

Place Citation HO15
Kent Street BENALLA

Address	Kent Street, BENALLA		
Heritage Overlay	HO15		
Heritage Overlay Map			
Designer/s	NA	Dates	1838 – date of massacre Date of construction of plaque unknown
Significance	Local	Builder/s	Benalla and District Historical Society
Heritage Overlay Map	Heritage Overlay to be reviewed after site visit to ensure significant features are included within the heritage overlay map.	Survey Date	March 2024



View to plaque from Kent Street Benalla (2024)



Plaque and rock (2024)

Statement of Significance 1992

Source: Hermes No:78798 <https://hermesorion.heritage.vic.gov.au/places/78798>

HO15 Faithful Massacre Site, & Memorial, Kent Street, Benalla

The following Statement of Significance has been prepared in accordance with the Planning Practice Note 01: Applying the Heritage Overlay, (2018)

Assessment against criteria

The following analysis is based on Victorian Government Planning Practice Note 01: Applying the Heritage Overlay (August 2018).

Criterion A: Importance to the course or pattern of our cultural or natural history (historical significance).

Criterion B: Possession of uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of our cultural or natural history (rarity).

Criterion C: Potential to yield information that will contribute to understanding our cultural or natural history (research potential).

Criterion D: Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural or natural places or environments (representativeness).

Criterion E: Importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics (aesthetic significance).

Criterion F: Importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period (technical significance).

Criterion G: Strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons. This includes the significance of a place to Indigenous peoples as part of their continuing and developing cultural traditions (social significance).

Criterion H: Special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in our history (associative significance).

Statement of Significance

What is Significant?

The extent of the heritage overlay area (east end of Kent Street Benalla) the land of the Yorta Yorta, which is believed to be the location where the Faithfulls' convict servants and drovers had been camping on 11 April 1838 in the lead-up to the Faithfull Massacre is significant.

How is it Significant?

The area marked by a rock plinth and interpretative plaque at the east end of Kent Street Benalla is of historical significance for the Benalla Rural City and has the potential to yield further information.

This area has cultural heritage significance for the Aboriginal communities.

Why is it Significant

The extent of the heritage overlay area (east end of Kent Street Benalla), land of the Yorta Yorta is of historical significance as it identifies the area where the drovers camped prior to the Faithfull Massacre. This area has special significance for the Aboriginal community and for the Benalla Rural City. This event, the Faithfull Massacre, became known as the largest single attack on Europeans by Aboriginal people of the period. It assists in understanding the impact that European settlement had on local Aboriginal people and their response to the sudden and unwanted invasion of their lands. (Criterion A)

The extent of the heritage overlay area (east end of Kent Street Benalla, land of the Yorta Yorta is of significance for its potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of this event and subsequent reprisals undertaken by European settlers. (Criterion C)

The extent of the heritage overlay area (east end of Kent Street Benalla, land of the Yorta Yorta is of cultural and spiritual significance for Aboriginal people. (Criterion G)

Additional Controls

External paint controls apply	No
Internal alteration controls apply	No
Tree controls apply	No
Outbuildings or fences not exempt under Clause 43.01-4	No
Included on the Victorian Heritage Register under the Heritage Act 2017	No
Prohibited uses permitted	No
Aboriginal heritage place	Yes
Solar energy system controls apply	No

Description and Integrity

The plaque is located on the edge of Lake Benalla and marks the site where Faithfulls' servants had been camping in the lead-up to the Faithfull Massacre. It is located at the east end of Kent Street. This area is relatively open, lightly treed landscape with adjacent pathways.

The location, is marked by a rock with a brass interpretative plaque with the following text:

Near this site on Wednesday April 11, 1838 eighteen of George and William Faithfull's men were attached and their drays plundered by Aborigines (sic) eight of the Faithfulls' men and one Aborigine (sic) died.

Erected by the Benalla and District Historical Society.

Place History

On 11 April 1838, a party of 18 shepherds and cattlemen, mainly convict servants, being led by overseer James Crossley on behalf of brothers William Pitt and George Faithfull, were violently attacked by a group of Aboriginal people while encamped on the Broken River (at modern-day Benalla). Most contemporary media reports and depositions from survivors suggest that the number of attackers was between 150 and 200 men. These were a combination of Waywurru people (from the Ovens Valley) and local Taungurung people. Eight of Faithfulls' men were killed in the melee which took place, as well as one Aboriginal man. The event, which would become known as 'the Faithfull Massacre', was the largest single attack on Europeans by Aboriginal people of the period.

The Faithfull party led by Crossley, which had brought with it 3472 sheep, 395 head of cattle and three bullock drays, was one of a number of overlanding parties flooding into 'the Port Phillip District' from the north, in response to explorer Major Mitchell's reports of good grazing lands south of the Murray River, made in late 1836. The Faithfull party had come from William Pitt Faithfull's 'Springfield', at Goulburn, where William had remained. At the time of the Massacre, George Faithfull had been trailing Crossley's party with a flock of sheep, having left his 'horned cattle' stationed on the King River at Oxley. Consequently, neither Faithfull brother was killed.

The reasons for the Massacre will never be known concretely. The Faithfull brothers believed it done was in order to loot their drays, but reports of the period suggested it was due to the ill-treatment of local Aboriginal people, including, according to one report, the abuse of women. Historian Judith Bassett suggests the attack was an act of retribution for the shooting of one or more Aboriginal people on the Ovens River (at or near Wangaratta) a few days earlier. However, the Massacre may also have been a response to the sudden and unwanted invasion of their lands.

Following the Massacre, police came from both Melbourne and Yass to investigate, but the killers of Faithfulls' men were not found. Retributive massacres of Aboriginal people occurred in the days following the Faithfull Massacre, reportedly at Benalla and on the King River. The government also responded by establishing a series of Border Police posts along the Port Phillip route, at Gundagai, Albury, Benalla and on the Goulburn River, to protect overlanders from further attacks.

The plaque commemorating the Faithfull Massacre on the edge of Lake Benalla marks the site where Faithfulls' servants had been camping in the lead-up to the Massacre, although not of the Massacre site itself: the bodies of the European victims were 'buried where they fell', and some of their skeletal remains were located in 1907, mainly on the Goomalibee Road (not far from the entry to the property 'Marangan'). The plaque does not mention the retributive massacres.