"United by One Vision"

The History of Coolamon Shire

CONTENTS

IN THE
BEGINNING ......

"FROM SMALL BEGINNINGS
COME GREAT THINGS"

COOLAMON - ORIGIN OF NAME

It was originally proposed to call Coolamon "Kindra", after the run and parish name, but the Pastoral Authorities were of the opinion that his name, if adopted, would possibly cause confusion with Kiandra. A conference between the District Surveyor and the Railway Traffic Branch led to Coolamon being suggested and agreed to by all parties.

"Coolamon" is an aboriginal name meaning "dish or vessel for holding food or water". A plan showing the northern boundary of Coolemon (Coolamon) Holes Run in 1870 shows a cluster of numerous water holes which he referred to as Coolamon Holes. This was the native name given to the holes and the origin of the name as applied today. The name being finalised and the extent of the village and suburban boundaries fixed, the village of Coolamon was gazetted on 3rd October, 1881.

Coolamon is situated on what was originally the junction of three runs - Keandra (Kindra) Creek, Cooleman (Coolamon) Holes and Kittigora). The southern boundary of the last named two, was marked by a substantial log fence which ran more or less parallel to, and just south, of the location of the railway through the southern part of Coolamon at the corner of Wallace and Devlin Streets, then turning south-east to the Wagga Wagga road at the south-east corner of the town.

Although the railway now passing through this district was not opened until 28th February, 1881 settlers had already, as early as 1870, taken up areas under conditional purchase tenures. To make provision for the future construction of the Junee to Narrandera railway, a strip of land one mile wide on each side of the proposed centre line was reserved for railway purposes on the 26th November, 1878 and a further area of about 3000 acres on north side of the railway (at Coolamon) was reserved for railway ballast on 8th December, 1879.

Parts of these reserves, together with part of the travelling stock reserve that ran along the Coolamon-Cowabbie road, leading to Wyalong and beyond, were revoked for the establishment of the village at the station site.

MARRAR TOWN

Like so many small towns in NSW Marrar Town had its beginning with the coming of the railway in 1881. A few tents and tin shacks were home for the navvies as they toiled with picks, shovels and hammers to keep the two ribbons of steel moving ever westward. To the rough diamond teamsters, with their horses and bullocks, home was under the big iron tyred wagons. When the weather turned wet, tarpaulins were used to keep out the rain and provide a dry place to do the cooking.

Quite a few women and children lived with their menfolk on the construction sites under conditions so hard by todays standards, we wonder how they managed to survive. Nine

miles was the recognised distance between camps and as construction moved further west a new campsite would be set up.

After Marrar came Coolamon, Ganmain, Matong and Grong Grong with Narrandera the end of the line. As the construction gangs moved on, some workers chose to remain and establish a town where the camps had been. So, in such a fashion, the town of Marrar had its beginning.

With the Railway as an outlet for their produce, the surrounding stations were able to greatly increase their production. Wheat, chaff and wool in ever increasing volume began to flow through the local Railway Yards. This in itself brought extra employment, and, in turn, a demand for farm machinery and household goods was created.

General merchandise was first supplied by stores at the station homesteads, but with merchants prepared to build new premises and open up business houses, the small towns began to grow. Marrar was proclaimed a Village on 27th February, 1904 but well before this date the streets had been surveyed and building blocks pegged out. The town was now beginning to take shape.

IN THE BEGINNING..........GANMAIN

Ganmain had its origin for the European Settlers with the arrival of James Devlin between 1835 and 1838. However the name was part of the area long before this and was the name given to the aboriginal tribal lands occupied by the Wiradjuri tribe. Many well known names in the area today originate from the aboriginal language.

The name Ganmain itself is an aboriginal word meaning - "a man decorated with scars". These were usually a sign of manhood or womanhood. Gashes were made with sharp stone knives or shells, and a mixture of fat and ashes rubbed into the wounds. They acted as a healing agent and helped raise the scars which were greatly admired. The first official recording of the Ganmain Run in 1838, when a receipt was issued to James Devlin of Yass for a run in the Southern Land District which went on to become the Lachlan Land District. The License was renewed annually and it is on the 1839 renewal that the name of the run first appears.

The boundaries of Ganmain Run were not defined at this stage, the license being a depasturing license only. When the Runs were gazetted in 1848, James Devlin was the holder of a license for two runs - Ganmain and Calkibitoo(sic).

THE OFFICIAL VILLAGE - ARDLETHAN

The village of Ardlethan was given official status by proclamation in the Government Gazette of February 5, 1908, and the first sale of allotments took place on April 14 of the same year.

Regular rail services began with the official opening of the line on November 18, 1908 about eight months after the gazettal of the village and the sale of first allotments.

By this time, Ariah Street was already taking shape. Ardlethan has not always been known as such. Then the first buildings appeared around the Warri Well the locality was referred to as Warri, after the nearby station. However, with the construction of the railway the platform was designated Rosebank by the railway authorities.

Then with the gazettal of the official village as Ardlethan, the railways also adopted the name, and the Postal Department made the change about the same time.

Ardlethan is the name of an adjoining parish and originated from a town in the Grampian Mountains of Scotland, where it is shown as Milton of Ardlethan, about 23kms north of Aberdeen and said to be Gaelic for "high and hilly".

BECKOM

The survey for the village of Beckom was made by Surveyor E Herborn at the railway station on March 8, 1908. The station, goods shed, trucking yards and tank were already operating at the time. The village and suburban boundaries of Beckom were proclaimed on September 22, 1909.

Beckom is located in the parish of Ariah, county of Bourke. The first sale of allotments took place at Beckom on December 10, 1909.

THEY SERVED OUR

NOT

"THERE IS NOTHING MORE DIFFICULT TO TAKE IN HAND, MORE PERILOUS TO CONDUCT OR MORE UNCERTAIN IN ITS SUCCESS THAN TO TAKE THE LEAD IN THE INTRODUCTION OF A NEW ORDER OF THINGS"

ARDLETHAN
A TWO PUB TOWN

Ardlethan has been a two-pub town since 1913, when the Palace Hotel was granted the second licence for the town. Before that the need of the thirsty populace had been catered for by the London Hotel which opened its doors early in 1910 with a licence transferred from the old London Hotel at Warri.

A single-storey building of 18 bedrooms, the London Hotel in Mirrool Street was built by RD Boyd. The Palace Hotel on the corner of Ariah and Yithan Streets, was originally a coffee palace built about 1910 by George Corner.

Following the discovery of tin in 1912 and the subsequent mining boom extensive additions were made to the building and a liquor licence obtained in 1913. A second storey was added in 1922.

ARDLETHAN-BECKOM TIMES

Ardlethan's only newspaper, the Ardlethan-Beckom Times, was first published on February 21, 1918. Established by JA Bradley of the Temora Independent the weekly broadsheet was printed on a plant housed in a former billiards room in Yithan Street.

The Ardlethan Office was closed on the grounds of economy, the plant dismantled and publication of the paper transferred to the head office at Temora in the late 1940s.

BANKS

Ardlethan's first bank was an agency of the Temora branch of the Bank of New South Wales which opened on March 23, 1910. It was converted to a sub-branch on May 23, 1910 and became a full branch on June 17, 1913.

It is not known where the agency was housed during the period March to July 1910 but from July 1910 to February 1914 it was located in premises in Mirrool Street. These premises were destroyed by fire in 1914. New premises were erected on the corner of Ariah and Mithul Street in March 1914.

A branch manager's report in 1915 described the office and residence as "roomy, up-to-date and convenient".

OTHER BUSINESSES
FEDERAL CASH STORES

George Corner began his storekeeping career by converting a room of his house at Clonmel to a storeroom which he stocked with a limited range of goods, mostly the necessities of the day. Customers were principally mill hands, station workers and travellers.

Anticipating the coming of the railway he set up a business which he called the Federal Cash Stores on Crown land near the Warri Well and later moved his residence there.

A reporter commented "in looking through the store there appeared to be nearly everything that a man could require". When the official village of Ardlethan was surveyed he transferred his establishment to a site in Warri Street, on the opposite corner to where the post office was later built and for the next five years was most active in expanding his business interests and acquiring various town allotments.

With the store now a growing concern, he built a "coffee palace" (later to become the Palace Hotel) on the corner of Ariah and Yithan streets and a butcher's shop and bakery in Warri Street. At about this time Mr Corner was joined by his brother, James in some ventures and by their joint efforts the coffee palace was extended to include a dining room and quarters for single men.

THE MODEL STORE

Coming to Ardlethan in September 1909 Patrick Kirby founded a general store which was to serve the people of Ardlethan and district for some 70 years. After meeting Ardlethan resident H. Saunders, who finally convinced him of the business possibilities of the new town and offered him the use of a cottage next to Mrs Barnes' accommodation house, Mr Kirby accepted the offer and moved to Ardlethan.

He converted the cottage into a small shop and living quarters and commenced trading.
He took a three year lease of the premises but before this term had expired the discovery of the tin field brought about an influx of population, doubling the size of the town almost overnight and the Kirby enterprise grew with the town.

The first portion of The Model Store was built on the corner of Mirrool and Rowston Street in 1912 and extensive additions made in 1914 and again in 1915. Following his death, Mr Kirby's son, William, took over the business and over the years fully maintained the high trading traditions and standards set by his father.

A disastrous fire in 1935 destroyed the Mirrool Street store and adjoining residence but the firm demonstrated its faith in the town and district by erecting modern premises in Ariah Street, where the business continued for more than another 40 years, finally ceasing operations in 1975 after the retirement of Bill Kirby.

MRS BARNES' BOARDING HOUSE

Coming to Ardlethan from Coolamon at the time the railway as being constructed, Mrs Barnes established a boarding house on the corner of Mirrool Street and The Willows Road in the conduct of which she was assisted by her daughters. Her husband was a shearer by occupation. They had a family of three sons and seven daughters

WEBSTERS CORDIALS

TJ Webster moved to Ardlethan in 1912 and opened a cordial factory in partnership with his son. With the booming tin mines and country opening up after the coming of the railways the business continued to grow.

In the early days all work was labor intensive and done by hand. Bottle-washing and labelling took long hours, deliveries were made by horse drawn vehicles and the railway was used extensively.

COOLAMON

By 1885, when the rail links had been well and truly established, a report entitled "Notes from Coolamon - A Rising Township - Railroad Agitation" appeared in a Sydney newspaper. That report, which appears below, gives a cameo account of the town as it appeared to an outsider.

"Although but a small place, Coolamon is a thriving township. Its origin only dates back some four years, so that it is but little known. Although heavily handicapped by the older and larger township of Junee Junction, Coolamon has a future before it as the centre of a flourishing district, with a considerable timber and wood trade, of which its position on the Jerilderie line enables it to take due advantage. In addition to its timber and wool trade, the township is advantageously placed in the midst of a thriving population of farmers and selectors, and taps the wheat-growing region of Berry Jerry, as well as the Mimosa, Merool, and other districts. Its progress and development have been rapid and its permanent prosperity is assured.

Even now it has all the appearance of a "live town" of respectable proportions. The population numbers upwards of 200, and at the present time a number of new buildings are in the course of construction.

There are several stores in the place doing a large business, the two principal ones being that of Mr J Heaver, the pioneer storekeeper of the place and the agent for the T and C Journal, and the branch establishment of Messrs WC Seignor and Co., of Junee Junction, who do a large trade here and act as agents for Messrs Permewan, Wright and Co. Messrs. Wright, Eathon and Co. have an office and store in the place.

There are two good hotels, viz., Mr TJ Webster's Coolamon Hotel and Morgan's Royal Hotel. Attached to Mr Webster's establishment is an assembly hall, recently built by Mr Webster at a cost of 150 pounds. The building will accommodation 200 persons; and being fitted with a stage and shifting scenes, is well adapted for concerts etc. There is an Anglican Church, built of wood and iron, and designed to accommodate from sixty to eighty worshippers.'

COOLAMON FLOUR MILL

The Coolamon Mill, known as the Devon Roller Flour Mills, and named Devon because the founder, William Tucker Pyke, immigrated from that County in England in 1870.

Situated on the corner of Cowabbie and Wade Streets on two acres of land, the site was first a sawmill, and when established, exported large quantities of timber as far east as Yass and south as Wangaratta. When wheat growing began to assume greater proportions, the flour mill was established in 1887.

The business was then taken over by two sons RK and WE Pyke and in 1945 control was given to the late Lance Pyke. The plant was a roller system and driven by a 140 hp compound steam engine and a landmark in the district was the 65 feet high chimney made of 14,000 hand bricks.

This was demolished in the 1970's. Coolamon flour won many prizes, including first prize at the Royal Sydney Show, Cowra and Junee and the British Empire Medal at the exhibition at Wembley. Export trade was the primary aspect, delivering to the Asian countries, including Japan, India, Egypt and England.

On the occasions of drought in Australia, the mill imported wheat from Argentina and Canada. This secondary industry was the largest employer of labour in the district. During World War II and until 1956 the mill worked on a 24-hour basis.

In 1942 the mill was converted to electricity with an 80hp motor purchased in England from British Electric and installed by Wagga and local employees. In the post war period, developing countries, especially Asia and the closure of the Columbo plan, found it more profitable to import wheat, build their own flour mills and have the lucrative by-products.

From 1960 the NSW Flour Millers conducted a series of rehabilitation, thereby purchasing plant and equipment, for it was obvious that the large number of flour mills exceeded the demand for export and many were converted to feed mills.

The Coolamon Mill was demolished in 1962 and a 75 year old tradition was lost to the community.

SCHOOL OF ARTS

About the year 1896 a meeting of townsmen was held to establish a School of Art and reading room at Coolamon. The late Mr Peter Iverach took a leading part and was elected first President.

A small room was leased and members of the committee took it in turns to act as librarian, tidy up the premises , light the fires etc. The room soon became too small for the requirements and at another public meeting it was decided to purchase a block of land and erect new premises.

Two sites were offered - one the present site of the School of Arts building and the other in Loughnan Street. Despite considerable difference of opinion it was decided to purchase the allotment in Cowabbie Street.

GANMAIN/MATONG
ROYAL HOTEL

The first Royal Hotel was built about 1887. The original building was single storey with the Federal Hall being built opposite. The hotel flourished and in 1907 the hotel was rebuilt, now two storeys.

Disaster struck on 17 April, 1912 when a fire start in Ashwood and McDonald's premises adjoining the hotel in Waterview Street, completely gutting the hotel. A temporary bar was fitted up in the Albion Billiard Room, which was saved from the fire, adjoining the hotel. The Royal Hotel was then rebuilt and is as it is today.

GANMAIN HOTEL

The Ganmain Hotel was also built about 1887; a single storey brick hotel comprising 20 rooms. Fire destroyed the hotel in 1908. Almost immediately, plans were put in hand to rebuild the hotel.

The second Ganmain Hotel was opened on 11 November 1908 with a dinner held in the upstairs dining room. In July 1930, the hotel was again destroyed by fire; however it was rebuilt and that building still remains today.

FARMERS HOME HOTEL - MATONG

The Farmers Home Hotel at Matong was initially a single storey weatherboard building constructed about 1899. The hotel was rebuilt as a double storey building sometime between 1905 and 1910. It appears to have escaped the ravages of fires, being the existing hotel.

HC WILSON

This store was located on the site now occupied by the CWA Rooms. The first store on this site was built by James Lynam about 1892 and known as Lynams Farmers Emporium. It was of pine construction and complete with a hitching post for horses along the front of the store.

About 1905 the store was sold to George Wheatley Cutts who came from Narrandera and George Groves White. The store was built from pine. On the night of 14 January, 1908 the store was burnt to the ground. White rebuilt the store with sun-dried bricks and it became known as Phoenix Stores.

In 1909 White sold the Phoenix Stores to George Ashelford and Charlie Wilson and the store became known as Ashelford and Wilson. WA Iverach and HC Nadin purchased Ashelford's share and for a short time the store was known as Nadin, Iverach and Wilson.

However it wasn't long and Charlie Wilson bought them out and conducted the store in his own right with the assistance of his brother George Wilson. HC Wilson and Company operated the store until August 1924, when the goodwill was sold to Mr Alan Gilbert.

Fire again created havoc on 20 July 1930 and the store was again burnt to the ground. The land and buildings were still owned by Charlie Wilson and he decided not to rebuild the store. Alan Gilbert removed to his home and conducted business from there until temporary premises could be found. He finally moved to a building on the eastern side of Ford Street, still operated as a grocery store.

MARRAR TOWN

With York Street facing the railway line and shops on one side only, Wise Street and Wood Street were considered the logical street for further shops to be built with homes being erected further south.

A few of the early shops were just tin sheds, freezing in winter and ovens in the summer. The first building of any substance in the town was the Royal Hotel which was completed in 1900. It was built of mud or pise as it was generally known by Grosvenor Flood, a gentleman with great confidence in the future of Marrar.

Flood's next venture was the two storey building adjoining the hotel. Built mainly of brick this building opened in 1908 as the first independent Post Office. When the first Post Office building became vacant Arthur Wheel, a local resident, moved in to conduct a drapery store. Wheel was a colourful character and his store was decorate with a large wagon wheel high up on the front above the verandah. Under the wheel, painted in large letters were the words, "Give the Wheel a Turn".

Like so many early settlers Arthur Wheel lived life the hard way. His house was situated on the hill on the town side of the cemetery. Each day he walked to work in the morning and home at night. With three other stores operating in the town business was not strong enough for a fourth and after a few years the wheel stopped turning.

On the corner of York Street and Wagga Road, Cameron and Mitchell operated as Grain and Chaff Merchants in a large galvanised iron shed, later to become known as the village blacksmith. In 1904, Ambrose Phelan constructed a weatherboard building next to Cameron and Mitchell and commenced business as a butcher.

WP Ryan opened a bakers shop next to Phelan's residence. In 1905 a small iron building was operating as a grocery store. During the time of around 1908, Arthur Ray had bought out the butchering business of Ambrose Phelan and Frank Roberts had started to erect brick buildings on land across the lane from the present service station. Roberts had completed a brick butchers shop and Brook and Crouch, who bought out Ray, opened up in the new premises.

The Pearce Family moved into Phelan's residence and conducted this as a boarding house, using the old butchers shop as a meal room. In 1911 fire broke out in one of the buildings and soon the whole lock was a raging inferno. Then the fire burned out all that was left standing was the shed on the Wagga Road corner, a few chimneys and the brick walls of the butchers shop. After the fire the whole block, now known as the Roberts Buildings, was built in portions commencing in 1912 with the brick portion still standing and the last portion being completed in 1914.

PALACE HOTEL, ARDLETHAN
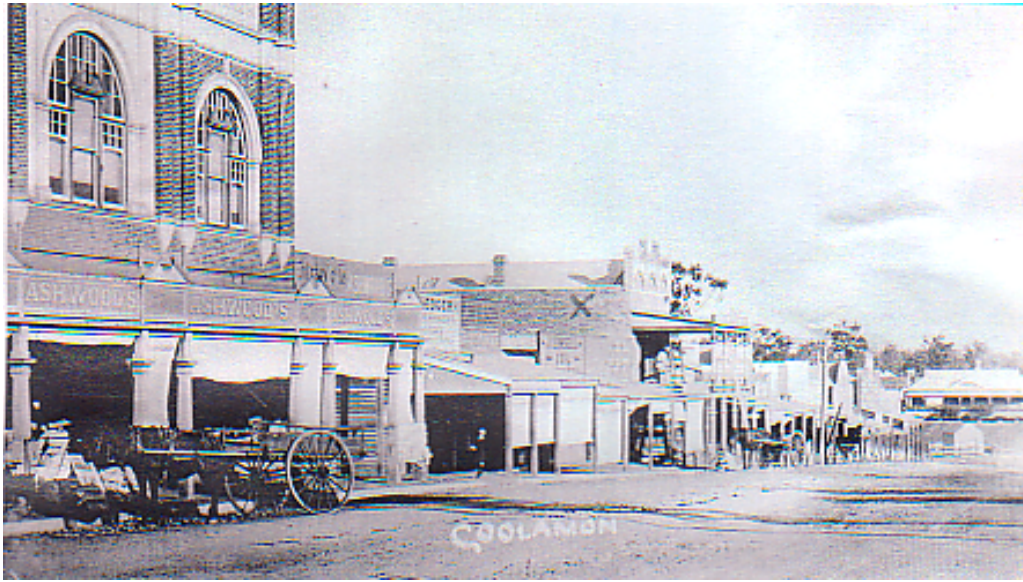

LONDON HOTEL, ARDLETHAN

EASTERN SIDE OF COWABBIE STREET, COOLAMON

PYKE BROS. FLOUR MILL

ASHFORD & WILSON STORE GANMAIN C1910

MARRAR TOWN

POST OFFICE, MARRAR.

YORK ST. MARRAR.

FARMERS HOME HOTEL, MATONG C1910

ROYAL HOTEL ABOVE: C1984 BELOW: C1910

GANMAIN HOTEL PREE 1900

BELOW: NEARING COMPLETION AFTER 1908 FIR

GANMAIN HOTEL 1913

INDUSTRIES

"AND THE WHEELS WENT ROUND....."

AND THE WHEELS WENT ROUND......

The first settlers to this area arrived in 1849. It is on record that the first grain planted was corn. This was planted by making small holes in the ground near falled trees for protection, and also in water courses where possible moisture could be utilised. The corn grew very successfully and when it had matured it was picked by hand and used for human consumption as well as for stock feed.

After several years, land having been cleared and post and log fencing having been erected, it was decided to try and work up some ground. This was done by making a plough from a tree sapling which was drawn by two bullocks.

The first wheat was grown in 1857 and was "quite successful" and by 1877 such progress had been made that horses were being used to pull double as well as single furrowed ploughs. These were now being commercially manufactured as were the harrows. The method of producing the wheat was as follows.

After the land was cleared of timber and ploughed, the wheat was broadcast by hand, a man walking over the small field scattering the seed evenly from a container. The seed was then covered by horse drawn harrows. Sometimes the farmer rode on horseback and broadcast the seed which was quicker than walking. It was after sowing, and before the grain became established as a young crop, that the birds, particularly galahs, would scratch up the seed to eat. The farmers were kept busy, hunting the birds away or shooting them.

Soon after this time a form of mechanical sowing was developed. This was done by a seed broadcaster. The machine was placed on a horse drawn dray with chain drive attachments fitted to the spokes of the dray wheel. A sprocket on the broadcaster drove a disc plate which was connected to the hopper containing seed. Also in the dray were several half bags of grain to keep supplying the broadcaster and hopper by hand. As the machine proceed the machine spread seed to a width of thirty feet. This method of seed sowing continued for some years.

At this time the harvesting of the crop had also developed from cutting by hand scythe and tying into bundles and pounding or treading, to extracting the seed from the straw. The horse drawn stripper came into use. This machine, with a comb width of 4 feet and mounted with a hopper was capable of holding approximately half a ton of wheat and husks. When this became full a door fitted at the rear of the machine was removed and the contents emptied out onto the ground in a heap. Then the next operation commenced. This involved quite an amount of manual labour.

The next machine used in the harvesting process was the winnower and required man-power to operate it. This was done by turning a handle at 60 revolutions a minute for an hour at a time, then another man took over for his turn. This was hard work and so it was necessary for several men to take turns. The grain was separated from the chaff by a wind blast from a fan, the grain being deposited into 4-bushel bags which were then sewn

up. These bags weighed 240 pounds. This method of harvesting was used until the approach of the 1900's.

The next development of wheat sowing involved the use of a seed box fitted to a one way disc powered by a chain drive by a sprocket attached to a wheel of the cultivator. This in turn was connected to another sprocket which was part of the seed box. Then by hollow hose the seed was distributed to the ground. This was very successful.

Then came superphophate, which proved to be very successful and became a valuable asset. With added improvements in the distribution of both seed wheat and fertiliser the acreage sown increased fourfold.

By 1910 the harvester made its appearance. This machine was a combination of a winnower and a stripper, a machine which handled the crop in one operation. The machine was pulled by four horses, the comb width being an average 4 feet. By 1915 it was a common sight to see teams of bullocks or horses with wagons loaded with up to 8 tons of grain in 3-bushel bags being transported to the railway sidings.

From 1915 to 1920 the methods of cultivation did not change, only machinery became progressively larger. This now enabled farmers to increase their acreage under crop. The average for the district would have been approximately 300 acres and the average yield per acre was 15 to 20 bushels.

During the first World War a machine commonly known as a header came into use. This machine, manufactured by the Massey-Harris Company, closely followed by HV McKay was a combination of stripper-harvester and grass mower which handled the crop by cutting the heads of wheat and approximately 12 inches of straw off the ripened plants. By this action 'down and tangled storm crops' were satisfactorily gathered thus increasing the yield by several bushels per acre.

By 1920 the first bulk grain silos were in use at Coolamon, which was a great boon as wheat could be stored saving waste and destruction of both grain and bags. It was in this era, just prior to the 20s that the first farm tractor made its appearance in the district. These tractors were reasonably satisfactory but horse teams were still favored.

In the early 20's the International Company produced a new model tractor - the 15-30; 3 forward gears and 1 reverse with power equal to 10 horses. By the year 1925 other developments were taking place; the combine-seeder and power drive header-harvester.

The 1940s saw the first tractor in the district fitted with rubber tyres and proved most successful. In addition these tractors were equipped with a road travelling gear with a top speed of up to 18 miles per hour and this enabled farmers to travel from one farm to another.

By 1950 there were very few horse teams needed and farmers ceased to breed draught horses for farm work.

Farmers who pioneered this district suffered many hardships in the early days, having to contend with rabbits, kangaroos, mice plaques and grasshoppers. Dust storms swept away the top soil and skeleton weed added to their problems. Coolamon farmers, however, managed to retrieve something even in the bad years. The following report which appeared in a 1922 Coolamon-Ganmain Farmers Review, certainly recommends the district in no uncertain terms:-

'From any eminence in the Coolamon district the undulating country opens out in glorious panoramas of extensive patches of golden crops, contrasting red fallow and park like lightly timbered lands, which stretch away until lost in the distance of the purple hills. In almost every paddock is to be seen hay carting, stack building, and wheat harvesting, the latter with every type of machine from the old stripper to the modern header-thrasher, drawn by a stalwart eight horse team. The paddocks thickly dotted with stooks of tall sheaves; the huge haystacks at frequent intervals; the stacks of bagged wheat; and the seas of ripened waving heads still to be garnered, all betoken a good harvest, a season of comparative plenty.'

TIN TOWN

An extensive tin field in Ardlethan was discovered within a few years of the town's birth and the mining of these rich deposits had a stabilising influence on the town's economy. There were years when little or no tin was produced but in 1963 when Ardlethan Tin Mining Co. acquired the leases and began production with modern methods, huge quantities of tin have been brought to the surface and much of the town's workforce absorbed in the industry.

Boom days followed the discovery of the tin field in 1912. With several big companies operating batteries on the Yithan field and two more on the Bygoo field, Ardlethan seemed destined to become an important mining centre.

However, the end of the 1914-18 war saw a slowing down in operations, a trend which continued until the depression and consequent low prices for base metals forced some companies to close and others to scale down operations. While some miners deserted the field during the depression, others chose to remain and eked out precarious livings working the shallow deposits or operating small tailings treatment plants. Mining thus helped many of the residents to survive the hard years of the 1930s with some dignity, but the outbreak of the 1939-45 war seemed to sound the death knoll of the industry.

Demand for base metals spiralled during the 1950s though, and another mining revival took place. Some indication of the value of mining to the town's economy can be gauged from a statement made by the late Cr JW Hawthorne at a Shire Council meeting during the depression days, when Council was discussing a request for road works to the field. Cr Hawthorne claimed that the value of tin production that year was greater than the value of the wheat harvest delivered to the Ardlethan silos.

Like many other towns, Ardlethan did suffer a decline in the number of businesses needed to service the community. The home building industry languished for years and many thought Ardlethan would follow the trend of towns and suffer a population drift.

However the coming of the big mining company change that. The company acquired land at the northern end of the town and created a suburb of about 50 homes to provide housing for its workers.

THE CHAFF CAPITAL

Chaff was the major rural industry in Ganmain and remains important to this day. Chaffcutting in the early days was a labour intensive industry and although mechanized to some degree, it is still largely labour intensive. There are many arguments as to who grew the first hay used for chaff, and that honour belongs to James Hughes, who grew 3 acres of hay at Ganmain Run in 1843.

The very early method of cutting hay for chaff required the hay to be dampened 24 hours prior to cutting and was a very cumbersome method. Then came the steaming method by means of a stem box invented and patented by Messrs Brown Bros of Morundah in 1900. The Brill Bros paid a royalty of Ten Shillings to William Brown, as did Eb and Ern Hamblin, and steamboxes made their appearance of the Ganmain district, where they are still used in the production of chaff. Because of the large amount of manpower needed to operate these cutters, there was also a large increase in the number of cutters operating in the area. Due to transport conditions of the times it was considered more economical to employ the many chaffcutting contractors who operated in the area.

WOOL INDUSTRY

Sheep and wool production was the major rural industry at the beginning. This remained so until the land was more closely settled and the introduction of the Border Leicester Breed. When crossed with merino, they produced what is known as First/Cross Lambs. This saw the beginning of the fat lamb industry, which the area produces in fairly large quantities.

Skeleton weed was introduced into Australia in bags of chaff from Argentina during the 1917 drought, and was first discovered in the Marrar district from where it spread throughout the Riverina. It was only when Skeleton Weed began to spread in the district in the late 1920s and early 1930s that farmers began to increase their sheep numbers.

Stock sales were conducted prior to 1900 in yards believed to be attached to the hotels. They were conducted by the various agents then operating in the town. In the late 1930s Mellor and Murphy built the Ganmain saleyards situated on the northern side of the Railway line fronting Derry Street, the approximate cost being three hundred pounds and sales started with an average monthly yarding of 4000 head.
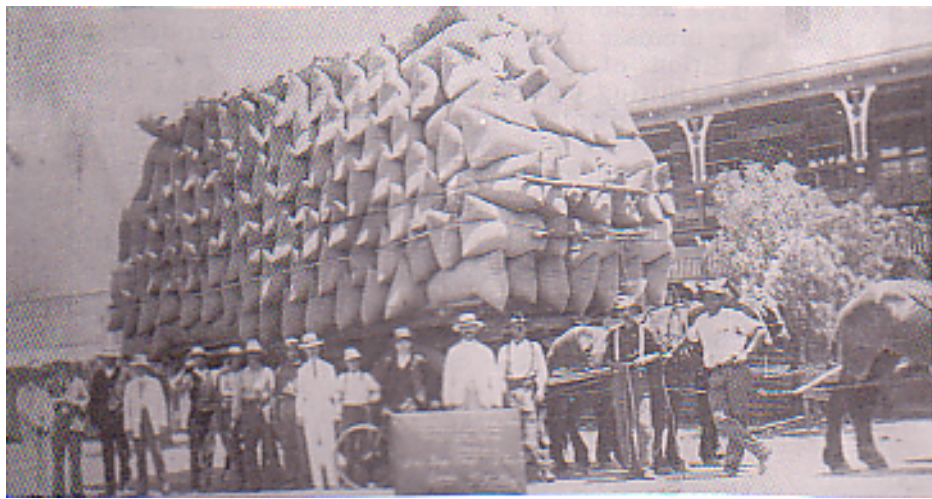
Monthly sales were on Saturday mornings at first but were later changed to a week day to enable buyers to get home to Sydney for the weekend. As few trucks were available on the roads, sheep and lambs were all walked to the saleyards and afterwards loaded on to sheep vans and transported by train. 30 to 40 sheep rail trucks were not unusual and at times up to 60 rail trucks had to be ordered for a sale. The great majority of lambs then were Border/Merino cross and it was not until the 1950s and 1960s that the Dorset/Merino cross took over as the major breed. It is interesting to note that in 1950 a pen of lambs sold brought four pounds six shillings and tenpence, then an Australian record price.

Perhaps the most important historic event concerning sheep in the history of Australia happened on the Ganmain Run, with the advent of Anthrax, the dreaded disease of sheep. Even today, the very mention of the name is enough to send a chill through the most hardened landholder. It was responsible for destroying hundreds of thousands of sheep in Australia, and up until the early 1880s there was no known cure. As nothing was known of the origin of the disease or how it was transmitted many remedies were tried in an effort to contain it. One method was to add measured doses of epsom salts to water troughs and tanks. This treatment had no effect on the livestock but quite an effect on the Chinese working in the area who used the water to quench a thirst. Feeding trials were also carried out, again with no result, as were trials with goats.

It was then discovered that in England and France this disease was being controlled with a vaccine developed by Louis Pasteur.
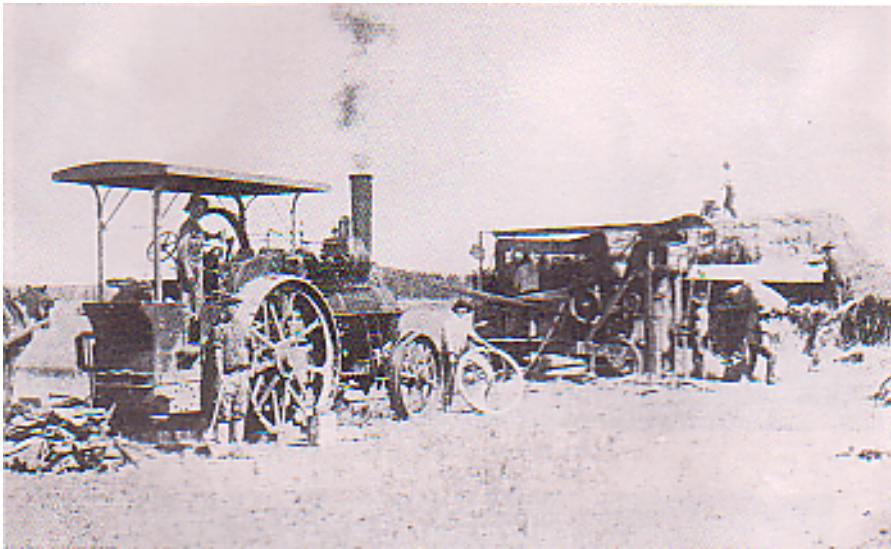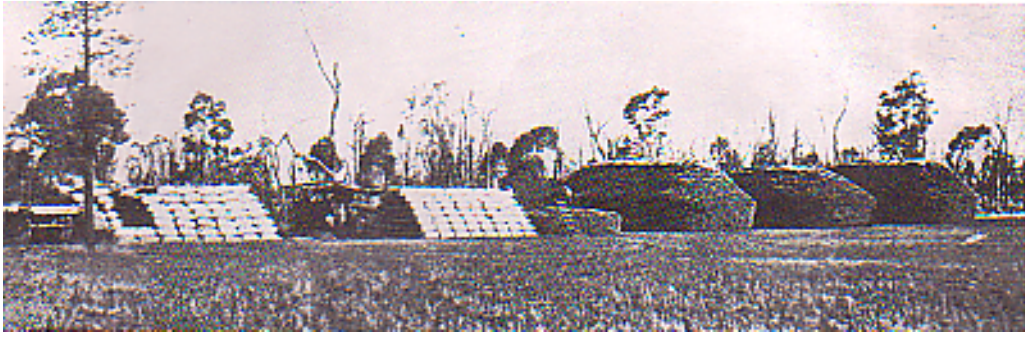
LOAD OF WHEAT

RECORD LOAD OF CHAFF

CHAFFCUTTING TEAM

CHAFF CUTTER

HORSEDRAWN BINDER CUTTING HAY

SMOKO AT HAYCUTTING TIME

ABOVE: BAGGED WHEAT
BELOW: AFTERMATH OF MOUSE PLAQUE ON BAGGED WHATE PRE 1920

BULLOCK TEAM AT RAILWAY YARDS

MERINO SHEET

SHEEP SALES

COMMUNITY COUNCIL

"COMING TOGETHER IS A BEGINNING;
KEEPING TOGETHER IS PROGRESS;
WORKING TOGETHER IS SUCCESS"

COOLAMON SHIRE COUNCIL

FIRST PROVISIONAL COUNCIL

With the passing of the first Local Government Act in 1906, provisional councils were appointed in each shire. The last meeting of the Temporary Council was reported in the "Review" of 14th December, 1906, when Messrs WH Rowston (Chairman), Steele, H Doubleday, Webb and JH Seymour (Secretary) were present. The meeting was purely formal, the business consisted of the payment of sundry accounts and the making over of the property and documents of the temporary council to the newly-elected Council.

THE FIRST ELECTED COUNCIL

The Shire was constituted in the year 1906, the first Council being elected on the 24th November in that year. Mr JH Seymour, who had been clerk to the Provisional Council, was the Returning Officer and the Councillors elected were:- "A" Riding: Crs TJ Kelly and WH Rowston; "B" Riding: Crs TE Lucas and Henry Doubleday; "C" Riding: Crs RK Pyke and John Poiner.

ELECTION OF PRESIDENT

The first meeting of the elected Council was held at the Coolamon Court House, on December 14, 1906. The first business was the election of a President; that being Cr H Doubleday.

"A difficulty then arose" says the "Review" report of the meeting, "owing to the mover and seconder of each proposition being the only voters. "The deadlock appeared insurmountable and to overcome the trouble it was decided to draw for the position. The "Review" representative was asked to write the names of the candidates on slips of paper, which were placed in a hat by the Chairman. The "Review" representative then drew out Cr Doubleday's name".

FIRST CLERK AND ENGINEER

Crs Lucas and Kelly were appointed delegates to attend a conference at Narrandera between representatives of Yanko, Urana and Coolamon Shire Councils for the purpose of appointing Mr Statham, Government Resident Engineer, Engineer for the three shires. He agreed to act for 600 pounds per year, to cover everything.

Mr Hawkes, from many applicants, was appointed Shire Clerk. At a subsequent meeting, Mr J Barrett was appointed first Engineer to the Coolamon Shire. The Shire office was located in the weatherboard building next to the Coolamon Hotel, in Wade Street. Here

the Council was content to carry on for a number of years. Accommodation was so limited that the only office for business served as a Council room, and on meeting days the business of the Council would be suspended whilst the Clerk turned to the counter to attend to ratepayers.

COOLAMON URBAN AREA

The town of Coolamon was proclaimed an urban area on the 1st May, 1912, vesting in the Council over this area the powers of a municipality. During 1913 the footpaths in the business portion of Cowabbie Street were constructed and asphalted.

TREE PLANTING

The first tree-planting programme was commenced in the same year, 60 trees and 60 shrubs being purchased for planting in the streets. The fences enclosing the 'parks' in Cowabbie Street were erected in this year. For many years the Council carried out a regular programme of tree planting, with the result that Coolamon has now reason to be proud of its tree-lined streets.
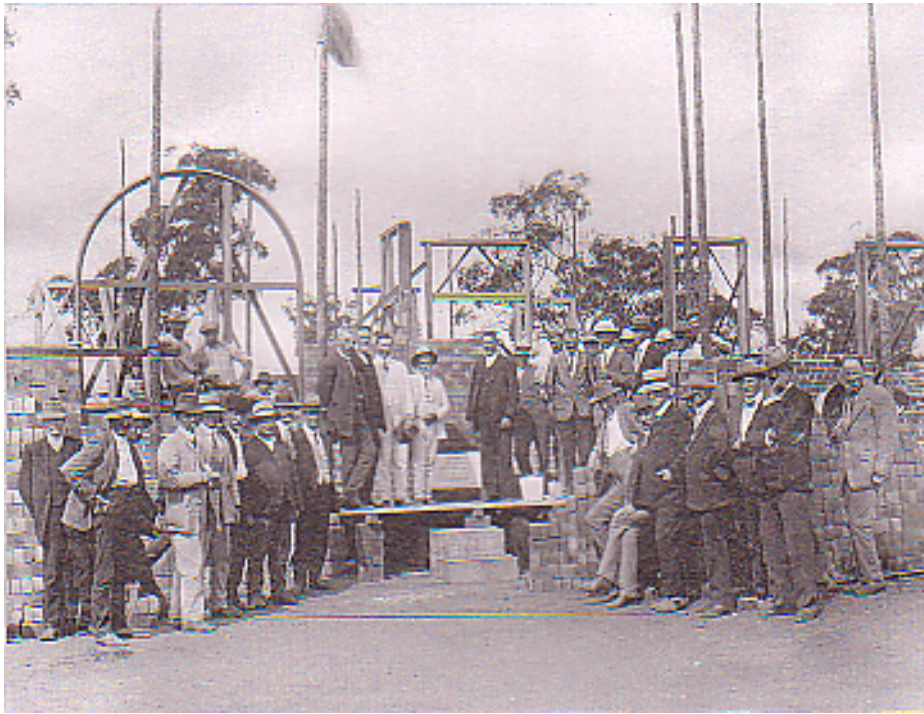
SHIRE HALL

In 1912 applications were called for designs for new Council Chambers. The foundation stone was laid by the late Councillor JW Rogerson, President, on the 11th December, 1912.

WAR EMERGENCY

In early 1942 when Australia was threatened by invasion, the Council had to hand over to the Allied Works Council the whole of its road plant together with most of the road staff, leaving the Council with 3 men and a truck. The Council had to handle many matters on behalf of the Government, the setting up of many organisations such as National Emergency Services, Salvage Collection, Evacuation Arrangements, Patriotic and War Funds and the assessment, and collection of War Damage Insurance. The Council continued its essential services, particularly road maintenance.

SALE YARDS

In 1929 Sale Yards were constructed at a cost of 670 pounds.

CONSTRUCTION OF COUNCIL OFFICE

COOLAMON SHIRE COUNCIL OFFICE 1924

EDUCATION IN THE
DISTRICT

"WE ARE TO LEARN WHILE WE LIVE"

COOLAMON CENTRAL SCHOOL

Though the town area had been settled for some time, an application for the establishment of a Public School was first received on November 1, 1883. The application was signed on behalf of the residents by Messrs. Charles Spiller, John Heaver, Donald Cameron, John Hanks and S. Hopkins.

The District Inspector of Schools, Dr D.S.. Hicks, in reporting on the application, stated that the township was educationally destitute and that there were 32 children in the locality who would probably attend the school, as the nearest school was at Kindra, about five miles away. He then recommended that a Public School be established at Coolamon and that this should consist of a wooden building, 24 feet by 15 feet.

In February of 1884, approval was granted for the establishment of the school and the contract for the construction of the school was given to Mr Charles of Wagga, at a value of 125 pounds. Most of the furniture was acquired from the Old Junee and Wagga Wagga schools. With this completed, the school began operation in May, 1884 with the principal being Mr GR Spalding. On the first day there were 25 people in attendance, while during the year the enrollment was 38 with an average attendance of 28.

ST MICHAEL'S SCHOOL, COOLAMON

In the year of 1896, at the earnest request of Dr Gallagher a community of three sisters from St. Joseph's, North Goulburn, consisting of Sr Rose, Sr Gonzaga and Sr Agnes (who was replaced because of ill-health by Sr M Stanislaus) was sent to Coolamon and Catholic education began in this town of the plains.

The Sisters occupied a weather-board cottage until 1920 when the new brick convent, built by Rev. Fr. Dr. Dwyer, Bishop of Wagga Wagga.

In 1936 the old weatherboard school that had served as a church and school for a period of years was replaced by a modern brick building, comprising four commodious classrooms.

BERRY JERRY NORTH SCHOOL

The Berry Jerry North Public School was built around the 1890's. Before that school had been held in the old Union Church. The School started as a half time school with Kinilibah about seven miles away. The teacher lived in the residence at Berry Jerry and rode his bicycle to Kinilibah two days one week and three the next.

The half time basis continued for about twelve months when a new school was built at Berry Jerry in 1912. The old school was then used as a weathershed. The school was

then closed in 1949 and brought to Coolamon. Amos Allen's school bus then commenced and brought the children to Coolamon.

EDUCATION IN MARRAR

There have been a number of schools established in the Marrar district during the past one hundred years. As new land was opened up, or as the population moved from one end of the district to another, schools which were formerly well located to meet educational needs, were depleted of pupils and forced to close.

Almost immediately requests were received from parents in a more populous section for the establishment of a school to accommodate their children. The first Government school to operate in the district was Marrar Provisional School, which commenced on April 24, 1879. It closed for the last time in December 1882. In October 1882 a Half Time school was opened at The Pinnacle. Early in 1883 this school was granted Provisional status; later in the same year to became a Public School. It continued as such until mid 1890. It closed in June 1894 as a result of declining attendance.

Another school, the Marrar Provisional School was opened in June 1896 and became a Public School in October of the same year. Apart from small periods when it was closed for want of a teacher, this school continued until March 1929.

In 1909, a Public School was indeed established in the town of Marrar itself. There had been pressure for this school for some time, but by 1908 it was clear that the developing township had an assured future, and merited a school of its own.

By 1950 each of the smaller schools in the district had closed, leaving the Marrar Public School to continue to the present day.

GANMAIN PUBLIC SCHOOL

On 18 May 1891 an application was lodged for the establishment of a provisional school at Boggy Creek. The application was supported by a covering letter from Mr A Chauffourier, who was a journalist for the Wagga Wagga Advertiser, and probably enlisted to help add strength to the application for the school.

The school was proceeded with and tenders duly called and the successful tenderer was Mr John McIntosh of Wagga for the sum of One Hundred and Thirty Eight Pounds Five Shillings. The school was completed and operating by February 1892. On 5 June 1895, Mr Lawford, the district Inspector recommended the name of Boggy Creek School be changed to Ganmain in line with the name of the local Post Office and Railway Station.

The Principal's residence and additions to the school were made in 1895 at a cost of Three Hundred and Ninety One Pounds, the contractor being Charles Hardy of Wagga Wagga.

ST BRENDAN'S CATHOLIC SCHOOL, GANMAIN

St Brendan's School originated in 1906 under the guidance of the Presentation Sisters headed by Sister M Columba Collins, assisted by Sisters M Vincent Phelan, MV Borgia Dunphy and M Monica Hartnett. The school was conducted in the original church building adjacent to the convent, with classes covering all levels of education.

The infants department was opened 4 November, 1933, the Blessing and Opening Ceremony performed by Right Rev Monsignor O'Connell. Total cost of the building was one Thousand Six Hundred Pounds. The floor space of the building was 50 feet by 25 feet, with 50 feet by 9 feet verandah. Attendance at this time was 150 students. Additions to this building costing $13,000 were made in October, 1967, being blessed by His Lordship, Most Rev Dr FP Carroll, DD DCL, a former student. The secondary department remained until 1970.

ARDLETHAN PUBLIC SCHOOL

The Ardlethan Public School was opened in February 1910. Before the establishment of this school a subsidised school had been in operation for about 12 months. Enrollment grew in numbers until there were 21 pupils enrolled and residents asked the Department of Education to establish a provisional school. The prime mover in this request was Mr J Thomas Weeks. During 1909 the department sent Inspector Walker to visit the district. He reported that the newly-formed village of Ardlethan gave every promise of development. A school site of a little more than five acres had been surveyed and reserved. He found that within a radius of this site there were 29 children of school age as well as 11 younger children.

The town's population was given as between 90 and 100 persons. Nearest schools were Warri Public (five miles) and Uley provisional (4.5 miles). On the strength of this report the department decided to build a school, completed in March 1910.

BECKOM PUBLIC SCHOOL

The history of education at Beckom dates back to before 1911 when a subsidised school existed at Ariah homestead. The first government school, known as Beckom provisional School, opened in May 1911 and two months later this was raised to public school status.

The first teacher, Miss M McRae had an initial enrollment of 24 pupils. A site of 3.5 acres was acquired by a government grant in August 1910 but this was relinquished in the
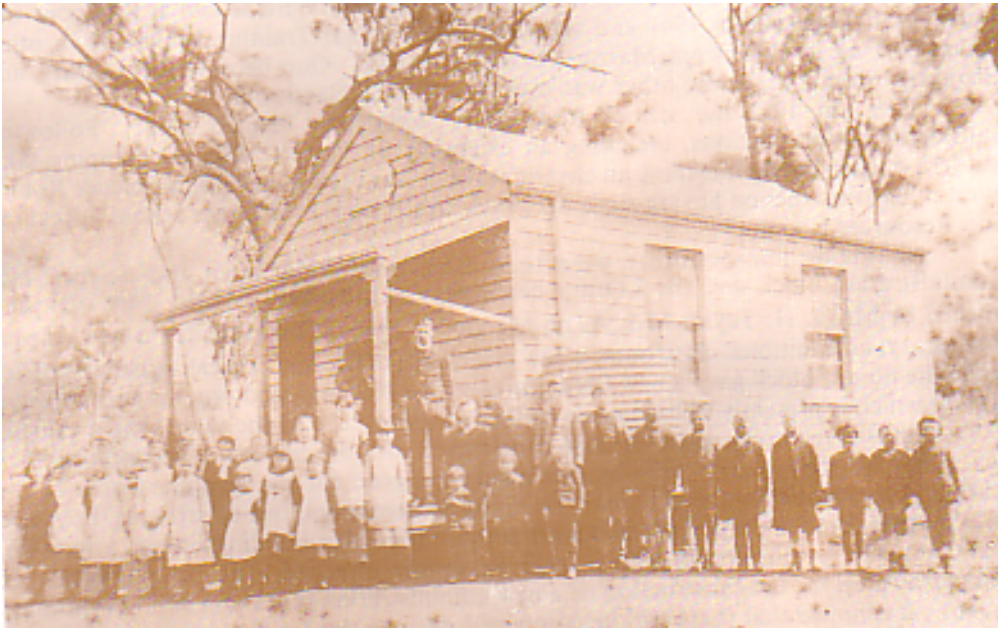
following month. Another site of two acres was acquired by a government grant in September 1912, in Moore Street and this was added to in 1918 and 1931 giving a total area of four acres.

ST JOSEPH'S SCHOOL, ARDLETHAN

A convent and school to provide for the education of the families of the Catholic community of Ardlethan and district was a dream brought to realisation by the first Parish Priest, Rev. Father Thomas Mullins.

Blocks of land in the private subdivision of Ardlethan West were given to church authorities in 1908, but in 1912 Father Mullins secured blocks in the official village on which the buildings were later erected. Father Mullins' plans were delayed on his service in the 1914-18 war, but on his return to Ardlethan in 1920 he continued the building program begun by the acting Priest, Father M.D. O'Sullivan.

The convent and classrooms were opened and blessed on September 28, 1924. About 60 children were enrolled at the school when it opened in January 1925. Children had to be seven years of age or over to enrol.

COOLAMON PUBLIC SCHOOL 1884

GANMAIN PUBLIC SCHOOL C1982

ACTIVITIES

"OUR FATHER WHO ART IN HEAVEN…………."

COOLAMON PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

In the early years of settlement in this district, Coolamon was part of the Junee Parish. A monthly service was conducted by Rev Mr Fullerton, the Junee minister, in the North Berry Jerry Union Church. Later, Rev Mr Carson of Junee conducted monthly services in Coolamon. These were presumably held in the Oddfellows' Hall.

Then followed the appointment to Coolamon of Mr T Hislop Dick, a Home Missions student and weekly services were held. On December 12, 1902, Coolamon was formed into a separate Parish: It's first Minister, The Rev A. McWatt Allen, commenced supply in January 1905 and was inducted the following April. On November 27 1904 the Rev John Walker, the Assembly's Commissioner, opened a Church Hall with seating for 150. The first sessions was constituted on May 5, 1904.

On August 15 1905, the Rev James McAndrew MA commenced his ministry, which extended for 22 years and ended in 1927. His services were faithfully rendered over the entire Parish and many are the tales told of his sterling work. His name is a legend in the life of the Parish and the community and his ministry for nearly a quarter of a century made an impact upon the history of the Church. The foundation stone of the commodious brick Manse was laid on June 3 1908 by Mrs EA Stinson. The bricks (50,000) were obtained from the kilns of Messrs Ashwood Bros., Coolamon

COOLAMON CHURCH OF ENGLAND

In the year 1881, the Rev James Studs, who was then in charge of the Parish of St Luke, Junee, held the first service in Coolamon of the Anglican Church. No other building being available, the waiting room at the Railway Station was used both on the occasion of Mr Studs' first and subsequent visits.

It was not until 1886 that the Parish was defined and a Vicar appointed. In that year the first Bishop of Riverina, Dr Linton, inducted the Rev. Manuel Moran to the Parish which at that time extended from Currawarna on the southwest to Mimosa and Winchendon Vale on the North. The Parish Hall was built during Mr Moran's term of office to serve as a Church building. It was destroyed by fire in 1940.

On Trinity Sunday, June 2, 1912 the Rev, Rupert Ross-Edwards officiated for the first time as deacon-in-charge of the Parish. During his first year here, Mr Ross-Edwards with the help of the Ladies' Guild worked hard for a Vicarage and in February 1913, the foundation stone was laid. Mr Ross-Edwards remained until July 1920, conducting his last services in the Parish on July 18.   The Rev. H Verner Rogers came on July 25, 1920. The debt on the rectory having been liquidated during the subsequent five years, it was decided to complete the Church building by the addition of the Chancel, provision having been made in the erection of the Nave for this purpose. This work was eventually carried out, and the Church, which had been dedicated in the name of St Andrew, was

consecrated by the third Bishop of Riverina, the Right Reverend RC Halse, on August 19,1928.

ST MICHAEL'S CHURCH, COOLAMON

Coolamon was first attached to the Parish of Wagga, the first priest to conduct a service in the district being the Rev. Father Birmingham. Bishop Gallagher and Monsignor Buckley were amongst the first to visit Coolamon as priests. It is understood that Mass was celebrated in the Railway waiting room.

Coolamon was later attached to the Junee Parish and then to the Ganmain Parish. Coolamon was formed into a separate Parish in 1916, the late Rev Father Griffin being the first parish prize. He was succeeded by the Rev Father Fleming. The Rev Father Gahan became parish priest in 1921.

The first church was built about the year 1888. It was enlarged some years later and served as a church school until the present brick church was built by the Rev Father Griffin in 1911 at a cost of 1,600 pounds.

The Sister of St Joseph first came to Coolamon in 1896 and occupied a weatherboard cottage. The cottage remained in occupation until 1920 when the handsome brick convent, built by the Rev Father Fleming was blessed and officially opened by his Lordship the Right Rev Dr Dwyer, Bishop of Wagga. The cost of the convent was 4000 pounds.

In 1928 the church was added to by the erection of a sanctuary, sacristy and nun's chapel, while the church was also extended, the cost of the total addition being 4000 pounds. Such heavy building programmes within a comparatively short period remain as a monument to the courage, faith and sacrifice of the Coolamon Catholic community.

The finance of the enterprises was made possible by a "Queen", "Princess" and a "Duchess" competition, which in the nine years were responsible for raising 9000 pounds. In these competitions a number of young ladies rendered wonderful service to their church.

METHODIST CHURCH

Methodist Church services were first held in Coolamon about the year 1886, conducted by the Rev JK Turner and were held in the Railway waiting room and later in the Oddfellow's Hall. Services were held intermittently from Junee until 1898, when the Coolamon Circuit was constituted.

The Rev L K Helynack, a probationer, was appointed the first resident minister. Services were held in the North Berry Jerry Church from a very early date and the names of

Higman and Furner were prominent in the early records but this church remained in the Junee Circuit until much later.

In 1898 land was purchased and plans prepared for the first church, a wooden building. It was erected on the eastern corner of Methul and Douglas Streets. The new brick church was built in 1927 and the wooden building was moved to serve and a Sunday School and church hall. The new Methodist Parsonage was opened on 4th June, 1952.

Since the 17th July 1937 a band of devoted members from the Coolamon Ladies' Church Aid have rendered sacrificial services to the community and the church at the Saleyards, by preparing morning teas and luncheons each sale day.

THE UNITING CHURCH

The Uniting Church was inaugurated on June 22, 1977 when the Congregational, Methodist and Presbyterian denominations, in accord with local consultations, came together to form the first autonomous Australian Church. The former Methodist and Presbyterian congregations of Coolamon, Ganmain, Marrar, Matong and Rannock areas came together to form the Coolamon Parish of the Uniting Church.

The joint Methodist and Presbyterian Parish of Coolamon and Ganmain was formed on January 1, 1974, under the ministry of Rev AH Proctor and continued until inauguration. The former Manse on the corner of Loughnan and Mirrool Streets and the former Parsonage in Loughnan Street were disposed of during 1978. A brick veneer Manse was erected on portion of the old basketball courts, being completed for the arrival of Rev J Marton and family on January 15, 1979. The building was dedicated by Rev R Sparks, Moderator of NSW Synod and officially opened on March 14, 1979.

ARDLETHAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

The original Ardlethan parish of the Catholic Church, formed in 1910, stretched from Barmedman to west of Binya. Father Thomas Mullins was appointed its first parish priest. He resided at Barmedman and under very difficult conditions served his large parish travelling in a buggy drawn by his two fractious horses. Fortnightly Mass was celebrated in the newly built public hall in Warri Street. in 1910, with much foresight, Father Mullins and his parishioners decided to build a large and substantial brick church, the foundation stone of which was laid in May 1911 and the building, completed at a cost of 1200 pounds, opened in March 1914. The newly erected church was a focal point both religiously and socially in the lives of the parishioners.

On Sunday mornings the local dust would be stirred by the arrival of all kinds of horse-drawn vehicles carrying families to Mass. With the tin mining boom and the subsequent increase in population, the church was being filled to capacity and there was already a suggestion of enlarging the building.

This, however, did not happen until 1957, when the original high vaulted structure was harmoniously renovated and enlarged, without losing its original character and imposing appearance. After the death of Father Mullins in 1939, the parishioners erected a memorial to him. When the church was remodelled, a beautiful white Sicilian marble altar was erected in the sanctuary and in it was set the symbol of gallantry, his Military Cross.

ST MARK'S ANGLICAN CHURCH, ARDLETHAN

During the early years of the district's growth, the Anglican (or Church of England as it was then called) community in Ardlethan, Beckom and Kamarah, was ministered to by clergymen from neighboring centres. More regular serves were conducted from 1911 onwards by Rev FG Ward from Barmedman and Rev C Ashley Wilson.

In April 1913 the Parish of Ariah Park-Ardlethan was formed as a parish on the eastern border of the large Diocese of Riverina. The first Rector appointed was Rev W Maitland-Woods. Soon after the formation of the parish, the building of St Mark's Church Ardlethan was completed and the first service was conducted there on October 5, 1913.

The first confirmation service was held at St Mark's on July 25, 1914 when Bishop Ernest Augustus Anderson confirmed eight boys and ten girls. The Ladies Church Guild has been an active body in the life of St Mark's since the early days. As well as raising funds for missions and helping with running costs of the church, the guild had financed many improvements for the interior of the church.

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, ARDLETHAN

It is believed that the ten years' work and influence of the Rev Donald McKay Barnet, of Narrandera, who visited the station homesteads of this area in the early days of settlement, laid the foundation for the Presbyterian Church in Ardlethan.

With the coming of the railway from Temora, the village of Ardlethan was laid out and church services began. With the finding of tin in the area in 1912, a large increase in population followed, so ground for a church was purchased at a public auction. St Andrew's Church was built and dedicated the same year. Ardlethan became a Home Mission station in 1917, and raised to a full sanctioned charge in 1922. The Methodist congregation shared the same building with the Presbyterians until 1921.

Rev AJ Barret, from Tenterfield, was inducted as minister on March 15, 1922. Mr Barrett was the first to occupy the manse, which was a home built for Mrs Fred Watson and later used as a doctor's residence and surgery.

METHODIST CHURCH, ARDLETHAN

The needs of the Methodist community in the Ardlethan area were cared for, firstly from the Temora circuit even before 1903, when the first railway spike was nailed and the line began moving westward.

When Ardlethan was proclaimed a village on February 5, 1908 trustees of the Methodist church purchased some of the earliest allotments. In 1915 both Ariah Park and Ardlethan were separated from Temora circuit and the Ardlethan circuit was established.

From 1918-22 Methodist needs were administered by the Riverina Mission and up to and during 1921 Sunday services were held in the Presbyterian Church. A decision was made to build a brick building for Methodist witness in Ardlethan. However it was a wooden structure which was finally erected on the corner of Barellan and Mithul Street in 1922.

During Rev. Bruce Robinson's ministry in 1966, it was agreed to have monthly united services with the Presbyterian church in Ardlethan. The parsonage in Bygoo Street was sold in 1973. The following year the church building was moved to the grounds of the Presbyterian church, and Rev Weston began his ministry to the combined congregations.

It was also Rev Weston who led the church forward until its inauguration in the Uniting Church on June 22, 1966 and so brought to a close the story of Methodism as such in Ardlethan.

ST BRENDAN'S CATHOLIC CHURCH

In the early days of the Run, the spiritual needs of the people were met by travelling Priests and Ministers. Thus it was that Catholic priests would often perform marriages for other denomination and vice versa.

The earliest church service able to be found is a service conducted by Father Long at Mr Thomas Jones residence, Ganmain on 2 January, 1877. By the early 1890's moves were made to build a Catholic church in Ganmain. It was of pine construction; 50 feet by 25 feet with galvanised iron roof and completed in 1896.

The foundation stone of the Presbytery was laid on 30 June 1907 and opened on 24 October, 1908. St Brendan's Church was Blessed and opened by Bishop Gallagher on Sunday 15 December, 1912 at a cost of three thousand, nine hundred and seventy pounds, nineteen shillings and two pence, with the furnishings costing another two hundred and ninety four pounds, ten shillings.

A magnificent feature of St Brendan's Church is the stained glass windows. The original windows commencing from the south western end of the church, the first window is dedicated by Mr L Carroll to the memory of his deceased parents.

Continuing round the following inscriptions are 'Erected by Mrs Murphy, in memory of her deceased husband', 'Erected in loving memory of Mr Cooney by Mr L Cooney and family', 'Erected by HY Welsch and Mrs Groutsch, in memory of their deceased parents'.

In the Sacristy 'Erected by Rev D Griffin, in memory of his deceased parents'. The window providing light to the space in the sanctuary set apart for the use of the Sisters of St Brendan's is inscribed 'Erected by the Presentation Sisters, in memory of their deceased relatives and friends'.

The next window is the gift of Mrs Kelly and family in memory of Mr P Kelly. The next three 'Erected by Mr Jas Egan, in memory of his deceased parents', 'Erected by the Guinan family in memory of their deceased parents', 'Erected by the Curtis Bros in memory of their deceased mother'.

The large window at the southern gable end was the gift of four old district pioneers, Messrs P Cosgrove, P Kelleher, JD McGrath and Jas Lynam. The series of five smaller windows underneath the gallery was donated by Mrs John Kelly and family. A project was commenced in 1922 by Monsignor Owen Clarke to add to the existing stained glass windows in the Church.

The windows were made by John Ashwin & Co of Dixon Street, Sydney at a cost of One thousand and Ninety nine Pounds; the cost being donated by Parishioners and Church organisations. Another addition that stands out is the bell and bell tower which came from Ireland.

ST PETERS ANGLICAN CHURCH

Ganmain Church of England parish was part of the Coolamon Parish and administered from there by Rev RW Holden. In September 1909 James Lynam subdivided his land and donated one of the blocks to the Church of England for the establishment of a Church.

Immediately the parishioners set to work to raise funds to construct the Church and obtained a quote for 350 pounds. Euchre parties were held to raise funds, as well as show catering and socials. On July 1911, fresh tenders were called and a contract was let for 900 pounds.

By the time the foundation stone was laid, eight hundred and thirty one pounds, eight shillings and sixpence had been raised towards the cost of the Church. The foundation stone was laid 27 October 1911 and the first service was held on 18 August 1912. The Church of England continued to prosper and in October 1924 the foundation stone was laid for St Peters Rectory.

METHODIST CHURCH

"The early pioneers who came into this district, as they settled in began to feel the want for religious service"

These words were written in the original minute book as an introduction of the recorded history of early Christian services held in this district and the building of the first church.

The first church service in the district was held at the home of Mr and Mrs William Brill in February 1892, by Rev M Maddern of Wagga. After this services were held as often as could be arranged in various settlers homes and were so well attended that it was decided to build a church and a committee was formed for that purpose.

On 24 February 1894, the committee purchased a crown land block on the corner of Langham and Gresham Streets for five pounds. The first church, built of timber with an iron roof was completed in May 1894 and was officially opened on 15 June 1894. A new brick Methodist Church was built on the same block and was officially opened and dedicated on 26 June 1912. The old church building became the Sunday School Hall.

On 22 June 1977, Methodist, Presbyterian and Congregational churches in Australia combined and became known as the Uniting Church with over 300 people attending the inaugural Uniting Church service.

METHODIST CHURCH, MATONG

The Matong Methodist Church was opened in May 1927 by the Rev F Walkerden Brown of Wagga. The building was of weatherboard construction with an external porch.

This church replaced the old wooden church which had served for many years and had become unfit for use. Services were held each Sunday, with the Presbyterian congregation worshipping on the first Sunday of each month; the Church of England in the third Sunday and the Methodist on the second and fourth Sundays.

ST PATRICK'S CATHOLIC CHURCH, MATONG

As Father Griffin was the driving force behind the building of St Brendan's Church Ganmain, so Father Own Clarke was cast in the same mould in Matong. In the early 1890's Father Gray from the Parish of Narrandera conducted services at irregular intervals in the home of Mr McCormick at Matong.

Matong was then transferred to the Parish of Junee, with Monsignor Buckley conducting services which were held in the dining room of the Farmers Home Hotel; later when the School of Arts was erected, that building served for 14 years as a house of worship.

Shortly after the completion of St Brendan's Church in Ganmain, Father Clarke concentrated his efforts in building a church in Matong. The foundation stone was laid by Dr Gallagher on 15 October, 1916.

METHODIST CHURCH, MARRAR

Until the year 1910 Methodist in Marrar and surrounding areas had no regular place of worship. Services were conducted in the Union Church at North Berry Jerry which was built as an all denomination church in 1880. The first record of Methodist Church services begins in the year 1880. Services were held intermittently from Junee until 1896 when the Coolamon Circuit was constituted.

Then 'Sister Alice' a Baptist Missionary first conducted all denominations services in Winter's Hall most Methodists attended, but moves were already under way for the erection of a Methodist Church in Marrar. It was a proud day for the Methodists of Marrar when the new church was completed.

The following report, published in the Coolamon review, dated 30 September 1910 gives a full coverage of the opening day.

'For the second time in a few weeks a new church has been opened in the thriving little town of Marrar. Tuesday 20th September the day of the opening dawned bright and fine and soon busy figures were flitting about making the hundred and one preparations necessary for the opening. A little before 3pm the church was packed with worshippers. The dedication service was conducted by the Rev JK Turner of Cootamundra, Chairman of the Riverina district. After the service Mr GL Massingham took a photo of the church and the assembled company which should be of lasting interest. Following the service a Tea Meeting was held in Winter's Hall. Provisions were abundant and of the best, and many there were that partook of them..........The church as well as being used by the Methodists and Sister Alice is offered to any denomination who cares to use it.'

In 1977 the Methodist and Presbyterian Churches were united in Australia and the well-cared for Marrar Methodist Church on the Coolamon Road became the Uniting Church in Australia.

ST PATRICK'S CHURCH, MARRAR

When Marrar was surveyed and proclaimed a village on 27th February 1904 a portion of land was set aside for the erection of a Catholic Church. The trustees were listed as F Gallagher and others. While services were continued in Winter's Hall the Catholic community set themselves the task of raising sufficient finance to build their own church in Marrar.

By 1911 they had reached their goal and in the same year work was commenced on St Patrick's Church, Marrar. A fine brick structure, it stands today as a memorial to their efforts. The church was officially opened and blessed on 28th February 1912.

THE BAPTIST CHURCH

Travelling from Mimosa in a horse and sulky in the year 1909, a missionary sister, 'Sister Alice' visited Marrar to ascertain whether it would be possible to hold Christian services in the town. She was well pleased with what she found in the town and district and believed it would be worthwhile commencing church services for all those who desired to attend.
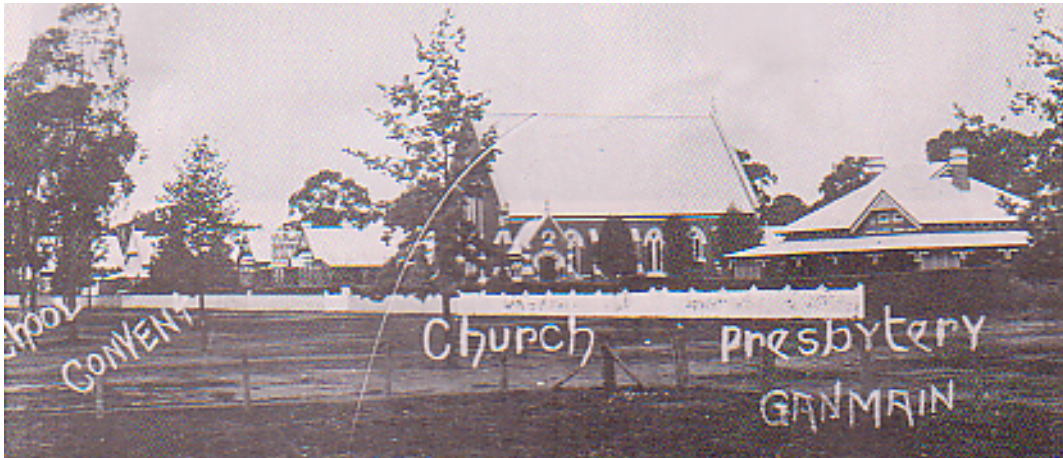
Winter's Hall was booked and at the first service eighty people attended and at the next one hundred. Later a Sunday School for the children was formed and this was well attended. The following year, 1910, the Methodist Church was completed and soon afterwards the Baptist Church and Manse were erected. 'Sister Alice' who had previously lived at Mimosa then moved into the Manse. She remained for over ten years and proved herself to be a Christian sister and friend, visiting and preaching and sharing the gospel message to all. Sister Alice returned home to Sale in Victoria when her mother's health was failing. The Baptist Denomination took over the church which in later years was sold to the Church Of England.

ST FRANCIS CHURCH OF ENGLAND, MARRAR

Beginning with the arrival of Rev Ross Edwards in 1912 services were held in the Methodist Church at Marrar after it was opened, and this amicable arrangement with the Methodist people continued until 1940.

As the congregation continued to increase so did the need for an Anglican Church in Marrar. The Baptist Church in Webb Street, which was completed in 1912, had not bee used for several years and negotiations were begun for its purchase.

After some repairs and additions were carried out, the building was dedicated and opened as St Francis Anglican Church on October 5th, 1940.

ROMAN CATHOLIC SHCOOL, CONVENT, CHRUCH & PRESBYTERY, GANMAIN

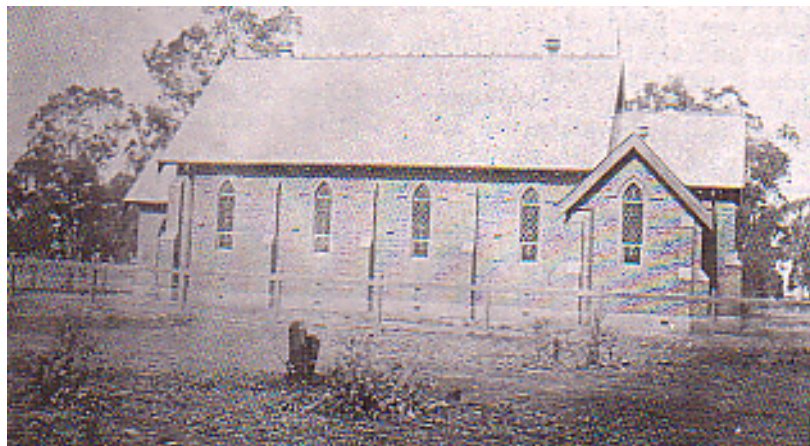ST. BRENDAN'S ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

GANMAIN METHODIST CHURCH C1910

ST ANDREWS CHURCH, COOLAMON

ST MICHAEL'S CHURCH, COOLAMON

CATHOLIC CHURCH, MARRAR

ST PATRICK'S CHURCH, MATONG

BIBLIOGRAPHY

1) **POPPETHEADS & WHEATFIELDS 1985**
   COMPILED BY THE BOOK COMMITTEE OF THE BACK-TO-ARDLETHAN WEEK COMMITTEE

2) **BYGOO AND BEYOND**
   ROB WEBSTER

3) **SOUVENIR OF COOLAMON 1881-1934**
   PUBLISHED BY THE BACK-TO-COOLAMON WEEK COMMITTEE

4) **BACK-TO-COOLAMON WEEK**
   AUGUST 25 TO SEPTEMBER 1, 1956
   PUBLISHED BY THE BACK-TO-COOLAMON WEEK COMMITTEE

5) **COOLAMON '81**
   MARK BRENNAN

6) **THE SETTLERS & SETTLEMENT OF GANMAIN**
   LORNA H. GILMORE

7) **A HISTORY OF MARRAR & DISTRICT**
   MR. ALBY ARMSTRONG

My Country

The love of field and coppice
Of green and shaded lanes,
Of ordered woods and gardens
Is running in your veins.
Strong love of grey-blue distance,
Brown streams and soft, dim skies
I know, but cannot share it,
My love is otherwise.

I love a sunburnt country,
A land of sweeping plains,
Of ragged mountain ranges,
Of droughts and flooding rains.
I love her far horizons,
I love her jewel-sea,
Her beauty and her terror
The wide brown land for me!

The stark white ring-barked forests,
All tragic to the moon,
The sapphire-misted mountains,
The hot gold hush of noon,
Green tangle of the brushes
Where lithe lianas coil,
And orchids deck the tree-tops,
And ferns the warm dark soil.

Core of my heart, my country!
Her pitiless blue sky,
When, sick at heart, around us
We see the cattle die
But then the grey clouds gather,
And we can bless again
The drumming of an army,
The steady soaking rain.

Core of my heart, my country!
Land of the rainbow gold,
For flood and fire and famine
She pays us back threefold.
Over the thirsty paddocks,
Watch, after many days,
The filmy veil of greenness
That thickens as we gaze ...

An opal-hearted country,
A wilful, lavish land
All you who have not loved her,
You will not understand
though Earth holds many splendours,
Wherever I may die,
I know to what brown country
My homing thoughts will fly.

©Dorothea MacKellar