If you would like to see more of Bellbrook, walk back to East Street and turn right. Continue to the intersection of East and Oreen Streets.

On the corner is the site of a once striking building known as the Dew residence. It was built by Tom Dew when he retired from the McKenzie's Creek property about 1920. It became an Art Gallery but was unfortunately burnt to the ground in 1987.

Turn corner into Oreen Street

On the right a vacant block is where once stood a cottage and blacksmith's shop. It was operated by wheelwright, Albert Robinson.

18. Still on the right is another old home. The Silvey family were the first to have lived here. Later owned by Jim Rossiter whose parents (the Edward Rossiters) also lived here. Jim Rossiter owned Elsinor Station across the river and kept his car at the house before the bridge was built.
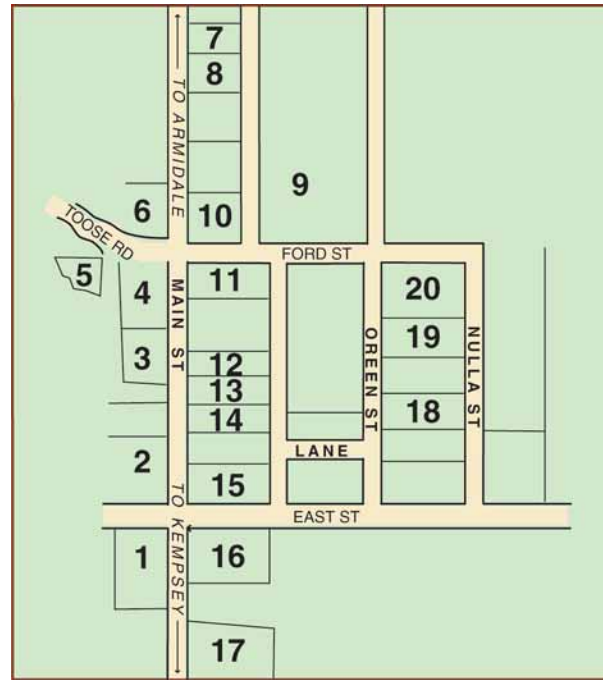
On the left are three cottages that were moved in from the Aboriginal settlement at Nulla Nulla.

19. On the right is a house built as the Anglican Rectory in 1918. There is no longer an incumbent minister in Bellbrook.

20. St James Anglican Church was opened in 1906. The land was donated by Eardley Murray Scott in 1903; the foundation stone was laid the same year. The church was built by Percy Landers, Mr. Scott's son-in-law. At the time the church was part of the Armidale and Grafton Diocese. It is now in the Diocese of Grafton.

*The village walk ends here
so you can now make your way
back to the starting point,
The Bellbrook Hotel.*

Information for items mentioned in this 'Walk in History' may be found at The Macleay River Historical Society Inc. Museum and Resource Centre

25606

Australian Government

Department of the Environment and Heritage

MACLEAY RIVER HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC.

is a resource centre and promotes the study of local history. The centre houses material such as maps photographs, textiles, documents and files on the history of early settlers.

Museum open 10am – 4pm

Step back in time - Visit the Settler's Cottage
Angus McNeil - Photographic Collection

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HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC.

step back in

time

Walks in History

MACLEAY RIVER

BELLBROOK

*This is a footpath walk only.
You do not have permission to enter
private gardens or houses.*

The name Bellbrook was adopted as the official title for the first Post Office in 1882 at the suggestion of James Chapman Toose who established the office at the junction of Nulla Nulla Creek and the Macleay River. Prior to this the office was a Telegraph Station. The town was laid out and gazetted as Bellbrook in 1892. Caroline McMaugh, wife of John McMaugh, an early settler, named the village. At that time bellbirds inhabited the dense scrub along Nulla Nulla Creek. The character of Bellbrook is expressed in the traditional architectural forms of the original buildings that are typical of the period, and the consistent use of weatherboard and corrugated iron materials.

Village Classifications
      Register of the National Trust 1978
      Register of the National Estate in 1981

1. Bellbrook Hotel was built in 1913 by R. Furniful and originally comprised of fifteen rooms. The licence was transferred from Uralgurra Hotel and was run by Mr A.J. (Ap) Davis. In the hallway there are photographs of service personnel. Mary Gaden Davis (nee Woodcock) began the collection during WW1 when soldiers sent their photographs to her to be displayed in the hotel. Tommy Woodcock, the strapper for the famous Melbourne Cup Winner, Phar Lap, was the nephew of Mrs Mary Davis and lived at the hotel with his family during the years his father drove a mail coach between Bellbrook and Kempsey.

2. The Police Station was built in 1922 to replace the first station and, with the exception of the additional office building on the eastern side, is unaltered. The first station was in a cottage on the corner of Main and Ford Streets. (Stop 10) Before this mounted police from Uralgurra, six kms away, patrolled the area.

3. The School residence was built in 1970

4. The Bellbrook School was built in 1930. The first school on this site was built in 1911. Education in the district began in 1883 at Midnight Creek about 3 kms east of Bellbrook. Carcolla School was moved here in 1970 and is now the infants department.

5. This cottage at No. 5 Toose Road was built by local grazier George Wilson in 1930 and was leased as a teacher's residence. It is now a private home.

6. The School of Arts was opened in 1922 at the same time as the first hall, built in 1894, and known then as the Mechanics Institute. In 1901 the first Court of Petty Sessions was held in the old hall. Constable Minter was the acting CPS. The present hall showed silent films when visited by the Picture Show man, Lawrence Penn, during the 1920s. The Bellbrook Pipe Band played to celebrate the opening of the present hall. The band was formed in 1921 and lasted three years. In that time competitions were held which attracted bands from as far away as Ipswich in Qld.

The War Memorial erected in 1956 records the names of local district service people who served in four wars. See the Lone Pine planted in 1998. A memorial garden was opened in 2002 as a tribute to Jim Phillips who devoted forty years of service to the upper Macleay sub branch of the RSL.

Walk to the **Tennis Courts.** Tennis has been a popular game in Bellbrook for many years. The first court was in a paddock between Oreen Street and a laneway behind houses in Main Street. A match was played in 1900 between Bellbrook and Uralgurra. Bellbrook won. The next court was established in the 1930s where the Fire Brigade shed is now.

7. *Cross Main Street.* See Residence and Butcher's shop built and owned by Roy McMaugh in 1930's.

8. The Bellbrook Post Office was built in 1930 by Walter Conn; a portion of the building was used as a store by the Brassell family. There was a bakery in the grounds run by Pat Bradley. The Post Office opened in 1936 on the western end of the building; Mrs Brassell was in charge from 1936 to 1966. She received the M.B.E. for service to the community in1966. This building closed as a Post Office in 1987 and was transferred to the general store owned by Alan Davis. The slot for posting letters can still be seen in the wall.

9. *Walk across the vacant block to see* **St Patrick's Catholic Church** built in 1899. Note the unusual arctic glass windows.

Continue to walk down Main Street

10. The first Bellbrook Police Station. This cottage was built by William McCarney and rented to the police department. In the backyard is an old slab shed that was once the lockup with two cells. This police station was also the Court House until it transferred to the present site. The last sitting of the court was in 1974.

11. *Cross Ford Street.* See general store opened by Alan Davis in 1948. He operated the business as a store and radio repair shop. After the electricity was connected to Bellbrook in 1953 he serviced electrical appliances. The Post Office was transferred here in 1987. Alan died in 1994 but the store and Post Office continued as a business. In the front window are some of Alan's collectables.

12. *Continue down Main Street.* See another early residence where the first occupants were the McCubbin family. This cottage was probably built by William McCarney and was later a teacher's residence. At one time it was owned by the Macleay Shire Council and housed workmen engaged in Flood Mitigation. It is now owned by Henry & Glenda Askew.

13. Originally the McCarney residence - they had the adjoining store. The residence was occupied by the family until the 1920s, when a butcher shop was opened in the grounds by Mrs McManus and her son Rex. Mrs Alice Garner nee Myhill, a well-known up-river identity, lived in the house until 2002.

The Bush Fire Brigade. This was the site of the first shop in Bellbrook. It was built by William McCarney in 1892. It was managed by Mr. McCubbin in 1894 and then leased to various storekeepers until 1920 when it was demolished.

14. The first Post Office and Telegraph Station in the village. Built in 1895, it replaced the Telegraph Office at the junction of Nulla Nulla Creek and the Macleay River. The first Postmaster was James Chapman Toose, who was called on to assist in many ways from reading a funeral service to stitching a wound. The telephone came to Bellbrook in 1918 with four subscribers. The posting slot is still evident.

15. CWA Park. Bellbrook Branch of CWA purchased a vacant block of land and developed a park by planting trees and shrubs. When the branch closed, the park was taken over by Kempsey Shire Council.

16. Gowers Store. This building was a general store. In 1920 the old store at Uralgurra was purchased by Jack Scott, moved to Bellbrook and erected on this site. The removal and construction was carried out by Percy Landers and later purchased by Eardley and Nell Gower who had managed the store for Mrs Gower's father, Henry Davis at Uralgurra. The Gowers were renowned for their community spirit and their kindly support of people in the village. Beside the residence was Aunt Nell's beautiful garden.
The store was closed in 1949 and the goods sold to Alan Davis, great grandson of Henry Davis. The building has been used as a library and a packsaddle business. It became part of the set for the filming of "The Chant of Jimmie Blacksmith". It has been restored by Doug and Frances Orr and is now a co-operative craft shop.

The next vacant block was the site of a blacksmith's shop. Well known "smithys" Jack Carroll and then Jack Watt conducted the business in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

17. This beautiful old family home was built by Dan Davis, son of Henry Davis of Uralgurra, in 1910. They sometimes took in boarders, such as the schoolteacher from Nulla Nulla. It became the home of Jack and Anna McCarthy in 1935. It is still a private residence.