



BROKEN HILL HISTORICAL SOCIETY

SILVERTON

Silverton is essentially an abandoned settlement. It was the largest township to exist in the Barrier Ranges before the discovery of the Broken Hill field in 1883 and was the first significant settlement established in this isolated area of New South Wales. The first discoveries of silver in the Barrier Ranges were made in 1876; in 1882 silver mines were established at Umberumberka and smelters were established at the Daydream Mine about 15km to the north east. Silverton served as a commercial centre for these early mines which all had ceased operation by 1894.

The township was surveyed in 1883. By the end of 1884 the number of inhabitants had reached 1,745 with a district population of 4,000. Silverton was proclaimed a township on 20th March 1885 and the Silverton Municipal Council was formed in October of 1886, holding its inaugural meeting in January 1887 in the Municipal Chambers which survive today. Silverton became linked to the South Australian railway line by the Silverton Tramway Company which ran from Silverton to Broken Hill and was opened on 12th January 1888.

With the establishment of Broken Hill, Silverton's fortunes fell into decline and from 1886 slowly decreased. The Municipal Council ceased operation in 1899 and from that time on Silverton became under the direct control of the Government in Sydney and this continues today with the Department of Lands and Water Conservation being the responsible authority for the area.

Today Silverton has a population of less than 60 people and very few building structures remain to indicate its early prominence. The township demonstrates to visitors the nature of early mining settlements and the effect of the harsh inland climate on pioneer endeavour. The town provides an intense cultural tourism experience for visitors.



SILVERTON GAOL

The Gaol was erected in 1889 at the cost of £10,070. In the 1930s the Gaol became a boys reformatory. Both the Police Station and the Gaol were closed in 1943. The Broken Hill Historical Society established a special trust in 1965 and the Gaol came under trust ownership in 1968 and now contains early historical displays of Silverton.



SILVERTON MUNICIPAL CHAMBERS

The Municipality of Silverton was constituted on 22nd October 1886. The Silverton Municipal Chambers was constructed in 1889 by John Colmer for £489 and opened in October of that year. Restored in 1947 by the Broken Hill builder, Gordon Schultz.



ST CARTHAGE CATHOLIC CHURCH

This church was completed in August 1886 and is a simple local stone and brick building elaborated by red brick, stonework and timber roof work.



SILVERTON COURT HOUSE

The Court House was erected in 1889 and was built to architects plans which still survive. The attached warden's residence was erected at this time. An early photograph shows the building and the residence with a timber picket fence in front which is proposed for reconstruction.



METHODIST CHURCH

This church building was constructed in 1885 as a new Presbyterian Church and is the only building remaining in the once busy thoroughfare Sturt Street which used to have the Silverton Tramway running along it.



MASONIC LODGE, CANOPUS STREET

The Umberumberka Masonic Lodge was established in October 1885 on land donated by Charles Rasp. The building is in very good condition and is maintained by the Broken Hill Historical Society.