AUSTRALIAN RAILWAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY | **MELBOURNE BRANCH**

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ARHS Melbourne Luncheon Outing Group, ANZ Banking Museum & Immigration Museum with Lunch at Royal Oak Hotel Richmond Tuesday 1st of April 2025

The ANZ Museum first opened in May 1985 to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the granting of a Royal Charter to the Bank of Australasia, one of ANZ's major forebears.

The museum tells the story of Australia's banking heritage beginning with Indigenous Australians and their trade with European settlers. Items displayed include banknotes and coins, moneyboxes, office machines, firearms, gold-mining equipment and uniforms. In putting together these displays, ANZ's Banking Museum draws upon the rich historical resource of ANZ's archives, which contains an extensive collection of manuscripts, correspondence and photographs covering more than 180 years of banking operations.

We then walk to the Immigration Museum on Flinders St.

Established in 1998, the Immigration Museum is a former hub of immigration and trade administration that holds profound historical significance and intricate complexity.

With a host of contemporary exhibitions, virtual learning classes, and historical archives, the museum is committed to spreading values of understanding and empathy through learning.

9:30am	Meet at ANZ Banking Museum. Go on a Tour of the Museum with a Guide/s.
10:45am	Meet at the ANZ Banking Museum Entrance, leave Museum and walk to the Immigration Museum Flinders Street Melbourne. Tour the Immigration Museum.
12:15 pm	Meet to catch the 75 Tram to the Royal Oak Hotel for lunch, corner of Burnley St and Swan St Stop 41.
2:00pm	Leave the Hotel. Catch 75 to the City or out to Hawthorn Station or catch the 48 and change at Kew Junction for the 109 Tram to Box Hill. Walk to Burnley Station down Burnley St, approx. 800 metres. Tour finishes here.

If you want to contact Geoff or John on the day of travel, Geoff 0412 056 033 or John 0418 384 718.

ANZ Banking Museum

ANZ's Gothic Bank first opened for business on 31 May 1887, a period that marked the boom era in Melbourne's history and the evolution of banking institutions in Australia. It stands tall to this day on the corner of Queen and Collins Streets in Melbourne's CBD.

The building was designed by architect William Wardell – a renowned leader of the Gothic Revival movement – and remains one of Australia's most historic buildings.

Originally built to host our predecessor, the English, Scottish and Australia Chartered Bank, as well as the adjacent former Melbourne Stock Exchange, the Gothic Bank has stood witness to the ebb and flow of economic tides across nearly two centuries.

Now, following a two-year restoration and refurbishment program, ANZ's Gothic Bank has re-opened as an ANZ Specialist Hub with a very special addition – a new banking museum that's open to the public.

"As proud custodians of the building and in recognition of the Gothic Bank's architectural significance to the City of Melbourne, we're delighted to play an important role in the conservation of this unique heritage building"

Shayne Elliott, ANZ CEO

Beyond the historical significance of the building also lies a broader story of resilience and adaptability. In an era marked by rapid technological advancements and shifting consumer preferences, the Gothic Bank reopening as a Specialist Hub is one of the ways we're evolving our Australian branch network to help meet customer demands.

Specialist Hubs allow customers to meet face-to-face with a banker for personalised support. These locations will continue to have bankers on hand to help customers use our Smart ATMs and cash devices, assist with using our safe and secure digital solutions, manage their money on the go and have the deeper conversations and guidance that our customers value.

Despite the historic veneer, our Gothic Bank hosts state-of-the-art digital banking services – a masterful fusion of physical and digital architecture.

ANZ's specialist hub and banking museum are open to ANZ customers and visitors Monday to Friday between 9.30am and 4pm (excluding public holidays).

Entry is free and visitors can self-explore any time within opening hours. Our friendly ANZ concierge is available to guide you.

Immigration Museum Melbourne

The stories of us.

Everyone has a story. While our lives might all look different from the outside, our shared humanity becomes clear when we share these stories. We welcome you to share with us, and each other.

Notre-Dame de Paris: The Augmented Exhibition

This new immersive exhibition relives the spectacular history of the Notre-Dame de Paris in an augmented takeover of the Long Room at Immigration Museum.

Five years ago, a devastating fire ravaged the world's most famous and beloved cathedral, Notre-Dame de Paris (Our Lady of Paris). This Augmented Exhibition is a 3D, 360-degree journey through the cathedral's immense history and ongoing restoration.

Opening on Friday 6 December 2024 – just days before the restored cathedral reopens in Paris on 8 December for the first time since the 2019 fire – this spectacular exhibition will grant singular access to Notre-Dame for visitors on the other side of the world, right here in Melbourne.

Explore the cathedral's history, from its earliest origins in the 12th century to its illustrious 850-year history, and the painstaking restoration following the devastating fire.

Designed and produced by digital heritage specialists, Histovery, in collaboration with Rebuilding Notre-Dame de Paris and supported by Presenting Partner L' Oréal Group, Notre-Dame de Paris, the Augmented Exhibition has been an international success. This world-touring exhibition has been seen by over 380,000 visitors across eleven cities worldwide including in Paris, Washington, Montreal, Dubai and London.

To navigate the exhibition, each visitor will use a HistoPad, an augmented reality touchscreen tablet that is a portable, hand-held device designed to be accessible for all ages. The HistoPad creates immersive and interactive reconstructions, visually transporting visitors to explore the cathedral's key historical moments from 1163 to the present-day restoration.

Visitors will travel back in time to the Middle Ages when the first stones of the cathedral were laid; to the lavish wedding of King Henry IV in 1572; to the glittering coronation of Napoleon Bonaparte in 1804; and to the nineteenth-century construction of Notre-Dame's iconic spire, which was tragically destroyed by the 2019 fire.

The exhibition will bring to light the skill, artistry and vision of the cathedral's architects, craftsmen and builders over the ages, culminating in the 21st-century experts who are restoring the iconic landmark to its former glory today.

History of Customs House, the building the Immigration Museum is housed in.

The Building

Three customs buildings have occupied the current site of the Old Customs House, culminating in the existing grand structure. Archaeological digs have revealed the foundations of the earlier buildings, and a detailed restoration project has returned the Customs House to its former glory.

Three Customs Houses

Illustration of Custom House lithographed & published by Stringer, Mason & Co., Melbourne, 1853.

The first iteration of Customs House was a white tent pitched on the banks of the Yarra, soon to be replaced with a structure described as a 'shabby, leaky, comfortless, weatherboard cabin' which shipped in pieces from Sydney and erected here during the 1830s.

As trade increased, a two-storey bluestone Customs House was completed in 1841. Designed by the Government architect in Sydney, it was Melbourne's first stone building. However, by the 1850s critics called it one of the 'ugliest and most inconvenient of all our public buildings'.

With the vast increase in revenue brought by the gold rush, the Victorian Government commissioned immigrant architect Peter Kerr to design a new Customs House. Although the building was occupied by Customs in 1858, a shortage of funds prevented its completion. The building was finally completed in 1876, to a modified design by Kerr and two other government architects.

1841 Building

As Melbourne's trade increased, a bluestone Customs House with a slate roof was completed on this site in 1841. It sat by the Turning Basin, a natural pool on the Yarra River that was the highest point to which ships could navigate up the river.

Convicts were used to row the customs officers out to ships moored in the bay. Although the settlement was not a penal colony, several hundred convicts worked as servants or on government duties.

The Present Building

The grand facade of the completed Customs House, 1876.

The present Customs House building is the result of two separate building phases over 20 years, architect Peter Kerr was involved in both.

With vastly expanded trade and soaring revenue from the gold rush, the Victorian colonial government commissioned Peter Kerr to design a new Customs House. Construction of the building commenced in 1855, but halted in 1858 when the economy slowed and government revenue declined.

Completion of a redesigned building recommenced in 1873, to a new design by Kerr and two other government architects, John James Clark and Arthur Ebden Johnson. The final 1876 building incorporated the Long Room from the 1850s building.

A Grand Palace

The Customs House was built to be one of Melbourne's grand buildings. Its grandeur declared that Melbourne was a thriving and wealthy metropolis, linked by trade to Britain and the other major cities of the British Empire.

Customs was the treasure house of government income. Until the introduction of income tax in 1915, customs duties raised some four-fifths of all government revenue.

The architecture was based on an Italian Renaissance palace. In the Palazzo style, the ground floor is a storage area, and the main activity occurs on the piano nobile (noble level) on the first floor.

Architect Peter Kerr modelled the ionic columns and door architraves on details of the Erechtheion temple in Athens. The plaster decorations may have been manufactured locally by British and Italian modellers, who established a local industry in the 1850s.

An archaeological survey at the rear of the site in 1997 identified building footings from a previous occupancy.

Restoration

When the project to transform the Customs House into the Immigration Museum began in 1998, the building had been empty for six years. It was in a state of disrepair, and decades of alterations obscured many of its original features.

Since its construction in 1876, considerable changes had been made to the building's interior to accommodate a growing Customs Service. After Customs officers moved out in 1965, the building was used as Melbourne offices for the Commonwealth Parliament and its local members.

Linoleum tiles had replaced original floors, a rabbit warren of office partitions disguised the original layout, plasterwork was cracked and paintwork peeling.

The challenge was to restore the Customs House to its original design, while adapting it to operate as a modern museum. Many of the twentieth century additions were erased, and architectural features such as tiled floors, moulded ceilings and timber details were restored.

Customs History

Within a generation, the gold rushes and pastoral industry transformed Melbourne from a small town into a bustling metropolis. The work of customs officers reflected those broader changes, as they sought to regulate trade and immigration.
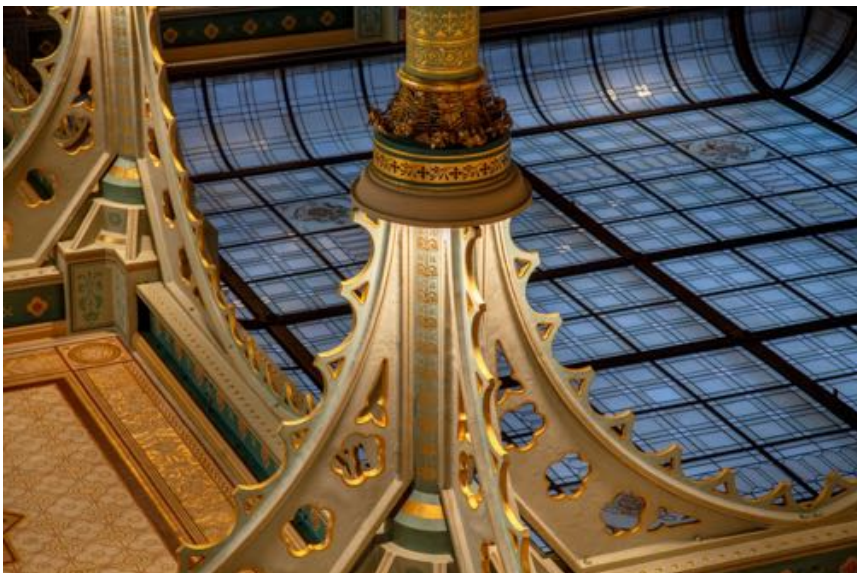

Early Customs, 1830s

The first Customs officer arrived in Melbourne in 1836, only two years after its founding. Governor Bourke in Sydney had to accept the illegal settlement at Port Phillip by John Batman and his fellow entrepreneurs. There was little he could do to prevent it. But Bourke could at least ensure that smuggling was prevented and that customs duties were paid on all goods brought into Melbourne.

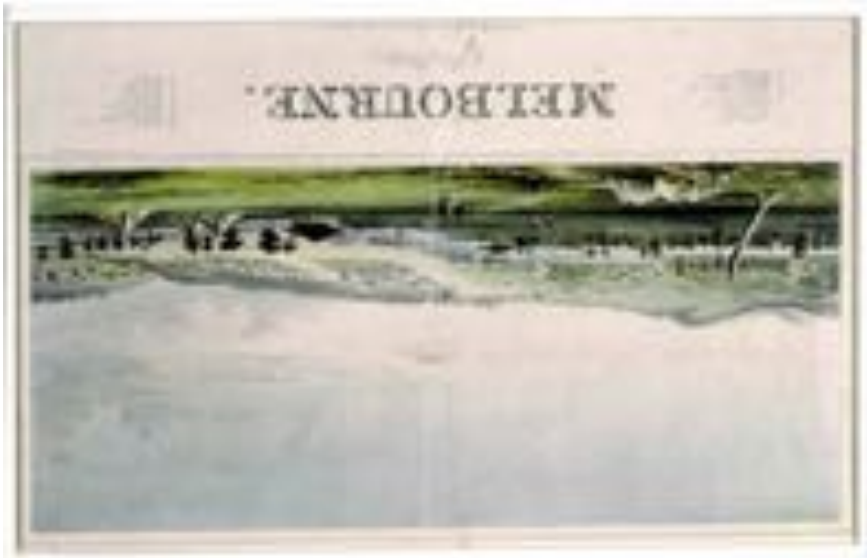View of Columns ANZ Banking Museum

Exterior ANZ Banking Museum Building ANZ Banking Museum

Details of the Column ANZ Banking Museum

Interior showing the vaulted archs & Ceiling ANZ Banking Museum

Melbourne from the south side of the Yarra River, 1839.
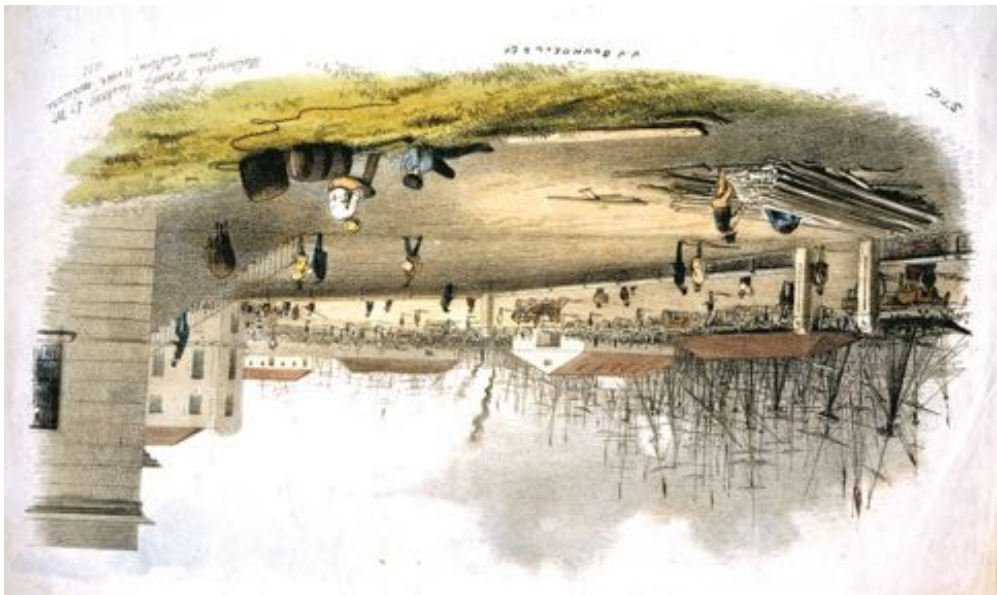

The Customs tent by the Yarra River, 1836

Uncovering foundations of a row of narrow toilet cubicles used by early customs officials, 1998.

Customs House enclosure, Melbourne, 1858

The Customs Tent

Robert Webb established his customs house in a round white tent pitched beside the Yarra River, close to where the boats unloaded their stock and supplies.

The customs service immediately paid its way. In 1837 Webb collected duties of 3000 from 140 ships, far more than his annual salary of 200.

Maritime Trade, 1840s

Melbourne's maritime trade expanded rapidly through the 1840s. Manufactured goods for the expanding town and surrounding farming districts came through Melbourne's port. Large amounts of imported spirits and tobacco generated much customs revenue.

Even stock and wool that was loaded at Geelong had to be cleared through customs at Melbourne, an arrangement that infuriated Geelong merchants.

In 1840 Melbourne was declared a free warehousing port, which meant that merchants could hold their imported goods in bonded warehouses, and only pay customs duty once they sold the goods. Commercial bond stores sprung up around the port in the vicinity of the customs house.

The Gold Rush, 1850s

The gold rush in the 1850s brought a dramatic increase in trade and a constant flow of immigrants to Victoria. When Victoria was proclaimed a separate colony in 1850 there had been concern whether the new government could raise sufficient revenue.

The Customs department was the government's own gold mine. Duties were levied on all the imported luxuries brought into the wealthy colony, while a tax was levied on the export of gold. Customs revenue in 1850 totalled 84,000. In 1854 the customs officers collected the same amount in a month.

Not everybody appreciated this success. The Melbourne Morning Herald fumed that customs officers were 'engaged in nothing more than in so disguising the medicine of taxation that the patient shall take it without being aware of the precise moment when he does so'.

Melbourne's Port, 1850s

During the 1850s, an endless procession of customs agents and ship captains climbed the stairs to the Customs House. By this time, the building stood at the centre of a busy maritime precinct.

The gateway to the Victorian goldfields and agricultural districts, the bustling port was a scene of continual activity.

Newly arrived immigrants crowded the wharves. Ships brought supplies for the new colony, and departed with Australian wool and gold.

Imported goods were hauled to the nearby Western Markets, or stored in the many commercial bond stores that ringed the area. Private wharves and crowded warehouses lined the waterfront, and the offices of navigation companies and ship owners were nearby.

Numerous hotels, attracted by the commercial opportunities in the busy precinct, offered temporary accommodation for travellers and immigrants, and entertainment to visiting sailors.

Tarrifs

The primary role of customs officers was to calculate the tariff payable on goods imported into Victoria. The term was derived from the ransoms demanded by the pirates of Cape Tariffe.

Customs officers spent a great deal of their time measuring and weighing goods, and then calculating the amount of duty to be paid by the importer. The tariffs for different products varied, and officers consulted published lists.

'Anything to Declare?'

Victorian customs officers examining baggage at Spencer Street railway station, Illustrated Australian News, 1 June 1889

As now, one of the main functions of Customs Officers was to prevent smuggling of illegal goods, and to ensure that customs duty was paid on imported goods.

When ships arrived at the port, passengers disembarked, the cargo was unloaded and the Customs 'Landing Waiter' checked the papers listing the cargo and persons on board. He then superintended the discharge of cargo and determined whether duties had to be paid.

Passenger's cabin baggage could be inspected when they disembarked. Because luggage held in the ship's hold would take longer to unload, passengers would typically return the next day to the Customs Shed at the pier or at Spencer Street railway station to clear the remainder of their luggage.

Measurement

Gaugers at work measuring the alcoholic strength of spirits, c. 1907.

Calculating the duty payable on a barrel of brandy was a detailed task. The gauger had to measure the barrel to determine its volume. Barrels were irregular in shape, and finding the volume required several measurements and checking tables of figures.

Alcoholic content was then measured with a hydrometer. The duty varied according to the alcoholic strength of the spirits. Imported spirits attracted a duty of 12 shillings per gallon; more if the spirits were above 'proof'.

Protection and Federation

Passing through Customs at Wodonga, 1881

Customs tariffs were not just the major source of government revenue. They were a major instrument of government policy.

The nineteenth century Victorian economy rested on wool, gold and manufacturing. The colonial government used import tariffs as a way of protecting these industries. Farming and mining equipment were brought in free, but imported manufactured goods that would compete with local industries were subject to high tariffs.

These duties applied equally to items brought from New South Wales or South Australia as they did to items imported from Europe. Customs houses were built at all the major crossing points into the colony, and customs officers patrolled the borders to prevent smuggling.

EMIGRANTS LANDING AT THE QUEEN'S WHARF, MELBOURNE.
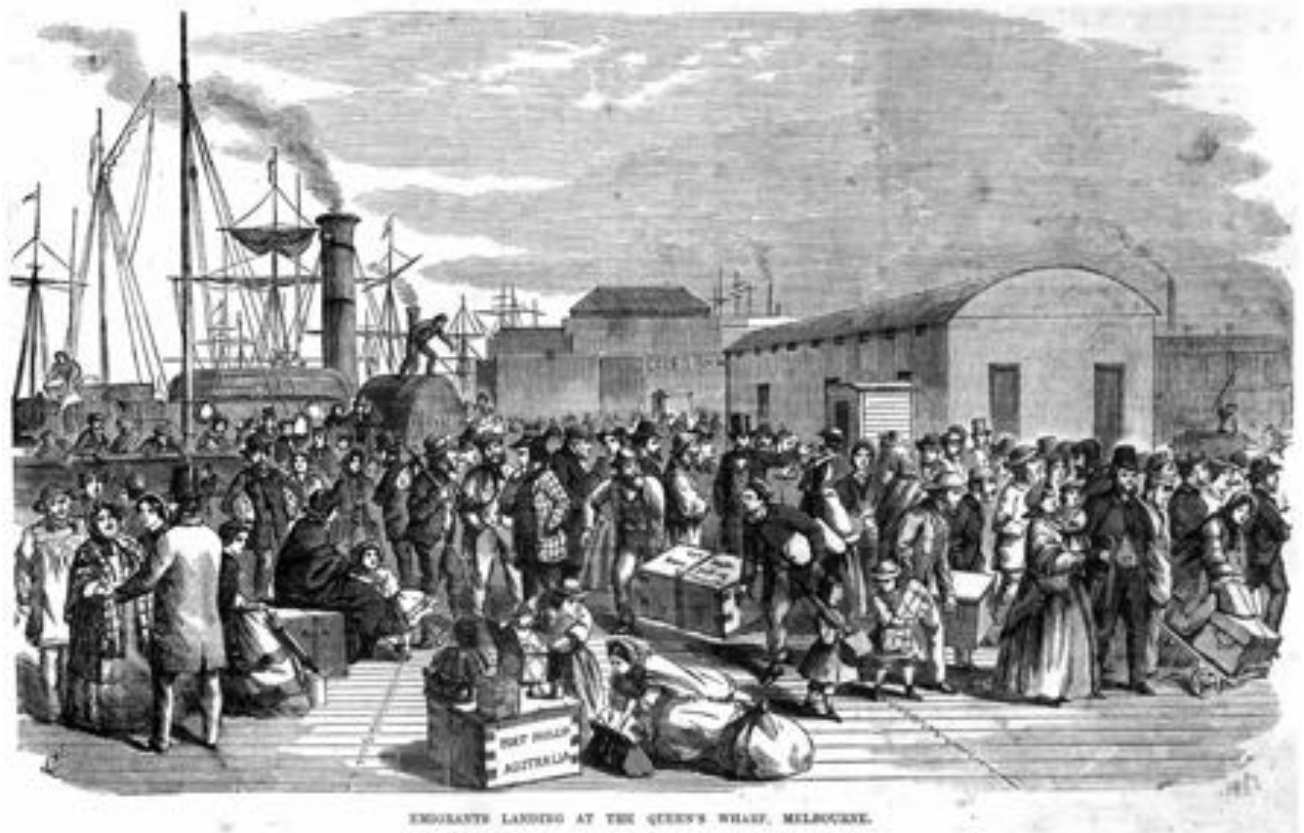
Immigrants arrive with their goods at Queens Wharf, near the Customs House, 1854.

Compared to the other Australian colonies, Victoria was protectionist, with high tariffs. The debates between free trade and protectionism fuelled the political debates over Federation, and the creation of the Commonwealth of Australia in 1901 brought a welcome relief from the hated customs posts on state borders.

Information & Pictures from ANZ Banking Museum and Immigration Museum Websites.
<https://www.anz.com/shareholder/centre/about/history/banking-museum/>
<https://museumsvictoria.com.au/immigrationmuseum/resources/customs-house/>

Notes compiled by Geoff Wallace

E&OE