

Moonta Historical Town Drive

Moonta is located just 165 kilometres from Adelaide, within Yorke Peninsula's Copper Coast region. Moonta, historic Moonta Mines, Moonta Bay and Port Hughes are well known today as a tourist destination, whether it be to discover the fascinating heritage of the town or appreciate the lifestyle of the beach and fishing scene.

Originally named Tiparra, green copper ore was discovered at Moonta in 1861, by shepherd Patrick Ryan in a wombat hole where the town of Moonta now stands. The land was owned by WW Hughes. After a legal battle over who had ownership of the lease he formed the Tiparra Mining Company (later renamed Moonta Mining Company) and started production by the end of 1861 and in the first year 5,000 tonnes of ore was produced.

The Government township of Moonta was surveyed in March 1863 on a grassy plain midway between the shafts and the sea, the name being derived from the Narungga aboriginal Moonta-Moonterra meaning 'impenetrable scrub'. It was laid out in a symmetrical grid pattern with the central Queen Square and surrounded by parkland reserves and the cemetery. Allotments were auctioned in April 1863 but the town was initially slower to develop than the nearby Kadina or Wallaroo.

Commercial buildings were the first to be established in Moonta as most miners continued to live on mining leases. The area east of the central square, along George and Ryan Streets, became the centre of business because of its proximity to the main road and the mines. In response to the prosperous mining operations after 1865, the commercial structure of the town began to expand, resulting in the town's most vigorous building period, which continued to the mid 1870s.



By 1870, the population of the Moonta district reached

10,000, with only the capital city of Adelaide exceeding this within South Australia at the time. More than 6000 people lived on the mining leases, and all building blocks in the town had been sold. Mine Manager H R Hancock managed the mine and by 1876 the Moonta Mining Company was the first to pay one million dollars in dividends.

In 1890 the Moonta and Wallaroo Mines companies merged. The new company ran for 33 years and averaged employment of 1900 people with the peak being in 1906 with 2700. When the mines flourished after 1900, the new prosperity was again reflected in town growth. However, there was a rapid decline in population after the closure of the mines in 1923 and, by 1926, there were only 1350 residents remaining in the Moonta area.

The influx of Cornish miners during the mines operation led to Cornish methods being used for construction and mining methods. The area of Moonta, Kadina and Wallaroo was known as the "Copper Triangle" or "Little Cornwall". Moonta Mines gained State Heritage listing on 10 May 1984 and on the 9th May 2017 the "Australian Cornish Mining Sites of Moonta Mines and Burra" were included on the National Heritage List.

The area is now known as the Copper Coast and it celebrates its Cornish heritage biennially with the Kernewek Lowender in the towns of Moonta, Wallaroo and Kadina (meaning Cornish Happiness it is held in May in odd years) The first event held in 1973 attracted 15,000 people. It now attracts up to 50,000 people during the event.

Moonta and district is now home to around 5,000 permanent residents who enjoy the temperate climate and all that the Copper Coast offers. Numbers can rise to up to 10,000 during holiday periods.

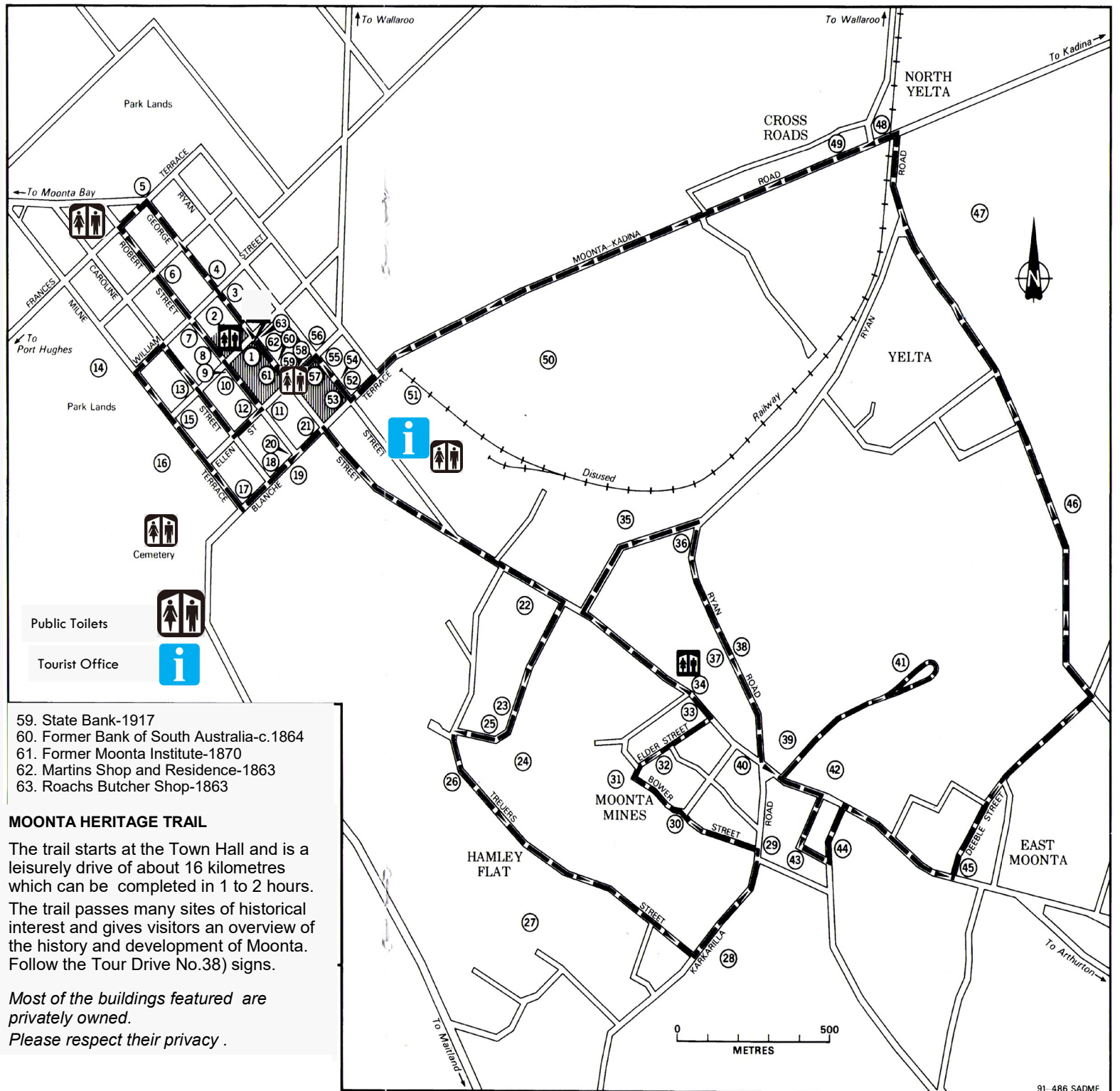


Copper Coast
Visitor Information Centre - Kadina

50 Mines Road
Phone 08 8821 2333

MOONTA HERITAGE TRAIL

1. Town Hall - 1885
2. Queen Square - 1897
3. Row Cottages - c.1865
4. Early Cottage- c.1865
5. Tramway Cutting -1892
6. Vercoes Shop and Residence-c.1878
7. Pollys Bonnet Shop-c.1870
8. Methodist Church-1873
9. Bible Christian Church-1873
10. Row Cottages-c.1880
11. Salvation Army Hall-1901
12. School of Mines-1866/1903
13. Fire Station-1920
14. Oval and Show Pavilion
15. Cothele House-c.1890
16. Victoria Park-1887
17. All Saints Anglican Church-1873
18. Masonic Lodge-1875
19. Moonta School-1877
20. St Francis of Assisi Catholic Church-1869
21. Moonta Hotel-1863
22. Site of Old Showgrounds-1872
23. Assayers Residence-1863
24. Hancocka Tailings Dump
25. Miners Cottage-c.1870
26. Site of Hamley Tramline-1896
27. Site of Hamley Mine-1862
28. Treuers Shaft-c.1880
29. Hughes Engine Pool-c.1865
30. Moonta Mines Methodist Church-1865
31. Site of Primitive Methodist Church-1865
32. Site of Bible Christian Church-c.1865
33. Former Post Office-1946
34. Moonta Mines School-1877
35. Ryan's Tailings Heap
36. Ryans Shaft-1861
37. Reservoir-1873
38. Powder Magazine-c.1875
39. Ruins of General Manager's Residence-1875
40. Ruins of Mine Offices-1875
41. Richmans Enginehouse-1869
42. Taylors Shaft-1862
43. Hughes Enginehouse-1865
44. Site of Mine Workshops-c.1865
45. East Moonta Methodist Church-1872
46. Wild Dog Mine-1924
47. Yelta Mine-1861
48. Cross Roads Methodist Church-1873
49. Cross Roads Primitive Methodist Church-1873
50. Ruins of Precipitation Works-1901
51. Railway Station-1908
52. Royal Hotel-1865
53. Rossiters Residence and Store-c.1865
54. Druids Hall-1866
55. Post Office-1866
56. Cornwall Hotel-1865
57. Shops-c.1870
58. Former Union Bank-1873



59. State Bank-1917
60. Former Bank of South Australia-c.1864
61. Former Moonta Institute-1870
62. Martins Shop and Residence-1863
63. Roachs Butcher Shop-1863

MOONTA HERITAGE TRAIL

The trail starts at the Town Hall and is a leisurely drive of about 16 kilometres which can be completed in 1 to 2 hours.

The trail passes many sites of historical interest and gives visitors an overview of the history and development of Moonta. Follow the Tour Drive No.38) signs.

Most of the buildings featured are privately owned.

Please respect their privacy .