Quirky fact:
At the end of shearing or ‘Cut Out’, a bush race meeting was held to celebrate.

Australian Curriculum Links

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Background Information

The first known white man to pass through the area of Richmond was William Landsborough, an explorer and expert bushman in 1861 when he was placed in charge of an expedition to search for the lost explorers, Burke and Wills.

Following his expedition and glowing account of the rich grazing country, the rush of settlers began as part of the inexorable expansion of graziers across Queensland. That expansion took the form of herds of cattle or flocks of sheep being driven ever further inland in search of unclaimed pasture and water for stock.

Cambridge Downs was the second property north of the Flinders River and was taken up in 1864 by Kennedy and MacDonald.

The need to take precautions against native attack was fundamental when the Cambridge Downs homestead was built. The site of the homestead, well out on a clear flat 300 metres away from the wooded Cambridge Creek, is supporting evidence of the pioneer’s defence strategy. The walls were of local flagstone rock mostly up to three centimetres thick laid horizontally and cemented one above the other in a wall 30 to 40 centimetres thick and about two metres high. Windows were square openings without glass but with vertical iron bars two and a half centimetres thick. Doors were solid timber swung on solid timber frames. The roof was initially thatch in a timber frame laid on top of the walls; later on when galvanised iron become available the roof was replaced.

The main building was linked by a passageway to a store room and office. The cookhouse with a big clay oven was out the back. Lawns, citrus trees and grape vines flourished. There were several other buildings; these included a jacharoo’s quarters (with their own cook and housemaid), ringers quarters, a butcher shop with two full time butchers and a blacksmith shop. Water would have been carted from the nearby creek.

In 1864, Cambridge Downs marked the limit reached by herds and flocks; it was recognised as an outpost of settlement and the threat of attack by local Aboriginals was ever present as they recognised the disastrous impact the white man and his animals were having on their traditional way of life.

In later years, when the main house was built, the original building became a general store/post office servicing the surrounding properties. Supplies for the store were shipped in by the family and delivered by the Cobb & Co Coaches that ran through the station on their way to the northern goldfields.

The Cambridge Downs shearing shed was known as the biggest and best equipped shed in the district with 26 stands. A wood fired mobile steam engine powered the old Cambridge plant. Up to 80 men camped in a string of tents along the bore drain and shore up to 250,000 sheep and many shearing records were set.

The property also bred fine thoroughbred horses.

Cambridge Downs was a focal point of social life in the area and has been the centre of many colourful and tragic events.

The remains of the original homestead are still visible from the Croydon Road approximately 40 kilometres north of the Richmond township.
### Points of Interest

- **Cambridge Downs Heritage Display Centre**
  97 Goldring Street, Richmond QLD 4822
  Phone: (07) 4741 3429  1300KRONOK
  Email: enquiries@kronosauruskorner.com.au
  Website: www.kronosauruskorner.com.au

- **Kronosaurus Korner, Richmond**

- **Pioneer Cemetery, Richmond**

- **Lake Fred Tritton, Richmond**

- **Historical Walk, Richmond**

### Inquiry Questions

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<td>What were interactions like between early settlers and local Indigenous Australians?</td>
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</table>

### ADDITIONAL RESOURCES


- "Early Days in North Queensland", by The Late Edward Palmer. Published 1903. A Project Gutenberg of Australia eBook at http://gutenberg.net.au ; eBook No. O901071.txt


### REFERENCES

- Queensland Department of Education
  www.dea.qld.gov.au

- Department of Environment and Heritage Protection
  www.ehp.qld.gov.au

- Richmond Shire Council Library
  Phone: (07) 47413777

### FURTHER INFORMATION

- Richmond Shire Council
  Phone: (07) 47413777

- Department of Environment and Heritage Protection
  www.ehp.qld.gov.au

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Cambridge Downs Heritage Display