In 1821 Governor Lachlan Macquarie made his second visit to Van Diemen’s Land. He inspected farms and public buildings, founded several new townships (including Sorell) and travelled overland to the northern settlements of Launceston, George Town and Port Dalrymple.

Below is a diary excerpt of his visit to Sorell:

**Wednesday 20 June 1821.**

At 1/2 past 9 am set out on Tour of Inspection to the Districts of Pitt Water and Coal River accompanied by Lt. Govr. Sorell, Lt. Robinson, Dr Redfern, Mr Evans and Lt Macquarie....

...arrived at the Bluff on Pittwater at 1/2 past 12 at noon, disce. 10 miles, and ferried from thence to Pitt Water District, disce. 4 mile - , where we landed at 1/2 past 1 PM near Mr Wade’s farm. We met several of the most respectable Settlers waiting there for us, along with Mr Gordon the Magistrate of the District.

...proceeded to the Ground intended for the Township, which I named “Sorell” in honour of the Lt. Governor.

It is a beautiful commanding Piece of Ground, centrical for the District—and well watered by a running stream: - a Jail has been already built here - and I have now marked out the site of a School House and temporary Place of Worship. There is Water Carriage to the Town, which is highly advantageous.

...I was highly gratified with my day’s Excursion.

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1. St George’s Church

The foundation stone for St George’s Church was laid in 1819. The original Church, consecrated in 1828, was a large building with a gallery for convicts. It fell into disrepair and was rebuilt. St George’s as it is today was erected in 1884 using sandstone from the original Church. Adjacent to the church, the old cemetery contains many graves of early settlers.

2. The Plough and Harrow

Daniel Long was the first licensee of the Plough and Harrow. This elegant two story building has stood the test of time.

3. The Railway House

The house has seen many changes since it served as a terminus of the Sorell - Bellerive Railway. The railway line was open from 1892 until 1926. Remains of the old platform and other features are still visible, however most of the rail sheds were destroyed in the 1967 bushfires.

4. The Gordon Highlander Hotel

The exact construction date is unknown, but the first known license for the hotel was granted to Jonathon Watson in 1844. It allowed for accommodation for one officer, three soldiers and one horse.

5. Pelham House

Dating from around 1864, this attractive building was constructed from bricks made at the rear of the property. The building served as a maternity hospital and Doctors surgery in the early 1900’s.

6. The Old Rectory

Reverend W. Garrard requested the building of a Rectory in 1826. Constructed by Messrs Chapman and Huddleston, it featured cedar doors and panelling at a cost of £800.

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**The Waterway Trail**

Starting in Pioneers Park, the Waterway Tail meanders along the Sorell Rivulet. The Trail is relatively flat and the wide concrete path means its suitable for everyone to enjoy.

There are storyboards along the Waterway Trail outlining historical and environmental areas of importance including:

- Pioneers Park
- Bellerive to Sorell Railway
- Aboriginal Heritage
- Bushrangers
- Farming History
- Pittwater - Orielton Lagoon Ramsar site

Storyboards describing the history of St George’s Church and the lives of some of those who are buried in the cemetery are placed along the fences on Fitzroy Street and Parsonage Place.

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**Welcome to Sorell**

One of Tasmania's oldest Towns

Established 1821

Take a walk through our history....
7. The Old Council Chambers
This building was the home of Sorell Council until 2013. This is the site of the first Courthouse and Gaol, which was the scene of the famous Brady raid in 1825. The construction of the Courthouse and Gaol began in 1818 and was completed in 1822 but the buildings were demolished in 1910 and replaced with the current building. The building now houses the offices of South Eastern Community Care.

8. The Police Magistrates House
Built by John Jackson in 1848, the house features fine cedar woodwork and Huon Pine verandah posts. The site was originally granted to Alexander Laing who was the District Constable in the Sorell (Pitt Water) District.

9. Sorell School
Sorell School is one of the oldest continuously operating schools in Australia. The first building on the site was erected in 1821. The School House and Head Masters residence built in 1888 was destroyed by fire in 1984 when the current school was built.

10. The Pembroke Inn
Dating from the 1840’s, records show that on 1 July 1847 the license was transferred from Mr Thomas to Mr Wright of Hobart. This Inn was licensed for accommodation, specifically one officer, two soldiers and one horse.

11. Sorell Antiques Centre
Originally built as a library in 1861, but as Sorell grew so did the building. It was the first Town Hall, the Sorell School of Arts and Buffalo Lodge meeting place. It is now home to the Sorell Antiques Centre.

12. Scots Uniting Church
A sandstone Romanesque Revival Church, it was built in 1842 from a design by renowned colonial architect James Blackburn. It has a gabled roof, a central tall square tower, semi-circular arched-topped entrance and buttresses. The windows are tall and multi-paned with arched tops and simple columns at the sides. The northern facade has a fine, central recessed window and flanking columns.

13. St Thomas’ Catholic Church
St Thomas’ Church is a small and simple sandstone Gothic Revival building. Construction began in 1864 on a site donated by Mr Andrew Council who also donated £200 to the construction costs. It took two years to build the Church.

14. The Barracks
Believed to be the oldest building in the township of Sorell, the Barracks is a Colonial Georgian terrace built in 1827. The delightful building and cottage garden have retained all the charm of the era.

15. Bluebell Inn
The original building was of wooden construction, consisting of 17 rooms including a ballroom, and was licensed to William Guard. Unfortunately in 1863 the building was destroyed by fire. The present stone building was then constructed and was used as an emergency hospital during World War 1.

16. The old Post Office
The front part of the house was built in 1840 and was run by George Peacock Senior. He also held the position of Magistrate and sat in court in the Post Office.

Photos from Tasmanian Archives and Heritage Office and the Historical Society of the Municipality of Sorell