

# York & Surrounding Districts

## SCENIC SELF-DRIVE ROUTES

### Tour No 9



# Beverley & County Peak

Return via Mawson

This route explores outer areas of Beverley and York Shires and the interesting geological feature of County Peak.

Distance: approx 160 km round trip tour

Note: Unsealed roads may not be in good condition following heavy rain



For further information on this or other self drive tours please contact

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[www.york.wa.gov.au](http://www.york.wa.gov.au)

9641 1301



**BE PART OF “HISTORY STILL IN THE MAKING”**

**Commence in Avon Terrace at the York Town Hall** toilets available here.

Set your odometer to 0 and head south.

**At 0.2 km** Stop sign at the Crossroads. On the left the Shire has created a pleasant green park on the site of the earliest Church in York (1840). *The position of the Church is marked with a cross and some of the early tombstones from the graveyard that once surrounded the church are laid in the ground in the shape of the former building.*

**At 0.4 km** Redmile Road on left used to go down to an early bridge over the Avon to the Convict Depot. Opposite on the right is the former King's Head Hotel (1848), now a private dwelling. *It was once a bustling hotel with its coach house, stables etc.* Also on the right is a white private house on the Wheeler St corner which was once also a bakery from the 1860's. Along this street there are several workmen's cottages from the 1800's.

**At 0.6 km** cross over Bland's Brook on the old Bridge named after one of York's early Resident Magistrates. *You are in a heritage listed precinct, steeped in early Western Australian history, called Blandstown [pamphlets available at the YIS if you are interested to explore this whole area on foot, also a booklet containing 4 Heritage Walk Trails].* This was the southern entrance to York. On the left is historic Wansbrough House (c 1860's) now National Trust registered. *It was once the home of one of York's early builders who often used a distinctive castellated front section on his houses.* Next is the grand two storey Langsford House (1873). On the right on the corner of Bland Street, is Brook Cottage. *An early section from the 1860's is at the rear with a Victorian addition in front.* On the left is Parker Road that leads down to Balladong Farm, which is now private property, but was the first inland farm in Western Australia dating from the 1830's. *Many important exploration trips into Western Australia's hinterland left from this farm.* On the right is the former Albion Inn (1861) with its distinctive balustrade on the upper storey verandah. *It is now a B&B and Beauty Retreat where you can stay and be pampered.*

**From 0.6 – 0.8 km** Several of the original small cottages from the 1860's are still standing. *In the one next to the Albion Inn on its south side, the midwife, Nurse Duckham, ran a Maternity Home where many of York's early residents first saw the light of day.*

**At 0.9 km** Knott's Road goes off to the right and Avon Terrace becomes The Great Southern Highway. On the corner on the right is the Boot maker's Shop then Bygrave's Cottage (1800's). *Note the low window on the south wall of the boot maker's workshop. It was low down so he could sit at his workbench and see who was coming along the road to York.*

**At 1.2 km** on the right is the Co-operative Bulk Handling grain facility. *A variety of grains and cereals are accepted here and railed off to the ports for shipment overseas.*

**At 1.6 km** cross the railway line – left goes eastwards on to Bruce Rock and right to Northam and Perth.

**At 2.2 km** look right across the paddocks to a hill (Mt. Matilda) that has a rock formation coming down the slope looking like a road with boulders stacked along each side. It is a very noticeable feature that can also be



seen from Mt. Brown and other places round the Shire. *This is a dolerite dyke thrown up from the bowels of the earth millions of years ago. It is of spiritual significance to the*

*aboriginal people who have a legend about this. The Nyungar people revere a giant serpent associated with water called the Wargyl. The story says that in The Dreamtime when the Wargyl was forming the landscape, it slid over the mountain leaving that track, rested overnight in a patch of bush in the paddock which is supposed to be always damp, then moved on to form the Golguler (called the Avon River by white people) . Across the paddocks on the left is a continuing belt of trees where the Avon River flows.*

**At 4.1 km** on the right is a tree-lined drive leading to the colonial homestead of “Grassdale” (private property). Roadside trees are mostly York Gums (*Eucalyptus loxophleba*) and the tall shrubs are mainly jam trees (*Acacia acuminata*) so called because when the wood is cut it smells like raspberry jam. *It is a very durable, hard, wood and the pioneers used it extensively for fence posts. Some which are still standing today could be over 100 years old.* The hill on the left is Mt. Hardey.

**At 5.7 km** on the right along the verge is the beginning of the Orchid Conservation Reserve. *In the spring there are wildflowers, including various orchids, among the jam trees and further in you can see the railway line to Albany and the water pipeline. Please tread gently if you explore this on foot.*

**At 8.4 km** on the right is a quarry that produced high quality granite for monuments.

**At 9.2 km** you will cross over Cave Hill Bridge. Between here and **10.3 km** where Youngs Road comes in, keep a look out to the right and you may see a ragged shaped cave about half way up the escarpment wall. *In the cave there is a Nyungar drawing of a round object with lines across it like loosely woven string and a hand print and a jagged hole in the roof of the cave. Legend has it that in the Dreamtime the moon was a man on the earth and some warriors chased him into this cave. He got tired of being confined there so he put his hand on the cave wall and using that leverage he burst out, making the jagged hole in the roof and escaped into the sky where he roams around still. Access to the cave can only be arranged with the Aboriginal Lands Department.*

**At 10.2 km** on the left is Gwambygine Park. See the rammed earth entrance gateposts of the Alcoa million dollar Avon Ascent environmental project. This is worth a visit. *Calculate your extra kilometers if visiting. (Toilets, BBQ's and children's climbing equipment here) Alcoa established all the facilities including a boardwalk that leads to a gazebo lookout over the River. Riverine vegetation is labelled, and well presented boards tell various interesting aspects of the River. Water birds frequent the pool and sometimes you may see a long-necked tortoise swimming. Blue wrens and other birds have been seen in the trees and the paper bark tea-tree bushes (*Melaleuca raphiophylla*). See interesting lichen on some of the bushes. In the bush further south in the park, following a line of pine posts marking a path is a memorial rock with a plaque at the site of the Gwambygine School (1908 - 1947) listing names of students and the dedicated teachers. The York Society has a fascinating article in one of its publications about the trials and tribulations of running this rural school, especially when the river was in flood. The teacher boarded on the east side of the River, was rowed across, and then walked to where her horse was stabled to ride on to the school. The school was closed in 1947 and the students were bused to York.*

**At 11 km** on the left pass the East Gwambygine Road.

**At 11.1 km** you cross the Wittenoom Brook and on the left down near the trees along the River is the old Wittenoom homestead (private property) now owned by the Clifton family – *both notable names in the annals of the history of the Swan River Colony.*

**At 12.4 km** Gwambygne Conservation Reserve is on the left on a curve of the road at Gwambygne Pool. *This spot was the swimming hole for generations of young Yorkies. However, due to a combination of factors, the river is silting up again even after many tonnes of silt were removed several years ago. So, much reclamation work is still ongoing. Tributaries that feed into the Avon upstream need to be planted with correct riverine vegetation to try to slow the washing in of silt. There are information boards and plantings of the shrubs and trees that once grew here, though the harsh summers and sparse rainfall of 2006/7 killed a lot of the seedlings. Walk down to the River and see the banks of silt still forming. There is still some bird life; several families of ducks swim here and in summer 2007 three Black Swans were seen here. Come again in a few years and see if we are making progress!*

**At 14 km** pass the entrance to Lavendale Farm on your left.

**At 15.1 km** Cross Oakover River.

**At 15.4 km** On the left is the entry track to St. Peter's Anglican Church (1860) and graveyard at Gilgering. *It is thought that the church was built by convicts.* The adjacent site of the old school, high on the river bank, is marked.

**At 18 km** cross Fleay's Bridge.

**At 19.2 km** Leave the Shire of York and enter the Shire of Beverley.

**At 22.3 km** pass the York Williams Road on the right.

**At 22.9 km** Cross the Dale River which eventually joins the Avon and thence on down to the Swan River.

**At 27.9 km** The Top Beverley Road from York comes in on the left. Arrive at the outskirts of the town of BEVERLEY. *Beverley was named after an English town near York in the UK*

**At 32.2 km** see St. Mary's Anglican Church (1892) on the left.

**At 32.5 km** The Dead Finish Museum is on the left. For opening times enquire at the Beverley Visitor Centre.

**At 32.8 km turn left** at the crossroads into the main street of Beverley which is also the road to Mawson.

**Deviation Option – Turn Right** in to Waterhatch road to visit Avondale Discovery Farm 6km from the town centre of Beverley. Phone the Avondale Discovery Farm on 9646 1004 or the visitor information centre on 9646 1555 for operating hours.

**At 33 km** on the right is the Beverley Visitor Centre. *Here you will also find the remaining wheel from the crashed aeroplane Amana. In June 1950 the plane crashed approx 18 km from York with the loss of all lives. This was Australia's worst air disaster.*



*There are things to see and do in Beverley if you decide to visit a while such as the grave of the faithful aborigine, Jimmy Noongal who accompanied Sir John Forrest .*

**Set odometer to 0** at the Visitor Centre; *visit the Art Gallery in the old Railway station on left.* Toilets situated opposite the train station. Carry on the journey still in the main Street and continue along the Mawson road.

**At 6 km** just over the River, **turn right** onto Yenyenning Lakes Road which is sealed. This is also called Bremner Rd in some places. **At 2.2 km** pass entrance to Gliding Airfield on the right.

**At 13.3km** **turn left** at T junction into Kokeby Road (sealed)

**At 13.5 km** **turn right** into Patten Road (unsealed). *Please drive carefully on all gravel roads with no sudden braking or swerving.*

**At 16.9 km** at T junction **turn left** into Yenyenning Lakes Road (unsealed).

On the road verge are dark barked York Gums (*Eucalyptus loxophleba*) and Salmon Gums (*Eucalyptus salmonophloia*). *The majestic Salmon Gums have white or salmon-coloured trunks depending on the time of year, and an umbrella shaped canopy of shiny leaves. Where they grow is good land for farming so this was quickly selected by the early settlers.*

**At 18.6 km** sparse tamarisks grow on left. *These were planted some time ago with the hope that they would slow the spread of the salt. They certainly grow on waterlogged salty areas where nothing much else will grow, but when they drop their leaves, the leaves are found to contain salt, so no real progress is made.*

**At 19.6 km** the road curves left with a ruined cement brick house on the right.

**At 21.1 km** The Erindale Old School site (1906–1910) is on your right.

**At 22.6 km** is a lovely tree lined road with gum trees meeting overhead. They are tall Salmon gums with shiny leaves, and white trunked wandoos (*Euc. wandoo*) with greyish green leaves. Note extensive tree plantings for revegetation, erosion control and stock fodder in the Shire. **At 26.5 km** is another avenue of tall trees.

**At 28.3 km** Crossroads – keep going on the Yenyenning Lakes Road. *Yenyenning comes from the Nyungar name nyin nyinniny meaning ‘sit sitting’ – a place to sit and rest by the water.* To the right is the Qualandary Crossing to the Avon River where the Lakes can overflow into the River. *This is monitored for its saltiness as the life of the river creatures is very dependent on the health of the River. The lakes are part of the extensive ancient drainage system from around Kellerberrin to Yealering forming part of the catchment of the Avon River and seem to have always been salty.*

**At 30.4 km** Alley planting of trees on the left. *This is another environmentally friendly measure to slow wind erosion and provide habitat for birds and other creatures.*

**At 31.6 km** **turn right** following sign to Yenyenning Lakes the home of the Beverley Ski Club.

**At 32.7 km** **turn left** over a cattle grid on dirt road then at **33.1 km** go over another grid. See Landcare plantings on left and right. See the remains of dead trees in the lake killed by salinity. Trees are Mallee type York gums and Casuarinas. The low salt-tolerant Samphire is the dominant vegetation.

**At 34.2km** arrive at the lake shore; go past the boat launching area to the rough dilapidated shelter shed and very basic toilets (bucket supplied collect water from the lake). *With the plantings of tea tree (*Melaleuca species*), Casuarina, and York Gums, land birds you may see in this area are Grey Fantail, Splendid Wren, Tree Martin, Port Lincoln parrots,*

*Rainbow Bee-eaters (Nov-Mar), Willy Wagtail, Scarlet Crested Robin. Various water birds such as White-faced Heron, Cormorant, Great Egret, Grey Teal, depending on the season, Pelicans frequent the Lake especially in winter when rain freshens up the water. The gums with the fine leaves are Euc. spathulata which grow very well in saline waterlogged terrain.*

### **Return to the boat launching area**

**Set odometer to 0** and leave the Lake along the dirt road, back over the cattle grids to the T junction where you now **turn right** heading for County Peak, so called because from the top you can see into 7 Shires (early settlers called these counties) Beverley, Pingelly, Brookton, Quairading, Corrigin, Kellerberrin and York. As you look left across the paddocks you can see a smaller version of a conical ironclad hill called Dog Kennel Hill, so called because there used to be wild dogs in the caves.

**At 5.5 km** leave the Yenyenning Lakes Road which curves to the right and **turn left** into Ewerts Road still on a well formed gravel road. The Road curves left, and left again with York gums on the verge. **Important Note:** if using a road map, ignore the road on the map saying "County Peak Road" **before** you come to Wansbrough Road as that road to the Peak is now CLOSED.

**At 7.0 km** Pass Wansbrough Road on your right.

**At 7.2 km Turn left** towards County Peak which you can see ahead. *This interesting iron topped hill was called Quajabin by the Nyungar people.*

**At 8 km** on your left is the County Peak old school site (1910-1933)

**At 9.2 km Turn left** into Pioneers Memorial Drive.

**At 9.5 km** Come to a cattle grid. This is sometimes closed by a 'cocky' gate - continue on, leaving the gate as you find it.

**At 10.2 km** Pull off road to the left near

**LOOK OUT** sign and walk from here to the top of the Peak. *From here you have extensive views all around. The climb is medium to hard as the hill is clad with ironstone and loose shale/gravel so please watch your footing. Takes 10 - 15 minutes to the top for seniors stopping to admire the view every so often!*



The vegetation is sparse with some Quandong trees right at the top. Return to your car and continue round the base of the Peak till you rejoin the 'in' road at the gated grid. Retrace the route then...

**At 11.4 km** you return to Pioneers Memorial Drive sign. See the Morbinning Catchment Group information Board on the left. *It contains photos and information about landcare and conservation strategies in this important farming/ecological landscape. Farmers have worked together beyond individual farm boundaries in their care for the land and its water ways.*

Set odometer to 0 **Turn right** along Bally Bally Road.

**At 1.9 km** come to T junction and **turn right** into Ewerts Road.

**At 2.2 km turn left** into Wansbrough Road. Pass magnificent Salmon Gums and then some grey barked trees - Euc. yorrell.

**At 4.6 km turn left** into Athol Road going in a northerly or north westerly direction.

**At 9.3 km** and onwards note plantations of various trees in this catchment area planted for

fodder, agriforestry, erosion and salinity control and corridors for wildlife habitat. Eucalypts have been used for road verge plantings.

**At 14.7 km turn right** at T junction (not sealed). It is Morbinning Road although not signed at 2008. It becomes Old Beverley Road at the next crossroads.

**At 16.6 km turn left** into Jacob's Well Road heading due north. *Verge on right will have flowering shrubs in the wildflower season Aug – Oct.*

**At 18.3 km** look ahead to the distant horizon on your left to see the Mawson radio mast.

**At 24 km** Pass Baty's Road on left and travel parallel to the railway line which is on your right. *Jacob's Well was a siding in the heyday of the railways.*

**At 25.7 km** Jacob's Well Road that you are on curves left then turns right. Continue on this road ignoring Clulow Road (straight ahead).

**At 26 km** The Mawson Radio mast is now seen in the distance on your right.

**At 28.6 km** Arrive at T junction of the York/Quairading Road (sealed) and **turn left** for Mawson and York.

**At 31 km** Arrive at Mawson. *This 'town' was a siding on the railway with a wheat bin. In 1912 it originally had the aboriginal name of Worraling meaning place of the Crested Parrot but was changed to Mawson in 1915 to honour the explorer after his heroic exploits in the Antarctic. If you are interested you can explore downtown Mawson with its wheat bin, old bridge for horses and carts and the 2.6 km road to the radio mast. Along the verges grow the sprawling grey-leaved Rose of the West (*Euc. macrocarpa*) and shrubs which will be a mass of flowers in the wildflower season. The gate to the mast is locked.*

**Set odometer to 0** on leaving Mawson returning back onto the York/Quairading Road again.

**At 7.3 km** enter the York Shire and soon cross the railway line. *No passenger trains travel this line now. It goes left for York and right on to Quairading and Bruce Rock. In 2008 it is still used for carting wheat, but there are rumours that it is to be closed.*

**At 15.6 km** Arrive at Kauring Gourmet Deli on the right. *Kauring (aboriginal for Place of Parrots) is the Town-that-never-was. The townsite was marked out in little blocks in an early survey, but the town never happened! In the late 1980's someone discovered a map with little blocks shown and bought the whole lot and proceeded to sell them off individually. There are toilets here for customers only.*

**At 18.4 km** see all that remains of a stone kitchen standing all lonely in the paddock on left. *This is all that remains of a house built by Henry Penny in 1890 for his son upon his marriage. Also see the heritage listed 1865 Korrawilla homestead on the right with stables and farm sheds and further into the property a modern brick house. (Private property – not available to the public) This was one of the first farms to be taken up east of York. Two generations of the Penny family still farm here. The first post office in the district was run from the homestead in 1867.*

**At 19.1 km** arrive at crossroads. **To visit Greenhills, turn right into Penny Drive (sealed).** On the left see a pile of brick and stone rubble in the corner of the paddock. *This is all that remains of the first Agricultural Hall built in Western Australia in approx 1895. Imagine the vital decisions made on this site by the ghosts of the past.*

In the bush about a 100mts ahead on your left is one of the old school sites of Greenhills (1896 – 1910), St. Andrew's Anglican Church (1912) and the old cemetery.

**If visiting Greenhills via Penny Drive – At 22.3 km turn left** into Greenhills Township with the Old Post Office, now a self-contained holiday cottage on left and the restored Hall 1912. The bulk wheat Bin is on right. *The name Greenhills came from the aboriginal name for the area which sounded like Greenilling. Note that Aboriginal place names in this area often end with one of the following “ine”, “in” or “ing”. These suffixes mean “place of”.* **At 22.5 km** on left is the famous old Greenhills Inn (1906) (Closed) An avenue of Sugar Gums (Euc.cladocalyx) lines the main street.

**Leave Greenhills, – At 23.4 km** pass Club Hotel Road on left. *You might wonder at such a name for a road leading between farm paddocks! Greenhills was once a thriving town in earlier times, with up to three hotels. One of the early hotels was removed bit by bit and carted by horse and dray and rail to Perenjori where it was re-erected.* There are some stately Salmon gums on the road verge.

**At 26.9 km** arrive at T junction with the sealed York/Quairading Road where you turn right for York. At about a 45 degree angle on the horizon on the left, Mt Bakewell (called Walwalling in the Nyungar dreamtime legend) is now visible. *You are entering the home stretch for Yorkies. The Nyungar people say that the mountain calls to them.*

**At 28.9 km** on right the Needling Hills (not accessible to public) come into view. *The highest point has a surveyor’s trig point on it and at 350 metres it is the second highest landmark in the Shire of York after Mt. Bakewell which is 417 m high.*

**At 30.2km** the road goes through a grove of she-oaks (Casuarina obesa)

**At 33.9 km** Mt. Hardy Reserve on the left hand side of the road.

**At 34.2 km** on your right is Station Road where you can park and walk into the Reserve. There can be as many as 41 different wildflowers in the wildflower season (Aug – Oct)

**At 36.6 km** cross over yet another railway crossing.

**At 38.2 km** On the right see penned emus.

**At 41km** On the right see the extensive sheds of the Mackie Hay enterprise. *Each year they cut about 80,000 tonnes of hay, plus straw, into chaff, mainly for export in containers. This is a very important facility for York and district farmers.*

On the left the Top Beverley Road comes in. You are now passing through what was originally a farm called “Cold Harbour”. *It was farmed from 1842 by John and Stanley Parker who had come out with their family from Northbourne in Kent, England, where their farm was called “Cold Harbour”. The name had nothing to do with the sea but was a term used for an area protected from cold weather.*

**At 43.4 km** you will cross over Tomney Bridge.

**At 44.2 km turn left** into Balladong Road. *This was the name of the main aboriginal group that frequented this part of the Avon Valley before white settlement.* Soon cross the Avon River and at the crossroads turn right, back into the heart of York.

**As stated on the front you are amongst  
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