

History Timeline

1846

- During his fourth expedition Sir Thomas Mitchell reached the Balonne River on 23rd April 1846, hence the name St George's Bridge being bestowed upon the site commemorating St George's Day.

1862

- Rowden Park was the location of the first grapes grown in St George by Dr. Ernest Seidel who now has a wine named after him at our local Riversands Winery

1864

- The first St George Post Office was established in 1864 with Mr. Chase the Post Master earning twelve pounds per annum. In 1864 horse mailman delivered mail on M/S 23 to Retreat {190 miles} M/S 24 Curriwillingham {87 miles} and in 1866 to Surat {89 miles}, Yarrowa {93 miles} The packhorse mail to Cooroorah, connecting with the Dalby Mail involved a round trip of 163 miles which took from Friday morning till Wednesday night
- The first hotel was built on the corner of St George Terrace and Grey Street and was named the St George Hotel and was licensed to David Roberts, David Roberts also purchased the first block of land in St. George
- Nindigully Hotel was built in 1864 and holds one of the longest continual licenses in Queensland and also was a changing post for Cobb & Co mail.



1872

- The first St George Hospital was built and consisted of 4 rooms, 1 male, 1 female a small dispensary and a matron's room.

1873

- The first school house was built in St George, this building still stands and is now located at 47 Roe Street St George

1874

- The first Catholic Church was built, the church had a shingle roof and seated approximately 30 people

1875

- First family to settle in Bollon was the Heness Family

1877

- A liquor license was granted to William Beaton Anderson for the Tattersall's Hotel now known as the St George Hotel/Motel

1879

- The Ula Ula Divisional Board was proclaimed on the 11th November as part of "The Divisional Boards Act of 1879" which later was to become the Balonne Shire
- Bollon recognized as a town

1890

- Wooden bridge over the Balonne river completed with the help of many local shearers that were on strike at that time, this bridge was washed away in 1950 flood

1890

- Hebel Dance Hall was built, this building now serves as the Hebel Cafe

1892

- The St George Gaol and Police Station were built in 1892 and moved to the Heritage Centre site in 1989

1897

- The Anglican Church was built on the block where the St George swimming pool is now situated. The first preacher's book is dated 1897-1917

1896

- The Metropolitan Hotel licensed to John Roberts, was the booking office for the Cobb & Co.

1901

- Federation bought meager rainfalls with drought years and devastation ahead for the Balonne Shire
- St George population was 900 and the State School had 107 pupils
- Hebel Provincial State School was opened on the 1st April with 9 pupils

1902

- Early landholders applied for their land selection at Hebel
- Empty water holes, high stock losses, high debt and unemployment were the result of the on going drought. Mulga being the only feed around for stock
- Local Authorities Act of 1902 was brought down which saw Qld divisions replaced by Shires

1903

- 11th March the new local authority 'Balonne Shire Council' was proclaimed by his Excellency the Governor and the Division of Ula Ula shall be now known as the Division of Balonne
- 14th April Council sat for the first time: First chairman was William Ross Munro. The first Councillors were: John Roberts, C W Wippell, W E Walmsley, W B Anderson, P M Bowman and Dugal Cameron
- The first meeting was held in Henry Street beside the Tattersall's Hotel (now the St George Hotel/Motel)
- 30th April the drought was broken

1904

- St George Bore (Henry St next to the Fire Station) was completed. The original depth being 2709ft and having a flow of 570 130 gallons per day. It was contracted by T F Greelish and drilled by R J Thorburn
- Public baths were founded at the Bore as the water ran hot and for a small fee they could be used

1905

- Large fire destroys bakery, newspaper premises, butcher shop, saddlery and Cobb & Co booking office

1907

- Loan to reticulate St George was completed in this year

1909

- A new stock route developed from Culgoa to Hebel opening up the development for Hebel

1911

- Highest floods since 1890's peaking at 43ft at St George
- Official opening of the railway to Thallon named after then Commissioner of Railways Mr J F Thallon

1912

- The prickly pear an introduced species (commonly used for garden hedges) was now recognized as a large problem and the Prickly Pear Travelling Commission was established
- Trunk line telephone installed at St George, Dirranbandi and Hebel
- St George Post Office and Commonwealth Savings Bank opened in town

1913

- 23rd August Thallon School was opened
- Railway line to Dirranbandi was completed
- First swimming carnival was held in the Balonne River

1914

- The Metropolitan Hotel was renovated plus adding electric lights as an attraction

1915

- Another fire razed most of the newly built buildings along St George's Terrace, St George

1919

- Influenza epidemic closed NSW/QLD border
- St George Rugby League club formed

1921

- First plane to visit St George enroute to Sydney

1922

- St George had a new maternity ward of 6 rooms built (the first in QLD)

1923

- Last horse drawn mail service and Cobb & Co coach left St George on the way to Surat
- Motorized vehicle to deliver mail and passengers
- First wireless in St George

1925

- First petrol bowser petrol was erected
- Cactoblastis eggs were put on to end the prickly pear
- Balonne Shire Hall was opened with the capacity to hold 600 people
- A new hospital was completed with the thanks to Mr W B Anderson who lost 4 of his 12 children in a 6 month period. He fought hard for its establishment.

1928

- The World War 1 Memorial sit at the rear of the Hospital Grounds on the Riverside on the current Hospital and was once the entrance to the hospital

- Bollon Bush Nursing centre opened was owned and operated by Queensland Bush Nursing Association
- 1930**
 - Weekly air service started in November by pilot T R Young in an all metal Junkers monoplane named 'The Glorious Queensland'. The first flight left 'Eagle Farm' at 9.15am on Saturday for the flight which took 2hrs and 40mins with 5 passengers and a mechanic
 - Current St George Hotel/Motel was built but wasn't named such until 1969
 - High unemployment as sheep and wool market prices dropped
- 1931**
 - Great Shearer's Strike
- 1932**
 - Charles Kingsford Smith landed at St George on the 2nd July and invited locals to inspect the Southern Cross with no admission fee. The aviator remembers that his father had been the manager of the Bank of NSW In St George
- 1933**
 - Current Primary School was built at St George
 - Catholic Boarding House was built to house the nuns and to provide accommodation for rural children
- 1938**
 - First direct telephone call from London
- 1939**
 - Mrs. E Ashwin was sworn in as the first female JP the town had ever known
- 1940**
 - New St George aerodrome was completed and was capable of taking any plane in the Commonwealth
- 1943**
 - Disastrous bush fire in Dirranbandi
- 1946**
 - Back to St George week with Centenary Show and race meeting
- 1950**
 - Large floods experienced in the St George resulting in total destruction of the timber bridge spanning the Balonne River
- 1953**
 - Andrew Nixon Bridge and Jack Taylor Weir were opened, Approval for the St George Irrigation Project was granted
- 1957**
 - Cotton was first planted in St George on a commercial basis. This was doomed for disaster due to limited planting area and limited know how
- 1958**
 - Airstrip in Dirranbandi was completed
- 1959**
 - Existing Catholic Church was opened
 - New Anglican Church opened and donated by Mrs. Willa Richardson the original church is located at the rear of the existing church and is utilized as Church Hall
- 1964**
 - Cyclone Audrey tore through St George in March leaving a destructive path behind
- 1972**
 - Beardmore Dam was completed with a holding capacity of 81 800 megalitres of water
- 1974**
 - The first Qld Cotton Gin was built in St George
- 1978**
 - St George High School was established, prior to this schooling only went to year 10. Further education meant boarding in a larger community such as Toowoomba
 - George Faessler was the first grower to commercially grow grapes in St George
- 1980**
 - The disappearance of St George man Andy Komarnicki is still a mystery to this day
- 1983**
 - In 1983 the late Des Stevenson purchased the original Cubbie Station property
- 1988**
 - St George man, Steve Margaritas displays carved Emu Egg display at Expo in Brisbane



1990

- Warrawee Retirement opened in St George

1993

- Geraldine Wax and Kangaroo Paw grown Commercially in St George

1996

- St George's 150 Years Celebrations, to commemorate of 150 years since Sir Thomas Mitchell crossed the Balonne River and name this spot St George
- Winery opened in St George, Riversands Winery is situated on Whytes Road St George

1997

- Cotton Gin was approved for Dirranbandi

1998

- St George Heritage Centre opened to proudly display our history

1999

- Wild hail storm hits Hebel on January 30th unroofing 15 out of the 20 houses in the township, causing much destruction
- Opening of the Beardmore Cotton Gin, the second Cotton Gin for St George



2000

- The Balonne Visitor Information Centre was officially opened on Australia Day by Mayor Nigel Winks
- Major Fire at Beardmore Dam Cotton Gin

2001

- Balonne celebrates Australia's Centenary of Federation by commemorating 155 years since Major Mitchell 1846 Expedition throughout the shire in conjunction with eleven shires throughout Queensland

2002

- Dirranbandi district protests over Queensland Government proposal to buy Cubbie Station

2003

- Centenary of Shire Celebrations, celebrating 100 years of the Balonne Shire
- Pilot's Memorial dedicated in March. The memorial located on the riverbank of St George's Terrace was constructed in remembrance of Squadron Leader John Francis Jackson and the only Aboriginal fighter pilot to serve during , World War 11, Warrant Officer Leonard Victor Waters
- Mungindi Truck Pull in April was a Guinness world record. A Mack titan truck pulled 87 trailers, 1235.3 meters long total of 325 meters to break the previous record set in 2000 in Kalgoorlie

2004

- St George resident Barnaby Joyce elected as a Federal Senator
- Uniting Church of St George completed in Victoria Street

2005

- Deputy Prime Minister and leader of the Nationals; Mark Vaile {in acting PM Role} officially opened Senator Barnaby Joyce's Senate Office and Balonne Skill Centre on 22nd July
- War memorial moved from Victoria Street, St George to the riverbank of St George's Terrace and rededication was celebrated on October 2nd attended by ex-POW Charlie Kelly and Victoria Cross recipient Keith Payne
- The local Newspaper Balonne Beacon turns 100

2007

- Bollon Heritage Centre opened by Queensland's Governor Honorable Quentin Bryce

2008

- Hydroponic business opened in St George
- Balonne Shire Council election was called in March 2008. Nominations were restricted to four Councillor's reduced from previously held nine due to changes imposed by Local Government Reform in Queensland

2009

- Sewerage treatment plant opened in St George
- Wild storm hits St George on the 22nd December, causing major damage to businesses and homes. Racing winds were up to 130km/h, and the town received 2 inches of rain in 20 minutes. In the following two weeks, St George received another 10 inches of rain.

2010

- Major flooding hits the Balonne Shire in March. The Balonne River in St George peaked at 13.5m, breaking the record of the 1890 flood. Bollon was the worst town affected, along with Dirranbandi, Thallon, and Nindigully.