

# Bothwell: Shared Stories, Open Skies



Bothwell's Georgian streetscape in Tasmania's Central Highlands

## A Two-Day, One-Night Self-Drive Itinerary

Travel through Tasmania's Central Highlands rarely announces itself through dramatic shifts or sudden arrival moments. Instead, change unfolds gradually.

The air freshens, traffic thins, horizons widen. The landscape opens, and with it, the sense that time is no longer pressing quite so hard.

Bothwell sits at the heart of this transition. Just over an hour from Hobart, around ninety minutes from Launceston, and approximately two and a half hours from the Spirit of Tasmania ferry terminal in Devonport, the town is easy to reach yet immediately different in feel.

Whatever direction visitors arrive from, the journey rises steadily into Highland country, where pasture expands and sky begins to dominate. The change is often noticed before the town itself appears.

It suits visitors comfortable with unstructured time, who enjoy learning about place through conversation and observation, and who understand that depth often comes not from doing more, but from doing less — slowly and well. Bothwell is not a place to be rushed. It rewards those willing to arrive gently, stay present, and leave with a sense of having participated rather than passed through.

This two-day, one-night self-drive itinerary is designed for travellers who value meaning over momentum.

It for the kind of traveller who craves authentic experiences: the warmth of a chat with a local over a cozy cuppa, the quiet joy of wandering heritage streets lined with stories, and the stillness of wild highland landscapes that speak louder than city noise ever could; mere specks.

## Day One: Coming In Close

Arrive in Bothwell mid-morning, when the town is awake but unhurried. Shops are open, locals are moving through their day, and there is a gentle sense of normality — not performance. Park near the centre of town and begin on foot. Bothwell reveals itself best at walking pace, where scale, sound and detail align naturally.

The town was laid out generously in the early 1800s, and that generosity remains visible. Streets are wide. Buildings sit with space around them. There is room to linger without feeling in the way.

Stroll through the town's largely flat, well-planned historic streets, admiring the beautifully preserved Georgian cottages, tartan-themed road signs, and stone buildings.

Visit the The Australasian Golf Museum and Central Highlands Visitors Centre; here you can discover the origins of golf in Australia, view fascinating memorabilia and local art, and explore Bothwell's rich Scottish heritage.

**...living heritage —  
practical, welcoming,  
and unmistakably,  
Bothwell.**

Did you know that Bothwell is home of the Tasmanian Tartan which was designed by Scottish born local designer and weaver Isabella Shorrocks?

The Tartan, which was officially recognised in 1999, draws inspiration from the colours of the natural bushland typical of the landscape around Bothwell.

You will be tempted to pick up these charming local keepsakes — Tasmanian wool tartan rugs and scarves available at the Visitors Centre. The centre is staffed by passionate volunteer locals proudly offering connection to their town.

For those keen on uncovering the stories behind the historical landmarks of Bothwell, self-guided walking tours come highly recommended. Grab a brochure from the Visitor's Centre and set off on a journey that unveils Bothwell's long and illustrious history.



Rural life moving through Bothwell,  
beneath wide Highland skies.



Exploring Clyde Mill distillery

Take your time as you walk through Bothwell. This is a place that feels lived in, not put on display. The history isn't polished for show — it's part of everyday life.

Georgian sandstone buildings sit naturally along the streets, their rooflines and verandas quietly repeating. Churches still gather their communities. Cottages are still family homes. Shops open because locals use them.

The streets are flat and easy to wander. As you go, you'll notice well-kept Georgian cottages, solid stone buildings and small details like tartan-themed road signs that hint at Bothwell's heritage. Many of the buildings date back to the early 1800s, and more than 50 are recognised by the National Trust. They tell their stories simply, without fuss.

What really brings the town to life are the people. Greetings come easily. Conversations happen without rushing. Visitors are noticed and welcomed, not questioned. You can stop on a corner with no real plan and feel comfortable doing so. Everything is close enough to walk. Sounds drift gently — enough to remind you you're not alone, but never crowded.



The Bothwell Post Office - cakes, coffee, and great conversation

Along the way you'll uncover some special landmarks: Queens Park – a beautiful green space in the middle of town, St Michael and All Angels, built in 1891 with its distinctive Gothic style; St Luke's Uniting Church from 1830, one of Australia's oldest churches; the ornate old Post Office; the Old Bootmakers Shop; and Queens Park at the heart of the village.

There's no set route here. That's part of the appeal. The more you slow down, the more you notice. For some, it's about learning the story of the place. For others, it's about a happy wander around the village appreciating its charm.

Either way, Bothwell offers the same quiet gift — time to explore, pause and simply enjoy where you are.

## Morning Tea: The Post Office Effect

At the centre of town stands the Bothwell Post Office, still fulfilling its original purpose — now paired with very good coffee and a cake cabinet fit for a queen.

Locals arrive to collect mail or exchange news. Visitors come for sweet treats, toasties, unique gifts and a chance to pause. Conversations drift easily between tables. Someone mentions a lookout. Someone comments on the weather in a way that feels reassuring rather than repetitive.

Morning tea often stretches longer than planned, shaping the rest of the day.

By the time lunch choices arise, nourishment has already settled into the rhythm of the day.



Bothwell, in the Tasmanian Central Highlands.

## Lunch with Perspective: Mount Adelaide Lookout

Once you have finished exploring our lovely tiny town, grab a picnic or light lunch from one of our delightful cafes and it's time to head to the Mount Adelaide lookout for a lunch with a view.

Although called a 'mountain', it is really only a small knoll with impressive views over the surrounding relatively flat land and is a short 10-minute walk from the centre of town. As you meander through Alexander Street, and onto Croaker's Alley, you will pass over the picturesque Clyde River, and past Fort Wentworth.

From the top, Bothwell unfolds below. The Clyde River traces its route through pasture. The town sits comfortably within its surroundings rather than competing with them.

Let your eyes wander from the snow-kissed peaks of Mt. Field National Park to the south, to the imposing bluff of Table Mountain to the north. On clear days, horizons stretch deep into the Highlands. On others, cloud, and shadows reshape the view minute by minute. Either way, the vantage point explains why life here moves at the pace it does.

For those who chose to drive or cycle instead, there is an easy sealed road up to the top of Mount Adelaide.

## Afternoon: Ratho Farm

Continue to Ratho Farm, one of Australia's oldest continuously operating rural estates.

Ratho boasts the first golf course in Australia —and the oldest course remaining outside of Scotland. This 18-hole links course offers a unique blend of historical charm and modern golfing challenge.

Established in the 1820s, Ratho has evolved through continuity rather than reinvention. Stone walls follow natural lines. The Fairways feel calm and uncluttered. Nothing appears forced or over-designed — the land has been worked with, not reshaped.

The course, which follows in the grand traditions of Old Scotland, is accessible to the public, making it a top choice for anyone looking to experience premier golfing in a picturesque setting.

As a cornerstone of Tasmania's golf landscape, Ratho Farm not only provides a competitive and enjoyable golfing experience but also connects you with the history and nature of Tasmania. Learn about Ratho Farm's fascinating history over a Ratho Farm whisky and cheese platter.

**Local tip:** While you do not have to wear a kilt to play at Ratho, legend has it that it will improve your handicap (and you'll get a beer on the house)!

## Late Afternoon: A Pause at the Pub

Before leaving town, step into the Castle Hotel, Bothwell's 1830s coaching inn.

Sandstone walls, open fireplaces and worn timbers speak to nearly two centuries of travellers moving through the Highlands. Today, it remains a working pub and a place of conversation, not commemoration.

Order a local beer, Tasmanian wine or something warming by the fire. Locals drift in. Stories move easily. Leaving feels less like departure than continuation.



Shared stories around the fire at Ratho Farm.

## Evening: Home for the Night to Rathmore to experience authentic Tasmanian country living

Following a great day exploring, head to your home away from home at beautiful Rathmore, a 15-minute drive away via a mesmerising countryside drive along Hollow Tree Road, surrounded by sheep producing some of the finest wool in the world.

Once you are checked into the historic heritage-listed c1828 Rathmore House, built by convicts from sandstone, hand hewn on the farm, settle in with a complimentary afternoon tea in the revived stables. Accommodation options include elegant heritage accommodation in the Georgian homestead, or the comfortable rustic chic revived Shearers Quarters or Cottage.

Enjoy a fireside chat and a 3-course candlelight homestead dinner in the elegant formal dining room. A highlight of Rathmore meals is grass-fed lamb, bred on the farm, with delightful vegetarian options also available. Alternatively, homestyle meal options, platters, and picnic dining is available on booking.

The hosts of Rathmore delight in regaling the farm's rich sheep-farming history and enjoy creating a surprising and delightful experience for their guests. Your hosts will take great joy in sharing Bothwell's rich pastoral history and in crafting an experience that is both surprising and delightfully unordinary, connecting heritage and place.

As night settles, the Highlands assert another defining quality: darkness. With minimal light pollution, the sky opens fully.

Stars appear sharply.

### Accommodation ideas in Bothwell:

Bothwell Hotel of the Highlands (by Ratho farm): <https://bothwellhotel.com.au>

Ratho Farm accommodation: <https://bothwellhotel.com.au/>

Castle Hotel: <https://www.facebook.com/CastleHotelBothwell>

Whites Corner: <https://bothwellhotel.com.au/>

Caravan and camping: <https://centralhighlands.tas.gov.au>

Rathmore Luxury accommodation and Shearers Quarters: <https://rathmore.com.au>

Charming self-contained historic houses can be found at: [www.airbnb.com.au](http://www.airbnb.com.au)

## Day Two: Staying a Bit Longer

Morning arrives gently.

Birds move through trees. Sheep shift across paddocks. Coffee is taken without hurry. Time allows for a leisurly morning exploring the farm.

After a delicious complimentary farm breakfast, start your day of exploration of the Central Highlands with a Rathmore farm and wool shed tour, which includes interacting with the furry and feathered creatures which call the farm home.

The tour includes visiting the Dew Rivulet on the farm and spying the six local wild platypus that have made their home in the rivulet - this "wildlife safari" is certain to be a highlight of your stay in Bothwell.

### Late Morning: off to the The Clyde Mill

Late morning is an great time to arrive at Clyde Mill. Once known as Nant Mill, the historic site has recently been revived and reopened as a family-run distillery and kitchen, following an extensive but sensitive restoration by the Ramsay family — long-time farmers in the Bothwell district.

The recent restoration has focused on reopening the mill to the community, restoring working areas, and expanding hospitality offerings while keeping the building's original character intact.

A guided tour provides the best introduction. Stories are grounded in place — from the early milling and distilling days to the site's new chapter as Clyde Mill.

Original machinery hums again, timber beams show their age, and the emphasis stays firmly on how things work, both past and present. The experience is kept approachable, practical and welcoming, reflecting its owners' farming roots rather than creating a high-gloss attraction.

Tastings follow at an unhurried pace. Clyde Mill produces small-batch spirits, including Highland gin and single malt whisky laid down locally to mature. The experience is informal and conversational, allowing time to ask questions or simply sit with the space and the scents of grain and wood.

Staying on for lunch feels like a natural continuation. The newly opened kitchen is part of the site's relaunch and broadens Clyde Mill beyond a traditional cellar door. Food is delightfully fresh, and seasonal, with a clear paddock-to-plate focus that ties back to the family's surrounding farmland. Whether seated indoors among the textures of the old mill or outside overlooking the grounds, lunch here feels earned rather than planned.

By early afternoon, Clyde Mill leaves a quiet impression — a place brought back to life without trying to be something it isn't. The recent revival is about continuity: a working site, returned to use, and opened again for people to sit, taste, listen and linger.

## Early Afternoon: Returning to Town

Drift back into town and let it be ordinary. Pop into Sealy's Café and Gifts and have a pie or a scone – autumn is a great time to try their seasonal venison pie. The café doubles as a gift shop in the way country places often do: mugs, local craft, things you didn't come looking for.

Sit in there's room, or take it outside if the sun's out.

Walk the main street slowly. You might find it quieter than you expected — a couple of cars passing through, someone sweeping a footpath, doors shut for the afternoon. Take the street you didn't bother with earlier, even if there's not much on it.

Find somewhere warm and sit for a while. A bench, a low wall, the edge of the footy oval. Watch the light shift and notice how the town sound changes once the day starts winding down. This is not a place that performs for visitors; you're fitting yourself around its pace, not the other way around.

If you happen to be here during Highlands Bushfest, the tone shifts. For a weekend in November, the town fills with people, noise, smoke from food stalls, demonstrations you didn't know you'd stop to watch. It's practical, hands-on, and proudly local — not slick or staged.

At the end of the day, why not opt for another night? Who knows, maybe you will be lucky enough to cap off your visit with a magical colourful Aurora Australis display or at the very least, the Southern Cross and Milky Way Galaxy?

## After Your Stay: Continuing Through the Central Highlands

Bothwell's strength lies not only in what it offers, but in how confidently it holds the centre of the Central Highlands. To the north, the Highland Lakes open wide. To the west, the land deepens toward wilderness, Lake St Clair and the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area. To the south, Hamilton and Ouse guide travellers back through river valleys and heritage townships.

Strong memories here are rarely tied to singular attractions. They are formed through moments — shared tables, wide skies, conversations not rushed.

In Bothwell, that is the itinerary.

### Seasonal Notes

Autumn offers clarity and colour.

Winter brings frost, fires and quiet.

Spring renews movement. New born woolly lambs race about the paddocks.

Summer remains mild and spacious, with Bushfest bringing community and celebration in November.