In 1889, at the age of 9, Stella Maria Sarah Miles Franklin, better known as author Miles Franklin, moved with her family to Stillwater, a property at Thornford in an area also known as Bangalore. It lies some 20 kilometres southeast of the city of Goulburn. She lived within the district for the next 13 years.

Her experience of the Goulburn district during the great drought of the 1890s seems to have provided the catalyst for Miles to write her first book *My Brilliant Career* at age 18. It was published in 1901. In 1902, she wrote *My Career Goes Bung* (not published until 1946), and in 1903, Miles penned her first draft of *Cockatoos* (published 1954 under the pseudonym Brent of Bin Bin). By the end of 1903, Miles had left Thornford, seeking work and new experiences in Sydney, Melbourne and ultimately America.

These three books reflect her real-life experiences in Goulburn and the surrounding districts. In addition to severe drought, it was a time of incredible social, economic and political change — the end of the prosperous and expansive 1880s, the harsh realities of severe economic depression during the 1890s, and political activism with the coming of Federation.

This Self-Guided Walking Tour commemorates Miles’ years in the Goulburn district. It features many of the sites mentioned in relation to Miles, identifies places quoted in her books, and highlights others that she would have recognised in her numerous trips to the city.

“There will be no mistakes in geography, scenery or climate as I write from fact not fancy. The heroine, who tells the story, is a study from life and illustrates the misery of being born out of one’s sphere.”

Miles Franklin — from a letter accompanying the manuscript of *My Brilliant (7) Career*, sent to publishers Angus & Robertson in 1899. The book was subsequently rejected by them.
Notes to walkers

- Remember to look up — many buildings include dates or impressive architectural features such as towers, interesting skylines, even intricate sculpting.
- Direction instructions are in italics.
- Public amenities are noted on the map.
- Existing pedestrian and wheelchair-friendly crossings and refuges are noted on the map, however the route of the walk sometimes suggests that walkers cross where there is no designated crossing. Care should be taken at these points, or alternatively, take advantage of more suitable crossing points.
- The walk will take around 1-1½ hours.

This is a guide only — feel free to deviate from the walk to explore other sites of interest or to seek refreshment.

1. This Walking Tour begins and ends at Goulburn Branch Library, located in the Civic Centre, Bourke St, Goulburn. The Library holds a range of materials on and about author Miles Franklin as well as life in Goulburn around the 1890s.

“I arose from my bed next morning with ... a fixed determination to write a book. Nothing less than a book.” (My Brilliant Career, Chap 7)

2. Proceed southwards, across Church St. Look back across Bourke St. The Masonic Temple was built in 1928 by local architect EC Manfred. It replaced an earlier Temple, which had also been built by Manfred, in 1890. As a keen musician and singer, Miles would have sat her music examinations in the earlier building.

“Sydney College of Music. The theoretical examinations of local candidates were held at the Masonic Hall, Bourke St, on Saturday ... the visiting committee were Mesdames Middleton and Ford, Miss Gillespie, and the local hon. secretary, Mr Percy Hollis.” (Goulburn Evening Penny Post, 14 Oct 1901).

Miles was a student of both Miss Gillespie (at Thornford School) and later, Mr Percy Hollis, Professor of Music.

3. The compact building beside the Masonic Temple at Nos.119–117 Bourke St was both place of residence and business premises for plumber James McNaught. This family business was active during the period Miles Franklin lived near Goulburn.

4. Continue south down Bourke St. St Saviour’s Anglican Cathedral and Hall were designed by noted colonial architect, Edmund Blackett. Construction of the cathedral commenced 1874, it was dedicated on 29 April 1884, and was consecrated on 24 Sept 1916. The tower was eventually added under a Bicentennial project in 1988. A spire was included on Blackett’s plans but has never been built. St Saviour’s Hall, located on the southern corner of this block, was originally designed as a school, but was never used for this purpose.

“... should it happen to be Sunday, I never fail to patronise one of the cathedrals. I love the organ music, and the hush which pervades the building; and there is much entertainment in various ways if one goes early and watches the well-dressed congregation filing in. The costumes and the women are pretty ... Regular attendants, of course, pay for and have reserved their seats, but it is in passing the visitors that the verger displays his talent. He can call the commoners from the reverend aristocrats, and put them in their respective places as skillfully as an expert horse-dealer can draft his stock at a sale.” (My Brilliant Career, Chap 33).

5. Continue down Bourke St across Church St. The Baptist Church on your right was built in 1887 as the Trinity Presbyterian Church. It operated in this role until closed in 1898.

6. Continuing south, on the corner of the Bourke and Verner St intersection is the Goulburn Technical College. This building has been in continuous use as a Technical College since its opening in 1901.

“On the whole, the College buildings are of the very latest style, and much in advance of any other local structure.” (Goulburn Evening Penny Post, 5 Dec 1901).

7. Continue south across Verner St, then turn immediately left and cross over Bourke St. St Peter & Paul’s Old Cathedral, built from distinctive local bluestone was officially opened 29 June 1890, and consecrated 24 April 1898. It is no longer the seat of the Bishop of the Canberra-Goulburn Archdiocese, hence the name “Old Cathedral”, though it remains the parish church.

“Sweetheart [the horse] was so rampant that she had to be let out till they passed St Peter and St Paul’s...” (Cockatoos, Chap VIII).

8. Cross back over Verner St to the northeastern corner, then look back across Verner St. Immediately behind the Cathedral is the Catholic Presbytery. Originally the Bishop’s House, Miles would have recognised the turreted wing on the Cathedral side, though the eastern wing alterations and the second storey, were not added until 1907.

WALKING TOUR (No 9–32) IS CONTINUED OVERLEAF
9. Proceed east along Vernon St then turn left into Cartwright Place. Head north toward Montague St. Previously enclosed, with rough access via lanes from Vernon, Bourke and Montague Sts, the centre of this block was appropriately named Cartwright Square. It contained the Central Horse Yards. Miles was an excellent horsewoman and would no doubt have investigated the stock on offer here.

"He was a familiar figure at the Gouldburn Sale-yards every Wednesday, always going into town the day before and not returning till a day, and often two days, afterwards. He was in great demand among drummers and auctioneers ..." (My Brilliant Career, Chap 10)

10. Continue north through Cartwright Place to Montague St but not across the street. Most buildings in this vicinity have a more recent history, but on the northern side of Montague St, almost directly opposite Cartwright Place is the Old Fire Station, built in 1890 by architect EC Manfred. Its traditional, colonially inspired design is still evident. The enormous fire bell, placed in the tower on 15 Dec 1890, was later transferred to the newly built St Nicholas' Church, North Gouldburn.

"This building, in Montague St, is now sufficiently advanced to enable speculation to judge of its appearance, which is very pleasing and distinctive ... designed by and erected under the supervision of a local architect in private practice ..." (Gouldburn Herald, 3 Nov 1888)

11. Turn right into Montague St. To your right is Dimmey's Store, which was originally built and operated by Furner Brothers as the Premier Store from 1878. Taking over in 1901, Charles Rogers, a former newspaperman, considerably extended the store, opening it in grand fashion as the Great Southern Emporium in 1901. You will have the opportunity to view the building's distinctive skyline and tower at a later point in this walk.

"There is an impression among certain people that he [Charles Rogers] is so eager to claim all the business of Gouldburn into his own hands, but Mr Rogers denies having any such intention. His business has grown and the old premises were entirely inadequate for the purposes of employees and the public. ... Moreover, Mr Rogers is a man of ideas, not bounded by the narrow confines of a small business, and time is not lost in thinking and planning even some of his schemes." (Gouldburn Herald, 4 Oct 1901)

12. Turn right into Auburn St. On the opposite, southeastern corner of the Auburn/Montague St intersection is the Mechanics Institute. The Institute's first activities were to conduct lectures and provide a library. Later, classes of instruction were held and the public-subscription library became the focal point. Recreational activities were also added as a means of attracting and maintaining stable membership.

"The other day I called to the Gouldburn [library] for your book to lend to a friend of mine. I found it so borrowed that copies were stored all out, so many people are reading a book (and many other books besides) at a paying rate of a shilling a month." (My Brilliant Career, Chap 12)

During the 1980s, Bushbridge's hairdresser & tobacconist and the ESFA Bank occupied the Mechanics Institute's shopfronts.

13. Proceed south along Auburn St (western side), taking time to investigate the existing buildings on the eastern side, particularly their upper portions and skylines. The Post Office was built in 1880 by colonial architect James Barnett.

"The two little towers of the post office were like sentries in the business main street, a notable copy of the admiral in the moonlight to the south horizon." (Cotterock, Chap 10)

14. The Old Town Hall, now the McDermott Centre, was another EC Manfred building. Opened in 1889, it housed the City's government offices and was used for public events.

"One night of great Classical Convene, at the Town Hall, 13 February, to aid the forming of a company of blind musical students. Mr Knight will be assisted by 'Leading Local Ladies and Gentlemen'." (Gouldburn Herald, 11 Feb 1901)

Now gone, the Cricketers' Arms Hotel stood beside the Town Hall. It was established by the Federal in 1889 in recognition of Australia's upcoming federation.

15. No evidence remains of Charles Rogers' most impressive endeavour, the Great Arcade, now the site of the Huntley Arcade. This huge building, erected in 1889 was a monument to Rogers' commercialism.

16. Further along the eastern side of Auburn St is the Hibernian Hotel. Originally opened in 1885, it became the consulting rooms of Dr William Pasley Haygood, who then in 1880 was reconverted to a hotel, re-opening once again as the Hibernian under licensee Angus McInnes. It has remained in continuous operation on this site since then.

"Pride forbade her appealing to her neighbours, so we moved the daily track of my father from one pub to another and bringing him home." (My Brilliant Career, Chap 4)

17. Interspersed between these identified buildings on the eastern side were a variety of additional business enterprises, which no longer exist. Toward the Vernon St end were saddlery, a blacksmith, and even an oyster dealer. The Commercial Banking Co of Sydney still stands on the southern corner of this block.

18. Even less evidence remains of the businesses that lined the western side of Auburn St. Located here were the Gouldburn Herald newspaper company, Henty Hollis & Co chemist, A Day jeweller, Timothy O'arcy's Hart Hotel and the Old Australian Stores. Between these were confectioners, milliners, tobacconists, hairdressers, tailors, fruiterers, shoe repairers, cycle agents, a boot and shoe mender, a fishmonger, a blacksmith and a baker. The Bank of NSW building completed the block on the Auburn/Vernon St corner.

19. Turn left at the Vernon St intersection, and proceed across Auburn St. Continue east along Vernon St. On the southern side of Vernon St some very handsome buildings were built in the 1880s as monumental stonemasons and cothandlers, though no evidence now remains.

20. Looking ahead, on the opposite side of Soane St is Gouldburn Railway Station. Miles was a keen traveller, and particularly enjoyed her travel.

...I bought a ticket at the Gouldburn railway station, and at some time about 1 am took my seat in a second class carriage of the mail-train on its way to Melbourne ... the noise of the train was a joy to me, and sleep sooner entered my head." (My Brilliant Career, Chap 11)

21. At Soane St, turn left and proceed north. At No.248 is the Alpine Lodge Motel. These terraces were built by Charles Rogers around 1880, as "an appendage" to his Great Arcade. They are more widely remembered as the Coffee House Palaces or simply, the Coiffe Palaces.

22. Proceed north along Soane St. To your left is the former Police Station, built in 1885 by colonial architect James Barnett, and the old Court House (dated 1849), which served until 1865.

23. Turn left at Montague St and proceed west. The majestic Gouldburn Courthouse on the left was designed by colonial architect James Barnett; a former drover's son, he may have spent time on the same seat in Belmore Square and have heard the sound of my voice." (My Brilliant Career Goes Bung Chap 14)

24. Cross Montague St into historic Belmore Park. This park dates from the 1820s when it was originally the city's Market Square. It was renamed Belmore Square in honour of Lady Belmore, the Governor's wife, who presided over the official opening of the Railway Station in May 1869. By the 1890s, it also contained the Botanical Gardens.

"There are ashes ... so sky that I know them only by letter in which they conjoin they have followed me all day, recording my account, and the precise place of the old seat on the same seat in Belmore Square and have heard the sound of my voice." (My Brilliant Career Goes Bung Chap 14)

25. Look back across Montague St. At the rear of the Mechanics Institute, which was viewed from Auburn St earlier (12), is the original Technological College building, on the lawnway beside the Court House. It operated prior the move to the new Technological College in Bourke St, which was also noted earlier (6). The Mechanics Institute housed a museum with some decidedly unusual local exhibits.

"The following donations were received:--one four-legged and four-winged duckling ... a blind snake ... a taffo cloth and seven vanilla pods from Fiji ... some clay from Boorun Creek district ... fish from Shoalhaven River." (Gouldburn Evening Penny Post, 7 Dec 1901)

Look across Auburn St to the former Furner Bros store seen earlier in this tour (11). The corner tower, designed by architect EC Manfred, was part of the original building prior to Charles Rogers' extensions in 1901.

26. Along the northern side of Belmore Park is Market Street. On the Market/Siaca St corner stands the Gouldburn Soldiers Club, formerly the site of the Commercial Hotel.

"This I went from to speak to till Gouldburn, where I left the train and went to the Commercial for the remainder of the night." (My Career Goes Bung, Chap 20)

27. Percy Hollis, Professor of Music and Franklin's tutor, practiced out of premises immediately to the left of the Gouldburn Club at 21 Market St.

"I longed for the arts. Music was a passion with me. I harmonised every book in the neighbourhood and stole hours from rest to read them ... I lived a dream-life with writers, artists, and musicians." (My Brilliant Career, Chap 4)

28. Look across Auburn St. The shop of W5 Foxall was located in Islington House, which can still be readily identified by the distinctive statuary adorning the top of the building. Foxall's store was the sole outlet in Gouldburn for My Brilliant Career.

"Old Foxall can't keep enough on hand. They must have printed dozens more than those you had ... all the old bibles despite you and laugh at the idea of you trying to write a book." (My Career Goes Bung, Chap 7)

29. Continue east along Auburn and continue north. On the eastern side is the Strickland Gouldburn Post newspaper building. The original 'Post' building was erected here in 1870. Later alterations and extensions created the current appearance. (Editor of the Gouldburn Evening Penny Post during the 1890s was Thomas J Hebblewhite. He was to provide valuable advice and support to Miles, thus helping to launch her literary career.

"Every house in the district had the book, though bhillibets the only reading was the Bible, or the Bible and the 'Kit'..." (My Career Goes Bung, Chap 7)

30. Continue north along Auburn St. A landmark of the 1890s that has not survived was John J Brutton's Royal Hotel, now the site of the Gouldburn Workers Club. Situated along much of the northern end of this street, the Royal was apally named, being known far and wide for its hospitality.

31. At the Auburn/Clifford St corner, look north along Auburn St. In the next block, on the eastern side, is the Centro Gouldburn. Located on this site during Miles' time was the Oddfellows' Hall, the prime venue for both local and visiting art events.

"They put up at the Royal and then strolled to the Oddfellows Hall, a commodious place with a stage and gallery in which the town enjoyed many concerts and where some of the world's great artists performed; it was a period of Bach in decline, were occasionally heard, and sometimes a young Australian destined for fame ... the elite sat in the gallery, where they were able to demonstrate their true taste by paying for the privilege of sitting at a distance from open places." (Cotterock, Chap 19)

32. Turn left and proceed west along Clifford St. At the Clifford/Bourke St intersection, look to the northwest corner, across the roundabout. Bourke Street School is the oldest public school in Gouldburn, established by private enterprise in 1858. During the 1890s it was known as Gouldburn Superior School.

"You may attend a competitive examination of applicant pupils on Sat 1 July at Gouldburn Superior Public School at 8-45 am. (Miles and Eunice are invited to bring Miles, Franklin, July 1898) Miles was not accepted as a pupil teacher, though she was twice recommended for a teaching position by local member, Hon EW O'Sullivan.

The walking tour ends at the Civic Centre and Gouldburn Library. For further information on the sites mentioned in this tour, or on Miles Franklin herself, visit the Regional History of Gouldburn Library branch or Gouldburn Regional Art Gallery.