

Historic Holiday Destination - Great Oyster Bay

by Damien Thomas

'The juiciest and most delicious seafood in Australia' is a bold statement in a country which highly values fresh seafood. Perhaps it is not so surprising, when you hear it has been made about the Great Oyster Bay area of Tasmania.

You can feed your passion for oysters and the best seafood, not to mention the cold climate wines, with a stay in one of Tasmania's historic townships - **Swansea**. **Waterloo Point** was the first name given to the settlement in 1827. There is a lovely walk which starts at Waterloo Beach, which wends its way around Waterloo Point, past the golf course and cemetery. The views across **Great Oyster Bay** to the **Freycinet Peninsula**, the **Hazards** and **Shouten Island** are fabulous. The walk will take you through a Mutton Bird (shearwater) breeding area. These birds nest in burrows on the ground and can be seen returning to their nests at dusk in the summer months. The most challenging thing about this 2.3 km walk is pronouncing its name - **Loontitetermairrelehoiner** (try saying it fast!). It's named after the local Aboriginal people, and is a good way to maintain the connections to the area. There are a lot of middens in the area, as the Aboriginals discovered the excellent quality of the oysters 35,000 years ago.

Swansea is the only Tasmanian historic town situated on the sea front. There is a rich history of European settlement, starting with the Welshman, George Meredith, naming the town after Swansea in Wales. He also chose a Welsh name for the county - Glamorgan.

The history in the town is still evolving. The original **(Morris') General Store**, is now the IGA. Constructed in 1838, the general store was expanded by building another two levels. Here's another trivia question for you - how many panes of glass are there in each of its windows?



“ We wish we could have stayed longer. ”

The **Swansea Bark Mill** was built in 1885 to create tannic acid from black wattle bark. The tannic acid was used in tanning leather. The site has expanded to incorporate a Tavern and Bakery while the original machinery is now preserved as part of a working display and museum.

All Saints Church was built in 1871. It still provides services to the Uniting and Anglican Co-operating parish.

Meredith House was built in 1853. It was originally built as a house. It became a school for girls when Mr Graham bought the land and married a school teacher. Mr James Morris purchased it in 1870, but it had become a boarding house by 1892. Today, it still offers accommodation, albeit at a very different standard.

There is also **Schouten House**, **East Coast Heritage Museum** and the **Council Chambers** to explore. There is some evidence the Council Chambers were constructed in-part from the former Military Outpost at Waterloo.



Schouten House

Then there is the very famous, convict built '**Spiky Bridge**'. Constructed entirely of stone with no mortar, it is an ingenious design, and no one is entirely sure why the convicts laid stones sideways to make it spiky, although it has been suggested this was done to irritate the overseers.



Meredith House

“ Stunningly good value, from just \$510 per week for 7 nights, for up to 6 guests! ”

There is a surprising amount to see, do and eat in the area and fortunately API members have an accommodation option at exceptional rates. **API's 3-bedroom holiday home in Swansea** is very popular. A recent guest commented *"It is well set up and very comfortable. It was a fabulous location... close to restaurants, cafes and local attractions. We wish we could have stayed longer."* **API**

Isn't it time for you to try it for yourself?



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