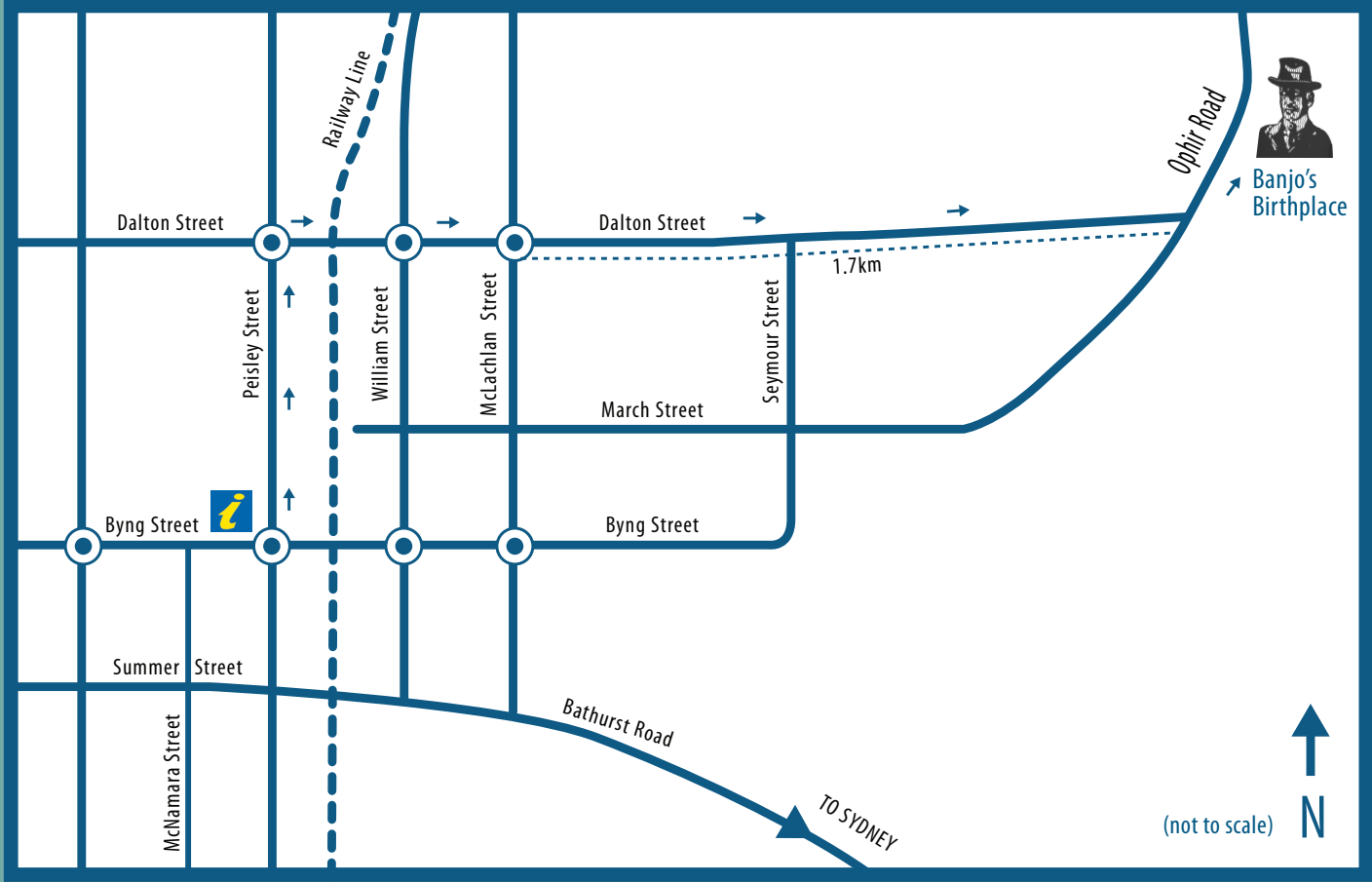




THE CIVIC SQUARE MEMORIAL

The A B (Banjo) Paterson Memorial in Byng Street was fully endorsed as a Centenary of Federation project. The design is by Reuben Buesnel who was born in Orange and is now living in England. Reuben worked on the project in consultation with local artist, Les Quick who designed the Sir Neville Howse memorial in Robertson Park.

The books at the memorial broadcast a narration on the life of Banjo Paterson together with excerpts of Banjo's poetry. Around the perimeter of the memorial tiles record the winners of the annual Banjo Paterson Writing Awards. Banjo's granddaughters Rosamond Campbell and Phillipa Harvie unveiled the Memorial on 17 February 2002.



DIRECTIONS TO BANJO'S BIRTHPLACE

banjo paterson memorial



FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT



Orange Visitor Information Centre
FREE CALL 1800 069 466
www.orange.nsw.gov.au

Civic Theatre Memorial



ABOUT BANJO PATERSON

At the time of Banjo’s birth, his parents were living on the Central Western property known as Buckinbah near Obley, which is beyond Molong. As the homestead was rough and isolated, Paterson’s mother travelled to the home of her aunt, Mrs Rose Templer, for her confinement. Her own mother, Mrs Emily Barton, had left the district to live in Sydney following the death of her husband, Rose Paterson’s father.

Rose’s mother and aunt were the daughters of Major Edward Darvall who came to Australia in 1839 after amassing a fortune with the East India Company and settled at the homestead at Narrambla. The family was very influential in the area and his daughters were well-educated and refined.

Banjo was the first child of Scottish-born grazier, Andrew Bogle Paterson and his wife Rose Isabella (nee Barton). The baby’s birth is registered at Orange on 25 February 1864 and the Anglican Church in Orange records the baptism of Andrew Barton Paterson at Narrambla homestead by the Anglican minister on 11 March 1864.

The baby and his mother left Narrambla after three months and returned to Buckinbah, where young Andrew spent the next seven years. His education began at a small school at Binalong where he first began to find material for his later prose and poetry, encouraged by his father who himself contributed verse to The Bulletin soon after its foundation in 1880.

In 1874, when he was ten, Banjo was sent to Sydney Grammar School and stayed with his grandmother, Emily Barton, at Rockend. On leaving school he embarked on a legal career and was admitted as a solicitor in 1886. While still a law student he was encouraged by his grandmother to write poetry. Emily Barton also wrote verse and her first book of poems, A Few of Grandmamma’s Prizes for the Little Ones was published in 1885, in the same year Banjo published his first verse in The Bulletin.

Banjo’s first literary effort was a pamphlet entitled Australia for Australian which “fell as flat as the great inland desert”. He then turned to poetry and wrote four flamboyant verses about the expedition against the Mahdi, which was going well and strong at the time. Banjo sent them to The Bulletin but decided to adopt the name “Banjo”, after one of the family’s horses. He was afraid to use his own name lest the editor, identifying him as the author of his previous pamphlet, would dump his contribution straight into the waste paper basket!

The Editor, Mr Archibald, printed the verses and commissioned him to write more poetry and Banjo’s literary career had begun. Along the way he met Henry Lawson who also wrote poetry about the bush, but from a difference perspective.

In 1895 his first book of verse, The Man from Snowy River and Other Verses was published and was an immediate success.

In 1900 he gave up law and became a correspondent for the Sydney Morning Herald and the Melbourne Argus covering the Boer War. During this time he provided detailed accounts of the fighting, together with photographs taken by him.

Due to his success as a war correspondent, Banjo became a full-time journalist when he returned to Australia, writing for The Sydney Morning Herald and The Sydney Mail.

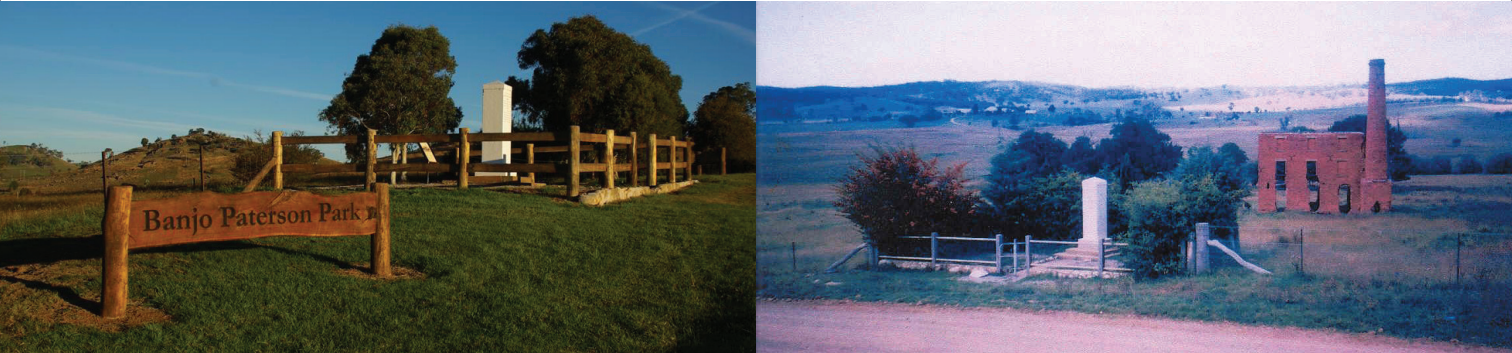
After the war Banjo embarked on a number of tours lecturing on the use of horses in warfare and his experiences in South Africa. During one of these tours, in Tenterfield, he met Alice Walker and they were married in April 1903.

During World War I he served again as a war correspondent and rose to the rank of major. After the war he returned to take up a position of Editor of the Sydney Sportsman.

He was made a CBE in 1930 and in January 1936, a portrait of Banjo by Sir John Longstaff was awarded the Archibald Prize.

Shortly before his 77th birthday he was admitted to hospital in Sydney, where he died on 5 February 1941. He was cremated and the ashes were interred at the Northern Suburbs Crematorium, Sydney. His widow Alice returned to Orange after his death and lived for a short time at a property in the vicinity of 95 Byng Street. Alice passed away on 23 June 1963 at Rose Bay, Sydney.

A B (Banjo) Paterson is an Australian icon who managed to capture the essence of Australian life in his poems and stories and has contributed to Australian literature by portraying life in a humorous and entertaining manner. His poems and stories have become an integral part of Australian lore. His characters such as The Man from Snowy River (1895) and Clancy of the Overflow (1889) are indeed “household words” today.



BANJO PATERSON PARK – BANJO’S BIRTHPLACE

On 17 February 1864, Andrew Barton Paterson was born at the home of his aunt and uncle, Rose and John Templer at Narrambla, near Orange.

It is assumed that the homestead of Rose and John Templer was built between 1847 and 1848. Surprisingly little is known about the homestead other than it is said to have been made of cobble stone with walls about two feet thick, although it is more likely to have been a weatherboard cottage as described by Leslie Oakes who apparently visited Narrambla in the early 1870s.

“The house, built of weatherboard, was a miniature station home, low and squat-looking – not many rooms, but very wide verandahs, back and front, with, I think, small rooms at each end of the back verandah. Several English trees were flourishing at the rear of the house, but its most notable feature was the front flower garden. This had evidently been planned by an Englishman, for the beds contained all the old English high-scented flowers that our ancestors loved. Moss roses predominated, with wallflowers stocks, lilacs, lavender and other highly perfumed flowers, bordered by violets. The wide front verandah was literally smothered with jasmine, honeysuckle and climbing roses.”

Not far from the homestead John Templer operated a flour mill known as the Narrambla Steam Mill from 1848 to 1869 - the building was not referred to as Templer’s Mill until much later. The homestead and flour mill once stood in the vicinity of the obelisk located at Banjo Paterson Park, five kilometres northeast of Orange on the Ophir Road. The mill was somewhat grander than the homestead as it was a three-storey brick building on bluestone foundations with ornamental lintels and sandstone sills - some of the sandstone sills were reused in 1947 as the base of the Paterson Monument on the Ophir Road. The brick chimney was built out from the southwest corner of the mill, adjacent to the boiler and beam-engine.

Narrambla Steam Mill finally closed in 1869 when the Templers moved to New Zealand. In 1870 the mill building was converted into a shearing-shed, and a wool-press was still in the building in 1935. The homestead was occupied by several owners and tenants until 1895 when it may have burnt down, as did so many weatherboard houses.

Unfortunately the remains of the mill had to be demolished in 1971 for safety reasons. Much of the original building, including the roof and second floor, were missing and it was considered beyond restoration.

Today there is little remaining of the three-story building other than a pile of bricks and a pillar and plaque to mark the site of the mill in Banjo Paterson Park. A brick feature wall exists in the foyer of the Orange Civic Theatre from bricks salvaged from the old mill.

On 20 December 1947 Banjo’s wife Mrs Alice Paterson unveiled a monument to the great poet before a crowd of 400 people.

The verse on the monument reads –

The Australian poet Andrew Barton Paterson (Banjo) was born 17th February 1864 at the Narrambla homestead which stood 8 chains north-east of this memorial. Erected 1947.

“And he sees the vision splendid of the sunlit plains extended,

And at night the wondrous glory of the everlasting stars.”
(Clancy of the Overflow)

Among the invited guests were Banjo’s young granddaughters who later unveiled the memorial to Banjo Paterson in the Civic Square, Byng Street, on 17 February 2003.



A bust and plinth to commemorate the site was commissioned from Anthony Chandler and can be seen in Banjo Paterson Park.