



# Heritage Bicycle and Walking Route

## Trees: Who Gives a Root

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Overbury Drive: The tree pictured won the biggest girth in Unley Competition run by Mayor Michael Hewitson.

*Cities are increasingly recognised as important for biodiversity as they can provide habitat for a diverse range of species. But we still need to work out how best to live with different species. Biodiversity is also important for cities as it is at the heart of ecosystem services.*

*Bio-diversity can be at the level of ecosystems, species and genes.*



This heritage walking and cycling route has been compiled in conjunction with **Unley Museum's exhibition "Trees: Who Gives a Root"**.

While the sites described are some of the most important heritage trees in the area, there are many other trees and streetscapes to enjoy as you cycle or walk by.

If cycling - cycle safely, obey the road rules, use footpaths as appropriate for safety particularly on busy roads and use pedestrian crossings as appropriate.

### **Pre-settler Unley.**

Kaurna people depended on the Willa willa—the winding creeks lined with Red Gum—for their food, shelter and water.

The area known by Kaurna as Kertaweeta (scrub with reeds) extended from the eastern foothill suburbs of Burnside, Erindale, Beaumont, Glen Osmond, south-west through to Urrbrae, Malvern, Mitcham, Unley, Goodwood, Wayville, South Adelaide, Black Forest, Hyde Park, Clarence Park, Plympton, Edwardstown, St Marys and the River Sturt near Marion.<sup>1</sup>

*'...A complex and diverse mosaic of woodlands, with different tree species dominating in various areas. Along the many streams, but stretching out over the eastern Adelaide Plains, huge River Red Gums and Blue Gums, some of which still exist, would have dominated a rich grassy woodland...Emus, goannas, quolls, bandicoots, platypuses, bettongs, wombats and bilbies, were plentiful on the Adelaide Plains prior to European settlement.'*

**MALLEE WOODLANDS:** Consists of woodlands and grassy woodlands with multi-stemmed Eucalypts growing on mainly alkaline (lime) soils in a strip from Wayville north through the western CBD and the Enfield area to a vast area on the Virginia Plains.

**TALL WOODLANDS:** Includes the plants of the Eucalyptus leucoxylon (SA Blue Gum) woodlands and the Eucalyptus microcarpa (Grey Box). These woodlands were centred on the clay soils to the south of the Torrens River. Along with Red Gums, most of Unley was covered with Blue Gums and Grey Box trees.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Information from the Unley Council website, originally sourced from the book by Darrell Kraehenbuehl 'Pre-European Vegetation of Adelaide: A Survey from the Gawler River to Hallett Cove' (1996).

<sup>2</sup> Source: Phil Bagust & Lynda Tout-Smith (2010) The Native Plants of Adelaide - Returning the vanishing natural heritage of the Adelaide Plains to your garden. Adelaide: Wakefield Press



### 1. **Council Offices/St Augustine's Church – Two River red gums**

Kat Ryan (Unley Council's Coordinator Environmental Projects & Strategy) advised that both trees are on church land, not Council (although the one closer to Unley Road now encroaches on Council land). The trees are about 150 years old. The taller one is 33 metres high and the other is 25 metres high.

Kat speculates the trees were probably self-seeded from an older tree. Settlers in the 1870s would have more likely planted a European species near their church rather than native. If they did plant them, it seems odd they would have planted them diagonally and offset - more typical to plant neat rows and orderly garden trees.

### 2. **10 Thomas Street: Mornington House - Dragon's blood trees**

**About the Trees:** Waite Arboretum on Fullarton Road has several of these remarkable trees and has the dragon's blood tree as its logo. It was chosen because its distinctive flat-topped appearance and regularly arranged swollen branches make it instantly recognisable. (Waite Arboretum is a wonderful place for a walk).

The species comes from the Cape Verde and Canary Islands and a new subspecies has recently been discovered in Morocco. Each island group has its own form and the Waite specimen has the massive branches and longer leaves of the Canary Islands form.

Dragon's blood trees may attain a great age. One specimen on Tenerife was famous for centuries and long believed to be the oldest tree in the world. When it blew down in 1868 the tree was 21m tall and its girth was a massive 24m close to the ground and 15m at chest height.

The species exhibits sympodial branching. The straight trunk grows for about 10 years before flowering and then producing its first ring of branches. About every 10 years thereafter, each axis gives rise to another ring, so the age of a tree can be estimated by counting the number of branching points to reach the canopy.

The dark resinous sap that gives the tree its common name is used for colouring varnishes and at one time was also used for medicinal purposes.<sup>3</sup>

**About the house:** Jacob Pitman's construction of Mornington took 5 years beginning in 1853 with major additions in 1872 and 1880. Pitman taught his brother's (Sir Isaac) English system of Phonography, or shorthand, in SA and other Australian colonies. Wrought iron railings on its roof outline an area known as a "widow's walk." Mornington Road to the west was named after this property. The extensive gardens and surrounds of Mornington have been swallowed up by development.

The Scammell family lived here from 1864 until 1922. Luther Scammell was a member of the first SA Parliament and the second mayor of Unley. In 1861 he entered into partnership with FH Faulding, the founder of FH Faulding & Co. Scammell became Faulding's sole owner in 1868.<sup>4</sup>

Mornington House was owned by the Housing Trust but is now owned by Renewal SA.

### 3. **Owen Street, Goodwood: Water Sensitive Urban Design**

Be impressed by the amazing trees along this street (*Eucalyptus intertexta*, red box). A Blue Gum was removed from the rear of 9 Owen Street (south east corner of Owen and Hardy) in 2010 – but it was considered to be in fair condition and poorly formed.

<sup>3</sup> Written by Jennifer Gardner for Waite Arboretum

<sup>4</sup> Discover Historic Unley brochure by Unley Council



4. **Lily Street:** Goodwood Boys Technical College (then Goodwood High School, now Arunga Apartments)

**The trees:** Coastal Redwood, Norfolk Island Pine, and Hoop Pine are on Unley's Significant Tree List.

**About the building:** There is a bronze plaque affixed to the right of the entrance to the Arunga Apartments. This was originally the Goodwood Boys Technical College, later Goodwood High School which ceased tutorial duties in 1992. The complex was then sold to private enterprise. The cessation of hostilities in 1945 was celebrated at the school with the planting of four Golden Poplars (which were later removed) at the entrance. On Arbor Day 1947, Brigadier Eastick celebrated the planting by unveiling the plaque which says:

*"Four Golden Poplars were planted near this porch on August 17 1945, the first school day after Victory in the Pacific."<sup>5</sup>*

5. **Wilberforce Walk. - Magnificent remnant River Redgum**

Wilberforce Walk runs along Brownhill Creek. The magnificent remnant River Redgum (*Eucalyptus camaldulensis*), known as 'Karra' in Kurna language, is the 'treasure of the trek'! Many hundreds of years old, this tree was respected by the local Kurna people and by early settler Dr Charles C. Everard who took ownership of the land in 1836. The timber of Red Gum was used by Aboriginals for making tools and carrying bowls, and its leaves were used for medicinal purposes. The hollows in this ancient tree are homes to birds, bats, possums and other living creatures.



6. **Goodwood Oval**

- **Spectacular Port Jackson Fig tree** (*Ficus rubiginosa*). Closely related to the Moreton Bay Fig, it is native to eastern Australia with widely spreading branches and small fruit.
- **Cork Oaks** Between the playground and grandstand on Goodwood Oval are 3 old Cork Oaks (*Quercus suber*). Cork from Cork oaks has been used since ancient times for bottle stoppers, footwear, flooring and insulation. Cork is a very sustainable resource as it can be stripped from mature trunks periodically without killing the trees.
- **Fairfax Ave.** The street trees are **English Oaks** (*Quercus robur*), planted in memory of members of the local Druids Lodge who died during World War II. Throughout history, oaks have been a symbol of honour, wisdom, endurance and remembrance. Their distinctive seeds, acorns, have symbolized the potential for growth, strength and longevity. Some species can live for 1000 years.

7. **72-74 East Avenue: Clarence Park Community Centre Biodiversity Garden**

Although not a replica of the original Black Forest, the Clarence Park Biodiversity Garden is a demonstration garden featuring local native Indigenous plants that would have been found in the original Black Forest. A variety of 30-40 plants of different size, colour and movement have been chosen that can be planted in most home gardens.

As only 2% of original vegetation remains on the Adelaide Plains, this garden is of significant importance and acts as a genetic material repository for local Indigenous plants.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Virtual War Memorial Australia, Goodwood 02

<sup>6</sup> City of Unley Website <https://www.unley.sa.gov.au/pets-environment/sustainability>



#### 8. Overbury Drive, Clarence Park

Allow yourself to be impressed by the amazing River Red Gum and the even more amazing fact that it has been retained in the middle of this street. It is on the council's Significant Tree List.

*"I grew up in Francis St and one of our neighbours, then head of Clarence Park Neighbourhood watch, knew Mrs Overbury. Apparently her will stated that the tree could not be cut down so when the property was subdivided and the road built, the tree was left." Local Resident*

#### 9. 3 Douglas Street, Millswood (off Avenue St) – River red gum

This tree at the back of the property is the only tree in Unley listed as a State Heritage Place. It marks the channel of Brownhill Creek. It is a mature single specimen, between 150-200 years old, and apart from some minor dead wood in the canopy, the tree is in good health.<sup>7</sup>

#### 10. Malcom Street, Millswood

Two trees on the Significant Tree List –

- No. 8, a magnificent River Red gum right on the footpath and
- No. 29 has a lovely lemon scented gum

#### 11. Heywood Park – Kurna Shelter Tree

During winter the Kurna people would burn out dead wood hollows in the base of river red gum trunks (karra) to create shelters (wattowaldi). You can see the remains of a shelter tree at Heywood Park in Unley. Unley residents have found artefacts around this shelter.<sup>8</sup>



<sup>7</sup> Unley Heritage Research Study 2006

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.unley.sa.gov.au/Events-facilities/Facilities-venues/Unley-museum/Unleys-history/First-Inhabitants>  
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## **Main Sources**

- Unley BUG Heritage Bicycle and Walking Route “**Unley, Goodwood and Clarence Park Tree Tour**” Created by Anne Wharton and Jennifer Bonham.
- “**Walking: Tree Treats Of The Forest**” Produced by FOCUS (Friends of the City of Unley), with thanks to Helen Palmer and Kate Hubmayer, 2019

## **Acknowledgements**

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- Compiled by David Sutton for The Unley Bicycle User Group

## **Want To Know More?**

- **About the History of Unley**  
Visit the Unley Museum [www.unley.sa.gov.au/museum](http://www.unley.sa.gov.au/museum)  
80 Edmund Ave Unley
- **About Cycling and Walking in Unley**  
Contact the Unley Bicycle Users Group [unleybug1.wixsite.com/ubug](http://unleybug1.wixsite.com/ubug)

# Who Gives a Root Tree Tour

## Points of Interest

- 1 St Augustine Church
- 2 10 Thomas St
- 3 Owen St Goodwood
- 4 Lily Street Goodwood
- 5 Wilberforce Walk
- 6 Goodwood Oval
- 7 Clarence Park Community Centre
- 8 Overbury Drive
- 9 3 Douglas St
- 10 Malcolm Street
- 11 Heywood Park

