Making your first digital map

In this example, I will choose a base map of the local area and add three items to it - two locations and a line that connects them.

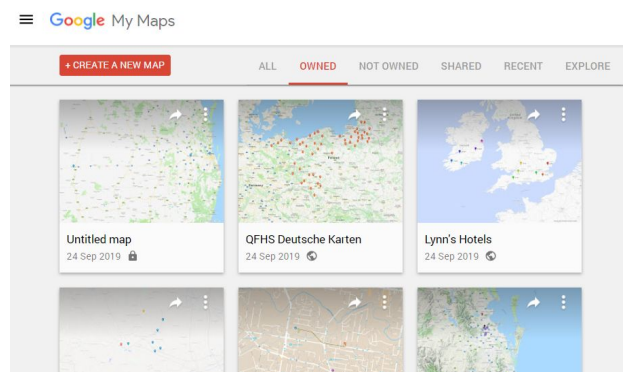The same basic pattern can be used to represent many different elements of a family history; such as
- your daily trudge between home and school
- a soldier's journey from home to enlist
- movement of crops from the family farm to the processing plant
- funeral procession from church to cemetery

Do not try to reproduce my map exactly. Follow along with the method but select the points of interest that will tell your story through YOUR map.

Login to your Google account
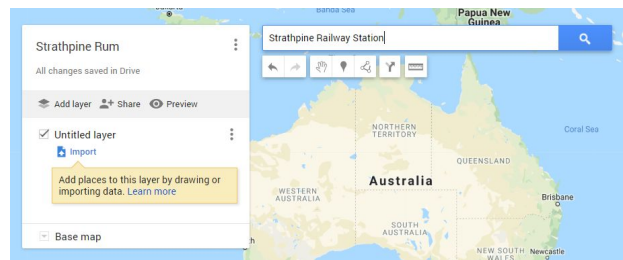
Open (your) My Maps. It should be at
https://www.google.com/maps/d/u/0/

Click on the **+ CREATE A NEW MAP** button

Click on the default title (Untitled Map) and give it a new name to suit your story.
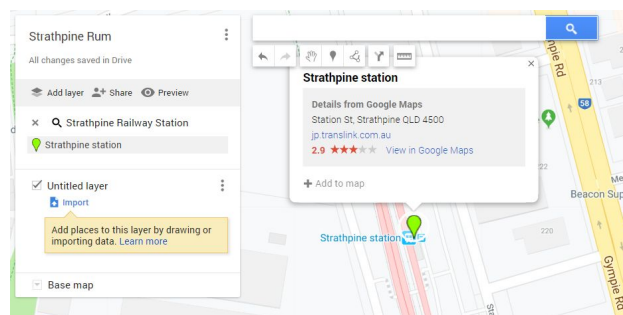
Type the name of a place (near where you want the map centred) into the search box.

Click the (blue) search button.

Your base map should now be zoomed in on the area you want.

If you want to keep the pin (which is displayed in green until you do this), click on **Add to Map** then close the descriptive card (with the X at top right).

Click and drag the map until the location for your next pin is in view.

Click the pin button in the tool bar.

Your cursor will change to a "gun sight".

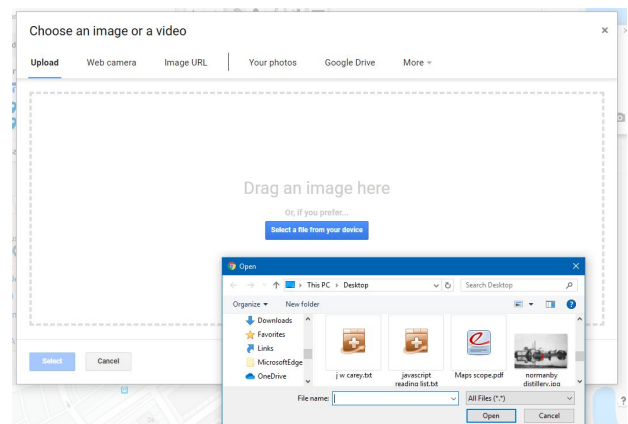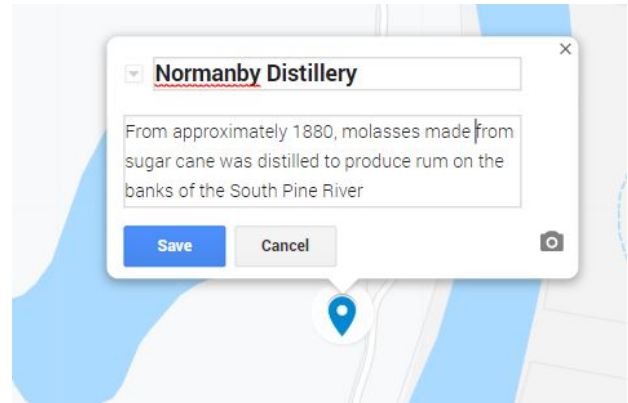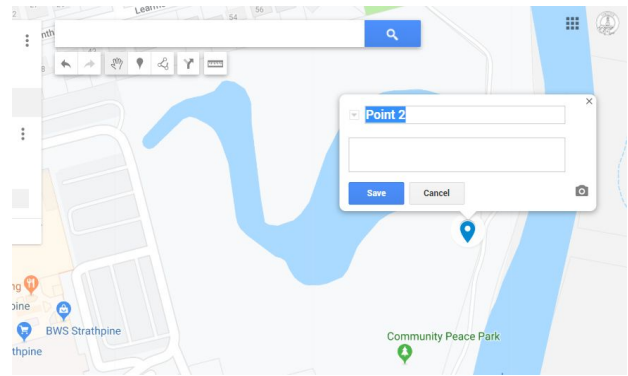Move it to the spot where you want the pin and click.

Type a name for the location to be marked in the top box.

Then type a description of the site into the larger box below.

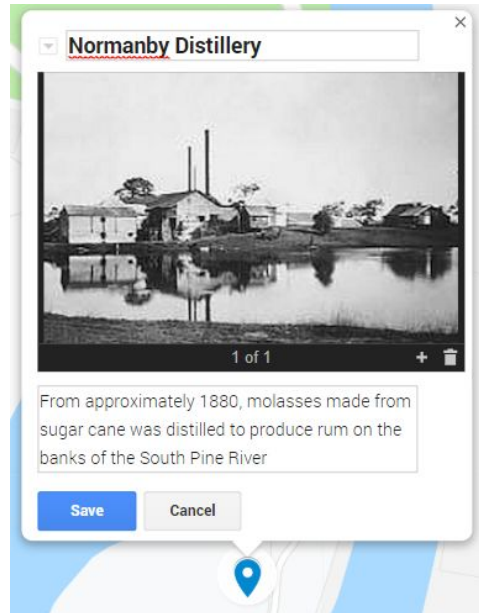To add an image of the site, click on the camera icon.

When the form opens, click on Select a file from your device.

Locate the image you want on your local hard drive and drag it onto the target area.
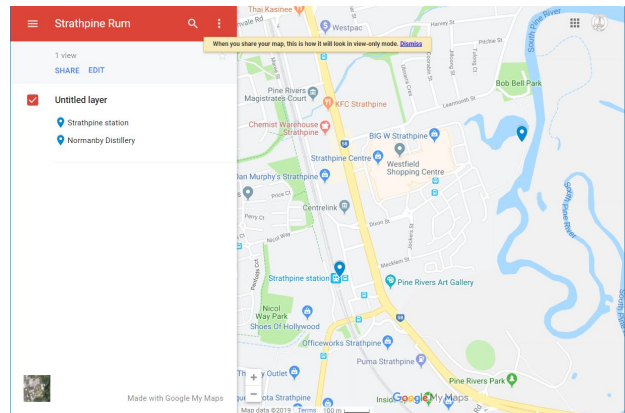
You have almost finished setting up your first point.

Click Save to ensure that you do not lose your work.

If you wish, you can click on the Preview button near the top left of your screen to see what you have achieved.

The preview opens in a new tab which appears over the top of the edit window but does not remove it. When you want to resume adding information, you can switch back to the first tab. (Note that you can close the preview tab without affecting the edit tab.)

On my map I have two places marked (Railway Station and Distillery), now I want to connect them with a line.
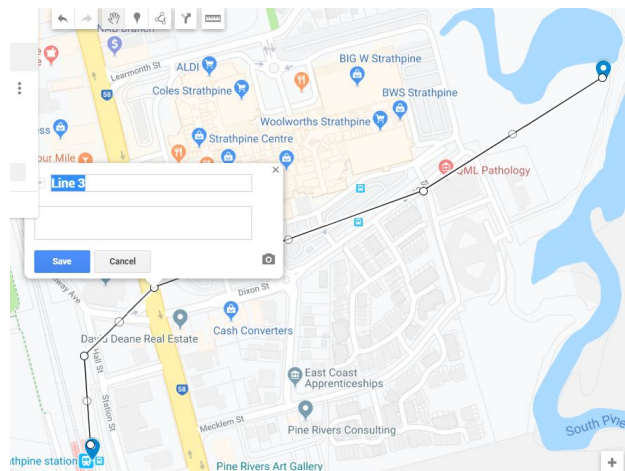
First I need to drag my map to a position where I can easily see both pins.

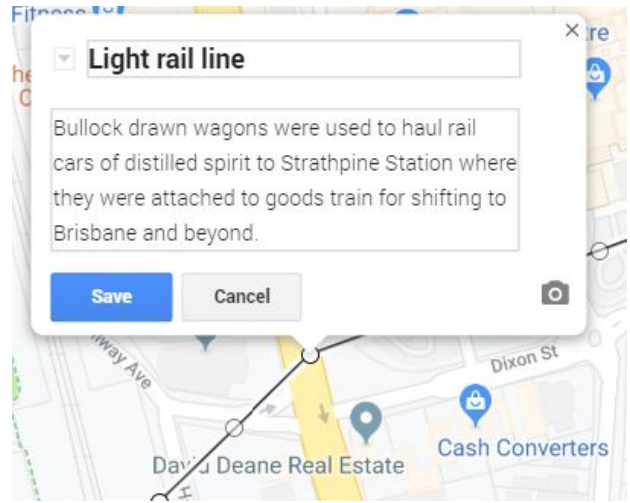The line tool is located right next to the pin tool.

Click once to open its submenu and then a second time to select line. (You can explore areas later).

Your next click begins the line. Each time you move the mouse and click, you add another segment to the line. Continue to add segments till you reach the destination, then double-click to end the line.

As before, type in a title for the path represented by the line and give it a description.

Notice that there is a camera icon here too. So go ahead and add an image.
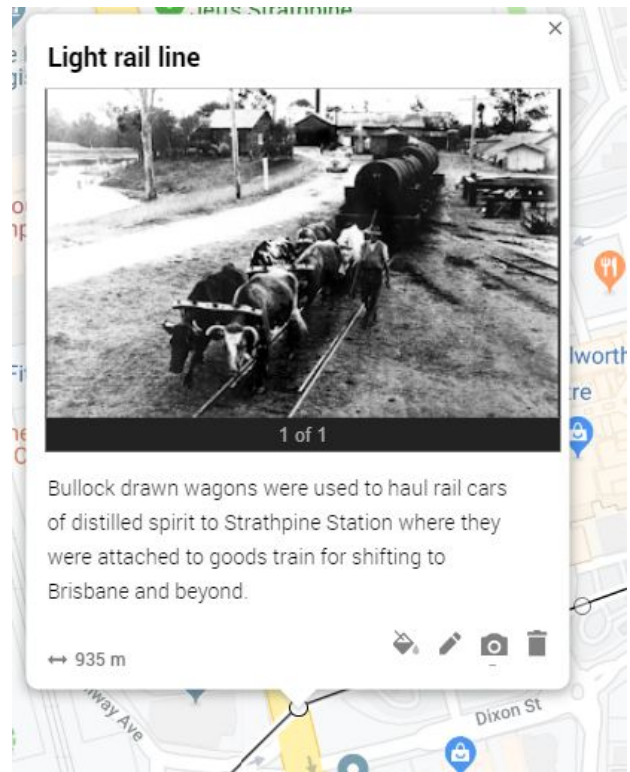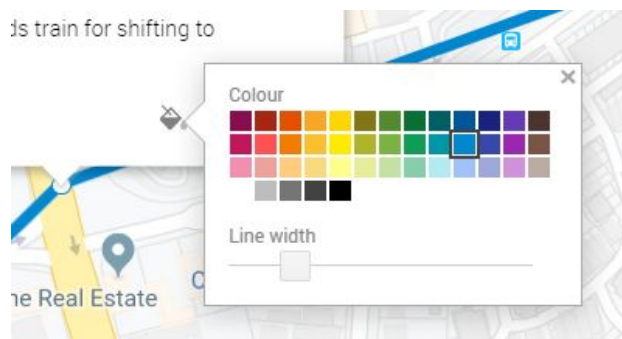

As a bonus, the mapping software has calculated the length of the path (see 935m at the bottom left).
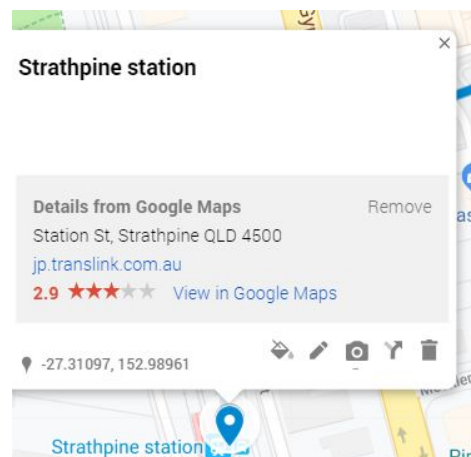
But the line itself is not very impressive, so you should edit it. It can be difficult to click exactly on the thin line to select it, so try its name in the left hand index pane.

Surprisingly, you change the look of the line with the paint bucket (not the pencil).
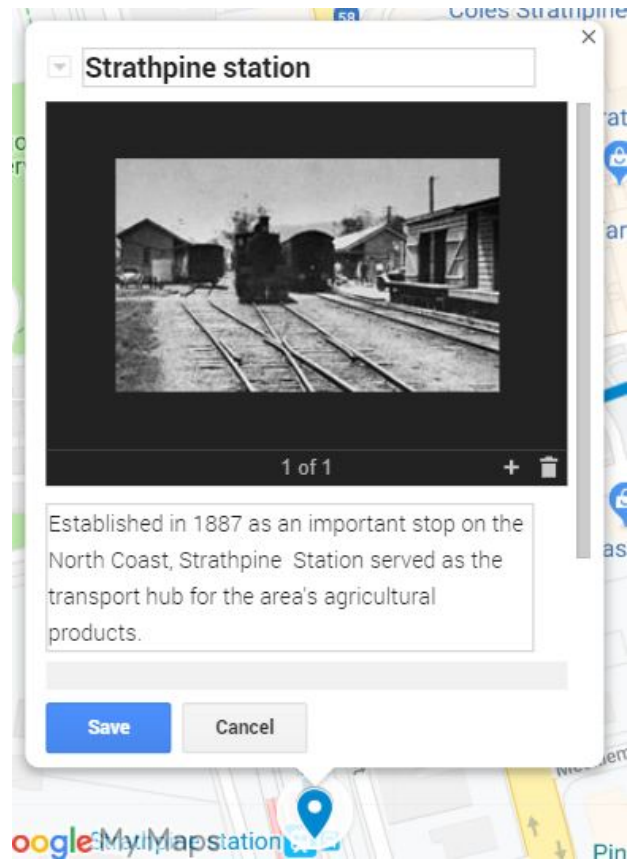
Use the options to set a new colour and line width.

If I click on the Strathpine Station pin, I see that Google has provided information about it (such as street address and website) from its search engine, because I placed that pin by Searching.
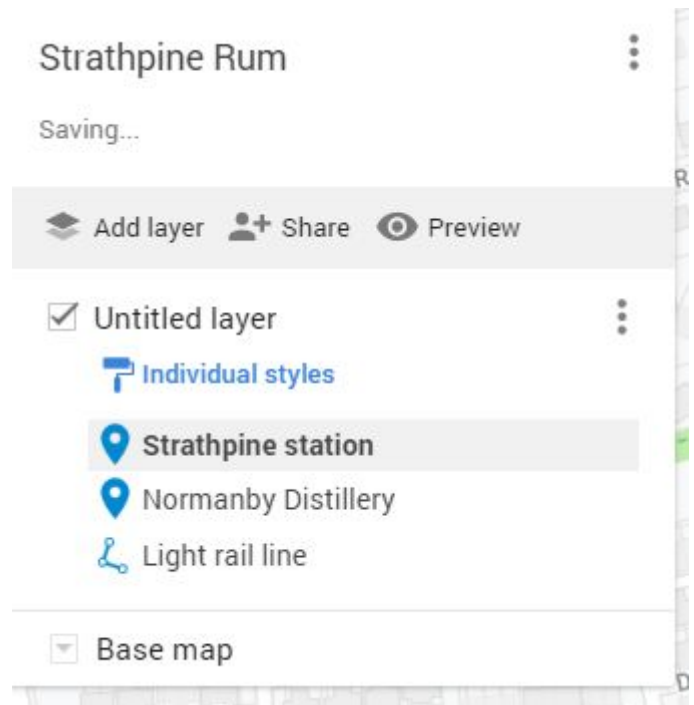
But you are free to add, modify or remove information until you get the result you want. Click the pencil to enable you to enter your (historical) description of this point. You can leave the modern information (it will be pushed down the screen) or click Remove.

Strathpine station

1 of 1

Established in 1887 as an important stop on the North Coast, Strathpine Station served as the transport hub for the area's agricultural products.

Save   Cancel

oogleMyIMapstation

I now have the basis for a story about making rum on the river bank, hauling it across to the station and then railing it into town.

But on the left hand side, the pins are listed in the order that I made them which is the "wrong" order for the story telling..

To rearrange the positions, just click on the pin you want to move and drag it to where you prefer it to be.

Strathpine Rum

Saving...

Add layer   Share   Preview

☑ Untitled layer

Individual styles

Strathpine station
Normanby Distillery
Light rail line

Base map

☑ Untitled layer

Individual styles

Normanby Distillery
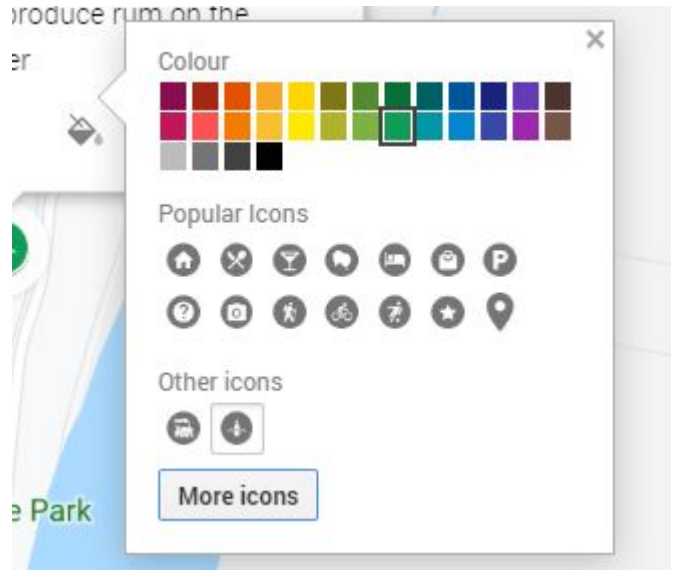Light rail line
Strathpine station

While you are improving the overall look, those plain blue pins are a bit boring.

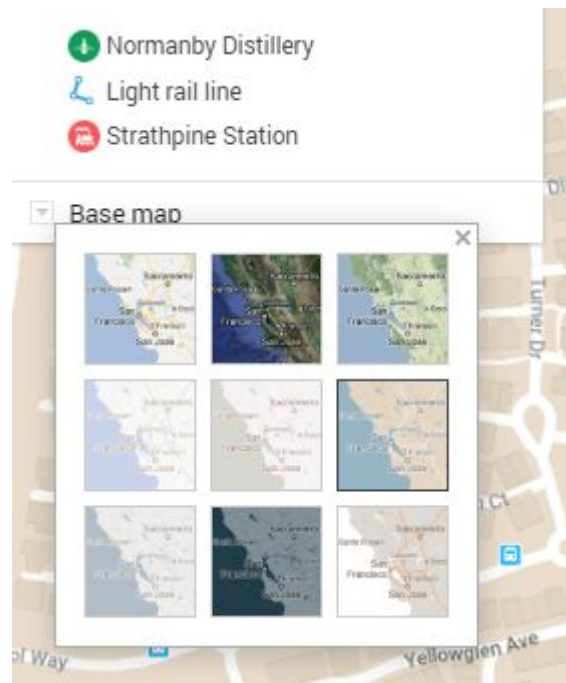Hover over any one of them and you see its own paint bucket tool.

Set a new colour and shape for the pin. (Hint use More icons to see what is available).

You can also take the opportunity to modify the base map.

Ideally you want a map that shows sufficient detail of the surroundings to ensure users know where they are; but not be intrusive and swamp the information you have added.

Try a few possibilities and see which one you like.

The final step is to decide how other people can view your map, if at all.

Click on the Share icon under the title

Strathpine Rum
9 views

All changes saved in Drive

Add layer   Share   Preview

to see your options.

Sharing settings

Link to share (only accessible by collaborators)

https://drive.google.com/open?id=1VRYX1kgObCY98vCui2tGwClp7k9Tz-xW&usp=sh

Share link via: M   f   y

Who has access

🔒   Private – Only you can access   Change...

(avatar)   Robert McAllister (you)   Is the owner
            robert.mcallister@gmail.com

Invite people:

Enter names or email addresses...   ✏ ▾

Owner settings Learn more
☐ Prevent editors from changing access and adding new people

Done

I have chosen to make this example public at
https://drive.google.com/open?id=1VRYX1kgObCY98vCui2tGwClp7k9Tz-xW&usp=sharing
so you can examine it. But note that you cannot make changes because I have made the permission "look but don't touch". You need to look through the options and choose the sharing settings with which you are comfortable.