

# The Farmer's Home Hotel, Matong: 1899-2008.



**The Farmer's Home hotel at Matong, in 1961.** Courtesy  
Tooth & Co. records.

Geoff Burch ©January 2019.

## **Introduction.**

This publication was designed primarily to record the history of the hotel at Matong. This location was initially known as Devlin's Siding, one of several stops along the then new railway line from Junee to Narandera.

The intent was to record the location of the hotel, the names of all licensees, and the details of the owners of the freeholds. Researching these topics, introduced me to other information about the village, some of which information is shared in this publication. Photos have been added to enhance the interest.

It is sad that so many small towns, like Matong, that once boasted a hotel, a butcher, a baker, several stores, a blacksmith's shop, and a proud community, should all have declined to such extent – a downside of modern technological advances. One can only guess at what society will look like in another fifty years.

I accept responsibility for any errors or omissions and am always happy to receive amendments, comments or additional information.

My contact details are as follows:

Email: [geoffrey.burch@bigpond.com](mailto:geoffrey.burch@bigpond.com)

Mobile: 0417 277 592

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# The Farmer's Home hotel at Matong.

## Early Settlement.

The earliest settlement along the northern bank of the Murrumbidgee, between Wagga Wagga and Narandera, was by Thomas Small and James Devlin in 1832. James Devlin's father died in 1820, and his widow remarried Thomas Small. James settled at Ganmain, while his step-father settled at Kockibitoo.<sup>1</sup>

James Devlin is listed as the occupier of the Ganmain Run from 1840 till 1847, inclusive,<sup>2</sup> and in 1849.<sup>3</sup>

Thomas Small was listed as the occupier of the Kockibitoo Run in 1840.<sup>4</sup> In 1847 James Devlin was listed as the owner of the Kockibitoo Run, as well as the owner of the Ganmain Run.<sup>5</sup> According to Gammage, Kockibitoo later became known as Deepwater Run.

It was around 1832 that John Lupton took up Berembled, being some thirty miles of river frontage west of Kockibitoo, with the head station at Berembled and outstations further west at Grong Grong and Narandera.<sup>6</sup> The license was listed in the name of Mary Lupton in 1840.<sup>7</sup>

John Jenkins later occupied Tooyal, to the east of Ganmain, and was listed as the occupier of that run from 1840 to 1847 inclusive.<sup>8</sup> John still occupied the run in 1848, when descriptions of most runs were gazetted.<sup>9</sup>

Early references to Ganmain can be confusing as the term covered such a large area. The first hotel on the northern bank of the river, west of Mundarlo, was said to be located at Ganmain, but it was situated at a spot we now call Currawarna.

There was an early hotel at Deepwater, but that is not covered in this article.

## The Railway Line

When the railway line from Junee to Narandera was opened in February 1881, there were stations at Old Junee and Cowabbie with a siding at Grong Grong.<sup>10</sup> Devlin's Siding was subsequently opened on the 1<sup>st</sup> March 1882, and renamed Matong Station in October 1900. The station closed on the 3<sup>rd</sup> June 1986.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Gammage, Bill. Narrandera Shire. 1986. p30.

<sup>2</sup> NSW Government Gazettes. Licensees of Occupied Runs. 1840-1847.

<sup>3</sup> NSW Government Gazettes. Licensees of Occupied Runs. 1849, pp1871-1874..

<sup>4</sup> Cosby. Commissioner of Crown Lands. Itineraries. January 1840.

<sup>5</sup> NSW Government Gazettes. Licensees of Occupied Runs. 1847.

<sup>6</sup> Gammage, Bill. Narrandera Shire. 1986. P30.

<sup>7</sup> Cosby. Commissioner of Crown Lands. Itineraries. January 1840. / NSW Government Gazettes. Licensees of Occupied Runs. 1840, p1194.

<sup>8</sup> NSW Government Gazettes. Licensees of Occupied Runs. 1840-1847.

<sup>9</sup> NSW Government Gazettes. Licensees of Occupied Runs. 1848, pp1305-1328.

<sup>10</sup> Sydney Daily Telegraph. 28<sup>th</sup> February 1881, p3.

<sup>11</sup> NSW Rail.net. <https://www.nswrail.net/locations/show.php?name=NSW:Matong>. Accessed 5<sup>th</sup> December 2018.

The new village was some distance from the river and from the areas of early settlement.

### **The Village**

The village of Matong was not proclaimed until 7<sup>th</sup> July 1900,<sup>12</sup> but development of the town started much earlier than that.

In June 1883 the locals wrote to the Wagga Wagga Progress Committee, seeking support for the erection of a goods shed and a post office at Devlin's Siding. The letter advised that there had been a porter stationed there once, but that he had subsequently been removed. The advice received for the committee was that the locals should organise two petitions - one for each project.<sup>13</sup>

Like many other areas along the new rail line Devlin's Siding was also a centre for saw milling and by October 1885, Wilkinson and Co. was operating a steam saw mill – the Albion Mills – at Devlin's Siding.<sup>14</sup>

In March 1886 James Sullivan's store at Devlin's Siding was burnt to the ground. The property was owned by George Dobbins.<sup>15</sup> The police eventually charged a man named Hall with starting the fire, but he was acquitted when he appeared in court in July 1889.<sup>16</sup>

On the 1<sup>st</sup> March 1886 a post office was established at Devlin's Siding.<sup>17</sup>

By August 1886 George Hill had a store at Devlin's Siding and trucking of timber was an extensive operation.<sup>18</sup>

In April 1888 Hardy's had a saw mill at Devlin's Siding and there was a fatal accident whereby a young man employed by the company had his arm sawn off and subsequently died in hospital.<sup>19</sup>

On the 26<sup>th</sup> July 1888, Henry Mortlock applied for a license for a new hotel at Devlin's Siding, to be called the Deepwater hotel. The police objected claiming a license was not needed at this location and the bench postponed the application until the next quarterly meeting in order that the applicant might respond to the concerns raised.<sup>20</sup> Mortlock never reapplied.

### **The Gold Robbery**

In April 1889, a local selector, John Andrew Shinnick, reported that his house had been held up by an armed man and that the thief had got away with £2,000. [His surname was reported in a variety of spellings – Shinnock, Shinneck and Shinnick – and his given names were listed as either John Andrew or James Ambrose].

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<sup>12</sup> NSW Land & Property Information. Historic Maps. Village of Matong.

<sup>13</sup> Wagga Wagga Advertiser. 7<sup>th</sup> June 1883, p2.

<sup>14</sup> The Riverine Grazier. 24<sup>th</sup> October 1885, p2.

<sup>15</sup> Australian Town & Country Journal. 3<sup>rd</sup> April 1886, p16.

<sup>16</sup> The Australian Star. 10<sup>th</sup> July 1889, p5.

<sup>17</sup> Evening News (Sydney). 27<sup>th</sup> February 1886, p6.

<sup>18</sup> Australian Town & Country Journal. 14<sup>th</sup> August 1886, p15.

<sup>19</sup> Newcastle Morning Herald. 23<sup>rd</sup> April 1888, p7.

<sup>20</sup> Wagga Wagga Advertiser. 28<sup>th</sup> July 1888, p2.

This was a large sum of money, and Shinnick claimed the income was from the recent sales of sheep at Albury and Corowa.<sup>21</sup> It turned out that Shinnick had called a meeting of creditors a few days earlier, and they had agreed to accept 12s. 6d in the pound. Despite extensive investigations police were unable to find any trace of the supposed thief, and when Shinnick appeared at a bankruptcy meeting in August 1889 his testimony was described as, “*very contradictory.*”<sup>22</sup>

The extent of Shinnick’s deception was more apparent in November 1890, when he reapplied for a certificate of release from bankruptcy. The evidence presented at the hearing was that his estate was sequestrated on the 30<sup>th</sup> May 1889, when he declared his liabilities at £7,935. 12s and his assets at £9,040. Shinnick had sold some 44,000 sheep, which he had purchased from various creditors for about £2,000. It seems he sold the stock for some £2,007 and in April 1889 and converted some £1,900 in cash into gold, in the form of gold sovereigns. It was the sovereigns that the thief allegedly stole. The official assignee stated that Shinnick’s behaviour in not banking the money, and in leaving it unprotected in his house, was reprehensible. Shinnick testified that he was absent at the time of the robbery, he having left the house in charge of a young servant girl. The other occupants of the house were his children, a governess, and his mother. Shinnick also admitted to the court that he was a gambler. The court refused to issue a certificate of release.<sup>23</sup>

### **The Village continued**

There was an influenza epidemic in the latter part of 1891, and a number of families around Devlin’s Siding were effected.<sup>24</sup> It was reported that the men at the saw mills were most affected.<sup>25</sup>

1891, 1892 & 1893 were years of extensive bush fires.

A travelling reporter visited the village at the end of December 1893 and spoke with Mr Hill, who was the local post-master and station-master, and a number of settlers around the village. The main topic of conversation was the recent catastrophic fires.<sup>26</sup>

Towards the end of 1895 a number of men started arriving at Devlin’s Siding to work on gangs that had been hired to thin the local forests. By the end of November 1895 there were sixty men on site, forming four gangs of fifteen men each, including one cook for each gang. Each gang had an area of one thousand acres to clear. The work site was a two mile walk from their camp, which in turn was one and a half miles from the railway station.<sup>27</sup> The men had all come from around Maitland way. The men appear, initially, to have been very happy with the food and supplies, the accommodation, and the work. One man commented

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<sup>21</sup> Wagga Wagga Advertiser. 30<sup>th</sup> April 1889, p2.

<sup>22</sup> Sydney Mail. 7<sup>th</sup> September 1889, p554. / Gundagai Times. 10<sup>th</sup> September 1889, p2.

<sup>23</sup> Australian Star. 17<sup>th</sup> November 1890, p6.

<sup>24</sup> Evening News. 9<sup>th</sup> November 1891, p5.

<sup>25</sup> Sydney Morning Herald. 14<sup>th</sup> November 1891, p10.

<sup>26</sup> Wagga Wagga Advertiser. 4<sup>th</sup> January 1894, p3.

<sup>27</sup> Maitland Mercury. 26<sup>th</sup> November 1895, p6.

that there were thousands of rabbits and hare, and plenty of wild ducks. He wished he had brought a gun to shoot some for eating, as others were doing.<sup>28</sup>

The men were not so happy by Xmas time. One man wrote to a Sydney paper advising that he was one of the original crews who had been hired by the Forestry Department to cut down all useless and crooked pine under four inches thick in diameter, to ring bark useless box trees, to remove scrub and to stack and burn all the aforementioned thinnings. He had been told he could earn from 7s to 9s per day, on which basis he signed up. Part payments to the men were to be made on a monthly basis, but after six weeks of working from 5am till 6pm for six days a week, the men had not been paid, despite the fact that assurances had been given in the parliament. He also commented that the squatter who would benefit most from their work was also the local store keeper, who was drawing about £35 to £40 a week from each gang, which he (the writer) obviously considered excessive.<sup>29</sup>

On the 14<sup>th</sup> May 1897 Michael Kennelly, of Devlin's Siding gave notice of his intention to apply for a publican's license for a house at that place, at the next sitting of the Wagga Wagga Licensing Court.<sup>30</sup> The house was to have nine rooms, in addition to those for private use.

The court met on the 6<sup>th</sup> July 1897, and Kennelly testified that there was currently no accommodation available at Devlin's Siding, that he owned the land on which the hotel was to be built, and that he planned to construct the hotel using dressed weatherboard. He stated that he had only been in the district for about three months. The police opposed the application stating they did not have a presence there and they did not believe a hotel was required at this location – there were very few passengers who embarked or disembarked at the station, and there were only about 130 adults within a four mile radius of the location. The police also stated that there were only five houses close to the siding, including one that housed the postal receiving office. The court denied the application, but declared that if the situation should change in the future Kennelly would have a prior right.<sup>31</sup>

By April 1898 there was a Progress Association at Devlin's Siding and at their meeting on the 18<sup>th</sup> April it was moved by the chairman, A Dufrayer, and seconded by R Trescilian, that Devlin's Siding be called Matong Station. Mr Thompson moved an amendment that it be called Elliott Station. The amendment was lost and the original motion was carried.<sup>32</sup>

By 1899 there had been large increases in land clearing and settlement. The district was still recovering from years of drought and fire, and from the economic malaise that blighted the colony in the 1890's. The crops had failed in 1898,<sup>33</sup> but the years ahead were about to introduce a new vigour.

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<sup>28</sup> Maitland Daily Mercury. 4<sup>th</sup> December 1895, p4.

<sup>29</sup> Sunday Times (Sydney). 12<sup>th</sup> January 1896, p5.

<sup>30</sup> Wagga Wagga Advertiser. 15<sup>th</sup> May 1897, p3.

<sup>31</sup> Wagga Wagga Express. 8<sup>th</sup> July 1897, p2. / Wagga Wagga Advertiser. 8<sup>th</sup> July 1897, p3.

<sup>32</sup> Wagga Wagga Advertiser. 23<sup>rd</sup> April 1898, p5.

<sup>33</sup> Wagga Wagga Advertiser. 5<sup>th</sup> January 1899, p2.

In February 1899 the government had let a contract to excavate a dam at Devlin's Siding, and works had commenced. The locals were concerned that it was too small and resolved to write to their local representatives requesting that an extra 5,000 yards be excavated.<sup>34</sup>

The first registered meeting of the Devlin's Siding Racing Club was held on the 20<sup>th</sup> January 1900. The event was dampened by inclement weather, which interfered with attendances.<sup>35</sup>

On the 3<sup>rd</sup> July 1900 the village of Matong was proclaimed by the Governor General.<sup>36</sup> On the 22<sup>nd</sup> October the Post and Telephone Office at Devlin's Siding was renamed Matong,<sup>37</sup> The railway station was also officially renamed Matong in the same month.

In May 1905, Matong was upgraded from a railway siding to a railway station, with Mr Greedy as the station master.<sup>38</sup>

A travelling reporter visited Matong in October 1906 and reported that the railway station was in the charge of Mr J Swaddling. There were two general stores – GW Wake & Co. and Hugh Doherty's – along with a butcher shop, a blacksmith's, and a public school with an enrolment of fifteen pupils, while the hotel, kept by Patrick Phelan, contained fifteen rooms.<sup>39</sup>

Development of the village was slow, as a travelling reporter noted, in May 1907, reporting that,<sup>40</sup>

*"A casual visitor to Matong (formerly Devlin's Siding) who expected to see a township, would certainly be disappointed by finding only what he would probably designate a "one horse town". Nevertheless, although there is at present only one shop, one hotel, and the inevitable blacksmith's shop, the business at these establishments and at the railway station proves the district to be thriving and prosperous. There has recently been considerable closer settlement in the neighbourhood, and with the cutting up of Cowabbee estate close by, and the prospect of a large government reserve being thrown open in the near future, Matong must not be left out of the running as one of the thriving townships on the south western line."* Some premises along Matong Street, from east to west, were GW Wake & Co.'s store, the Farmer's Home hotel, Mr Doherty's store and the School of Arts.<sup>41</sup>

The report also commented that an application was to be made by a local resident for a conditional license for a new hotel.<sup>42</sup>

## **St Patricks Church**

There is a claim that the first church at Matong was a Presbyterian Church, on a block of land, which in 1979 was owned by Mr & Mrs Frazer. It was said to be a pise building, which

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<sup>34</sup> Wagga Wagga Advertiser. 2<sup>nd</sup> February 1899, p4.

<sup>35</sup> Sydney Morning Herald. 23<sup>rd</sup> January 1900, p7.

<sup>36</sup> NSW Government Gazette. 1900, p5300.

<sup>37</sup> Narandera Argus. 26<sup>th</sup> October 1900, p2.

<sup>38</sup> Albury Banner. 4<sup>th</sup> May 1906, p25.

<sup>39</sup> Wagga Wagga Advertiser. 13<sup>th</sup> October 1906, p5.

<sup>40</sup> Wagga Wagga Advertiser. 18<sup>th</sup> May 1907, p5c8.

<sup>41</sup> Wagga Wagga Advertiser. 27<sup>th</sup> June 1907, p3.

<sup>42</sup> Wagga Wagga Advertiser. 18<sup>th</sup> May 1907, p5c8.

faced west towards the then post office. The building developed some large cracks and was subsequently destroyed.<sup>43</sup> No other reference could be found for this church.

When a reporter visited the village in May 1905 he noted that the Presbyterian Church held services every Sunday, except the 13<sup>th</sup> Sunday in every quarter when the Catholic Church held their service. These services were all held in a small hall in the village.<sup>44</sup>

On the 13<sup>th</sup> June 1918, St Patrick's Catholic Church at Matong was officially opened by Bishop Gallagher. There were over 500 people present for the occasion. The building had only just been completed and was free of debt. A local press report provided the following history,<sup>45</sup>

*"The progress of Matong is interesting, originally, in the early nineties, Mass was celebrated at the house of Mr. McCormick. Matong then belonged to the parish of Narrandera, the late Father Gray being the beloved priest. Afterwards the parish of Junee took charge, and the people were under the spiritual guidance of the Right Rev. Monsignor Buckley, P.P., V. G. The Mass was then celebrated in the dining-room of the Farmers' Home Hotel until the erection of the local School of Arts' hall, which served as a church for about 14 years. On the formation of the parish of Ganmain, Matong became one of the strongholds of the new parish, and has had for its spiritual advisers Father Griffin, now stationed at Coolamon, and the present priest in charge, Father Clarke, who took the first definite steps in bringing the church into being about three years ago. In spite of the war and the great drought, Father Clarke was not dismayed. He persevered, and with Mr. Rody Hogan as his first lieutenant soon awoke an answering thrill of enthusiasm in his people, with the result that the foundation stone was laid by his Lordship Dr. Gallagher on October 15, 1916. Originally the church was estimated to cost £1000, but the response of the people was so liberal that this amount was exceeded. It should be mentioned that the land upon which the church is built was the gift of Mr. W. F. Regan, one of Matong's most public-spirited townspeople. What enhances this gift is the fact that Mr. Regan is not a Catholic."*

The building itself was described as, *"built of brick, with cement facings. The windows overlooking the altar are of beautiful stained-glass, depicting striking Biblical events, the Crucifixion of Christ; St. Peter, with the keys of heaven; the Virgin Mary, gifts of Mrs. Kenny (Ganmain), Mr. and Mrs. J. J. Quinn (Matong), and the male parishioners of Matong. The furnishing is solid and handsome. The seats and wood work are of Queensland maple. The dimensions of the building are: Nave, inside measurements, 45 by 25ft.; sanctuary, 14ft. square; sacristy, 12ft. by 10ft. The walls are 14ft. high from floor level and from floor to top of ceiling in nave 20ft. The entrance from the nave to the sanctuary is built round a fine arch with massive Corinthian columns, beautifully traced with Keen cement. The whole reflects the greatest credit on both the architect and contractor."*<sup>46</sup>

Another report described it as a handsome brick structure with a fibro-slate roof that had cost in excess of £1,600.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> A History of Matong Public School & District. Jack McInnes. 1979.

<sup>44</sup> Albury Banner. 4<sup>th</sup> May 1906, p25.

<sup>45</sup> The Catholic Press. 13<sup>th</sup> June 1918, p20.

<sup>46</sup> The Catholic Press. 13<sup>th</sup> June 1918, p20.

<sup>47</sup> Freeman's Journal. 13<sup>th</sup> June 1918, p37.





**Above:** Matong main street in 1972. Courtesy National Archives. NAA: A6135, K10/5/72/12.



**Above:** The old shops including the Antiques Store in January 2019.

In 2019 Jack Doherty recalled the town as it was in earlier days. Working from east to west along Matong Street, commencing at the Wood Street intersection.

**Down Wood Street.**

The Catholic Church, St Patrick's, was set back, on the western side of Wood Street, between Pine Street and Devlin Street.

**Wood Street to Yanco Street.**

Moving along Matong Street, from Wood Street, we come first to the chaff mill, then the garage (now the old Matong Motors, Golden Fleece Service Station), then as we cross Yanco Street we come to the Post Office on the corner.

**Down Yanco Street.**

Two block back south along Yanco Street is the United Church (formerly the Methodist Church) on the eastern side of this street, between Pine and Devlin Streets.

### **Yanco Street to Deepwater Road.**

Continuing along Matong Street, from the Post Office, there was Lew Simpson (machinery parts), then Tim Jones general store (later Hintchcliffe's). Next came Bob Smith's machinery shop (agent for HB Mackay) followed by a lane, then a hairdresser and a billiard room. Then came Hankinson's large general store (now the old Antiques shop), then a lane (down which, some twenty feet on the right, stood the building that housed the Bank of NSW, which opened for business one day a week). This was followed by Mary Barrett's food shop, a vacant block, then Tom Davis's butcher shop, and then Deepwater Road.

### **Deepwater Road to Olive Street.**

Crossing over Deepwater Road we come to the Farmer's Home hotel, then the block of land, which featured the two wells of the hotel. Then a lane, followed by Mrs Doherty's house and store, then a vacant block, followed by the mechanics hall, a grocer shop (burnt down), a vacant block, then Halbisch's pise house, followed by the home of Zappy Doherty.

**Down Deepwater Road.** Moving south down Deepwater Road we cross over Pine Street, to find a baker's shop, a small haberdashery shop, a house, then the blacksmith's shop, followed by another house. Crossing over Devlin Street there was a dam followed by another chaff mill, then a road followed by a butcher shop.



**Above:** Looking at the Farmer's Home hotel across the railway line.

## **The Farmer's Home Hotel.**

**Location:** The Farmer's Home hotel was located on the north-west corner at the intersection of Deepwater road and Matong Street, in the village of Matong, parish of Elliott. The hotel is located on allotment 4, section 6, village of Matong, parish of Elliott.

### **Licenses**

On or about the 13th July 1898 the Wagga Wagga Licensing Court met and heard an application, from Michael Kennelly [or Kennelly], for a conditional license for a new house to be erected at Devlin's Siding. The bench inspected the plans submitted, and granted the application subject to certain amendments to the plan as recommended by the bench – these included the addition of fireplaces. The applicant was given 6 months to erect the hotel, which was to be known as the Farmer's Home hotel.<sup>48</sup> This would become the first hotel at Matong.

In October 1898 it was reported that construction was under way and that the new building would contain thirteen rooms.<sup>49</sup> In the same month it was also reported that a telephone office had been established at this location.<sup>50</sup>

On the **3rd January 1899**, the Wagga Wagga Licensing court issued a license to Michael Kennelly for the Farmers Home hotel at Devlin's Siding.<sup>51</sup> The hotel could now trade.

Michael renewed the license in 1900,<sup>52</sup> and again in 1901,<sup>53</sup> but by this date the town was now known as Matong. From 1902 the Farmer's Home hotel came under the jurisdiction of the Junee Licensee Court, instead of the Wagga Wagga Court. Kennelly renewed the license in 1902 and 1903,<sup>54</sup> but in 1904 the license was renewed by Patrick Phelan.<sup>55</sup>

When the court heard Kennelly's application in January 1902, it heard from the licensing inspector that the hotel was in need of better sanitary conveniences. His application was also late being filed and it was held over to the next sitting.<sup>56</sup>

Patrick Phelan held the license from 1904 till 1909, when he was superseded by Hugh Doherty. Doherty held the license from 1909 till 1912.<sup>57</sup> It was in this latter year that the Licensing inspector ruled that the hotel was not in a satisfactory condition. He had served three notices on Kennelly, but nothing had been done. He declared he would oppose any move to renew the license, while it was in its present condition, and noted that the then licensee, Devlin, had stated he would apply for a license for a new hotel, elsewhere in the town, if Kennelly's license was not renewed.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Wagga Wagga Advertiser. 14<sup>th</sup> July 1898, p4.

<sup>49</sup> Wagga Wagga Express. 15<sup>th</sup> October 1898, p5.

<sup>50</sup> Daily Telegraph. 1<sup>st</sup> October 1898, p15.

<sup>51</sup> NSW Government Gazette. Publican's Licenses. 1899, p4. / Wagga Wagga Express. 5<sup>th</sup> January 1899, p2.

<sup>52</sup> Wagga Wagga Express. 9<sup>th</sup> January 1900, p2c3.

<sup>53</sup> NSW Government Gazette. Publican's Licenses. 1901, p1375.

<sup>54</sup> NSW Government Gazette. Publican's Licenses. 1902-1903.

<sup>55</sup> NSW Government Gazette. Publican's Licenses. 1904, p720.

<sup>56</sup> Coolamon Echo. 10<sup>th</sup> January 1902, p2c1.

<sup>57</sup> NSW Government Gazette. Publican's Licenses. 1904-1912.

<sup>58</sup> Coolamon Ganmain Farmers Review. 11<sup>th</sup> October 1912, p6c4.

Mr & Mrs Hugh Doherty came to Devlin's Siding, from Victoria, around 1896, and settled to the south of the town. A few years later they opened a store and post office on a site that later became their home, where Mrs Doherty resided up until the time of her death in October 1948. They later took over the license of the Farmer's Home hotel, and after leaving the hotel went back to the store. Her husband, Hugh, had passed away in 1914.<sup>59</sup> The Devlin family sold the Ganmain Run to a Victorian syndicate in June 1910. The property consisted of some 7,000 acres and was said to have been in the hands of the family for some sixty years.<sup>60</sup> Earlier, in May 1903, the Scottish Australian Investment Co. had sold the Ganmain homestead and a portion of that estate to Norman Devlin. They retained a significant portion of the estate, which they now called Deepwater. They had also purchased various Matong selections from Devlin and these were now part of the Deepwater Estate, which was to be managed by JG McPherson.<sup>61</sup>

There was a severe storm in December 1912, which knocked down the public school and Mrs Donkin's residence, and severely damaged the railway grain shed.<sup>62</sup>



**Above:** Doherty's Farmer's Home hotel c.1910 – the original single storey timber building. Courtesy of the Daily Advertiser.<sup>63</sup>

<sup>59</sup> Narandera Argus. 1<sup>st</sup> October 1948, p2.

<sup>60</sup> Wagga Wagga Advertiser. 21<sup>st</sup> June 1910, p2c3.

<sup>61</sup> Wagga Wagga Express. 14<sup>th</sup> May 1903, p3c2.

<sup>62</sup> Daily Advertiser. 26<sup>th</sup> December 1912.

<sup>63</sup> Held by the Museum of the Riverina. Ref. BGS2017\_266.



Kennelly was in more strife in December 1912 when he was found guilty of attempting to bribe the police, and fined £50. He was fortunate to have his application for renewal of the license approved, given the condition of the building, and would have been under pressure to erect a new hotel.<sup>64</sup>

Hugh Doherty was superseded by Reginald S Devlin in 1912. A year later, in 1913, the license was transferred to William A Devlin,<sup>65</sup> who held it until 1914, at which point the license was forcibly transferred to Sidney Roderick Pratt, a barman from Narandera.<sup>66</sup>

Despite the pressures to remedy the dilapidated state of the hotel, Kennelly continued to vacillate and when the licensing inspector presented his quarterly report, in July 1913, he described the hotel as, "*antiquated and the worst hotel in the licensing area.*"<sup>67</sup> Kennelly appeared in court, in December 1913, to renew the license, and he was armed with plans from Mr Lundholme, architect of Junee, for a handsome two storey brick building containing twenty rooms.<sup>68</sup>

The court received the plans and also an application by William Devlin to renew his license. Devlin also told the court that if Kennelly did not proceed with his plans he would be prepared to construct a new hotel. The court had some reservations about Kennelly's tenure of the land, but the latter advised he had been promised, by the Premier, Mr Holman, that he would be given the opportunity to convert the property to freehold. The court approved the plans, with a stipulation that the building was to be completed within twelve months.<sup>69</sup> Devlin's license was also renewed.

The licensing inspector had also referred to an unnamed hotel "*on the extreme end of the licensing district*", where "*no bathroom was provided, and if a person desired a bath, they could have same by using a tub in the harness room.*"<sup>70</sup> This turned out to be the Farmer's Home at Matong. William Devlin wrote to the editor of the local paper to acknowledge that the reference was to his hotel, but that he was not the owner and he had no control over the state of the hotel building. He pointed out that the inspector had commented that the hotel was, "*well conducted, very clean, and frequented by a good class of people.*"<sup>71</sup>

The correspondent, who submitted the original comments, responded with a direct quote from the licensing inspectors report, "*these premises are in a bad state generally. There is no bath room, and anyone wanting a bath has to have it in a tub in the harness room. The rooms used for preparation and supply of food have no protection from flies and dust. No proper garbage receptacles and properly constructed manure bins are provided. The rooms*

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<sup>64</sup> Daily Advertiser. 20<sup>th</sup> December 1912, p3c2.

<sup>65</sup> NSW Government Gazettes. Publican's Licenses. 1912-1914.

<sup>66</sup> Narandera Argus. 1<sup>st</sup> May 1914, p3.

<sup>67</sup> Daily Advertiser. 11<sup>th</sup> July 1913, p4c6.

<sup>68</sup> Daily Advertiser. 11<sup>th</sup> December 1913, p3c1.

<sup>69</sup> Daily Advertiser. 13<sup>th</sup> December 1913, p6c1.

<sup>70</sup> Daily Advertiser. 13<sup>th</sup> December 1913, p6c1.

<sup>71</sup> Daily Advertiser. 18<sup>th</sup> December 1913, p4c7.

*are not properly ventilated. Altogether, the premises are not such as are required at a place like Matong, and a new and up-to-date hotel should be erected.”<sup>72</sup>*

By April 1914, James G Taylor of Hunter’s Hill (Sydney) had been selected as the contractor to erect the new hotel, under the supervision of the architect, JE Lundholme.<sup>73</sup>

On the 23<sup>rd</sup> May 1914, Lincoln & Co., brewers of Narandera, who had a financial tie over the hotel, applied to transfer the license from William Arthur Devlin to Sidney Roderick Pratt, of Narandera. The firm, and Devlin, were in conflict. Devlin had agreed to hand over the premises but refused to give up the license, so as of the 14<sup>th</sup> April, Lincoln & Co. were conducting the hotel business for the benefit of Devlin.

Kennelly testified that he was the lessor of the property and that William Arthur Devlin was the licensee. Devlin owed him a sum in excess of £100 and was refusing to make any more repayments. Devlin also owed some £600 to Lincoln and Co. who were now conducting the business and who were controlling the income and expenditures associated with the hotel. Kennelly was demanding that the firm pay him the outstanding rent. The firm had employed Pratt to manage the hotel and now wished for the license to be transferred into his name. Pratt had, in company with the sheriff, taken over from Devlin, without resistance, on the 7<sup>th</sup> April, but on the 18<sup>th</sup> Mrs Devlin came into the bar and took control of the money and stock, saying she did so on legal advice. Pratt advised the court that he was a single man, twenty eight years old, and he intended to hire a Mrs Moore, of Narandera, to manage the hotel. Moore, was separated from her husband and had three children. She had experience in hotels at Gillenbah and at Darlington Point.

The court approved the transfer of the license to Pratt, and Devlin’s solicitor immediately lodged an appeal.<sup>74</sup> The decision was never reversed and work on the new hotel had started by July 1914.<sup>75</sup>

Kennelly was before the court in August 1914, applying for the license to be transferred from Pratt to himself. Police objected to Kennelly being granted a license, declaring that he was not a fit person, as both he and his wife each had three convictions against their name. The court was told that the dilemma still existed whereby both Pratt and Mrs Devlin were running the hotel, and that transferring the license to Kennelly would resolve the matter. The court ruled against the application, on the basis that Kennelly, who owned three hotels, was a not a fit person to hold a license.<sup>76</sup>

On the 24<sup>th</sup> September 1914, Frederick W Crouch took over the license from Pratt,<sup>77</sup> ending the impasse between Pratt, Mrs Devlin and Lincoln & Co. Crouch renewed the license for a full year in January 1915,<sup>78</sup> but when it was renewed in January 1916, Michael Kennelly, was now the new licensee.<sup>79</sup> The court had obviously revised its opinion of Kennelly.

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<sup>72</sup> Daily Advertiser. 20<sup>th</sup> December 1913, p6c4.

<sup>73</sup> Daily Advertiser. 4<sup>th</sup> April 1914, p4c2.

<sup>74</sup> Narandera Argus. 1<sup>st</sup> May 1914, p3.

<sup>75</sup> Albury Banner. 24<sup>th</sup> July 1914, p12.

<sup>76</sup> Daily Advertiser. 15<sup>th</sup> August 1914, p3c6.

<sup>77</sup> Daily Advertiser. 26<sup>th</sup> September 1914, p6.

<sup>78</sup> NSW Government Gazette. Publican’s Licenses. 1915, p456.

<sup>79</sup> NSW Government Gazette. Publican’s Licenses. 1916, p533.

There was a big fire at Matong on the 26<sup>th</sup> January 1915. The hotel was safe but WF Regan's general store, La Reen's saddle shop and the post office were all destroyed. Reagan's store was a weatherboard building, while the post office was a brick building. The fire threatened Wake's boarding house and fruit shop, but the fire was stopped from spreading to these and then onto Donkin's general store.<sup>80</sup>

No record could be found of when the new hotel was completed, but presumably it was in either 1915 or 1916.

Kennelly renewed the incense each year, up until January 1919.<sup>81</sup> Sometime between that date and the 13<sup>th</sup> March 1919 James Logan Jnr, took over the license from Kennelly. On the first day of that month Logan's five year old son fell off the balcony of the hotel, and was not expected to live.<sup>82</sup>

In June 1919, thieves entered the hotel and stole a safe that weighed about 2 cwt, containing about £40 cash and some cheques. The safe was kept in the bar area. Police could find no trace of the safe or the thieves.<sup>83</sup>

Logan was originally in partnership with George Richard Symes, as hotel keepers, but this partnership was dissolved on the 22<sup>nd</sup> August 1919. Logan was now the sole operator.<sup>84</sup>

James Logan renewed the license in January 1920,<sup>85</sup> and again in January 1921,<sup>86</sup> but in April 1921, Joseph Ignatius Langtry of Marrar became the new landlord, on the 21<sup>st</sup> of that month.<sup>87</sup> Langtry was a strong supporter of Aussie Rules Football and had supported the Marrar team during the period in which they won several cups. Langtry declared that he intended to establish a top team at Matong and to that end a number of interstate players had been secured and would soon be residing at Matong.<sup>88</sup> It was also his intention to install an up to date lighting plant at the hotel.<sup>89</sup>

In June 1921, a young lady at Matong described the town, as follows,<sup>90</sup> *"It is situated ten miles from the Murrumbidgee River. There is a hotel, baker's shop, butcher's shop, blacksmith's shop, two grocery shops, two fruit shops, saddler and one school. We have had such a lot of rain lately, and the grass is lovely and green. Football is in full swing. We had a dance for it, and it turned out a great success."*

She also noted that, *"Since I last wrote to you a 'Pals' aeroplane flew over here and landed. It circled right over the town and landed not far from the school. The man that owned the aeroplane took the school children's photo. That afternoon they intended going, but the tail*

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<sup>80</sup> Farmer & Settler. 29<sup>th</sup> January 1915, p4.

<sup>81</sup> NSW Government Gazette. Publican's Licenses. 1919, p503.

<sup>82</sup> Daily Advertiser. 13<sup>th</sup> March 1919, p3.

<sup>83</sup> Daily Advertiser. 12<sup>th</sup> June 1919, p4.

<sup>84</sup> NSW Government Gazette. 1919, p4865.

<sup>85</sup> NSW Government Gazette. 1920, p424.

<sup>86</sup> NSW Government Gazette. 1921, p238.

<sup>87</sup> Daily Advertiser. 22<sup>nd</sup> April 1921, p2.

<sup>88</sup> Daily Advertiser. 9<sup>th</sup> April 1921, p6.

<sup>89</sup> Daily Advertiser. 2<sup>nd</sup> May 1921, p4.

<sup>90</sup> Albury Banner. 24<sup>th</sup> June 1921, p12.

*of the aeroplane caught in a fence and did much damage. This delayed them for about a fortnight.”*

Joseph Ignatius Langtry, lost his copy of the license and in October 1921 was forced to apply for a new copy, which was granted.<sup>91</sup> Two months later he renewed the license, for a full year, in the first week of December 1921.<sup>92</sup>



**Above:** Esler's Farmer's Home hotel at Matong in 1924. Courtesy Tooth & Co. Records.



**Above:** The Farmer's Home hotel at Matong in March 1930. Courtesy Tooth & Co. Records.

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<sup>91</sup> Daily Express. 15<sup>th</sup> October 1921, p2.

<sup>92</sup> Daily Advertiser. 7<sup>th</sup> December 1921, p2.



Joe Langtry was from Finley, where he had previously lived for fifteen years, and where he was employed as a share farmer. He was captain of the local football team there, and was said to be the best captain to ever lead the local team. He had held a publican's licence for hotels at Finley, Matong and Marrar, before settling down to farm again Binya. In 1940 he became the new Labor member for the seat of Riverina.<sup>93</sup>

On the 13<sup>th</sup> April 1922, Jack Esler took over the licensee of the Matong hotel.<sup>94</sup> Jack had previously been connected with the Central hotel at Henty. Mr & Mrs Jack McGrogan Esler had retired from the hotel by July 1923 when they were given a farewell social in the School of Arts, in that month. Mr Frederick Henry Helm Kemp had taken over the license on the 2<sup>nd</sup> July 1923.<sup>95</sup> Helm Kemp initially signed an eight year lease, and then took another three year lease in January 1927.<sup>96</sup> On the 6<sup>th</sup> November 1924, Frederick's wife, Eliza Jane, was given permission to carry on the business, and when the license was renewed, on the 26<sup>th</sup> June 1925, Eliza Jane was now the official licensee.<sup>97</sup>

On the 13<sup>th</sup> August 1925 Eliza Jane transferred the license to John Gleeson.<sup>98</sup> Gleeson was followed by Patrick Rupert Slattery on the 1<sup>st</sup> January 1926.<sup>99</sup>

The June licensing court met in January 1927, and Kennelly was served with an order to carry out substantial alterations and renovations to the Farmer's Home hotel.<sup>100</sup> JA Robertson, architect of Narandera, had already prepared plans and Kennelly agreed that the work would go ahead.<sup>101</sup>

Francis Henry Tully succeeded Gleeson on the 14<sup>th</sup> December 1927. Kennelly had reason to eject Tully and then put a manager in charge, which he did in May 1929, this being William Robert Heavener, and the license was transferred to the latter on the 17<sup>th</sup> of that month.<sup>102</sup>

Doris Ceely described the town in July 1929. In her words, *"The town itself is small, consisting of two general stores; two fruit shops, one baker's shop, one butcher's shop, one hotel, three agencies, two banks, one post office, a public school, a billiard saloon and barber shop, two churches and about 100 houses. The town is established on the north side of the Southwestern Railway line. The beautiful Murrumbidgee River is only eight miles north (sic) of the town. There is a population of about 400 people here, and about 80 children attend the school. The crops at present around here are not much good, as they badly need rain.*

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<sup>93</sup> Jerilderie Herald. 17<sup>th</sup> October 1940, p2.

<sup>94</sup> Daily Advertiser. 28<sup>th</sup> October 1922, p4.

<sup>95</sup> Daily Advertiser. 5<sup>th</sup> July 1923, p2.

<sup>96</sup> Noel Butlin Archives Centre, Australian National University: Tooth and Company yellow cards, N60-YC-1727, Farmer's Home hotel, Matong, circa 1920-1979.

<sup>97</sup> State Records. Index to Publicans' Licenses: 1920-1937.

<sup>98</sup> State Records. Index to Publicans' Licenses: 1920-1937.

<sup>99</sup> NBAC: Tooth and Co., N60-YC-1727, Farmer's Home hotel, Matong, circa 1920-1979. / State Records. Index to Publicans' Licenses: 1920-1937.

<sup>100</sup> Daily Advertiser. 14<sup>th</sup> January 1927, p2.

<sup>101</sup> Sydney Morning Herald. 15<sup>th</sup> January 1927, p16.

<sup>102</sup> NBAC: Tooth and Co., N60-YC-1727, Farmer's Home hotel, Matong, circa 1920-1979. / State Records. Index to Publicans' Licenses: 1920-1937.

*The feed is getting very scarce, and if it doesn't soon rain, for the grass to grow, the farmers will be hand-feeding their stock.*<sup>103</sup>

There were also three chaff cutting plants in the town at that time.<sup>104</sup>

Licenses to follow Heavener were,<sup>105</sup>

1929, 11<sup>th</sup> July – Mrs Evelyn Hayes, as manager for Kennelly.

1929, 5<sup>th</sup> December – Frederick Charles Pyke.

1930, 5<sup>th</sup> June – James Pittendreigh.

1931, 15<sup>th</sup> May – Ernest Mawson Earl Stevens. Stevens had previously held a license at Bathurst and an officer was sent from that place to oppose the transfer of the license to Stevens. The police testified that the latter had carried on betting at his old house and also conducted business out of hours. The police had been unable to catch him in the act, but had warned him on numerous occasions. Stevens promised not to allow betting on his new hotel, and declared he would conduct the business within the law. The application was granted.<sup>106</sup>

Stevens held the license for some three years, and then, on the 29<sup>th</sup> March 1934, he transferred the license to Mr Joseph (Joe) William Hamilton, late of Gilgandra. It should be noted that some reports referred to the hotel as the Matong hotel.<sup>107</sup>

Joe didn't stay long, and he was soon replaced by Arthur George Seely, on the 25<sup>th</sup> October 1934.<sup>108</sup>

On the 29<sup>th</sup> December 1935 the body of Jack Conway, a fifty five year old cook, was found dead in the well of the Farmer's Home hotel at Matong. Jack had been employed as a cook by several teams of men cutting chaff in the district. Police believe he was robbed and then dropped into the well, which was some thirty three feet deep and held about ten feet of water.<sup>109</sup> The police maintained their suspicions up until January 1936, when they reached the conclusion that Jack, who was blind in one eye and half blind in the other, had stumbled into the well drunk, and drowned.<sup>110</sup>

There were two wells associated with the hotel and these were both located on the vacant piece of land to the west of the hotel and to the rear of the hotel. The largest was furthest back from the hotel. It could have been twenty to thirty feet wide, with a flat cover.

The smaller tank was located between the hotel and the large tank. It had a dome cover with a small flat section in the middle of the dome.<sup>111</sup>

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<sup>103</sup> The Land (Sydney). 19<sup>th</sup> July 1929, p6.

<sup>104</sup> The Land (Sydney). 1<sup>st</sup> August 1930, p3.

<sup>105</sup> NBAC: Tooth and Co., N60-YC-1727, Farmer's Home hotel, Matong, circa 1920-1979. / State Records. Index to Publicans' Licenses: 1920-1937.

<sup>106</sup> Narandera Argus. 19<sup>th</sup> May 1931, p2.

<sup>107</sup> Narandera Argus. 16<sup>th</sup> March 1934, p2.

<sup>108</sup> NBAC: Tooth and Co., N60-YC-1727, Farmer's Home hotel, Matong, circa 1920-1979. / State Records. Index to Publicans' Licenses: 1920-1937.

<sup>109</sup> Daily Advertiser. 31<sup>st</sup> December 1935, p2.

<sup>110</sup> Daily Advertiser. 2<sup>nd</sup> January 1936, p2.

<sup>111</sup> Conversations. 9<sup>th</sup> January 2019 with Will Kember, Pat Quinn and Jack Doherty.

Licensees to follow Seely were,<sup>112</sup>

1936, 14<sup>th</sup> February –Robert Ian Cleaver.

1938, 19<sup>th</sup> September – Claude H Barber.<sup>113</sup>

Claude was a former policeman at Narandera and Matong, who passed away in Sydney, in July 1942, at the age of fifty one. His wife, Ethel was the daughter of Mr & Mrs Harry Dempsey of Narandera.<sup>114</sup>

1940, 27<sup>th</sup> February – George J Thame.

1941, 12<sup>th</sup> June –Laurence D Montgomery

1941, 1<sup>st</sup> October - George J Thame. George's mother was Elizabeth Thame and his father was Richard Thame. Richard died around 1932, and Elizabeth in June 1946. Elizabeth was well known in Wagga Wagga, as a former licensee of the Tourist hotel, in that town.<sup>115</sup> She had also been licensee of the Post Office hotel at Gulgong at one time.<sup>116</sup>

1947, 30<sup>th</sup> January – Dudley Victor Howe.

1950, 18<sup>th</sup> January – Kenneth Thomas Dudley Norman, ex Royal hotel, Murrurundi.

1951, 18<sup>th</sup> April – Gerald James Stokes (first license)

1952, 3<sup>rd</sup> September – John Patrick Marchant (first license).<sup>117</sup> Marchant's wife, Jessy, had left him in 1949. John attributed the breakup to her fixation with the Jehovah's Witnesses, which group she had joined. According to John she spent all of her time going from house to house spreading the word, neglecting him and their four children. They had been married for fifteen happy years before she found religion. In 1953 he was granted a divorce on the grounds of desertion.<sup>118</sup> Marchant later had pubs in Sydney – one in the red light area, where all the girls drank, and another near Pymont Bridge.

1957, 21<sup>st</sup> August – Harry Bertram Woodward (first license).

1960, 10<sup>th</sup> March – John Raymond Matterson (first license).

1961, 19<sup>th</sup> December – Frederick Joseph Bowder. Fred was described as a lazy publican. He had a habit of pouring himself a beer before his customers, causing them to ask, "What's wrong with my money?"<sup>119</sup> It was Bowder who sold the wrought iron work off the 1<sup>st</sup> floor balcony, for a cheap price.

1963, 22<sup>nd</sup> October – Russell McElhinney, formerly of the Walbundrie hotel at Walbundrie.

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<sup>112</sup> NBAC: Tooth and Co., N60-YC-1727, Farmer's Home hotel, Matong, circa 1920-1979.

<sup>113</sup> Daily Advertiser. 22<sup>nd</sup> February 1940, p4.

<sup>114</sup> Daily Advertiser. 31<sup>st</sup> July 1942, p2. / Narandera Argus. 28<sup>th</sup> July 1942, p2.

<sup>115</sup> Narandera Argus. 14<sup>th</sup> June 1946, p2.

<sup>116</sup> Mudgee Guardian. 20<sup>th</sup> June 1946, p16.

<sup>117</sup> Narandera Argus. 4<sup>th</sup> September 1952, p6.

<sup>118</sup> Narandera Argus. 21<sup>st</sup> September 1953, p2.

<sup>119</sup> Conversations. 9<sup>th</sup> January 2019 with Will Kember, Pat Quinn and Jack Doherty.

1965, 1<sup>st</sup> November – Mrs Doreen Marcella Stuckey (first license). Her husband, George had been a prisoner of war in Changi Prison and had been forced to work on the Burma railway line. They later had a pub at Yass.<sup>120</sup>

1970, 7<sup>th</sup> January – Eric Tillyer.

1974, 18<sup>th</sup> November – Gabriel Madrusan (first license)

1976, 2<sup>nd</sup> November – Cecil Ernest Fitt (first license). Ces had also purchased the freehold and he literally took to the hotel with a chain saw cutting out walls to eliminate a number of smaller rooms and create more open spaces for drinkers. He also owned and operated the hotel at Ganmain at some time.<sup>121</sup>

Fitt sold the freehold to Bernard and Colleen Dunnett in June 1982, and Bernard held the license for some time. By the 2<sup>nd</sup> December 1986 Marianne Waters was the licensee.<sup>122</sup> It is not known when she took over from the Dunnetts, or whether there were other licensees between Dunnett and Waters.

2<sup>nd</sup> December 1986 till 4<sup>th</sup> July 1988 – Ian Arthur Coles.<sup>123</sup> Coles took a strong interest in the local community and it was he that suggested the women play their Aussie Rules games on the same day as the men. An idea that was taken up by the local football clubs.<sup>124</sup>

4<sup>th</sup> July 1988 till 7<sup>th</sup> September 1993 – Francis James Ratcliffe.<sup>125</sup>

7<sup>th</sup> September 1993 till 20<sup>th</sup> April 1999 – Brian Leslie Koorey.<sup>126</sup> Brian was claimed to be one of the most popular publicans and said to be an excellent cook. He also ran a small shop in the hotel, which carried basic essentials. Someone else subsequently started up a shop and Brian ceased to operate his shop.<sup>127</sup>

20<sup>th</sup> April 1999 till 28<sup>th</sup> August 2002 - Janice Margaret McGregor.<sup>128</sup> Janice operated the hotel along with her husband.

28<sup>th</sup> August 2002 till license was cancelled - Keith Campbell Neumann.<sup>129</sup> The Neumanns sold the freehold in 2008 and it is believed the hotel ceased to trade around the 11<sup>th</sup> January 2008.

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<sup>120</sup> Conversations. 9<sup>th</sup> January 2019 with Will Kember, Pat Quinn and Jack Doherty.

<sup>121</sup> Conversations. 9<sup>th</sup> January 2019 with Will Kember, Pat Quinn and Jack Doherty.

<sup>122</sup> NSW Office of Liquor & Gaming. Hotel Licensing Records.

<sup>123</sup> NSW Office of Liquor & Gaming. Hotel Licensing Records.

<sup>124</sup> Jack Doherty. 10<sup>th</sup> January 2019.

<sup>125</sup> NSW Office of Liquor & Gaming. Hotel Licensing Records.

<sup>126</sup> Daily Advertiser. 30<sup>th</sup> September 1995, p25. / NSW Office of Liquor & Gaming. Hotel Licensing Records.

<sup>127</sup> Conversations. 9<sup>th</sup> January 2019 with Will Kember, Pat Quinn and Jack Doherty.

<sup>128</sup> ABN 95 150 598 740 Details.

<sup>129</sup> Weekend Advertiser. 12<sup>th</sup> & 13<sup>th</sup> January 2008, front page. / NSW Office of Liquor & Gaming. Hotel Licensing Records.



**Above:** The Farmer's Home hotel at Matong in September 1939. Courtesy Tooth & Co. Records.



**Above:** The Farmer's Home hotel at Matong in 1949. Courtesy Tooth & Co. Records.



**Above:** The Farmer's Home hotel at Matong in 1961. Courtesy Tooth & Co. Records.

## Stories

As well as being the centre of community activity – a meeting place for sporting bodies and other community groups, - the hotel was also used to hold church services, and was also the de facto employment agency. This was where employers and employees went to make employment agreements.<sup>130</sup>

### Keith O'Reilly.

On a non-descript day several regulars including Keith O'Reilly and Philip Burns, a jack of all trades, were drinking at the hotel when Burns bragged that he could drive from Matong to Wagga Wagga in under half an hour. His fellow drinkers scoffed at this, but Burns was adamant that he could do it. The time seemed impossible and O'Reilly, bolstered by a few drinks, bet Byrnes one thousand dollars he could not make the trip in under half an hour.

With a rush of blood Burns accepted the challenge and the finer details were settled. The race was to be from the Farmer's Home at Matong to the Post Office in Fitzmaurice Street, Wagga Wagga, and two men were to be stationed at each location to verify departure and arrival times. Arrangements were made for a telephone hook up to enable the immediate communication of results.

\$1,000 was a lot of money and Burns left nothing to chance. The run would take place at 2am in the morning when there was very little to nil traffic on the road. Burns also arranged for men to be stationed at locations where there could be delays – intersections etc.

On the designated day Burns climbed into his Ford Falcon and the race was on. The men at Matong waited eagerly by the phone. After twenty minutes nothing had been heard. Still nothing at twenty five minutes. Then a call came through – Burns had done it in twenty six minutes. Legend.<sup>131</sup>

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<sup>130</sup> Conversations. 9<sup>th</sup> January 2019 with Will Kember, Pat Quinn and Jack Doherty.

<sup>131</sup> Conversations. 9<sup>th</sup> January 2019 with Will Kember, Pat Quinn and Jack Doherty.



O'Reilly was a character who liked a bet and a challenge. On another occasion Tom Carroll and Mick Clark were returning from out of town and had stopped at a couple of pubs along the way, to refresh themselves. They arrived in town and went straight to the Farmer's Home for more refreshments. Clark was a good all round sportsman, being a very capable cricketer and a very good pool player. While they were drinking Clark was mucking around throwing quoits with only average results. He missed a few but he got a few on the peg. O'Reilly fancied his chances and challenged Clark to a game (quoits), placing £5 on the bar in an effort to tempt him. Clark accepted and went first. To O'Reilly's utter disbelief, Clark threw seventy in a row before he missed one. It was now O'Reilly's turn to throw. He stood up, walked over to Mick and said, "Here's the money!"<sup>132</sup>

There was a wooden table in the public bar area where regulars would play euchre every Saturday morning. These regulars included Pat Baker, Ted Richards, Eric Bean, Reg Kerr, Reg Smith, Pom Doherty and John Plummer. Games could go on until 3 or 4am in the mornings.<sup>133</sup>

The beer for the hotel would come to town by rail, in the old wooden casks. Sometimes the beer would go off and it was the responsibility of the Post Master (the only government official in town) to supervise the destruction of the contents. The casks were tipped into an open drain on the vacant block adjoining the hotel, much to the amusement of the locals. Frank Slattery was the Post Master at one time.<sup>134</sup>



**Above:** Farmer's Home hotel in 1972. Courtesy National Archives. NAA: A6135, K10/5/72/13.

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<sup>132</sup> Conversations. 9<sup>th</sup> January 2019 with Will Kember, Pat Quinn and Jack Doherty.

<sup>133</sup> Conversations. 9<sup>th</sup> January 2019 with Will Kember, Pat Quinn and Jack Doherty.

<sup>134</sup> Conversations. 9<sup>th</sup> January 2019 with Will Kember, Pat Quinn and Jack Doherty.



**Above:** Completely demolished. Now just a pile of rubble. Courtesy Twipu. Marguerite McKinnon. 2018.



**Above:** The Farmer's Home hotel in January 2019.





**Above and Below:** The Farmer's Home hotel in February 2008, after the fire had gutted the building.





**Above:** The old pub on fire in November 2018. Courtesy Area News.



**Above:** Being demolished in 2018. Courtesy PRIME7 News.

## Freehold

In March 1914 it was revealed that Michael Kennelly [or Kenneally] held a lease, from the Crown, for the land on which the Farmer's Home hotel at Matong was situated. The lease was set to expire in December 1917, it having been originally signed on the 1<sup>st</sup> November 1897 [a twenty year lease].

According to Kennelly the weatherboard hotel building and outhouses were valued at a figure between £1,900 and £2,000. In 1914 the premises were leased to Mr Devlin whose tenancy would expire of the 30<sup>th</sup> June 1915. The rent, from the hotel was £17. 10s per month, while he paid £5 per annum for the lease of the land. He declared that improvements dictated by the licensing inspector, in 1912, had cost £700 to £800 to carry out, and that he estimated current requirements would cost some £3,000. Kennelly requested that the local Land Board grant an extension of the lease for thirty five years in order that he could justify the expenditure to rebuild the hotel. He also advised that he planned to build a store and a house on the land as part of the redevelopment.

The board also heard that Kennelly owned a hotel at Koorawatha, which was leased out, and the Empire hotel at Temora. His wife also owned a hotel at Grong Grong.

The licensing inspector advised that the current building was not up to standard but that the proposed new building would be. He declared his intention to oppose the granting of a license for the existing premises.

The board heard evidence from the current licensee, Devlin, who also made offers to purchase a lease. The board though resolved to grant Kennelly a twenty one year lease, to be re-appraised every seven years, at a rental of £35 per annum for the first seven year period. The board specifically precluded the inclusion of a store or a residence. The site was restricted to a hotel only. Kennelly accepted the offer, which was subject to the Minister's approval.<sup>135</sup>

A lease was finally approved and gazetted in August 1914. The period of the lease was from 29<sup>th</sup> April 1914 till the 31<sup>st</sup> December 1934. The land in question was allotments 4 and 5 of section 6, in the village of Matong. The yearly rental was set at £25. The lease was conditional on Kennelly erecting a new hotel on the site that cost a minimum of £3,000 and maintaining it throughout the period of the lease. Kennelly was required to fence the property and it was stipulated that the rent be reviewed after seven and then fourteen years. It also had a clause that a breach of the licensing act, or failure to adhere to the conditions of the lease, could cause the lease to be cancelled.<sup>136</sup>

Allotments 4 and 5, section 6, were originally purchased from the crown by Michael Kennelly. The hotel was located on allotment 4, while the stables were located on allotment 5.<sup>137</sup>

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<sup>135</sup> Daily Advertiser. 7<sup>th</sup> March 1914, p6.

<sup>136</sup> Daily Advertiser. 31<sup>st</sup> August 1914, p2.

<sup>137</sup> NSW Land & Property Information. Historic Maps. Village of Matong.

Kennelly was able to secure freehold title to the land on the 6<sup>th</sup> December 1926,<sup>138</sup> for the sum of £500.

In January 1934 Kennelly leased the hotel to Tooth & Co.

In 1935, Kennelly's wife, Mrs Anna Kennelly, passed away on the 29<sup>th</sup> March 1935, leaving an estate of £43,000 for her husband, in trust. The assets consisted of two hotels, some shops and some cottages. Michael still owned the Farmers' Home hotel, in his own right. Anna stipulated that when Michael died her estate was to be divided amongst some of her relatives.<sup>139</sup> The various properties owned by Michael and the trust were located at Koorawatha, Grong Grong, Matong and Young.<sup>140</sup>

The property was transferred to Charles Francis Giugni, a solicitor of Young, on the 8<sup>th</sup> December 1936, who would have been acting on behalf of Kennelly.<sup>141</sup>

On the 14<sup>th</sup> April 1937 the hotel property was purchased from the Kennelly estate by Tooth & Co.<sup>142</sup> Although Tooth & Co. now owned the freehold, it was a special category of tenure which required the permission of the minister, before any lease of the property, or sale of the freehold, could be concluded. This restriction was later removed (in June 1957).<sup>143</sup>

On the 21<sup>st</sup> March 1968 Tooth & Co. sold the freehold to Mrs Doreen Marcella Stuckey for \$16,000.

Owners to follow were,

1970, 1<sup>st</sup> January – Freehold sold to Eric Tillyer, publican of Alexandria & Doreen Winifred Tillyer, his wife, for \$26, 250.<sup>144</sup>

1974, 18<sup>th</sup> November – Freehold sold to Gabriel and Klavdia Madrusan, for \$52,000.

1976, 2<sup>nd</sup> November- Freehold sold to Cecil Ernest Fitt and Joyce Marjorie Fitt., for \$68,000.

1982, 23<sup>rd</sup> June – Bernard Victor Dunnett and Colleen May Dunnett are now the legal owners.<sup>145</sup>

1983, 8<sup>th</sup> March – Carndun Holdings Pty Ltd is now the registered legal owner.<sup>146</sup>

1986, 23<sup>rd</sup> December – Butosi Pty Ltd registered as the legal owner.<sup>147</sup>

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<sup>138</sup> NSW Land Registry Services. Title Deed. Volume 4054, folio 38.

<sup>139</sup> Daily Advertiser. 10<sup>th</sup> June 1935, p2.

<sup>140</sup> Daily Advertiser. 12<sup>th</sup> June 1936, p4.

<sup>141</sup> NSW Land Registry Services. Title Deed. Volume 4054, folio 38.

<sup>142</sup> NBAC: Tooth and Co., N60-YC-1727, Farmer's Home hotel, Matong, circa 1920-1979. / NSW Land Registry Services. Title Deed. Volume 4054, folio 38.

<sup>143</sup> NSW Land Registry Services. Title Deed. Volume 6798, folio 98.

<sup>144</sup> NSW Land Registry Services. Title Deed. Volume 6798, folio 98.

<sup>145</sup> NSW Land Registry Services. Title Deed. Volume 12699, folio 111.

<sup>146</sup> NSW Land Registry Services. Title Deed. Volume 12699, folio 111.

<sup>147</sup> NSW Land Registry Services. Title Deed. Volume 12699, folio 111.



1988, 19<sup>th</sup> August – Christopher Frank Schofield and Roslyn Ann Schofield registered as joint tenants.<sup>148</sup>

From the 4<sup>th</sup> July 1988 till the 7<sup>th</sup> September 1993, the owner of the property was Kanadey Holdings Pty Ltd.<sup>149</sup>

From the 7<sup>th</sup> September 1993 till the 20<sup>th</sup> April 1999 Brain Leslie Koorey and Lorraine Koorey were the legal owners of the property.<sup>150</sup>

In September 1995 the hotel freehold was up for sale. The owners were Brian & Lorraine Koorey, who after three years at the pub were looking to move to Canberra. The couple had renovated the hotel during their time there.<sup>151</sup>

From the 20<sup>th</sup> April 1999 till the 28<sup>th</sup> August 2002 Janice Margaret McGregor and Brian McGregor were the owners of the freehold.<sup>152</sup>

28<sup>th</sup> August 2002 till around 2008<sup>153</sup> – Keith Campbell Neumann and Christine Maria Neumann were the owners. The hotel was forced to close in January 2008 when it was gutted by fire. The couple were ineligible to claim insurance and were forced to place the property and the license on the market for a sum of \$50,000. There was a condition that the purchaser had to rebuild the hotel, which Mr Neumann estimated would cost \$150,000. By his own reckoning the hotel was valued at \$1.2 million, before the fire, and his estimate to rebuild appears to have been extremely optimistic given the structural damage to the hotel.<sup>154</sup>

The hotel was gutted by fire on Friday the 11<sup>th</sup> January 2008.<sup>155</sup>

In 2008 Bruce Maples, Merril Stever, Patrick Campbell and Robert Dallizia, purchased the freehold for \$50,000. Bruce was still a co-owner in February 2018.<sup>156</sup>

Keith Neumann retained the license but it was surrendered in July 2016.<sup>157</sup>

There was conflict between the owners and the Coolamon Shire Council. The latter had been compelled to take the matter to the Land & Environment Court, who upheld the decision by council that work carried out on the building did not comply with legislated regulations.<sup>158</sup> This conflict between council and the owners was still being carried on in February 2012.<sup>159</sup>

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<sup>148</sup> NSW Land Registry Services. Title Deed. Volume 12699, folio 111.

<sup>149</sup> NSW Office of Liquor & Gaming. Hotel Licensing Records.

<sup>150</sup> NSW Office of Liquor & Gaming. Hotel Licensing Records.

<sup>151</sup> Daily Advertiser. 30<sup>th</sup> September 1995, p25.

<sup>152</sup> NSW Office of Liquor & Gaming. Hotel Licensing Records.

<sup>153</sup> NSW Office of Liquor & Gaming. Hotel Licensing Records.

<sup>154</sup> Daily Advertiser. 27<sup>th</sup> March 2008, p1.

<sup>155</sup> Daily Advertiser. 12<sup>th</sup> January 2008.

<sup>156</sup> Wagga Weekly. 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2018, p22. / The Land. Marguerite McKinon. 18<sup>th</sup> November 2017.

<sup>157</sup> BushTelegraph. Clyde Mooney. 9<sup>th</sup> November 2018. See PUBtic, <https://pubtic.com.au/farmers-home-burns-police-investigate>. Accessed 8th December 2018.

<sup>158</sup> Daily Advertiser. 26<sup>th</sup> August 2010, p6.

<sup>159</sup> Daily Advertiser. 14<sup>th</sup> February 2012, p8.

In December 2017 the council issued a demolition order against the hotel, but this was subsequently withdrawn after the matter had been referred back to the Land & Environment Court.

In November 2018 the hotel building caught fire again,<sup>160</sup> and was promptly demolished. The company that owned the hotel property, was, by this time, in liquidation.

Current title – Allot.4 > DP.4.6.758657. Prior title volume 12699, folio 111.

Current title – Allot.5 > DP.5.6.758657. Prior title volume 12699, folio 111.

Prior titles: Volume 12699, folio 111 > volume 6798, folio 98 > volume 4054, folio 98.

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<sup>160</sup> BushTelegraph. Clyde Mooney. 9<sup>th</sup> November 2018. See PUBtic, <https://pubtic.com.au/farmers-home-burns-police-investigate>. Accessed 8th December 2018.