

# GRONG GRONG HOTELS



**Front Cover:** Royal Hotel, Grong Grong,

Geoff Burch ©April 2022.

## **Acknowledgments.**

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Thank you to Ancestry, which is now, for me, a standard research tool.

# **EARLY SETTLEMENT**

## Early Settlement

The earliest settlement along the northern bank of the Murrumbidgee, between Wagga Wagga and Narandera, occurred in 1832, according to Gammage. James Devlin settled at Ganmain, and his stepfather, Thomas Small, settled Kockibitoo (later known as Deepwater), and in 1833, the latter took up Yanco.<sup>1</sup> John Jenkins settled Tooyal in 1832.<sup>2</sup>

What we now know as Grong Grong is to the west of Berembled station and was initially part of a larger Berembled Run.

The area was originally settled by John Lupton in 1832,<sup>3</sup> and his head station was known as Berembled. John Lupton died in 1836,<sup>4</sup> aged forty three, and his wife Mary took over the run. It is doubtful that Lupton spent much time on the Murrumbidgee. When he died, as a consequence of being thrown from his horse, he was residing at West Bargo, where he had also conducted the Woolpack hotel since 1831.<sup>5</sup>

Resistance from the indigenous owners of the lands, along with several droughts, meant that the various runs between Wagga Wagga and Narandera were not always occupied during the 1830's, especially those west of Berembled. It was in August 1839 that local Wiradjuri warriors killed workers on the outstations of Grong Grong and Narandera and threatened the head station at Berembled.<sup>6</sup> There is no doubt that the Aborigines were responding to years of hostilities and mistreatment from the white European invaders. In 1840 and 1841 the squatters responded, killing possibly hundreds of the Wiradjuri people,<sup>7</sup> and this seems to have ended the opposition to white European settlement along the Murrumbidgee.

The license for Berembled was in Mary Lupton's name by 1840.<sup>8</sup> Mary, like her late husband, resided at Bargo,<sup>9</sup> and she had also taken over the license of the Woolpack hotel, in 1836.<sup>10</sup>

In 1840 Mary Lupton married Joseph Henry Jones.<sup>11</sup> Frederick Jones was listed as occupier of an unnamed run on the Murrumbidgee for the years 1839 to 1841<sup>12</sup> (listed as Toongeen in 1839).<sup>13</sup> There were members of the Jones family living at Bargo, at this time.<sup>14</sup>

In 1840 Thomas Small held Kockibitoo<sup>15</sup> [to the east of Berembled], and to the east of that lay James Devlin's Ganmain.<sup>16</sup> Between Ganmain and Wagga Wagga, John Jenkins held Tooyal.<sup>17</sup> Going further east, Jane Thorn held Gobbagumbalin,<sup>18</sup> followed by Charles Tompson who held Eunonyhareenya,<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Bill Gammage. Narandera Shire. p30.

<sup>2</sup> Bill Gammage. Narandera Shire. p38.

<sup>3</sup> Bill Gammage. Narandera Shire. p30.

<sup>4</sup> NSW BDM's. Death registration # 934/1836 V1836934 20.

<sup>5</sup> Sydney Monitor. 12<sup>th</sup> October 1836, p2. / State Records. Treasury Butts & Certificates of Publicans' Licenses. 1830-1860.

<sup>6</sup> Bill Gammage. Narandera Shire. p34.

<sup>7</sup> Bill Gammage. Narandera Shire. p35.

<sup>8</sup> NSW Government Gazette. 1840, p1194.

<sup>9</sup> Sydney Times. 10<sup>th</sup> December 1836, p2.

<sup>10</sup> Sydney Monitor. 16<sup>th</sup> November 1836, p4.

<sup>11</sup> NSW BDM's. Marriage registration # 489/1840 V1840489 24B.

<sup>12</sup> NSW Government Gazette. 1840-1841, p171, 692, 1484.

<sup>13</sup> Bingham Itineraries.

<sup>14</sup> The Australian (Sydney). 13<sup>th</sup> July 1841, p4.

<sup>15</sup> State Records. Commissioners of Crown Lands Records. Cosby January 1840.

<sup>16</sup> State Records. Commissioners of Crown Lands Records. Cosby January 1840. / Government Gazette. 1840, p171.

<sup>17</sup> State Records. Commissioners of Crown Lands Records. Cosby January 1840. / Government Gazette. 1840, p541.

<sup>18</sup> Government Gazette. 1840, p761.

<sup>19</sup> State Records. Commissioners of Crown Lands Records. Cosby January 1840.

and Oura.<sup>20</sup> To the west of Berembled, Charles Tompson, Junior, held the Narandera Run,<sup>21</sup> and further west, Thomas Small held Yanco.<sup>22</sup>

In 1841, Mary Jones was the licensee of the Beremebed Run,<sup>23</sup> but from 1842 to 1847 Berembled Run was occupied by John Jones (1842), then Joseph Henry Jones (1843-1847).<sup>24</sup> [John may have been an erroneous entry and perhaps it should have read Joseph Henry].

In 1844, Edward Flood held Narandera, Joseph Henry Jones held Berembled, James Devlin held Ganmain, John Jenkins held Tooyal, Jane Thorn held Gobbagumbalin, and Charles Tompson held Eunonyhareenya and Oura.<sup>25</sup>

In 1845,<sup>26</sup> and 1847,<sup>27</sup> Joseph Henry Jones was listed as the licensee of Berembled and the Heifer Station [the latter would become known as the Grong Grong Run].

In 1845, William Thorn held Yanco, Edward Flood held Narandera, William Taylor now held a license for Bundidgerry (formerly a part of the Narandera Run)<sup>28</sup>, between Berembled and Narandera. John Jenkins held Tooyal, Jane Thorn held Gobbagumbalin, and Charles Tompson still held Eunonyhareenya and Oura.<sup>29</sup>

In 1847, William Thorne held Yanco, Edward Flood held Narandera, James Devlin held Kockibitoo and Ganmain, John Jenkins held Tooyal, and Jane Thorn held Gobbagumbalin.<sup>30</sup>

Joseph Henry Jones was still the licensee of Berembled in 1848, when the following description of the run was given,<sup>31</sup>

*"No. 74. Jones, Joseph.*

*Name of Run—Berrembed.*

*Estimated Area—21,000 Acres.*

*Estimated Grazing Capabilities—1,280 Cattle, or 8,000 Sheep.*

*Bounded on the north (sic) by the Murrumbidgee River, commencing at the north (sic)-west corner of James Devlin's station, named Colkibitoo (sic), and running to Oak Creek, being a distance in a direct line of about 10 miles; on the west by Oak Creek, dividing it from Taylor's station to a range of hills; on the south by the centre of the same, to the western boundary of Devlin's station before named; and on the east by the said boundary to the River Murrumbidgee."* [the two references to the north should obviously have read south]

Joseph Henry Jones renewed the license for *Berrembed* in 1849.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> State Records. Commissioners of Crown Lands Records. Cosby January 1840. / Government Gazette. 1840, p171.

<sup>21</sup> State Records. Commissioners of Crown Lands Records. Cosby January 1840.

<sup>22</sup> State Records. Commissioners of Crown Lands Records. Cosby January 1840.

<sup>23</sup> Sydney Gazette. 2<sup>nd</sup> November 1841, p4.

<sup>24</sup> NSW Government Gazette. 1842-1847.

<sup>25</sup> NSW Government Gazette. 1844, p1280. / State Records. Commissioners of Crown Lands Records. Beckom December 1844.

<sup>26</sup> NSW Government Gazette. 1845, p1297.

<sup>27</sup> NSW Government Gazette. 1847, p5790.

<sup>28</sup> Bill Gammage. Narandera Shire. P40.

<sup>29</sup> NSW Government Gazette. 1845, p1297.

<sup>30</sup> NSW Government Gazette. 1847, p580.

<sup>31</sup> NSW Government Gazette. 1848, p1314.

<sup>32</sup> Sydney Morning Herald. 17<sup>th</sup> July 1849, p3.

In the 1840's the runs were mostly stocked with cattle. Sheep were restricted to a couple of runs – *Narandera*, *Bundidgerry* and *Deepwater*. The number of men working on the stations was relatively small. *Berembed* for example only employed six to eight men between 1845 and 1848.<sup>33</sup>

In July 1855, Mary Jones, who was still living at Bargo, placed a notice in the Goulburn Herald warning that the station known as *Berembed* and the *Heifer Station*, adjoining, could not be sold or in any way disposed of without her consent.<sup>34</sup>

In 1856,<sup>35</sup> 1857,<sup>36</sup> 1860,<sup>37</sup> 1863,<sup>38</sup> 1864,<sup>39</sup> and 1865,<sup>40</sup> *Berembed Run* was occupied by John Lupton (junior), Mary's son.

In August 1867 *Berrembed* was stuck up by four bushrangers, who stole some rifles, a pair of pistols, and some clothing. John Lupton was absent at the time - away in Melbourne - but his wife was at the station.<sup>41</sup> The bushrangers threatened to return when Lupton was back, but three of the men – Scott, Smith and Black Jack - were subsequently captured by Sergeant Ussher. John Lupton presented Sergeant Ussher with one of the rifles stolen from the station as a reward.<sup>42</sup>

### **Grong Grong Station**

The earliest references found to *Grong Grong* were from 1859 onwards,<sup>43</sup> and in 1867 the Government Gazette referred to the *Heifer Station*, or *Grong Grong Run*.<sup>44</sup> In that same year (1867) the *Grong Grong Run* was up for sale, in Melbourne,<sup>45</sup> by the proprietors, who, purportedly, had dissolved their partnership. This may have been William and John Lupton. The property was described as having six miles frontage to the Murrumbidgee River, with a total area of seventy square miles.<sup>46</sup>

The *Grong Grong Station* was sold to George Peppin, of *Wangonilla*, in April 1867, along with 11,500 sheep.<sup>47</sup>

In 1867 Daniel Turner was reported as missing. He had once been the superintendent on Eunonyhareenya when Mr H Wallace was the occupier. He later took over the management of *Grong Grong Run*, up until January 1867, when he left to go to Sydney.<sup>48</sup>

By March 1868, Messrs Morgan and Bear were occupying the *Grong Grong Run*.<sup>49</sup> The partnership consisted of Charles & Henry Morgan, and their relatives - John William Bear [the son of John Pinney

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<sup>33</sup> Bill Gammage. *Narandera Shire*. p42.

<sup>34</sup> Goulburn Herald. 21<sup>st</sup> July 1855, p3.

<sup>35</sup> Goulburn Herald. 28<sup>th</sup> June 1856, p8.

<sup>36</sup> Empire. 27<sup>th</sup> October. 1857, p4.

<sup>37</sup> Sydney Morning Herald. 2<sup>nd</sup> February 1860, p3.

<sup>38</sup> Empire. 13<sup>th</sup> October 1863, p4.

<sup>39</sup> Goulburn Herald. 4<sup>th</sup> May 1864, p2.

<sup>40</sup> Sydney Morning Herald. 21<sup>st</sup> April 2019, p7.

<sup>41</sup> Bendigo Advertiser. 28<sup>th</sup> August 1867, p3.

<sup>42</sup> Burringong Argus. 8<sup>th</sup> February 1868, p4.

<sup>43</sup> Wagga Wagga Express. 19<sup>th</sup> February 1859, p3.

<sup>44</sup> NSW Government Gazette. 1867, p1577.

<sup>45</sup> The Argus. 10<sup>th</sup> April 1867, p2.

<sup>46</sup> The Argus. 16<sup>th</sup> March 1867, p3.

<sup>47</sup> The Australasian (Melbourne). 13<sup>th</sup> April 1867, p14.

<sup>48</sup> Empire. 10<sup>th</sup> July 1867, p4.

<sup>49</sup> Sydney Mail. 28<sup>th</sup> March 1868, p12.

Bear] and Thomas Hutchings Bear [the brother of John Pinney Bear]. The latter two men had a connection with the Melbourne Banking Company.<sup>50</sup> John Pinney Bear established the bank in the early 1860's.<sup>51</sup> His only son to survive past infancy was John William Bear, who would have been fourteen years old when Messrs Morgan & Bear took over the *Grong Grong Run*.

The run was known as *Garrongoorung* from around 1868, when the Melbourne Bank Co., took over the run.

### **Thomas Hutchings Bear**

In April 1856 Thomas Hutchings Bear, late of Victoria, married Emily Henrietta Morgan, the eldest surviving daughter of Charles Morgan. The marriage took place in London England.<sup>52</sup> In May 1860 Bear was elected a director of the National Bank (Melbourne).<sup>53</sup> In May 1862, Thomas was a partner of the Melbourne Banking Company.<sup>54</sup> Thomas passed away in October 1890, aged sixty-five.<sup>55</sup>

In March 1871, Henry Morgan, grazier, of Grong Grong, Wagga Wagga, and late of Tumut, was declared insolvent with liabilities of £4,040 and assets of £10.<sup>56</sup> It appears that the Bears provided the finance and that the Morgans mostly managed the property,<sup>57</sup> although Thomas Hutchings Bear was at Grong Grong for many years (1868 to 1880's).

In November 1885, Henry's wife, Lucy Elizabeth Morgan (nee Coward) passed away at *Billaah*, Grong Grong.<sup>58</sup>

In February 1891 Henry Morgan was the legal owner of the *Billaah* estate, situated twenty-three miles from Narandera and twelve miles from the Grong Grong railway station. He had placed the property up for private sale, unstocked. The holdings consisted of 250 acres of freehold land, 4,453 acres of conditional purchase land, and 500 acres of leasehold land. The property was split into seven paddocks, all fenced, and featured a homestead of seven rooms and associated outhouses.<sup>59</sup>

Henry Morgan passed away in March 1896, at Tumbarumba, aged seventy-one.<sup>60</sup> One of his five daughters had married Mr HD Bear, of *Burrah Station*, Tumbarumba.<sup>61</sup>

It was in September 1906 that the *Grong Grong* and *North Berembed Runs* were put up for auction. These properties, between them consisted of some 35,600 acres of freehold land, 5,500 acres under crown lease, and a further 4,400 acres under occupation license. The stock consisted of some 31,000 sheep, 300 cattle and 60 horses.<sup>62</sup> It appears that Richard Guest, of the Bundiwarrie station, near Narandera, was the purchaser of the Grong Grong property.<sup>63</sup> Guest died in February 1908.

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<sup>50</sup> Bill Gammage. Narandera Shire. p64.

<sup>51</sup> The Argus. 28<sup>th</sup> October 1889, p5.

<sup>52</sup> The Argus. 24<sup>th</sup> April 1856, p4.

<sup>53</sup> The Age. 2<sup>nd</sup> May 1860, p5.

<sup>54</sup> The Mercury (Hobart). 12<sup>th</sup> May 1862, p2.

<sup>55</sup> Weekly Times (Melbourne). 18<sup>th</sup> October 1890, p11.

<sup>56</sup> Australian Town & Country Journal. 1<sup>st</sup> April 1871, p5.

<sup>57</sup> Wagga Wagga Advertiser. 15<sup>th</sup> April 1874, p2.

<sup>58</sup> The Argus. 24<sup>th</sup> November 1885, p1.

<sup>59</sup> Albury Banner. 6<sup>th</sup> February 1891, p1.

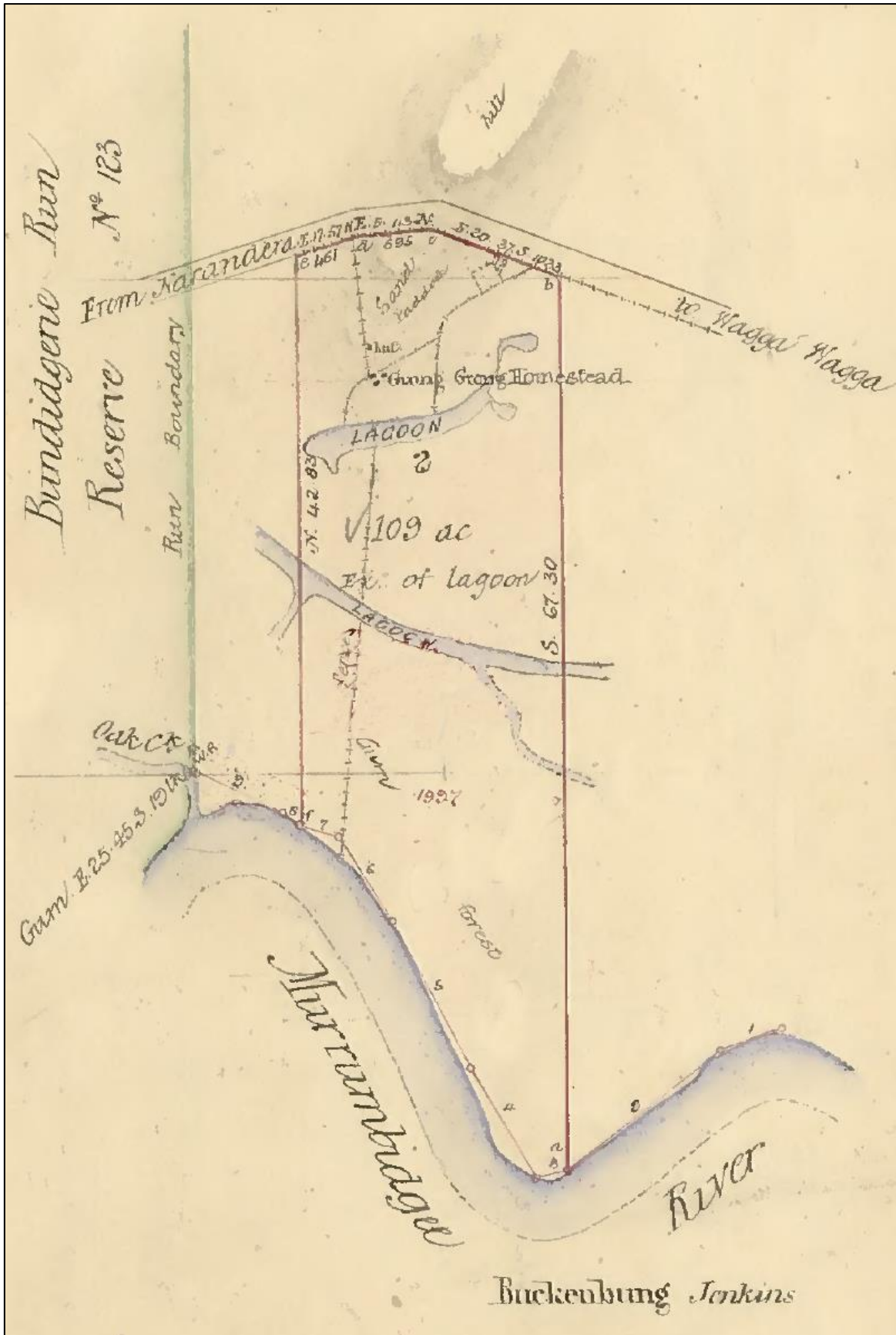
<sup>60</sup> Daily News (Perth). 11<sup>th</sup> April 1896, p6.

<sup>61</sup> Wagga Wagga Express. 19<sup>th</sup> March 1896, p2.

<sup>62</sup> Wagga Wagga Advertiser. 30<sup>th</sup> August 1906, p3.

<sup>63</sup> Wagga Wagga Advertiser. 1<sup>st</sup> February 1908.





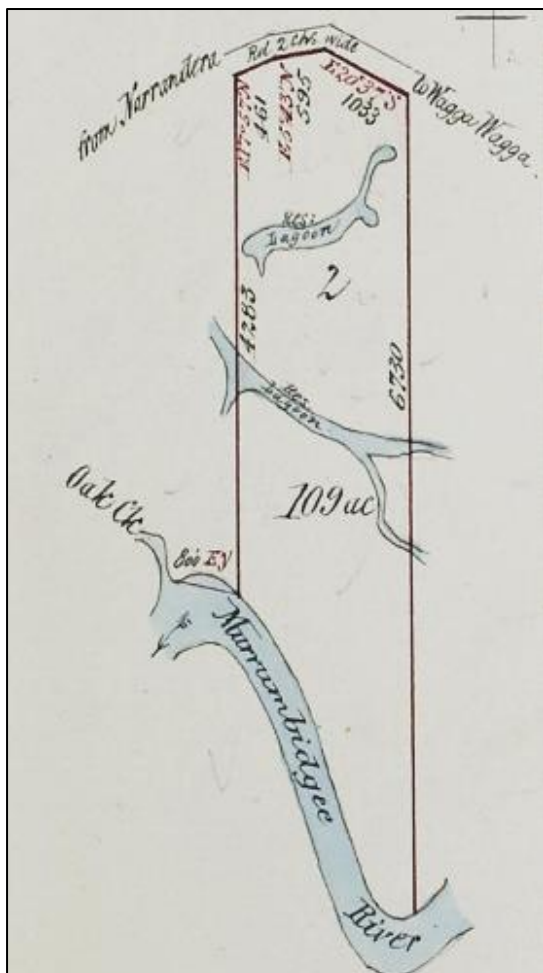
**Above:** Extract from 1867 crown plan [29.1804] showing the early Grong Grong homestead on portion 2 in the parish of Grong Grong.

## Grong Grong Homestead Block

John Lupton (junior) was still occupying land at Grong Grong in January 1868 when he was given approval to purchase a number of lots including a 109-acre block described as the "*Grong Grong Home Station*."<sup>64</sup> On the 17<sup>th</sup> July 1869, John Lupton purchased this 109 acre lot, in a sale of crown lands held at the Wagga Wagga police office. The block was described as being situated at the junction of the Murrumbidgee River and Oak Creek and featured a lagoon, which was excluded from the sale. It was said to be at the *Grong Grong* home station.<sup>65</sup> Lupton may have been acting on behalf of another person, or he failed to complete the sale, as he is not listed on the title deeds. [See crown plan C.29.1804]

The official title deed records that Charles Joseph Morgan purchased portion 2 [109 acres], in the parish of Grong Grong, on the 28<sup>th</sup> July 1869, for the sum of £109.<sup>66</sup> The lagoons that featured in this portion remained the property of the Crown. In that same year [1869] Charles sought contractors for brush fencing.<sup>67</sup>

On the 28th March 1871 the property was transferred from Charles Joseph Morgan to Henry Morgan, a gentleman of Tumut, and Charles Morgan, a surgeon of London.<sup>68</sup>



**Left:** An extract from the relevant title deed, showing portion 2, parish of Grong Grong, as purchased by Charles Joseph Morgan in 1869. The Oak Creek entry into the Murrumbidgee River can be seen to the left of portion 2. Courtesy NSW Land Registry Services.

In August 1872 a travelling reporter commented that *Grong Grong Station* was the property and residence of Mr Thomas Hutchins Bear. The run had an area of about 150 square miles and six miles of frontage to the Murrumbidgee River. The wool shed was about three miles from the homestead. Mr Bear was running some 30,000 sheep at the time. The article reported that Mr Bear was from Victoria and that he had made many improvements since taking over the run, including seventy to eighty miles of fencing. The homestead was of colonial pine, laid cross wise, and the schoolhouse, kitchen & stables were also made from the same material. There was a flower garden between the schoolhouse and the main house, and a large sheet of water to the rear of these. On the bank, to the left of the house, stood an orchard of various fruits, including grapes and oranges. Away

<sup>64</sup> NSW Government Gazette. 1868, p127.

<sup>65</sup> Goulburn Herald. 17<sup>th</sup> July 1869, p8.

<sup>66</sup> NSW Land Registry Services. Title deed. Volume 101, folio 137.

<sup>67</sup> Wagga Wagga Advertiser. 1<sup>st</sup> May 1869, p3.

<sup>68</sup> NSW Land Registry Services. Title deed. Volume 101, folio 137. / Australian Town & Country Journal. 14<sup>th</sup> January 1871, p11.

from the homestead there was a vineyard of several acres. The next homestead west of Grong Grong was Mr Robert Mitchell's Bundidgarie (sic).<sup>69</sup>

It was in August of 1872 that John Lupton sold off a large part of *Berrembed* to James Joseph Flood. The lot was described as all of that part of *Berrembed* north of the Bundidgerry Creek, with the exception of the paddock known as "*De La Rue's*." This became *North Berrembed* and was a block roughly nine miles by five miles. Flood paid two thousand pounds for the land.<sup>70</sup> The southern part of *Berrembed* was later called *Uarah*, and by the mid 1880's was owned by Arthur Devlin.<sup>71</sup>

On the 15<sup>th</sup> June 1880 portion 2 was transferred to Henry Morgan, of Tumut, and Emily Henrietta Bear, the wife of Thomas Hutchins Bear.<sup>72</sup> The latter had married Emily Henrietta Morgan, the daughter of Charles Joseph, in England, on the 26th December 1855.<sup>73</sup>

Transfers to follow were,

1882, 30<sup>th</sup> November – Conveyance from Emily Henrietta Bear and Henry Morgan, to Thomas Hutchins Bear, a settler of Toorak, Victoria.<sup>74</sup>

1890, 20<sup>th</sup> September – Conveyance from Thomas Hutchins Bear to Charles John Bear, Walter Henry Bear, and Hugh Twynam Bear, all graziers of Grong Grong.<sup>75</sup> Portion 2 was now a small part of a much larger holding consisting of some fourteen different portions.<sup>76</sup>

When shearing commenced in December 1890, Bear's *Grong Grong Run* held some 90,000 sheep, including 3,400 lambs. There were twenty-four men on the boards and Bear had installed the latest Wolseley machinery.<sup>77</sup>

On the 16<sup>th</sup> May 1907, the three Bear men transferred their holdings to Richard Guest, a grazier of Bundidjerry.<sup>78</sup> Portion 2, was now a very small lot within a very large conglomeration of lots,<sup>79</sup> to the north of Bundidgerry Creek. Guest was already the owner of the *Bundidjarie* [sic], *Bank Vale*, and *Sunny Vale Stations*, and the new acquisition added another 21,660 acres to his holdings.<sup>80</sup>

On the 16th November 1910 Louisa Guest, a widow of *Bundidgerry*, Thomas John Guest of *Bank Vale*, Richard Guest of *Sunnyvale*, and William Guest of *Grong Grong* – all graziers – became the legal owners of the holdings. Richard passed away in 1911 and his share was assumed by the other three.

On the 19<sup>th</sup> June 1922, the holdings were transferred to, Thomas John Guest, William Guest and Percy Oswald Guest, as joint tenants.<sup>81</sup> [Homestead block not tracked past this point in time].

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<sup>69</sup> Evening News (Sydney). 19<sup>th</sup> August 1872, p4.

<sup>70</sup> NSW Land Registry Services. Title deed, book 132, number 935.

<sup>71</sup> NSW Government Gazette. 1884, p8651.

<sup>72</sup> NSW Land Registry Services. Title deed. Volume 120, folio 136.

<sup>73</sup> Church of England, Marriages and Banns: 1754-1932. [ancestry.com]

<sup>74</sup> NSW Land Registry Services. Title deed. Volume 120, folio 136.

<sup>75</sup> NSW Land Registry Services. Title deed. Volume 120, folio 136.

<sup>76</sup> NSW Land Registry Services. Title deed. Volume 1551, folio 181.

<sup>77</sup> Albury Banner. 25<sup>th</sup> December 1890, p12.

<sup>78</sup> NSW Land Registry Services. Title deed. Volume 1551, folio 181.

<sup>79</sup> NSW Land Registry Services. Title deed. Volume 2191, folio 124.

<sup>80</sup> Albury Banner. 19<sup>th</sup> April 1907, p4.

<sup>81</sup> NSW Land Registry Services. Title deed. Volume 2350, folio 40.

## Splendid Property.

NEAR NARANDERA.

On the MURRUMBIDGEE,  
NEW SOUTH WALES.

**Edward Trenchard & Co.,**

In conjunction with the

**Agency, Land & Finance Co.,**

Will SELL BY AUCTION, at

**SCOTT'S HOTEL,**

**MELBOURNE,**

on

**Tuesday, September 25th,**

At Three p.m.,

**Grong Grong**

And

**North Berembed,**

Containing

35,692 acres FREEHOLD LAND,

5500 acres CROWN LEASE,

1100 acres OCCUPATION LICENSE.

Together with

31,000 SHEEP,

300 CATTLE,

60 HORSES.

**GRONG GRONG** is situate between Junee and Narandera, four miles from Grong Grong Railway Station, and opposite to the Buckingham Estate, recently sold for subdivisational purposes. It is splendidly watered by the Murrumbidgee River and the Bundigerie Creek, the latter having recently been made permanent by the canal from the Murrumbidgee. The greatest feature of this Estate is the fact that it contains **OVER 12,000 ACRES OF THE RICHEST FLATS ON THE MURRUMBIDGEE RIVER.**

**BEREMBED NORTH** is situate three miles north of Grong Grong, and is also splendidly watered, fenced, and subdivided into numerous paddocks, and the whole of it is excellent grazing country.

There are two homesteads, and all the necessary outbuildings; also commodious wool-shed and yards.

The Sheep are particularly good, having been most carefully bred for the last 40 years.

Delivery of the Sheep will be given off the shears, and the shearing tallies taken. Shearing commences 1st October.

To show the intention of the Vendors to SELL BY AUCTION, it has been decided TO PLACE an UPSET PRICE on the Freehold Land, which UPSET will be declared at the AUCTION SALE. THE SHEEP, CATTLE and HORSES will be taken at FIXED PRICES, which will be duly advertised in the following newspapers on SATURDAY, 2nd SEPTEMBER, namely, "Argus," "Australasian" (town edition), "Sydney Morning Herald," and "Sydney Daily Telegraph."

NOTE—Special attention is called to the Sale of this Property, owing to its suitability for CLOSER SETTLEMENT. The rich flats on the Murrumbidgee, already referred to, are acknowledged to be the best on that river, and are a great stand-by in any drought. The sale is absolutely bona-fide. It is not placed on the market to ascertain a value, but to be disposed of. Intending purchasers can therefore with confidence make an inspection.

Above: Notice for the sale of the Grong Grong and Berembed North Runs in September 1906.<sup>82</sup>

<sup>82</sup> Wagga Wagga Advertiser. 30<sup>th</sup> August 1906, p3.

# Grong Grong & Berembed North,

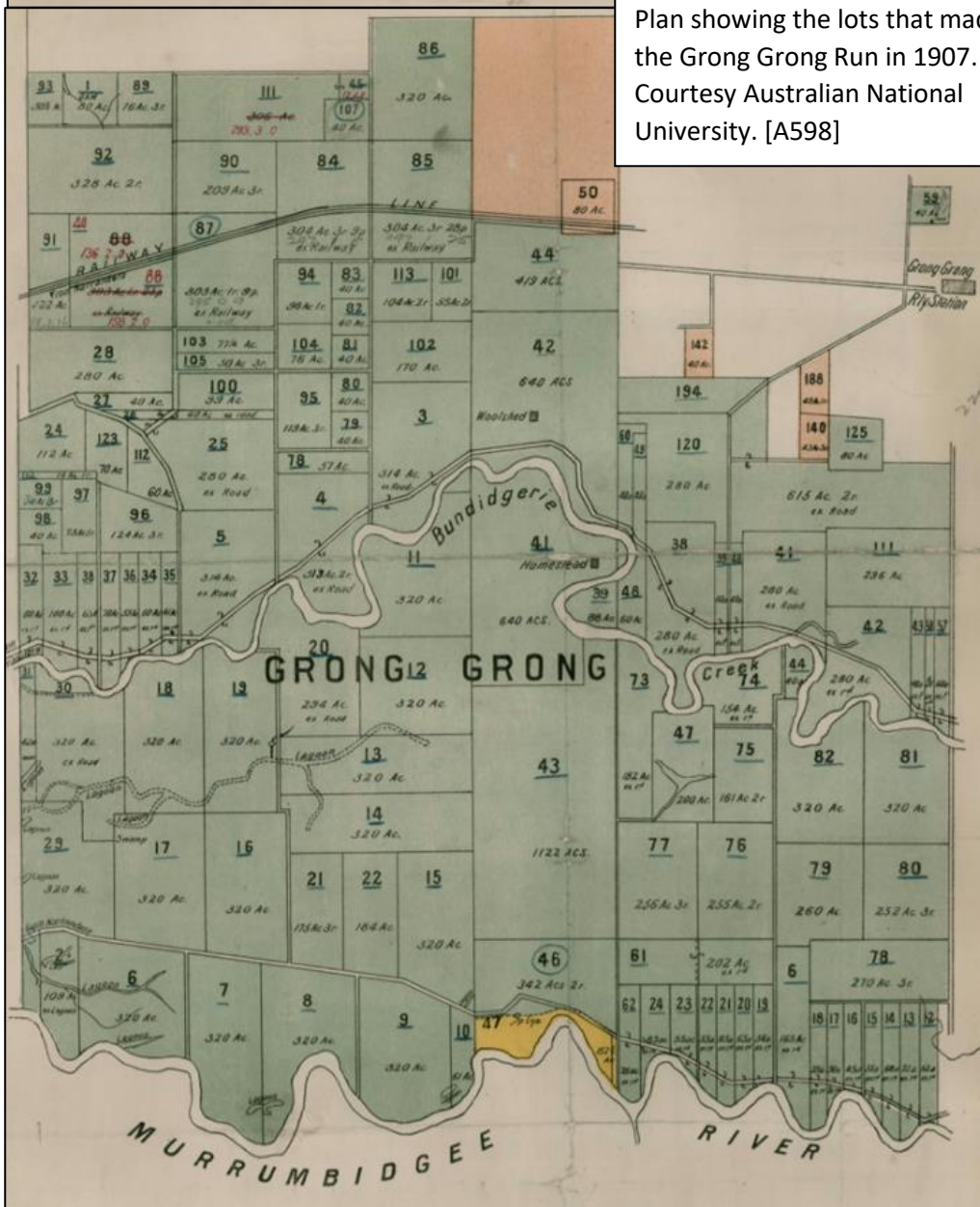
Containing  
 35,905 acres freehold land.  
 5500 acres Crown lease.  
 4100 acres occupation license.  
 Together with  
 31,000 sheep, 300 cattle, 60 horses.

## GRONG GRONG

is situate between Junee and Narandera, 14 miles from the Grong Grong railway station, and opposite the Buckingbong estate, recently sold for subdivisinal purposes. It is splendidly watered by the Murrumbidgee River and the Bundigerie Creek, the latter having recently been made practically permanent by the canal from the Murrumbidgee. The greatest feature of this estate is the fact that it contains

Over 12,000 Acres of the Richest Flats on the Murrumbidgee River.

Plan showing the lots that made up the Grong Grong Run in 1907. Courtesy Australian National University. [A598]

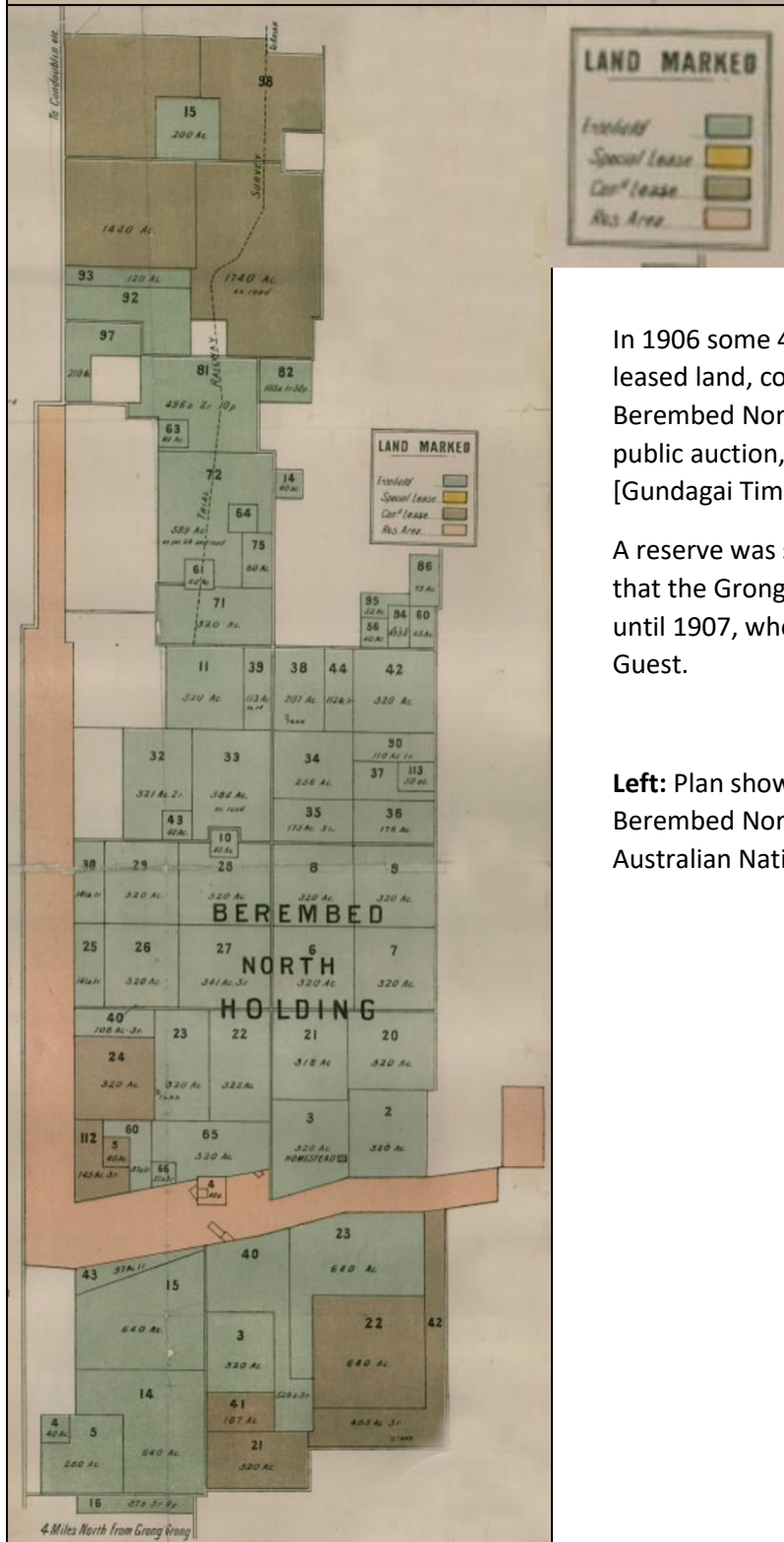


# BEREMBED NORTH

is situate 3 miles north of Grong Grong, and is well watered, fenced, and subdivided into numerous paddocks, and the greater portion is splendid Wheat Land and Fine Myall and Boree Fattening Country.

There are two homesteads, and all the necessary outbuildings; also commodious woolshed and yards.

Delivery of the Sheep will be given off the shears, and the shearing tallies taken. Shearing commences 1st October (weather permitting).



In 1906 some 45,500 acres of freehold and leased land, consisting of the Grong Grong and Berembéd North Runs, were listed for sale by public auction, on the 25<sup>th</sup> September. [Gundagai Times. 11<sup>th</sup> September 1906, p2].

A reserve was set on all lots, and it appears that the Grong Grong Station was not sold until 1907, when it was purchased by Richard Guest.

**Left:** Plan showing the lots that made up the Berembéd North Run in 1907. Courtesy Australian National University. [A598]

# **GOLD MINING**

## Gold Mining

Speculations about gold strikes around Grong Grong were prevalent from the mid 1880's. In 1884 it was reported that *"a rich gold reef was discovered within 12 to 20 miles of Grong Grong."* The discovery was made by a selector on his selection. A shortage of water for processing was noted.<sup>83</sup>

In July 1887 there were *"a good number of diggers on the ground at both Cowabie and Belmore."* Expectations exceeded results,<sup>84</sup> and a report noted that the Belmore Reef was an old site that had previously been worked and shut down.

*"Lately it is not safe to look at or touch a piece of gravel in the presence of some of our residents, who are on for pegging out a claim, or burrowing under your house, or digging a pit in your yard, so prevalent is the gold fever at Grong Grong."*

In October 1887, a crushing from the Belmore Reef returned 20oz of gold from ten ton of stone.<sup>85</sup> This reef was twelve miles distant from the township of Grong Grong, and stone from the sinking had to be carted ten miles, to Mr Ferrier's battery at Cowabie. The Belmore sinking was down a distance of one hundred and forty feet, and another twenty or so shafts had been sunk on the hill, to a depth of one hundred feet or more.<sup>86</sup>

In June 1888, a Sydney syndicate inspected reefs at Berembed, near Grong Grong. The reef, which varied in thickness from 1ft to 5ft, had provided a good return from a recent crushing of stone from the Gladstone Claim.<sup>87</sup>

In November 1893 a new discovery five miles from the Grong Grong village was made, on an ACP held by Mr McKewan [sic].<sup>88</sup> A report from the Chief Inspector of Mines, Mr WHJ See, stated that the discovery was ten miles north of Grong Grong railway Station and three miles north of McKeon's homestead. The Cowabee Reef lay some ten miles to the east, while the Belmore, Gladstone, and Home Rule Reefs lay some four miles to the north of the new discovery. Three hundred and sixty tons of stone, from the Harry Smith claim, had been crushed at the Gladstone reef [12 stamp battery], for a return of three hundred and thirty-three ounces of gold. Other leases taken up included Farrell and party, Duval and party, Malley and party, and Lyons and party. Meyer was working a different reef. The greatest setback was the lack of water.<sup>89</sup>

In 1894, Masey's shaft, to the south of Smith's, and O'Farrell's to the north, had both failed to strike the reef. Duval's claim had yielded three dwt to the ton, which was not profitable. Meyer was down fifty-seven feet with a drive that extended forty-seven feet, but the gold was patchy at best.<sup>90</sup>

In 1895, thirty men were working the Harry Smith mine, which crushed twelve hundred and forty-two tons and recovered nine hundred and sixty ounces of gold., for the year.<sup>91</sup>

In 1896, the claims of Harry Smith, Lyons Bros, and Duval, were still being worked, and George Elwin had struck a reef north of Duval's reef.<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> Albury Banner. 5<sup>th</sup> September 1884, p22.

<sup>84</sup> Albury Banner. 29<sup>th</sup> July 1887, p17.

<sup>85</sup> Albury Banner. 14<sup>th</sup> October 1887, p16.

<sup>86</sup> Albury Banner. 27<sup>th</sup> July 1888, p16.

<sup>87</sup> Sydney Morning Herald. 29<sup>th</sup> June 1888, p4.

<sup>88</sup> Wagga Wagga Express. 11<sup>th</sup> November 1893, p4.

<sup>89</sup> Sydney Mail. 20<sup>th</sup> October 1894, p824.

<sup>90</sup> NSW. Planning Industry & Environment. DIGS. Mine Inspectors Report [Summary], c.1940. [MR02507]

<sup>91</sup> NSW. Planning Industry & Environment. DIGS. Mine Inspectors Report [Summary], c.1940. [MR02507]

<sup>92</sup> Albury Banner. 20<sup>th</sup> March 1896, p26. ; Australian Star. 12<sup>th</sup> May 1896, p3.



By 1900 the Harry Smith mine was idle but was being worked again in 1902 - R Golding and his party were reprocessing the old tailings [cyanide works], which they expected would take three to four months.<sup>93</sup> Things moved much quicker than expected and all of the tailings were reworked by the end of September. It was reported that a total of £1,300 of gold had been recovered.<sup>94</sup>

In May 1903, the Harry Smith Gold Mining Co., was in trouble with some workers questioning where the money had gone. It appears the cyanide works were not as successful as previously mooted, and that many of the investors would readily sell their shares cheap.<sup>95</sup> The workers were also concerned about being paid, especially when it was discovered that the cyanide plant had been dismantled and transported off to an unknown location.<sup>96</sup>

In March 1904 the stamping battery, and associated plant, of the Harry Smith Gold Mining Co., was also dismantled and transported off. This equipment was on its way to Kildary.<sup>97</sup>

Despite the setbacks mining continued at these old reefs for some time. In 1909 the Belmore Reef was owned by John Lynch, although he called it the North Berembed Reef. This reef was located within portion 40, in the parish and county of Bourke. The claim had an area of ten acres. Excavation was down one hundred and sixty feet, with two men prospecting.<sup>98</sup>

### **Harry Smith Mine<sup>99</sup>**

This mine was first discovered by a party consisting of the Smith brothers and Lyons. The new discovery was named the Harry Smith Mine, after one of the brothers.<sup>100</sup>

The most successful claim was clearly that of Harry Smith's. In 1913 the claim was owned by Dale & Party, of Narandera. Other owners referred to included a group consisting of "*Dicker, Coghlan, Nicholls, and others.*"

This claim was located within portion 80, in the parish of Fennel, county of Bourke. In the early 1900's the claim had an area of twenty-five acres and the shaft had been opened to a depth of two hundred and forty feet. There were four men working the claim, but there was no machinery and no gold had been taken from the mine for some time. There had been a lot of shafts sunk on this 80-acre portion and a report noted that the lease covered, "*a lot of abandoned and collapsed mines.*"

Activity in 1913 was restricted to sinking and driving, although a trial crushing had been sent to the battery at Wyalong and a small plant was being erected on the site.

When the mine was at its peak, Mrs M Haid [nee Thomas] kept a boarding house at the site.<sup>101</sup>

From 1911 to 1917 WO Dicker worked the Lone Hand Mine, which was in the same vicinity, but it was never financially viable.<sup>102</sup> A crushing plant was erected in March 1913.<sup>103</sup> Donald McPherson, a grazier of Grong Grong, was an investor in the mine, and he closed it down in May 1917. John V

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<sup>93</sup> Albury Banner. 1<sup>st</sup> August 1902, p17.

<sup>94</sup> Albury Banner. 26<sup>th</sup> September 1902, p39.

<sup>95</sup> Narandera Argus. 22<sup>nd</sup> May 1903, p3.

<sup>96</sup> Narandera Argus. 29<sup>th</sup> May 1903, p3.

<sup>97</sup> Narandera Argus. 25<sup>th</sup> March 1904, p2.

<sup>98</sup> NSW. Planning Industry & Environment. DIGS. Mine Inspectors Report, 1909. [MR01307]

<sup>99</sup> NSW. Planning Industry & Environment. DIGS. Mine Inspectors Report [Summary], c.1940. [MR02507]

<sup>100</sup> Wagga Wagga Advertiser. 10<sup>th</sup> April 1894, p2.

<sup>101</sup> Narandera Argus. 15<sup>th</sup> July 1941, p2.

<sup>102</sup> NSW. Planning Industry & Environment. DIGS. Mine Inspectors Report [Summary], c.1940. [MR02507]

<sup>103</sup> Daily Advertiser. 3<sup>rd</sup> March 1913, p1.

Harris was the manager of the mine.<sup>104</sup> There were four men in the partnership that owned the mine. One was McPherson, another was JH Jarman.

From around 1935 the old Harry Smith Mine was known as the *Golden Spray Mine*, consisting of the twenty-five-acre lease plus another one-acre lease that contained the conjugation of the two existing lodes. Each load ran for about fifteen hundred feet and converged at the southeast corner of the claim. Several reports referred to the mine as being situated "near Bulloak." This mine was on the same lease as the Harry Smith Mine, but at a different location on the lode.

In 1935, Pat Sullivan was the manager of the mine. In August of this year Pat was preparing a detonator when it exploded, resulting in the loss of two fingers and a thumb from his left hand.<sup>105</sup>

In 1936, Edward Ernest Osborne took over the Golden Spray Mine, from Frederick Ernest Archer.

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| <p style="text-align: center;"><b>THE MINING PARTNERSHIPS<br/>ACT, 1900</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>APPLICATION FOR<br/>REGISTRATION<br/>OF COMPANY</b></p> <p><b>I. EDWARD ERNEST OSBORNE.</b><br/>of Narrandera, Retired Hotel Proprietor, hereby make application to register The Golden Spray Goldmining Company Limited under the provisions of the mining partnership Act, 1900 and I do solemnly and sincerely declare that the following statement is, to the best of my belief and knowledge, and true in every particular, namely:</p> | <p>1.—The name and style of the company is Golden Spray Goldmining Company Limited.</p> <p>2.—The place of operations is at Bulloak, near Grong Grong.</p> <p>3.—The nominal capital of the Company is £10,000 in 40,000 shares of 5/- each.</p> <p>4.—The amount already paid up is £10,000.</p> <p>5.—The name of the manager is Edward Ernest Osborne.</p> <p>6.—The office of the Company is at Golden Spray mining lease, Bulloak, near Grong Grong.</p> <p>7.—The names and several residences of the shareholders and the number of shares held by each at this date are as follows:</p> <p>Edward Ernest Osborne, of Murrumbidgee Hotel, Narrandera, 16,834 shares.</p> <p>Frederick Ernest Archer, of Melbourne Street, Narrandera, 5,317 shares.</p> <p>William James Hill, of Kooroongal, Bringagee Siding, 5,717 shares.</p> <p>Joseph John Clark, of Audley Street, Narrandera, 5,316 shares.</p> <p>Roland Wilfred Hill, of Golden Spray, Bulloak, near Grong Grong, 5,316 shares.</p> <p>James Martin McGilvray, of Thorne Street, Wagga Wagga, 1500 shares.</p> <p>DATED this twentieth day of August, 1936.</p> <p>(Signed) E. E. OSBORNE, Manager<br/>(Witness to signature) Geo. H. Ribodli</p> |
| <p><b>Above &amp; Right:</b> Osborne's registration of the partnership including details of the partners. [Narandera Argus. 21<sup>st</sup> August 1936, p5.]</p>  |  |

<sup>104</sup> Border Morning Mail. 14<sup>th</sup> January 1918, p3.

<sup>105</sup> Narandera Argus. 27<sup>th</sup> August 1935, p2.

Osborne held a lease on the mine, but his health prevented him from continuously working the claim. He was well known on the district having moved to Narandera in 1924 and taken over the Murrumbidgee hotel at that place. Osborne passed away on the 12<sup>th</sup> May 1948.<sup>106</sup>

The mine was closed in the late 1930's but a review of the mine provided an optimistic perspective of its potential. The mine was owned by Osborne at this time, but a public company had been formed and shares were on offer [three hundred thousand shares at four shillings each].<sup>107</sup>

In June 1937 this mine was taken over by the Riverina Gold Mines. This was a Melbourne syndicate who had purchased the mine from Osborne.<sup>108</sup>

In 1938, Cox's Find Extended and Deeps, held an option on the lease.<sup>109</sup> The mine manager was Mr SW Russell.

In 1939 Osborne sold the Golden Spray Gold Mine to Robert Donald McLachlin, who paid one thousand pounds, with a worthless cheque. McLachlin was an habitual criminal with a string of previous convictions for similar offences.<sup>110</sup>

In October 1942, James Munro Parker was the manager of the Golden Spray Mines Ltd.<sup>111</sup>

### Previous Output

- According to the Department of Mines over 16,000 ounces of gold [valued at £62,000 at the time of extraction] had been taken from "Harry's Shaft."

| Year          | Crushing - tons | Yield - ozs | Value - £ |
|---------------|-----------------|-------------|-----------|
| 1894          | 626             | 558         | 2,223     |
| 1895          | 1242            | 960         | 3,259     |
| 1896          |                 | 840         |           |
| 1898          | 493             | 251         | 998       |
| 1899          | 514             | 148         | 518       |
| 1900 - CLOSED |                 |             |           |
| 1911          | 3.5             | 15          |           |
| 1936          | 374             | 278         | 3,000     |
| 1937          | 6               | 37          |           |
| 1938          | 113             | 57          |           |
| 1939          | 144             | 96          |           |
|               |                 |             |           |

**Above:** Table showing the output of the Harry Smith Mine

- Another 2,000 ounces were taken out of Osborne's mine.
- Alec Gray had recovered 3oz. to the ton, earning some two thousand pounds in twelve months.

<sup>106</sup> Narandera Argus. 14<sup>th</sup> May 1948, p2.

<sup>107</sup> NSW. Planning Industry & Environment. DIGS. Mine Inspectors Report [Summary], c.1940. [MR02507]

<sup>108</sup> Corowa Free Press. 25<sup>th</sup> June 1937, p5.

<sup>109</sup> Sydney Morning Herald. 23<sup>rd</sup> May 1938, p8.

<sup>110</sup> Narandera Argus. 9<sup>th</sup> June 1939, p2.

<sup>111</sup> Narandera Argus. 2<sup>nd</sup> October 1942, p3.

## Existing Plant

In the mid 1930's the plant consisted of a complete crushing and treatment plant in perfect order. The equipment consisted of a six-stamper battery, plates and tables [with spares to enable installation of four more stampers]; three diesel engines; air receivers; compressor; two jack hammers; pumping column for two hundred and fifty feet; pump tester; hoses; shaft timber; top winding gear; beltings; wire ropes; forge; spares for the battery and other arts; pumps and pump lines; buildings, mine offices, and huts; and other necessary equipment for operating the mine

The inspector noted that the water resources were "*practically unlimited.*" The associated dams were said to have a capacity of two million gallons, with drainage of the mine estimated to recoup four thousand gallons a day. There was sufficient local timber for shaft and drive works. There was a high-tension electricity supply within one and a half miles of the mine site that could provide unlimited power.

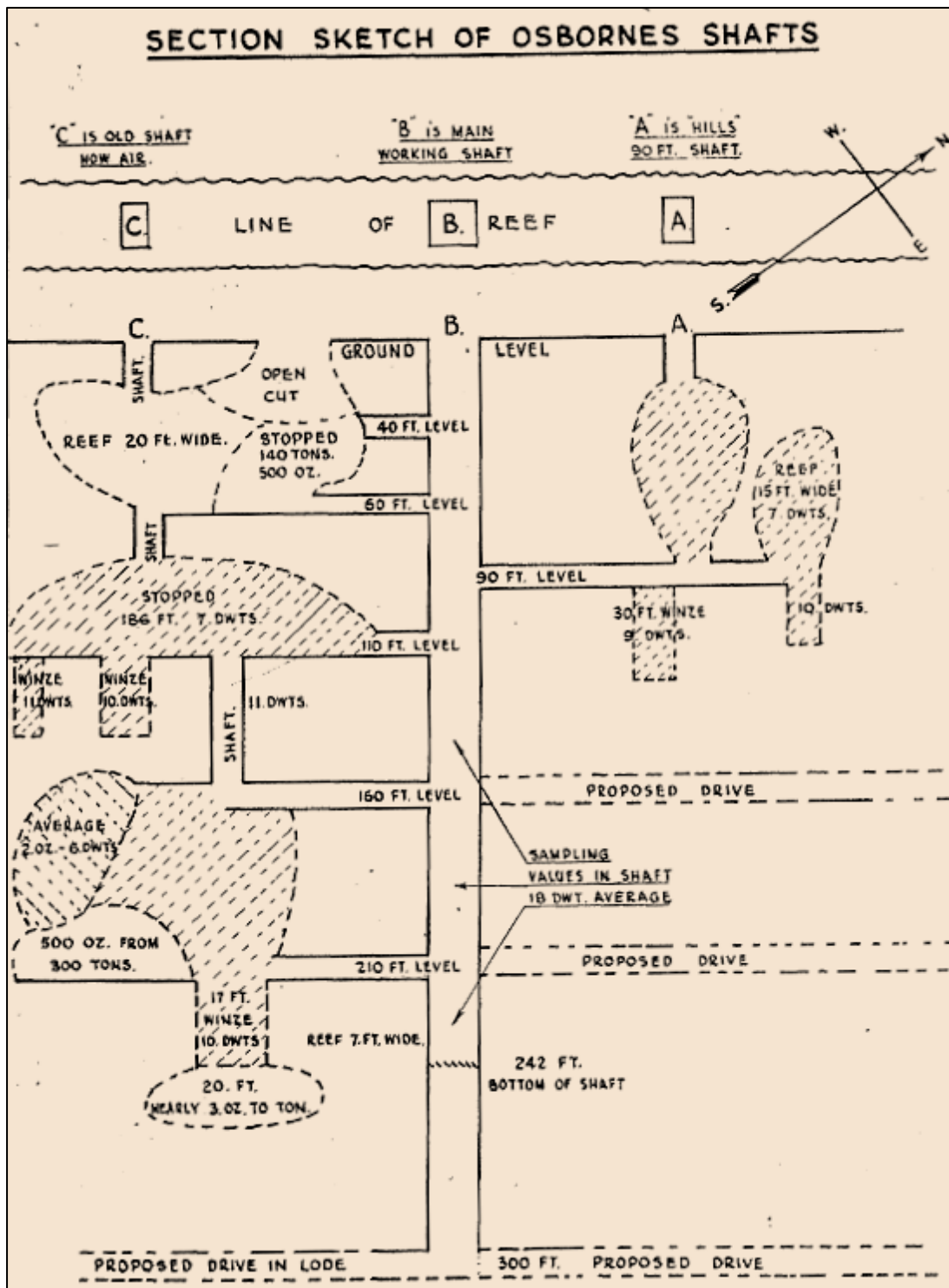
In 1940, four hundred and fifty tons were crushed and one hundred and twenty-five ounces of gold were recovered. [value one thousand two hundred and twenty-one pounds]. In 1941 one hundred and fifty tons were crushed and some twenty ounces of gold recovered, before the war caused all works to cease.

In 1944, Osborne sold of the plant and equipment of the Golden Spray Mine at Grong Grong.<sup>112</sup>

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| <p><b>Dispersal Sale</b><br/><b>of Mining Plant</b></p> <p>ACCOUNT MR. E. E. OSBORNE</p> <p>At <b>"Golden Spray" Mine</b><br/>12 Miles North of <b>GRONG</b><br/><b>GRONG</b> and about One Mile West<br/>of the Bulloak School</p> <p><b>WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 18</b><br/>Commencing at 1.30 p.m.</p> <p><b>A</b>CTING under instructions from<br/>MR. E. E. OSBORNE, who has<br/>been in poor health during the past<br/>few months, <b>LLOYD BROTHERS</b><br/>will sell on the abovementioned date<br/>the whole of his <b>"GOLDEN SPRAY"</b><br/><b>MINING PLANT &amp; EQUIPMENT,</b><br/>as under:</p> | <p>10-12 h.p. Imperial Super Diesel, 8-10<br/>h.p. Imperial Super Diesel, Counter<br/>Shafting complete with Pulleys<br/>and Bearings, 6-Head Stamper<br/>Battery, quantity of 9in. Belting,<br/>quantity of 6in. Belting, quantity<br/>of 5in. also Scrap Belting, Tip<br/>Dray, Water Cart, 2 2000-gallon<br/>Tanks, 1 400 Square Tank. 10ft.<br/>Ladder, Bellows, Stocks and Dies,<br/>Blacksmith's Tools, Anvil, <b>Gold</b><br/>Retorts, <b>Gold</b> Moulds, Scales,<br/>Bench Vyce, 2 h.p. Kerosene En-<br/>gine, 10ft. x 12ft. Hut (for re-<br/>moval), also quantity of Iron for<br/>removal, quantity of Pump Rods,<br/>Piping (1½in. and 1¼in.), 5in. Bore<br/>Casing (approximately 300 feet),<br/>60ft. of 6in. Flanged Piping, 2<br/>Deep Well Pumps, Pump Jack<br/>(power). Boring Plant and Power<br/>Winch, Crossley 25 h.p. Diesel Ver-<br/>tical Engine, Compressor Jack<br/>Hammer, Steel Air Hose, quantity<br/>of Scrap Cast and other Metals,<br/>400ft. 5/8 Steel Cable (flex), Picks<br/>and Shovels, Crowbars, Grind-<br/>stone, Pulley Blocks, Split Pulleys,<br/>Pipe Wrenches, No. 4 Hand Pump,<br/>3in. Rubber Hose in 3ft. lengths,<br/>2 Metters' Stoves, Red Gum Sawn<br/>Slabs (8 x 2), Air Tank, Blow<br/>Lamps, etc.</p> <p><b>Lloyd Brothers : : Narandera</b><br/><b>Licensed Auctioneers</b></p> |
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**Above & Right:** Notice of sale – the plant and equipment of the Golden Spray Gold Mine – in October 1944.

<sup>112</sup> Narandera Argus. 19<sup>th</sup> September 1944, p3.

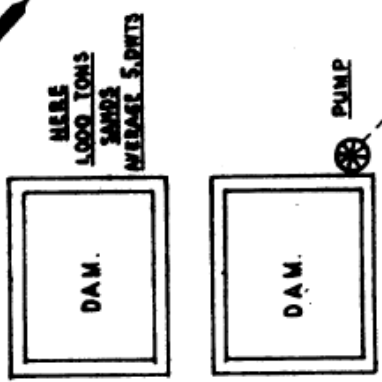
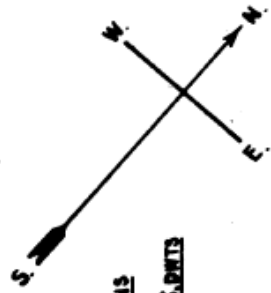
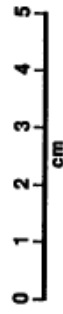
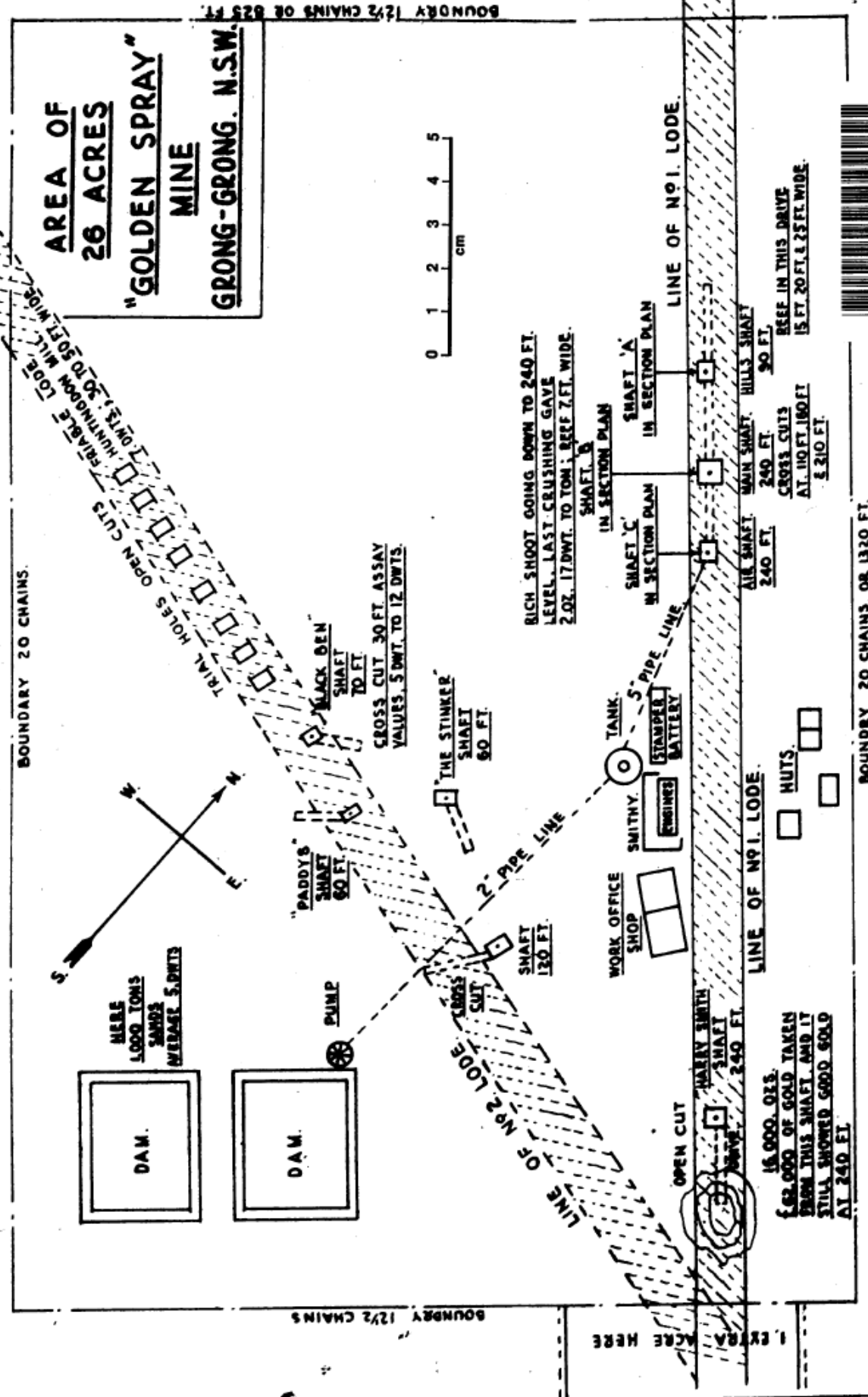


**Above:** Section sketch – Osborne’s shafts [A, B & C]. Courtesy DIGS.

**KEY [to diagram on following page]**

1. Osborne’s Mine
  - “A” Shaft: Down 120 feet
  - “B” Shaft: Down 242 feet. Main working shaft.
  - “C” Shaft: Used mainly as an air shaft.

**AREA OF  
26 ACRES  
"GOLDEN SPRAY"  
MINE  
GRONG-GRONG, N.S.W.**



RICH SHOOT GOING DOWN TO 240 FT. LEVEL. LAST CRUSHING GAVE 2.02. 17 DWT. TO TON. REEF 7 FT. WIDE. SHAFT 'D' IN SECTION PLAN

CROSS CUT 30 FT. ASSAY VALUES, 5 DWT. TO 12 DWT'S.

LINE OF NO. 1. LODE

LINE OF NO. 2 LODE

REEF IN THIS DRIVE AT 110 FT. 180 FT. & 25 FT. WIDE. 1.210 FT.

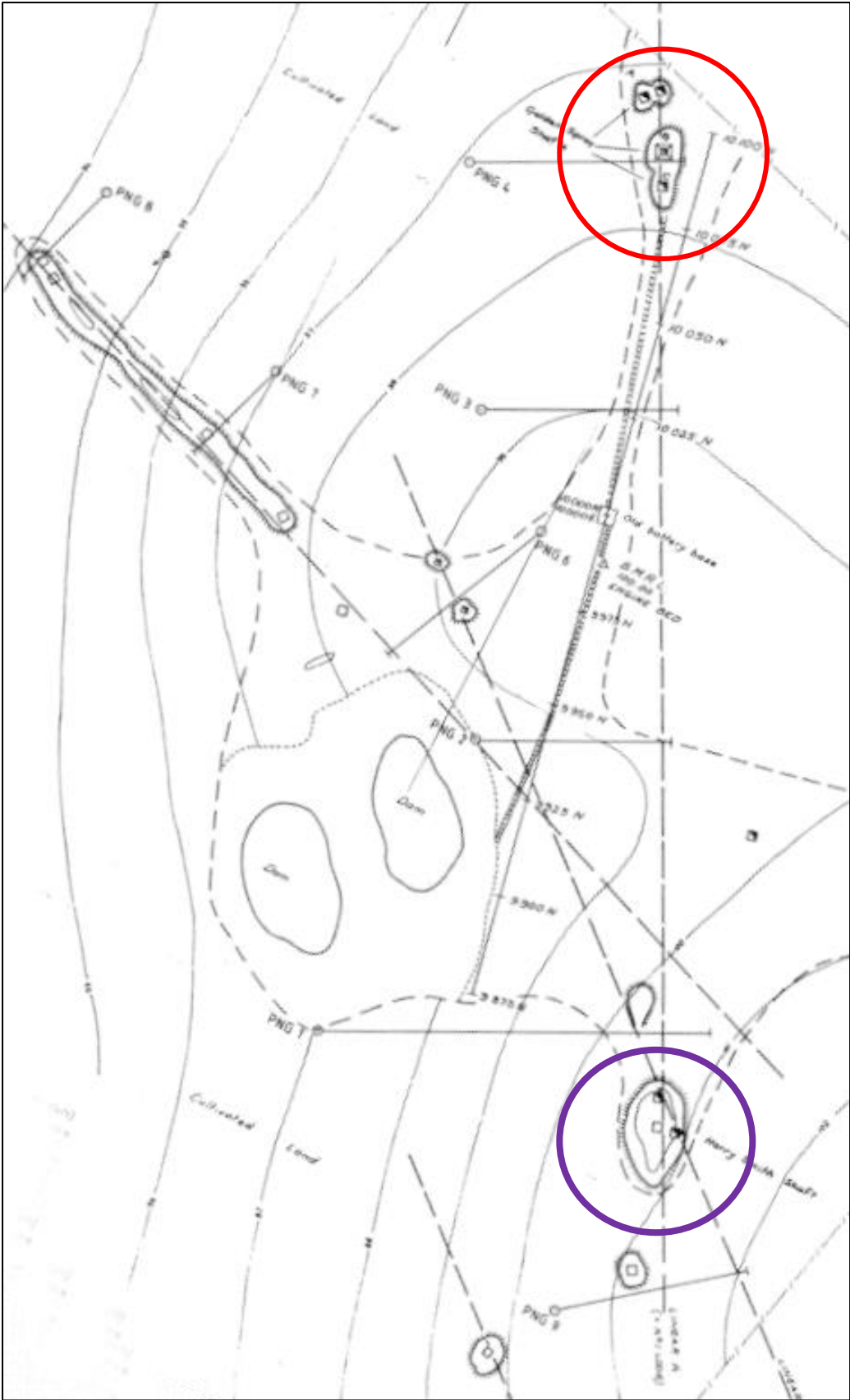
16,000 OZS. £82,000 OF GOLD TAKEN FROM THIS SHAFT AND IT STILL SHOWED GOOD GOLD AT 240 FT.



BOUNDARY 20 CHAINS, OR 1320 FT.

BOUNDARY 12 1/2 CHAINS

1.25 ACRES  
ACRE HERE



**Above:** 1981 plan showing the relative locations of Harry Smith shaft [purple circle] and Golden Spray shafts [red circle]. Courtesy DIGS.<sup>113</sup>

<sup>113</sup> NSW. Planning Industry & Environment. DIGS. Final Report for Grong Grong. 1982. [GS1982/094]

**VILLAGE**

**OF**

**GRONG**

**GRONG**



## Old Grong Grong [pre 1881]

Grong Grong as a village existed in two periods – pre-1881, and post 1881. The opening of the railway line from Junee to Narrandera in 1881 saw new towns develop along the railway line, at Old Junee, Marrar, Coolamon, Ganmain, Matong and Grong Grong. Before this, ungazetted villages existed close to the Murrumbidgee River and its feeder creeks – such as Bundidgerry Creek and Oak Creek.

The early village of Grong Grong, and its hotels, are the subject of another article [not covered in this story]

## The Village of Grong Grong [post 1881]

The catalyst for the establishment of the contemporary village was the opening of the railway line from Junee to Narrandera in 1881.

1881, 8<sup>th</sup> February – Henry Pollock was an agent at Grong Grong for Williams' [a chemist at Wagga Wagga] celebrated "*Rose Eye Solution*."<sup>114</sup>

1881, 15<sup>th</sup> January – Tenders sought for erection of platform, waiting shed, and station master's home at Grong Grong.<sup>115</sup>

1881, 28<sup>th</sup> February – Railway line from Junee through to Narrandera officially opened,<sup>116</sup> but Grong Grong railway station platform and buildings not yet constructed.<sup>117</sup>

1881, 1<sup>st</sup> December – Post office established at Grong Grong.<sup>118</sup> In January 1884 this building was officially named the Grong Grong railway station.<sup>119</sup>

No reference could be found as to when the railway platform and associated buildings were constructed but in January 1883 a reporter visited the town and noted the existence of a platform and a "*neat little station house*." There was a post and telegraph office, and in front of the railway platform stood a large tent, with a sign confirming this to be the local public school. Unfortunately, there was no teacher yet and the school was not open. There was a need for a goods shed, but no such edifice had been erected at that time. The lack of same meant that goods were deposited on the platform and, "*left to the mercy of the weather and plunderers*," with the stationmaster declining to take any responsibility for their security. The report also confirmed that, as yet there was not a store at this site.<sup>120</sup>

By March 1883 Mr D McNamara was installed as the schoolmaster, with some twenty-nine students enrolled.<sup>121</sup>

Later in the year (September 1883) the construction of a goods shed was finally underway.<sup>122</sup>

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<sup>114</sup> Wagga Wagga Advertiser. 8<sup>th</sup> February 1881, p4.

<sup>115</sup> Wagga Wagga Advertiser. 25<sup>th</sup> January 1881, p3.

<sup>116</sup> Australian Town & Country Journal. 5<sup>th</sup> March 1881, p24.

<sup>117</sup> Wagga Wagga Advertiser. 1<sup>st</sup> March 1881, p3.

<sup>118</sup> Australian Town & Country Journal. 5<sup>th</sup> November 1881, p13.

<sup>119</sup> Australian Town & Country Journal. 12<sup>th</sup> January 1884, p13.

<sup>120</sup> Albury Banner. 2<sup>nd</sup> February 1883, p22.

<sup>121</sup> Albury Banner. 16<sup>th</sup> March 1883, p22.

<sup>122</sup> Albury Banner. 28<sup>th</sup> September 1883, p23.

## The Bunyip

It was in the month of March (1883) that a correspondent at Grong Grong reported the capture of a bunyip type creature, as follows:<sup>123</sup>

*"An extraordinary creature was captured here a few days ago, which some people declare to be the original of the many "bunyip" stories which every now and then crop up in different parts of the colony. I offer no opinion as to the identity of the monster, but merely describe it. It is about four feet in length, and has four legs, web footed, and a snout somewhat resembling that of a pig. It is covered with a coat of feather, those in the tail being six or seven inches in length but getting shorter and finer as they grow along the back towards the head, until they terminate on the shoulders and head in a kind of down, dark blue in color. The hinder part of the body is covered with scales similar to those of a fish, and the tail, which comes back over the hinder parts of the body, is divided into two parts, each part being about 8 inches long and 4 inches broad. The stranger has greenish eyes, and appears to be amphibious, as it had just come out of a large dam near the railway line. The monster was disabled by a charge of shot, and the person who shot it advanced to despatch the thing, when it seized the stock of the gun and squealed like a pig. The skin has been carefully preserved."*

## The Town

In May 1884 it was reported that the government surveyors had pitched their tents and were preparing to survey the Grong Grong village reserve. The locals were keen for this to be completed as they expected buildings to be promptly erected once the blocks were put up for sale.<sup>124</sup>

In November 1884, the boundaries of the village of Grong Grong, and the associated suburban boundaries, were gazetted.<sup>125</sup>

The first sale of town lots took place on the 31<sup>st</sup> December 1884,<sup>126</sup> when a total of forty three lots were sold. The highest price paid was by Mr Eaton, a brewer of Wagga Wagga, who paid £83 for his lot. Two people had applied for a publican's license at Grong Grong, one of which was declined due to its proximity to the school – this was the application of Eaton, who subsequently forfeited his deposit on the lot in question. The other application, by Mr F Flood, of Narrandera, for a house yet to be erected at Grong Grong, was approved. At this time the only building in the town was the partly completed store of Mr Gannon.<sup>127</sup> Flood had previously licensed the Cricketers' Arms hotel at Narrandera, and by May 1885 his new building at Grong Grong was ready to trade.<sup>128</sup>

Gannon's store was the first business to open at the new village of Grong Grong, by the end of February 1885, but tragedy struck on the 24th May 1885 when the two storey store and all of its stock were destroyed by fire.<sup>129</sup>

By March 1886 Flood had erected a new building, initially envisaged as a venue for public events [a hall], but when the first arranged event, a ball, turned out to be a total failure, Flood was considering converting it to a store, as the town was still devoid of such an enterprise.<sup>130</sup> There must have been a

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<sup>123</sup> Albury Banner. 30<sup>th</sup> March 1883, p13.

<sup>124</sup> Albury Banner. 23<sup>rd</sup> May 1884, p22.

<sup>125</sup> NSW Government Gazette. 1884, p7896.

<sup>126</sup> Albury Banner. 14<sup>th</sup> August 1885, p12.

<sup>127</sup> Albury Banner. 13<sup>th</sup> February 1885, p13.

<sup>128</sup> Albury Banner. 22<sup>nd</sup> May 1885, p13.

<sup>129</sup> Albury Banner. 13<sup>th</sup> February 1885, p13.

<sup>130</sup> Albury Banner. 26<sup>th</sup> March 1886, p16.

change of mind as a new store was under constructed in October of that same year [1886], and expected to open in the near future.<sup>131</sup>

One writer took exception to the cemetery in February 1888, noting that the area selected for the cemetery was located, *“on a hill where enormous rocks rear themselves several feet above the level of the ground.”* His concern was that *“In no part can a grave be sunk more than from 2ft to 3ft without coming onto solid rock.”*<sup>132</sup>

In May 1888, stock sales were held in the Royal Hotel Yards at Grong Grong,<sup>133</sup> and these continued for many decades.

By July 1888, Mr Hall had opened a bootmakers shop, and the railway station had a resident porter. Visitors to the town included men from the surrounding sawmills – these included John McDonald’s Coolamon Sawmills, and Mr Wilkinson’s Albion Mills.<sup>134</sup>

In April 1889, the stationmaster, Mr Levinge departed for Carcoar, his new posting. The new store was now open saving people from having to travel to Narrandera for common items. A butcher shop was also under construction.<sup>135</sup>

The Presbyterian Church was almost completed in June 1890, it being a neat little building twenty-five feet by fifteen feet.<sup>136</sup> It was officially opened in October of 1890. In this same year, the local schoolteacher, Miss Rex, departed after six years’ service to the town. Her replacement was a Miss Parry from Richmond.<sup>137</sup> Mr Nicholas was the station master, and his assistant, Master Grove Flood, had been transferred to the Illawarra line.<sup>138</sup> Mr Dunn had opened a blacksmiths and wheelwright’s shop, and funds had been collected towards construction of a Catholic Church.<sup>139</sup>

By June 1891 the town had a second blacksmith, and there was a rumour that Mr Humby, late of Melbourne, was preparing to open a coach factory in the town. The town was again without a general store, with Narrandera being the closest source of general goods. There were two large sawmills in the district, each some thirty miles distant from Grong Grong, but they were carting their timber to the railway at Grong Grong.<sup>140</sup>

In 1891, the general store had disappeared, but the hotel, butcher shop and baker’s shop, were carrying on. Other buildings included the local school and the Presbyterian Church. There was no sign of the Catholic Church, but there were rumours of a new store being built.<sup>141</sup> Blacksmith’s were in demand with two established businesses and rumours that Mr Humby, late of Melbourne, was looking to establish a coach factory in the town.<sup>142</sup> A racing club was formed in this year and a race meeting held in May.<sup>143</sup>

A correspondent noted, in March 1892, that the town suffered from a proliferation of pigs roaming the streets and declaring that the owner of the pigs declined to take any action, despite the nuisance

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<sup>131</sup> Albury Banner. 8<sup>th</sup> October 1886, p16.

<sup>132</sup> Albury Banner. 3<sup>rd</sup> February 1888, p17.

<sup>133</sup> Wagga Wagga Advertiser. 12<sup>th</sup> May 1888, p3.

<sup>134</sup> Albury Banner. 27<sup>th</sup> July 1888, p16.

<sup>135</sup> Albury Banner. 26<sup>th</sup> April 1889, p16.

<sup>136</sup> Albury Banner. 20<sup>th</sup> June 1890, p16.

<sup>137</sup> Albury Banner. 18<sup>th</sup> July 1890, p17.

<sup>138</sup> Albury Banner. 30<sup>th</sup> May 1890, p16.

<sup>139</sup> Albury Banner. 11<sup>th</sup> October 1890, p16.

<sup>140</sup> Albury Banner. 5<sup>th</sup> June 1891, p16.

<sup>141</sup> Albury Banner. 3<sup>rd</sup> April 1891, p17.

<sup>142</sup> Albury Banner. 5<sup>th</sup> June 1891, p16.

<sup>143</sup> Albury Banner. 1<sup>st</sup> June 1891, p3.

to the residents of the town. He also noted the unsuitability of the current schoolhouse, in the hot summer months, with some parents electing not to send their children to school, believing the premises to be unhealthy. A petition had been presented to the relevant minister, but nothing had come of it.<sup>144</sup>

In 1892 there was a new Music Hall, and the stationmaster, Mr Nicholas, was transferred to another town.<sup>145</sup> The new hall was completed in April 1892, and a social held there in that month elicited a comment as to how readily the lime wash on the inner walls transferred onto everything that came in contact, much to the amusement of the observers.<sup>146</sup>

In 1893, some 10,000 bags of wheat were despatched from Grong Grong railway station, and cereal farming was well on the way to overtaking wool production, which in that year had consisted of some 500 bales. Bear's *Grong Grong run* could now accommodate up to forty shearers. The population had trebled in the past three years and now stood at around three hundred persons.<sup>147</sup>

In 1894 there were two stores in town – an established business belonging to Mr Pleming and a newer business recently opened, by Mr Jacobs of Narrandera. Mr D Hogan owned the butcher shop, and Patrick O'Connor owned the barber's shop. There were two blacksmiths and two hotels.<sup>148</sup>

In May 1896 the Grong Grong creamery was opened as a feeder to the Wagga Wagga butter factory. The cream was separated at Grong Grong and then transported to Wagga Wagga.<sup>149</sup> The factory was located about two hundred metres from the railway station.<sup>150</sup>

There were, in 1897, two churches – the Catholic Church and the other, shared by the Wesleyans, the Presbyterians, and the Anglicans. The Catholic Church was said to be much larger than the other. The post office business was conducted by the station master, Mr H Musgrove [late of Bowral]. Mr Pleming still operated his store and there were now two bakers – Mr P O'Connor and Mr J McDonald. The two blacksmiths were Mr Dunn and Mr Stanhope. Mr D Hogan was still the sole butcher. There was now a police station, with quarters, manned by Constable McLaughlin.<sup>151</sup> Mr O'Connor had only recently returned from a six month visit to Ireland and had re-established his business in Mrs John Halbish's new bakery.<sup>152</sup>

In 1897 the rabbits were becoming a real nuisance and the erection of wire netting fences was common. Mr Pleming's Commercial Stores were doing well, and the businessman now proposed erecting a new butcher shop, close by his existing business. A new blacksmith's shop was also under construction.<sup>153</sup> Another butcher's shop was soon afterwards opened by Mr F Rudd of Narandera, next to Mr Glenny's store.<sup>154</sup> Due to low volumes of milk the creamery at Grong Grong was closed in March 1897, on instruction from the Wagga Wagga Butter factory.<sup>155</sup>

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<sup>144</sup> Wagga Wagga Advertiser. 19<sup>th</sup> March 1892, p2.

<sup>145</sup> Wagga Wagga Advertiser. 26<sup>th</sup> April 1892, p2.; 19<sup>th</sup> March 1892, p2.

<sup>146</sup> Wagga Wagga Advertiser. 26<sup>th</sup> April 1892, p2.

<sup>147</sup> Australian Town & Country Journal. 22<sup>nd</sup> April 1893, p16.

<sup>148</sup> Wagga Wagga Advertiser. 4<sup>th</sup> January 1894, p3.

<sup>149</sup> Albury Banner. 22<sup>nd</sup> May 1896, p16. [see Wagga Wagga Advertiser. 19<sup>th</sup> May 1896, p2 – for a description]

<sup>150</sup> Wagga Wagga Advertiser. 19<sup>th</sup> May 1926, p2.

<sup>151</sup> Wagga Wagga Advertiser. 23<sup>rd</sup> February 1897, p2.

<sup>152</sup> Albury Banner. 5<sup>th</sup> February 1897, p17.

<sup>153</sup> Albury Banner. 20<sup>th</sup> August 1897, p24.

<sup>154</sup> Albury Banner. 10<sup>th</sup> September 1897, p16.

<sup>155</sup> Wagga Wagga Express. 3<sup>rd</sup> August 1897, p2.

In August 1897 the tender of Mr Charles Baker, of Hamilton, NSW, was accepted to erect a new post and telegraph office at the corner of Bellario [Balara] and Bynya Streets, opposite the police station.<sup>156</sup> The new structure was completed in November 1897.<sup>157</sup>

In August 1902, the stationmaster's residence was moved to higher ground. It had been particularly prone to inundation by water from surrounding water courses during the wetter months.<sup>158</sup>

On the 24<sup>th</sup> February 1903, the Royal Hall and the stables associated with the Royal hotel, were both destroyed by fire. The licensee at the time was Mr A McPherson. The hall was within twenty feet of the hotel, on the eastern side. The hall, and the stables, were both constructed of the local cypress pine. The hall had only recently been constructed by Mr GW Casburn. It was some forty feet long and about twenty feet wide and featured a stage and a proscenium, along with an iron roof and an excellent timber floor. The stables had been built some years previous.<sup>159</sup>

In 1903, Mr Fleming conducted the Victoria Store, which featured a cellar underneath, the entry to which was located at the front entry.<sup>160</sup> Charlie Jones was conducting a combined bakery, fruit shop and newsagency in 1903. By March of that year, he had decided to sell up and leave the district.<sup>161</sup>

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <p><b>Auction - Sale</b><br/><b>At Grong Grong.</b><br/><b>Saturday, 28th March,</b><br/>At 2 O'clock Sharp.<br/><b>Rare Opportunity for a Baker,<br/>Fruiterer &amp; News Agent.</b><br/><b>THE GOODWILL AND STOCK<br/>ON HAND OF<br/>Mr. CHARLIE JONES'<br/>Bakery, Fruit Shop &amp;<br/>News Agency.</b></p> | <p><b>STINSON &amp; STINSON,</b><br/>AUCTIONEERS, NARANDERA,<br/><b>H</b>AVE been favored with instructions from Mr. Charlie Jones, of Grong Grong, to sell by Public Auction on above date at Grong Grong, <b>THE GOOD WILL</b> and <b>STOCK</b> on hand (on day of sale) of his well established <b>BAKERY, FRUIT SHOP,</b> and <b>NEWS AGENCY BUSINESS.</b><br/><b>AVERAGE TAKINGS £15 A WEEK.</b><br/>Also at the same time and place, the Auctioneers will offer, the whole of Mr. Jones'<br/><b>Household Furniture and Effects,</b><br/>Comprising—Beds and Bedding, Tables, Chairs, Pictures, Mirrors, Wash-stands and Ware, Cooking Utensils, Verandah Blinds, Couches, Chest Drawers, Lanterns, Scales and Weights, Ice Chest, Grind Stone, and a sundries of good useful Tools.<br/>Also, 1 Horse, Buggy and Harness, 1 Tip Dray and Harness, 1 Wagonette.</p> |
|---|---|

Above: Notice of sale for Charlie Jones' business in March 1903.

<sup>156</sup> Albury Banner. 13<sup>th</sup> August 1897, p16.

<sup>157</sup> Albury Banner. 26<sup>th</sup> November 1897, p17.

<sup>158</sup> Albury Banner. 1<sup>st</sup> August 1902, p17.

<sup>159</sup> Narandera Argus. 27<sup>th</sup> February 1903, p3.

<sup>160</sup> Albury Banner. 9<sup>th</sup> October 1896, p17. / 14<sup>th</sup> December 1900, p28.

<sup>161</sup> Narandera Argus. 6<sup>th</sup> March 1903, p3.

**Teams.**

**W**ANTED at once, Teams to Draw Logs and Cart Timber to **Grong Grong**. Constant work can be had; fair price paid

**A. G. HUMBY,**  
Albion Saw Mills,  
Bolero, via Narandera.

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**Timber.**

**A.** G. HUMBY begs to notify his friends that he has rebuilt his Steam Saw and Planing Mills, which were destroyed by fire in 1901; and is now prepared to supply Timber for all building purposes in large or small quantities at reasonable prices.

**ALBION SAW MILLS,**  
Bolero, via Narandera.

Timber Mills were still an important business sector for the town in 1903. Mills included those of AG Humby,<sup>162</sup> and Dumbrell Bros of Albury.<sup>163</sup>

**DUMBRELL BROS.,**  
**TIMBER MERCHANTS & SAW MILLERS.**

Head Office—Timber Yards, Saw & Moulding Mills, Albury. Telephone 50  
SAW MILLS—RED GUM, BUNGOWANNAH; MURRAY PESE, GRONG GRONG.

Left: Notices from the Albion Saw Mills in December 1903.

Fire struck the town again in March 1904. On Saturday, around 2am on the 24th March the Royal hotel was totally consumed, and then three days later, Grosvenor Flood's store on the opposite side of the town was also lost. In a reversal of the 1903 fire, this time, the hall adjoining the Royal hotel was not affected.<sup>164</sup>

A month later, in July 1904 it was announced that Mr R Hankinson, a former clerk with Messrs H Rich & Co. had taken over the premises formerly occupied by Mr John Alfred Pleming, for the purpose of conducting a general store business, from the 1<sup>st</sup> of August.<sup>165</sup> The business was named the Victoria Cash Stores.<sup>166</sup>

In August 1904, R Hankinson & Co. took over the Victoria Stores from Mr John Alfred Pleming.<sup>167</sup>

Right: Notice of new proprietors of the Victoria Cash Stores, in August 1904.

**Victoria Cash Stores,**  
**GRONG GRONG.**

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**R. Hankinson AND Co.**

**B**EG to notify to the Residents of **Grong Grong** and Surrounding District that they have leased the STORES lately occupied by MR. J. A. PLEMING, and will commence business as

**General Storekeepers**

ON

**Monday, 1st August,**

With an entirely NEW and Well Assorted Stock of

**Grocery, Ironmongery,**  
**Crockery,**  
**Drapery, Etc., Etc.**

**A Trial Solicited.**

<sup>162</sup> Narandera Argus. 4<sup>th</sup> December 1903, p3.

<sup>163</sup> Albury Banner. 27<sup>th</sup> February 1903, p17.

<sup>164</sup> Albury Banner. 8<sup>th</sup> April 1904, p38.

<sup>165</sup> Narandera Argus. 22<sup>nd</sup> July 1904, p2.

<sup>166</sup> Narandera Argus. 26<sup>th</sup> August 1904, p2.

<sup>167</sup> Narandera Argus. 12<sup>th</sup> August 1904, p2.

In December 1904 there was another major fire, when the railway station building, a small wooden structure, was consumed by flames.<sup>168</sup> The Albury Banner reported the incident in its pages, and commented, "*This town is getting its name up for fires.*"<sup>169</sup>

A description of the town in August 1906 provided the following details – the main business centre was to the north of the railway station; Mr T McLachlan, a recent arrival, conducted the butcher shop; Mr J Kennedy conducted the only bakery, which he combined with a newsagency; Mr Hankinson conducted a branch general store (his main store being at Narrandera); Mr WD Scott conducted an agency business; the Commercial hotel was kept by Mr FB Brooks; and the Royal hotel was kept by Mr D McLennan (both latter gentlemen being recent arrivals). Each hotel was adjoined by a hall, suitable for public meetings and events. There was a post office (a pretty, wooden building); a blacksmith and wheelwright, Mr JA Gee; and a police station, under the charge of Constable O'Connor. The station master was Mr J Crabtree. The region continued to be a major source for timber.<sup>170</sup> Mr DW Dance had started a blacksmith's business earlier in the year.<sup>171</sup> In July the local baker, Mr P O'Connor, sold his business and equipment and left town with plans to travel to Ireland.<sup>172</sup> By the end of the year Mrs Halbisch had opened a bakery and fancy goods shop, in newly erected premises.<sup>173</sup>

In 1904, Gee's blacksmith's shop was occupied by William Stewart Justice. On the 24<sup>th</sup> October 1904, Justice purchased the business from a man named Joseph White, securing a five year lease. Justice sold the goodwill and the blacksmith's tools to John Adams Gee in the same month. Justice had erected a building worth forty-nine pounds, on the property, and in 1906 he lost this when he failed to pay the rent on the lease. White, a storekeeper at Ganmain, subsequently sold the shop and a cottage to Frank Lockett, who, in July 1907, served Gee with a notice to quit the premises.<sup>174</sup>

Work on the Berembled Weir was underway in 1908, as a part of the Barren Jack Scheme, and goods for the little township at Berembled were being carted from Grong Grong, filling the loss in business activity that had occurred when the rail line to Barellan commenced. The latter had resulted in a severe drop in the number of teams carting timber to the town. The nucleus at Berembled included three boarding houses, two stores, and a butcher's shop. Some two hundred men were employed on the site and the works were predicted to take about four years to complete.<sup>175</sup>

In February 1919, Mr E Dale, the local blacksmith at Grong Grong, sold the business to Mr G McNeil, of Landerdale, and departed the town.<sup>176</sup>

[The history of the village has not been traced past 1920].

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<sup>168</sup> Coolamon Echo. 9<sup>th</sup> December 1904, p2c1. / Wagga Wagga Express. 8<sup>th</sup> December 1904, p2.

<sup>169</sup> Albury Banner. 16<sup>th</sup> December 1904, p17.

<sup>170</sup> Albury Banner. 24<sup>th</sup> August 1906, p19.

<sup>171</sup> Albury Banner. 17<sup>th</sup> April 1896, p17.

<sup>172</sup> Albury Banner. 3<sup>rd</sup> July 1896, p17.

<sup>173</sup> Albury Banner. 4<sup>th</sup> December 1896, p17.

<sup>174</sup> Narandera Argus. 26<sup>th</sup> July 1907, p3.

<sup>175</sup> Albury Banner. 3<sup>rd</sup> July 1908, p19

<sup>176</sup> Daily Advertiser. 17<sup>th</sup> February 1919, p4.

**BUILDINGS**

**-**

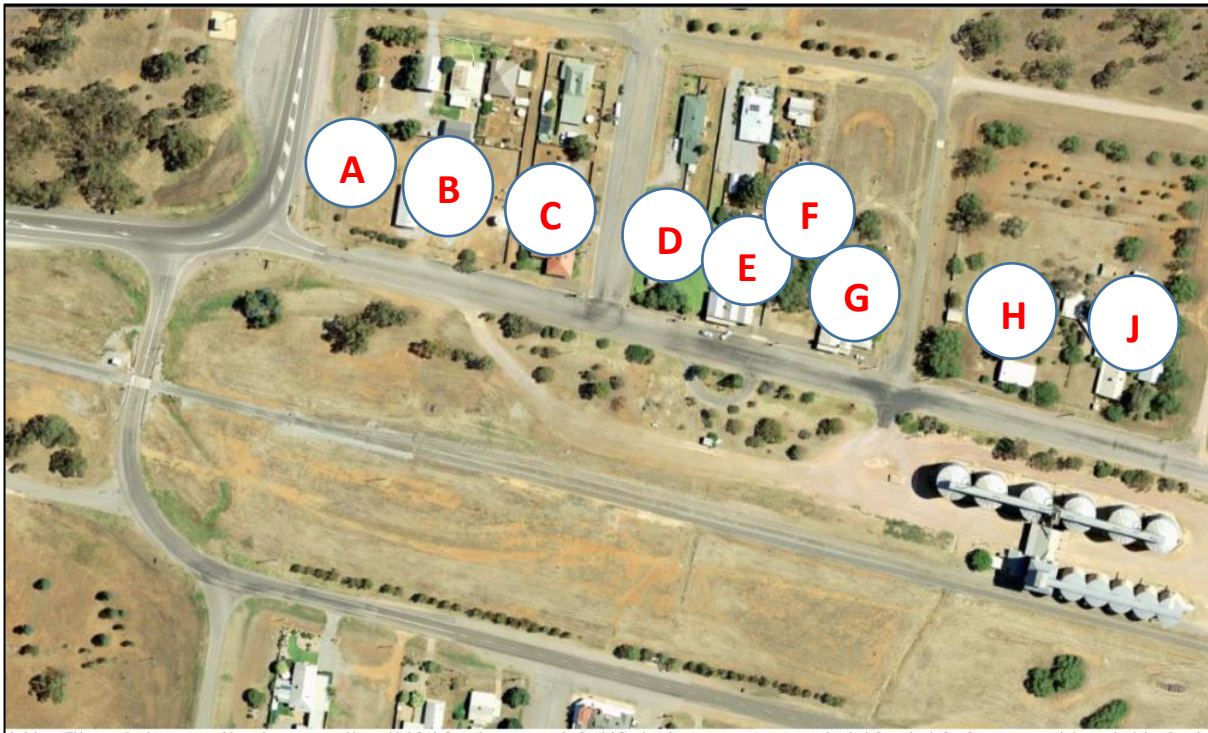
**BUSINESS**

**&**

**CIVIC**



## The Buildings – Business and Civic



**Above:** A contemporary map of Junee Street, showing location of earlier buildings. Courtesy NSW Land Registry Services. SIX.

### Key<sup>178</sup>

A = Former site of the Commercial hotel

B = Rava's commission agency [Mobil] and the butcher shop were both situated to the west of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Bank of NSW site.

C = Former Bank of New South Wales [3<sup>rd</sup> location] - now PIC Australia.

D = On the immediate west of the general store was Kennedy's baker shop. Later the

E = Grong Grong Store

F = A strip of three buildings in between the General Store and Choy's Reliance Garage. From left to right: the first Bank of NSW office [later Kennedy & Co. offices], Kennedy & Co. storage, and then the barber shop with a billiard room at the rear.

G = Old Reliance Garage building with adjoining house [Choys']. Between the garage and the residence was the old Blue Bell Café.

H = School teacher's residence

J = Grong Grong Public School

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<sup>177</sup> Albury Banner. 3<sup>rd</sup> April 1891, p17.

<sup>178</sup> Ken Limbrick. 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2019.

**Junee Street – between Berrembed Street and Balaro Street.**

Old businesses along this section of Junee Street commencing at the Berrembed Street end were,

1. Commercial hotel [destroyed by fire],
2. Rava's building
  - a. Mobil Service station [Lou Atkinson and Len Powell]
3. Butcher shop and residence
4. Bank of NSW office and residence
  - a. PIC Australia [Piggery]



**Above:** A part of Junee Street in 1976 [between Berrembed and Balaro Streets].<sup>179</sup>

In the 1920's this building [Mobil] was occupied by M Rava & Co., Land, Stock & General Commission Agents. The building to the right was the butcher shop and residence, which was built in 1891. Lou Atkinson and Len Powell purchased the business from Rava in 1934. Atkinson passed away in 1948 and Powell continued as a sole proprietor. Both these buildings burnt down in 1984. Regrettably a quantity of historical records was held in Powell's building, which were lost forever.



**Above:** The butcher shop in 1980. The verandah has been removed from the residence portion of the building. George Organ was the town butcher in the 1930's and 1940's.

<sup>179</sup> CSU Regional Archives. National Trust Photos [RW16-157 & 158]



**Above:** The 1953 Bank of NSW offices and residence, occupied by PIC [Pig Improvement Company] Australia in 2021. PIC Australia is part of a large global company that specialises in breeding pigs.



**Bank of NSW**

The Bank of New South Wales first opened at Grong Grong in 1925, in the old skin and wool store of Ben Jones. The manager was Mr H Humbley.<sup>180</sup>

**Left:** The 2nd bank building, located in Kennedy’s old building.

The 2nd Bank of New South Wales offices and residence were occupied around February 1926.<sup>181</sup> This building was adjacent to the offices of J Kennedy & Co,<sup>182</sup> and according to one account, was owned by this latter firm. The bank continued to occupy these premises upon until 1953, at which time the bank decided to erect new premises, which included a residence, at the corner of Junee and Bolero Streets.<sup>183</sup>

The architects for this latter project were Messrs Louis S Robertson & Son, of Narandera, and the builder was Mr HM Dixon.<sup>184</sup>

<sup>180</sup> Narandera Argus. 3<sup>rd</sup> September 1953, p8.

<sup>181</sup> Daily Advertiser. 16<sup>th</sup> February 1926, p4.

<sup>182</sup> Narandera Argus. 12<sup>th</sup> February 1926, p6.

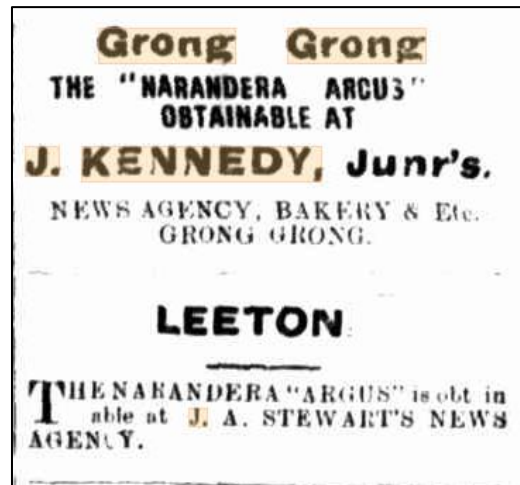
<sup>183</sup> Narandera Argus. 17<sup>th</sup> September 1953, p6.

<sup>184</sup> Narandera Argus. 3<sup>rd</sup> September 1953, p8.

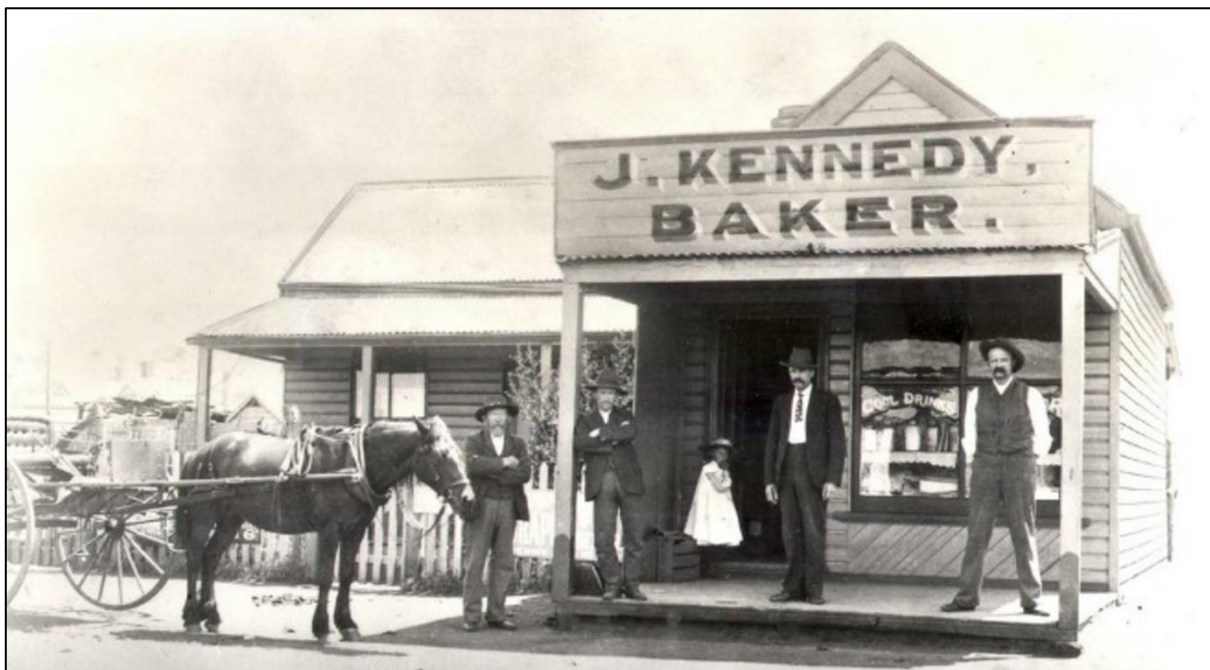
**Junee Street – between Balaro Street and Barellan Street.**

Old businesses along this section of Junee Street commencing at the Balaro Street end were,

1. Kennedy's Bakery
2. General Store
  - a. Mobil Service station
3. Kennedy's building no.1 [part]
  - a. Bank of NSW [2<sup>nd</sup> offices]
  - b. Kennedy's offices
4. Kennedy's building no.1 [part]
  - a. Kennedy's offices
5. Kennedy's building no.2
  - a. Kennedy's warehouse [storage]
6. Kennedy's building no.3
  - a. Hairdresser, tobacconist, billiard room.
7. Reliance Garage [Choy's]
8. Blue Bell Café [Choy's]
9. Choy's residence.



**Above:** An advertisement for Kennedy's bakery store in October 1915.



**Above:** Kennedy's baker shop. Courtesy Lost Narrandera.

**Kennedy's Baker Shop**

Originally built before 1903. It was in this year that John Kennedy junior, and his sister, Nora, purchased the bakery business.<sup>185</sup>

The shop fronted Junee Street and was situated to the west of the General Store, where the park is in 2021. In 1906 it was both a newsagency and a baker shop.<sup>186</sup>

<sup>185</sup> Narandera Argus. 28<sup>th</sup> October 1927, p7.

<sup>186</sup> Albury Banner. 24<sup>th</sup> August 1906, p19.



**Above:** The stores at Grong Grong, c.1925. Courtesy Lost Narrandera.

The original store was built in 1881. Conducted by Hankinson Ltd for many years. Renovated in 1948, and currently pretty much the same structure.



**Above:** The Grongy Store in November 2019.



**Above:** The row of old business premises to the east of the general store, before everything was knocked down. Courtesy Ken Limbrick.



**Above:** The main street in 1976.<sup>187</sup> **From left:** Kennedy & Co. [1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> building [ main store and storeroom], Tom McQualter [3<sup>rd</sup> shop – hairdresser].

The barber shop was originally established by Bert Choy and included a billiard room. It is believed the garage was constructed in 1925. It had a frontage of thirty-two feet to Junee Street, and a depth of sixty-five feet.<sup>188</sup>

The hairdressing saloon, which included a tobacconist's shop and a billiard room, was also constructed in 1925,<sup>189</sup> [between Kennedy's and Choy's buildings].

**Right:** October 1929 notice.<sup>190</sup>



**Above:** The same strip in 2010, with the Grongy Store on the left and the old Reliance Garage on the right. Courtesy Google Earth.

<sup>187</sup> CSU Regional Archives. National Trust Photos [RW16-157 & 158]

<sup>188</sup> Narandera Argus. 6<sup>th</sup> March 1925, p1.

<sup>189</sup> Narandera Argus. 10<sup>th</sup> July 1925, p4.

<sup>190</sup> Narandera Argus. 1<sup>st</sup> October 1929, p3.



**Above:** The hairdressing shop of Tom McQualter c.1940.'s

**Kennedy & Co.**

John Kennedy, senior, was an early settler in the Grong Grong district, taking up land in 1881. John, senior, remained on the land for many years. After the drought of 1902, John Kennedy, junior, and

his sister, Nora, purchased the bakery shop in Grong Grong in 1903, and were very successful in that venture. In 1907 John, junior, made the decision to commence business as an auctioneer and commission agent, and subsequently formed a partnership with Fred Kelly. This business operated for seven years, as Kelly & Kennedy, then in 1914, the partnership was dissolved – Kelly took over the Ardlethan component of the business and John Kennedy retained the Grong Grong component. In 1921 Kennedy took on a partner, Mr TH Butler. The partners then purchased the business of Messrs J Hurst and Co., of Ardlethan. In 1927, the business was publicly floated and henceforth named J Kennedy & Co. Ltd.<sup>191</sup>

**Forthcoming  
Clearing Sales  
By J. Kennedy & Co.  
of Grong Grong & Ardlethan**

---

A/c Mr. E. Wennerbom, Grong Grong, SATURDAY, 21st JANUARY.

A/c Mr. W. E. Hubble, "Grassmere," Grong Grong, SATURDAY, 28th JANUARY. .

A/c Messrs. Kehoe and Maher, "Hillside," Ardlethan, WEDNESDAY, 1st FEBRUARY.

A/c. Mr. J. Turnbull, "Indiana Park," Ardlethan, WEDNESDAY, 6th FEBRUARY.

**Left:** Clearing sale notice in January 1922.<sup>192</sup>

<sup>191</sup> Narandera Argus. 28<sup>th</sup> October 1927, p7.

<sup>192</sup> Narandera Argus. 10<sup>th</sup> January 1922, p3.



Above: Choy Bros, Reliance Garage, c.1925. Courtesy Lost Narrandera.

**RELIANCE MOTOR GARAGE**  
**Grong Grong**

---

**GENERAL MOTOR & ENGINEERING REPAIRS**

**AGENTS FOR CARS :**

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <p><b>CHRYSLER SIX</b><br/>           5-seater American Body<br/>           5 Genuine Balloon Tyres<br/>           Standard Equipment, Comfort and Long Life combined<br/> <b>Price - £550</b><br/>           CALL AND SEE OUR DEMONSTRATOR</p> | <p><b>ROLLIN FOUR</b><br/>           There's Life in the Rollin Touring Car<br/>           Australian Body, Disc Wheels and 5 Genuine Balloon Tyres. : Standard Equipment, Beauty, Luxury and Economy combined<br/> <b>Price - £425</b></p> |
|---|---|

**MOTOR CYCLES - - HARLEY-DAVIDSON AND B.S.A.**  
 Motor Spirits and Oils stocked, also Large Stock of Accessories

**CHOY BROTHERS, Proprietors, Grong Grong**

The Reliance Garage was opened by the Choy brothers and was up and running by July 1925.<sup>193</sup> Harry Choy's son, Bill Choy, joined the business in 1946.



Right: Harry Choy and his bride, Florence Pack. Courtesy shannon2579 [ancestry.com]

<sup>193</sup> Narandera Argus.





**Above:** The old Reliance Garage building and adjoining premises, in November 2019.

In February 1926, the timber for a fruit shop and refreshment room was laying adjacent to Choy's garage in February 1926, awaiting erection. Construction was due to start within a week.<sup>194</sup> The building was completed in 1926. It was situated in front of the Choy residence and butted onto

the garage. This business was known as the Blue Bell Café. The business was originally owned by Florence Choy, Harry Choy's wife.

**Fashion Decees the Shingle !**

**Grong Grong**  
**Hairdressing Saloon**

Is Now in Charge of  
**Mr. Jack Melton**  
Late of Mick Simmons  
Limited : : Sydney  
**First-class Ladies' & Gentlemen's**  
**Hairdresser**

LOCAL RESIDENTS ARE INVITED  
TO GIVE US A TRIAL

We are Local Agents for  
**HARRINGTON'S LTD.**  
**Photographic Supplies**  
Bring your Films and have  
them developed by experts at  
a small cost  
Look us up for  
**"Sure Catch" FISHING TACKLE**  
We have a large stock on hand

**BERT CHOY - Grong Grong**

**Left:** December 1926 advertisement for the Grong Grong Hairdressing Saloon.<sup>195</sup>

In 1926 the Choy family controlled three shops in a row – the hairdressers, the garage, and the café.

In September 1949, a fire broke out in Mrs Choy's café around 2:30am in the morning. Quick action by Harry Choy and his son, Bill, saved the building from destruction.<sup>196</sup>

The business was purchased by Mick and Shirley Watters in 1952 and closed in 1963. Reopened in 1965 by Betty Menzies [the daughter of Florence Choy], Jean Choy, [Florence's daughter in law], Vera Reynolds, and Monica Southern.

<sup>194</sup> Narandera Argus. 12<sup>th</sup> February 1926, p6.

<sup>195</sup> Narandera Argus. 17<sup>th</sup> December 1926, p1.

<sup>196</sup> Narandera Argus. 9<sup>th</sup> September 1949, p2.

### Grong Grong Post Office

The first post office at Grong Grong was conducted out of the railway station office, by the stationmaster. In August 1897 the tender of Mr Charles Baker, of Hamilton, NSW, was accepted to erect a new post and telegraph office at the corner of Bellario [Balaro] and Bynya Streets, opposite the police station.<sup>197</sup> The new weatherboard structure was completed in November 1897, at a cost of four hundred and eighty-five pounds.<sup>198</sup> The building is still at the same location in 2021.



**Above:** An early photo of the Grong Grong Post Office. Courtesy National Archives of Australia.<sup>199</sup>

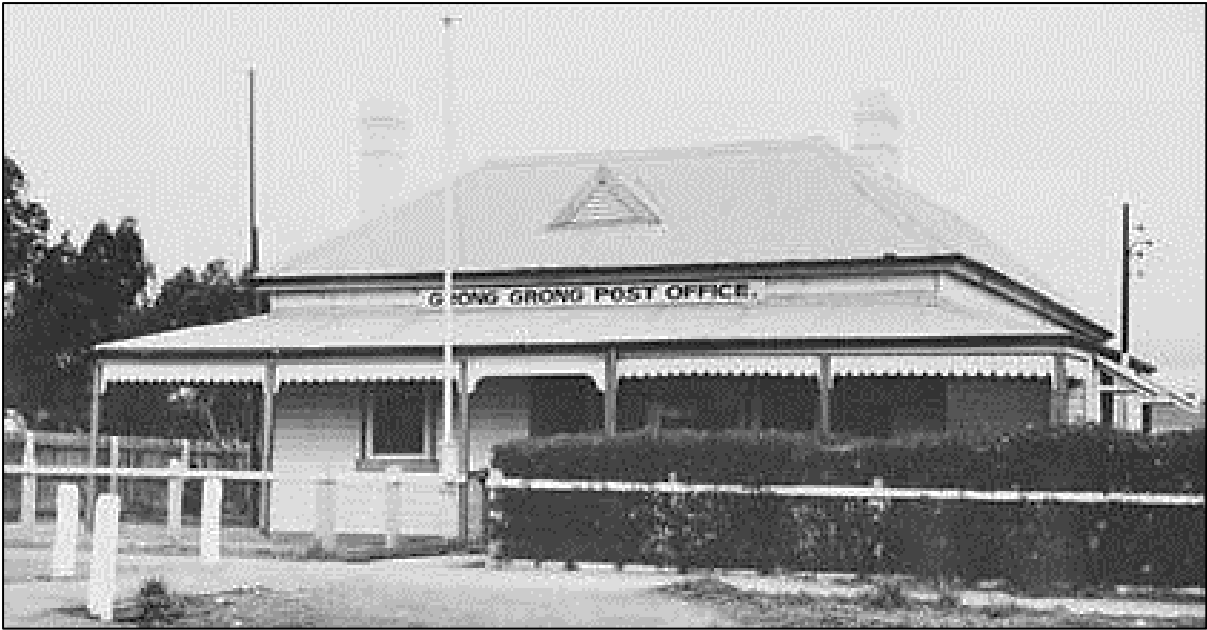


**Above:** The Grong Grong Post Office, c.1935. Courtesy NAA. [C4076, HN6098]

<sup>197</sup> Albury Banner. 13<sup>th</sup> August 1897, p16.

<sup>198</sup> Albury Banner. 26<sup>th</sup> November 1897, p17.

<sup>199</sup> National Archives of Australia. [B5919, 4/231]



**Above:** The Grong Grong Post Office, c.1965.<sup>200</sup> Courtesy NAA. [C4076, HN6099]



**Above:** The Grong Grong Post Office building in 1976.<sup>201</sup>

<sup>200</sup> National Archives of Australia. [C4076, HN6099]

<sup>201</sup> CSU Regional Archives. National Trust Photos [RW16-159]

## The Public School

The first school at Grong Grong opened in 1882 and was conducted in a tent.<sup>202</sup> A wooden building was erected in 1884, and several years later a brick building was constructed.<sup>203</sup>

By March 1884 the erection of a weatherboard school with an iron roof was well underway but the village was still not surveyed.<sup>204</sup> Trucking yards were also being constructed in this same month.<sup>205</sup>

In February 1892 there was an average attendance of thirty-seven children but the school building, which faced the railway station, was said to look more like a stable than a school room.<sup>206</sup>

In August 1892 the government revoked the dedication of the original school site at Grong Grong, which was a two-acre piece of portion 52 [originally dedicated on the 15<sup>th</sup> January 1886].<sup>207</sup>

In December 1892 tenders were sought for the relocation of the old school building, on account of the Department of Public Instruction.<sup>208</sup> The new site was within the village and the new teacher's residence had already been erected on that site.<sup>209</sup> In 1896 the new brick school building was opened.<sup>210</sup>



**Above:** The former Grong Grong Public School, in November 2019. Now a private residence.

<sup>202</sup> Narandera Argus. 17<sup>th</sup> September 1953, p6.

<sup>203</sup> Narandera Argus. 17<sup>th</sup> September 1953, p6.

<sup>204</sup> Albury Banner. 4<sup>th</sup> April 1884, p22.

<sup>205</sup> Albury Banner. 7<sup>th</sup> March 1884, p23.

<sup>206</sup> Wagga Wagga Advertiser. 13<sup>th</sup> February 1892, p2.

<sup>207</sup> NSW Government Gazette. 1892, p6894.

<sup>208</sup> Wagga Wagga Advertiser. 1<sup>st</sup> December 1892, p3.

<sup>209</sup> Wagga Wagga Advertiser. 24<sup>th</sup> November 1892, p2.

<sup>210</sup> Albury Banner. 8<sup>th</sup> January 1897, p17.



**Above:** The former police residence in November 2019. Now a private residence.

There was a police station at Grong Grong in February 1895, with Constable McLaughlin [or McLachlan], formerly of Narandera, in charge. This appears to have been the earliest police presence in the town. There was no purpose-built police station at the time, but a cottage had been leased.<sup>211</sup>

There was no cell for prisoners originally and McLaughlin was forced to chain prisoners to a log in an open paddock, day and night, without any protection from the weather.<sup>212</sup>

Constable McLaughlin was still in charge in February 1897<sup>213</sup> but in December 1897 Constable Toohey was the officer based at Grong Grong.<sup>214</sup>

In December 1905, the police station was relocated to a site purchased from Mr JFW Alldis by the Crown, for the sum of two hundred and seventy-five pounds. The new station was now on the southern side of the railway line [moved from north side]. Mr Alldis had been contracted to move the police cell from the old site to the new site.<sup>215</sup> The new officer in charge was First-class Constable Jackson. The latter left Grong Grong in January 1903, having purchased the business of a hotel at Grahamstown, near Adelong.<sup>216</sup>

New stables were erected for the police station in the latter part of 1908 and were completed by January 1909.<sup>217</sup> It was expected that a new residence would also be constructed. In March 1909, the Sydney firm of EP Frost & Co. won the tender for a new police station at a cost of £1,074.<sup>218</sup> It is assumed the new station was completed in 1909. In 1953 a brick lockup and office adjoined the brick residence.<sup>219</sup>

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<sup>211</sup> Narandera Argus. 30<sup>th</sup> April 1895, p2.

<sup>212</sup> Albury Banner. 28<sup>th</sup> August 1896, p16.

<sup>213</sup> Wagga Wagga Advertiser. 23<sup>rd</sup> February 1897, p2.

<sup>214</sup> NSW Police Gazette. 29<sup>th</sup> December 1897, p451.

<sup>215</sup> Narandera Argus. 8<sup>th</sup> December 1899, p2.

<sup>216</sup> Narandera Argus. 9<sup>th</sup> January 1903, p2.

<sup>217</sup> Wagga Wagga Advertiser. 13<sup>th</sup> October 1908, p3. / Albury Banner. 22<sup>nd</sup> January 1909, p46.

<sup>218</sup> Wagga Wagga Express. 16<sup>th</sup> March 1909, p2.

<sup>219</sup> Narandera Argus. 17<sup>th</sup> September 1953, p6.



**Above:** The former Uniting Church in November 2019. Now a private residence. Originally St Paul's Presbyterian Church.

The first Presbyterian Church was erected in the early 1890's and was a weatherboard building.<sup>220</sup> Timber for the edifice was laying at the railway station in May 1890<sup>221</sup> and it is assumed the building was completed in that year. It was definitely completed prior to March 1891.<sup>222</sup>

In January 1919, architect, JH Robertson, invited tenders for erection of a new Presbyterian Church at Grong Grong.<sup>223</sup> The foundation stone was laid on the 9<sup>th</sup> April 1919, by Mr H Andrew. A silver trowel was presented to Mrs Andrew.<sup>224</sup>

St Paul's Presbyterian Church was officially opened on Wednesday the 29<sup>th</sup> October 1919, by the Rev. Thomas Morgan, ex-Moderator and convenor of Home Missions. The cost of the project was one thousand three hundred and twenty pounds with an amount of five hundred and eighty pounds outstanding. The church was a brick building designed by JH Robertson of Narrandera and constructed by Messrs Tiltman and Taylor. The inside walls were plastered, and the building was ceiled.<sup>225</sup> St Paul's was to be used by both the Presbyterians and the Methodists.

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<sup>220</sup> Narandera Argus. 17<sup>th</sup> September 1953, p6.

<sup>221</sup> Albury Banner. 30<sup>th</sup> May 1890, p16.

<sup>222</sup> Albury Banner. 3<sup>rd</sup> April 1891, p17.

<sup>223</sup> Narandera Argus. 10<sup>th</sup> January 1919, p2.

<sup>224</sup> Australian Town & Country Journal. 16<sup>th</sup> April 1919, p13.

<sup>225</sup> Narandera Argus. 31<sup>st</sup> October 1919, p1.



**Above:** The distinctive St Patrick’s Catholic Church, in November 2019.

On the 14th April 1891, a sale of town lots at Grong Grong took place with most lots sold. Purchases included those by the Rev. Charles Eldred, who secured two lots on behalf of the Church of England, and Mr McKeone, who bought two lots for the Catholic Church. Both gentlemen paid five pounds per half acre.<sup>226</sup>

In June 1891, P Higgins, an architect at Narrandera, invited tenders for the construction of a Catholic Church at Grong Grong. It was to be a wooden building.<sup>227</sup> No record could be found confirming when this Church was opened, but it is assumed this occurred in the latter part of 1891. In 1918, Bishop Gallagher stated that he had opened the church in 1891. A report in February 1897 described the building as being larger than the Presbyterian Church. It was also claimed that it was the only Catholic Church in the diocese that was free of debt.<sup>228</sup>

On the 28<sup>th</sup> March 1917, the Catholic Church at Grong Grong was destroyed by fire. It was a wooden building, and the contents were quickly consumed without any opportunity to save them. These included two valuable statues and some costly pictures.<sup>229</sup> The building and contents were insured.

Moves to build a new church were soon underway. In May 1917 JH Robertson, an architect of Narrandera, invited tenders for the erection of a brick church [Catholic] at Grong Grong.<sup>230</sup> The foundation stone was laid and blessed by the Right Rev. Dr Gallagher, Bishop of Goulburn, on the 13<sup>th</sup> June 1917.<sup>231</sup>

The contract for construction of the church went to Messrs McFadzean & Bland of Narrandera at a cost of one thousand five hundred and forty-nine pounds.<sup>232</sup> Progress was well advanced in early

<sup>226</sup> Albury Banner. 24<sup>th</sup> April 1891, p23.

<sup>227</sup> Wagga Wagga Advertiser. 9<sup>th</sup> June 1891, p3

<sup>228</sup> Wagga Wagga Advertiser. 23<sup>rd</sup> February 1897, p2.

<sup>229</sup> Narandera Argus. 30<sup>th</sup> March 1917, p2.

<sup>230</sup> Narandera Argus. 18<sup>th</sup> May 1917, p3.

<sup>231</sup> Albury Banner. 15<sup>th</sup> June 1917, p30.

<sup>232</sup> Narandera Argus. 13<sup>th</sup> July 1917, p2.

December. The brickwork was completed, including the tower, and work was due to start on the altar, which was to be feature Queensland maple.<sup>233</sup>

The new church was officially opened by the Bishop of Goulburn, the Right Rev. Dr Gallagher, on Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> July.<sup>234</sup> Some four hundred people attended the ceremony. Additional funds were collected on the day and by the end of the day the church was declared free of debt. Final costs, including the furnishings came to approximately one thousand nine hundred and fifty pounds.

A description of the new building read as follows,<sup>235</sup>

“The church is a very fine structure, and its striking feature is an ornate tower and belfry. It is of brick, and measures 45ft. by 25ft. wide, with sacristy and porch added, with two side aisles. The modern seating and confessional are of Queensland maple. The ceiling is beautifully panelled. The leadlight windows are of modern pattern, allowing for the best ventilation. The beautifully designed and richly decorated altar in white and gold, with religious symbols, is truly a work of art, and has been executed by Mr. J. F. Babilinsbri, of the well-known firm which bears his name. Mr. Babilinsbri is also responsible for the scrolls on the walls. The tabernacle doors are of solid brass, and are most imposing in appearance and massive in style. The altar is erected to the memory of the late Father Gray. The Stations of the Cross are of very elegant design — in raised Mosaic, decorated in oils, and most life-like — are only the fourth set of their kind in the diocese. Two beautiful statues, the Sacred Heart and Immaculate Conception, occupy niches in each wing, and go far towards beautifying and furnishing the church. The whole building is very complete in every detail.”

The building was designed by JH Robertson, architect, of Narrandera.

A month earlier, on Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> May 1918, Bishop Gallagher had officially opened the new St Patrick’s Church at Matong, which was also free of debt.

It appears that the Catholic church at Grong Grong did not have a name for many years. St Patrick’s nomenclature is, presumably, post 1954.

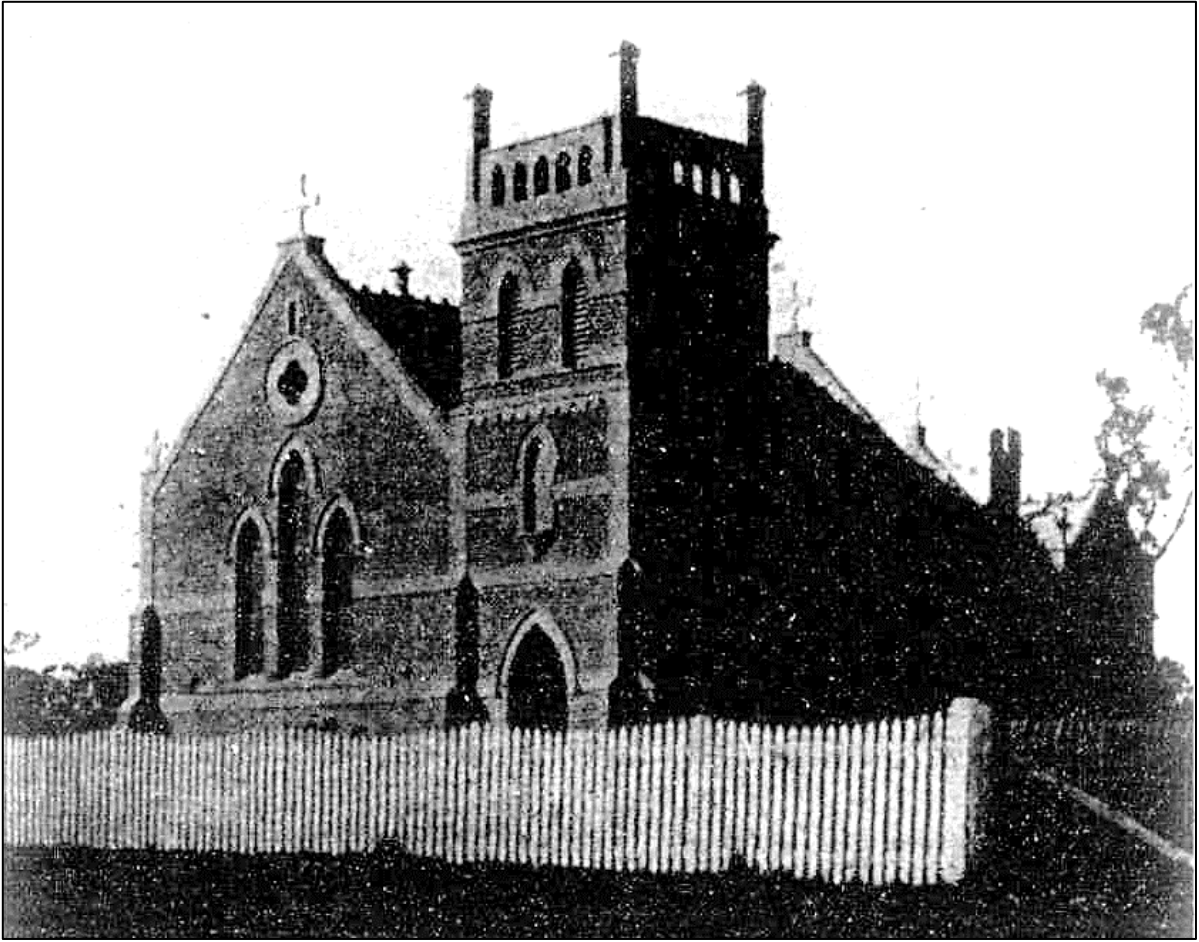
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<sup>233</sup> Narandera Argus. 4<sup>th</sup> December 1917, p2.

<sup>234</sup> Catholic Press. 29<sup>th</sup> August 1918, p6.

<sup>235</sup> Catholic Press. 29<sup>th</sup> August 1918, p6. / Narandera Argus. 2<sup>nd</sup> August 1918, p4.

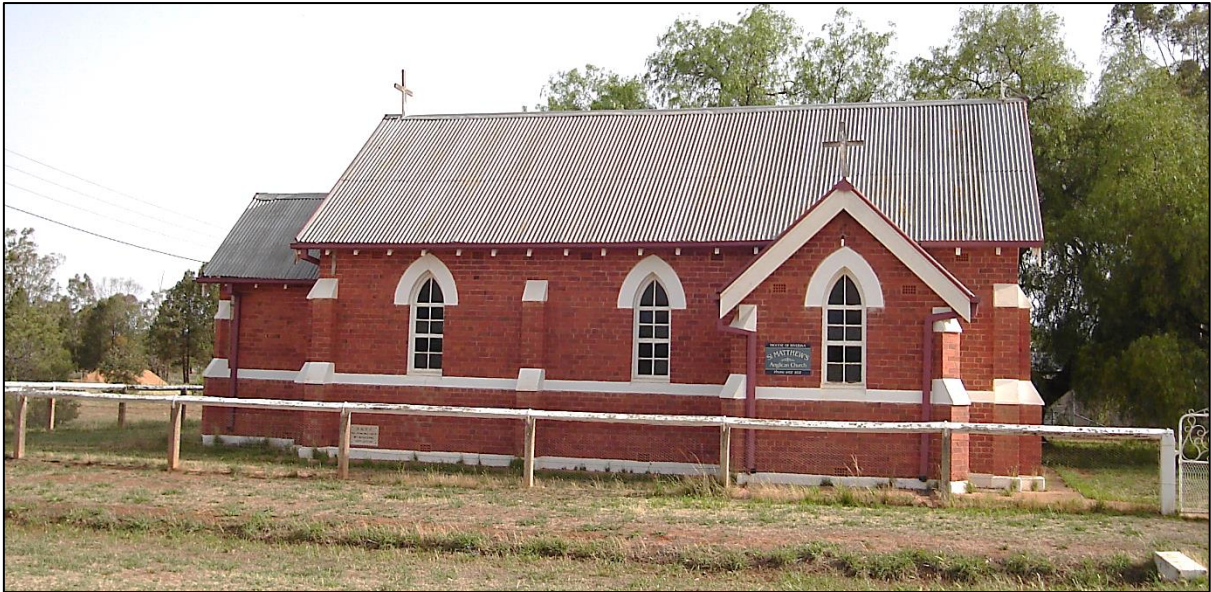




**Left:** The new Catholic Church at Grong Grong in August 1918.<sup>236</sup>

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<sup>236</sup> The Catholic Press. 29<sup>th</sup> August 1918, p6.



**Above:** St Matthew's Anglican Church, in November 2019.

Prior to 1911, the Anglicans of Grong Grong held their services in the little wooden Presbyterian Church.<sup>237</sup>

The foundation stone for St Matthew's Church was laid on the 20<sup>th</sup> September 1911, by Mrs Brideoak of *Federal Park*. The location was near the existing Catholic Church.<sup>238</sup> This was the first and only Anglican Church. Prior to 1911 Anglicans and Methodists used the Presbyterian Church.

Brickwork for the new church was completed in October 1911, and it was expected the whole building would be completed within a matter of weeks.<sup>239</sup> The new building was thirty six feet long and twenty feet wide [nave], with chancel nine feet by ten feet, and a porch and vestry. The building was Gothic in style, with an open timber roof ceiled with native pine, and capable of seating two hundred and fifty people.<sup>240</sup> Mr HC Hind, an architect of Narandera, was the contractor.

The new church was officially opened on Sunday the 3<sup>rd</sup> December 1911, by the Right Rev. Dr Anderson, bishop of the Riverina.<sup>241</sup> Additions have been made to the building since 1911.<sup>242</sup>

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<sup>237</sup> Narandera Argus. 22<sup>nd</sup> September 1936, p2.

<sup>238</sup> Narandera Argus. 22<sup>nd</sup> September 1911, p4.

<sup>239</sup> Daily Advertiser. 14<sup>th</sup> October 1911, p6.

<sup>240</sup> Narandera Argus. 8<sup>th</sup> December 1911, p4.; 22<sup>nd</sup> September 1911, p4.

<sup>241</sup> Narandera Argus. 8<sup>th</sup> December 1911, p4.

<sup>242</sup> Narandera Argus. 24<sup>th</sup> December 1948, p2.



**Above:** The Commemoration Hall, School of Arts, and Memorial Club complex in November 2019.



**Above:** The School of Arts and Commemoration Hall in May 1925.

### **School of Arts**

In August 1921, a meeting was convened in the Public School for the purpose of forming a School of Arts Committee. Mr W Guest was elected president and a sub-committee, consisting of the president, secretary and treasurer, was authorised to meet with the *“old committee”* to determine what funds might exist. The committee resolved that the allotment of land originally granted as a site for a School of Arts was not suitable, and efforts should be made to obtain a more central site.<sup>243</sup>

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<sup>243</sup> Daily Advertiser. 12<sup>th</sup> August 1921, p1.

The committee commenced fund raising and in October 1923 a bazaar in support of a Soldiers' Commemoration Hall and a School of Arts raised over eight hundred and fifty pounds, increasing the gross holding to some thirteen hundred pounds. Mr Smart, a returned soldier and an architect, of Sydney, had offered his services for free.<sup>244</sup>

A plan of the building design was almost complete, and the following characteristics had already been determined,<sup>245</sup>

"The front of the building will be most attractive, with overhanging gable roof, supported by massive round pillars. A spacious entrance porch will give access to the library and reading rooms on the right, and to the committee and reading rooms on the left. A vestibule with cloak rooms, will lead to the main hall, 50ft by 40ft, providing twice as much floor space as the present hall. A cinema operating room will be constructed above the vestibule. The large stage 40ft by 20ft is specially designed to serve as a supper room. All the stage fittings will be movable. The kitchen will adjoin the supper room; Electric light will be installed."

Tenders for construction of the buildings, brick or concrete, were called for in January 1924,<sup>246</sup> but failed to attract any submissions.<sup>247</sup>

An update of affairs in March 1924, confirmed that the committee had paid Maples [Wagga Wagga] the full price for a Beale piano. The committee had agreed to purchase a new site from Mrs Cosgrove and the respective solicitors were to be advised to finalise the transfer of the property. Mr GH McNeill was now the president, and he, along with the relevant sub-committee had the task of amending the plans in order to reduce the cost but at the same time retaining those aspects most desired by the local community. The sub-committee adopted a plan that reduced the size of the building and dispensed with the billiard and cloak rooms.<sup>248</sup>



Tenders were sought again in May 1924.<sup>249</sup>

**Left:** Advertisement for tenders in May 1924.

In May 1924, the tender of Messrs Haynes & Dixon, of Narandera, was accepted, at a cost of two thousand three hundred pounds.<sup>250</sup> The contract was for the building only and did not include furniture, fittings and lighting.<sup>251</sup>

<sup>244</sup> Daily Advertiser. 9<sup>th</sup> October 1923, p1.

<sup>245</sup> Daily Advertiser. 24<sup>th</sup> August 1923, p1.

<sup>246</sup> Construction & Local Government Journal. 2<sup>nd</sup> January 1924, p6.

<sup>247</sup> Narandera Argus. 8<sup>th</sup> February 1924, p1.

<sup>248</sup> Narandera Argus. 7<sup>th</sup> March 1924, p2; 1<sup>st</sup> April 1924, p4.

<sup>249</sup> Daily Advertiser. 6<sup>th</sup> May 1924, p3.

<sup>250</sup> Daily Advertiser. 31<sup>st</sup> May 1924, p7.

<sup>251</sup> Narandera Argus. 30<sup>th</sup> May 1924, p5.

The foundation stone was laid on the 23rd June 1924,<sup>252</sup> by a distinguished Australian soldier, Major-General CF Cox, CB, CMG, DSO, VD.<sup>253</sup>

The new building was officially opened on the 19th November 1924. Some four hundred people attended a banquet in the evening as part of the celebrations. The following description appeared in the local press,<sup>254</sup>

“The building contained a large hall, 52ft. x 32ft, with a stage and dressing-rooms 32ft. x 20ft.; a library, a reading-room and a kitchen. The stage is not only spacious, but the effects are well in keeping with the remainder of the building. Inside the porch, on either side of the main entrance, are two marble tablets with the names of the men who volunteered from Grong Grong printed in gold. The tablets were carved and polished by Mr F. Lindley, Narandera. Messrs. Haynes and Dixon, Narandera, were the contractors; and Mr. J. H. Robertson, Narandera, the architect.”

In August 1953, a tender was in hand for additions to the building. These were to consist of a club room for ex-servicemen and a supper annex attached to the hall.<sup>255</sup>



**Left:** A sign that has been a regular feature in the town for many years, notifying travellers that the pub is on the other side of the railway line.

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<sup>252</sup> Narandera Argus. 17<sup>th</sup> September 1953, p6.

<sup>253</sup> Narandera Argus. 27<sup>th</sup> June 1924, p5.

<sup>254</sup> Narandera Argus. 21<sup>st</sup> November 1924, p2.

<sup>255</sup> Narandera Argus. 20 August 1953, p5.

## Neenish Tarts

In 1988 a young resident of Grong Grong, Douglas Evans, wrote a letter to a Sydney journalist, in response to an enquiry regarding the origin of “*Neenish Tarts*.” The letter read as follows,<sup>256</sup>

“Dear Mr Journalist,  
My sister Venus and I clearly remember our mother's good friend Ruby Neenish of Kolabi via Ardlethan who got short of cocoa powder when baking for her daughter's unexpected shower tea in 1913. Made do by making them with half cocoa and half white icing. From then on they were known as Neenish tarts.”

The letter was pure fantasy, but the journalist published the letter and the fallacy spread. Evans had written the letter in a fit of pique activated by the journalist's theatre reviews, which habitually rubbished Grong Grong. Evans stated,

“His measurement for terribleness or awfulness was if a show was appalling on the Sydney stage, he would recommend that it would be suitable for the Grong Grong School of Arts.”

Folklore now is that Mrs Neenish of Grong Grong invented the Neenish Tart, but there is clear evidence that the Tart was invented prior to 1913, possibly by an Australian company, the Aerated Bread Company, in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. There is no definitive answer as to its origin.



**Above:** Neenish Tarts.

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<sup>256</sup> ABC. <https://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/earshot/the-origins-of-the-neenish-tart/7585914>. Accessed 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2021.

# THE HOTELS

## The Hotels

The first hotel at Grong Grong village was the Royal hotel (1885), followed later by the Commercial hotel (1892). These were the only two hotels ever licensed in the town.

### Commercial hotel (1892-1921)

#### Location

The Commercial hotel was located on allotment 2, section 52, in the village of Grong Grong, parish of Lupton. In 2019 the site was occupied by an Ag & Vet business, on the north-east corner of the intersection of Berrembed and Junee Streets.



**Above:** Allotment 2, section 52, in 2019. Courtesy Google Maps.

#### Licensees

The Commercial hotel was first licensed to John Knight for the period from the 19<sup>th</sup> January 1892 till the 18<sup>th</sup> January 1893.<sup>257</sup>

When the license was renewed on the 19<sup>th</sup> January 1893 it was in the name of Francis J Flood.<sup>258</sup> A visitor to the town, in January 1894, noted that there were two stores, Mr Jacob's of Narandera having just opened one. The other store was owned by Mr Fleming. There was also a bootmaker's shop, two blacksmith's shops, a barber's shop (owned by Mr Patrick O'Connor), and two hotels.<sup>259</sup>

Shearing was due to commence in September 1894, with *Deepwater* due to call the roll on the 12<sup>th</sup> of that month, followed by *Berrembed* and *Grong Grong*, about a week later. *Deepwater* insisted on the 1894 agreement and the men walked off and set up camp. There was a shortage of "free labourers" and it was expected that the pastoralists would have to accede to the 1891 verbal agreement.<sup>260</sup> The influx of shearers would have benefited the commercial enterprises, especially the two hotels.

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<sup>257</sup> NSW Government Gazette. Publicans' Licenses. 1892, p1616.

<sup>258</sup> NSW Government Gazette. Publicans' Licenses. 1893, p1682.

<sup>259</sup> Wagga Wagga Advertiser. 4<sup>th</sup> January 1894, p3.

<sup>260</sup> Albury Banner. 21<sup>st</sup> September 1894, p16.



There was another sale of town lots in December 1894, when some thirty blocks were sold. Much of the enthusiasm for the lots was driven by the success of the various gold mines in the surrounding districts.<sup>261</sup> It was in this month of September that the license for the Commercial hotel was transferred from Flood to Daniel Hogan who took over in September 1894.<sup>262</sup> Flood moved to Narrandera to take over the Commercial hotel at that place.

Daniel Hogan took a wife, on the 4<sup>th</sup> November 1896, marrying Caroline Josephine Murphy, the 2<sup>nd</sup> daughter of James Murphy, of Brisbane, Queensland. The ceremony took place in St Michael's Church, Wagga Wagga.<sup>263</sup> Hogan continued on as the licensee of the Commercial hotel and on the 2<sup>nd</sup> May 1898, he took a new lease of the premises from Mary Ann Flood.<sup>264</sup>

A description of the building in 1897 described it as a brick edifice containing fourteen rooms, which is incorrect – it was a timber building. [When the building burnt down in 1921 it was confirmed to be a timber structure]. In 1897, the Royal hotel was also a timber building.<sup>265</sup>

In January 1900 the license was renewed in the name of Francis Joseph Flood [full name Grosvenor Francis Joseph Flood].<sup>266</sup> Flood was the licensee in 1901 when a reception was held in the hotel to welcome home Trooper Walter Caunt who had fought in the Boer War, and who was presented with a suitably inscribed gold medal from the local citizens.<sup>267</sup>

At the end of April 1903, Grosvenor Flood, senior, transferred the license to Grosvenor Flood, junior.<sup>268</sup> It is not clear what was going on here. According to the official records, in January 1903, Francis Joseph Flood renewed the license for a year.<sup>269</sup> As noted, he transferred the license to his son in April, but then in January 1904 it was renewed in the name of Francis Joseph Flood,<sup>270</sup> but it is unclear as to whether this was Flood senior, or Flood junior. It is not known why the two men did not include the name "Grosvenor" in the official applications for licences.

In September 1904, Francis Joseph Flood gave notice that he intended to apply for a license for a new hotel at Marrar, to be called the Royal hotel.<sup>271</sup>

Mary Ann Flood leased the premises to John Thomas Leaper, a hotel keeper of Grong Grong, on the 27<sup>th</sup> August 1904, and from the 19<sup>th</sup> January 1905 the license was officially in the name of John Thomas Leaper. In 1907 Leaper was succeeded by Francis H Brook – officially from the 5<sup>th</sup> April, although Brook was in the hotel by August 1906.<sup>272</sup> Brook had applied for a renewal in January 1907, but his application was lodged after the previous license had expired – on the 18<sup>th</sup> January – and the court ruled they did not have the authority to grant a renewal under these circumstances. Consequently, the hotel was closed from the 18<sup>th</sup> January until the 5<sup>th</sup> April 1907.<sup>273</sup>

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<sup>261</sup> Wagga Wagga Advertiser. 2<sup>nd</sup> January 1894, p3.

<sup>262</sup> Albury Banner. 21<sup>st</sup> September 1894, p16.

<sup>263</sup> Wagga Wagga Advertiser. 7<sup>th</sup> November 1896, p2.

<sup>264</sup> NSW Land Registry Services. Title deed volume 981, folio 14.

<sup>265</sup> Wagga Wagga Advertiser. 23<sup>rd</sup> February 1897, p2.

<sup>266</sup> Narandera Argus. 2<sup>nd</sup> March 1900, p2.

<sup>267</sup> Narandera Argus. 23<sup>rd</sup> August 1901, p3.

<sup>268</sup> Narandera Argus. 1<sup>st</sup> May 1903, p2.

<sup>269</sup> NSW Government Gazette. 1903, p1686.

<sup>270</sup> NSW Government Gazette. 1904, p1680.

<sup>271</sup> Junee Southern Cross. 27<sup>th</sup> September 1904, p2c3.

<sup>272</sup> Albury Banner. 24<sup>th</sup> August 1906, p19.

<sup>273</sup> Narandera Argus. 1<sup>st</sup> February 1907, p5.

On the 4<sup>th</sup> December 1908, Francis Harold Brook sublet the premises to Archibald John McKenzie, and on the 5<sup>th</sup> April 1909, the license was officially transferred to McKenzie.<sup>274</sup> Frank Brooks shortly afterwards, in partnership with Mr Sullivan from Wagga Wagga, took over the Lockhart hotel.<sup>275</sup>



Grosvenor Francis Joseph Flood passed away in December 1918. Flood was significant in that he built both the original hotels at Grong Grong village – the Royal and the Commercial. He licensed both hotels at various times and conducted other businesses in the town. He was known as a good cricketer and all round sportsman.<sup>276</sup>

**Left:** Grosvenor Francis Joseph Flood, junior. Courtesy annettedavies68 [ancestry.com]

In August 1914 McKenzie sublet part of the hotel land to Lincoln & Co Ltd.<sup>277</sup>

On the 5<sup>th</sup> April 1915, John F Gleeson became the new licensee of the Commercial hotel.<sup>278</sup> Archie McKenzie subsequently licensed the London hotel at Ardlethan. He passed away, at this place, on Xmas Day, 1917, suffering from Bright's Disease.<sup>279</sup> Gleeson retained the license for some five years before selling out to James Kelly of

Young, in May 1919.<sup>280</sup>

Kelly only stayed about a year before the license was transferred to Arthur McGrath on the 20<sup>th</sup> April 1920.<sup>281</sup> McGrath's stay was even shorter and five months later Ernest J Ashwin, of Narrandera, became the newest licensee. McGrath went back to his farm, near Grong Grong.<sup>282</sup>

On the 9<sup>th</sup> August 1921 the Commercial hotel was destroyed by fire. Nothing was saved.<sup>283</sup> The hotel was a weatherboard structure and was owned by Mrs McKenzie. The building and its contents were insured.<sup>284</sup>

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<sup>274</sup> NSW Government Gazette. 1909, p2260.

<sup>275</sup> Albury Banner. 2<sup>nd</sup> July 1909, p31.

<sup>276</sup> Daily Advertiser. 16<sup>th</sup> December 1918, p3.

<sup>277</sup> NSW Land Registry Services. Title deed volume 1733, folio 124.

<sup>278</sup> NSW Government Gazette. 1915, p2832.

<sup>279</sup> Narandera Argus. 4<sup>th</sup> January 1918, p6.

<sup>280</sup> Narandera Argus. 20<sup>th</sup> May 1919, p3.

<sup>281</sup> NSW State Records. Index of Publican's Licenses. 1920-1937.

<sup>282</sup> Daily Advertiser. 14<sup>th</sup> October 1920, p1.

<sup>283</sup> Young Witness. 11<sup>th</sup> August 1921, p4.

<sup>284</sup> Sydney Morning Herald. 13<sup>th</sup> August 1921, p16.

Ashwin secured temporary premises alongside Mrs McKenzie, of Ardlethan, and it was suggested a new brick structure would be erected.<sup>285</sup>

In September 1921 Ashwin's lease still had several months to run and temporary premises had been erected on the site. Ashwin also owned a butcher shop, which he had reportedly just sold to Mr Bellman of Coonamble.<sup>286</sup> Fred Kelly, the licensee of the Royal hotel at Grong Grong purchased the freehold of the Commercial hotel property, in that same month, from the trustees of the McKenzie Estate.

A year and a half after taking over the license, Ashwin transferred it to Daniel Matthew McLeish, on the 11<sup>th</sup> April 1922.<sup>287</sup> McLeish had previously held licenses for the Royal hotel and the Murrumbidgee hotel, both at Narrandera.<sup>288</sup>

The license was cancelled on the 12<sup>th</sup> September 1922,<sup>289</sup> as a consequence of a report from the licensing inspector to the licensing court, charging that the hotel building was not of a standard required by the licensing act. The court heard from McLeish's legal representative, Mr Dangar, that since the destruction of the hotel by fire, the owner had sold the property, and rebuilding a hotel on this site was not an option. McLeish tendered a petition from a number of local residents to support his claim that a second hotel was required in the town, and declared he was prepared to build a new hotel on another site. The court ruled they could not hear the matter at this sitting and Dangar subsequently consented to the license being cancelled.<sup>290</sup>

From that date forward the only hotel at Grong Grong was the Royal Hotel.

### **Grosvenor Francis Joseph Flood**

Grosvenor Francis Joseph Flood was a descendant of Joseph Flood [1763-1808] who arrived in the colony in August 1793, as a convict, on board the vessel, *Boddingtons*. In 1791 Joseph was convicted of stealing a horse and sentenced to seven years penal servitude and subsequently transported to Australia, by the Dublin City Court.<sup>291</sup>

Grosvenor Francis Joseph Flood, senior, was the son of Joseph Flood [1799-1871] and the grandson of the convict, Joseph Flood. Grosvenor senior's uncle was Edward Flood, MLC. The latter was well known in New South Wales both as a successful merchant and as a member of the New South Wales Parliament. Despite their successes these men still bore the *convict stain*.

When Edward Flood passed away an obituary noted, "*His father, Mr Joseph Flood, is also reported to have been a man of strong character.*" There was no mention of how the latter had arrived in the colony. It was though noted that Joseph had been one of those who signed the petition inviting Major Johnstone to arrest Governor Bligh.<sup>292</sup>

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<sup>285</sup> Daily Advertiser. 26<sup>th</sup> August 1921, p1.

<sup>286</sup> Daily Advertiser. 24<sup>th</sup> September 1921, p7.

<sup>287</sup> NSW State Records. Index of Publican's Licenses. 1920-1937.

<sup>288</sup> Albury Banner. 21<sup>st</sup> April 1922, p44.

<sup>289</sup> NSW State Records. Index of Publicans' Licenses 1920-1937. / NSW Government Gazette. 1922, p5208.

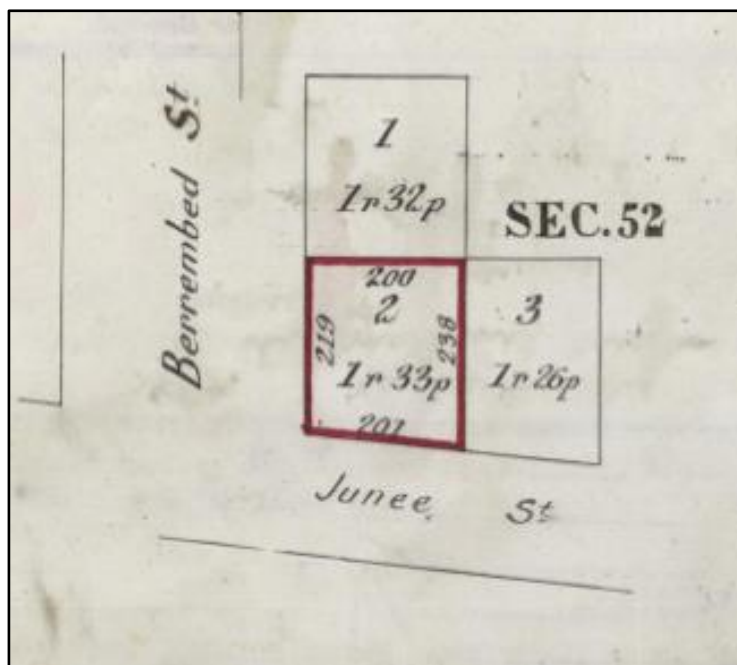
<sup>290</sup> Narandera Argus. 15<sup>th</sup> September 1922, p2.

<sup>291</sup> Australia, Convict Records Index, 1787-1867. [ancestry.com]

<sup>292</sup> Daily Telegraph 11<sup>th</sup> September 1888, p5.

## Freehold

Allotment 2, section 52, was originally purchased by Grosvenor Francis Joseph Flood, publican of Grong Grong, on the 6<sup>th</sup> May 1887, for the sum of thirteen pounds.<sup>293</sup> Allotment 2 had an area of one rood and thirty three perches. The deed was not registered until the 26<sup>th</sup> July 1890.



**Left:** Allotment 2, section 52, as purchased by Grosvenor Francis Joseph Flood in 1887.<sup>294</sup>

Flood transferred the title to George Douglas Young, a gentleman of Narrandera, on the 4<sup>th</sup> October 1890.<sup>295</sup>

On the 18<sup>th</sup> August 1891 Young transferred the property to Mary Ann Flood, the wife of Francis Joseph Flood, with a power of appointment (the right to dispose of, or lease, the property on Young's behalf).<sup>296</sup>

Referred to as Flood's Commercial hotel in June 1892.<sup>297</sup>

On the 6<sup>th</sup> October 1906, Mary Ann Flood transferred the property to Francis Harold Brook, an inn keeper of Grong Grong.<sup>298</sup> Some three years later on the 6<sup>th</sup> August 1909, Brook transferred the property to his wife, Ada Brook.<sup>299</sup> On the 26<sup>th</sup> January 1911, Ada transferred the property to Archibald John McKenzie, a hotel keeper of Grong Grong.<sup>300</sup>

The property was owned by Mrs AJ McKenzie of Waratah Street, Katoomba, from 20<sup>th</sup> April 1920, or earlier,<sup>301</sup> and mortgaged to Lincoln & Co. of Narrandera.

On the 18<sup>th</sup> August 1922, Mary Ann McKenzie, a widow of Jerilderie, and Harry Stanley Lincoln, a company director of Narrandera, became the legal owners of the property, as joint tenants.<sup>302</sup>

<sup>293</sup> NSW Land Registry Services. Title deed volume 981, folio 14.

<sup>294</sup> NSW Land Registry Services. Title deed volume 981, folio 14.

<sup>295</sup> NSW Land Registry Services. Title deed volume 981, folio 14.

<sup>296</sup> NSW Land Registry Services. Title deed volume 981, folio 14.

<sup>297</sup> Wagga Wagga Express. 7<sup>th</sup> June 1892, p2.

<sup>298</sup> NSW Land Registry Services. Title deed volume 1733, folio 124.

<sup>299</sup> NSW Land Registry Services. Title deed volume 1733, folio 124.

<sup>300</sup> NSW Land Registry Services. Title deed volume 1733, folio 124.

<sup>301</sup> NSW State Records. Index of Publican's Licenses. 1920-1937.

<sup>302</sup> NSW Land Registry Services. Title deed volume 3352, folio 238.

In September 1921 it was reported that Frederick John Kelly of the Royal hotel at Grong Grong had purchased the freehold of the old Commercial hotel site, from the trustees of the McKenzie Estate.<sup>303</sup> According to the title deed the transfer took place on the 6<sup>th</sup> September 1922.<sup>304</sup>

On the 14<sup>th</sup> July 1950 Frederick John Kelly transferred the title to Arthur Leonard [Len] Young Powell, commission agent of Grong Grong.<sup>305</sup> At one time Len worked for M Rava & Co., but later carried on as Atkinson & Powell, up until the time he sold out to the Walsh brothers.

In April 1986 Roderick Michael Walsh, Barry Patrick Walsh and Dennis Gregory Walsh, became the new owners as tenants in common,<sup>306</sup> and carried on a business on the property known as Grong Grong Farm Centre.

In 2014, the Walsh's sold the property and the business to a holding company for Ag & Vet. Rod Walsh vacated the premises on Friday 31<sup>st</sup> October, and the new owners opened on Monday the 3<sup>rd</sup> November, 2014.<sup>307</sup> Rod could recall the old well on the property, which was still in existence during his occupation.<sup>308</sup>

Current title (in 2019) was DP.2.52.758477. The prior title was volume 3352, folio 238.



**Above:** A contemporary aerial view of the site with the old hotel site circled in red. Courtesy NSW Land Registry Services. SIX.

<sup>303</sup> Daily Advertiser. 24<sup>th</sup> September 1921, p7.

<sup>304</sup> NSW Land Registry Services. Title deed volume 3352, folio 238.

<sup>305</sup> NSW Land Registry Services. Title deed volume 3352, folio 238.

<sup>306</sup> NSW Land Registry Services. Title deed volume 3352, folio 238.

<sup>307</sup> Rod Walsh. 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2019.

<sup>308</sup> Rod Walsh. 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2019.

## Royal Hotel (1885-2020)

### Location

The Royal hotel is located on allotments 1, section 60, village of Grong Grong, parish of Berrembed, on the southeast corner of the intersection of Balaro and Narrandera Streets.<sup>309</sup>



**Above:** An extract from the 1885 village map of Grong Grong, showing the location of the two hotels. Courtesy NSW Land Registry Services. HLRV. Historic Maps.

### Licenses

George Henry Flood was issued the first license for a hotel in the new village of Grong Grong effective from the 1<sup>st</sup> July 1885.<sup>310</sup> In August of 1885 the only building in town was Flood's Royal hotel – none of the other 43 lots sold had been built on, except Gannon's, which premises had burnt down.<sup>311</sup>

A travelling correspondent visited the town in August 1885 and referred to the erection of a first-class hotel by Mr G Flood, and alluded to a store that Flood also "*contemplated.*"<sup>312</sup>

<sup>309</sup> NSW Land Registry Services. Title deed volume 745, folio 188.

<sup>310</sup> NSW Government Gazette. Publicans' Licenses. 1885, p5409.

<sup>311</sup> Albury Banner. 14<sup>th</sup> August 1885, p12.

<sup>312</sup> Wagga Wagga Advertiser. 27<sup>th</sup> August 1885, p2.

Flood promoted a ball at the hotel in March 1886, but it was described as a failure. The inclement weather was blamed but as a consequence Flood indicated he would convert the ballroom into a store, of which there was none in the town.<sup>313</sup>

The property (the land and the hotel building) were owned by Grosvenor Francis Joseph Flood. George Henry Flood was the cousin of Grosvenor [senior].



In July 1887 there were only two buildings in town – the hotel, and a new store, which was yet to open.<sup>314</sup>

George passed away on the 31<sup>st</sup> January 1893 at Narrandera. He was only forty-seven years old and had lived within a half a mile of his birthplace for all of his life. He was the nephew of the Honourable Edward Flood (a well-known member of parliament) and said to be the first white man born in the Narrandera district. He was survived by eleven children. The eldest, a daughter was twenty-two years old and the youngest was a baby of six months.<sup>315</sup>

On the 24<sup>th</sup> June 1886,<sup>316</sup> the license was renewed in the name of GF Flood, presumed to be Grosvenor Francis Joseph Flood, senior.

**Left:** George Henry Flood, the first licensed publican at Grong Grong village. Courtesy Ancestry.

The license was renewed by Grosvenor Flood, senior, in 1887 and 1888.<sup>317</sup>

In the late 1880's the land legislation was a hot political topic and gold mining at Cowabbie and *Belmore* offered hope to many a miner.<sup>318</sup> Newer discoveries in the 1890's continued to attract miners to the area.<sup>319</sup> These factors all benefited the development of the village.

On the 24<sup>th</sup> June 1889 the hotel license was issued to William Laskie.<sup>320</sup> In March 1890 the newly formed Grong Grong Cricket Club played its first match, against the miners of the *Berembed* and *Cowabbie Reefs*, winning by eight wickets and one run.<sup>321</sup> The teams celebrated at Laskie's hotel.

<sup>313</sup> Albury Banner. 26<sup>th</sup> March 1886, p16.

<sup>314</sup> Albury Banner. 1<sup>st</sup> July 1887, p16.

<sup>315</sup> Wagga Wagga Advertiser. 7<sup>th</sup> February 1893, p3.

<sup>316</sup> NSW Government Gazette. Publicans' Licenses. 1886, p5385.

<sup>317</sup> NSW Government Gazette. Publicans' Licenses. 1887, p5085 & 1888, p5651.

<sup>318</sup> Albury Banner. 29<sup>th</sup> July 1887, p17.

<sup>319</sup> Wagga Wagga Advertiser. 10<sup>th</sup> April 1894, p2. [see other references around this period]

<sup>320</sup> NSW Government Gazette. Publicans' Licenses. 1889, p5573.

<sup>321</sup> Wagga Wagga Advertiser. 25<sup>th</sup> March 1890, p2.

The early development of the town was slow but by the end of March 1891, the town boasted a railway platform and a station house, along with a licensed hotel, a public school, a butcher's shop, a baker's shop, and a Presbyterian church.<sup>322</sup> The growth was driven by the continuous flow of new settlers. Despite this growth there was still no general store in the village in June 1891, with the locals having to travel to Narrandera to purchase basic goods. There were two blacksmith's shops, and a lot of timber was being carted to the railway station from the two large sawmills some thirty miles out from the town.<sup>323</sup>

By April 1892 a new music hall had been erected and it seems this was separate to the hotel. The Laskie's held a social there in that month and one of the most notable memories of the event was the limewash, which had been used to paint the walls of the new room, transferring a white smear onto everything that came into contact with the walls.<sup>324</sup> Major events were still being held in Laskie's hall, in September 1895, when a concert was held in aid of Mrs Spence, whose husband had recently passed away.<sup>325</sup>

William Laskie passed away on the 15<sup>th</sup> March 1895, following a prolonged period of poor health.<sup>326</sup> When the license was renewed on the 24<sup>th</sup> June 1895 it was in the name of Bridget Bertha Laskie.<sup>327</sup> Bridget, better known as Bertha, continued to hold the license up until 1902. Her maiden name was Kelly,<sup>328</sup> and in November 1922 the hotel freehold was held by a Mary Kelly (the wife of Frederick John Kelly).

A description of the Royal hotel in 1897 described it as a timber building. By contrast the Commercial hotel was described as a brick edifice containing fourteen rooms [when the Commercial hotel burnt down in 1921 it was said to be a timber building and it is probable that the Commercial hotel was not a brick building].<sup>329</sup>

When Bertha Laskie advertised the hotel in January 1900 it was under the name of the Royal Mail hotel.<sup>330</sup> This may have been a mistake by the newspaper editor.



**Left:** Mrs Laskie's advertisement in January 1900.

On the 4<sup>th</sup> September 1901 the hotel license was transferred from Bertha Laskie to Henry John Lea, late of Hillston.<sup>331</sup> Less than a year later the license was renewed by Angus McPherson, for the period from the 24<sup>th</sup> June 1902 till the 23<sup>rd</sup> June 1903.<sup>332</sup>

<sup>322</sup> Albury Banner. 3<sup>rd</sup> April 1891, p17.

<sup>323</sup> Albury Banner. 5<sup>th</sup> June 1891, p16.

<sup>324</sup> Wagga Wagga Advertiser. 26<sup>th</sup> April 1892, p2.

<sup>325</sup> Narandera Argus. 24<sup>th</sup> September 1895, p2.

<sup>326</sup> Albury Banner. 29<sup>th</sup> March 1895, p29.

<sup>327</sup> NSW Government Gazette. Publicans' Licenses. 1895, p5521.

<sup>328</sup> Albury Banner. 18<sup>th</sup> September 1896, p16.

<sup>329</sup> Wagga Wagga Advertiser. 23<sup>rd</sup> February 1897, p2.

<sup>330</sup> Narandera Argus. 26<sup>th</sup> January 1900, p1.

<sup>331</sup> Narandera Argus. 6<sup>th</sup> September 1901, p2.

<sup>332</sup> NSW Government Gazette. 1902, p6068.



In September 1902 it was mooted that the remaining butcher shop was about to close down, due to a shortage of fat stock.<sup>333</sup>

Tragedy struck on the 24<sup>th</sup> February 1903 when the Royal Hall and the hotel stables were destroyed by fire. The hall was located less than twenty feet from the eastern end of the hotel and both it and the stables were constructed of colonial pine. The hall had only recently been erected by Mr GW Casburn for the proprietor. It was about forty feet long, twenty feet wide, and featured a stage and a proscenium. It included a splendid floor and an iron roof. The stables were much older. The building was insured, for the sum of £180.<sup>334</sup>

The owner of the hotel, Michael Kennelly [of the Farmer's Home hotel at Matong] shortly afterwards sought tenders for the erection of a new hall, to be 70ft long by 25ft wide.<sup>335</sup> At the same time, Mr Charlie Jones, advertised his bakery, fruit shop and newsagency business for sale, along with the stock and his household furniture and effects.

Fire ravaged the town again in 1904. On Saturday, around 2am, on the 24<sup>th</sup> March the Royal hotel was totally consumed, and then three days later, Grosvenor Flood's store on the opposite side of the road was also lost. In a reversal of the 1903 fire, this time the new hall was not affected.<sup>336</sup> The licensee, McPherson, wasted no time in securing an alternative business, and on the same day, Saturday the 24<sup>th</sup>, he purchased the business of the London hotel at Warri. A report on the subsequent inquest noted that both Kennelly and Flood had been the victims of previous fires, and commented, "*in view of these circumstances it is probable that the matter will not be allowed to rest.*"<sup>337</sup> In June 1904, an architect at Cootamundra, Mr ER Laver, called for tenders to erect a brick hotel at Grong Grong.<sup>338</sup>

Although it was reported that MacPherson had purchased the business of the London hotel at Warri, it seems the deal never went through. He was never listed as a licensee and from the 17<sup>th</sup> March 1905, he was once again the licensee of the Royal hotel.<sup>339</sup> Annie Kennelly was the owner of the freehold at this time.<sup>340</sup> There is clearly a period between the time the old hotel burnt down and the construction of the new hotel during which the license was expired. No references could be found of the hotel being rebuilt but by March 1905 the hotel was again licensed. The date for the issue of the license in 1905, suggests the new hotel was completed in the early months of that year.

MacPherson later held the license for the Railway hotel at Koorawa, and then the Home Hotel at Wagga Wagga.<sup>341</sup>

A report in August 1906 listed James Duncan McLennan as the licensee of the Royal hotel but the official transfer of the license did not take place until 1907, on the 17<sup>th</sup> March.<sup>342</sup> Annie Kennelly signed a new lease for the hotel with McLennan, in March 1911,<sup>343</sup> and McLennan went on to hold the license for the next seven years.<sup>344</sup>

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<sup>333</sup> Albury Banner. 5<sup>th</sup> September 1902, p16.

<sup>334</sup> Narandera Argus. 27<sup>th</sup> February 1903, p3.

<sup>335</sup> Narandera Argus. 6<sup>th</sup> March 1903, p3.

<sup>336</sup> Albury Banner. 8<sup>th</sup> April 1904, p38.

<sup>337</sup> Narandera Argus. 1<sup>st</sup> April 1904, p2.

<sup>338</sup> Wagga Wagga Advertiser. 23<sup>rd</sup> June 1904, p2.

<sup>339</sup> NSW Government Gazette. 1905, p2796.

<sup>340</sup> NSW Land Registry Services. Title deed volume 745, folio 188.

<sup>341</sup> Daily Advertiser. 8<sup>th</sup> December 1914, p2c3.

<sup>342</sup> NSW Government Gazette. 1907, p2343.

<sup>343</sup> NSW Land Registry Services. Title deed volume 745, folio 188.

<sup>344</sup> Albury Banner. 24<sup>th</sup> August 1906, p19.

### James Duncan McLennan

James Duncan McLennan passed away at Bondi on the 19<sup>th</sup> March 1940, aged seventy six. An obituary provided the following details,<sup>345</sup>

“Born at Rutherglen, in Victoria, in 1864, Mr. McLennan had spent his early life in Victoria and the Riverina district. For the last sixteen years he had resided at Marulan, in the Goulburn district, where he was the proprietor of the Terminus Hotel. Up to the time of his death he had been a keen fisherman, and during the past two years had become an enthusiastic golfer. It was whilst enjoying his favorite sport he collapsed and died on the Bondi Golf Links. He was of a charitable disposition, and an ardent supporter of many Catholic charities. Mr. McLennan's remains were conveyed to Goulburn, where Rev. Father J. S. Comenford, assisted by Rev. Fathers D. F. O'Hurley and T. Moore, recited the prayers, the interment taking place at Kenmore Cemetery. The chief mourners were Mrs. Eliza McLennan (wife); Marg (Mrs. Rumble, of Bribbaree); Kate (Mrs. Conrick, of Sydney), and Stella (Mrs. Philpot, of Marulan), daughters. The pall-bearers were his sons-in-law, two grandsons, and two old friends from Marulan.”



**Above:** McLennan's Royal hotel c.1922.

In April 1918, Annie Kennelly leased the premises to Catherine Kelly, a widow of Ganmain.<sup>346</sup> Mrs Kelly purchased the goodwill and the license from McLennan, who, with his family, moved away from the town.<sup>347</sup> Catherine Kelly subsequently renewed the license, effective from the 17<sup>th</sup> March 1919.<sup>348</sup>

<sup>345</sup> Catholic Freeman's Journal. 20<sup>th</sup> June 1940, p36.

<sup>346</sup> NSW Land Registry Services. Title deed volume 745, folio 188.

<sup>347</sup> Narandera Argus. 10<sup>th</sup> May 1918, p2. / 26<sup>th</sup> April 1918, p2.

<sup>348</sup> NSW Government Gazette. 1919, p2381.



**Above:** Another pre 1923 photo of the Royal hotel. The battlemented parapet is yet to be added.

In May 1921, Annie Kennelly leased the premises to Frederick John Kelly, a licensed victualler of Grong Grong, and the son of the previous licensee, Catherine Kelly.<sup>349</sup> John took over the license on the 20<sup>th</sup> June 1921.<sup>350</sup> Catherine was, at one time, the licensee of the old London hotel at Warri.<sup>351</sup> In September 1922, John Kelly was given approval for additions and improvements to the Royal hotel.<sup>352</sup> These changes would have included the battlement parapet.

### **Catherine Kelly**

Catherine Kelly [nee McKinnon] was the wife of Peter Kelly. The couple married at Tumut in 1882.<sup>353</sup> Peter Kelly passed away on the 13<sup>th</sup> June 1917. He was a resident of Ardlethan and well known as the former licensee of the old London Hotel [Warri].<sup>354</sup>

Catherine was the daughter of Mr & Mrs Hugh McKinnon who were early settlers at Brungle where she was born.<sup>355</sup> Catherine's death took place at Cootamundra in August 1983, at the age of eighty-two. Catherine was visiting friends at the time. She was survived by two sons and two daughters.<sup>356</sup>

Catherine's eldest son, Frederick John Kelly, married Mary Kennedy, the daughter of John Kennedy of *Woodlands*, Grong Grong, in 1918.<sup>357</sup> Frederick John Kelly passed away on the 28<sup>th</sup> January 1952, at Gundagai.<sup>358</sup>

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<sup>349</sup> NSW Land Registry Services. Title Deed volume 745, folio 188.

<sup>350</sup> NSW State Records. Index of Publicans' Licenses 1920-1937.

<sup>351</sup> Sydney Morning Herald. 31<sup>st</sup> August 1938, p13.

<sup>352</sup> Narandera Argus. 15<sup>th</sup> September 1922, p2.

<sup>353</sup> NSW BDM's. Marriage registration # 6681.

<sup>354</sup> Albury Banner. 15<sup>th</sup> June 1917, p2.

<sup>355</sup> Tumut & Adelong Times. 30<sup>th</sup> August 1938, p1.

<sup>356</sup> Narandera Argus. 30<sup>th</sup> August 1938, p3.

<sup>357</sup> NSW BDM's. Marriage registration # 8223.

<sup>358</sup> Daily Advertiser. 29<sup>th</sup> January 1952, p2.

Other licensees to follow John Kelly were:<sup>359</sup>

1924, 15<sup>th</sup> May - William Hawkshaw obtained a ten-year lease from Mary Kelly and took over the license of the hotel. Lincoln & Co. Ltd held a mortgage over the property from November 1922.<sup>360</sup>

1924, 28<sup>th</sup> October - Andrew Gillespie Dall.

1925, 14<sup>th</sup> April - George Layton Smith

1926, 14<sup>th</sup> September - Horace Alfred Copley

1926, 14<sup>th</sup> December - James Pittendreigh

1929, 30<sup>th</sup> May - Frederick  
John Kelly

**Left:** The corner entry in  
1924. Courtesy Tooth & Co  
records. Noel Butlin  
Archives.



**Above:** The Royal hotel in 1924. Courtesy Tooth & Co records. Noel Butlin Archives.

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<sup>359</sup> NSW State Records. Index of Publicans' Licenses 1920-1937. / Noel Butlin Archives Centre, Australian National University: Tooth and Company Yellow Cards, AU NBAC N60-YC-1448, Royal hotel, Grong Grong, circa 1920-1970.

<sup>360</sup> NSW Land Registry Services. Title Deed volume 3395, folio 26.



**Above:** Kelly's Royal hotel in the 1930's. Courtesy Tooth & Co records. Noel Butlin Archives.

1937, 28<sup>th</sup> April - Donald Bede Galvin. Six-year lease. Formerly of the Royal hotel at Ganmain.

On the 8<sup>th</sup> May 1937 Mary Kelly gave a lease to Donald Bede Galvin, a publican of Sydney.<sup>361</sup>

1937, 10<sup>th</sup> August - John Harold Logan. Formerly of the Royal hotel at Ganmain.

1938, 27<sup>th</sup> October - John B McTiernan. Formerly of the Empire hotel at West Wyalong.



**Above:** Kelly's Royal hotel in September 1939. Courtesy Tooth & Co records. Noel Butlin Archives.

<sup>361</sup> NSW Land Registry Services. Title Deed volume 3395, folio 26.



**Above:** Another shot of Kelly's Royal hotel.

1939, 6<sup>th</sup> April - George John McDonald

1940, 7<sup>th</sup> November - Harry Reginald Coveny.<sup>362</sup>

1941, 18<sup>th</sup> November: Allan B Fowler. Formerly of the Royal hotel at Harden.

1942, 3<sup>rd</sup> March: William L McConnon.

1943, 11<sup>th</sup> May: Frederick Kelly. Owner and licensee. Fred's wife was the daughter of well-known early settlers at Grong Grong, Mr & Mrs John Kennedy. She passed away in December 1947,<sup>363</sup> and this no doubt influenced Fred's subsequent decision to sell the license.

1947, 14<sup>th</sup> May - Russell Francis Dreverman, of Albury.<sup>364</sup>

On the 14<sup>th</sup> May 1947, Mary Kelly gave a lease to Russell Francis Dreverman, hotel keeper of Grong Grong.<sup>365</sup>

1947, 12<sup>th</sup> November - Darriel George Colling

1949, 28<sup>th</sup> November - Alexander Clive McDonald, a carrier of Grenfell.<sup>366</sup>

1950, 5<sup>th</sup> September - Dulcie Muriel Devine (sister of W Case) and wife of Fred Devine. The hotel at this time was one of the few "*free houses*" in the Riverina and had been owned by the Kelly family for many years.<sup>367</sup>

1951, 24<sup>th</sup> December - Kieran Edwin Stiff, of the Palace hotel, Ardlethan.<sup>368</sup> On the 14<sup>th</sup> January 1952, the four Rourke partners, who now owned the freehold leased the property to Kiernan Edward Stiff.<sup>369</sup>

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<sup>362</sup> Narandera Argus. 8<sup>th</sup> November 1940, p2.

<sup>363</sup> Daily Advertiser. 9<sup>th</sup> December 1947, p2.

<sup>364</sup> Daily Advertiser. 11<sup>th</sup> June 1947, p5.

<sup>365</sup> NSW Land Registry Services. Title Deed volume 3395, folio 26.

<sup>366</sup> Daily Advertiser. 2<sup>nd</sup> December 1949, p5. /Narandera Argus. 29<sup>th</sup> November 1949, p2.

<sup>367</sup> Narandera Argus. 29<sup>th</sup> August 1950, p1.

<sup>368</sup> Narandera Argus. 24<sup>th</sup> December 1951, p2.

<sup>369</sup> NSW Land Registry Services. Title Deed volume 6275, folio 222.



Above: The Royal hotel in 1949. Courtesy Tooth & Co records. Noel Butlin Archives.

1956, 2<sup>nd</sup> July - Harold Gibbons. On this date Keiran Edward Stiff leased the premises to Harold Gibbons, hotel keeper of Ganmain.<sup>370</sup>

1958, 1<sup>st</sup> May - William Joseph Considine

On the 14<sup>th</sup> September 1959 Stiff leased the hotel to William Joseph Considine, a licensed publican of Grong Grong and his wife, Bertha.<sup>371</sup>

1962, 2<sup>nd</sup> April - Robert Norman McKechnie. 1<sup>st</sup> License.

1963, 7<sup>th</sup> May - Kieran Edwin Stiff. Owner in possession from 9<sup>th</sup> April 1963.

1964, 11<sup>th</sup> December - Raymond Leslie Gaul

On the 23<sup>rd</sup> December 1964 Stiff leased the hotel to Raymond Leslie Gaul, hotel keeper of Grong Grong.<sup>372</sup>

1966, 5<sup>th</sup> July - David James Collins. 1<sup>st</sup> license

On the 3<sup>rd</sup> October 1967 Stiff leased the hotel to David James Collins, hotel keeper of Grong Grong, and his wife, Sarah May Collins.<sup>373</sup>

1967, 6<sup>th</sup> November - Bernhard Viemeier. 1<sup>st</sup> license

1969, 30<sup>th</sup> June - William John Ford. 1<sup>st</sup> license.

1970, 30<sup>th</sup> October - Raymond Silas Turner. 1<sup>st</sup> license. Also purchased freehold.

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<sup>370</sup> NSW Land Registry Services. Title Deed volume 7227, folio 59.

<sup>371</sup> NSW Land Registry Services. Title Deed volume 7227, folio 59.

<sup>372</sup> NSW Land Registry Services. Title Deed volume 7227, folio 59.

<sup>373</sup> NSW Land Registry Services. Title Deed volume 7227, folio 59.



**Above:** The Royal hotel in 1961. Courtesy Tooth & Co records. Noel Butlin Archives.



**Above:** The Royal hotel in 1976. Courtesy CSU Regional Archives [RW16-160]



On the 8<sup>th</sup> May 1971 Stiff leased the hotel to Raymond Silas Turner, hotel keeper of Grong Grong, and his wife, Joan Dawn Turner.<sup>374</sup>

1974, 6<sup>th</sup> May - Roy Albert Southgate

1976, 6<sup>th</sup> December - Albert Eric Hornby

In February 1977 the owner, Allan Roy Southgate, leased the premises to Albert Eric Hornby, a licensed publican of Grong Grong, and his wife, Judith Mary Hornby.<sup>375</sup>

1978, 8<sup>th</sup> February - William Eric Mannell.<sup>376</sup>

In 1981, Russell Lyell Milne, purchased the lease and the license from Bill Mannell.<sup>377</sup> Russell retained the license up until 1985 when he sold out to Rick James.

The Royal hotel at Grong Grong was Russel Milne's first hotel. Russell was a well-known footballer, playing VFL in Melbourne before taking advantage of better money in the bush. He moved to Berrigan, supposedly for a short spell, and ended up staying for some twenty years. Russell met his wife at Berrigan and their family was raised at Berrigan. While they were at Berrigan the family conducted a milk bar for some ten years.

After leaving Grong Grong, Russell purchased the freehold and the license for the Walla Walla hotel, before finally moving on to his last pub, the Royal hotel at Ganmain, in 1993. In 1998 or 1999 Russell sold the license to a Sydney based firm [Manly Wharf Hotel group] during the Sydney Olympics period, along with the gaming rights.<sup>378</sup> Russell and his wife kept the freehold of the old Royal hotel at Ganmain, which was retained and occupied by the family up until 2017.



**Above:** The old Walla Walla hotel as it was in the 1920's and 1930's. Courtesy Tooth & Co. records. Noel Butlin Archives.<sup>379</sup>

<sup>374</sup> NSW Land Registry Services. Title Deed volume 7227, folio 59.

<sup>375</sup> NSW Land Registry Services. Title Deed volume 7227, folio 59.

<sup>376</sup> NBAC: Tooth and Co., AU NBAC N60-YC-1448, Royal hotel, Grong Grong, circa 1920-1970.

<sup>377</sup> Danny Milne. 22<sup>nd</sup> August 2019.

<sup>378</sup> Ted Obudzinski. 19<sup>th</sup> July 2019.

<sup>379</sup> NBAC: Tooth and Co., AU NBAC N60-YC-2599, Walla Walla hotel, Walla Walla, circa 1920-1930.

It was during these years, at the three hotels, that Russel's son, Danny Milne, learnt the trade. In 2019 Danny was the passionate licensee of the Coolamon hotel at Coolamon.

Russell passed away on the 6<sup>th</sup> August 2017, in Calvary Hospital, Wagga Wagga, approaching the age of seventy eight years.<sup>380</sup>



**Above:** The Royal hotel at Ganmain, one of three hotels licensed by Russell Milne. Courtesy Tooth & Co. records. Noel Butlin Archives.<sup>381</sup>

1985, 22<sup>nd</sup> November - Richard [Rick] John James took over the lease and the license from Russell Milne.



1992, 7<sup>th</sup> October – Tadeusz [Ted] Obudzinski was now the licensee. Ted held the licensee continuously up to and including the year 2019.

**Left:** A sign in the Royal hotel at Grong Grong, in 2019.

<sup>380</sup> Daily Advertiser. 9<sup>th</sup> August 2017.

<sup>381</sup> NBAC: Tooth and Co., AU NBAC N60-YC-1345, Royal hotel, Ganmain, circa 1960.



Above: The Royal hotel in February 2008.



Above: The Royal hotel in 2009.

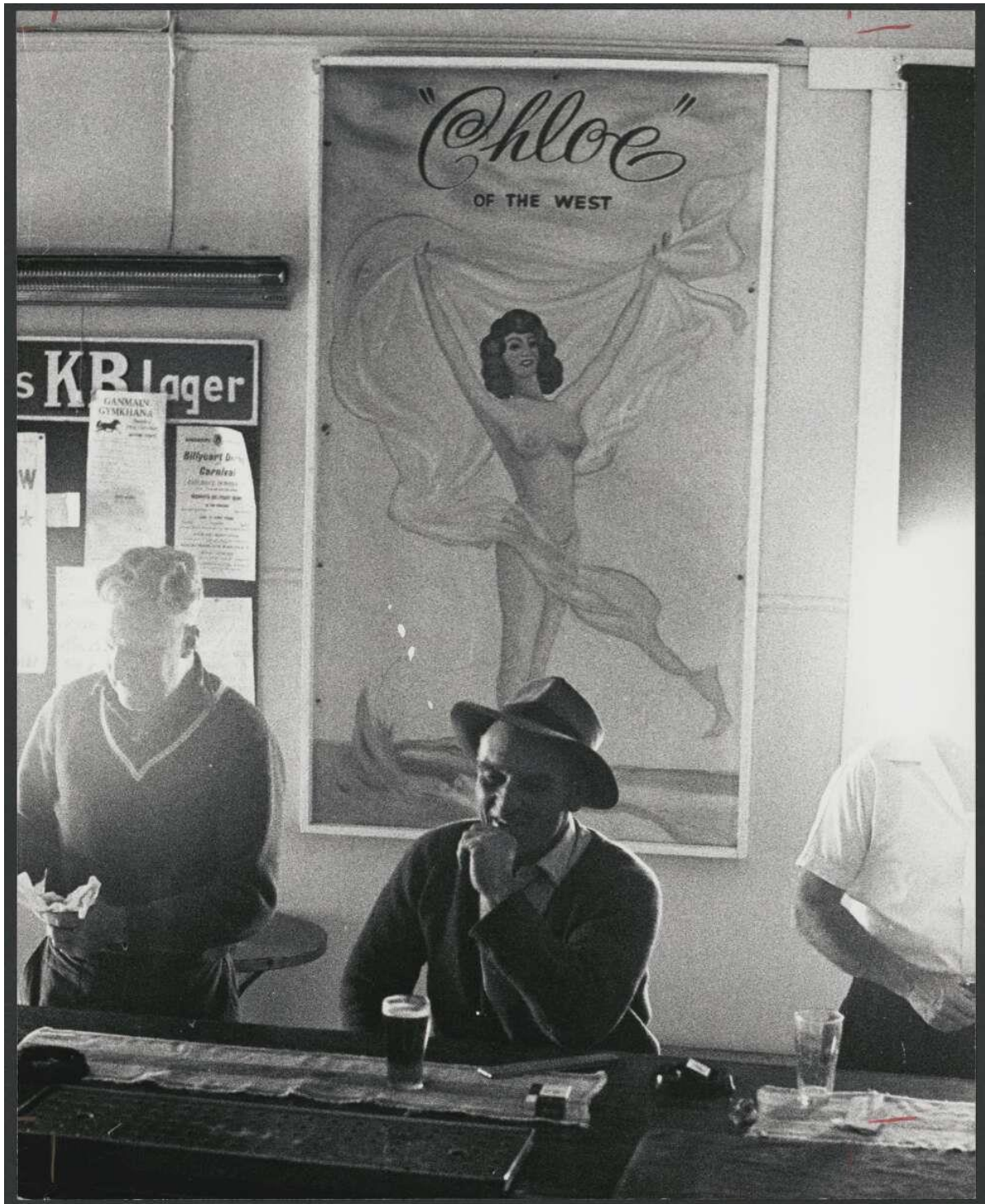


Left: Welcome to Grong Grong sign.



**Above:** The famous "Chloe of the West" graphic in 2019.

During Rick James time at the pub he had a local lass, Kate Jones [nee Croll], who was a teacher at the local Matong school, restore the picture – it having suffered some deterioration with time.



**Above:** Chloe from the West in 1972. The man wearing the hat is Les Wall. Les was the assistant stationmaster at Grong Grong for many years. Courtesy National Library of Australia. [ID 4361369]<sup>382</sup>

The Chloe of the West poster was procured from a travelling salesman, by Don Robinson, a local teacher [at Grong Grong], who was a regular at the hotel. It is believed Don donated the poster to the hotel in the early 1970's.<sup>383</sup>

<sup>382</sup> NLA. PIC P805 LOC Q28 MS Boxes 1-10-Bruce Howard collection [picture]/Australian pubs collection, 1971-1973 [picture].

<sup>383</sup> Ken Limbrick. 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2019.



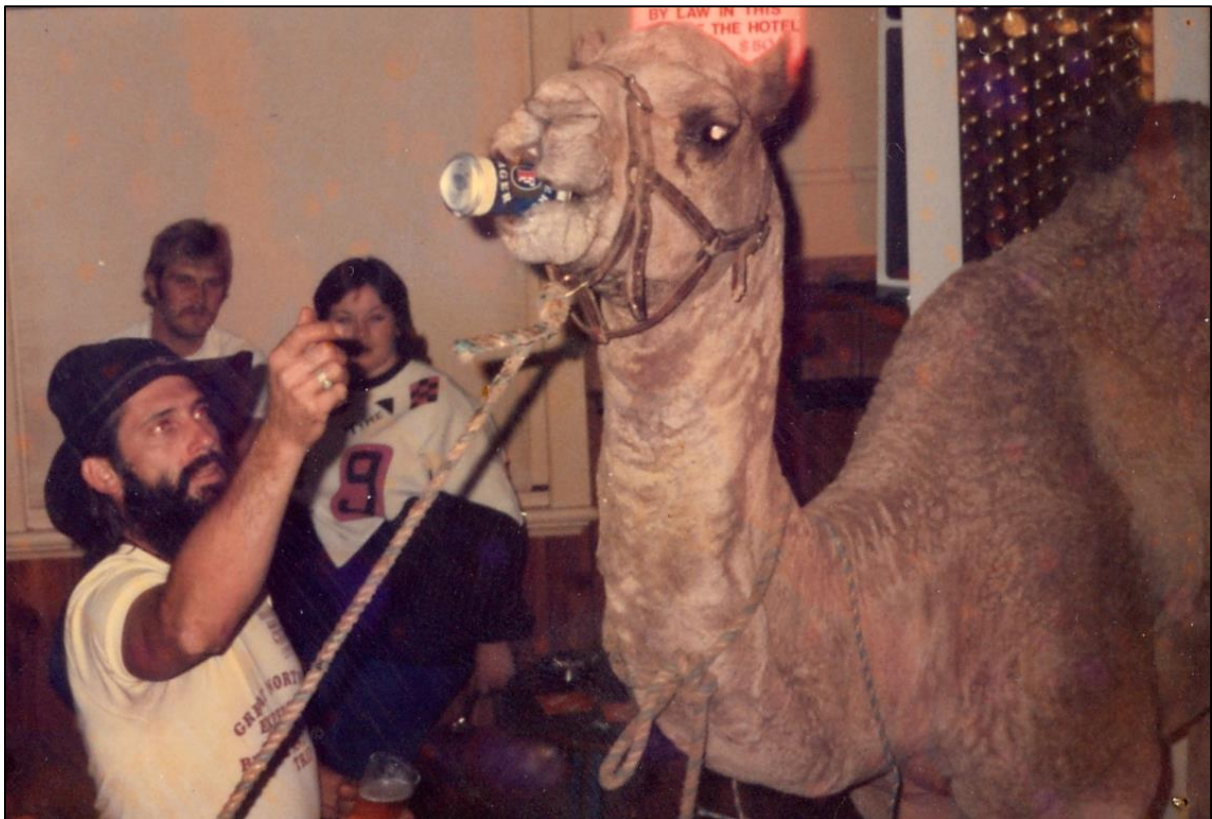
**Above & Below:** The bar before it was altered in 1986. Courtesy Rick James.



In 1986 Rick James moved the bar back over one and a half metres, to eliminate excess space behind the bar, and to provide more room for drinkers. At the same time, he installed a glass washing machine and a second set of taps at the southern end of the bar.



**Above:** Mick James giving Abdul a drink. Courtesy Rick James.



**Above:** Abdul, downing a can of Fosters. Courtesy Rick James.

## Stories

**Decorum.** In the old days the pub had no dress rules and dogs were common in the bar area, peeing on the furniture and even the leg of the occasional unlucky drinker. Rick James raised the standard of the pub. He encouraged men to wear a singlet or shirt and dogs were banned.

**Mick James and Abdul.** Mick James was an entertainer who sang and wrote songs. When Mick decided to support Kids with Cancer, he chose to re-enact the journey of Burke and Wills as a way of raising funds. Mick's entourage on the journey included Abdul, his camel. After completing the trek Mick was booked to perform at the Matong pub and the Grong Grong pub, and the photos of Abdul in the Royal hotel were taken at the time of his performance.

**SPECIAL**  
**Fat Stock Sale**  
—  
In the **Grong Grong** Yards  
—  
**FRIDAY, 29th SEPTEMBER**  
Commencing at 10 a m.  
—  
**200 FAT CATTLE 200**  
**2000 FAT LAMBS AND SHEEP**  
**ALREADY LISTED**  
Immediate particulars of Additional Entries (approximate numbers only) are requested. Any received after the 23rd September may have to be refused for this Special  
Arrangements are being made to yard all stock on Thursday night to allow buyers to attend the Narandera Sale.  
Selling at **Grong Grong** will commence on the Cattle at 10 o'clock; Narandera advertised for 12 noon on the same day  
**J. KENNEDY & CO. PTY. LTD.**  
Licensed Auctioneers, **Grong Grong**

**Wild Bullock.** A popular yarn centred around the days when cattle sales were held next to the pub. A bullock supposedly escaped and was pursued on horse and in attempting to escape the beast ran through the bar. The sale yards next to pub were a boon for business, with as much business transacted in the pub as in the yards. Dudley Butler [Kennedy & Co] was the last agent to sell sheep at the yards. After Dudley left the only stock sold was pigs. All sales ceased in the 1980's.

**Left:** A 1944 notice for sale of stock at the Grong Grong Yards.

**The Snake.** Mick Batchelor's dad could recall the time when Reggie Wiles played a practical joke on the locals. Reggie was a rodeo rider but was doing some fencing at the time. While out in the paddocks he came across a large brown snake, which he captured and then sewed up its mouth. He put it in a bag and when he entered the pub he let it loose. There was pandemonium for a while as the snake slithered around the floor of the bar. This incident took place when Rick James was licensee. Rick recounted how in those days the empty kegs were stacked up near where the dart board is now. Men were climbing up on the empty kegs or anything else that got them up high. One patron broke three bar stools trying to kill the snake.





**Above:** Mick Bachelor on "Todd," in the main bar area. Courtesy Rick James.



**Above:** The Grong Grong premierships darts team, 1988. Courtesy Rick James.

## Mick Batchelor

Mick Batchelor rode a horse into the Royal Hotel on at least three occasions. The first was as a teenager. Local flooding saw the town almost deserted and as Mick rode towards the pub, on his horse "*Beau*" he just decided to ride through the front door into the bar, which he did. No doubt the licensee was surprised when Mick ordered a beer, his first ever in the pub. The publican at the time was Albert Eric Hornby and he had the pleasure of cleaning up the horse shit deposited in the bar.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> occasion was several years later, when William [Bill] Eric Mannell was the licensee. Mick and his mate Bevan Deamer, who were both rodeo riders, were in town during a fundraising event, which had attracted a lot of locals. The two young men decided it would be fun to ride their horses into the bar, so on this occasion there were two horses in the bar.

The third time was during Rick James' occupancy. Mick was on his way back home from a polocrosse practice when he stopped at the pub and decided to ride his horse "*Todd*" into the bar, and on this occasion the event was captured on camera.

Rick James was worried that the horse was going to bolt for the window and was relieved when Mick rode the horse outside.

## Famous Patrons



The Royal hotel has always attracted people interested in "*the outback.*" Visitors over the years have included Spike Milligan and Bill Kerr. Winifred Atwell visited in the 1950's, and in the 1980's it was Lee Marvin who ventured into the pub.

**Left:** Spike Milligan having a beer at the | Royal hotel, Grong Grong.

## Popular Events

The pub was the heart and soul of the local community. The fishing club, the football club, two darts teams, the pool teams, the cricket team, along with the tennis and golf clubs, all had connections with the hotel.

The gymkhanas and race meetings were held adjacent to the Royal hotel and were very popular local events.

Other popular events were the yabby races and the damper cooking competitions.

The annual Vietnam Veterans' Wheelbarrow Push from Wagga Wagga to Grong Grong was another popular community event supported by the pub.

In addition to the local buyers, others flew in from Sydney and Melbourne, to attend the monthly stock sales [sheep and cattle] in the yards adjoining the Royal hotel, and the pub benefited from these events.

# GRONG GRONG WAR MEMORIAL SPORTS & GYMKHANA

Over £100 in Trophies to be Won

Commencing at 12.30 p.m. sharp

ON SATURDAY, MARCH 23, 1957

|   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| <p><b>J. PETROVICH</b><br/>Grong Grong<br/>for<br/><b>Fresh Fruit and Vegetables</b><br/>(Locally grown)</p> <p><b>D. A. BOCK</b><br/>Grong Grong<br/>for<br/><b>All Tractor and Car Repairs</b></p> <p><b>S. T. WATTERS'</b><br/><b>SHIRLIE CAFE</b><br/>Junee Street, Grong Grong<br/>for<br/><b>Cool Drinks, Fresh Fruit<br/>and Vegetables of all kinds</b></p> <p><b>GEORGE ORGAN</b><br/><b>AI BUTCHERY</b><br/>GRONG GRONG<br/>for Highest Quality and<br/>Reliable Service<br/>Telephones 47 and 30 (House)</p> <p><b>W. H. TOLSHER</b><br/>GRONG GRONG<br/>For High Quality<br/><b>Bread, Fruit and Vegetables<br/>Newspapers, Confectionery</b><br/>Telephone — Grong Grong 9</p> <p><b>H. W. H. CUTHBERT</b><br/><b>GENERAL STORE</b><br/>Grong Grong<br/>Telephone 2<br/>Service and Civility Always</p> <p><b>RAY COX</b><br/>THE GRONG GRONG<br/><b>BLACKSMITH</b><br/>Horses Expertly Shod</p> <p><b>RELIANCE GARAGE</b><br/>GRONG GRONG<br/>(CHOY BROS. : Proprietors)<br/>Motor &amp; General Engineers<br/>See us for Reliable Service<br/>Telephone : Grong Grong 21</p> | <p><b>PROGRAMME OF EVENTS</b></p> <p>All Races with Six or More Starters, a Trophy valued at £1 will be given for Third</p> <p>1. At 12.30 p.m. — <b>DIGGERS' NOVELTY PONY RACE</b>, Four Furlongs. Trophies valued at £4 for First and £1/10/- for Second. Entry 2/6.</p> <p>2. At 1 p.m. — <b>HACK RACE</b>, Four Furlongs. Trophies valued at £1 for First and £1/10/- for Second. Entry 2/6.</p> <p>3. At 1.30 p.m. <b>CLUBROOM HACK RACE</b>, Five Furlongs. Trophies valued at £5 for First and £2 for Second. Entry 3/.</p> <p>4. At 2 p.m. — <b>OPEN HUNT</b>, 3ft. Hurdles. Trophies valued at £4 for First and £1/10/- for Second. Entry 2/6.</p> <p>5. At 2.30 p.m. — <b>OPEN HUNT</b>, with various obstacles. First a Show Bridle, Second a Trophy valued at £3. Third £1. Entry 3/.</p> <p>6. At 2.40 p.m. — <b>THROWING AT THE WICKET</b>. First £1. Entry Fee 1/.</p> <p>7. <b>STEPPING THE DISTANCE</b>. First £1. Entry Fee 1/.</p> <p>8. At 2.45 p.m. — <b>LADIES' FLUTTER</b>, Three Furlongs. Trophies valued at £3 for First and £1 for Second. Three starters or no race. Catch Weights. Entry 2/6.</p> <p>9. At 3.15 p.m. — <b>LADIES' HUNT</b>, 3ft. Hurdles. Trophies valued at £3 for First and £1 for Second. Three starters or no race. Entry Fee 2/6.</p> <p>10. <b>BEST BOY RIDER</b>, under 15 years. Trophies valued at £1/10/- for First, 15/- Second, and 10/- Third. Entry Free.</p> <p>11. <b>BEST LADY OR GIRL RIDER</b>. Trophies valued at £1/10/- for First, 15/- Second, 10/- Third. Entry Free.</p> <p>12. <b>BEST BOY RIDER</b>, under 15 years (Junior Division). Trophies valued at £1/10/- for First, 15/- Second, 10/- Third. Entry Free.</p> <p>13. <b>BEST GIRL RIDER</b> (Junior Division). Trophies valued at £1/10/- for First, 15/- Second, 10/- Third. Entry Free.</p> <p>14. <b>BEST SCHOOL PONY</b>, ridden by Boy or Girl under 14 years. Trophies valued at £1/10/- First, 15/- Second, 10/- Third. Entry Free.</p> <p>15. <b>LADIES' NAIL DRIVING</b>. First £1. Entry 6d.</p> <p>16. <b>PUTTING COMPETITION</b>. First £1. Entry 6d.</p> <p>17. At 3 p.m. — <b>MEN'S HANDICAP</b>, 100 Yards. First £5, Second £1/10/-. Entry 2/.</p> <p>18. At 3.30 p.m. — <b>GRONG GRONG CUP</b>, Six Furlongs. Trophy valued at £20 for First; Trophies valued at £4 for Second and £1/10/- for Third. Entry 7/6.</p> <p>19. <b>SCHOOL PONY RACE</b> (Ponies to be limited for 13.2 hands), 1 1/4 furlongs. All riders must be under the age of 16 years. Trophies valued at £1/10/- for First, 15/- Second, 10/- Third. Entry Fee 2/6.</p> <p>20. At 3.45 p.m. — <b>FLAG RACE</b>, First £1/10/-, Second 10/-. Entry Fee 1/.</p> <p>21. At 4.15 p.m. — <b>SUPPER ROOM CONSOLATION RACE</b>, of Four Furlongs. Trophies valued at £4 for First, £2 Second and £1 Third. Entry 2/6.</p> <p>22. At 4.45 p.m. — <b>MELOON RACE</b> (Bareback). First £1/10/-, Second 10/-. Entry 1/.</p> <p>23. At 5 p.m. — <b>FLAG RACE</b> on Motor Cycles. First 30/-, Second 10/-. Entry 1/.</p> <p><b>A RIDING WHIP FOR THE MOST SUCCESSFUL RIDER OF THE DAY</b><br/>(Donated by Mr. A. W. Pether)</p> <p><b>HORSE RACES</b><br/><b>THREE STARTERS OR NO RACE</b><br/>Minimum Weight to be 10 stone<br/>Winners to carry Penalty of 7lb.</p> <p>The complete control of the programme will be in the hands of the Committee, who reserve the right to alter or cancel any event.</p> <p>All Competitors compete at their own risk, and must sign form at the Secretary's Table.</p> <p><b>ENTRIES for the HORSE EVENTS must be in the hands of the Hon. Secretary at least 15 MINUTES BEFORE EACH RACE.</b></p> <p><b>A CUP will be awarded for the Best ALL ROUND HORSE placed in at least two classes of events</b></p> <p>POINTS allotted for:<br/>(a) Flat Racing<br/>(b) Hunting<br/>(c) Novelty Events<br/>(d) Children's Events</p> <p><b>PALOMINOS!</b> — Would you like to own one of these Beautiful Horses? Then see R. M. CURRY, Grong Grong. Some Quiet Ponies also for Sale</p> | <p><b>ATKINSON &amp; POWELL</b><br/>General Commission Agents<br/>Authorised Sunshine Farm<br/>Machinery Agents<br/>Grong Grong and Narrandera<br/>Telephone — Grong Grong 12</p> <p><b>LES GRIFFITHS</b><br/>Shearing Contractor<br/>Grong Grong<br/>Telephone : Grong Grong 37</p> <p><b>ROYAL HOTEL</b><br/>Grong Grong<br/>(H. GIBBONS — Proprietor)<br/>Excellent Bar Service<br/>Richmond Beer on Tap<br/>Travellers catered for<br/>• First-Class Accommodation<br/>Telephone — Grong Grong 7</p> <p><b>THE PREMIER GARAGE</b><br/>(L. H. Evans, Proprietor)<br/>Motor and General Engineers<br/>GRONG GRONG<br/>Authorised Massey Harris Service<br/>Courtesy and attention at all times<br/>Telephone — Grong Grong 72</p> <p><b>C. A. LIMBRICK</b><br/>General Carrier and Live<br/>Stock Transport<br/>Grong Grong<br/>Telephone 41 (Day or Night)</p> <p><b>PALOMINOS</b><br/>Would you like to own one of these Beautiful Horses? Then see<br/><b>R. M. CURRY</b><br/>Grong Grong<br/>Some Quiet Ponies also for Sale</p> <p><b>J. KENNEDY &amp; CO.</b><br/>Fat and Store Stock Salesmen and General Agents<br/>Yard Sales at Grong Grong on Second Tuesday in Each Month<br/>Phones:<br/>23 (Day) — 10 or 58 (Night)</p> <p>For Reliable<br/><b>CARRYING SERVICE</b><br/>Contact<br/><b>R. E. GRIFFITHS</b><br/>GRONG GRONG. Phone 54<br/>CONCRETE POSTS SUPPLIED in any quantity<br/>Agents for NEPTUNE Products</p> |
|---|---|--|

Cool Drinks, Novelty and Produce Stalls. MERRY-GO-ROUND. Admission to the Ground, 3/-  
LUNCHEON AND AFTERNOON TEA will be provided at a Nominal Charge. Pablican's Booth on the Ground  
**GRAND DANCE, in Commemoration Hall, at Night.** Good Floor and Music  
R. CURRY, President, L. POWELL, Hon. Secretary D. BUTLER, Assistant Hon. Secretary

THE MATONG GYMKHANA AND SPORTS WILL BE HELD ON SATURDAY AFTERNOON, 30th MARCH, 1957 "Argus" Print, Narrandera

Above: A flyer for one of the regular and popular Sports and Gymkhana events. Courtesy Ken Limbrick.

## Fishing

Grong Grong was a very popular spot with fishermen from all around the state. Long weekends were especially popular. Groups would camp on both the Murrumbidgee River and the Bundidgerry Creek, and these visitors made an important contribution to the economy of the town.

A number of specific groups made regular trips to the town and established strong bonds with the hotel and the town. One such group was from Braidwood.

It was Rick James who established the Grong Grong Fishing Club at the hotel, which was very popular with the locals.



**Above:**  
Members of the  
Grong Grong  
Fishing Club.  
Courtesy Rick  
James.

**Left:** The ladies  
also joined in  
the events  
organised by the  
Grong Grong  
Fishing Club.  
Courtesy Rick  
James.





**Above:** The group from Braidwood, who were regular visitors to the town and the hotel. Courtesy Rick James.



**Left:** Keith Osmond from Braidwood with a good feed of lobsters. Courtesy Rick James.

In addition to the Fishing Club, the hotel fostered a number of other groups. There were three darts teams, a cricket club, two pool teams [one men's and one women's], and of course the hotel supported the local Ganmain Grong Grong Matong Football Club.



**Left:** One of Rick James' best catches.



**Above:** Rick James with one of the many Murray Cod he caught. Courtesy Rick James.



**Above:** A successful outing for the Grong Grong Fishing Club. Courtesy Rick James.



**Above:** Some younger members of the hotel Fishing Club. Back Row [L to R]: Rick O'Reilly, Peter Walsh, Craig Bryon, Steven Kerr. Front: Mark Russell. Courtesy Rick James.



**Above:** A good days lobstering by the fishing club. Courtesy Rick James

The Royal Hotel Grong Grong Family Fishing Club was established in 1986 and is still active today [December 2019]. An ongoing project of the club has been to restock the Murrumbidgee River and the Bundidgerry Creek with Murray Cod and Golden Perch fingerlings. Club members have collected, cut, and sold, firewood to raise funds for this purpose. The fingerlings were obtained from Bruce Malcolm at the Uarah Fisheries hatchery.



**Above:** The mural painted on the wall in the beer garden area. A swaggie on the riverbank.

It was Rick James who created the beer garden out back, where the mural now features.

The mural was painted by Kate Jones [Croll], a teacher at the Matong Public School, with the help of her students. Kate approached Rick James with the idea of bringing the kids down to the hotel to paint a mural, which Rick agreed to. It took a few weeks to complete but Kate and her students created a wonderful image that captures the spirit of the hotel and the town.



## The Snake Gully Cup

On the 27<sup>th</sup> November 1985 a syndicate formed by Russell Milne celebrated when their horse, Glory Rose, won the first ever Snake Gully Cup. The trainer was Dave Heywood, who went on to train two more Snake Cup winners – Green Ridge and Irish Landy. This was the day that Rick James took over the pub from Russell.

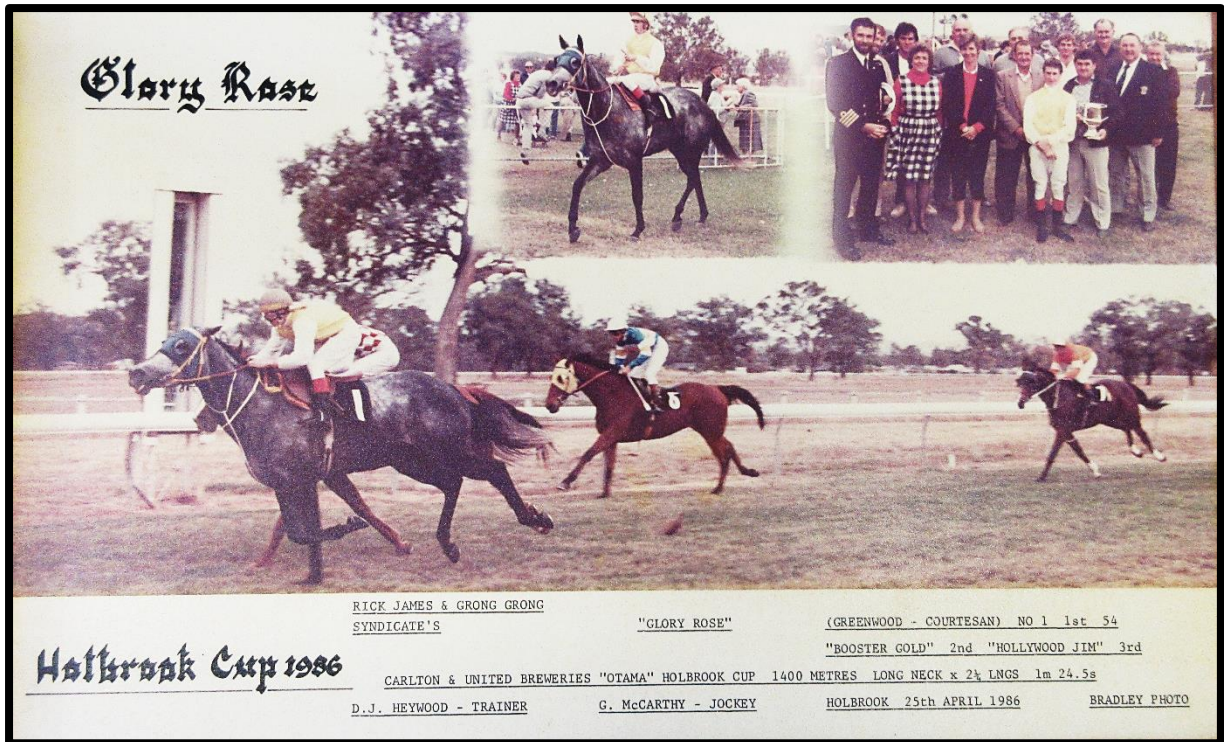
The syndicate members were,

1. Rick James
2. Steve Kerr
3. Malcolm Limbrick
4. Ian Lucas
5. Russ Milne
6. Dick Reid
7. Johnno Russell
8. Mark Russell
9. Merv Russell
10. Marie Smith
11. Keith Stratton
12. Bill Walsh
13. Rod Walsh

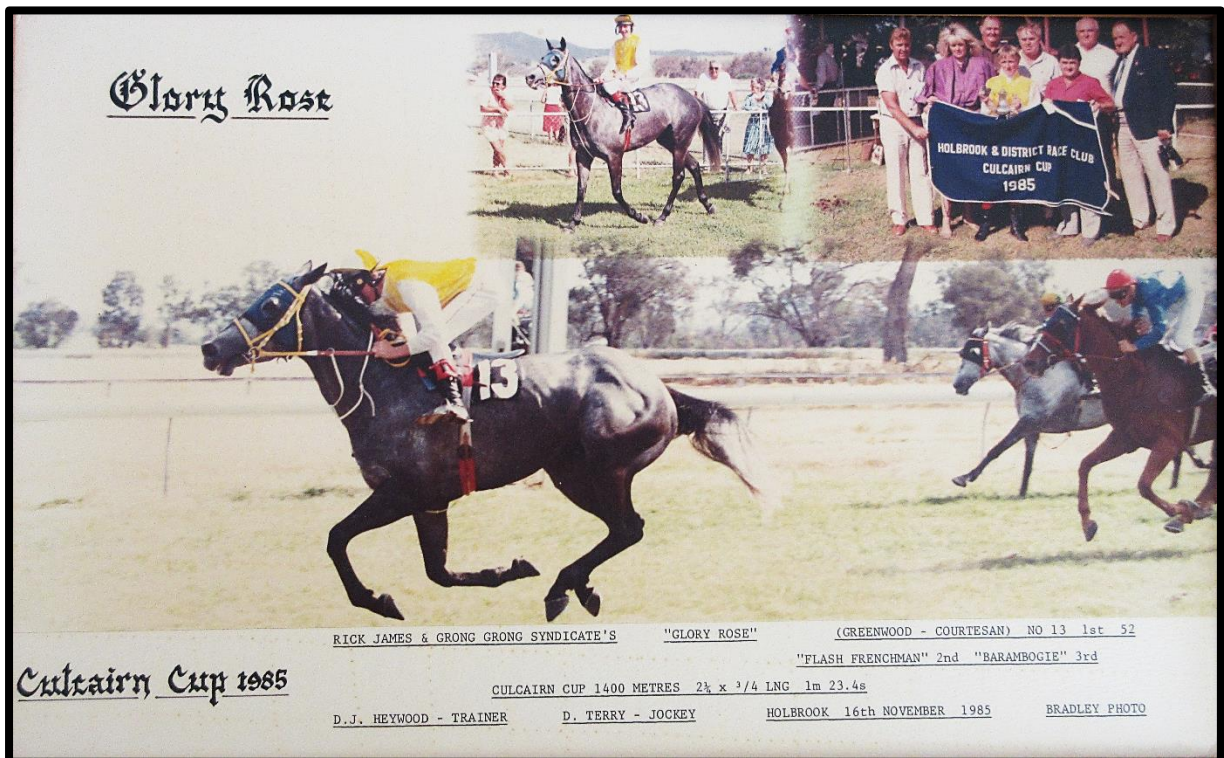
Glory Rose had thirty-two starts for twenty four places and twelve wins. Wins include the Culcairn and Holbrook Cups, and the Grain Harvesters Cup [Griffith]. Glory Rose won at Wagga Wagga, Gundagai, Narrandera, Leeton, Griffith, Holbrook, et al.



**Above:** Glory Rose winner of the Snake Gully Cup. 27<sup>th</sup> November 1985. Trainer: DJ Heywood, Jockey: M Watt. Courtesy Rick James.



**Above:** Glory Rose winner of the Holbrook Cup. 25<sup>th</sup> April 1986. Trainer: DJ Heywood, Jockey: G McCarthy. Courtesy Rick James.



**Above:** Glory Rose winner of the Culcairn Cup. 16<sup>th</sup> November 1985. Trainer: DJ Heywood, Jockey: D Terry. Courtesy Rick James.

## Freehold

Allotments 1, section 60, was originally purchased by Francis Joseph Flood on the 31<sup>st</sup> December 1884, for the sum of thirty one pounds. The land consisted of an area of one rood and thirty-seven perches.<sup>384</sup>



**Left:** Allotment 1, section 60, as purchased by Francis Joseph Flood in 1884, on the south east corner of the intersection of Balaro and Narrandera Streets.<sup>385</sup>

On the 13<sup>th</sup> August 1885 the property was transferred from Flood to John Sweeting, sawmill proprietor of Narrandera.<sup>386</sup>

Some three years later, on the 17<sup>th</sup> September 1888, Sweeting transferred the title to James Thomas, the elder, an inn keeper of Narrandera.<sup>387</sup>

On the 18<sup>th</sup> January 1889 Thomas, leased the premises to William Jones and Thomas Filmore

Lincoln, brewers of Narrandera.<sup>388</sup>

In January 1896, Frank Grey Taber, gentleman of Merrylands, and William Newman, farmer of that same place, became the legal owners of the property.<sup>389</sup> These two gentlemen promptly resold to Annie Kennelly, the wife of Michael Kennelly of Narrandera, in the same month.<sup>390</sup>

Owned by Anne Kennelly of Young on 1<sup>st</sup> January 1920.<sup>391</sup> (Wife of Michael Kennelly of Matong]

In November 1922, Annie Kennelly transferred the property to Mary Kelly,<sup>392</sup> the wife of Frederick John Kelly.<sup>393</sup>

Owned by Mrs Mary Kelly of Grong Grong from the 19<sup>th</sup> October 1925.<sup>394</sup> Still in 1930's.

1939, - Described as a single-story building with eleven bedrooms. Served with electric light, but no septic tank.

1943, 11<sup>th</sup> May – Owned by Frederick Kelly

1943 - Owned by Mrs Mary Kelly of 773 Canterbury Road, Belmore.

In the 1940's the beer was drawn from the cellars.

<sup>384</sup> NSW Land Registry Services. Title Deed volume 745, folio 188.

<sup>385</sup> NSW Land Registry Services. Title Deed volume 745, folio 188.

<sup>386</sup> NSW Land Registry Services. Title Deed volume 745, folio 188.

<sup>387</sup> NSW Land Registry Services. Title Deed volume 745, folio 188.

<sup>388</sup> NSW Land Registry Services. Title deed volume 745, folio 188.

<sup>389</sup> NSW Land Registry Services. Title Deed volume 745, folio 188.

<sup>390</sup> NSW Land Registry Services. Title Deed volume 745, folio 188.

<sup>391</sup> NSW State Records. Index of Publican's Licenses. 1920-1937.

<sup>392</sup> NSW Land Registry Services. Title Deed volume 745, folio 188.

<sup>393</sup> NSW Land Registry Services. Title Deed volume 3395, folio 26.

<sup>394</sup> NSW State Records. Index of Publican's Licenses. 1920-1937.



**Above:** The annual Vietnam Vets' Wheelbarrow Push in 1991. Courtesy Rick James.

**Below:** A presentation to Rick & Norma James in appreciation of their support for the Vietnam Veterans. Courtesy Rick James.



In August 1950 Frederick John Kelly, retired farmer of Sydney, and Anne Catherine Kelly, spinster of Ganmain were the legal owners of the property, as joint tenants.<sup>395</sup> A month later on the 19<sup>th</sup> September 1950 the pair transferred the title to William Edward Rourke, Janet Irene Rourke, Patricia Marie Rourke and Joan Margaret Rourke, as tenants in common.<sup>396</sup>

Frederick John Kelly passed away suddenly at Gundagai on the 28<sup>th</sup> January 1952. His wife, Mary (nee Kennedy), who he married in 1917, had predeceased him. He was survived by one daughter, Mrs Nan Yaubaung of Ganmain. He was a competent jockey (amateur) in his early days and a follower of racing for most of his life.<sup>397</sup>

On the 2<sup>nd</sup> July 1956 the property was transferred from the Rourkes to Keiran Edward Stiff.<sup>398</sup> Stiff also purchased allotment 2 of section 60 and both allotments now came under a new title.<sup>399</sup> Allotment 2 adjoined the southern boundary of allotment 1.

In the 1960's the hotel had seven bedrooms for the public – six single and one double. There were three bedrooms and a lounge reserved for private quarters – for the licensees family.

After Kelly owned by Rourke and then from 24<sup>th</sup> December 1951, Keiran Edwin Stiff.

On the 19<sup>th</sup> October 1973, Raymond Silas Turner, hotel keeper of Grong Grong, and his wife, Joan Dawn Turner, became the legal owners of the property.<sup>400</sup>

1974, 6<sup>th</sup> May: Allan Roy Southgate was now the new owner of the property.<sup>401</sup>

In 1981, Southgate sold the freehold to William Mannell, and it was Mannell who sold to Rick James, et al, in September 1989.<sup>402</sup>

1989, 21<sup>st</sup> September - Richard John James & Norma James.<sup>403</sup> Initially Kevin John Absolom and Lindy Louise Absolom were also listed as owners (from the 21<sup>st</sup> September 1989), but that status ceased on the 23<sup>rd</sup> October 1989.

1992, 7<sup>th</sup> October - Ted & Kay Obudzinski. Ted was the licensee. The legal owners of the premises and the business were Tadeusz & Kayleen Margaret Obudzinski.<sup>404</sup>

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<sup>395</sup> NSW Land Registry Services. Title Deed volume 3395, folio 26.

<sup>396</sup> NSW Land Registry Services. Title Deed volume 3395, folio 26. / Narandera Argus. 29<sup>th</sup> August 1950, p1.

<sup>397</sup> Daily Advertiser. 29<sup>th</sup> January 1952, p2.

<sup>398</sup> NSW Land Registry Services. Title Deed volume 6275, folio 222.

<sup>399</sup> NSW Land Registry Services. Title Deed volume 7227, folio 59.

<sup>400</sup> NSW Land Registry Services. Title Deed volume 7227, folio 59.

<sup>401</sup> NSW Land Registry Services. Title Deed volume 7227, folio 59.

<sup>402</sup> Danny Milne. 22<sup>nd</sup> August 2019.

<sup>403</sup> NSW Government. Independent Liquor & Gaming Authority. Premises history. Royal hotel, Grong grong.

<sup>404</sup> NSW Government. Independent Liquor & Gaming Authority. Licensing details, Royal hotel, Grong Grong.



**Above:** The Royal hotel in 2013 with the railway station in the foreground. Courtesy Bonzle Collection. Graeme Reid.



**Above & Below:** The Royal hotel in May 2019.



## Contemporary Situation

In 2019, after some twenty-six years in the pub Ted and Kay Obudzinski sold up and moved away. Kay conceded that the hotel had been hard hit by the drought, especially in the previous year [2018], and after twenty-six years without a holiday the couple were looking forward to the change. Kay had also been diagnosed with Parkinson's disease, which was another reason for the change. Kay explained that she and Ted had run the pub on their own, with a little help in the kitchen. Ted and Kay had listed the property at \$290,000.<sup>405</sup>

New owners, Jay Keyzer and partner, Amanda Simon, took over after Ted & Kay and moved their family to Grong Grong in January 2020. Two months into their new venture they were forced to close the hotel due to COVID 19 restrictions. They were able to operate as a takeaway business, but the lack of traffic through the town meant the situation was untenable. Jay was compelled to seek work in order to survive, which he did with support from the local community.<sup>406</sup>

In August 2021 it was announced that a group of local residents had formulated a plan to purchase the hotel.<sup>407</sup> A trust was set up and shares issued, in blocks of \$5,000. The foundation directors were Adan Conway; Adam Ferguson; Anthony Gillespie; Cain Gawne; Reiner Meier, and Gemma Purcell.<sup>408</sup>

The trust was a huge success. One hundred and sixty nine shareholders contributed in excess of one million dollars.

By October 2021 the Trust had purchased the hotel and working bees were being held to refurbish the old pub. Before the end of the month Adam Evans and Selena Lorenz had been signed up to manage the hotel. Adam and Selena had both grown up in the Riverina and had previously managed the hotels at Darlington Point and Mirrool.<sup>409</sup>

The refurbished hotel reopened on the 24<sup>th</sup> December 2022.



**Left:** The old cellar exposed during the renovations.

<sup>405</sup> Daily Advertiser. 14<sup>th</sup> July 2019. [Jess Whitty]

<sup>406</sup> Daily Advertiser. 21<sup>st</sup> April 2020. [Emma Horn]

<sup>407</sup> Daily Advertiser. 19<sup>th</sup> August 2021, pp1,2.

<sup>408</sup> Facebook. Lost Narrandera. 13<sup>th</sup> August 2021.

[[https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story\\_fbid=1690451371150261&id=155565141305566](https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=1690451371150261&id=155565141305566)]

<sup>409</sup> Facebook. Grong Grong Royal Hotel Investors. 31<sup>st</sup> October 2021. [<https://www.facebook.com/GGROTEL>]



**Above:** The newly refurbished Royal hotel in December 2021. Courtesy Grong Grong Royal Hotel.



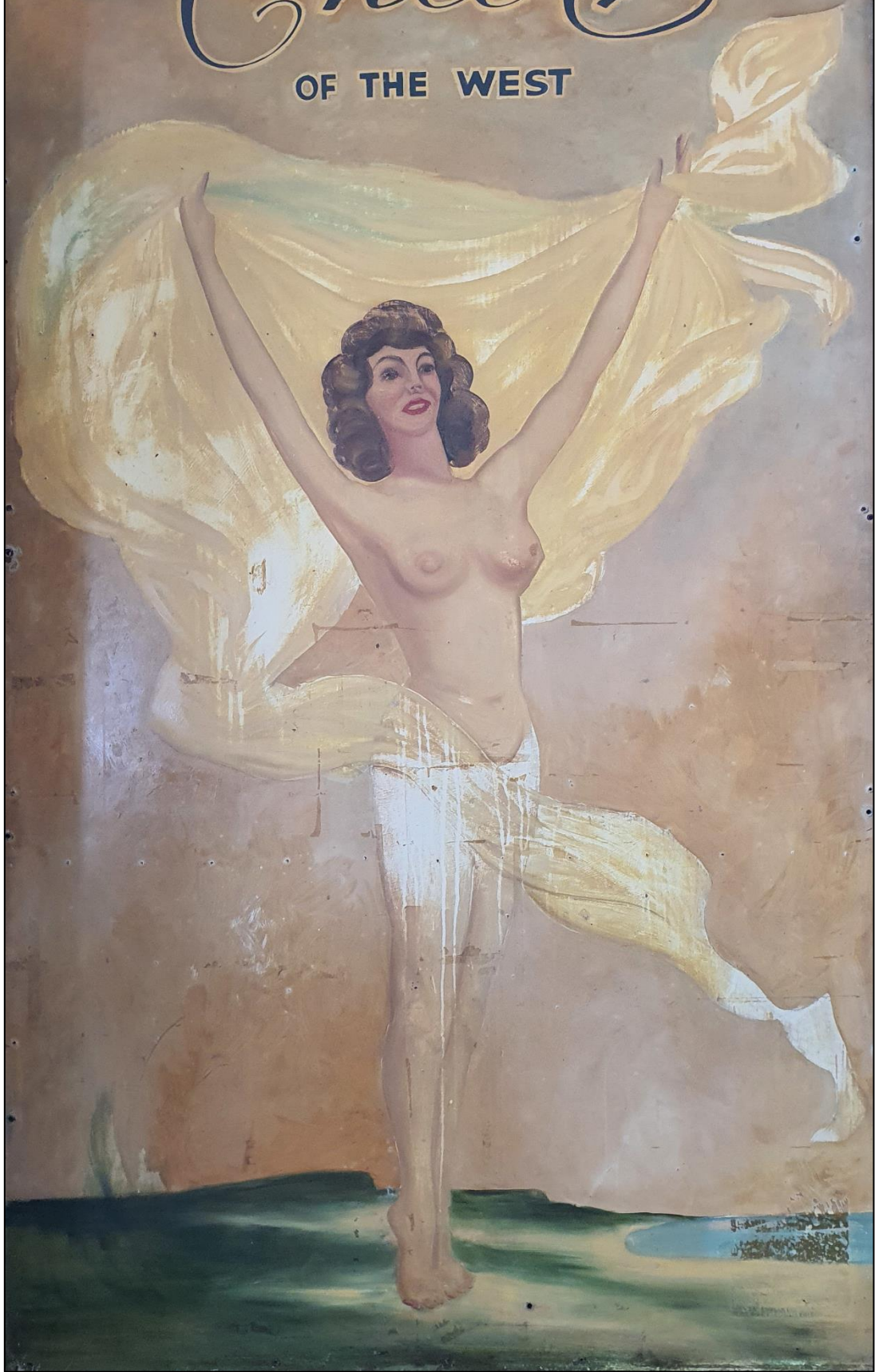


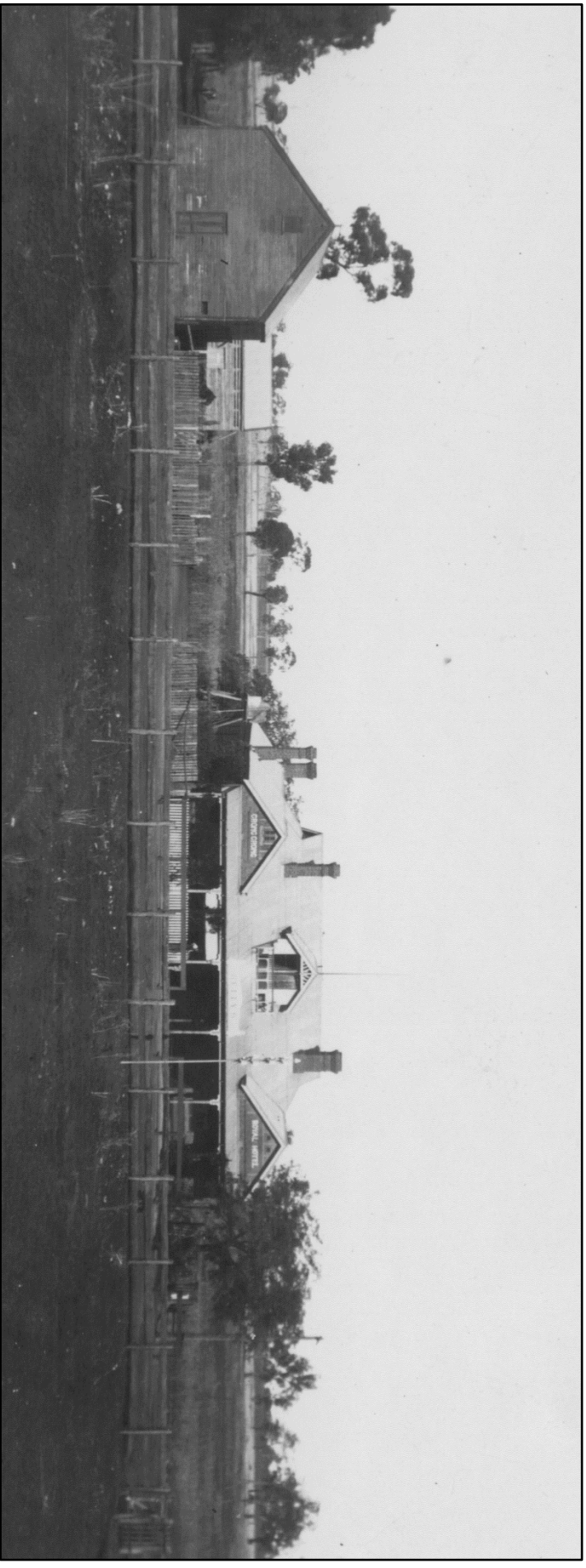
**Above:** The new bar in 2022.



# "Chloe"

OF THE WEST





## Royal hotel at Grong Grong – 1920.

Courtesy Noel Butlin Archives Centre, Australian National University: Tooth and Company Photographs: Hotels [Country] [N417-597-468]