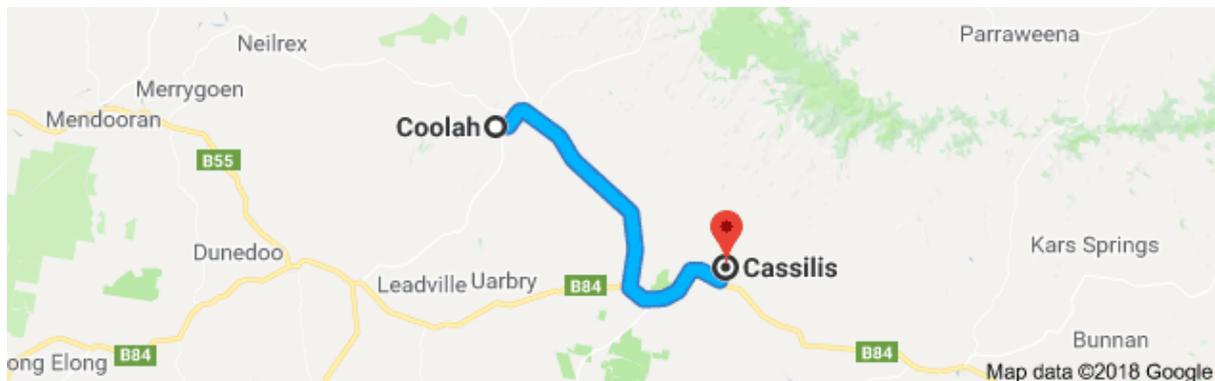


## CASSILIS

### A drive to Historic Cassilis, the town that once eclipsed Mudgee in size!



*Journey time is approx. 42 minutes / distance 56km one way.*

Drive to the east of Coolah through rolling countryside to the village of Cassilis. Take Campbell Street which turns into Cassilis Rd out of town, driving over the Coolaburragundy River, the road lined with Lombardy Poplar trees that were planted early in the 20<sup>th</sup> century – a wonderful photo of them as young trees was taken by a young Max Dupain – a print of which can be seen in the Coolah Library. You will see another avenue of the Poplars to the right of the road which leads to the old bridge site that was washed away by a huge flood in 1955. About 7km out on the road, on Perrams Hill is a lookout with a fabulous view to the west over the Coolah valley. Continue following the road.

There are two roads to Cassilis, the first off Vinegaroy Road takes you into the back of Cassilis – note that the road is dirt and dry weather access only. Alternately continue along Vinegaroy Road to the Golden Hwy, turn left. Continue east past the Ulan Road turn on the right that heads to Mudgee, (also known locally as the “Barrier Gates”. Believed to be constructed in the late 1800s the gate was part of a rabbit proof fence. Known as a stopping place for teams on their way to and from Morpeth, there were apparently sightings of several ghosts there). Cassilis is well signposted and is on your left a few kilometres further down the Golden Highway. The trees lining the entrance road to the town were planted in honour of local soldiers who fought in world conflicts.

Cassilis is a small historic township with a few buildings dating from the 1800s. Originally a depot of mounted police with a lock up and court house erected in 1835 and headquarters on the border police from 1836 to 1839 on the property “Cassilis” owned by the Busby family (still owned by a descendant). The town was developed on the neighbouring property of Dalkeith, along the Munmurra Brook, and was initially a private village. Once more populous than Mudgee it was soon eclipsed after the village stalled with the death of the owner John O’Regan who died intestate and no further lots were able to be sold until 1874. In 1860 the population of the Police District of Cassilis (which included Coolah) was 1060, including “45 Chinese” and the only piano in town was at the Cassilis Hotel. The original Dalkeith cemetery is on a steep slope adjacent to the present day Catholic Church, only a couple of the grave sites can still be seen as it was not preserved, however reportedly over 100 burials are contained there.

The notable buildings still in Cassilis are the sandstone buildings that were the Court House (now a general store) and Police Station in Branksome St that date from approx. 1858. The aboriginal bushranger Jimmy Governor worked as a police tracker at Cassilis and lived behind the police station. This was prior to his working at Breelong which started his three month rampage resulting in ten murders. The sandstone Royal Hotel in Buccleugh St was erected in about 1870 on the site of an earlier hotel called the Traveller's Rest.



A grand post office was built almost opposite the Royal Hotel and cost over 2000 pounds by the time it was occupied in 1882. It was unfortunately demolished in the 1960s. An elegant residence dating from around the late 19th Century near the corner of Buccleugh and Branksome Streets, once belonged to the town's female doctor, Dr. Bray. The low long building on Branksome Street, not that far from Dr. Bray's house was once a Chinese Emporium and before that a general store, dating back to the late 1800s. The Anglican church (St. Colomba of Iona) near the entrance of the town built in 1899, is a well kept building worth a visit.

*More information on Cassilis can be obtained from the Merriwa Historical Society.*