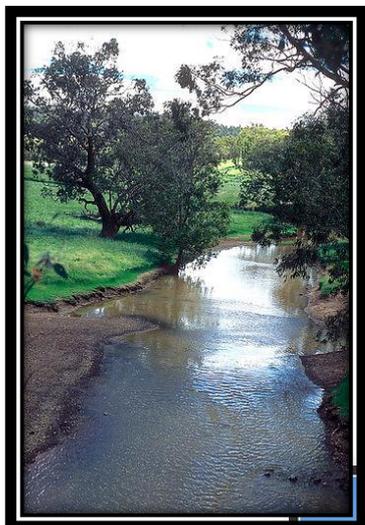


York & Surrounding Districts

SCENIC SELF-DRIVE TOUR

Tour No. 10



YORK TO NORTHAM

& return

Distance: 76 kilometres

For further information on this or other self drive tours Contact

York Information Services

info@york.wa.gov.au www.york.wa.gov.au

9641 1301

BE PART OF "HISTORY STILL IN THE MAKING"

Distance: 76 kilometres

We ask that you respect that many of the places of interest in this drive are privately owned or on private property and as such may only be viewed from the road.

You will be driving on major roads with traffic travelling at speeds of up to 110kph should you wish to slow down or stop to view the sites from the road please take due care for the safety of yourself and others.

Commence in Avon Terrace at the 1911 York Town Hall.

Toilets are available here.

Set odometer to 0. Drive north through the main town centre with its heritage shop fronts, hotels and banks. On the left on the corner of Ford Street is the Sandalwood Yard precinct. *The building, now the Headquarters of the York Society, was once the thriving, bustling hub of the Monger family's transport business. Bullock wagons with stores from Perth were unloaded and turned around here. Sandalwood and other products of the hinterland were carted into here and thence down to Perth. Behind the main building, a small country school from the 1800s has been brought in to the Yards, brick by brick, from its original location on the Northam York Road, and restored to show what an early rural school was like.*

Avon Terrace becomes the York–Spencers Brook Road.

At 1.5km on the left in a patch of bush is the site of a clay pit where many of the bricks for York's early buildings were made. Majestic Mt. Bakewell (455 m) is dead ahead.

At 2.1 km the road veers to the right.

Roadside trees are generally York Gums (*Eucalyptus loxophleba*) with dark rough bark but around **3.3 km** with the York Race Course on the left, there is a stand of Flooded Gums (*Eucalyptus rudis*) with lighter grey rough bark and usually associated with creek lines. *The York–Beverley Turf Club is the oldest continuously operating Race Club in Australia, run and maintained by an enthusiastic band of local volunteers and holding several race meetings each year.*

At 3.9 km on the right, up and down through the trees, is the Motocross track. Toilets here.

At 5.1 km on your right is the York Recycling Depot which has won a "Tip Top Tip Award".

At 6.7 km the road curves left to cross the railway line. Please NOTE THE STOP SIGN AT ALL RAILCROSSINGS. After crossing safely veer right staying on the sealed road with the railway running on your right. **At 7.6 km** on your left is a disused gravel pit and at **7.9 km** pass Mackie Siding road on the right.

At 9.5 km passing the hangers on your right is the entrance to the HQ of Sky Dive Express. *Tandem skydiving can most likely be arranged on relatively short notice however booking is essential as they do get very busy on the weekends. It is*

recommended to allow about ½ a day for this experience however spectators are welcome and there is a coffee shop on site.

At 11 km on right pass Burges Siding Road on the right and down in the paddock are the large sheds of Emfert Organic fertiliser works. On the left at **11.4 km** are the lovely stone buildings of Burges Siding School. These include the toilet block at the back and the Teacher's House on the right. *These buildings are all now privately owned. This was first called Tipperary School, from the late 1870's till 1929.*

(This is not the same school that you saw earlier,) It then became officially known as Burges Siding School until its closure in 1946 when school buses were introduced to comply with the Education Department's centralisation policy. In the early days kids came to school by covered carts, walking, ponies and even by train. (info. From "From Early Beginnings: A History of York's Schools" by York P. & C.)



Glimpses of the Goldfields Water Supply Pipeline branch to York can be seen on the far side of the railway tracks.

At 12.1 km on your left is a sign under some trees showing where the former Gregson's Well School once stood (1892 – 1897). *Furniture from this school was transferred to the Tipperary (Burges Siding) School. At 14.6km also on the left is the green roofed Homestead of Kerry Downs. Formerly this farm was run by the Irish Roman Catholic order of Norbertine Fathers who staffed St. Patrick's Church in York. Produce and profits from the work of the Lay Brothers on the farm supported the Parish.*

The road you are travelling follows the Great Southern Railway line and the Avon River which is marked by a dense line of trees seen in the paddocks on right. *It was on these river flats in the vicinity of the modern Kerry Downs that Ensign Dale, York's discoverer in 1830, took up land for his own farm.*

At 18.5 km on your right is a marker stone with a plaque commemorating the first sighting of the Avon Valley by white people, namely Ensign Dale and his small exploring party, as they came over Mt. Mackie, the mountain on the left. *This is the discovery point of the entire Avon Valley on August 7th 1830. The aboriginal people had been using their 'firestick farming' methods here for probably 20,000 + years and we read in the early settlers' diaries the land resembled "parklands" and therefore looked very suitable for grazing. Dale reported this to Governor Stirling when he returned to Perth. Settlers followed in 1831, thus beginning York, the first settled inland town in West Australia.*

Just before the crossroads **at 19 km** on the left is the beautiful "Rivoli" formerly the homestead of the Hamersley family – early settlers of the district. Pass Wilberforce Road on the right which leads over the Avon River – low level crossing often closed in winter – to the York–Northam Road. Pass Hamersley Siding Road on your left. Continue straight ahead on the York–Spencers Brook Road through attractive farming country, cleared and cropped at lower levels with the upper slopes of the rounded hills reserved for grazing.

At 23 km you will cross the York Shire Boundary into the Northam Shire. Mainly York gums (*Eucalyptus loxophleba*) are visible on the hilltops. At 25.2 km there is a farm on right.

At 26km the road curves right to cross the railway. Please STOP at the STOP SIGN. The Pipeline and railway are now on your left.

At 28.1 km come to a T junction at the Spencers Brook Road (sealed). Left goes to the old Spencers Brook Tavern where there is also information about historical sites. Right goes to Northam. *In the early days of the railway, Spencers Brook was an important refreshment stop. A hand bell was rung as the train stopped at the station (old photo in the Tavern.) Tea hot scones and pies were available.*

Set odometer to 0 at the T junction and **Turn Right** heading to Northam along Spencers Brook Road.

At 0.4 km cross River Avon

At 0.6 km pass entrance to Muresk Agricultural College – a campus of Curtin University. *This was formerly the farm and Muresk homestead of the pioneering Dempster family, started in 1890. The family had various estates in Esperance and around the Avon Valley. In 1925 the W.A. government purchased it to become an Agricultural College where young men **and women** are trained in practical skills and farm management. This could be seen as an indirect tribute to the hardy self-reliant Dempster womenfolk as they had loyally toiled beside the pioneering male members of the family.*

At 1.1 km Ellel Camp Site – now a private camp for a religious group. *This site was formerly known as Spring Hill and during World War 11 was used for storage for ammunition and a base for some personnel.*

At 4.1 km Large quarry on right. *The hill is being quarried and especially large rocks were quarried from here for the new container wharf at Fremantle.*

On the left is the railway spur line that went from Spencers Brook to Northam and is now the mainline to York and Albany.

From 4.9 – 5.1 km in the paddock on right are the remains of old ammunitions dumps and old wartime fuel storage ‘tanks’. At 6.2 km see on the right the main Kalgoorlie water pipeline from Mundaring. *Each day 23 million litres of water leave the weir. Only 7 million litres go to Kalgoorlie, the rest is piped all over the wheatbelt as far north as BindiBindi and Brookton to the south.*

At 8 km **turn left** at Glass Street, then over the old railway line, and then **turn right**.

At 8.6 km pass the Railway works Depot on the right.

At 9 km On the right is the old West Northam Railway Station. *This is being restored and a varied collection of railway memorabilia is being cared for and placed on display by volunteers. Phone Northam Visitor Centre (9622 2100) for opening hours.*

You are passing through West Northam which used to have the two storey Grand Hotel, another hotel and stores etc. in its heyday before the main line went to Southern Cross from the main Railway Station at the eastern end of town.

At 9.2 km The Northam Shire Offices are on the right. *Around 2008 after some years of debate, The Road Board and Town Councils amalgamated and moved into this new building.*

At 9.6 km See the multi-storey Northam Flour Mill (1871)

At 9.7 km on the left is the Avon Bridge Hotel (1860). You are now in Fitzgerald Street, the main street of Northam which goes through the CBD.

At 9.9 km turn left into Beavis Place and curve right following the high bank of the River Avon which is on your left. Arrive at Grey Street where you turn left to park for the Northam Visitor Centre **at 10.5 km**. On the river bank see the starting box for the world-renowned white water classic – the Avon Descent – held every year in August. *This is raced, from Northam to Perth, over two days by all manner of water craft including overseas entrants.*

View the Avon River with its swinging bridge, fountain and white swans, and ask at the Visitor Centre for things to see and do in Northam – probably include a walk along Fitzgerald Street – Northam's CBD – looking above street level to see the facades of the early historical buildings.



Set odometer to 0 when ready to leave.

Head up to the main street, **turn left** into Fitzgerald Street and continue to the traffic lights at the crossroads – the last traffic lights you will see before Kalgoorlie.

At 0.6 km turn right into Peel Terrace.

At 0.7 km see the Northam Railway Station on the left. *The Standard gauge Rail line goes through here to Kalgoorlie and the Eastern States. Also The Avon Link train goes to Perth daily and returns at times to suit commuters who work in Perth.*

At 1.1 km See the Northam Agricultural Society Show Grounds and Jubilee Sports Oval on right.

At 1.9 km Main Roads Department offices and Depot on right. On the left the Great Eastern Highway swings left across the railway line and goes off to Kalgoorlie, Melbourne etc. Keep on Peel Terrace, which becomes the York–Northam Road.

At 2.6 km The Mundaring Goldfields water supply pipeline goes under the road and on the left are the Regional offices of the Agricultural Department. Next to them is the Office of Western Power.

At approx 4.5 km on the left the Standard Gauge main railway line swings east northeast to go to the Eastern States.

At 6.7 km on the left pass Mulukine Road which would take you to the Golden Pipeline Trail.

At 6.9 km on the left is Princes Garden Centre. *In the past thousands of trees and shrubs have been grown here and used for farmer's revegetation plantings.*

The line of trees over the paddocks on the left marks the Mortlock River – a tributary that joins the Avon at Northam.

At 13.4 km pass Carter Road on left.

At 14 km enter York Shire.

At 15.9 km see the white trunks of the Wandoos (Eucalyptus wandoo) on the left

At 17.8 km pass Karabine Road on left and Wilberforce road on right. *The latter was a Hamersley property and has been farmed since the 1800's.*

At 19.6 km look right front on the horizon and see telecommunications mast on Mt. Bakewell. Also, right, away across the River see the green roof and chimneys of Kerry Downs Farm that you pass on the Spencers Brook Road leg of this tour.

The rough dark-barked gum trees scattered along the verges are York gums (Eucalyptus loxophleba). Most of the midstorey shrubs are wattles commonly called Jam trees (Acacia acuminata.) *So called because when sawn the branches smell like raspberry jam. The wood is very hard and termites usually leave it alone. Generations of farmers have used the jam wood for fence posts and some of those still standing could well be over 100 years old.*

There are scattered medium level shrubs with strong prickles instead of leaves. These are *Hakea preissii* and their flowers look like pale wattle blossom in November/December.

At 23.6 km pass Burges Siding Road on Right. *Down this road is the second Homestead on Tipperary Farm where Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth 11 was entertained outdoors during her 1954 visit because of the polio scare.*

At 24.3 km pass the entrance to the original old Burges mud brick homestead on Tipperary Farm built c1836 with later additions including a ballroom. Also blacksmith forge, extensive stables, out buildings etc. These are privately owned and not available to the public.

At 24.9 km pass Quellington Road on left. *It leads to a farmstay in the old Quellington schoolhouse designed by renowned Government architect of the 1890's Temple-Poole.*

At 25.1 km See the Tipperary Church (1892) on the right. *It was still in use as a place of worship in 1940's but there was no graveyard associated with this church. It was shaken in the Meckering earthquake of 1968. Feel free to pull over on to the verge and look over the fence at the original church. It is now privately owned and was restored and converted to a residence and added on to very sympathetically and now used for Bed and Breakfast guests.*

At 25.8 km on the right is a clump of trees where the Tipperary School (1869 – around 1885) once stood on Tipperary Farm land. *The school has been relocated into York and rebuilt at the York Society's headquarters at the Sandalwood Yards in Avon Terrace.*

At 27.2 km pass Lennards Road on the left.

At 27.6 km pass Mackie Siding road on right. Over on the far right, see Mt. Bakewell (457m) with its communication towers – the highest point in the Dyott Range.

At 29.7 km on the bend of the road, see some beautiful Salmon gums (*Euc.salmonophloia*), so called because their trunks turn a pink/orange salmon colour when they shed their bark in January/February.

At 30.6 km pass Goldfields Road on left. *This was the route that more than 10,000 gold seekers took to the goldfields – on horseback or wagons or on foot pushing makeshift wheelbarrows, from the 1890's when gold was discovered at Southern Cross, Coolgardie and Kalgoorlie. It is no wonder that the discoveries of the precious metal were called 'gold rushes' and 'gold fever'!*

At 33.9 km Pass Cowan Road on right and then Crawford Court on the left. You are now entering the Town of York.

At 34.8 km come to crossroads straight ahead goes to Quairading, Bruce Rock and so on. Left leads up to the top of Mt. Brown (310m) where there are sweeping views of York and the Avon Valley from the lookout. **Turn right** which takes you into the heart of the York heritage precinct and CBD.

At 35.5 km see Marwick's Shed (1870) on right with its tall gabled roof and high entrance that allowed laden camels to go inside to be unloaded. *Cobb and Co coaches once used this for a stopover point.*

At 35.7 km see Kairey Cottage (1859) on the left. *This shingle-roofed cottage is one of the cottages built for the army pensioner guards that came out from England to accompany the convicts. It is privately owned and has been carefully restored from a near derelict state. An extension at the back has been sympathetically added*

At 35.8 km on the right see the red brick Holy Trinity Church built from 1853. The building attached on the right of the Romanesque style bell tower was formerly the earliest Anglican Church in York on the other side of the river where it was surrounded by a graveyard. *There is a large wooden cross that marks its former site, in a park diagonally opposite the Gull Service Station. In 1905 it was taken down and rebuilt at its present situation to be used as the Parish Hall.*

At 36 km See the Anglican Rectory (1875) on the right then turn right into Glebe Street.

At 36.2 km you can see tennis courts on your left with a grape vine probably over 100 years old still remaining and fruiting from the one time orchard of the Castle Hotel. On the right are the Croquet lawns. *Started in 1909, it is one of the three oldest continuing Croquet clubs in Western Australia. Both sporting groups welcome visitors. Inquire at York Information Services for contact numbers.*

At 36.3 km cross the Avon River and at the Crossroads turn left into Avon Terrace and go along to the Town Hall **at 36.7 km**. *Call in to York Information Services to find out what to see and do in York and where to have a coffee or eat out.*

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