

Walking Tour of Adelaide's Historic Olive Groves: 1

East Parklands and Hackney

Although olives were introduced earlier into other colonies, South Australia and especially Adelaide can lay claim to be the historic centre of the Australian olive industry. Less than 50 years after its foundation, the City of Adelaide (and neighbouring Hackney) boasted more than 7000 — possibly as many as 30,000! — olive trees, planted mostly by the Corporation in the city's parks and squares. This walk connects many of the surviving olive trees on the eastern side of Adelaide. It is unstructured; start and finish anywhere. It will take you through or close to the East Parklands, the Botanic Garden, Botanic Park, the National Wine Centre and the cafés of Hutt, Rundle and Melbourne Streets.

Stevenson's Garden

George Stevenson (1799–1856), a gifted amateur horticulturist, introduced the first successful olive trees into South Australia (1836) and was an early advocate of olive cultivation. In 1844 Stevenson recommended that the South Australia Company import olive stock; these were planted in the nursery of Stevenson's associate, John Bailey (2).

The first (and still surviving) olive tree is in this general area. Please respect the privacy of the current landowners.

The tree at 1b was possibly planted by John Morphett or George Kingston in the 1840s.



Botanic Garden and Park

The first two directors of the Botanic Garden, George Francis and Richard Schomburgk, were olive enthusiasts. The Botanic Garden and Botanic Park include specimen olive trees, such as the African sub-species, *Olea africana*. The olive tree in this area of Botanic Park is possibly a remnant from Schomburgk's nursery for the trees imported by William Boothby in 1877 and known locally as "Boothby's Lucca" (in fact var. *Frantoiana*).

Parklands boundaries

Through the 1870s the Adelaide City Council bordered parts of the East Parklands, from Botanic Road to Unley Road, with olive trees mostly from what remained of Bailey's Garden. Planted in single rows, the olive trees provided a shelter-belt that defined the roads leading from the city — a cheap and productive form of fencing that augmented the existing olive plantations and provided employment for, initially, the inmates of the original Lunatic Asylum (the site now occupied by the National Wine Centre). The trees along Fullarton Road (4b) were planted in 1876 at the suggestion of Luther Scammell, one of the founders of F. H. Faulding & Company, an early producer/bottler of olive oil.

East Terrace plantation

The East Terrace plantation was the last of the three main Adelaide City Council olive groves. It was planted progressively from 1872. Planting the main grove at Wakefield Road was completed in 1876-7. This completed an almost continuous belt of olive trees in the East Parklands, from the Botanic Garden to South Terrace. Apart from some remedial pruning by Paolo Villanis in 1883-4 and like most of the other Parklands olive trees, the grove has been neglected since and gradually reduced in size.



View of the northern section of the East Terrace plantation in 1880, from 5a above. Courtesy: State Library of South Australia

John Bailey

Trained as a horticulturist at the famous Loddiges & Sons nursery at Hackney near London, John Bailey (1800–1864) immigrated to South Australia with the assistance of the South Australia Company in 1839. He brought valuable horticultural stock, including six varieties of olive. About 1844 Bailey opened J. Bailey & Sons' "Hackney Nursery" (2a). When the Company imported olive 'truncheons' in 1845, Bailey was charged with planting, propagating and distributing them; the trees were planted in Bailey's Garden and on the adjacent land belonging to the Company (2b). Remnant trees can be found in the small park at the end of Botanic Street and around "Athelney" (St Peter's College).

In 1851 George Francis pressed the first South Australian olive oil from fruit picked at Bailey's Garden; the oil was exhibited at the Great Exhibition in London, winning an honourable mention. Despite this, olive oil was not manufactured successfully again in South Australia until 1870!

"Bailey's Garden"



In 1855 the Adelaide City Council contracted Bailey to revegetate sections of the North Parklands including the area near Mann Terrace (2c), planted with olives in 1855-6.

When Bailey closed his nursery in 1858 he left over 15,000 olive trees for distribution. For twenty years these remained the main local source of olive stock and were used in the East Terrace plantation.

 Finish your tour by enjoying quality South Australian olive oil from the extensive collection at Providore, in the Central Market.

Stall 66/67, Central Market, Gouger Street, Adelaide
Tuesday and Friday (am and pm), Saturday (am)

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← Approx scale = 500 metres →

