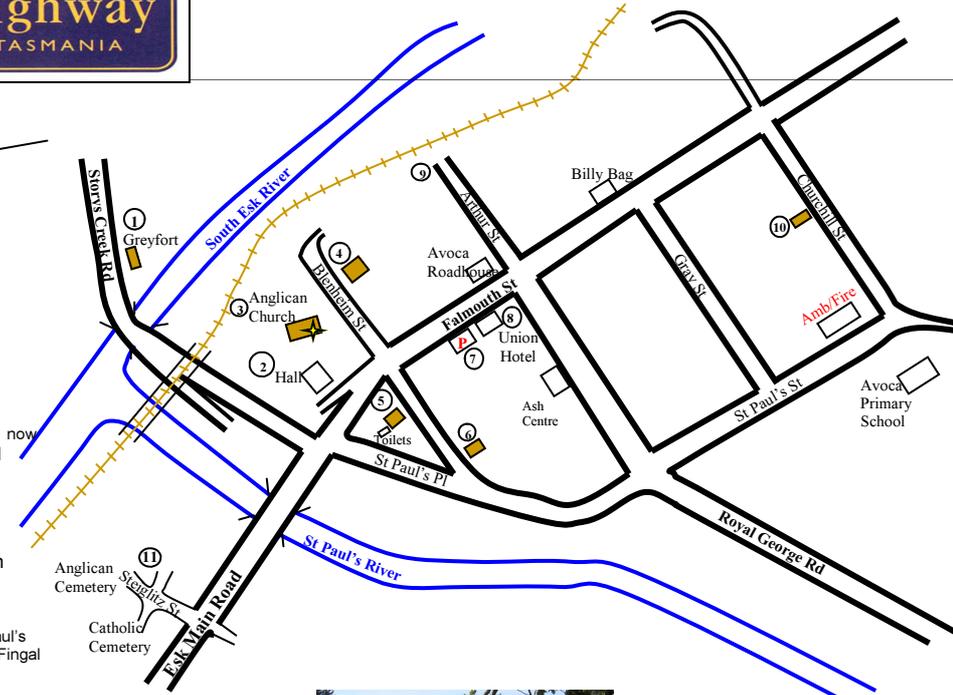


AVOCA



1. Greyfort
2. Community Hall
3. Anglican Church
4. Marlborough House
5. Old State School the **Avoca Museum and Information Centre**.
6. Former Catholic Church
7. Parish Hall (Post Office)
8. Union Hotel
9. Ruins of railway platform
10. Old stone home
11. Former Rectory

Information referenced from "St Paul's Plains" book and "Let's talk about Fingal Valley District" leaflet



Avoca, at the 'Meeting of the Waters', was officially settled in 1834 although John Helder Wedge, the Government Surveyor, mentioned Avoca village in his diary in 1829. In 1827 Roderic O'Connor of 'Benham' and 'Connorville' estates, wrote in his journal "There is a vacant space between Mr Hammond's grant and Major Abbotts; most commodiously situated for a township. It is immediately at the junction of the South Esk and St Paul's River. We beg to recommend reserving it". In 1832 military troops, formerly at 'St Paul's Plains', were recorded as garrisoned at Avoca. A **Post Office** opened at Avoca on 1st Jan 1838.

'**Greyfort**', the home of Captain James Kingsley Grey, is believed to have been the earliest stone building; early timber and mud buildings have not withstood the ravages of time. '**Bona Vista**' (circa 1842) is a magnificent Georgian homestead built by Simeon Lord and doubtless the centre of society at the time. Martin Cash is said to have worked there as a groom before becoming a notorious bushranger. In 1853 bushrangers Dalton and Kelly made a raid on the house, committed a murder and robbed the house. Blood stains remain on the steps. In 1890 a young man named Beckitt was murdered at the homestead woodheap, his body dumped in the South Esk River to be discovered by Tom Badkin Jr.



Greyfort ruins on Bona Vista



St Thomas' Anglican Church

Self sufficiency was essential in outlying settlements. Vegetables, meat, milk and grain were produced on surrounding farms and processed in the town. Blacksmiths, cartwrights, bootmakers and a tannery within the town catered for most other needs.

Some fine old buildings remain. Most prominent is **St Thomas' Anglican Church** (Romanesque Revival style), designed by James Blackburn who also designed the church at Port Arthur; consecrated on 8th May 1842. Three wealthy men, Mr Simeon Lord, Humphrey Grey and Captain William Grey, stood as guarantors for the cost of the building. Some of the pews still carry their original numbers and at the back of the church is a large pew built for a particularly large church warden.



Marlborough House



Union Hotel and Parish Hall (PO)



Old State School

Avoca Museum and Information Centre



Avoca Roadhouse



The Cow Shed



Stone house ruin in Churchill Street



Historic Plaques

The former **Rectory** is on the western bank of the St Paul's River.

Marlborough House (circa 1845) also known as 'Blenheim', was initially constructed as an hotel, but a license not granted due to its proximity to the church, used as a grammar school, coaching stop and private residence.

The **Union Hotel** (1842) was operated by R C Foster and his family for 60 years with accommodation for coaching passengers and stables for the change-over horses.

The **Parish Hall** (circa 1850) constructed by Foster as a storehouse for the hotel, became an entertainment centre. Mr B O'Connor purchased it in 1937 and donated it to the Anglican Church. It is the current Post Office.

The old **State School** was built in 1908 at a cost of 348 pounds. In 1935 electric lights were fitted and a wireless set was installed in 1936 prior to the Prime Minister the Hon. J A Lyons MHR visiting the school. There are still residents in Avoca who attended school here prior to 1951 when the current Primary School opened. The **CWA** used the building for several years. Restored in 2011 by Greater Esk Tourism Inc. as the **Avoca Museum and Information Centre**.

The **Memorial Hall** was opened in 1907 amid much pomp and ceremony. Other buildings, many of equal significance have been demolished - the 'Gardiner's Arms' hotel, 'Gray's Arms Inn', 'Woolpack Inn', 'Help-me-Thro'-the-World' hotel, a blacksmith's shop, rival stables, butcher, baker, dairy and other General stores.

15 new **Historic Plaques** tell the stories of historic buildings and people from the past on the Avoca Town walk.