

## Attractions

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### BOTHWELL TASMANIA

Bothwell has been largely untouched by the passage of time. As if it were a Colonial Snap-shot. Established in the 1820s, it has retained a distinctive colonial Georgian character &mdash;small well-proportioned stone houses, simple hotels and shops, and handsome country residences.

"The tiny village of Bothwell lies in the lush Clyde River valley in the central highlands of Tasmania. It is remarkable for its collection of colonial houses, ranging from grand residences to modest cottages and shops.

The Bothwell district was explored in 1807 but it was in the 1820s when Van Diemen's Land&mdash;as Tasmania was then known&mdash;was being promoted as an attractive place for people of means to settle, that Bothwell had its beginnings. By 1822 the district had been surveyed and the first settlers, many of them Scots, had taken up their grants. One of the pioneers, Captain Patrick Wood, a retired officer of the East India Army, introduced a herd of Aberdeen Angus cattle, founding what is believed to be the oldest pedigree herd in Australia.

Another original settler, Alexander Reid, a native of Ratho near Edinburgh, played what is thought to have been the first game of golf in Australia, establishing the links still used by the Bothwell Golf Club.

The Lieutenant-Governor of Van Diemen's Land, Sir Arthur George, visited the tiny settlement in 1824 and named it after the Scottish town of Bothwell, on the Clyde River near Glasgow. About the same time, the Fat Doe River, so called by kangaroo hunters who had visited the area before the first settlers arrived, became known as the Clyde.

Despite official efforts to play down Tasmania's penal beginnings, Bothwell's pioneers, many of whom lived on lonely farmhouses, led dangerous lives, prey to escaped convicts and Aborigines whose ways they had disrupted. The settlers cleared the bush to prevent ambushes and built their first huts of wattle and daub or of locally quarried stone. Their barns doubled as fortresses. Within ten years of the founding of the settlement, there were a brickworks, a tannery, a bakery, a blacksmith's shop and a barracks to house a company of soldiers. A short distance outside the town two flour mills, 'Nant' and 'Thorpe', were operating. A magistrate, a doctor and a minister had joined the settlers, and the Presbyterians and Anglicans had grudgingly united to build St Luke's Church for their joint worship. By 1850 when the Irish exile John Mitchel arrived in Bothwell, the town had between 60 and 70 houses and four large inns 'establishments which are much better supported on the voluntary system, and have much larger congregations than the church . . .', wrote Mitchel. An active member of the Young Ireland Group, an organisation that sought to overthrow British domination of Ireland, Mitchel was arrested for sedition. He was eventually transferred to Van Diemen's Land and given a ticket-of-leave to reside in Bothwell. Three years later he escaped to America.

Bothwell is little changed since Mitchel's days. There are now 170 houses and about 400 people in the town, which began as a rural centre and remains one still, having avoided the peaks and slumps caused by such disruptive nineteenth-century developments as the discovery of gold."

(The Reader&rsquo;s Digest)