Gawler’s Historic Main Street reflects Colonel William Lights’ vision; to create a settlement that could prosper on the banks of the North and South Para Rivers, bounded by rolling hills and within close proximity to Adelaide. Today you can witness the remarkable eras from the historical buildings that line Gawler’s Main Street.

The attractive setting, coupled with major roles in the mining and agricultural booms of the 1860’s, 70’s and 80’s saw Gawler blossom into a town of broad streets, peaceful parklands and distinctive architecture. As the walk unfolds you will gain an appreciation of the achievements that our ancestors accomplished in times of challenging environmental and social harshness.

1. **Pioneer Park**
   Your first stop adjacent to the Gawler Visitor Information Centre is this attractive park. Originally planned as the town cemetery which closed in 1870 and the headstones removed. It is now a pleasant park in easy reach of the town centre.

2. **McKinlay Memorial**
   Strolling west down to Murray Street you will come across The McKinlay Memorial. This memorial was erected by Gawler residents in 1874 as a tribute to explorer John McKinlay, ‘Big John’, as he was known to other explorers, led the expedition in 1861 to search for the ill-fated Burke and Wills. This is a significant and unusual landmark that is a prominent feature of the town.

3. **Charles Sturt Memorial**
   Stop outside the Exchange Hotel and look across the road to see the Charles Sturt memorial plaque fixed to the wall in the alcove area. The plaque was originally located on a cairn on the corner of Murray and Cowan Streets. It was erected in August 1944 to mark the centenary of Sturt’s exploration into Central Australia and the passing of his party through the district.

4. **Pile’s Building**
   Next to the memorial is the magnificent Pile’s Building built in 1878 for James Pile, a wealthy pastoralist and resident of Gawler. His daughter, Jane, married John McKinlay, the explorer.

5. **The Bunyip**
   As you continue down Murray Street you will see the home of The Bunyip newspaper which was first published on Saturday 5 September 1863 under the management of Mr William Barnet and the editorship of Dr Nott. It was a unique publication that reflected the wit and satire of some of the members of ‘The Humbug Society’. The first issue resulted in a libel action. Over the years the publication changed to become a more orthodox and sober chronicle. The Bunyip is still produced today; pick it up from the nearest newsagent and read all about the local happenings in Gawler and surrounding towns. The building was erected in the late 1870s as part of a group of shops known as Jones’ Buildings.

6. **Essex House**
   One of the most well-known buildings in Murray street, Essex House, is a particularly fine building enlarged and improved by Mr Alfred Sheard in 1905. The name “Essex House” has been synonymous with drapery, general merchandise and fashion since the 1880’s. It has survived a number of changes of ownership, demolition, alterations and additions - even “removal” from one side of Murray street to the other. Originally Essex House was a humble store on the eastern side of the street where Victory square now stands. The last example of a flying fox money carrier is inside the premises.
We hope you have enjoyed just some of our hidden treasures on your walking tour of Gawler's Historic Main Street.