



- Yerrabi Pond
- Gold Creek Homestead Courtesy of the ACT Heritage Library.
- Mulligan's Flat

LISTED PLACES IN  
**GUNGAHLIN [2]**

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*A heritage tour of*  
**GUNGAHLIN**

**NORTHERN GUNGAHLIN**

A SELF-GUIDED TOUR



**NATIONAL TRUST**

CONSERVING AUSTRALIA'S HERITAGE

Although Gungahlin is one of Canberra's most recent urban development areas it has had a long European history dating well before the establishment of Canberra and a much longer Aboriginal history.

## 1. MULLIGAN'S FLAT

*Access is from Gundaroo Drive. The entry point and car parking area are clearly marked. An information area is located 200 metres from the car park.*

Mulligan's Flat is an area of remnant grassland, woodland and open forest extending over an area of 765 hectares reaching to the north-eastern border of the Australian Capital Territory (ACT). The area is part of the Canberra Nature Park. Local legend has it that it gets its name from a former Irish convict, Mulligan, who lived in the area in the 1840s. Mulligan's Flat retains much of the human history of the area in the several Aboriginal stone artefact sites and evidence of European farms. Walking quietly along the trails will enable you to see the many land and water birds that inhabit the region as well as the mammals and reptiles.

### **The Old School Site**

The old school site is situated just inside the gateway leading from the carpark off Gundaroo Road. A few traces of the foundations are all that remains of the building, but two rows of pine trees and a large specimen of photinia remain in what was once the school yard. The school was opened for primary students in the area from 1896 to 1931. The remains of the foundations are some 50 metres in a northerly direction from the carpark.

### **Gungahlin Quartz Ridge**

A prominent quartz ridge is located in the south-west portion of Mulligan's Flat. The site is a massive outcrop of reef quartz laid down in the *Silurian* geological period over 400 million years ago. It is 'hog-backed' (steep and symmetrical in shape) and extends for over one kilometre tracing the course of the Gungahlin Fault Line. It has been noted as an outstanding example of quartz intrusion along a fault line.

### **Dams**

There are numerous dams in Mulligan's Flat created during its pastoral phase. The biggest is in the southern section east of the quartz ridge and is the size of a small lake. It was built in the 1960s and has been maintained to provide a habitat for water and wetland fauna. This dam is an ideal place to sit quietly and rest and to observe the aquatic birds.

### **Grasslands**

The Gundaroo Road passes through the northern section of Mulligan's Flat. On the northern side of the road there is an area of gently sloping fields leading up to steep hills. These fields contain one of the largest remaining stands of Kangaroo Grass in the ACT and the area is of significant scientific and ecological value. The ACT/NSW border runs along the ridgeline. The walk from Gundaroo Road is moderate and there is a track to follow. Towards the ridge the track becomes steeper. If you make it you will be rewarded with a sweeping view over both Gungahlin and into NSW.

### **Old Coach Road**

Walking up from the Gundaroo Road carpark you can locate and walk along the old coach road. The information area points the way. The Old Coach Road, constructed in 1880, was the main route which linked the early rural settlements in the Canberra/Queanbeyan region to the railhead at Bungendore, Lake Bathurst and eventually Sydney. It was also a link between Bungendore and Gundaroo, offering a much shorter route than the former way via Queanbeyan and Canberra. The road and its corridor extend to the ACT/NSW border. Just below the slope leading to the border fence are the remains of an orchard, stone footings and fence posts. These are the remnants of 'Dugarvon', a small homestead, owned by Walter Ginn who farmed the area.

### **Shearing Shed**

Evidence of the pastoral history of Mulligan's Flat can be seen in the shearing shed and yards. Follow the trail from the Gundaroo Road carpark for approximately 1.3 kilometres. It is a small two stand shed built of timber framework and corrugated iron cladding. The holding yards and loading race are nearby. The shed was built during the 1940s and was used up until 1994.

## 2. HORSE PARK HOMESTEAD & RURAL COMPLEX

*A privately operated farming complex and residence. Access is restricted but the complex can be viewed from Gundaroo road travelling to and from Mulligan's Flat.*

Formerly called Dead Horse Gully, Horse Park is a homestead complex which dates from the early settlement of the upper Ginninderra Valley. A slab cottage (built in the 1840s) and a rubble stone cottage (1850s) were the first buildings. The woolshed is of bush timber construction. Horse Park has been a continual working farm for 150 years and as such is the oldest in the ACT. The area is also important as a temporary wetland habitat for waterbirds, including the migratory Latham's snipe which travels from Eastern China and Japan to spend the summer in the southern hemisphere.

## 4. GUNGAHLIN LAKES

*There are several access points leading off Gundaroo Road and Gungahlin Drive and Mirrabai Drive.*

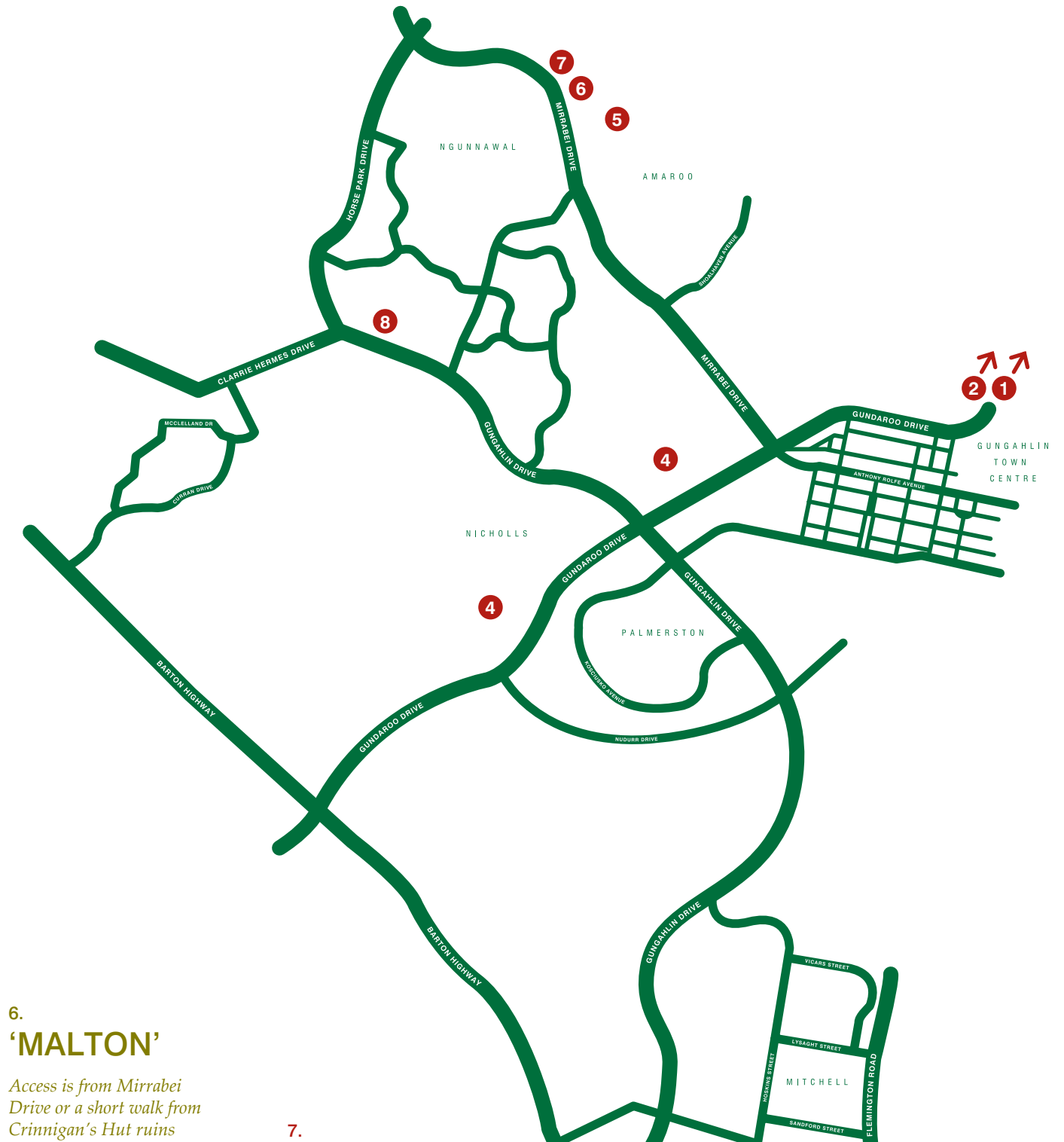
Gungahlin Lakes are two connecting artificial lakes formed during the development of Gungahlin and feature prominently in its urban landscape. The lakes were created by the damming of Ginninderra Creek at two points.

You can walk around much of the perimeter of the lakes. Waterbirds and other aquatic species established themselves on the margins and wood ducks breed there in the spring.

## 5. CRINNIGAN'S HUT RUINS

*Access from Wanderer Circuit, Amaroo. Turn off Mirrabai Drive onto Shoalhaven Avenue and then left into Burdekin Avenue to Wanderer Circuit. The ruins are fenced but can be viewed from the road.*

Crinnigan's Hut was built in the 1840s by



## 6. 'MALTON'

*Access is from Mirrabai Drive or a short walk from Crinnigan's Hut ruins*

7.

### 3. GUNDAROO ROAD QUARTZ RIDGE

*Access off Gundaroo Road between junctions of Gungahlin Drive and Mirrabai Drive, opposite the service station.*

The quartz ridge has been squeezed up due to pressure along a fault line. It marks the edge of the Gungahlin Fault. The quartz outcrop is fractured and shattered and rises up to one metre above the surface. It continues for approximately 100 metres parallel to Gundaroo Road before grading down to the general ground level.

John Crinigan, a former convict. He selected forty-one acres in the area in 1859 but was probably in residence as early as 1842. The Crinigans are thought to have had ten children, nine of whom died early in life. There may be two other children buried near the hut.

All that remains of the former three-roomed hut are the ruins of the double stone walls revealing a rubble infill and joints of mud mortar, two stone fireplaces and a brick chimney. Crinnigan's Hut is one of the few remaining examples of small family houses once common in the rural lands that now surround Canberra. Next to the ruins a grove of three 150 year old pear trees, two false accacias and two hawthorn trees. Hawthorn trees are now considered weeds in the ACT but last century were favoured plantings near rural homes. In spring you can see the flowering flag irises the Crinnigans planted.

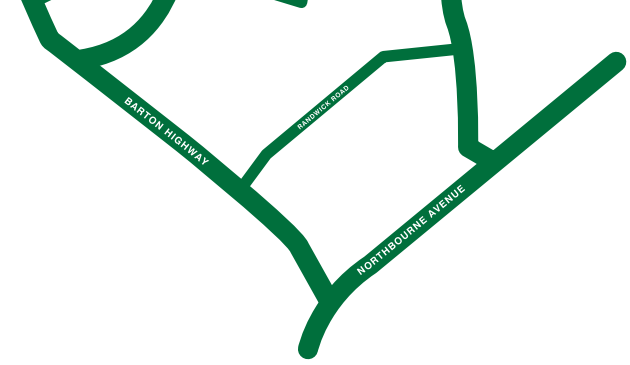
*following the pathway crossing Ginninderra Creek.*

The original site of the residence of Malton is now under the road surface of Mirrabai Drive. A plaque on a stone just off the pathway running parallel to Mirrabai Drive north of Shoalhaven Avenue commemorates the site. In 1859 John and Anne Butler purchased a portion of the Parish of Goorooyaroo and built their home above Ginninderra Creek, becoming neighbours of the Crinnigans. One hundred metres to the northwest of the plaque are two large pear trees, the remains of the Malton orchard, that was planted on the property over 100 years ago. Malton was occupied by the Butler's and their descendants until early this century.

### GINNINDERRA CREEK

*There are several ways to get to Ginninderra Creek but an easy way to reach it is between Crinnigan's Hut and Malton.*

While walking between Crinnigan's Hut and Malton stop a while by Ginninderra Creek. The foot bridge between these two historic places crosses Ginninderra Creek in front of a small waterfall and upstream of a pond formed by the creek. Ginninderra Creek was very important to the early settlers in Gungahlin as it provided an almost permanent source of fresh water. Like Crinnigan's and Malton many of the early huts and homesteads were built in valleys like this on high ground above the flood line of the creek. Water was carried up from the creek to provide the daily needs of the households and to water the orchards and flower gardens that were grown in the grounds. Today this area of the creek is a favourite place for wood ducks. Like all other ducks, they prefer to be near water, but unlike most other ducks do not mind perching in trees with other birds. In the late afternoon and early evening you can hear the frogs in the pond.



### 8. GOLD CREEK HOMESTEAD

*Access is off Gungahlin Drive between the junctions of Anne Clark Avenue and Clarrie-Hermes Drive.*

Gold Creek homestead is owned by the ACT Government and the grounds are privately leased. In 1860 Edmund Rolfe took up the property which was next to his parents and established his own residence. He first built a small slab and stone cottage characteristic of the time. Later when he prospered, he built the first part of the homestead with squared stone and followed with an addition of brick in the same style as the original. Rolfe was caught up in the gold-fever of the time and unsuccessfully invested and worked a mine in nearby Hall.

### 9. HILL RESERVE

*Access at several points from Gurrang Avenue and also from Marungul Avenue.*

This ridgeline is composed of sedimentary shale and sandstones with quartz layers exposed on the surface. A short walk to the crest of this hill will be rewarded with a 360 degree view of the Gungahlin area. Facing east you are overlooking the Gungahlin lakes and the suburbs of Nicholls and Ngunnawal. Belconnen and Black Mountain are in the distance. Facing north and west you can see the rolling hills in the distance marking the ACT border. One Tree Hill is the highest point rising to 876 metres.