

A History in Three Rivers

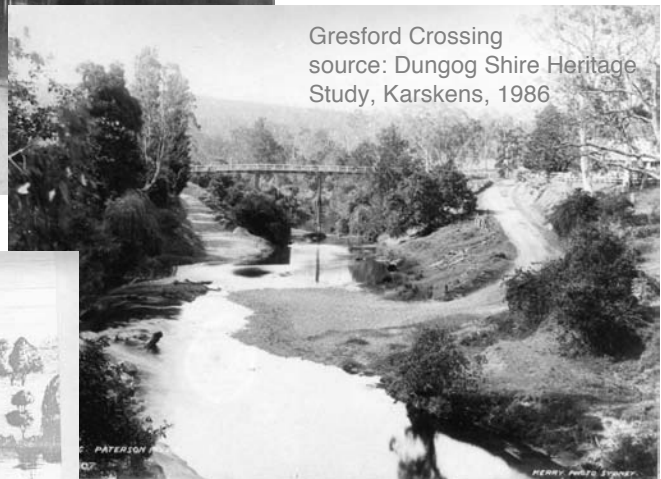
Dungog Shire Heritage Study Thematic History

August 2014

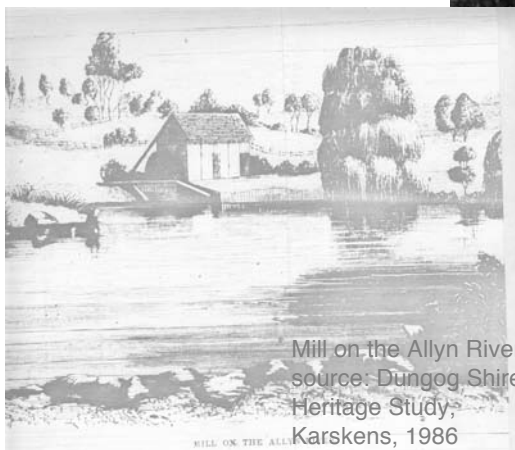
Michael Williams



Ships at Clarence Town
source: Dungog Shire Heritage Study
Karskens, 1986



Gresford Crossing
source: Dungog Shire Heritage
Study, Karskens, 1986



Mill on the Allyn River
source: Dungog Shire
Heritage Study
Karskens, 1986

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Introduction

This thematic history of Dungog Shire is based upon the themes produced by the Office of NSW Heritage and is part of a wider Dungog Shire Heritage Study. Such a thematic approach is intended to bring out a range of factors and features in a regional history that might otherwise go unnoticed in a more standard chronological or narrative historical approach. In addition, while not providing a listing of heritage items in itself, the thematic history is designed to enable the heritage of Dungog Shire to be placed within context more readily than might otherwise be the case.¹

These numerous themes provide an excellent opportunity to highlight the role of many institutions, groups, families and individuals in the history of the Dungog Shire district. As well, they assist in focusing on often forgotten details, whether of domestic life, working life or technology, details of changes and influences that, while often small in themselves, can have a great impact, especially over time.

A shire by the name of Dungog has only existed since 1958 when the Dungog Municipal Council merged with Wallarobba Shire (itself having only just added the Paterson and Vacy districts to its area), to create a new area of local government. Despite the relatively recent re-drawing of boundaries, the historical connections along the river valleys of the Paterson, Allyn and Williams, flowing from the Barringtons to join with the Hunter River, have a validity reaching back before the first European settlers.

The title of this study - *A History in Three Rivers* - is deliberately chosen to highlight the significant role of the three main rivers of the area: the Williams, Paterson and Allyn Rivers.² These rivers provide a unity to the history of the district that the term 'Dungog Shire' does not. While Dungog as a settlement appeared early, it was only one among many such settlements.³ The rivers and their valleys, on the other hand (including of course their many tributaries), have always played a significant role, providing divisions and boundaries, unities and separations that find a natural place in this history.

It has been suggested that this history says more about wealthy males than it does poorer ones and women.⁴ This cannot be disputed, since, as with any history, this work is hostage to its sources and inevitably the wealthy and the prominent leave more in the way of records and evidence. However, within the brief of a heritage study, every effort has been made to include the full range of society and much has been said about tenant farmers, women and workers of various kinds.

Nevertheless, this history too, particularly one commissioned and written to a deadline, must leave out more than can be included. In the past, once the printing was done, a work such as this was doomed to remain largely unmodified. However, modern technology now allows for easy alteration and continual improvement, and it is hoped that the community whose history this is will continue to contribute to and help to refine this work.

¹ For this reason a list of 'Heritage Survivals' is appended at the end of each section. These lists are not intended to be complete but to highlight possible heritage items arising directly out of the history that for many reasons (political, social, legal, etc.) do not tend to make it onto 'official' heritage lists.

² The Williams River was originally named the William River or River William and was gradually transformed into the Williams. It is referred to here always as the Williams River.

³ Where 'Dungog' appears alone it refers to the town itself.

⁴ Dungog Historical Society, Comments, p.1.

Historical Overview & Chronology

1800 – 1830: Early contact & Settlement

The valleys of the Paterson, Allyn and Williams Rivers, to give them their recently bestowed European names, were home to many generations of the Gringai people. From the early 1800s, and with increasing intensity after the late 1820s, large portions of land were granted to various individuals who moved up the valleys establishing farms and attempting to transform the landscape.

At the beginning of this period, exploration up the Hunter River from Newcastle saw Europeans go as far as the navigation on the Williams River. By 1812, a number of small holdings were established around what became Clarence Town and Paterson. It was not until the 1820s that large grants began, at first along the navigable section of the Paterson and Williams Rivers. By 1825, a lockup was established on the Paterson River and the first land grants began to be made higher up both the Williams and Allyn Rivers. In 1830, the 'Limits of settlement' for the Colony of NSW were defined and Durham County was one of the original nineteen counties within these limits.

- 1801 First explorations of Hunter, Williams & Paterson Rivers
- 1804 Convict timber cutters
- 1812 Small holdings begin (Paterson)
- 1821 Major land grants begin (Paterson River)
- 1825 Small holdings begin (Clarence Town)
- 1825 Courthouse & Lockup (Old Banks)
- 1829 Major land grants begin (Williams River)

1830 – 1860: Churches & Schools

Grantees employing convict labour began to establish farms for sheep, cattle and crops such as wheat and corn. The heads of navigation on the Williams and the Paterson Rivers became the transshipment points for the produce of these farms. The William IV was built on the Williams River at Clarence Town - the first ocean-going steamship built in Australia. In 1832, 90 acres were purchased on the Paterson River for a town site (Paterson) and in the same year the settlement of Erringhi changed its name to Clarence Town. Dungog and Paterson received Courts of Petty Sessions in 1833 and postal services were established by 1834.

- 1831 William IV built
- 1833 Court at Dungog
- 1834 School at Lowe's shipyard (Clarence Town)
- 1835 Charley hanged at Dungog
- 1837 Blanket distribution to Gringai people
- 1838 Barracks for troopers (Dungog)

The hanging of a Gringai man at Dungog in 1835 marked a period of conflict. A few years later, a barracks for mounted troopers was built at Dungog and blankets distributed to the Gringai. By the 1840s, four settlements of note – Paterson, Clarence Town, Dungog, and Gresford – were developing with a mix of government services (courts & lockups) and private businesses (inns & stores).

- 1840 Bishop Polding visits Dungog
- 1840 Catholic Chapel Summer Hill
- 1842 St Ann's Church (Presbyterian)
- 1844 Horse race (Clarence Town)
- 1845 St Paul's Church (Anglican)
- 1846 Oddfellows (Paterson)
- 1848 Troopers withdrawn
- 1849 First National School (Clarence Town)

In the generation following the initial grants, a mixed farm economy developed in the three valleys based on a combination of convict labour and free settlers, with the convict element quickly dwindling after 1840 with the ending of transportation. The main crops were wheat, corn, and tobacco, along with sheep and cattle, while timber was also cut. The pattern for both Dungog and Gresford was set from this early time, with these towns positioned at the centre of prosperous agricultural districts supporting their existence and gradual growth. Their relative isolation from larger centres and the

coast also kept them from developing faster, while the size of the Paterson/Allyn Valley relative to the Williams Valley is reflected in the relative size of these two service centres. Clarence Town and Paterson also acted as service centres for their districts, but thrived largely as river ports transshipping goods between settlements further up their respective valleys and the wider world.

National Schools (later Public Schools) were early established at Clarence Town, Glen William, Brookfield and Dungog. In 1852, the Hunter River New Steam Navigation Company was formed by mainly Dungog and Clarence Town based merchants, and a reading room was established in Dungog.

1860 – 1890: Selection & Commerce

As population grew, local communities built their own churches and began to think in terms of wider culture and entertainment. Horse races, cricket and other activities were more frequently organised, and by the 1860s and 1870s so too were Mutual Improvement Societies, and later Schools of Arts, Masonic and Oddfellows societies. Outside government intervention was limited, with its main impact through the establishment of schools and education.

Throughout this first generation after European settlement, as the Gringai people themselves declined in numbers due to murders, disease and intermarriage, the European population was largely divided between relatively few large landowners and many tenants, along with some smaller landowners and those living in the towns. Agricultural production was overwhelmingly dominant, and for smaller farmers this meant mixed crops of wheat, corn and tobacco. For larger landowners, who described themselves as graziers, it was mostly beef cattle. Timber provided the main alternate manner of living off the land at this time, though beekeeping, fruit and vegetable growing, chickens, and a dairy cow would have supplemented most families' incomes.

The first Selection Acts were passed as more churches, particularly Catholic Churches were built in the 1860s, and in 1867 Clarence Town received a Court House. Throughout the 1870s, many one-teacher schools opened around the valleys, as population grew and government funded education expanded. In 1872, a School of Arts began in Dungog and gold mining at Wangat, and two years later the telegraph at Dungog. In 1878, Wade's Cornflour Mill opened at Dungog and in 1880 both Clarence Town and Dungog received new Post Office buildings. In 1882, the last sizeable group of Gringai people was removed from the valleys to a distant mission. Two years later a Dungog branch of the Bank of NSW was established. In 1887, the first Dungog Agricultural Show was held and the following year both a Catholic School and the *Dungog Chronicle* were established in Dungog.

- 1851 National School (Dungog)
- 1852 German vinedressers in Allyn Valley
- 1855 Two Presbyterian Churches at Dungog
- 1858 Rev Vanderkiste lost in Allyn Valley
- 1860 Reading Room (Dungog)

- 1861 First saw mill (steam driven) in Dungog
- 1863 Kendall writes poem *Dungog*
- 1864 Mutual Improvement Society (Dungog)
- 1865 Three schools open (Alison, Croom Park, Fosterton)
- 1869 Courthouse (Clarence Town)
- 1870 St Mary's Catholic Church (Dungog)

- 1871 Summer Hill PS
- 1872 Gold mining at Wangat
- 1875 First saw mill (Paterson)
- 1878 Cornflour Mill (Dungog)
- 1879 Bridge over Williams River (Clarence Town)
- 1882 Gringai removed to Maloga Mission
- 1884 Congregationalist Church (Eccleston)
- 1888 Catholic Convent and School (Dungog)

1890 – 1920: Dairying & Technology

The agricultural landscape began to change with the rise of the dairy industry in the 1890s. From that period on, smaller farmers and tenants had a much more reliable source of income. At the same time, the population of the rural districts increased as selection enabled more to take up farming and as many of the larger estates were subdivided, with existing tenants also often becoming land owners. This coincided with a boom in the timber industry and the coming of rail (which demanded sleepers), creating a long period of prosperity for the entire district, even as the arrival of the railway in 1911 reduced the prosperity of the river ports of Paterson and Clarence Town.

In 1892, Dungog Cottage Hospital began and the following year Dungog Municipal Council was formed. In 1901, Prime Minister Edmund Barton addressed crowds in Dungog in the year the first car made its appearance, while the following year Wade's Cornflour Mill closed and moved to Sydney. In 1904, the telephone was installed at the Dungog post office and in 1906 Durham College opened and Wallarobba Shire was formed. The big event of the period was the coming of the railway through Paterson and Dungog in 1911, with its booming consequences for Dungog and dampening effect on both Clarence Town and Paterson. The following year the Dungog Electric Lighting Co was established and its Picture Palace opened. In 1913, the Williams River Navigation Steamship Co liquidated and in 1914 the Commercial Bank established a branch in Gresford. In 1920, the Dungog Memorial Town Hall was built and jointly occupied by the Municipal Council and the RSL.

1920 – 1950: Tourism & Talkies

Dairying continued to grow as an industry, as motor cars and the railway made the delivery of milk to processing centres easier. Clarence Town and Paterson declined or stagnated, while Gresford and particularly Dungog boomed, added to at Dungog by the building of the Chichester Dam. In 1925, the Barrington Guest House was built and the Dungog and Barrington Tourist League founded. Cinemas began showing movies in all the towns, while the cinema in Dungog was renovated in 1930 in time for the talkies. Dungog received a sewerage system in the 1940, after much political controversy. Country Women's Associations began to be founded, and tennis playing became very popular, as did dancing. During the Second World War as prices rose, dairy farmers first began to complain about the low incomes they were receiving.

The early 20th century brought an increasing range of technology - electricity, motor cars, cinema, lights, and telephones - which, despite the Great War and even the Great Depression, meant a long period of gradually improving standards of living for most. This is not to say that class differences did not exist or that many throughout the district did not continue to live in relative poverty. However,

- 1892 Cottage Hospital (Dungog)
- 1893 Municipal Council (Dungog)
- 1894 Creamery set up by Boydell (Allyn River)
- 1901 Aged pensions awarded
- 1904 Telephone at PO (Dungog)
- 1905 Butter Factory (Dungog)
- 1908 Butter Factory (Gostwyck)
- 1911 Railway reaches Dungog
- 1912 Picture Palace (Dungog)
- 1913 Williams River Shipping Co liquidated
- 1915 School of Arts (Clarence Town)
- 1916 Mt Rivers P&C begun
- 1920 Memorial Town Hall (Dungog)
- 1923 Martin's Creek transferred from Port Stephens Shire
- 1924 Motor Car service Dungog to Chichester
- 1925 Street lights (Dungog)
- 1926 Vacy estate subdivided
- 1928 Tarring of Main St (Dungog)
- 1930 Talking pictures arrive in Dungog
- 1930 Barrington Guest House
- 1936 Electricity beyond Vacy
- 1936 CWA Gresford

between the wars and for many years afterwards the communities of the Dungog Shire district maintained strong social institutions that provided a great many of the social supports required. Hospitals, baby health centres, new entertainment venues, churches, and schools were all provided and supported with funds from community organised activities.

1950 – 1980: Closures & National Parks

The first proposed Tillegra Dam in 1951 was opposed by a community united behind its productive dairying industry. Before that proposal was withdrawn, in 1957, all the private hospitals in Dungog had closed and the year after Wallarobba Shire and Dungog Municipal Council merged into Dungog Shire Council.

Much began to change in the 1960s as women entered the workforce in increasing numbers and as the number of dairy farms began to decline. The resulting fall in the number of families, plus the increasing use to the motor car, led to nearly all the one-teacher schools of the three river valleys closing.

Mains water came to Clarence Town in 1960 and in 1965 Tocal College was founded by the Presbyterian Church. In 1971, Dungog High School opened and the courthouses at Paterson and Clarence Town were converted into museums. The creation of the Barrington Tops National Park further reduced the timber industry and on the Allyn River, the Pender & Foster Mill closed. In 1972, the last cinema of the district, the James Theatre at Dungog, ceased to show films. In 1978, the Upper Allyn company title village was created from the former sawmill workers' village. In 1980, the last blacksmith in Dungog closed.

The bridging of the Williams River at Raymond Terrace and the growth of the two car family meant that the major centres outside the Dungog Shire district, such as Maitland and even Newcastle, were within an easy day's travel. This resulted in the commercial precincts of all the major towns shrinking, sometimes to as little as a single general store and a garage. Clarence Town and Paterson fared the worst in this regard, largely maintaining themselves as commuter suburbs of larger centres outside of the Shire. The lack of employment opportunities for younger people also resulted in increasing numbers leaving the area once their education was completed.

At the same time, the improved transport that saw many leave also began to attract people to a quieter rural lifestyle. A period when smaller subdivision was allowed in the 1970s brought an increase in population density to specific areas. Since the 1980s, regulations have attempted to slow the subdivision of agricultural land, but while slower, much agricultural land has continued to been taken out of production for what has been termed 'lifestyle' use.

1938	Sewerage works begin (Dungog)
1945	Clarence Town receives electricity
1949	Last new school opens (Upper Allyn)
1950	Rotary (Dungog)
1951	Tillegra Dam proposed
1954	Dusodie & Wangat Schools close
1956	Lions Club (Dungog)
1957	Tennis allowed on Sundays (Dungog)
1958	Paterson & Vacy incorporated into Wallarobba Shire
1958	Dungog Shire created
1960	Mains water (Clarence Town)
1962	Cinema closed (Clarence Town)
1965	Tocal College begins
1967	Paterson Courthouse closes
1968	Seaham Weir
1968	Dungog Museum opens
1970	Clarence Town courthouse closes
1971	Dungog High School opens
1973	Public Library (Dungog)
1974	Paterson Museum opens
1975	Summer Hill School closed
1976	Filming of <i>The Outsiders</i> – ABC TV
1979	Filming of <i>The Earthling</i>

1980 – 2012: Lifestyle & Dams

A second Tillegra Dam proposal was made in 1981 and again resisted by a united community. Smaller schools continued to close and even churches, with St Killian's at Brookfield closing in 1982, the year the Barrington Tops National Park was listed as a World Heritage Area. The following year Dark's General Store at Dungog closed and Clevedon Hospital at Gresford the year after that, replaced in 1985 with a Community Health Centre. Croll's Mill at Dungog closed in 1987 and that year a Museum opened in the former Courthouse at Clarence Town.

While many younger people left the valleys as jobs in the timber industry and on farms disappeared, others in search of a rural lifestyle moved into smaller properties. Their need for agricultural education led to the annual Tocal Field Days. Other signs of outside influences on the three valleys are the Dungog Film Society and the annual Pedalfest.

The development of Clarence Town and Paterson into commuter suburbs began to add to their commercial faculties for the first time since the 1950s. In 2006, the Barrington Guest House burnt down, the same year a third Tillegra Dam was proposed, a proposal that split a community now even more anxious about its economic future.

Developments, both social and economic, continue, perhaps symbolised by the first annual Dungog Film Festival in 2007. In 2010, the third Tillegra Dam proposal was withdrawn as some businesses and long-term social institutions close. At the same time, new residents seeking 'lifestyle' changes continue to arrive, adult education was re-established in the district in 2012, and many now find jobs in the Hunter Valley to which they commute.

1980	Stevens Knitting Mill closes
1982	Community work funding
1985	Tocal Field Days begin (Paterson)
1985	Community Health Centre (Gresford)
1986	First computer at Glen William Public School
1986	Last one-teacher school (Eccleston) closes
1987	Croll's Mill closes (Dungog)
1994	Film Society starts (Dungog)
1995	First Pedalfest
2006	Dungog Red Cross finishes
2007	First Dungog Film Festival
2012	Gresford Ladies RSL auxiliary ends
2012	Drovers Ay-One closed
2012	Dungog Community College opens

1. Environment/naturally evolved

- significance independent of human intervention

The Dungog Shire district is situated between the heights of the Barrington Tops and the wide lowlands of the Hunter Valley. The Shire itself lies along the narrow valleys of three main rivers, each with a number of tributaries, which flow down into the Hunter - namely the Williams, Allyn and Paterson Rivers. These valleys have fertile but small river flats and are divided by rough hills of medium height.¹

The Paterson and Allyn Rivers flow from the southern escarpment of the Barrington Tops. They join near Vacy, and the Paterson then joins the Hunter River outside the Shire at Hinton. The Paterson Valley is approximately 76 kms long and usually less than 20 kms wide.² The heads of the valleys around Eccleston and Carrabolla consist of steep uplands of high rainfall. The middle section, to Paterson, consists of undulating slopes and narrow discontinuous floodplains with low rainfall. The final section down to Hinton has higher rainfall again and is continuous floodplain.

The Williams Valley similarly flows down from the Barrington Tops with the head of the valley at Salisbury only a short distance from Eccleston. This river also passes through a section of slopes and narrow floodplains until it is joined by its major tributary, the Chichester, at Bandon Grove. After this point the floodplains are wider and more continuous, passing through Dungog, becoming navigable at Clarence Town and joining the Hunter outside the Shire at Raymond Terrace, at which point it is actually the wider stream.

The pre-European landscape was described as heavily timbered along the rivers with open grassy forest or 'open forest land' behind.³ While many trees have been cleared by European settlers, the hills were perhaps originally more wooded, though parts may have been kept cleared along the travel routes of the Gringai people, while areas protected by fire contained more extensive stands of rainforest. The area around the present town of Paterson, for example, was described as a thickly wooded swamp. Cedar and other timbers were cut within easy reach of the rivers in the early settlement period. Pockets of native growth remain, and in recent times tree re-growth has again covered many of the hills.

The Barrington Tops to the north is a declared World Heritage area that lies partly within the Dungog Shire boundaries and encompasses spectacular rainforest and alpine environments. This includes the southernmost remnants of the Antarctic Beech (*Nothofagus moorei*) on the Upper Allyn River as well as sections of the Gondwana Rainforests of Australia World Heritage Area. The Gondwana Rainforests are "the largest area of subtropical rainforest in the world" including warm temperate and cool temperate rainforest which all occur within the Barrington Tops and Mt Royal National Parks. "These ancient forests are remnants of the vast forests that once covered much of the southern continents. They represent a natural heritage of international significance with a great variety of plant and animal species, which are of considerable value to science and the community."⁴

¹ Healthy Rivers Commission, *Williams River Inquiry*, p.9.

² Skaines, *The Dairy Industry of the Paterson Valley*, p.2.

³ See 3.4 Pastoralism.

⁴ NPWS, *Barrington Tops National Park*, p.6.

Further down the valleys the most significant natural feature within the Shire and considered by some to be of comparable world heritage value is Pilcher's Mountain just a few kilometres from Dungog. 'Pilcher's is on a plane far above, far above, anything else that is remnant vegetation.' It is 'absolute world heritage'.⁵ Formed by tectonic stresses, Pilcher's Mountain is a maze of massive boulders and niche environments containing numerous unique plant species.⁶

Known to local residents from at least the 1860s and no doubt earlier, the area of Pilcher's Mountain was formed into a Crown reserve in 1889.⁷ Little is known about activities, if any, after that (although numerous legends of bushranger treasure were told), until the 1960s and 1970s when cavers began to explore the area, including the Scouts Association. In the 1990s the Crown Reserve status was altered under Environmental Protection legislation and Dungog Shire Council is now responsible for a Management Plan of the area.⁸ The fragile nature of this environment in addition to the potential danger to unguided tourists has led to the spectacular value of this area remaining relatively uninvestigated and unexploited to date.

Another location of significance are the Moonabung Falls (aka Moneybung Falls). These 50 metre high falls are located on the Moonabung Ranges, which overlook the Hunter and Paterson Valleys. The Moonabung Ranges boast spectacular views from the Pacific Ocean to the Barrington Tops.⁹ The Moonabung Falls have been known since at least the 1860s but even today remained relatively unknown.¹⁰ While not the only waterfall in this area, the Moonabung Falls are easily the most spectacular.¹¹

Not far from the Moonabung Falls and within the Webbers Creek catchment that runs into the Paterson River, can be found a glaciated pavement first documented in 1921 that provides evidence of glacial action of 300 million years ago.¹²

Of wider significance within the Shire area are the numerous small pockets of surviving pre-European natural environment.¹³ These are areas in 'bits of the river today that still retain the atmosphere of the way it must have been 200 or 2,000 years ago'.¹⁴ While these are more common in the higher ranges and within the boundaries of the Barrington Tops National Park, many such pockets are known to exist right along the entire length of the Williams at least as far as Clarence Town. A study from the 1990s of 46 dry rainforest stands (15 larger than 20 ha) within the Allyn, Paterson and Williams River valleys determined that 11 rainforest species (5 trees, 1 herb and 5 climbers) reach their southern limits within these valleys. This study also described the then conservation status of these stands as 'unsatisfactory'.¹⁵

⁵ Ken Rubeli, interviewed, 4/3/2012. See Note 7.

⁶ Smith, 'Tectonic and Talus Caves at Pilchers Mountain', pp.11-20.

⁷ For a report on a picnic here, see *Maitland Mercury*, 21/1/1865, p.5.

⁸ Smith, Tectonic and Talus Caves at Pilchers Mountain, pp.16-17.

⁹ http://www.australiaforeveryone.com.au/places_nswgen_falls.htm (accessed, 4/4/2012).

¹⁰ For a description of a picnic and a visit there see *Maitland Mercury*, 11/11/1869, p.2 & *Maitland Mercury*, 22/9/1864, p.2.

¹¹ Archer, *An Environmental & Social History of the Upper Webbers Creek Catchment*, p.6.

¹² Archer, *An Environmental & Social History of the Upper Webbers Creek Catchment*, p.10.

¹³ Information on these surviving pockets comes supplied by Ken Rubeli, a local naturalist who has extensively surveyed the Williams River Valley and its tributaries. Interviewed, 4/3/2012.

¹⁴ Ken Rubeli, interviewed, 4/3/2012.

¹⁵ Turner & Vernon, *Rainforest Stands between Barrington Tops and the Hunter River*, p.465 & p.485.

These pockets of native environment mostly exist where the river channel consists of cliffs and so cattle and other introduced species, including weeds, have been unable to penetrate, and where landowners have had little interest in going. Such pockets have been seen between Tillegra and Tunnibac, near Fosterton, and between Dungog and Clarence Town. More pockets exist on tributaries such as the Chichester below Wangat, which is very pure, with no weeds, and where nature has not been disturbed. Mulconda Creek further up the valley has steep sides along the stream containing gorges and caves. The cliffs above Fosterton are very rugged and retain a feeling of purity. Even on Dungog Common there exist ancient trees.

Perhaps the most significant of these pockets, and one with the potential to be restored, is that on a travelling stock reserve near Tillegra Bridge where less than a square kilometre of 'grasses and other ground flora underneath ironbarks and spotted gums' is to be found.¹⁶ This pocket is however too isolated for animals, there are no bigger predators such as quolls, nor koalas, or ring-tailed possums as these last require hollows found only in older trees. However, this pocket of native environment is also very near one of the very few remaining ancient trees still standing outside the National Park boundaries. Near the Tillegra Bridge there is 'an absolutely ancient falling to bits gum', one that was 'certainly there when the settlers arrived.'¹⁷ This is a remarkable and rare survival that together with the nearby pocket of native plants represents a potential reserve. This possibility is currently the subject of a submission to Dungog Shire Council.

The rainforest stands at Mirari Creek and Pilcher's Mountain are considered to be particularly rich in species, and those at Moonabung Falls, Cabbage Brush Creek and Pilcher's Mountain have previously been recommended for preservation; though this is not considered the limit of stands that could be considered for preservation.¹⁸ While most of these pockets preserve rare native plants species within the Shire, they are generally too small to preserve native animals. One endangered species that does exist within the higher tributaries, such as Mulconda Creek and others which flow into the Williams River above Tillegra, is the Stuttering Frog (*Mixophyes balbus*).

- features which have shaped or influenced human life

In addition to the many areas of environmental significance within themselves, many elements of the natural environment of the Shire are of interest due to the history of human interaction. While little is known of what areas were of special significance to the Gringai people, the sites of some boras and other ceremonial areas have been catalogued.¹⁹

Water and water courses have perhaps done most to influence European settlement within the valleys of the Williams, Paterson and Allyn Rivers. The many rivers, creeks, fords and punt crossings, as well as bridges, have played a major role in shaping not only the routes of roads but also the location of towns and schools.²⁰ Paterson and Clarence Town both lie at points where the depth of their respective rivers first begin to be impossible for boats, and both Gresford and Dungog then lie a good day's walk up river from these points. Vacy sits

¹⁶ Ken Rubeli, interviewed, 4/3/2012.

¹⁷ Ken Rubeli, interviewed, 4/3/2012.

¹⁸ Turner & Vernon, *Rainforest Stands between Barrington Tops and the Hunter River*, p.485 & p.494.

¹⁹ Hardy, Tillegra Dam Aboriginal Archaeology Environmental Assessment Report, pp.33-35.

²⁰ See 3.4 Towns and Villages.

just above the point that the Allyn and Paterson rivers join and where a ford - now replaced by a bridge - once crossed. Wallarobba is approximately half way between Paterson and Dungog, just as Brookfield is mid-way between Clarence Town and Dungog. Bandon Grove is another good day's walk up river from Dungog, while other settlements scattered around the district lie either up smaller valleys or higher up the main rivers at the edge of the Barringtons themselves.

The early prevalence of travel by foot and horse meant that many footpaths, bridle paths, as well as travelling stock routes have played a major role in movement within, as well as in and out of, the Shire area. In contrast to the 'dray roads' which hugged the flats, footpaths and bridle paths would cross the ridges by shorter routes. A path from Gresford to Clarence Town, for example, would have cut across the ridges via Martin's Creek. Little remains of such paths today. As to the bridle paths, many but not all are now roads. Examples of bridle paths not transformed into roads are those between Fosterton and Bandon Grove and from the end of Wordens Rd over to Hilldale.

The attractions of the relatively high rainfall of the upper reaches of the Williams Valley, combined with a rare geological site at Tillegra, have greatly shaped human life within the Shire in a unique sense. The Tillegra area is a potentially outstanding location for the building of a major dam, and the attraction of this rare feature from an engineering perspective along with the desire to utilise the water of the Williams River for the long-term needs of populations outside the Shire has led to the perhaps unique situation of a specific location being proposed, protested against and withdrawn as a dam site on no less than three occasions within a little more than half a century.

The attractions of the higher rainfall and hence water flows, coming off the Barrington Tops down into the Dungog Shire district were evident over 100 years ago when the Chichester Dam was proposed and built with minimum, if any protests.²¹ It is unclear if the Tillegra site was examined at that time but the building of the Chichester Dam meant that further dam proposals were not made for two generations. The Chichester Dam itself had many impacts upon the district including the initial impact of the many workers living at Wangat during its construction, the creation of a boom in the timber industry, and the attraction of many tourists who enjoyed its location as a popular picnic spot. This last aspect was enhanced by the Hunter Water Board's employment of the curator of the Sydney Botanical Gardens in a beautification scheme begun in 1928. The project was supervised by Chief Engineer Corlette, after whom Corlette Drive is named.²²

In 1951 it was announced that: 'A major dam ... is likely to be built on the Williams River'. This was to be 'at Tillegra about seven miles from Dungog'. At the same time a 'protest meeting at Tillegra' was held.²³ The arguments and protests over the flooding of the Williams Valley by a dam at Tillegra went on for at least four years when in 1955, 'over 30 residents of the Tillegra area and others affected by the proposed dam at Tillegra, showed appreciation of the services rendered by Mr J. A. Ferguson in preventing the carrying out of the proposal'. It was stated at the time that: 'The loss of 30 or 40 farms would have meant a lot to the town and to the [butter] factory'.²⁴

²¹ Healthy Rivers Commission, *Williams River Inquiry*, p.10.

²² Armstrong, *Pipelines and People*, p.97.

²³ *Dungog Chronicle*, 22/8/1951, p.2.

²⁴ *Dungog Chronicle*, 3/8/1955, p.2.

While not directed at the Tillegra site, a number of dam proposals were made in subsequent years, such as in 1965 when there was talk of a dam on the Barrington Tops, and again in 1978 with talk of a dam on the Williams above Salisbury, with reference to the fact that a dam 'at Tillegra would be strongly objected to.... There is too much valuable arable land in this area'.²⁵

In 1981 it was announced that: 'Landholders [are] totally opposed' to 'a water storage on the Williams River at Tillegra'. A 'Save the Williams Valley Committee' was formed and it was declared that the loss of \$1,000,000 in revenue to Dungog would result from the effects on this dairying area.²⁶ Three years later, in 1984, the argument continued with announcements that the 'Save the Williams Valley Committee refuses to accept defeat' and further that 'the committee is not aware that any land has yet been bought'.²⁷ But it was not until 1989 with a 'protest rally on council steps' and declarations of 'Damn the Dam!' that the government began to listen to the views of the local community.²⁸ Finally, it was announced in 1990 that the dam proposal would be withdrawn.

Then in November 2006, the NSW government for a third time announced its intention to build a dam at Tillegra. This was the most serious attempt to date, as this time the water authority was authorised to begin buying property and this, combined with a much impoverished valley due to the decline of the dairy industry, meant that Hunter Water was able to purchase nearly all the land required. This land buying resulted in a substantial displacement of communities and families who had resided in the Williams Valley for many generations. Additionally, the Dungog Shire community was more divided than ever before with significant elements supporting a dam for economic reasons, while the main arguments against the dam were environmental. This time protests continued for four years until, in November 2010, it was announced that the Tillegra Dam would not go ahead.

The Tillegra site's combination of geology and water resources has influenced human life within and without Dungog Shire in ways that are not only significant in themselves but which are perhaps unique in the history of community protest and governmental decision-making.

Heritage Survivals

- Pilcher's Mountain
- Antarctic Beeches
- Tillegra native pocket
- Tillegra ancient tree
- Scattered pockets of native environment – dry rainforest
- Oft proposed Tillegra Dam site

²⁵ *Dungog Chronicle*, 17/3/1965, p.1 & 21/6/1978, p.3.

²⁶ *Dungog Chronicle*, 1/4/1981, p.1.

²⁷ *Dungog Chronicle*, 6/6/1984, p.1.

²⁸ *Dungog Chronicle*, 31/5/1989, p.1.

2. Peopling Australia

2.1 Aboriginal [experiencing and remembering Aboriginal cultural identity & interactions]¹

Territory – early contact - numbers

The area which is now Dungog Shire seems to have overlapped at least two major tribal groups of the broader Hunter River Valley and coastal region; the Wonnarua of the Hunter Valley and the Worimi of the Port Stephens coast area. Within the Williams, Paterson and Allyn River Valleys and continuing as far as the Barrington Tops were the family groups of the Gringai. The consensus is that the Gringai were not a separate tribe but a sub-group of one of the two region's tribes, though which one is in some doubt, with perhaps the Wonnarua being the more likely.² A map drawn by Charles Boydell who had much contact with members of the Gringai, even has a spur of their territory stretching as far as Singleton.³ These various Aboriginal groups, including those as far away as the Awabakal on Lake Macquarie, had languages sufficiently related that a speaker of one could make themselves understood to the speaker of another.⁴

In 1845, Dr McKinlay, a Dungog based doctor, in answer to a circular sent out by a NSW parliamentary committee, reported that the 'District of Dungog' (which he described as 'from Clarence Town to Underbank'), had 63 aborigines, made up of 46 'men and boys', 14 women and three children. McKinlay also estimated that this was only half the number of ten years ago due to diseases which affected the women and children in particular.⁵ These estimates do not appear to include the Gringai of the Paterson or Allyn Valleys who can perhaps be assumed to have been of at least similar numbers. If 63 represent the number of survivors after 15 years of European settlement and a wave of introduced diseases, then the total Gringai at the time of white encroachments into their valleys was perhaps at least 300.

The numbers given by McKinlay are among the earliest recorded, while recollections from much later times provide somewhat higher figures: 'The aboriginals were numerous, there being then three or four hundred then living in the district, but they were all practically civilised'.⁶ 'At the time I speak of, Dungog might be described as a collection of 4 or 5 houses, erected on sites and along a road carved out of primeval forest that sheltered in force the aboriginal and the marsupial. Yes, many a time I have seen several hundred blacks camped at various points between Abelard and Dowling Streets, and many a time, too, have I shot possums on the Court House Hill, and what was afterwards called Barney's Hill'.⁷ These reports of old-timers refer to perhaps the 1850s and 1860s and would imply larger numbers than the more careful reports of Dr McKinlay of 1845 or blanket distribution lists. It is possible these later figures are either the exaggerations of time or that they represent

¹ This theme has used only sources directly related to Aboriginal people of the Williams, Paterson and Allyn Valleys rather than attempting the perhaps too common practice of extrapolating from other groups and regions. However, much useful extrapolation about Aboriginal practices in the Paterson Valley can be found in Archer, Social and environmental change as determinants of ecosystem health, Chapter 3, The Indigenous Era, pp.73-118.

² For a discussion of the conflicting evidence see Miller, *Koori: A Will to Win*, pp.12-14 & Archer, Social and environmental change as determinants of ecosystem health, p.85.

³ James Boydell, sketch map, in Howitt, A. W., [Notes on the Gringai tribe].

⁴ See tribal map from Charles Martin in Aborigines of the Hunter by Helen Brayshaw in Heath, "Muloobinbah", p.40. Threlkeld, *Sydney Gazette*, 16/7/1836, p.2.

⁵ Replies of Dungog Bench, *Report from the Select Committee on the Condition of the Aborigines, 1845*, p.6.

⁶ *Dungog Chronicle*, 18/9/1903.

⁷ *Dungog Chronicle*, 1/4/1904.

memories of special gatherings either before an attack or for purposes of a corroboree, which would have brought in people from outside the valleys of the Williams, Paterson and Allyn.⁸

Many place names remain from the Gringai, not least the name Dungog itself which is reputed to mean 'clear hills', though is more likely to have identified a specific hill just to the north of the settlement that was first referred to as 'Upper William' before being known as Dungog.⁹ Other Gringai names such as Wangat, Caningulla and Wallarobba appear to have been clan or family group names, or at least the names the clan or family group gave their localities.¹⁰ The Gringai word 'wilhurgulla', which became the name of the Hooke family estate 'Wirragulla', reputedly meant, 'a place of little sticks', came from the habit of making fires with the little sticks which dropped from the trees growing there.¹¹ Clarence Town was for a time known as Erringi – meaning black duck – before its shipbuilding industry led it to be renamed after a Duke of Clarence with navy connections. Old maps sometimes give a Gringai name for a creek or location later changed; such as Jerusalem Creek being the Monduk – meaning fertility.

Little is known of the specific customs or favoured places of the Gringai. Charles Boydell reports seeing pademelon hunts in which boys drove the animals out of the bush and any game speared was cooked and eaten immediately 'with great delight'.¹² We know of prohibitions on the uninitiated seeing certain items under penalty of death.¹³ A 'keeparra' or initiation ground is reported is near Gresford.¹⁴ Ceremonial meetings took place either at specific times or, as with one account of a 'karabari' in 1845 or 1846 held by 'the blacks of Dungog', for special purposes such as the appearance of a comet.¹⁵ Conflicts between groups also took place, such as those in 1844 and again 1846 when 'the Dungog and Gloucester tribes' attacked those 'of the Stroud and Booral tribes'.¹⁶

That so little is known of the habits and culture of the Gringai is testimony to the swiftness with which they were destroyed as a separate people. This history of first contact and disappearance of a distinct Gringai people begins with European explorations in the 1820s up the valleys of the Hunter River tributaries. Soon after this, land grants were made and convicts and overseers sent in to begin clearing land and establishing farms for sheep, cattle and agriculture. Across the ridges to the east of the Williams River, the Australian Agricultural Company (AAC) was also established with much interaction occurring between the districts.

⁸ Mathews, The Keeparra Ceremony of Initiation, *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, Vol. 26, pp.320-340.

⁹ One of the first European explorers of the land of the Gringai commented that Aborigines had names 'for every inequality of the surface of the land, each water hole and bend in the streams have their distinctive name ... each variety of timber is named; peculiarly formed trees are also noted'. See, Les Dalton, 'Surveyor George Boyle White', *Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society*, December 1, 2008.

¹⁰ Special bundles: Aborigines 1833-44: Papers dealing with the issue of blankets, and including returns of the native population in the various districts, Return, May 1837 and May 1838 - Upper Williams, Thalaba, Dungog.

¹¹ <http://www.ancestryaid.co.uk/boards/genealogy-lookup-requests/20069-john-hooke-1789-1845-mary-ann-beale-1794-1864-a.html> (accessed 4/6/2010).

¹² Sullivan, *Charles Boydell*, p.26.

¹³ Threlkeld, 'Mission to the Aborigines, Annual Report 1835', *Sydney Gazette*, 16/7/1836, p.2.

¹⁴ Mathews, 'The Keeparra Ceremony of Initiation', p.334.

¹⁵ Fraser, *The Aborigines of NSW South Wales*, p.23.

¹⁶ *Maitland Mercury*, 13/4/1844, p.3 & *Maitland Mercury*, 21/10/1846, p.2.

Nothing is known about the first contact between the Gringai and the Europeans who made their way up the Williams, Paterson and Allyn rivers, though when such strangers did first enter the valleys, either as timber cutters or surveyors, it would not have been a total surprise. The local Gringai would have been told via messengers long before they saw their first white men of the arrival of this new element into their world. Early signs were not good, and as quickly as 1804 it was considered necessary to send armed men with the cedar cutting parties travelling up the various rivers.¹⁷ Although, initial reports from the Australian Agricultural Company occupying land across the ridge from the Williams Valley are of friendly interaction.

Conflict – two cases – aftermath - massacres

While little is known about this earliest period of contact, within a few short years a number of conflicts occurred. The earliest reported conflict that may have involved members of the Gringai occurred in 1827 on the Paterson River near where the 'border' between the Wonnarua and the Gringai may have been. A convict shepherd was speared in reprisal for killing a dog and, in return, twelve aboriginal men were reported killed on the estate of Edward Gostwyck Cory, though he denied this.¹⁸ The skeptically received account was that, under the threat of attack, the servants of Edward Cory in defending themselves left 12 men dead.¹⁹

A little further up the Paterson River, a shepherd on Mr John Phillip Webber's farm who disappeared was suspected of having been killed in revenge over a previous dispute.²⁰ While two more shepherds were also reported killed by what were then referred to by the newcomers as 'William's River people'.²¹ By 1830, numbers on the lower Paterson River had fallen so much that many survivors from this area, with its longer period of European penetration close to the Hunter River, began 'coming in'; that is, accepting food in return for work or for refraining from stealing.²²

Wong-ko-bi-kan

In 1834, the first individual member of the Gringai people that can be identified by name appears in the records. He was called Wong-ko-bi-kan, also known as Jackey. By this period, settlers and their sheep had occupied much of the narrow Williams River Valley and the Gringai found their camps within easy reach of these newcomers. According to newspaper and court accounts, the spearing of a number of sheep by some Gringai people inspired a group of shepherds to make an armed approach early one morning to a camp thought to contain the sheep killers.²³

In the confusion that morning a spear was thrown and a man named John Flynn hit. Not being immediately disabled Flynn walked some 20 miles to Paterson where soon after being seen by a doctor he died. At the time of the spearing, chase was given and Wong-ko-bi-kan was apprehended as the only person who could have thrown the spear. The remarkable thing

¹⁷ Walsh, *Voices from Tocal*, pp.74-75.

¹⁸ Walsh, *Voices from Tocal*, p.77, Sullivan, Charles Boydell, p.214, *The Monitor*, 9/3/1827, p.2.

¹⁹ *Sydney Gazette*, 24/3/1827, p.3.

²⁰ *The Australian*, 14/3/1828, p.2 & Walsh, Heartbreak and Hope, p.180.

²¹ Sokoloff, *Aborigines in the Paterson Gresford Districts*, p.40.

²² Walsh, *Voices from Tocal*, p.80.

²³ http://www.law.mq.edu.au/research/colonial_case_law/nsw/cases/case_index/1834/r_v_jackey/ (accessed 15/2/2012) & *Sydney Gazette*, 9/8/1834, p.2.

about this case is not that a fight should have broken out, or that a person was killed and another arrested for it, but that, generally, sympathy seemed to lie with Wong-ko-bi-kan.

Wong-ko-bi-kan's trial, with the Rev Threlkeld acting as interpreter, was held in Sydney, to which he was brought in chains on a steamer.²⁴ Newspapers report that many, including the judge, saw the actions of the shepherds in approaching the Gringai camp the way they did as provocative and Wong-ko-bi-kan's actions as understandable. The trial evidence discusses the use of a member of another tribe to help track people, also of the quick gathering of men and arms after the 'attack'. The admissibility of evidence by natives is discussed and something of the relations between the Gringai and shepherds are also seen.²⁵

Despite the sympathy, Wong-ko-bi-kan was trapped within the mechanism of British justice, and the only result of the Judge's sympathy was that instead of being hanged, he was sentenced to transportation - in this case to Van Diemen's Land:

Jackey, an aboriginal native, convicted of the manslaughter of John Flynn, at William's River, on the 3rd April last, to be transported out of the colony for the term of his natural life. The unhappy creature seemed totally unconscious of what was passing while he was being sentenced to perpetual exile.²⁶

Jackey [Wong-ko-bi-kan] is reported to have died before the end of the following month in His Majesty's Colonial Hospital Van Diemen's Land on October 29th, 1834.²⁷

Charley

It is not known if Wong-ko-bi-kan's fate made relations between the Gringai and the new arrivals any worse, but, at the beginning of the year after Wong-ko-bi-kan's arrest and death, a reward was offered for 'an Aboriginal Black named Jemmy' for 'many outrages'.²⁸ Then in May the same year, not one but five shepherds were killed in a more obviously organised attack and this time no sympathy was aroused. As before, a Gringai man was charged with murder; known to us only as Charley, this time, not only was he sentenced to hang, but, in an exceptional move, he was ordered to be hanged in Dungog as a warning to his fellow Gringai.

The circumstances surrounding the events for which Charley was accused are confusing, with a number of contradictory newspaper accounts at the time based on rumours and guesses. They begin with the news of the killing of the five men and continue with various accounts which range from reports of a general uprising of all Gringai intent on wiping out the new arrivals, to what seemed a greater fear - that bushrangers were joining with Aboriginal people to create a more formidable threat.²⁹

²⁴ *The Australian*, 6/5/1834, p.2.

²⁵ *Sydney Gazette*, 12/8/1834, pp.2-3 & trial documents (see note 23).

²⁶ *Sydney Gazette*, 2/9/1834, p.2.

²⁷ Jackey (an aboriginal native), CON31-1-26, p.16, Conduct Registers, Archives Office of Tasmania.

²⁸ Mackay to Paterson Magistrate, 21/1/1835 (Dungog Magistrates' Letterbook). See also *Government Gazette*, 30/5/1835 & 15/7/1835.

²⁹ Miller, *Koori: A Will to Win*, p.52; *The Australian*, 22/5/1835, p.2; *The Colonist*, 11/6/1835, p.4; *The Sydney Herald*, 1/6/1835, p.2; *The Sydney Herald*, 11/6/1835, p.2; R v Charley: 1835 – Macquarie University, Original Documents on Aborigines and Law, 1797-1840: http://www.law.mq.edu.au/research/colonial_case_law/nsw/other_features/correspondence/documents/document_3/ (accessed 17/2/2012).

All this occurred after May 1835 with Charley arrested and put on trial in the Supreme Court by August. Once again Threlkeld acts as interpreter, and it is from his account based on conversations with Charley as he escorts him to Dungog that we are able to catch a glimpse into the thoughts of one member of the Gringai people, and a little into the Gringai people's view of these events. The newspaper and court accounts all interpret the actions of the Gringai as a form of warfare and revenge for the actions of either the men killed specifically or of European acts in general; a response that was understandable to the Europeans and in fact expected by them. Threlkeld, however, reports that:

In August last I was again subpoenaed to the Supreme Court, in consequence of outrages having been committed by the Aborigines in the vicinity of Williams' River; when another Black, named Charley, was found guilty of murder, which he did not deny, even when arraigned, but pleaded in justification the custom of his nation, justifying himself on the ground that, a Talisman, named Mura-mai, was taken from him by the Englishman, who with others were keeping a Black Woman amongst them, was pulled to pieces by him, and shewn to the Black Woman, which, according to their superstitious notions, subjects all the parties to the punishment of death; and further, that he was deputed with others, by his tribe, to enforce the penalty, which he too faithfully performed.³⁰

Thus Charley, the first and only man to be hanged in Dungog, was both an enforcer of one law and the victim of the enforcement of another set of laws. Charley, and his death by hanging in the spring of 1835, most likely next to the newly built court house and lockup at the newly named (in the Gringai language), village of Dungog, marks the passing of the rule of Gringai law and the imposition of the newly arrived 'British law'.³¹

Despite the purpose in carrying out the execution at Dungog as a demonstration to the Gringai people, Threlkeld makes no mention of their presence:

... the executioner then arrived, and we walked to the fatal drop through an escort of military, he kneeled and prayed, we ascended the gallows, he stood firmly, saying, "I am now cast away for death; ..."³²

The trial and hanging of a single man known to us only as 'Charley' for what was known to be an organised attack feared by some to be a declaration of war, leads to speculation about other deaths not so well reported at the time. A number of other Gringai men were identified as involved in the killings; there are reports of others having been arrested and of at least one death at Paterson while 'attempting to make his escape'.³³ As well, two other names (Tom and George) appear on the docket of Charley's trial but are crossed out. What happened to all these men? A story is also told (that perhaps first appeared in print in 1922), of a group of settlers from the Williams Valley who set out after the perpetrators of the killings and having caught up with a group of native people high in the Barrington's, attacked and pushed many over a cliff.³⁴ This story cannot now be verified, but the overall silence regarding any revenge, arrests, deaths in custody or any action other than the hanging of the lone Charley,

³⁰ Threlkeld, 'Mission to the Aborigines, Annual Report 1835,' *Sydney Gazette*, 16/7/1836, p.2.

³¹ 'It was deemed necessary, for the tranquility of those disturbed Districts, that Charley should be executed at a place called Dungog, nigh to the scene of violence ...' Threlkeld, "Mission to the Aborigines, Annual Report 1835," *Sydney Gazette*, 16/7/1836, p.2. Threlkeld nor any other source specifies the exact location of the gallows, however, next to the place of imprisonment was usual.

³² Threlkeld, 'Mission to the Aborigines, Annual Report 1835,' *Sydney Gazette*, 16/7/1836, p.2.

³³ *The Colonist*, 18/6/1835, p.6 & *Sydney Gazette*, 27/6/1835, p.2.

³⁴ *Wingham Chronicle*, 25/4/1922, p.2.

suggests that actions similar to, if not actually those of, the cliff side massacre, may have taken place.³⁵

That many actions took place that would not have been reported was the opinion of at least one contemporary of Charley's who wrote that the 'natives':

... are not sufficiently protected from the insolence and outrage of Convicts who in the service of gentleman squatters (i. e. the large settlers who have stations far in the interior for the maintenance of their superabundant flocks and herds) and out of the reach almost of a magistrate, offend and ill-treat the poor blacks with impunity.³⁶

Despite the capture and hanging of Charley and possible actions by the settlers, troubles continue with it reported that: 'The shepherds have so repeatedly been attacked by the blacks and forced to flee for their lives, that they now refuse to go out with their sheep. Five sheep stations were plundered by them lately, in the course of a single week.'³⁷ Dungog Magistrate Thomas Cook in the beginning of 1836 is fearful of a rescue attempt being made on 'Black' prisoners being sent to Newcastle and requested two troopers from Maitland; this was granted.³⁸ While in May 1836, Lawrence Myles, J.P., requested mounted police citing 'intelligence that the Blacks are becoming more troublesome'.³⁹

However by 1837, relations with the original inhabitants appear to have improved from the European settlers' viewpoint, although still perceived as delicate. The new Dungog-based Police Magistrate Cook, for example, exercised his discretion when he felt it advisable to ignore the recently arrived McAuthy, despite a reward being posted for this Aboriginal man with the Scottish name. The magistrate felt that the removal of two other Aboriginal people, named Calkie and Carbon Paddy (presumably by arrest), had had an 'effect'.⁴⁰

By the end of 1838 this same Magistrate Cook wrote to the Colonial Secretary that 'the conduct of all the Blacks in this neighbourhood has been quiet and praiseworthy during the last two years'. Cook wrote this as part of his 'Return on Natives taken at blanket distribution' for 1838. The magistrate also described how only those 'most worthy of the boon' were selected. This good conduct Cook feels to be due to the amended Licensing Act, Oct 1835, which he wrote had effected a good reform on 'all classes of this anomalous community'.⁴¹

Blankets – disease – starvation – ineffectual law

That the Police Magistrate felt he could judge the worthiness of the remaining Gringai people is perhaps a sign that the relations between the new settlers and the old residents had reached a new phase. There is mention of starvation, of epidemic diseases and the ineffectualness of the newly imposed legal system to protect those no longer allowed to protect themselves. Armed conflicts on any scale are not recorded, though violence on an individual level is. The Gringai remain outsiders to the new society which was evolving, with individual Gringai appearing rarely in the record. People with such names as Combo

³⁵ For a detailed analysis of the evidence of what may have occurred see, 'Massacre in the Williams River Valley', *Dungog Chronicle*, 10/7/2013, p.8.

³⁶ *Sydney Gazette*, 27/6/1835, p.2 & Sokoloff, *Aborigines in the Paterson Gresford Districts*, p.44.

³⁷ *The Colonist*, 1/10/1835, p.5.

³⁸ Cook to Patterson Bench, 21/1/1836, (Dungog Magistrates' Letterbook).

³⁹ Myles to Colonial Secretary, 15/5/1836, (Dungog Magistrates' Letterbook).

⁴⁰ Cook to Colonial Secretary, 13/3/1837, (Dungog Magistrates' Letterbook).

⁴¹ Cook to Colonial Secretary, 31/12/1838, (Dungog Magistrates' Letterbook).

and Brandy come into view, with others simply referred to as ‘a native’ or perhaps ‘a half-caste’.

In the absence of armed conflict, the government attitude was generally to keep the ‘native blacks’ peaceful through minor support, protection and handouts. In the 1830s, this took the form of the NSW Colonial government distributing blankets to ‘deserving’ natives. The purpose of the blanket distribution was made plain in the circular of 1837, which requested that:

you will give the preference to such Individuals as may have distinguished themselves by any good Behaviour,--marking the Conduct of those who may have evinced a disposition to be troublesome, by omitting the bounty to them ...⁴²

Blankets were handed out through local magistrates, who were required to list the names and a few details of those receiving these blankets.

A result of the bureaucracy that inevitably accompanies any government handout is that we know the names of many Gringai people living in and around Dungog district at this time. Thus we know that in 1837 there lived in the Dungog area a young man (the return lists his probable age as 23) by the name of Mereding who was recorded as having two wives. Mereding was also known as King Bobby, and his tribal or clan designation was ‘Canninggai’. The following year Mereding also received a blanket, this time accompanied by other Canninggai men such as the older Dangoon, thought to be 51 and also called Old Bungary, and the more middle aged Tondot (36 years old) known as Jackey. Also in 1837, but from the Wallarobba clan or group, blankets were given to the 30 year old Oderdare, who had two wives and two children, though these last were recorded as dead. With Oderdare came the young men Guiwa and Muincalbitt (perhaps 18 years old) and the even younger Corang (aged 15). In 1838, from the Wangat group, we know of the 50 year old Berindrigan with his four children, and of the 17 year old Kuanga, and also the older Boomikan, who was also called Harlequin Bill.⁴³

In 1837, Magistrate Thomas Cook recorded the total number of natives to be 144; those receiving blankets were 54, not receiving blankets 32, male children 14, females who received blankets (or a share) 30, females not receiving blankets 7, and female children 7.⁴⁴ Dr McKinlay of Dungog reported that blankets were pinned across the chests with a bone peg and in March 1837, Thomas Cook describes these blankets as a ‘comfort of the naked, houseless Blacks’ ‘during the inclemency of winter’.⁴⁵

That the Gringai were in increasing need of assistance was obvious by this time, though whether blankets made much difference is doubtful. The great impact of introduced diseases on the original inhabitants is well recorded in Sydney, and at each stage of the European

⁴² Circular, Colonial Secretary’s Office, Sydney, 1837.

⁴³ Special bundles: Aborigines 1833-44: Papers dealing with the issue of blankets, and including returns of the native population in the various districts, Return, May 1837 and May 1838 - Upper Williams, Thalaba, Dungog.

⁴⁴ Return, 1837, Thomas Cook, JP. Special bundles: Aborigines 1833-44: Papers dealing with the issue of blankets, and including returns of the native population in the various districts. (Assuming this to be for the Williams River Valley above Clarence Town only, then these figures compare well with those of Dr McKinlay’s of 1845.)

⁴⁵ Sokoloff, *Aborigines in the Paterson Gresford Districts*, p.46 & Cook to Colonial Storekeeper, 13/3/1837, (Dungog Magistrates’ Letterbook).

expansion across the continent. On the Hunter River just before settlers entered the Williams, Paterson and Allyn River Valleys it was reported that ‘men and women, especially the latter, are actually rotting from the face of the earth’.⁴⁶

These new diseases, and the subsequent population decline, seem to have affected women and children more than men. Syphilis also causing sterility, and the early response of killing all mixed race children both lessened the population and impeded the development of resistance to these ‘white’ diseases.⁴⁷ The spread of sexually transmitted diseases, or other diseases for that matter, was made worse by the common practice of convicts taking an Aboriginal mistress. An ACC report, for example, estimated that 10% of their workforce had VD and the case of Mr Flitt’s ‘seraglio’, mentioned below, would seem to be not unusual.⁴⁸ In 1847, measles were reported to have caused the deaths of some thirty children of the Gringai in a single season. In a population of only 250 or so people, this figure would have represented at least 30% of the younger generation in a single winter.

It was not only direct violence and the diseases brought by new arrivals which destroyed the local culture and population. The impact of these newcomers through their use of the land, occupying it in a new way, cutting down trees and introducing new types of animals, caused great changes in the environment and in the food supply of the Gringai. There are reports of food scarcity in 1831 on the Hunter River and 1845 on the Williams.⁴⁹ Gradually deprived of food resources, with their family groups more than decimated by diseases, the remaining members of the Gringai were easy targets for the many ‘half-civilized Europeans’ who attempted to take advantage of the ‘blacks’ in a variety of ways. Blaming native robbery in order to be able to draw extra rations from the store was one common method.

Thereafter murders and deaths are frequently reported, but they take on the nature of mostly individual or, at most, small gang crimes of passion and revenge as the ‘anomalous community’ settles into a sometimes uneasy period of co-habitation between the old locals and those who quickly began to consider themselves locals. One major difficulty was fitting the newly dispossessed within the new legal system, as demonstrated in a number of cases originating in what was then the Dungog Police District.

An illustration of how Aboriginal people were not part of the legal system occurs when a man named Flash Jemmy is shot:

The Aboriginal known by the name of “Flash Jemmy,” who it is supposed murdered two children at the Paterson, was captured on Tuesday last near the William’s River by a ticket-of-leave man, in the service of Captain Livingstone. In the scuffle he endeavoured to escape, and after some struggle was shot dead. It is to be hoped that this man will get some indulgence for his brave conduct.⁵⁰

The reason that the suspicion alights on this black is, that some time before the unfortunate father had attempted to take a gun from him and hinder him from shooting ducks, and it is supposed that the *Brute* has taken his revenge on the poor helpless children. Three blacks have been lodged in Newcastle Goal on suspicion of being concerned in the murder.⁵¹

⁴⁶ Miller, *Koori: A Will to Win*, p.34. *Sydney Gazette*, 28/6/1826, p.2.

⁴⁷ Miller, *Koori: A Will to Win*, p.50 & Replies of Dungog Bench, p.6.

⁴⁸ Walsh, *Voices from Tocal*, p.79.

⁴⁹ Miller, *Koori: A Will to Win*, p.48 & Replies of Dungog Bench, p.6.

⁵⁰ *The Australian*, 17/4/1841, p.2.

⁵¹ *The Sydney Herald*, 5/4/1841, p.3.

It is reported that they have confessed the murder of the boy and girl from motives of revenge.⁵²

Although there was not the shadow of a doubt, morally speaking, as to Jemmy's guilt, it is very probable that the legal evidence (the evidence of the blacks not being admissible) would have been insufficient to procure a conviction.⁵³

The inability of the legal system to include the Gringai is even more clearly shown in a case of 1837. Three years after Wong-ko-bi-kan had defended his camp against armed intruders and two years after Charley had attempted to enforce tribal law on those who had broken it, a number of Charley's fellow Gringai now approached the representative of the legal system, now been imposed on them, with a complaint. The Dungog Police Magistrate Thomas Cook wrote to 'The Hon E. Deas Thomson', the Colonial Secretary, seeking advice in how to proceed in a 'case of native wives being detained against their will and that of their friends'. After a 'formal complaint by a respectable [white] person' was made in favour of five aboriginals, Cook interviewed the five 'blacks,' including Fullam Derby and Pirrson, who he described as 'most intelligent fellows', adding that 'Derby is a king and speaks English well'. Cook discovered that the superintendent of Mr John Lord, Mr Flitt, had detained their wives; in fact that he 'keeps quite a seraglio'. Cook sent a note to Flitt 'via one of the blacks,' only to have them report back that Flitt had torn it to pieces. Cook wrote that he 'feared ill blood and foul murder may result', and requested 'instructions how to proceed'.⁵⁴ While the results of this case are unknown, it is apparent that Flitt's arrest was not one of them.

Not long before the new legal system so clearly demonstrated its ineffectiveness, the Government Gazette had announce that those holding native women against their will would have their licences cancelled and that they would then be prosecuted for illegal occupation of crown land. That Mr Flitt would not have held any licences himself, and that Mr Lord would not have had his licences threatened on the basis of his overseer's actions was perhaps the basis of Police Magistrate Thomas Cook's rather pathetic letter of appeal to the Colonial Secretary.⁵⁵ For Fullam Derby and Pirrson, fearful of the fates of Wong-ko-bi-kan and Charley, and receiving no help from Thomas Cook, what choices remained?

Fewer troopers – fear – social interaction – farm help - traditions

By the 1840s it would seem the settlers had little to fear from organised attacks, though reference is again made to the Mackenzie killings in 1846 in speaking of some troubles that it seems were handled by Constable Patrick Conway, when 'he fearlessly and alone entered the black camp, on a remote range, and took the guilty black fellows into custody'. Another settler relates how, around 1840 he often used members of the Gringai people to guide him whenever he needed to cross from the Williams to the Allyn River Valley: 'I had been some three times across these ranges, but each blackfellow took me over by a different route, therefore I knew my way imperfectly'. The first time he attempt the crossing himself he became lost.⁵⁶

⁵² *The Sydney Monitor and Commercial Advertiser*, 5/4/1841, p.2.

⁵³ *The Sydney Herald*, 20/4/1841, p.2.

⁵⁴ Cook to Thomson, 14/12/1837, (Dungog Magistrates' Letterbook).

⁵⁵ See *NSW Government Gazette*, 20/9/1837, p.625, re cancelling of licenses and prosecution for illegal occupation of Crown Land. While directed at lands 'beyond the limits of location', similar laws were equally ineffective for those lands along the Williams River that were within these limits.

⁵⁶ *Maitland Mercury*, 29/10/1889, p.3.

Another incident reveals that a more condescending attitude was developing as fear of actual harm lessened. This was a humorously told account of the capture of 'King Darby' in the act of pilfering a fowl.⁵⁷ The fact that the new settlers now had little to fear from the Gringai is perhaps reflected in the fear the Gringai themselves had, as when Williams Valley landowner Brown recounts, that when 'Billy' speared a pig of his, he was 'punished with the aid of his own tribe'.⁵⁸

This fear of local punishment may explain reports of people travelling some distance, as when 'several houses were broken into in the absence of the occupiers, in Lyndhurst Vale, and robbed of flour, clothing, tea, sugar, and other moveables'. 'From the direction the tracks were taking when lost, it is supposed the blacks must have come from the Port Stephens district'.⁵⁹

A visitor to Dungog in 1846 gives a peaceful view of a group of Gringai people:

On the skirts of the brushwood, we came upon some tribes of blacks, encamped. They are a very fine race here, being chiefly natives of Port Stephens and its neighbourhood. A princely-looking savage, almost hid in glossy curls of dark rich hair, calling himself "Boomerang Jackey," smiled and bowed most gracefully, saying, "bacco, massa? any bacco?" Some chiefs, with shields, and badges of honour on their breasts, sat silently by the fire with some very young natives, who were going to a "wombat," or "grand corroboree," when the moon got up.⁶⁰

While not fearful of direct attacks, robberies and cattle spearing was a concern, one that was strongly expressed when the withdrawal of troopers stationed at Dungog was proposed in 1848. The proposal was 'much to be regretted, on account of the longing of our black neighbours for fresh beef. In the open day, within thirty miles of Dungog, the aborigines will drive the cattle into the mountain brushes, where they get entangled in the bush vines, when their pursuers tomahawk them at their leisure'.⁶¹ A meeting was held to petition against the removal of troopers and declared that the mounted police were needed against 'the frequent outrages and depredations of the aborigines in the neighbourhood of Dungog, Gloucester, and the Manning'.⁶²

The stealing of sheep and cattle was the most obvious recourse for the Gringai in a continued to attempt to survive in a world that had so radically changed around them. Efforts to adapt to this new world varied. One, when caught roasting mutton, was to be aggressive: 'the shepherd who had the sheep in charge had come on the blacks while slaughtering them, when they threatened to kill him, until he promised he would say nothing of it'.⁶³ Another method was a form of extortion as when Mrs Lindeman, who, whenever alone in the house at Cawarra, would put out sugar and other items for the natives, who would of course return and renew the cycle of fear, treats and return.⁶⁴

⁵⁷ *Maitland Mercury*, 21/11/1846, p.2.

⁵⁸ Replies of Dungog Bench, p.6.

⁵⁹ *Maitland Mercury*, 13/3/1847, p.2.

⁶⁰ *Maitland Mercury*, 18/7/1846, p.2.

⁶¹ *Maitland Mercury*, 1/1/1848, p.2.

⁶² *Maitland Mercury*, 16/2/1848, p.2.

⁶³ *Maitland Mercury*, 2/3/1844, p.3.

⁶⁴ Sokoloff, *Aborigines in the Paterson Gresford Districts*, p.40.

The Gringai people had also early made efforts to perform tasks in return for what the new arrivals had to offer. The earliest such tasks were assisting whites in their pursuit of other whites, and convicts and bushrangers were often tracked or returned for rewards.⁶⁵ Charles Boydell, a landowner on the Allyn River who always maintained a good relationship with Gringai people, tells of sending for “muskets & blacks” on discovering that one of his huts had been robbed and of setting off in pursuit with five local men acting as trackers.⁶⁶

This same Charles Boydell, when attempting to grow corn on his Allyn River property in 1833, complained of losses ‘by blacks and cocatoos [sic]’, with the local Gringai leaving the corn on the outside of the field to better take the rest of the crop.⁶⁷ The year before, Boydell had brought in his tobacco crop ‘with the assistance of the blacks’.⁶⁸ While Boydell may have been one of the first to use Gringai people as farm help, by 1846 it was reported that a number of farmers around Paterson used local natives when they considered the price demanded by white labourers too high, though their reluctance to work for too long a period of time made them an unreliable source of labour. ‘On several farms we hear that the blacks have been employed to reap the wheat, and that they have done their work very creditably; but unfortunately their habits of industry are not of long duration, and they could not be kept long enough at work to make themselves really valuable.’⁶⁹ ‘Our sable brethren - the aboriginal natives - have proved great service in getting the crops off.’ ‘They have certainly exhibited an industry, perseverance, and skill in the execution of their task which cannot be surpassed by Celt or Saxon.’ This last observer felt their harder and more persistent work was simply due to their being given adequate compensation, unlike the ‘daily supply of broken victuals’ usually given.⁷⁰

Another Williams Valley landowner, John Lord testified to an Immigration Committee that: ‘I have employed them, however, in washing sheep, in which I found them quite as useful as white men; I should hardly have got through the washing last season without them ...’⁷¹ This same landowner also employed Indian coolies and it was reported that ‘... the natives’ of William’s River are upon good terms with the Coolies on Mr. Lord’s estate. The two people laugh at each other, because the Coolies work, and the other because the native wanders and has no comfort, nor good and regular food. The native tries to seduce the Coolie into the bush, and the Coolie to persuade the native to take service.’⁷²

Using the Gringai as workers did not include social intercourse and the police were called quickly enough when: ‘On Sunday evening, a disturbance arose at the Dungog Inn, between the police and a lodger, who had taken a black woman into his apartment to drink’.⁷³ This attitude was reinforced legally by the 1851 Vagrancy Act which prohibited white co-habitation with blacks.

Despite the reduction in numbers, the Gringai continued to maintain a traditional lifestyle in some respects at least, including regular clashes with neighbouring groups. However, such tribal rivalries continued with firearms naturally made these clashes more deadly: ‘Some few

⁶⁵ Walsh, *Voices from Tocal*, p.78.

⁶⁶ Sullivan, *Charles Boydell*, p.26.

⁶⁷ Sullivan, *Charles Boydell*, p.25.

⁶⁸ Sullivan, *Charles Boydell*, p.36.

⁶⁹ Sullivan, *Charles Boydell*, p.103 & *Maitland Mercury*, 26/12/1846, p.2.

⁷⁰ *Maitland Mercury*, 2/12/1848, p.2.

⁷¹ *The Sydney Herald*, 4/10/1841, p.1S.

⁷² *The Colonist*, 19/12/1838, p.4.

⁷³ *Maitland Mercury*, 27/3/1847, p.2.

nights back a body of blacks from the Dungog and Gloucester tribes came to a camp of the Stroud and Booral tribes in the dead hour of the night, and having first fired a gun to awaken and alarm, immediately discharged a volley of musketry and spears into the camp ...⁷⁴ 'We regret to say that the aboriginal natives of this part have had a serious encounter with the natives of Port Stephens. They met in the woods near Stroud, armed with muskets, and kept up a treacherous fire, until one or more of the Stroud blacks were killed.' Troopers were sent for from Dungog with a reference made to the 'dread' of soldiers inspired by the hanging of Charley in 1835.⁷⁵

Accommodation – cricket – Combo – dancing – cooeey

By the middle of the century the Gringai had ceased to kill children of mixed parentage and their numbers, though now very small, were beginning to stabilise.⁷⁶ Small local numbers are reported, such as a group of 90 at Paterson in 1846.⁷⁷ In 1848, the 'natives' at Dungog are described as neither 'numerous' nor 'troublesome' and generally found at Mrs Hook's 'boiling-down establishment'.⁷⁸

In the second half of the century the remaining Gringai, including their mixed race children, were beginning to make further accommodations with the now well established new society. This accommodation could take many forms ranging from menial work to playing cards and cricket.⁷⁹ In the 1870s a number of instances of income producing activity are recorded, such as about 20 Aboriginal people camped behind the Paterson Hotel selling honey that they had collected from bush hollows, selling at 2s. to 2s. 6d. per bucket. 'For the last two or three weeks about twenty blackfellows have been encamped in Mr Stanbridge's paddock, at the rear of the old Paterson Hotel, and have been chiefly occupied in getting honey from the trees in the bush, in which capacity they appear to be carrying on a very brisk trade...' 'During the week we noticed one blackfellow hawking about beeswax for sale, in cakes which they had themselves manufactured, and which appeared quite as good a sample as that manufactured by many of our farmers' wives. The blacks seem quite independent, and proud of their new avocation.'⁸⁰ Laundry and scrubbing work was also reported being done in Gresford by Gringai women.⁸¹ Also, in the 1870s, travellers employed local Gringai people to make a trail: 'we sent two blacks forward who opened a marked tree line from the Williams River to the Tumally line, which leaves the road on the Williams about eleven miles above Underbank, and took us along the top of the main range dividing the Williams and Allyn Rivers'.⁸²

But no matter what efforts Gringai people made, they were generally met with paternalism at best, as when about a dozen people, who had finished reaping, were dancing in 'European style' to the tune of a concertina. It was remarked that their actions were 'equal to many such entertainments got up by the white folk'.⁸³ Dancing was not the only thing learned by a

⁷⁴ *Maitland Mercury*, 13/4/1844, p.3.

⁷⁵ *Maitland Mercury*, 21/10/1846, p.2.

⁷⁶ Miller, *Koori: A Will to Win*, p.63 & Replies of Dungog Bench, p.6.

⁷⁷ Walsh, *Voices from Tocal*, p.82.

⁷⁸ Wells, *A Geographical Dictionary*, p.158.

⁷⁹ Miller, *Koori: A Will to Win*, p.68.

⁸⁰ *Maitland Mercury*, 2/5/1871, p.3.

⁸¹ Sokoloff, *Aborigines in the Paterson Gresford Districts*, p.40 & *Maitland Mercury*, 10/3/1950 (Anna Maria Eidler).

⁸² *Maitland Mercury*, 20/4/1872, p.5.

⁸³ Sokoloff, *Aborigines in the Paterson Gresford Districts*, p.42 & *Maitland Mercury*, 3/12/1872, p.3.

people who by this time also used English regularly; an ability which led to complaints about drunken noise, made worse by their use of English.⁸⁴

Worse than paternalism was the general treatment of the Gringai, including presumably those of mixed ancestry, as outcastes. An interesting example of what this meant in practice is seen when a locally brought up white girl was lost in the bush and refused to call for help to people she believed were aborigines. 'Her cooey was returned, but ... had imagined that the cooey she got in the first instance had been given by some black, rather to her alarm than to her gratification.'⁸⁵ This girl, brought up within 10 miles of Dungog, was also brought up to fear the local Gringai even to the point of her remaining lost.

It is rare for the native people living side-by-side with Europeans to be noted as individuals, but various incidents provide us with occasional glimpses of their presence. 'Mr Brown, a farmer on Bendolba', is reported to have 'sucked the wound' of 'a half-caste servant woman'.⁸⁶ The diary entries of a young member of a wealthy landowning family are also revealing of what can perhaps be interpreted as a typical relationship. Fredrick Hooke aged 18 wrote: '1868, May 14th Saturday – Combo and I burning off.' Two years later: '1870, March 8th Wednesday – Combo was drowned today whilst swimming the river for Warner'.⁸⁷

Combo was, as reported in the local paper, 'one of our Aborigines', and was taking a letter across the Williams River after heavy rains when he got into difficulties and drowned - 'he shouted out something that could not be heard, and finally sank'.⁸⁸ Combo's body was not recovered for nearly a week, after which he was buried at 'the Old Burying Ground'.⁸⁹

Two years later another diary entry of Fredrick Hooke reads: '1872, Dec 15th Monday – Took a warrant out for Edwardo who bolted on Saturday with Combo the horse'. It is not clear if young Hooke saw naming his horse after the deceased Combo as a sign of respect or simply a name he remembered.

While the relationship of Hooke with Combo is unclear, it is clear that not all the new locals treated the old with contempt or indifference. At Brookfield, a well known resident was Mundiver (also well known for hating all of his own 'race').⁹⁰ Mundiver was generally looked after by Patrick Nihil, the publican of the Alma Inn at Brookfield.⁹¹

Investigations – Protector – education – scattering – Brandy/Jonas

In the last quarter for the 19th century there was an increasing consciousness of severe Aboriginal population decline, the attitude to which was mixed. Many were indifferent; some welcomed it as removing a problem, while a few looked on with pity and made efforts to assist the survivors. One of these last was James Boydell, born on his father Charles' estate on the Allyn River: '... Mr. Boydell, of the Paterson, and one or two others, have been looking after the blacks during the winter, by distributing blankets and clothes, obtained

⁸⁴ *Maitland Mercury*, 6/12/1866, p.4.

⁸⁵ *Maitland Mercury*, 27/8/1867, p.3.

⁸⁶ *Maitland Mercury*, 20/4/1871, p.3.

⁸⁷ Diary of Frederick Augustus Hooke, January 1st 1867 to September 21st 1873.

⁸⁸ *Maitland Mercury*, 15/3/1870, p.3.

⁸⁹ *Maitland Mercury*, 19/3/1870, p.3. 'Old folk say under the Rectory' - Don Redman, interviewed, 27/6/2011.

⁹⁰ *The Mercury*. 21/7/1871, p.4.

⁹¹ *Maitland Mercury*, 7/3/1872, p.2.

from the Government'. There is also mention of efforts to obtain land at Port Stephens and on the Barrington where – 'There are both young blacks and half-castes in camp, who may linger on for years'.⁹²

The numbers of Gringai continued to decline with some 15 on the Camyr Allyn estate by the late 19th century supported by James Boydell. Boydell's help included supporting a number of 'helpless men and women' on his property and even arranging on one occasion for a group to travel to Sydney to see the Sydney exhibition.⁹³ James Boydell appear to have operated a kind of hospital: '... for as you know I have a hospital of my own to attend to sick blacks, &c. The Government did not send me any food as they promised. The old gin "Blind Sally" died last Sunday. The Manager of the Maloga Mission took away 15 men, women, and children, which is a great relief to me; I sincerely trust that some good may be done for the poor creatures'.⁹⁴ In 1882, Daniel Matthews, who ran the Maloga Mission near Moama on the Murray River, convinced 15 men, women and children to go with him: '... in the interests of the Maloga mission, fifteen aborigines from Gresford were induced to join the mission'.⁹⁵ Despite this, some still remained with Boydell at Camyr Allyn in the Gresford/Paterson area, though these last had probably moved to the St Clair mission at Singleton by 1911.⁹⁶

With the continuing decline in numbers and the prospect of total extinction, another aspect of white/black relations became the anthropological, with many taking an interest in tribal habits and customs. Though often of a scientific and anthropological nature, this was not incompatible with a real human sympathy. Thus James Boydell compiled lists of Aboriginal words, and Dr McKinlay and others made various observations, many of which were used by Howitt.⁹⁷ A W Howitt compiled a study based upon information elicited from many locations, including the Dungog area. In February 1882, for example, he sent a letter to Dr McKinlay whose reply stated that he had 'made careful enquiries' 'from the Aborigines themselves'. McKinlay also said he had difficulty eliciting information as the surviving Gringai, perhaps only 20-30 by 1882, were naturally suspicious. McKinlay claimed to have reassured them that far from being 'injurious', such gathering of information would 'tend to their benefit', though how this might be so he does not say. In any case, McKinlay passes on little, apart from a remark about it not being customary to talk with a mother-in-law and comments concerning scars about which he had little concrete to say.⁹⁸ In another letter McKinlay remarks that it is 'altogether too late in the day to acquire any reliable information'.

Around the time that Boydell is relieved to send his remaining Gringai off to a mission is also the time that a 'protection' model in Aboriginal relations begins to evolve. What this meant was that government intervention and control over the remaining natives increased and became more systematic.⁹⁹ Around 1881, the Hon. George Thornton, M.L.C. was appointed to the 'newly instituted office of protector of the aborigines of New South

⁹² *Maitland Mercury*, 10/6/1880, p.5 & 20/8/1881, p.5S.

⁹³ *Maitland Mercury*, 4/11/1879, p.5.

⁹⁴ *Maitland Mercury*, 20/8/1882, p.4. (From copy of letter to Isaac Gorrick, 31/7/1882)

⁹⁵ Sullivan, *Charles Boydell*, p.156 & *Maitland Mercury*, 13/8/1881, p.4S & 20/8/1882, p.4.

⁹⁶ Miller, *Koori: A Will to Win*, p.66 & Report of the Board for the Protection of Aborigines, 1889, Appendix A, Census in *Votes and Proceedings of the Legislative Council, 1890*, pp.4-6 & *Sydney Morning Herald*, 11/9/1882, p.4 – 'Upper Paterson'

⁹⁷ See: Howitt, Alfred William, *The native tribes of south-east Australia*.

⁹⁸ McKinlay to Howitt, 13/3/1882.

⁹⁹ Miller, *Koori: A Will to Win*, p.77.

Wales'.¹⁰⁰ This Protector undertook a census and found 8,919 natives in NSW, divided into 'pure-breeds' and 'half-castes' - many more than expected.¹⁰¹ This report mentions centres at Maitland, Singleton, Port Stephens and Upper Paterson.¹⁰² Some 181 of these were in the Hunter, with a number of of the 'half-caste' children at Dungog Public School.¹⁰³ The Protector was soon replaced with the Aborigines Protection Board in 1883, which adopted a paternalistic approach targeting the aged, disabled and children. The Board '... disapprove of the system of issuing Government rations to able bodied aboriginals, as it tends to encourage idleness in a large degree'. 'A supply of flour, suet, and raisins sufficient to make a pudding can be issued to the aged, young and helpless, and those unable to earn a living through bodily infirmity, for Christmas Day.'¹⁰⁴

In 1885, the death of Nancy, 'the last surviving black gin of the district', occurred, and her funeral was reported to have taken place at the 'old aboriginal burial ground near the town'.¹⁰⁵ With only 'two or three of the Dungog tribe' remaining, from this point on the local accounts of the Dungog Shire area begin to talk of the 'last' representatives of the Gringai. This, however, is based upon a 'full-blood' vs. 'half-caste' division which encouraged the hiding of Aboriginality. In fact, the records of the Board of Aboriginal Protection show a number of Aboriginal people living within the Dungog valleys well into the 20th century. However, whether the decline in numbers of identifiable Aboriginal people is due to people moving away, or continual intermarriage, or both is not clear.

In 1883, 15 Aborigines are reported at Dungog, four men, two women and nine children. 'The half-castes work the same as Europeans, and educate their children. Aborigines pull corn for farmers, cut firewood and other work such as splitting in the bush.' Only the 'half-caste' children attend the Public School and they receive no medical attention - 'When sick they must get well best way they can.' In Gresford, the number reported is nearly 40 - 'Getting honey and fishing, sometimes employed by the settlers.' At Gloucester, 50 acres of Church and School land was reported as being used by some 60 people with three of the children attending Barrington Public School.¹⁰⁶

In 1884, reference is made to a reserve for Aborigines at Barrington where rations were supplied and ploughing done to allow farming, with another reserve recommended, while at Dungog 'Medical attendance' was supplied.¹⁰⁷ The next year the Board feels optimistic about education, quoting the Department of Public Instruction as preferring separate schools but having 'no objection' if small numbers attend the nearest Public School. Aboriginal parents themselves were encouraged to send their children with clothes and extra rations. With education the Board felt confident that Aboriginal people would take their place 'amongst the industrial classes'. Reference is made to people being given rations and clothes at Barrington (4), Gresford (5) and Singleton (16). A number of reserves are established around NSW, but none in the Dungog district.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁰ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 11/9/1882, p.4.

¹⁰¹ In the 1881 census only 1,643 were reported - *Maitland Mercury*, 23/3/1882, p.4.

¹⁰² Miller, *Koori: A Will to Win*, p.86 & *Sydney Morning Herald*, 11/9/1882, p.4.

¹⁰³ Miller, *Koori: A Will to Win*, p.90.

¹⁰⁴ *Maitland Mercury*, 23/7/1887, p.13S & Miller, *Koori: A Will to Win*, pp.90-91.

¹⁰⁵ *Australian Town and Country Journal*, 7/2/1885, p.16.

¹⁰⁶ *Aborigines. (Report of the Protector to, 31 December, 1882.)*, NSW Legislative Assembly, printed 31 January 1883, pp.22-23.

¹⁰⁷ *Protection of Aborigines (Report of the Board)*, NSW Legislative Assembly, printed 26/3/1884, p.5.

¹⁰⁸ *Protection of Aborigines (Report of the Board)*, NSW Legislative Assembly, printed 8/9/1885, p.2 & p.5.

Numbers fluctuate and may imply that people are moving. A possible link between the Gringai and Aboriginal people at Gloucester may mean that movement to the reserve at Barrington was possible, as well as to that at Singleton, but this is speculation only. In 1886, no one is recorded for Gresford, 5 at Barrington and 15 at Singleton.¹⁰⁹ In 1887, 7 receive rations and clothing at Barrington at a little over £46 and 18 at Singleton.¹¹⁰ In 1888, the number at Barrington rises again to 8 while 17 are reported at Singleton.¹¹¹ In 1889, it is reported that on the Barrington are 'comfortable huts built of slab with galvanized iron roofs'. For the first time children – five – are mentioned on the Barrington River and an increase to 10 of adults. Three people are also mentioned in Dungog as receiving clothing; this appears to be a one-off to the value of £1.18.9. In Singleton are recorded 24 adults and 17 children who receive gunpowder and shot as well as rations and tents.¹¹² The following year it is reported that a school has been established at the Barrington. A much more detailed census is undertaken in 1894, and in Dungog are recorded one man (half-caste) between 40 and 60 years old and 5 children. At the Barrington are now only 6 adults but 18 children, on whom is spent over £131 plus £30 in medical expenses and £45.10 by the Department of Public Instruction, with some £2 worth of clothing for the Dungog group, while 27 adults and 26 children are reported at Singleton.¹¹³

In 1903, the Barrington school is reported closed with no explanation given. This same report mentions that some Aboriginal children were not being allowed to attend Public Schools because 'objections have been raised by a few of the parents of European children' despite their being 'nothing to which exception can be taken in their habits or behaviour'. Despite its weakness to 'protect', the Board requests an extension of power over Aboriginal people 'in the best interests of the aboriginal inhabitants of the State'.¹¹⁴

In 1907, the 50 acre reserve at Barrington in the parish of Fitzroy, county of Gloucester, was revoked over the Board's objections. Only St Clair at Singleton was within reach of the Gringai lands. In this same report there is a reference to a 'plot of land formerly owned by an old Aboriginal named "Old Brandy", now deceased' that was allocated to another person.¹¹⁵ In that same year a handful of Aboriginal people are recorded in Dungog – one 'half-caste' man aged between 30 and 40, one between 40 and 60, and 2 children. Again no women are recorded.¹¹⁶ The next year the report is of the younger man only and two children, with one adult drawing rations at Barrington.¹¹⁷ While the year after, only the two children are reported and in Barrington four adults and two children receive rations.¹¹⁸ In 1911, in addition to the two children there is one 'half-caste' and one 'full-blood' man, both between 30 and 40 years old.¹¹⁹ These are the last references to Aborigines, Gringai or not, in Dungog.

In 1918, the Aboriginal Board expelled all part-aboriginal people from its reserves and town camps swelled.¹²⁰ It is around this time that a number of sources report the presence of

¹⁰⁹ *Protection of Aborigines (Report of the Board)*, NSW Legislative Assembly, printed 22/7/1886, p.3.

¹¹⁰ *Protection of Aborigines (Report of the Board)*, NSW Legislative Assembly, printed 5/7/1887, p.3.

¹¹¹ *Protection of Aborigines (Report of the Board)*, NSW Legislative Assembly, printed 10/5/1888, p.3.

¹¹² *Aborigines. (Report of the Board for 1888)*, NSW Legislative Assembly, printed 12/4/1889, pp.2-4.

¹¹³ *Protection of the Aborigines. (Report of the Board for 1894)*, NSW Legislative Assembly, 1/3/1895, pp.2-9.

¹¹⁴ *Aborigines Protection Board (Report of Year 1903)*, NSW Legislative Assembly, printed 24/11/1904, p.3.

¹¹⁵ *Aborigines. (Report of the Board for the Year 1907)*, NSW Legislative Assembly, 31/5/1908, p.4 & p.12.

¹¹⁶ *Aborigines. (Report of the Board for the Year 1907)*, NSW Legislative Assembly, 31/5/1908, p.17.

¹¹⁷ *Aborigines. (Report of the Board for the Year 1908)*, NSW Legislative Assembly, 1/6/1909, p.17 & p.20.

¹¹⁸ *Aborigines. (Report of the Board for the Year 1910)*, NSW Legislative Assembly, 30/4/1911, p.19.

¹¹⁹ *Aborigines. (Report of the Board for the Year 1911)*, NSW Legislative Assembly, 28/2/1912, p.19.

¹²⁰ <http://www.tobwabba.com.au/worimi/index.html> (accessed 20/6/2010).

Aboriginal people within the Dungog district. But whether these are Gringai people or not is unknown. The Redman family, for example, was visited by an Aboriginal couple who stayed the night in their barn; the Redmans also report seeing a few around town.¹²¹ Aborigines were also reported staying in the Anglican Rectory grounds in 1922 who may have been part of the same migration created by government policy.¹²²

Local historians have often declared the extinction of the Gringai, usually in the form of labelling a man named Brandy as 'The Last of the Gringai'.¹²³ However, groups such as the Gringai had always intermarried and their links to the Worimi on the coast and the Wonnarua on the Hunter River are clear. The impact of the white invasion and the drastic decline in numbers resulted in a mixing of peoples. Those descended from the Gringai of both black and white parentage would have gone to St Clair near Singleton at first and after to other NSW locations such as La Perouse, Kempsey and Redfern. James Wilson-Miller is one who can claim decent from the Gringai.¹²⁴ Perhaps another is William Jonas. Born at Salisbury in 1889, he was a horserider, showman and member of the AIF. William died in 1947 and his grandson Bill Jonas was a director of the National Museum Canberra.¹²⁵

After this the Aboriginal history of the Dungog Shire area blends with the general history of Aboriginal Australia, though perhaps with a more generous dose of family history and semi-secret stories than most. In the 1990s occurred an incident, that, to take a generous view, symbolised the last of knee-jerk anti-Aboriginal attitudes within the Shire. Minor land claims caused some consternation within Dungog Shire Council, leading to fearful declarations of objection. Local residents, including those adjacent to the claims, protested at this attitude and succeeded in reversing the Council's attitude. In the end, two claims were successfully made for tiny parcels of land; one at Jerusalem Creek and another at Paterson.¹²⁶

Today, Dungog High School regularly holds aboriginal awareness activities and many students freely identify with their aboriginal ancestry, though few would be certain it that ancestry included - though some undoubtedly would - Gringai people.

Heritage survivals

- The NSW Parks and Wildlife Service have nine sites registered in Dungog.¹²⁷
- Groove sites at Tocal Homestead.
- Aboriginal Place names.
- Archaeology at Tillegra of 'high scientific significance'.¹²⁸
- Large number of family stories – should be recorded.
- Artifacts in hands of local families.
- Canoe Trees at Clarence Town (Lionel Ridgeway).
- Various sites have been identified in local lore, a possible 'old aboriginal burial ground' in or near the current Anglican Rectory.
- Possible burial site at East Gresford.
- Possible Black Camp massacre site.

¹²¹ Michaelides, *Growing up in Dungog*, p.15.

¹²² Loban, *A Substantial Handsome Church*, p.45.

¹²³ Foster, "Brandy, last of the Gringhi"

¹²⁴ Miller, *Koori: A Will to Win*.

¹²⁵ Heath, "Muloobinbah", p.60-61.

¹²⁶ *Dungog Chronicle*, 4/8/1993, p.1 & 11/8/1993, p.5.

¹²⁷ Koettig, *Assessment of Aboriginal archaeological sites in the Dungog Shire*, p.23.

¹²⁸ Hardy, Tillegra Dam Aboriginal Archaeology Environmental Assessment Report, p.61.

2.2 Convicts [incarceration, transport, reform, accommodation & work during the convict period]

The European settlement of the Williams, Paterson and Allyn River valleys was from the very beginning based upon convict labour with the presence of this system influencing many aspects of the district's history from at least as early as 1812 on the Paterson River.¹ At the same time, the lands along the Hunter River had been opened up to grants and settlement very quickly compared to the previous colonial period and an implication of this was that the proportion of free immigrants to convicts was very much greater in the Hunter, and subsequently the Williams and Paterson/Allyn River valleys in the 1830s and 1840s.²

The advantage of being able to make use of convicts as labour is clearly stated by one Allyn River settler:

It was a most fortunate thing for me that I came out at the time I did, one month later and I should not have got convicts, in which case I must have looked out for a situation, or have been ruined in attempting to settle up the country with free servants at most exorbitant wages.³

A later settler on the Williams River could tell of similar advantages. When Christopher Lean arrived in Sydney in the late 1830s it took the new emigrant only two days to secure a job as a 'sheep overseer' at £30 per year plus a weekly ration of 12lb beef or mutton, 10lbs of flour, half a pound of tea and 2lbs of sugar. Christopher thought this an 'ample' amount. Thus employed, he spent six weeks travelling by bullock to his station where he was in charge of 'gangs of convicts', 'no free men being procurable'. As a free man in a world of convicts Christopher Lean spent the next two years, until May 1841, in what he considered good circumstances: 'I had a regular routine of duties, but no laborious work. On the whole, time passed away very comfortably.' The relative ease of his position does not seem unusual, with his cousin Jonathon Wilce, who later settled near Christopher at Fosterton, writing from Bolwarra on the Hunter River in 1840 that: 'I have no work to do except sow the grain and look after the men.'⁴

First granted his land on the Allyn River in 1826, by 1829 Charles Boydell had cleared some 80 acres with the help of at least three convict workers and was running some 30 cattle and over 500 sheep on it. In that same year, he was successful in applying for another 640 acres to add to his holdings, naming his now 1,280 acres Camyr Allyn. In his diary of that year, the twenty year old Charles Boydell reported that he was setting up his farm with the help of 'one free man and his wife, two free fencers and several assigned servants'.⁵

Landowners such as Boydell were responsible for supplying the food and basic necessities of their 'assigned servants'. An account of 1826 detailed the cost of keeping a convict for a year at £17/12/-. This was made up of 13 bushels of wheat at 6s. per bushel = £3/18, and 365 lbs. of beef at 4d. per lb = £6/1/8, or 208 lbs. of pork at 8d. = £6/13/8. Clothing was a 'frock and trowsers' provided twice a year at £1/10/-; two cotton shirts, 12s.; two pair of shoes, 16s.; as well as 52 lbs of sugar at 4d. per lb = 17s.; 6½lbs. of tea at 3s. per lb = £1/1/-; and

¹ See, Walsh, *European Settlement at Paterson River, 1812 to 1822*.

² Perry, *Australia's first frontier*, pp.72-75.

³ Arthur Edwin Way to Benjamin Way Esq, Clevedon, Gresford, Allyn River, NSW, Sept 11th 1842.

http://www.sl.nsw.gov.au/discover_collections/people_places/caergwrle/settlers/wayLetter.html (accessed 4/7/2010).

⁴ Lean, *The Lean Family History*, pp.47-48.

⁵ Sullivan, *Charles Boydell*, pp.21-22 & p.24.

incidentals such as tobacco and soap at £2/10/-.⁶ John Lord's evidence concerning his employment of 'Hill Coolies' from India on his Williams River land, compared the cost of three possible types of workers in 1841: Free = £41/18 per year, a prisoner = £16/17/4, a coolie = £18/8.⁷

An interesting aspect of the distinction between an assigned servant and a prisoner of the government in terms of their cost is described by Police Magistrate Cook of Dungog. According to Cook:

when convicts are sent by their masters to any lock-up in the country, to await the appointed day for the coming of a Magistrate, it is understood the culprit brings his rations with him; but having once been before the Court and remanded, all subsequent expense falls on Government.⁸

Who exactly the convicts of the Williams, Paterson and Allyn valleys were is not clearly known. Analysis of 150 convicts assigned to five estates on the Paterson and Allyn Rivers over a period of years up till the ending of transportation reveals that a typical convict sent to such estates was protestant, single, aged between 15 and 30 years of age, had been sentenced to between 7 and 14 years, and had some education. Catholics made up less than 14%, those under 15 years old 3% and over 30 years old less than 7%, the totally illiterate 12%, those with a life sentence 33% and those who were married around 10%.⁹ Another analysis of the convicts of the Tocal estate on the Paterson River shows half to have been English, nearly half Irish and the rest Scots, with one Swede. Relatives of convicts were also sometimes present, as they could be granted free passage and many took up this offer when it was made. Other families, after an absence of many years, did not make this choice and this was a cause of some convicts committing suicide. Still others, such as Michael Magner, returned to Ireland to bring relatives back with him. Overall about one sixth of married convicts had their families join them.¹⁰

The assignment of a convict was not the end of the story but rather part of an ongoing bureaucracy, one that at the local level was dealt with by the magistrates. Magistrates spent much time dealing with the relations between convicts and the masters to whom they were assigned. Routine, were applications by landholders for convicts, as in September 1837, when Cook needed to ask James Edward Ebsworth of Booral to sit with him in a 'Special Petty Sessions' for this purpose.¹¹ Authorising ticket-of-leave men's transfers to other districts was another major part of a magistrate's role, with Cook, for example, reporting in the beginning of 1838 on the transfer of 11 men to various districts.¹² Identification and being able to access a convict's records was naturally important and characteristic of this was adding the name of the ship on which a person arrived to the convict's name, as when Williams River landowner Myles sent a list of convicts, 24 in total, that included such names as William Mumford (*Lady MacNaughton*), John Farrell (*Clyde*) and John Pritchard (*Printr*), to complete the transfer of property and servants to 'John Hooke of Wiragully Farm'.¹³

⁶ Atkinson, *An account of the state of agriculture and grazing in New South Wales*, p.114.

⁷ *Sydney Herald*, 4/10/1841, p.1S.

⁸ Cook to AAC, 10/8/1837 (Dungog Magistrates' Letterbook).

⁹ Readford, *Guide to Assigned Convicts of the Paterson/Gresford Area 1821/1838*, pp.4-25.

¹⁰ Walsh, *Voices from Tocal*, p.7, p.32 & p.116.

¹¹ Cook to Edwards, 30/8/1837 (Dungog Magistrates' Letterbook).

¹² Cook to Superintendent of Convicts, 21/1/1838 (Dungog Magistrates' Letterbook).

¹³ Lawrence Myles to Police magistrate, 18/12/1837 (Dungog Magistrates' Letterbook).

Part of this government bureaucracy included the 'Board of Assignment of Servants,' which was responsible for where convicts were placed, and to which magistrates could only make recommendations if a crime were not involved. In October 1836, for example Magistrate Thomas Cook at Dungog Court was investigating a complaint of J Devlin, assigned to Mr Holmes; Devlin is described as 'a poor simpleton'.¹⁴ Later that same year, James Williams appears before Cook to request 'slop Clothing'.¹⁵ The following year, Joseph Webster found himself removed from service with Mr Rogers for complaining from 'Peak, and not ill usage'. Cook felt Webster was 'one of those Convicts who pretend to know Rules, Laws, and regulations better than their superiors,' and feared this 'levelling Spirit Contaminate whatever they come near'. Cook suggested Webster go to the 'Ironed Gang' at Port Macquarie.¹⁶ The assignment of servants did not always work out, as when Cook ordered that Sarah Robinson be removed from the house of Michael Doyle – 'She being a greater burden than a comfort to an industrious Family'.¹⁷

A labour force based on sentenced prisoners was not easy to manage and punishments were a major part of the system. The degree and nature of this punishment was often debated by landowners who as magistrates also determined these punishments. Charles Boydell, for example, criticised a law that would limit punishments, as this would allow a servant to sin 'to the utmost limit of his tether'.¹⁸ A lost sheep could result in a flogging. And a master could be criticised for being too easy on his convict charges. Masters for a time could determine whether free passage for a convict's wife and children should be granted, and could also recommend ticket-of-leaves. In 1827, Governor Darling removed this last authority, as many masters refused to make such recommendations in order to retain good workers.¹⁹

The control and punishment of the convict population of the district was a major function of a magistrate with the first letter in the Dungog Magistrates' Letterbook (1834-1839) complaining that two years on a road gang is inadequate power to punish absconders.²⁰ This was written by the first magistrate of what was then called Upper Williams, local landowner George Mackenzie, J.P., who at the end of January 1834 was investigating the activities of William O'Neil, 'here by servitude', who was occupying Crown land on the Clarence Town road and having no visible means of sustenance was suspected of receiving and stealing cattle. Having been convicted of harbouring prisoners of the Crown O'Neil is given notice to quit.²¹ R. G. Moffat (Captain 17th Regiment) added the following March that O'Neil is 'a most notorious Sly Grog seller'.²²

Local landowners acted as magistrates with the limitation that they could not sentence their own convicts. This often meant sending convicts away for sentencing with a consequent loss of labour. The 1825 appointment of a scourger to Paterson was significant therefore in allowing local punishments to be handed out. In 1827, Paterson received a new lockup built for £95. In addition to scourging, punishments included being sent to road or other labour

¹⁴ Cook to Board of Assignment of Servants, 7/10/1836 (Dungog Magistrates' Letterbook).

¹⁵ Cook to Board of Assignment of Servants, 16/12/1836 (Dungog Magistrates' Letterbook).

¹⁶ Cook to Board of Assignment of Servants, 26/4/1837 (Dungog Magistrates' Letterbook).

¹⁷ Cook to Bench of Magistrates, Newcastle, 26/9/1838 (Dungog Magistrates' Letterbook).

¹⁸ Sullivan, *Charles Boydell*, p.38.

¹⁹ Walsh, *Voices from Tocal*, p.42, pp.86-87 & p.111.

²⁰ Mackenzie to Colonial Secretary, 3/1/1834 (Dungog Magistrates' Letterbook).

²¹ Mackenzie to Colonial Secretary, 31/1/1834 (Dungog Magistrates' Letterbook).

²² Moffatt to Mackenzie, 7/3/1834 (Dungog Magistrates' Letterbook).

gangs with or without irons. Men from these road gangs would be assigned to help at harvest times.²³

For absconding and other crimes, punishment with the lash was often inflicted, as when in 1837 William Forbes and William Daley received 50 lashes each. John Ford was given 50 lashes plus 12 months on the 'Ironed gang' and John Cairns also 12 months.²⁴ Michael Welsh received 100 lashes for 'Cooking' sheep and cruelty to animals, and 12 months in an 'Ironed Gang' for absconding a second time.²⁵ The following year William Evans, who dared to complain against his Master - a complaint Cook regarded as 'trifling and vexatious,' - was given 50 lashes and returned.²⁶ Some exceptions were recognised, however, as when Edward Birmingham was described as a simpleton who 'absconded through ignorance'.²⁷

Another common punishment was loss of ticket-of-leave, a punishment that limited a person's mobility and thus made a servant of less use, as when J M Pilcher wrote to complain that his overseer Downs had been so punished. Cook reminded Pilcher that such a ticket was 'only to be enjoyed during good behaviour'.²⁸ Other technicalities associated with punishing a useful class of people was the need to inform the bench before trial that a master wanted a convict back, otherwise they would be sent to Sydney on conviction.²⁹

The granting or withdrawal of tickets-of-leave was a major part of convict life and of convict control. A ticket-of-leave meant limited travel and the need for permission to go outside one's nominated district. Such tickets-of leave were needed for those with life sentences, followed by a conditional pardon that did not allow them to return to Britain or Ireland. At Tocal, those with life sentences took an average of 12 years to obtain a ticket-of-leave. Those whose terms had expired were free to return to Britain but few seem to have done so. It was reported that some masters even failed to inform a convict that a pardon had been received. An additional form of control were convict bank accounts, which held any money earned until gaining a certificate of freedom, and Magistrate Cook states that it was usual for constables to search prisoners for the purpose of taking their money.³⁰ This system continued well after the ending of transportation with only the greatly increased population due to the gold rushes making it easier for convicts to disappear into the wider population.³¹

Convicts had few options, but they could resist by setting fire to the barns and crops of masters they considered too harsh or unfair, though simple absconding was the most common form of rebellion, with one third of Tocal's convicts having done so at one time or another. Such absconders might simply live in the bush for a time, become bushrangers, or pose as free men in a town, a practice made easier by many employers, often former convicts themselves, desperate for workers. The Habouring Act, 1825, and Bushranging Act, 1830, were introduced to reduce this problem.³²

²³ Walsh, *Voices from Tocal*, pp.88-89, p.96 & p.100.

²⁴ Cook to Colonial Secretary, 21/9/1837 (Dungog Magistrates' Letterbook).

²⁵ Cook to Colonial Secretary, 12/10/1837 (Dungog Magistrates' Letterbook).

²⁶ Cook to Police Magistrate, Maitland, 24/11/1838 (Dungog Magistrates' Letterbook).

²⁷ Cook to Colonial Secretary, 21/9/1837 (Dungog Magistrates' Letterbook).

²⁸ Cook to Pilcher, 1/10/1837 (Dungog Magistrates' Letterbook).

²⁹ Cook to Ebsworth, 8/6/1838 (Dungog Magistrates' Letterbook).

³⁰ Cook to Colonial Secretary, 10/8/1837 (Dungog Magistrates' Letterbook).

³¹ Walsh, *Voices from Tocal*, pp.112-114.

³² Walsh, *Voices from Tocal*, pp.97-99.

Despite these laws, a flaw in the system of controlling convicts remained many settlers' desire for labour at any price. This point Magistrate Cook made in July 1838 when he detailed the case of Pat Brady (alias Brown) who absconded in December 1836, taking a steamer to Sydney, from where he walked to Parramatta. Here he took up with a party being taken down to Port Philip, and was paid £3. He then returned to the Hunter region and took a contract with Mr Dawson of Black Creek as a shepherd for £22 and a large ration 'without anything to show for his freedom'.³³

The constables used by these magistrates for escorting prisoners and arresting bushrangers were usually ex-convicts, a circumstance that often caused difficulties. In September 1834, Senior Constable Thomas Rodwell was replaced in his position due to being intoxicated 'while in the discharge of his duty'. His replacement was Michael Connolly, a ticket-of-leave man and former constable at Bathurst.³⁴ A few years later, a constable brought in his prisoners drunk, having given them rum at a Public House near Paterson – 'the day being wet & cold'. Magistrate Cook seems to have sympathized and waived the charge of neglect but did fine the Senior Constable £5 for breach of the Licensing Act; half of this to go as a reward to the informer, in this case the Police Magistrate at Paterson.³⁵ Such constables were not always unreliable and Cook was very pleased with the work of what seems to have been a lone constable placed at Gloucester, Patrick Conway, who gave 'good service in taking bushrangers and putting down sly grog shops'. Cook felt that his 1s per day pay should be increased.³⁶

The town of Dungog seems to owe its very existence to convicts, not only in the usual sense that they supplied the workers opening up the new grants and building the first buildings, but also in the sense that the distance between Clarence Town (the furthest a boat could travel up the Williams River) and Dungog was reputedly the distance a female convict could walk in one day. Be that as it may, a court house and lockup was established by 1834 near the junction of the Williams River and Myall Creek at a location variously known as Upper William or Dungog. The reason for the choice of Dungog for a court also lay in part with the convicts of the Australian Agricultural Company (AAC) established across the ridge to the east of the Williams River. Here was a high concentration of convicts given mainly shepherding duties and their tendency to leave or go bushranging was high. The only place for these bushrangers to go at first was down to the farms of the Hunter River, which took them via Dungog. As Williams River landowner and Magistrate George MacKenzie wrote to the Colonial Secretary, the Dungog court house is 'directly in the thoroughfare between the AAC extensive establishment and Hunter River'.³⁷ The problems of the previous magistrate in dealing with the AAC led the government to relocate the new Police Magistrate (Thomas Cook) to Dungog, though with jurisdiction over and the requirement to visit Stroud and the AAC. A general reduction in the number of Police Magistrates in 1839 saw the Dungog/Port Stephens police district keep its paid magistrate's position.³⁸

A few years later, in 1838, a barracks for troopers was built in Dungog. This was felt to be a great improvement in the service, which seemed to consist mostly of escorting absconding convict workers to court. A service that the billeted and part-time police had done very

³³ Cook to Colonial Secretary, 23/7/1838 (Dungog Magistrates' Letterbook).

³⁴ Mackenzie to Colonial Secretary, 18/9/1834 (Dungog Magistrates' Letterbook).

³⁵ Cook to Police Magistrate, Paterson, 25/8/1838 (Dungog Magistrates' Letterbook).

³⁶ Cook to Colonial Secretary, 26/10/1837 (Dungog Magistrates' Letterbook).

³⁷ Mackenzie to Colonial Secretary, 16/4/1834 (Dungog Magistrates' Letterbook).

³⁸ *The Sydney Gazette*, 16/11/1839, p.4.

inefficiently according to a writer due to their preoccupation with other duties and tendency to do their escort duties at night, when absconders were prone to escape.³⁹ The location of these government services also led to Dungog being surveyed for a town plan in 1838.

A convict of the area about whose life a little more detail is known was James Davis Smith. Born in London in 1821 he was convicted of stealing a shawl worth 12 shillings. As this was a second offense, he was sentenced to transportation for life. He was aged 12 at the time. After a month in Newgate and three in a hulk, he was placed on the *Henry Tanner* with some 219 other convicts and on 1st July 1834 left England for Port Jackson, arriving on October 25th. Authorities took a careful description of the young boy as having a ruddy complexion, brown hair and blue eyes. He also had a tattoo of a 'women on inside of lower right arm, "J.D." with mermaid and anchor above the outline of a Brig.- lower left arm'.⁴⁰

James was assigned to "Lewinsbrook", the property of Alexander Park to which he travelled on the *Sophia Jane* to Morpeth via Newcastle and by wagon onto this property near Gresford. There James found some two dozen other convicts including at least one his own age. James was granted a ticket-of-leave in 1845 and a conditional pardon in 1849. Conditional meaning the pardon would become 'wholly void' should he ever 'go to, or be in, any part of the United Kingdom'. In 1851, James married Jane Elizabeth Parker, herself the daughter of a convict mother, Caroline Parker, who was transported in 1829. The couple leased 35 acres from Alexander Park and used it to grow tobacco. There they raised 12 children before moving to Singleton in 1875 to run a tobacco manufactory until a final move in 1881 to take up a property of 240 acres near Combarra, where James died in the 1900s aged 82. Like many former convicts, he never told his children how he arrived in Australia, hinting at a seafaring youth instead.⁴¹

In 1840, transportation ended and, in the following year, assignment of convicts to private settlers.⁴² With the ending of transportation many former convicts left the Williams Valley to take up work in the more heavily settled districts along the Hunter River. The resulting labour shortages lead to higher wages and strenuous efforts on the part of landowners to re-establish some form of cheap labour. In 1840, for example, the Australian Immigration Association was formed to find such cheap labour, including Indian coolie labour, and in December 1840 the Paterson and Williams River District Committee was established.⁴³ In 1842, a petition was submitted requesting that Indian coolie labour be introduced with a public meeting held at Paterson Court House on 19th Oct, 1842.⁴⁴ In 1846, proposals to reintroduce transportation were heavily protested against and again in 1850.⁴⁵ The resolution carried at a Paterson meeting seems to sum up attitudes to the still well-remembered convict system:

That the renewal of transportation of convicts to New South Wales, in any way or under any circumstances, would be injurious to the well being of society, and utterly subversive of the social happiness now enjoyed.⁴⁶

³⁹ *The Sydney Gazette*, 31/3/1838, p.2.

⁴⁰ Readford, *The History of James Davis Smith*, pp.3-36.

⁴¹ Readford, *The History of James Davis Smith*, pp. 3-36.

⁴² Walsh, *Voices from Tocal*, p.115.

⁴³ Sullivan, *Charles Boydell*, p.76 & *Australian*, 12/12/1840, p.1.

⁴⁴ Sullivan, *Charles Boydell*, p.204 & *Australian*, 14/11/1842, p.3.

⁴⁵ Sullivan, *Charles Boydell*, p.101 & p.113.

⁴⁶ *Maitland Mercury*, 28/9/1850, p.3.

A similar meeting held around the same time at Dungog reports the attitude of a former convict to this system. A local correspondent reported Michael Ryan telling the gathering that he knew:

... by experience the bad effects of the old system, and very feelingly mentioned an instance of cruelty towards a party of 22 men, himself being one of them, who, because some robbery was perpetrated in the neighbourhood, were all flogged, without any trial or conviction by the whim or caprice of a fiend in command, and which was the cause of driving some of them to desperation.⁴⁷

Heritage Survivals

- Dungog Magistrate's Letterbook (NLA).
- James Gilchrist, Diary for Burrowel, Seaham, Williams River, 1839 (CB Alexander Foundation Archives, Tocal).
- Many early homes and buildings on the new estates were built with convict labour such as a barracks at Tocal and a barn at Melbee (Dungog).
- The foundations of homes since rebuilt are possibly of convict origin, including Figtree and Rocky Hill. Another house with a core that perhaps dates from this period is Violet Hill, the home of Chief Constable Thomas Abbott and still in the Abbott family.
- Stephenson's Inn (aka Dungog Inn) is the only remaining commercial building in continuous use from the convict period, its publicans licence dates from 1840 as does the building itself.
- The current Dungog Court House, though continuously renovated, is based on the 1838 barracks for Mounted Troopers.
- Gresford has a number of convict era estates such as Camyr Allyn of the Boydells.

⁴⁷ *Maitland Mercury*, 28/9/1850, p.4.

2.3 Ethnic influences [common cultural traditions and shared descent]

The Dungog Shire district is homogenous even by the standards of rural Australia. It was early settled by the usual mix of British and Irish peoples and as throughout Australia, these ethnic differences were largely played out along religious lines. Scots Presbyterians, both directly from Scotland and indirectly from Ireland, were a slightly more prominent grouping than in many other places. Irish Catholics, both ex-convicts and assisted migrants were also numerous, but formed distinct communities only at Brookfield and Summer Hill. Aside from the usual English, the Welsh had a distinctive impact early on through a number of individuals who named and settled on the Allyn River around Gresford, with other Welsh settlers such as John and Sarah Edwards settling at Salisbury.¹ While the English majority was Anglican dominated, numerous dissenters also resulted in Congregational and Methodist communities, particularly around Eccleston and Salisbury further up the Allyn and Williams Rivers.

Perhaps most distinctive among the groups from the British Isles were poorer Gaelic speaking Scots Presbyterians who at first settled near Paterson and later moved to the Gloucester area. While at Paterson, the Presbyterian School advertised in 1848 that: 'Preference will be given to one who can speak and teach the Gaelic language grammatically'.² These Scots were 'Free Church', and later this Barrington River community of 'Scotch' whose 'elder folk spoke Gaelic almost exclusively', preferred to welcome a Wesleyan minister to any representing the Presbyterian Church of NSW, even contributing to his 'stipend'.³

While most 'free settlers' came from various parts of the British Isles, many in fact come from other parts of the world than is usually realised. This fact is often obscured by the tendency for those with non-British names in the early settler period to change them so as to better fit in or to give their children a better chance of getting ahead in the xenophobic culture that dominated. Two of the earliest ship builders to operate at Clarence Town, Francis Roderick and Andrew Smith, for example, were both Portuguese, and were originally named Francisco Rodrigues and Andre Femeria.⁴ Another such was Andrew (Andreas) Rumbel from one of the German states, whose many descendents still populate the district. A cooper, Andrew Rumbel's skills in making barrels for carting water and salting beef were of much value locally.⁵

With the ending of transportation in 1840 the Australian Immigration Association was formed to find cheap labour after the ending of transportation, including Indian coolie labour.⁶ However such proposals were resisted and only one Dungog landowner is known to have actually brought in 'coolie' labour. John Lord is reported to have had 17 Indian coolies plus a 'Sindar' (overseer) on his Williams River estate in 1841.⁷

¹ Davies, *Salisbury Public School*, p.7.

² *Maitland Mercury*, 4/3/1848, p.1.

³ Uniting Church, Dungog, *Gateway to the forests and faith*, p.15. See 8.2 Religion, for details of the dispute between the two Presbyterian groups.

⁴ Murray, *Colonial Shipwrights of the Williams and Paterson Rivers*, Chapter 1 (n.p.).

⁵ Rumbel, *The Rumbel Family Tree*, p.1.

⁶ Sullivan, *Charles Boydell*, p.76, *Australian*, 12/12/1840, p.1.

⁷ *Sydney Herald*, 4/10/1841, p.1S. (Later people, generally referred to as 'Hindoos', frequently operated as itinerant peddlers in the Dungog district but no link between these two groups is evident.)

The nearby Australian Agricultural Company also employed many Chinese people from Amoy (Fujian) on contracts as shepherds and while a few of these did remain and settle in Australia, none are evident in the Dungog Shire area. A few Chinese market gardeners did settle in the three valleys later, one winning prizes at the Dungog Agricultural Show, but these can be assumed to have been Cantonese people arriving in the post-gold rush period.⁸ In Paterson a group supplied the town with vegetables in the 1880s, and from Dungog in 1883 it was reported that: 'We have two parties of Chinamen cultivators in the suburbs; in consequence, vegetables are plentiful and cheap.'⁹

Market gardens and at least one a fruit & vegetable store were operated by Chinese people at Clarence Town. When one brought a wife, the rarity excited the locals:

We now can boast of a real live Chinese lady resident. One of our Chinese gardeners, Ah Young, has taken unto himself a wife, one brought out from China. There was quite a gathering at the wharf yesterday to witness the arrival of the pair.¹⁰

Wine production was an early interest of landowners in the Colony and this led to the search for non-British immigrants in the form mainly of Germans with vine growing skills. At one point, with transportation ended and the gold rushes more attractive, agents organised this migration and a bounty scheme assisted those with the skills to make the journey.¹¹ In 1847, following the government's announcement of a bounty on eligible immigrants such as vinedressers, Wilhelm Kirchner advertised himself as an immigration agent to the landowners of the Hunter Valley. It was reported that: 'He [Kirchner] considers that vinedressers could be obtained at £15 per annum, and wine coopers at £20.'¹² By September Kirchner had obtained orders for 43 families from the landowners of the Hunter.¹³ While Kirchner does not appear to have travelled to Dungog he did visit both Paterson and Maitland.¹⁴ A list of landowners interested in Kirchner obtaining migrants with vine related skills does not appear to include any from the Williams or Allyn River valleys; the Hunter however is represented.¹⁵

The first of these German families arrived in the Hunter area (including to vineyards on the Allyn river), in 1849, on conditions that bound them to work off their passages with their contacted employees for at least two years. Once this was done, many moved on to other employment or to their own farms and it is at this point that many began to enter the Williams River valley and the countryside surrounding Dungog as well. Jakob Hofman, for example, obtained property at Brookfield, while at least one couple, began at Brookfield before moving nearer to Newcastle. Another such immigrant was Jakob Paff and his wife Christina and their four children, who worked on the Paterson River before purchasing 80 acres also at Brookfield in 1861. Brookfield was a very Catholic area of Dungog with many tenant farmers of Irish descent. Most of the Germans who arrived in this assisted migration of the early 1850s were also Catholic, though this did not necessarily mean the two groups got on well together.¹⁶

⁸ Williams, *Chinese Settlement in NSW*, p.4 & *Maitland Mercury*, 16/4/1887, p.7.

⁹ *Maitland Mercury*, 2/8/1890, p.6S & 13/1/1883, p.2S.

¹⁰ *Maitland Mercury*, 21/6/1887, p.3.

¹¹ Cloos & Tampke, *German Emigration to NSW 1838-1858*, p.viii & 7.

¹² *Maitland Mercury*, 30/6/1847, p.2.

¹³ *Maitland Mercury*, 8/9/1847, p.2.

¹⁴ *Maitland Mercury*, 18/8/1847, p.1.

¹⁵ Cloos & Tampke, *German Emigration to NSW 1838-1858*, Table 2, pp.8-9.

¹⁶ Cloos & Tampke, *German Emigration to NSW 1838-1858*, pp.27-31, p.160 & p.170.

John and Mary Trappel arrived from Germany in 1852 and worked for a time at Campsie, an estate between Vacy and Gresford. Their daughter died age 5 and was buried in the Catholic cemetery at Summer Hill. In 1866, John Trappel, under the 1861 Land Acts, was able to select 40 acres at Wallaroo Creek (Woerden).¹⁷ Joseph and Lenna Eyb were also German immigrants who arrived in Australia in 1853, subsequently moving into the Big Creek area of Wallarobba. Joseph Eyb was naturalized in 1865 and selected 40 acres at Big Creek (Hilldale after 1905), at the head of Mirar Creek.¹⁸

In the 1870s, another influx of German settlers attempted to revive wheat growing, though without success.¹⁹ The growing of vegetables was also undertaken with the crown of Mt Douglas [Gardener's Road] occupied by a fine orchard and vegetable garden which supplied Maitland, Dungog and Paterson. This area from Mt Douglas to Clarence Town was reported to be poor land, well worked by German settlers.²⁰ Clarence Town itself also has a number of families of German decent.

At the beginning of the 20th century Dungog district appears to have had a number of itinerant hawkers from India. They would travel to isolated farms with goods for sale and perhaps make purchases of eggs or chickens. Little is known of these men, but they may have used Dungog as a base at one point: 'It appears that the Indian Hawkers in this district are doing a big "biz". They are building a new place on their lot in Lord Street. When this is erected there will be a veritable colony of Hindoos.'²¹

Aside from these modest groups, individual men and families from various locations have also come to the Dungog district. The Capararo family originated from Capararo in northern Italy with Antonio Capararo's arrival in the early 1880s. After marrying, he purchased a property at Carrabolla in the Upper Paterson Valley. His attempt to grow grapes so far up the Paterson was not successful, though his oranges were more so.²² William George Rose of Lebanon was a Dungog storekeeper from 1913 until his death in 1961, and to this limited ethnic diversity can be added a few Greek immigrants, the Crithary Bros who ran an Oyster Saloon for 5 years from 1917, and Tony & Jack Barbouttis from Castellorizo, Greece from about 1922. The Barbouttis family settled for a generation in Dungog and ran a number of successful cafes, including one on Dungog railway station before moving to Newcastle.²³

Culturally the impact of any one of these ethnic groups outside the Anglo-Irish has been slight or non-existent and Dungog district remains a mix of Anglo-Irish descended Australians with only slight recent additions of urban migrants from wider ethnic backgrounds and a handful of new arrivals directly from overseas.

Heritage Survivals

- Barbouttis Cafes (Dungog)
- Site of Chinese market gardens (Dungog, Fosterton Rd, Clarence Town)
- Hilldale community
- 'Hindoo' house in Lord St (Dungog)

¹⁷ Trappel, *The Trappel Story*, p.25 & p.42.

¹⁸ Sippel, *Hilldale Union Church 1899-1999*, p.6.

¹⁹ Hunter, *Wade's Corn Flour Mill*, p.26.

²⁰ Gow, *Kempsey to Dungog*, p.84.

²¹ *Dungog Chronicle*, 23/9/1902.

²² Capararo, "Looking Back", pp.10-11.

²³ Dungog Historical Society, Comments, p.2 & Williams, *Ah, Dungog*, p.37.

3. Developing economies

3.1 Exploration [making places previously unknown known]

It goes without saying (or should) that the valleys of what are today known as the Paterson, Allyn and Williams Rivers were well known to the Gringai people having been discovered and explored by their ancestors many thousands of years previously. The earliest explorations by Europeans of the Hunter district were undertaken by William Paterson, James Grant and Francis Barrallier in 1801 and led to the European discovery of the Paterson and Williams Rivers.¹ It is assumed that various timber getters in the years afterwards would have travelled further and further up these rivers in search of cedar and other timbers within easy reach of the water for floating down stream. Exactly how far up these men would have gone is unknown.

Further exploration was done by Barrallier and others, and by 1825 Robert Dawson had named the Barrington area while exploring for the Australian Agricultural Company, and surveyor Thomas Florance had in 1827 explored the upper reaches of the Williams River and named the Chichester River for his hometown in England. Two years later, George Boyle White explored the sources of the Allyn and Williams rivers.² Soon after these surveys, land grants were being made all along the river frontages.³

Naturally much of the land within the three valleys, particularly in the foothills of the Barrington Tops, remained to be explored by Europeans and this was done in piecemeal fashion as more settlers arrived and wandered beyond the river flats. Two explorers who would have been more systematic in their wanderings were John Gould, collecting for his series on the *Birds of Australia* in 1840, and Ludwig Leichhardt in 1843.⁴

Over the course of the 19th century, specific locations and features were discovered that were long unknown to the European settlers due to the relative denseness of the bush and ruggedness of the hills. An example of such a discovery, made only a short distance from settlers' farms, was of a rock formation on the Williams River above Dungog, a discovery made with the guidance of a member of the Gringai people:

Near this I was led by an aboriginal native to the face of a precipitous rocky ridge, having the appearance of the front of a fortress, overlooking the River William. I was shewn by the black-fellow stones as round and of the size of twenty-pound cannon balls, fixed in the face of the masses of rock, as if artillery had been at work. My first impression was that cannon shot had actually been fired into the rock, the balls of stone being only half-fixed in a socket, presenting to me the appearance of shot sunk in the rock, and requiring but little trouble to unfix them. This extra- ordinary discovery I have never heard mentioned by geologists or antiquarians.⁵

¹ Archer, *The Settlement of the Paterson District*, p.2. While the Paterson River (after swapping names with the Hunter), is named after William Paterson, it is highly unlikely the Williams (at first called the William River) was also named after him also. Who 'William' was is now unknown, perhaps a native name – Willim? For a discussion of possible origins of the name of the Williams River see, 'Who was Williams of the Williams River anyway?', *Dungog Chronicle*, 22/5/2013, p.6.

² Hartley, *Barrington Tops*, p.10 & Andrews, 'North to the Manning 1824-1834', p.38 & p.43.

³ See 4.1 Land Tenure.

⁴ Hartley, *Barrington Tops*, p.10.

⁵ *Maitland Mercury*, 18/7/1846, p.2.

Even at late as 1863 it would appear that a whole tract of country remained unknown to the Europeans and once again ...

Guided by one of our most intelligent aborigines, we proceeded to Bandon Grove, eight miles north of this town, and thence a distance of six miles further northwards along a leading range until we came to a scrubby hill, where we tied our horses up, and whence we proceeded at once on foot ...⁶

The account would appear to be the discovery of what is now known as Jerusalem Creek.

In the days of travel by horse back it was possible for individuals to attempt to take a new trail, and again with the help of Gringai people this is what some appear to have done in the 1870s when they reported that:

... we sent two blacks forward who opened a marked tree line from the Williams River to the Tumally line, which leaves the road on the Williams about eleven miles above Underbank, and took us along the top of the main range dividing the Williams and Allyn Rivers.⁷

Finally even as late as the first decades of the 20th century places remained to be found. John Hopson, who resided at Eccleston on the Upper Allyn in the days when Gringai people were no longer available, was a great explorer of the Barrington Ranges and guided many parties into the Barringtons for both pleasure and scientific exploration.⁸

Heritage Survivals

- John Hopson papers (Hopson family)

⁶ *Maitland Mercury*, 17/1/1863, p.2.

⁷ *Maitland Mercury*, 20/4/1872, p.5.

⁸ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 30/6/1928, p.11.

3.2 Agriculture [commercial cultivation of plants and animals]

At first the new European settlers in the valleys of the Paterson, Allyn and Williams River valleys attempted to make them places of English style agriculture. This involved large estates with tenants as well as scattered small farms, producing a wide variety of crops sustaining the local people with the excess shipped to larger centres for sale. These ambitions, combined with the unfamiliar environment, led to great experimentation early on and the establishment of crops such as vineyards, wheat, corn, and tobacco, as well as sheep and cattle. Over time a mixture of diseases and market forces greatly narrowed this range of agricultural production.

Wheat and sheep were both tried in the Dungog Shire district, but both became better options further west in NSW and apart from the AAC sheep runs, which lasted until 1857, cattle predominated.¹ Agriculture was slow to develop with land prices only large pastoralists could afford and wheat prices subject to import competition.² Wine production was also very common for many years, falling only as wine consumption itself fell out of fashion. Tobacco and corn survived for two generations as the product of small land holders and tenants until the rise of dairying gave these small producers a better source of income.³

One of the earliest of the estates to develop was that of Webber's farm at Tocal on the Paterson River, which reported a mix of crops in 1828 such as maize (Indian corn), wheat, barley and tobacco. Wheat received a high price and maize planted after this was harvested in November.⁴ In 1827, tobacco was introduced and by 1830 the estate was producing £3,000 worth of a crop commended in the *Sydney Gazette* as fully equal to 'the best Colonial we have met with, and wants age alone to make it as pleasant as the Brazil'.⁵ Webber was soon followed by others and in 1831, Charles Boydell on the Allyn River hired a tobacconist to work in his newly built tobacco shed for £25 per year. Boydell in that year had 'about 3 acres of tobacco, 400 bushels of wheat, 6 acres of corn, 600 sheep, 70 or 80 cattle & 2 horses'.⁶ Much later, cotton was also introduced at Gresford in 1863 by Boydell but was not successful.⁷

Those with large grants were reliant on convict labour with assignment based on the amount of land worked. Thus:

Mr. Mossman, on Williams' River, purchased one section on which he has expended thousands, he cultivates wheat, maize, tobacco, &c - the latter article requires the constant attendance of one man per acre - for this favour he will be allowed four men and one additional for every forty acres, and admitting him to have three forties, he obtains seven men to cultivate a farm requiring twenty.⁸

Complaints of a shortage of workers were common, though men from the road gangs would be assigned to help at harvest times.⁹

¹ See 3.4 Pastoralism.

² Jeans, *An Historical Geography of New South Wales*, p.124.

³ See 3.3 Dairying.

⁴ Walsh, *Voices from Tocal*, p.37.

⁵ Walsh, *Voices from Tocal*, p.38 & *Sydney Gazette*, 4 & 6/3/1830, p.2.

⁶ Sullivan, *Charles Boydell*, p.29.

⁷ Sullivan, *Charles Boydell*, pp.142-143.

⁸ *The Sydney Herald*, 4/6/1835, p.2.

⁹ Walsh, *Voices from Tocal*, p.100.

Despite this apparent lack of workers, within 10 years, and allowing for the agent's talk-up, substantial farms appear to have been established:

THE VALUABLE ESTATE of "TILLEGRA" on the William River, comprising 2560 Acres capable of being divided into two complete and most eligible Farms, adjoining each other and each consisting of 1280 acres, of the finest quality of land for cultivation and pasturage; with an extensive run for Sheep and Cattle. On one Farm upwards of £2000 has been expended in improvements, and there is on it a convenient Cottage Residence, with secure Store and Kitchen detached, a large Garden and Orchard, both well stocked with fruit trees, in full bearing, and a small Vineyard; with a Barn, Granary, Stock yard, Stables, Blacksmith's Forge, Tobacco Press, Men's Huts, a one-horse Mill, and every suitable erection for carrying on the business of such an Establishment. Several miles of the Fencing are quite new, and of the most substantial description, enclosing the Corn, Wheat, and Tobacco, cultivations, and two large Grass Paddocks.¹⁰

The brothers George and Christopher Lean provide an example of smaller settlers working without convict labour when they acquired land in Fosterton. The new land is described as 'wild forest' which they cleared during the 1840s with slash and burn techniques and where they built a cottage. Farming required much effort as only after several years were the many roots and stumps laboriously burnt out and cultivation became easier.¹¹ Christopher describes how the early choices in crops became narrower:

Our principal crop was Maize, although in those days we also grew Wheat and Tobacco, but these crops both failed, the wheat being destroyed by Rust, and the tobacco by a fungus... We now confine ourselves to maize as being the safest and most profitable crop ...¹²

Settlers both large and small had a variety of issues to consider in making their crops commercially successful. This included British import duties, the condition of the roads and the amount of shipping available. Rain made it difficult to get crops down to market, with the roads of the upper Paterson and Allyn reportedly in a 'shocking bad state'.¹³ As well, the single ship at Paterson limited the speed with which crops could be got to market and those on the Williams River had similar complaints about shipping from Clarence Town.¹⁴ The existence of import restrictions to the main market in Britain caused many petitions to be written such as that got up at a meeting at Paterson Court House to request the export of flour and grain into Britain on the same terms as Canada.¹⁵ Despite these issues, land was rapidly cleared and crops planted so that by 1851 it could be reported that on a ride from Morpeth to Camyr Allyn 'we scarcely ever lost sight of paddocks of wheat and of Indian corn waving in the breeze'.¹⁶

Tobacco in particular was much affected by American imports, even though an import duty was levied.¹⁷ By 1843, Boydell had his own brand of tobacco that was considered 'American' in quality.¹⁸ By 1855, however, Boydell seems to have ceased manufacturing

¹⁰ *The Sydney Monitor and Commercial Advertiser*, 8/5/1840, p.1.

¹¹ Lean, *The Lean Family History*, p.49 & Walsh, *Voices from Tocal*, pp.35-36.

¹² Lean, *The Lean Family History*, p.49.

¹³ *Maitland Mercury*, 24/2/1844, p.3.

¹⁴ Sullivan, *Charles Boydell*, p.99 & Ford, *Clarence Town Erring – I to River Port*, p.17.

¹⁵ Sullivan, *Charles Boydell*, p.95.

¹⁶ Sullivan, *Charles Boydell*, p.115.

¹⁷ *Sydney Gazette*, 31/8/1839, p3.

¹⁸ Sullivan, *Charles Boydell*, p.84.

tobacco.¹⁹ Nevertheless, tobacco continued to be promoted and many tobacco manufactories were established, but overall wheat, tobacco and maize were all giving poor returns in 1863 due to disease.²⁰ This is despite the fact that, with the U.S. Civil War, American tobacco had all but disappeared and local prices rose in 1862 to 3s. per lb.²¹

Tobacco continued to be popular with small farmers and tenants, but the more capital intensive tobacco factories were run by larger farmers and local storekeepers. Bandon Grove in particular, about 15 miles north of Dungog along the Williams River, became a centre of both corn and tobacco farming.²² William Alexander Smith at Bandon Grove established a tobacco curing and manufactory business, even bringing out twistlers and cigar makers from Britain.²³ In 1855, Thomas and Peter McWilliam operated a retail/wholesale store and, in 1863, these brothers established a tobacco manufactory in Dungog.²⁴ In the Vacy/Paterson area in 1865 it was reported that seven tobacco manufactories were operating, two in Paterson itself.²⁵

The level of agricultural technology in the 19th century meant that those who owned large estates could only cultivate so much themselves directly, with the rest given over to tenants to work. Even so, after 20 years of settlement the description of Boydell land on the Allyn River shows only about 10% of the land to be cleared or cultivated and with huts or cottages. While many lots are classed as 'commands a vote', others have been uncultivated for a number of years.²⁶ The sale of such land and the opening up of land to 'free selection' after the Robertson Land Acts of 1861 resulted in many former Paterson and Allyn River tobacco growers moving onto land on the Upper Hunter around Patrick's Plains and Singleton. The effect of this was to increase the production of tobacco in general, though not necessarily in the Dungog Shire district.²⁷

In 1857, floods were extremely severe, destroying mills all along the rivers.²⁸ A series of further floods in the 1860s destroyed crops, made roads impassible and contributed to a developing rust problem that all but destroyed the wheat growing of the district, while high seed costs and crops losses hit the economy of the district hard.²⁹ In the 1870s, an influx of German settlers attempted to revive wheat growing but without success.³⁰ Though a report of 1872 says that though damage by rust would be high, the wheat crop was plentiful with much that was safe from the rust.³¹ Again in 1875, an account from Vacy also reports on a fair wheat crop.³² Despite these efforts, wheat growing entirely disappeared from the three valleys in the face of wheat coming increasingly from western NSW now linked by rail.

¹⁹ Sullivan, *Charles Boydell*, p.130.

²⁰ Sullivan, *Charles Boydell*, pp.142-143.

²¹ Sullivan, *Charles Boydell*, p.137.

²² Hunter, *Wade's Corn Flour Mill*, p.11 & p.13.

²³ Notes by Pauline Middlebrook's mother (nee Smith) c.1930.

²⁴ Hunter, *Wade's Corn Flour Mill*, p.12.

²⁵ Clements, *Vacy ... One Hundred & Eighty Years of History*, p.70.

²⁶ Sullivan, *Charles Boydell*, p.124.

²⁷ Sullivan, *Charles Boydell*, pp.138-139.

²⁸ Hunter, *Wade's Corn Flour Mill*, p.10 & Sullivan, *Charles Boydell*, p.133.

²⁹ Hunter, *Wade's Corn Flour Mill*, p.11 & *Maitland Mercury*, 21/1/1865, p.5

³⁰ Hunter, *Wade's Corn Flour Mill*, p.26.

³¹ *Maitland Mercury*, 3/12/1872, p.3.

³² *Maitland Mercury*, 2/12/1875, p.2.

In addition to crops such as tobacco, wheat and corn, many also attempted commercial production of butter and the growing of fruit. Boydell first sold butter at 14d per lb, and then 10d per lb. Fruit was also grown early on, with reports of 'district navel orange trees 30 years of age still in bearing, and in the town of Paterson may be seen the old orange trees planted by Major Johnston, now over 50 years of age'.³³ Boydell also reports as early as 1832 that he had produced excellent melons and peaches.³⁴

Wine making was also popular, with Boydell recording 1½ acres of vines planted in 1833.³⁵ By 1849, the number of acres under vines in the Hunter had greatly increased.³⁶ At one point, with transportation ended and the gold rushes more attractive, agents organised migration from Germany under a bounty scheme to assist those with wine related skills to make the journey as the Government extended the bounty scheme.³⁷ Bounties had previously been given only on British immigrants, but now foreigners who were specialist workers on products not produced in Britain such as wine, silk, or oil were targeted.³⁸ By 1866, an observer reported that the demand for Australian wines at Clarence Town had markedly improved.³⁹ Such wines included not only those from Camyr Allyn and the Lindeman estate, but also Dingadee wines made by the Hooke family on the Williams River near Dungog.⁴⁰

By the early 20th century grape growing and wine production had begun to decline due to a variety of factors that included an overall decrease in wine consumption in Australia, the importation of cheap foreign wine, and a series of bad seasons and fungal diseases. In 1918 for example, it was reported that 'Mr R B Boydell of Allynbrook ... is one of the largest vignerons. The quantity of grapes treated by him last season, including that which he bought from neighbouring growers was only about a third of his own usual crop.' This was reportedly the result of - 'Bad seasons due to excessive rains' And that - 'Oidium, a fungous disease has done a great deal of damage and the sulphur treatment has been unavailing owing to frequent showers coming after each application.'⁴¹ Despite this, grape growing and wine making continued on the upper Allyn until at least the 1940s.⁴²

Corn was cultivated from agriculture's beginning in the three valleys and there are early reports of a range of cereals grown for the Sydney market, such as wheat, barley, corn and hay. But it is corn that replaces the rust prone wheat, with corn commonly used by poorer families as a flour substitute.⁴³ Corn, for example, was being promoted in 1864 by Thomas Mort, a friend and associate of George Mackay, a large Dungog landowner.⁴⁴ Another remembers farmers reduced to 'homony' [a porridge made from cracked corn] in hard times such as when floods washed pumpkins down off the farms.⁴⁵ There are also reports of the Gringai people both helping to harvest and stealing corn crops, implying that they were

³³ *Australian Town and Country Journal*, 10/12/1892, p.30.

³⁴ Sullivan, *Charles Boydell*, p.36.

³⁵ Sullivan, *Charles Boydell*, p.38.

³⁶ Sullivan, *Charles Boydell*, p.108.

³⁷ Cloos & Tampke, *German Emigration to NSW 1838-1858*, p.viii & p.7 & Sullivan, *Charles Boydell*, p.101.

See also 2.3 Ethnic influences.

³⁸ Sullivan, *Charles Boydell*, p.103.

³⁹ *Maitland Mercury*, 11/1/1866, p.2.

⁴⁰ *Maitland Mercury*, 6/1/1874, p.1.

⁴¹ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 22/5/1918, p.9.

⁴² *Allynbrook Public School, 1869 – 1969*, p.8.

⁴³ Hunter, *Wade's Corn Flour Mill*, p.11.

⁴⁴ Hunter, *Wade's Corn Flour Mill*, p.15.

⁴⁵ *Dungog Chronicle*, 9/3/1926.

happy to eat this new food.⁴⁶ However, wheat flour was preferred for home consumption and later corn was usually fed to pigs or for milling at the corn flour mill established in 1878 on the Williams River near Dungog.⁴⁷ While the Williams Valley farmers were fortunate in having their corn purchased by the Dungog based cornflour mill, those in Gresford had relied since the 1850s on a mill operated by the Boydell family and when this failed around 1894, farmers began favouring pumpkins to feed their pigs rather than corn.⁴⁸

Pig raising was a popular source of additional income and in 1893, for example, some 13 farmers on the Paterson and Allyn Rivers were granted slaughtering licenses for pigs.⁴⁹ Pigs seem to have been kept by a wide range of farmers and landowners, large and small. At Bandon Grove, for instance, in 1885, Vincent Dowling on 2,000 acres with 140 cattle, Joseph Atkins on 44 acres with 12 cattle, and Paul Haggerty on 32 acres with 20 cattle, all had 30 pigs each. Most kept less than 30 pigs, though Richard Boydell at Caergurle (Caergwrle) on the Allyn River had 98 pigs.⁵⁰

The Lean family at Fosterton was one that benefited from the Dungog cornflour mill. By the 1880s they had built Figtree House, 'a brick cottage containing nine rooms with a large cellar ...' Their vineyard produced 900 gallons a year at 5/- a gallon and there were orange and apple orchards.⁵¹ In 1882, Christopher wrote that it cost him 25/- to break a horse, and that he had 400 bushels of corn unsold. Six loads of maize went to J Wade's mill was at 5/- per bushel, and a few months later he wrote that 'Wade is giving 4/6 delivered at the Mill'.⁵² Later again he reported the wheat crop was ruined by rain but that the grass for cattle was good.⁵³ By 1884, prices for corn had dropped even more, from 4/- to 3/9 delivered and that Wade planned to stop buying at the end of the month.⁵⁴

It is interesting to note that Christopher Lean is continuing to try and grow wheat at a time when many report it had already ceased to be a viable crop in the Dungog district.⁵⁵ Others, it seems, also made efforts to try new crops, and some mention is made of attempts in the 1890s to grow and process arrowroot in the Williams Valley, but this was of limited success, while Paterson growers seem to have also tried this crop as early as 1865.⁵⁶

Vegetables seem to have been mainly grown for home consumption and some local consumption through local auctions, the few Chinese market gardens at Dungog and Gresford being an exception: 'We have two parties of Chinamen cultivators in the suburbs; in consequence, vegetables are plentiful and cheap.'⁵⁷ As well the crown of Mt Douglas [Gardener's Road] was reported to be occupied by a fine orchard and vegetable garden that supplied Maitland, Dungog and Paterson. This area from Mt Douglas to Clarence Town was said to be poor land well worked by German settlers.⁵⁸

⁴⁶ Sullivan, *Charles Boydell*, p.25.

⁴⁷ See 3.7 Industry.

⁴⁸ *Gresford 150 Years 1829-1979*, p.19.

⁴⁹ *Maitland Mercury*, 29/7/1893, p.6S.

⁵⁰ *Return of Stock and Stock Owners*, 1885.

⁵¹ Lean, *The Lean Family History*, p.67.

⁵² Lean, *The Lean Family History*, p.121-126, letters to Thomas Lean, 20th March, 6th April, 9th August, 1882.

⁵³ Lean, *The Lean Family History*, p.127, letter to Thomas Lean, 30th Dec, 1882.

⁵⁴ Lean, *The Lean Family History*, p.131, letter to Thomas Lean, 26th January, 1884.

⁵⁵ Sullivan, *Charles Boydell*, p.155.

⁵⁶ Hunter, *Wade's Corn Flour Mill*, p.38-39 & Sullivan, *Charles Boydell*, p.144.

⁵⁷ *Maitland Mercury*, 13/1/1883.

⁵⁸ Gow, *Kempsey to Dungog*, p.84.

Much of this produce was sold locally, as this 1920s description of East Gresford describes:

Market day in East Gresford presents a busy scene, when farmers bring in their eggs, poultry, vegetables, and fruit to be "put up." They call it the "union," and on this and cattle sale days most of the business in the town is conducted by farmers and cattle men.⁵⁹

Other produce of the district included lucerne, honey and pigs. Honey was also being produced by local bee keepers by the end of the 19th century, sufficient for a Dungog tinsmith to advertise that he made honey tins and for a Hunter River Bee-keepers Association to exist.⁶⁰ It was also reported that some Aborigines of the Paterson area would, in season, collect the honey of native bees and sell this from the roadside.⁶¹ Another crop grown along the river flats was lucerne, which harvested as hay was used for both local feed and shipped as a cash crop. Attack by lucerne aphids in the 1970s caused much economic loss until resistant varieties could be developed.⁶² Closely associated with dairying was the raising of pigs, which were fed on skimmed milk that was a by-product of early milk and cream production as well as on corn. Bacon and ham production was therefore common, though as clean water and sanitation became a priority, piggeries declined.

At the end of the 19th century the dairy industry began to develop.⁶³ At first reluctant, by the early years of the 20th century numerous farmers were at least partly devoted to the commercial production of milk. By 1910, a general description of Camyr Allyn was of its four pursuits, grazing, dairying, agriculture and wine growing.⁶⁴ The impact of dairying on other agricultural pursuits was that corn, tobacco and wheat growing declined or completely disappeared, as did commercial vegetable growing. In the early years of the 20th century a description of a typical farm was of one with fruit trees, vegetables, chickens, pigs, ducks and cows (40), and a cart with one horse to take milk to the butter factory.⁶⁵ And the Paterson Valley is described as one where – 'Dairying, pig-raising, orange, maize, and lucerne growing are well established activities ...'⁶⁶

Changes in the technology of dairying had a wide range of impacts on the typical farm. The skim milk that was a by-product of cream production was fed to pigs, and when all milk began to be sent on for processing with the introduction of quotas in the 1950s and 1960s, the number of pigs kept rapidly declined. Similarly with the change over from crop fed cows to pasture fed. When corn was grown, the rows in-between were planted with pumpkins, squashes and water melons. As corn planting disappeared in favour of the sowing of rye grass, so to did the planting of many vegetables for family consumption.⁶⁷

While fruit trees were established in all the valleys, the growing and sale of what were known as 'Paterson Oranges' became particularly established on the Allyn and Paterson Rivers, though many were grown in the Williams Valley also. A number of varieties were introduced to the Paterson Valley in the 1850s, but by the end of the 19th century it was

⁵⁹ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 19/1/1925, p.9.

⁶⁰ *Maitland Mercury*, 7/6/1890, p.6S.

⁶¹ See 2.1 Aboriginal.

⁶² Archer, Social and environmental change as determinants of ecosystem health, pp.187-190.

⁶³ See 3.3 Dairying.

⁶⁴ Sullivan, *Charles Boydell*, pp.184-185.

⁶⁵ Michaelides, *Growing up in Dungog*, p.3, 4, 6, 14,

⁶⁶ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 19/1/1925, p.9.

⁶⁷ Grafton Shelton, interviewed 19/4/2012.

reported that the 'principal variety is the St. Michael's or Siletta'.⁶⁸ Already by the 1890s, oranges were being brought down the valley to be packed and shipped on to the Sydney market, but it was in the early decades of the 20th century that the 'Paterson Orange' dominated the market.

It is quite an ordinary sight to see in the orange season large wagons laden with oranges heaped loose in the body of vehicles coming into Paterson. Some are sold loose and placed into cases for dispatch to Maitland, Newcastle, and Sydney. The Paterson River oranges are of good marketable size, thin skinned and very juicy.⁶⁹

Not only was this a delicious orange but one, 'which is less hampered by disease than much of the fruit grown closer to the coast'.⁷⁰ This industry gradually declined as competition from irrigation areas growing seedless varieties of orange out priced the Paterson variety.⁷¹

With the decline of oranges, and later dairying, the range of agricultural pursuits within the Dungog Shire district was perhaps narrowest in the second half of the 20th century. Perhaps the first new agricultural pursuit to enter the Dungog Shire area in the post-war period was chicken farming. Chickens before the 1950s were for eggs and the occasional Christmas dinner, but from the late 1950s Steggles introduced the practice of raising large numbers of chickens to be quickly killed and frozen to create a regular supply for city markets. The first of the large barn-based chicken farms to enter the Paterson River area was in the late 1960s. The most significant aspect of this type of agriculture is the tight link between the farmers and the re-seller of the chickens in determining the manner in which the farming takes place. For many, chicken farming became an alternative to dairying as this industry declined.⁷²

As dairying and other agricultural pursuits suffered falling returns, many within the three valleys have again begun experimenting with a range of alternatives. These have included or now include alpacas, deer, olives and snails, while Riverdene Nurseries at East Gresford has specialised in producing native plants for revegetation projects.⁷³ Also, vineyards, following on from the great revival of the wine industry in the Hunter Valley have also been reestablished in the Paterson and Allyn Valleys, though relatively few on the Williams River.

In very recent times a handful of organic farms have also been established and efforts made to sell their vegetable produce commercially. Dungog continues to have a vegetable auction every second Thursday, to which local producers bring their vegetables, eggs and chickens for sale, and several weekend markets are held throughout the district at which agricultural produce is sold.

Heritage survivals

- Remaining 'Paterson Orange' trees
- Union shed at Paterson
- Tobacco manufactories

⁶⁸ *Australian Town and Country Journal*, 10/12/1892, p.30.

⁶⁹ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 22/5/1918, p.9.

⁷⁰ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 19/1/1925, p.9.

⁷¹ Archer, Social and environmental change as determinants of ecosystem health, pp.196-199.

⁷² Clements, Vacy ... One Hundred & Eighty Years of History, pp.86-87. See also 3.3 Dairying.

⁷³ Collison & Hancock, *Gresford 170 years*, p.77.

3.3 Dairying [production and processing of milk products]

Milk cows and the making of butter certainly entered the three valleys of the Dungog Shire district along with the first European settlers. However, while some attempt at making butter for sale elsewhere was made, the majority of 'dairying' before the 1890s was a matter of family production or local and fairly immediate consumption. This changed with the arrival of the cream separator, which initiated the development of a dairy industry along the river flats of the Williams, Paterson and Allyn Rivers. This industry grew rapidly throughout the first half of the 20th century, reaching its peak in perhaps the late 1950s or early 1960s, before going into an, at first slow and then increasingly rapid decline, until by the 1980s only a handful of dairies remained scattered around the valleys.

Early in the 19th century on the Tocal Estate on the Paterson River, cheese and butter were produced, with 15 lb of cheese a day and 150 lbs of butter per week sent to Sydney at one point, though none was shipped in the summer.⁷⁴ But it was not until the end of the 19th century that a number of technological changes created a dairying 'industry'. Beginning in 1880 with the invention of the cream separator, refrigeration in the 1880s helped increase demand as overseas markets could now be reached, while the Babcock Tester of 1890 meant the amount of cream in milk could be tested on a cow by cow basis, allowing farmers to cull and improve their herds.⁷⁵

Up until the 1880s, butter had been made by placing milk in shallow dishes, setting these out overnight, then skimming the cream off the top. This was done at the farm and the butter then churned by hand. The butter produced was at best a side income to the main farm activity of growing crops such as tobacco or corn. The introduction of the centrifugal cream separator, marketed most successfully by Swedish engineer Carl Gustaf Patrik de Laval, dramatically sped up the butter-making process by eliminating the slow step of letting cream naturally rise to the top of milk. The major impact of this technology, in addition to increased production, was the establishment of 'creameries' to which farmers could take their cream, with the leftover skim milk used to feed to pigs and calves, while butter was produced on a larger scale.⁷⁶

The growth in dairying was to be a great boon to the Dungog Shire district, but change never comes easily and many opposed or neglected this opportunity at first. This was a circumstance pointed out in some detail by a correspondent of the *Manning River Times* who in 1905-6 toured the north coast and the Williams Valley and reported on what he considered was much wasteful land use. Farmers, such as Mr Harry Muddle on 76 acres at Bendolba, were used to maize growing. For years Mr Muddle hated the idea of dairying until a friend asked to run 12 dairy cows on his property and paid him in milk. The £5 a month this gained him soon converted Mr Muddle to the benefits of this new industry.⁷⁷

The change to dairy farming gave a major boost to the many small farmers and tenants whose tobacco and corn crops had not provided them with any but the barest living. By 1899, there were 296 landholders who could be described as farmers, and of these 129 had dairy farms.⁷⁸ Dairy farms soon spread further up the rivers as better roads and motor cars cut

⁷⁴ Walsh, *Voices from Tocal*, p.47.

⁷⁵ Jeans, *An Historical Geography of New South Wales*, p.256.

⁷⁶ Scarr, *The Oak and the Dairy Industry*, pp.3-4.

⁷⁷ Gow, *Kempsey to Dungog*, p.83.

⁷⁸ Strachen, 'Assumed but rarely documented', para 6.

travelling times and rail (1911) improved access to markets. For the larger landowners too, dairying provided the opportunity for increased rents from their tenants as well as profits from the creameries and butter factories that their capital allowed them to set up. The government also moved to support the new dairying industry and a 'travelling Dairy Unit' in the Hunter region demonstrated the new methods so as to encourage the establishment of creameries.⁷⁹

Creameries were set up at Vacy, Gresford, Allynbrook and on the Williams River at various locations. One was the short-lived creamery at Vacy in 1892:

This creamery, the first in our district, was publicly opened yesterday, Monday, the 18th instant, by Mr. Theo. Cooper. The dimensions of the building are 35 feet by 16 feet, and 13 feet high. The boiler room is 10 feet square, and the boiler of 6-horse power, and the engine is of 4-horse power. The two separators are capable of holding 180 gallons of milk. There is also a reservoir for heating milk. The receiving tanks allow for weighing 120 gallons of milk at a time. A windlass is arranged to draw the milk from the carts, and the water required is pumped up from the river, near which the creamery is situated.⁸⁰

Another was opened also in 1892 at Eagleton on the Williams River, and in 1893 John Hooke set one up at Wirra Gulla not far from Dungog, and in 1894 a creamery/butter and cheese factory was set up by Richard Boydell in the Allyn Valley.⁸¹ Boydell's attempt to set up a Dairy Co-op, however, was not successful, while that at Wirra Gulla burned down in 1895. About 1890, Robert Bosworth set up a creamery just north of the Bandon Grove bridge and another was established at Dingadee near Dungog.⁸² With access to rivers, much cream was taken by 'cream boats' from Gresford to Bowthorne/Duckenfield, where a co-operative butter factory was established, as well as down the Williams River to Clarence Town, and the Paterson River to Morpeth, doing this in 1916 at 6d. per can.⁸³ Many of the smaller creameries quickly closed and larger establishments developed known as butter factories, such as those at Dungog, Gresford and Gostwyck.

A significant feature of the dairy industry at this time, and for many years afterwards, was that it favoured co-operatives. Co-operatives were very popular as a means of raising capital and keeping control in the hands of producers. The dairying industry was suited to this as it was based on many small producers whose resources could afford to establish the relatively simple creameries and butter factories. The local creameries could handle the milk supplied to them by farmers within 'horse and cart' distance, but the production of butter and its supply to the larger centres required more capital and this was gained by the establishment of co-operatives such as the Dungog Co-operative Butter factory in 1905 and the Bowthorne Co-operative Butter Factory at Gresford in 1907.⁸⁴ In June 1908, the Raymond Terrace Dairy Company established a Paterson branch with a factory at Gostwyck.⁸⁵ This factory was owned by Peters Ice Cream Company from 1915 to 1926, and closed in that year after

⁷⁹ Scarr, *The Oak and the Dairy Industry*, p.4.

⁸⁰ *Maitland Mercury*, 22/12/1892, p.4.

⁸¹ *Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners' Advocate*, 23/9/1892, p.7; *Gresford 150 Years 1829-1979*, Early Farming & *Dungog Chronicle*, 5/12/1893.

⁸² Sullivan, *Charles Boydell*, pp.172-173 & Hazell, *A Centenary of Memories*, pp.13-14 [1895/1896].

⁸³ Scarr, *The Oak and the Dairy Industry*, p.5 and p.18 & Gow, *Kempsey to Dungog*, p.83-4.

⁸⁴ Scarr, *The Oak and the Dairy Industry*, p.4 & p.26, & Clements, *Vacy ... One Hundred & Eighty Years of History*, p.77.

⁸⁵ Gent, *Gostwyck Paterson 1823 to 2009*, p.54.

being repurchased by the Raymond Terrace Dairy Company.⁸⁶ In 1913, a second Dungog milk processor opened, known as the Dungog Dairyman and Farmers Milk and Ice Company. Unlike the Dungog Co-operative Butter factory, this second processor did not make butter but instead supplied milk to the Sydney market only.⁸⁷

Despite the increased scale these factories implied, the basic unit of the dairy industry remained a family farm with hand milking and labour costs keeping things small. For these farmers the great advantage was that dairying provided a weekly income compared to the more annual result (if any) of other crops and products.⁸⁸ As dairying became the main concern of farmers, crops such as tobacco, corn, vegetables and fruit declined. Another result was that the major communication between farms and their service centres became the milk pickup. Increasingly, motor vans carrying milk cans would deliver supplies, newspapers, and even school children as they went between dairy farms and creameries.⁸⁹

By the beginning of the 20th century, even before the railway line came through, a general description of the Boydell estate at Camyr Allyn was of its four pursuits: grazing, dairying, agriculture and wine growing, with the dairying largely taking place on a share system.⁹⁰ Railways allowed milk to be transported from dairies along the line to factories in the city, and those within reach of the line running through Dungog to Paterson and on to the city markets were able to take advantage of this.⁹¹ By 1917, the Dungog district was described as a major milk supplier, after the South Coast, due to its rail link.⁹² In 1927 Dungog was awarded 3rd prize in the British Dairy Show, following Canada and Warwick in Queensland.⁹³

The quality of milk products was always an issue, and as early as 1915 the Dairy Industry Act was designed to regulate this. In the Williams Valley, the Jersey Herd Society, with R W Alison and H L Fitzgerald among others as members, aimed at improving butter fat content.⁹⁴ However, the major factor influencing the dairy industry was the fluctuation in milk production between summer and winter, with winter milk production able to be kept up only with expensive feed.

In an attempt to overcome these fluctuations, NSW milk zones were introduced in 1932 within which farmers were paid high prices to maintain year round production and fodder conservation, herd improvement and pasture management were also encouraged. Any continuing winter shortfalls were met by purchases from outside the milk zone. In the 1930s, widespread price-cutting led to Sydney's 'Milk War' which only ended when a reformed industry Milk Board took control of supplies into Sydney and Newcastle. The Board then appointed a handful of organisations to act as agents to sell milk to the public. The various dairy farmers of the Paterson, Allyn and Williams then had to fit within this increasingly regulated system.

⁸⁶ Clements, *Vacy ... One Hundred & Eighty Years of History*, pp.81-83 & Gostwyck Butter Factory, <http://www.patersonriver.com.au/places/gostwyckbutterfactory.htm>

⁸⁷ Osmond, *Dairy Farming in Dungog During the Milk Board Years*, p.22.

⁸⁸ Jeans, *An Historical Geography of New South Wales*, p.251.

⁸⁹ Scarr, *The Oak and the Dairy Industry*, p.5 & p.18.

⁹⁰ Sullivan, *Charles Boydell*, pp.184-185 & *Dungog Chronicle*, 3/5/1910.

⁹¹ Jeans, *An Historical Geography of New South Wales*, p.252.

⁹² *Sydney Morning Herald*, 31/5/1917, p.5.

⁹³ *Examiner*, 20/10/1927, p.5.

⁹⁴ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 12/4/1922, p.9.

It was at this time that the Dungog Dairyman and Farmers Milk and Ice Company closed leaving the Dungog Co-operative Butter Factory without competition within the Williams Valley. Also, after a long period of mergers and closures, the Hunter Valley Co-operative Dairy based at Hexham, which changed its name from 'Raymond Terrace' in 1944, controlled most milk production in the Hunter region, with the Sydney based Dairy Farmers Co-Op providing the main competition - competition strictly controlled by the Milk Board and its system of zones and quotas.⁹⁵ The Paterson Valley did not enter these milk zones until 1942, which resulted in encouraging more dairy farms on even more marginal land, with only some of the most remote farms remaining cream-only producers.⁹⁶

In 1942, the dairy farmers of the district threatened to strike if they were not granted an increase in the price paid for milk. Among other things it was argued that: 'Young men were getting sick of the farms and getting better money elsewhere.'⁹⁷ The response was continued government intervention that helped, presumably, to keep some of these young men on the farms. This was done with protection for butter and restrictions on imports of margarine and vegetable oils, as well as minimum prices that helped to prop up an uncompetitive export market in butter. The result was that 1945 to 1955 was a period of continued expansion, with Paterson and Allyn River dairies, for example, increasing from 200 to 248 dairy farms. Despite the continuing growth in dairy farms, or perhaps because of it, the *Dungog Chronicle* in 1950 declared dairying to be a form of 'white slavery' as price and wage increases were not matched by rising milk prices.⁹⁸

Many of these dairy farmers would have been share farmers, under which the landowner provided all the capital, including the herd, and all subsequent costs and income was then split between the landowner and the dairy farmer. Sharing farming agreements varied, from hand-shakes to detailed written conditions determining such things as the number of horses that could be kept, etc. The proportion of share farmers to those who owned and worked their own properties is unclear. Where larger properties continued to exist, such as on the Williams River around Dungog - some of which ran two or three dairies - the proportion was high, while further up the Williams Valley and over on the Paterson and Allyn Rivers it appears to have been much less.⁹⁹

In 1955, individual quotas (as opposed to factory quotas) began to be introduced based on a dairy's winter production (the most expensive period).¹⁰⁰ The introduction of this kind of quota was strongly opposed within the area of the Dungog Co-operative and their introduction was delayed until as late as 1961.¹⁰¹ The quota system resulted in a marked increase in productivity as some dropped out of dairying - often those who qualified for a quota insufficient to live on - and those that remained had more income for improvements. The quotas of those who left could be purchased, with the cost of two cans worth of milk quota (40 gallons) in the early 1960s as high as £5,000.¹⁰²

⁹⁵ Scarr, *The Oak and the Dairy Industry*, pp.20-31.

⁹⁶ Skaines, *The Dairy Industry of the Paterson Valley*, pp.10-16.

⁹⁷ *Dungog Chronicle*, 20/1/1942, p3.

⁹⁸ *Dungog Chronicle*, 26/8/1950 & Skaines, *The Dairy Industry of the Paterson Valley*, p.42.

⁹⁹ Dugald Alison, interviewed 16/4/2012 & Grafton Shelton, interviewed 19/4/2012. [Both are Williams Valley dairy farmers.]

¹⁰⁰ Skaines, *The Dairy Industry of the Paterson Valley*, p.29.

¹⁰¹ Osmond, *Dairy Farming in Dungog During the Milk Board Years*, p.35.

¹⁰² Grafton Shelton, interviewed 19/4/2012.

Another impact of quotas and the effort to maintain a constant level of milk supply was that less separated milk was sold as cream. Previous to quotas, the morning milk was generally sent to the Butter Factory and night milk was separated for cream – with occasionally a special run if milk was short at the factory. With quotas, nearly all milk was sent to the factory and skim milk was no longer available as pig feed, with the consequence that keeping pigs as extra income on dairy farms further declined.¹⁰³

The increased productivity of the 1950s meant that the Dungog Co-operative Butter Factory was very pleased with its results in 1959, declaring a record turnover and a profit of £26,901. The Butter Factory, the Chairman of which at this time was also the local MLA, made this profit from both the sale of its butter, manufacturing powered milk, and supplying milk to the Milk Board. It also ran an artificial insemination project and provided veterinary services; this last partly subsidised by both the Milk Board and Dairy Farmers. The management of the Co-op at this time was also pleased that the price of butter in Britain was rising, but concerned that margarine quotas had increased and that per head consumption of butter in Australia had fallen to a mere 27.8 pounds.¹⁰⁴

An aspect of the improved productivity within the three valleys was the switch from corn and sacaline feed to pasture feed. Since the beginning of dairying in the 1890s, dairy regions such as the Dungog Shire district had relied on crops such as corn and the newly introduced sacaline to provide feed for dairy cows. The change to pasture such as rye grass and clover, improved milk productivity, as well as reduced the amount of handling a dairy farm required, while increasing the need for pasture management.¹⁰⁵

After pasture feed and quotas, the next major change for dairying within the three valleys was the introduction of bulk milk pickup, which needed a suitable road, ramps, room to turn, and vats – these last could be bought on easy payments from Dairy Farmers Co. All this meant higher capital costs that often outweighed the ease of tanker collection versus cans. One Eccleston farmer, for example, with a bridge unable to sustain a tanker, mounted his refrigerated vat on a trailer to take to the road for tanker collection. When a flood washed away the bridge he gave up dairying. For those operating several dairies on a share farmer basis, the capital requirements of bulk milk were especially high and at least one landowner reputedly closed down three dairies in one day on the introduction of bulk milk.¹⁰⁶ From 1962, Paterson and Allyn River milk went to the Hunter Valley Co-operative Dairy Company via a milk receiving depot built at Paterson.¹⁰⁷ Williams Valley milk went to Dairy Farmers, though the introduction of bulk milk pickup seems to have been late compared to the Paterson and Allyn Valleys.

The high capital cost of the change over to bulk pickup, coinciding with a severe drought in the mid-1960s, saw a decline in dairying farm numbers. In 1963, it was reported that 40% of dairy farms in the Williams and Paterson Valleys were between 150 and 350 acres, with some 15% between 200 and 250 acres. These sizes were considered large but this was attributed to the hilliness of the country, which meant that much of the land was suitable only for dry cows or for ancillary cattle. This same report stated that ‘the Paterson Valley is

¹⁰³ See 3.2 Agriculture.

¹⁰⁴ *Dungog Chronicle*, 9/9/1959, p.1.

¹⁰⁵ Grafton Shelton, interviewed 19/4/2012.

¹⁰⁶ Skaines, *The Dairy Industry of the Paterson Valley*, p.54 & Dugald Alison, interviewed 16/4/2012.

¹⁰⁷ Clements, *Vacy ... One Hundred & Eighty Years of History*, p.84.

not as well off as the Williams Valley climatically'.¹⁰⁸ From 1963 to 1979, dairy cattle numbers fell by half in both the Paterson/Allyn and Williams Valleys. Major droughts in 1964-66, and again in 1979-80 contributed to this fall. Naturally the most remote and marginal farms began to withdraw first, with Paterson/Allyn dairies numbering 110 in 1970 and only 62 by 1980. This rate of 5% withdrawal per year was in line with NSW and national trends.

Any fall in overall milk production due to the reduction in the number of dairy farms was partly offset by the increase in productivity per dairy, from an average 72,000 litres in 1951 to 163,000 litres in 1971, as smaller producers withdrew and production increased in those remaining.¹⁰⁹ This increase in productivity was also due to a change in the late 1960s and early 1970s from the Jersey cows that had been common to Friesians. The much larger and more productive Friesians were largely obtained using artificial insemination (AI) methods that now became standard practice on most dairies.¹¹⁰ In this same period the demand for milk and butter began to decline for health reasons, as well as being greatly impacted by the UK's joining of the Common Market, and the 1970 lifting of the ban on margarine.¹¹¹

The decline in dairy farm numbers meant that the Dungog Co-operative Butter Factory was over capacity by the 1970s. In that decade it also had a turnover in the consumer goods it supplied to the dairy farms of over \$800,000 – an aspect of its operations it now began to consider a burden. In 1981, this co-operative allowed itself to be taken over by Dairy Farmers, which a short time later closed its Dungog operations.¹¹²

Drought, bulk milk collection, the introduction of quotas, and then their abolition as de-regulation affected the dairy industry, as well as high grain prices in the 1980s, forced many to leave the dairy industry. Despite these considerations, the reluctance of many farmers to leave a 'way of life' made this a long drawn out process. Factors that made many reluctant to give away dairying, despite its falling profitability, included family tradition, freedom of hours, and the attractions of working in the open. Additionally, there were many tax deductions, as well as savings with home grown vegetables, fruit and meat. Factors that pushed many to give up their dairies ranged from tighter hygiene from the 1960s and the condemnation of many sheds, to the aging of farmers, and the increasing reluctance of children or wives, on whose labour the farm depended, to continue. As well, growth of expectations for children's education, and for leisure in general, encouraged alternatives to dairying.¹¹³

A major alternative to dairy farming that was readily available in the Dungog district was the switch to beef cattle. Many dairy farmers had experience with beef cattle as it was common to raise vealers on higher pastures above the riverflats, and all three valleys contained much high land suitable for beef cattle. Again, the rise in beef cattle within the Dungog Shire was in line with averages in NSW and Australia, with a peak between 1966 to 1975.¹¹⁴

¹⁰⁸ Study by Hunter Valley Research Foundation in *Dungog Chronicle*, 4/5/1963, p.1.

¹⁰⁹ Skaines, *The Dairy Industry of the Paterson Valley*, pp.17-25.

¹¹⁰ Dugald Alison, interviewed 16/4/2012.

¹¹¹ Skaines, *The Dairy Industry of the Paterson Valley*, p.47.

¹¹² Osmond, *Dairy Farming in Dungog During the Milk Board Years*, p.48.

¹¹³ Skaines, *The Dairy Industry of the Paterson Valley*, pp.45-56.

¹¹⁴ Skaines, *The Dairy Industry of the Paterson Valley*, pp.58-63.

Another alternative for dairy farmers was to raise broiler chickens. This was increasingly common after 1977 due to increased productivity and the provision by Steggles of feed, credit and permission within their own system. This system was limited to 40 farms per processing plant and to below Gresford. Horse studs and even goats were other livestock choices that some made. A final alternative was simply to sell the land, and this many did to hobby farmers, leading to a fragmentation of agricultural land, and some promotion of weeds and fence declines.¹¹⁵

Despite the numbers that have left the dairy industry, the Dungog Shire district still has many dairy farms, with around 20 dairies in the Williams Valley alone.¹¹⁶ These dairies include a few with more than 200 cows that produce nearly as much milk as did the numerous smaller dairies of a generation ago, as well as a number that continue to operate on a smaller scale with perhaps only 50 cows. Change continues to occur, with some change even appearing to indicate a pulling back from the seemingly inevitable technological enhancement of the dairying process, as with the now common practice of many dairies foregoing AI and instead allowing a bull to service their commercial herds - a practice that is less costly and which some believe improves the chances of gaining heifers over bull calves.¹¹⁷

Heritage Survivals

- Milking sheds on many properties.
- Butter factory sites – Dungog, Gostwyck and Vacy.

¹¹⁵ Skaines, *The Dairy Industry of the Paterson Valley*, pp.62-67.

¹¹⁶ Some claim as few as 12 dairy farms remain, Dungog Historical Society, Comments, p.2.

¹¹⁷ Dugald Alison, interviewed 16/4/2012.

3.4 Pastoralism [breeding, raising, processing and distribution of livestock]

The granting of large areas of land to a relative handful of men who were also given access to a cheap but unskilled labour force was highly conducive to pastoral endeavours. The boom in the wool industry after the destruction of the Spanish wool trade during the Napoleonic Wars meant that many of the new settlers in the valleys of the Dungog Shire district at first attempted sheep breeding. In the long run, however, cattle were to prove more suited to the environment of the Williams, Paterson, and Allyn Valleys. Alongside sheep and cattle, horse breeding has been undertaken and this also continues today.

According to one study of social and environmental change in the Paterson Valley, the Europeans inherited an 'open park-like landscape' that was the result of Aboriginal practices involving regular burning.¹ This landscape is clearly described by Peter Cunningham, an early visitor who in 1827 stated:

The alluvial banks of Patterson's and William's River are heavily timbered, but the forest behind is open, grassy, and in every way suitable for pasture without cutting down a single tree.²

A few years later, in 1832, we have a similar account:

The principal characteristics of this district, from Clarence Town upwards, are open forest land, affording excellent sheep pasture ... the track between the William and the Chichester is said to be the finest bit of sheep country in the whole Colony.³

Webber at Tocal on the Paterson River, and Lord, Hooke and others in the Williams Valley, and of course the extensive runs of the Australian Agricultural Company (AAC) just to Dungog's east which lasted until 1857, all attempted to raise sheep for wool. However, the drier lands further west proved better suited to sheep and by the 1860s cattle predominated over other livestock in the Williams, Paterson and Allyn Valleys. Nevertheless, sheep numbers were substantial while they lasted. Webber at Tocal had 1,200 sheep in 1827 and 3,000 by 1834. One shepherd would care for 300-400 sheep on the unfenced land, which would graze by day and be penned at night near the shepherds' huts. Cattle were easier, however, as they did not require yarding and were less prone to disease, dingo attack and, overall, needed less men.⁴

Whether sheep or cattle, livestock were vulnerable to attack by native peoples and bushranging convicts, as well as anyone looking for a cheap meal or extra income. As a result, local landowners formed themselves into, 'An Association for the Protection of Stock on the Upper Districts of the Paterson and William's Rivers'. The major landowners who joined included; Charles Boydell, J H Boughton, Alexander Park, George Mackenzie, W H Windeyer, John M'Lean, and Duncan Mackay, with Chairman, George Townshend, Treasurer, Lawrence Myles, and Secretary, James Adair. A 'Protector of Stock' was also

¹ Archer, Social and environmental change as determinants of ecosystem health, p.92.

² Peter Cunningham, 1827, in Archer, Social and environmental change as determinants of ecosystem health, p.106.

³ Raymond, *The New South Wales calendar and general post office directory, 1832*, pp.145-146.

⁴ Walsh, *Voices from Tocal*, p.47.

appointed in 1834 to 'reside in the vicinity of the Court-house, at Dungog, William's River'.⁵

The protection of stock was serious business and in the year after:

At the close of the Criminal Sessions on Friday last, the following prisoners were placed at the bar to receive their sentence: Thomas Skeefe, for shooting at with intent to kill William Burke, ranger for the Association for the Suppression of Cattle Stealing, at Williams' River. Death.⁶

Skeefe's hanging naturally did not put an end to the landowners' problems with what seems to have been at times well-organised and extensive operations. Dungog Police Magistrate Thomas Cook, for example, gives an account of the activities of one such bane of the landowners, Thomas Ford. Ford was a prisoner who had been recaptured and while free had been selling and branding cattle 'for the purpose of raising money and deceiving government'. Ford had made contact with a Dark of Hinton who had borrowed money from Andrew Lang of Paterson. Phillip O'Brien was the principal purchaser of the cattle, and one beast of landowner John Hooke had been killed and six others stamped over 10-12 days according to witness James Doherty. Ford and his partner Latham had bought casks off William Miller to cure four tons of beef. Thomas Bamford was their cooper, employed to seal the casks.⁷

This was a problem that would continue, with more reports in 1842 that Williams' River gangs were stealing cattle.⁸ Later, the Barrington Ranges were used as a base for cattle duffers in the 1860s.⁹ And again in October 1883, a meeting of the Cattle Stealing Prevention Society of Paterson and Dungog was held in Gresford with rewards offered for the conviction not only of cattle stealers (£500) but also for the conviction of those willfully (£50) or negligently setting fire to grass (£25).¹⁰

Despite their problems with stock thieves, the larger landowners were able to sustain the numbers to make this form of pastoralism profitable and from these build grand homesteads such as those at Cangon and Dingadee. Usually the original homes were demolished in this process, though sometimes a barn or other outhouse has survived, such as Blackett's barn at Tocal and that at Melbee at Dungog.

Sands Pastoral Directory of 1903 gives an indication of who these larger landowners were. J K Mackay is recorded as having 760 head at Bingleburra, Gresford and another 1,362 at Underbank on the Williams River. Various members of the Hooke family had nearly 500 head at Rocky Hill, near Dungog, F A Hooke over 700 at Dingadee, and J T M Hooke, 2500 at Crook's Park, also near Dungog. At Tilimby on the Paterson River, A A W Nivison had over 1000 cattle, and at Tocal, F Reynolds over 700.¹¹

While cattle, both beef and dairy, predominated over sheep in the Dungog district, they never entirely disappeared.¹² In 1902, for example, some 6000 sheep were sent to Dungog

⁵ *The Sydney Herald*, 29/9/1834, p.3.

⁶ *Sydney Gazette*, 19/5/1835, p.2.

⁷ Cook to Colonial Secretary, 17/10/1837.

⁸ *The Sydney Herald*, 14/3/1842, p.2.

⁹ Hartley, *Barrington Tops*, p.11.

¹⁰ *The Maitland Mercury*, 18/10/1883, p.2.

¹¹ *Sands Pastoral Directory 1903*

¹² For dairy cattle see 3.3 Dairying.

from the western districts, which were suffering from drought at a time when grass was plentiful on the Williams River.¹³ This kind of transfer of livestock from district to district was of course fundamental to the pastoral industry, with sheep playing a major role in how the pastoralist industry evolved. An instance of this being sheep scab, a persistent problem in the 19th century which led to the establishment of government boards that ultimately evolved into Pasture Protection Boards (then Rural Lands Protection Boards, and now Livestock Health and Pest Authorities). A significant impact of the Pasture Protection Boards was their role in the development of the system of Travelling Stock Reserves or Routes (TSRs), many of which remain within the Shire boundaries today.¹⁴

Along with cattle, horse breeding was also undertaken by many of the larger landowners. In 1827, Edward Cory at Gostwyck bred with such horses as *Young Cameron*, and was continuing to do so in 1837. A horse famous in its day that was brought to the Dungog area for stud was *Chilton* in 1829, owned by John Hooke of Dungog. John Hooke, and at least some of his sons, continued to breed horses into the 1840s. Also on the Williams River in 1846: ‘... Mr. Chapman was the largest proprietor of horse stock in this part of the country, and the best judge of that noble animal.’¹⁵ Dungog Magistrate Thomas Cook also bred horses for a time, or at least in May 1859 he was selling 12 horses by auction at West Maitland.¹⁶

On the Paterson River at Trevallyn, George Townshend was also breeding horses in the late 1820s, and in 1846, *Indiaman*, ‘a beautiful bay, with black points’ was advertised as being ‘bred by G. Townshend, Esq’.¹⁷ Also on the Paterson, Charles Reynolds established a stud farm at Tocal in the 1850s, which by the 1870s was considered one of the leading such farms in the colony. The famous Goldsbrough of Tocal sired numerous winners of such races as the Melbourne Cup (1886) and the AJC Derby (1884).¹⁸

Not only large landowners bred horses and sometimes conveniently located innkeepers stood stallions, such as Thomas Jones at the Settlers Arms Inn at Paterson.¹⁹ At a later period a Mr Mayo at Cardoness, ‘well known on the turf’ was also reported to be breeding horses, and at Tocal, horse breeding took place along with a Hereford stud at the end of the 19th century.²⁰ Another interesting horse connection of Dungog Shire district worth noting is through Charles Bruce Lowe, the son of William Lowe at Clarence Town, who developed what is now a world standard system for assessing thoroughbred horses.²¹

Horses were not only bred as thoroughbreds for racing, but were also ‘part bred’ or ‘bush thoroughbreds’. Such horses became very popular with the British Army in India where horses imported from New South Wales became known as ‘walers’. This export market to India seems to have taken off in the 1830s and while William Arnold on his Allyn River

¹³ *The Dubbo Liberal and Macquarie Advocate*, 1/10/1902, p.2.

¹⁴ Archer, Social and environmental change as determinants of ecosystem health, pp.129-130.

¹⁵ *Maitland Mercury*, 1/8/1846, p.3.

¹⁶ *Maitland Mercury*, 17/5/1859, p.4.

¹⁷ Binney, *Horsemen of the First Frontier*, p.271 & pp.262-263 & *Maitland Mercury*, 17/10/1846, p.1.

¹⁸ Reynolds, *An Eye for Excellence*, p.34 & p.43.

¹⁹ Binney, *Horsemen of the First Frontier*, pp.278-279.

²⁰ *Maitland Mercury*, 7/12/1875, p.2 & Binney, *Horsemen of the First Frontier*, p.442.

²¹ Binney, *Horsemen of the First Frontier*, pp.455-479. For William Lowe and his shipbuilding see 3.7 Industry.

property of Wortwell, was one such breeder, it is not clear how many others referred to as horse breeders were doing so for this trade.²²

By the 1880s, there are numerous mentions of livestock auctions at Dungog in the *Maitland Mercury* at places such as Robson's yards located opposite where the Dungog RSL now stands in Lord St.²³ At these sales, a range of cattle ('fat cattle' & dairy cattle) were available, as well as bullocks and horses (draught horses & buggy horses). Sales meant the movement of cattle and significant to this before the railway, and even afterwards, were the travelling stock routes and places such as Abbott's Ford across the Williams River near Dungog, where cattle could avoid the bridge. Dungog was also provided with a Common, on which many would place their stock, including agents waiting for the next sale day. Sale yards and cattle paddocks were established in various locations for this industry and later, stock yards at various railway sidings also became important.

When prices were good, a not untypical note was:

HAPPY DUNGOG. A telegram from Dungog, dated Friday last, says:- "A thousand head of cattle were sold at the local stock sales yesterday, when record prices were realised for store bullocks, which made £7/17s. More stock have passed through the local saleyards this year than in any two previous years combined, which is attributed to the splendid state of the district during the drought, and the high prices ruling."²⁴

As breeding and stock improvement progressed so too did the awarding of prizes and the annual Agricultural Show became a significant event in the life of many towns. Dungog has held annual agricultural shows from 1887 (Williams River Agricultural and Horticultural Association), and Gresford from 1927 (Allyn and Paterson Rivers Agricultural, Horticultural, and Pastoral Association), both of which still run. Eccleston also ran a show for a short time around 1903, and Paterson held its first show in 1949, running until 1969.²⁵

At this first Dungog Show, cattle classes were Durham, Hereford and Devons, with the major prizes taken by such descendants of original land grantees as G A Mackay, J K Mackay and F. A. Hooke, though a Mr E Smith was also a prizetaker. With the Devons, Mr F and H Wilce represented a smaller class of landowner. Dairy cattle, pigs and sheep, were also represented.²⁶

Not only large landowners kept cattle, many smaller owners and tenants also kept small numbers of cattle. Even those with a dairy herd might keep some beef cattle on their high pastures and in 1925 it was reported from the Allyn River that, 'many of those who went back to breeding fat cattle when the market for beef was high have never returned to dairying'.²⁷ The switch to beef cattle greatly increased as many gave up dairying in the second half of the 20th century. For these many small owners, beef cattle could mean simply buying young cattle and growing them up until they could be sold on. Fattening cattle until

²² Binney, *Horsemen of the First Frontier*, p.88, & Collison & Hancock, *Gresford 170 years*, p.194. On Walers see, <http://www.walerhorse.com/whsa/>

²³ For examples see *Maitland Mercury*, 24/11/1881, p.1 & 24/5/1883, p.1.

²⁴ *The Dubbo Liberal and Macquarie Advocate*, 1/10/1902, p.2.

²⁵ Archer, *Social and environmental change as determinants of ecosystem health*, p.154.

²⁶ *Maitland Mercury*, 16/4/1887, p.15S.

²⁷ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 19/1/1925, p.9.

they are ready for slaughter is less suited for most of the land available within the three valleys, though this is possible with extra feeds and supplements.²⁸

Cattle prices always fluctuated, but until the 1970s this form of pastoralism seems to have provided a reasonable income, at least for those doing so on a large enough scale. In 1942, for example, the sale of Aberdeen-Angus bullocks from Dungog at the Homebush markets were reported in the *Charleville Times* – they averaged £17/5/6.²⁹ However, with the British entry into the Common Market and other factors, a sudden decline in beef prices occurred in the mid-1970s which saw many forced into cutting timber and other income producing measures before prices began to recover at the end of the 1970s.³⁰

For much of the period, land use related to beef cattle has been of low intensity. Many owners did not live on or near their land and in the early 20th century often relied on single men living in simple accommodation to manage eucalyptus regrowth (grubbing), control rabbits and provide some measure of security. Such men lived rent free and could earn income from the rabbits. Owners of smaller properties might also work collectively when it came to rounding up their cattle, which might be bullocks brought down from Queensland for fattening and then sold on at the markets at Maitland or Singleton.³¹

With the lower prices for cattle after the 1970s and the introduction of four-wheeled drive tractors that have greatly reduced the need for labour and man-handling, a switch by many landowners to holistic farming practices has taken place. Cattle are grazed more intensively and paddocks are more carefully managed to remove unwanted species such as blady grass, lantana, tobacco, blackberry and eucalyptus, which is now done through spraying rather than grubbing.³²

Despite its decline as a source of income, as other agricultural uses have declined and with an increasing proportion of land purchased to give the owner a ‘rural lifestyle’ rather than an agricultural income, much land within the Dungog Shire district is now being used as agistment for those who buy and sell cattle at different stages of their lives. Cattle breeding, such as Charolais, Devons and Short Horn Devons, and the recently popular Angus, is also widespread.

Heritage Survivals

- Travelling Stock Reserves
- Graziers homesteads
- Barns and outbuildings
- Saleyards and resting paddocks

²⁸ Tom Boorer, interviewed 21/2/2012.

²⁹ *The Charleville Times*, 24/7/1942, p.2.

³⁰ Dugald Alison, interviewed 16/4/2012.

³¹ Archer, *An Environmental & Social History of the Upper Webbers Creek Catchment*, p.14.

³² Dugald Alison, interviewed 16/4/2012.

3.5 Forestry [managing land for commercial timber]

From the beginning of Dungog's European settlement the search for and cutting of timber have played a significant role. Convict timber getters were sent up the Paterson and Williams Rivers before the first land grants were made and cedar was cut and floated in rafts back to Newcastle for shipping to Sydney. It is unclear exactly how far up the valleys these first timber getters went.¹

By 1819 timber had been cut in such quantities that it was necessary to push further and further up the waterways. As William Wentworth described it:

The timber procured on the banks of this river [the Hunter River, called by him the Coal River] is chiefly cedar and rose wood. The cedar, however, is becoming scarce in consequence of the immense quantities that have been already cut down, and cannot be any longer obtained without going at least a hundred and fifty miles up the river. At this distance, however, it is still to be had in considerable abundance, and is easily floated down to the town in rafts.²

The relative isolation of much of the valleys often led to disputes when timber was cut on land belonging to others.³ The government too wished to ensure it obtained a share of this valuable resource and declared that all timber on crown property could only be felled under licence.⁴ Timber was in high demand for houses and ships, and, after the 1860s, for sleepers and other railway associated construction; later again, telegraph poles added to the demand for timber.⁵ Local farmers naturally used the timber on their own properties and many found cedar so abundant that it was common to build barns and other functional buildings with this valuable and now scarce timber.

Much of this timber was cut, sawn and transported by hand with saw pits dug out close to where the timber was felled. The timber was then transported with bullock teams, a method long carried on even after the arrival of the internal combustion engine when bullocks would drag the felled logs down from the mountains to 'dumps' more accessible to trucks.⁶ Considerations of feed for the bullocks would also determine where timber was cut.⁷ Bullock teams continued until the arrival of caterpillar log haulers made it possible to drag timber from most locations.⁸

The timber industry was not a safe place and industrial accidents were common. In 1929, Allan Croll, the son of James Croll owner of Croll's Mill, was killed when a log coming out of a saw crushed his skull.⁹ While John Gam, the owner of Gam's Mill, was himself killed in 1922 when he was run over by the wheel of a bullock dray.¹⁰ Another long-time timber worker could recall six mates killed in the forest over the years.¹¹ As well as deaths, the loss of numerous fingers and other limbs was even more common.

¹ Hunter, *Wade's Corn Flour Mill*, p.9.

² Wentworth, *Statistical, Historical and Political Description*, p.28.

³ McDonald & Henderson, *Timbergetters, Sawmills and Sawmillers*, p.41.

⁴ Hunter, *Croll's Mill Dungog, 1917-1969*, p. 9.

⁵ Hunter, *Croll's Mill Dungog, 1917-1969*, p. 10.

⁶ Hunter, *Croll's Mill Dungog, 1917-1969*, p.33.

⁷ Hunter, *Croll's Mill Dungog, 1917-1969*, p.18.

⁸ McDonald & Henderson, *Timbergetters, Sawmills and Sawmillers*, p.60.

⁹ McDonald & Henderson, *Timbergetters, Sawmills and Sawmillers*, p.70.

¹⁰ McDonald & Henderson, *Timbergetters, Sawmills and Sawmillers*, p.74.

¹¹ McDonald & Henderson, *Timbergetters, Sawmills and Sawmillers*, p.89.

In the second half of 19th century it was considered bad for the local economy if timber was taken out of the valleys and down to mills at Maitland. The alternative, it was argued, was to convert the many flour mills into saw mills. On the Paterson River, the first saw mill seems to have been that at Gostwyck in 1875. The Keppie Brother's had a steam powered saw mill at Paterson in 1890, and a second, also at Paterson, of the Maunders Brothers is established in 1892.¹²

Later mills in the Paterson Valley would specialise in the types of timber they cut. Thus Jordan's Sawmill near Vacy of the 1920s produced house timbers. Partridge's Sawmill, begun in the 1930s at Dun's Creek Hill, cut timber for fish boxes and pallets. Another mill was owned by a mining company and cut pit props, slabs, wedges and sleepers for pit rails. This was the Hebburn Mining Co. Sawmill at Red Hill, Duns Creek.¹³

On the Upper Allyn, the Hancock family had established a mill at Gresford in the 1880s and later this same family had a mill further up the Allyn opposite the site of the Pender & Foster Mill established in 1942.¹⁴ This mill closed in the 1960s but another Hancock family mill operated from the 1950s to the 1970s at Allynbrook, by which time power for the mill was derived from electricity rather than steam.¹⁵

The Pender & Foster Mill on the Upper Allyn ran from the 1940s to 1970. While it was not unusual for a small community of workers' cottages and their families to grow up around a saw mill, the Pender & Foster Mill had workers' houses more substantial than was typical. The houses were built by the Edwards Brothers of Salisbury and boasted double brick fireplaces. The community also had its own hall, tennis court and school.¹⁶ When the Pender & Foster saw mill closed, the company began to rent these former workers' cottages to whoever wished them; this included former timber workers but also an increasing number of holidayers and others looking for a bush retreat.¹⁷ By 1978, the saw mill company was ready to sell the cottages and a group of by then entrenched tenants formed a company called the 'Upper Allyn Lister Village Pty Ltd', consisting of a middle class group of a solicitor, pharmacist, manufacturer, academic and watchmaker who bought all 15 cottages for \$60,000 and allocated shares per house with renting rights.¹⁸ This was a move illustrating the 'tree-change' mentality that was to grow in significance over the next generation, changing the face of the timber industry within Dungog Shire and elsewhere as it did so.

Just as timber made its way down the Paterson and Allyn River valleys to Paterson and its river port, so too did timber come down the Williams River to Dungog and then onto Clarence Town and its port, to continue on to Newcastle and beyond. This was to be the case until the railway came to Dungog in 1911, resulting in Clarence Town losing much of this trade as timber began to be transported by rail instead.

¹² McDonald & Henderson, *Timbergetters, Sawmills and Sawmillers*, pp.41-43.

¹³ McDonald & Henderson, *Timbergetters, Sawmills and Sawmillers*, pp.44-45.

¹⁴ McDonald & Henderson, *Timbergetters, Sawmills and Sawmillers*, pp.47-48.

¹⁵ McDonald & Henderson, *Timbergetters, Sawmills and Sawmillers*, p.51.

¹⁶ McDonald & Henderson, *Timbergetters, Sawmills and Sawmillers*, pp.54-56.

¹⁷ Wilson, *From Company Town to Company Town*, p.3.

¹⁸ Wilson, *From Company Town to Company Town*, p.4.

The early shipbuilding industry at Clarence Town created its own demand for timber.¹⁹ However, it was the deep river port itself that generated a direct timber export trade to New Zealand. The Williams River at Clarence Town was deep enough to allow ocean-going ships to come up and at least partially load with timber. The ships would then make their way down to Newcastle where they would finish loading before making for New Zealand. This export trade lasted from at least the 1880s until the coming of the railway to Dungog in 1911. A number of Clarence Town based saw mills contributed to this trade, though much of the timber came down to Clarence Town from further up the Williams River valley and other areas.²⁰

As on the Allyn and Paterson Rivers, the forestry industry on the Williams River used bullocks to carry the hand-felled and sawn timbers to and from the increasing number of mills which became established on the Williams. The first of these was Kermode's Saw Mill and Flour Mill at Dungog built in 1861.²¹ At some point this mill must have closed because when the Walker Flour Mill at Dungog had a saw mill added to its operations in 1891, it does not appear to have had any competitor. This Walker Mill closed in 1916, and in the same year a fire destroyed the mill owned by the Croll family on the Myall Lakes.²² James Croll, son of Alexander Croll who had founded the business in 1872, decided to re-establish his operations near the new railway station in Dungog.²³ The Croll family would have been very familiar with the timber industry of the Williams Valley, as the Bulahdelah-Stroud-Dungog route had long been significant to the coastal mills.²⁴

With mills constantly opening and closing, many of the mills established were done so with recycled materials from other mills. Thus the Hancock Mill on the Upper Allyn used a boiler that came from a Maitland mill, while Croll's Mill purchased the machinery of Heath & Son when it closed its Fosterton mill in 1932.²⁵

Changes in the timber industry did not go unnoticed, and when in 1911, a special consignment of cedar logs was transported through Dungog, the event was considered noteworthy for a number of reasons. The *Dungog Chronicle* report describes the bullock teams by this time as in themselves unusual; this load of July 1911 would have been one of the last to make its way down to Clarence Town before the railway opened the following month; and finally, the report describes the cedar timber (on its way to ex-champion sculler George Town's boat building works on the Parramatta River), to be 'about the last there is of any dimensions in the district'.²⁶ Though in 1947, the 'last' of the giant cedar trees, with a girth of 11m, was removed.²⁷

Around this time two other saw mills are reported in the Williams Valley, one at Hutchinson's Crossing near Dusodie and another at Main Creek.²⁸ Soon after this, construction on the Chichester Dam created a boom in the timber industry and Croll's as

¹⁹ See 3.7 Industry.

²⁰ McDonald & Henderson, *Timbergetters, Sawmills and Sawmillers*, pp.92-93.

²¹ McDonald & Henderson, *Timbergetters, Sawmills and Sawmillers*, pp.66-67.

²² Hunter, *Croll's Mill Dungog, 1917-1969*, p.24.

²³ Hunter, *Croll's Mill Dungog, 1917-1969*, pp.20-21 & p.25.

²⁴ Hunter, *Croll's Mill Dungog, 1917-1969*, p.22.

²⁵ McDonald & Henderson, *Timbergetters, Sawmills and Sawmillers*, p.49 & p.79.

²⁶ McDonald & Henderson, *Timbergetters, Sawmills and Sawmillers*, p.69.

²⁷ Hartley, *Barrington Tops*, p.11 & *Dungog Chronicle*, 16/9/1947.

²⁸ McDonald & Henderson, *Timbergetters, Sawmills and Sawmillers*, pp.72-73.

well as other mills grew.²⁹ Croll's Mill in particular continued to prosper, surviving a major fire in 1947, and in 1962, when the mill converted from steam to electricity, it employed 44 men and 5 girls, and paid out £50,000 a year in wages.³⁰ Croll's also had bush mills (temporary or movable mills near a source of timber), such as one in 1957 that was some 17 miles from Dungog.³¹

On the whole, the timber harvesting conducted by these many mills was overseen by the NSW government via departments sporting a variety of names over the years, but generally referred to as 'Forestry'. Much timber was obtained by negotiation with individual farmers and property owners, including people bringing their own logs to the mills to be sawn. But for timber on Crown land, the mills would be licensed to cut specific sections.³² Forestry inspectors, such as Dave Skimmings on the Williams River side of Dungog Shire, would choose the trees to be felled and measure and stamp each log with an estimate of its size in super feet. This was usually done in the forest itself, but sometimes at a measuring station, such as one in Gloucester, or at a mill. It was on the basis of the estimated size of a log in super feet, with deductions for possible faults, that the timber cutter and also sometimes the drivers would be paid by the mill. Most timber cutters were contracted by the mills, while some drivers were paid wages, as were mill workers.³³

During the Second World War, with petrol scarce, charcoal was extensively used to create charcoal gas to run cars and trucks. Many of the saw mills, themselves still running on wood-fired steam engines, set up charcoal kilns and converted their excess wood into this temporary fuel for cars both locally and in Maitland and Newcastle.³⁴

While Croll's and its successors, Allen Taylor and Boral, were the largest saw mills in the Dungog district, there were many smaller mills. Prominent among these was Gam's Mill at Main Creek, which began in 1909 and operated until the 1970s.³⁵ Mills at Bandon Grove, Salisbury, Dusodie, Fosterton, Dingadee, Hilldale and Underbank are also recorded, some of these perhaps operating for only a short time or servicing purely local needs.³⁶ In addition, many farms used tractor engines and other means to operate their own small mills, while a saw mill was also set up during the construction of the Chichester Dam in the 1920s.³⁷

Always a tough industry to work in, the development of steam engines, electricity, trucks and caterpillar haulers all had an obvious impact on the manner of extracting timber and transporting it to railheads. But it was not until the 1950s, and the arrival of the chainsaw that the actual felling of the tree changed greatly. With portable single and double chainsaws the entire process of forestry could then be said to have become mechanised.³⁸

Regardless of the tools used, the best wood was Tallowood and Blue Gum, with the plentiful Brushbox usually left until Forestry instructed this to be taken also. Brushbox was not

²⁹ Hunter, *Croll's Mill Dungog, 1917-1969*, p.26.

³⁰ McDonald & Henderson, *Timbergetters, Sawmills and Sawmillers*, pp.71-72 & Hunter, *Croll's Mill Dungog, 1917-1969*, p.45.

³¹ *Dungog Chronicle*, 7/3/1957.

³² McDonald & Henderson, *Timbergetters, Sawmills and Sawmillers*, p.48 & Allan Nash, interviewed 8/3/2012.

³³ Allan Nash, interviewed 8/3/2012.

³⁴ McDonald & Henderson, *Timbergetters, Sawmills and Sawmillers*, p.46 & Allan Nash, interviewed 8/3/2012.

³⁵ McDonald & Henderson, *Timbergetters, Sawmills and Sawmillers*, pp.74-76.

³⁶ McDonald & Henderson, *Timbergetters, Sawmills and Sawmillers*, pp.77-81.

³⁷ McDonald & Henderson, *Timbergetters, Sawmills and Sawmillers*, pp.81-82.

³⁸ McDonald & Henderson, *Timbergetters, Sawmills and Sawmillers*, pp.86-87.

favoured as, unless very mature, it had too many faults - up to a third could be lost to these - and it would warp easily. Brushbox was, however, used for dressed flooring, though not for house frames.³⁹ Much wood was also used for sleepers and these were a specialty, with the sleepers until quite late hand-cut on site, then taken by bullock to the road for a truck pick up. It was considered that a sleeper would last longer if cut by broad axe, as a chain saw would tear the fibres.⁴⁰

In the early 1970s, Croll's Mill at Dungog supplied the laminated brushbox for the Sydney Opera House. This also allowed the business to regularly advertise its 'Glulam Special Opera House Offcuts'.⁴¹ In 1969, the business had been bought by Allen Taylor & Co. though continuing to operate as Croll's Mill. In 1987, this Dungog saw mill closed, though by this time the Maxwells Creek Mill of Allen Taylor & Co., just outside of Dungog, was operating as a boarding mill. It was the closure of this mill in 2010 that left the Williams Valley and Dungog Shire district without a timber processing operation for the first time in nearly 150 years.⁴²

The cause of the disappearance of the Dungog Shire district's saw mills lies with technology and other factors. Pit props for mines have ceased to be cut as open-cut mining and hydraulics have eliminated the demand, while railway sleepers are now made of concrete. A more social factor which has impacted on the timber industry in the three valleys was the creation of National Parks in the surrounding hills, closing off many areas to timber cutting. This was not a change that occurred without protest, and the impending declaration of the Barrington Tops National Park in the late 1960s was strongly opposed by mill owners Pender & Foster on the Allyn River, for example.⁴³ The reduction in timber felling, combined with changes in agricultural land use, has meant that many more trees have begun to grow on the once cleared hills and even on the river flats, resulting in an increase in native animals, most noticeably birds.

Heritage Survivals

- WWII charcoal kilns
- Giant tree stumps
- Laminated timber arches – Maxwells and Tall Timbers
- Former mill sites
- Upper Allyn Lister Village

³⁹ Allan Nash, interviewed 8/3/2012.

⁴⁰ McDonald & Henderson, *Timbergetters, Sawmills and Sawmillers*, pp.89-90.

⁴¹ *Dungog Chronicle*, 27/7/1972, p.1. For an example of an offcuts ad see, *Dungog Chronicle*, 18/7/1972, p.6.

⁴² McDonald & Henderson, *Timbergetters, Sawmills and Sawmillers*, pp.70-73.

⁴³ Hartley, *Barrington Tops*, pp.51-52.

3.6 Commerce [buying, selling and exchanging goods and services]

The local Gringai people lived a self-sustaining hunter gatherer existence; although it is likely they also exchanged goods over a wide area, as it is known other Aboriginal groups did. While the Europeans who entered the river valleys of Dungog Shire did not recognise the rights of the Gringai to the land and so did not enter into any negotiations regarding this, the colonial government since the time of Governor Macquarie had instituted a distribution of blankets. From the colonial government's viewpoint the blankets were in exchange for peaceful or helpful behaviour. Such blanket distributions were carried out by the local magistrates based at Dungog and Paterson in the 1830s and subsequently. Over time some surviving Aboriginals may have seen these blankets as an exchange for their loss of land, and at least one Paterson man threatened to walk naked through the town if the expected blankets were not given.¹

In the 1870s, a number of instances of commercial activity on the part of Aboriginal people are recorded. This included selling honey collected from bush hollows at 2s. to 2s. 6d. per bucket: 'For the last two or three weeks about twenty blackfellows have been encamped in Mr Stanbridge's paddock, at the rear of the old Paterson Hotel, and have been chiefly occupied in getting honey from the trees in the bush, in which capacity they appear to be carrying on a very brisk trade ...' In another Paterson instance: 'During the week we noticed one blackfellow hawking about beeswax for sale, in cakes which they had themselves manufactured, and which appeared quite as good a sample as that manufactured by many of our farmers' wives. The blacks seem quite independent, and proud of their new avocation.'²

Although settled as an agricultural district, it was always the ambition of those who settled in the three valleys of Dungog Shire district to produce a surplus which could be exchanged on markets either locally, within the Colony of NSW, or with Britain. Commercial activity was also needed to provide essential tools and supplies, and inns for accommodation. Such commercial activity first began on the Paterson River after 1812, and expanded into the river valleys of the Allyn and Williams as both Gresford and Dungog early developed as service centres for the farmers and pastoralists of their respective valleys, while Paterson and Clarence Town developed as depots for the transshipping of goods onto Sydney and beyond.³ In 1828, on the eve of the granting of land beyond Paterson and also up the Williams River, there were six regular vessels carrying trade along the Hunter River to Newcastle.⁴ Such vessels could also go as far up the Paterson and Williams Rivers as where Paterson and Clarence Town are now sited, thus putting any produce that could be brought down the valleys to these river ports within reach of Newcastle and Sydney.

In the generation following the initial grants, a mixed farm economy developed in the three valleys based on a combination of convict labour and free settlers, with the convict element quickly dwindling after 1840. The main produce was wheat and various other grains, sheep and cattle, and timber.⁵ The pattern for both Dungog and Gresford was set from this early time, with these towns positioned at the centre of prosperous agricultural districts assuring their existence and gradual growth. Their relative isolation from larger centres and the coast

¹ Sokoloff, *Aborigines in the Paterson Gresford Districts*, p.24 & *Maitland Mercury*, 27/6/1863, p.5.

² *Maitland Mercury*, 2/5/1871, p.3.

³ For the earliest commercial activities of 1812 and its barter nature see, Walsh, *European Settlement at Paterson River, 1812 to 1822*, p.16.

⁴ *The Australian*, 14/3/1828, p.2.

⁵ See 3.2 Agriculture, 3.4 Pastoralism & 3.5 Forestry.

also kept them from developing faster, while the size of the Paterson/Allyn Valley relative to the Williams Valley is reflected in the relative size of the two service centres.

The movement of goods to and from farms to the service centres of Gresford and Dungog and from them down to the river ports of Paterson and Clarence Town, was therefore the earliest commerce carried on. This movement began with each landowner providing their own drays and horses or bullocks and taking the goods of others for either a fee, for services in kind, or as a favour.⁶ Later, hired bullock trains would take the local produce over the bad roads to the ports of Clarence Town and Paterson, from which steamers would take the goods on to Newcastle and Sydney, returning with supplies, tools and goods for sale in the shops.⁷ Animals such as pigs would also be walked to markets.⁸

The earliest commercial establishments recorded are hotels and inns, which required licences, although 'sly grog' shops, that is, unlicensed premises were also in evidence.⁹ In the 1840 census, four publicans' licenses are reported in Dungog, two of which continue to this day, one in the same building.¹⁰ Paterson, Clarence Town and Gresford also had such businesses, as did Brookfield, positioned halfway between Clarence Town and Dungog. Public houses provided both drink and accommodation, while boarding houses were more suitable for women and families. Many boarding houses from the late 19th century are recorded and survive today as private homes.¹¹

By 1866, Dungog, with a population of 500 people, had two tanneries, two tobacco manufacturers and three hotels - the Royal, Durham and Settlers Arms.¹² Poor seasons and floods by the end of the 1860s, however, led many to move further north, with shopkeepers complaining of the loss of trade and that the town was 'empty'.¹³ By 1870s, commerce seems to have recovered: 'We can also boast two bakery establishments, three public houses, two butcher's shops, five general stores, a bank, and one saddlery business, besides a host of shoemakers, so you see besides having enough to replenish the inner man we can go a long way to satisfy the outer one too.'¹⁴ However, the dependence on bullocks to haul goods to the steamers at Clarence Town continued to limit development, especially in bumper years when extra punts and droghers were needed.¹⁵ Also the lack of bridges often meant roads were closed in poor weather, with agitation for bridges finally leading to some being built in 1875 along with new roads.¹⁶

Listed in the post office directory of 1872 under Dungog are 190 residents of Dungog and its surroundings; the list includes a chemist, five storekeepers, four blacksmiths, five bookmakers, three wheelwrights, two tanners, four carriers, and a tailor, cabinet maker, tinsmith, saddler, draper, butcher and a miller. Clarence Town, with some 150 residents listed has no cabinet makers or tailors mentioned, but nearly as many bootmakers, as well as a shipwright, a vigneron and two bakers. Paterson, with 185 on the list, also has plenty of

⁶ Cook to Colonial Storekeeper, 27/3/1837 (Dungog Magistrates' Letterbook). See also 3.9 Transport.

⁷ Hunter, *Wade's Corn Flour Mill*, p.10.

⁸ Rex Kingston in Dungog Historical Society, Comments, p.3.

⁹ Moffatt to Mackenzie, 7/3/1834 (Dungog Magistrates' Letterbook). See also 7.2 Law & Order.

¹⁰ Williams, *Ah, Dungog*, p.6.

¹¹ Williams, *Ah, Dungog*, p.32.

¹² *Baillier's NSW Gazetteer and Road Guide*, 1866.

¹³ *Dungog Chronicle*, 10/7/1923, extract from *Manning River News*, 1868.

¹⁴ *Maitland Mercury*, 10/12/1877, p.5.

¹⁵ Hunter, *Wade's Corn Flour Mill*, p.25 & *Maitland Mercury*, 8/4/1871, p.2.

¹⁶ See 3.9 Transport.

carriers and wheelwrights as befits a port town, as well as three laundresses and two dressmakers, and though only two storekeepers, three tobacconists. Gresford's list of 112 shows the fewest commercial residents, with only two storekeepers, two blacksmiths and three bootmakers.¹⁷

Among the smaller settlements there was also a scattering of commercial establishments and operations. Lone storekeepers are mentioned at Vacy, Underbank and Lewinsbrook in the early 1870s.¹⁸ While Vacy reports only the one store in 1872, by the beginning of the 20th century it had expanded to include two general stores, a butcher, blacksmith and a bakery, in addition to the hotel that it had long had. Bandon Grove in 1919 had a saw mill and an orchardist, but no other commercial establishment is recorded at this time, though it did have a small shop that sold petrol in the late 20th century. Allynbrook, which was a major coach station, had a wine shop, wheelwright and coachbuilder. Brookfield had a general store and a blacksmith, Martin's Creek a store and post office, and Dingadee, with its new rail siding, had three teamsters.¹⁹

Clarence Town seems to have had at least an agency of the Savings Bank of NSW from 1857, and Paterson a bank also from an early period.²⁰ Despite Dungog's wider range of commercial enterprises, a bank did not establish itself there until the late 1870s. The Commercial Bank of Sydney operated in both Paterson and Dungog and then extended to Gresford in 1914 under the threat of another bank's entering the field.²¹ Agricultural wealth and then the development of gold mines at Wangat encouraged the banks, with a second bank established at Dungog in the 1880s and also an Angus & Coote.

When Dungog acquired this second bank in 1884 with the Bank of NSW, many thought this a rash move in a town with a population of only 500. However prominent business owner Mrs Dark, whose premises the bank was renting at £100 a year, became the first account holder, followed by her storekeeper sons, Henry Charles Dark and Stephen Whiteman Dark of Clarence Town and son-in-law Joseph Abbott, also a storekeeper. Stephen delivered the safe for £1/8-, and this safe, costing £61/4, was the bank's single most expensive item. The manager received £20/16/8 per month, plus a servant's allowance of £2/3/4.²²

The commercial people of Dungog, and the few others with money to bank, can be seen from a list of the first account holders of the Bank of NSW:

Storekeepers – Darks, Joseph Abbott

Postmasters – Lazare Ahrenson (Wallarobba), Stephen Duggan (Underbank), T J Foley

Baker - T S Alexander

Builder - W J Boots

Auctioneer - Thomas Carlton

Publicans - Mrs Elizabeth Hill, Annie Johnson (Clarence Town)

Butcher - J A Jones

Surgeon – A W McMath

Gold diggers – J B Cameron, Andrew George, Lysaght & party

¹⁷ *Greville's Post Office Directory for 1872.*

¹⁸ *Greville's Post Office Directory for 1872.*

¹⁹ *Sand's Country Commercial Directory 1919.*

²⁰ *Maitland Mercury*, 10/11/1857, p.3.

²¹ Collison & Hancock, *Gresford 170 years*, p.68.

²² Bank of NSW centenary supplement, *Dungog Chronicle*, August 1984.

Dungog Gun Club
Brookfield Jockey Club²³

The Bank of NSW was perhaps right in opening a second bank in Dungog and the following decade commercial activity seems to have much increased. Listed in *Hall's Country Directory* at Dungog in 1899 are two Apiaries, Auctioneers, Bakers, Banks, Chemists, and Hairdressers, five blacksmiths and wheelwrights, four boots and shoes establishments, five builders, three butchers, four hotels, two doctors and two solicitors, three tailors, two undertakers and ten stores.²⁴ Just after the Great War, according to *Sand's Country Commercial Directory*, Dungog was a very different place from the other towns of the three valleys. In addition to the usual bootmakers, bakers, general stores and blacksmiths, Dungog could boast three stationers, two chemists, a jeweller, a cordial maker, three hairdressers, two painters, four garages, two newspapers and even an electricity company. It also had a restaurant, an Oyster saloon, a music teacher and a photographer.²⁵

With the coming of the railway in 1911, both Paterson and Clarence Town suffered commercially as transport by ship declined. Clarence Town had also been affected by the tobacco tax, four floods and the depression even before the new railway damaged its river trade. This river trade in goods and passengers meant that Clarence Town had a number of Inns and Hotels, such as the George & Dragon Inn (1842 -1887), the Fitzroy Hotel (1861-1888), the Commercial Inn (1861 - ?), the Ship Inn (1866-67 - ?) and the Crown Inn (burned down 1912). After this last hotel was destroyed, its replacement of 1913, the Erringhi Hotel, remained Clarence Town's only hotel, as it does today.²⁶

Earlier commercial establishments were closer to the docks and included, around 1900, a general store and produce store. There was also a butcher shop, blacksmith, saddler, and mixed business shops. The former George & Dragon Inn became, in 1887, Ah Kun's Fruit & Vegetable shop until well into the 20th century. Most vegetables came for market gardens to the east of the town, and a skating rink inside a wooden floored barn provided entertainment.

In *Sand's Country Commercial Directory 1919*, Clarence Town is recorded as having two stores, a saddler, tanner and butcher, as well as a coachbuilder and a teamster, two blacksmiths and two timber merchants; also one hairdresser, a fruiter and a hotel. In addition, four residents are described as graziers, five as dairy farmers and 40 as simply as farmers.²⁷

By the 1950s, most of these stores had gone. Morgansen's store since 1859 had burned down and the blacksmith's shop was abandoned, along with its former shed for painting sulkies. Dark's Store, which operated from the 1920s continued to run until 1983, and was where Shaw's Bakery is now established. Christopher Robard's clothing store operated from the 1930s until 1959-60 and was next to Shaw's. A cinema (the Empire Theatre) operated inside the School of Arts building from the 1930s until 1962-63. At least one garage was established and the Bank of NSW had a branch here from 1925 to the 1970s. No chemist appears to have ever established itself in Clarence Town.²⁸

²³ Bank of NSW centenary supplement, *Dungog Chronicle*, August 1984.

²⁴ *Hall's Country Directory and Gazetteer of NSW, 1899-1900*, p.83.

²⁵ *Sand's Country Commercial Directory 1919*.

²⁶ Ian Lyall, interviewed 28/3/2012.

²⁷ *Sand's Country Commercial Directory 1919*.

²⁸ Ian Lyall, interviewed 28/3/2012.

By the 1950s many people began to fear that Clarence Town might die. As one elderly resident at the time is reported to have said: 'There are 400 people in the town and 1,000 in the district,' he said. 'When I was a boy the town had a population of 640. We had two flour mills and a sawmill, five hotels, seven shops, and a skating rink. Now we have one hotel and two shops.'²⁹ Since the 1980s there has been a reversal in Clarence Town's population decline contributed to by many factors. Most significant have been new residents working in Newcastle who are prepared to commute. The result has been a series of new shops established since 2001, with the reliance on cars over shipping positioning the revitalized shopping precinct away from the river and closer to the Dungog-Raymond Terrace road.

In the *Sand's Country Commercial Directory* of 1919 only the one Gresford is listed, where is found the Butter Factory, along with two general stores, a motor service, two auctioneers, a butcher, a blacksmith and a hotel. As well, 38 farmers, five dairymen and seven graziers are listed as residents.³⁰ By 1929, Gresford and East Gresford had a Stock and Station Agent, hairdresser, hotel, two general stores, two bakeries, a garage, two butchers, a shoe shop and a saddler store. By 1947, the main change was an increase in the number of garages and 'refreshment rooms', as well as the existence of taxi services. By this time there was also a cinema, called the Garden Theatre, which ran until 1954.³¹ At the beginning of the 21st century, Gresford, including East Gresford, has a small general store, a garage and a cafe as well as the hotel it has had since before the coming of the car.

Paterson's relative proximity to the larger centre of Maitland, even after the decline of its river port function, has greatly influenced its commercial pattern. This has allowed a number of businesses to maintain themselves throughout most of the 20th century, such as Crouch's Garage from the 1920s until 1990, selling cars and serving farm machinery, and more recently providing agricultural equipment as Stockers and Partridge. A business which commenced not long after 1900 was Auchett's which was a centre for the packing of oranges as well as a buyer of hides, to which people from as far away as Salisbury on the Upper Williams would bring their rabbit skins.³²

The role of Paterson in 1919 as a centre for the commercial sale of fruit and transshipment in general is seen in the *Sand's Country Commercial Directory* of that year. Paterson had a number of fruiterers and fruit merchants, as well as the Farmers' Union and the Fruit Growers Association. It also had wood merchants, two teamsters, four blacksmiths, two stores and a coach proprietor, along with a baker, hairdresser, butcher, tailor, bootmaker, a bank and two hotels. Other residents included ten graziers and over 40 farmers.³³

The Hunter Valley Dairy Co-operative had a milk depot at Paterson for a short period before bulk milk came in the mid 1960s; with the site becoming a base for Hunter Valley Power Lines, later known as PowerServe. The Presland family has operated a trucking business in Paterson since the mid 20th century and there were livestock sale yards near the Railway Station also until the 1950s. A bank continued in Paterson until 1979 which is now a B&B/restaurant. As in Clarence Town, the decline in local businesses reversed as the Paterson District began to become a home for people commuting to Newcastle, Maitland and

²⁹ *The Sunday Herald*, 3/6/1951, p.13.

³⁰ *Sand's Country Commercial Directory*, 1919.

³¹ Gresford Businesses – 1929, 1947, 1949, 1968.

³² Cameron Archer, interviewed 9/4/2012 & Rita Boswell, interviewed 5/3/2012.

³³ *Sand's Country Commercial Directory*, 1919.

the Hunter Valley mining districts. This change was marked by the erection of new shops in 1987.³⁴

Dungog's commercial district is the most developed of all the towns within the Shire and within this Dark's Store represented the largest commercial operation from its centrally located premises on the corner of Brown and Dowling Streets. J A Wade first operated a store on this site until Henry Charles Dark established his own store here in 1877, which he eventually called the 'Hall of Commerce'. The original cottage building was replaced by the first section of the present building, designed by local architect C H Button, in 1897. At the time it was considered by some that 'the edifice is too elaborate'. Elaborate or not, this building was extended in 1919, and again in 1926. By this time it was the largest general store in Dungog, and continued operating until the 1980s as a Dark family business.³⁵

In the first decades of the 20th century, the commercial districts of the three valleys began to change with the introduction of many new technologies, foremost of which was the motor car. Horses and bullocks had always meant saddlers and blacksmiths, and these businesses were gradually replaced by garages and mechanics. This occurred very gradually in some cases, with the last blacksmith shop in Dungog closing only in 1980. The development of the motor car not only established motor garages but also led to taxi operators who at first met trains and ran groups up to the Barrington Guest House. By the 1950s and 1960s taxis had become quite numerous until they also gradually faded as personal car ownership increased. Bus companies, however, have survived, mainly through the need to move school students to the now far fewer schools and for charter use.

While Dungog was expanding and prosperous in the 1920s, many in business there felt the need to widen Dungog's commercial base and efforts were made to increase tourism. These efforts were centred mainly around the promotion of the Barrington Tops and led to many ventures such as touring companies, taxis to meet the trains, and hotels and boarding houses located in the foothills of the Barrington Ranges. Tourist Leagues were formed in Dungog, Gresford and Maitland, which mostly demanded better roads for access to the Barringtons, including in one case to enable health sanitariums for TB to be established.³⁶ One result was the well-known Barrington Guest House:

Mr NT McLeod, Proprietor of the Royal Hotel, Dungog, who has a keen eye to business and has seen the necessity for catering for tourists has decided to build a modern up-to-date hostel right at the edge of the brush, under the shadows of the mountain. So great was the demand in the past for accommodation that many people were precluded from going to the wonderland of the north. In his new building which is now in the course of erection there will be accommodation for 40 guests. Electric light, hot and cold water, a sewerage system will all be installed. There will be a big dance floor and wide verandahs. A wireless plant will keep people in touch with the outside world. Mr McLeod is also building tennis courts which will be electrically illuminated at night, and he is not forgetting golfers, because he is putting down "putting greens" for them.³⁷

The 1920s also brought cultural change, and one that had a major impact on the commercial area was the growth of women's hairdressers. It was not unknown for women to visit

³⁴ Cameron Archer, interviewed 9/4/2012.

³⁵ Williams, *Ah, Dungog*, p.36.

³⁶ Hartley, *Barrington Tops*, pp.18-19.

³⁷ *Dungog Chronicle*, 15/7/1930.

hairdressers, at least in large towns, though perhaps in a separate room.³⁸ However, it was in the post-war world that the word 'hairdresser' changed from describing smoke-filled, billiard table holding domains of men - usually with the word 'Sports' before it - into something similar to the modern concept:

Bobbed hair and the other fancy "cuts" that have become the craze with the fair sex, have revolutionised the hairdressing trade. In a town with an effective population from a hairdresser's point of view that used to be only one half – the male half. Now, however, the effective range is 90%, and is still increasing. Dungog always had four or five barber's shops in the pre-bob days, and at the present time only has four. The new trade has meant increased staffs to cope with the business. Messrs G & E Dark have installed a lady hairdresser in the store, and are the latest to take out a hairdressing license.³⁹

The impact of the motor car on the commercial operations of the valleys was upheld by the continued improvement in travel due to more bridges, better roads and the growth in two car and more families. By the end of the 20th century these developments meant that the large regional centres of Maitland and Raymond Terrace, and even the cities of Newcastle and Sydney were within a day's travel. Commercially this has meant that not only bootmakers but shoe and most clothing shops have disappeared completely from within the Shire, going the way of Indian hawkers and commercial travellers.

Similar factors have also led to a gradual withdrawal of many commercial services, or at least their downgrading, and banks in particular have left many of the smaller centres. In East Gresford, the Commercial Banking Company of Sydney, which had built a traditional bank and manager's residence as late as 1961, became, as the National Australia Bank, an agency in 1994.⁴⁰ Paterson no longer has a bank, Clarence Town has a post office agency and a branch of a building society and in Dungog, the Bank of NSW remains only an agency of Westpac, though both the NAB and Commonwealth Bank continue to have branches there.

Heritage Survivals

- Tourist sign monument (Dungog)
- Former boarding houses
- Blacksmiths, Bootmakers shops/sites
- Former bank & managers residences

³⁸ *Maitland Mercury*, 20/12/1884, p.4.

³⁹ *Dungog Chronicle*, 23/7/1926.

⁴⁰ Collison & Hancock, *Gresford 170 years*, pp.71-72.

3.7 Industry [manufacture, production and distribution of goods]

Although always predominantly an agricultural district, the region now included in Dungog Shire has had a variety of industries over time. Some were for local consumption, such as brick making, blacksmiths and tinsmiths, and others were the by-products of agricultural, forestry and pastoral production such as tobacco factories, saw mills, tanneries and butter production. In addition to these, three industries stand out in particular, namely the shipbuilding industry once centred on Clarence Town, cornflour manufacturing undertaken at a major mill erected at Dungog, and a clothing factory also located at Dungog for many years.

Local Consumption - brick making, blacksmiths, tinsmiths

Early homes and buildings were made from either slabs or mortared river stone. Later, brick making was done at a local site specifically for a building's needs, this occurred when the Anglican Church at Dungog was built.¹ As the demand for bricks grew, a more permanent site would be established such as that by Mr McWilliam at Calton Hill near Dungog in 1885.² Blacksmiths were common, and in addition to making horseshoes and horse related material, would have also made tools and ploughshares. In 1878, a saddle and harness factory was also reported in Dungog district.³ Tinsmiths made such material as water tanks, bullnoses for verandahs and honey tins and milk cans.⁴ Some businesses also styled themselves 'carriage makers', though whether their level of production could be described as 'industry' or if they were simply repair shops is unclear. More recently, cordial was produced locally for many years in the mid-20th century before declining to competition from mass produced drinks.

All these local industries faded as mass production of bricks or metalware, or the rise of the motor car and large-scale production, either out priced them or eliminated demand for their product.

Agricultural by-products – tobacco factories, tanneries and butter production

Tobacco growing was carried on in conjunction with tobacco factories set up by larger landowners or storekeepers with some capital. Such factories existed at Bandon Grove, Dungog and Gresford. Termed 'factories' they cut, rolled and pressed the tobacco leaf for shipping to Sydney and other markets.⁵

With cattle plentiful and the demand for leather in harnesses, saddles, and in boots and shoes high, tanneries operated at many locations. Tanneries required not only leather but also tannin derived from wattle bark. While the NSW leather industry was required to import much of its wattle bark from Victoria and Tasmania, there is no evidence that this was necessary within the Dungog Shire district, and this local supply of wattle bark may explain the relatively high number of tanneries.⁶ In 1878, four tanneries were reported to exist in the

¹ Williams, *Ah, Dungog*, p.56.

² *Australian Town and Country Journal*, 7/2/1885, p.16.

³ *Australian Town and Country Journal*, 27/4/1878, p.32.

⁴ For the tinsmith ad of J Stuart see *Dungog Chronicle*, 5/2/1909, p.1.

⁵ See 3.2 Agriculture.

⁶ *Australian Town and Country Journal*, 6/4/1878, p.24.

district of Dungog at that time.⁷ Known tanneries include one at Dingadee, another was at the northern end of Dungog, and one at Brookfield owned by the Carlton family.⁸ With the large amount of bark stored, fire was always a danger as when the Dungog tannery of Mr Hayman burned in 1880.⁹

Both early butter and cured tobacco required cooperage to pack and ship the tobacco and butter, though this appears to have been done by skilled workers working directly for landowners rather than setting up to supply these goods to all comers as did the later tinsmiths.¹⁰ As dairying developed in the late 19th century many butter and dairy factories were set up to process the milk of local producers.¹¹

Shipbuilding and Shipping

The earliest major industry established within Dungog Shire was shipbuilding, mainly established at the head of the navigable section of the Williams at Clarence Town where some of the first steamers in Australia were built. The first, at Clarence Town Deptford shipyard in 1831, was the *William IV*, an 80 foot by 15 foot paddle-wheel steamer.¹² Many other ships were built here and at Raymond Terrace. Additionally a number of steamers were also built on the Paterson River by Daniel Peattie at Brisbane Grove.¹³ This industry reached its peak in the 1870s, and in 1872 it was reported that a 180 ton schooner was launched at Clarence Town, another of 600 tons was nearly ready on the Paterson River, and a third of 150 tons was also being built on the Williams River.¹⁴

Not only the building of such ships, but the existence of a number of shipping companies was also due of the proximity to navigable rivers that much of the Dungog Shire area enjoys.¹⁵ However, the coming of the railway through Paterson and Dungog destroyed both the shipping and the shipbuilding industry of Clarence Town and Paterson. This occurred quite rapidly. In 1906, when the *Cooreei* was destroyed by fire, and despite the imminent arrival of a new rail line to Dungog, it was replaced by the *Erringhi*. With the railway line put through to Dungog in 1911, the *Erringhi* was sold the following year to operators on the Hawkesbury River. Subsequently the WRSN Co (Williams River Steam Navigation Company) was liquidated by 1913. Another ship, the *Favourite* was sold to the Lower Hunter Co-operative Steamship Co, which continued to operate for some time, as did various 'creamers' transporting the produce of dairy farms.¹⁶ The demand for new ships, however, was gone.

⁷ *Australian Town and Country Journal*, 6/4/1878, p.25.

⁸ *Maitland Mercury*, 16/5/1885, p.1.

⁹ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 21/8/1880, p.5.

¹⁰ Walsh, *Voices from Tocal*, pp.50-51.

¹¹ See 3.3 Dairying.

¹² Murray, *Colonial Shipwrights of the Williams and Paterson Rivers*, Chapter 3 (n.p.).

¹³ Archer, *The Settlement of the Paterson District*, p.41.

¹⁴ *Maitland Mercury*, 8/2/1872, p.2.

¹⁵ See 3.9 Transport.

¹⁶ Murray, *Colonial Shipwrights of the Williams and Paterson Rivers*, Chapters 16 (n.p.).

Cooreei Cornflour Mill

Situated 'just across the river from Dungog, on a slight eminence in full sight from the town' was the Cooreei Mill (named after the prominent hill below which it stood).¹⁷ The mill was considered by 1880 to 'have conferred somewhat of a reputation upon the town of Dungog'.¹⁸ Built on an eight acre site, the mill measured 120 feet by 40 feet, had three floors above and one below ground (90 feet in length), and was built on hardwood (ironbark) piles with weatherboard cladding that was oiled not painted. It also had brick drying rooms, a 3,000 gallon tank that was 16 feet by 6 feet by 5 feet, a reservoir with filters, and was powered by a 24 hp steam engine imported from Scotland, with grinding stones imported from France. The below ground floor was excavated after the erection of the above ground ones and was lined in a mixture of cement and asphalt. The entire mill was 18 months in building, cost between £6,000 to £7,000 and commenced operations in mid-1878.¹⁹ The owner of this mill was John Wade & Co., and Wade & Co. was owned by two people, John Wade and R L Alison. The mill's manager was Kenneth McDonald from Scotland and it employed from 8 to 16 men plus 40 to 45 packing girls.

Wheat growing in the Williams Valley was restricted by the development of rust and many farmers grew corn. This corn was taken by bullock dray to Clarence Town for shipment by steamers. John Wade was a Dungog storekeeper who saw the difficulties local farmers had in getting their produce to market and began to investigate the possibilities of a corn mill.²⁰ Corn at that time was being imported with a 1d per lb duty and sold at 8d per lb. In 1866, a corn mill was established at Dungog and paid local farmers between 1/3 and 1/6 per bushel. A bushel of corn was 60lb and yielded some 20 lbs of corn flour.²¹ But the real value of corn came not from a simple grinding into corn meal but through a more complex refining that produced what was then called 'maizena' or what is today known as cornflour.²²

A major boost to the local economy was made therefore when John Wade and local landowner Robert Alison of the 2,000 acre East Bank Estate established a cornflour mill able to effect this refining on the edge of Dungog in 1878.²³ Together the two invested £8,000 in what was considered a significant enterprise even on a colony level, especially considering that most processed corn at this time was being imported.²⁴ Equipment and experienced people were also imported in 1877 and by June of 1878, the Cooreei Corn Mill began operations, named after the hill that sits prominently just to the east of Dungog on the property of Robert Alison.²⁵ By 1888, in addition to Munn's on the south coast, a least one other cornflour mill was operating in Sydney, on the Lane Cover River at Chatswood, but that in Dungog was reported to be the largest.

For the local economy, the mill meant much employment and steady sales for local farmers who increasingly grew corn until it was reported 70% of the crops grown in the district were corn.²⁶ Another local bonus was that the fish feeding on the mill waste downstream grew

¹⁷ *Maitland Mercury*, 13/4/1886, p.7. See also, 3.3 Dairying.

¹⁸ *Australian Town and Country Journal*, 4/9/1880, p.18.

¹⁹ *Maitland Mercury*, 20/7/1878, p.15.

²⁰ *Maitland Mercury*, 20/7/1878, p.15 & Hunter, *Wade's Corn Flour Mill*, p.15.

²¹ Hunter, *Wade's Corn Flour Mill*, p.16.

²² *Maitland Mercury*, 11/5/1867, p.2 & Hunter, *Wade's Corn Flour Mill*, p.16.

²³ Hunter, *Wade's Corn Flour Mill*, p.17.

²⁴ Hunter, *Wade's Corn Flour Mill*, p.17.

²⁵ *Maitland Mercury*, 8/5/1877, p.5 & Hunter, *Wade's Corn Flour Mill*, p.18.

²⁶ *Maitland Mercury*, 20/7/1878, p.15 & Hunter, *Wade's Corn Flour Mill*, p.7 and 18-23.

greatly in size - to the delight of local fishermen.²⁷ That this mill was seen to be significant on a colony level is shown by the fact that when the NSW Governor visited Dungog in 1892 to lay the foundation stone for the Dungog Cottage Hospital, he first visited the cornflour mill.²⁸

Although the mill was reliant on imported technology, the local level of technology was not to be despised. At one point a broken cog halted production and it needed six months to send to England for a replacement. A local worker, Samuel Redman, was able to make a replacement in three months using only a cold chisel. This worked so well that it was left in place after the new part arrived.²⁹

John Wade became involved in politics, running at the elections in 1887 (losing by 162) and 1889 (626 to 482), against the sitting member H H Brown.³⁰ Wade ran on a protectionist agenda – ‘If the protective duties were taken off it would strangle two-thirds of our Colonial Industries: we must foster them’.³¹ He was also an energetic businessman, having begun as a shopkeeper but after 1882 devoting himself solely to manufacturing.³² At one point he travelled to America to learn about a new technique called ‘dry grinding’.³³

It was soon after his return from this American trip in 1901 that the owners announced they ‘intend to remove their maizena mills from Dungog to Newtown’.³⁴ They stated that ‘carriage of maizena to the metropolis, where they do the packing, is a big item, and that in order to cope with the increase of trade consequent upon the abolition of border duties between the various States, they are compelled to remove their factory to the centre of distribution, Sydney.’ The Federal government was also intending a 1d per lb duty on imported cornflour at this time.³⁵

The removal of the mill not only impacted on the corn growing farmers, but timber getters who had supplied fuel for the boilers, as well as the various teamsters and carriers as well as the many mill workers were all affected.³⁶ Today nothing is left to show the presence of this mill but an empty field.

Clothing

A clothing factory was established in the Victoria Hall at Dungog during WWII and at the end of the war this Steven’s Knitting Mill closed. However, during the 1950s with unemployment high, the local council purchased the former Grierson’s store in Dowling Street in 1966 and negotiated with the company to return to Dungog at a subsidised rent. Steven’s Knitting Mill employed many local women for a number of years before closing in 1980.³⁷

²⁷ *Dungog Chronicle*, 23/1/1894 & Hunter, *Wade’s Corn Flour Mill*, p.23.

²⁸ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 25/11/1892, p.5.

²⁹ Charles Redman to Dungog Historical Society, 14/4/1988.

³⁰ *Maitland Mercury*, 1/3/1887, p.5 & 19/2/1889, p.8.

³¹ *Maitland Mercury*, 12/2/1887, p.13S.

³² *Maitland Mercury*, 19/9/1882, p.8.

³³ *Dungog Chronicle*, 30/11/1900 & 26/2/1901.

³⁴ *Dungog Chronicle*, 28/10/1901.

³⁵ *Dungog Chronicle*, 28/10/1901.

³⁶ Hunter, *Wade’s Corn Flour Mill*, p.33.

³⁷ Williams, *Ah, Dungog*, p.27 & p.77.

Rationalisation

While local entrepreneurship will often begin a successful business, the very success and subsequent expansion of such a business will see it move to a more central location, as happened with Wade's Cornflour Mill. Thus at Paterson, Partridge Engineering for many years manufactured a range of irrigation equipment before expanding to Maitland. Also at Paterson, and still with some operations there, was PowerServe, a company specialising in power lines. Wallaby Engineering developed a niche manufacturing market by constructing tractor drawn spreaders to distribute litter from poultry sheds. These are sent all over Australia from the factory at the former Partridge Engineering site.³⁸

A more recent, but also locally grown industry, was the 1986 established Drovers Ay-One. This Dungog-based company specialised in livestock tags and identification systems which it distributed throughout Australia. In 2011 it was taken over by a multinational company that, within a year, closed the Dungog operations and transferred all manufacturing to a more urban location.

Heritage survivals

- Clarence Town shipbuilding docks
- Paterson River shipbuilding docks
- Cornflour Mill site (Dungog)
- Blacksmith sites
- Brick kilns (Dungog)
- Cordial factory (Dungog)

³⁸ Cameron Archer, interviewed 9/4/2012.

3.8 Mining [extraction of mineral ores]

Gold appears to have been the main substance extracted from the three valleys of the Dungog Shire area. This was not done during the major Gold Rush period of Australian history but later, when a number of mines were established primarily at Wangat at the northern end of the Williams Valley. These mines, although small operations, were not individual prospectors but partnerships as some capital was required to sink shafts and operate stampers. Sufficient gold was extracted over a number of years to encourage Angus & Coote to set up a shop in Dungog at which gold could be sold by the miners.

Wangat on the Little River at is described as '6 miles from the junction of Little River with the Chichester', itself a tributary of the Williams River. From the 1870s through to the early years of the 20th century the area around Wangat was the site of numerous gold mining claims. In 1872, mines such as the Perseverance, Morning Star, Webb's line, Homewardbound, Bohemian, Aunt Sally, Victoria, Golden Spur, and William Tell are mentioned, as are the presence of four hotels, but no resident Commissioner.³⁹ In 1873, the shareholders of the Golden Spur Reef had a 50 foot tunnel that they were extending to strike a new reef named the Liberator.⁴⁰

Both steam and water stampers were used, with Lower Wangat producing 1,456 ozs and Upper Wangat 215 ozs; an average of 2 ozs of gold per ton.⁴¹ The average claim at Wangat was 2 to 5 men per claim and miners such as 'Quinn and Party' sank shafts costing ten shillings per foot to locate reefs at 60 foot that were perhaps 18 inches wide.

Gold was also successfully mined at Copeland on the other side of the Barringtons from Dungog Shire, and in 1878 gravel was being laid down to improve the roads and a new Monkerai Hill road was being built. In fact, the best route to the 'Barrington diggings' was reported to be via Monkerai with the trees marked for horsemen and the work done by 'a few Dungog residents'.⁴²

In 1878, two cakes of gold of around 12 pounds each came to Dungog, spent the night in the bank safe, and then left again escorted by two constables.⁴³ It was around this time that a government subsidy to encourage prospecting, known as the 'Prospecting Vote' was provided. This meant grants of up to £2,000 were made to assist in extending shafts and other operations but with 50% of the value to be done before a subsidy could be applied for.⁴⁴ Later a 'Prospecting Board' was established in 1887, and £15,000 provided for the encouragement of prospecting. The Board would inspect sites proposed by miners and estimate the cost of any work required, and again a sum not exceeding 50% of the estimated costs could be provided.⁴⁵

It is not known how much of this prospecting vote, if any, came to the Wangat miners, but by 1880, the population at Wangat was reported to be 60 and in 1881 there were '80 souls all told at Upper and Lower Wangat'. It was also reported that: 'There are no Chinese mining or

³⁹ *Australian Town and Country Journal*, 5/10/1872, p.11.

⁴⁰ *Empire*, 17/1/1873, p.2.

⁴¹ Osborne, Idle (compiler), Geological Survey of NSW – Gloucester, Dungog Division, 1886-1909.

⁴² *Maitland Mercury*, 22/10/1878, p.5.

⁴³ *Maitland Mercury*, 27/6/1878, p.2.

⁴⁴ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 16/5/1879, p.2.

⁴⁵ NSW Votes and Proceedings 1887, Prospecting for Gold, printed 12 July 1887, p.509.

otherwise there.’ By 1886, the population was 14 men, 7 females and between 20 and 30 children, though the following year the report was 10 miners only. Despite this decline, in 1907 mining was still continuing with at least six men at Wangat digging 100 tons for 44 ozs of gold or £150. The miners were both locals and from further afield, with a ‘company of working coal miners’ reported to be on the Loch Lomond Mine, and a ‘Dungog syndicate’ on the Eclipse Mine.⁴⁶ After 1916, the construction of the Chichester Dam, including the resumption of the Wangat Village, further restricted access to the Wangat gold mines, though some prospecting continued, with an old lease being taken over by the Mountain Maid Mining Co. as late as 1924.⁴⁷

Few details of this gold seeking life remain. There are reports of prospectors approaching local shopkeepers for a stake, and of prospectors skipping off with gold won by their partners.⁴⁸ Angus & Coote set up a shop in Dungog and acted as gold assayers. This company appears to have misjudged the amount of gold left in these Barrington foothills, investing in a new store in 1911 just as the gold petered out; their manager bought them out in 1913 and continued as a jewellery store. Finally, according to a Department of Mines report, the total Wangat production over some 30 years or more was just over 88 kg of gold from 2,444 tons or 30 grams (a little for than 1 ounce) of gold per ton.⁴⁹

Far up against the Barrington foothills was not the only place people sought for gold within Dungog district and the lure of gold led people to sink a number of other mines such as at Rocky Hill just to the north of Dungog. Even on the Dungog Common a shaft some 51 foot deep was sunk by Thomas M’William in search not of gold it seems, but of silver.⁵⁰ Other mining locations were Cherry Tree Hill in 1880, five miles east of Dungog on Stroud Rd, and at Marsh Creek, five miles above Wangat. Another in 1888, was at Little Mountain, four miles from Dungog. The Cherry Tree Hill claim even had a stamper in 1889, but was abandoned by 1897. By 1909, the only operating mine was reported to be the Mountain Maid Mine at Monkerai, which had begun in 1893 or 1894.⁵¹

While gold was the only metal successfully mined within the Dungog Shire area, this does not mean that efforts were not made to find and exploit other metals. As early as 1845, copper was being found, or at least searched for, on the Cory property at Gostwyck on the Paterson River.⁵² Despite much enthusiastic talk of specimens being similar to those in Cornwall, nothing serious seems to have come of these deposits, despite at least one shaft having been sunk.⁵³ Years later, in the 1870s, copper fever seems to have hit again, this time with a company formed and the sinking of shafts not only at Gostwyck but also further east on the ridge dividing the Paterson and Williams Rivers.⁵⁴ When offered for sale the following year, the Gostwyck estate was described as one where, ‘it having been proved beyond doubt that copper exists in more than one portion of the property, which if properly developed would yield an enormous fortune to the proprietor ...’⁵⁵

⁴⁶ Osborne, (compiler), Geological Survey of NSW – Gloucester, Dungog Division, 1886-1909.

⁴⁷ Armstrong, *Pipelines and People*, p.87 & *Dungog Chronicle*, 8/8/1924.

⁴⁸ Grogan, M. J., Wangat Village, (n.d.).

⁴⁹ Department of Mineral Resources, Letter Dec 10th, 1991.

⁵⁰ Osborne, Geological Survey of NSW – Gloucester, Dungog Division, 1879, 1880, 1881.

⁵¹ Osborne, (compiler), Geological Survey of NSW – Gloucester, Dungog Division, 1886-1909 & *Sydney Morning Herald*, 26/4/1894, p.7.

⁵² *Maitland Mercury*, 13/12/1845, p.2 & Gent, *Gostwyck Paterson 1823 to 2009*, p.18.

⁵³ *Maitland Mercury*, 2/10/1847, p.4 & 3/11/1847, p.2.

⁵⁴ *Maitland Mercury*, 28/12/1872, p.3.

⁵⁵ *Maitland Mercury*, 18/2/1873, p.1.

Another mineral that was discovered and rediscovered several times was antimony. The first such finding occurred in the 1850s when it appears in an advertisement for the sale of land near Gresford. In a further effort to boost the value of these supposed antimony deposits, it was also reported that the British government was experimenting with the use of antimony in cannonballs. Reports of antimony were circulating again in the 1870s and again in 1907.⁵⁶ Finally in 1937, there is a report of an antimony mine actually being worked, though not now on the Allyn River, but rather on the Upper Paterson near Lostock/Mount Rivers.⁵⁷

The passing of the new railway line through Martin's Creek on its way to Dungog not only meant improved travel but an increased demand for blue metal, used as ballast for the railway tracks. The Martin's Creek blue metal quarries have provided such ballast for the railways and later for roads and other construction throughout the 20th century. More recently, an increase in extraction and a consequent increase in heavy truck movements has generated some local controversy.⁵⁸

Heritage Survivals

- Mine shafts (Wangat)
- Village remains (Wangat)
- Mines (copper & antimony)

⁵⁶ *Maitland Mercury*, 11/2/1871, p.4 & 23/1/1907, p.53.

⁵⁷ *Maitland Mercury*, 27/10/1938, p.6.

⁵⁸ *Gent, Gostwyck Paterson 1823 to 2009*, p.55.

3.9 Transport [moving people & goods – activities & systems]

The ease or difficulty of transport to and from, as well as within Dungog Shire, has significantly shaped its history. When road transport was extremely slow and steam shipping superior, the routes down the Williams Valley to Dungog then onto Clarence Town, or down the Allyn River to Gresford and onto Paterson, then via steamers from both these river ports down to the Hunter River to Newcastle and onto Sydney, meant that Dungog Shire district was in relatively close contact with the rest of the Colony of NSW. As roads improved and a rail connection came to Dungog, the dynamics of the district changed and have continued to change ever since.

Even getting around within the district was a hazardous occupation at a time when roads were always poor and river crossings meant exactly that in the absence of bridges. As Charles Boydell put it:

Nothing is, I think, more foolish than venturing into water without being very certain of your horse.⁵⁹

In 1832, Boydell was swept away trying cross a flooded river and forced to take shelter with a neighbour. He was not the only one, with a similar thing happening to Magistrate Thomas Cook in 1848 and there are numerous reports of deaths in comparable circumstances.⁶⁰

Aside from the numerous river crossings, there were the hazards of the bush itself, with many early routes simply roughly marked trails. This the Rev Robert Vanderkiste, one time Methodist minister at Dungog, discovered when he became lost in the Upper Allyn Valley for six days in 1858 - an adventure detailed in his book, 'Lost – but not forever'.⁶¹ By the time the Rev Vanderkiste became lost, many tracks had been made and many Europeans, now considering themselves locals, knew their way about. Earlier in the settlement period there had been great reliance on Gringai people to act as guides, or on their providing assistance, once one had become lost.⁶²

For most, it was transport into and out of the district that was the focus of their concern. From the very beginning getting produce off the grants along the Allyn, Paterson and Williams Rivers and down the tracks to the heads of navigation at Paterson and Clarence Town, or what became these towns, was of primary concern. As early as 1829/30, applications for small grants to erect wharfs and storage at the 'Termination of navigation' on the Williams River were being made by settlers at Dungog, including Myles, Mackay of Melbee and Windeyer.⁶³ In April 1832, Windeyer wrote that 'there being no place for deposit at the head of navigation, settlers are compelled to let their drays wait for a vessel, and only one dray load can be shipped at a time...'.⁶⁴

When Magistrate Cook requested a supply of blankets from the Colonial Storekeeper in March 1837 to distribute to the Gringai, he described the best route for such blankets to reach him; first to Greenhills [Morpeh], then 'by Mr Cory's boat to the Paterson', then by

⁵⁹ Sullivan, *Charles Boydell*, p.26.

⁶⁰ Sullivan, *Charles Boydell*, p.33 & *Maitland Mercury*, 12/2/1848, p.2.

⁶¹ *Maitland Mercury*, 26/10/1858, p.2 & Uniting Church, Dungog, *Gateway to the forests and faith*, pp.9-10.

⁶² For various accounts of being lost on the Upper Williams see *Maitland Mercury*, 29/10/1889, p.3.

⁶³ Ford, *Clarence Town Erring – I to River Port*, pp.16-17.

⁶⁴ Ford, *Clarence Town Erring – I to River Port*, p.17.

‘dry dray to Dungog’.⁶⁵ However, Williams River landowner Lawrence Myles actually carried the blankets from Maitland, a service for which he was still unpaid in October.⁶⁶ For the following two years’ blankets, Cook requested they go to Clarence Town via the *Northumberland* or the AAC schooner *Carrington*.⁶⁷

Steamer transport dominated, but while steamers were common on the rivers, sail continued also to be used even as late as 1863.⁶⁸ Much of this river and coastal transport was carried on by the Hunter River Navigation Company, renamed the Australasian Steam Navigation Co in 1851. Many in the Hunter region did not like the expansion into other areas this name change heralded and in 1852, the Hunter River New Steam Navigation Company was formed. By 1854 this new company was operating ships called the *Hunter*, *Williams* and *Paterson*, and a drogher (a kind of paddle-wheeled barge) called the *Anna Maria*.⁶⁹

From Clarence Town to Raymond Terrace it was two hours by steamer, then another two hours to Newcastle, with stops at private wharves when required.⁷⁰ Thereafter, it was often an overnight trip down the coast to Sydney. This compared well to a journey of four days from the Allyn River valley to Sydney for two men in a gig.⁷¹

Even as late as 1864, it was taken for granted that a trip to Sydney from the three valleys required a sea voyage, as when the Rev Sherriff’s illness demanded a change of environment and it was reported that:

His liability to extreme sea-sickness will prevent the trial at present of a residence in the vicinity of Sydney among his relatives.⁷²

Transport by ship only began to decline with the establishment of a railway link from Sydney to Newcastle in the 1880s.⁷³ The connecting river traffic with Newcastle, however, continued untroubled by rail competition and in 1885, the Williams River Steam Navigation Co (WRSN Co) was formed by local storekeepers in Clarence Town and Dungog, operating such ships as the *Favourite*, which they purchased, and the *Williams* and the *Cooreei*, which they commissioned.⁷⁴ These ships were built at Raymond Terrace and had engines made by R J Morrison & Bearby of Newcastle, the *Williams* costing £600 in 1883. The *Cooreei* was licensed for 379 passengers and operated each way on alternative days.⁷⁵

The WRSN Co charged 3s for the trip from Clarence Town to Newcastle, a price undercut by the Lower Hunter Steamship Co with 1/6d from Raymond Terrace to Newcastle. These companies also offered ‘moonlight excursions’ and meals.⁷⁶ Though in 1880, a nephew of

⁶⁵ Cook to Colonial Storekeeper, 27/3/1837, (Dungog Magistrates’ Letterbook).

⁶⁶ Cook to Colonial Secretary, 26/10/1837, (Dungog Magistrates’ Letterbook).

⁶⁷ Cook to Colonial Storekeeper, 26/3/1838, 9/1/1839, (Dungog Magistrates’ Letterbook).

⁶⁸ Murray, *Colonial Shipwrights of the Williams and Paterson Rivers*, Chapter 7 (n.p.).

⁶⁹ Sullivan, *Charles Boydell*, p.120, *Maitland Mercury*, 19/6/1852, p.4. & 17/7/1852, p.2. This company merged in 1891 with the Newcastle Steamship Co. to form the Newcastle and Hunter Steamship Co.

⁷⁰ Murray, *Colonial Shipwrights of the Williams and Paterson Rivers*, Chapter 16 (n.p.).

⁷¹ Sullivan, *Charles Boydell*, p.38.

⁷² *Maitland Mercury*, 3/11/1864, p.3.

⁷³ Murray, *Colonial Shipwrights of the Williams and Paterson Rivers*, Chapter 14 (n.p.).

⁷⁴ Murray, *Colonial Shipwrights of the Williams and Paterson Rivers*, Chapter 16 (n.p.) & Hunter, *Wade’s Corn Flour Mill*, p.26.

⁷⁵ Murray, *Colonial Shipwrights of the Williams and Paterson Rivers*, Chapters 16 (n.p.).

⁷⁶ Murray, *Colonial Shipwrights of the Williams and Paterson Rivers*, Chapters 16 (n.p.).

Christopher Lean of Fosterton near Dungog, took a steamer to Sydney and reported that a lack of bunks meant that he needed to sleep lying across 'some casks of grog'.⁷⁷

To and from the heads of navigation at either Clarence Town or Paterson, road travel was necessary and for bulk goods this meant bullock trains. Lighter goods, such as the mail, travelled faster by horse and were carried by contractors such as Charles Boydell, who in 1841 had the Paterson to Gresford mail contract for three times a week at £105 per year.⁷⁸ Such a route required river crossings, which were increasingly done by punt. In 1843, Boydell was sued for refusing to pay £6 in punt fees on the Paterson punt. Boydell asserted that mail was free of charge, but the court determined this applied only to government punts, which the Paterson punt was not at that time.⁷⁹

Not a great deal is known about the nature of these punts, though one glimpse is a vivid one:

We hope these temporary constructions will not cause us to have to record such a fatal catastrophe as occurred a few years ago near Gostwyck, when in crossing on one of their ill-constructed log arrangements, called catamarans, a man, his wife, and two children, met their death by drowning, by the capsizing of these frail and giddy rafts.⁸⁰

This was not the only one in poor condition and two years later there was an urgent need to replace the old punt at Paterson, which the government appears to have agreed to pay £300 to do.⁸¹

In 1872, three routes to Dungog from Sydney are described, little changed from those of 40 years before except for coaches replacing drays. Namely, by steamer to Clarence Town, then a coach 10 miles; steamer to Morpeth and then coach; or via Raymond Terrace to Stroud, then 16 miles on horseback.⁸² One who took this last route over Stroud Hill in 1878 claimed that 'taking your horse over it is a splendid introduction to teaching him to climb the side of a house...'⁸³ One route change was to Settler's Road from Maitland to Paterson, which had gone in a loop to cross high up Webber's Creek until 1849 when a bridge crossing near its junction with the Paterson River allowed the Tocal Road to provide a much shorter option.⁸⁴

Travelling by horse, coach or even foot, could all be done at a reasonable pace despite poor roads, but for heavy goods, the means was bullock with, for example, the trip from Paterson to Allynbrook (30 kms) by bullock taking 12 days.⁸⁵ This dependence on bullocks to haul goods to the steamers at Clarence Town limited development, especially in bumper years when extra punts and droghers were needed.⁸⁶ Also, the lack of bridges often meant roads were closed in poor weather.

⁷⁷ Lean, *The Lean Family History*, p.115.

⁷⁸ Sullivan, *Charles Boydell*, p.81.

⁷⁹ Sullivan, *Charles Boydell*, p.85.

⁸⁰ *Maitland Mercury*, 28/3/1871, p.3. This punt or an earlier version of it appears in a lithograph of Gostwyck House (State Library of NSW, DG SV1B/6).

⁸¹ *Maitland Mercury*, 8/3/1873, p.4.

⁸² Greville's Official Post Office Directory NSW - 1872, p.229.

⁸³ *Australian Town and Country Journal*, 14/9/1878, p.18.

⁸⁴ See 'Settlers' Road', <http://www.patersonriver.com.au/places/settlersroad.htm#ref2>

⁸⁵ *Allynbrook Public School, 1869 – 1969*, p.8.

⁸⁶ Hunter, *Wade's Corn Flour Mill*, p.25 & *Maitland Mercury*, 8/4/1871, p.2.

The need for bridges and better roads soon became a major issue, with many public meetings and various Colonial administrations vying for votes by using bridges as campaign promises. Petitions from the districts were common and one candidate seeking re-election in 1877 mentions roads and bridges, along with post offices and schools, as his government's main claim for re-election.⁸⁷ This issue also led to rivalry and arguments over routes and which roads and bridges should be built first, particularly between Dungog and Clarence Town.⁸⁸ One writer complained, for example, that Dungog and Paterson were getting too much and instanced the new 1883 road from Dungog to Underbank, while another disputed that the road money was being fairly distributed among the various roads.⁸⁹

As a result of the agitation and promises, many bridges were built in the 1870s and 1880s: such as at Dungog, 1877; Clarence Town, 1879; Paterson, 1887; Woodville, 1898; Vacy, 1898; Allynbrook, 1900; Bandon Grove, 1900; and a new Williams River bridge, now called the Cooreei Bridge, 1904. Sometimes bridges were not built at the existing river crossings, such as in 1877 when the Gostwyck Bridge was built to make a more direct route between Paterson and Dungog.⁹⁰

The erection and opening of such bridges was a major event for the local community well aware of the impact upon their lives, as this description of the 1877 opening of the new Gostwyck Bridge shows:

Very extensive preparations had been made for the purpose of adding *eclat* to the event. A band was engaged from Maitland; liberal provision was made for feasting the school children of Paterson and Vacy; and the people far and near were urged to make a gala day.

Altogether, some five or six hundred people must have come. Two arches of boughs had been erected in the centre of the bridge, and across the descent at the Dungog approach flaunted a line of flags. Two booths, which did a fair trade in liquor selling, were planted on the top of the bank. The public school children from Paterson and from Vacy were present, under the direction of their teachers; and at half past twelve a procession was formed, with the band and the members of the opening committee at its head ...⁹¹

Many of these early bridges were truss bridges, and as a result Dungog Shire now has the largest concentration of such bridges in NSW. However, in a district with so many crossings even its modern bridges continue to require something above the ordinary and the 1995 Pound Crossing Bridge over the Paterson River near Gresford is the largest cellular stress laminated hardwood timber bridge deck in the world.⁹²

Naturally these bridges began to change the dynamics of transport and movement around the district, even if only by adding the ability to move with less regard to weather conditions. However, many of the more isolated areas continued to have only low level crossings and flying foxes were used during floods on the Allyn River until the 1920s and a low level bridge connecting the community at Summer Hill with Vacy was not put in until 1930.⁹³ The

⁸⁷ *Maitland Mercury*, 17/8/1876, p.5; 23/10/1877, p.8 & 7/4/1883, p.7S.

⁸⁸ *Maitland Mercury*, 28/7/1877, p.10.

⁸⁹ *Maitland Mercury*, 23/10/1883, p.4 & 28/7/1887, p.2.

⁹⁰ Clements, *Vacy ... One Hundred & Eighty Years of History*, p.133.

⁹¹ *Maitland Mercury*, 3/8/1878, p.12S.

⁹² Collison & Hancock, *Gresford 170 years*, p.136.

⁹³ *Allynbrook Public School, 1869 – 1969*, p.8 & Clements, *Vacy ... One Hundred & Eighty Years of History*, p.140.

low level bridge at Horn's Crossing near Vacy, for example, also continued to be a problem in even moderate wet weather until a new low level (but one metre higher), crossing was built in 2002 using concrete planks recycled from the Sydney Olympic Games Village.⁹⁴

While bridges were generally paid from Colonial government funds, roads often began as casual affairs, with even in the 1860s the best route to the 'Barrington diggings' reported to be via Monkerai with the trees marked for horsemen and the work done by 'a few Dungog residents'.⁹⁵ Sometimes it was necessary to establish a new road so as to prevent the continuation of disputes and litigation over the use of tracks on private land. This was the case when a road was resumed from property by the Department of Lands in 1874.⁹⁶ However, once a road was recognised, its upkeep, before the establishment of local government at the end of the 19th century, was in the hands of road trusts made up of interested landowners. Such a "Road Trust", for example, made up of three property owners, contracted to have a culvert built at Fosterton in 1881.⁹⁷ These road trusts had the power to levy rates on landowners, and even tolls on the users of a road.

In 1881 appeared an accounting of the kind of money these road trusts received:

The following is a summary of the proposed expenditure on the subordinate roads of the colony under trustees for the present year:

11 miles, Seaham, by east side of Williams River, to Clarence Town, £165;
22 miles, Dunmore Bridge to Paterson and Gresford, £550;
17 miles, Gresford to Ecclestone, £255;
12 miles, Gresford to Lowstock, £308;
13 miles, Lowstock to Carrabola, £130;
4 miles, Penshurst to Allyn River, £60;
8 miles, Ecclestone to Upper Allyn River, £80;
9 miles, Underbank to Upper Chichester, £90;⁹⁸

As the roads improved, so did the means of using them and coaches began to make regular journeys between specific points. Those doing so needed to apply for a 'Coach License', and one such application gives us an insight into traffic hazards of the time:

Richard J. Fitzgerald applied for a license for a coach called the "Emerald," to ply between West Maitland and Dungog. The father of the applicant, Stephen Fitzgerald the driver of the coach, appeared for him, and Mr Mitchell, one of the magistrates, said he was sorry to be the depository of a charge against Fitzgerald, but he had been told by the Rev Father Lonergan that Fitzgerald had on two occasions attempted to drive him into the ditch on the side of the road, and that on one of these occasions the lady passengers in the coach had thought the Rev Father was killed. Fitzgerald said that it was unfair for the Rev Father to take that way of making a charge against him. He denied that he had willfully driven Father Lonergan off the road, but as that gentleman rode a very spirited horse, it was in the habit of shying at the coach, and that he (Fitzgerald) could not help that. The Rev Father had already made a

⁹⁴ Clements, *Vacy ... One Hundred & Eighty Years of History*, p.131.

⁹⁵ *Maitland Mercury*, 22/10/1878, p.5.

⁹⁶ Lean, *The Lean Family History*, p.60, Letter, 29/6/1874.

⁹⁷ Lean, *The Lean Family History*, p.61 & *Maitland Mercury*, 14/12/1867, p.4.

⁹⁸ *Maitland Mercury*, 22/3/1881, p.6. Note the variation in spelling of Lostock and Carrabolla.

complaint against him to the police at Dungog, and had demanded an apology, but he had not continued the proceedings, The license was then granted.⁹⁹

Fry Brothers was a prominent company that ran coaches from Dungog to Maitland via Paterson daily from 1870, returning at midnight. The Maitland train was at 12.30am and the coach departed at 1am, arriving at Dungog at 7.30am. The coach had six horses and carried passengers plus mail and ice. Passengers were regularly required to get out and walk up Wallarobba hill, mid-way between Paterson and Dungog.¹⁰⁰ At Gresford an old homestead – Ard-Na-Hane – was used for many years as a coach stop and hotel for the Maitland to Gresford route.¹⁰¹ By the mid-1880s coaches also ran between Clarence Town and Dungog:

There is now ample provision made for travellers visiting Dungog. Mr. Oakley is now running a coach daily between Dungog and Clarence Town; he is likely to be well patronised at holiday time, but there is some fear that travellers are not yet numerous enough to make it pay in ordinary times.¹⁰²

Paterson was a central place for many of these routes and here Fry Brothers had a coach workshop and kept 60 horses in their stables.¹⁰³

The gradual improvement in roads did not stop complaints, such as a description of the Dungog to Stroud Road as ‘that most shameful of all shameful tracks called a road’. The same report stated that a 1½ inch axle on a buggy broke when attempting to use this route.¹⁰⁴ In 1889, the Dungog to Stroud road was upgraded to a first class road, however, the next year the state of the Clarence Town to Dungog road was still the subject of much complaint, especially after an accident.¹⁰⁵

Over the years routes that were at first bridle paths have been turned into roads, such as the Bingleburra Road between Gresford and Dungog, or the Salisbury Gap Road from Salisbury to Eccleston completed by Fred Rumbel.¹⁰⁶ Other paths, such as that between Fosterton and Bandon Grove or the end of Woerdens Rd leading over to Hilldale, were never upgraded and have gradually faded back into the bush.

Transport by foot and horse, then by coach, continued until the coming of the railway in 1911 with the first stage extension of the North Coast route from Maitland to Dungog via Paterson. Trains meant not only faster transport but the elimination of regular coach routes (Oakley and Fry Brothers) and had a severe impact on steamer transport at Paterson and Clarence Town.

This rail link from Maitland established stations at Paterson, Martin’s Creek, Hilldale, Wallarobba, Wirragulla and Dungog. The location of stations changed during the planning stages and greatly affected the surrounding districts. Access to trains for milk, cattle and passengers all influenced the social and economic dynamics of the immediate areas. In

⁹⁹ *Maitland Mercury*, 8/10/1872, p.3. For a detailed account of another coach accident, on the road from Dungog to Paterson, see Frank Lemon, *Australian Town and Country Journal*, 4/9/1880, p.2.

¹⁰⁰ *Dungog Chronicle*, 10/8/1923.

¹⁰¹ Collison & Hancock, *Gresford 170 years*, p.127.

¹⁰² *Maitland Mercury*, 11/12/1884, p.2.

¹⁰³ Collison & Hancock, *Gresford 170 years*, p.128.

¹⁰⁴ *The Maitland Mercury*, 13/10/1883, p.3.

¹⁰⁵ Hazell, *A Centenary of Memories*, pp.6-7. [1889/1890]

¹⁰⁶ *Dungog Chronicle*, 1/10/1926.

addition, other factors were brought into the valleys the railway line, such as the pumping station that operated near Gostwyck between 1911 until 1949 enabling the area to be linked to a piped water supply; the expansion of the blue metal quarry at Martin's Creek, and the establishment of a railway workers' barracks at Dungog.¹⁰⁷

Despite the coming of rail and even cars, some river transport continued with cream boats taking not only milk but mail and people up and down the rivers, just as milk trucks travelling from dairy to dairy also took mail, bread and school students, with motor buses replacing the milk trucks only gradually after 1913.¹⁰⁸

Many other aspects of pre-car and train transport only gradually disappeared from the Dungog Shire district. Bullocks continued for along time as a major form of transport, particularly for timber. Cattle have always been moved into and out of the Dungog area and as a result, a network of travelling stock routes was created that still exists, though now rarely used. The widespread use of horses meant that horse yards, places to rest and stable horses, and blacksmiths and farriers were important for many years. These included a large yard on the corner of Fosterton Rd and Stroud Rd just to the north of Dungog, and the yards behind Dark's store on Dowling Street.

The coming of the motor car eliminated these features, but did so only slowly. The first glimpse of things to come was in June 1901, when the first motor car came through Dungog, driven by a Dr Bennett and his wife of Morpeth.¹⁰⁹

Timber getting gradually moved from bullocks to steam traction engines, with the motor lorry introduced in 1923. Although bullock teams were still passing through Dungog as late as 1911, they now were a newsworthy event. Their damage to the roads became a sensitive issue as cars became more common. In 1923, the Wallarobba Shire proposed weight limits to traffic on its roads, an idea much opposed by timber carriers and farmers alike. As part of this dispute, it was pointed out that while cars were taxed, bullock teams were not. After 1924, bullock teams were generally replaced by traction engines and after 1928, with the introduction of pneumatic tyres, the damage of heavy trucks to the roads considerably reduced.¹¹⁰

The increased use of motor cars allowed transport services to reach into areas that horse drawn coaches never did and in the 1920s:

Mr H C Shelton notifies the public that he will be commencing on 5th instant, a motor passenger service between Dungog and Chichester on Fridays. The bus will leave Chichester at 8am and on return leave Dungog at 3pm.¹¹¹

The tarring of roads occurred gradually, beginning in the towns and gradually making its way out along the connecting roads. A report by the NRMA in 1937 gives an indication of the progress of tarring by that time:

¹⁰⁷ Clements, *Vacy ... One Hundred & Eighty Years of History*, p.138.

¹⁰⁸ *Allynbrook Public School, 1869 – 1969*, p.8.

¹⁰⁹ Hunter, *Croll's Mill Dungog, 1917-1969*, p. 29.

¹¹⁰ Hunter, *Croll's Mill Dungog, 1917-1969*, pp.29-34.

¹¹¹ *Dungog Chronicle*, 2/12/1924.

Reporting on the condition of the main road from Maitland to Dungog and Gloucester, an inspector of the N.R.M.A. states that after leaving the first mentioned town the road is tar paved for the first five miles, followed by corrugated gravel for 15 miles to Clarencetown. From this point good tar pavement is traversed to Dungog. Beyond this point there is two miles of paved road, thence fair gravel to Weismantels and Gloucester. There are several short sections of corrugated surface on this run.¹¹²

The gradually increasing reliance on the motor car received a blow with the arrival of petrol rationing during the Second World War. Many cars at that time were fitted with charcoal burners that produced sufficient charcoal gas to run the engine. Large amounts of charcoal were required and many timber operators set about producing this. One example at Vacy was the Partridge Brothers, who built brick-lined charcoal kilns to supply charcoal both locally and to Maitland.¹¹³

Motor cars also allowed taxi services to develop, such as those meeting the trains and taking people to such destinations as the Barrington Guest House. E C Barnes advertised a taxi service in Dungog in the 1920s with two cars and 'picnic and sporting parties' a specialty.¹¹⁴ Many of these services gradually developed into bus routes. Rover Motor bus services ran from 1936 between Gresford and Maitland with three buses daily, and a late night shopping bus on Fridays would go as far as Allynbrook.¹¹⁵ In the 1960s, daily buses ran between Clarence Town and Maitland and from Gresford to Maitland, as well as morning and afternoon return trains from Newcastle to Dungog. Market Days were alternate Thursdays and Fridays, with, of course, a half-holiday on Saturdays.¹¹⁶

As cars became almost universal, taxi services faded and students under subsidy became the only regular users of buses as educational resources were concentrated into fewer schools.

Heritage survivals

- Wharves (private and public)
- Bridle paths
- Truss bridges
- Brick-lined charcoal kilns (Vacy)

¹¹² *Nambour Chronicle and North Coast Advertiser*, 26/2/1937, p.2.

¹¹³ Clements, *Vacy ... One Hundred & Eighty Years of History*, pp.118-119.

¹¹⁴ *Dungog Chronicle*, 21/3/1922, p.3.

¹¹⁵ Collison & Hancock, *Gresford 170 years*, p.122.

¹¹⁶ *Dungog Chronicle*, *May we introduce ourselves* (n.d, c.1965?)

3.10 Communication [creation and conveyance of information]

European settlers, as they moved up the three river valleys, were keen to maintain contact with others. Letters were commonly sent, at first carried by travellers, then via a regular postal service. That at Dungog was established by local landowner Duncan Mackay while acting as postmaster, a position he held along with being Clerk of the Bench in 1835. The position of postmaster was established after George McKenzie, writing as Magistrate, had requested such a position from the Colonial government in Sydney. At the end of 1834, the Colonial Secretary approved the establishment of a number of new postal positions, including 'Dungog', that name replacing 'Upper Williams'. The mail travelled overland from Raymond Terrace.

Mackay was replaced by E. Cormack when he took over as Clerk. Cormack was reluctant to take both positions as the Clerk's position was now much busier, however, the Colonial Secretary insisted.¹¹⁷ When Cormack resigned in 1839, his place as both Clerk of the Bench and postmaster was taken by Mr Magrane, who, when he resigned in 1840, was prosecuted for 'arrear of P.O. collections', with Police Magistrate Thomas Cook instructed to reprimand the outgoing postmaster 'in the Governor's name'.¹¹⁸

The postmaster handled the letters and associated fees, but the actual delivery was by those contracted to do so by horse via Raymond Terrace or Maitland. William Kilpatrick in 1835 was paid £52 a year to carry the mail 'on horseback once a week' from Raymond Terrace to Dungog. The amount seems have reflected the length and difficulty of the route, as the contract from Maitland to Paterson, half the distance but twice a week, was only £24.¹¹⁹ In 1841, Charles Boydell had the Paterson to Gresford mail contract for three times a week at £105 per year, though in 1845 he tendered for the same contract at only £50.¹²⁰

The emphasis was very much on keeping up regular times as these 1847 route timetables confirm:

RAYMOND TERRACE AND DUNGOG, VIA SEAHAM AND CLARENCE TOWN.

A postman on horseback to leave Dungog every Monday and Thursday morning at ten o'clock, and arrive at Raymond Terrace at not later than six o'clock, p.m., of the same days; and to leave the post office, Raymond Terrace, every Tuesday and Friday morning at ten o'clock, or immediately after the arrival of the steamer, and proceed to Dungog, arriving there in eight hours; but in no case shall the postman be detained at Raymond Terrace longer than ten o'clock of every Wednesday and Sunday; and provided also, that the said postman shall always call at Clarence Town and Seaham on the route to and from Dungog.

MORPETH AND PATERSON.

A one-horse mail cart, to leave Morpeth every morning at ten o'clock, or immediately after the arrival of the steamer, and to arrive at Paterson in two hours from the time of leaving Morpeth; and on return from Paterson, to leave that place at five o'clock every day, arriving and delivering the mails at Morpeth in two hours from that time.

PATERSON AND GRESFORD.

¹¹⁷ Cormack to Post Master, 15/9/1837 (Dungog Magistrates' Letterbook).

¹¹⁸ AA: C3629/1, Register of Inward Correspondence, 1834-1844, 16/6/1840.

¹¹⁹ *The Sydney Gazette*, 20/1/1835, p.2.

¹²⁰ Sullivan, *Charles Boydell*, p.81 & p.98.

A postman on horseback shall leave Gresford every Monday, Tuesday, and Friday, at noon, and arrive at Paterson at half-past two in the afternoon, there to await the arrival of the mails from Morpeth, and then to return to Gresford, arriving and delivering the mails at that post office in two hours and a half after leaving Paterson.¹²¹

By the 1850s the Clerk of the Bench was no longer required to act as Postmaster and the job was being done by local storekeepers such as Hanna, Peter McWilliam and Thomas Doust in Dungog. When Doust got the job in 1858, he was paid £25 per annum. At this time the 'postal lines' were increasing and now included the 9 miles from Dungog to Bandon Grove.¹²² In 1861, there was a once a week horseback service to Bandon Grove, costing £28 and three times a week from Dungog to Clarence Town, Brookfield and Seaham for £145.¹²³ In these more distant settlements the job of postmaster was often undertaken by schoolmasters to supplement their incomes, such as at Glen William in the 1870s where the teacher ran the post office and also a small store. The post office remained part of the Glen William school until at least 1900.¹²⁴

A school teacher who ran the local post office was a common element in the smaller communities, as was the passing of an income earning position on in the one family. Gresford seems to have had a Post Office from at least 1841. In 1851, the schoolmaster of the Church of England Denominational School, Mr Bush, took over the post office, and when he died in 1887, his wife carried on, passing the position onto her daughter Emily in 1899. While Gresford continued with its post office, the nearby East Gresford also acquired a post office in 1900, and a new Post Office and residence was built there in 1937.¹²⁵ In the nearby community of Eccleston, the Sivyer family ran the postal service for a total of 92 years from 1859 until 1951.¹²⁶

At Vacy the postal service began in 1860 operated by the school teacher from his rooms at Clark's Crossing, for which he received £12 a year plus commission on stamps sold. As was common, the wife of the next school teacher took on the postmistress's role and continued to do so after the death of her husband when her daughter became the new school teacher. In 1878, the 'money order system' was extended to Vacy, but not until 1889 did the telegraph reach here, despite this service having been in Paterson since 1874. The telephone soon followed in 1892, installed in Vacy's first purpose-built Post Office of 1891, which was nevertheless still attached to the school residence.

It was not until 1918 that a change in government policy saw the appointment in 1919 of Vacy's first non-school connected postmaster. This new Postmaster literally lifted the post office from its position next to the school residence and shifted it by horse-drawn slide across the road to his own home; the telephone lines then followed. After this, the telephone exchanged dominated the service as the number of subscribers grew to over 100. In the 1960s it became a 24 hour service, with bells placed in the operator's bedroom. In 1981, the Vacy exchange became automatic, and, in 1983, the post office services were transferred to a local shop under licence.¹²⁷

¹²¹ *Maitland Mercury*, 13/1/1847, p.3.

¹²² 'Extension of Inland Service in 1858', Postmaster General's Report, 1859.

¹²³ Postmaster General's Report, 1861.

¹²⁴ Gorton, *Glen William Public School*, p.22.

¹²⁵ Collison & Hancock, *Gresford 170 years*, p.83.

¹²⁶ *Gresford 150 Years 1829-1979*, Early Postal and Telephone Services, p.11.

¹²⁷ Clements, *Vacy ... One Hundred & Eighty Years of History*, pp.53-60.

By 1872, the postal service had much improved and could even claim next day delivery to Sydney from the three valleys.¹²⁸ By 1877, the mails were going via the regular coach services that now ran from Maitland to Dungog via Clarence Town, though the new bridge at Paterson would shorten this trip.¹²⁹ Before that, in 1874, the telegraph had come to Dungog also, with Thomas H Ryan appointed the Telegraph Station Master at £150 a year. It was not until the following year that this position was merged with the Post Office when Ryan also became the Post Master. This was a great saving for the government as Ryan received only £10 more for the two positions. Batteries were used to supply power to the telegraph equipment and a line repairer was also employed at £120 per annum. The dual positions were amalgamated into the single Post and Telegraph Master in 1885 on £200 a year. Before that, in 1878, land was purchased for £60 to build a new Post Office at Dungog, and this was completed in 1880 at a cost of £1,350. By the mid-1880s, the mails were three times a week, though flooding at Hinton could cause the carrier to divert via the only bridges at West Maitland and Dunmore. Service at the Dungog Post Office was through a window, replaced by counters in 1902.¹³⁰

The telegraph was a much used system but not one that could be considered very private and it was said of one appointment to Dungog that he, ‘possesses the very great advantage, in a Telegraph Office, of being unconnected with any person in this town...’¹³¹ The telegraph also brought other changes to the towns, such as the original ‘telegraph poles’:

We are pleased to observe that the Telegraph Department are at last erecting new and suitable telegraph poles in the town of Dungog. They are of iron bark, are planed smooth, and painted white, adding a clean and neat appearance to the town.¹³²

In addition to the mail and then telegraph, newspapers have, from the beginning, played a major role in communications within the Paterson, Allyn and Williams Valleys. The *Sydney Gazette* and other Sydney based papers always circulated and reported on local happenings. But from January 1843, *The Maitland Mercury & Hunter River General Advertiser* acted as the local paper for the region and its pages often reported the ‘District News’ of Paterson, Gresford, Dungog and Clarence Town, with this news supplied by local correspondents, usually anonymous. Then in 1888, Walter Bennett, originally from New Zealand, founded an even more local newspaper, called the *Durham Chronicle and Dungog and Williams River Advertiser*, later re-named the *Dungog Chronicle*. It was published with the announcement that, ‘we shall not shirk our duty’ in exposing any wrongs; ten years later Bennett became the local member in the NSW Parliament.¹³³

For a time the *Dungog Chronicle* was not the only local paper, and in the early years of the 20th century, it was reported that: ‘Dungog also boasts of two newspapers, “The Dungog Chronicle,” - and “The Eastern Telegraph.” The latter paper is a Co-operative concern, and is edited by Mr. Madgwick, ...’¹³⁴ Little is known about the backers of this rival newspaper or how political, if at all, the rivalry was.

¹²⁸ Greville's *Official Post Office Directory NSW - 1872*, p.230.

¹²⁹ Report of the Mail Route between West Maitland, Paterson, and Dungog, Brown to Postmaster General, 28/7/1877.

¹³⁰ Williams, *Ah, Dungog*, p.34.

¹³¹ AA: SP 32/1, Postmaster, Dungog to Secretary, General Post Office, Sydney, 18/4/1882.

¹³² *Dungog Chronicle*, 25/4/1899.

¹³³ Hazell, *A Centenary of Memories*, p.5.

¹³⁴ *Clarence and Richmond Examiner*, 13/4/1912, p.2.

The next major step in communications was the extension of the telephone to the district. There were few subscribers at first but gradually telephone exchanges were set up and many local women were employed as operators until automatic exchanges came into use. The mere existence of a new technology did not ensure its rapid distribution, and, in fact, the extension of telephone services up the valleys was quite slow. This can be seen in the dates at which the telephone reached up the Paterson and Allyn Valleys. While Vacy acquired the telephone as early as 1892, beyond that, Allynbrook had to wait until 1914, Eccleston the year after, and then Mount Rivers in 1917, with Lostock gaining this form of communication only in 1922.¹³⁵ At Clarence Town, a phone was placed in the P.O. in 1910 and an exchange established in 1915.¹³⁶

The cinema, which found a permanent base in Dungog as early as 1912, also provided a general means of communication once the newsreels became a regular feature of the movie-going experience.¹³⁷ This did not occur until the 1930s, by which time Paterson, Clarence Town and Gresford all had cinemas operating with newsreels providing contemporary news until the 1950s. Before this, however, radio was also providing a new means of communication. While electricity had reached the towns in the 1920s, for most in the rural settlements, radios meant batteries and this meant regular re-charging at motor garages.

From the 1960s, the TV began to enter the home and, for many, provided the main means of communication, though neither newspapers nor radio were entirely supplanted. When first established, TV required high antennas on homes, until towers were erected on Cooreei and other hills around the area. More recently, satellites have made most, though still not all areas, within the three valleys as easy to communicate with as anywhere else on the planet. The rise of the Internet and email, as well as the ability of mobile phones to be 'mobile' have also greatly widened the scope of both individual and social communication far beyond the horse delivered mail that began the three valleys' communications with the world.

Heritage Survivals

- Post offices
- telephone exchanges
- *Dungog Chronicle* office

¹³⁵ Archer, Social and environmental change as determinants of ecosystem health, p.139.

¹³⁶ Essex, *The Town of Lots of Time*, p.11.

¹³⁷ See 8.4 Leisure.

3.11 Health [providing medical assistance and maintaining people's well-being]

For the Gringai people, as for most isolated human populations suddenly brought into contact with new arrivals, the impact of introduced diseases on their health was devastating. Throughout the 1840s numerous deaths are reported, particularly among women and children, resulting from an epidemic far outweighing the diphtheria and other health problems of later generations. Those of the Gringai people who survived this period would have continued to have access to their traditional medicine, of which little is known, but did not it appears gain access to the medical support of the Europeans.¹³⁸

For the European settlers', the level of health care was a hit and miss affair at first, though for those within reach of Paterson as early as 1822 William Evans, a retired surgeon, continued to practice, and in 1834 Issac Nind is reported to be established as a doctor in Paterson as well as Dr Park.¹³⁹ By 1839, however, the 'respectable settlers' of Dungog on the Williams River were seeking their own medical man to avoid the need to send to Paterson.¹⁴⁰ It is not known if it was because of any action on the part of these 'respectable settlers', but Dr McKinlay arrived in Dungog soon afterwards in 1840, having paid for his passage to the colony by supervising '60 Government Emigrants'.¹⁴¹

Slow transport meant that both doctors and patients often needed to travel long distances and wait for long periods before treatment could be obtained. When, for example, in 1834 John Flynn was speared, he walked some 20 miles before he was seen by Dr Park at Paterson, by which time his lungs appeared to have filled with blood and he died soon after.¹⁴² Dr McKinlay, on another occasion in 1840, was on his way to a patient when he was held up for a night by bushrangers.¹⁴³ And a few years later, when Dr McKinlay wished to amputate the leg of a man who had been run over by a bullock dray, this man with a crushed leg had to wait two days while Dr McKinlay first sent to Stroud and then to Paterson for a second doctor. The leg was finally amputated but the patient died.¹⁴⁴

Spearings and amputations might appear in newspapers, but little is known of the general health of most people, particularly convicts. One glimpse occurs when a prisoner complained enough to receive some attention from Magistrate Cook at Dungog. Cook wrote to Doctor Park at Paterson that he was sending Thomas Ford who had been sometime in the lockup and wished to consult a medical practitioner for an 'imaginary disease'. Cook sent him to the Paterson lockup where Dr Park could advise him.¹⁴⁵ A little later Cook seems to have modified his opinion, writing that Ford (who had been charged with cattle stealing), 'seems to labor under some nervous affliction – arising I believe from confinement and anxiety of mind'. Cook suggested Ford 'be either committed for trial or at once discharged'.¹⁴⁶

If patients had to be flexible in their dealings with the few medical practitioners that were available, so too it seems were the doctors. Dr McKinlay, when first advertising his presence

¹³⁸ Replies of Dungog Bench, *Report from the Select Committee on the Condition of the Aborigines, 1845*, p.6.
See also 2.1 Aborigines.

¹³⁹ Walsh, Heartbreak and Hope, p.166.

¹⁴⁰ *The Sydney Herald*, 19/8/1839, p.2S.

¹⁴¹ *Sydney Gazette*, 8/2/1840, p.2.

¹⁴² *Sydney Gazette*, 12/8/1834, p.2.

¹⁴³ *The Sydney Herald*, 10/12/1840, p.2.

¹⁴⁴ *Maitland Mercury*, 16/11/1844, p.3.

¹⁴⁵ Cook to Park, 23/2/1838 (Dungog Magistrates' Letterbook).

¹⁴⁶ Cook to Alexander Livingston, 5/3/1838 (Dungog Magistrates' Letterbook).

in the Williams River district, announced not only that he would pay 'strict and unremitting attention to the cases entrusted to him', but also that for 'the convenience of settlers' he would 'always have on hand an assortment of Horse and Cattle Medicines'.¹⁴⁷

Doctors, of course, could come and go from a district, such as when Dr McKinlay departed for a time to South Australia. The community would attempt to encourage other doctors to settle in their area or to keep those they had. A Dr Street was practicing in Dungog from at least 1844, but, by 1851, effort was required to ensure he remained. This was done in part by publicly requesting that 'Dr F. Gale. S. Street' remain, promising that efforts would be made to ensure his practice was remunerated, and assuring him that 'no second Medical man was required in the district'. The names attached to this public notice were not those usually associated with public business in Dungog and may reflect a class division.¹⁴⁸

In 1866, the Upper Paterson was in similar need of a medical practitioner.¹⁴⁹ And in the 1870s, the efforts of a medical man at Paterson, Dr Hector, were favourably reported.¹⁵⁰ While in 1878, a local correspondent was happy to report that the district now had two doctors, including one who came 'at the instance of the Committee', that were 'fit to ride'.¹⁵¹ Ten years later, local committees were formed and subscriptions were being taken to ensure a doctor for the district.¹⁵² On occasion, doctors were offered suitable housing in order to entice them to settle in an area and at least one house was built in Dungog with the requirements of a doctor in mind and provided for him, perhaps at a low cost, to purchase after settling in.¹⁵³

Vacy appears to have only received its first resident doctor in 1894, before which those in need had to travel to Paterson or even Maitland for a doctor. The Dr Richards who took up residence at Vacy also gave lectures in first aid at Paterson and Gresford, as well as acting as 'Government Medical Officer and Vaccinator'. This doctor remained only three years, with another mentioned in 1897 who also appears to have stayed only a short time, after which it was again a matter of Paterson or Maitland, as it is today.¹⁵⁴

As Dr McKinlay at Dungog aged and could no longer travel, the need for another medical man grew. In the 1880, Christopher Lean of Fosterton wrote: 'What we want then, is not only a bridge for a medical man to cross but also a medical man to cross the bridge.'¹⁵⁵ He also wrote: 'Poor old Dr. McKinlay is talking of going home to Scotland, he says he is heartily sick of Dungog as no-one visits him now, which I think is not to be wondered at, he is so deaf that no one can converse with him.'¹⁵⁶ As an aging person without relatives, Dr McKinlay's situation points up the lack of services for the elderly not provided by one's family. However, Dr McKinlay was not without financial means and was able to take up residence at a local boarding house and rely on his landlady to take care of him.¹⁵⁷

¹⁴⁷ *The Sydney Herald*, 13/4/1840, p.2.

¹⁴⁸ *Maitland Mercury*, 24/8/1844, p.2 & 12/4/1851, p.3.

¹⁴⁹ *Maitland Mercury*, 6/3/1866, p.3.

¹⁵⁰ *Maitland Mercury*, 8/3/1873, p.4 & *Maitland Mercury*, 3/8/1875, p. 3.

¹⁵¹ *Maitland Mercury*, 27/6/1878, p.2.

¹⁵² Sullivan, *Charles Boydell*, p.162.

¹⁵³ Williams, *Ah, Dungog*, p.66.

¹⁵⁴ Clements, *Vacy ... One Hundred & Eighty Years of History*, pp.112-115.

¹⁵⁵ Lean, *The Lean Family History*, p.62.

¹⁵⁶ Lean, *The Lean Family History*, p.126, Christopher Lean to Thomas Lean, 9/8/1882.

¹⁵⁷ Williams, *Ah, Dungog*, p.21. See also 7.4 Welfare.

The licensing of medical practice was not as strict as it is today and there is evidence of at least one unlicensed 'medical man', a Mr Higgs, setting bones, which in two cases resulted in death from 'mortification'. The second death led to a coronial inquiry and some 'some mild censure on Mr. Higgs' as well as a trial at which he was acquitted of gross negligence.¹⁵⁸

Health affairs were not entirely limited to these few medical men, qualified or not, and in 1845 an inspector of slaughter houses was appointed in an early effort at preventative medicine.¹⁵⁹ While in the 1880s, the vaccination of children was also being performed to some extent.¹⁶⁰ Towards the end of the 19th century, health care began to become more concerned with sanitation and the prevention of typhoid, cholera and other epidemics. This led, for example, to more regulation of piggeries near water supplies and the better disposal of human waste in towns.

In addition to doctors, chemists also played an important role as health providers, with some operating for many years, such as one that operated until the year 2000 from the same location in Brighton Terrace on Dowling Street, Dungog for over 100 years.¹⁶¹ Gresford also had a number of chemist shops - the last closing in 1985 - after which doctors, when they were available, were licensed to dispense drugs also.¹⁶² Clarence Town does not appear to have ever had a chemist.¹⁶³ Dentists also played a role in health but one that has not been well recorded, with many dentists travelling from place to place, advertising their visits in the local papers.

Children, in particular, were vulnerable to many dangers to their health, mainly endemic diseases such as diphtheria and whooping cough; but also playing with matches, the wax kind being poisonous, as a two year old in the Redman family found to her cost.¹⁶⁴ There were also many instances when people were left to home remedies, such as in 1904 when Granny Ann Rumbel was suffering from gangrene in one leg. Her treatment involved boiling water and it was said her screams could be heard three miles away.¹⁶⁵

Dr McKinlay himself got to the point of declaring:

It is humiliating for me to assert that the Practice of Medicine is complete quackery. Surgery is pretty well an "exact" science but the practice of Physic is bosh.¹⁶⁶

Despite Dr McKinlay's misgivings, the general community continued to press for more medical services and, at the end of the 19th century, a major change in the district's health services occurred with the building of Dungog's first hospital.

THE DUNGOG COTTAGE HOSPITAL. A movement has been started at Dungog for the establishment of a Cottage Hospital, and we rejoice to know that the project has been taken up warmly by the people of the district. A provisional committee has been appointed, and

¹⁵⁸ *Maitland Mercury*, 5/3/1885, p.5, 20/2/1890, p.6 & 12/4/1890, p.7S.

¹⁵⁹ *Morning Chronicle*, 21/11/1845, p.2.

¹⁶⁰ *Maitland Mercury*, 13/9/1881, p.4.

¹⁶¹ Williams, *Ah, Dungog*, p.27.

¹⁶² Dent, *A Brief History of Health in the Gresford District* (n.p.) & Margaret Dent, interviewed, 5/4/2012.

¹⁶³ Ian Lyall, interviewed 28/3/2012.

¹⁶⁴ Michaelides, *Growing up in Dungog*, p.2.

¹⁶⁵ Rumbel, *The Rumbel family Tree*, p.5.

¹⁶⁶ McKinlay to Pelham Alderich, 5/11/1884, p.2.

canvassers chosen to raise subscriptions toward the building fund. Already about £200 are in hand, we understand, towards which Mr. J. K. Mackay, of Cangon, Dungog, has contributed £50, with a promise of £10 per year. Further donations, however, are needed, and the committee appeals for support towards so laudable an object.¹⁶⁷

The Dungog cottage hospital was built in 1892 by Boots Bros for £849 with community funds at a time when the population of the town was 836 people. The hospital was intended to assist those who could not afford medical help and opened with a matron plus a visiting doctor, a men's ward of six beds and a women's of four beds. The then Governor of NSW, the Earl of Jersey, laid the foundation stone and community support provided the hospital with linen and food, and local doctors (to whom a direct phone line was installed in 1898), the medical requirements. Patients who could afford it were charged £1 a week and doctors received £1.11.6. In 1916, the doctors agreed to receive a reduction to £1 a week. At one point only married women were allowed to use the hospital for 'lying in'.¹⁶⁸

The original 1892 building has been much extended, including verandahs in 1914, a new operating theatre in 1915, and even a tennis court for nurses in 1953. In 1917, electricity replaced 'expensive' acetylene lighting and, by 1935, one ward was air conditioned. Polio in the 1950s saw an 'iron lung' bought, again with community funds, and in 1958 a maternity ward replaced the private hospitals. A ladies' auxiliary generally raised funds, but, in 1910, a Girls Patriotic Fund helped furnish the nurses' quarters, and, in 1911, a bazaar provided a cot (though government grants, such as £900 for instruments, were also useful). In later years, the opening of the new picture theatre and wood chopping competitions also raised funds for this community facility.

A report of 1909 stated there had been 90 cases at the hospital, with 72 cured, 3 relieved, 2 unrelieved and 8 deaths. While in the 1930s, a diphtheria epidemic resulted in 60 cases at one time, with even tents used on the grounds, but only one death. In 1929, the hospital came under the authority of the Hospitals Commission and in 1986 its Local Board was replaced with an Area Board. From a peak of 35 beds the hospital has been reduced to 15 beds.¹⁶⁹

While the hospital dealt with those already ill, measures were also taken to reduce the causes of such diseases as typhoid. In 1900, a health inspection recommended that the keeping of pigs be banned from Dungog and that the collection of night soil be increased to once a week. Typhoid was common at the time and often affected children. The following year a reduction in fevers was reported, but so also were increases in complaints about the cost of the more frequent night soil collection.¹⁷⁰

By the 1920s, the use of hospitals for most procedures was more common, particularly for maternity cases - who would have previously relied on midwives (about whom very little is known). This led to the establishment of private hospitals, which were usually owned and operated by a nurse in connection with a specific doctor who would attend and perform operations. A number of these existed, such as Keba and Oomabah in Dungog, and Kalala and Clevedon in Gresford which operated from the 1920s into the 1950s, by which time government reports were condemning private maternity hospitals and recommending the

¹⁶⁷ *Maitland Mercury*, 8/10/1889, p.5.

¹⁶⁸ Williams, *Ah, Dungog*, p.70.

¹⁶⁹ Williams, *Ah, Dungog*, p.70.

¹⁷⁰ Hazell, *A Centenary of Memories*, pp.20-21 [1900/1901].

concentration of resources in public hospitals.¹⁷¹ There is no evidence that the Dungog Shire district's private hospitals were not satisfactory, but this did not stop their closing.

While both Paterson and Dungog appear to have been able to attract medical practitioners from their earliest days, there is little mention of medical services at Clarence Town. In the 1850s, there was a Dr Wigan, who seems to have remained only three years before moving onto Maitland. At his farewell dinner no mention was made of getting a replacement for him.¹⁷² In 1885 a Dr Canny is mentioned as about to transfer from Stroud to Clarence Town.¹⁷³ The relative ease of Clarence Town's connection with Newcastle and its health care, particularly its hospital, may have limited any community demand for such services in the town itself. Though in the 1940s Clarence Town was reported as having trouble obtaining a doctor when a Dr C Gordon Harper arrived, having previously refused a Paris based UN position to do so.¹⁷⁴

This pattern of doctors for short periods of time with gaps in-between of no local medical care continued in the post-war period. The doctors who did settle in Clarence Town were a diverse lot and included the 'elderly lady', Dr Charleston, followed by the Hungarian Dr Andre for four to five years, then an Irish ship's doctor named Mitchell who was reputed to have helped the Emir of Dubai's wife and been given a pearl (flawed) for his trouble. Later two London doctors were shared between Dungog and Clarence Town, as was Dr Holley until recently. At the present time Clarence Town is visited by Dungog based doctors.¹⁷⁵

Gresford, more isolated than Clarence Town but smaller than Dungog, has often struggled to maintain its health care. Gresford needed to rely on access to Paterson doctors, some of whom, such as Dr Hollywood and Dr Bennett, perhaps visited Gresford one day a week in the 1920s. During periods without a doctor, Gresford residents would make arrangements with those further away, such as when Esther Joliffe in the 1920s rode her horse to Maitland a month before her baby was due, for her 'lying-in', and then returned two weeks afterwards.¹⁷⁶

Dr Brown opened a private hospital in Gresford called Kalala that was destroyed by fire in 1930.¹⁷⁷ After this, Dr Brown made Clevedon his private hospital and after Dr Brown left, Gresford had a series of doctors. At times the resident nurse at Clevedon may have had to cope with the health care of Gresford alone, before she too left in 1955. When this occurred, the community began to lobby for a public hospital and in May 1956 the Clevedon Gresford Subsidiary Hospital was opened. Clevedon Hospital was maintained with much community effort and fundraising before finally closing in 1984 after a long battle with government decision-makers over the loss of this community facility.¹⁷⁸

During the period of Clevedon Hospital's existence, Gresford continued to have a high turnover of doctors. When without a doctor of its own, Gresford relied on Dungog doctors visiting a number of days a week until, in the 1970s, Dr Rosemary Sheather arrived to stay

¹⁷¹ *The Mercury*, 10/7/1943, p.5.

¹⁷² *Maitland Mercury*, 8/5/1856, p.4.

¹⁷³ *Maitland Mercury*, 11/7/1885, p.8S.

¹⁷⁴ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 12/1/1950, p.1.

¹⁷⁵ Ian Lyaal, interviewed 28/3/2012.

¹⁷⁶ Dent, *A Brief History of Health in the Gresford District*.

¹⁷⁷ Dent, *A Brief History of Health in the Gresford District & Collison & Hancock, Gresford 170 years*, p.31.

¹⁷⁸ Dent, *A Brief History of Health in the Gresford District*.

for more than 20 years. Before this, the building of Lostock Dam had provided a temporary increase in health care as part of the services required by the dam's builders for its workers.¹⁷⁹

Ambulance services became important in the 1930s, and annual carnivals and regular fundraising, along with locally trained volunteers, supported this service more many years until a gradual professionalisation led to this role being taken over by medical bureaucracies. Today, community fundraising efforts focus on the provision of a helicopter rescue service for fast evacuation to health services that are now largely located at a distance.¹⁸⁰ Gresford and Paterson rely on their access to the Maitland Ambulance Service.¹⁸¹

Other health services were the establishment of Baby Health Centres, often by the local Country Women's Association (CWA), again with extensive community fundraising.¹⁸² Baby Heath Centres had begun being established in Sydney and Newcastle before the First World War, but it was not until the 1920s that they became more common in rural areas. The first in the three valleys was that at Gresford when a Baby Health Centre was established by the Gresford CWA in the old Post Office in 1939, moving to new premises in 1954 before being taken over by the Community Health Centre in 1984. In 1946, it was reported that the Dungog BHC, which was established in 1940, saw 95 babies under 12 months of age, as well as another 42 older children, while the sister had visited 12 new-borns.¹⁸³

On the closure of its hospital, the Gresford community was offered a Community Health Centre. This opened in August 1984 in the former Motor Mission Nun's Convent; previously the Catholic Presbytery.¹⁸⁴ It was in the 1980s that a major expansion in government health budgets began to establish Community Health Centres, such as Gresford Community Health Centre, which combined the services of a Baby Health Centre and Home Nursing, and provided a base from which the Gresford District was supplied with a Community Nurse servicing the remoter settlements.¹⁸⁵ Since 2011 the Gresford Community Health Centre has closed and once again the Gresford CWA has supplied the Community Nurse with a base for attending to the needs of the local district.¹⁸⁶

Community nurses operating from a Community Health Centre is not the first time trained nurses were used to supplement a lack of doctors and to provide additional health care. Bush Nurses had been established from the early 1900s to provide basic medical support to remote settlements and homes.¹⁸⁷ The details as to how many and where these nurses operated within he three valleys are sketchy. One such nurse who in the Allynbrook area after 1910 was Laura Eason, who worked with sick families, delivered babies and set broken bones. After she married in 1914 she continued her work, only now without charging a fee.¹⁸⁸

These bush nurses evolved into district nurses, then into community nurses in the 1980s, and finally into the specialist aged care services and other services current today. As with many

¹⁷⁹ Dent, *A Brief History of Health in the Gresford District*.

¹⁸⁰ For example Blueys' Barn Dance and the annual Pedalfest.

¹⁸¹ Collison & Hancock, *Gresford 170 years*, p.116.

¹⁸² O'Connor, *A History of 75 Years of Baby Health Services in NSW*, passim.

¹⁸³ Jones, *From intervention to invitation*, passim & *Dungog Chronicle*, 20/3/1946, p.1.

¹⁸⁴ Collison & Hancock, *Gresford 170 years*, p.116.

¹⁸⁵ Collison & Hancock, *Gresford 170 years*, p.116 & Dent, *A Brief History of Health in the Gresford District*.

¹⁸⁶ Margaret Dent & Delma Lawrence, interviewed, 5/4/2012.

¹⁸⁷ Collison & Hancock, *Gresford 170 years*, p.116.

¹⁸⁸ Dent, *A Brief History of Health in the Gresford District*.

of these services, community support and fundraising provided for many years, such things as cars, until the gradual extension of government funding took over and standardised all such aspects of these services.

Specialisation and cost of new technology has meant local health services have become limited, as resources are concentrated for efficiency and maximized use. This development has reduced the scope of local input and a sense of intimacy within health services. In contrast to this, aged health services have increased at the community level, with efforts to ensure that an aging population remains in its community for as long as possible.¹⁸⁹ Often beginning as community run, these services too have become standardised and regulated through medical bureaucracies, though often with a measure of community involvement. In 1973, for example, a public meeting was held in Gresford to discuss Meals-on-Wheels, which ran as a voluntary service until 1994, when it was taken over by Dungog District Neighbourhood Care.¹⁹⁰ Similarly in the 1970s, Meals-on-Wheels began as a community initiative in Paterson, utilising the Tocal College kitchens, a service it continues to provide today.¹⁹¹

Heritage Survivals

- Private Hospitals (Keba, Oomabah, Kalala, Clevedon)
- Medical equipment at museums

¹⁸⁹ See 7.4 Welfare.

¹⁹⁰ Collison & Hancock, *Gresford 170 years*, p.117.

¹⁹¹ Paterson Historical Society, Response, p.4.

3.12 Events [marking the consequences of natural and cultural occurrences]

It is known that Gringai people, as did other Aboriginal peoples, celebrated certain events. The exact nature of most of these is unknown today but at least one concerned a natural occurrence, in the form of a comet, which initiated a special gathering and ceremonies related this.¹

For the European settlers, their Christian religion in its various denominations was of great significance, and regular celebrations on Sundays and specific feast days were the foremost events on the calendar. Religious holidays such as Christmas predominated, but as time went on more secular ones, such as Empire Day and Coronation Day were also celebrated; usually with picnics, speeches, dinners and, in later times, dances. In 1861, for example, as part of the New Year celebrations, a 'balloon' was sent up from Finch's Royal Hotel at Dungog.²

Little is known about what arrangements a town might make to mark Christmas, but an account of one resident's disappointment at the appearance of Paterson at Christmas 1866 gives an indication both of what this town did (or didn't) do and what others presumably did.

Taking a stroll through our town this evening (Christmas eve) we could see nothing to indicate that this festive season had arrived, which in every other town is generally commemorated by a grand display from the butchers' shops, the green grocer, the public houses, and other places of business. ... only one little shop in the town presented anything like a Christmas appearance, with its green bushes and lighted appearance, sufficient to attract anything like a number of customers. We must say our town this evening presented anything but like a Christmas eve appearance, but rather a very dull, unanimated, and unbusiness character.³

A few years later in 1872, Paterson still seems reluctant to get into a Christmas spirit, but it does seem to be attracting people who are out for a holiday drive:

The Christmas festival has passed over extremely quiet. No public amusements were got up and the holiday has passed over chiefly in the meeting of distant friends, and in a convivial manner amongst acquaintances. We have noticed that many Maitland, residents have driven out in their various vehicles, and much enlivened our streets daily throughout the holidays. A drive out to our little village seems to be a very favourite pastime for our Maitland friends. What a pity there is not a little spirit amongst the Patersonians, that they cannot arrange some little diversion at holiday times, to entertain our visitors on such occasions. We should think they would be amply repaid for their trouble if they would only attempt the movement.⁴

In addition to celebrating specific holidays, many celebrations and entertainments were organised around local events, such as the laying of foundation stones and the official openings of buildings, marked with speeches and dinners. These ceremonies were often also fundraising exercises for the costs of the associated building. The opening of a new bridge, or in a later period, a tennis court, and many other openings would also be marked by speeches, dinners, and often balls.

¹ Fraser, *The Aborigines of NSW South Wales*, p.23.

² *Maitland Mercury*, 17/1/1861, p.3. Presumably this was a paper balloon with an attached candle providing the hot air to lift it as is common in China today.

³ *Maitland Mercury*, 27/12/1866, p.3.

⁴ *Maitland Mercury*, 28/12/1872, p.3.

Also common in the 19th century was the raising of funds to mark the leaving of people from certain positions or from the district. A 'purse' would be raised via subscriptions; the subscribers of which would be listed in the newspapers along with a letter of thanks from the receivers.⁵ In latter times such events were most often held for departing ministers, with a dance at the associated church or parish hall. At Christmas, when the nuns from the St Joseph's Convent at Dungog would return for a time to their main convent at Lochinvar, the local community would raise money for a Christmas present.

As well as a purse, the farewelling of a long-term resident, such as a minister, shopkeeper, magistrate or doctor, was also a cause for a gathering, and the detailed account of such a farewell of Dr Wigan from Clarence Town in 1856, gives an indication of how these events were organised generally. Dr Wigan was invited to a 'public dinner' by his 'friends and patients' who wished to 'show him some token of the high esteem and regard in which he was held in the district of the Williams River'. Held in a marquee set up at Clarence Town's George and Dragon Inn, the numbers attending are not certain, but the writer assures us they included most of the 'respectable inhabitants and settlers'. As was usual with these public dinners, a chair was appointed to handle the large number of speeches that were an essential part of the event. For his occasion 'Thomas Cook, Esq., J.P.', was chair, and 'Thomas Holmes, Esq. J.P.', was vice-chair.

The whole event began at five o'clock with the eating of the 'good things provided for them' until the 'removal of the cloth'. It was at this point that the toasts and speeches began. The health of The Queen, Prince Albert, and The Governor and Lady preceded 'the toast of the evening' to Dr Wigan, by the chair, followed by a prepared address by the vice-chair, all praising the good doctor and much regretting his departure. After nine 'vociferous cheers, and 'one cheer more', Dr. Wigan gave a speech in reply.

After this, the health of a number of either categories of people or causes was drunk, to which various representatives responded. These included 'The Members for Durham', 'The Clergy', 'Prosperity to Clarence Town', 'prosperity to the educational interests of the colony', and finally to the 'health of the Chairman' and 'Vice-Chairman'. But not quite finally, as Dr Wigan then proposed 'the health of Mr. Dark, his wife, and family' which was replied to in a manner that 'caused a great deal of laughter'. This was followed by 'the health of the ladies' and 'the health of the host and hostess', and then by the true marker of the end of such an occasion, the vacating of the Chair and the voting of thanks to the Chair.⁶

In case it is assumed that such events were all good cheer and heartiness - certainly the impression the *Maitland Mercury* writer wished to convey when he merely described the response of 'W. M. Arnold, Esq., M.P.', as 'a speech of some length' – an alternative account of this event exists in the *Empire*. Here, in this not so local paper, we find that Mr Arnold gave a very spirited defence of his election campaign, so spirited, that he was shouted at to sit down and the Chair threatened to leave if order was not restored. Mr Arnold insisted on calling some of his detractors 'geese' before order was restored and, according to this writer, the conviviality continued.⁷

The habit of marking an event with speeches certainly continued, and in 1892 when the Governor of NSW came to Dungog to lay the foundation stone for the Dungog Cottage

⁵ For an example see, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 16/6/1845, p.1 & *Maitland Mercury*, 28/6/1845, p.3.

⁶ *Maitland Mercury*, 8/5/1856, p.4.

⁷ *Empire*, 6/5/1856, p.6.

Hospital the event was marked with a parade, bunting, a floral arch, many speeches, a tour of Wade's Cornflour Mill, the foundation laying itself, and a special dinner with more speeches. The opening of the railway to Dungog in 1911 was similarly celebrated with a floral arch, many speeches and a banquet.

In 1907 the ending of a period of dry weather was marked with religious services:

November 27 was observed as a day of thanksgiving for the splendid rains, which have fallen in the Dungog, Stroud, and Clarencetown districts, the day being strictly observed, and the public services largely attended.⁸

The many deaths resulting from the First World War led to the holding of annual Anzac Day marches and services, as well as numerous honour boards and memorials. The Memorial Town Hall at Dungog was built in 1920 and Honour Boards were often erected to fallen members in Churches, Masonic halls, schools and at community halls. Some Honour Boards have outlived the buildings in which they were first erected and are now located in local history museums.⁹

The dedication of the Honour Roll in St John's Church, Vacy in 1918 was one of many:

The occasion was the important one of the dedication of an honour roll recently erected in the Church by the parishioners in memory of the men who have made the supreme sacrifice. The board, which cost £21, measures about six feet x two feet, is of polished cedar beautifully carved, is from Red Cross industries, Sydney, and is the work of returned soldiers. ... the wife of the senior churchwarden ... unveiled the tablet, which was covered with the Union Jack ... At the close of the service the congregation adjourned to the local School of Arts, where a reception was given ... and while refreshments were being partaken of, kindly provided by the ladies, short speeches were delivered ... A few musical items and recitations were given and a most enjoyable evening was brought to a close with the signing of the National anthem.¹⁰

In the years after the First World War it became common to mark an event with dancing, which was also often a fundraising event. Sometimes this dance became an event in itself, such as the annual Diggers' Ball, which began as a fundraiser to assistance to the many ex-diggers who were passing through Dungog. This Diggers' Ball is still held each year as a Diggers' Dinner at the Dungog RSL. In 1930, when the James Theatre was newly renovated and re-opened, the official opening was held at the Diggers' Ball and a ribbon cut 'in true Diggers' style' by the Mayoress.¹¹

The role of the local Major and Mayoress in opening the many events that took place - Catholic and Anglican Bazaars, Scottish Balls, Flower Shows, etc. - was a prominent one. For Debutante Balls, which from the 1940s to the 1960s marked the 'coming out' of young girls, it was also common to invite the Mayor of Newcastle or other such dignitary to present the debutante to. In Gresford, debutante balls continued to be held at the School of Arts until the 1990s.¹²

⁸ *Australian Town and Country Journal*, 4/12/1907, p.57.

⁹ See also 7.3 Defence.

¹⁰ Clements, *Vacy ... One Hundred & Eighty Years of History*, pp.42-43.

¹¹ Williams, *Ah, Dungog*, p.44.

¹² Margaret Dent & Delma Lawrence, interviewed, 5/4/2012.

In the middle of the 20th century began a series of centenary occasions as various towns, schools, halls and churches reached their 100th and even 150th years. These too were marked with celebrations, often involving commemorations in which locals, often descendants of the original participants, would dress in period costume and recreate the first opening. In addition, local teachers and others would write up histories of the school or town being celebrated, often speaking to older community members in order to preserve what people began to realise was a fast fading community memory. These centenary and sesquicentenary celebrations have included the 100th of Municipal Government, the 150th of Dungog, and most recently the 100th of the railway coming to Dungog.

The various Churches have also celebrated their centenaries and sesquicentenaries with commemorative booklets. The Catholic community at Dungog is unusual in that it has changed its church's location twice in its history, and so in the 1970s its commemoration included a pilgrimage to the site of the first Catholic chapel at Sunville. A cairn of bricks from this first Church was erected outside the current St Mary's Church, just as a stained glass window of this Church commemorates the Fitzgerald family who donated the land for this first Church.

Many parks were dedicated as memorials in the 1960s and 1970s, often by the new service clubs such as Lions or Apex. One such was the Dave Sands Memorial, erected in 1972 to mark the place where promising boxer Dave Sands died in a motor accident in 1952. This memorial was put in place in response to the number of people coming to asking after the place of his accident. The dedication ceremony at the park (located 15kms north of Dungog), was accompanied that night by a series of boxing matches held at the James Theatre, and refereed by Leo Darcy, brother of Les Darcy.

In the 1950s, there began a number of events to mark life in the valley generally and also to help attract more visitors. These events evolved and have had many names, such as the Williams Valley Festival and Tall Timbers Festival. Most recently Dungog has held an annual Pedalfest, the Thunderbolt Rally, and, since 2007, at the James Theatre, the annual Dungog Film Festival.

The bicentennial celebrations of Australia in 1988 with its accompanying funding for historical publications and other markers resulted in a series of books and memorials including the stones in Jubilee Park at Dungog, and the book *Centenary of Memories*, a collection of articles over 100 years from the *Dungog Chronicle*, which, by co-incidence, had begun publication in 1888.

Heritage Survivals

- Honour boards
- Dave Sands Memorial
- War memorials
- Foundation stones
- School and Church Centenary books

3.13 Environment Cultural landscape [human interaction with their natural surroundings]

Apart from numerous finds of worked stones¹, relatively little evidence of the interaction by the Gringai people with their natural surroundings remains. One vivid exception is an account of the hunting of a pademelon on the Allyn River in 1830.

There were 3 Boys each of whom had a stick about 2 ft long to fling at the Paddy Melons as they passed them. 3 men had spears in Case of meeting with game, two or three go in the brush hullooming with all their might to drive the poor animals the others remain outside ready for them. They killed one poor Paddy Melon which they roasted immediately & devoured with great delight.²

For the Europeans newly arrived in the valleys of the Allyn, Paterson and Williams Rivers, the new environment was one to be tamed and brought into a familiar agricultural pattern. Trees were cleared, timber harvested and trails and roads blazed along lines determined by the easiest river crossings and passages over hills and ridges. The narrow floodplains of the rivers largely determined settlement patterns and the location of the main settlements.³

Both floods and bushfires posed regular dangers, such as those of 1857 in which the Ross family of eight drowned. These 1857 floods were extremely severe, also destroying mills all along the rivers.⁴ The dangers from such natural hazards remain and are responsible for the strong support given today to such volunteer organisations as the Bush Fire Brigades and the local SES.

As populations grew and the patterns of life settled, other interactions with the natural environment based on leisure and enjoyment developed. Hunting was one indulged in by some, largely targeting pigeons.⁵ The increasing use of swimming holes and the gradual establishment of parks, camping areas, and national parks all illustrate a changing relationship with the natural surroundings not based solely upon wresting a living from it.

Picnics were popular at many riverside sites, particularly on special occasions such as Christmas or Empire Day.⁶ Such spots remain popular, though perhaps used less frequently and generally only by smaller groups of family or friends. As well, in an often hot environment, swimming naturally became popular, though dangerous in changing river systems as the death of many by drowning attests. Swimming spots existed all along the rivers wherever deep pools were to be found. The building of a weir on the Williams River just to the north of the town of Dungog to allow water to be pumped for the town water supply created a pool that was used by the people of Dungog for many years.

The development of public parks is another sign of changing interaction with the natural surroundings. Paterson, more than any of the towns in the three valleys, developed within narrow confines and quickly ran out of land, including access to the river. Local landowner John Tucker perceived this and through his purchase and donation of land, added to by Councils, the result is the large John Tucker Park by the Paterson River. Over time, many

¹ Hardy, Tillegra Dam Aboriginal Archaeology Environmental Assessment Report, p.57.

² State Library, NSW: Transcript a1604003, Journal of Charles Boydell, 1/3/1830.

³ See 4.3 Towns and Settlements.

⁴ Hunter, *Wade's Corn Flour Mill*, p.10 & Sullivan, *Charles Boydell*, p.133.

⁵ For an example at Dungog see, *Maitland Mercury*, 30/10/1886, p.4.

⁶ See 8.4 Leisure.

town parks have been dedicated to a local dignitary or through a family bequest established to honour a respected member. These include Bennett Park and Bruyn Park at Dungog, John Tucker Park and the Allan Fairhall Reserve at Paterson, and the Reg Ford Sports Ground, Clarence Town.

One of the most significant changes in the interaction of the people of the Dungog district with their natural environment came with the recognition of the Barrington Tops as an area significant for its diversity of plant species and as worth enjoying for its own sake, as opposed to its value either as a source of timber or a place to bring cattle for summer grazing. This began in the 1920s with the Dungog Tourist League and their many promotional efforts to open up access to this area.⁷ The result was the establishment of a number of guest houses, the most famous of which was the Barrington Guest House near Salisbury. In addition to these 'retreats', horse riding trails and easy walking trails were established and locals employed to serve those who came from Sydney and other urban centres. This interaction has continued to the present day, modified by a number of new developments, such as self-contained accommodation allowing people with their own transport to stay as long as they wish. The Barrington Retreat at Wangat and Eaglereach Wilderness Resort at Vacy have established a number of semi-isolated lodgings which provide fully serviced access to the bush, while Wangat Lodge, on the Chichester River, offers simpler accommodation in combination with education about the bush.⁸

Along with a sense of the environment as an attraction to be looked at and enjoyed, came the use of the developing art of photography to capture scenes. Many professional photographers began to produce postcard pictures of Dungog district for sale, such as G Kelly of Dungog, and at least one outside company travelled around Australia producing similar postcards which included many scenes from the Dungog Shire district. One photographer of note was R J Marceau, a school teacher at both Eccleston and nearby Halton.⁹

In the 1950s and early 1960s, it became popular for groups to come up from the Hunter Valley with dogs and guns to hunt rabbits in the countryside around the Dungog Shire district. These unorganised groups caused some annoyance to the locals but demonstrate that the relationship with the environment is an evolving one. In general, private gardens, public parks, a golf course, tennis courts, caravan parks and camping/fishing spots have all added, in the course of the 20th century, to the varied ways that humans interact with their natural surroundings. Garden clubs also became very popular in the 1960s and held regular events, including establishing a local environmental garden in Dungog.

In the 1980s, a report detailed the damage that had been done to the Allyn River by the Water Resources Commission in efforts to improve water flows.¹⁰ This report marked a move away from maximal practical use of the landscape to a more flexible and, what is now referred to as a, sustainable approach to the land. As a result of these changing attitudes many more trees have been allowed to grow in recent times as the intensive use of the land for agriculture or pastoralism has reduced and hobby farmers or those with no agricultural ambitions have taken up land. The result has been an increase in native species - particularly noticeable in the increase in bird populations.

⁷ Hartley, *Barrington Tops*, p.35.

⁸ Wangat declared a wildlife refuge, *Dungog Chronicle*, 11/9/1985. See also, 4.2 Accommodation.

⁹ See 8.6 Creative Endeavour.

¹⁰ *Dungog Chronicle*, 26/3/1981, p.3.

The early recognition of the recreational and environmental value of the Barrington Tops led to the gradual declaration of State and then National Parks and the creation of the Barrington Tops National Park in 1969. In the past hunting, fishing and also cross-country skiing were popular recreational activities in the area, with participants often accessing the area from the Dungog district. As a result, groups such as the Barrington Tops League and the Newcastle Bushwalking Club built a number of huts; including the Selby Alley, Munro, Careys Peak and Little Murray Huts. In the present day, the BTNP continues to attract a range of recreational usages that includes bushwalking, picnicking, and four-wheel driving.¹¹

The early efforts to establish National Parks that led to the Barrington Tops National Park also created conflicts with those who would continue to use the forests as a source of timber.¹² Another such conflict occurred over the Tillegra section of the Williams Valley, which has, on a number of occasions, been proposed as a dam site.¹³ Any such a dam meant the removal of a number of long established communities, and in the 1950s, and against in the 1980s, the opposition to the dam proposals was largely based on the desire to protect these communities and the income they generated for the Dungog Shire district. However, the most recent Tillegra dam proposal in the first decade of the 21st century was opposed principally on environmental grounds, while local support for the dam (largely absent from the previous proposals), was based on economic grounds.

The decision not to proceed with the dam on the Williams River left a large area of the Williams Valley in the ownership of the State government through its agency, Hunter Water. The debate over what to do with this land reflects the differing attitudes towards the landscape that now exists.

Heritage Survivals

- Archaeology – Aboriginal
- Swimming/picnic spots
- Williams River pool at Dungog
- Postcard collections
- Huts and other heritage items within the BTNP (see BTNP Plan of Management)

¹¹ NPWS, *Barrington Tops National Park*, pp.33-34 & p.7.

¹² See 3.5 Forestry.

¹³ See 1 Natural Environment.

3.14 Technology [use of mechanical arts & applied sciences – activities & processes]

For the Gringai people the use of, and adaptation to their environment at the technological level was superb, though only a handful of artifacts remain to demonstrate these technological achievements, such as the Green Wattle Creek grinding grooves described by some as an ‘Aboriginal Axe Factory’.¹

For the European settlers in the context of three valley’s history, technology has largely been the application of new technology from outside and its effects on the social and economic fabric of the district. However, in several instances it has also been a matter of the ingenuity of the people of the Dungog Shire district in developing their own technology or innovations.

The European settlement of the river valleys of Dungog district began just as the industrial revolution was beginning to take off. As a result, while the earliest farms were established using, largely, hand tools, steam engines and their associated mechanical arts were not long in coming. Water-powered mills became steam-powered and the ships being built at Clarence Town were designed to travel using the new power of steam. Much later, steam technology transformed the timber industry by powering saw mills, as well as the traction engines that gradually replaced bullock teams before they were in turn replaced by internal combustion engines.

William Lowe and James Marshall in 1830 established the Deptford shipyard on the Williams River at Clarence Town, and there Australia’s first ocean-going steamer (*William IV* – an 80 foot by 15 foot paddle-wheel steamer) was built and launched. Such shipyards did not build the steam engines themselves, but rather built the ships and then fitted them out with imported - then later Newcastle and Sydney-made - engines.²

While transport by river was significant, it was the agricultural produce of the Williams, Paterson and Allyn Rivers that required transportation, and for this a technology that had an early direct impact on the new farms of the district was the mechanical threshing machine such as that of James King on the Williams River who in 1835 had a threshing machine that he would hire out to such farms as Tocal on the Paterson River.³

Once threshed, whether by hand or using the new technology, the grains then required processing into flour and, by 1840, wind and water-powered mills were operating in the district.⁴ Water-powered mills were, of course, affected by droughts as well as floods, and after having tried a bullock-powered mill, the enterprising James Stephenson, who owned the Dungog Inn, advertised for a steam engine to power his mill.⁵ In 1859, the Dunmore Steam Mill advertised itself as ready to take ‘grist’ with, ‘All grist crossing the Dunmore punt free of charge’.⁶

¹ Archer, Social and environmental change as determinants of ecosystem health, pp.93-94. For a summary of the evidence see Hardy, Tillegra Dam Aboriginal Archaeology Environmental Assessment Report, pp.30-35.

² Murray, *Colonial Shipwrights of the Williams and Paterson Rivers*, Chapter 3 & “Technology in Australia 1788-1988”, <http://www.austehc.unimelb.edu.au/tia/517.html> (accessed 4/5/2010). See also 3.7 Industry.

³ Walsh, *Voices from Tocal*, p.38.

⁴ Hunter, *Wade’s Corn Flour Mill*, p.10.

⁵ *Maitland Mercury*, 20/4/1844, p.3 & 15/4/1846, p.3.

⁶ *Maitland Mercury*, 30/4/1859, p.1.

In addition to steam, new technology of a smaller kind was also becoming common, ranging from guns to hand held grinders for making flour and corn meal. This perhaps included the locally developed Sim & Sons hay press.⁷ Though not all the technology was necessarily new, and such things as brick-making and wine-making were undertaken throughout the district from earliest times using traditional techniques.

Moving up and down narrow valleys with winding rivers and their many tributaries meant that punts, footbridges and, later, road-bridges were of significance. The existence of punts on the river crossings is well known, though less is known about the actual construction of early punts - though one description implies the hazards of amateur manufacture.

We hope these temporary constructions will not cause us to have to record such a fatal catastrophe as occurred a few years ago near Gostwyck, when in crossing on one of their ill-constructed log arrangements, called catamarans, a man, his wife, and two children, met their death by drowning, by the capsizing of these frail and giddy rafts.⁸

The unreliability of punts and the continual interruptions to travel and communications caused by flooding led to early agitation for bridges. The result today is that Dungog has a number of types of truss bridges representing various phases in the development of bridge building technology.⁹

While steam technology had been in use since the mid-19th century, it was only towards the end of that century and in the early years of the 20th century that its application to traction engines and saw mills began to transform the timber industry of the valleys. Saw mills powered by steam were established in many localities, while traction engines began to replace bullock teams for transporting logs. The internal combustion engine quickly replaced the steam traction engines, though steam powered mills lasted longer and tended only to be replaced by electricity in the 1950s.¹⁰

Steam technology also played a major role in the establishment of Wade's Cornflour Mill (aka Cooreei Mill) at Dungog. Measuring 120 feet by 40 feet, with three floors, it was powered by a 24 hp steam engine imported from Scotland and, with grinding stones imported from France, it commenced operations in mid-1878.¹¹ Although the mill was reliant on imported technology, the local level of technology was not to be despised. At one point a broken cog halted production and it needed six months to send to England for a replacement. A local worker, Samuel Redman, was able to make a replacement in three months using only a cold chisel. This worked so well that it was left in place after the new part arrived.¹²

While this steam-powered cornflour mill had a significant impact on farmers in the Williams Valley at least, it was another technology, and its subsequent development, that had a greater effect on the Dungog district. Perhaps the most significant technical change to enter the valleys in the third generation of European settlement was the cream separator. This was only the beginning of developments in milk processing that at first enabled the rise of the

⁷ Archer, Social and environmental change as determinants of ecosystem health, pp.187-188.

⁸ *Maitland Mercury*, 28/3/1871, p.3.

⁹ RTA, *Timber Truss Road Bridges*, pp.3-6.

¹⁰ See 3.5 Forestry.

¹¹ *Maitland Mercury*, 13/4/1886, p.7 & 20/7/1878, p.15. See also 3.7 Industry.

¹² Charles Redman to Dungog Historical Society, 14/4/1988.

dairy industry and then led to its gradual decline within the three valleys.¹³ Technology associated with the dairy industry included the cream separator, butter factories, rail transport, insulated trucks, and automatic milking.¹⁴

While the valleys of Dungog Shire district were only indirectly affected by the gold rush of the mid-19th century, gold mining did play a significant part in the Shire at a later period when stamper technology and deep shafts allowed gold extraction at Wangat and some other areas within the district.¹⁵

Electricity first entered the towns of the area in the form of individual generators that gradually increased the number of street lights, as well as helped to run the *Dungog Chronicle* printing press and the new Dungog Picture Palace of 1912. At first lighting was a random affair with the Post Office adding one and:

The residents living in the vicinity of Myles & Dowling Street have decided to erect at their own expense a street light – this will be the second street light in town ...¹⁶

By 1924, however, the Dungog Municipal Council began to introduce street lighting on a more systematic basis.¹⁷ Electricity came to Clarence Town, Paterson, and Gresford in the 1930s, and to remoter areas gradually in the 1950s and 1960s. Even after mains electricity was established, the James Theatre at Dungog used its own generator to help avoid post-war electricity restrictions. This generator was taken over by the Bowling Club and then the Dungog RSL. This last institution still has its own back-up generator to keep the pokies running during power failures.

After the cream separator and electricity, the greatest change was brought about by the railway and the motor car. Until just before the First World War, coaches drawn by horses still provided the main links between towns the railway did not reach. In 1901 appeared a glimpse of things to come when the first motor car came through Dungog in June that year, driven by a Dr Bennett and his wife of Morpeth.¹⁸ When, in 1911, the North Coast Rail line established its first link between Maitland and Dungog, the immediate impact was that Fry's Coaches, operating out of Paterson as far as Wauchope and Kempsey, ceased to operate. And by November the same year, a fleet of 'powerful and reliable motor cars' were running from Dungog to Gloucester, meeting the train in Dungog each day at 9 am. Clarence Town was also severely affected, with even timber being hauled by train rather than taken by river.¹⁹

Many other changes were also coming in the years just prior to the First World War, and an interesting index of this technical progress can be found in the records of the Church of England at Dungog as it switched from candles and kerosene lanterns to carbide gas in 1906, and then to electricity in 1917. In 1919, a car was used for the Rector and even a motorcycle at one point; the car in 1924 cost £250 plus £50 a year in upkeep. A phone was also installed soon after, and even water in the bathroom, a luxury that caused some comment. Electricity

¹³ See 3.3 Dairying.

¹⁴ Thanks are due to Rex Kingston for pointing out that milk trucks are insulated not refrigerated. Dungog Historical Society, Comments, p.3.

¹⁵ See 3.8 Mining.

¹⁶ *Dungog Chronicle*, 20/6/1919.

¹⁷ McCormack, *Show and tell*, p.14.

¹⁸ Hunter, *Croll's Mill Dungog, 1917-1969*, p. 29.

¹⁹ Hunter, *Croll's Mill Dungog, 1917-1969*, p. 26.

was installed in 1925, and in 1941 the Rectory was connected to the sewer.²⁰ Not evident at the Rectory, but common in many larger houses being built at the end of the 19th century, was the use of tanks for water, particularly underground tanks.²¹

The coming of the car and the telephone to the Dungog Shire district had many obvious impacts, but one change worth noting brought about by these improved means of communication and transport was the lessening of the need for private, live-in nurses, a common feature of medical and aged care at one time.²²

Of course most spectacular, even if of relatively slight significance to the Dungog district at first, was the aeroplane. The first flight over Dungog occurred on June 1st 1920, with the plane landing on a strip on the Melbee estate just to the south of the town.

Of greater immediate impact, was the radio which quickly became popular and, in the absence of electricity in most areas, at first meant batteries - special radio batteries, which would need to be taken to such places as Davey & Olsen's at Dungog and other motor garages to be recharged on a regular basis.

The building of the Chichester Dam, finished in 1923 and handed over to the Hunter Water Board in 1927, resulted in an interesting mix of advanced and old technology. Due to a steel shortage, the first nine miles of the pipeline carrying water from this dam were, for many years, made of wood. Constructed of 4½ inch wide curved strips of brushbox assembled to create a three foot wide pipe, it was set on concrete cradles, and the whole held together by over 142,000 bands of metal set 4 inches apart. This wooden pipeline was used for some 22 years and dismantled over a period of nine years. In constant need of repair; when demand was low during winter, the water would be stopped to allow for maintenance.²³

One technological development that originated in Dungog was Hutton's Hone Razor Strop, of Edward Peter (Ted) Hutton. Ted Hutton and his sons promoted their razor strop at shows around Australia before the increasing popularity of the safety razor eliminated its value.²⁴

The Dungog Hospital of 1892 constantly received community support, much of it designed to ensure that the latest in medical technology was available. A new operating theatre was installed in 1915, electricity in 1917 replaced 'expensive' acetylene lighting, and by 1935 one ward was air conditioned. Polio in the 1950s saw an 'iron lung' bought, again with community funds, and in 1958 a maternity ward established.²⁵

The Second World War created a need for mechanical expertise wherever it could be found, and in the Davey & Olsen motor garage at Dungog and another at Paterson was found the technology required to help make armaments.²⁶ While after the war, increased demand was long coupled with a shortage of resources that forced many businesses to make their own

²⁰ Loban, *A Substantial Handsome Church*, p.24, pp.42-47 & p.57.

²¹ For examples see, *Dungog Chronicle*, 18/7/1899, & Williams, *Ah, Dungog*, p.16, p.28 & p.35.

²² Strachen, et al, 'Susanne and Elizabeth', p.136.

²³ McCormack, *Show and tell*, p.54-55; Armstrong, *Pipelines and People*, pp.91-95 & Chichester pipeline display board, Dungog History Museum.

²⁴ Williams, *Ah Dungog*, p.39.

²⁵ See 3.11 Health.

²⁶ Brouwer, *The Paterson at War*, p.31.

arrangements. Again at Dungog, a number of businesses such as Croll's Mill, jointly operated a workshop that would repair trucks and make required tools.²⁷

Another technique developed in Dungog, but perhaps never successfully promoted, was in 1953, when a resident of Myles Street, Dungog, named Vladimir Stanislav Para registered as copyright his 'Apparatus for Bottling Fruits and Vegetables by Vacuum' to be known as Paravac.²⁸ A more successful innovation was the development in the 1960s of laminated wood. James Croll of Croll's Mill developed a version of this known as Glulam that was subsequently used by this company in providing material for the Sydney Opera House.²⁹

In more recent times, the GasTek LPG injection system for diesel engines was developed in Dungog. The system utilises a computer and multiple sensors to ensure that just the right amount of LPG is injected through a very accurate vapour injector. The technology combines auto electrical and software technology and won a New Inventors award on ABC TV in 2009.³⁰

Heritage Survivals

- Truss bridges
- Cornflour mill site (Dungog)
- Museum collections (guns, farm tools, etc)
- Private collections (tractors and tools, 35mm film projectors, artifacts)
- Maxwell's Mill – arch, Tall Timbers beam
- Section of wooden pipeline (Dungog Museum)

²⁷ Allan Nash, interviewed 8/3/2012.

²⁸ A1336; Copyright Registered 2nd Dec 1953, 'Apparatus for Bottling Fruits and Vegetables by Vacuum'.

²⁹ See 3.5 Forestry.

³⁰ The New Inventors, <http://www.abc.net.au/tv/newinventors/txt/s2486572.htm> (accessed 22/2/2012).

3.15 Science [systematic observations – associated activities]

Dungog has been the location of a number of scientific studies mostly associated with the great biological diversity of the Barrington Tops. However, an attempt at systematic observations was previously conducted by local physician Dr Ella McKinlay, who was typical of many educated people of the 19th century seeking to learn more of their new environment. In this case, Dr McKinlay was among the very few to make any effort at learning something of the local Gringai people, some of his observations making their way into the researches of A W Howitt.³¹

Most scientific research within the Dungog Shire area has been undertaken in the field of natural history. Outstanding was the work undertaken by John Hopson of Ecclestone on the Barrington Tops in making observations of his own, particularly in the field of entomology, as well as in leading many naturalists from Sydney University and other institutions on extensive field trips through the area.³² John Hopson left his extensive collection of Paterson, Allyn and Williams Valley insects to the Australian Museum.³³

One naturalist John Hopson guided was the Rev H M R. (Herman Montague Rucker) Rupp. Known as the ‘Orchid Man’, the Rev Rupp was at Paterson from 1924 to 1930 and identified many new species of orchid, including a new *Dendrobium*, while in the Barringtons with John Hopson in 1925.³⁴ In more recent times Noel Jupp has developed an extensive knowledge of native plants of the Paterson and nearby valleys.³⁵

Born in Clarence Town in 1845, Charles Bruce Lowe, the son of the shipbuilder William Lowe, was responsible for the Bruce Lowe Numbers, or Family Numbers, used to designate thoroughbreds. Lowe’s work, *Breeding Racehorses by the Figure System* was published posthumously in 1895.³⁶ Finally, another researcher in the field of natural studies was Dr Patkin, another a local medical practitioner, who investigated the sting of the Bullrout – a fish known for its ability to produce a ‘spectacularly painful’ though non-lethal sting. Michael Patkin was living at Dungog when he investigated some 16 patients treated at Dungog Hospital with Bullrout stings over five years from February 1963.³⁷

Both the dairying and timber industries of the Dungog Shire district have also attracted a number of studies conducted by academics and industry groups in efforts to either maintain these industries or to manage their decline, and in 1981, Macquarie University conducted a study of the water flows of the Allyn River.³⁸

Heritage Survivals

- Papers of John Hopson

³¹ Howitt, Alfred William, *The native tribes of south-east Australia*, (London: Macmillan, 1904).

³² *Sydney Morning Herald*, 30/6/1928, p.11 & Hartley, *Barrington Tops*, p.28. See especially NPWS, *Barrington Tops National Park*, p.33 for a list of such expeditions over the years.

³³ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 27/6/1928, p.12.

³⁴ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 30/6/1928, p.11 & Gilbert, *Rupp, Herman Montague Rucker (1872–1956)*, *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/rupp-herman-montague-rucker-8298> (accessed 22/2/2012).

³⁵ Brouwer, *Yarning with Jupp*, Preface.

³⁶ Binney, *Horsemen of the First Frontier*, pp.455-479.

³⁷ Bullrout stings, http://mpatkin.org/surgery_clinical/bullraut.htm (accessed 22/2/2012).

³⁸ *Dungog Chronicle*, 25/3/1981, p.3.

4. Building settlements

4.1 Land Tenure [forms of ownership and occupancy]

Occupancy of the Williams, Paterson and Allyn River Valleys by the Gringai people can be presumed, as with Aboriginal occupancy of Australia in general, to have pre-existed European settlement by many thousands of years.¹ Any claim by the Gringai people to the land was, however, not recognised by the newcomers and, within a short period, nearly all the river frontages and much of the hill country had been granted and the rest was seen as crown land.² While not acknowledged by European law, some Aboriginal people seem to have regarded the blankets they were regularly given at one time as in exchange for their land. In 1863, for example (when the arrival of blankets in Paterson was delayed), at least one person threatening a mass exposure of 'black flesh' in protest.³ In more recent times, the possibility of native title and land claims has been recognised and two small parcels of crown land, one at Paterson and another at Jerusalem Creek, have been claimed by Aboriginal Land Councils based in the Hunter Valley representing the Wonnarua people.

From the time of the exploration of the Lady Nelson in 1801, the settlement of land in the Hunter River valley proceeded with increasing speed. The Hunter Valley was closed to settlement until 1821, before which only relatively small parcels of land were granted to often ex-convicts at Paterson's Plains and near the present site of Clarence Town. After this, access to land was more quickly granted, increasingly to wealthy new arrivals.⁴ By 1829, nearly the entire Hunter River frontage (some 110 miles) had been granted; most of it in the 5 years between 1826 and 1829, or some 1.5 million acres of land in the Hunter Valley - half of all land alienated in this period.⁵ Additionally, a further one million acres was selected for the Australian Agricultural Company (AAC) around the Port Stephens area leading up to the Manning River, as well as large amounts set aside as Church and School Corporation land. After this, only the river frontages along the Hunter's tributaries were available and this led to the quick granting of large amounts of land along the Paterson, Allyn and the Williams Rivers between 1829 and 1835.

Land on the Paterson River around and below what is now the town of Paterson was given early to small settlers, including former convicts, and some 12 such small scale farmers were present by 1820 when changes in government policy led to many of these smaller farmers being moved to make way for larger grants.⁶ The first of these larger grants was William Dun, Duninald (1821); John Powell, Orange Grove (1821); and James Webber, Tocal (1822); followed by James Phillips, Bona Vista; John Herring Boughton, Tillimby (1822); and Susannah Ward, Cintra (1823); as well as Edward Gostwyck Cory, Gostwyck (1823); John Cory, Cory Vale (1824); and George Williams, Brisbane Grove (1824).⁷

Many of these settlers were younger sons of English landowners who came with the capital that enabled them to acquire larger grants. Examples of such settlers in the valleys of the Paterson and Allyn rivers, are Charles Boydell, a fourth son, and George Townshend, a third

¹ See 2.1 Aborigines.

² Perry, *Australia's first frontier*, pp.56-75.

³ Sokoloff, *Aborigines in the Paterson Gresford Districts*, p.24 & *Maitland Mercury*, 27/6/1863, p.5.

⁴ Jeans, *An Historical Geography of New South Wales*, p.101.

⁵ Jeans, *An Historical Geography of New South Wales*, p.104.

⁶ Wood, *Dawn in the Valley*, p.3 & Hunter, *The Settlers of Paterson's Plains*, pp.3-4 & pp.25-27.

⁷ Archer, *The Settlement of the Paterson District*, pp.7-25 & Gent, *Gostwyck Paterson 1823 to 2009*, p.2.

son.⁸ These members of the landowning class did not travel half-way around the world on the chance they would make-do on arrival, but embarked carrying letters guaranteeing them land. Charles Boydell, for example, carried one that promised land, 'upon your arrival, in proportion to the means you may possess in bringing the same to cultivation'.⁹ Boydell's shipboard companion, Townshend, even hired an overseer before his departure. This government policy of granting land in proportion to the grantees resources, while a sensible one, locked in class divisions which time, multiple failures and economic trends only gradually dismantled.

With such a letter in hand, Charles Boydell did not even need to be present when the Land Board reviewed his application and determined the size of his grant. Aspinall, Brown & Co. acted as his agents and, with £600 capital and after deducting some assets 'not immediately available for agricultural purposes', the 18 year old Boydell was granted 640 acres, or one section, on the Allyn River in 1826. This was small compared to his two shipboard companions - George Townshend and Alexander Park, who each received 2,560 acres.¹⁰ This £600 of Boydell's can be compared to a yearly wage of £25 or the five acres a former convict might get even under the generous-to-emancipists Governor Macquarie – long gone by this period. Boydell did not immediately go to his new land, instead taking a job superintending an estate in the Hunter Valley where he obtained experience overseeing convicts and working land in an unfamiliar environment.¹¹

Grants on the Williams River were taken up only after those on the Paterson and Allyn Rivers in part, perhaps, because it was considered too close to large native groups in Port Stephens and due to its use as a route for convicts escaping from the AAC lands and even from Port Macquarie.¹² An alternative explanation, according to a visitor in early 1827, was that:

A strong prejudice has always prevailed amongst the settlers, against the First Branch [the Williams River] and I am inclined to think not without cause. As far as the navigation goes [brackish water], there is little or no water for cattle; and when the river becomes fresh, you are in mountainous country not at all adapted to grazing purposes.¹³

This assessment perhaps only demonstrates a relative ignorance of the Williams Valley. Another reason for slowness in granting land was delays in surveying, which by the late 1820s was creating problems, as a joint letter to the Colonial Secretary from various grantees at this time made clear.¹⁴

On the Williams River between 1828 and 1830, grants included Duncan Mackay (Melbee), Benjamin Solomon (Thalaba), John Hooke (Wiry Gully/Wirragulla), Smeathmans (Brookfield), Crawford Logan Brown (Cairnsmore), James Dowling (Canningalla), Charles Windeyer (Tillegra), Archibald & George Mosman (Underbank), Mathew Chapman (The Grange at Wallarobba), and Henry Incledon Pilcher (Wallarobba).

⁸ Sullivan, *Charles Boydell*, p.1.

⁹ Sullivan, *Charles Boydell*, p.8.

¹⁰ Sullivan, *Charles Boydell*, pp.12-13.

¹¹ Sullivan, *Charles Boydell*, p.16 & p.19.

¹² Perry, *Australia's first frontier*, p.77, quoting Morisset to Goulburn, 28/7/1822.

¹³ *The Australian*, 3/2/1827, p.2.

¹⁴ Letter to Colonial Secretary, 18/8/1827 in Sullivan, *Charles Boydell*, p.21.

The large size of most of these grants meant labour was needed and convicts supplied this, easing the government's need to support them at the same time. Smaller estates were worked by poorer free men or by ex-convicts and tended to be highly cultivated, perhaps with a small herd of cattle, while the larger estates at first grazed sheep and cattle. Many grantees sent managers or requested alternative grants if the choice proved a poor one. However, the Paterson, Allyn and Williams seemed to have had a high proportion of owner-managers from the beginning. Given the state of the land and technology, no other method of making more intensive use of the land was available to these landowners other than placing either convicts or tenants on it.

However simply being granted land was not sufficient to guarantee success, as a comparison of two Allyn River settlers demonstrates. In 1832, Charles Boydell began a long series of land dealings in which he constantly mortgaged his land holdings to purchase more land until by 1860 he owned many thousands of acres of land in the Allyn Valley. His friend George Townshend, who had begun with a grant of four times as much land, had in the meantime gone bankrupt.¹⁵

After 1831, free grants were replaced with auctions. Both systems favoured the already wealthy with prevailing thinking fearing making land too readily available to the poor as it was believed they would not then work for others, thus leaving the rich with no one to work for them. By the 1840s, convicts were scattered with the exception of the 'large, intensively farmed estates of the Lower Hunter and Williams rivers'.¹⁶ The ending of convict labour at this time greatly increased costs and led to many more farms being tenanted and then to a gradual breaking up of the larger estates.¹⁷

Even before the ending of transportation, sufficient farms had been established on the Williams River to justify a water flour mill in 1829 and, by 1831, land had been granted as far as the Chichester River, a tributary of the Williams River. By 1834 the settlement at Dungog had developed as an administrative centre.¹⁸ At the same time, grants lower down the Williams River around Clarence Town, and their early subdivision into tenant farms, saw a rapid rise in the population scattered between these two towns.¹⁹

In addition to farm lands, town plots were surveyed at the locations designated for villages and towns. These included Dungog, Paterson and Clarence Town. At Dungog, a detailed plan was drawn up in 1838 and those with the necessary capital purchased numerous plots, presumably, for speculation. At any rate the price achieved was considered to be high.²⁰ In 1839, for example, all but a handful of allotments were sold in this second round and the Dungog Police Magistrate Thomas Cook, for a cost of nearly £50, was the largest single purchaser.²¹

A feature of this town plan of Dungog is that it contains a unique record of the major landowners of the time, fixed in the street names that Dungog still preserves. Nearly all the original streets were named after surrounding landowners, such as Dowling, Lord, Mackay,

¹⁵ Sullivan, *Charles Boydell*, pp.35, *passim*.

¹⁶ Jeans, *An Historical Geography of New South Wales*, p.119.

¹⁷ Jeans, *An Historical Geography of New South Wales*, p.125.

¹⁸ Hunter, *Wade's Corn Flour Mill*, p.9, p.10.

¹⁹ Gorton, *Glen William Public School*, pp.5-6.

²⁰ *Sydney Herald*, 19/8/1839, p.2S.

²¹ *NSW Government Gazette*, Oct 1839, pp.1159-1160.

Brown, Hooke, Verge, Chapman and Myles. Streets added after this time have also tended to be named after Dungog residents, some landowners, some not. The exceptions are Abelard and Eloiza Streets (named after a 17th century poem based on the Abelard & Heloise story), and Mary Street - it is not known who Mary might have been.

The colony of NSW early went through a series of boom and busts linked to the volatility of agriculture and the seasons. The three valleys naturally participated in these cycles and early in its existence the Williams Valley also participated in an interesting related financial experiment. Bank failures had left many bankrupt and their creditors, the banks, with unsaleable properties. It was suggested that rather than sell such property at give away prices, a lottery at £4 a ticket should be held. Drawn on January 1, 1849, the 8,320 acre Underbank Estate, located about 15 miles north of Dungog was won by Angus MacDonald, who unfortunately died soon after his win.²²

In the second half of the 19th century the desire to make land available to larger numbers of smaller owners grew. In 1871, the disposal of the last of the Church and School Corporation land began to cause some difficulties among the larger landholders around Paterson.²³ However, it was the selection acts of the 1860s and 1870s, and the major estate subdivisions of the early 20th century, that enabled the smaller farmers, who were often tenants, greater access to landownership. The names and exact numbers of these tenants are difficult to determine, but an 1852 subscription list for flood victims at Gundagai gives an idea of the number of tenants on Charles Boydell's land on the Allyn River. Listed are at least 22 names against Boydell's Camyr Allyn (Camyrallyn) estate, and, assuming most are heads of households and a few paid workers, and that Boydell encouraged nearly all to make a contribution, then well over 100 men, women and children would have been tenanted on his land.²⁴ It was soon after this that Boydell began to subdivide and sell off his large estate, converting his tenancies into small landholdings of 200-400 acres or evicting those who could not or did not wish to buy.²⁵

Boydell was unusual in subdividing so early, but when such subdivisions did occur on estates with large numbers of tenants, the number of people on the land dropped. This happened in the 1870s near Brookfield when a subdivision of an estate led to a drop in tenants - and therefore in the numbers of children - so that by 1873 the two Public Schools at Brookfield and Glen William both became half-time schools.²⁶ This process of freeing up land for smaller settlers did not happen fast enough for some, and many members of the younger generation left the Dungog Shire area for new land further north around the Bellingen River: '... if we want a home we must push out and the sooner the better for land is getting dearer and rents are rising every year.'²⁷

With John Robertson's 1861 Crown Lands Alienation Act and Crown Lands Occupation Act, selection of between 40 and 320 acres of Crown Land was allowed. This was designed to allow those with limited capital more access to the land for a small down payment and

²² Butlin, *Foundations of the Australian Monetary System*, pp.332-335 & *Sydney Morning Herald*, 16/5/1849, p.3.

²³ Hunter, *The Settlers of Paterson's Plains*, pp.38-41.

²⁴ Sullivan, *Charles Boydell*, p.121, *Maitland Mercury*, 18/8/1852, p.1.

²⁵ Sullivan, *Charles Boydell*, p.123.

²⁶ Gorton, *Glen William Public School*, p.20.

²⁷ Lean, *The Lean Family History*, p.116, William Lean to Thomas Lean, 6/3/1880.

gradual payments if they occupied the land for three years with improvements.²⁸ This was a major political topic of the day and many meetings were held in favour of free selection.²⁹ Many of the German immigrants who arrived in the 1850s were able to take advantage of these Selection Acts to settle within the Dungog district, such as John Trappel, who in 1866 selected 40 acres at Woerden, and Joseph Eyb, who at Big Creek also selected 40 acres.³⁰

While many were disappointed with the results of the Selection Acts, due to the strong resistance and actions of the leaseholders, figures would suggest that large numbers did take up land.³¹ Unfortunately many could not survive on the selections available and lists of lapsed selections and forfeited selections being sold were common.³² Much of the land sold ended up as grazing land, often to run dry dairy cows from better located dairies, rather than under cultivation.³³ Nevertheless, more were able to take up land, such as Herbert Shelton who selected 150 acres at Mt Oliver near Wangat around 1887, calling it 'Sunnyside'.³⁴

Subdivision also occurred through inheritance, with the Hooke family on the Williams River in particular dividing their land among a very large second generation. But it was in the early years of the twentieth century that many subdivisions by sale occurred; such as the Underbank Estate in 1911, and, in 1930, the Auchentorlie estate (itself a subdivision of a larger original grant), Cory's Vacy estate in 1926, and Dingadee of the Hookes' in 1941. The subdivision of the Vacy Estate in 1926 is of particular interest because, with the exception of the Public School and the Church of England Church, the village of Vacy was part of the estate property. In the main it seems that those living in the houses and running the various businesses were able to purchase these at auction. Less than a year later it was reported that 'our little village has improved as each householder owns his own plot. Most of the houses have been renovated and made more comfortable, and new fences have been erected ...'.³⁵

Most of the smaller farmers of the 19th century who resulted from these selections or purchase at subdivisions attempted to survive on a mixture of commercial crops, mainly corn and tobacco, supplemented by vegetables, cows and chickens. It is these small scale farmers who switched over readily to dairy farming, added to by those who purchased new subdivisions as they became available. By 1910 the dairying industry, based on small freeholders, was seen as the best option for the future and the continued existence of larger estates used for cattle fattening as standing in the way of this; more subdivision was seen as the answer by many.³⁶

Those larger landowners who held onto their lands did so with beef cattle and rent from tenants; which increasingly included shared dairying arrangements, perhaps supplemented with investments in dairy co-operatives. The decline in dairying and most other intensive agricultural pursuits has led to the grazing of beef cattle to become the predominant agricultural land use by the beginning of the 21st century. This has been accompanied by the

²⁸ Jeans, *An Historical Geography of New South Wales*, p.208.

²⁹ *Maitland Mercury*, 10/11/1860, p.3.

³⁰ Trappel, *The Trappel Story*, p.25 & p.42 & Sippel, *Hilldale Union Church 1899-1999*, p.6.

³¹ Between 1861 and 1881, 70,000 applications for selection were made, while only a quarter received land, this still amounts to some 18,000 sectors. Lawrence, *The more they remain the same*, p.4.

³² *Maitland Mercury*, 16/2/1869, p.4 & 5/6/1875, p.6.

³³ Archer, *An Environmental & Social History of the Upper Webbers Creek Catchment*, p.14.

³⁴ Dawes, *The Story of Harry & Gladys Shelton*, p.1.

³⁵ Clements, *Vacy ... One Hundred & Eighty Years of History*, p.14.

³⁶ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 6/10/1910, p.5.

desire of many from urban areas to acquire rural land without wishing to pursue agricultural activities which has led in turn to much land being used for the agistment of cattle.

With the decline of dairying throughout the final third of the 20th century, the intensity of land occupation within the three valleys has greatly reduced.³⁷ This was a trend reflected, for example, in the falling numbers attending the once numerous Public Schools scattered throughout the Dungog Shire district.³⁸ In the 1970s and 1980s, what were at first referred to as 'Pitt Street Farmers' (then 'Hobby Farmers' and now 'Tree Changers'), took up some of the now reduced land occupancy. With better roads and transport, and before some restrictions to rural subdivisions were introduced in the 1990s, many began to purchase small lots of rural land for non-agricultural purposes: for weekend retreats, retirement in a non-urban setting, or even to commute to work in the Hunter Valley or perhaps to work from home.

While the general tendency in land occupancy and ownership has been from Crown to private, there have also been numerous instances where private land has been resumed. Land for some roads and for Public Schools was commonly resumed, such as a stretch along Dowling Street resumed for an extension of the Dungog Public School where once stood a line of shops. Of wider impact was the building of the Chichester and Lostock Dams, which, in both cases resulted in the displacement of a number of established farming families, seven in the case of Lostock, and some subsequent resentment.³⁹ The proposed Tillegra Dam of the early 21st century involved the buying up of many farms until Hunter Water now owns nearly all the land within the area of the Upper Williams Valley that was to have been affected.

Heritage Survivals

- Land deeds and title documents (family, Lands office)
- Abandoned selections

³⁷ See 3.3 Dairying.

³⁸ See 6 Education.

³⁹ Margaret Dent & Delma Lawrence, interviewed 5/4/2012.

4.2 Accommodation [the provision of types of accommodation]

The initial provision of accommodation for the first settlers in the three valleys was very much along class lines, or certainly that of occupation, which amounted to the same thing. Convict shepherds were provided with the most basic, slab huts, or, if on a large estate, perhaps a brick-built barracks such as at Tocal. Landowners provided themselves with modest cottages and houses at first, but these were replaced as soon as resources allowed with grander homes. Tenants and small freeholders built a variety of modest cottages in wood.

Of this variety of first generation settler accommodation, very little remains. Charles Boydell has left us an impression of his French doors and the remaining outbuildings of Duncan Mackay's Melbee near Dungog are impressive.¹ In the next wave of building, those who could afford to do so began to build more substantial homes such as those at Rocky Hill in stone and brick above the Williams River, at Duninald on the Paterson River, and on the estates at Tocal, Gostwyck and Trevallyn.

An early description of the accommodation on a sizeable 854 acre property on the Allyn River for sale in 1855, including separate accommodation for servants, is:

A weatherboarded COTTAGE with verandah, containing seven rooms, viz.:

Two apartments, 18 feet square

One ditto, 12 feet by 18 feet

Four ditto, 10 feet square

Kitchen detached

Two Cottages composed of slabs, shingle roofs, each containing three rooms, being farm servants' apartments.²

On the Williams River a generation later in the 1880s, the Lean family was able to build Figtree House, 'a brick cottage containing nine rooms with a large cellar ...'³ And a generation on again, when Ernest Guy Hooke renovated the imposing Rocky Hill, he added a windmill to lift the tank water, an air gas plant, and sewerage to make it 'one of the most up-to-date residences'.⁴

An aspect of accommodation throughout this time was that buildings and materials were used and re-used, and is summed up in a story told at a golden wedding anniversary. The teller related of a house in Brookfield where his parents lived that had been built by his father as a public house; it later became a private dwelling with a large room used as a school, for dances and for Masses. Finally, the house was demolished and the bricks used to build Brookfield Convent. The teller concluded by saying he was born in the old house, went to school in it, danced in it, went to Church in it, and his daughter, a member of the Sisters of St Joseph, taught in it.⁵

¹ From Boydell's Journal, quoted in Ingle, *Valley Echoes*, p.16.

² Sullivan, *Charles Boydell*, p.207, *Maitland Mercury*, 21/4/1855, p.3.

³ Lean, *The Lean Family History*, p.67.

⁴ *Dungog Chronicle*, 8/1/1915.

⁵ Cantwell, *St. Mary's*, p.12.

An interesting sub-set of the grand homesteads of the larger landowners such as Dingadee and Cangon, was the town house of the bank manager. Bank managers were at first always resident and the banks designed these houses to raise the prestige of both their banks and their managers. Notable examples of this type of housing are to be found at Paterson, Dungog and even one from the 1960s at Gresford. That of the Commercial Banking Company of Sydney in Dungog was built in 1884 and designed by J W Pender of Maitland.

Overall, the design is a mixture of grandeur and restraint. The walls are built in triple brick, the facade is finished with fine tuckpointing, while inside, all window sashes and framework are in local cedar. Even the skirting boards are a study in calculated expense and display. The narrowest skirting is in the kitchen and other servant areas, with wider and more finished skirting in the bedrooms and other private areas. But the widest and grandest of skirting was laid down in the hallway, stairs and grand sitting room upstairs - areas visitors, including wealthy clients of the bank, would see.⁶

In addition to private accommodation, hotels and inns were also built to provide accommodation for travellers. Of these, Stephenson's Inn (aka Dungog Inn) is the only remaining from the earliest period and none are thought to have been any more substantial. Another, perhaps nearly as old and also in Dungog, was Sheridan's, described as a weatherboard hotel with three parlours, a dining room, grooms' and servants' rooms, two sitting rooms, and seven bedrooms.⁷

A visitor in 1888 described several of Dungog's inns of that time. The Royal was a 'large and commodious house', while Sheridan's had an 'excellent reputation for sale of good stuff', and the Settlers Arms was 'a quaint but cosy inn and reminds one much of the country hostelries in England'.⁸ Both the Royal and the Settlers Arms continue to operate under those names today. The Royal was completely rebuilt as a 1940s hotel, while the Settlers Arms underwent major renovations around 1900.

Boarding houses provided another style of accommodation, one which gave women and children a place to stay who otherwise found the hotels unsuitable. Such boarding houses also provided for school teachers, bank clerks and other workers who might find themselves transferred into the Dungog Shire district. Examples of such boarding include Redman's in the former Stephenson's Inn and Mrs Kelly's, but many more operated, often informally.⁹

During the building of the North Coast Railway line, large numbers of navvies such as the 150 men working on the Stroud tunnel in 1912, were provided with temporary accommodation of which an interesting description exists:

About the hills are the huts of the men built of timber of the small ironbark variety. The huts are made in a different manner to those of the North Coast huts built on works of a public nature. A frame is erected of sawn timber and covered in Hessian, which is coated with about three-eighths of an inch of cement.¹⁰

⁶ Williams, *Ah, Dungog*, p.16.

⁷ Williams, *Ah, Dungog*, p.60. Inns and hotels were usually known after the license holder and thus often changed name from time to time.

⁸ *Dungog Chronicle*, 9/10/1888.

⁹ Williams, *Ah, Dungog*, p.32.

¹⁰ *Clarence and Richmond Examiner*, 13/4/1912, p.2.

A range of accommodation types specific to various professions has also existed. The many simple timber cutters' huts associated with bush mills and sleeper cutters' camps are perhaps the direct descendent of the slab huts of convict shepherds. During the first half of the 20th century at least, it was common for single men to reside in 'huts' on properties the owners did not live on. These men would manage eucalyptus regrowth, control for rabbits and provide general security. Little is known about these men or their huts, but an analysis of the Webber's Creek catchment area has come up with a total of 11 huts and houses in this one locality.¹¹

Other accommodation types were railway barracks provided for train crews at Dungog until the 1960s, nurses quarters at Dungog Hospital, and teachers' quarters, often provided as part of the school building itself.¹² Perhaps unique within the Dungog district, at least until the establishment of Tocal Agricultural College in the 1960s, was the students' accommodation built as part of Durham College at Dungog.

The nature of travellers' accommodation changed as the bulk of travellers switched from those on business, such as commercial travellers, to those seeking to enjoy themselves by travelling. As a result, guest houses associated with the Barrington Tops became popular, especially, for many years, the Barrington Guest House, originally built by the owner of the Royal Hotel, Dungog. Built in 1930 and large for a guest house, it could accommodate more than 50 people. The Barrington Guest House continued to offer 'guest house' style (shared bathrooms, trivia nights, and communal meals), until well into the 1980s, and people continued to come to the Dungog area solely to visit the Barrington Guest House right up until its destruction by fire in 2006. Even today, many visitors to the Dungog area request information about the Barrington Guest House and are disappointed to learn it no longer exists.

In more recent times travellers have been serviced by caravan parks, motels and bed & breakfast style accommodation, all based on the flexibility allowed by the car. In addition, two alternative accommodation types outside this range have been established within the Dungog Shire. These are Wangat Lodge, which provides basic accommodation, and the semi-luxurious self-contained accommodation of the Barrington Retreat, also at Wangat, and Eaglereach Wilderness Resort at Vacy. Wangat Lodge was established in 1985 as a combined educational and recreational facility and caters for day-trips for schools groups as well as overnight accommodation for groups and individuals. The emphasis is on the environment, many of the buildings are of mud-brick, there are no televisions, and guided tours of the surrounding environment are offered.¹³

Billed as eco-tourism, the Eaglereach Wilderness Resort and Barrington Retreat facilities utilise community title to establish numerous privately owned accommodation units within a managed resort. Located on top of Mt George, the Eaglereach area had seen limited human intervention due to its steepness, while the Barrington Retreat was located in former dairying country with much regrowth. Both resorts feature high-end accommodation and are designed to attract urban dwellers who wish uncomplicated access to a bush environment.¹⁴

¹¹ Archer, *An Environmental & Social History of the Upper Webbers Creek Catchment*, pp.25-28.

¹² See 6 Education.

¹³ Ken Rubeli, interviewed 28/3/2012.

¹⁴ Clements, *Vacy ... One Hundred & Eighty Years of History*, pp.150-151.

A limited amount of public housing has been erected in Dungog in the 1950s and since been sold privately. At Main Creek, a hotel for rehabilitation patients was established until its destruction by a fire in the 1970s which killed many of its residents. Of more long-term impact upon the community have been changes in the way the aged are catered for, resulting in the development of a great deal of aged-care accommodation, ranging from self-contained units of Alison Court and Ironwood at Dungog to the specialist nursing home facility of the community operated Dungog District Nursing Home.

Heritage Survivals

- Sites of early houses
- Former school teachers dwellings
- Former boarding houses
- Durham College dormitories
- Timber cutters huts/camps
- Property workers huts
- Railway barracks (Dungog)
- Barrington Guest House (site and concept)
- Tocal Homestead and Convict Barracks

4.3 Towns and villages [creating, planning, managing urban functions]

When the limits of settlement were defined in 1829, the northern boundary began at the mouth of the Manning River and followed the mountains of the Barrington and Mount Royal Ranges inland 'so as to include all the Streams, Valleys and Ravines which descend to the Rivers Goulburn and Hunter'.¹ Within this, the planned system by county never developed and instead regional centres such as Maitland served a number of counties and within these regions it was the Police Magistrates who served as the basis of local administration.² Within these regions, town layouts were determined by British bureaucrats with colonial experience. Thus the surveyor Mitchell preferred narrow streets on the Spanish model as shady in a hot climate, while Darling, with his India experience, overruled him and preferred wide streets as allowing breezes to circulate.³

The significance of the Police Magistrates was that they required a court house and a lockup, often only granted along with a town plan. This meant more people coming on official business, which in turn encouraged commercial businesses already made more secure by the town plan.⁴ The towns of Clarence Town, Paterson and Dungog were influenced by these factors with additional villages and settlements growing up around other considerations. An interesting variation in the town plans of these three sites, all drawn up in the early 1830s, is with the naming of their earliest streets. At Paterson the streets are dominated by names such as King, Queen, Duke, etc. Clarence Town follows this for its streets running east/west but adds the names of prominent colonial officials for its north/south streets (John Russell and Earl Grey). The streets of Dungog, by contrast, are named after the local large landowners at the time of survey.

East Gresford grew up without any such planning in opposition to Gresford, while Clarence Town was primarily dictated by proximity to deep water, as to a lesser extent was Paterson. The many smaller settlements around the valleys were either near river crossings, such as Vacy, or roughly a day's travel along the valley from other centres, such as Bandon Grove, or nestled within narrow valleys and limited transport routes such as Martin's Creek. Some grew up around schools or Post Offices or both, while other settlements never really developed as centres but were simply a cluster of homesteads near a major estate house, such as Underbank, or perhaps a cricket pitch or tennis court where people might gather on occasions, such as Tillegra.

Within the three valleys four settlements have grown to town size, namely Dungog, Gresford/East Gresford, Clarence Town and Paterson. While Paterson was first established, Dungog soon equalled it in size before gradually coming to predominate. Gresford and its twin East Gresford soon stabilised, while Clarence Town, after some initial growth, declined along with its shipping. As early as 1848, Dungog had 124 people in 25 houses as well as two schools, two inns and a steam flour mill.⁵ Clarence Town had 93 inhabitants and 18 houses, and Paterson 141 people and 23 houses at the same time.⁶ The wider rural population was very much higher than these small villages, with Durham County having 7,554 people

¹ Government Order, No.50, 14/10/1829 in *Sydney Gazette*, 17/10/1829, p.1.

² Jeans, *An Historical Geography of New South Wales*, p.106.

³ Jeans, *An Historical Geography of New South Wales*, p.110.

⁴ Jeans, *An Historical Geography of New South Wales*, p.128.

⁵ Wells, *A Geographical Dictionary*, p.157.

⁶ Wells, *A Geographical Dictionary*, p.125 & p.334.

and 1273 houses, and Paterson police district 3,733 inhabitants and 638 houses.⁷ In the census of 1861, the populations recorded for the three major towns were: Dungog, 1757, Clarence Town, 1031, and Paterson, 2240.⁸ By 1904, with perhaps a narrower definition of what defined a town, the respective populations of the four main towns were: Dungog over 1200, Gresford 267, Clarence Town 371, and Paterson 506.⁹

Paterson area was first settled by timber cutters and as many as 12 small-scale farmers at Paterson's Plains, with a barracks with at least three soldiers established in 1820 at a site known as Old Banks.¹⁰ After 1822, a change in government policy led to larger-scale land grants being made further along the Paterson River. This meant more convicts, and so a court house and lockup were set up there in 1827. In 1832, ninety acres for a planned town were purchased further up the Paterson River at what became Paterson town, which was surveyed and lots sold in 1833, with a new court house and lockup built and all government services transferred from Old Banks by 1841.¹¹ Soon after, a steamer service was established and in addition to the government buildings, many inns sprang up to accommodate the needs of travellers. A post office and a school soon followed, including a request for a 'Gaelic' speaking teacher and a Presbyterian and an Anglican Church by the 1840s. The wharf and its river connections were supplemented by regular coach connections with Maitland and the Allyn and Paterson valleys. In 1857, a new more substantial court house was built, as were other public buildings such as the School of Arts and the Post Office in the 1870s and 1880s, and a Public School established in 1875. The growth of both dairying and fruit growing brought increased population to the area, furthered by the subdivision of the larger estates in the first quarter of the 20th century. This boost to the town of Paterson was offset by the arrival of the railway, which greatly affected its river trade. Paterson remained a quiet rural town, slowly declining as first its fruit growing and then dairying industries declined. In recent times, improved roads and access to cars has made it both a convenient tourist destination and a commuter suburb to those working in the Hunter Valley.¹²

Clarence Town like Paterson was first visited by timber getters, with land grants made as early as 1825.¹³ With its deep water river frontages, Clarence Town was early a place from which timber and other goods could be transported and many of the grantees further up the Williams River made application for small grants at this head of navigation to establish stores for their produce awaiting transshipment.¹⁴ Clarence Town was proclaimed a town in 1832, the third in the Hunter district after Newcastle and Maitland, and provided with a generous street plan. Also established here was a shipbuilding industry where Australia's first ocean-going steamer was built.¹⁵ The early establishment of relatively small farms on the river and the ease of river transport led to rapid growth. Along with tobacco factories and steam driven flour mills, one of the earliest National Schools was founded here in 1849.

⁷ Wells, *A Geographical Dictionary*, p.158 & p.334.

⁸ *Maitland Mercury*, 2/10/1866, p.2.

⁹ *Dungog Chronicle*, 5/1/1904.

¹⁰ Wood, *Dawn in the Valley*, p.3 & p.23.

¹¹ Gent, *Gostwyck Paterson 1823 to 2009*, p.5 & Walsh, *Paterson River* <http://www.patersonriver.com.au/> (accessed 19/2/2012).

¹² Karskens, *Dungog Shire Heritage Study*, pp.65-72.

¹³ Ford, *Clarence Town Erring –I to River Port*, p.7.

¹⁴ Ford, *Clarence Town Erring –I to River Port*, pp.16-17.

¹⁵ See 3.7 Industry.

Despite its early establishment and river traffic, Clarence Town was not provided with services as quickly as either Paterson or Dungog. A local sums up the situation as he saw it in 1847:

Grievances.— Here we are, I may say, in the centre of six populous settlements —being distant about twenty-four miles from Bural, Stroud and Carrington, eighteen from Dungog and, Raymond Terrace, and sixteen from Paterson— yet we have no bench or police office, and are obliged to travel to the latter place to seek redress, however trifling the case may be, which is the means of a great many cases being overlooked, that would be punished, were there a court held here. Whilst stating our grievances, I cannot omit the circumstance that we have no church or chapel, although the inhabitants some time ago made a collection for the making and baking of a kiln of bricks, and there it stands, like the Tower of Babel, a mass of bricks, as a memento (not of the confusion of tongues), but a diversity of creeds, some wishing them to be used for a Presbyterian, others Episcopalian, and some for a Catholic place of worship; so between conflicting opinions, we are without any place.¹⁶

The 1850s and 1860s was a period of expansion and was when many of the Churches were built.¹⁷ For an observer of 1858, the situation seems to have much improved:

The ground of the township is not yet wholly cleared, nor are the streets very discernible to the eye of a stranger. Still, the situation is remarkably agreeable, and the number of the houses is considerable. Among those which stand most, conspicuous are the three churches, the National school, and the stores of Messrs. William Johnston, Lyall, and Farquhar. There are, also several excellent inns; the flour mills of Messrs. Dark and Achurch, the well known shipbuilding establishment, of Mr. Lowe, and wharves for the discharge and loading of vessels.¹⁸

By the 1860s, regular coach services connected the steamer services of Clarence Town with Dungog and other rural towns, and a new court house was erected in 1869. In the 1880s, many of Clarence Town's most prominent public buildings and private houses were built and it was in this period that the functional river steamers began to be supplemented by pleasure cruisers from Newcastle. Although the decline of Clarence Town in the 20th century is generally attributed to the railway route running through Dungog, there is evidence that even before this it was affected by the tobacco tax, four floods and the depression of the 1890s.¹⁹

When Wallarobba Shire was formed in 1906, it remained based at Dungog and from the reports of its deliberations in the *Dungog Chronicle* rarely, if ever, concerned itself with either Clarence Town or Gresford. Clarence Town seems to have been left to its own devices as far as town management was concerned and possibly had a Town Committee, though what its legal status was is unclear. A Progress Association has also existed to help with local improvements.

A slow decline in Clarence Town's population has recently reversed as it has become a commuter suburb for those working in Newcastle.

¹⁶ *The Australian*, 13/3/1847, p.4.

¹⁷ Ford, *Clarence Town Erring –I to River Port*, pp.37-38.

¹⁸ *Empire*, 14/1/1858, p.5.

¹⁹ Karskens, *Dungog Shire Heritage Study*, pp.72-77.

Gresford and East Gresford are sited between the Paterson and Allyn Rivers where these come quiet close to each other and where the road from Paterson is met by another from Singleton. Gresford usually dates its beginning from 1829 when the first grants in the area were taken up by Charles Boydell, George Townshend and Alexander Park, though any facilities would only have come later.²⁰ Always service centres for their agricultural districts, like other towns in Dungog Shire, the rise of the dairying industry greatly increased the populations of both Gresford and East Gresford. Gresford remained a scattered settlement, while East Gresford gradually outstripped the earlier town in size. Over the years the School of Arts and other significant buildings have shifted to East Gresford, along with its supper room, library, billiard room, etc.²¹

A 1925 description of the two Gresfords reports:

Gresford, East and West, the towns of the upper valleys of the Paterson and Allyn, lie thirteen miles from Paterson. Though only a mile apart, the towns occupy similar positions, each overlooking a verdant river valley. The Lindeman family marked the Paterson side for its home. Cawarra, which has given a well-known name to the wine. The Boydell family, also associated with wine-growing, settled on the Allyn River side. East Gresford, on this side, has shown vigorous growth since the coming of the North Coast railway, and is to-day the main town, with its churches stores, hotel, butter factory, and other activities which go to the making of a busy little centre. The population within the police patrol now reaches nearly 2000.²²

Dungog, early known as Upper Williams, had a Court of Petty Sessions from 1833 for which a court house and lockup were built by the following year.²³ One of the very few settlements of the district to adopt an aboriginal name, 'Dungog' was the name of a hill just to the north of the present day town; the popular belief that Dungog means 'thinly wooded hills' only developing much later.²⁴

The surveyed Dungog plan of 1838 provides an example of early colonial government attempts to create an English-style model of small villages and surrounding estates.²⁵ Dungog even had a designated common that survives, in part, to this day. This plan was so ambitious that even today not all the streets drawn up so carefully have been filled with houses. In 1838, the plan was advertised in the *Sydney Gazette* and land sold at a 'Minimum price' of '£2 sterling per acre'.²⁶ In 1839, a further parcel of half acre and other sized allotments were offered for sale at £4 per acre.²⁷

In 1846 a visitor to Dungog gives this description:

There are two large inns, some excellent stores, and many good tradesmen in every line, as their sign boards announce. The finest ornament in the village is its magnificent windmill, erected at great expense and much taste by the proprietor of the head inn. The village has a

²⁰ Collison & Hancock, *Gresford 170 years*, p.11.

²¹ Sullivan, *Charles Boydell*, p.192.

²² *Sydney Morning Herald*, 19/1/1925, p.9.

²³ *Sydney Gazette*, 26/12/1833, p.4 & Mackenzie to Colonial Secretary, 16/4/1834 (Dungog Magistrates' Letterbook).

²⁴ For an account of the meaning of Dungog see, 'Where Myall Creek joins the William', *Dungog Chronicle*, 15/8/2012, p.8.

²⁵ Most of the streets were named after its then major landowners.

²⁶ *NSW Government Gazette*, 26/7/1837, p.527.

²⁷ *NSW Government Gazette*, 13/7/1839, pp.774-775.

most efficient civil police force, who maintain the greatest order both night and day. The village has one or two excellent schools, in which a very great number of children are taught.²⁸

Dungog with its court house lockup and barracks was an administrative centre that quickly evolved into a service centre for the surrounding agricultural district. By 1852, Dungog comprised about 40 houses, five of which were hotels, two stores, a tobacco factory, and a post office.²⁹ Despite its plan, John Wilson, born in Dungog in 1854, described the town as a 'sea of bush and scrub, with a house here and there', with bullock teams and drays having 'to wend their way between stumps and saplings'.³⁰

The Wilson description is perhaps from the 1870s, while one of 1912 reports:

Dungog is a business place of no mean order. It contains four hotels, two banks, a public hospital, and two medical practitioners, and a fine police station, where there are stationed three officers, under Sergeant Brown. Two firms of auctioneers carry on business, ... Dungog also boasts of two newspapers, "The Dungog Chronicle," - and "The Eastern Telegraph." The latter paper is a Co-operative concern, and is edited by Mr. Madgwick, ...³¹

At the end of the 19th century, the agricultural basis of Dungog was prospering and many of its most prominent buildings in a variety of Victorian architectural styles were built, particularly banks and the homes of wealthier citizens. Since that time, the population of Dungog has grown more rapidly than the others of the three valleys, boosted by the arrival of the railway in 1911, and another period of growth and building in the 1920s when its present streetscape was largely set.

Dungog has had its own local paper since 1888 and, in 1963, the paper produced a advertising snapshot of the town and Shire, describing itself as with a circulation of 1,379 and the Shire as having a population of 6,537 and 1,823 dwellings. The surrounding towns were Gresford with 400 people and Clarence Town with 250 people. The Dungog Butter Factory had 500 suppliers at that time and 52 saw mills operated within the Dungog, Stroud, Bulahdelah and Tea Gardens region. It also had 40,000 dairy cattle, 32,000 beef cattle, 1,500 pigs and 1,500 sheep.³²

By the 1960s, Dungog had begun to deteriorate and a Main Street committee was formed to clean up and ultimately impose a heritage streetscape on Dowling Street. Subdivisions have added to the old Dungog plan in relatively recent times; one to the north with small blocks and one to the south with larger individual blocks.

The Smaller Settlements

Dungog Shire is perhaps unique in Australia in the sheer number of small settlements which have existed within its area, with many rising and declining again and leaving very little trace.³³ An analysis by Karskens divided these smaller settlements into three not necessarily exclusive types: estate towns, rural service and industry settlements.³⁴ These settlements

²⁸ *Maitland Mercury*, 18/7/1846, p.2.

²⁹ *Dungog Chronicle*, 18/9/1903.

³⁰ *Dungog Chronicle*, 19/5/1939.

³¹ *Clarence and Richmond Examiner*, 13/4/1912, p.2.

³² *Dungog Chronicle*, *May we introduce ourselves*

³³ See Appendix 1: Settlements.

³⁴ Karskens, *Dungog Shire Heritage Study*, p.88.

were also influenced by geographic factors, and sometimes by religious and even ethnic considerations.

The existence of the smaller settlements was often due to the number of tenants on a specific estate, such as at Brookfield, or later to the subdivision of a larger estate. Once sufficient families settled in an area it might attract a one teacher school, a post office or even a shop or two. Many of these have now dwindled so that only the place names remain.

An exhaustive study of each settlement has not been done and the following is a selection intended to provide an indication of the range of settlement types within the Dungog Shire district.

Hilldale (Big Creek): Many existing settlements grew as the dairying industry grew in the late 19th century, such as Hilldale, which had a Union Church, a Public School, a shop with Post Office and a Community Hall. The wooden Union Church remains behind a new brick one built in 1957 at a cost of £2,500.³⁵ The area around Big Creek, called Hilldale after 1905, was first settled by the brothers Albert and John Boyce at High Park.³⁶ Other settlers included David and Elizabeth Parish, whose Cambridgeshire Church paid £30 to help send them to Australia in 1848, William Bucknell whose 2,560 acres was known as Elms Hall, and Joseph and Lenna Eyb, from Germany in 1853, who began with a 40 acre selection at Big Creek.³⁷

However, with the decline in dairying, by 1990 both the school and the hall at Hilldale were closed and its last public building is the Union Church.³⁸ The subdivision of a number of former dairy farms and the possibility of commuting from Hilldale to the Hunter Valley means that, today, the Hilldale district has a population as high or higher, than it did when it once supported its full range of public buildings.

Allynbrook: Developed around Boydell's Caergwrle Estate after 1836. In 1844, St Mary's-on-Allyn Anglican Church was erected and a school, at first called Caergwrle was established in 1869. A hotel, wine shop and boarding house sprang up, also briefly a soap factory and, later, timber mills, with coach services stopping in the 1890s. As with many settlements it grew and then declined with dairying.³⁹

Vacy: Was established on the estate of the Cory grant of 1824 by the tenants of this landowner in the years after about 1855. A Church of England Church (1849) was established, also a school (1859) and post office (1860), with most of the buildings strung out along the road passing between Paterson and Gresford. In 1926, the Cory estate was subdivided and Vacy ceased to be a 'private town'.⁴⁰

Summer Hill: Like Brookfield, this was a Catholic community made up at first of mostly tenants on a large estate, but unlike Brookfield the estate owner in this case – Edward Kealy – was also Catholic. The settlement established a Church early (the third in the

³⁵ Sippel, *Hilldale Union Church 1899-1999*, pp.19-20.

³⁶ Sippel, *Hilldale Union Church 1899-1999*, p.5.

³⁷ Sippel, *Hilldale Union Church 1899-1999*, pp.6-8.

³⁸ Sippel, *Hilldale Union Church 1899-1999*, p.27.

³⁹ Karskens, *Dungog Shire Heritage Study*, pp.97-98.

⁴⁰ Clements, *Vacy ... One Hundred & Eighty Years of History*, passim.

Colony), and later a Public School, which operated until 1975.⁴¹ The original slab church was replaced with one in brick in 1913 and still holds services.

Wangat: This village is perhaps unique in having had two manifestations, both of which are now abandoned. Originally a gold mining village, it was officially surveyed in 1888 and nearly deserted by 1902.⁴² The workers on the Chichester dam in the 1920s established a second Wangat village (as well as Dusodie) during the construction phase, which in its turn was also abandoned.

None of these smaller settlements can be said to have been planned. They were, however, managed, often through the committee of the community hall or perhaps the group who lobbied the Department of Education to set up the school. In communities of this size, most such groups and committees would have been composed of the same people.

Heritage Survivals

- Sites of former settlements
- Former halls, schools, post offices

⁴¹ See 6 Education.

⁴² Karskens, *Dungog Shire Heritage Study*, p.62.

4.4 Utilities [the provision of services, especially communal]

The Europeans who first entered the valleys of the Williams, Paterson and Allyn Rivers did so at a level of technology that allowed for very little provision of communal services. The provision of such basic utilities as water, power and the disposal of refuse was largely performed on a household level until the end of the 19th century; an early exception to this being flour mills. With advances in technology new ways of providing these utilities arose that at first continued to be on the household level, but with more efficiency. These advances were soon superseded by the provision of water, power and refuse services on an increasingly communal level.

Flour mills are perhaps the earliest example of a communal service within the Dungog Shire area. While hand grinders existed for individual and household purposes, for the production of flour on any scale it was necessary to bring the grain to a mill. Water power limited mills to specific locations to which growers would take their 'grist' to be processed for a set fee. Water power was soon replaced by steam but the general nature of this service remained the same.

With regard to access to water for drinking and other purposes, proximity to rivers and simply carting whatever water was needed to individual households remained for a long time the standard method. The use of tanks spread only gradually as galvanised iron became more readily and cheaply available.¹ At first these tanks were small and gravity fed, but, in the late 19th and the early years of the 20th century, large underground tanks were added to many homes with wind pumps to circulate the water.²

Tanks of any kind were gradually replaced by the increasing use of piped water supplies. This began with town water based on steam, then electricity driven pumping stations that raised the water into large tanks such as on Carlton Hill at Dungog that then provided the water under pressure.³ This was achieved at Dungog in 1910 with the building of a weir on the Williams River to enable a pumping station to operate; incidentally creating a long-time popular swimming spot. The provision of town water at Clarence Town came in 1960, and at Paterson, Vacy and Martin's Creek only in 1980, when a link with the pipeline from the Chichester Dam and the erection of water tanks for each settlement was completed.⁴

Piped water in the smaller settlements and to individual homes, came only gradually as water supply dams such as that at Chichester were built, and water supply became the responsibility of bodies with wider and wider jurisdictions, as when Hunter Water took over from Dungog Shire.

In the 1980s, the needs of water for agricultural and domestic uses clashed when the upper Paterson users of water in the Lostock Dam came into conflict with those of the Lower Paterson River where salinity had been creeping further up the river due to drought. The conflict arose over the need to release water from the dam in order to increase river flows. The desire of farmers to maintain this water for agricultural purposes also led to the

¹ *Dungog Chronicle*, 9/3/1926.

² Examples include Rocky Hill at Fosterton and the Commercial Bank residence in Dungog, see *Dungog Chronicle*, 8/1/1915 & Williams, *Ah, Dungog*, p.16.

³ Allan Nash, in *Dungog Historical Society*, Comments, p.4.

⁴ Clements, *Vacy ... One Hundred & Eighty Years of History*, p.143.

abandonment, in the 1990s, of a plan to send this water downstream and then pump it to Gostwyck to there join the existing water supply system.⁵

In recent times, as water shortages and environmental concerns about the building of dams and other high impact projects grew, the use of household tanks to supply water needs began to grow once again, including government incentives to install tanks.

While the change in power supply from water to steam had little impact on those using the flour mills, the change from steam to electricity had a much greater effect. At first electricity, like steam power, came from individual generators and so only those businesses or individuals connected were affected. In 1912, for example the newly formed Dungog Electric Lighting Company used its access to this power to establish the first permanent cinema in Dungog and also began providing ice for sale.

It was in the provision of lighting, and, at first, street lighting, that electricity made its first impact with even groups of residents choosing to make use of this new service. In 1919, for example, it was reported that the 'residents living in the vicinity of Myles & Dowling Street have decided to erect at their own expense a [electric] street light – this will be the second street light in town...'.⁶ Dungog Municipal Council began to introduce street lighting on a more systematic basis in the 1920s, while electricity came to Clarence Town, Paterson, and Gresford only in the 1930s and 1940s, and then to remoter areas only gradually in the 1950s and 1960s. In 1930, the citizens of Paterson met at the School of Arts to accept the extension of electricity from Maitland and the installation of eight street lights. Seven years later this was extended up the river to Vacy and Gresford, with a government subsidy keeping the rates comparable to that at Paterson. Summer Hill, Lostock and Eccleston all then requested that electricity be extended to their areas. Though at the same time not all were immediately convinced of the need for this innovation.⁷

The provision of lighting and the supply of electricity was taken over at the municipal council level and then, as with water, was gradually provided by units of larger and larger scope as demand vastly increased along with the growth in electrically driven devices.

Electricity like water has had its impact by being provided on a communal level direct to individual homes. Just as piped water replaced tank water, so too did this electric lighting replace a form of household lighting based on acetylene, referred to as air gas plants.⁸

Like water and power, sewerage and waste removal were also provided on a household level. It was as the towns grew in size that this method first became untenable due to the spread of disease and Dungog suffered many deaths due to cholera, diphtheria and other causes. This was dealt with at first by regulation and the provision of night carts to remove waste in the towns. Only in the 1930s was it proposed that a fully connected sewerage system be installed; a suggestion that caused much political controversy before being implemented by Dungog Municipality. Clarence Town has been provided with a town sewerage system only in recent times, while outside the towns sewerage continues to be a matter of septic tanks - though of an increasingly regulated and monitored kind.

⁵ Archer, Social and environmental change as determinants of ecosystem health, pp.160-162.

⁶ *Dungog Chronicle*, 20/6/1919.

⁷ McCormack, *Show and tell*, p.14 & Clements, *Vacy ... One Hundred & Eighty Years of History*, pp.141-142.

⁸ Rocky Hill had this too, as did the new Rectory in 1916, see *Dungog Chronicle*, 8/1/1915 & 2/2/1912.

Despite the threat of bushfires, it was only in the 1950s that Bushfire brigades began to be organised, based on volunteers and community fundraising. One of the first was the Paterson-Vacy Brigade, with a separate Vacy Bushfire Brigade set up in the early 1970s. This became the Vacy Rural Fire Service and the aims of the organisation expanded beyond bushfire fighting.⁹ At Gresford, the Bush Fire Brigade was under the local police officer, with little community support until the shock of a threat from a major bushfire in 1958 inspired greater input that included the donation of a shed and the acquisition of a fire tender – an ex-army Blitz truck. Fundraising efforts kept this volunteer force effective and it was put to good use in the 1990s against a number of threatening fires.¹⁰

Rural Fire Services exist at Paterson, Martin's Creek, Hilldale, Vacy, Gresford and Lostock. Volunteer based, the extension of central control and regulation has greatly affected how these services operate.

Heritage Survivals

- Sites of flour mills – water and steam
- Underground tanks
- Air gas plant connections
- Steam power remains
- Drill Press associated with pumping station (Dungog Museum)

⁹ Clements, *Vacy ... One Hundred & Eighty Years of History*, pp.145-149.

¹⁰ Collison & Hancock, *Gresford 170 years*, pp.57-58.

5. Working/labour [work practices, organised and unorganised labour]

From a very early time the Gringai people were recruited to perform work for the newly arrived European settlers. Gringai work practices are unknown except as they were interpreted by Europeans who wished to employ them as cheap alternative labour. In general, this impression was of good workers while they were at it, but who could not be prevented from wandering off after a short period. However, it is known that the making of stone axes and other traditional tools took a great deal of time and perseverance, while the tendency of Europeans not to pay native people equally was seen, by at least one observer, as the reason for their less than consistent work practices.

In the European settlement period, the overwhelming mass of work undertaken within the Williams, Paterson and Allyn Valleys has been agricultural and forestry, with the majority of people either working for themselves or for owners with comparatively small capital. The exceptions have been a handful of large landowners who generally employed small numbers of workers, those working for stores and commercial enterprises in the towns, and a narrow range of professional workers such as teachers, nurses and others. The tradition of unionism in general seems not to have been strong.

In 1832, Charles Boydell on the Allyn River brought in his tobacco crop ‘with the assistance of the blacks’.¹¹ A decade later, John Lord on the Williams River stated that: ‘I have employed them, however, in washing sheep, in which I found them quite as useful as white men; I should hardly have got through the washing last season without them ...’¹² And in 1846, it was reported that many around Paterson used local natives as a substitute for expensive white labour:

On several farms we hear that the blacks have been employed to reap the wheat, and that they have done their work very creditably; but unfortunately their habits of industry are not of long duration, and they could not be kept long enough at work to make themselves really valuable.¹³

Another observer felt that given adequate compensation instead of the ‘daily supply of broken victuals’ that was usual, then harder and more persistent work was likely:

They have certainly exhibited an industry, perseverance, and skill in the execution of their task which cannot be surpassed by Celt or Saxon.¹⁴

This is not to say that the Gringai people did not have their own attitudes to work that differed from that of the newcomers. A glimpse into how the Gringai people saw the work practices of the newcomers is provided by their interaction with workers brought from India:

... the natives of William’s River are upon good terms with the Coolies on Mr. Lord’s estate. The two people laugh at each other, because the Coolies work, and the other because the native wanders and has no comfort, nor good and regular food. The native tries to seduce the Coolie into the bush, and the Coolie to persuade the native to take service.¹⁵

¹¹ Sullivan, *Charles Boydell*, p.36.

¹² *The Sydney Herald*, 4/10/1841, p.1S.

¹³ Sullivan, *Charles Boydell*, p.103 & *Maitland Mercury*, 26/12/1846, p.2.

¹⁴ *Maitland Mercury*, 2/12/1848, p.2.

¹⁵ *The Colonist*, 19/12/1838, p.4.

Despite the evidence of benefits to the contrary, it seems payment in ‘broken victuals’ was the more usual, and the regular employment of Gringai people never became part of their relationship with European settlers. This attitude of European employers is not unremarkable, as their attitude to labour in general was one of seeking the cheapest possible workforce, which at the beginning of European settlement was provided in the form of convict labour.

The early work practices of the Europeans were determined by the convict system in which some worked and others oversaw that work. For those doing the overseeing, life, for some at least, could be comfortable. As Christopher Lean and Jonathon Wilce, who both eventually settled in Fosterton to farm without convict help, reported of their early days in the colony:

I had a regular routine of duties, but no laborious work. On the whole, time passed away very comfortably.¹⁶

I have no work to do except sow the grain and look after the men.¹⁷

For the ‘men’ in these cases, that is transported convicts, work practices could involve being sent to walk many kilometres to take up ones assigned position on remote farms, having set amounts of work to perform, payment in kind, compulsory bank accounts, travel restrictions, being hauled up before a magistrate for failing to work sufficiently, being scourged as part of work-related punishment and even set to working as part of an iron gang.¹⁸

Side by side with convict labour (assigned, on tickets of leave, and period expired) was what were termed ‘free’ workers; those who had come to the Colony without being sentenced. It was common for such workers also to receive rations as part of their payment and when Christopher Lean took up a position as a ‘sheep overseer’ at £30 per year, he also received a weekly ration of 12 lbs beef or mutton, 10 lbs of flour, half a pound of tea and 2 lbs of sugar. Christopher thought this an ‘ample’ amount.¹⁹

Contracts varied and the £30 per year mentioned by Lean may have been less the supplies provided.²⁰ In 1822/23 for example, the convict wage was set at £10 but only £7 if clothing was provided. This government wage was repealed in 1823 when money was to be earned only in extra time, though many employers continued to pay a wage to their convict workers.²¹ John Lord’s evidence in 1841 gives us a clear comparison of the cost of the three possible types of workers then available: Free = £41/18 per year, a prisoner = £16/17/4, a coolie = £18/8.²²

The protestant dominated culture of the Europeans meant work was not supposed to be performed on Sundays, and that this rest day was expected to be a time of prayer rather than amusements. This contrasted with the significant number of Catholics, whose interpretation of Sunday rest was always more convivial. Other holidays were observed in addition to Sunday, and, at one point St Patrick’s Day and St George’s Day were granted as holidays on alternate years.²³

¹⁶ Lean, *The Lean Family History*, p.47.

¹⁷ Lean, *The Lean Family History*, p.48.

¹⁸ See 2.2 Convicts.

¹⁹ Lean, *The Lean Family History*, p.47.

²⁰ Sullivan, *Charles Boydell*, p.38.

²¹ Walsh, *Voices from Tocal*, p.52.

²² *Sydney Herald*, 4/10/1841, p.1S.

²³ Walsh, *Voices from Tocal*, p.64.

Early work practices under the convict labour system did not emphasise safety, and accidental deaths while working were not uncommon. At 'Cairnsmore,' the estate of Crawford Logan Brown, according to a deposition taken by Dungog Magistrate Cook in 1837, William Mitten was 'killed by an explosion of gunpowder which he himself had placed in a well for the purpose of blowing up the rock'.²⁴ That same month, an inquest was held into the death of a servant of W J Forster, named William Wilson, killed by a falling tree.²⁵ Two months later, there was another death by falling tree, this time on Australian Agricultural Company (AAC) property, of Robert Launders, who had just come to the colony. Magistrate Cook was moved to think in terms of prevention and wrote to fellow Magistrate, and sometime Commissioner of the AAC, Edward Ebsworth that, as this was one of four such cases in four months and that as many such accidents were due to 'inexperienced youth', such people should be paired with 'old hands' to provide training.²⁶

A most significant change in the organisation of labour occurred with the ending of transportation in 1840, with assignment to private settlers ending the following year.²⁷ This immediately led to efforts to replace this cheap labour force with another just as cheap. In 1840, the Australian Immigration Association was formed to find a new source of low-cost labour, including Indian labour, and in December 1840 a Paterson and Williams District Committee was established.²⁸ Petitions were submitted requesting Indian coolie labour be introduced, with public meetings at Paterson in 1842.²⁹ Despite these efforts, the supply of labour would remain focused on immigration, largely, though not exclusively, from Britain and Ireland.

By 1844, the Dungog Magistrate Cook stated that the average wage was now £20 a year.³⁰ If accurate, this would imply a small increase only over the cost of a convict given by Lord (£16/17/4) a few years before. In the post-convict era, the self-employed or small-scale nature of much of work within Dungog Shire district means that the majority of work practices took place within the agricultural, pastoralist and forestry industries.

One specific class of worker was servants and the employment of servants was intimately tied up with class difference. The nature of this is clearly shown in the many examples of purpose-built servant's quarters that were left unrendered in what were otherwise fully rendered interiors.³¹ Similarly, the position of these quarters next to the kitchens, often with no access to the main part of the house, demonstrates the degree of distance and separation built into the very architecture.

Another level of servants were the various child workers. From the 1870s through to the 1950s, various government and charitable organisations sent young boys and girls to the farms, shops and homes of the Dungog Shire area to work as farm hands, apprentices and servants. Various known as Vernon Boys (after a ship in Sydney Harbour) or Barnados Girls, they appear occasionally, usually in family recollections, but are rarely named.

²⁴ Cook to Colonial Secretary, 10/8/1837 (Dungog Magistrates' Letterbook).

²⁵ Cook to Colonial Secretary, 17/8/1837 (Dungog Magistrates' Letterbook).

²⁶ Cook to Ebsworth, 6/10/1837 (Dungog Magistrates' Letterbook).

²⁷ Walsh, *Voices from Tocal*, p.115.

²⁸ Sullivan, *Charles Boydell*, p.76, *Australian*, 8/12/1840, p.3.

²⁹ Sullivan, *Charles Boydell*, p.204, *Australian*, 14/11/1842, p.3.

³⁰ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 5/3/1844, p.2.

³¹ Williams, *Ah, Dungog*, p.16 & p.71.

The working conditions of these young people are difficult to judge, but cupboards and storage areas are often referred to in family stories as the sleeping places for these children. In one instance in 1916, Mr Saxby, a teacher at Glen William school reported on the abuse of State Wards as a 'modern form of slavery' by local farmers and at least one child was removed.³²

While unionism has not been strong within the Dungog region, other forms of labour organisation which have had a strong impact are co-operatives and partnerships. With the rise of the dairy industry, the favoured form of organisation for these mostly small producers was co-operatives that allowed the setting up of the necessary milk processing factories on an equitable basis. This form of organisation remained intact even as the local co-ops gradually merged into larger units.

Within the dairy farms themselves the main labour force was provided by the family, with wives and children providing a great deal of unpaid labour for much of the period. Also common, particularly before the subdivision of the estates, was a form of shared farming in which a dairy was operated on a share basis with the owner of the land.

While mining has not played a major role within the Dungog Shire area, the mining that did take place was largely in the form of partnerships on a small claim with sometimes sufficient capital to operate a stamper.³³

The forestry industry was perhaps the largest single employer of labour, as the saw mills required a modest amount of capital. The timber getters themselves were paid on the basis of the estimated value of the wood cut and brought to the mill.

The closest thing to factory work within the Dungog district was during the operation of Wade's Cornflour Mill, and when the Fit-Rite clothing factory set up in the Victoria Hall Dungog in 1945, and then again in 1966 when Steven's Knitting Mills was established in the former Grierson's store on Dowling Street as a Shire Council subsidised operation. All these factories employed largely women; in the mill as packers and the clothing factories as seamstresses.³⁴

One group of workers within the district which was highly unionised was railway workers. These workers brought into Dungog some examples of the facilities that such workers could demand. Thus the railway barracks, now a pre-school, gave the large crews needed to operate steam trains some measure of comfort and a place to rest. As did the change rooms provided in the post-war Dungog railway station. Even the gangs that passed through building the new line to Dungog in 1911, were well organised and struck at least once over their medical protection, for which they paid 6d per week, and which they felt was not providing them with quality care. Around the same period sleeper cutters, who would have been independent contractors, also requested an increase in the price paid per sleeper, although it is unclear what the result was.³⁵

³² Gorton, *Glen William Public School*, p.31.

³³ See 3.8 Mining.

³⁴ Hazell, *A Centenary of Memories*, p.78 [1945] & p.108 [1966].

³⁵ *Dungog Chronicle*, 4/5/1909 & Hazell, *A Centenary of Memories*, p.29 [1909].

In addition to the railway workers, two groups of workers which largely came from outside the Dungog district were teachers and nurses. At first teachers were in the many one teacher schools scattered around the district and were accommodated nearby or in purpose built schools with teacher accommodation attached. The poor quality of such accommodation was often a source of complaint. As Dungog and other schools grew and required several teachers, these were often accommodated in dormitory style or boarding house type residences. Teachers are now highly unionised and those of the Williams Valley early began to organise themselves into a 'Teachers federation', at first for the purposes of information sharing and learning.³⁶

As Dungog Hospital grew so did its nursing staff, leading to the building of nursing accommodation, including a tennis court. Both nursing and 'domestic' - kitchen and cleaning - staff were accommodated in the same building but were expected to not to socialize together. These facilities were generally provided through community fundraising activities. As the control of health has been taken over by regional bureaucracy outside the district itself, the conditions and pay of health professionals has been standardised with little local variation.

In recent times, the major change in the organisation of labour has been the tendency for many workers not be employed within the Dungog Shire district where they reside but instead to make use of improved roads and cars to work in distant locations. Paralleling this is a rise in the number working from home utilising the Internet.

Heritage Survivals

- Servants' rooms
- Railway barracks
- Teachers' accommodation

³⁶ See 6 Education.

6. Education [teaching and learning by children and adults]

Education within the area of the three valleys has taken a path determined in the main by Colonial and State Government policies. Little formal education existed in the first European generation apart from a few church groups making intermittent efforts. Thereafter, the National and then Public School system provided most education with a Catholic system paralleling this. At first these schools were established within reach of pupils, making the majority of schools small, one teacher affairs. Gradually a combination of improved transport and falling numbers led to a concentration of educational resources into fewer but larger schools and the transporting of pupils over longer distances. Higher education was for long undertaken outside the Dungog Shire area or by correspondence, until a Central School and then a High School were established at Dungog. Adult education has been limited or non-existent until community education began in the 1980s, while in recent times an increasing number of families have taken up home schooling.

Early schools – National/Denominational then Public

Before the establishment in 1849 by the Colonial government of the Irish National Schools, education within the Dungog Shire district was in the hands of private schools.¹ These were sometimes sponsored by a large estate owner to cater for the children of tenants or were Church based, with the Colonial government from the 1830s providing some subsidies on a denominational basis. Such schools included what may have been the earliest educational facility within what is now Dungog Shire, that at Tillimby estate near Paterson, where there was a ‘church-cum-schoolhouse’; then Lowe’s at Clarence Town (1834-47), and that on the Cory property at Vacy (1850). There were also schools at Allynbrook and Paterson (1839), Bandon Grove (1850) and a Church of England school at Dungog operating from at least 1858.² These schools, however, never catered for more than a small proportion of the children of the district.

In 1849, the government established a dual system of education with National and Denominational schools; both subsidised by government funds. Local communities could make applications and, if approved, the Board of Education would provide two-thirds of the costs plus a salary for a teacher whose income would be supplemented by individual school fees. The Board’s contribution was set at £40 and for this, plus what they could collect in fees, a teacher was to be:

imbued with a spirit of peace, of obedience to the law, and loyalty to the sovereign, and should not only possess the art of communicating knowledge, but be capable of moulding the mind of youth, and of giving the power which education confers a useful direction.³

The first National School was that at Clarence Town (1849), making it one of the oldest government schools in NSW; after this came, among others, Brookfield (1851), Dungog (1851), Vacy (1859), and Bandon Grove (1862). After 1866, the Public Schools Act lowered the minimum number of children required and so more schools were established, such as Eccleston (1867), Gresford (1868), Allynbrook (1869), Mount Rivers (1875), Paterson (1875), Lostock (1878), and Martin’s Creek (1892).⁴

¹ ‘Irish’, because it copied a system being used in Ireland to cope with a mixed Catholic and Protestant population.

² Gent, *Gostwyck Paterson 1823 to 2009*, p.3 & *Sydney Morning Herald*, 17/11/1858, p.5.

³ Gorton, *Glen William Public School*, p.13.

⁴ See Appendix 2: Schools.

The number of Denominational Schools is less clear; three Church of England Schools are reported in 1848 at Dungog, Paterson and Lostock, and six Presbyterian local School Boards are reported in 1849 – Clarence Town, Brookfield, Vacy, Dungog, Paterson and Gresford.⁵ A Wesleyan School in 1850 is also recorded on the Tillimby estate near Paterson.⁶ The Presbyterian Church at this time aimed at providing a ‘secular’ education, choosing to use the same books as the Irish National Board. Though at Paterson, the Presbyterian School also advertised that: ‘Preference will be given to one who can speak and teach the Gaelic language grammatically’.⁷ Schools set up by the Church of England used the books of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, and the Wesleyans and Catholics used books of their own choosing.⁸

Many of these early Presbyterian Schools were happy to convert themselves into National Schools once the opportunity arose and this happened at Dungog, while at Gresford and elsewhere it was a Church of England school that converted, though usually after a longer period.⁹ The Church of England school at Paterson, for example, which reputedly had only 38 out of 90 to 100 potential students attending it in the 1860s, was strongly supported by its minister even after the Board of Education had withdrawn its certification.¹⁰

Dungog Public School

At Dungog in 1849, some 153 children were reported as justification for establishing a ‘National School’.¹¹ At this time it was proposed to merge the Presbyterian school into a National School in the same building, on the corner of Windeyer and Chapman St, and with the same teacher, Joseph Ross. The school had opened by 1851, but Joseph Ross resigned in 1852, declaring that the £40 salary was insufficient. After a further turnover of teachers, a Mr and Mrs Gibbs, who had been running a private school, took over. Enrolments rose from an initial 26 to 84 in 1852 when the school unexpectedly had to close due to Mr Gibbs being ‘in the lock up and can’t get bail’.¹²

In the following years, the resources available to the schools of the Paterson and Williams River school districts seem to have been limited according to both an Education Commission report and a detailed complaint from a Dungog correspondent.¹³ It was not until the mid-1860s that the school at Dungog received a purpose-built building. In 1863, a new committee, comprising George Mackay, Joseph Fitzgerald, Robert Alison and Thomas Abbott, was formed to erect a new school building, which opened in January 1865 after the school committee raised some £323 to build on what was probably the site of the old court house, and after having the old cell blocks demolished.¹⁴

Soon after this, the Public Schools Act of 1866 transformed the National schools into the now familiar Public Schools.¹⁵ In 1867, the Local School Board consisted of George Mackay,

⁵ *Maitland Mercury*, 1/11/1848, p.4 & 17/1/1849, p.4.

⁶ *Maitland Mercury*, 23/1/1850, p.2.

⁷ *Maitland Mercury*, 4/3/1848, p.1.

⁸ *Maitland Mercury*, 5/11/1851, p.4.

⁹ *Maitland Mercury*, 4/8/1868, p.3.

¹⁰ *Maitland Mercury*, 28/8/1869, p.5.

¹¹ Gately, *A History of Education in Dungog*, p.1.

¹² Gately, *A History of Education in Dungog*, p.1-2.

¹³ *Maitland Mercury*, 10/6/1856, p.2.

¹⁴ *Maitland Mercury*, 3/4/1862, p.2 & Gately, *A History of Education in Dungog*, p.2.

¹⁵ Gorton, *Glen William Public School*, p.20.

Robert Alison and Dr McKinlay.¹⁶ This committee established the fees at 6d per week for the first child and 5d per week for each subsequent child. The Church of England school at this time had 51 pupils and perhaps somewhat lower fees. In the following years, money was raised for the teacher's residence and expansion required for the separate scripture classes, as required by the Education Act.

When the Church of England school closed in 1881, room was needed for the influx of new pupils and it was reported that some families were unable to send their children due to lack of room.¹⁷ In the 1880s, more land was resumed, pupil teachers and assistant teachers appointed, and in 1889 a request that the school be designated a 'Superior School' was granted.

The number of children requiring education continued to grow as the population grew and, in 1891, the Minister visited the school. In 1893, some £700 for a new teacher's residence was acquired, further land was resumed and application made in 1897 for an evening school for older students, but this does not seem to have been a success. In 1910, further expansion took place in anticipation of a rapid population increase with the opening of the new railway line, with the school inspector waxing lyrical and reporting that 'Dungog must shortly become a great Railway Centre'. At a cost of £1,709, four new classrooms and a hat room were built in 1910 and, in 1913 some 225 pupils were being taught by a headmaster and four assistants. In 1917, electric lighting was available, though only in one classroom; a kindergarten was begun in 1929 and, in 1935, pupil numbers reached 300. The following year the footpath was laid down outside the school and more land resumed.¹⁸

Gresford Public School

A Church of England School had operated at Gresford before losing its funding in 1868 from the Denominational Board. The local community immediately applied for registration as a Public School with the same teacher (who was also the Postmaster), to continue. The lack of choice in teachers is demonstrated by the fact that Mr Bush was allowed to continue despite the inspection report stating that 'the Teacher is not competent'. Gresford Public School was however fortunate in having comparably stable teachers in its beginnings, with Mr Bush able to continue to 'exert some amount of beneficial influence over the children' until illness forced his retirement in 1880. The new teacher, who was also able to start in the new brick school building of 1881, remained until 1903. By 1905, there was a teaching assistant and in the 1930s, at least three teachers were on the staff.¹⁹

It was common for children to ride a horse to school, with such horses kept in nearby paddocks. At Gresford in 1890, two children were reportedly prevented from attending school when their parents could not afford the fee charged by the owner of the nearby paddock. The Department thereupon resumed two acres to provide the essential 'parking' facilities.²⁰ In another illustration of Departmental flexibility, the starting time of the school was put back to 9.30 am during winter to allow more distant students to attend.²¹

¹⁶ *Maitland Mercury*, 5/3/1867, p.2 & Dungog Public School, *Our Best Always*, p.9.

¹⁷ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 8/3/1881, p.5 & Gately, *A History of Education in Dungog*, p.3.

¹⁸ Gately, *A History of Education in Dungog*, pp.4-7.

¹⁹ *Gresford Public School, 1868-1968*, pp.3-4 & Collison & Hancock, *Gresford 170 years*, p.38.

²⁰ Collison & Hancock, *Gresford 170 years*, p.43.

²¹ Collison & Hancock, *Gresford 170 years*, p.44.

Paterson Public School

For the size of the town, the establishment at Paterson of a Public School only as late as 1875 is remarkable and was certainly remarked upon at the time.²² It seems, however, that rather than Paterson parents being especially uninterested in education, it was efforts to maintain or even revive the Church of England denominational school (both after the 1866 Act began to edge these out, and even beyond its 1869 closure), which accounts for the late arrival of a Public School in Paterson.

A meeting at the Paterson Court House in 1869 voted to not only continue to support the Church of England School but to reject the Board of Education's offer to take over the existing school, and to proceed with their own plans to build a new teacher's residence.²³ However, only a few months later another meeting was told that insufficient money had been raised to carry out these plans, and despite the continued opposition of the Church of England Minister, it seems the majority were now in favour of a Public School; especially after the various government grants this would make possible were explained.²⁴ Nevertheless, continued opposition from the Rev Addams, despite much pressure from the local member, seems to have stalled progress towards the establishment of any school at Paterson.²⁵

It wasn't therefore until several years later that Paterson Public School was established in 1875, at first in the Oddfellows' Hall, with a new building erected by 1878. Unusually, this new building's foundation stone laying and opening was not celebrated publicly, much to the disgust of one *Maitland Mercury* correspondent signing himself a 'Paterson Schoolboy'.²⁶ The obvious implication is that community resentment over the closing of the denominational school was still high and there was an inclination for the Public School to keep a low profile.

Things seem to have progressed smoothly after this until the construction of the rail line in 1907 that helped destroy the Paterson shipping business also cut right through the school yard and destroyed the teachers' residence. The Oddfellows Hall was temporarily used again until additions to the school were completed.²⁷

Clarence Town Public School

A private school organised by the shipbuilder William Lowe is reported to have taught at least the children of his employees from 1834 to 1847. Lowe was among those who signed the deeds for the land on which the new National School was established in 1849. Lowe also provided a temporary building while the new school and teacher's residence was under construction; this was completed by 1851.²⁸

The first examination in 1852 of the school was a public affair at which all were pleased with the quality of both the teachers and students:

On the 21st instant our village of Clarence Town presented for once quite a holiday scene, in consequence of the examination of our school. Parents, children, local patrons, and others from a distance, crowded our substantial, commodious, and neatly-furnished school-room to excess.

²² *Maitland Mercury*, 20/2/1875, p.8.

²³ *Maitland Mercury*, 4/2/1869, p.4.

²⁴ *Maitland Mercury*, 5/6/1869, p.2.

²⁵ *Maitland Mercury*, 28/8/1869, p.5.

²⁶ *Maitland Mercury*, 20/4/1875, p.3 & 2/11/1878, p.12S.

²⁷ *Paterson Public School Centenary Celebrations 1875 – 1978*, p.6.

²⁸ *Clarence Town Primary School – Commemorating 125 Years*, p.8.

Since the opening of our National School we have been favored with most efficient teachers; first Mr. and Mrs. Kirk, and now their worthy successors, Mr. and Mrs. Gardner, all trained in the Normal School in Sydney; and the advanced state of the children on examination day certainly proved that not only is the system good, but that here it has been well worked.²⁹

Unlike at Paterson, the Church of England Minister appears to have happily participated in the activities of the National School.

By 1854, the attendance at the school is reported to have been at least 80, 'although it was a Friday'.³⁰ In the 1860s, a Catholic School was established at Clarence Town and, in the 1870s, this led to some competition for student numbers as after the 1866 Act the Catholic School depended on maintaining a minimum of 30 pupils to receive its government subsidy. At one point, the then Council of Education insisted both schools charge the same – 6d for the first child, scaling down after that until the fifth and more were free – as the cheaper Catholic School was felt to be poaching Public School students. In 1874, this Catholic School closed when its government subsidy was removed.³¹

In 1866, a part of the school grounds was sold off to provide money for extensions to the school.³² However, by 1876 a new building and residence was built, which although bigger, proved to be too small by 1886 when enrollment reached 153.³³

One teacher schools

Small schools were established in many of the farming communities around the three valleys as intensive land use, particularly after the growth of dairy farming, meant high numbers of families, while the impossibility of travelling to the larger centres for schooling required that schools be nearby. In the Williams Valley: Salisbury, Bendolba, Munni, Underbank, Bandon Grove, Glen Martin plus Catholic Schools at Brookfield, Clarence Town and Dungog were established. While on the Paterson and Allyn Rivers, there were schools at Eccleston, Allynbrook, Mount Rivers, Lostock, Gresford and Paterson. In 1868, the Church of England schools at Gresford, Upper Bendolba and Clarence Town lost their Denominational Board support due to falling numbers – the minimum was 30 students.³⁴

As population grew, more schools were opened, with, in 1879, a number of new Public Schools opening or upgrading from Provisional status, including Caergurle (Allynbrook), Gresford, and Welshman's Creek. Half-time schools at Little River and Munni were already operating at this time.³⁵

While the history of the many individual schools might appear similar, in fact they are sufficiently diverse to each contribute to our understanding of how these tiny institutions of education worked within the isolated communities they served.

Glen William

Glen William was a heavily tenanted district just up river from the head of navigation at Clarence Town. The community applied for and was granted a school license to be situated

²⁹ *Maitland Mercury*, 2/11/1852, p.2.

³⁰ *Clarence Town Primary School – Commemorating 125 Years*, p.8.

³¹ *Clarence Town Primary School – Commemorating 125 Years*, pp.10-11.

³² *Maitland Mercury*, 29/5/1866, p.2.

³³ *Clarence Town Primary School – Commemorating 125 Years*, p.11.

³⁴ *Maitland Mercury*, 30/5/1868, p.3.

³⁵ *Maitland Mercury*, 4/5/1880, p.3.

on two acres given by local landowner Thomas Holmes. The petition claimed 119 school-aged children in the area - 40 Anglicans, 32 Presbyterians and 47 Catholics. To accommodate these children a building for £120 was proposed, one-third to be raised locally. The plan was unusual in that the teacher residence was placed in the middle with boys' and girls' classrooms on either side; although there is no record that such a design was ever implemented. A building was eventually constructed, however, after many contractual delays which saw teaching out of the half finished building for a time.³⁶

The obvious problem with a system that relied on fees to supplement a teacher's salary was that smaller schools in poorer areas would always be unable to offer as much. The first teacher at Glen William, for example, received only one penny per student per week and considered the food situation forced him into vegetarianism. In 1864, this fee was 3½d per student. Teacher quality was low and this arrangement ensured only those unable to get better positions would apply to small schools. Another aspect of this school was the overbearing attitude of the local landowner – Thomas Holmes – with many parents also his tenants, a feature of numerous teachers' complaints at Glen William.³⁷

By 1851, the school at Glen William had 74 children, the highest number it ever had. In 1852, a report on the school at Glen William noted: 'Spelling bad, seemingly from vicious pronunciation learnt at home.' By 1859, attendance had dropped so much that the school was closed, to be re-opened only when parents guaranteed an attendance of 48. Many things kept children away from school, such as the need to help on the farm, poor roads, and flooded creeks.³⁸

A tenant farmer in 1880 was reported to be paying £25 per year for 14 acres, and such high rents, as well as floods and poor crops drove many out of the district. This and subdivisions of the larger estates led to a drop in tenants and, therefore in numbers of children so that by 1873 the two Public Schools at Brookfield and Glen William both became half-time schools, meaning they shared a teacher, who had to walk the three miles between them each day to teach at both.³⁹

Teacher quality could be low and methods various. Samuel Rutter at Glen William, for example, was an ex-seaman who felt learning by rote had greatly damaged the children's education. Opposition from parents, however, greatly soured his efforts. In addition, teachers' wives were generally expected to teach such subjects as sewing to female students (for no extra pay of course), as the wife of Glen William's first teacher did.⁴⁰

In 1890, the school at Glen William burnt down, supposedly caused by parents living across the flood prone river at Banfield who felt aggrieved at being refused their own school - though there was a private school catering to 16 children in Banfield at this time. Previous to this, a dispute about the location of a footbridge to assist children's access to the school had involved the teacher and inflamed tempers. Later, the Banfield people accused the teacher of 'incompetence, cruelty and intemperance', but this was dismissed. A bridge was finally built in 1895 for £800 with disputes over the location leading to delays.⁴¹

³⁶ Gorton, *Glen William Public School*, p.5, pp.11-12 & p.14.

³⁷ Gorton, *Glen William Public School*, pp.13-14 & p.20.

³⁸ Gorton, *Glen William Public School*, p.14, pp.18-19 & p.22.

³⁹ Gorton, *Glen William Public School*, p.22 & p.20.

⁴⁰ Gorton, *Glen William Public School*, p.17 & p.14.

⁴¹ Gorton, *Glen William Public School*, pp.23-25.

Lessons in the 1890s involved anatomy, geography, history and grammar. The history was English but did include the discovery of Australia, while the geography was also European. One teacher, Hugh Jones, introduced agriculture into the teaching at Glen William in 1897. Ahead of his time, this subject was not officially introduced until 1902. The Glen William school opened its library in 1899, doing so with a picnic attended by 300 people. The library consisted of 132 volumes in a 'substantial case with glass doors'.⁴²

The years saw many changes in this small school. The introduction of motor vehicles led to many students arriving by milk carrier, which was often late and meant many also needed to leave early. A bus service was not established until the mid-1950s. A tuck shop was established in 1970, in 1986 the first computer arrived, and in 1994 the first female teacher.⁴³ This school continues to operate.

Allynbrook (Caergwrle/Caergurle)

A church school possibly existed here as early as 1839. The first public school was established in 1869 and named after the Boydell estate, Caergwrle, before becoming Allynbrook after 1909. It began as a Provisional School, which required an attendance of between 15 and 24, before gaining Public School status in 1879 (attendance over 25). As with many such schools, a few community members were anxious to promote education, while many parents were indifferent to the concept, with perhaps only 20 out of a possible 89 children attending at first.⁴⁴

The condition of the school building was for a long time very poor; many of the teachers had no training and often the school was closed for long periods either because of a lack of teachers, or at one point due to flood damage to the approaches to the school.⁴⁵ Floods, or even just a thunderstorm, could prevent up to three-quarters of the children attending. In 1880, the land the school stood on was resumed from William Boydell and in 1882 a new building erected in brick. This was followed in 1892 by improvements to the teacher's residence.⁴⁶ The school closed in 1971.

Lostock

On the Paterson River, the families of Lostock applied to establish a Provisional school in 1878. The inspector recommend against a school here on the grounds that Mount Rivers School was only three miles away at which many of the promised students attended, and because the Wesleyan Church which was the proposed school building was in a very poor state. However, pressure from the local member (who was also a local landowner), and a promise of more children and to repair the windows was sufficient to reverse this recommendation.⁴⁷

By 1880, sufficient students were attending to allow upgrading to Public School status. This meant more government funds for the facilities, although for a time the teacher was forced, with his family, to occupy the schoolroom itself until a teachers' residence was put up. In 1883, a combined teachers' residence and school was erected able to accommodate 40

⁴² Gorton, *Glen William Public School*, pp.26-28.

⁴³ Gorton, *Glen William Public School*, p.23, p.49 & p.58.

⁴⁴ *Allynbrook Public School, 1869 – 1969*, pp.9-10.

⁴⁵ *Allynbrook Public School, 1869 – 1969*, pp.12-13.

⁴⁶ *Allynbrook Public School, 1869 – 1969*, pp.15-16.

⁴⁷ *Lostock Public School Centenary 1878-1978*, pp.3-4.

students. In fact, enrolments reached 50 in 1889, before declining so much that the school became part-time in 1901, sharing a teacher with Tea Tree, an hour and a half's ride away.⁴⁸ This was a temporary fall and by 1902 it was again a full-time Public School. In 1905, Lostock School established one of the earliest Parents and Citizens Associations in the State.⁴⁹ The school closed in 1978.

Summer Hill

This school represents something that is perhaps unique in the history of schools within Australia. The Summer Hill (later Bunnabunoo, then Fishers Hill) school was a Public School that for at least the first half of its existence, and perhaps much longer, was composed almost entirely of Catholic students with Catholic teachers. Even the original application to set up a provisional school was made in 1871 by a Catholic priest at a time when the Catholic Church in Australia was setting up its own school system and encouraging Catholic parents to send their children to these in preference to the Public School system.

Established in 1871 as Summer Hill provisional school, teaching began in a slab hut. It became a Public School in 1880, before the new school building of 1884 was built in brick about 150 yards south of the old one. It was then the school was re-named to avoid confusion with Summer Hill Public School in Sydney, then again to Fishers Hill in 1934. The school closed in 1943 before re-opening as Fishers Hill provisional school in 1950, before finally closing in 1975.

That the school was attended by mainly Catholic students in an area primarily settled by Catholic families is not remarkable. What is, is that the community supported its Public School and in return, until at least 1929, the education authorities tacitly supported the Catholicity of the community by having only Catholic teachers. This was at first perhaps due to community control over the selection of teachers. But in 1917 the situation was acknowledged when the Inspector recommended a Catholic teacher be sent as all students were Catholic (except one, who lived in a Catholic home), and stating that if a Convent school were opened, the Public School would close.⁵⁰

Other schools

The public school established at Bandon Grove in 1862 had, like many, been preceded by another, probably denomination, school. In that year, an inventory of the school included two maps of the world, two of Australia and one each of Scotland and England. For the teacher travelling to Bandon Grove, the cost was £2/10 from Sydney to Clarence Town, then a further £2 to Bandon Grove, plus £1/10 for lodging and meals on the trip; a total cost to the Board of Education of £6.⁵¹

In 1875, a new school opened at Salisbury where it was reported that, 'It's a long way to Tipperary' was regularly played on the gramophone.⁵² Empire Day (May 24th) was a big event with a school picnic in Jim Rumbel's paddock and a dance that night in a shed.⁵³ The Salisbury School enrolment was: 1928 = 13, 1934 = 16, 1957 = 24.⁵⁴ Broken down, the

⁴⁸ The teacher reputedly shooting kangaroos on the way, *Lostock Public School Centenary 1878-1978*, p.20.

⁴⁹ *Lostock Public School Centenary 1878-1978*, pp.9-13.

⁵⁰ Ingle, *Summer Hill, Paterson Valley*, pp.29-41.

⁵¹ *Bandon Grove School, 1862-1962*, pp. 4-5.

⁵² Davies, *Salisbury Public School*, p.3.

⁵³ Davies, *Salisbury Public School*, p.6.

⁵⁴ Davies, *Salisbury Public School*, p.26-27.

Salisbury School roll in 1957 was: K = 1, 1st = 2, 2nd = 2, 3rd = 8, 4th = 1, 5th = 4, 6th = 6, and of the 24 students 5 were from the Rumbel family.⁵⁵

Mount Rivers parents seem also to have had a small private school before they applied for a public school in 1875. The application included a request to keep the teacher they already had - a local woman named Miss McNamara. This was the first of a series of women teachers, the sex supposedly determined by the only family willing to board a teacher insisting on a female. The building these women teachers taught in was a barely adequate earth floored slab hut and, until the construction of a footbridge over the Paterson, many children had difficulty attending. A ball was held in 1888 to raise funds and the community funded the footbridge, in part through tea parties held at the school. In 1906, a new building was erected on a new site more suited to the changing demographics of the area. Its land was resumed, as was usual, but in this case it would resumption was against the wishes of the owner. Declining enrolments saw the school actually closed as a Public School in 1924, though it did continue as a subsidised school, re-opening as a Public School in 1939.⁵⁶ It closed in 1981.

Another school that continued on a subsidised basis for a period was Lewinsbrook. This happened after 1932 and meant that parents had to board teachers and maintain the building. Once numbers rose again it achieved provisional status in 1945. Lewinsbrook was one of the many schools that, in the 1960s, received visits from the Catholic Motor Mission nuns based at East Gresford.⁵⁷

A school could in fact slip below the subsidised level and still operate in a sense. This happened to Binglebrah. This school was established in 1878 and managed a very high turnover of teachers until 1889 when falling student numbers reduced its status to 'house-to-house'. Under this system 'teaching stations', which might be homes, were visited on a regular basis by a teacher covering a number of such stations. Binglebrah dropped to this status twice (though only for a short period each time), as well as periods as a half-time school. This school finally closed in 1933.⁵⁸

Another school at Wortwell, on the Upper Allyn began as a house-to-house school in 1883, it achieved provisional status in 1884, but dropped to half-time status in 1885 before closing in 1892. A nearby school was opened in 1908 as Shellbrook, closed, then re-opened as Brookshell, before closing in 1914.⁵⁹ The parents of this general area continued to struggle to gain educational services and, after a period using Blackfriars Correspondence School, the Upper Allyn School began in 1939 as a subsidised school until, with the influx of children of workers at the new Pender and Foster Mill, provisional school status was achieved in 1948 and a new school building erected in 1949.⁶⁰ This school closed in 1970.

Eccleston had a Church of England School from 1853 to 1864 and when the teacher left, application was made for a Public School which opened in 1867 in the C of E Church. However, the first attempt was short-lived and the children of Eccleston went without a

⁵⁵ Davies, *Salisbury Public School*, p.24.

⁵⁶ *Maitland Mercury*, 21/7/1888, p.4 & *Mount Rivers Public School, 1875-1975*, pp.5-11.

⁵⁷ Collison & Hancock, *Gresford 170 years*, pp.160-161. In 1957, the distinction between provisional and public schools was eliminated.

⁵⁸ Collison & Hancock, *Gresford 170 years*, pp.163-165.

⁵⁹ Collison & Hancock, *Gresford 170 years*, pp.194-195.

⁶⁰ Collison & Hancock, *Gresford 170 years*, pp.196-198.

school until 1875. The 1875 Provisional School became a Public one in 1880 and received a new building in 1885. The new teacher in 1880 was a former local returning to live, and she remained the Eccleston teacher for the next 25 years. During the 1930s the school closed due to falling numbers but did re-open. The 1885 building, which featured an unusual curved roof, was replaced in 1944 when the unused school building at Trevallyn (Campsie) was transported and attached to the existing chimney and water tank. In the 1950s and 1960s, several Eccleston students achieved their Intermediate Certificates via correspondence courses.⁶¹ This school closed in 1986.

Catholic Schools

With the 1866 Public Schools Act, and compulsory education in 1880, the previously loose system of Public and Denominational schools was gradually tightened with greater government oversight of Denominational Schools. It was this rise of the so-called 'State schools' that was met with great fear by the Catholic Church in Australia. The hostility of the Irish to a largely 'English' government and of the Catholic clergy to potential contamination, resulted in a huge effort to establish a separate school system on the part of largely poorer parents, greatly assisted by a plentiful supply of teachers in the form of Irish clergy.

The Bishop of Maitland caused a public stir in 1870 with his efforts to ensure that Catholic children were withdrawn from the Glen William Public School and sent to the Catholic School at Clarence Town.⁶² Despite his efforts, this Clarence Town School closed in 1874. Another Catholic School was established at Brookfield, though not until 1892; running until 1958.⁶³

In 1888, a Catholic school was established at Dungog with nuns from the rapidly expanding Sisters of St Joseph, who had began in the Hunter Valley with only four nuns at Lochinvar in 1883.⁶⁴ The three nuns, aged from 22 to 27, first occupied a house in Dowling Street and, soon after, in 1889, a school opened in a room within this cottage. The present Convent was built in 1891 and the nuns moved in early the following year.⁶⁵ The school also moved to the new location and reportedly had nearly 100 pupils, more than half of whom were non-Catholics.⁶⁶ With numerous bazaars raising funds, a separate school room was built in 1913 for £700.⁶⁷ Additions to the school were built in 1923, 1952, 1976 and, most recently 2002. The 1976 addition was in fact the Brookfield School transported to the site after that school's closure, to become 'Brookfield House' and allowing the former Infants Block to be converted into the 'Father Bourke Memorial Library' - Father Bourke having served over 55 years as parish priest of Dungog.

The Sisters of St Joseph taught at the Dungog Catholic school until 1986 when it continued with lay teachers only. A small community of nuns continued to reside in Dungog, however, providing a range of community support activities until their final departure in early 2000.⁶⁸

⁶¹ *Education in Eccleston, 1867-1967*, pp.6-17, & Collison & Hancock, *Gresford 170 years*, p.192.

⁶² *Maitland Mercury*, 8/11/1870, p.4.

⁶³ Gorton, *Glen William Public School*, p.21.

⁶⁴ *Dungog Chronicle*, 27/11/1888

⁶⁵ *Dungog Chronicle*, 16/2/1892.

⁶⁶ *Freeman's Journal*, 5/11/1892, p.15.

⁶⁷ *Dungog Chronicle*, 28/1/1913.

⁶⁸ *Dungog Chronicle*, 16/2/2000.

While in general the Catholic community was successful in establishing its own education system, there were cases of Catholic Schools failing. The case of the Clarence Town Catholic School gives us an indication of how this struggle took place. First established in the 1860s, the Clarence Town Catholic School, after the 1866 Public Education Act, needed a minimum of 30 pupils to continue with its government subsidy. It was having trouble getting these numbers and, in the 1870s, was happy to take pupils from the Clarence Town Public School - which it was partly able to do by charging a lower fee. One parent was accused of having 'sold his child to the Pope for 3d a week'. The Council of Education solution to this was to make both schools charge the same fees. Unable to achieve its minimum numbers, this Catholic School closed in 1874 when its government subsidy was removed.⁶⁹

Where there was no Catholic School, a priest would provide religious instruction, though it is difficult to tell how regularly such classes took place. A Father Flanagan is reported teaching such a class to Catholic students from Gresford Public School in 1896. Unlike the Church of England Minister's use of the neighbouring 'weathershed' for his classes, it was felt by the Under Secretary that the Catholic classes in a cottage 100 yards away was less likely to cause controversy.⁷⁰

While Gresford Parish had four Churches, the distribution of its families meant that it never established a Catholic School (excepting the anomalous Summer Hill). In 1964, the Gresford Motor Mission was established by which a convent was established in the former Gresford Presbytery and from this base Sisters of St Joseph regularly attended the many Public Schools of the Allyn and Paterson Rivers and also Glendonbrook to provide religious education. From 1964 until 1978, the Sisters would travel by car in pairs some 250 miles a week. As well as teaching children, sometimes only one, home visitations would be made. Music lessons would also be given at the Convent, as had been the case at the Dungog Convent as well.⁷¹

School closures

By the 1950s single teacher schools were closing as student numbers dwindled as the number of dairying families declined, families also became smaller, and students could take the increasing number of subsidised buses. The last of the small schools had closed by the 1980s and the only Public Schools now operating in Dungog Shire are those in the four main villages plus Glen William, Martin's Creek and Vacy.

A crucial element allowing these school closures was the Education Department subsidy to local bus operators. A school bus, for example, only began to take students to Summer Hill Public School in 1970, and, when it closed in 1975, the school bus continued to take the remaining students to Vacy Public School.⁷²

Higher Education

In theory, most pupils left their various schools at age 14, and the Dungog Shire district did not receive any secondary education until the 1950s. In practice, with the support of the teacher, it was possible for some to receive higher education, even as early as the 1880s. Elizabeth Skillen recalled that a group of sixteen and seventeen year olds stayed on at

⁶⁹ *Clarence Town Primary School – Commemorating 125 Years*, pp.10-11.

⁷⁰ Collison & Hancock, *Gresford 170 years*, pp.44-45.

⁷¹ Ingle, *Valley Echoes*, pp.61-64.

⁷² Ingle, *Summer Hill, Paterson Valley*, p.41.

Dungog Public School to learn at high school standard and that at least one student passed the university entrance examination.⁷³

Higher education was provided in a number of ways. Sometimes a student would simply stay on for an extra year or two. In 1884, Maitland Girls' and Maitland Boys' High Schools were established, but transport costs and high fees made this an unlikely choice for most in the district.⁷⁴ Those who could afford it would send their children to boarding schools, and, once the railway made it possible after 1911, many more made the regular journey to Maitland schools, either every day or staying in Maitland for the week and returning home on weekends. Trains known as School Trains did the run with separate carriages for boy and girl students. The entrance exams for these schools, including scholarships, were held at Dungog and other locations.⁷⁵

By 1938, some 106 students travelled each day or boarded in Maitland or Newcastle at various Secondary Schools, while a further 15 in Dungog and another 11 in smaller district schools studied what were called 'leaflet' or correspondence courses. In the 1950s, Marie Nicholson became the first Dungog School student to attain the Intermediate Certificate. She achieved this through a mixture of correspondence courses at her home and attending school in Salisbury and in Dungog. This achievement led to one of the Dungog Public School houses being named Nicholson.⁷⁶

By 1950, agitation began for the establishment of secondary education and a Central School was established in Dungog.⁷⁷ Students from further up the Williams Valley went in the mornings with the Shelton's mail run, and in the afternoons Harry Shelton returned them using an 8 seater car; later this was a bus, as the numbers seeking higher education grew. In 1951 this trip took three students, two from Salisbury and one from Dusodie, including Marie Nicholson.⁷⁸ Finally, in 1971 Dungog High School opened, the only High School within the Dungog Shire district.

An interesting, if short lived, addition to higher education was Durham College established in Dungog by H S Crowther as a private boarding school that at one time had 30 boys attending it. Set up in an existing house, an L-shaped schoolroom, dining and dormitory building was erected in 1907, separate but close to the main house. Henry Stewart Crowther, M.A., Oxon., (Late Exhibitioner of King's School, Canterbury, and of Keble College, Oxford; 4 years Senior Assistant Master at Bilton, Rugby, and 3½ years at Cumloden, Melbourne), and also one time manager of Thalaba Estate, was head of this school which prepared pupils for matriculation and other examinations. In 1909, it was reported that this was the only college in NSW at the time with its own horse troop, and many who attended would have been of an age to participate in the First World War. Certainly obituaries of some killed in this war from as far as Gloucester mention attendance at this college. Durham College was well attended but the arrival of the railway was perhaps the cause of its early closure. It is not certain when the school closed, but by 1923 the house had become a private maternity hospital.⁷⁹

⁷³ Dungog Public School, *Our Best Always*, p.32.

⁷⁴ Gorton, *Glen William Public School*, p.23.

⁷⁵ *Maitland Mercury*, 10/7/1886, p.4.

⁷⁶ Gately, *A History of Education in Dungog*, p.7-8.

⁷⁷ Meaning the Public School was extended, rather than a separate High School being established.

⁷⁸ Davies, *Salisbury Public School*, pp.33-34.

⁷⁹ Williams, *Ah, Dungog*, p.71.

Sunday Schools & Scripture Classes

The Church of England failed to establish a viable school system on the Catholic scale. Instead it put its energy into Sunday Schools and, by 1868, Sunday Schools had been established at Dungog, Bendolba and Clarence Town.⁸⁰ In Paterson around this time, despite the Church of England Denominational School continuing, a Sunday School also ran, although it seems not with the same set of students, implying that some parents simply sent their children to the Sunday School but not the weekday one.⁸¹ The Presbyterians at Clarence Town had a Sunday School operating as early as 1855 and, in 1879, the Presbyterian Sunday School of St Ann's at Paterson could muster between sixty and seventy students, though this was for a 'treat' (a kind of parish picnic).⁸²

This supplement to the perceived secularism of the Public School system was not enough for many however, and by the 1870s a movement began called 'Bible Combination'.⁸³ This meant a combination of Christians to get the Bible used in Public Schools. The movement professed a willingness to allow Catholics to use their version of the Bible, but never succeeded in allaying Catholic fears.⁸⁴ In the 1870s, for example, a teacher was required to sign an agreement stating: 'I shall abstain from giving special religious instruction' - 'special' in this case meaning specific denominational instruction as readings from 'scripture' were in fact often part of the supplied texts.⁸⁵ Eventually, this movement did establish scripture classes within Public Schools. Scripture classes began in 1916 at Glen William, for example, resulting in many of the Catholic students being granted extra free time to play.⁸⁶

Adult Education

These early schools were designed to provide basic education up to the early teens or a little beyond, at most. The need to provide educational opportunities for older people was, however, recognised and the School of Arts movement became widespread. However, in Dungog, as in most towns, the educated middle class dominated, and these Schools of Arts were rarely places of education beyond the provision of a library, with very often billiard rooms taking up more space. Some individual efforts were made to provide classes for young men on occasion, such as the evening school for young men operated by Summer Hill Public School teacher Maurice Collins in 1894.⁸⁷

Since the 1980s and the growth of community centres and community workers, many adult education programs have been promoted. These often focus on crafts and the learning of particular skills, but numeracy and literacy skills, as well as general vocational courses have also played a role. Since 1985 the Tocal Field Days, initially aimed at the many newer residents striving for a rural lifestyle on small acreages, have been another aspect of adult education. In 2012 the Dungog Community Centre re-established adult education classes within the three valleys.

⁸⁰ Loban, *A Substantial Handsome Church*, p.22.

⁸¹ *Maitland Mercury*, 27/12/1866, p.3.

⁸² *Maitland Mercury*, 31/3/1855, p.2 & 16/10/1879, p.7.

⁸³ *Maitland Mercury*, 5/8/1876, p.1 & 10/8/1876, p.5.

⁸⁴ *Maitland Mercury*, 27/4/1876, p.8.

⁸⁵ *Lostock Public School Centenary 1878-1978*, pp.5-6.

⁸⁶ Gorton, *Glen William Public School*, p.31.

⁸⁷ Ingle, *Summer Hill, Paterson Valley*, p.33.

Agricultural Education

Education in agriculture began in the district in 1965 when the Presbyterian Church established an agricultural college on the Tocal Estate. The College was transferred to the NSW Department of Agriculture in 1970 and it has expanded with the purchase of neighbouring estates such as Bona Vista in 1974. Tocal is a unique training faculty with accommodation for over 100 people, external studies and e-learning, a large range of agricultural publications, and over 400 graduates a year. It is the Department of Primary Industry's Centre of Excellence for Agricultural Education in NSW and attracts interstate and overseas interest in its programs. Known as the Tocal Agricultural Centre, it boasts three commercially viable farms within its 2,250 hectares of property and Tocal Field Days attended by around 25,000 people each year. Additionally, it is the headquarters for the Hunter-Central Rivers Catchment Management Authority and the Lower Hunter office of the Mid Coast Livestock Health and Pest Authority. The historic Tocal Homestead also has a flourishing tourism/wedding business and is the venue for many community and special interest events.⁸⁸

Other aspects of education

Local teachers early formed the 'Williams' River Teachers' Association'. This was not a trade union but an association 'for mutual improvement, and the discussion of educational topics'. Not only teachers from the Public Schools at Clarence Town and Dungog joined but at least one teacher from a denomination school, Mr. J. P. Collier, of the 'Cert. Den. C. E. school, Bendolba' also attended. Meetings were to be 'on the first Saturday each month, at eleven a.m.'⁸⁹ There are also references to both a Dungog Teachers' Kendall Literary Association in 1903, and a Dungog Teachers' Association in 1906. These may have been the same group, with the latter recorded as having monthly meetings, including one in 1909 when Mr Dart, Inspector of Schools, gave a presentation on the Montessori method along with permission to try this method 'one hour weekly'.⁹⁰

As far as teachers were concerned, Dungog seems to have been the most central location such as when regular teachers' examinations were held:

The half-yearly examination of school teachers of the district has just been completed, under the supervision of Inspector M'Lelland. A goodly number presented themselves, and among them a few for the pupil teachers' grade. The holding of the examination in Dungog the last three times has proved a great convenience to teachers of the district, who formerly had to travel to Maitland, which entailed considerable expense.⁹¹

Another aspect of the changing school system has been the decline in the role of the P&C. Parents & Citizens Associations began as early as 1905, though most schools established them later; that at Mount Rivers in 1916, Allynbrook in 1934 and at Summer Hill in 1950.⁹² Organising fundraising for extra equipment and special events such as Empire Day or Christmas Picnics were part of the role of these P&Cs. Community support was for many years essential to the establishment and running of schools, and, for a time, significant in the

⁸⁸ Cameron Archer, interviewed 9/4/2012.

⁸⁹ *Maitland Mercury*, 20/11/1873, p.3 & 25/11/1873, p.3.

⁹⁰ *Singleton Argus*, 24/1/1903, p.2, *Dungog Chronicle*, 16/6/1914, p.2 & *Sydney Morning Herald*, 24/2/1909, p.10.

⁹¹ *Australian Town and Country Journal*, 27/6/1885, p.15.

⁹² *Mount Rivers Public School, 1875-1975*, p.13; Ingle, *Summer Hill, Paterson Valley*, pp.37-39, & *Allynbrook Public School, 1869 – 1969*, p.18.

running of the High School also. However, as teachers have grown more professional and no longer isolated in single teacher schools, this community element has gradually declined.

From perhaps the 1920s through to the 1970s, inter-school sports competitions were popular, with schools of various districts coming together to participate.⁹³ In the 1950s and 1960s, it was common for the district schools to hold a combined Sports Carnival with marches down the streets of Dungog. From perhaps 1957, a Triangular Sporting Event was held in rotation between Dungog, Gloucester and Wingham until the 1960s. A final triangular was held in 1970 between Dungog, Bulahdelah and Nelson Bay.⁹⁴

At various times schools have also introduced innovative or vocational courses, such as classes in 'Dairying' (including butter and cheese making), at Dungog Public School.⁹⁵ Also, the Gould League of Bird Lovers was established at Glen William Public School around 1926.⁹⁶ School uniforms have made a compulsory appearance since the 1950s (but never in the single teacher schools), though differing shoes began to appear in 1980s, and, in the 1990s, girls were allowed to wear shorts while the tie disappeared.⁹⁷ Corporal punishment has also disappeared entirely.⁹⁸

In more recent times private organisations have been set up to provide education on the environment or opportunities for personal development. Taking advantage of the increased mobility of even school children, these organisations are able to cater for schools on a regional basis and are attended by students from well beyond the boundaries of the Dungog Shire. Wangat Lodge on the upper Williams River and Riverwood Downs on the Karuah River, are two examples of this education type. Wangat Lodge was set up as a wildlife refuge in 1985 and after 1988 began to develop school programs under which some 20-30 school groups a year are given environmental education.

A final element in the history of education in Dungog Shire has been the gradual growth of home schooling. This is an educational option arising not from established families, but one brought into the district by families striving to escape urban environments and provide for their children in ways organised schooling cannot. There are an estimated 10 families within the three valleys who home school.

Heritage Survivals

- Former Durham College school and dorms
- Individual school histories
- Former school residences and schoolrooms
- Motor Mission photos (Lochinvar)

⁹³ Gorton, *Glen William Public School*, p.38.

⁹⁴ Gately, *A History of Education in Dungog*, pp.8-10.

⁹⁵ Dungog Public School, *Our Best Always*, p.36.

⁹⁶ Gorton, *Glen William Public School*, p.34.

⁹⁷ Dungog Public School, *Our Best Always*, p.94.

⁹⁸ Dungog Public School, *Our Best Always*, p.87.

7. Governing

7.1 Administration [governance and administration of public programs on all levels]

It was common for the new European settlers to describe this or that individual of the Gringai people as ‘King’ but there is little evidence that such imposed titles had any real meaning within the culture of the Gringai. The one hint of an authority structure that we have is the account of Charley stating that ‘he was deputed with others, by his tribe, to enforce the penalty’ on those who had broken Gringai law.¹

For the European newcomers administration was provided by magistrates located at Paterson and Dungog.² A nearly complete record of the outward correspondence of the magistrates at Dungog exists from 1834 to 1851 and provides a unique source of Dungog’s history and heritage. At first paid Police Magistrates, supplemented by landowner magistrates, did most of this work. After 1845, salaried Police Magistrates were replaced by local landowners acting as magistrates on a voluntary basis.³ An attempt to create District Councils such as the Paterson District Council in the 1840s seemed to have had little or no impact beyond road repair.⁴ Until 1893, and the formation of Dungog Municipal Council, nearly all administrative activity was of a self-organised nature dealing directly with various Colonial bodies, if not through the magistrates or the police. Roads were maintained by trusts or the District Council, schools by local boards supported by fundraising, post offices by local appointees, etc. Even after Municipal and Shire Councils were established, the police, as local representatives of State Government administration, often dealt with matters well outside law and order.

With land grants made and convicts assigned the government set up a variety of government services such as court houses, police lockups, pounds, and barracks wherever it thought was necessary for the control of law and order. Dungog and Paterson received these services along with their magistrates early, while Clarence Town and Gresford obtained them much later. Postal services were at first run through the Clerks of the Court but later private agents were given these contracts to set up Post Offices within their shops, or in smaller centres by a school teacher or school teacher’s wife. Post Offices were established at Paterson (1834), Dungog (1835), Gresford (1841), and Clarence Town (1845), then Vacy (1860), Allynbrook (1866) and thereafter in the settlements as need arose.

The Magistrates were responsible not only for the administration of the police and convicts but also handled land sales, the granting and review of licenses for public houses, forwarded ‘Benevolent Society’ collections, distributed blankets to Aboriginal people, organised the census, and obtained statistics on wages & prices.⁵ As time progressed, the Bench of Magistrates seems to have acquired more roles such as acting as registrars of Births, Deaths & Marriages, inspectors of weights and measures, or of slaughter houses, though not all these tasks required a magistrate, sometimes being performed by the Chief Constable or other qualified resident.⁶

¹ Threlkeld, ‘Mission to the Aborigines, Annual Report 1835,’ *Sydney Gazette*, 16/7/1836, p.2.

² *Sydney Gazette*, 26/12/1833, p.4.

³ *Maitland Mercury*, 19/3/1844, p.S1 & Sullivan, *Charles Boydell*, p.81.

⁴ Sullivan, *Charles Boydell*, p.85.

⁵ Dungog Magistrates’ Letterbook & *Maitland Mercury*, 25/4/1854, p.3.

⁶ *Maitland Mercury*, 13/4/1858, p.3 & *Morning Chronicle*, 21/11/1845, p.2.

While the magistrates were in regular correspondence with the various colonial offices in Sydney, local residents, including the magistrates, would often appeal directly to the Governor on issues of concern, such as; on the ending of transportation, a Dungog petition to the Legislative Council not to be charged with half the Police expenses, a petition concerning the dismemberment of the Colony, and petitions concerning protection.⁷ The magistrate at Dungog it seems was at first responsible for settlers on the Allyn River, which runs parallel to the Williams, and these settlers wrote in 1836 to request they be allowed to deal through magistrates at Paterson rather than Dungog.⁸ Conversely in 1848, Clarence Town petitioned to be joined to Dungog for the purposes of court administration.⁹

As self-government and democracy developed, the holding of elections became a major public event. The first election for Durham in 1843 of Richard Windeyer involved magistrates and electors assembling at Paterson Court House and resulted in disputes and a riot leading to one death.¹⁰ A second election needed to be called in 1848 due to the death of Windeyer in which a Stephen Donaldson was elected over local Alexander Park, 107 to 77.¹¹ The format of these early elections was that of a public meeting and a show of hands, with one candidate declared the winner. The loser would then generally demand a poll.¹²

The issues at this first election in 1843 according to one prospective candidate, Andrew Lang of Dunmore, were:

- That a relatively low franchise is ‘the best means of elevating the great mass of society’,
- That public expenditure is ‘susceptible to important reductions’ and the public service ‘better conducted than it is with fewer hands’,
- That he favoured ‘religious liberty and no political distinctions on account of religion’,
- That the ‘emigration of virtuous and industrious persons’ should be promoted, and
- That it ‘would be neither politic nor patriotic to encourage the extensive importation of an inferior race’.¹³

Throughout the 19th century elections were run locally with prominent community members acting as returning officers, such as when James Boydeell acted as such in the election of 1891.¹⁴ By this time public nominations had been abolished, but the selection in 1894 of Gresford as the principal polling place caused much indignation in the larger Dungog.¹⁵

By the 1890s, a prominent issue of the day was incorporation, with the Colonial government proposing local government. There was much local opposition due to fear of costs, especially on the part of farmers who felt they would end up paying the rates for town roads.¹⁶ Another issue was the slowness of the mails, with Dungog now receiving some

⁷ *Sydney Gazette*, 9/5/1833, *Maitland Mercury*, 10/8/1844, p.2, Sullivan, *Charles Boydeell*, p.77, & *Sydney Morning Herald*, 9/7/1841.

⁸ Broughton, Boydeell and Webber to Colonial Secretary, 20/8/1836 (Dungog Magistrates’ Letterbook).

⁹ *Maitland Mercury*, 23/8/1848, p.2.

¹⁰ Sullivan, *Charles Boydeell*, pp.82-3.

¹¹ Sullivan, *Charles Boydeell*, pp.104-105.

¹² Sullivan, *Charles Boydeell*, pp.105-106.

¹³ *Maitland Mercury*, 21/1/1843, p.1.

¹⁴ Sullivan, *Charles Boydeell*, p.168.

¹⁵ Sullivan, *Charles Boydeell*, p.171.

¹⁶ Hazell, *A Centenary of Memories*, pp.6-7 [1889, 1890].

4,300 letters a year.¹⁷ But the most significant issue dividing the main parties was free trade and in 1891:

The Hon. J. H. Carruthers, Minister for Public Instruction, paid a flying visit to Dungog during the week, and delivered a very forcible and eloquent address on the advantages of freetrade, on Wednesday afternoon, in the Court House, to a very large audience, but I am sorry to say the hon. gentleman was not shown that respect which his position entitled him to, a few prominent and noisy protectionists making themselves very conspicuous by their hooting and yelling - one who, from his position and standing in society, should have shown a better example, being particularly remarkable for prompting a protectionist boniface to intercept by asking ridiculous questions.¹⁸

In 1901, Edmund Barton, Australia's first Prime Minister gave a speech from the balcony of the Bank Hotel, as Dungog was then part of his electorate.¹⁹ The giving of outdoor election speeches remained common until well after the middle of the 20th century, and in Dungog was generally done at what was known as Dark's Corner – the corner of Brown and Dowling Streets.

The Colonial Government had been incorporating towns since the 1850s, but it was not until Dungog feared it would be incorporated with Maitland, if they did not organise something for themselves, that Dungog Municipal Council was established in 1893.²⁰ In that year, the Municipality of Dungog was created with W A Lloyd as Clerk on £100 per annum and F. A. Hooke as Mayor. A poll was held on 14th July 1893 returning Hooke, Robson, Dark, Abbott, Bruyn and Jones. Issues of the day included the removal of stumps in the streets and general sanitation.²¹

It was not until 1906 that the Wallarobba Shire Council was established covering the rural areas of the Williams and Allyn Valleys, including Gresford (despite the Gresford district's opposition to inclusion). Both councils met at first in the Dungog School of Arts until both moved into their own offices in Dungog. By this time, the magistrates were no longer responsible for State Government administration but the local police remained as a general instrument sending in reports on the local cinema, and other matters relating to state legislation and licensing. In Clarence Town, the Postmaster acted as the Registrar of Births, Deaths & Marriages.

Just after WWI, the returned soldiers and Dungog Municipal Council supported the building of a Memorial Town Hall, which the two groups shared for many years. A cottage, now the Police Station, was used by the Wallarobba Shire Council, and the Town Clerk seems to have kept separate offices for a time in Brighton Terrace. It had been thought that eventually the Municipal Council would take over the Memorial Town Hall as the number of returned soldiers dwindled. WWII meant that this was not to be and instead the new RSL Club took over the entire Memorial Hall and further accommodation had to be built for the Council.²²

The Dungog Municipal Council had only just erected its new chambers in 1956 when the following year it was informed that its electricity operations would be taken over by

¹⁷ Hazell, *A Centenary of Memories*, p.7 [1890].

¹⁸ *Maitland Mercury*, 27/6/1891, p.2S.

¹⁹ *Dungog Chronicle*, 19/3/1901, p.2.

²⁰ Hazell, *A Centenary of Memories*, p.9 [1892].

²¹ Hazell, *A Centenary of Memories*, p.10 [1893].

²² Williams, *Ah, Dungog*, p.48.

Shortland County Council. The loss of revenues this entailed was felt to make the existence of this four square mile council unworkable and application was quickly made to merge with Wallarobba Shire. This the Wallarobba Shire Council agreed to, only requesting that Dungog representatives on a merged council be limited to two to Wallarobba's six and that the name Wallarobba Shire be retained. Some opposition to the merger did come from residents of the Gresford district, their protests were, however, dismissed by a inquiry held by the Department of Local Government.²³

Before the merger could take place, another local council, that of Lower Hunter Shire was dissolved and in 1958 Paterson and Vacy and their immediate surrounds were transferred to Wallarobba Shire. This was the first addition since Martin's Creek had been added to Wallarobba Shire from Port Stephens Shire in 1923. Soon after this, Dungog Municipal and Wallarobba Shire Councils merged and to the dismay of many the new local government body was given the name - Shire of Dungog. The Minister for Local Government ignored the local preferences of many and simply followed a standard policy in naming the new Shire after the most prominent town. The then Shire President announced that: 'We have been dealt a body blow in the name-change.'²⁴

Little change in administration occurred in the generation that followed until the Local Government Act of 1990 transformed the structure of Local Government by shifting much authority away from elected councils and onto the newly created position of General Manager. For Dungog Shire in general, a most significant issue has been the reduction in State Government funding for roads when all roads within the Shire were declared local (as opposed to State roads). The resulting shortfall in revenue has greatly limited options for local administration since.²⁵

Heritage Survivals

- Magistrates' Letterbooks, 1834 to 1851
- Police Station (former Wallarobba Shire Offices) & Lockup
- Memorial Hall (former Dungog Municipal Offices)

²³ *Dungog Chronicle*, 26/3/1958, p.1 & 29/3/1958, pp.1-2, 6-7.

²⁴ *Dungog Chronicle*, 30/4/1958, p.1 & p.4

²⁵ *Dungog Chronicle*, 11/8/1993, p.4.

7.2 Law & Order [maintaining and implementing criminal and civil legal processes]

A Gringai man named Charley informed the Rev Therkeld as they travelled to Dungog, where Charley was to be hanged for the killing of Fred Simmons, that he had been instructed to kill this shepherd and others by members of his tribe.¹ Charley, it seems, was upholding the laws of his culture and in doing so came in direct conflict with the new order and its laws that now dominated the valleys of what had been the lands of the Gringai.

This new order of the European settlers provided Dungog and Paterson with court houses from which magistrates administered the law as it related to convicts, free settlers and land grantees. They also, on occasion, attempted to fit the Gringai people within this system with limited success. This was a legal system designed to ensure that a labour force was kept labouring and in which a lost sheep could result in a flogging and a master could be criticised for being too easy on his convict charges.² Masters could also recommend tickets-of-leave and whether or not free passage for a convicts wife and children should be granted; though in 1827 Governor Darling removed this privilege as many masters refused to do so in order to retain good workers.³ Local landowners often acted as magistrates, with the proviso that they could not sentence their own convicts. In 1825, a scourger was appointed to Paterson (Old Banks) thus allowing local punishments to be handed out that, in addition to flogging, could include being sent to a work gang - with or without irons.⁴ In 1827, Paterson (Old Banks) also received a new lockup built for £95.⁵

Charles Boydeell on the Allyn River criticised a proposed new law that would limit punishments, as this would allow a servant to sin 'to the utmost limit of his tether'.⁶ Perhaps some did so. Convicts could also resist this control over their lives by setting fire to the barns and crops of masters they considered too harsh or unfair, though simple absconding was the most common form of rebellion, with one third of Tocal's convicts having done so at one time or another.⁷ Such absconders might live in the bush, become bushrangers, or pose as free men in a town, a practice made easier by many employers desperate for workers and often former convicts themselves. The Habouring Act, 1825 and Bushranging Act, 1830 were introduced to reduce this problem.⁸

Dungog received its own court house with lockup soon after the Court of Petty Sessions was established in 1833, and a barracks for mounted troopers in 1838 in order to control the many bushrangers that were escaping from the Australian Agricultural Company (AAC) lands to the east and making their way via Dungog to the Hunter Valley settlements. In 1836, John M'Gibbons was appointed to be 'the Watch-house Keeper, and Thomas Brown, holding a Ticket-of-Leave, to be Constable' at Dungog.⁹ Tenders were then called in 1837 for the erection of a Mounted Police Barracks and the Police Magistrate transferred from Port Stephens to Dungog.¹⁰ The first court house and lockup was on land now occupied by Dungog Public School and St Andrews Presbyterian Church. The barracks were placed on

¹ Threlkeld, "Mission to the Aborigines, Annual Report 1835," *Sydney Gazette*, 16/7/1836, p.2.

² Walsh, *Voices from Tocal*, p.42 & p.86. See also 2.2 Convicts.

³ Walsh, *Voices from Tocal*, p.87 & p.111.

⁴ Walsh, *Voices from Tocal*, pp.88-89.

⁵ Walsh, *Voices from Tocal*, p.96. For the move from Old banks to Paterson town see 4.3 Towns and villages.

⁶ Sullivan, *Charles Boydeell*, p.38.

⁷ Walsh, *Voices from Tocal*, p.97.

⁸ Walsh, *Voices from Tocal*, p.99.

⁹ *The Sydney Gazette*, 17/5/1836, p.2.

¹⁰ *The Sydney Gazette*, 16/9/1837, p.4 & 16/11/1839, p.4.

another hill dominating the town which, after the withdrawal of the troopers, was converted in 1849 into a new court house that continues to operate today.¹¹

The completion of these barracks and their subsequent occupation by troopers was felt to be a great improvement in the service, which seemed to consist of mostly escorting absconding convict workers to court. A service that the billeted and part-time police had done very inefficiently according to one writer, due to their preoccupation with other duties and tendency to do their escort duties at night, when absconders were prone to escape.¹²

That the threat from bushrangers could be quite significant is well illustrated by this report at the end of the 1830s of a gang on the Williams River:

The noted bushranger, Opossum Jack, with a band of ten armed and mounted marauders are on the Williams', and have plundered the residence of Mr. Chapman, of the Grange, near Dungog ... After possessing themselves of plate and other valuables, they left Wallaroba, threatening that if any alarm was given, they would return on a future day and make it worse for them. On leaving the Grange, they exultingly exclaimed that they would visit Mr. Cook, the magistrate, and serve out the settlers. On being apprised that mounted bushrangers were in the district, the police magistrate sent an express to Maitland, a distance of forty miles, for the mounted police, and to the credit of these efficient men, they were, in the space of nine hours, roaming the banks of the river ... The landed proprietors on the Williams' are in a state of the utmost alarm, and have a right to demand aid, that the cause may be removed.¹³

Law and order issues in the 1830s and 1840s on the Paterson, Allyn and Williams Rivers included dealing with the administration of the convict and the ticket-of-leave system, taking depositions, appointing and dismissing constables, sentencing cattle thieves, investigating 'Sly Grog' sellers and forgers, apportioning rewards to informers, and making appeals for troopers in the event of bushranger attacks. This was criminal law - civil law involved disputes between landowners, and investigating breaches of publicans' licenses.¹⁴ Levying fines and collecting fees were naturally part of this system, and in 1837 a total of £63/2/8 was collected in fines and £22/10/0 in fees for the October quarter at Dungog.¹⁵

General policing was handled by constables appointed by the Magistrates and for many years this was an ex-convict named Patrick Conway who Magistrate Cook reported gave 'good service in taking bushrangers and putting down sly grog shops'. Cook felt that his 1s per day pay should be increased.¹⁶ The job of these enforcers of the law was not a popular one and in 1847 it was reported that:

A mare belonging to the Chief Constable of Dungog, having on the 19th instant been maliciously stabbed by some person unknown; the Government have offered a reward of £10 for such information as may lead to their apprehension and conviction of the guilty parties or a conditional pardon of the person giving such information, should he be a prisoner of the crown.¹⁷

¹¹ *Maitland Mercury*, 14/2/1849, p.4.

¹² *The Sydney Gazette*, 31/3/1838, p.2.

¹³ *The Sydney Herald*, 9/8/1839, p.2.

¹⁴ Dungog Magistrate's Letterbook.

¹⁵ Cormack to Colonial Secretary, 1/1/1838 (Dungog Magistrate's Letterbook).

¹⁶ Cook to Colonial Secretary, 26/10/1837 (Dungog Magistrate's Letterbook).

¹⁷ *Sydney Chronicle*, 30/6/1847, p.3.

This same Chief Constable, Thomas Abbott, was afterwards dismissed in 1854 not long after having attempted to charge a local magistrate with being drunk and disorderly.¹⁸

From his appointment in 1834, Thomas Cook had been a paid Police Magistrate, as was the Magistrate at Paterson, though his fellow magistrates at Dungog acted voluntarily in that capacity. However in 1845, a government policy of gradual reduction in paid Police Magistrates and their replacement with unpaid local landowners acting as Justice's of the Peace, led to Cook too became an unpaid magistrate, despite local protests at this measure.¹⁹

This cost saving measure was still drawing complaints several years later when Christopher Lean wrote in the 1860s about the inefficiency of appointing unpaid magistrates.

Any hypocritical, sympathetic old rascal that appears before the Bench, either as a plaintiff or defendant that will bless your Honour's Worship will at once be proclaimed a "good old man" and may safely calculate upon having a verdict in defiance of evidence of Acts of Council.²⁰

Christopher Lean was himself appointed to the Bench in 1876.²¹

While Dungog was always well provided with police and court, other locations within the three valleys were less provided for. In 1856, for example, Clarence Town was without a lockup.²² The following decade, in 1863, four mounted troopers were stationed at Paterson, occupying 'miserable accommodation' 'in the loft over the Court-house'.²³ Clarence Town possibly acquired some constables at the same time, though Gresford, on the other hand, which at one point had two such troopers, had none in the 1860s, and the difficulties of dealing with crime in an isolated but self-reliant community are illustrated by one case at this time:

On Monday night last, Mr. Woodhill, licensed hawker, was staying at the Gresford Inn. During the evening he found a quantity of his goods had been stolen from his dray. On search being made by Mr. Woodall and the inmates of the inn, the goods were found, and a man by the name of "Lanky Ned" was taken in charge for stealing them. Lanky Ned was handcuffed, and shut up for the night in the inn, there being no police stationed at Gresford; however, in the morning Ned had made his escape; but the police stationed at Paterson were early made acquainted with the affair, and at once started for Gresford, and again apprehended Lanky, who was the same evening duly lodged in the gaol at Paterson, and will be brought before the bench to-day.²⁴

A court house built at Clarence Town in 1869 and a Police Station established in 1875 (rebuilt 1912). Police were also eventually stationed at Gresford when it received a Court of Petty Sessions which opened on 29th July 1883, with a lockup the following year.²⁵ Though not all were satisfied even then:

¹⁸ *Maitland Mercury*, 4/10/1854, p.2.

¹⁹ *Maitland Mercury*, 19/3/1844, p.S1.

²⁰ Lean, *The Lean Family History*, pp.62-63.

²¹ Lean, *The Lean Family History*, p.66, Letter from Colonial Secretary's Office, 4/10/1876.

²² *Maitland Mercury*, 15/1/1856, p.3.

²³ *Maitland Mercury*, 25/7/1863, p.6.

²⁴ *Maitland Mercury*, 22/7/1865, p.2.

²⁵ Sullivan, *Charles Boydell*, p.156.

The White Elephant. - Doubtless this name will strike the reader as being a rather strange one. When first we heard it we were at a loss to know the meaning of the same, but upon making inquiry it proved to be the name given to the "Gresford Court House." It is now nearly twelve months since this building was completed, and yet the old style of holding the sittings at Beattie's Hotel has been adhered to, and why? Because Government cannot afford to furnish the new building with the necessary furniture.²⁶

For a short time a District Court sat at Dungog, but over time the courts at Gresford, Clarence Town and Paterson have closed. That at Dungog remains an operating court and as such can claim to be the oldest such court house outside Sydney.

In a late instance of 'bushranging' the brothers Jimmy and Joe Governor passed through the Dungog Shire area on their extensive pursuit causing much local disquiet and the naming of Governor's Lookout in the present day Barrington Tops National Park.²⁷

Heritage Survivals

- Magistrates' Letterbooks, 1834 to 1851
- Various court houses and police cells
- Site of hangings (Dungog, Paterson)

²⁶ *Maitland Mercury*, 4/9/1886, p.12S.

²⁷ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 18/9/1900, p.7.

7.3 Defence [defending places from hostile takeover]

Dungog has been involved in defence in a number of ways. The local Gringai people defended themselves against the influx of European settlers and it seems against members of other tribes or clans on occasion. In addition, along with all of Australia, the residents of Dungog participated in assorted international wars, with many from the Dungog Shire district enlisting, and those who remained participating in a variety of support activities before, and commemorative activities afterwards.

At least two occasions of resistance with violence by the Gringai people as a result of the settlement of their valleys by Europeans are clearly recorded. The first, in 1834, was when a camp was attacked and one of the intruders speared, and the other in 1835, when a totem was violated, and those seen to be responsible were attacked and killed at Rawdon Vale just outside the present Shire boundaries. In addition, at least one retaliatory attack by Williams River settlers associated with the 1835 killings is rumoured to have taken place at an uncertain location in the Barrington Ranges just to the north of the Shire. Another possible massacre site at Black Camp is also spoken of locally, though with few details.¹

Conflicts between the Gringai people and other Aboriginal groups also took place within the European period, as presumably they had done previously. The journal of Charles Boydell records one such conflict.² In 1843, the 'Paterson' and 'Port Stephens' tribes are reported to have joined in a fight against those of 'Maitland'.³ In 1844, those of 'the Dungog and Gloucester tribes' joined in an attack on those 'of the Stroud and Booral tribes'.⁴ And again, in 1846, Dungog people are reported attacking those at Stroud.⁵

Regarding European settlers, mounted troopers were based for a time in Dungog at barracks that now form part of Dungog Court house. In 1842, the troopers at Dungog were one serjeant, two troopers and one dismounted trooper, with local landowner John Mackay supplying provisions at a reputedly high rate.⁶ While these troopers would have responded to any disturbances relating to the remaining original inhabitants of the Williams, Paterson and Allyn River valleys, their main role was to deal with absconding convicts and disturbances related to the newer inhabitants. However, on their withdrawal in 1848, many locals urged fear of attacks by 'natives' as a reason for their remaining:

Our mounted police have orders to proceed to head quarters at the close of the year, the station here being about to be broken up, ... This is much to be regretted, on account of the longing of our black neighbours for fresh beef.⁷

It is apparent that loss of cattle rather than threats to life was the main concern by the middle of the 19th century. Once any organised threat from the Gringai people had passed, the involvement of the people of Dungog district in defence relates to their support for the many international conflicts that Australia as a whole has participated in, including maintaining and training armed forces. The three valleys' involvement in such international wars actually

¹ See 2.1 Aboriginal.

² Sullivan, *Charles Boydell*, pp.216-217.

³ *Maitland Mercury*, 3/6/1843, p.2

⁴ *Maitland Mercury*, 13/4/1844, p.3.

⁵ *Maitland Mercury*, 21/10/1846, p.2.

⁶ *Australasian Chronicle*, 30/8/1842, p.2.

⁷ *Maitland Mercury*, 1/1/1848, p.2.

began with the first land grants, with many grants being made on the basis of service in the wars against Napoleon. Such grants at Paterson included Captain James Phillips (Bona Vista), Captain William Dun (Duninald), Lieutenant William Ward (Cintra and Clarendon), Lieutenant Commander Frederick Bedwell (Valentia), Captain John Johnston Cory (Vacy and Cory Vale) and in Gresford the Waterloo veterans, Thomas Rodwell and Thomas Handcock.⁸

The first war supported by those settled in the three valleys would seem to be the Crimean War with a patriotic fund in support of the war set up in 1854.⁹ The first war in which people from the three valleys participated directly, was the Boer War. Some of those returning alive received gold medals and some of those who did not were commemorated. Arthur Percy Briton Grey and Martin LG Grey, are commemorated in the gates of St Anne's Church, Gresford and Alexander Eagleton in the gates at Clarence Town Park.¹⁰

Previous to the First World War, a local private school in Dungog, Durham College, had maintained a horse troop reputed to be the only one in NSW at the time. Also around this time the military were anxious for a place to train, and a permissive occupancy was proposed of part of the Dungog 'Travelling Stock and Temporary Common'. A 'large sum of money' was proposed to be spent, some £109 for the 5½ acres.¹¹ This set up a rifle range on which shooting competitions were common.

It was WWI, or the Great War, which saw large scale participation on the part of the residents of the Dungog Shire district. As many travelled outside the area to enlist, it is difficult to know how many from the district enlisted. However 234 AIF members are recorded as having been born in Dungog, 60 in Paterson, 28 in Gresford and 52 in Clarence Town, as well as numerous others in the various settlements.¹² Not only did many enlist, but groups such as the Hands Across the 'C' and the Women's Patriotic Fund were formed to raise money and sent material to the troops. On their return, Returned Servicemen Clubs were quickly formed, as were Ladies' Auxiliaries - at Dungog known as the Wattle Club until 1967. In 1920, a Memorial Town Hall was built in Dungog and war memorials erected at numerous other locations.

Community groups commonly erected Honour Rolls to mark the names of those from their community who did not return as well as those who served that did come back. The dedication of one such Honour Roll in St John's Church at Vacy in 1918 is one of many:

The occasion was the important one of the dedication of an honour roll recently erected in the Church by the parishioners in memory of the men who have made the supreme sacrifice. The board, which cost £21, measures about six feet x two feet, is of polished cedar beautifully carved, is from Red Cross industries, Sydney, and is the work of returned soldiers. ... the wife of the senior churchwarden ... unveiled the tablet, which was covered with the Union Jack ... At the close of the service the congregation adjourned to the local School of Arts, where a reception was given ... and while refreshments were being partaken of, kindly provided by the ladies, short speeches were delivered ... A few musical items and recitations were given and a most enjoyable evening was brought to a close with the signing of the National anthem.¹³

⁸ Brouwer, *The Paterson at War*, p.2.

⁹ *Maitland Mercury*, 21/3/1854, p.1S.

¹⁰ Brouwer, *The Paterson at War*, p.3 & Hazell, *A Centenary of Memories*, p.22 [1902].

¹¹ A101; Rifle Range Dungog, 23/3/1907.

¹² Mapping Our Anzacs - <http://mappingouranzacs.naa.gov.au/map> (accessed, 4/4/2012).

¹³ Clements, *Vacy ... One Hundred & Eighty Years of History*, pp.42-43.

In Gresford, the gates of St Anne's Church has memorial plaques to two Boer War veterans. The Gresford School of Arts has a memorial porch, while specific war memorials and honour rolls were erected in various locations, such as Gresford Public School. The Honour Roll from the Lostock Public School has been transferred to St John's Church at Lostock. The CWA Memorial hall was built in 1954 and more recently, a cenotaph was erected in front of the School of Arts. In addition, the various RSL sub-branches of the district have collections of memorabilia from this and other wars.¹⁴

Clarence Town began with a memorial to the Boer War, then one to the First World War of a uniformed Digger that is now its central memorial, followed by a Second World War memorial playground. The WWI memorial was erected with community fundraising and, unusually for such memorials, was placed on private land when the community's chosen design was considered too grand for a small community. The Clarence Town community purchased a private easement and placed its favoured design on it. It was not until the 1980s that Dungog Council assumed ownership from the descendants. Since 1988, this memorial has been the venue for an Anzac Dawn Service.¹⁵

A Dungog Troop of the 16th Hunter River Lancers had been formed in 1909 and between the wars participated in many training exercises, including winning the Lord Foster Cup (for machine gun troops) in both 1931 and 1932. Gresford also seems to have had a Light Horse Troop.¹⁶

During WWII, participation was similar, with many enlisting and others forming support organisations. An aspect of this war, absent from WWI, was the greater participation of the 'home front'. This included troops being camped at the Dungog Showground, Paterson Park and other locations and many exercises taking place in the district. Local services were also required to help make armaments, such as garage workshops at Dungog and Paterson.¹⁷ In June 1942, a convoy of army jeeps went from Singleton to Dungog via the Barrington Tops.¹⁸ While in Paterson, an artillery range was set up (from which unexploded shells continue to be found), a substantial OPIT (observation pit) constructed, a pontoon bridge was flung across the river, and an air raid shelter was built in the early 1940s to protect school children in the event that the railway bridge at Paterson was bombed.¹⁹

Men in occupations that did not allow them to enlist were required to join the VDC (Volunteer Defence Corps), which included regular meetings and field exercises. Those at Paterson met in the Union Shed.²⁰ The possibility of a Japanese invasion led to some being appointed the job of driving cattle away should the need arise.²¹ While various facilities were seen as possible targets and a guard was put on the Bandon Grove Bridge and the local mounted police officer, Constable Jack Bell patrolled the pipeline. The dam was also patrolled, mainly by employees of the then Works Department. The authorities were very

¹⁴ Margaret Dent & Delma Lawrence, interviewed, 5/4/2012.

¹⁵ Interview with Ian Lyall, 28/3/2012.

¹⁶ Collison & Hancock, *Gresford 170 years*, p.6.

¹⁷ Brouwer, *The Paterson at War*, p.31.

¹⁸ Hartley, *Barrington Tops*, p.41.

¹⁹ Brouwer, *The Paterson at War*, pp.29-30, p.50 & *Maitland Mercury*, 5/3/2010.

²⁰ Brouwer, *The Paterson at War*, p.37.

²¹ Rex Kingston, Dungog Historical Society, Comments, p.4.

concerned about dangers to the water supply and the *Dungog Chronicle* came under the eye of the censor for referring to it in an article; the editor was warned.²²

After the Second World War further memorials were erected, including the Dungog Memorial Bowling Club and the Lych Gate at the Anglican Church. With an enlarged membership the Dungog RSL was able to raise funds to extend its Memorial Hall, eventually pushing out the Council offices to become the sole occupier.

Heritage Survivals

- Dungog Memorial Town Hall
- War memorials and Honour Boards
- Rifle range (Dungog)
- Air raid shelter (Paterson)
- Artillery range and OPIT (Paterson)

²² SP109/3; Miscellaneous Newspapers – Dungog “Chronicle”, Department of Defense, 8/2/1943.

7.4 Welfare [provision of social services by state or philanthropic organisations]

Helping others on an individual or social basis has always been an aspect of life within the area now covered by Dungog Shire. At first such services were provided on an ad hoc basis with numerous collections being organised to provide money and support for widows and others affected by death or natural disaster. The first organised welfare was directed at the Gringai people when blanket distribution was undertaken. Like much welfare in the 19th century, this is tinged with an aspect of virtue and reward. Over time a variety of organisations were founded to provide support on a more regular basis, particularly in the area of medicine and unemployment support. In more recent years, government organised welfare has reached into more areas, an extension that has seen many community organizations dwindle and expire, along with much local control.

The first provision of what can be considered welfare was the distribution of blankets to the Gringai people in the 1830s. Such distributions took place throughout the Williams Valley in 1837 and 1838, and included compiling lists of names along with some age and family details.¹ Magistrate Thomas Cook describes these blankets as a ‘comfort of the naked, houseless Blacks’ ‘during the inclemency of winter’.² The purpose of this blanket distribution from the Colonial Government’s perspective was detailed in a circular of 1837, which requested:

that you will give the preference to such Individuals as may have distinguished themselves by any good Behaviour,--marking the Conduct of those who may have evinced a disposition to be troublesome, by omitting the bounty to them ...³

For the Europeans in the early days of settlement, calling on the help of neighbours in time of need was the most common form of social service. Charles Boydell’s journal records his many visits to neighbours and his lack of hesitation in sending for help when occasion arose, such as when he found a hut ransacked and his neighbour ‘Townshend heading a party came’ on being sent for.⁴ In another incident, when he cut himself with an axe, Boydell rode to Townshend’s for help, arriving just before fainting due to loss of blood.⁵

Boydell, however, was a member of the landowning class. Thomas Cook, a landowner and magistrate faced a case of need for which he had no clear solution. Concerning a Mrs Parkes, Cook wrote: ‘what is best to be done for a woman in her destitute situation?’ All he could do was send her and her two children to Newcastle gaol ‘to await His Excellency’s pleasure regarding them’.⁶

Permanent organisations were rare and the calling of special meetings to make collections or organise such collections for a variety of purposes appears to have been the main method employed. Such collections raised money for both local and outside needs. Thus in 1843 a meeting was held at Stephenson’s Inn Dungog to collect funds to purchase a plate for retiring Magistrate Cook, and, the following year, a number of Ticket-of-Leave men took up

¹ Special bundles: Aborigines 1833-44: Papers dealing with the issue of blankets, and including returns of the native population in the various districts, Return, May 1837 and May 1838 - Upper Williams, Thalaba, Dungog. See also 2.1 Aboriginal.

² Cook to Colonial Storekeeper, 13/3/1837 (Dungog Magistrates’ Letterbook).

³ Circular, Colonial Secretary’s Office, Sydney, 1837.

⁴ Sullivan, *Charles Boydell*, p.26.

⁵ Sullivan, *Charles Boydell*, p.29.

⁶ Cook to Colonial Secretary, 6/6/1838 (Dungog Magistrates’ Letterbook).

a subscription for one of their own who had drowned in the Williams River. In 1846, there were collections for the Irish Relief fund and, a decade later, the Crimean War inspired a collection of subscriptions for widows and orphans, as did the Indian Mutiny Fund in 1858. When the U.S. Civil War devastated the Lancashire cotton mills, sympathy for the consequent unemployed led to further subscription appeals.⁷ The health needs of the district were always a concern and similar local committees and subscriptions were organised to provide doctors for the local districts, as did Gresford in 1888.⁸

The first permanent organisation to provide any kind of social support appears to have been the Oddfellows. The Oddfellows was founded in Sydney in March 1840 (though a 'Society of Odd Fellows' was donating money in 1837⁹), with others in other locations and colonies soon after, including a Newcastle Lodge by 1843 called the Union Lodge. These were linked to lodges in England such as Manchester Unity and were composed 'chiefly of the poorer classes' to amass a 'real and substantial amount of solid money ... for the noblest of all purposes – for the relief of suffering humanity'. The money collected into funds was paid out to members in 'sickness or distress', for funeral expenses and as lump sums to widows of members.¹⁰

Paterson had an Oddfellows lodge in 1845 and five lodges are reported in the Hunter by 1846.¹¹ In Dungog, a Good Samaritan Lodge opened in 1866, which did not thrive, and in 1874 the Star of the Williams Lodge was established.¹² Gresford's Oddfellows had their own hall by the late 1860s and Clarence Town also had a lodge well established by the 1880s.¹³

Concerns over health continued to grow and, by the end of the 1880s, those on the Williams River had begun to raise funds to establish a Cottage Hospital at Dungog.¹⁴

One, apparently unique instance, of welfare directed towards the Gringai people occurred on the Allyn River. By the 1880s, few members of the Gringai people seemed to have survived, but at least one small group that did, attracted the support of James Boydell, the son of Charles Boydell, an early settler on the Allyn River: '... Mr. Boydell, of the Paterson, and one or two others, have been looking after the blacks during the winter, by distributing blankets and clothes, obtained from the Government'.¹⁵ Boydell at one point describes his set up as a 'hospital'. The last of these surviving Gringai people seem to have moved to a mission at Singleton by 1911.¹⁶

Perhaps the first example of welfare intervention on the part of wider government occurred when children from urban slums were placed as servants or workers within Dungog district. By the end of the 19th century governments were acting to deal with child poverty and crime, and, as part of this, young boys and girls were sent to farms and rural families to provide them with apprenticeships and distance from urban vices. In the 1890s, Summer Hill School

⁷ *Maitland Mercury*, 1/4/1843, p.2; *Maitland Mercury*, 20/4/1844, p.3; *Maitland Mercury*, 14/10/1846, p.3; Sullivan, *Charles Boydell*, p.129 & p.139 & *Maitland Mercury*, 9, 16/8/1862.

⁸ Sullivan, *Charles Boydell*, p.162 & *Maitland Mercury*, 21/7/1888, p.4. See 3.11 Health.

⁹ *The Colonist*, 14 /12/1837, p.5.

¹⁰ *The Oddfellows' Magazines*, October, 1843, No.I, p.34, pp.37-38 & January, 1845, No.VII, p.2.

¹¹ *Morning Chronicle*, 29/4/1846, p.2.

¹² See 8.1 Social Institutions.

¹³ *Maitland Mercury*, 26/8/1869, p.2 & 26/10/1889, p.4.

¹⁴ See 3.11 Health.

¹⁵ *Maitland Mercury*, 10/6/1880, p.5.

¹⁶ See 2.1 Aboriginal.

near Vacy was reported as having 52 to 56 pupils, numbers boosted by the farmers having 'State school-boys'.¹⁷ There are also reports of girls boarded out in Dungog, and of a Vernon boy (a ship in Sydney Harbour housing 'orphan' boys) at Bendolba arrested, as well as of boys of similar origin whose circumstances were being investigated at Dungog and Paterson.¹⁸ In one case in 1916, a teacher at Glen William School reported abuse of these state wards, reports resulting in at least one child being removed.¹⁹

As well as the very young, the aged were early a target of welfare as the options were limited for those without family support. Dr McKinlay at Dungog had no local family and it was reported that: 'Poor old Dr. McKinlay is talking of going home to Scotland, he says he is heartily sick of Dungog as no-one visits him now, which I think is not to be wondered at, he is so deaf that no one can converse with him.'²⁰ As an aging person without relatives, Dr McKinlay's situation points up the lack of services for the elderly not provided by one's family. However, Dr McKinlay was not without financial means and was able to take up residence at a local boarding house and rely on his landlady to take care of him.²¹

For those lacking financial means in their old age government first began to be directly involved with the granting of an aged pension in 1901. Lacking the bureaucracy it has nowadays, a local committee at Dungog made up of the Police Magistrate, the doctor (also the Mayor) and a leading landowner, investigated the first applicants for an aged pension, whose names were then published in the local paper.²² In the aftermath of the Great War the plight of returned servicemen also attracted much support and a similar (though more private method), was also used to distribute repatriation services to ex-soldiers. These services administered Federal funds through a combination of the RSL and local committees. But much remained based on local fundraising rather than government monies and, during the 1920s and 1930s, when many itinerant workers were ex-diggers, the Dungog RSL would raise money through its annual 'Diggers' Ball' to enable regular handouts to be made.

When payments to unemployed or the dole began with the Great Depression, the use of local committees, as with the first aged pensions and the reparation funds, was not repeated. Instead the local police were relied upon to assess dole relief applications, including the organisation of 'work for the dole'. Details of these schemes are sketchy but it is known that Dungog received £500 in Commonwealth money in 1932 for 'the relief of unemployment'.²³ When the NSW Premier visited Dungog during an election campaign he claimed that there were only 30 unemployed in Dungog, 15 people were on 'Relief Works' and 15 on 'food relief', a reduction from 124 'people seeking work' from 1932. The Premier did not make clear the distinction between removing people from relief and their actually getting work.²⁴ The handing out of public money by any public servant is always problematic and, in that same visit by the Premier, three unemployed men in Dungog appealed directly to the NSW Premier against being denied dole funds by the local policeman due to their having frequented a pub for a drink. The Premier promised to look into the matter.²⁵

¹⁷ Ingle, *Summer Hill, Paterson Valley*, p.34.

¹⁸ http://www.dictionaryofsydney.org/entry/biloela_reformatory_and_industrial_school (accessed 20/2/2012), *Maitland Mercury*, 15/11/1890, p.7S, & *Sydney Morning Herald*, 24/9/1885, p.4.

¹⁹ Gorton, *Glen William Public School*, p.31.

²⁰ Lean, *The Lean Family History*, p.126, Christopher Lean to Thomas Lean, 9/8/1882.

²¹ Williams, *Ah, Dungog*, p.21.

²² *Dungog Chronicle*, 2/8/1901.

²³ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 17/6/1932, p.10.

²⁴ *Dungog Chronicle*, 14/8/1934. p.4.

²⁵ *Dungog Chronicle*, 14/8/1934. p.2.

The provision of public housing by the then Housing Commission resulted in some houses being built in Dungog in the 1950s. Even in this area the tendency for local community effort remained strong and in the 1960s the Dungog Lions also built houses to replace some destroyed by storm.²⁶

The provision of emergency services such as fire fighting, the bush fire brigade and the SES began as locally organised committees supported by community fundraising. While these services are still based on volunteers and community support, they are given much government funding along with an enhanced level of regulation and control.

While governments had always provided funds to local communities, this concept was raised to a new, and Federal level, by the Whitlam Labor Government of 1972 to 1975. The many new programs this government funded also raised local awareness of community needs, particularly in the area of services to the less well-off and the aged. Partly in response to this, in the 1970s the Dungog Shire Community Development Group was established and undertook an ambitious program of community based support for the aged of Dungog. The program for supporting the elderly of Dungog outlined by this group in 1975 included visiting and surveying 300 Dungog elderly, setting up a committee to undertake structural repairs of homes, using Lions and Apex to deliver free firewood, referring health problems to 'visiting Nursing Sisters', free shopping deliveries, provision of emergency numbers, providing emergency housing (this to non-aged in need also), a newsletter and a flashing light program.²⁷

However, the days of the community alone providing this level of support were ending and there is no evidence that this program was implemented to any great extent. Instead, in 1978 application began to be made to government to provide funding for aged care facilities. This was done with a great deal of community involvement and backing that raised much of the funding which after a decade or so of lobbying saw the establishment in 1989 of a Dungog nursing home. This was at the time an innovative mix of a 20 bed hostel and a 20 bed nursing home. Further beds have since been added, including a dementia wing in 2001, as well as more self-care units built separately. The 1990s also saw an expansion in Federal funding for aged care services that aimed at maintaining the aged in their homes for as long as possible. This resulted in the establishment of Dungog & District Neighbourcare which has provided many new services as well as taken over some older ones such as Meals-on-Wheels. While Dungog-based, all these aged services cater for the whole of Dungog Shire.²⁸

By the 1980s the first funded 'community centres' were established, along with paid community workers. Beginning in June 1982, the Dungog Information and Neighbourhood Centre (DINS) began in the Baby Health Centre with \$100 from the Shire Council and \$15,000 from YACS (Youth and Community Services). Mostly volunteer based, its aims were announced as: the dissemination of information, bringing those with similar needs together, filling gaps in services, acting as a meeting place, and as a location for visiting professionals. Early programs included: Dungog Adult Education, support for the unemployed (under the 'wage-pause', CEP and JET initiatives), advice and information, outreach at Clarence Town, Gresford and Paterson, and talks on drugs and mental health.

²⁶ *Dungog Chronicle*, 27/5/1981, Lions 25th Anniversary Supplement.

²⁷ Dungog Shire Community Development Group, 15/9/1975.

²⁸ Ray Neilson, interviewed 26/4/2012.

An early survey on the need for emergency accommodation illustrates the division between the self-help attitudes of much of the Dungog Shire district's history, and the approach to community welfare the government funded community worker model represented. Attitudes expressed by this survey were that Dungog takes care of its own, and that as everybody is related to everybody else, outside help was unnecessary. The *Dungog Chronicle* letters to the editor produced sometimes heated debate on this issue.²⁹

Efforts to help the unemployed were a major concern of the early to mid-1980s with subsidised positions a popular means. Grant applications for a Tourist Information Officer for DINS and an Historical Researcher for the Historical Society made. This tourist information aspect of DINS was a major role until the Visitors Information Centre was established with a Tourist Information Officer employed by August 1985. In 1985, the Dungog Shire Council also purchased new premises for the community centre and began to seek government funding for the employment of its own Community Worker.

By the 1990s, Adult Education courses were also popular and covered a wide range, such as: a natural foods course, typing, exercise, accountancy, patchwork & embroidery, Basic English, Basic Maths, homemakers, wood craft, painting & drawing, mud brick building, beekeeping, and wine appreciation. Asthma Support and a Mothers' Support were also established, and Meals-on-Wheels begun, as well as the holding of unemployed workshops, special care workshops for volunteers, sustainable living and land use workshops, and displays of art works.

By the 21st century programs such as Vacation Care and Youth Worker funding were a regular part of the welfare situation in Dungog district. Also a regular feature by this time was Emergency Relief funding, a Free Legal clinic, Tax Help (for those on low-incomes - \$20,000 then \$35,000, now \$50,000), Family Counselling, the Internet and the hosting of a Centrelink Agency. All of these continue today as a major component of services in the renamed Dungog Community Centre. Clarence Town also obtained a Centrelink agency in 2004.

Welfare of another kind is also provided by the Glen William based but Australia-wide, Good Samaritan Donkey Sanctuary. Operating for over 20 years this donkey rescue organisation takes in sick and neglected donkeys from around Australia.

The Dungog district also continues to have welfare related activities independent of the government funded services; the Salvation Army ran an op-shop for a time, and the Anglican Church in Dungog established an op-shop in the 1990s and St Vincent De Paul another in 2011.

Heritage Survivals

- Oddfellows Halls (Paterson, Dungog)
- Lions Club (Dingadee) & Housing Commission Houses

²⁹ Dungog Shire Community Centre archives.

8. Cultural life

8.1 Social Institutions [provision of social activities]

For much of the European history of the Dungog Shire area, there has been a strong link between social activities and fundraising for community benefit. Thus the various social institutions would devote much of their time to organising balls, dances, sports events and other activities, not only for their own sake but with the aim of raising funds for specific community needs. This was particularly the case both when most social activities were of a community nature in pre-TV days and when many community needs were supplied by the community itself with limited government contribution or control.¹

Thus an organisation established with a welfare, religious or educational aim would regularly organise a ball or sports day. The Oddfellows, which aimed at providing support for families in time of illness, would hold sports events; the RSL would put on Diggers' Balls to raise funds to assist unemployed ex-diggers; and the various churches sponsored balls, flower shows and bazaars for their general needs, or, in the case of the Catholic Church, for their schools. In later years, the various service clubs - Lions, Rotary, and Apex - organised annual carnivals and other activities to fundraise for the Ambulance Service and other community services.²

For the initial generation of European settlers, the first social institutions were the churches, with any social or fundraising activities organised outside these done so on an ad hoc basis. Soon, however, more permanent groups began to be organised, the Oddfellows and Masons being among the earliest. The Grand United Order of Oddfellows was a self-help organisation based on contributory insurance and was a predecessor of private health insurance. Both the Oddfellows and the Masons had a semi-religious or ceremonial aspect that was intended to help members to bond and trust each other. Another, in a similar vein, established later was the Order of Buffaloes.

The first Oddfellows' Lodge, the Loyal Paterson Union Lodge, was established at Paterson in 1846 with a hall erected in 1865. A hint at the now obscure social divisions that then existed is provided by an account of the failure of the Paterson Oddfellows' efforts to establish a Literary Institute:

We regret to learn that this institute has ceased to exist. Very few of the Oddfellows joined the institute, not apparently having much taste for literary matters, whilst the public refused to become connected with it, in consequence of its being connected with the Oddfellows: hence its downfall.³

In Dungog, a Good Samaritan Lodge opened in 1866, however, this first effort appears to have failed and was replaced in 1874 by the Star of the Williams. This Lodge erected a hall in 1893, which is now the music room of Dungog Public School.

The Oddfellows were big on display and sports, as a description of their 1883 event shows:

¹ See 7.3 Welfare.

² See Appendix 3: Social Institutions.

³ *Maitland Mercury*, 4/8/1868, p.3.

The 'Star of the Williams Branch of the Grand United Order of Oddfellows' held its ninth anniversary meeting in Dungog on Wednesday 3rd November 1883 with athletics at the racecourse and a ball that night. Some 700 people attended with beer and light refreshments, a shooting gallery, games of chance and 'swings for the ladies'. The day was begun with a procession starting at 10 am from the lodge room that proceeded through the streets accompanied by the local brass band of 12 to the racecourse. Events included foot races, including a handicap race with a watch as prize worth 8 guineas, a sack race, throwing a cricket ball at a wicket (only two could hit it twice out of three), and horse jumping. Some ten pounds was the profit on the day, laid towards the building of an Oddfellows Hall.⁴

In addition, a ball was held at the School of Arts and a dinner for a dozen or so members was held the following Friday night at Joseph Robson's Settlers Arms Hotel.

In Dungog, the Masonic Lodge Hiram No. 213 of the United Grand Lodge of NSW was first formed in 1894. However, by 1899 this first attempt had failed, and the charter was surrendered. A second attempt in 1905, proved more lasting, with the foundation stone of a new temple laid in 1908, and opened the following year. Membership of this lodge was at its peak in 1921 due to dam construction, but declining membership resulted in the last meeting of Lodge Hiram, Dungog occurring in October 2006. The building now serves as the Anglican Church Hall.⁵ A Masonic Lodge was established at Gresford in the former Butter Factory building until the 1950s.⁶

In another interesting glimpse into social perceptions, in 1859 the Oath taken by Colonial Police Officers was specially amended to state that:

... I do not now belong to and that I will not while I hold the said office join subscribe or belong to any political society whatsoever or to secret society whatsoever unless to the Society of Freemasons or of Oddfellows. So help me God!⁷

While these two 'secret societies' were accepted by the Colonial Police, the Catholic Church was less sure. For this, and other reasons, the Catholic (Irish) community had organised its own mutual support organisation known as the Hibernian Australasian Catholic Benefit Society (H.A.C.B.S.) or Hibernians. Branches existed at both Dungog and Gresford, with that at Gresford winning a shield at one point for having the highest membership, while that in Dungog organised an annual Christmas present for the nuns of the local convent. Like the Oddfellows and the Masons, the Hibernians enjoyed using ceremonial regalia and that of Gresford is now in the keeping of the community.⁸

Schools of Arts were part of a general education movement of the late nineteenth century and became essential for any progressive town's image. In May 1860, a Reading Room was established at Dungog with members' subscriptions purchasing periodicals such as the *Illustrated London News*, the *Mechanics Journal* and *Punch*. This group evolved into the Dungog Mutual Improvement Association which began in 1864 for 'mental culture and social recreation', with politics and religion to be avoided. By 1872, the Mutual Improvement Society was calling itself a School of Arts and had a permanent library and reading rooms in a cottage, but needed to hire rooms when special events or debates took

⁴ *The Maitland Mercury*, 11/10/1883, p.2.

⁵ Williams, *Ah, Dungog*, p.57.

⁶ Margaret Dent & Delma Lawrence, interviewed 5/4/2012.

⁷ *Maitland Mercury*, 31/12/1859, p.5.

⁸ Ingle, *Valley Echoes*, p.49.

place.⁹ In 1876, a wooden School of Arts building was erected, with athletics games on the racecourse the following year raising funds to add a ceiling to its roof. The building was used for balls and entertainments as well as debates and lectures. Though, in 1880 it was complained that few lectures took place in the School of Arts and it was a mere reading room.¹⁰ In 1883, it was the library that was complained of and it was hoped money would not be diverted to unnecessary building.¹¹ This was not to be the case, as in 1897 the wooden building burned down after the adjacent building caught fire. The present School of Arts building was erected in 1898. The former building had been complained of as unworthy of the fast growing Dungog, while the new building was described as a 'fitting building for this wealthy and progressive town'.¹²

While the library continued to be patronised, by the early 20th century a leading activity appears to have been billiards, apart from the use of the rooms by various committees to meet, including the Wallarobba Council and the organising committee for the opening of the railway in 1911. Balls and race meetings continued to raise funds throughout the 1920s and 1930s, but, by the 1950s, the building had become vacant. In the 1960s, after a period of neglect, the building was restored, its two billiard tables sold and many of the books distributed to other libraries. Taken over by the Dungog Historical Society in 1968, this former School of Arts building now houses the Dungog Museum.¹³

A School of Arts was also erected in Gresford in 1890, raising money for its activities with bazaars, debates and maintaining a temperance bar during activities.¹⁴ In 1927, the School of Arts committee sold this Gresford building to the Church of England for use as a Parish Hall and built a new building at East Gresford which opened in 1930.¹⁵ Many other smaller centres also erected halls that were proudly styled 'School of Arts' such as that at Vacy (1901) and Bandon Grove (1930). However, these operated largely as community halls, which is not to say they were not social institutions in themselves; acting not only as venues for events but generating social activities through their community based committees.

The people of Vacy seem to have used their old school building for dances and concerts but by the end of the 19th century this was in poor condition. Fundraising, including a picnic, enabled a pressed tin-lined School of Arts to be erected in 1901. The debt on this building was not finally paid off until after 1919, with the Vacy Girls' Patriotic League and their bazaar making a great contribution. The Vacy School of Arts was the venue for fundraising not only for itself, but for many local causes with card parties, dances and bazaars raising money, such as the cricket club and the local church. The building had a local committee and, with men away during the First World War, the Vacy Girls Patriotic League organised many functions. After the war, a new room to accommodate a billiards table was added. Billiards was still being played there in the 1930s, although in many places (perhaps with more alternatives forms of entertainment), the popularity of billiards had by then faded. Over the years changes occurred, new books were bought for the library and electric lighting via a generator (until mains power arrived in 1937), was shared with the church next door. In the mid-1990's the hall was taken over by the Dungog Shire Council, mainly to lessen the

⁹ Hunter, *Dungog School of Arts Centenary 1898-1998*, pp.5-6.

¹⁰ *Maitland Mercury*, 14/8/1880, p.2S.

¹¹ *Maitland Mercury*, 28/1/1882, p.4.

¹² Williams, *Ah, Dungog*, pp.49-50.

¹³ Williams, *Ah, Dungog*, p.50.

¹⁴ Sullivan, *Charles Boydell*, p.167 & p.171.

¹⁵ Collison & Hancock, *Gresford 170 years*, p.95.

increasing burden of insurance and, in 2001, the centenary of the Vacy School of Arts was celebrated.¹⁶

While usually classified as employee organisations, the broad interests of Farmers and Settlers Associations and Junior Farmers' Clubs across a range of issues and their local focus within the three valleys justifies their inclusion as social institutions. Once agricultural workers began to organise themselves into unions, this in turn inspired the formation of the Pastoralists' Union in 1890, which became the Graziers' Association after 1917. This was largely an organisation of the larger landholders, while that for the smaller landholders, the Farmers and Settlers Association, had its beginning with the Free Selectors' Association of Wagga in 1875, followed, in the 1880s, by many others, including the Hunter River Farmers' Association, which united in 1893 as the NSW Farmers and Settlers Association. The concerns of this association included farm finance, weeds, land reform, land tax, local government, fire fighting, education, young farmers, and water conservation. In 1928, an offshoot of the Farmers and Settlers Association were the Junior Farmers Clubs.¹⁷

There was a Graziers Association at Gresford, and Farmers and Settlers Associations at Hilldale and Dungog. Also branches of the Agricultural Bureau and Junior Farmers Clubs for educational purposes existed at such places as Eccleston, Fosterton and Hilldale.¹⁸ In the 1960s, dairy farmers attained a body of their own with the Dairy Farmers Association. However, by the end of the 20th century all of these separate groups had come under the NSW Farmers' Association. In the 1980s, Landcare groups were also set up to assist landholders better care for their land.¹⁹

The Farmers and Settlers Associations had a wide brief, and, in 1909, the Underbank branch of the Farmers and Settlers Association resolved to urge the government 'in view of the recent sad shooting accident, in which the young man Stanton lost his right arm, and of the many other gun accidents among boys', of 'the necessity of introducing legislation prohibiting the use of firearms by boys under 18 years of age'.²⁰

Towards the end of the 19th century in Dungog, an Agricultural Society (the Williams River Agricultural and Horticultural Society) was established, the purpose of which was to showcase the agricultural produce of the district. The Dungog Show became over the years highly popular, incorporating agricultural produce with entertainments and competitions of various kinds. Gresford established its own show in 1927.²¹

Few institutions existed solely for the purpose of organising social activities, the exception being perhaps the Wattle Club (although this was technically an auxiliary of the Dungog RSL). Originally set up by women who had, during the First World War provided support for the troops overseas in organisations such as the Red Cross and the Comforts Club, the Wattle Club after the war worked in association with the newly formed RSL.²² From that time until the 1980s (it formally changed its name to the Dungog RSL Ladies' Auxiliary in 1967), this women's group was responsible for the organising of all suppers and associated

¹⁶ Clements, *Vacy ... One Hundred & Eighty Years of History*, pp.124-129. Also see 8.4 Leisure.

¹⁷ Lawrence, *The more they remain the same*, pp.5-23.

¹⁸ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 13/12/1937, p.7.

¹⁹ Archer, Social and environmental change as determinants of ecosystem health, pp.154-155.

²⁰ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 13/8/1909, p.4.

²¹ Collison & Hancock, *Gresford 170 years*, p.101. See 3.4 Pastoralism.

²² Michaelides, *Growing up in Dungog*, p.29.

support for the many balls, dances and other events put on by the RSL itself. A similar group operated in Gresford which continued in existence until 2012.²³ Such organisations gave women a platform through which to fundraise and participate in the community. Events were often organised by two committees, such as the celebrations for the coming of the Railway in 1911, with a male committee organising the event itself, and a women's committee organising the food and dinner.²⁴

In addition to RSL associated groups such as the Wattle Club, numerous women's groups existed which have made a range of contributions to the Dungog Shire district. The Wattle Club, for example, organised numerous 'suppers' at dances and balls such as the annual Diggers' Ball put on by the RSL. These dances were major fundraisers for many causes, including for the expansion of the RSL's Club rooms so that it could hold dances in-house. A number of Country Women's Association (CWA) branches were founded, and those in Gresford (1936) and Dungog continue today, while that at Vacy closed in 2007. Red Cross Societies were formed during the First World War and many continued until recent times; that of Gresford lasted for 46 years and that in Dungog until 2006. A variety of Women's Guilds have been and are associated with the Church of England and other Churches.

The CWA in particular was a major community organiser and fundraiser with, for many years, a focus on setting up and supporting Baby Health Centres in their areas.²⁵ The Gresford CWA, for example, began with an 'American afternoon tea' to provide 'Xmas cheer' for the local hospital. Over the years it held balls, provided lunches at the Gresford Show, sent parcels to troops, and maintained a rest room. In 1953, the Gresford CWA, like many, formed a 'Younger Set' to allow a new generation to participate in slightly different ways.²⁶

In years after the First World War, the foundation of the Returned Sailors and Soldiers Imperial League (now the RSL) created a new institution that was to have a major impact over the years. Initially the focus of the RSL was on providing a meeting place for ex-diggers and assistance to those needing to fit back within post-war society, particularly those with injuries. As time went on, the plight of ex-diggers passing through the Dungog district looking for work inspired the annual event known as the Diggers' Ball. But it was in the aftermath of the Second World War, with an influx of new members, that the RSL began to organise dances and rodeos as fundraisers for its expansion. An expansion that saw it take over the Municipal Council offices within the Memorial Town Hall it had shared since 1920, and found the Dungog RSL Club in 1956. Further space for dances, bars and poker machines were added, until the RSL Club now dwarfs the activities of the RSL Sub-branch itself.²⁷

The smaller centres of the three valleys found it more difficult to maintain RSLs. That at Clarence Town lasted only from 1950 to 1960, but a commemorative wall is maintained at the Clarence Town Bowling Club and the Clarence Town ANZAC committee is very active.

The 1960s and 1970s saw a great rise in interest in local history and the founding of Historical Societies and associated museums. These societies have helped find a new use for

²³ *Dungog Chronicle*, 28/3/2012, p.4.

²⁴ Dungog Historical Society, *One Hundredth Anniversary of the Maitland to Dungog Railway, 1911 to 2011*, p.7.

²⁵ See 3.11 Health.

²⁶ Dent, *History of the Gresford Branch of Country Women's Association*, pp.14-18.

²⁷ *Dungog Chronicle*, 12/7/1995, p.1.

a number of buildings such as court houses and Schools of Art that were standing empty. In 1968, the Dungog Historical Society was formed and now occupies the former Dungog School of Arts. Both Paterson and Clarence Town Historical Societies also have museums and these are in the former court houses of these towns. At first people who were also active in other areas of the community – local councilors, doctors, etc., served on these historical societies, as they did on the Parents & Citizens, but gradually, as in other areas, these organisations began to attract only those with special interests.

As the Masons, Buffaloes and Oddfellows declined the so called service clubs developed in the 1950s and 1960s – Rotary (1950), Lions (1956) and Apex (1966). These clubs provided outlets for community activities across a range of areas. In 1956, the Dungog Lions Club held its first meeting with an aim to ‘take an active interest in the civic, commercial, social and moral welfare of the community’. By 1957, Lions were planning Lions Park, delivering Sunday papers to Dungog Hospital, and staffing the Dungog control point of the round Australia Ampol Trials. Over the years Lions’ projects have included the replacement of two storm damaged homes in the 1960s, an annual ball at Clarence Town, a TV for the hospital, numerous fundraising events, a car for the district nurse, and, in 1975, a ‘Race Meeting and Trotting Gymkhana’.²⁸ Gresford did not share in the rise of the service clubs; it briefly had an Apex Club but never a Lions or Rotary.²⁹

In recent times the maintenance of the many, now aging, community halls has become a social activity in itself. The desire to preserve a piece of heritage has led many in the Wallarobba area, for example, to put much effort into ensuring the Wallarobba Hall has sufficient funds and activities to maintain its existence. Bandon Grove Hall, with its older community more intact, has continued to maintain its hall with less desire for innovative activities.

As older organisations of long-standing such as the Red Cross have ceased to operate, newer arrivals have begun to form new groups. In Gresford, the Gresford Community Group was formed in the 1990s and has sponsored such events as the Gresford Annual Billy Cart Derby; GAPS – Gresford Amateur Performing Arts Society - has also been operating for a similar length of time. In Dungog, the Film Society has also operated since the 1990s and, in 2011, the Friends of the James Theatre was created to help maintain Australia’s oldest purpose-built Picture Theatre. In 2011 a community radio was established – Radio Dungog – which has begun to allow a range of local groups and individuals to reach out to their community.

Heritage Survivals

- Oddfellows’ Halls (Paterson & Dungog)
- Masonic Lodge (Dungog)
- Paraphernalia of organisations, banners, etc.
- Club minutes and records
- Present and former meetings rooms
- Schools of Arts buildings

²⁸ *Dungog Chronicle*, 27/5/1981, Lions 25th Anniversary Supplement.

²⁹ Margaret Dent & Delma Lawrence, interviewed 5/4/2012.

8.2 Religion [system's of faith and worship]

Little is known of the religious beliefs of the Gringai people. The actions of Charley in obeying orders to kill those who had violated a totem can be characterised as part of a system of belief, but beyond that little can be said.¹ Ceremonial meetings took place either at specific times or, as with one account of a 'karabari' [corroboree] in 1845 or 1846 by 'the blacks of Dungog', for special purposes, such as the appearance of a comet.² A 'keeparra' or initiation ground was also reported near Gresford.³ Other beliefs associated with natural events are only hinted at, as when a European traveller reported that as 'my mate, a darkey, occasionally saw a tree struck by lightning as he passed along, he got very frightened, and would not speak when spoken to'.⁴

The systems of faith brought by European settlers into the valleys of the Williams, Paterson and Allyn Rivers in the 1830s are similar to those that have evolved throughout Australia. Each of the four main villages – Dungog, Clarence Town, Gresford and Paterson - has a similar distribution of Churches and denominations, while the various smaller settlements are usually represented by one denomination or perhaps a Union Church that encompassed at least two and sometimes three of the Protestant denominations.⁵ The only Catholic Churches outside the four villages were at Brookfield, mid-way between Clarence Town and Dungog, and at Summer Hill, near Vacy. Similar to schools, a new wave of local church building occurred at the end of the 19th century as dairying increased the population density, then as average family size shrank and dairying declined, many of these churches closed.⁶

The first public buildings in Dungog and Paterson were the court houses and, for many years, these buildings served on Sundays for the religious services of the many Christian denominations which the mainly British and Irish settlers divided themselves into. The exception to this seems to have been a Church of England chapel at Tillimby, an estate on the Paterson River, which pre-dated the court houses. This was later referred to as the 'Ranters' Chapel' - presumably when Wesleyans or others were using it.⁷ One by one the denominations constructed a church for themselves where numbers and funds allowed, or continued to use private homes or other facilities whenever a minister or priest visited. Nearly all of the communities remain in their first built church or are in updated buildings erected on or near the same site. An exception to this is the Catholic community at Dungog who began across the Williams River in Sunville Chapel, then switched to a site in Dowling St for many years and then moved again to another Church built in 1930 in Brown St. The move to Brown St was by way of consolidation, as the St Joseph nuns had long had a convent and school there.

The lands for these various churches were either acquired by government grant, by community fundraising, by donation from a member of the congregation, or by a combination of these. Each of these denominations, if they had a resident minister or priest, also acquired or purpose-built a rectory, manse or presbytery, usually close by the Church.

¹ See 2.1 Aboriginal.

² Fraser, *The Aborigines of NSW South Wales*, p.23.

³ Mathews, 'The Keeparra Ceremony of Initiation', pp.320-340.

⁴ *Maitland Mercury*, 20/4/1872, p.5.

⁵ The indenture of Bandon Grove Union Church of 14/10/1889 reputedly included five protestant denominations: Presbyterian, Church of England, Wesleyan, Congregational and Baptist. Though it is not known if all made use of this facility. Dungog Historical Society, Comments, p.5.

⁶ See Appendix 4: Churches.

⁷ Gent, *Gostwyck Paterson 1823 to 2009*, p.5.

Church of England (Anglican)

A chapel on the Tillimby estate near what is now Paterson seems to have been the first Church of England place of worship. It was built as early as 1820 and used as a school as well as being referred to as the 'Ranters' Chapel', presumably because it was used by the Wesleyans at a later date.⁸ In 1836, the settlers of Paterson opened a subscription list to raise funds for a church. The Church of England Archdeacon subscribed £100, as did many living on the Williams River, some of them Presbyterians.⁹ The church itself was not built until 1845, when it was consecrated as St Paul's by Bishop Broughton the day after he did the same for St Mary's-on-Allyn, the church built on the Boydell estate for William Barker Boydell's wife, who was also Bishop Broughton's daughter.¹⁰ Stained glass windows donated by his family commemorate the Rev Jennings-Smith, St Paul's first Rector and main contributor to the building of this church.¹¹

In 1849, a meeting was held at Dungog Court House attended by William Tyrrell, the new 'Lord Bishop of Newcastle', to organise the building of a new church in Dungog. At this meeting the proposed £450 cost of 'a beautiful Church, drawn by Mr Blackett' was subscribed or otherwise guaranteed.¹² Services had previously been held in the old court house and a weatherboard hall built in 1842. In 1861, Bishop Tyrrell dedicated the new church in Dungog.¹³ The building of a parsonage was also mentioned and one seems to have existed by 1859, as a bazaar was run in July that year to liquidate a debt of £150 for repairs and alterations to it.¹⁴ The present rectory was built in 1912.

Clarence Town received its first Church of England church in 1858 only to see it destroyed in a storm in 1868. Another was built in 1872 and a third has been standing since 1898.¹⁵ The total communities covered by the Church of England Rectors, in addition to Clarence Town and Dungog, were Glen William, Bandon Grove (sharing a Union Church with the Wesleyans), Bendolba, Thalaba and private houses in Fosterton, Main Creek and Wallaringa. The Rector also often visited Upper Chichester and Wangat (New Park). Like many professionals in a rural district, for his trouble payment was often in kind rather than cash.¹⁶ Clarence Town separated into its own parish in 1919.

Gresford's St Anne's Church of England appears to be the third church on this site, the first two having been of wood, with one erected about 1843 and then Christchurch in 1856. This was replaced by the present St Anne's in brick in 1898, with the foundation stone of the 1856 church re-used in the current church.¹⁷ This 1856 foundation stone was intended for a brick church but a sudden dispute over the land title saw it remain under the floor of a wooden church instead until its discovery over 40 years later.¹⁸ As with many foundation stone laying ceremonies, this was an opportunity to gather more funds to continue the building: 'The building is to be of brick, and replaces the wooden structure which has stood for the past fifty years. A collection was taken up at the stone-laying, about £100 being

⁸ Clements, *A History of St. Pauls Church Paterson*, p.2.

⁹ Sullivan, *Charles Boydell*, p.50. *Sydney Herald*, 21/1/1836 & 9/5/1836, p.4.

¹⁰ Fibbens, *Wood of the Cranes*, passim.

¹¹ Clements, *A History of St. Pauls Church Paterson*, p.11.

¹² *Maitland Mercury*, 10/10/1849, p.3.

¹³ Williams, *Ah, Dungog*, p.56.

¹⁴ *Maitland Mercury*, 29/7/1859, p.3.

¹⁵ Gorton, *Glen William Public School*, p.14.

¹⁶ Loban, *A Substantial Handsome Church*, p.21.

¹⁷ Sullivan, *Charles Boydell*, pp.131-132 & Collison & Hancock, *Gresford 170 years*, pp.32-34.

¹⁸ *Maitland Mercury*, 12/11/1898.

subscribed towards the building fund.’¹⁹ The Gresford Parish was created in 1884 and consisted of St Anne’s, Gresford; St Mary’s on Allyn, Allynbrook; St Paul’s, Eccleston; and St John’s, Vacy.²⁰

At Vacy a slab church was erected in 1849 on land donated by Gilbert Cory and used for some 40 years before a new brick church, St John’s, was built on a new site and opened in 1887.²¹ At Eccleston, a combined church and school room was established in 1853 until a new church was built in 1924.²²

Throughout the 19th century and well into the 20th, the Church of England, which officially became the Anglican Church in 1981, used a ‘pew rent’ system as part of its efforts to raise money. Families which could afford it paid a regular rent to the Church and, in return, their name was placed on certain pews reserved for their exclusive use. The system did not always work smoothly with Christopher Lean agreeing to pay his rent only: ‘When Smith ceases to occupy my pew, and pays for the time he has used the occupation of it. I will pay the balance, but not until then.’²³

Presbyterian

The earliest Presbyterian Church - or ‘Scots Kirk’ - St Ann’s, was opened in 1842 at Paterson; the Rev William Ross servicing an area that at that time included Dungog and Clarence Town.²⁴ By 1850, the Free Church or the Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia, following on from the so called ‘Disruption of 1843’ (when 450 Presbyterian Ministers in Scotland broke away from the Established Church of Scotland), was organising itself in Australia. As part of this, the newly licensed Rev Mr Sherriff was appointed in 1851 as minister of this Free Church, ‘to labour in Dungog, Stroud, Clarence Town and adjacent localities’, which included the Allyn River.²⁵ The Rev Mr Sherriff took up residence at Clarence Town and, in 1855, the foundation ceremonies of two churches were held; one at Clarence Town, called Chalmers’ Church, and one at Dungog known as John Knox’s Church.²⁶

The John Knox Church at Dungog was one of two Presbyterian churches which had their foundation stones lain in that town in 1855. The second represented the Established Church of Scotland and was sited where the present St Andrew’s stands. With few ministers available by 1880, this long term difficulty saw the two church congregations in Dungog merge into the present Presbyterian Church, a merger which preceded that in Scotland by 20 years. It was perhaps as a result of this expanded single congregation that a new manse was purchased (1889) further south along Dowling St, with land adjoining this new manse intended as the site of a new (neutral?) church. However this project did not eventuate and instead the new church was built next to the old one in 1904.²⁷

¹⁹ *Australian Town and Country Journal*, 26/6/1898, p.7.

²⁰ Clements, *A History of St. Pauls Church Paterson*, p.9.

²¹ Clements, *Vacy*, pp.37-40.

²² Collison & Hancock, *Gresford 170 years*, p.189.

²³ Lean, *The Lean Family History*, p.58. This was perhaps around 1868.

²⁴ Archer, *Australia’s Oldest Presbyterian Church? St. Ann’s Paterson*, pp.2-3.

²⁵ *Maitland Mercury*, 12/4/1851, p.3.

²⁶ *Maitland Mercury*, 22/9/1855, p.2. The Reverend Thomas Chalmers was a contemporary leader of the Free Church movement in Scotland, while John Knox was a prominent leader of the past.

²⁷ *Maitland Mercury*, 22/9/1855, p.2 & Williams, *Ah, Dungog*, p.55.

In Paterson, St Ann's remained the only Presbyterian Church but it seems that, rather than found a Free Church, those sympathetic to this side of the split moved - perhaps some to Barrington just outside the present Dungog Shire boundaries. Certainly by the 1870s, St Ann's Church was being described as neglected, though sufficient support was found to restore it in 1878 thanks to the Rev Gibson of Dungog who also took charge of St Ann's at this time.²⁸ After going through further periods of neglect and revival, St Ann's Church is now privately owned. In Clarence Town on the other hand, the Chalmers' Free Church burned down at one point and was replaced, unusually, not with another brick Church, but with a wooden one - St David's. This church, after having been moved from its original location, is the current Presbyterian Church of that town. The original manse at Clarence Town remains as a private home.²⁹

In contrast to the uniformity of most of the Dungog Shire district, when it comes to religion, Gresford is the only town without a Presbyterian Church. It did, however, have prominent members of the community who were Presbyterians, such as Alexander Brown of 'Glenthorne', Allynbrook, and 'Caledonian Balls' were regularly held.³⁰

Catholic

A Catholic Chapel on the Williams River at 'Sunville' at Dungog on land donated by Joseph Fitzgerald is mentioned in 1840, and, also in 1840 (on the Paterson River), the Sacred Heart Church was built at Summer Hill. St Patrick's at Clarence Town was erected in 1856, St Helens at Gresford in 1867, then St Killian's at Brookfield in 1879. In 1860, the Dungog Parochial District included Wallarobba, Gloucester, Stroud and Port Stephens, while the later Parish of Gresford covered the Paterson and Allyn Rivers, and also Glendonbrook.

The first baby baptized a Catholic at Dungog was in 1836 by Father J Watkins. This was when the nearest church was in East Maitland where priests were based. The Sacred Heart Church at Summer Hill was originally established in 1840 on land donated by local Catholics, Edward Kealy and Richard Clark; Kealy's house having previously been used as a Mass Station. This church was reputedly only the third Catholic Church to be built outside Sydney: 'At Paterson there is also a wooden chapel, roofed and a very excellent building, cost £150.'³¹ In 1850, there is a reference to this as the Guardian's Angel Chapel, though later it is the Sacred Heart. In 1913, a new brick church was opened at Summer Hill, besides which the old church site's foundations are still to be seen.³²

By 1839, the Dungog congregation was 80 with two Mass Stations. After 1840, when Magistrate Cook refused the use of the Dungog Court House to Catholics, Sunville Chapel was used across the Williams River from the town and it was perhaps here that Bishop Polding said Mass when he visited Dungog in that year.³³ By the late 1850s, the court house was again being used, and the building of a larger church planned, bricks prepared and some £336 raised, but nothing was done.³⁴ By 1867, the Bishop felt that Dungog Catholics had a reputation for being 'troublesome' and at least one priest had left them, supposedly because

²⁸ *Maitland Mercury*, 8/8/1878, p.6 & Archer & Sullivan, *A History of St Ann's Presbyterian Church Paterson*, p.57.

²⁹ Ian Lyall, interviewed 28/3/2012.

³⁰ Margaret Dent & Delma Lawrence, interviewed 5/4/2012.

³¹ *Australia Catholic Directory*, 1841 quoted in Ingle, *Summer Hill, Paterson Valley*, p.18.

³² Ingle, *Summer Hill, Paterson Valley*, pp.21-23.

³³ Cantwell, *St. Mary's*, pp.7-10 & *Australasian Chronicle*, 15/10/1840, p.2.

³⁴ *Maitland Mercury*, 19/8/1858, p.3; *Dungog Chronicle*, 18/9/1903.

they did not support him. Perhaps they had a case, with the money they had previously raised being sent to Sydney and then used to build a church at Morpeth, among other things. The Bishop had to promise the return of the money and more from a special fund.³⁵ It was not until 1870, that St Mary's Catholic Church was built at Dungog, though with no priest provided until 1875.³⁶ The Catholic community also benefited by the work of a Mr Beardsmore, for a time Clerk of the Court at Dungog, who purchased several land parcels in the town and donated them to the Catholic Church on various conditions.

After a period using another building, the Edmund Blackett designed St Helen's Catholic Church was built at East Gresford in 1867 on land and with £100 donated by James McCormack. McCormack's wife's name was Ellen, and there being no St Ellen, St Helen was the nearest choice to please this patron. Despite its church, Gresford district did not get its own parish priest until the 1890s with the Parish of Gresford (Paterson, Gresford, Summer Hill) formed in 1892.³⁷ It was then that further fundraising was required to establish a presbytery. This presbytery housed, from the 1964 until 1978, Sisters of St Joseph who conducted a 'Motor Mission' to the children of the remoter settlements before it became the Gresford Community Health Centre in 1980.³⁸

Shortly after the Dungog and Gresford Churches, another church was built at Brookfield named St Killian's (an Irish Missionary Bishop martyred in Germany in 689), with that district's many German families in mind. Despite these new churches, due to the scattered nature of the Catholic community, Mass Stations were common. These would be visited several times a year, and included Pine Brush, Sandy Creek, Tabbil Creek, Bendolba, Fosterton, Monkerai, Wallarobba, Welshman's Creek, Weismantels, and Limeburners Creek. They were attended by 40 to 50 people, with Mass, a sermon, then breakfast 'under the trees'. Mass stations and regular visits by a priest did not end with the 19th century, and in the late 1930s Mass was being said in the Community Hall at Martin's Creek once a month.³⁹ While not a religious ceremony, horse races held on St Patrick's Day at Tabbil Creek in later years, raised money for the Dungog Presbytery.⁴⁰

The 1870-built St Mary's at Dungog was replaced in 1933 with the present St Mary's Church in Brown St, closer to St Joseph's school and convent. Unremarkable from the outside, the J P Gannon designed St Mary's has a beautifully curved wood panelled ceiling that suggests a dome and gives the interior a basilica-like impression. Beside the church, is a small cairn of bricks from the original Sunville Chapel, and adjoining the church is the Presbytery, which replaced the Dowling St Presbytery in 1956. Joseph Fitzgerald and his wife are commemorated in a stained glass window at the entrance end of the church.⁴¹

At Clarence Town the first St Patrick's Catholic Church was erected in 1863, though there is reference to an earlier chapel.⁴² This was replaced by a new St Patrick's built in 1892.⁴³ At Paterson, a Catholic Church was not erected until St Columba's was built in 1884, with a

³⁵ Cantwell, *St. Mary's*, pp.11-12.

³⁶ *Maitland Mercury*, 22/4/1869, p.1; 18/10/1870, p.2 & Cantwell, *St. Mary's*, p.13.

³⁷ Ingle, *Summer Hill, Paterson Valley*, p.21.

³⁸ Collison & Hancock, *Gresford 170 years*, pp.110-114.

³⁹ Ingle, *Valley Echoes*, p.57.

⁴⁰ Cantwell, *St. Mary's*, pp.13-15.

⁴¹ Williams, *Ah, Dungog*, p.46.

⁴² *Maitland Mercury*, 21/10/1862, p.2.

⁴³ *Maitland Mercury*, 2/7/1892, p.7S & 17/11/1892, p.6.

porch and sacristy added in 1926.⁴⁴ All of the Dungog Shire District Catholic Churches remain today, with the exception of St Killian's, which closed in 1982 and is now converted to tourist accommodation.

Wesleyans, Baptists, Congregationalists

For the Wesleyan Church, visiting preachers provided services, beginning on the Allyn River from 1843 and gradually extending over the range to the Williams River.⁴⁵ There may have been a chapel at Eccleston as early as 1844 that was damaged by floods in 1875.⁴⁶ Certainly a Wesleyan chapel was erected at Dungog in 1853. Dungog's first resident preacher was the newly arrived Rev William Clarke, described as a 'zealous little Welshman'.⁴⁷ He was soon followed by a second resident minister, the Rev Vanderkiste, who is famous for becoming lost for six days in the Allyn ranges in 1858, about which he wrote a book entitled, *Lost - but not for ever*.⁴⁸ The Rev Vanderkiste presented his rescuers with bibles, one of which is now in a Maitland Museum. By this time, Dungog was the centre of a Methodist circuit that included the Paterson and Allyn Rivers and settlements far up the Williams River. In Clarence Town, the Methodists appear to have shared a chapel with the Baptists and Congregationalists for a time in what has been the Anglican Hall since the 1930s.⁴⁹

With numbers small and divisions between protestant members of the same geographically isolated communities considered slight, many communities agreed to share their churches or even to build what were generally called Union Churches. In 1862, the Baptist minister was able to use the Church of England Church at Glen William when he visited.⁵⁰ Union Churches allowed ministers of the differing protestant denominations to attend on alternate Sundays. Dungog boasted its own Wesleyan Church, as did Bandon Grove in the 1850s, but Union Churches were used at Bandon Grove (after 1889) and Underbank. Elsewhere, such as Chichester or Bendolba, services were held in private homes or schoolrooms.⁵¹ In the case of the Hilldale area, this co-operation included the Presbyterians, Baptists and Anglicans, though this last dropped out soon after the church was built.⁵²

One group that did not share this Protestant ecumenicalism was reported by the Rev Carruthers to be a Barrington River community of 'Scotch' whose 'elder folk spoke Gaelic almost exclusively'. This community preferred to welcome a Wesleyan minister to any representing the Presbyterian Church of NSW, even contributing to his 'stipend'.⁵³

Congregationalists did not at first have a church within any of the towns but did have them at Eccleston, Lostock, Underbank and Salisbury. Much work in this area was done by the Rev Williams who helped establish churches, and where no churches were established, regular meetings would take place such as at Upper Allyn, Carrabolla, Chichester and Bingleburra. In 1882, the Congregationalists at Eccleston raised £200 to guarantee the first 12 months stipend for a minister. A church was officially established in 1884 in a former Wesleyan chapel and by 1886 a manse was built. A new church building was erected in 1895, and by

⁴⁴ Ingle, *Valley Echoes*, p.54.

⁴⁵ Uniting Church, Dungog, *Gateway to the forests and faith*, p.17.

⁴⁶ Collison & Hancock, *Gresford 170 years*, p.183.

⁴⁷ Uniting Church, Dungog, *Gateway to the forests and faith*, p.14.

⁴⁸ Uniting Church, Dungog, *Gateway to the forests and faith*, pp.9-11.

⁴⁹ Ian Lyall, interviewed 28/3/2012.

⁵⁰ *Maitland Mercury*, 15/11/1862, p.7.

⁵¹ Uniting Church, Dungog, *Gateway to the forests and faith*, p.15.

⁵² Sippel, *Hilldale Union Church 1899-1999*, pp.10-11.

⁵³ Uniting Church, Dungog, *Gateway to the forests and faith*, p.15.

1904 a membership of 40 was recorded. In 1914 a new manse was erected, and in 1930 the John Hopson Memorial Church Hall was opened. In 1920, Congregational services were held at Eccleston, New Park, Munni, Salisbury, and Underbank. Since 1964 there has been no resident minister, and in 1968 the Congregationalists combined with the Anglicans of St Paul's. The Eccleston Church closed in 2006.⁵⁴

A Congregational Church was also erected at East Gresford in 1903 and thanks to the locally born N C Parish becoming a minister, services at Gresford, and fortnightly at Salisbury and Underbank continued into the 1990s.⁵⁵

Another church that benefited from the work of a local as minister was the Thalaba Baptist Church. Founded in 1869 as the Majors Creek Baptist Church by the work of local farmer turned preacher Isaac Brewer, it was also called the 'Church in the Wilderness', and replaced a farmers' building that had been in use until then. This church was replaced in 1881 and again in 1913 with the one now known as the Thalaba Church; a small extension was added in 1950. From this base, eight mission stations were recorded in 1887 within a 25 mile radius, including Munni, Bandon Grove, Big Creek and Wangat. The cemetery associated with this church is the only such Baptist cemetery in NSW.⁵⁶

Fundraising and management

Community fundraising for these buildings was always essential, despite some support from a Church's hierarchy or wealthy individual Church members on occasion.⁵⁷ Once built, a building had to be managed, and in Hilldale the Union Church management committee meetings took place on the 'Saturday nearest the full moon' at 5 pm, though later meetings were held in daylight hours to save on lamp oil.⁵⁸

In addition to buildings, ministers and priests needed to be supported and it was perhaps referring to the 1870s that a Wesleyan minister reported the sustenance of preachers consisted of 'pumpkins and the affections of the people'.⁵⁹ A common event to be organised was the farewell to a preacher as these came and went over the years.⁶⁰

It was also common for a member of the community to donate memorial gates. St Paul's at Eccleston had gates presented by J M Sivyer in memory of his parents, and the Congregationalist Church, also at Eccleston, had gates in memory of the Rev Williams.⁶¹

Sectarianism

As in the rest of Australia, a major line for many years was drawn between the Catholic community and those of the various Protestant Churches. This sectarianism was often hidden below the surface and just as often ignored in business relations and practical affairs, as opposed to family or cultural ones.

⁵⁴ *Education in Eccleston, 1867-1967*, pp.19-20, Collison & Hancock, *Gresford 170 years*, pp.185-186, *Dungog Chronicle*, 26/11/1920, p.2 & McClure, *A Brief History of Congregational Work in the Valleys of the Allyn, Paterson and Williams Rivers*, p.4.

⁵⁵ Collison & Hancock, *Gresford 170 years*, p.60 & McClure, *A Brief History of Congregational Work in the Valleys of the Allyn, Paterson and Williams Rivers*, p.5.

⁵⁶ Garland, *Thalaba Baptist Church 1869-1994*, pp.1-28.

⁵⁷ See 8.4 Leisure.

⁵⁸ Sippel, *Hilldale Union Church 1899-1999*, p.13.

⁵⁹ Uniting Church, Dungog, *Gateway to the forests and faith*, p.14.

⁶⁰ Sippel, *Hilldale Union Church 1899-1999*, p.13.

⁶¹ Collison & Hancock, *Gresford 170 years*, pp.186-187.

The contradictory or at least overlapping nature of this division is difficult to pin down but can be hinted at. In 1840, for example, the Dungog Magistrate Thomas Cook reportedly refused Catholics the use of the court house as well as created a controversy when he dismissed two of his Catholic constables, and when advertising for more announced that 'none but protestants need apply'.⁶² Yet in the same year when Bishop Polding toured through the district he stayed at the 'mansion of W. F. Mackay, Esq.', a prominent Protestant, and at the Mass he celebrated, not only some 70 Catholics, but many 'respectable Protestants' were also present.⁶³

More than a generation later in Clarence Town, a similar case of bigotry and opposition to bigotry can be seen:

A STORM IN A TEA-POT. - From what we have heard the denizens of the locality in and around the quiet little town of Clarencetown have been in a state of agitation over the fact that the master of their public school is an adherent of the Roman Catholic denomination. The master in question, Mr. Forest, is spoken highly of as a gentleman who minds his own business and troubles himself but very little about the creeds of others. If others had done the same we think the muttering of this petty little storm might, with advantage to all concerned, have not been heard.⁶⁴

Around the same time occurred another example of both tolerance and bigotry in Protestant/Catholic relations in Gresford when the wife of the new Anglican minister, attended the St Helen's Catholic Church bazaar. This example of intra-sectarian cordiality was promptly denounced by an extreme example of anti-Catholic bigotry in the Sydney based *Protestant Standard*. Although defended in the *Maitland Mercury*, the controversy greatly upset the unhappily named Rev Priest.⁶⁵

Another indicator of this tension just below the surface of society are the many accounts of the funerals of prominent people in which emphasis was placed on people from all the community attending. Similarly when reporting various Catholic activities in small communities, *The Catholic Sentinel* would also stress the co-operation of Catholics and non-Catholics in their organisation.⁶⁶

While sectarianism is usually seen in terms of Catholic versus Protestant Churches, there was also some level of tension between the Protestant sects. Though again the degree of this is difficult to determine. An example from Dungog at the end of the 19th century was:

The METHODIST says that the Church of England clergyman at Dungog appears to be much concerned about the presence of Wesleyans in his parish; nearly the whole of his "Church News" for September bearing on the sins of these schismatics.⁶⁷

New Churches

By the 1870s, most of the main churches were established, but the renewed growth of the farming districts as dairying expanded in the 1890s led at first to new schools and then to the

⁶² *The Sydney Gazette*, 5/11/1840, p.2.

⁶³ Kenny, *A History of the Commencement and Progress of Catholicity in Australia*, p.190.

⁶⁴ *Australian Town and Country Journal*, 25/8/1883, p.15.

⁶⁵ Sullivan, *Charles Boydell*, pp.161-162.

⁶⁶ Ingle, *Valley Echoes*, p.58.

⁶⁷ *Australian Town and Country Journal*, 27/10/1894, p.8.

building of new churches. In 1899, Union Churches were established at Munni and Hilldale, and within the Church of England, St Paul's was established at Underbank in 1901, St James in 1903 at Wallaringa and another in 1905 at Melbury near Salisbury.⁶⁸

A relative newcomer to Dungog Shire was the Salvation Army, which has established itself a number of times. They were reported in Clarence Town as well as Dungog and probably visited others locations as well. The Salvation Army was a radical and noisy group in its early days and many complaints were made against their tendency to indulge in outside band playing.⁶⁹

In 1977, most congregations of the Congregational Union of Australia merged with all Churches of the Methodist Church of Australasia and a majority of Churches of the Presbyterian Church of Australia to form the Uniting Church in Australia. Those congregations that did not join the Uniting Church formed the Fellowship of Congregational Churches or continued as Presbyterians. In 1988, this Congregational Fellowship began new services in Dungog for a time, held at the Doug Walters Pavilion.⁷⁰

The most recent addition to the religious mix of the three valleys is the Seventh Day Adventist Church, which first arrived in the district with the conversion of a farming family in the late 1930s. This family subsequently moved into Dungog and by 1942 the Adventist community numbered from 15 to 20 people, meeting in private homes and public halls, including the Church of England Hall, for many years. Additions to the community were mostly from new arrivals in the district. In 1979, a purpose-built Church was erected to which a hall was added in 1990. The Salvation Army also used this venue for ten years from 1996 when it re-established itself in Dungog. Since that time, like many other churches within the three valleys, membership has declined and nowadays ten or more people worship together in this Brown St church each week.⁷¹

The Christian denominations have been central to much of the cultural life of the Dungog district, though a slowly fading one. Symbolic of this has been the on-going resistance to any major organised activities on a Sunday. The first official breach in this ban occurring in 1957, when sports were allowed on Sundays after 12 noon.⁷² Of greater impact has been the gradual decline in people willing to be ministers and priests, with the result that many of the Churches no longer have resident ministers or priests and rely on regular visits, shared arrangements or even community ministers.

Heritage Survivals

- Church buildings (two Blackett designed)
- Sites of former churches, (Sunville, Chalmers, Summer Hill)
- Former Manses (Clarence Town, Dungog)
- Vanderkiste bibles
- Memorial gates
- Baptist Cemetery, Thalaba

⁶⁸ Loban, *A Substantial Handsome Church*, p.26-27, Sippel, *Hilldale Union Church 1899-1999*, p.3, p.10.

⁶⁹ *Maitland Mercury*, 12/12/1885, p.16S & 19/4/1890, p.3S.

⁷⁰ *Dungog Chronicle*, 4/5/1988, p.3.

⁷¹ Glynn Hefren, interviewed 23/4/2012.

⁷² *Dungog Chronicle*, 3/4/1957.

8.3 Domestic [creating, maintaining, living in and working around houses and institutions]

For much of Dungog's history, domestic life meant women working at home with perhaps the assistance of servants, also usually women. Associated with this was the building-in of servants' quarters in some homes or as separate accommodation in others. Kitchen gardens, house pumps, chicken runs and perhaps the keeping of a cow in a nearby paddock were all features of domestic arrangements. Men on the other hand generally worked outside the home, either in separate locations or out in surrounding paddocks. Exceptions to this, until relatively recent times, were doctors who, as general practitioners, would set up a surgery or clinic as part of their own home to which patients would attend.

Just as accommodation types varied, so too did domestic arrangements. For those without a family, domestic arrangements ranged from simple slab huts to barracks to bush camps. Temporary camps were also used when large numbers of workers entered the district, as when the railway line was being built from around 1910 to 1913 through Paterson and Dungog and on to Taree. For those in family circumstances, domestic arrangements could also consist of simple slab huts with minimum furnishings or range up to the relatively elaborate furnishings of homes supplemented by servants of the late Victorian and Edwardian era.

For those on farms, or even within town on larger lots, vegetables and chickens, or perhaps a milk cow, were essential elements of domestic arrangements which provided a steady flow of food despite low cash incomes, as well as extra money through the selling or bartering of eggs and perhaps butter. In addition to vegetables, the preferred cereal was always wheat, but maize was the more reliable crop and for those who could not afford it when the wheat crop was poor, maize in the form of hominy [a kind of porridge made from cracked corn] was used.¹ One old timer remembers farmers reduced to 'homony' in hard times such as when floods washed pumpkins down off the farms.²

Despite slow travelling times and the relative rarity of trips into town, isolation for those on properties was lessened by the gradual establishment of regular deliveries of bread, groceries and meat. Indian hawkers travelled around isolated properties with cloth for the always homemade clothes, often taking eggs and chickens, and sometimes butter instead of money.³ The town stores would supply other goods, and with motor vehicles, delivery services became more common. It also became common for the carrier of the milk cans to take a variety of essentials on their runs.

However, such arrangements could be less than satisfactory, as Basset D'Arcy Dickson, school teacher at Summer Hill near Vacy describes in 1936:

There are no shopping facilities. With the exception of the grocer who calls once a week no trades people come this way. We have to depend on milk lorries to bring bread, meat, papers, etc., these they leave on the road nearly half a mile from the school.⁴

An important aspect of domestic arrangements was the washing and presentation of clothes, a feature highlighted at the Dungog Agricultural Show when among the show prizes was one

¹ *Maitland Mercury*, 16/10/1847, p.2.

² *Dungog Chronicle*, 9/3/1926.

³ E. M. Bird in *Allynbrook Public School, 1869 – 1969*, p.7.

⁴ Ingle, *Summer Hill, Paterson Valley*, p.36.

for the best 'ironed white shirt' - presumably a man's shirt.⁵ Another feature of domestic arrangements was the focus on the kitchen as the main gathering place and the reservation of a front parlour for special, often rare, occasions. The origin of the kitchen as the centre of domestic arrangements lies partly in the practice of many older homes to have detached kitchens. With most work being done in this separate area it was natural for family members to gather there. By the turn of the century, kitchens in new houses were built-in and those of older ones incorporated into the main house.

The contents of a typical home at any one period are difficult to ascertain. Homes varied from slab huts with dirt floors to brick-built mansions with elaborate wooden fittings, and the contents of such homes would have been equally varied. From the sale of the household goods of a middling farm property on the Allyn River in 1874, a glimpse of internal domestic arrangements can be obtained. The household contents of this farm with 20 dairy cows and 20 fat pigs were:

Large Dining Table, 3 Parlour Tables, Bedsteads, Toilet Tables, Washhand Stands, Chests of Drawers, Cheffonier [a kind of sideboard], splendid Eight-day Clock, Pictures, Glass and Crockery Ware, Cooking Utensils, &c, and other articles too numerous to particularize in an advertisement.⁶

A more vivid picture is provided by a memoir of family life in an average home within Dungog Shire district in the years just before the First World War. This recounts a typical large family in which the older children moved out early to make way for the younger ones. The domestic routine consisted of doing chores – milking, wood chopping, collecting chips – walking long distances, going to the Convent School because it was closer, being barefoot to save shoes even in winter frost, finishing school at 13 or 14, a dining room for visitors only, selling of all butter and eggs, with eggs a treat only if sick, a separate kitchen, camp oven, kerosene tins for water, three kids on a horse, all sharing a bed (crying if sleeping alone), corn porridge with brown sugar and cream for breakfast, bread and dripping with salt and pepper, punishments – spanking, locked in room, no tea, no play – sewing on Sundays (if Methodist), washing up in a tin dish, cups on separate hooks and plates on rims in a Welsh Dresser, scrubbing floors with a brick, euchre at night (disapproved by Methodist mum), a cup of tea before bed at 8pm, Saturday night bath night (tub on floor, sharing the water with a fight to be first), Saturday shopping, shops open till midnight (8pm other days), games such as rounders, hopscotch, marbles, the dog, sewing dolls clothes, having the dressmaker stay a week to make a special dress, staying the night at neighbours' if caught in the rain, and patterned wallpaper on walls covered over each year (once a snake was caught between the layers).⁷

For one girl, growing up on a property at Salisbury in the 1940s, chicken was a treat at Christmas only, with most meat provided by a home-killed cow that was fresh at first and salted for many months thereafter. Rabbits trapped by herself, or parrots shot by her brothers for soup, supplemented this low protein diet. The skins of her rabbits would be taken by her father to Paterson and provided pocket money. Once a fortnight a horse and cart was sent up the valley by a Dungog-based store that would sell groceries. Bread and soap, however, were

⁵ Strachen, et al, 'Susanne and Elizabeth', p.128.

⁶ *Maitland Mercury*, 11/6/1874, p.1.

⁷ Michaelides, *Growing up in Dungog*, pp.3-14.

made by her and once a week the horse was hitched to a sled and the clothes taken down to the river for washing.⁸

For the moderately wealthy and the wealthy, servants were a general aspects of domestic arrangements before the First World War. This meant in grander homes, rooms specifically built for such people; rooms that often did not allow direct access to the main part of the house and rooms that were even left unrendered so as to show the essential inferiority of that room (person).⁹ Often servants were girls from city institutions sent to rural locations in order to get them away from the 'temptations' of urban vice.¹⁰

The separation of the male and female sphere in domestic arrangement had one consequence in that it made it difficult for women to attend to the shopping, as men usually controlled access to the means of transportation. A solution, until the rise of the two car family, was late night shopping, usually on a Friday or Saturday night. Late night shopping was in fact seen as 'evil' by some and made necessary only by the inability of many women to leave home during the daytime.¹¹ The early closing movement was not only a trade union movement, but partly a moral one, based on the idea that women should not be out late mixing with all sorts; whatever the reasoning, late-night shopping remained in Dungog until at least the 1950s.

Home based work for those not on farms was a rarity in domestic arrangements, the notable exception being doctors. Before the development of separate medical clinics, GPs would usually see patients in a 'surgery' located in part of their home. Dungog has at least two examples of houses purpose-built with the requirements of doctors in mind.

Technical developments had a great impact on domestic arrangements with the renovations at Rocky Hill undertaken by Ernest Guy Hooke demonstrating what such developments meant in the early years of the 20th century. A windmill to lift the underground tank water, the air gas plant (based on acetylene), and sewerage made it 'one of the most up-to-date residences'.¹² These developments were soon to be superseded by the coming of electricity and other changes that had a great impact on the domestic sphere.

Water tanks and easier access to water cut down on the amount of time it took to wash sheets and do various chores, just as it made possible personal washing more than once a week if desired. The gradual adoption of the telephone changed the nature of domestic arrangements for the elderly and the sick. Those who could afford it had hired live-in nurses as carers for their elderly and sick, and these were now replaced by the ability to phone for assistance that could arrive quickly by car when needed.

Of even greater domestic impact was the rise of such household machines as the refrigerator and the washing machine. Electricity or bottled gas replaced the wood fired stove, and also reduced the need for chopping wood. All these were billed as labour saving devices and mirrored the decline in servants as the growth in industrial jobs opened up preferred employment for those who had previously had little option but to become domestic servants.

⁸ Rita Bosworth, interviewed 13/3/2012.

⁹ Williams, *Ah, Dungog*, p.16 & p.71.

¹⁰ http://www.dictionaryofsydney.org/entry/biloela_reformatory_and_industrial_school

¹¹ Caroline Chisholm, *Sunbeam*, 23/2/1861, cited in Turner, *Catholics in Australia*, p.196.

¹² *Dungog Chronicle*, 8/1/1915.

After these technical developments the next great change in domestic arrangements was the fall in the average number of children in a family and the growth in the number of working women. These changes began to take place in the late 1960s and most rapidly throughout the 1970s and 1980s.

Heritage Survivals

- Remains of house gardens, vegetable patches
- Site of railway camps
- Servants rooms
- Doctors surgeries
- Household items
- Underground tanks
- Remains of air gas plants

8.4 Leisure [recreation and relaxation]

Little is known of the specific customs or favoured places of the Gringai people but Charles Boydell, who settled on the Allyn River, reports seeing paddy melon hunts in which Gringai boys drove the animals out of the bush and any game speared was cooked and eaten immediately 'with great delight'.¹

European settlers within the Dungog Shire district have indulged in a diverse range of leisure activities that began with horse racing but soon included hunting, cricket, and polo. Fashions in leisure and sport that developed somewhat later include women's cricket, tennis, swimming, golf and water skiing, as well as excursion boats down to Newcastle. Many of these more organised forms of leisure can be classified as sport.² Leisure activities, apart from those classed as organised sport, ranged from drinking to pigeon shooting, ploughing matches, billiards, euchre, gambling (legal and illegal), debating, reading, attending balls and dances, annual picnics, skating, attending bazaars and flower shows, listening to bands, boat trips, swimming, water skiing, fishing, motor touring, camping and attending concerts, theatricals and the moving pictures.

An early leisure activity reported in Dungog was viewing the 'Flying Pieman' who came to Dungog in 1848.³ William Francis King was an eccentric character, made so reputedly as the result of a romantic tragedy, who specialised in various pedestrian associated feats (such as walking continuously for several days), as well as making rambling speeches and selling pies. Based mainly in Sydney, he visited the Hunter Valley and in 1848 made an extended stay in Dungog.⁴ Similar entertainments that involved people gathering in the streets as spectators were the 1845 Boxing Day amusements put on by Stephenson, the publican of the Dungog Inn, or those organised by the owner of Finch's Royal Hotel, which featured the sending up of some sort of balloon.⁵

That drinking as a form of leisure appeared with the first Europeans (particularly Europeans of British origin), is not to be doubted. This is a circumstance reinforced by the establishment in the 1870s of an Abstinence Society and, in the beginning of the 20th century, of a Temperance Hotel, as well as the holding of numerous temperance meetings in between.⁶ The temperance movement was part of an Australia wide anti-drinking movement popular in the late 19th and early 20 century, and the presence of such meetings does not imply that this leisure activity was excessive in the Dungog district or, from the following extract, on the Upper Allyn either:

In the course of the last few years, the temperance movement has made great progress in the upper parts of the Allyn, Williams, and Chichester rivers, owing to the exertions of the Rev. R Williams, who some five and a-half years ago took up his residence on the Allyn river, at Eccleston and commenced a work of evangelical and temperance reform.⁷

While drinking was a leisure activity, so might be attendance at a temperance meeting for those with few other forms of entertainment, as the report of this same meeting asserts:

¹ Transcript a1604003, Journal of Charles Boydell, 1/3/1830. See also 3.13 Environment Cultural landscape.

² See 8.5 Sport.

³ *Maitland Mercury*, 1/3/1848, p.2 & *The Australian*, 3/3/1848, p.3.

⁴ Williams, *The Flying Pieman*, pp.1-2 & p.14.

⁵ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 23/12/1845, p.1 & *Maitland Mercury*, 17/1/1861, p.3.

⁶ Hunter, *Wade's Corn Flour Mill*, p.25 & *Ah, Dungog*, p.17.

⁷ *Maitland Mercury*, 12/10/1889, p.7.

Meetings are held from time to time on the different parts of the above mentioned rivers, at which addresses, dialogues, and recitations on temperance are given, which are well attended by young and old, and are of a highly entertaining and instructive character.⁸

In Dungog too, the 'good templars' or the I.O.G.T. (Independent Order of Good Templars) would participate in their temperance with a picnic followed by concert. In 1885, the Dungog lodge was reported to have had about 100 members.⁹

Reading was another form of leisure much indulged by some. In May 1860, a Reading Room was established with members' subscriptions purchasing periodicals such as the *Illustrated London News*, the *Mechanics Journal* and *Punch*. This group evolved into a Mutual Improvement Society and by 1872 was calling itself a School of Arts. It had a permanent library and reading rooms.¹⁰ A library associated with the School of Arts continued in Dungog until at least the 1950s with fees varying for those living in town and out of town. Paterson also early had a School of Arts and in 1885 reported that it had a library of 835 volumes, an increase of 77 on the previous year.¹¹

In addition to reading, the giving of lectures on various topics for a charge was also a popular form of both entertainment and fundraising. In the late 1850s, for example, a series called the 'Dungog Lectures' took place with such topics as 'The Rise and Progress of Music' and the 'Post-Biblical History of the Jews; from the close of the Canon of the Old Testament, and the return from Babylon, to the Dissolution of the polity under Titus'. The Presbyterian Church also put on similar lectures, such as one for the opening of the Free Church in 1858 on the 'new' subject of geology (admission one shilling), and another to support both the Presbyterian Cemetery at Dungog and St Ann's Church at Paterson in 1878 called 'The Etruscans and their tombs; or Italy 2500 years ago'.¹²

A variation on both reading and lectures that took place in Paterson in the 1860s was the 'Penny Reading'. This was designed to provide cheap, amusing entertainment by reading from literature; possibly with musical interludes.

The monthly penny readings entertainment by the members of the School of Arts, was held at the Odd Fellows' Hall, on last Friday evening, and was a very successful affair. Upwards of two hundred persons were present. The entertainment gave every satisfaction.¹³

A form of entertainment that today would probably be considered work were the many mowing and ploughing matches that were for long a popular part of the various agricultural shows of the district. These events were well organised and one held at Dunmore on the Paterson River in 1879 involved a number of classes of competitors: Class A for those who had previously won a prize, Class B for those who had not, and Class C for those under 18 years of age. A typical ploughing match might be for the fastest to plough a quarter acre; the depth of the ploughing needed to be 5 inches, but only 4½ for Class C.¹⁴

⁸ *Maitland Mercury*, 12/10/1889, p.7.

⁹ *Australian Town and Country Journal*, 7/2/1885, p.16.

¹⁰ Hunter, *Dungog School of Arts Centenary 1898-1998*, pp.5-6.

¹¹ *Maitland Mercury*, 14/2/1885, p.17.

¹² *Maitland Mercury*, 11/12/1858, p.3, 17/3/1859, p.1, 24/8/1858, p.2, & 27/6/1878, p.2.

¹³ *Maitland Mercury*, 30/9/1869, p.2.

¹⁴ *Maitland Mercury*, 20/5/1879, p.4 & *Maitland Mercury*, 11/6/1874, p.1.

Ploughing matches were associated with agricultural shows, and Dungog held annual agricultural shows from the 1880s, and Gresford from 1927; both of which still run. Eccleston in 1903 was the first to hold such a show, though only for a short time, and Paterson held its first show in 1949, running until 1969.¹⁵ With prizes and displays, these shows always had a strong entertainment side, particularly for those isolated in the smaller settlement whose families were prepared to make the rare trip into town for the Annual Show; an event for which new clothes might be bought for the kids.¹⁶

Throughout most of the history of the Dungog Shire district, community leisure activities associated with attending dramatic events and concerts have involved the community putting on such events themselves more than watching outside professionals. As well, such events usually served the double purposes of entertainment and fundraising. In 1871, for example, W H Smith lent his store at Bandon Grove for entertainment to raise a harmonium for the Union Church. The laughter for the 130 who attended was in part provided by the school master dressing up in 'Negro character'.¹⁷ Another such event at the Dungog School of Arts was 'A Grand Vocal and Instrumental Concert' at which the program was of some 10 songs and piano pieces by various 'Lady' and Gentleman' amateurs. This was followed by a ball with music supplied by the Dungog Brass Band.¹⁸

In the days before radio or records, and long before TV and CDs, music needed to be provided locally. Town bands were common and provided the music for a range of activities. At one point Dungog even attempted to support two such bands:

The Town Band having disbanded, the Dungog Brass Band has taken over the instruments and is now a strong combination. This is much better than the original state of affairs when the two bands fought against each other.¹⁹

By at least 1890, Dungog had its own dramatic club, one of many over the years.²⁰ Nevertheless outside entertainment was also common with regular returns by such as Mr Ashton's 'British and American circus' or the Lynch Family Bellringers who would do a circuit that included at least Paterson, Gresford and Dungog.²¹

While Bandon Grove in 1871, like many settlements, made use of private barns or stores, in later times, the mark of a community was the erection of its own hall. Bandon Grove erected such a hall in 1905 (replaced by the present one in 1930), as did Wallarobba, Fosterton, Martin's Creek and many of the smaller settlements at various times. The hall at Tillegra was always a privately owned one and, when it was no longer required, was dismantled and the material used to build a new home for the daughter of the family.²² Sometimes these halls were described as Schools of Arts - as was that at Bandon Grove - and were used for a variety of functions including meetings, but as dancing became more popular, this form of entertainment was a predominant usage.

¹⁵ Archer, *Social and environmental change as determinants of ecosystem health*, p.154.

¹⁶ McCormack, *Show and tell*, p.29.

¹⁷ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 2/3/1871, p.3.

¹⁸ *Maitland Mercury*, 12/4/1887, p.1.

¹⁹ *Dungog Chronicle*, 1/4/1903.

²⁰ Hazell, *A Centenary of Memories*, pp.5-7. [1888, 1889, 1890]

²¹ *Maitland Mercury*, 13/8/1881, p.4, 13/5/1893, p.4 & *Sydney Morning Herald*, 3/7/1886, p.2.

²² Don and Thelma Redman, interviewed 3/1/2012.

The four towns had a variety of halls with both East Gresford and Dungog having a Victoria Hall, and at one time Dungog had at least three community halls in addition to those of the Churches; so many in fact that the Centennial Hall at Dungog was eventually converted into a skating rink.²³ These halls were all used in similar ways to those in the settlements for a variety of social and entertainment activities.

In addition to amateur dramatics and concerts, and often closely associated, were the Church bazaars and fetes. These were perhaps more obviously fundraising activities but certainly provided a form of leisure for those attending, whether they spent much money or not. In 1881, a bazaar was held in Clarence Town to raise money for an enlargement of St John's Church.²⁴ In 1888, the Public School at Caergwrle held a concert followed by a dance to raise money to buy 'prizes for the scholars' – they raised £7 5s 6d.²⁵ The Catholic Church in Dungog for many years held an annual Catholic Bazaar in the Dungog Picture Palace [James Theatre], which went all day and ended with a dance at night. The other Churches held variations on these; though neither the Presbyterian nor the Baptists condoned dances.

While the Protestant Churches always interpreted the concept of Sunday as a day of rest to mean no organised activities, one Sunday leisure past-time that seems to have arisen early on was Sunday shooting. This was an activity that caused some controversy at a time when Sunday rest was interpreted strictly by many.²⁶

The shooting of Wonga pigeons at Jerusalem Creek is reported, and while generally carried on casually, it could also be organised:

Pigeon Shooting. We would remind knights of the trigger that the meeting of the Dungog Gun Club takes place on Monday, when no doubt the blue rocks will have a very unhealthy time of it. Shooting will commence at eleven o'clock.²⁷

Apart from Sunday hunting there were the occasional picnics, such as a Boxing Day picnic on the river at Fosterton.²⁸ A vivid account of a much earlier picnic at a then popular spot near Dungog shows that some effort might be spent on these leisure activities:

I shall only mention in this letter one remarkable place, called Mount Pilcher, which lies south-west of Dungog, and is distant therefrom about three miles. This mount, which rises very abruptly on the north-eastern side to a height of 300 feet above the surrounding country, is much resorted to by holiday-making folks and picnic parties. It requires considerable exertion to clamber to the top, which is nearly level for half a mile, and covered with grass and various trees and shrubs. The south-western side is almost a perpendicular precipice, and at the bottom, underneath rocks, is a great cavern on which the sun never shines, called the Devil's Hole, where pure cold water may be obtained on the hottest summer's day.

The scenery from the top is delightful as far as the eye can reach, and a view of Nobby's Island at Newcastle can be obtained with the use of a telescope on a clear day, a distance of fifty miles. Pleasure-seekers, with a band of music, may frequently be seen, with their baskets of

²³ Williams, *Ah, Dungog*, p.20.

²⁴ *Maitland Mercury*, 13/8/1881, p.4.

²⁵ *Maitland Mercury*, 1/9/1888, p.7S.

²⁶ Loban, *A Substantial Handsome Church*, p.22. *Dungog Chronicle*, 10/7/1888.

²⁷ *Maitland Mercury*, 30/10/1886, p.4.

²⁸ McCormack, *Show and tell*, p.17.

refreshments, clambering up its sides, to enjoy its pure air and feast their eyes on the country round.²⁹

In East Gresford a favoured spot for weekends and public holidays was Victoria Gardens, a cedar grove on the Allyn River just behind what was the Victoria, now Beatty Hotel.³⁰ While in the 1920s it was reported that:

Paterson is growing in popularity as a pleasure resort, and visitors arrive there on holidays and Sundays in hundreds from all parts. On Sundays especially the Wharf Reserve is crowded with picnickers from Maitland and Newcastle districts.³¹

Visiting the bush for its own sake gradually became a more regular leisure activity. The recognition of this growing interest led to the establishment of the Dungog and Barrington Tops Tourist League in the 1920s and the Newcastle Bushwalking Club in the 1950s along with a number of guest houses from which visitors could take guided horse rides into the Barrington Ranges and huts for shelter.³² Later, the Chichester Dam picnic area was also very popular, as well as bushwalking in general, eventually leading to the declaration of a number of National and State Parks and the construction of associated walking trails. In more recent years camping, caravan parks and touring have grown in popularity with various facilities provided both publicly, in the form of camping grounds, and privately in the form of Bed & Breakfast and other forms of temporary accommodation.

The most famous of these guest houses was undoubtedly the Barrington Guest House built in 1930. Large for a guest house, it could accommodate more than 50 people and did so in a 'guest house' style (shared bathrooms, trivia nights, and communal meals), until well into the 1980s. People continued to visit the Barrington Guest House, often coming to the Dungog area solely for that purpose, right up until its destruction by fire in 2006. Even today, many visitors to the Dungog area request information about the Barrington Guest House and are disappointed to learn it no longer exists.³³

The practice of visiting the bush was not always a peaceful one and as the ability to drive up from Maitland or other centres became easier, so too for a time did the popularity of night time shooters. Such campers and their activities created much concern in the 1950s and 1960s.³⁴

Just as bushwalking only gradually became a leisure activity, so too did swimming. Swimming has not always been considered a natural way to spend a hot summer's day, but the creation of a swimming pool incidental to providing a water level sufficient for the Dungog water supply and pumping station led to this becoming a major leisure spot for many years. Thereafter, the building of community pools has largely replaced swimming at river pools. Until the Seaham Weir was put in place in 1967, water skiing on the Williams River was also popular.

²⁹ *Maitland Mercury*, 21/1/1865, p.5.

³⁰ Collison & Hancock, *Gresford 170 years*, p.103.

³¹ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 1/12/1924, p.10.

³² NPWS, *Barrington Tops National Park*, pp.33-34.

³³ For the Barrington Guest House see, 4.2 Accommodation.

³⁴ Archer, *An Environmental & Social History of the Upper Webbers Creek Catchment*, p.15.

Billiards was, for along period, a popular leisure activity, though not one always seen as quite moral. An application for a 'bagatelle license' [an early form of billiards] was refused in 1863 on the grounds that a similar license had already proven to be 'a social pest' and would not 'improve the moral tone of our younger population'. A generation later, in 1901, the same Dungog hotel, 'had a billiard table erected ..., which promises to be well patronised' and to which it seems moral objections were no longer raised.³⁵

For many years a billiard table was present in most barber shops, which were generally known as Sports Hairdressers. Later, the Dungog School of Arts became dominated by its billiard tables with little other activity apart from its aging library. Billiards, however, began to decline after the First World War and at least one retailer of billiard tables became desperate at this decline in billiard playing:

because men have allowed Pictures, Night Tennis and Jazz with the companionship of the fair sex to attract them away from this classic among games that for the last 400 years have stood unrivalled in scientific interest.³⁶

The firm wrote to the Dungog School of Arts to encourage 'the ladies' to use billiard tables that were idle during the day. The same letter advertised Miss Ruby Roberts, 'the greatest living lady exponent of the game of billiards', who would play exhibition games and teach the game in return for her '1st class return fare, hotel expenses' and £2 fee per class.³⁷

Children of course have always provided their own leisure activities, about which we have few glimpses. One we have refers to how 'poor old Granny Redman used to keep the only toy and marble shop, just about where T Carlton's shop is now. Granny used to put a couple or three pickle bottles full of marbles in the window, with a label on like this – Marbles 16 a Penny – and how the kids used to rush it, but even pennies were scarce in those days.'³⁸

The establishment of bus transport from the 1920s on had a big impact on social outings and entertainment, especially for the smaller communities scattered around the district. It meant not only greater access to the towns such as Dungog, Clarence Town, Gresford and Paterson but also a mixing of peoples as they attended events held regularly in each locality. There were dances held each Saturday in rotation at Wallarobba, Bandon Grove, Tillegra, Stroud and Dungog with a bus taking participants to each in turn.³⁹ Such dances were accompanied by a supper usually supplied by donations and prepared by a women's group such as the Wattle Club or the CWA. Alcohol was not served at these dances but was commonly brought and consumed semi-surreptitiously outside between dances. From the 1930s through to the 1950s, these 'adult' dances were often paralleled with dances for children. These were usually held on a following night and were called juvenile balls or frolics. An alternative fundraising style was euchre nights, which were sometimes combined with dances.

From just before the First World War the moving pictures began to play a major part in weekly entertainment and leisure. The Dungog cinema was established in 1912 and cinemas in East Gresford, Paterson and Clarence Town all ran until the 1950s or early 1960s. At East Gresford was the Garden Theatre, begun as an open air theatre, it was also used for dancing,

³⁵ Williams, *Ah, Dungog*, p.47.

³⁶ Home Recreations to Secretary, School of Arts, Dungog, 6/5/1926.

³⁷ Home Recreations to Secretary, School of Arts, Dungog, 6/5/1926.

³⁸ *Dungog Chronicle*, 9/3/1926.

³⁹ McCormack, *Show and tell*, p.57.

boxing and skating.⁴⁰ In Clarence Town, the School of Arts was used as a cinema from 1930 until the early 1960s.⁴¹ The cinemas usually played twice a week, perhaps every Tuesday and Saturday night, and not until the development of TV in the 1960s did the routine of regular cinema-going fade, leading to the permanent closure of all but the James Theatre in Dungog.⁴²

Dungog also had a number of cafés where people could simple go for coffee and a chat as they do today. The Globe Refreshment Café made its own chocolates.⁴³ While the Busy Bee Café and the Sunshine Restaurant were run by Greek immigrants, the Barboutis family.⁴⁴

While the sport of horseracing has always been popular, the leisure activity of gambling required more than the occasional Dungog district race. With off-course betting illegal for many years this meant a variety of SP bookmakers operated, such as one that ran from the back of the Busy Bee Cafe in Dungog.⁴⁵ Other illegal gambling included the playing of a numbers machine in the back of a bakehouse.⁴⁶ A legal TAB opened in Dungog in 1971 but closed in 1993 as unprofitable.⁴⁷

Licensing laws also restricted the opening hours of hotels and this led to the popularity of licensed clubs, such as the Bowling Club and the RSL Club (1956), which could serve members on a Sunday.⁴⁸ Not that this stopped the occasional hotel, such as the Court House Hotel, from serving drinks on a Sunday – sometimes with a nod from the local police.⁴⁹

A form of leisure now associated with these clubs are poker machines. These machines have expanded in popularity as restrictions have eased and the Dungog RSL, after many years expanding so as to provide space for dance floors, in the 1980s built a dedicated space for its poker machines that cut into the now seldom used dance space.

Dances, bazaars, concerts and fundraising events were very popular forms of entertainment throughout the 20th century until the 1960s. Thereafter a number of factors have both focused leisure activities on either the home or on activities outside the district. TV and an increasing range of home-based forms of entertainment have directly led to less community-based entertainment and recreation. In addition, greater access to cars and reduced travel times to larger centres such as Maitland, Raymond Terrace, and even Newcastle and Sydney, has meant travel to these places for leisure as well as shopping and employment have become commonplace, particularly among teenagers and younger people.

Heritage Survivals

- former and current halls
- former and current cinemas

⁴⁰ Collison & Hancock, *Gresford 170 years*, p.61.

⁴¹ *The Sunday Herald*, 3/6/1951, p.13.

⁴² For a history of the James Theatre the social role of cinema see, Williams, *Entertaining Dungog*.

⁴³ McCormack, *Show and tell*, p.4.

⁴⁴ McCormack, *Show and tell*, p.48.

⁴⁵ McCormack, *Show and tell*, p.49.

⁴⁶ McCormack, *Show and tell*, p.50-51.

⁴⁷ *Dungog Chronicle*, 4/8/1993, p.1.

⁴⁸ McCormack, *Show and tell*, p.68 & *Dungog Chronicle*, 12/7/1995, p.1.

⁴⁹ McCormack, *Show and tell*, p.69.

8.5 Sport [organised recreational and health promotional activities]

Always a significant activity, sport within the Dungog Shire has ranged from horseracing, polo and cricket to football, tennis and squash. Not to mention rifle shooting competitions, cattle drafting, and in more recent times, bicycling and running.

The first organised recreation was undoubtedly horse racing with the earliest reported horse races occurring at Clarence Town in 1844 at which some 300 people attended.¹ In December 1844, a race course was laid out near what is now the site of Dungog High School and the first races held in 1845.² Later races took place at Hanley's Creek, as well as at Brookfield. Regular race days were held at the Hanley's Creek course right up until the 1980s, until insurance issues made it all too onerous to continue. Race meetings were often held as fundraising for various causes, such as those on St Patrick's Day to support various projects of the Catholic Church. Similar races were also held at Vacy from at least 1863 through till the 1880s, and again in the 1970s and 1980s as the Vacy Picnic Races.³ At East Gresford, races were held at Clevedon Racecourse, such as the 1915 Belgian Races held in aid of the Belgian Fund, and the Gresford Cup of 1925.⁴

Not all horse racing was of the organised 'race day' type and individual races between horses were not uncommon – with betting of course. Such races took place at the Clarence Town course in 1885 when two local horses competed for 'a fiver a side' and 'once around the course'. A sweep held later that day was won by the same horse.⁵

In addition to straight horse racing, polo has also been a popular sport with the first polo matches held at the Mackay family property of Cangon near Dungog, and the Wirragulla Polo Club established there in 1936.⁶ Polo matches have usually been associated with the larger landowning families, particularly the Mackays, Hookes and others. Polo matches are still held at Cangon on occasions, with the latest occurring in early 2012.

Horse riding for farm work and at the many Agricultural Shows is a common aspect of life within the Dungog Shire area and has led to the popularity of camp drafting as well as general equestrianism. The most famous exponent of equestrianism from Dungog was Kevin Bacon, who became an Olympic equestrian, a career that perhaps began when, as a 5 year old, a horse bolted under him.⁷ Though others report it was when a professional jumping team was visiting the Dungog Show in 1948 and allowed him to put one of their horses over some practice jumps.⁸

Cricket seems to have been the first sport unrelated to horses that was played in an organised fashion, including local teams and excursions to and from surrounding areas. Betting on these matches by the players was common with '10s per bat' mentioned.

¹ *Maitland Mercury*, 20/4/1844, p.3.

² *Maitland Mercury*, 28/12/1844, p.3 & 4/1/1845.

³ Clements, *Vacy ... One Hundred & Eighty Years of History*, pp.90-94.

⁴ Collison & Hancock, *Gresford 170 years*, p.104.

⁵ *Maitland Mercury*, 12/12/1885, p.16S.

⁶ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 7/7/1936, p.4S.

⁷ McCormack, *Show and tell*, p.44-45.

⁸ Holland, *Kevin Bacon*, pp.10-12.

A cricket club was formed at Vacy in March 1872 and their team played its first match against a Gresford eleven; this was only one of several district matches played around that time.⁹ Gresford established a cricket ground and teams even came from Sydney to play in 1897. For a time women's cricket was also very popular and was played by, among others, May Walters, mother of Dungog's most famous (though not only), contribution to the game of cricket - Doug Walters; Arthur Miller being another Dungog boy.

Cricket was fun and games for some, but in the 19th century and well into to 20th century it also mattered when you did it, as a number of youths discovered in 1866:

Last Sunday senior constable Johnston suddenly came upon a numerous party of cricketers, who were playing a game of cricket at Wallarobba; some were young men, residents of the Paterson; the others, residents of Dungog. We understand the whole of those present will be brought before the bench for illegal desecration of the Sabbath.¹⁰

In addition to individual games, sports carnivals were popular at the end of the 19th century and were often organised by groups such as the School of Arts and the Oddfellows as fundraisers. When the 'Star of the Williams Branch of the Grand United Order of Oddfellows' held its ninth anniversary meeting in 1883, the event included foot races, a sack race, throwing a cricket ball at a wicket, and horse jumping.¹¹ The Paterson Oddfellows mixed sports, cricket and more:

ODDFELLOWS' ANNIVERSARY. - Friday last (the Queen's Birthday), the members of the Loyal Paterson Union Lodge of Oddfellows, M.U., celebrated their 26th anniversary by a cricket match between eleven Oddfellows and eleven members of the School of Arts, a series of athletic sports, and public dinner, all of which took place on the Paterson cricket Ground.¹²

The public dinner [lunch], including 'colonial wines', was then followed by foot races.

Foot races were also popular for betting on and at Clarence Town in 1885:

a footrace was run between J. Sellars and A. Hare, two local pods, for £2 aside, distance 125 yards. After a great race, Hare managed to get home some two feet ahead of his opponent.¹³

Local schools also began to organise sports for their students on a regular basis in the 1920s and for many years this also involved regular competitions between the schools of other districts including a street parade.¹⁴ In more recent times the idea of sports fundraising has been revived with Dungog holding a GP Stakes in 2011 to raise money to advertise for a doctor, and a JT Stakes to do the same to restore Dungog's James Theatre in March 2012.

⁹ Clements, *Vacy ... One Hundred & Eighty Years of History*, p.94.

¹⁰ *Maitland Mercury*, 11/12/1866, p.5.

¹¹ *Maitland Mercury*, 11/10/1883, p.2.

¹² *Australian Town and Country Journal*, 1/6/1872, p.6.

¹³ *Maitland Mercury*, 12/12/1885, p16S.

¹⁴ Gorton, *Glen William Public School*, p.38.

Possibly the first mention of football in the district occurred at Gresford in 1885:

There is talk of a football club being started at Gresford. It only requires being made public for a strong team to be formed amongst the young men of the district. From the conclusion until the beginning of the cricketing season, there has always been a want of a universal game in the district. In football we have the connecting link. The rules and regulations have only to be adhered to and the game is no more dangerous than cricket. Gresford can stand its own at cricket. Why not at football?¹⁵

Certainly football began to grow in popularity towards the end of the 19th century when teams such as the Dungog Rovers were established. Regular matches were played against the teams of surrounding districts and later junior teams also became popular. Games were held at Bennett Park and later at ovals established on the High School grounds, partly with donated land. Teams would visit from as far away as Maitland, playing a game and being entertained at night before returning the next day.¹⁶

Rifle shooting as a sport was popular in the first half of the 20th century and a rifle range was set up on Dungog Common and another existed at Gresford.¹⁷ Rifle clubs were formed and competitions held.

Boxing seems never to have been a major sport within the Dungog Shire district, though a 'Dungog Stadium' is reported to have opened in 1909 at which boxers such as Joe Shakespeare fought as well as lesser-known locals.¹⁸ This venue was probably beside the Royal Hotel where travelling shows also appeared. In later years a few Police Citizen's Boys Club bouts occurred at the Victoria Hall, and one at the James Theatre, also at Dungog, in the 1960s.¹⁹ However, Paddy Slavin, Heavyweight Champion, was born at Brecon near Vacy in 1861 and a memorial stone commemorating this fact was erected at Vacy in 1994.²⁰

A quieter sport was fishing, which, for many seems to have implied trout. A school teacher at Vacy in the 1890s, for example, released many thousands of fingerlings provided by the Fisheries Department into the Paterson and Allyn River.²¹ A few year later the Clarence Town progress committee applied to the Department of Fisheries for a supply of trout, two hundred of which duly arrived by the steamer Erringhi, and were 'liberated' into the Williams River at a point six miles above Clarence Town.²²

Perhaps the sport that attained the greatest popularity at any one time was tennis. In the 1920s tennis became very popular and numerous tennis courts were established in nearly every locality. Players would travel long distances, usually by bus, to matches and competitions at surrounding locations such as Tea gardens, Stroud, and Dungog.²³ Vacy had a tennis club in the 1920s, with many private tennis courts and a public one completed in

¹⁵ *Maitland Mercury*, 13/6/1885, p.15S.

¹⁶ *Maitland Mercury*, 5/9/1889, p.3.

¹⁷ Collison & Hancock, *Gresford 170 years*, p.103.

¹⁸ *Referee*, 27/10/1909, p.8, describes it as 'new'. For more details see *Dungog Chronicle*, 22/1/2014, p.7.

¹⁹ See 3.12 Events, for the Dave Sands memorial bout.

²⁰ Clements, *Vacy ... One Hundred & Eighty Years of History*, pp.101-103.

²¹ Clements, *Vacy ... One Hundred & Eighty Years of History*, pp.95-96.

²² *Sydney Morning Herald*, 1/11/1909, p.8.

²³ McCormack, *Show and tell*, p.81.

1928.²⁴ The popularity of tennis led to a continuing controversy over playing on Sundays until 1957 in Dungog at least, when sport was allowed there on Sundays after 12 noon.²⁵

Golf was another game that quickly rose in popularity and led to a number of courses being built such as Paterson and Dungog golf courses. Before these courses were established many tried out the game by playing it on the Dungog showground.²⁶ Competitions and regular visits to attend games at other courses, as with tennis, were common.

Lawn bowls with their associated licensed club rooms also proved popular and three of the Shire towns have their Bowling Club and greens. The Gresford Bowling Club was not established until 1953.²⁷

Swimming as a leisure activity was popular at various pools along the many rivers of the area. Though this did not mean that they lacked the organisation of modern aquatic facilities, and in 1938 we have this account:

... crowds flocked to the various river pools about Dungog. The big pool under the control of the Dungog Swimming Club was particularly well patronised everyday, while swimming at night under the powerful floodlights has proved very popular.²⁸

With the building of public swimming pools in each town, swimming as an organised sport has become popular with schools, and the youth of the district have participated strongly in many State-wide competitions.

The natural environment of the Dungog Shire has also attracted many to come from outside the district to undertake particular sports on a one-off or sometimes regular basis. One-off events which have occurred within Dungog Shire have included canoeing down the Williams River, motor-cross rallies, and, in recent times, various fun runs. Since 1995, Pedalfest, a gathering of bicycle riders, has come to Dungog every year. Begun as a fundraiser for the Westpac Helicopter service, it has been consistently popular and attracts 500 to 600 riders each year from Newcastle and Sydney. Originally competitive, Pedalfest has evolved into a family oriented weekend of 20km rides around the Fosterton loop and other activities.

Most of the traditional range of sports continue to be popular among younger people, a range of choices that has expanded to include netball, soccer and skateboarding.

Heritage Survivals

- playing fields – cricket, tennis
- racecourses
- rifle ranges
- Site of ‘Dungog Stadium’

²⁴ Clements, *Vacy ... One Hundred & Eighty Years of History*, p.100.

²⁵ *Dungog Chronicle*, 3/4/1957.

²⁶ Michaelides, *Growing up in Dungog*, p.31.

²⁷ Collison & Hancock, *Gresford 170 years*, p.97.

²⁸ *Dungog Chronicle*, 7/1/1938, p.2.

8.6 Creative Endeavour [imaginative or inventive works]

Dungog Shire has a long history of creative endeavour centred on town bands, local concerts and dramatic societies. As well, numerous artists and crafts people have either originated in the Dungog Shire area or taken up residence within it, particularly in more recent times.

Dungog was early recognised for its scenic beauty and the earliest record of creative endeavour inspired by this beauty was a poem entitled 'Dungog' published in 1863 in the *Sydney Morning Herald*. By Henry Kendall, the 21 verse poem included lines that will still be appreciated by modern tree-changers:

I've seen the deep, wild Dungog fells,
And HATE the heart of towns!¹

At the time Henry Kendall was being inspired by the beauty of Dungog and its surrounds, he was perhaps visiting his brother Basil who worked in Dungog at one of the shops.²

While Kendall was once a well known poet, his style is now out of favour. However, the district encompassing Dungog Shire can claim to have also been the inspiration for a poet of more continuing fame. The Paterson Valley was the inspiration for Dorothea Mackellar's poem written in 1911, *I love a Sunburnt Country*, where she lived for a time on a property at Torryburn owned by her family.³

Another poet was Arthur Ferres who wrote for *The Bulletin*, published a book of poems called *The Free Selector and Other Verses*, and a collection of short stories for boys entitled *His First Kangaroo*. Arthur Ferres was the pen name of John William Kevin, Inspector of Schools in the 1890s, who travelled up and down the Paterson, Allyn and Williams Rivers.⁴

Continuing in literature, Dungog can boast one published author in Ruby Doyle - *The mystery of the Hills* (1919) and *The winning of Miriam Heron* (1924) - as well as in more recent times the book illustrator Kim Gamble, who illustrated the *Tashi* books by Anna Fienberg, among others.⁵

In the early 20th century, photography became very popular and many professionals sold their pictures as postcards. One whose skill raises his work to the level of creative endeavour is R J Marceau, a teacher in the 1920s at both Eccleston and Halton schools. Many of his photos are now rare examples of life and scenery in the more isolated settlements.

By the end of the 19th century Dungog had at least three community halls as well as numerous church halls. These spaces were used for many things including amateur performances as well as visiting entertainers. Little is known about some of the early theatrics, but by the 1940s and 1950s the Dungog Dramatic Society was putting on a number of dramas each year, such as *Arsenic and Old Lace*. While most of these performances have used scripts written by professionals, a series of 11 performances enacted in the 1970s to raise money for Dungog High school were written by a local High School teacher.

¹ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 12/11/1863, p.8.

² *Dungog Chronicle*, 18/3/1904.

³ Anderson, *The Dorothea Mackellar My Country Paterson Valley Connection*.

⁴ Collison & Hancock, *Gresford 170 years*, p.54.

⁵ *Sydney Mail*, 5/11/1913.

In the field of music, much was accomplished with town bands and for many years Dungog had its own town band as well as a number of dance bands such as the Red Peppers Dance Band. There have also been a number of music teachers who trained students and put on live performances such as Alethea Abbott in the 1930s, Sandra Osmond in the 1990s and most recently Kathryn Abbott since 2010. In 1907, fundraising from the town also sent a young violinist to Europe.⁶ In the 1960s, Kenneth Street (aka Ken Churcher), a teacher at Brookfield, registered a song he wrote in collaboration with William Bates of Newcastle. The song was called 'Reach Me Down a Star'.⁷

In architecture, the Dungog Shire district can boast three Edmund Blackett designed buildings: two churches – St Helen's at Gresford and Christchurch at Dungog - and a Cathedral-like barn at Tocal. While architecturally the Dungog district has many lovely buildings, few could claim to be unique or especially creative, the exception being Keba in Dungog. Keba, named when it was a private hospital, appears to have been of unique design and construction being built entirely of concrete slabs of a tongue and groove make. The architect is unknown but some conjecture that he was a friend of the owner, who was working at the time as an engineer on the Chichester Dam.

Perhaps the most prominent artist within the three valleys is the painter William Salmon who for many years lived in the Chichester area before moving into Dungog. In recent years the attraction of the tree-changer lifestyle has brought numerous artists and skilled crafts people into the valleys who lived scattered around various, usually remote, properties.⁸

A number of films have been made within the three valleys: *The Earthling* (1980), *Tomorrow When the War Began* (2010) and *Bathing Franky* (2012). In addition, an episode of ABC-TV's *The Outsiders* (1976) was also made in Dungog. Since 2007, the James Theatre at Dungog has attracted a number of film related events including the founding of the Dungog Film Festival of Australian Films (which has highlighted new Australian films), AGOG (a festival of foreign films), and Flickerfest (a showcase of short films).

A final area of creative endeavour worth noting are the works of local historians, often self-published, that preserve elements of the history of the three valleys that would otherwise be lost forever. All have significance to the extent that they record information that would otherwise be lost, and not a few have merit in themselves as writing and as history. Many of these local and family histories are rare and have not been systematically preserved.⁹

Heritage Survivals

- Copies of works by Ruby Doyle, Arthur Ferres
- Copies of films made locally
- Scripts of local dramas
- Architecturally significant buildings
- Local and family histories
- Photos of Marceau and George Kelly

⁶ Strachen, et al, 'Susanne and Elizabeth', p.139.

⁷ A1336; Copyright Registered 6th Aug 1964, 'Reach Me Down a Star'

⁸ For examples see, <http://www.artsupperhunter.com.au/artists.php>

⁹ See Bibliography for examples.

9. Phases of life

9.1 Birth & Death [bearing of children & disposal of the dead; initial & final stages of life]

The practices of the Gringai people regarding birth and death are largely lost to us now. A Gringai name for what is now Jerusalem Creek was Munduk, meaning fertility, and a large pool with a shallow ledge on this creek may have been used as a birthing pool. Burial grounds associated with the Gringai are mentioned but with no details of associated practices.¹

Despite the inescapability of birth and death, much has changed in the manner in which these two phases of life have been dealt with since European settlement began, on both an individual and community level. Births have gone from home affairs with at best a neighbour as midwife, to hospital based procedures with a doctor in attendance. As well, the support given and expected during the early years of childhood has greatly increased. Death and its attendant practices have perhaps changed less, though aged care facilities and services have significantly altered the quality of the final stages of life for many. The ceremonies surrounding death have become less formal and are more often performed outside Church ceremonies.

For the new European settlers, births and deaths were largely family affairs, with both usually taking place at home. For those who had the choice, a pregnant woman might go to a larger centre such as Maitland or Sydney with its access perhaps to wider family and greater medical support, staying there for many weeks or months both before and after the birth.² Burials for those on the land would often take place near the home, though at least one general burial ground seems to have existed on the edge of Dungog before the present general cemetery was established.

Both births and deaths were registered at one's church if available, and although official registration was also required through local magistrates acting as registrars, this system only gradually became standard.

Midwives were commonly used, but their training and knowledge was a matter of experience and on-the-job training with little known of how a 'good' midwife was chosen, or what impact they had upon the birth itself, or the rate of infant mortality. That infant mortality was high is well known and was generally accepted throughout the 19th century as inevitable.

Also inevitable, but not always so accepted, was that births would take place outside marriage. When the Dungog community established what was called a cottage hospital in 1892, it was intended to assist those who could not afford medical help, including those giving birth. However, at one point this community run institution declared that only married women were allowed to use the hospital for 'lying in'.

As gradually the intervention of a doctor in births became more common, doctors attached themselves to private hospitals. These were usually large houses owned and run by trained nurses. While many procedures took place at these hospitals, maternity was perhaps their main role. Women would typically remain in these hospitals for many days or even weeks

¹ *Maitland Mercury*, 19/3/1870, p.3.

² Dent, *A Brief History of Health in the Gresford District* (n.p.).

after a birth. Two major ones in Dungog were Keba and Oomabah, and in Gresford, Kalala and Clevedon House, which operated from the 1920s until the 1950s.³ In 1958, a specialist maternity ward was added to Dungog Hospital to replace the now out of favour private hospitals. With the centralisation of medical resources that took place in the 1970s and 1980s, even the maternity functions of local hospitals were eliminated, and for births in a hospital, women of Dungog Shire are now required to travel to Maitland or Newcastle.

In addition to doctors and maternity wards, greater support for mothers, parents and children in the early years of childhood also became seen to be necessary in order to both assist young mothers and to lower infant mortality.⁴ For this, Baby Health Centres were seen as essential and the money for establishing these was taken up as a fundraising priority in the 1940s through to the 1960s by the Country Women's Association (CWA), in particular. In more recent times the need for such specific centres has again declined.

At the other end of the spectrum, as infant mortality declined so too has life expectancy increased. Nevertheless, death arrives eventually and for this each locality established a general cemetery. The first cemetery was a Church of England one, at Tillimby on the Paterson River, then from 1839 at St Paul's. Many of the Tillimby graves were removed to St Paul's after a 1875 flood, and in the 1920s a new cemetery was developed on Webber's Creek Rd. The St Paul's Church cemetery contains the graves of numerous of Paterson's first grantees, such as John and Charlotte Broughton, Susannah Matilda Ward of Cintra, James Phillips of Bona Vista, and members of the Cory family. Also buried there are William M Arnold (MLA), the Rev John Jennings-Smith (first Rector of St Paul's) and in a special location, Bishop Sadiq (Bishop of Nagpur).⁵

A general cemetery was early planned at Dungog and was the first such cemetery in NSW. It was laid out by the Surveyor General in 1848 and, as befitting a plan originating in a distant capital, it was provided with and still has, a section reserved for 'Jews' that has yet to find a resident.⁶ Original markers were generally simple and made of wood, with only gradually more elaborate family and individual plots being raised in stone. In recent times, many family plots have been renewed. General cemeteries are found throughout the Dungog district including at Gresford, Bandon Grove, Paterson and Clarence Town. Many, though not all, of the individual churches also have their own cemeteries. In addition private cemeteries were established, and many of these are now abandoned as families have died out or sold the land and moved on.⁷

Clarence Town Cemetery, as do many of the Dungog Shire district's cemeteries contains a number of old, as well as historically significant graves; William Lowe, the builder of Australia's first steamship is buried here for example. At first under the control of trustees, by 1967 all public cemeteries were under the control of the Dungog Shire Council. Such control has not guaranteed preservation, such as in the 1970s when, after a period of flooding, the middle section of Clarence Town Cemetery was reputedly bulldozed and many of the grave markers in this section destroyed, much to the distress of local descendants.⁸ After the 2007 floods, more graves were damaged, including wrought iron railings washed into the

³ Williams, *Ah, Dungog*, pp.71-72.

⁴ O'Connor, *A History of 75 Years of Baby Health Services in NSW*, passim.

⁵ Clements, *A History of St. Pauls Church Paterson*, pp.17-19.

⁶ Murray, *God's Acre*, p.11.

⁷ See Appendix 4: Cemeteries.

⁸ Ian Lyall, interviewed 28/3/2012.

river. The Clarence Town Lions Club and community groups were refused permission to restore the damage and no restoration work has been carried out to date.⁹

While ministers and priests of the various denominations usually carried out the ceremonies associated with death, funeral parlours also became established businesses. These were usually associated with furniture making and until recent times these two businesses were often carried on together. Fry Brothers, who also ran the coach connections through Paterson, also operated as funeral directors for the Paterson and Allyn valleys.

Death comes in many forms, including in childbirth, but its coming in the form of accident or suicide was more likely to be noted. It is difficult to say if accidental death was more common in years past but certainly the nature of some of the accidents reported over time has changed. Death from falling trees, by fire, by drowning and by bullock are all commonly reported in this largely agricultural and timber district. In more recent times, 12 people died when a hostel they were living in caught fire at Main Creek. Also widely recorded are the accidental deaths of children by fire, as well as through the taking of poisonous substances. Car accidents begin to be reported in the 1920s and have since overtaken most other reasons for accidental death.

Outside of the cemeteries and honour rolls associated with war, there are few memorials to any deaths within the Dungog Shire district; an exception being the Dave Sands Memorial erected in 1972 by Dungog Apex at the site of his death in 1952 in a motor vehicle accident near the Bandon Grove Bridge.

Death by suicide was also widely reported. Depression, particularly post natal, and the general lack of support for mental problems would have greatly contributed to this. An early example was the suicide of a trooper after being reported for misconduct:

John Stephens, put an end to his life by shooting himself with a pistol. The ball entered just below the stomach, passed downwards, and came out close to the spine¹⁰

Natural disasters such as bushfires and floods were also the cause of many deaths, such as the drowning of the entire Ross family during a flood on the Williams River on the Melbee Estate in 1857 just to the south of Dungog.¹¹

Epidemics of diphtheria, cholera and other diseases were common as the towns expanded but did not improve their sanitary systems. The debates in Dungog on the controversial issue of town sewerage in the 1930s hinged on the perceived health benefits of this versus of course the cost, to be borne at that time by property owners only.¹²

For many to whom death came at the end of a reasonable span, an important aspect of their death was the bequest. It was common for those with some resources to make a bequest to a hospital or Church or even a park resulting in a memorial to their name. The rest of the estate would go to children, often in the form of annuities. For those with land to pass on, it was not uncommon to divide the land among their sons while providing for daughters with annuities or perhaps a house from which they could derive rents. This last method was

⁹ Diane Ellis, interviewed 28/3/2012.

¹⁰ *Maitland Mercury*, 28/10/1843, p.3.

¹¹ *Maitland Mercury*, 3/9/1857, p.2.

¹² *Dungog Chronicle*, 13/8/1937, p.4.

common within the Mackay family of Dungog for example.¹³ Similarly, Christopher Lean left enough in his estate to cover several £500 annuities for his daughters and to leave farms to a number of sons - some 700 acres in total.¹⁴

For most people, death comes in old age with the quality of this final phase of life dependent on health and family or community support. In the early period, large families and few community resources meant that the elderly relied on their children to assist them in old age. However, if their health was poor, the quality of this assistance could be variable. For those without family, old age could be a time of isolation and hardship unless supplemented by financial resources.

As health and life spans have improved, more people are living to a more advanced age, and this, combined with smaller families and a tendency for many children to establish themselves away from where they grew up, has resulted in a shift to community supported aged care. This aged care ranges from home-based services such as meal-on-wheels to planned elderly accommodation facilities such as Ironwood and Dungog Nursing Home. The community erected accommodation for nurses at Dungog Hospital, built in the 1940s, has now been converted into offices for the many aged care services that operate through the Dungog Shire district. Palliative care has also been established at Dungog hospital.

Heritage Survivals

- Burial grounds (Aboriginal, private, public)
- Church registers
- Private hospitals
- Dave Sands Memorial
- Significant graves – William Lowe, Stephen Dark, Dr McKinlay

¹³ Williams, *Ah, Dungog*, p.51.

¹⁴ Lean, *The Lean Family History*, pp.70-73.

9.2 Persons [identifiable individuals, families and communal groups]

The task of identifying individuals or even families and groups within the history of any area is one fraught with difficulties. Nevertheless it is one well worth the risks and as the increasing popularity of family histories show, one that many find very rewarding. Modern attitudes shy away from making a selection based on ‘prominence’, or ‘success’ or even wealth, and any criteria selected will always seem arbitrary to some. However, without some criteria the first difficulty becomes the sheer scale of listing even brief entries. Nevertheless, the Internet does make feasible the establishment of just such an open listing with the only limit being the ability or willingness to compile and sort the information available.

The entries below are intended therefore as an arbitrary start to a future Internet based ‘Dungog Shire Dictionary of Biography’. All the entries here are brief ones, selected for illustrative purposes only. Many could be given in much greater detail.

People of the Gringai

Despite the scanty evidence for the Gringai people in general, there are a surprising number of named individuals, including approximations in English of names in the Gringai language, as opposed to a name assigned by the Europeans for their convenience, and, it would often seem, amusement. This is due to the existence of blanket lists of the 1830s in which names and a few details were taken. Others are known through various records as they came into contact with Europeans.

Wong-ko-bi-kan: The first named individual member of the Gringai people to appear in European records. Arrested and tried for defending his people and sentenced to transportation to Tasmania for manslaughter, where he died soon after in October 1834.

Charley: A Gringai man ordered by his elders to carry out a punishment according to Gringai law resulting in the deaths of five convict shepherds (see Mackenzie’s shepherds below). Arrested and tried for murder under British law, sentenced to death and hanged in September 1835. The only man hanged at Dungog.

Mereding (aka King Bobby): A man of the ‘Canninggai’ who in 1838 was 23 years old, had two wives and lived perhaps a little to the north of the newly established settlement of Dungog. In that year he received a free blanket courtesy of the Colonial Government.

Mundiver: A native who lived at Brookfield and who appears to have been so overcome with self-hatred that he would threaten to kill any Aboriginal person he saw.

Combo: Worked for the Hooke family on occasion and drowned in the Williams River while taking a message for some Europeans.

Nancy: One of the even fewer female members of the Gringai people to be recorded. Nancy’s death in 1885 was reported to have been of ‘the last surviving black gin of the district’.

Brandy: Reported to have been born in the 1830s and lived until 1905, having witnessed the destruction of his entire people as a separate group within his life time. Brandy was thereafter inaccurately declared to be ‘the last of the Gringhi’.

Individuals

Thomas Abbott: Chief Constable for a time at Dungog before losing this position in controversial circumstances due, it was alleged, to his having confronted a local magistrate. The Abbotts lived at a house called Violet Hill that remains in the possession of the family today. Thomas is reported to have died of a 'wasting disease' in 1868.

Father Michael Bourke – born Limerick, 1896, arrived Dungog March 1920, retired 1975, died August 1982. Having arrived in Australia as a young man, Father Bourke spent his entire life as first the Assistant and then Parish Priest of Dungog.

Mary Burrows: A widow with two children, Mary Burrows was, for many years, an usher at the James Theatre. Her torch and frequent requests to young cinemagoers to get her something at the shops during interval are well remembered.

Peter "Gerald" Capararo: Born at Carrabolla on the Upper Paterson and long time resident of Gresford, he was a champion rodeo rider and sometime composer of poems.

James and Ellen Carlton arrived in Australia in 1841 from Enniskillen. Both Catholics, he was a farm labourer aged 20 and she a dairymaid aged 19, and heavily pregnant. James worked briefly for John Eales at Nelsons Plains and then for Henry Hooke at Dungog. After living on the Hookes' property Wirragulla for about four years, the family moved to their own property on the Williams River about 13 miles from Dungog, which they called Pine Brush - a leasehold of 97 acres on Church and School land. Living first in a timber home, a more substantial house was built known as 'The Stone House', which remained until 1963. James Carlton worked as a tanner in Brookfield for a time, buying small parcels of land which he then divided between his sons.

Thomas Cook and family arrived in Sydney, via Hobart in April 1834, and took oath as a Magistrate in November that year, becoming the Police Magistrate of Port Stephens and Dungog. He continued to act as a magistrate after this paid position was removed. He left Dungog in the 1860s and died in Sydney.

Mrs Chedu Khan: 1910 - Suicide of Mrs Chedu Khan, wife of a 'Punjaubee hawker'.

Joseph Cannon Gatty: 'The passing of the late Mr Gatty is regretted by all who knew him. He was very popular in the town and the fact that amongst the mourners were Rev Carlos Stretch (Anglican), Rev Robb (Presbyterian), Rev AF Crapp (Methodist), Rev Watkin-Smith (Baptist), Father Meagher and Father Bourke (Catholic), was ample proof of his tolerant nature, and of the esteem in which he was held by all sections of the community. Mr Gatty was 55 years of age.'

John Hopson: A resident of Ecclestone, John Hopson was an expert on the Barrington Tops and guided many scientific expedition to the Barringtons in the 1920s as well as discovering many new species of insects himself.

Christopher Lean: In 1839, Christopher Lean arrived in Australia after a four month voyage. He had left his native Cornwall with a number of others from his village, including some of his brothers. They were all taking advantage of the £18 bounty then being offered. Christopher Lean not only kept a diary of his voyage which is extant, but so are many of his

letters written throughout his long life in Dungog. He left enough in his estate to cover several £500 annuities for his daughters and to leave farms to a number of sons - some 700 acres in total.

Dr McKinlay: A Scottish born doctor who arrived in Australia after having taken a position as ships doctor to a group of immigrants. Dr McKinlay was a well respected medical man in the Dungog district from the 1840s until his death. He also acted as a local magistrate. Dr McKinlay died, November 1889, after falling down stairs at the Settlers Arms, Dungog.

Rev Mr Sherriff: A minister of the Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia or the Free Church, he was the first minister for Clarence Town and Dungog, resident at Clarence Town. Clarence Town's Sherriff Street is named after him. He died in 1864 at East Maitland.

Mrs Stephenson: 'DEATH OF AN OLD RESIDENT. On the 5th instant, in the 33rd year of her age, Mrs James Stephenson died here, leaving her husband, with two small children, and a great number of friends to deplore their loss. Mrs. Stephenson along with her husband had held the Dungog Inn for the last fourteen years, and was much respected. Her funeral was followed to the grave yard by almost all the respectable persons of the district. I have not seen such a crowd together in this district.' [*Maitland Mercury*, 25/10/1854, p.2.]

Ah Young: Grew vegetables at Clarence Town and was one of the minority of Chinese men who brought a wife to Australia; her arrival causing much excitement among the people of Clarence Town. Ah Young suffered a severe accident only a year after his wife's arrival.

Commemorated individuals

While a focus on people for reasons of wealth or other factors is perceived as undemocratic and unfair to the majority of those whose lives are lived in obscurity, there are many individuals whose communities have, for various reasons, chosen to memorialize them in ways ranging from name plaques to memorial gates and school prizes, or by naming parks or bridges after them.

Dave Sands: A promising boxer of Aboriginal descent, Dave Sands was not from the Dungog area, but his accidental death there in 1952 when the truck he was driving overturned, resulted in many people coming to Dungog asking for the location of the spot. As a result, Dungog Apex erected the Dave Sands Memorial at a park near the Bandon Grove Bridge in 1972.

Doug Walters: This well known cricketer was born to the north of Dungog and attended Dungog Public School. The Doug Walters Pavilion at Bennett Park, as well as the Doug Walters Bar in the Dungog RSL, commemorate this favourite son.

The Fitzgerald family is commemorated in a stained glass window in St Mary's Catholic Church. The first Catholic Chapel – Sunville – was built on land donated by Joseph Fitzgerald.

James Stuart: Builder of what is now the oldest purpose-built enclosed cinema in Australia is commemorated in the name of the James Theatre itself. Three generations of Stuarts owned and operated the James Theatre until the early 1970s.

Families

The streets of Dungog are named after those who possessed land grants at the time the town plan was drawn up. The result is that Dungog's Streets mark a number of families who have continued to own land within the Dungog Shire since that time. These include the Hooke, Alison, Dowling and Mackay families. Also marked are landowners who have faded from Dungog history as they sold and left, such as Myles, Lord and Brown. As streets were added other families were also memorialised such as Abbott, Simmons and Redman.

Numerous family histories have been written, though not all have been placed in public access. Those that have been are scattered in the Dungog Library, the Local Studies of Newcastle Library and in various Historical Society collections.

Communal Groups

It is not always possible to identify all individuals yet the participation of these unnamed people in the history of Dungog Shire district is clear. For these, it is only possible to mention the group to which such individuals belonged.

Vernon Boys & Barnados Boys and Girls: From the 1870s through to the 1950s, various government and charitable organisations sent young boys and girls to the farms, shops and homes of Dungog Shire district to work as farm hands, apprentices and servants. Various known as Vernon Boys (after a ship in Sydney Harbour) or Barnados Boys and Girls, they appear occasionally on the records, usually in family recollections but are rarely named. An exception to this is a listing of 13 names of 'State Boys and Girls' that attended school at Eccleston while placed with local families.¹

Wattle Club women: Formed after the First World War and continuing throughout most of the 20th century, the women of the Wattle Club were an RSL 'Ladies Auxiliary', responsible for the organising of countless dances, balls and euchre nights which raised money for handouts to ex-diggers, and expansions of the RSL Club rooms. While the names of many individual members are known, many more members contributed in an unnamed capacity.

Sisters of St Joseph: In 1888, four nuns of this order travelled from Lochinvar to Dungog to establish a convent and school in Dungog. From then until the convent closed in 2002, the nuns of St Joseph supplied teachers to the school as well as music lessons to many Dungog children both Catholic and non-Catholic.

Mackenzie's shepherds: Five men killed at Rawdon Vale by a group of Gringai people. While their deaths caused much concern among the Europeans of the Dungog district, they are never named individually. Only Alfred (Fred) Simmons is named as the individual for whose murder Charley (see above) was tried.

Heritage Survivals

- Family histories - published and unpublished
- Personal papers and letters in family possession

¹ *Education in Eccleston, 1867-1967*, p.18.

Appendix 1: Settlements

A range of what can loosely be described as ‘settlements’ have come and gone throughout the history of the three valleys. Some remain only as names on old maps, some were perhaps only ever homesteads, while others were the sites of schools, post offices, a community hall, or perhaps a saw mill, a railway siding, or even a shop.

The table here is a slightly modified version of that drawn up by Karskens, which in turn was based on an analysis of Robinson’s 1927 *Road Guide* and the Dungog Cottage Hospital collections reports for 1912/1913.¹

Alison	Fosterton	Paterson
Allynbrook	Glen Martin	Pine Brush
Bandon Grove	Glen Oak	Salisbury
Banfield	Glen William	Summer Hill (Fisher's Hill)
Bendolba	Gostwyck	Tea Tree
Bingleburra	Gresford	Thalabah
Bonnington Park	Halton	Tillimby
Brookfield	Hilddale (Big Creek)	Tillegra
Cambra (Black Camp)	Irwin's Flat	Torryburn
Carrabolla	Lewinsbrook	Trevallyn (Campsie)
Canningalla	Lostock	Underbank
Chichester	Main Creek	Upper Allyn
Clarence Town	Marshdale	Upper Chichester
Colstoun	Martin's Creek	Vacy
Dingadee	Masseys Creek	Wallarobba
Dungog	Melbury	Wangat
Dusodie	Monkerai	Welshman's Creek
East Gresford	Mount Rivers	Wirragulla
Eccleston	Munni (Quart Pot)	Woerden
Elmshall	New Jerusalem	
Flat Tops	New Park	

¹ Karskens, *Dungog Shire Heritage Study*, pp.89-96.

Appendix 2: Schools

This table is based on the NSW Education Department website – *Government Schools of NSW from 1848* (http://www.governmentschools.det.nsw.edu.au/main_pages/advanced.aspx)

Public Schools	First opened	Closed
ALISON (Thalaba)	1865	1961
ALLYN UPPER	1949	1970
ALLYNBROOK (Caergwrle)	1869	1971
BALLINGTON (Halton)	1876	1949
BANDON GROVE	1862	1984
BENDOLBA	1856	1919
BIG CREEK (Hilldale)	1879	1968
BINGLEBRAH	1878	1933
BLACK CAMP (Cambra)	1937	1964
BRECON	1850	1852
BROOKFIELD	1851	1969
CAMPSIE (Trevallyn)	1853	1938
CARRABOLLA	1882	1915
CHICHESTER	1871	1969
CLARENCE TOWN	1849	Open
COLSTOUN	1883	1932
CROOM PARK	1865	1962
DUNGOG	1851	Open
DUNGOG EVENING	1897	1897
DUNGOG HIGH	1971	Open
DUNNS CREEK	1900	1938
DUSODIE	1883	1954
ECCLESTON	1867	1986
FOSTERTON	1865	1962
GLEN MARTIN	1891	1942
GLEN WILLIAM	1849	Open
GLENOAK	1872	1944
GRESFORD	1868	Open
LEWINSBROOK (1)	1852	1854
LEWINSBROOK (2)	1918	1964
LOSTOCK	1878	1978
MAIN CREEK	1908	1960
MARTINS CREEK	1892	Open
MOUNT RIVERS	1875	1981
PATERSON	1875	Open
SALISBURY	1875	1972
SHELLBROOK (Brookshell)	1908	1914
STRATHISLA	1896	1918
SUMMER HILL (Fishers Hill, Bunnabunoo)	1871	1975

Appendix 2: Schools

Public School	First opened	Closed
TEA TREE	1883	1915
TILIMBY	1858	1862
UNDERBANK	1867	1957
VACY	1859	Open
WALLARINGA	1895	1909
WALLAROBBA (1)	1870	1872
WALLAROBBA (2)	1919	1971
WANGAT (1)	1881	1907
WANGAT (2)	1883	1954
WELSHMANS CREEK	1877	1936
WOERDEN	1890	1942
WORTWELL (Upper Allyn)	1883	1892

Note: Many of these schools opened and closed and opened again over the period shown.

A number of denominational schools also operated in the early period.

Denominational Schools	Location	dates
Catholic	Clarence Town	1860s to 1874
C of E	Tillimby	1820s?
C of E	Clarence Town	1834 to 1847
C of E	Vacy	1850?
C of E	Allynbrook	1839 to ?
C of E	Paterson	1839 to 1869
C of E	Bandon Grove	1850?
C of E	Dungog	1848? to ?
C of E	Lostock	1848?
Presbyterian	Clarence Town	1849?
Presbyterian	Brookfield	1849?
Presbyterian	Vacy	1849?
Presbyterian	Dungog	1849? to 1851
Presbyterian	Paterson	1849?
Presbyterian	Gresford	1849?
Wesleyan	Tillimby	1850?

Catholic Schools

Clarence Town – 1860s to 1874

Brookfield – 1892 to 1958

Dungog – 1888 to continuing

Private School

Durham College, Dungog – c.1906 to c.1920

High School

Dungog – 1967 to continuing

Appendix 3: Social Institutions

A wide variety of organisations come under this category, many of uncertain history. This table should be seen as a tentative and ongoing first attempt to categorise them all.

Name	Location	Year est.	ended
A&H Association	Dungog	1886	ongoing
Agricultural Bureau - Upper Williams			
Apex	Dungog	1966	ongoing
Apex	Gresford	1970s?	1980s?
Boomerang Club	Bandon Grove	1939	1946
CWA	Dungog	1938	ongoing
CWA	Gresford	1936	ongoing
CWA	Vacy	1949	2007
CWA	Lostock/Mt Rivers	1956	
Farmers and Settlers Association	Hilldale		
Farmers and Settlers Association	Underbank		
Farmers and Settlers Association	Dungog	1909	
Farmers Club		1827	
Girl Guides	Dungog	1954	
Graziers Association	Gresford		
Hibernians	Gresford		
Hibernians	Dungog		
Historical Society	Clarence Town	1970	ongoing
Historical Society	Dungog	1963	ongoing
Historical Society	Gresford	1979	ongoing
Historical Society	Paterson	1973	ongoing
Junior Farmers Club	Eccleston		
Junior Farmers Club	Fosterton		
Junior Farmers Club	Hilldale		
Junior Farmers Club	Bandon Grove		
Junior Farmers Club	Wallarobba		

Name	Location	Year est.	ended
Junior Farmers Club	Glen William		
Landcare	Paterson/Allyn		
Landcare	Gresford		ongoing?
Lioness Club	Dungog	1983	ongoing
Lions	Dungog	1956	ongoing
Lions	Clarence Town		
Masonic Lodge	Gresford		
Masonic Lodge	Dungog	1894 (1905)	2006
Oddfellows	Paterson	1846	
Oddfellows	Dungog	1874	
Red Cross	Gresford		
Red Cross	Dungog	1914	2006
Rotary	Dungog	1950	ongoing
RSL	Dungog	1919	ongoing
RSL	Gresford	1919?	ongoing
RSL	Clarence Town	1950	1960
RSL Ladies Auxiliary	Gresford	1945?	2012
RSL Ladies Auxiliary (Wattle Club to 1967)	Dungog	1967 (1919)	2004
School of Arts	Dungog	1872	1950s
School of Arts	Gresford	1890	
School of Arts	Clarence Town	1879/1914	
School of Arts	Paterson		
Scouts			
Sunshine Club	Dungog		
Tourist League	Dungog	1920s	
Wattle Club	Dungog	1919	1967
Women's Guilds			

Appendix 4: Churches

Denomination	Location	Name	First/current building	Closed
Baptist	Clarence Town		1863	
Baptist	Dungog		1917	Continuing
C of E	Allynbrook	St Mary's-on-Allyn	1844	Continuing
C of E	Bendolba	St Peter's	?/1885	Continuing
C of E	Chichester		1903	
C of E	Clarence Town	St John's	1840/1906	Continuing
C of E	Dungog	Christchurch	1838/1858	Continuing
C of E	Eccleston	St Paul's	1853/1924	
C of E	Glen William	St Thomas	1862?/1897?	
C of E	Gresford	St Anne's	1840/1898	Continuing
C of E	Lostock	St John's	1892	Continuing
C of E	Martin's Creek	St James	1899/1928	Continuing
C of E	Paterson	St Paul's	1845	Continuing
C of E	Tillimby		1820s	
C of E	Underbank	St Paul's	1901	
C of E	Vacy	St John's	1849/1887	Continuing
C of E	Wallingara	St James	1903	
Catholic	Brookfield	St Killian's	1850/1884	1982
Catholic	Clarence Town	St Patrick's	1852/1893	Continuing
Catholic	Dungog	St Mary's	1857/1870/1933	Continuing
Catholic	Gresford East	St Helen's	1867	Continuing
Catholic	Paterson	St Columba's	1884	Continuing
Catholic	Summer Hill	Sacred Heart	1840/1913	Continuing
Congregational	Chichester		1883/1906	
Congregational	Eccleston		1886/1895	2006
Congregational	Gresford East		1903	
Congregational	Salisbury		1887/1903	
Congregational	Thalaba		1860/1881/1913	Continuing
Congregational	Underbank		1924	
Presbyterian	Clarence Town	Chalmers/St David's	1857/1906	Continuing
Presbyterian	Dungog	St Andrew's	1856/1905	Continuing
Presbyterian	Paterson	St Ann's	1842	2010
Presbyterian	Wallarobba		1931	
Seven Day Adventists	Dungog		1940/1979	Continuing
Union (see p.183)	Bandon Grove	Union Church	1889	Continuing
Union	Fosterton		1913	
Union	Hilldale (Big Creek)		1899/1957	Continuing
Wesleyan	Bandon Grove		1849	1889
Wesleyan	Clarence Town		1853	
Wesleyan	Eccleston		1844?	1875
Wesleyan	Lostock		c1850s	1880?
Wesleyan	Paterson		?	
Wesleyan (Uniting)	Dungog		1853/1910	Continuing

Appendix 5: Cemeteries

Status	Location
Anglican	Allynbrook - St Mary-on-Allyn
Anglican	Bendolba - St Peter's
Anglican	Chichester
Anglican	Glen William - St Thomas'
Anglican	Gresford - St Anne's
Anglican	Lostock - St John's
Anglican	Paterson - St Paul's
Anglican	Timbily
Anglican	Vacy - St John's
Baptist	Thalaba
Catholic	East Gresford - St Helens
Catholic	Mount Rivers
Catholic	Summer Hill - Sacred Heart
Private	Cooreei - Alison Family
Private	Fosterton
Private	Wirragulla - Hooke
Private	Carrabolla - Joliffe Family
Private	Rumble Family?
Public	Bandon Grove
Public	Clarence Town
Public	Dungog
Public	East Gresford - Jupps
Public	Eccleston (Belgrave)
Public	Lostock
Public	Munni (Quart Pot)
Public	Paterson
Public	Salisbury (Melbury)
Uniting	Chichester
?	Oakendale
?	Stony Creek

Individual graves

George Gardner d.1919
Catherine Gardner d.1923

Location

Mt Douglas
Mt Douglas

Henrietta Lowe d.1845?

Deptford, Clarence Town

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