Changing Times Changing Landscapes

AT HOVELLS CREEK, NSW

200 Years of History and Personal Recollections



A Hovells Creek Landcare Group Project

CHANGING TIMES CHANGING LANDSCAPES at HOVELLS CREEK, NSW

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Prepared for publication by Jan Hyde Cover design by Louise Crawford Printed by Impress Printers Canberra

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'Road to Cowra' by Peter Simpson, oil on canvas, 2008
View Westwards over the Hovells Creek Valley from Mount Darling
Reproduced with permission of Brian Langer, Director, Cowra Art Gallery
Gifted to the Cowra Art Gallery by John and Liz Baker of *Old Graham*

CHANGING TIMES, CHANGING LANDSCAPES

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FOREWORD

I cannot picture in my mind what the landscape of Hovells Creek might have looked like or sounded like over 200 years ago. Chains of ponds, lightly wooded grasslands, shrubs, koalas, songbirds and wildflowers, an environment in a state responding to extremely long timescales of relative stability.

Today's landowners are the inheritors of those foundations and all the changes since. The pursuit for more ecological ways to manage biodiverse agroecosystems must continue, and this book sets the scene towards compassionate understanding of our local history; how we got here, and what we might aspire to recapture.

In 2018 Hovells Creek Landcare Group began a series of interviews with older residents in the valley, capturing memories and records of the people that live and lived in this area. This work is a repository of key information on early life in the valley, on the history of its land use and of environmental changes in the landscape. Focused not just on the social and family aspects of life in the valley but also on farming practices, technologies and homesteads, the book reflects on the state of the natural environment and the issues our forebears and predecessors faced during the early years of settlement.

During the interviews, dusty family diaries, scrapbooks, old photographs, and hand-written memoirs were produced and generously loaned for this work. It became apparent that gaps in the picture could be filled by a wide range of other records and sources, and so existing books on the area, published family histories, National Library of Australia Trove records of old newspaper articles, and early land survey records in New South Wales Archives were explored. Revealing sources such as the notebooks of explorer James Meehan's journey through the valley in 1820 and surveyor VB Riley's field books from his 1871 survey of Frogmore Road.

Notwithstanding the evidence of stone tools, there is regretfully little written information on the life of the Wiradjuri people, to whom we pay respects to their elders, past and present.

Hovells Creek Landcare Group hopes that readers will find the book enjoyable, informative, and helpful in enhancing their understanding of this a small part of New South Wales, which in a microcosm illustrates so many aspects of the development of rural Australia more generally.

The wonderful creation of this book is the result of the painstaking and tireless efforts of the Baker and Hyde families. In this we have a legacy for the families of Hovells Creek, then, now, and in the future.

Gordon Refshauge Chairman Hovells Creek Landcare Group 2021

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Hovells Creek Landcare Group wishes to acknowledge and thank the many people who have contributed to the information and production of this book:

- The Hovells Creek residents, previous and current, who willingly gave their time to share information, their stories, family histories, memories, experiences, and photographs of their association with the valley. Appendix 1 includes a brief biography of each of these contributors: Muriel Abraham, Max Boulding, Charlie Chown, Ken Chudleigh, Jim Clements who also shared his mother, Laurie Dunn Clements' memoirs, Doug Dockery, Joan Gay, Barry Gay, Carly Hudson, Wayne Hudson, Phyllis Hudson McGann, Anne McGann, John McGann, Alan and Monica McDonald, Ray Neville, John O'Connor, Vera O'Connor, Judy Refshauge, Kevin Tarrant, David Webster. It is an honour to have spoken with some of these former residents before they passed: Joan Gay, Phyllis Hudson, Judy Refshauge, and Vera O'Connor.
- John and Liz Baker, Jan and Keith Hyde, who talked at length with these residents; and Jan for transcribing these oral interviews.
- Members of the Wiradjuri people of Cowra, who gave feedback on the inclusion of information, albeit scant, on the first inhabitants of the valley; and to NSW Landcare for their valuable comments on Aboriginal people.
- John and Liz Baker for their extensive research into Hovells Creek history through the NSW
 Archives, State Library of NSW, and discussions with former owners and residents of
 Graham, prompted by their purchase and restoration of Graham, and keen interest in this
 grand home's history.
- Keith Hyde, with his agronomy background, for his expertise in soils and vegetation, and his analysis how these impacted on farming practices in the district.
- Gordon Refshauge for his input on climate data, weeds, and the Hovells Creek Landcare Group.
- Trudi Refshauge for proof reading and editing, and for her suggestions on important inclusions; to Marianne Payten for editorial expertise based on her long term connection with Hovells Creek; and to Lyn (name withheld), for valuable comments on clarifying points for readers not familiar with the Hovells Creek area.
- Jan Hyde for compiling the enormous amount of collective information, writing, layout, formatting, scanning and insertion of photographs, culminating in the production of Changing Times, Changing Landscapes at Hovells Creek, NSW.

There are likely to be omissions, stories and memories not recorded, and errors for which sincere apologies are extended.

Hovells Creek Landcare Group November 2021

HOVELLS CREEK - The Name

The naming of 'Hovells Creek' remains one of the unanswered questions arising from the research for this book. It is not listed in the NSW Geographical Names Board.¹

William Hilton Hovell (1786-1875) was one of the most well-known early Australian explorers. His name is linked with Hamilton Hume (1797-1873) in their 1824 expedition from Appin, south of Sydney, to Corio Bay on the coast of Victoria² for which they received great acclaim, recognition, and grants of land around Goulburn and Yass.

William Hilton Hovell retired to his property at Goulburn after one further expedition by sea in 1826 to Western Port in Victoria. He served as a magistrate on the bench at Goulburn.

Hamilton Hume settled at Yass at Cooma Cottage and became a magistrate on the Yass bench.

One might surmise an official in the Colonial Secretary's Office in Sydney,³ was tasked with naming the Nineteen Counties introduced by Governor Ralph Darling in 1829. As portions of land were allocated for sale within these Counties from the mid-late 1830s, a number of previously unnamed smaller creeks and waterways needed reference names.

By this time William Hilton Hovell, as a result of his 1824 expedition, had become a respected figure. It was customary to use the names of notable people to name geographic features such as mountains, rivers, and even small creeks such as Hovells Creek.

The earliest use of the name 'Hovells Creek' found in research for this book appears in a Land Sale notice in the County of King, gazetted on 15 March 1837 by the Colonial Secretary's Office, Sydney:

NSW Government Gazette [Issue No.243]; 15 March 1837, p249

SALE OF LAND

At eleven o'clock on Wednesday 14th day of June next, the Colonial Treasurer will put up to AUCTION, within the George Street Market Building, Letter C, the undermentioned PORTIONS OF LAND, on the condition authorised by Government

122. KING, 640, Six hundred and forty acres, or more, parish unnamed, on Hovell's Creek; situated about eight miles south of Hovel's stock station* called the Forest**, on Hovell's Creek; bounded on the east by that creek, and on the north, west, and south by section lines. Price 5s. per acre.

123. KING, 640, Six hundred and forty acres, or more, parish unnamed, on Hovell's Creek; bounded on the east by lot 122; on the north by a section line; on the west by a branch of Hovell's Creek; and on the south by a section line. Price 5s. per acre.

By command of his excellency E. Deas Thomson

*Spelling of 'Hovel' as it appears in this document. This is the only reference found that suggests William Hovell may have held land at Hovells Creek prior to purchase.

**Hovell named his future purchase of Lot 1 *Jerringoman*. At this time he was well established on his property at Goulburn.

¹ https://www.gnb.nsw.gov.au/place_naming/place_name_search

² https://www.sl.nsw.gov.au/stories/hume-and-hovell

³ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chief_Secretary_of_New_South_Wales

From January 1838 and 1839 the number of land sales at Hovells Creek increased. In June 1839-William Hovell purchased Lot 1 in the Parish of Newham. This was more than two years after the advertised March 1837 land sales. The wording 'eight miles south of Hovel's stock station' in the 1837 land sale notice might suggest Hovell had some earlier interest in the area.

Local folklore has William Hovell exploring the Hovells Creek area with Hamilton Hume; receiving a land grant of 968 acres; squatting on this land before he purchased it in 1839; and living on the block after the purchase.

Hovell's life is well documented, and there is no recorded evidence that any of these suppositions were the case, while there is ample evidence of where he explored; the purchase documents of Lot 1; and that he lived on his property at Goulburn. On an 1857 map 'Capt Hovell's Buildings' are noted (p9) – it is likely he had an overseer on his block at Hovells Creek, especially as he had some 2000 acres leased to the south of Lot 1.



Hovells Creek winding its way north to its junction with the Lachlan River on the far horizon

Aerial photograph taken from above *Jerringomar* in the early 1980s with Hovell's Lot 1 (now *Balloch*) in the middle distance, and part of his 2,000 acre lease block in the foreground.

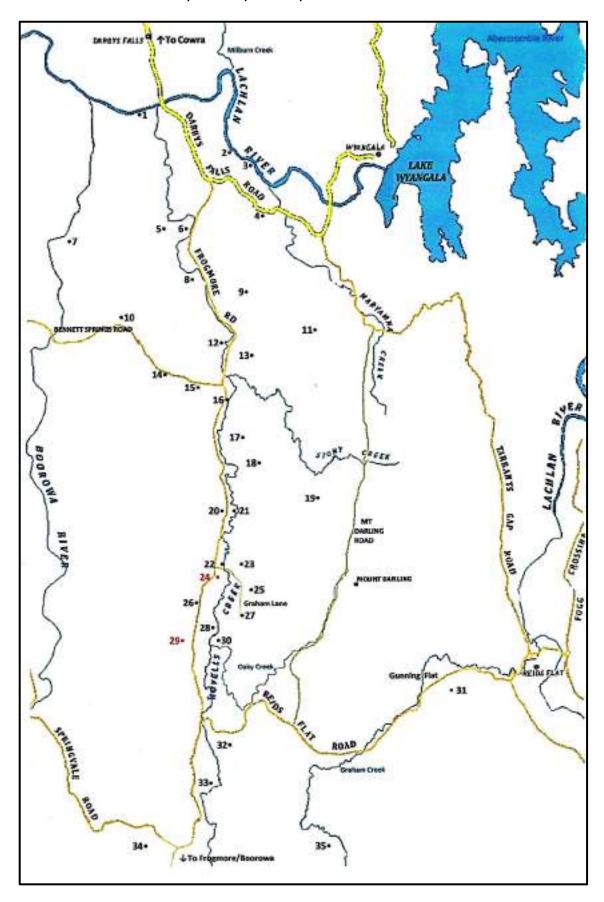
(courtesy of D Dockery)

PROPERTY NAMES AND HOMESTEADS Detailed history of property ownership can be found in Chapter 13

MAP No.	Property Name Now (then)	Earliest owner	Date acquired
1	The Junction (Sunnyview)	Patrick Neville	1854
2	Ledglea (Riverslea)	E Killen/ S Coward	1880s/c.1920
3	Riverslea	E Killen/ S Coward	1880s/c.1920
4	Gidgall (Riverslea)	S Coward	1920
5	Laurel Grove, now a ruin	Patrick Neville	1854
6	Sunnyview	Patick Neville	1854
7	Kember	Patrick Neville	1854
8	Glen Eden (Alta Villa)	Patrick Neville	1854
9	Riversteen (Riverslea/ Ballysteen)	T Neville/ Coward/ L Berry	c.1880s
10	Bennett Springs	Francis Harris	1856
11	Maryamma	Henry Taverner	Late 1850s
12	Eupon Downs (Geweroo)	A&G Dunn	1924
13	Balloch (Jerringoman)	William Hovell	1839
14	Benwerrin	A&G Dunn	1926
15	Grasmere (Jerringomar)	A&G Dunn	1926
16	North Jerringomar	A&G Dunn	1926
17	Kooringle (Jerringomar)	W Hovell lease; Smith Co.	1838/1890
18	Guvesne	Thomas O'Connor	c.1900
19	Spring Creek	John Hudson	1880s
20	Kondon (Kiaora)	John O'Connor	Late 1850s
21	Kiaora	John O'Connor	Late 1850s
22	Smart's Cottage, now a ruin	Thomas Smart	1856
23	Kalaraville	Jack Berry	c.1870s
24	The Graham School	NSW Dept of Education	1884
25	Willow Park	George Hudson	1916
26	Old Graham (Graham)	Edward Kerr	1878
27	Werrawee (Cunningham Ponds)	Edward Cunningham	c.1860
28	Willow Glen	Thomas O'Neill	1862
29	St Joseph's Church	Catholic Church	1879
30	Oaky Creek Station, now a ruin	Alexander Sligar	1838
31	Tatong (Gunning Flat)	Christopher O'Leary	1851-58
32	Sunnyside	Fred Gay	1940s
33	Brooklyn (Hillside)	William O'Connor	1856
34	Glenbrook	Glanville Chudleigh	1895
35	Clonalton	Fred Gay	1942

The map opposite is downloaded from: https://www.spatial.nsw.gov.au/

HOVELLS CREEK VALLEY and SURROUNDING DISTRICT RIVERS, CREEKS, ROADS, PROPERTY LOCATIONS



EXPLANATORY NOTES

A short biography of each person who contributed to the project is included in Appendix 1. Property names in the main body of the text are in *italics*.

PRICES are quoted in pounds, shillings, and pence, for example £1.15.6; or in shillings and pence as 15s 6d.

Name	Explanation		
HOVELLS CREEK			
Hovells Creek	A locality		
Hovells Creek	The waterway – from the source to its end		
Hovells Creek valley	From Reids Flat road to the confluence with the Lachlan River		
GRAHAM			
Parish of Graham	A locality with the County of King		
Graham property	Pastoral property		
Graham	The original stone homestead from 1884-1994		
Old Graham	The name of the house since restoration in 1994		
Graham Lane	A roadway		
Graham School	Named after the locality		
The Graham Telephone Exchange	The name of the locality		
The Graham Post Office	The name of the locality		
Graham Creek	Crosses Reids Flat Road at the southern end of the valley		
Smith Co Graham and Narrawa Ltd	The Smith family company with land at Hovells Creek		
Graham Gymkhana	An event held during the 1960s		
Graham Bush Fire Brigade Inc.	The rural fire unit at Graham locality		
Graham Berry	A person		
KEMBER	A locality		
	A property name owned by Patrick Neville		
Burrowa/ Boorowa	Pre-1914 Burrowa used, then Boorowa, although the Burrowa Times used the old spelling until 1951		
Hovell's Creek/ Hovells Creek Reid's Flat/ Reids Flat	Apostrophes in names such as this are no longer used, but remain in this document in newspaper articles		

HOVELLS CREEK VALLEY



Panoramic view from the top of *Graham Hill* towards Mt Darling (centre rear)

(photo courtesy of J Baker)

CHAPTER 1 – BEGINNINGS

European Exploration and Encounters with Aboriginal People

European settlement in Australia has had a far-reaching impact on the landscape and the Aboriginal people who have inhabited this vast continent of Australia for 50-60,000 years. European exploration away from the coastal areas gradually opened up more and more land for European settlement and farming enterprises, including at Hovells Creek.

EUROPEAN EXPLORERS IN THE CENTRAL WEST OF NEW SOUTH WALES

European exploration of the Central West of NSW began in May 1813 when Gregory Blaxland, William Lawson and William Charles Wentworth travelled westwards from Sydney and found a route across the previously impregnable Blue Mountains. George Evans (1780-1852) followed in November 1813, going further inland to find the Fish [Lachlan], Campbell and Macquarie Rivers, and the site of present day Bathurst. In 1814 William Cox (1764-1837),constructed a road across the Blue Mountains to the Bathurst Plains. Governor Lachlan Macquarie⁴ drove his carriage on the new road from Sydney to the emerging township of Bathurst in April 1815.

In May 1815 George Evans led another expedition travelling southwest from Bathurst, where he crossed the Lachlan River, near the site of present day Cowra.

In 1818 Governor Macquarie sent Deputy Surveyor-General James Meehan (1774-1826) on an expedition to explore southwards from Sydney to assess the country that lay in that direction. New grazing lands were needed as those nearer Sydney were becoming exhausted, overstocked, and run down, and had suffered from repeated ravages of caterpillars. In March 1818 Meehan found the Goulburn Plains and Lake Bathurst.

JAMES MEEHAN'S EXPEDITION TO THE HOVELLS CREEK VALLEY

On 3 April 1820, Macquarie gave instructions to Meehan to travel even further south and locate a route to Jervis Bay on the coast, and to ascertain, 'the Quantity of disposeable Land fit for tillage and grazing in that part of the country'.

Meehan's party comprised a team of himself and five men travelling on foot, with their food and equipment carried on horses, rather than on carts. Unlike some other expeditions t+hey were not accompanied by hunting dogs and were not carrying firearms to shoot animals for meat. Evening meals were typically salt meat boiled over a fire, accompanied by boiled rice and peas.

James Meehan's statue at the Lands Building, Sydney, NSW

1

⁴ NSW Governor, 1810-1821

Meehan pushed a forty-six inch diameter single-wheeled perambulator fitted with a counting dial to measure distances. The details were entered in his notebook in miles, furlongs, and rods, and tallied into daily totals. An average day's journey was about twelve miles (20 kilometres). Directions were recorded with a sighting compass, with bearings being read in octants – a nautically-derived system for taking bearings.

Meehan and his support team of five left Bong Bong, near present day Bowral, on 19 April 1820 and travelled south to the Goulburn Plains. Instead of following instructions in search of Jervis Bay, Meehan turned west. The party passed eleven kilometres south of present day Crookwell, about two kilometres south of Grabben Gullen and on Wednesday 26 April crossed the Lachlan River [then known as the Fish River] where Grabben Gullen Creek flows into the Lachlan – approximately mid-way on a direct line between Crookwell and Boorowa.

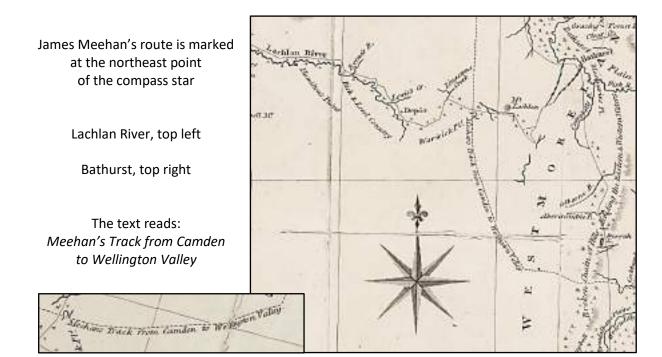
Having crossed the Lachlan, Meehan, 'finding the appearance of the country so very bad to the westward', turned northwest, then north-northwest and north again on a route which took him along the Hovells Creek valley.

Meehan reached the main part of the Hovells Creek valley (south of the present Reids Flat and Frogmore Roads junction) on Saturday 29 April 1820.

A Map of New South Wales from the best Authorities and from the Latest Discoveries, 1825

Creator: Tyrer, J. (nla.gov.au)





MEEHAN'S ACCOUNT OF THE HOVELLS CREEK VALLEY

Meehan kept a record of his expedition in a small folding notebook, with entries written in pencil. An average day's journey of about twelve miles was covered in twelve pages of notes. The available microfilmed copy of his notebook is in parts barely legible, and Meehan's handwriting is often difficult to decipher. The two pages reproduced here are among the clearer pages.

Meehan's entry at about midday on 29 April notes: 'Marked a large box tree' 5 and 'met a

chain of deep ponds in a large flat about a mile wide'.

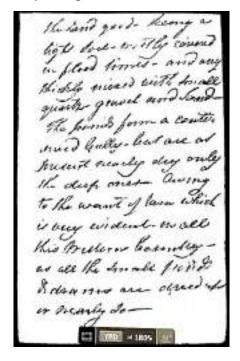
Marked a large Box Tree at 9-1-0 the land to N10S at 20. Round the pt of a rocky hill at 10-1-12 meet a chain of deep ponds in a large flat at a mile wide — ahead a knob on the main range R. E1272N — accept E44N - and point N26Eis the last crafted end of the range on LW..N. the other N40WN1E — 10-5-32 ... 10at 10-2-12 is 2K at 10-2-30is 7 at 10-3-12 is 4 at end of the Range or L..... the other (as I suppose)

These ponds are now known as the Cunningham Ponds, named after Mr Phillip Cunningham, a farmer and storekeeper who was the first owner of the adjoining lands (Lot 5 Parish of Graham, 1851)) on the eastern side of Hovells Creek, a kilometre or so north of present day *Willow Glen*.

Minched a large Box Freis of D-1-0-the per level at to 10 the per land 20 Poris Ithe per la the per la the per la the per large of the period on the Brain of a period on the Brain of the Brain of the Brain of the Brain of the American of the American or per the Brain of the American or per the Carryen or the period of the American or per the Carryen or the American of the American or the American of the Affect of the

⁵ William O'Connor found a blaze in a tree in 1911 on *Hillside* thought to be Meehan's *(p16)*. Subsequently mentioned by Ken Chudleigh of *Brooklyn (previously Hillside)*.

The next morning, Sunday 30 April, Meehan continued travelling north along the valley, on the eastern side of Hovells Creek, and made the following notes on the land through which he was passing:



The land good – being a light soil – mostly caused in flood times – and very thickly mixed with small quartz gravel and sand. The ponds form a Gullybut are at present nearly dry only the deep ones. Owing to the want of rain which is very evident in all this Western Country as all the small ponds & drains are dried up or nearly so –

780 of 1805

Meehan arrived at an area referred to as Gerringaman by the local Wiradjuri people (later recorded as *Jerringoman* by the European settlers), a little to the northeast of the intersection of the present day Bennett Springs and Frogmore roads.

After continuing north and keeping to the eastern side of Hovells Creek, Meehan left the creek at a point where it takes a sharp turn to the west [described on the 1:50,000 topographical map as Third Angle Flat and located on the present day Sunnyview property]. He continued in a north-north-easterly direction across the present day Ledglea property to meet and cross the Lachlan about two miles upstream from where Milburn Creek runs into the Lachlan and opposite what is now Lot 4, Parish of Dunleary. In his notes Meehan wrote, 'Met a considerable River, comes from East ... Is a very considerable stream, marks of very rapid and high floods ... Saw some natives'.

After crossing the Lachlan Meehan noted, 'Country on right and ahead is so very hilly and intersected with deep ravines that I can see no hopes of being able to cross them'. Meehan followed the Lachlan downstream for about two miles until he reached the confluence with Milburn Creek. He followed Milburn Creek northwards, reaching flatter country with open forest. From there he travelled to Wellington, Bathurst, and back to Sydney.

In reviewing Meehan's record of his journey along the Hovells Creek valley it is important to recall Macquarie's instruction to Meehan to ascertain 'the Quantity of disposeable Land fit for tillage and grazing in that part of the country'. This instruction to focus on the agricultural potential of the land seems to have framed Meehan's observations as he travelled along the valley. He describes much of the land and vegetation he saw as 'not so good', 'poor', 'rocky and bad', 'bad' or 'very bad', or as 'scrubby', 'poor forest', 'forest too sandy', 'brushy', 'rocky', 'very rocky all granite', 'gravelly', and 'steep stony ridges'. These descriptions reflect his route along the valley slope, rather than the valley flats where the better land was to be found.

Meehan mentions areas of good pasture with thick timber and red loamy soils north of the Cunningham Ponds: 'The land good – being a light soil – mostly caused in flood times – and very thickly mixed with small quartz gravel and sand.'

Meehan made no reference in his notes about the species or density of the vegetation. Given that the team travelled on foot and averaged twelve miles (20 kilometres) a day one might deduce the woodland on the slopes and edges of the flats must have been relatively open, interspersed with patches of grassland. Meehan makes no notes on his passage being slowed by thick woodland or vegetation.

There appear to have been more ponds in the valley when Meehan visited than there are today. In addition to the Cunningham Ponds, described earlier, he recorded nine more ponds or groups of ponds between the Cunningham Ponds and when he crossed the Lachlan near Milburn Creek. This was at a time when he had noted how dry the landscape appeared, and how little surface water was evident.

Most of these ponds or groups of ponds would have been between Graham Lane and the present *Kooringle* property, with many of them 'cut-offs' that resulted from changes in the course of Hovells Creek as it meandered across the valley floor. Landholders have undertaken drainage works in the valley in the last one hundred years, including lowering the bed of the creek, thus reducing the number of ponds and the extent of previously swampy areas.

ENCOUNTERS WITH ABORIGINAL PEOPLE⁶

At the time of European settlement, the Aboriginal population around Hovells Creek and its environs is said to have been relatively sparse⁷ as they journeyed through the area for hunting and foraging, with stops at regular camp sites.

James Meehan recorded that during the four days from when he first crossed the Lachlan near Grabben Gullen Creek to when he next crossed it upstream at its junction with Milburn Creek, he only saw Aboriginal people on three occasions, with no substantive contact being made.

Shortly after leaving Grabben Gullen, while still at the southern end of the Hovells Creek valley, Meehan reported on two occasions seeing land that had been recently burned. When viewing the country from a ridge he noted a range to his left appeared to have been burnt because the trees had a reddish hue. These could have been Aboriginal burns, or more likely (as it was a dry season) a naturally occurring bushfire from a lightning strike. Meehan's first visual contact with Aboriginal people in the Hovells Creek area was on 30 April 1820. He reports seeing, 'a native woman who fled on seeing us. Heard others cry to each other, they set the grass on fire in their flight'. This occurred mid-way through the valley, two kilometres east of a permanent spring (now Black Springs) and about eleven kilometres from the Lachlan River.

⁶ LANDCARE NSW GUIDELINES RUN G2.7 Aboriginal Protocols: Tips & Facts

⁷ Lloyd, 1990, p2

⁸ Sutton and Walshe, 2001

Worked river stones (not local to the area), typically used as tools by Aboriginal people, were collected from around Black Springs during the 1990s. This may indicate the site was a regular stopping point or meeting place for Aboriginal groups.

Similar stones have been found on other properties in the area: near the confluence of Hovells Creek and the Lachlan, and at Bungawarra near Reids Flat.



Edible plants were an important food source for Aboriginal people. The Yam Daisy tuber, eaten either raw or roasted, can still be found in the Hovells Creek area. A survey plan dated 1857 (p23) shows a large grassy flat — a typical habitat for Yam Daisies — near Black Springs, and close to where Meehan reported seeing the Aboriginal woman.

Other indigenous edible plants found in the Hovells Creek area include plants with tubers: Chocolate, Vanilla and Fringed Lilies, Bulbines, Milkmaids and Early Nancy. The fruits of the Peach Heath and Cherry Ballert or Native Cherry can still be found in the area, as are the edible seeds of Kurrajong trees. The roots of young Kurrajongs would be dug up and eaten, while Bluebell flowers and the fruit from some Mistletoes in the area were known food sources.

Plants and trees in the area that were a resource for Aboriginal people include the Silver and Hickory Wattles: the seeds were ground into flour and the wood used for digging sticks and tools. The Blakeleys Red Gum provided bark for canoes, coolamons, or shields, while the Stringybark provided bark for shelters, with the inner bark being woven into string and rope. Grass trees provided a sweet drink from the flower spike and the resin was used as a glue for weapons and stone axes. The Kangaroo Apple provided an edible fruit. Young Cypress pines were used for spears and digging sticks.

Many plants were used for medicinal purposes, but this is too complex an issue to cover here.⁹

Meehan's only other comment on Aboriginal presence was as he approached the Lachlan River, when he wrote, 'saw a native woman'.

Despite enquiries made to the Wiradjuri community in Cowra, there appears to be no extant local knowledge about the original Gerringaman inhabitants of the Hovells Creek area. A library search has not revealed any documented Aboriginal oral history or records for the area and the NSW Government's Aboriginal Heritage Information Management System (AHIMS) does not have any entries for the Hovells Creek valley.

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⁹ See ACT Government (2014), 'Ngunnawal Plant Use'

CHAPTER 2 – LAND SETTLEMENT AND HOLDINGS

Australia was settled under the doctrine of 'terra nullius' (belonging to no one), a legal principle the British used to claim permanent title to a country by merit of discovery and occupation. Governor Richard Bourke's¹⁰ proclamation of 'terra nullius' on 10 October 1835 claimed the land for the British Crown, which then had authority to control land policy and dispossess the Aboriginal people.

The reality behind 'terra nullius' was that the British saw Australia as a commodity. It was a source of raw materials, an outlet for surplus population from gaols and poorhouses and a source of revenue from land sales. The new population saw the new continent as a chance to make a living and get rich, often through taking up so-called 'waste land'.

While explorers like Evans and Meehan undertook government-initiated journeys of exploration, squatters embarked on their own search of pastoral land for their sheep and cattle. JF Campbell noted in articles written for the Royal Historical Society in 1929 and 1931, 'The movements of the squatters, in the appropriation of Crown lands for pastoral purposes, were for many years practically uncontrolled owing chiefly to the inadequacy of Government supervision, and vast areas were privately explored and squatted upon long before the central government had any definite knowledge of such proceedings'.

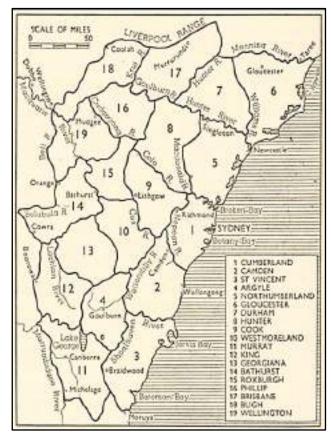
THE PROCESS OF SETTLEMENT AND GOVERNMENT LAND REGULATIONS

Governors Lachlan Macquarie¹¹ and Thomas Brisbane¹² favoured members of the clergy, military officers, and the English gentry with land grants. Squatters were occupying large tracts of land unimpeded by government regulations.

In October 1829, Governor Ralph Darling, ¹³ at the request of the Secretary of State Lord Bathurst, introduced a Government Order. This sought to limit settlement in NSW to what was known as the Nineteen Counties, within a line drawn about two hundred miles around Sydney.

Hovells Creek and Boorowa (County of King 12) and Cowra (County of Bathurst 14) were located just within the western boundary of the Nineteen Counties.

Map of the Nineteen Counties



¹⁰ NSW Governor 1831-1837

¹¹ NSW Governor 1810-1821

¹² NSW Governor 1821-1825

¹³ NSW Governor 1825-1831

From 1831 free land grants ceased. All land available land within the Nineteen Counties had to be purchased from the Crown.

An overview of the land settlement situation in the Hovells Creek area in the late-1820s and early to mid-1830s can be gained from Dixon's July 1837 map of 'Appropriated Lands'. Published in London, it is likely it reflected land settlement of 1835 or 1836. While Dixon's map showed several large land holdings at Boorowa to the south, Cowra to the north and Narrawa to the southeast, it shows no settlement in the Hovells Creek area to the west of Mount Darling and to the east of the range of hills shown running north south on the east side of the Boorowa River. Squatters living in the area with their sheep and cattle are not recorded.

Governor Darling's 1829 Order was followed in 1836 by the First Squatting Act, which attempted to regulate squatting by permitting pastoral licences for a fixed licence fee of 'Ten Pounds no matter what area' per annum. Squatting districts were established by a second Squatting Act in 1839, with Boorowa and Hovells Creek appearing in the Lachlan District. The 1839 Act introduced a tax of one penny per annum for each sheep, three pence for cattle and six pence for a horse. There is no documentary evidence that such pastoral licences were issued in the Hovells Creek area, given that it may have been only sparsely settled at the time.

EUROPEAN SETTLEMENT AT HOVELLS CREEK

European settlers into the Hovells Creek area came from two directions. After the crossing of the Blue Mountains in 1813, the establishment of Bathurst in 1815 and George Evans' expeditions to present day Cowra in 1815 and 1817, squatters began to arrive in search of pastoral lands.

The first European settlers in Cowra were two cattlemen from Bathurst, Arthur Rankin and James Sloan, who settled at Coura [sic] Rocks in 1831. Other settlers followed, with some likely reaching Hovells Creek from the north in the early to mid-1830s.

Settlers moving southwards from Sydney to Bong Bong (present day Bowral), Goulburn and Gunning reached the Yass plains in 1821. William Broughton, the first known European settler at Boorowa, had a farm on the Boorowa River as early as 1828.

There is evidence that preceding Broughton at Boorowa in 1828, and Rankin and Sloan at Coura [sic] Rocks in 1831, there was a process of 'informal settlement' as runaway convicts, emancipists, Ticket of Leave men, squatters in search of land, and others operating on the margins of settlement and society pushed into newly-discovered areas ahead of recorded settlement.

Hovells Creek is located mid-way between the two directions of settlement. Known early European settlers arrived from the north via Cowra and Darby's Falls, such as the Neville¹⁴ family who settled at *Alta Villa*, or from the south via Boorowa, Yass, or Goulburn, such as the O'Connor¹⁵ family who settled at *Hillside* and *Kiaora*.

¹⁴ One Patrick Too Many, 2008

¹⁵ The O'Connor family 2002

STAGES IN SETTLEMENT OF LAND HOLDINGS IN THE HOVELLS CREEK VALLEY

The earliest advertised land sales at Hovells Creek are notified in a Government Gazettes of 15 March 1837 (page vi). Further sales appear in January 1938:

New South Wales Government Gazette; Tues 2 January 1838, p9

KING, 950, Nine hundred and fifty acres, more or less, parish unnamed, near Kember; bounded on the north by a continuation easterly of the section line forming the northern boundary of a measured portion of 971 acres; on the east by a section line; on the south by a continuation easterly of a section line forming the southern boundary of the aforesaid 971 acres; and on the west by Hovell's Creek. Price 5s. per acre.

New South Wales Government Gazette; Tues 2 January 1838, p9

KING, 1000, One thousand acres, more or less, parish unnamed, near Kember; bounded on the west by a continuation northerly of the section line forming the eastern boundary of lot 11; on the south by a continuation easterly of the section line forming the northern boundary of lot 11; and on the east by part of a Village Reserve and the section line; and on the north by the Lachlan River. Price 5s. per acre.

From then on land settlement in the valley fell into four stages:

Stage 1 - Early Large Leases and Sheep Runs

On 29 June 1839, a land sale of Lot 1, 968 acres at Hovells Creek was registered to William Hilton Hovell, the well-known explorer, at the cost of five shillings per acre for a total sum of £242. This was named *Jeringoman* from the local Wiradjuri name Gerringaman. Hovell's portion broadly coincides with the present day *Balloch* property. The survey map of 1857 (p23) marks 'Capt Hovell's Buildings' set well back on the block from the road and adjacent to a cleared paddock.

Hovell applied to purchase an additional 810 acres immediately to the south of Lot 1, advertised for sale in the NSW Government Gazette on 18 July 1838, also at five shillings per acre.



New South Wales Government Gazette; Wed 18 July 1838 [Issue No.346], p540

KING, 810 acres parish unnamed at Jeringoman*; bounded on the north by a line bearing east 119 chains; commencing at the north-west corner on Hovell's Creek on the east by a line bearing south 80 chains on the south by a line bearing west 107 chains to Hovell's Creek; and on the west by that creek downwards to the north-west corner aforesaid.

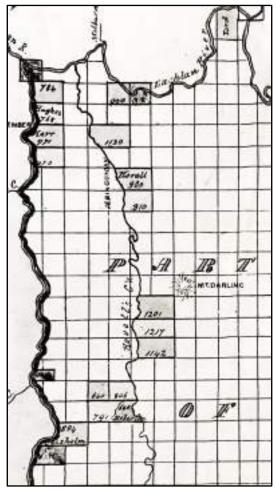
*or spelt Jerringoman; later became Jerringomar

In March 1850 Hovell's property was advertised for a five-year lease, together with a preemptive lease of 2,700 acres, containing a 'good cottage', kitchen, stable, huts and cultivation paddock of twenty-five acres, sheep hurdles and with the ability to run 5,000 sheep. In 1865 the property was sold to William O'Connor of Hovells Creek.

Other landholders recorded in the area are John O'Sullivan with a significant land holding between 1838 and 1847, and Hugh McDiarmid taking up those portions from 1848.

Further south, on the eastern side of Hovells Creek opposite present day *Willow Glen* where Oaky Creek runs into Hovells Creek, three portions of land of 1,201, 1,217, and 1,142 acres respectively were advertised for sale at five shillings per acre in the same 18 July 1838 Gazette. These three portions were purchased by Alexander Sligar, who some years later was reported as having a 3,936 acre sheep run in the Parish of Graham.

Alexander Sligar and his family are the first officially recorded residents at Hovells Creek. Their stone residence was on the east bank of Hovells Creek near the junction with Oaky Creek on the current *Willow Glen* property. Only the stone foundations remain today.





Alexander Sligar appears to have been a well-to-do gentleman, evidenced by his large holding, his stone house, and his photograph.

Areas of Sligar's land later became part of *Willow Glen*, operated by the O'Neill family for more than 60 years.

Map of 'Grants, Purchases and Unlocated Lands', mid-1840s, Baker's Australian Country Atlas



The stone chimney of Mr Sligar's former house on Lot 7,
Parish of Graham

In May 1840 John Frost senior and his wife Mary Anne took up Lot 1 in the Parish of Kenyu of 640 acres where present day *Brooklyn* is located. Frost purchased more land to become a major landowner centred on *Forest Creek Station*. Baker's Australian County Atlas map of the mid-1840s shows Lot 1 occupied in the name of Alexander Robertson with three adjoining lots of 640, 806 and 791 acres occupied (no occupier is named). On 20 April 1850 annually renewable leases let at ten shillings per 640 acres per annum were tendered at Carcoar (the regional centre for all land auctions and transactions) for three adjoining leases of 1,200; 1,114; and 640 acres, respectively.

Sheep on these large sheep runs owned by Sligar, Frost, and Robertson, were overseen by shepherds who corralled the sheep into a brush fenced enclosure at night. Properties were unfenced, so shepherds and hutkeepers guarded the sheep at night against native dogs and theft by Aboriginal people. Shepherds had huts near these enclosures – stone foundation remains can be seen on the eastern-facing valley side on both the *Grasmere* and *Graham* properties. An 1846 report from Thomas Icely's *Bangaroo* property near Canowindra noted each hut or station had two shepherds and a hutkeeper with folds for the sheep. The report states shepherds and stockmen were paid £15-25 per annum, while watchkeepers or hutkeepers received £15 per annum, plus rations. These rates may well have been similar for shepherds at Hovells Creek.

In 1844, in an attempt to address the problem of excessively large land holdings, a new land act specified, 'No licence will cover a station capable of depasturing more than 4,000 sheep or 500 head of cattle'. Based on an average stocking rate of half a dry sheep per acre for unimproved pasture in the Hovells Creek area this would have limited stations to 8,000 acres or 3,200 hectares. In 1847 another Squatters Act limited tenure for pastoral licences to fourteen years; this was the beginning of the end of the squatting era.

Pre-1860 Landholders in the Hovells Creek Area, By Parishes in the County of King

A snapshot of land ownership in the Hovells Creek area pre-1860 is provided by an unsourced table on pages 313-20 of the Young and District Family History Group's 1988 book on 'Pioneers of the Lachlan, Murrumbidgee and County King Pre-1860'. Land ownership details for the four parishes – Kember, Newham, Kenyu and Graham, which comprise the bulk of the Hovells Creek area – are given as follows (in acres):

Newham Bewley, William Horton, Thomas J Hovell, William Melville, James Newham, Thomas	800 320 968 [the explorer] 188 3540	Graham Hanrahan, Daniel Slingar, Alexander Kember Harris, Francis	290 3936 [Sligar] Total 4226 1064 [Bennett Springs]
O'Connor, John Kenyu Elizabeth Frost	3040 Total 9044 340	Neville, Daniel Terry, John	750 768 Total 2582

¹⁶ Cowra Family History Group (1995) p38

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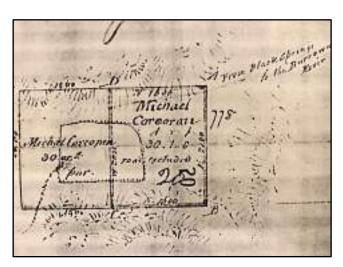
Stage 2 – Sale of Small Areas of Land at Springs, on the Valley Flats, and Lower Slopes

Commencing in 1850 smaller acreage land sales began in the Hovells Creek valley as some of the earlier large sheep run leases ended. One of the first sales was held at the (then) important regional administrative centre of Carcor (now Carcoar located about 50km northeast of Cowra and 80 kms NNE of Hovells Creek).

Seven lots (No. 20, 21, 22, 23, 25, 50 & 53 in the Parishes of Kenyu and Graham) were offered for sale in October 1850 at twenty shillings per acre. No offers were made for any of the lots. A note on the plan indicates that on 11 December 1850 Michael Corcoran selected Lot 20 of 30 acres. It was not until September 1855 that a final survey of his land was undertaken, by which time Corcoran had possibly been occupying the land for nearly five years. Surveyor Armstrong noted on the survey plan, 'This farm includes part of a cultivation paddock. The central portion is good land, nearly clear of timber and fit for cultivation – at the East and West boundaries there is a strip of rocky and inferior land – water may be obtained near the South boundary by diagning'.

Lot 20, known as 'Black Springs', is one of only a few reliable permanent springs in the valley, which would have been an incentive for Corcoran to take up the land promptly. Shortly after buying Lot 20 Corcoran purchased the adjacent 30 acre Lot 21, which he may well have been using/occupying for some time. (Lots 20 and 21 are part of the present *Graham* property).

Survey map for Michael Corcoran's 1850-55 purchase of Lot 20 in the Parish of Kenyu



Stage 3 – Sales and Leases of Balance of Land in the Hovells Creek Area

The NSW Crown Lands Acts (1861)¹⁷, often referred to as the Roberston Land Acts, were introduced by the then New South Wales Premier, John Robertson¹⁸. The objective was to break the dominance of squatters on large holdings, and to open up crown lands beyond the Nineteen Counties for agriculture.

The Robertson Land Acts allowed a settler to select a block on crown lands, even before it was surveyed. Holdings between 40 and 320 acres could be purchased at £1 per acre, a deposit of five shillings per acre, with the balance repayable within five years at five percent interest. Conditions of purchase (the term 'Conditional Purchase' or 'CP' is noted on survey plans) stipulated the owner live on the land for three years and carry out improvements such as clearing, fencing, and cropping to the value of £1 per acre. Most of the productive, more fertile floodplains adjacent to Hovells Creek were purchased under the 1861 Land Acts.

The Robertson Land Acts provided a basis for the orderly sale of land. New settler occupancy at Hovells Creek with the present pattern of land lots principally dates from 1861.

¹⁷ 'Crown Lands Alienation Act 1861' and the 'Crown Lands Occupation Act 1861'

¹⁸ John Robertson (1816-1891), served as Premier of NSW on five occasions

The new Acts were widely welcomed by shearers, bagmen, the unemployed and disappointed gold miners, about whom Banjo Paterson¹⁹ penned his poem 'The Free Selector':

Rejoice o'er the victory John Robertson has won, Now the Land Bill has passed and the good time has come, No more with our swags through the bush need we roam, For to ask of another there to give us a home, Now the land is unfettered, and we may reside, In a home of our own by some clear waterside. On some fertile spot which we may call our own, Where the rich verdure grows, we will build up a home.

The opportunity to purchase land on generous terms led to a range of abuses. 'Peacocking' involved picking the best portions of larger blocks. 'Dummying' was the use-of employees, family members or friends to claim land on behalf of an existing lessee. 'Pre-empting' involved trying to secretly buy land before it could be put up for sale.

Instances of possible 'peacocking', 'dummying' or 'pre-empting' at Hovells Creek include:

- Philip Sawaker's purchase of the 30 acre Lot 9 on Oaky Creek in the Parish of Graham is an example of 'peacocking'. Lot 9 included a spring and a waterhole in Oaky Creek, which were the most desirable features of the 1,217 acre former lease, originally let in 1839.
 Without these water sources the balance of the land was much less appealing.
- The names of some purchasers of multiple blocks (on NSW Parish maps) are not recognised as early residents of the valley suggest 'dummying' or land speculation, for example Officer and Raleigh whose names appear on multiple small blocks in several locations, with four 40 acre lots along Hovells Creek at present day *Kooringle*.

There was a growing realisation that while a smaller land holding in Britain could provide a good living for a family, a similar area in Australia was insufficient. Landholders progressively purchased 40 acre or larger 60-100 acre lots to add to existing 40 acre portions, to obtain an economically viable landholding.

Early Parish portion maps show Phillip Cunningham with five 35-50 acre lots along Hovells Creek just north of present day *Willow Glen*; and John O'Connor with six 40 acre lots along Hovells Creek near present day *Kiaora*.

During Stages 1 and 2, between the early-1830s and about 1860, the government was focused on regularising the occupation of land that had already been taken up by settlers. In Stage 3 the government was more proactive and surveyed and subdivided more land for sale. At the same time settlers could request a survey and purchase the land on which they already resided and farmed.

The second Crown Land Act of 1884 Act allowed for conditional leasehold of land adjoining a holding up to, but no more than, three times the acreage of the existing holding. The requirements were five years residency and the erection of boundary fences. At this time Hovells Creek landholders expanded their acquisition of land into the upper slopes and hill country.

The survey plan of Lot 147 (p14) illustrates the sale of a larger hilly land portion in the valley. The sale was for 240 acres of what was described as: 'Rough and rocky country with stony and sandy soil covered with Eucalypt, Box, and Stringybark trees'. The land had a brush fence 4192 links long (843m) running E-W across the portion, valued at £6-0-0.

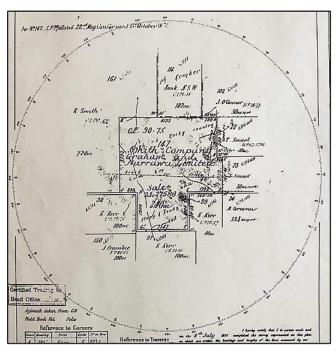
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¹⁹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Banjo Paterson

Lot 147 was purchased by Robert Smith under Section 26 of the Crown Lands Act of 1884 on behalf of Smith Company Graham and Narrawa Ltd and became part of the 7,550 acre property which was broken up and sold in 1924.

This block has since been subdivided, with a portion of it incorporated in *Old Graham*, a part of it in the Picker property, and part of it on *Willow Glen*.

1881 survey map of Robert Smith's purchase of Lot 147 in the Parish of Kenyu



By the late-1800s virtually all the land in the valley had either been sold or had become a crown lease. The portion map for the parishes of Kember, Newham, Kenyu and Graham (p17) shows a pattern of acreage holdings in the valley:

- Smaller portions: 40, 60 or 100 acres in size, concentrated along the valley flats were typically selected from 1850/1860 onwards, although some had been claimed earlier. These portions were allocated first within a Parish and have lower portion numbers.
- Larger portions of 200, 320, 350, 440, and 720 acres on the less valuable hilly areas were selected from about the 1870s onwards. These later allocations have higher portion numbers.
- Very few of the early large holdings that encompassed good valley land still exist today.
 Original large holdings were broken up as the Robertson Land Acts allowed selectors to move in on leases, or blocks were surrendered by their owners for resale in smaller portions by the government.

Stage 4 – Alternating Amalgamation and Breakup of Large Holdings, 1900s Onwards

After the available land in the Hovells Creek area had been sold or leased, future amalgamations of land holdings could only take place by landholders purchasing adjoining properties — a process which continues to the present day. Many families were related, so amalgamation occurred through family arrangement or marriage. A key driving force behind most of the amalgamations has been the search for economies of scale in farm management.

A significant consequence of land amalgamations and a move to larger properties since World War II has seen depopulation of the valley. As farmers purchased neighbouring properties, dwellings on the newly-acquired amalgamated land were left unoccupied. Labour efficiencies were introduced into agriculture, so additional cottages were not needed for farm workers. The use of contractors resident outside the valley has reinforced this trend. Smaller family units have been a contributing factor to a lower population at Hovells Creek.²⁰

²⁰ 2021 data shows a population of 40; https://landchecker.com.au/suburb/hovells-creek-nsw-2794/

Subdivision of holdings may occur when a landholder's estate is divided between family members; or when portions of larger land holdings are sold, such as the sale of *Graham* in 1924, the O'Connor holdings in the 1940s, and the sale of portions of *Jerringomar* in 2002.

Between 2005 and 2020, *Grasmere* and *Kondon* were subdivided into fourteen rural lifestyle/residential blocks consisting of: three concessional lots with cottages on Bennett Springs Road; four dwellings on existing portion lots with road frontage; and seven new 40 hectare lots with building entitlements on Frogmore Road. The balance of the land and farm infrastructure was purchased by neighbouring landholders. To date this process has seen six new permanent households in the valley; five lots occupied by 'lifestyle/weekenders'; and three lifestyle blocks still to be built on. The Hilltops Council's newly released 2022 Local Environment Plan (LEP) incorporates a 40 hectare minimum provision for building entitlement within designated rural land including in the Hovells Creek valley.

SURVEY OF LAND PORTIONS

Most of the land surveys in the Hovells Creek valley were undertaken between 1860 and 1890 and were carried out with a surveyor's chain and compass. The surveyors were private contractors who were paid a fee for their work. Modern day surveyors working with GPS based survey systems speak highly of the accuracy of these early surveys. Survey marks were blazed onto, and cut into trees, while lockspits (rocks placed in a line and overlapping each other) were sometimes placed on the top of hills to show the survey line where a convenient tree was not available.





Tree trunk survey marker cut off
and used as a fence post,
and rock lockspit.
Located on the boundary between
Graham and Kondon (now Hillview) properties

In 1908, almost 90 years after James Meehan's journey along the Hovells Creek valley in 1820, William O'Connor at *Hillside* made a significant discovery:

The Lithgow Mercury; Fri 8 May 1908, p5

OLD LANDMARK DISCOVERED, Goulburn Wednesday

While splitting a tree he had felled, Mr William O'Connor, of Hovell's Creek, discovered in the inside of the tree a broad arrow mark, with the track of an axe. He considers that the mark was made by the late Captain Hovell, explorer, upwards of eighty years ago. The tree was the north-west corner post of an area with a mile frontage to Hovell's Creek and Forest Creek, surveyed by Captain Hovell about the time stated. The tree was a red gum (known amongst bushmen as a blue gum, because of the colour of the bark) and as it was only two feet in diameter the growth has been exceedingly slow - a fact which should be noted by our Forestry Department.

This is likely to be the tree marked by James Meehan in 1820 and recorded in his notebook as 'marked a large box tree' (p2). Ken Chudleigh²¹ recalls a blazed tree at *Brooklyn*, formerly William O'Connor's *Hillside* property, however, believes it is no longer there.

Starting in the 1850s, the NSW Lands Department established a network of trigonometrical stations to link local portion and parish surveys into a statewide system.

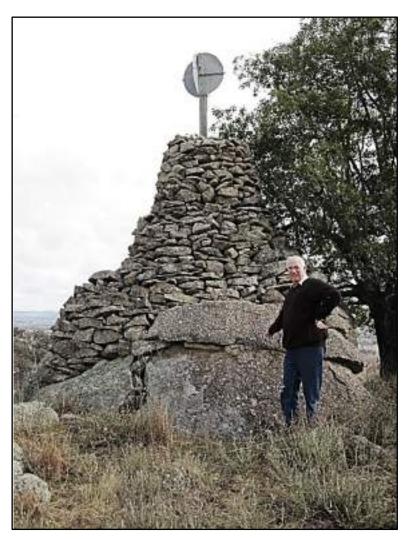
The Kember trig station was built in late-1900 and commissioned on 1 January 1901.

It is located on *Benwerrin* at Hovells Creek.

There is a similar trig station on the top of Mt Darling.

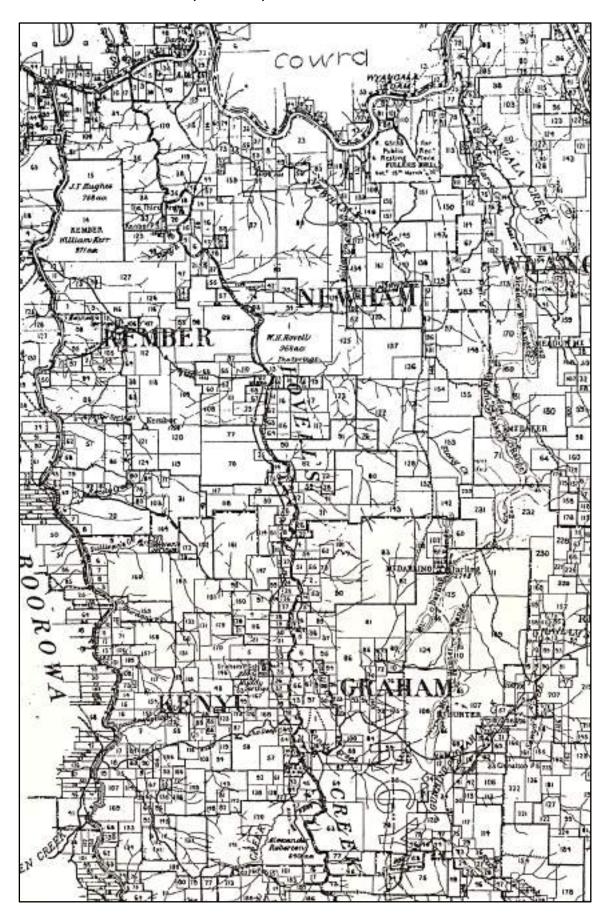
Trig stations have been little used since the 1980s when satellite-based GPS surveying became the norm.

Yass surveyor, Steve Hogan (pictured), buried a metal pipe time capsule at the Kember trig station when he was surveying there in the early 2000s.



²¹ Ken Chudleigh's great grandfather, Glanville Chudleigh came to Hovells Creek In 1895 (p185)

THE PARISHES OF KEMBER, NEWHAM, KENYU AND GRAHAM SHOWING LAND PORTIONS



EARLY-EUROPEAN SETTLEMENT IMPACT ON THE ABORIGINAL POPULATION

While no specific information could be found on what happened to the Wiradjuri population as European settlers pushed into the Hovells Creek area, there are some broader accounts about Aboriginal people in the Central West of NSW.

Foley (2018)²² describes initial relations in the Central West of NSW between the new European settlers and the Wiradjuri as peaceful, with the Wiradjuri sharing their food and resources with the new arrivals. There were subsequently 'misunderstandings' between the two over 'sharing' of foodstuffs. Foley gives an example of the Wiradjuri people sharing yams from the Bathurst yam pastures with the settlers, but when the Wiradjuri took some of the settlers' potatoes, they were killed for stealing. This led to violence between the two groups, with struggles occurring over land and women, and massacres became commonplace. During this time smallpox decimated the Wiradjuri population. It has been suggested that Aboriginal populations in the Boorowa and Cowra regions which originally numbered in their thousands were reduced to hundreds.²³

As pastoralism spread there were fewer and fewer places for Aboriginal people to live. Settlers, who were unfamiliar with the country, often relied on Aboriginal knowledge to establish their homesteads and properties on Wiradjuri campsites – places that were sheltered, had clear water and were safe from flooding. The new settlers prevented Aboriginal people from engaging in their traditional burning practices, which were incompatible with the new pastoral economy. This led to the few remaining displaced Aboriginal people camping on the properties of sympathetic pastoralists. Intermarriage between Aboriginal people and pastoralists, convicts, and settlers may have been more frequent, although there are no documented cases. Foley observes the Irish convicts were being treated as badly as the Wiradjuri by the British. Around this time Aboriginal labour was becoming increasingly valuable to pastoralists, especially during the Bathurst goldrush from 1851 onwards, when many white labourers abandoned their jobs on farms in search of gold. Several of the early shepherds in the area were Aboriginal men.

By the 1880s there was increasing pressure for Aboriginal people to move from pastoral stations to reserves at Cowra, Yass and further afield. This process was hastened by the Depression of the mid-1880s and the drought of the late-1890s. Peter Read's 1980 oral history of five Aboriginal men who grew up on the Cowra Erambie Reserve describes how, after Aboriginal people left the pastoral stations and settled in Cowra, Yass, and other centres, they were forced to seek work in the white community.²⁴

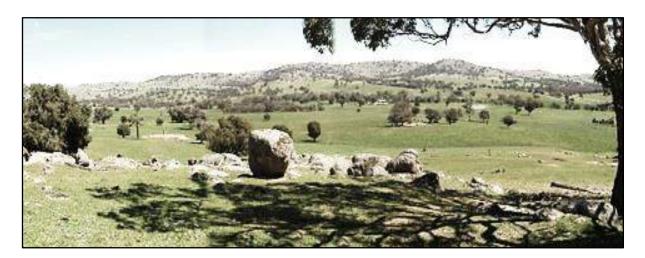
²² Dennis Foley, Professor of Indigenous Entrepreneurship, University of Canberra

²³ Lloyd 1990 p2

²⁴ Read (1980) and Beckett (1965)

CHAPTER 3 – THE HOVELLS CREEK LANDSCAPE

Geographic Features, Soils, Vegetation



The area defined-as the Hovells Creek valley is bordered by the Lachlan River and Wyangala Dam to the north and east; the Boorowa River catchment to the west; and the Reids Flat Road to the south. It is in the Central West region of New South Wales.

Other creeks named after William Hovell are located between Gunning and Yass in NSW, and one in Victoria.

Latitude: 34.0390; Longitude: 148.8874 (central point)

Nearest towns: Cowra and BoorowaSW Government area: Hilltops Shire

• NSW Natural Resource Management area: Southeast

The whole Hovells Creek catchment comprises an area of about 380 square kilometres. It is part of the headwaters of the Lachlan River, one of the main inland river systems of New South Wales. Hovells Creek represents less than 0.5% of the Lachlan River Catchment.

The south-north catchment is approximately 45km long and varies in width from around 10km wide to less than 2km wide at the junction of Hovells Creek with the Lachlan River, just below Wyangala Dam.

The focus of 'Changing Times Changing Landscapes' is on the northern, lower end of the catchment, defined as the Hovells Creek valley (map page ix).

TOPOGRAPHY AND DRAINAGE

The elevation of the catchment/valley ranges from 839m at Mount Darling on the eastern boundary, to about 330m where Hovells Creek enters the Lachlan River. The Hovells Creek catchment is dominated by two north-south ridges either side of the valley of approximately 500m in elevation bordered by gently undulating areas and alluvial creek flats along Hovells Creek at the base of the valley at 340-360m. The two ridgelines form the western boundary of the Great Dividing Range. The main sub-catchments are defined by the Stony, Oaky and Sandy Creek tributaries which intersect the eastern ridgeline of the valley, and Forest Creek to the immediate south.

THE GEOLOGY

Hovells Creek lies within the Lachlan Fold Belt of south-eastern Australia, ²⁵ formed around 100-200 million years ago. The oldest rocks in the catchment are sandstones, siltstones and shales that form the hill country in the upper reaches of Hovells Creek (near Rye Park). These rocks form poor soils and are prone to erosion if not carefully managed. In the central part of the catchment is a volcanic outcrop running from present day Frogmore, around the western edge of the Hovells Creek granite country towards Breakfast Creek in the northwest. The lower Hovells Creek catchment is dominated by granite hills and big granite boulders.

A series of major faults and shear zones influence the topography of the catchment with many of the creeks flowing along these fault lines.

The most recent deposits of sand, silt and clay have been washed down from the weathered granite bedrock and form the undulating hillslopes adjacent to the ridge lines of the catchment. Sands, gravels, silts, and clays have also been washed down from higher in the catchment and deposited along narrow floodplains, adjacent to Hovells Creek. These deposits vary from a few metres to over thirty metres in depth.

The geology of the region influences the chemical composition, and especially the salinity, of the ground water and run-off water into Hovells Creek itself. Run-off water from the sandstones, siltstones, and shales in the upper catchment and via the Forest Creek tributary is notably saltier than the run-off from the granites of the lower catchment.²⁶ The salt level within the creek water is influenced by salt stored over years within the valley alluviums and released into the creek water during wet periods and floods. Catchment runoff and salt levels into the Lachlan River is monitored through a WaterNSW gauging station on Hovells Creek at *Alta Villa*.

THE SOILS

The soils of Hovells Creek valley are highly variable and generally of moderate to low fertility. The surface texture of the soils is coarse, derived from granites and coarse-textured sediments. Soils on the slopes are generally acid (pH 4-5), becoming more neutral (pH 6-7) on the flood plains and slightly alkaline (pH 7.5) in some poorly drained areas.

The mid slope soils are characterised by a distinct change in particle size at a depth of 15-30 centimetres. The topsoil is generally light in colour, coarse textured, sandy, and low in organic matter. The subsoils tend to be reddish on the hills and yellowish in the valleys, with quite a high clay content. This causes them to shrink and swell with water content change, which presents land use challenges. They are typical of the Eucalypt forests of southern Australia and can be quite boggy during wet weather.

Alluvial soils of the flood plain have developed from upstream weathering and erosion and generally have a sandy loam surface, grading to loamy clay subsoils. Regular floods over the years have top-dressed the flood plains with sand, silt, clay, and organic matter.

In contrast to these generalisations there are areas of deeper cracking clay soils on the landscape benches along the alluvial floodplain.

²⁵ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lachlan_Fold_Belt

²⁶ Harvey, K & Moore, CL (2004). Regolith-landform mapping: a tool for the strategic management of dryland salinity. University of Canberra.

The surface structure of most of the valley soils is fragile and, if cleared, overgrazed, or poorly cultivated becomes impermeable, and subject to erosion. Precipitation runs across the surface and, if channelled into depressions, can lead to the formation of erosion gullies. Where native vegetation has been cleared or overgrazed and the surface left unprotected, these soils are particularly vulnerable. Much damage was caused during the rabbit era, when there was almost no plant matter remaining each summer (the annual rabbit drought) to hold the soils intact during summer storms.

Several comments were made during the interviews that some paddocks on the slopes ploughed and ripped so many times in the 1930s-1960s they lost surface organic their structure and matter, fertility leaving them prone to erosion.

Erosion gullies at Hovells Creek



NATIVE VEGETATION²⁷

While it is difficult in the twenty first century to determine precisely how much open land or scrubby timber dotted the landscape 200 years ago, areas of remnant vegetation suggest it was lightly to moderately timbered but not densely timbered, except on the ridges.

James Meehan made very few notes on vegetation during his 1820 journey of exploration but was able to walk twenty kilometres in a day through the area (*Chapter 1*), which would not have been possible through dense vegetation.

An 1857 pre-sale survey map (p23) of Lots 22, 23 and 24 adjacent to Hovells Creek includes vegetation notes describing:

- grassy low forest, lightly timbered with gum, apple, and stringybark
- the west side is scrubby
- a large grassy flat

The 'large grassy flat', noted on Lots 23 and 24, is the current day lucerne paddock on Kooringle. 'Good water holes in the creek' are also noted.

A 'cleared and fenced paddock' is marked on Lot 22, and a 'cultivation paddock' marked on Hovell's block Lot 1, (now Balloch), evidence of established farming in 1857 (p23).

VB Riley, in his 1871 survey, included notes describing 'yellow and white box and gum', which he also referenced on the lower slopes. He noted 'white box, gum'; 'apple²⁸ and gum', 'gum and yellow box'; and 'pine scrub' (p29). Apple Box is typically found in low lying and swampy areas, White Box and Yellow Box prefer better drained soils, and pine grows on the upper slopes and ridges. Riley noted thick Cypress pine scrub on the slopes and ridges.

The distribution of vegetation in Hovells Creek correlates closely to geology, soil type and position in the landscape. Vegetation communities are named according to the dominant tree species (eg. White Box Woodland).

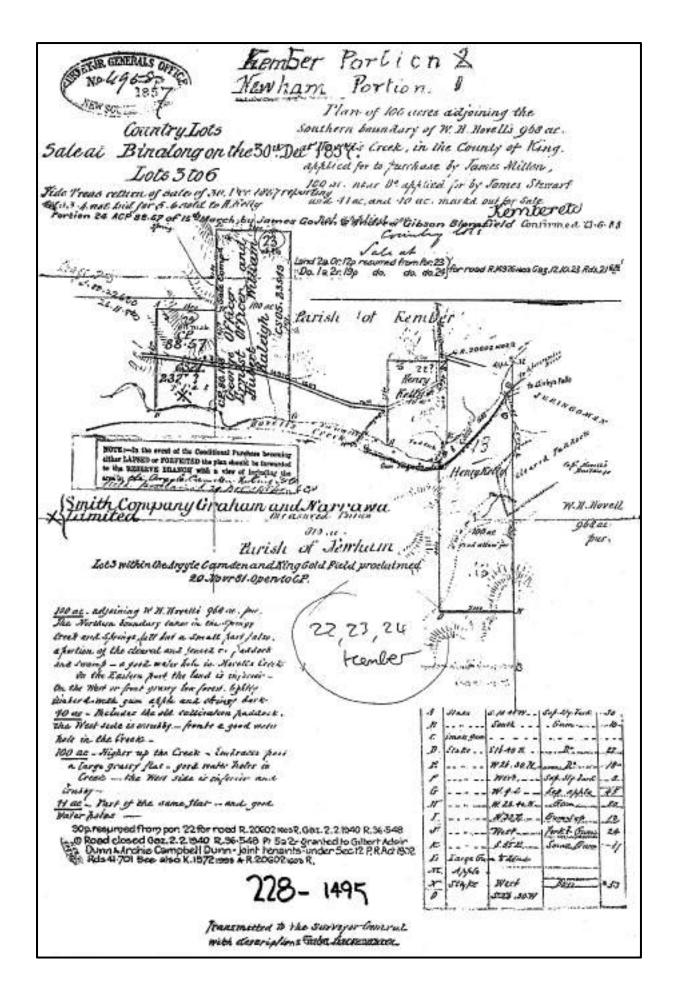
Riparian forests of River Red Gum and River Sheoak occur along Hovells Creek and tributaries. White/Grey Box open woodlands with a grassy understorey are typical on the lower slopes and floodplain benches. Woodland communities with a grass understory, dominated by Blakely's Red Gum and Yellow Box, grow along the higher, undulating slopes. They are all classified nationally within the White Box/Yellow Box/Blakely's Red Gum Endangered Ecological Community (EEC).

Denser stands of Cypress pine, with Kurrajongs and mixed Eucalypts were a feature of the hillslopes (as noted by Riley).

These features of the landscape undoubtedly influenced pre-European land use, European settlement in the region in the 1830s-1850s, subsequent agricultural enterprise, and landscape change.

²⁸ Apple Box

²⁷ Detailed information on soils and vegetation of Hovells Creek valley can be found at: https://hovellscreeklandcare.org.au/resources/boorowa-catchment-action-plan-2005-2010



The tree communities, their current extent, and the estimated pre-clearance cover within the former Boorowa Shire (now Hilltops Shire) which includes Hovells Creek were described in a comprehensive 2002 study by the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) for regional Landcare. Over 85% of the Shire was assessed to have been cleared over the past 200 years.²⁹

Vegetation Ecosystem	Pre-1750 Area (ha)	Existing Area 2002 (ha)	% Cleared
River Red Gum riparian forest *	3,063	577	81
River Oak riparian forest *	738	111	85
Blakely's Red Gum/Yellow Box Woodland *	50,071	4,093	91
Kangaroo Grass/Red Grass open woodland	24,269	419	98
White Box Woodlands *	39,700	2,204	96
Red Stringybark/Long-leaved Box/	17,297	2,197	87
Candlebark open Forest/ Woodland			
Black Cypress/Red Stringybark-Red Box shrub forest	2,379	828	65
Red Stringybark Dry Shrub Forests	72,955	9,492	87
Red Stringybark/Joycea grass tussock open forest	47,205	8,965	81
TOTAL	257,659	28,862	88
* Present in the Hovells Creek valley			

Denser stands of Cypress pine, with Kurrajongs and mixed Eucalypts were a feature of the ridgelines.

Woodland communities with a grass understory, dominated by Blakely's Red Gum and Yellow Box, occurred along the higher, undulating slopes,

White/Grey Box open woodlands with a grassy understorey grew on the lower slopes and floodplains.³⁰

Riparian forests of River Red Gum and River Sheoak were found along Hovells Creek and tributaries.

One of the few remaining blocks of remnant riparian vegetation, larger than one hectare in area, is found on the *Kiaora* property and can be seen in this aerial photo. https://maps.six.nsw.gov.au/



²⁹ Priday 2002

³⁰ These three groups are mapped within the White Box/Yellow Box/Blakely's Red Gum Endangered Ecological Community (EEC).

Most of the remaining larger blocks of remnant vegetation are dry forests on rocky ridgelines, for example along the Mount Darling Range (p91), or rocky areas unsuitable for agriculture, for example, within the Grasmere Woodland, on *Eupon Downs*, *Jerringomar* and *Balloch*. These patches are characterised by remnant shrubs and significant regeneration.

Other remnant woodland cover consists of isolated large old paddock trees and small patches of less than two hectares. Understorey shrubs are non-existent in most areas, particularly those used for grazing domestic livestock.



Part of the Grasmere Woodland showing mixed Stringybark, Cypress, and Box Gum species

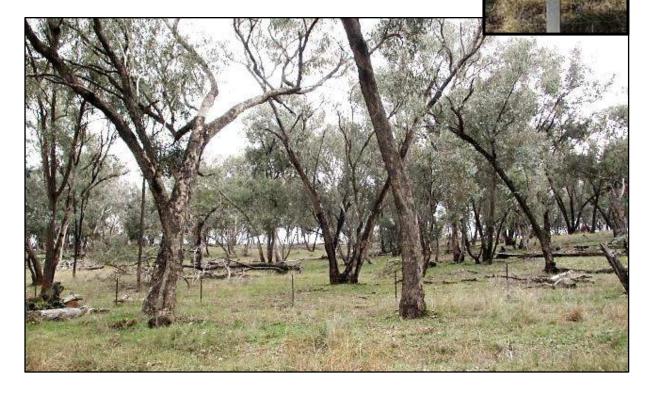
Today, the ground cover vegetation of the lower fertility soils of the cleared hills and slopes is dominated by redgrass with some Microlaena. The grasses are less dense under remnant trees, suggesting this may have been the case 200 years ago.

Parcels of Crown land called Travelling Stock Reserves (TSR) are used by the rural industry as a network of holding paddocks when grazing or moving stock around a state. In addition, the TSR network has other values such as biodiversity conservation, Aboriginal and European culture, and recreation.



Significant patches of remnant native vegetation can be found on ungrazed roadsides, corners cut off by new roads, and Travelling Stock Reserves. The Hovells Creek and Bennett Springs TSRs retain the largest areas of remnant plant diversity within the valley.

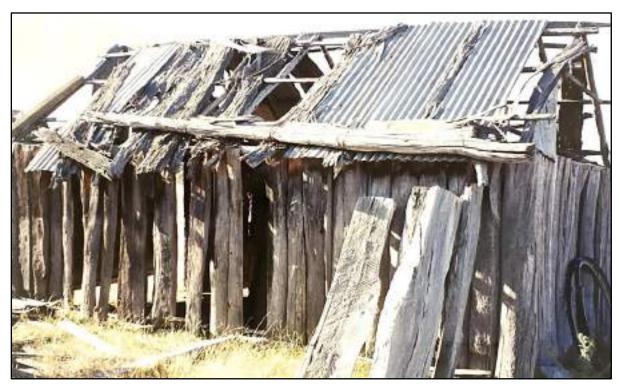
A 1991 vegetation survey for the NSW Department of the Environment recorded some 70 ground-story and shrub species in Travelling Stock Reserves, including perennial Redgrass, Kangaroo grass and Wiregrass/Speargrass. (Prober and Thiele).



Trees, shrubs, and grasses are only one aspect of vegetation. Laurie Dunn³¹ writes in her memoirs of her days at *Jerringomar*: 'Wildflowers were everywhere in springtime, little mauve and pink ground orchids, vanilla flowers with their lovely scent, wild hyacinths, sarsaparilla, wattle of all kinds, heath in white and pink, blue bells in myriads, wild white clematis like clouds, little pink ground convolvulus, dandelions, yellow buttercups and many more. Picking bunches to take home and put in water was a favourite pastime'.

Roots and tubers used as a food source by Aboriginal people can still be found in protected areas within the valley. [Chapter 1].

Eucalypts were readily available and used extensively in the construction of bark and slab huts for some one hundred years after European settlement. Eucalypts were cut and split into slabs for walls and the bark used for roofing. Black and white Cypress pine was logged for use as roof beams and milled for flooring. Cypress grows straight and is termite resistant.



This example of a typical slab hut shows vertical slabs, round Cypress pine roofing timbers, the original bark roofing, as well as corrugated iron sheeting.

This hut is located near Rye Park, near Hovells Creek. (photo courtesy of J Baker)

While both Cypress species and Kurrajongs regenerate readily from seed, the young seedlings are highly palatable to sheep, cattle, and kangaroos. The survival rate is higher when they grow in protected areas such as between rocks, fenced tree plots, or along roadsides. Regeneration of Eucalyptus species has been less impacted by grazing. Regeneration of Cypress species after fire is evident on the Mount Darling range.

Landowner and Landcare tree and shrub planting for landscape rehabilitation, habitat for endangered native species, to address soil erosion, and to provide shade and shelter for livestock is addressed in Chapter 14 – Hovells Creek Landcare Group.

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³¹ Laurie Dunn (later Clements) moved to *Jerringomar* in 1924 as a six year old, (p185)

THE ABORIGINAL LANDSCAPE

James Meehan in his 1820 journey through Hovells Creeks observed an Aboriginal woman setting fire to grass and noted evidence of fire scars.

AW Howitt (1890) comments in his paper on the 'Eucalypts of Gippsland'³² 'the annual bushfires set by the Aboriginal people tended to keep the forest open and prevented open country from being overgrown'.

Alex G Hamilton in an 1892 paper, 'The Effects of Settlement on Indigenous Vegetation',³³ noted the Aboriginal occupants of the land were, 'purposefully in the habit of setting fire to grassy tracts in order that the animals on which they lived might fall an easier prey to them; and in some cases, the sweet fresh feed after a fire attracts kangaroos and wallabies'.

In more recent studies, Bill Gammage (2011),³⁴ describes how Aboriginal people used fire in 'planned, precise, fine-grained local caring'. They knew what grew where, which plants were preferred by animals after burning and, 'they established a circuit of such places, activating the next as the last was exhausted and the animals fled'.

Bruce Pascoe (2014) in 'Dark Emu: Aboriginal Australia and the Birth of Agriculture'³⁵ went much further than Gammage and argued that Aboriginal people practised sophisticated agriculture, stored food, and lived in large numbers in substantial dwellings and permanent villages.

No mention is made by Meehan, Riley, or early European settlers indicating the existence of Aboriginal dwellings in the Hovells Creek valley.

The tradition of Aboriginal grassland burning to encourage new green pick for native wildlife contrasts significantly with the more invasive and destructive European practice of whole scale ringbarking, grubbing out of roots, and clearing of trees for open grazing for domestic stock, and for the cultivation of crops.

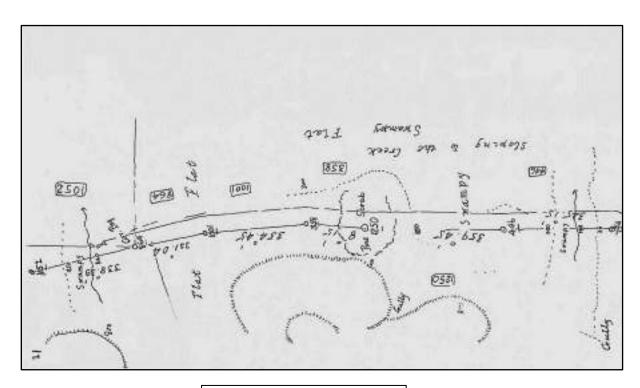
³² A.W. Howitt. 'The Eucalypts of Gippsland' Transactions Royal Society of Victoria II, Part 1 (1890), p109

³³ Alex G Hamilton, 'On the Effect which Settlement in Australia has Produced upon Indigenous Vegetation' Transactions, Royal Society of New South Wales, (1892), p200

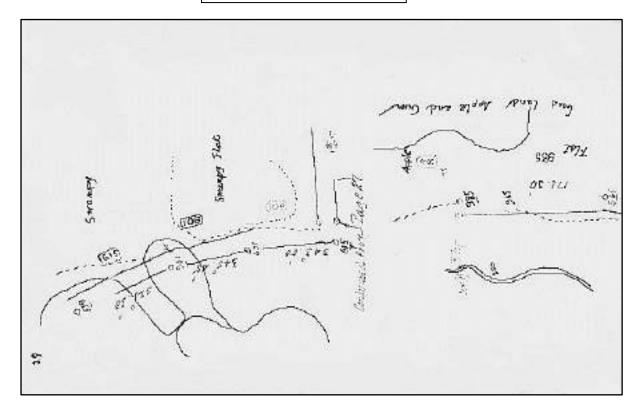
³⁴ Gammage (2011), p2

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³⁵ Pascoe, Bruce (2014), Dark Emu: Aboriginal Australia and the Birth of Agriculture, Magabala Books, Broome, WA



V B Riley
1871 survey notes
for Frogmore Road
showing swampy flats
and
vegetation described
as 'apple and gum'
and 'pine scrub'



CHAPTER 4 – OF DROUGHTS AND FLOODING RAINS³⁶

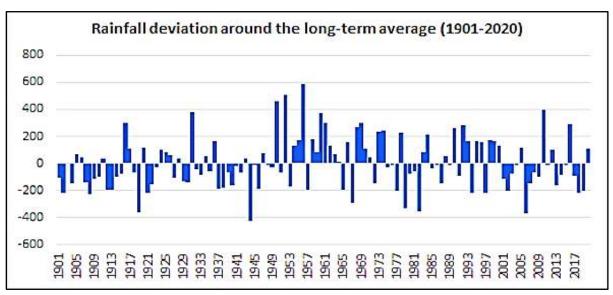
Australia is the driest inhabited continent in the world. Australia's climate data shows cycles of dry years, followed by cycles of wet years.

Seasonal variations are key to decisions made regarding farm management. Cycles of wetter and drier years are acknowledged and accepted, by some more than others, and farming practice and land use is adjusted accordingly.

An official weather station existed at *Riverslea* from January 1901 to June 1976. When Gordon Refshauge took ownership of *Riverslea* in 2004, he filled in the unrecorded years using *Benwerrin* rainfall records then continued recording to the present day. From this, Hovells Creek Landcare Group has gained access to 120 years of rainfall records and a clearer understanding of rainfall variation and long term trends.

The histogram below shows the past 120 years of wet and dry cycles plotted as deviations around the long-term average (LTA).

The driest year was 1944 when just 220mm of rainfall was recorded. The wettest year was in 1956 with 1233mm. The LTA is 641mm per annum with a standard deviation of ± 1 (ie. 66% of rainfall will be between 839mm and 457mm).



Recorded rainfall to 30 October 2021 is 745mm

The histogram does not show rainfall data before 1900, however the following newspaper article indicates a dry period around 1875, and how even a small fall of rain – enough to make Hovells Creek flow – was welcomed.

The Burrowa News; Sat 23 Jan 1875, p2

THE WEATHER

We hear that Hovell's Creek has been blessed with a smart fall of rain, sufficient to make the creek run. The rest of the district is very much parched, and the weather shows every indication of protracted drought.

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³⁶ I Love a Sunburnt Country by Dorothea McKellar

DROUGHTS IN AUSTRALIA

Since Australian records have been kept, the major droughts affecting many areas and having the most devastating impact have been:³⁷

- 1803: Drought in New South Wales (NSW) that produced several crop failures
- 1813-15: Severe drought in NSW prompted searches for new pastures
- 1826-29: Severe drought in NSW; the Darling River ceased flowing
- 1835-1838: Sydney and NSW received 25% less rain than usual
- 1849: Sydney received about 27 inches less rain than average
- 1850: Severe drought, with big losses of livestock across inland New South Wales
- 1864-66 and 1868: The little data available indicates that this drought period was severe across all of mainland Australia
- 1895-1903: The Federation Drought resulted in the highest stock losses recorded in Australian history. An estimated 40% of cattle numbers were lost and sheep numbers dropped from 106 million in 1892 to 54 million in 1903
- 1828-1942: 'The 1930s Dust Bowl' drought
- 1937-1947: Eastern Australia suffered dry conditions for ten years. Welcome rain coincided with the 1946-47 Ashes series when it rained during almost every match!
- 1982-83: This drought was short, sharp, and intense with respect to the widespread area affected by severe rainfall deficiencies
- 2001-2009: Millenium Drought, said by some to be the worst drought recorded since European settlement
- 2017-2019: The most recent dry period.



In Drought Time, No.1, by J.A.C. 1897 National Museum of Australia

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³⁷ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Drought in Australia

PERSONAL EXPERIENCES AT HOVELLS CREEK

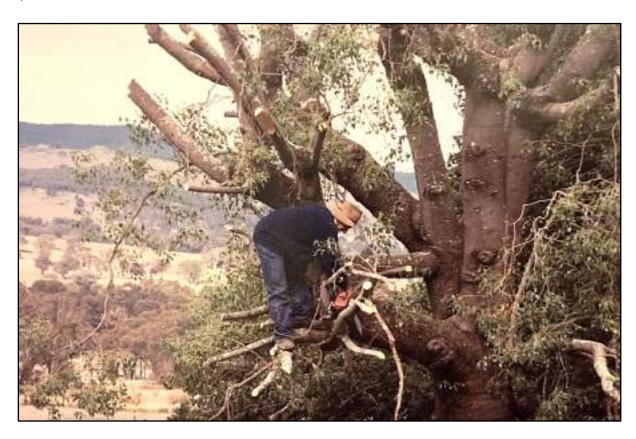
Many Hovells Creek residents talk about the droughts they remember. The one that is recalled most vividly on a personal level is the 1982-83 drought.

This was a time when the cost of carting sheep to market was greater than the sale price of the sheep. It was common for many landholders to shoot the starving sheep and dump them into large dug out pits and cover them up. One landholder recounts shooting 2000 sheep at this time; a heartbreaking experience but considered a better option than watching them starve in the paddocks.

The additional impact of wingless grasshoppers³⁸ in plague numbers during the 1982 drought left paddocks totally bare. The numbers of wingless grasshoppers had built up in the previous dry years, feeding off crops of clover which were abundant due to the use of fertilisers. These insects do not survive in moist and humid conditions when infestation of parasitic nematodes reduce their numbers but thrive in dry conditions.

Willow trees were planted all along Hovells Creek by many of the earlier settlers until the 1920s, '30s and beyond. These provided reserves of stock feed in drought years.

Branches of Kurrajong trees were also lopped and used for stock feed. A value of £10 was placed on each Kurrajong tree on a property, which shows their importance. A good-sized Kurrajong could keep 200 sheep going for some time. The trees would bulk up again and provide an additional source of fodder



Charlie Chown³⁹ lopping Kurrajong branches for stock feed, 1982

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³⁸ https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0007/204577/Wingless-grasshoppers.pdf

³⁹ Charlie Chown shore sheep at Hovells Creek for 66 years, (p185)

Landholders of the early to mid-1900s would drop Kurrajong seeds into old hollow fence posts or tree stumps or establish seedlings in their gardens to be planted out later into paddocks, not an easy task as they have a long tap root.

Current Hovells Creek landholders are reestablishing Kurrajongs on their properties. These trees grow particularly well in rocky crevasses on the granite hills where they are protected from grazing stock.



Stringybark and Yellow Box could also be used in desperate times. The tops of young saplings would be bent over and fastened to the ground, so the stock could eat the leafy tops.

The lack of water during drought years is a critical issue. Landholders can fill their silos and haysheds with reserves of stock feed, and make silage, but once the dams dry up, the situation is grim.

During the 2006 drought there were informal gatherings at Friday night 'drought drinks' as a mental health support group, though not named as such. Gatherings such as this would have occurred in an informal way in earlier tough times, when the men would talk about stock survival strategies, and the women would share their concerns about their families and how to get through.

In 2019, the most recent dry period, the Hovells Creek Landcare Group held six valuable workshops thanks to funding from the Foundation for Regional and Rural Renewal (FRRR) under the 'Tackling the Tough Times Together' program, and its donor partner, Stockland CARE Foundation.⁴⁰

The aims of the program were to provide helpful information and reduce social isolation by bringing people together.

Experts spoke on a range of topics, from managing mental health to support tools for decision making to help manage that period of drought and plan for future droughts.

⁴⁰ https://hovellscreeklandcare.org.au/past-projects/152-workshops-set-to-help-farmers-doing-it-tough

FLOODS

Hovells Creek wet weather events are mentioned in newspaper articles in the late nineteenth century.

The Sydney Morning Herald; Wed 7 Sep 1887, p10 COWRA, TUESDAY

It rained heavily all last night and continues showery at intervals still. The rivers and creeks are all pretty high. The mail from Wheeo and Reid's Flat was delayed owing to the Burrowa River and Hovell's Creek being up. Hovell's Creek has to be crossed six times by the mailman before he reaches Cowra. The roads and tracks are boggy, and the bush is nearly a quagmire.

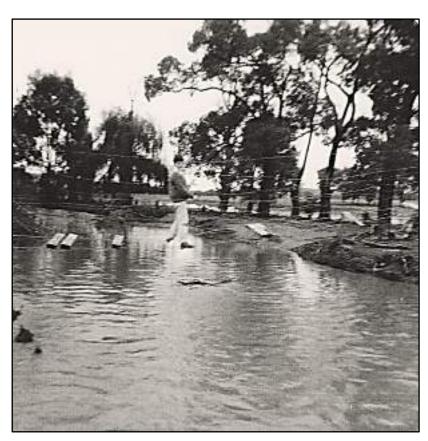
Many Hovells Creek residents remember a lot of wet years as well as the dry times. They recalled much wetter winters when they were growing up, especially during the 1950s. Comments were made in the interviews about not being able to ride a horse around the paddocks because it would get bogged in the wet ground. 'There would be a flood every two years.'

There were very few bridges across Hovells Creek; access was mainly via level crossings with rocky bases. A few footbridges were built across the creek, and this was the way to get from one side to the other.

Sometimes motorists were stranded until the creek went down. Residents on the roadside of the creek would offer overnight B&B for marooned families until the water level subsided. The brave (or foolhardy) would roll up their trousers and feel their way across hidden bridges with a stick to test for flood debris or missing planks. Most of the tributary creek crossings were treacherous until concrete floodways were constructed.

Suspension wires formed a 'bridge' across Hovells Creek when it was in flood.

Hannah (Hudson) Berry's grandson, Rodney, crossing Hovell's Creek at *Kalaraville*, pre-1972



Upstream landholders would let those downstream know a flood was on its way so they could move stock to higher ground or leave a vehicle on the roadside of the creek, so they could get out if they had to. It was (and still is!) dangerous to drive through a flood, or even wade through it. It may have rained up at Frogmore and not a drop in the valley and the water would come down, 'You could hear the flood coming down the hill!'

After heavy rain Hovells Creek floods out across the creek flats and creek crossings. The force of the water is incredibly strong, and damage caused to fences creates a huge repair job. Grasses, twigs, and branches wash up against the fence wires, eventually forming a 'dam'. The floodwaters pull fence posts out of the ground, flattening whole fence lines.



Fences need to be cleared and repaired, and debris cleared from tracks and paddocks, 2010



The bridge at Kooringle after flood waters subsided, 2010

The 2010 floods along Hovells Creek, were the biggest ever recorded. There were two floods within a week – on the 3^{rd} and the 10^{th} of December.



Hovells Creek flooded across the front paddocks at *Kooringle* on 3 December 2010 The water was deep enough for cattle to swim until they reached higher ground



The flood of 10 December 2010 rose to the top of the well on the creek flats at *Kooringle*

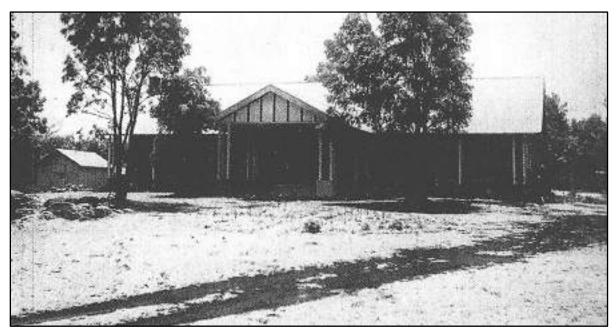


Everyone in the district will have experienced a bogged tractor in a wet year!

EXTREME WEATHER EVENTS

Snow events are rare, but the following were recorded in Thomas O'Shaughnessy's diaries:⁴¹

- 25 May 1879 Cold enough to snow all day.
- 22 June 1896 Commenced to snow at 6 o'clock this morning and continued up to 12 o'clock. About 3 inches deep all over the ground. Very cold.
- 30 July 1901 Snowing. I got my Old Age Pension certificate.



Snow at Tatong, 1930⁴²



Snow at Kooringle 2015

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⁴¹ Thomas O'Shaughnessy, 1835-1911, (p191); http://www.frankmurray.com.au/oshaughnessy,

⁴² Reids Flat, Helen Lloyd, p.171

CHAPTER 5 – INFRASTRUCTURE

Roads and Transport, Bridges, Wyangala Dam

In 1820, when James Meehan and his party explored the Hovells Creek valley there were no roads or even tracks. The party walked most of the way with pack horses carrying supplies.

Meehan makes no mention of tracks or trails made by the Wiradjuri people around the natural springs.

Once squatters began to settle in the area a more established track would have been formed by new residents with their horses and carts, bullocks and drays carrying their possessions into this new territory where they hoped to build their homes and make a living from the land.

Crossing streams along the way would have been at any spot that was shallow enough to be forded. Branches would be cut and laid across sandy creek beds to afford a firmer base for heavy loads. It was common for drag logs to be attached to the backs of carts and wagons to slow them down on steep inclines.



The remains of a dray in the foreground and a cart in the background at former Oaky Creek Station, now Willow Glen

ROADS AND TRANSPORT

The earliest reports on formed roads appear in the Thomas O'Shaughnessy diaries. Thomas successfully contracted for road building works on the Hovells Creek road in the late 1870s and 1880s:

- 29 Nov 1878 Mr Single and I started to Darbys Falls on the Hovell's Creek road to pass some clearing that the Markhams and young Baker were doing for me. The work was not finished satisfactorily. We instructed John Jordan to show the men what to do and to measure the work when finished.
- 4 Feb 1879 I went up to Mr Single's this morning. I made up the Hovell's Creek roadwork. It amounted to 209 pounds.
- 21 Feb 1879 Mrs O'Shaughnessy no better four sisters of St. Joseph came in the coach.
 I signed for the Hovell's Creek work. 209 pounds. Great wind today.
- 23 Jan 1881 Pat Fitzgibbon drove Mrs O'Shaughnessy out in Walsh's buggy from Cowra. I made out a tender for road work on Hovell's Creek Road.

William O'Connor, a prolific writer 'To the Editor' at local newspapers, made the following scathing comments on the development, or rather lack of it, on local roads as early as 1889:

Goulburn Evening Penny Post (NSW: 1881-1940); Saturday 12 October 1889, p7

Our roads and Bridges at Hovell's Creek and from there to Burrowa.

To the Editor of the Evening Penny Post.

Sir, there have just been finished in sight of Hovell's Creek two fine bridges – one over Forest Creek and one over Deep Creek. The inhabitants of the district have succeeded at last in making the Public Works Department comply with their request after 15 years' agitation, another illustration of the wise maxim, "Never despair." The bridges are a public benefit to the inhabitants of this vast district.

I am sorry that I cannot describe other public roadworks between here and Burrowa in the same satisfactory manner. No, quite the reverse. Although this road has been in use since the first white settlers came into this district it is only some four years ago since District-Surveyor Lester defined it between here and Frogmore.

.... [etc, etc]

I saw several places between Burrowa and Hovell's Creek where the road has been metalled. Although the bed rock was right on the surface and you could load a wagon on it, previous to metalling the road would fall to pieces....[etc]. I see they are making a futile attempt at repairing the roads in various places between Burrowa and Hovell's Creek with boughs and brambles. The said material has good qualities for road formation, but they are applying it in this instance in the wrong formation of country.

From Hovell's Greek to Burrowa there are several hills covered from the base to the top with water-worn gravel equal to any found on the seashore or river. If our local road repairer would take a few loads of this gravel and place it where they are putting the brambles it would be more in keeping with road repairing.

....[etc, etc]

Mr Brunker, the Minister for Lands, I have no doubt, will put a stop to these wastes that I have alluded to.

WILLIAM O'CONNOR, Hillside, Hovell's Creek. 1st October 1889

Edward J Egan, a school inspector for the Graham School (at that time located at the Hovells Creek church), travelled on the road described by William O'Connor. His 1890 claim for expenses is as follows:

- train from Sydney to Binalong £1.5.9
- coach from Binalong to Frogmore 15 shillings
- buggy from Frogmore to Graham £1.5.0

Total £3.5.9

He does not indicate how long this journey took.

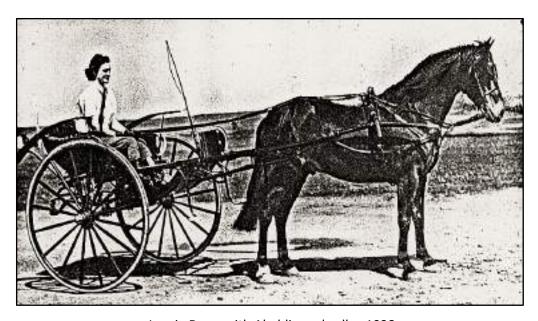
In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century the track followed a route away from the creek banks on higher ground to avoid the valley flats (described by VB Riley in 1871 as swampy).

Sheep and cattle grazed across the road – there were no roadside fences. Any existing fence lines ran across the road, with gates in the middle of the roadway.

A trip to town (Boorowa or Cowra) was a major undertaking. The horses would have to be brought in, harnessed, and hitched to the sulky, buggy, cart, or wagon. An overnight stay would be planned, as the horses had to be rested before the return journey.

Laurie Dunn remembers her father, Gilbert's buggy and horses. 'We had a fine pair of big bays called Hector and Norah, and our outings were once a week to Cowra – a distance of 24 miles – to shop and visit friends; and several times a year a big journey to Orange for some special occasion. It was quite a gruelling trip to Orange as it is such hilly country, and it was very hard on the horses. They used to be stabled at the hotel stables for the day with nosebags on, to conserve their strength for the return trip of about 60 miles. Quite a journey in a buggy! Mum and Dad wore dust coats. Margaret always sat on Mum's lap as she was three years younger than I was, and I had to sit in the middle between Mum and Dad, which never seemed quite fair to me.'

In addition to the buggy and pair, Gilbert Dunn kept two strong Clydesdales which were used pull a wagon with heavier supplies from town.



Laurie Dunn with Aladdin and sulky, 1938

Until the late 1920s the dirt track ran mainly on along the western side of Hovells Creek, crossing over in a number of places to the eastern side on low-level rock-formed crossings. When the creek flooded there was no access until the water receded. There were no vehicular bridges. A few footbridges, or large logs stretched from bank to bank, enabled the local residents to cross the creek in flood.



Footbridge across Hovells Creek (courtesy of Neville family)

Laurie Dunn remembers when the new road was realigned in 1928 to its current position on the western side of Hovells Creek. It ran right in front of their house at north *Jerringomar*. She comments, 'It was a great improvement'.

By the mid-1920s the Dunn family were driving about tentatively in a car. Gilbert purchased 'Aunt Lucy Chisholm's Buick tourer, which was a khaki colour with rollup side curtains'.

Laurie says, 'Going out in the car was a big deal. Mum couldn't drive, so outings in the sulky were very important. The car was driven by Dad when a trip to town was necessary. It was a long day out with lunch to be packed and taken with us. The road was very rough, just gravel or dirt surface; gutters were deep and often full of mud and water and there were creeks to cross'.

Gates still existed across the roads when Hovells Creek residents began to acquire early T- model Fords in the 1910s, but the driver had to be sure to leave the engine running when getting out to open the gates, or the engine would have to be cranked up again with the starting handle.

Ken Chudleigh remembers in the 1930s and '40s the family would go to Cowra via Springvale Road as there were only seven gates that way while going via Frogmore Road and Bennett Springs Road, they would have to open twelve gates — a task allocated to the children! Ken says, 'We used to hate opening the gates!' Later, some farmers put ramps and vehicles would have to go up and over the ramps.

Ken's grandfather had a Rover which he could not drive. His daughter drove him around. Most people did not have a licence and the sons and daughters were all driving by the time they were twelve or thirteen.



Barry Gay⁴³ and his siblings in the back of Fred Gay's Ford truck, early 1950s

One resident comments, 'In the '50s it was pretty horrendous to get to town because all the roads were breaking up. You'd have to cut saplings to put on the road. One Sunday we couldn't even get to church'.

Sealing the gravel surface of the road did not begin until the early 1960s, and then in dribs and drabs. Everyone turned up with great excitement to watch when the first stretch of bitumen was laid in front of Archie Gorham, the shire president's place, in the early 1960s.

Also in the 1960s, fences were built along the sides of the roads, so the roadways were clear of gates. This required a bit of give and take on properties.

The Boorowa Times; Thursday 4 Sept 1980

Road is a Disgrace Ratepayer Claims

One local ratepayer has lodged a strong protest to the Boorowa Shire Council regarding the condition of the Jerringomar Road.

In a letter to last week's council meeting, Mr Donald Clements of Geweroo said, 'The road that I have to travel is not worthy of the rates that I have to pay. The road is nothing short of a disgrace with large potholes, gutters running down the road, and bad bends. With election time coming soon, the Councillors might pause to think where their votes will be coming from, certainly not from me'.

The councillors do not share Mr Clements opinion of the road in question.

- 'I don't think it's in such bad condition', said Cr Ken Gay.
- 'I was on this road recently and was quite pleased with it', was Cr Neil Gorham's view.
- 'I think Mr Clements should be informed Council is doing everything possible to keep all roads in repair', said the Shire President, Mr Jim Corcoran.

Council resolved to write to Mr Clements ... that the condition of the Jerringomar Road compares favourably with roads elsewhere in the Shire.

One is led to speculate on the state of roads 'elsewhere in the Shire'!

⁴³ Barry Gay, son of Fred and Joan Gay of Clonaton, owner of Willow Glen, (p187)

Like roads everywhere, constant maintenance is required:

- 1924 Smart's Crossing, at Hovell's Creek, needs repair, near the 29 mile peg, near *Graham* house, road badly scoured. There should be a diversion made around Granite Knob about three miles east of Hovell's Creek bridge. Burns and Good are cleaning drains and water tables, repairing causeways, and filling in ruts. There is a shortage of gravel for the necessary repairs to the road. (*The Burrowa News; Fri 14 March 1924, p4*)
- 1928 General repairs to the *Jerringomar* to Darby's Falls Road, including re-concreting Hovell's Creek causeway. (*The Burrowa News; Fri 14 Dec 1928, p5*)
- 1940 Attention will be given to the *Jerringomar*-Darby's Falls road and the plant will then return to Hovell's Creek. Pipe culvert and other requests of Councillors relating to that locality will have attention when the plant reaches this centre. (*The Burrowa News; Fri 20 Sep 1940, p8*)
- 1948 Hovell's Creek-Jerringomar the sand drifts referred to at the last meeting have been attended to, and some draining and general maintenance attention has been given. (The Burrowa News; Fri 30 July 1948, p7)
- 1953 Regarding extension from Springvale Road junction of Frogmore-Hovell's Creek road to *Jerringomar*, the President and Shire Clerk were instructed to arrange a check of prospective consumers, and if sufficient consumers were available, authority be given to negotiate a necessary construction loan. (*The Boorowa News; Fri 22 May 1953, p1*)

Frogmore Road, in 2021, is a mostly single lane, bitumen road with solidly constructed cement low-level floodways where smaller creeks flow across the road. It is used by local landholders; stock transport vehicles; vehicles towing boats and trailers on their way to Wyangala Dam for water sports and camping holidays; and motor bike groups out for a Sunday drive on the winding, hilly road between Boorowa/Frogmore and the Darbys Falls/Wyangala Road junction.

Road access and road repair remain key issues for local residents and Council representatives alike.

• • •

Work to improve drainage, and strengthen and widen narrow sections, are ongoing. During the first half of 2021 Hilltops Council carried out repair works to badly washed out culverts and wash outs.

The photos on the next page show works done at *Kooringle* during 2021. Heavy rainfall in November shows the effectiveness of these works *(photo 3)*.



The culvert showing washed out soil

Rocks are placed into the gully to stabilise the soil.





After heavy rain on 10 Nov 2021

BRIDGES

As mentioned, low level crossings were initially the only way to cross the rivers and creeks. If there was a flood, these became impassable, and travellers had to wait until the water receded.

Ken Chudleigh remembers his Vanguard ute stopping every time he attempted to cross even a small dip with water in it. He recalls when on one occasion in 1955, only two miles short of his destination, he could not get across a flooded creek and was invited by a local resident for dinner and an overnight stay. By the next morning he was able to proceed.

Early recorded evidence of the push for bridges shows it was a slow process to get a proposal past councils. Residents were desperate for proper bridges, so they were not cut off during floods along Hovells Creek. There was the obvious inconvenience of being stranded on one side of the creek or the other, but one major issue was they were unable to reach medical aid, or for a doctor to get to families in need.

Hovells Creek residents were prepared to contribute up to a quarter of the cost of a bridge and held a fund-raising sports meeting on 19 April 1918. They raised £150 towards the estimated £600 plus construction cost. The Shire president at the time, Cr Balgowan, said he 'admired the people for their offer'. (The Burrowa News; 12 July 1918; p1)

It appears the additional contribution from desperate residents prompted construction of a low-level bridge at the current junction of Frogmore Road and Reids Flat Road. This must have occurred during the 1920s, because newspaper reports indicate this newly built bridge was washed away in early April 1931 after falls of '1233 pts (435mm) of rain so far this year'. (The Sun; 4 April 1931).

The Burrowa News; Fri 3 April 1931, p2

HOVELLS CREEK BRIDGE SWEPT AWAY

As a result of the heavy rain on Tuesday night and Wednesday last, a heavy flood washed away the Hovell's Creek bridge on the Reid's Flat Road. The water was too high on Wednesday to make a temporary crossing and it may be a day or two before same can be made.

It is also reported that another bridge has washed away at Bennett Springs.

This time repair works to the damaged bridge were acted upon promptly. The Murrungal (the forerunner to the Boorowa/now Hilltops) Shire Council held a special meeting in Boorowa on 23 May 1931 to consider the re-construction of both the Bennett Springs and Hovells Creek bridges. (photo next page)

It was also agreed the Council engineer would commence construction of a cableway over the Boorowa River at Bennett Springs capable of transporting parcels or passengers over the stream during flooded periods.



The new 1933 bridge over Hovells Creek on the Reids Flat Road

Other bridge and road damage reports in the first half of the twentieth century include:

- 1925 Heavy floods were experienced in the Burrowa district on Sunday last resulting in serious damage to roads and bridges. The floods followed on 455 points [115.5mm] of rain registered between Friday and Sunday. The approaches to Hovell's Creek were considerably wrecked. (The Burrowa News; 26 June 1925, p2)
- 1931 Washed out causeway at Graham Church repaired. Hovells Creek and Bennett Springs crossing maintained. General flood repairs at Reid's Flat end effected. Repairs to washaways between Hovell's Creek and Bennett Springs in progress. (The Burrowa News; 26 June 1931, p1)
- 1942 Hovell's Creek and Graham Creek: Flood debris against a pier of Hovell's Creek removed. (*The Burrowa News; 23 Jan 1942, p1*)
- 1948 Hovell's Creek-Reid's Flat: Drainage has had attention and the bad cross gutters following rains were repaired. (*The Burrowa News; 30 July 1948, p7*)
- 1950 *Jerringomar*-Darby's Falls road: About one mile of road adjacent to Hovell's Creek has been completely washed bare down to the formation and one causeway will require concrete wing protection. (*The Burrowa News; 28 April 1950, p7*)

Charlie Chown talks about his involvement in the construction of several bridges across Hovells Creek, 'We cut the timber for the bridge across Hovells Creek on Graham Lane. We carted the piers, there was more hanging off the back than there was on the tray. Frank Norris, Joe Power, Lindsay Berry (Kalaraville), Vince Hudson (Willow Park): they all put money in to build the bridge. We cut the planks and brought the piers to go in the ground. That was in about 1954. Then we did one at Kooringle for Max Boulding'.

Tenders were called in November 1935 for the construction of a timber bridge over Hovells Creek on the *Jerringomar* to Darbys Falls road.⁴⁴ This was just downstream from the current Jerringomar Bridge. Plans were drawn up by the Main Roads Department, Sydney, with specific instructions that 90 percent of the labour be engaged through the Boorowa Labour Exchange and all materials were to come from New South Wales.

This was during the Depression, so projects and works such as bridge construction provided much needed employment. Wyangala Dam works had been completed, so there were men looking for work. The Murrungal Shire unemployment relief gazetted works in November 1935 for 'construction of abutments and approaches, including clearing, excavating, forming, gravelling, concreting, etc' on the bridge over Hovells Creek at Jerringomar'.⁴⁵

The new Jerringomar Bridge opening was a grand event:

The Burrowa News; Fri 18 Sept 1936, p4

On Saturday last Mr Spooner, Minister for Works and Local Government, accompanied by Mr G.E. Ardill, Member for Yass, paid a visit to Boorowa for the purpose of opening a bridge over Hovell's Creek on the Boorowa to Wyangala Road.

Arriving at the site the party found a large number of district people waiting to welcome them, and after the Minister was introduced to all present ... the official opening took place.

The construction of this bridge has been under consideration for years. But until Mr Ardill was able to persuade Mr Spooner to recognise its urgent necessity, we were unable for financial reasons to consider its construction. When Mr Spooner offered a grant of £1500 towards the cost, we were able to allot from our own funds an amount of £500 and the bridge was constructed at slightly over £2000.

The bridge is of extraordinary design due to the fact that ... one side of the creek is much higher than the other. The bridge is on a curve 200 feet radius to meet the curve of the road.

You will notice that the rabbit proof fences continue over the bridge. Any rabbits or stock coming down the road must pass over the bridge and cannot get under it. Rabbit proofing cannot be damaged by floods as there is no fence across the stream. The road running through Mr Dunn's lucerne paddock does not cut it in two because stock have free access under the bridge from one side of the road to the other.

The site where the bridge is constructed over Hovell's Creek is an area of land which was the original Crown grant to the explorer, Captain Hovell, from whom the Creek derives its name, and within a stone's throw of the bridge is an old cultivation paddock which was probably the first area of land cultivated on this side of the mountains.

All present were then invited to afternoon tea served on the banks of Hovell's Creek 'neath the shade of the weeping willows and Mr Spooner found much delight in meeting all present.

Mr Ardill moved a vote of thanks to the ladies for providing the afternoon tea, and the vote was carried by acclamation.

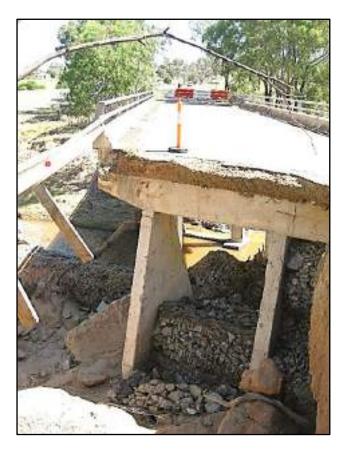
[This is an extract from a much longer, more detailed article]

⁴⁴ Construction and Real Estate Journal, Wed 13 Nov 1935; p11

⁴⁵ Construction and Real Estate Journal, Wed 25 Nov 1935, p5

Current Hovells Creek residents will well remember the floods of 2010. Damage to the Jerringomar Bridge abutments was substantial. The rebuild took approximately one year.







WYANGALA DAM

In 1928 construction began on the second⁴⁶ major dam for irrigation in NSW. Wyangala Dam was designed to irrigate 15,000 hectares along the middle reaches of the Lachlan River between Cowra and Condobolin; supply water for townspeople and stock over an area of half a million hectares; and open up a quarter of a million hectares for settlement including wheat farming in western NSW.⁴⁷

Wyangala Dam is situated at the junction of the Lachlan and Abercrombie rivers about 48 kilometres upstream from Cowra in Central West NSW, and about 320 kilometres west of Sydney.

The name Wyangala is said to originate from a Wiradjuri word of unknown meaning. William Newham (1807-1878) arrived on the Lachlan River in 1835 via Emu Plains, Goulburn, and Crookwell, and established Wyangala Station, adopting the Wiradjuri word. The property was held for over 90 years by three generations of the Newham family: William, his son Thomas, and Thomas's son Walter. The property was resumed in the mid-1920s by the NSW government for the development of Wyangala Dam. Wyangala Station was flooded by the rising waters of Lake Wyangala; the homestead can still be seen when the dam is close to empty.

An Australian Lady of the Lake

by Nellie Gallagher Flannery, 1936

The one who suffered most was the widow-lady – owner of Wyangala Station. The very bottom must have fallen out of her world by the building of the wall. Disliking intensely to leave her riverside home, she stayed on and on and would not budge until the water actually came up to her back door. Then and only then she moved, but not far – just up the hill a bit to a little cottage where she has taken up her temporary abode. She personally supervised and did a big share of the work of removing her furniture and household effects. But her fowls went down with the home; they clung to their roosts until finally swept away by the onrush of the waters.

The small township of Wyangala, located downstream of the dam wall, was established to house the hundreds of construction workers in cottages and barracks during the building phase.⁴⁸ Steam engines were used, with a railway line transporting materials to the site.

When construction works were completed in 1935, the Wyangala village site was demolished. The *Graham* woolshed and the original *Sunnyview* homestead were both built with second-hand timber and iron from the Wyangala Dam works site. The *Riversteen* house was moved from Wyangala to its present site.

The dam wall was raised between 1961 and 1971, which increased its storage capacity fourfold. The original concrete dam wall can be seen when the water level drops to below thirty percent.

Water levels in Wyangala Dam fluctuate dramatically according to the seasons. At times, the levels have been as low as under one to two percent (1968 and 1983)⁴⁹.

In 1952, houses near the bridge south of Darbys Falls were covered by twenty feet deep (seven metres) as floodwaters from Wyangala Dam came down the Lachlan River.

⁴⁷ https://www.waternsw.com.au/supply/heritage/dam-histories

⁴⁶ Cataract Dam 1908

⁴⁸ https://www.waternsw.com.au/supply/visit/wyangala-dam

⁴⁹ http://www.lewag.com.au//wp-content/uploads/Wyangala_Per-Cent_Capacity_1960_2014.jpg

The dam reached 100 percent in September 2016 and again in August 2021.

In 2021 the dam continues to support irrigated agriculture along the Lachlan River from vineyards around Cowra; to wheat, barley, oats, and canola at Forbes; and cotton at Hillston.⁵⁰ It also supplies stock and household water for landholders and towns along the river, mitigates environmental flows and floods, and supplies hydroelectricity power.

Lake Wyangala, the impounded waters behind the dam, is a popular recreation spot for fishing and boating, attracting local and regional residents. The Wyangala Club at the village is an important meeting place for locals including Hovells Creek residents.

A NSW Government proposal to raise the dam wall by another ten metres to increase dam capacity by 100 percent is in the planning phase, with a proposed completion date of 2025. The proposal aims to make more water available for irrigation, town supplies and environmental flows in dry years, and to reduce flooding in the mid-reaches of the river during very wet years. A team from Water Infrastructure NSW has been holding consultation sessions with key stakeholders, such as Aboriginal groups, community Landcare groups, Holiday Park owners at Wyangala and Grabine, local town Councils, and landholders who will be impacted by flooding of their farmland.

Local concern centres around:

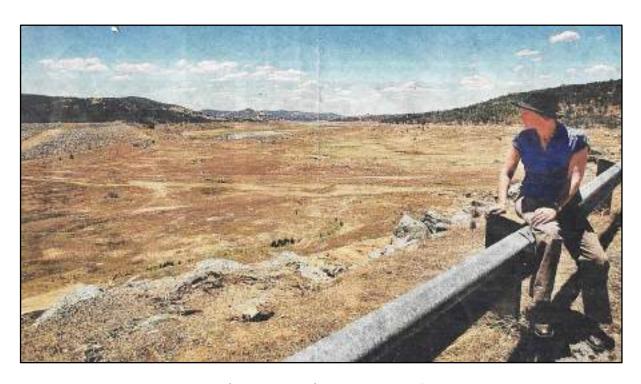
- the increased amount of heavy traffic with trucks carrying many tons of rock from local quarries
- infrastructure to develop roads before the increased heavy traffic
- inundation of over 1,000ha of endangered grassy box/gum woodland by the enlarged dam
- uncontrolled soil erosion in the catchment and sedimentation of the downstream Lachlan waterway
- inundation of productive farmland
- the validity of the project given that Wyangala Dam fills to its current capacity on average every ten years.

WYANGALA DAMS FACTS AND FIGURES⁵¹

Construction period	1928-1935	1961-1971	2019 proposal
Construction cost	£1,352,000	£18 million	\$2 billion
	(2020 = \$133 million)	(2020 = \$534 million)	
Type of dam	Concrete	Embankment	Embankment
Height	192ft (58.8m)	279ft (85m)	95m
Total capacity	374,860 ML	1,220,000 ML	+50%
Surface area	2,520ha	5,390ha	7,343ha

⁵¹ https://www.waternsw.com.au/supply/heritage/dam-histories

⁵⁰ https://www.waternsw.com.au/supply/visit/wyangala-dam



Above: Wyangala Dam 2009, 4.5% Below: 28 August 2021, 100% Photo courtesy of https://www.farmpix.com.au/



As this book goes to print in November 2021, the NSW government is poised to back away from two of the country's largest water infrastructure projects promised at the height of drought conditions. A plan to raise the Wyangala Dam wall by 10m is likely to be 'indefinitely postponed' according to The Australian. However, a spokesperson for the NSW Water Minister Melinda Parvey said, 'The government is committed to completing the final business case and environmental impact statement as quickly as possible'.

The Australian, 4 Nov 2021/ https://www.abc.net.au/news/

CHAPTER 6 – SERVICES

Mail, Telephone, Electricity, Medical, Police, Fire Brigade

There was no official mail service in the 1830s when squatters began to settle. Letters and parcels were collected intermittently by residents when they rode their horses into 'town' (Cowra or Boorowa) to collect supplies or were brought out by neighbours.

Early settlers relied on candles for light, and from the 1860s kerosene lamps provided lighting, with finger lamps especially useful for going to the outside toilet in the dark!

Medical services were 30 miles away, so home remedies were relied on unless it was an emergency.

That is not to say people were totally isolated. From the 1880s the coach came along the valley with passengers, stopping at the Glenco Inn (the *Graham* homestead) for refreshments, and to rest the horses. The coach would have also carried mail and supplies.

MAIL

The first evidence of an official mail service is in early 1859 with an advertisement in the NSW Government Gazette calling for tenders for a weekly mail service to Hovells Creek.

NSW Government Gazette; 8 Feb 1859, p397

Tender for the conveyance of mail for nine months or one year and nine months from 1st April 1859 – from and to Burrowa and Reid's Flat, via Hovell's Creek and Phil's Creek, once a week.

A mail service had been in operation at Reids Flat since 1859 operated by Thomas Reid and after 1870 by Ralph Lowe. In May 1873 Ralph Lowe suggested to the postal department that it would be desirable to have a receiving and dispatch office at Hovells Creek, to service the 90-100 people who lived in that vicinity. He suggested Edward Kerr as a suitable person for postmaster and consequently Kerr was appointed to the position on 1 August 1873. The post office was conducted in Edward Kerr's store, on Lot 5, in the Parish of Graham, which was on the east bank of Hovells Creek, opposite where he would later build his large stone *Graham* house (p134). The post office continued at this site for the next eleven years.

NSW Government Gazette; 2 March 1877, p915

CONVEYANCE OF MAILS

Tender for the following Mail Services for the period 1st April 1877-31st December 1879 will be received up to noon on Wednesday 7th March – to and from Burrowa, Frogmoor, and Reid's Flat via Hovell's Creek and Phil's Creek, once a week.

Edward Kerr died in November 1884, and his wife Mary took over the post office duties until her death the following August. Kerr's daughter, Katherine, agreed to continue with the post office until other arrangements could be made for its transfer. She suggested Francie Harris at *Bennett Springs*, as a suitable person. The Graham Post Office was abolished in 1885 and moved to *Bennett Springs*. In 1912 the post office at *Graham* was reopened, with the inclusion of a telephone exchange.

In 1905 mail deliveries were still only once a week – Michael P Neville of Hovells Creek won the tender for £30 a year.

By the 1930-40s mail deliveries became more frequent. Charlie Chown comments, 'Bushby's in Boorowa used to get their Model-T Ford trucks to bring everything out — the mail, the papers, everything. It used to come six days a week, even on a Saturday. Now it's back to only three days'.

Other residents also comment on daily mail deliveries and remember some of the mailmen: 'Noakes used to run it for a few years. There was Harry Wentworth, Tommy Power, and Armstrong'.

The mailmen had to contend with all sorts of challenges in all sorts of weather, including flooded creek crossings or fallen trees across the roads, which delayed mail deliveries. One story is about Bob Shepherd, a mail/newspaper/groceries delivery driver in the 1980s. Soon after he set out on his trip, he drove over a snake on the road. He could not see it in his rear-view mirror and decided it had probably slithered off the road in a hurry. He continued his run for the next few hours. On his last delivery – out of the truck, put the mail and other items into the roadside mailbox – he climbed back into the cab to find a large tiger snake staring at him from the driver's seat! The snake had been in the truck all afternoon. All in a day's work!



Wayne Hudson⁵² at Wyangala with the Graham Post Office sign and other memorabilia.

⁵² Wayne Hudson grew up at Hovells Creek, a descendant of a long line of Hudsons, (p187)

TELEPHONE

The first tender for a telephone line was called in November 1909, but it took a further year for one to be accepted.

The breakdown in the cost makes interesting reading, especially the use of existing 'suitable' trees to supplement the cost of supplying, carting, and erecting wooden poles, most of which would have been sourced locally by cutting down trees.

Commonwealth of Australia Gazette; Sat 27 Nov 1909 [Issue No.61], p1752

Postmaster-General's Department,

22nd November 1909

Tenders for Erection of Telephone Line, Frogmoor to Graham, via Hovell's Creek.

TENDERS will be received at the office of the Deputy Postmaster-General, Sydney, up to half-past two p.m. on Wednesday 29th December 1909, for the supply and erection of about 384 new Wooden Poles, and erection of 19 miles of Galvanized-iron Wire, between Frogmoor and Graham, via Hovell's Creek, in accordance with Schedule NSW, E.E. 116/09.

Tenders must be addressed to the Deputy Postmaster General, Sydney and endorsed 'Tender for Erection of Line, Frogmoor to Graham. A deposit must accompany of five percent the total amount thereof.

Commonwealth of Australia Gazette; Sat 3 Dec 1910 [Issue No.74], p1836

3 Dec 1910 Acceptance of Tender for telephone line

Acceptance of Tender for Erection of Telephone Line BETWEEN FROGMOOR AND GRAHAM POST OFFICES via Hovell's Creek.

It is hereby notified, for public information, that the tender of W.A. Stephens, Mount Costigan, for the erection of a Telephone Line between Frogmoor and Graham Post Offices, via Hovell's Creek, has been accepted, as under:

Supply and erection, etc of the following new wooden poles: about five 26ft lengths, at 11s.6d. per pole; about 281 24ft lengths, at 9s per pole; about 98 21ft lengths, at 7s.6d. per pole.

Erection, complete on existing and new wooden poles and suitable trees, of about 19 miles 60 chains of one galvanized-iron wire, at £1 14s. per mile.

Even after completion, residents had ongoing issues with the telephone line. Trees substituted for posts in some cases, so the lines were situated under the tree overhang where branches were most likely to fall, causing frequent outages until the branch could be cleared and the line reattached, most often by the homeowner, not the council. Gus Clements remembers having to go out and reattach the lines when the phone stopped working. He still has a few poles on his land.

Telephone calls were relayed through a series of exchanges. (Frogmore, *Graham*, Darbys Falls). Mrs Annie Hudson operated the telephone exchange at *Graham* from 1940-1975. Heather Hudson (Annie's niece-in-law) operated the Darbys Falls exchange.

Party lines were common in the first half of the twentieth century, especially in rural area and during the war years, when copper wire was in short supply. A party line was a local loop telephone circuit that was shared by more than one subscriber. There was no privacy on a party line; if you were conversing with a friend anyone on your party line could pick up their phone and listen in. If one resident was on the line, no one else could make a call – even in an emergency – though if a caller announced they had an emergency all other parties were required to hang up.



Hovells Creek residents would simply pick up their handset to reach Annie Hudson or Phyllis (Hudson) McGann⁵³ at Graham or Heather Hudson at the Darbys Falls exchange and ask to be put through to the person they required. Annie or Heather Hudson plugged the request into the switchboard and the phone would 'ring' a particular call signal, for example: two longs and two shorts; one short, three longs; one short, one long; denoting who was being called. The resident would recognise their personal call signal and pick up, then Mrs Hudson would make the connection between the two parties.

Charlie Chown remembers, 'We had a telephone party line with Kooringle, the O'Connors, and somebody else – there were four on the party line. We were 1D – then we moved to the new line with eight on the party line and we were 8K. We were one long and two shorts. Not a lot of people had a phone'.

Muriel Abraham⁵⁴ comments, 'We'd dial up Heather Hudson at the exchange and we'd give her the number we wanted, and she would put us through. In this district she knew all the numbers. Geoff would often ring from his office in Sydney and say he'd like something picked up from town [Cowra] and Heather would organise it'.

⁵³ Phyllis Hudson McGann, daughter of George and Annie Hudson, Willow Park, (p187)

⁵⁴ Muriel Abraham, a resident of 30 years at *Gidgall*, (p184)

Annie Hudson operated the telephone exchange at Graham for 35 years, from 1940 until her retirement in 1975 at the age of 80. The operation hours at the exchange were increased in May 1946 to Monday to Friday from 9am to 1pm, and 2pm to 8pm, and from 9am to 1pm on Saturdays. (*The Burrowa News, 3 May 1946, p2*).

Phyllis McGann, Annie's daughter, assisted her mother at the exchange. Phyllis comments, 'Mum and I couldn't go away together because someone had to be there to operate the exchange. We had Sundays off. Then they made it automatic. They invited us for morning tea when Mum retired'.



The Boorowa News; 25 June 1975

The Boorowa Shire Council paid tribute to Mrs. Annie Hudson for her 35 years of devoted service at the Graham telephone exchange. Mrs. Hudson operated the Graham exchange, which has 24 subscribers, between the hours of 9am to 1pm and from 2pm to 9pm.

With her daughter Mrs. Phyllis McGann, Mrs. Hudson was invited to attend Monday's Council meeting to join councillors for morning tea as a token of appreciation for her long and faithful service. Cr. Peter Gorham ushered Mrs. Hudson and Mrs. McGann into the council chambers and introduced them to all councillors and council officers present.

Shire President, Cr. Jim Corcoran officially welcomed the ladies and thanked Mrs. Hudson on behalf of the shire for the work done on the exchange over the number of years and congratulated her on her 80th birthday.

While clearly the installation of telephone lines opened up communication at Hovells Creek for residents in the past, new mobile phone technology lags behind more densely populated centres. Mobile connectivity is severely limited, and one has to stand in just the right position, or drive along the road to another spot, or find a high point on a hill to get a signal. There has been a push by landholders at Hovells Creek for additional towers in the vicinity, as yet unheeded by the relevant authorities.

In times of emergency, CB radios have to be used on a specific channel. For instance, during the fire season most landholders would tune in to the fire channel.



An Ericson wall phone, Typical of early telephones

This is the one at *Old Graham*



A timber pole used to carry a telephone line

ELECTRICITY

Electricity was connected in the Hovells Creek area in the 1950s, one hundred years after European settlement in the district.

Candles were the earliest form of household lighting. Kerosene was widely used for lighting from the 1860s. This product, also known as paraffin, is a combustible hydrocarbon liquid derived from petroleum. Kerosene was always coloured blue, to avoid it being confused for some other product.

Families relied on various types of oil lamps which were functional as well as decorative. The base of these was filled with kerosene and a wind-up wick was lit before the glass cover was placed over the flame. Liz and John Baker describe finding pieces of decorative glass from such lamps at *Old Graham.* (p145)

Several older women mentioned their children being burnt by touching the glass chimney of these lamps.









Many families at Hovells Creek generated their own electricity from petrol, kerosene and diesel generators powering a 32 volt battery. Jim Clements⁵⁵ remembers their 32v plant established in the 1940s as a 'terrible thing. It had a row of batteries about ten metres long and they were nearly always flat!' These would generate power during the day and charge up again at night. This capacity enabled housewives to have electric vacuum cleaners, mixmasters and electric irons.

While all of these were relatively efficient, there was great excitement in the early 1950s when electricity poles were erected, and power was carried into people's homes through a narrow cable.

Establishing the electricity line was a huge undertaking. Like the telephone poles, trees were sourced to provide sturdy poles for the new lines.

Charlie Chown worked on the installation of the line with the contractors. He talks about when the team came to dig the holes, 'When they came through it was wet and boggy. They had to put duals on the front of the tractor – an army 6x6 GMC – to stop it from bogging. They had a 4x4 army blitz with a posthole digger on it'.

⁵⁵ Jim Clements grew up at *Geweroo* and is a third generation Hovells Creek resident, (186)

MEDICAL AND HEALTH

In the early days of settlement at Hovells Creek, if a person fell ill, one did what one could and hoped for the best. Doctors were few and far between and access to medical services in Boorowa or Cowra necessitated a long journey on rough roads, perhaps in the back of a buggy, to get to a doctor.

Vera O'Connor related the family history of when her brother, Thomas, fell ill in 1917 at the age of four. The creek was in flood, so a doctor could not come to *Guvesne*, nor was her father, Tommy O'Connor, able to take the child across the flood waters in Hovells Creek. Sadly, the child died.

Joan Gay⁵⁶ recalled a time in the 1940s when her husband, Fred, became ill and could not move his legs. She said, 'There was just me and somebody who helped on the property, and first of all we had to saddle up the horse and put a mattress in the buggy. I had to drive the buggy through the paddocks, open all the gates, hand Fred the reins so he could drive through the gates and then I would shut them and then eventually got him to the hospital. The biggest problem was the isolation and if there was an accident, you just had to do what you could'.

Snake bites were treated by applying a tourniquet, cutting open the bite site and sucking out the poison. In the late 1880s a treatment for snakebite used with dubious success was injecting with strychnine. Antivenoms were introduced in the 1930s.

In Australia, doctors often dispensed drugs, and chemists provided medical advice as well as drugs. Many people, especially in rural and remote areas, self-medicated with ingredients from the garden, as well as with drugs from the chemist. Patent medicines became hugely popular in the second half of the nineteenth century. Many of the estimated 80,000 medicines patented in the United States were available in Australia. Very much in demand was an English product, Bates' Salve, for treating bronchitis, asthma, and lumbago; and two local products: Eucalyptus as a panacea and, copied from the Aboriginal people, goanna fat as a salve. Cost differences were significant. A bottle of patent medicine might cost one shilling and sixpence, but a doctor's visit, ten shillings and sixpence.⁵⁷

Phyllis McGann said she was sixty years old before she went to hospital. She attributed her good health to the healthy outdoor lifestyle they all lived. Her mother, Annie Hudson, used home remedies: warm olive oil for earache; mercurochrome on cuts and grazed knees; Bates' Salve for bronchitis and asthma; butter on burns; a poultice to draw out an infection.

It was usual in remote areas to gain the assistance of a local woman, a midwife, known for her skill in helping an expectant mother in labour. Catherine Healy (1808-1902) attended the births of many children in the valley in the late 1800s, including Mary Ann Kerr at her deliveries from 1875-1882. Catherine was also present at the death bed of many residents.

Catherine Healy died on 8 December 1902, aged 94, after contracting influenza three weeks before. Her obituary notice praises her as a highly valued member of the community:

Catherine resided at Hovells Creek for over 50 years and has been by the death beds of many of her neighbours, who have passed away in that time. She was always ever ready to assist those in need of help, and good and kind to all. She was loved and respected by her neighbours. (The Burrowa News; Fri 12 Dec, p2)

⁵⁶ Joan Gay moved to *Clonalton* in 1942. Her descendants are still at Hovells Creek, (p186)

⁵⁷ https://www.mja.com.au/journal/2014/201/1/medicine-colonial-australia-1788-1900

Just as births were assisted by local community members, when a Hovells Creek resident died in the 1800s, it was neighbours who acted as undertakers. When Mary Cunningham died in 1872, the 'undertaker' on her death certificate was Patrick Lynch. Mrs Cunningham was described on her death certificate as 'buried at Hovells Creek'. This would have been usual at that time because there was no church cemetery until 1880.

About thirty burials are listed as being on properties at Hovells Creek, until the end of the 1800s. Between 1866 and 1900, twenty-four burials were of children under the age of fourteen; most were babies or very young children. The Smart family buried three of their children near their home on Graham Lane: Elizabeth Ann, aged fourteen, and her brother John Joseph, aged eight, died on 9 March 1894; their little brother Walter, aged five, died a day later: all of them during a diphtheria epidemic. Child mortality was a constant reality for families even though their living conditions were healthier than in towns or cities.

Private cemeteries at Hovells Creeks are known to have been on *Willow Glen, Clare View, Alta Villa, Gunning Flat* and *Bennett Springs*. The Frost family private cemetery can be seen on a hill on the southeast side of the junction of Frogmore and Reids Flat Roads, near *Sunnyside*.

When Edward Kerr died in 1884, a 'Pat Malone' is recorded as the undertaker at his burial in Frogmore. Mary Ann's death certificate a year later recorded the same details. It has not been possible to locate their graves at either the Frogmore General Cemetery or the Roman Catholic Cemetery at the Frogmore church. 'Pat Malone' is rhyming slang of the time for 'on one's own' – might this indicate they were buried alone? This would be surprising for such prominent members of the Hovells Creek community.



The cemetery at St Joseph's Church

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⁵⁸ https://www.lexico.com/definition/pat malone

Cowra Free Press; 10 Aug 1918, p2

A Serious State of Affairs – Who is to Blame?

To the Editor

Sir – In the interests of the health of the people of this locality I would request you grant me space in your valuable paper for the publication of this grievance.

Within the past year or so there have been several outbreaks of diphtheria and scarlatina in the Hovell's Creek district, and usually the patients have been taken to Cowra, but after only a week or ten days have been allowed to return to their homes, also to mix with other people.

Apart from the actual treatment of the sufferers from the complaint, in some cases nothing whatever has been done. The authorities, whose concern it should be to safeguard the health of the members of the community, appear to take no action in the matter. Contacts are allowed to mix as usual with others and thus spread the disease amongst them. Surely such a procedure is a serious menace, and the occurrence at ominously regular intervals of the same complaints is a striking indication that some action is needed on the part of the authorities.

In the towns and cities patients suffering from infectious diseases, and to some extent contacts, are debarred from mixing with others for a period of six weeks. Are not country people living at a distance of thirty miles from medical aid entitled to the same safeguards? It is high time that the authorities departed from their lax methods and made an attempt to deal with a state of affairs that is becoming intolerable.

Yours, etc 'One concerned' Hovell's Creek 2 Aug. 1918

'One Concerned' sounds remarkably like William O'Connor, and the date is during the time when the Spanish flu had arrived on Australian shores. An interesting commentary when, in 2021, social distancing measures are strongly advised in communities due to COVID-19.

Mr Con O'Connor, the son of John O'Connor of *Kiaora*, and nephew of William O'Connor of *Hillside*, showed his support for various organisations by holding a Woolshed Dance in aid of the Cowra ambulance in July 1940. This event was attended by more than 160 people and an amount of £20 was raised towards the ambulance funds. The ambulance committee expressed their gratitude to the residents of Hovells Creek, 'as the avenues of revenue open to the ambulance have been severely limited of late'. (The Burrowa News; 26 July 1940, p2)

In the twenty-first century a road ambulance with paramedics could attend an emergency in the Hovells Creek valley in thirty minutes or provide an air ambulance service if required. A well-equipped hospital is situated in Cowra (albeit subject to a \$70.2m redevelopment proposal). Severe cases are transported to bigger hospitals at Orange, Canberra or even Sydney. Sophisticated medical technologies such as Xrays, CT scans, MRIs, paediatric incubators, and some specialist services are available.

POLICING and TRUE CRIME at HOVELLS CREEK

In 1867 a strongly worded suggestion was made urging a greater police presence at Hovells Creek because: 'It is a very bad neighbourhood – a more disreputable quarter is not to be found in the whole Cowra district. More trouble is caused by the Hovell's Creek people to the Cowra bench than by those of any other part. We have robberies, fire raising, and all sorts of the most disorderly conduct from that quarter and it would be well that a police station be put there to keep them under some control'. (Illawarra Mercury; Fri 15 Feb 1867, p2)

Reports from the New South Wales Police Gazette and Weekly Record of Crime include the following incidents in the Hovells Creek district:

- June 1859: Mr Cambrey, a hawker at Hovell's Creek, was robbed of £150 of goods from his cart and all his bedding and the cart were burnt while he was at a nearby house. Corporal Higgs of the Mounted Police will do everything in his power to detect the guilty party.
- July 1869: A mare, the property of Michael Corcoran of Hovells Creek, is alleged to have been stolen by a man who was last seen heading in the direction of the Lachlan River
- Sept 1876: Two men were arrested and charged with stealing men's coats, vests, trousers, boots, and saddlery to the value of £50 from the store of Edward Kerr of Hovell's Creek.
- June 1922: Thomas Quigley was charged with behaving in a riotous manner at the Hovell's Creek dance on 20 May. He pleaded guilty. Constable Kelly asked the magistrate to deal severely with Quigley, as it was getting almost impossible to carry on a dance in the district without a policeman present. The P.M. fined Quigley £4 16s.

In 1874 Constable Michael O'Dwyer was appointed Senior Constable of the police station at Reids Flat. Coincidentally, he arrived in Australia on the same ship as Edward Kerr (later of *Graham*) in 1854. His jurisdiction included Hovells Creek.

During the gold mining era, bushrangers took advantage of easy pickings, holding up coach travellers to demand gold, watches, and money. There are very few reports of bushranger activity in the valley, though a sighting of a gang at Hovells Creek is reported as far afield as Sydney:

The Sydney Morning Herald; 8 Dec 1863, p5

Cowra, 4th December

Yesterday a shepherd on Hovell's Creek saw four men splendidly mounted galloping in the direction of the head of the Lachlan, near the junction of the Fish and Abercrombie Rivers. This is, or has been, the usual route of Gilbert and his gang ever since they commenced operations in our quarter. Two of the above robbers were, it is said, recognised as Gilbert and Dall, the others appeared to be new members of Gilbert's staff. If so, it would appear that a fresh body has started into existence, and we may expect to hear of more outrages.

The shepherd who saw the four men says one of them was mounted on a splendid grey horse, the others were equally well horsed. It thus appears that the Cowra police will have some stirring work to do again.

HOVELLS CREEK BUSHFIRES and the GRAHAM BUSH FIRE BRIGADE

Bushfires are a seasonal hazard in Australia. Fortunately, there have not been many in the Hovells Creek valley that have blazed completely out of control. Fires may be started by lightning strikes, or misuse of chainsaws or angle grinders, which can throw sparks. A fire can get away very quickly, and responsible farmers carry a water tank on their vehicles to put out small spot fires during the fire season.

The Burrowa News; Fri 16 Dec 1921, p3

District Bush Fires

Lightning said to have caused them.

On Sunday week last, Mr. N.B. Jordan's property at Hovell's Creek was the scene of an outbreak of fire, that gentleman losing 300 acres of grass, while one of the adjoining landholders, Mr. R. Neville, lost 30 acres of crop, which unfortunately was not insured. The neighbours rolled up in full force to fight the fiery elements, otherwise there might have been a far greater loss. Good work was done with the Shire fire-fighter in charge of Mr. Dan Neville and Mr. Ticehurst's water cart. It is surmised that the outbreak was caused by lightning.

It was evident a dedicated bush fire brigade was needed. The minutes of the meeting to form the first brigade have been kindly supplied by Jim Clements and read as follows:

On Sunday 20 December 1930 at 3pm, a meeting was convened by Gilbert Dunn in the Jerringomar woolshed to discuss forming a bush fire brigade. The meeting was well attended. Those present were Dan Neville (who was appointed to the chair), G. Clements, R. Neville, J. Neville, W. Evans, W. Hyles, J. Clements, A.E. Clements, L. Hogan, F. O'Connor, W. Morgan, C. O'Connor, A. Gorham, H. O'Neill, P. Byrnes, W. Clarke, D. Neville, and G. A. Dunn.

It was decided to form a brigade, that Dan Neville be captain, that G.A. Dunn be secretary and treasurer. It would be called the Jerringomar Bush Fire Brigade.

It was decided that subscription fees for landholders be sixpence per 100 acres for areas upwards of 500 acres, and a minimum of 2s 6d for areas less than 500ac, and a minimum of one shilling per annum for non-landholders. Most landholders had tanks of up to 100 gallons on drays, pumps, axes, and rakes.

A bushfire went through *Clonalton* in the 1940s. The rabbits were still in plague numbers then, and it is said the rabbits came out of their burrows and hollow logs squealing as their fur was on fire, and they spread the fire as they tried to escape. There was not much ground cover, but bushy patches would catch alight and dried Eucalypt leaves under trees enabled the fire to creep up the tree trunks. One comment made at interview was, *'There were no bushfires after Christmas: there was nothing left to burn'*, with reference to ground cover having been cleaned out by the rabbits.

Everyone turns out to help put out a fire before it gets away. Max Boulding⁵⁹ recalls an occasion in the early 1960s when a fire was reported at the back of Gorhams' on the Mount Darling Road. He went to *Kiaora* to alert Frank O'Connor, but Frank's mother said he had been up all night cutting lucerne and not to wake him. Max replied, 'I'll wake him alright!' Frank leapt out of bed and gathered his farm hands to go and help. The fire was under control by nightfall.

⁵⁹ Max Boulding worked and resided at Hovells Creek from the early 1940s until 1977, (p184)

On 3 March 1964, the name was changed to the Graham Bush Fire Brigade. It was thought this was more in line with the local telephone exchange name. On 10 March 1993, the Brigade was incorporated and became the Graham Bush Fire Brigade Inc.

The NSW government delivered the first fire truck to the Graham Bush Fire Brigade in the mid-1970s. The most recent upgraded fire trucks and fire-fighting equipment were provided in 2014. Members are supplied with equipment – boots, trousers, jackets, helmets, and masks by the NSW government.

Fire captains since 1930 include: Daniel Neville, Alvin Neville, Richard Forster, Edley Clements, Jack Berry, Jim Clements, Alan Clements, Barry Gay, and Andrew Smith.

A new shed was built in 2014 on land made available by Jim Clements. The fire shed is now used for regular training programs, fire brigade meetings, and the Hovells Creek Landcare Group's annual AGM and Christmas party.

A more recent development during the summer months is that fire spotting planes are often out. If a landholder sees a spiral of smoke, it is reported, and the plane can check it from the air. On one occasion a local resident suffered an accident on his motorbike resulting in a broken leg and was unable to phone for help. He lit a small fire, and the visible spiral of smoke alerted a spotter plane to check the site. The gentleman was rescued and made a full recovery.

The number of absent small block holders is of concern today. Many of these part-time residents do not have stock to reduce grasses and this poses a potential fire risk.



The new Graham Bush Fire Brigade shed, opened in 2014

HOVELLS CREEK FIRE BRIGADE, 1938



On 2 August 2014, the Graham Bush Fire Brigade's new fire station was officially opened by NSW Rural Fire Service Commissioner Shane Fitzsimmons.



MEDIA RELEASE

Graham brigade celebrates new station and long-serving members

2 August 2014

A new era began for the Graham Rural Fire Brigade (RFB) when NSW Rural Fire Service (NSW RFS) Commissioner Shane Fitzsimmons officially declared their new station open today.

Commissioner Fitzsimmons said the new Graham Brigade station is the culmination of a number of years of hard work by its members.

"This is the Graham Brigade's first official station and a testament to how tirelessly the Graham Brigade volunteers have worked to turn their dream into a reality," Commissioner Fitzsimmons said.

"The brigade is understandably thrilled that they now have a place to meet and store their two trucks."

Commissioner Fitzsimmons was also honoured to present Long Service Medals to seven NSW RFS volunteers.

*Between them, these seven Long Service Medal recipients have amassed an impressive 287 years of service," Commissioner Fitzsimmons said.

"This significant commitment demonstrates that the tradition of volunteering is thriving in this region.

"It is an honour to present these awards and reflect upon the outstanding achievements of these members."

Commissioner Fitzsimmons also presented two appreciation plaques to two members of the local community, in recognition of the long-standing assistance they have provided to the Graham RFB.

The Graham RFB has protected the local community from bush fire since it was formed in the 1950's.

"Today, members of this Brigade continue to protect their community from bush, grass and house fires as well as motor vehicle accidents," Commissioner Fitzsimmons said.

"These men and women make themselves available to respond to emergencies 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and we should be extremely proud and grateful for their contribution."

"I would also like to take this opportunity to praise all our volunteers for their ongoing efforts each and every day, particularly when dealing with emergencies here in the South West Slopes Zone."

The awardees were – Jim Clements (50 years). Barry Gay (50 years), Wayne Hudson (50 years) Lyndon Constance (40 years), Angus Clements (20 years), John McGann (20 years), and Alan Clements (37 years).

WELL DONE, GENTLEMEN!

CHAPTER 7 – COMMUNITY

Church, School, Sport, Social, CWA

Attending church services; gathering at school concerts; participating in or watching sport; and social events at Hovells Creek valley formed the backbone of the local community. These occasions provided important opportunities to meet one's neighbours to catch up on local gossip; for the men to discuss prevailing farm conditions and the livestock markets; for the women to proudly share their children's progress at school, or bewail the lack of it, swap recipes, and collect treatment ideas for home remedies for family illnesses; and for young people to eye off future spouse prospects!

CHURCH

Many of the Hovells Creek residents came from an Irish Catholic background, strong in their faith and beliefs. A visiting priest held occasional services in people's homes, and conducted christenings, weddings, and funerals; however, the community was keen to establish a 'proper' church. One of the earliest recorded meetings to discuss the building of a Catholic church and school at Hovells Creek was held on 23 January 1869, at the residence of Mr Phillip Cunningham. It was attended by a 'number of persons': Mr JC Carney, Mr J Frost, Messrs W and J O'Conner, Mr Canfield, and others. By that time, £120 had been raised in the district towards the build. A number of local residents expressed their concern at undertaking 'a pretentious building in the present dull season', however the motion to call for tenders was carried. The decision of the meeting was to be communicated to His Lordship the Bishop through the Rev. Riordan. (Freeman's Journal; 23 January 1869, p15)

The site for St Joseph's Church was blessed in September 1879 by Father Dunne and Father Hanley of Boorowa in the presence of a large congregation. The church was built by stonemason, William Duncan, of Goulburn, using granite sourced from the adjacent hills, as well as some from *Oaky Creek Station* (now part of *Willow Glen*).

Records held at the Bank of New South Wales, Burrowa Branch from 27 October 1879 show a mortgage taken out for the church:

Saint Joseph's Roman Catholic Church, Hovells Creek. CC Bond of £400. Signed by Reverend John Dunne, John Frost, William O'Connor, Patrick Stinson, Thomas O'Neill, Richard Anthony, John O'Connor, Joseph Smith. To secure advance of £200.

The completed church was officially opened on 8 February 1880 by the Rev. J Dunne, assisted by the Rev. E Fallon, and Rev. W Bermingham who preached an eloquent sermon. The service was followed by a sumptuous luncheon served by the hospitable people of Hovells Creek.

A successful mission was held in November 1909 when Father Alphonsus and Father Sheehan spent almost a week at St Joseph's. They imparted the benediction of His Holiness, the Pope, and members of the congregation attended several services, and renewed their baptismal vows. Father Alphonsus thanked the people for their devotion and especially referred to the hospitality he and Father Sheehan had received from Mr Webster and Mr J Smith.⁶⁰

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⁶⁰ The Burrowa News, 19 Nov 1909, p2



HOVELLS CREEK CHURCH GROUP 1904

Standing at back: James Daly, Con O'Connor, Nellie O'Neill, John Smith, Annie Smith (holding Grace Smith), Ellen Hudson, girl in white dress unknown, Alice Platt (Jones?), girl in white dress unknown, Mary O'Connor, Tom O'Connor, Fred Hudson, Tom O'Neill, William O'Connor, John Hanrahan Seated/kneeling at front: Nora O'Neill, George Hudson, Hannah Berry, Ellen O'Neill, unknown, Hannah Smith, unknown, Peter Smith⁶¹

(Photo courtesy of Anne McGann⁶²/ John O'Connor⁶³, likely taken by JJ Murphy Clonalton Studio, Reids Flat)

A number of jointly organised bazaars were held in the following years to raise funds to offset the cost of the building of St Joseph's at Hovells Creek and the Catholic church at Frogmore. Newspaper reports of two of these events follow:

The Freemans Journal; Sat 27 January 1883, p15

A bazaar is being held this week in aid of churches at Frogmore and Hovell's Creek. It is hoped that sufficient funds will be raised to clear off all debts. Some time ago the projectors of the movement held out high hopes of its ultimate success, and it is gratifying to think that they were not unfounded. Since the inauguration of the bazaar project, over £100 have been received, so that the debts that hang so heavily on our two churches of Hovells Creek and Frogmore, are now nearly things of the past.

The Burrowa News; Fr 5 Feb 1892, p2

The bazaar at Frogmore in aid of the Roman Catholic churches at Frogmore and Hovell's Creek resulted satisfactorily beyond the expected hopes of those interested and nearly £100 net was obtained. Father Hanrahan thanked the people present for their liberal patronage and, he said, no one could doubt the success that attended their efforts, considering the times and the great scarcity of money.

⁶¹ Editor: the names in two available photographs differ slightly, but with some agreement, are reproduced here.

⁶² Anne McGann, daughter of Phyllis Hudson McGann, grew up at Willow Park, (p188)

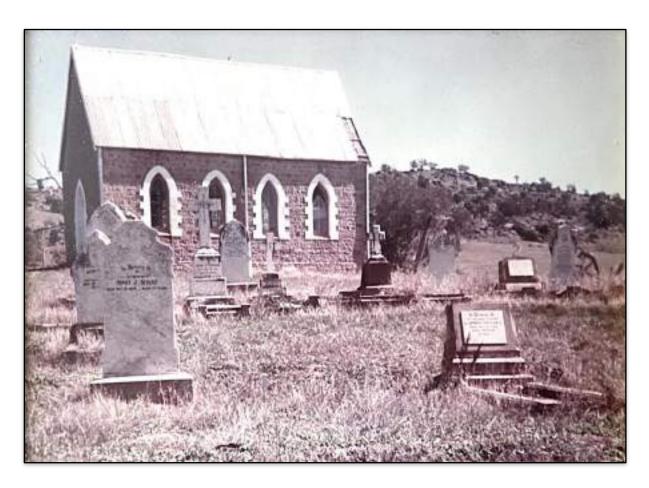
⁶³ John O'Connor, great grandson of John O'Connor (1835-1918) of Kiaora, (p189)

The wedding of Ellen Elizabeth, eldest daughter of Mr and Mrs Thomas O'Connor of *Guvesne*, Hovells Creek, to Carl Thomas Brown was held at St Joseph's in July 1935 – the first wedding ceremony at the church in nearly 30 years. The bride was given away by her father; the bridesmaid was her sister Vera; and the best man was her brother, Frank. Father Sheehan of Burrowa performed the ceremony, which was followed by a Nuptial Mass. *(The Cowra Free Press; 1 July 1935, p8)*

Phyllis McGann recalls, 'We didn't have church every Sunday. The priest would come out from Boorowa and say Mass there. Occasionally he'd come and stay the night at our church, and I'd clean it out'.

There are interesting recollections of Father Morrison, a priest during the 1950s and 60s, who had a strong personality and a wicked sense of humour. On one occasion, during a particularly dry spell, a parishioner asked Father Morrison to say a few prayers for rain. The priest replied, 'There's nothing the Lord can do with this south-easterly blowing'.

Local legend tells of a parishioner who had fallen out with Father Morrison. Apparently the two had a common interest in sheep dog trials. Father Morrison had gifted two pups to the parishioner but was horrified when he discovered they had been named 'Mary' and 'Jesus'. When this gentleman died, his funeral service was held in Cowra, but the burial was to be at St Joseph's at Hovells Creek. When the family brought the coffin to the gate, Father Morrison said, 'Bring him in, bring him in, I haven't finished with him yet'.



Many members of the O'Connor, Hudson and Berry families are buried here

Centenary celebrations were held at St Joseph's Church at Hovells Creek in 1981.



The church was deconsecrated not long after the Centenary event. For twenty years it stood empty, with broken windows, loose roof sheeting flapping in the wind, and the front door open to the elements.

In 2001 John and Liz Baker of *Old Graham* purchased the church from the Catholic Diocese and began a restoration project. The project was undertaken by Bede Morrissey of Boorowa, aided by his son, Aaron, and Boorowa builder David Barton. The roof was re-sheeted, using the best iron from the roof and other suitable secondhand galvanized roof sheets, and the doors and windows were repaired to make the building watertight. A mezzanine bedroom level, a bathroom, and a kitchen were incorporated into the build in such a way they could be removed if required later. All this work was done according to Burra Charter standards.⁶⁴

In 2016 the former church was listed by the National Trust of Australia on the Trust register. In 2016 the church was sold to a Canberra based couple, who use it as a much-loved weekender and country retreat.

⁶⁴ https://australia.icomos.org/publications/burra-charter-practice-notes/

SCHOOLS

In the very early years of settlement there were no schools. Children may have learnt some simple basics in reading, writing, and arithmetic; perhaps affluent families employed a governess.

The first school in the valley was opened in 1861 with Miss Mary Anne O'Connor appointed as its teacher. Mary Anne married William O'Connor (no relation) in 1863, then resigned from teaching. The modest structure was located near the residence of William O'Connor's *Hillside* property and was also used for occasional church services. When it burned down in 1876, Edward Kerr of *Graham* offered a £50 reward for the arrest of the arsonist.

The loss prompted the growing community to apply for both a new school and a larger designated church.

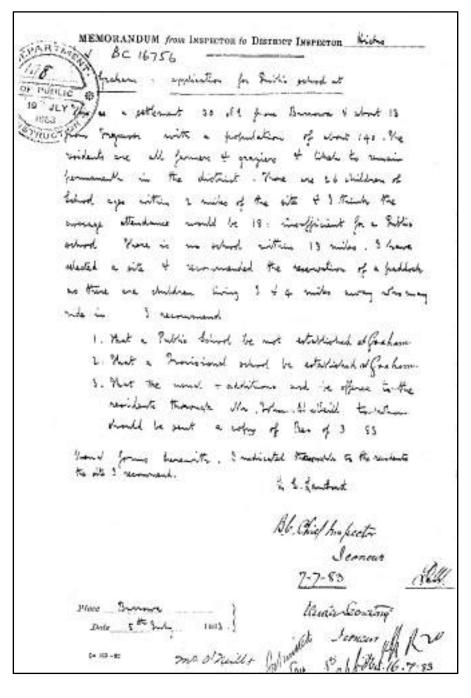
An application, dated 14 May 1883, was made to establish a public school at Hovells Creek. This letter was signed by John O'Neill, John O'Connor, Joseph Webster, and James Daly.

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APPLICATION FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A PUBLIC SCHOOL
Howell's Creek Graham
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The undersigned, on behalf of the residents at Hovell's Grade
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The names on a list of prospective students attached to the application were from well-known Hovells Creek families:

James (14), Mary (12), Henry (9), Annie (7), and Rosaline (6) Hudson; Thomas (13), Patrick (12), William (10), Sarah Jane (9), and Catherine (4) Smart; Jane (14), Margaret (12), Edward (10), William (8), and Ellen (9) Kerr; Rosamund (8), Mary Anne (6), George (5), and John (4) O'Neill; John Hudson; Margaret Oxley; Mary, Jim, and Charley Reid; Louise, Patrick, and Harry Gurney; Rose and Martina Hesse; Annie Smith; Ada Higgins.

A Memorandum dated 5 July 1883 from Inspector E Lambert to District Inspector Hicks indicates there were 26 school-age children in the vicinity within three to four miles of a site selected by him, with an estimated average attendance of 18 students. This was deemed 'insufficient for a Public school' and Inspector Lambert recommended 'that a Provisional school be established at Graham'.



A recommendation for a Provisional School was approved, and the new Graham School was built in 1884 adjacent to St Joseph's Church.

The school was conducted on a part time basis in conjunction with Clonalton School.

The architect of the building wrote to the Under Secretary, on 13 Sept 1884, stating:

'I have had the building erected at the above place for School purposes inspected, and I estimate the value of the same at £67.7.0. It is a substantial and well-built wooden structure, 18x15x9 feet; the roof is covered with galvanized iron with proper ridge capping; and the furniture consists of 4 desks and 4 forms, 8 feet long, 1 table, 1 chair, and 3 small bookshelves.'

The school building at St Joseph's Church was moved in 1929 onto land belonging to Mr Medway adjacent to Graham Lane. It closed in 1966 due to lack of enrolments.

Hovells Creek residents reminisce about their own school experiences. In 2004, Vera O'Connor of *Guvesne* recalled starting her lessons, at the age of five, with a governess in the 'school room' at the *Jerringomar* house [now Kooringle]. At that time, Robert Smith, the son of John Smith of Smith Company Graham and Narrawa Ltd, lived at the *Jerringomar* house with his family of eight children. The O'Connor children, Ellen, Vera, and Frank (when he was old enough) walked the half mile from *Guvesne* down the hill to *Jerringomar*, as the Graham School was then still situated at the church and was too far to travel. When *Jerringomar* was sold to Archie and Gilbert Dunn in 1924, the 'school room' was no longer used.

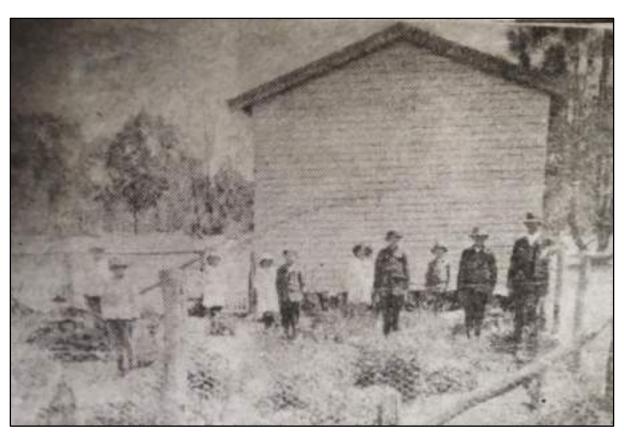
In the late 1920s Laurie and Margaret Dunn shared a governess with Vera and Frank O'Connor at north *Jerringomar*. This arrangement was short lived as the O'Connor family insisted on a Catholic governess, which did not suit the Protestant Dunn family. Mrs Dunn taught the two little girls for a time, then they attended the Graham School.

Laurie recalls the Graham School in her memoirs: 'A small school at Graham was six miles distant towards Boorowa. Margaret and I started going to school there by horse and buggy with the children of one of our working men. It was quite a good little one teacher school, the children's ages ranging from about six years to fourteen or even fifteen. Roy Ford was our teacher, and he managed all six classes without much difficulty. The parents had obtained permission from the Education Department to move the schoolhouse two miles back towards us, where the majority of the children came from. It was a mammoth task, which of course fell mainly to the parents and eventually we were installed in the 'new' school around which we, the children, planted a big row of trees. And we had a new teacher called Miss Downes who fairly soon became Mrs Smart when she married Aubrey Smart'.

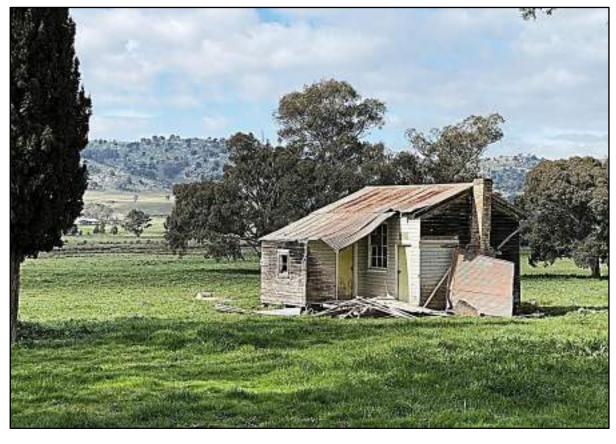
Phyllis McGann was also a pupil at the Graham School. She remembers, in the 1920s, going across Hovells Creek on a flying fox when the creek was in flood. Phyllis recalls, 'I started school in the old Graham School. I went for a while when it was up at the church, but it was a fair walk for a little girl of five. When the school was moved, it was only across the creek. There were a lot of kids at that school. Dad's sister, Gladys Gay, taught there for a while'.

Phyllis McGann's four children were a second generation at the Graham School. Anne recalls there were thirteen children when she attended, and two in her year group in which she always 'came second'. She admired her teacher, Mr Torr, who taught there from 1953-56. In spite of the school only being small, Anne commented on the number of students who went on to university or were awarded scholarships and bursaries, due in no small part to their solid primary school education.

Another second generation of Hovell's Creek offspring at the Graham School were Ina (nee Power) Boulding's older children. Ina Power attended the Graham School in the 1930s, and her children in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Ina remembers her teacher Mr George King (1939-40), whom the children called 'King George', but never to his face!



The Graham School situated near St Joseph's Church in 1912; the teacher at right is Austin Hayes



The Graham School building adjacent to Graham Lane in 2021, sadly in a state of disrepair

The Burrowa News; Fri 25 Dec 1931, p3

"MISERY FARM"

DRAMATISED ON HOVELLS CREEK BY LOCAL CHILDREN

"Nothing's grown since the day we came; Misery Farm is our farm's name!"

As a forlorn quadruped drew a hay wagon across the stage in Mr O'Connor's fine shed at Hovell's Creek, with the dejected occupants of "Misery Farm" – Dave, Joe, Kate, and all of them chanting of blasted hopes, crops ruined, and cows gone west – the audience shook the building with their applause.

Of course, they knew that "Dad" with his whiskers, and even the animal which eventually dropped down in the shafts, exhausted, were children of the Graham school a few miles south of Darby's Falls.

Further, they knew that their teacher, Miss Downes, had only a few weeks in which to instruct these children of the bush in stage craft, with the result that their concert would be hard to beat for both originality and dramatic effect.

A graceful performance of dancing was given which must have warmed the heart of any Scot in the audience. The Highland Schottische was played on a gramophone, and with one or two little slips, the dancing was delightful.

All the rest of the music was provided by Mrs McGrath (piano), Mrs G.A Dunn (piano), Mr McGrath (violin), and Mr Worthy (banjo).

Mr G.A. Dunn of "Jerringomar", who presided, thanked Mr C. O'Connor on behalf of the parents, for the use of his fine shearing shed "hall" which is bigger and better than many towns have.

Mr Dunn then paid a special tribute to the teacher, Miss Downes. He said that the parents were indeed fortunate in having one who, by her ability, sympathy, and the interest she took in the children, had made such a fine concert possible.

That these were the sentiments of the audience as well, was shown by the applause which followed Mr Dunn's remarks.

The following were then presented by Mr McGrath with prizes: 7th class, Laurie Dunn, spelling and arithmetic; 6th class, Jack Clark, spelling and arithmetic; 5th class, Phyllis Hudson, spelling and arithmetic; 4th class, Herb Hudson, spelling and arithmetic; 3rd class, Marie Berry, spelling; Gwen Stuart, arithmetic.

The Programme

Following are some of the items and the performers: overture, Mr and Mrs McGrath and Mr Worthing; introduction prologue recited by Laurie Dunn, and "Advance Australia Fair" sung by the children; song "The Star Crossed Flag" by the children; recitation by Margaret Dunn; song "The Chinaman" by the children; "Sweet and Low" (Tennyson), Margaret Dunn, Marie Berry, Daphne Hudson; "Oliver Twist" (the main part was taken by Jack Berry), Mr Limkins, (Jack Clarke), Mr Brumble (Frank O'Connor), Magistrate (Laurie Dunn), Mr Gamfield (Will Clark), Members of the Board (Herb Hudson, Frank Hudson, Pat Clark and Edgar Hudson).

John Payne, aged 21, taught at the Graham School from 1958-59.

He eloquently describes his days at the school in a long descriptive poem penned in 1999. Thirteen of us there were, just me and twelve of them, Aged from a mere five years right through to fourteen, And every one – yes, every single one – a challenge To my yet unpolished pedagogic skill.

Slouching beside the lane to Hovells Creek, the school Contained us. It was one room, timber, yellow painted, Red tin roofed, verandah hanging off its eastern side. Inside we sweltered, froze, shouted against the rain, Peered through the dim or foggy light, and now and then, Got through the lessons scheduled for the week.

John Payne attended the 1983 Reunion with his wife and thirteenyear daughter, Jenni, who chatted with some of the former students, now grown up.

He describes a conversation his daughter had with his former pupils.

My Jenni found herself surrounded by 'the boys', Wayne Hudson, Graham Berry, Ken McGann, the others, too. And she was smitten by their size, their blatant manliness. "Did my Daddy ever use the stick on you?", she asked. Big John*, still grinning, cast his eyes around the group. "Ah, yes, I guess he sometimes did", was his reply. "And did you really misbehave, and so *deserve* the stick?" Again, a quick glance at each enigmatic face. "No doubt we did; no doubt of that at all!" "Well, what was it you did that brought my Daddy down on you?" This time, there was a long and deathly pause. The kind of pause before the trapdoor snaps open, Dropping the condemned a short way into open air. You know that kind of pause. You hold your breath For what seems like an age, and then ... John blinked, and Graham Berry sucked back on a laugh. "There was the lunchtime when your Dad was sleeping, Sitting with his back against the peach tree in the yard. And we - that's most of us; not Nessie, Rhonda, Or the Boulding kid – thought it would be guite funny To make our mark by setting fire to the dunny!"

*John McGann

It seems, after the incident described above, John Payne found a more creative use for the cane!

But on one glorious Friday afternoon, high and lovely Against the winter sky, and bellying in the bosky breeze, It flew ... our brilliant kite; the bobbing, swooping Loop-the-looping proof that amnesty had been declared, And wary truce converted to a comfortable accord. Benignly spilt in two, and soundly strapped To form the backbone and extended arms On which the kite was stretched, the cane, My occupational inheritance and tool of trade Through generations, symbol of adult authority (and prop for those in charge whose wit had failed), Now humbly, bravely, served by far its noblest task.

Pupils at the Graham School, 1958-59 (photo courtesy of John Payne, the teacher at that time).

I-r: Gemma McGann Graham Berry Ken McGann Denise Norris Mary Tarrant Harry Tarrant John McGann

Absent: Roger & Neville Hudson Roger Boulding Rhonda Chown Wayne Hudson Anne McGann



In June 1983, one hundred years after the school began, a Graham Public School Reunion was held at the Boorowa Services Club. The New South Wales Inspector of schools in the Western region, Mr Spencer Harvey, spoke strongly in support of small country schools at this event, saying they are the backbone of the education of the nation. The reunion was attended by about 150 former pupils of the school travelling from other parts of Australia to catch up with old friends and teachers.



I-r: Daphne Smith (nee Hudson, later a teacher at the school), Rita Burns (nee Berry), Ina Boulding (nee Power), Jack Berry, Frank Hudson, Joe Power, Vina Roberts (nee Berry), John Hogan, Vince Hudson, 'Teddy' Norris (nee Berry, partly obscured), Ivy Smart (teacher 1935), Frank O'Connor, John Lane, Phyllis McGann (nee Hudson), Marv Brav (nee Hogan), Betty Dwyer (nee Hudson)



The oldest surviving former pupil of the Graham School,
Mrs Hannah (Hudson) Berry
a sprightly 91-year-old,
was presented with a posy
by the youngest former pupil, Jody (Power) Robinson

A comprehensive Timeline of Graham Public School can be found in Appendix 3 (p194)

SPORT

Sporting events brought the community together. Cricket, tennis, and polo matches, were participated in, watched, and enjoyed by residents of Hovells Creek and surrounding districts. These events were opportunities to gather, not only for the game but to share chit-chat about daily events on the farm and at home.

Cricket teams were formed early, with regular reports in various newspapers on the outcome of matches. There was much rivalry between the Hovells Creek, Reids Flat, and Frogmore teams. Games were played as early as 1906 with the Goulburn Evening Penny Post reporting, 'Hovells Creek won by an innings and 42 runs against Frogmore. H O'Neill took ten wickets for 15 runs'. (26 April 1906, p3)

In 1909 a delegation met at Frogmore to formalise a district cricket competition between Boorowa, Frogmore, Forest Creek, Hovells Creek, Reids Flat and Rugby.

The Burrowa News; Fri 14 April 1911, p5

On Saturday last the final match of the RFDCA Competition was continued between Hovell's Creek and Reid's Flat on the former's wicket. With three wickets down for 149, Reid's Flat commenced batting, and after a most exciting finish they won by 2 wickets and 4 runs.

Reid's Flat men all batted with great determination, and played much better cricket than their scores indicate, as the bowling of Hovell's Creek was very high-class and was frequently changed.

The match was a very friendly one and was played in good spirit by both sides.

Hovells Creek lost again in a home game on their cricket pitch situated on the valley flats at Werrawee [now a cultivated paddock] as the following article attests:

The Burrowa News; Fri 2 May 1913, p2

The final match of the local competition was commenced on Friday last between Reid's Flat and Hovell's Creek on the latter's wicket. The match lasted through Friday and Saturday and although then unfinished, Hovell's Creek decided to give their opponents a win, as their own position was hopeless, having only three wickets to fall and wanting 350 runs to win.

The players for the Hovell's Creek team were F. Hudson J. Harris, W. Giles, G. Newham, P. Hudson, H. O'Neill, G. Hudson, A. Hudson, P. Smith, and J. Gemmell.

The Hovells Creek team met with greater success in the Shackel Cup when they played against Cowra in 1914, winning handsomely 100 to 47. Wayne Hudson remembers playing in this competition against Orange, in the 1960s when Hovells Creek won again.

The Cup was donated by Mr David Shackel, a Polish immigrant and lover of cricket, who came to Grenfell in the late 1880s to join his brother, Alfred, a prominent businessman in Grenfell. David Shackel became a businessman and alderman in Cowra. The Shackel Cup was a much-coveted trophy in country cricket competitions. National Library of Australia newspaper articles mention Shackel Cup competitions at Grenfell, Cowra, Orange, Burrendong and other country towns from 1887.

The Shackel Cup, now held by Wayne Hudson



Hovells Creek was well ahead of the times when it formed a women's cricket team in the 1920s.

The Burrowa News; 16 March 1928, p2

HOVELL'S CREEK LADIES

A most thrilling game was witnessed at Reid's Flat oval last Saturday when Hovell's Creek ladies journeyed up to play the local ladies.

The game was both exciting and amusing from beginning to end.

Hovell's Creek, winning the toss, went into bat first, making a total score of 71. Special notice was taken of their fine wicketkeeper (Mrs. T. Grimson) who played the part rather well, also Miss L. O'Neill's bowling, which seemed to be always on the mark. She was ably assisted by Mrs. B. Smart, who bowled rather well.

Reid's Flat sent in their local nurse as first batsman, who played rather well, their innings resulting in a score of 136. Gladys Roberts topped the score by 62 runs and retired. She is also an excellent wicketkeeper.

Kevin Tarrant⁶⁵ remembers a less formal cricket game at the woolshed at *Graham* where his mother worked as a cook in the late 1950s. The team consisted of Tommy Power, Joe Power, Vince Hudson, Lindsay Berry, Frankie Norris, and a few others. They stayed in the shearers' quarters during shearing, located across the road from the shearing shed. Kevin recalls, 'The boys used to play up a bit. One night the shearers were drinking and decided they'd have a game of cricket. They went out and knocked the handle off a pickaxe and got a bag of potatoes. They flogged a full fifty pound bag! All hell broke loose next morning when Mum got up. She went out and knocked on all the doors and got 'em all up and got them inside and said, "There's no cooking – no breakfast, no dinner, no morning tea – until this is all cleaned up and you get another bag of potatoes." One of them had to duck over to Crookwell to buy some more!' [Hovells Creek to Crookwell is approximately 100 kilometres!]

Tennis was popular with all age groups. It was played socially as well as at competition level. Many of the local properties had their own tennis courts: Archie and Gilbert Dunn at *Jerringomar*, John Gay at *Glenview*, Lindsay Berry at *Kalaraville*. There were two tennis courts towards the creek behind the Graham School. These courts were well used at weekends. The concrete rollers for rolling the courts are still there.

The Burrowa News reported: 'A very enjoyable afternoon was spent at the Gunning Flat tennis courts when a team representing Hovell's Creek Tennis Club journeyed to Gunning Flat to play a friendly match. Hovell's Creek players were Ladies: Miss M. Smart, Miss G. Gay; Gents: J. Hudson, J. Smith, A. Corcoran, G. Hudson, F. Hudson'. (4 July 1930, p8)

Ken Chudleigh recalls, 'Nearly every weekend there'd be a tennis party either at our place or at Steve Laver's or Roger Webster's. Everyone played – the kids would play, and the adults would play. We'd play tennis all day and stay up half the night'.

Jim Clements and Ken played with a Frogmore team on Saturday mornings. Games were played at Numby, Reids Flat and Gunning Flat.

Tuesday night is now the regular tennis night in the district. It is mostly the older folk who still play. Younger locals are now less interested in such activities.

⁶⁵ Kevin Tarrant worked at various jobs at Hovells Creek, as did his father before him (p190)

OTHER SPORTING ACTIVITIES

Hovells Creek had its own polo club and grounds. On one occasion in 1950, the Burrowa River Polo Club's annual tournament, which was to be held on the new ground at Hovells Creek, had to be cancelled due to wet weather. (*The Burrowa News; Fri 7 July 1950, p4*)

The men played polo; the women had a polocrosse team. Ken Chudleigh's mother was on this team – he recalls she was a good player. Their horses were taken to events in an old truck.

A rifle club was formed in 1911 with a site chosen for the shooting range at the junction of the Reids Flat turn off at Hovells Creek. (*The Burrowa News; 2 June 1911, p2*)

Shooting for sport and recreation, as well as keeping the rabbit and fox populations down was a popular Saturday afternoon pastime amongst 'the lads' of Hovells Creek.

A racecourse located on the west bank of Hovells Creek on Graham Lane past the Graham School was used for trotting events. Lindsay Berry (*Kalaraville*) took his trotters there as well as to other events in the district. Jack Berry made this site available for the annual Graham Gymkhana, held in the early 1960s.

Wayne Hudson's brother Harvey won ribbons for an obstacle race on Wayne's horse.



COUNTY WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION

The CWA, established in 1922, aimed to support women and children in rural and remote Australia. They not only held cake and scone stalls as fund raising events, but knitted socks for Australian soldiers in WWII and provided scholarships for students to go away to boarding schools.

Mrs Joyce Laver of *Tatong* joined the Frogmore branch of the CWA in the 1920s, making a long and valuable contribution to this organisation. Joan Gay of *Clonalton* was a member from the 1940s for many years.

The Frogmore group was the closest to Hovells Creek.



SOCIAL

It was unlikely there was a great deal of social interaction outside of church and sporting activities in the mid to late 1800s as it was not easy to travel between neighbouring properties. Locals were busy with the everyday commitments of home and farming activities. Many of the participants, when interviewed, laughed when asked about their social life – the most common response was, 'What social life? We were too busy working!'

Dances were popular and held several times a year at Reids Flat, Rye Park, Frogmore, and Boorowa in the first half of the twentieth century. Later, as families acquired motor vehicles, travel to dances became much easier. These events were opportunities for young singles to meet and form a connection, which sometimes led to marriage. Joan Gay met Fred at a dance in Boorowa; Ken Chudleigh met Beth at a dance at Rye Park.

In the 1960s, B&S⁶⁶ balls became popular and continue in some rural locations to this day, although young people are more likely to meet through work, mutual friends, or possibly online dating sites.

Mr Cornelius O'Connor (1864-1943), the son of John O'Connor of *Kiaora*, was the organiser of a number of social activities at Hovells Creek during the 1920s, '30s and '40s that were held in his 'shed'. Variously dubbed 'Con's Shed' or 'The Hall', this was a weatherboard shed with a timber floor and a skillion on the side situated behind the *Kiaora* homestead. It was the venue for many dances and social gatherings. Some events are described in the following reports in local newspapers:

Cowra Free Press; 31 July 1918, p3

Another Returned Hero – Private Arthur Hudson Welcomed Home.

On Friday 26th, Pte. A. Hudson, was accorded a welcome home at the residence of Mr Con O'Connor, Hovell's Creek. The returned soldier is the youngest son of Mr. and Mrs. J Hudson, of Hovell's Creek. He served with the New Zealand forces in France for three years and was twice severely wounded. He was attached to a Lewis Machine Gun section and, when all his mates were killed, continued to fire the gun till all the ammunition was used up. He then took his gun into a shell hole where he lay for twelve hours within fifty yards of the German trenches. He finally reached his own trenches, taking the gun with him. For this action he received the Military Medal.

Sergeant TG O'Neill was also welcomed home at Con's Shed. He was a descendant of Thomas O'Neill who arrived at Hovells Creek in 1862, indicating the O'Neill family were long term residents at Hovells Creek.

The Burrowa News; 14 May 1920, p6

The dance and social to welcome home Sergeant T.G. O'Neill, eventuated in the spacious shed kindly lent (and suitably decorated) by Mr C. O'Connor and it upheld, if not surpassed, the traditions of former entertainments. The ladies committee had been plying their fantastic tricks among the edibles. The empty platters and satisfied glances of all a little later-spoke for the efficiency of the culinary department.

Dancing continued until daylight, "Mr Rooster" reminding all, with his sonorous voice of "The Dawn of Another Day".

⁶⁶ Bachelor and Spinster

The Burrowa News; Fri 1 July 1927, p5

A plain and fancy-dress ball organised by the committee of the Mount Collins-Hovells Creek Road League and held at Mr Con O'Connor's Kiaora hall on Friday last, proceeds in aid of road improvements. The Darby's Falls orchestra supplied the music. The night was mild and fine, and a large gathering attended (about 160 in all). The Road League funds will benefit to the extent of £25. Messrs Bert Neville and R. Hoad acted as MCs and made the evening a great success.

The ladies in fancy dress were Mrs A.G. Dunn (Aunt Jemima); Miss B. Anderson (Uncle Moses); Miss Laurie Dunn (Eastern Lady); Miss Margaret Dunn (Chinese Lady); Miss Thelma Neville (1910 evening dress); Miss Sylvia Neville (Arnott's Biscuits); Miss Ruby Neville (White Wings Self Raising Flour); Miss Addie Neville (Night); Mrs F. Barnes (Silk Tax); Miss Kit O'Neill (Russian Dancer); Miss Allie O'Neill (Witch); Miss Elsie Roberts (Fancy Handkerchiefs).

Mr A.G. Dunn received the prize for the most original costume: a handsome thermos flask; Miss Allie O'Neill, the prize for best costume: a valuable mirror; Mr Sampson, a clown, divided the men's prize with Miss Anderson: a safety razor to Mr Sampson and a powder box to Miss Anderson. The judges: Mrs Hyles, Mrs Elliott, and Miss O'Connor had considerable trouble in deciding the ladies' prize as the costumes were all excellent and showed great taste and skill. There were Chocolate, Monte Carlo, and Confetti waltzes (great money gatherers) and the Squire of Hovells Creek (Mr Con O'Connor) was entertained with musical honours.

This is the last dance to be held at this hall, as it is being turned into a shearers' accommodation, much to the regret of the Hovell's Creek dancers.

The Hall's life as shearers' accommodation appears to have been temporary, as the hall was used again for school concerts in the 1930s, and other functions in the 1940s.

A farewell party was held at Con's Shed in 1941 for the local boys departing for service in WWII; and a welcome home to 'the boys' returning from service in 1945 although, sadly, Con was not there for this event as he died in 1943. Con's Shed was blown down by a willy-willy in 1946.

Other social events

Occasionally there would be a travelling picture show at the hall at Reids Flat, which Hovells Creek residents may have attended.

Laurie Dunn recalls the 'silent films' called 'movies' – in black and white. She writes, 'I probably only saw a couple of these, but once the 'talkies' came in, I was a great fan. By the time I was a teenager, going to the pictures was a tremendous treat. When I was at school in Cowra, a night-time show was very desirable, but a matinee on a Saturday afternoon was almost as good'.

Travelling circuses came to Boorowa several times a year. No doubt this was an exciting outing for Hovells Creek residents. In April 1957, a circus came to Frogmore, but with only three men, two horses, and one dog, it was a little disappointing.

A New Year's Eve party was held every year the Smiths'. Card parties – playing Euchre and 500 – were organised at Lindsay Berry's at *Kalaraville*.

CHAPTER 8 – HOME LIFE

Shopping, Self-Sufficiency, Washing, Cooking, Radio/TV

SHOPPING

In the early days of settlement staple supplies such as tea, sugar, flour, and salt would have been purchased in bulk and sent out from 'town' with the passenger coach, or on the wool dray on its return journey after delivering a load of wool to the railhead at Cowra.

In about 1870, Mrs Mary Cunningham set up her general store on Lot 5 at Hovells Creek, on the east side of the creek from present day *Willow Glen*. Edward Kerr assisted Mrs Cunningham in the operation of this store. Household necessities as well as clothing, bullets, fencing materials, and other farm supplies were available. The store closed in 1884.

In the late 1800s and early 1900s many housewives would have ordered goods by mail order catalogues from department stores in Sydney, such as Feldheim, Gotthelf & Co.⁶⁷ general importers and merchants who commenced business in York Street, Sydney in the 1860s. The catalogues advertised a comprehensive range of goods: clothing, furniture, lamps, china, glassware, clocks, sporting goods, pianos, firearms, patent medicines, and 'fancy goods of every description'. Grace Bros., established in Sydney in 1885,⁶⁸ was another provider of mail order items to rural residents.

Once the telephone was connected in the 1910s housewives could telephone an order to Bushby's at Boorowa (owned and operated by Alec Bushby and his sons from 1920 until the 1970s) and orders were sent out with the mail truck. This was the precursor of placing an order online in the twenty-first century and having it delivered to your door.

Clothing was purchased in Cowra at Reid Smith's, Weston's or Fossey's. Most women were accomplished seamstresses and made their own and their children's clothing, often from cut down adult garments; turned frayed collars on shirts; darned holes in socks; cut worn sheets down the middle and stitched the sides together – all to make items last as long as possible.

Once Hovells Creek residents began to drive cars, many families went shopping once a week or once a month, driving to Boorowa to shop at Bushby's, Learmont's (the newsagent), and at Needham's (where Tradelink is now situated), or into Cowra.

SELF SUFFICIENCY

Everyone had a well-established vegetable garden. Crops consisted of turnips, carrots, potatoes, cauliflower, cabbages, corn, and tomatoes.

Fruit trees were abundant: apricot, peach, apple, pear, plum, fig, and lemon. Jams, chutneys, and pickles were made. Fruits and vegetables were bottled in Fowler's Vacola jars. Recipes were handed down from generation to generation.

⁶⁷Australian Town and Country Journal; Sat 13 Dec 1890, p42, Messrs Feldheim, Gottleib & Co. new premises

⁶⁸ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grace_Bros.

The family cow or two provided fresh milk and cream, from which butter was made. The children in the district grew up taking turns to milk the cow before and after school. Phyllis McGann remembers, 'There were eight of us and we'd take it in turns to use the churn to make butter'.

Perishable items were kept in a cool safe, aptly named a 'Coolgardie safe'. Invented in the 1890s by Patrick McCormick in Coolgardie, Western Australia, it quickly became a household necessity for the next sixty years. This precursor of the modern-day fridge was a wooden or metal cabinet with hessian sides. A water tray at the top dripped onto the hessian, and when placed in a breezeway applied the principle of evaporative cooling to the contents.

Meat, mostly mutton, was killed on the property and hung in the meat safe awaiting consumption. Most properties employed one or two farm hands who killed and butchered the sheep.

A sheep or two was required to feed the residents on a property – families were large with more children than is the 'norm' today. The farmhands and their families living on the property also had to be fed. Surplus cuts were placed in a brine solution to preserve them – providing 'corned beef' or 'pumped mutton' for family dinners. This method of curing meats by immersion in a salty solution has been used since ancient times.



Peter Byrnes, a farmhand on Jerringomar in the 1920s-30s, lived with his wife and eight children in this modest threeroom cottage on the banks of Hovells Creek.

Chickens, ducks, geese, and turkeys were kept for a ready supply of eggs and meat. Surplus eggs were put in kerosene tins of waterglass (sodium silicate) to preserve them for cooking during the times the hens were moulting and not laying.⁶⁹

One of Laurie Dunn's daily tasks was to round up the turkeys and pen them for the night, safe from fox predators. She writes in her memoirs, 'They would roam out to the foothills, and I had to go for them on my horse and bring them home with my stockwhip'.

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⁶⁹ https://www.1900s.org.uk/1940s50s-preserving-eggs.htm

In the first half of the 1900s the ice man delivered blocks of ice to properties, which were left in mailboxes by the road. Ken Chudleigh recalls, 'My sister and I would get the big slabs of ice. They were about four feet long, fifteen inches wide, six inches deep, and were as heavy as lead. We'd put wheat bags over the ice, and wheel them home in the wheelbarrow'.

Rabbits were plentiful and provided another source of protein. Traps were set daily. The catch was used to feed the working dogs; some were on the family dinner menu – considered by more affluent families as 'poor man's food'; and many thousands were sold.

The roles of men and women were very 'traditional'. Men worked at outdoor pursuits; the women were in charge of all 'things household'. Children had their own chores – collecting eggs, bringing the cow in for milking, picking vegetables or fruit, washing the dishes, hanging out the clothes, setting rabbit traps – depending on their age and ability. Everyone worked to ensure the farm and household ran smoothly.

WASH DAY

In the nineteenth century the washing of clothing was done with a scrubbing board and a washtub. Water did not come out of a tap but was carted by the bucketload pumped from a well or the creek.

In the late 1800s and until the mid-1900s washing machines were 'coppers' with a space underneath to light a fire with woodchips to heat the water. A hand operated wringer squeezed excess water out of the clothes, then they were rinsed in clean water, wrung out again and hung on a line. Reckitt's Blue (synthetic ultramarine and baking soda) was used to 'whiten and brighten' clothes. This product was introduced in the mid-1800s.

Once electricity came to Hovells Creek, semi-automatic washing machines, such as the twin tub became popular, and today fully automatic, water saving devices are in every household.

Some items of clothing were immersed in a liquid starch solution before being hung out to dry. Then there was the additional task of ironing. This involved heating a heavy flat iron on the stove top. Housewives became very skilled at not scorching the clothes! Electric irons revolutionised this task.

The Hovells Creek ladies of yesteryear made their own washing soap from animal fat and lye. Washing soaps were often grated from a solid soap bar into the washing tub or machine. Laurie Dunn remembers her mother making their soap out of necessity, as pre-packaged soaps were not readily available.

Family baths in the mid-late nineteenth century were taken in a tin tub, probably in front of the fire in winter. In the 1920s-30s the Dunn family pumped water from a well near the creek, which was heated on the cooktop and tipped into the bath. Separate bathrooms were added in the early twentieth century, but the outside 'dunny' or 'dub' was common even in the late twentieth century. An instant hot water chip heater in the bathroom was introduced in the 1940s-50s.

Household water supplies were revolutionised with the installation of corrugated iron tanks to collect rainwater from roof runoff, and pipes to carry water directly into kitchens and bathrooms at the turn of a tap. Many rusted corrugated tanks have been replaced with concrete or, more recently, heavy duty plastic tanks.

COOKING

Meals were cooked in ovens fuelled by wood. The Metters 'Kooka' stove was launched in 1917, and the AGA in the 1930s. The AGA also heated water in a tank for kitchen or bathroom use.

The AGA stove at *Jerringomar* was installed by Elijah Wright in 1948. It was fuelled by chunks of 'coke' – not the drink or the drug! A similar stove was in the *Guyesne* kitchen.

At Gilbert Dunn's home at north *Jerringomar* the large fuel stove in the kitchen was allowed to go out after the mid-day dinner had been cooked. Then the kerosene fuelled primus was used for afternoon tea or for an evening meal.

The AGA stove at Jerringomar/Kooringle



WASTE DISPOSAL

Rubbish disposal has always been an issue, though more so since the introduction of plastics in the 1950s, and an excess of packaging in supermarket products since the late 1900s.

Kitchen scraps were fed to the chickens or the working dogs or went into the compost pit. Every home had an incinerator for burning whatever would burn. Usually, a pit was dug somewhere on the farm to bury 'stuff'. Useless machinery was left in the paddock. Empty bottles were often 'disposed' of down the outside dunny!

In 2018 Hilltops Council provided a fenced off rubbish collection and recycle facility on Frogmore Road where local rates-paying residents can dispose of household waste. Access is via a key issued to rate payers to prevent passers-by from filling up the bins, although many travellers prefer the roadside verges to dispose of their waste, creating an ongoing clean-up job for property owners.



FURNISHING A HOME

Cabinetmakers and furniture stores made and sold household furniture such as tables and chairs, dressers, beds, wardrobes and so on. These were available in mail order catalogues. Some residents were enterprising and created furniture out of kerosene cases, and pine butter boxes which made excellent shelves and cupboards. Mrs Gilbert Dunn added legs and curtains to the front of these 'cupboards'.

Mrs Dunn also made all the curtains for the windows of new home at north *Jerringomar* on her treadle sewing machine. She wall-papered the rooms in the house – each length of paper had to be pasted by hand.

RADIO/TELEVISION

The wireless radio was introduced to Australia in 1905, just ten years after its invention. No doubt it took longer to reach rural communities.

Laurie Dunn remembers her Sydney cousins, the Corlette boys, on a visit to *Jerringomar* in the 1930s, piecing together crystal sets with 'a lot of wires and valves and batteries and lots of this and that, and climbing the tall gum tree by the tennis court to rig up an aerial with a long piece of wire'. Then the boys were able to listen to words and sounds coming in on the airwaves 'from somewhere a long way away'.

When Australia played test cricket against England, Hovells Creek families were invited (possibly in 1934 or 1938) to Wallace Hyles' residence at Lawling Vale to listen to 'short wave' broadcast on his new modern wireless. Laurie remembers, 'It was mostly static, but everyone expressed great wonder at the new miracle of modern science'.

By the 1940s a radio had become a household necessity. These were powered by a large cumbersome battery that had to be recharged fortnightly on a battery charger. The quality of wireless broadcast improved when electricity came to Hovells Creek in the 1950s.

Television came to Hovells Creek in the late 1950s which was not much later than the introduction in the cities (1956) and of course after mains electricity came to the valley.

. . .

This is a snapshot of homelife for many families at Hovells Creek from early settlement for the next 170 years, with developmental 'progress' impacting on shopping for supplies, cooking, and other daily life. Landholders' circumstances varied, from families who struggled financially from day to day to others who could afford a more affluent lifestyle.

During the Great Depression (1929-1933), the situation was dire for many. Men tramped the roads on foot or on bicycles seeking work or a bit of food from generous housewives. The Wyangala Dam project from 1929-1936 employed many itinerant workers, but stories of others seeking employment were common from Hovells Creek residents who remembered that time.

Laurie Dunn recalls that her parents never refused assistance for these men with a supply of tea and sugar, flour to make damper, a bit of jam, perhaps a chunk of salted meat; sometimes in exchange for chopping and stacking firewood or fixing a fence. A 'sign' was left on a gatepost or next to an entrance gate by these men – such as a cairn of stones or sticks forming an arrow – indicting to those following where a request for food would not be refused.

CHAPTER 9 – FARMING PRACTICES

Farm Tools and Machinery, Land Management, Farm Production

European settlement in the Hovells Creek valley in the 1830s, '40s and '50s was not for the faint-hearted. The first tasks faced by new settlers would have been to cut and split timber to erect a dwelling and gather rocks or make clay bricks for a fireplace; the next would be to clear and fence the land.

Access to fresh water supplies was crucial to settlement. There were many ground-water springs and the creek, although seasonal, had pools of water much of the year (p23).

The Crown Lands Acts 1861 and 1884⁷⁰ influenced new settler occupancy and land use in the Hovells Creek valley (*Chapter 2*). The 1861 Acts required bone fide residency and land clearing for farming purposes. Most of the productive, more fertile floodplains adjacent to Hovells Creek were purchased under the 1861 Acts. The 1884 Act allowed for conditional leasehold of adjoining land. The requirements were five years residency and the erection of boundary fences. At this time Hovells Creek landholders expanded their farming activity into the upper slopes and hill country.

An article published in the Sydney Morning Herald on 15 August 1859 by their 'Special Goldfields Reporter' describes agricultural production at Hovells Creek during the early settlement period prior to the Crown Land Acts of 1861:

The Sydney Morning Herald; 15 August 1859, p3

At Hobble's* Creek, there is a fair sprinkling of small proprietors, and rude bush homesteads, each with their patch of cultivation may be found on all the intermediate watercourses from Hobble's* Creek to the banks of the Lachlan. The agricultural population within thirty miles of Burrowa are said to number about 3000, chiefly settled to the eastward. The crop of wheat produced in the same district is averaged by the miller who grinds the greater part of it at 30,000 bushels, or about ten bushels per head. This, with potatoes, a little pork, and a few tons of hay, constitutes the entire agricultural production of the district.

*Hovells

An Australian harvesting machine that reaped and threshed grain, developed by John Ridley in 1843, may have been used to harvest these 30,000 bushels of wheat [one bushel = 60]. Ridley's grain crop stripper was widely available by the 1850s. The price of wheat at this time was 65 6d per bushel, and flour £11-£12 per ton.

The introduction of Australian agricultural innovations in the next 150 years changed farming methods dramatically. A gradual shift from manual labour and the reliance on horses and bullocks for clearing, ploughing, and planting to mechanical systems and machinery increased production and stocking numbers, and therefore profitability.

⁷⁰ Conditional Purchase of Crown Land Guide | NSW State Archives

⁷¹ https://australianfoodtimeline.com.au/1843-ridley-stripper-harvester/

BULLOCKS AND HORSES

Bullock teams were used extensively during the 1800s and even until the mid-1900s for on farm work, such as clearing the land, hauling timber, scooping out dams for water supplies, taking loads of wool to market and returning with fencing and other materials.

They were favoured over horses for heavy duty work as they 'panicked less' – the bullocks just went about their work calmly without a fuss through boggy or rocky patches.

John James O'Connor (1869-1940), of Yeronga, [the son of John O'Connor (1836-1912) of Kiaora] specialised in training bullock teams in the Hovells Creek district.

Charlie Chown explains how to train bullocks: 'First you put a yoke on them and walk two together around in the yards for a few days. Then put a rope around one of them and call him by name, to come to you. If you want him to go the other way you get beside him and tell him to "push off" and he'll go the other way. And once they learn, you say to them, "Come here, Spot" and they'll come to you. Once you've trained them you could get them to move an inch at a time, just tell them to "be off" and "whoa" and they'd stop straight away. Very intelligent stock, cattle are, so long as you treat them right'.



A bullock team at Hovells Creek

Note the horse and buggy on the right,
the heavily wooded hills, open grasses, and ringbarked trees

John also bred and trained horses which were then sent by sea to the Indian Army. An Arab sire called Steel Arrow was used for breeding the Indian Army stock.



John O'Connor's bullock team and dray was the first across the newly built bridge at Cowra in 1912.

John O'Connor is on the far left of the photograph.



James Howarth and his nephew Alfred Chown , both of Reids Flat, carting wool from Dryburgh by bullock team, mid 1930s. (photo courtesy of C Chown)

Residents of Hovells Creek in the past one hundred years recall the use of horses in daily life. Everyone rode horses: children rode their ponies to school; men used horses for stock work; Gilbert Dunn at *Jerringomar* and Ambrose (AB) Clements at *Yeronga* dressed in waistcoat and tie when out mustering, regardless of the weather. Laurie Dunn recalls riding twelve miles to Wyangala Dam with her mother and her sister during the late 1920s and early 1930s to watch the construction of the dam wall.

Laurie Dunn remembers a travelling horse breaker, Kell B Jeffries, who turned up every year at *Jerringomar* from 1928 until 'he was too old and incapable of anything'. He arrived in a sulky with one horse in the shafts and another one or two tied on behind and accompanied by his 'niece'. Laurie remembers his gentle handling of the horses, his kindness and authority. She says, 'He was a fey man, uncannily successful in handling the unruliest horse'.

Glanville Chudleigh used a draught horse to plough the potato paddock and a team of six horses to pull a four-furrow plough. A neighbour, Mr Burton, used his two draught horses to plough his paddocks, going 'round and round for about three months'. Today a 30ft scarifier pulled by a 300hp (horsepower) tractor can plough 20 acres in an hour.

Max Boulding constructed dams 'out in the hills' at Graham with Mr Edgerton's horse teams in the 1940s. A scoop was attached to a harness, filled with soil, then the horse team would pull the bucket out. It was slow and laborious work, but the horse teams were invaluable.

Ken Chudleigh's family recognised the value of a horse. Ken recalls, as a child, coming home late from a trip to town, 'We'd all go to sleep, and the horse knew where to stop – you'd wake up at the gate, and we'd open it. Now they talk about self-driving cars – we had a self-driving horse!'

John McGann⁷² worked at Gorhams' treating fly blown sheep from horseback, riding around with a bottle of fly oil and hand shears. He says, 'That's pretty much all we did one summer'.

Jim Clements remembers going to work on a horse: 'First you had to catch your horse. You had to run the horses into the horse yard, and they were smarter than you and they knew exactly what you wanted, so you'd be knocked-up by then, and you still had to go to work!'

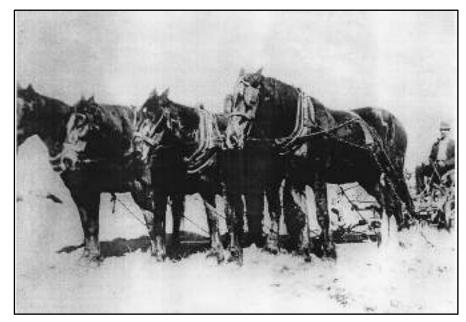
Where there are horses a farrier is needed. John Hudson (1861-1948) was well known in the district for his farrier skills and had a blacksmith's forge at *Willow Park*. John passed his skill on to his son George and his grandson, Vince. Wayne says his father Vince, 'Taught me how to shoe a horse when I was nine or ten. There were always heaps of horse-shoes and nails lying around near there'.

Archie Dunn shod all the horses on *Jerringomar*, even the workmen's riding horses. He was a top-class farrier. Laurie never tired of going to watch her uncle at his forge near the old *Jerringomar* homestead and was allowed to work the bellows. She recalls in her memoirs, 'He wore a leather apron for shoeing and his hat, and he always smoked a pipe when he was working'.

The introduction of motorbikes and tractors in the 1960s revolutionised farm and stock work, saving time, labour costs, and effort. By the 1960s the horse had all but disappeared from heavy farm work, although they were still used for mustering sheep and cattle by some farmers.

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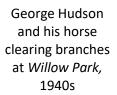
⁷² John McGann, son of Phyllis Hudson McGann, grew up at Willow Park, (p188)



John (Jack) Hudson on a horse drawn plough at Willow Park, 1920s (note the pipe!)



Fred Gay ploughing with a horse team, 1930s





TRACTORS AND MOTORBIKES

You have to learn to ride a bike like a horse, nice and steady.

You just put petrol in it and away you go.

The development of light weight tractors in Australia from the early 1900s gradually replaced horse teams and cumbersome heavy weight steam powered traction engines. They were fuelled by liquid kerosene, later diesel fuel, and replaced grass fed horses and timber powered steam engines.

Labour shortages on farms, especially during and after World War One, and the need to boost food production, led to the introduction of the Case diesel in 1911; the International IH in 1915; the Fordson in 1917; and the Ferguson with integrated hydraulics in the 1930s. These tractor developments and especially the 'little grey Fergie' TE20 and its subsequent big brother, the Massey Ferguson 65 with a more powerful diesel engine, revolutionised agricultural cultivation practices.

These developments led to a shift in land use in the Hovells Creek valley from cultivation for grain production (which moved to the central west plains) to predominantly grazing with supplementary fodder crop production.

By the late 1940s, post WWII, most Hovells Creek farmers had their own tractor or shared with a neighbour. Initially they were used more for ripping rabbit burrows than for ploughing and planting. The TE20 was used with a single tyne – what was called a sub-soiler.

Vince Hudson, of *Spring Creek*, purchased a Fergie TE20 in 1946 from Lachlan Steel in Cowra, who were the Massey Ferguson dealers. The tractor, a two-furrow plough, a back scoop, and a grader blade cost a total of £450.

Vince found the TE20 tended to rear up at the front. He bought a set of wheel weights and bolted them to the inside of the wheels, but then the steering was too heavy. [There is no further information on how Vince solved the problem].

Stories of broken down tractors; tractors being driven into the creek; tractors getting bogged in the paddock after heavy rains and having to be pulled out by a neighbour's bigger and stronger tractor abound. However, in most cases, the locals found them easier than horses. When Jim Clements was asked when he stopped using a horse for farm work, he promptly replied, 'As soon as I could afford a tractor!'

Two-wheel motorbikes came into regular use on farms for mustering in the 1960s. There are some landholders who still prefer a horse even in the 21st century.

The general consensus on quad bikes is that they can be useful on level ground, but much of the valley is hilly and quad bikes are dangerous in such terrain. In 2021 the National Farmers' Federation is supporting federal government moves to introduce a controversial law for rollover bars to be fitted to quad bikes after twenty-one deaths nationwide in 2020. New regulations state that from October 2021 all quad bikes must be fitted with rollover protection.

Australia and Israel are the only two countries in the world to mandate rollover bars on quad bikes.⁷³

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⁷³ https://www.abc.net.au/landline/farm-safety:-new-quad-bike-laws/13578956

CLEARING

Early settlers spent considerable time and effort in the second half of the nineteenth century ringbarking and clearing timber for grazing and cultivation land. Trees were cut down to be used for house building and constructing post and rail fences for stock yards. Branches were used for topping up brush fences – built of tree branches stacked on top of each other as wire was very expensive.

On Glanville Chudleigh's *Glenbrook*, and William O'Connor's former *Hillside*, purchased by the Chudleigh family in 1920 and renamed *Brooklyn*, most of the combined 3000 acres had been cleared by the late 1920s, with clearing of dead ringbarked trees continuing until the 1950s.

Many Hovells Creek residents recall ringbarking trees and clearing scrub. Joan Gay said they used goats to clear the scrubby areas with great success. Vince Hudson engaged a Mr Lenny Porter to use nitro-glycerine to blow up trees as this method was quicker than ringbarking. The wood was cut up and shared around. Most families relied on wood fuelled stoves for cooking and fireplaces for heating, so there was always a strong demand for cut up wood.



Charlie Chown's team cutting wood in the 1980s

Charlie Chown's father, Alfred, operated a sawmill at Reids Flat for fifteen years from 1954 which cut Stringybark, Ironbark and Cypress pine (Callitris). Cypress was used extensively in house building as it is naturally resistant to termites. The Chowns trucked 2,500 Black Cypress pines a week to Godfreys, the timber mill in Goulburn.

The sawmill was operated by a huge Fowlers steam engine, weighing twenty-one tons. Charlie remembers, on one occasion when the pump broke down, bucketing 300 gallons of creek water up a 100m bank to cool the steam engine.

The Fowler 16161
Originally used
in 1925-27
to haul materials
from the Kingston
Railway Station in
Canberra to the
construction site
at the new
Parliament House.





The same Fowler was used by Alfred Chown in the 1950s at his Reids Flat Timber Mill logging timber from the Hovells Creek district.

The restored 16161 is now on display at Lanyon Homestead, near Canberra.



Some Hovells Creek residents believe that parts of the valley landscape have been over cleared, particularly on the hillsides.



A hillside on the Mount Darling range shows uncleared woodland on the right and cleared land in the centre.

William O'Connor's attitude was well ahead of the prevailing thinking of the time when he penned a letter to the Goulburn Evening Penny Post in 1908 about the wanton destruction of trees at Hovells Creek. An extract from his letter is included here:

The Goulburn Evening Penny Post; Tues 5 May 1908, p2

To the Editor

Sir,

Most people think they have only to plant a few trees and they will grow up in a very short time – something in the style of mushrooms. People have buried "Woodman, Spare that Tree". It is now "Woodman, Destroy that Tree". I don't think it is through ill nature altogether they are going at this destructive pace, but for the want of knowing better. There is a great deal of useless crooked timber on most holdings which it would be advisable to kill; but unfortunately, it is the good timber that is killed first, and some of the useless left. We are going to destruction in that direction as fast as we can go. It is a great pity Government cannot step in and put a stop to this wholesale destruction of valuable timber, even on private land.

WILLIAM O'CONNOR

"Hillside" Hovell's Creek

2nd May, 1908

Glanville Chudleigh was another early landholder whose personal philosophy did not support wholesale land clearing. While *Glenbrook* and *Brooklyn* were, in the 1920-1950s, cleared for cultivation, 'quite a few trees were left standing, and it is now a very picturesque property'. (The Chudleigh Grapevine, p461)

By the later years of the twentieth century, landholders realised the benefits of trees and vegetation in providing protection from weather extremes for stock; stabilisation of the soil; protection of creek banks from being washed away; habitat for birds and wildlife; as well as the aesthetic appeal of a well treed and vegetated landscape.

FENCING

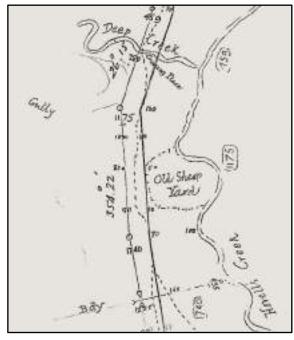
The 1871 VB Riley survey notebooks record some of the earliest fences in the Hovells Creek valley as 'brush fences' – cleared branches gathered in a line to form a stock barrier.

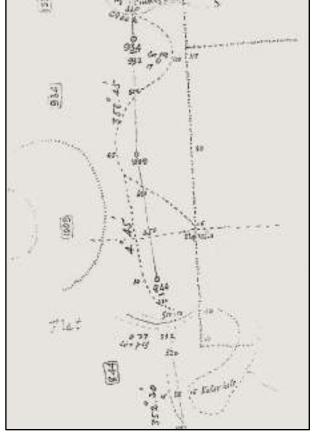
Brush fencing was gradually replaced by either post and rail or wire fencing. Some appears to have still been in use around 1900, as Glanville Chudleigh on *Brooklyn* spent considerable time retrieving or returning wandering stock that pushed its way through in both directions (*The Chudleigh Grapevine*, *p461*). Little evidence remains of post and rail fences in the Hovells Creek valley.

VB Riley maps show five fenced paddocks extending 1.5km along the east side of the road on the valley flats – land that is now part of *Willow Glen*.

Just south of the Reids Flat road corner Riley marked a fenced sheep yard.

(VB Riley map 27)





VB Riley marked a slip rail in a fence – a rail in a fence that can be slipped out to make an opening, located on present day Willow Glen.

(VB Riley map 32)

Steel wire for livestock fencing was developed on the American prairies where timber for fencing was scarce. Initially this consisted of a single strand, low tensile heavy gauge wire, which could be broken through quite easily by livestock. A similar product was imported into Australia from Scotland in 1840, but it was expensive. The first evidence of its use at Hovells Creek is in 1879 on Lot 114, on a Parish of Kenyu portion map: one boundary shows a fence 2206 chains (443m) valued at £30.

Barbed wire was patented in the United States in 1867 by Lucien Smith and further improved by Joseph Glidden in 1874. Much of this type of heavy gauge barbed wire remains on fences in the valley but is gradually being replaced by lighter gauge, stronger, high tensile barbed wire.

Subdivisional fencing was facilitated by the development of steel droppers (star pickets) by Cyclone and other Australian companies from around 1905. These include holes for running plain wire or fixing netting and a top slot for fixing a barbed wire. Most strainer posts were of timber cut from local trees until the 1980s, when they were gradually replaced by tubular steel or recycled rail track posts.

Wire netting fencing was developed by Charles Barnard, a British ironmonger in 1844. He based his design on cloth weaving machines.⁷⁴ The first wire mill in Australia was opened by John Lysaght on the banks of the Parramatta River in 1884. The Lysaght 'Waratah' company expanded rapidly and supplied wire to erect the well-known 2000 mile long rabbit proof fence built in Western Australia from 1901-07.⁷⁵

When Archie and Gilbert Dunn purchased *Jerringomar* in 1924, the 5598 acre property had a boundary fence and one fence through the middle, as well as a smaller fenced yard for the horses. In the next two to three years they ringbarked 2500 acres and erected 33 miles of wire netting fencing.

This type of fencing material was the most effective in excluding rabbits and containing sheep and was used extensively in the first half of the 1900s.

Cyclone 'ring lock' fencing became available from 1934 onwards in easy to erect configurations and is widely used to this day for subdivisional fencing to contain sheep and cattle.

Prefabricated steel gates came onto the market in the 1930s, replacing wooden gates and slip rails and are in common use on properties at Hovells Creek.

Solar powered fencing is being used more widely either as a temporary exclusion fence, along creek banks, or as a replacement for picket and wire fences.

Fence maintenance is an ongoing task for property owners. Damage from fallen trees and branches; flood damage; stock pushing their way through a weak spot, often caused by kangaroos; and general wear and tear create a never-ending repair job.

⁷⁴ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chicken wire

⁷⁵ https://www.waratahfencing.com.au/about-us



Wooden fence posts



Wire netting used for rabbit control



Standard ringlock fence



Electric fence

CROPPING/ CULTIVATION

Early cropping activity was most likely concentrated on the more friable (easier to cultivate), and more fertile alluvial soils adjacent to the creek. Since the increased use of fertiliser and lime in the past 60-70 years, cropping areas have expanded to the less fertile lower hill slopes.

Australian agricultural innovations in the second half of the nineteenth century and early twentieth century enabled settlers to establish and harvest more crops.

- The stump jump plough invention by Robert Smith in South Australia in 1875 allowed crops to be grown without first removing stumps and rocks, thus saving time and money.
- Hugh McKay received international acclaim when he combined stripping (harvesting), winnowing, and bagging of wheat into a single stripper harvester machine in 1884.
- McKay's stripper-harvester was further developed into the predecessor of the current day self-propelled grain harvester by Headlie Taylor of Henty, NSW, in 1913.
- The spring tyne cultivator and seed placement drill was developed in 1916.

Available records suggest wheat was grown along the Hovells Creek valley from the mid-1800s. In 1859 the 'Goldfields Reporter' mentioned in this chapter refers to 30,000 bushels of wheat being ground by the miller in Boorowa from the surrounding district, including Hovells Creek.(p88)

In 1862 the Bathurst Free Press expressed dismay at the rising price of flour to £32 per ton which the reporter cannot understand as 'there are still considerable quantities of last year's wheat in the hands of the Hovells Creek farmers'. The article goes on to praise the arrival of cabbages from Hovells Creek which were 'greedily bought up and devoured by the green-stuff-famished people' of Bathurst who had apparently not seen cabbages for years. (Bathurst Free Press; 29 Oct 1862, p2)

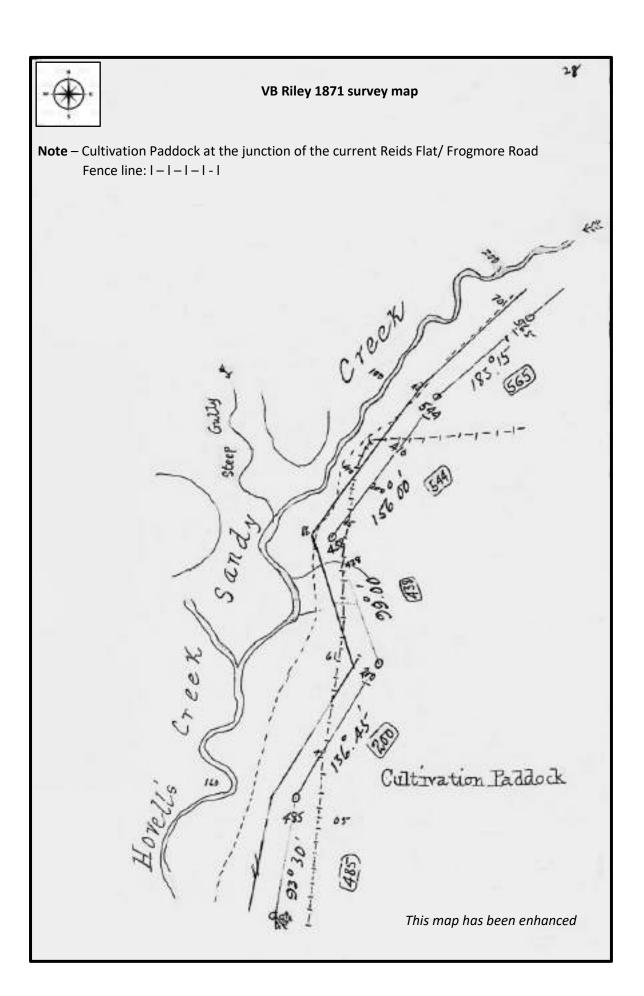
On the 17 July 1870, a fire in a wheat shed destroyed 500 bushels of wheat and sundry other property belonging to Mr John Hudson. The value of wheat then was 3s 3d per bushel (Goulburn Herald & Chronicle; 4 May 1870), a loss of approximately £82. Another article observes, 'Wheat sowing is nearly finished. What is overground looks very promising so far'. (The Goulburn Herald & Chronicle; 30 July 1870, p3)

VB Riley references cultivation paddocks in his 1871 survey notebooks.(p101) This 'cultivation paddock' is situated just north of the current Reids Flat turnoff from Frogmore Road, on present day Willow Glen.

A report of wheat rust at Hovells Creek in 1871 'proving very destructive and rendering many promising crops almost worthless' must have been difficult for the growers in the district. (The Sydney Mail and New South Wales Advertiser; 23 Dec 1871; p1350)

Production of wheat most likely gave way to other crops such as lucerne and oats for livestock fodder as the grain growing and cropping zone moved further west.

Old grain barns, which predate their more modern silo counterparts, remain on *Kooringle* and *Kiaora*.

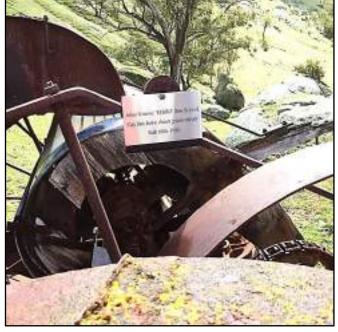


Early ploughs and cultivators were pulled by horses, and strippers pulled or pushed by bullock teams or horses. Small tractors replaced working animals from the early 1900s. Many of these farm implements used in the Hovells Creek valley can be found abandoned in paddocks or in local collections.

When Robert Neville died in 1934 his estate included farm machinery, indicating long term cultivation: 'Two old ploughs, one old grader, old harvester and cart and binder, poison cart, chaff cutter, thresher, mower and cultivator'. (One Patrick Too Many, 2008, p24)

A grain stripper used by John O'Connor at *Kiaora* has been kept as a significant example of a bygone era. It is now located at his great-grandson John O'Connor's *Hillside* property on Milburn Creek.





John O'Connor, 'KIAORA' Hovells Creek May Bros. horse drawn grain stripper Built 1886-1900



Seed drills manufactured and used on European and North American farms from the mid-1800s were imported into Australia in the early 1900s.

Seed drills were subsequently manufactured in Australia and first used to spread superphosphate fertiliser (seed was still spread by hand). Later it was able to spread both seed and fertiliser mixed together.

An abandoned seed drill on Kondon



The economics of seed drill use was promoted through research by the NSW Department of Agriculture (est.1890) and advisory services of the regional agricultural bureau.

The Australian drill was developed into 16-20 run implements pulled by teams of eight horses able to simultaneously cultivate and plant 16-20 acres per day, at a seeding rate of 90lbs per acre and fertiliser application at one 100 weight per acre. With the development of tractors, the size of the combine drill increased to 24 runs able to sow 40-50 acres per day, which substantially increased agricultural production in the Hovells Creek area.

In the 1900s, lucerne was grown on the creek flats along the banks of Hovells Creek at *Jerringomar*, *Kiaora*, *Willow Park*, *Willow Glen*, and *Geweroo*. The alluvial soils and shallow water table provide conditions suited to deep rooted lucerne. The *Kiaora* flats had the capacity to grow lucerne all year round making the property practically drought proof. One year, Wayne Hudson made five cuts of lucerne from un-irrigated creek flats at *Willow Park*. He sold the excess after ensuring his own hay shed was full. Most landholders grew just a few acres of oats and lucerne as supplementary feed for horses or a milk cow, as native grasses were insufficiently nutritious. Often it was not baled, but put into stooks or sheaves, or handled loose with pitchforks. In the past 20-30 years, oats, triticale, and grazing canola have been included in crop rotation programs.



An early baler in a paddock on Willow Glen.

The O'Connor family were noted for their quality lucerne production on *Kiaora*.

Some concern was expressed by interviewees that continuous cropping and cultivation of paddocks on the valley slopes of Hovells Creek have led to deterioration in the structure and fertility of the soils. The loss of organic matter has made the soils much more susceptible to sheet and gully erosion.

Cropping on the creek flats, which are not susceptible to runoff, are extremely productive as shown in a winter oats crop at *Kooringle* in 2015.



Oats crop growing







Oats crop baled

FERTILISERS

Farmers at Hovells Creek relied on natural animal fertilisers from cattle and sheep for over one hundred years. The application of additional chemical fertilisers did not begin in earnest until after the rabbit numbers had been substantially reduced through myxomatosis in the 1950s. The resultant increase in farm productivity – more grass, more wool, more beef – was a period of prosperity, and relief, for land holders.

The introduction of superphosphates in the 1920s transformed pasture production in southern Australia. Superphosphate, originally guano from the Pacific islands, is treated with sulphuric acid making the phosphate more water-soluble, thus enabling plant roots to take it up more readily. At the same time, the introduction of subterranean clover (from the Mediterranean area), which takes up nitrogen from the atmosphere, was introduced.

Edley Clements constructed an airstrip on *Geweroo*. He and Max Boulding spread 15-30 tons of superphosphate by air on their hills at *Benwerrin* and *Kooringle* for a few years in the late 1950s and the grass *'just jumped out of the ground'*. Jack Berry and Frank O'Connor were also spreading superphosphates on *Grasmere* and *Guvesne*. *Spring Creek* and *Kondon* have been aerial supered.

Other landholders argue sub-clover and superphosphates led to loss of native grasses and increased erosion. 'The super has killed off the natural grasses and, once the clover dies off, there's nothing left to hold the soil. You need ground cover to slow the water.'

Another interviewee agreed: 'During the 1970s, everyone was tipping superphosphate out of aeroplanes, and that changed the country a lot – it got rid of most of the red grass because it doesn't like super, and it made everything very clover dominant. If you've got no red grass and you get no rain, you've got no summer grass'.

Agri-ash was trialled at *Kooringle* in 2011 with successful results. Agri-Ash is a sterile phosphate and calcium rich by-product of town sewerage treatment processing, which is being used as a soil conditioner for agricultural purposes. *(photo)*

Other landholders are trialling the use of poultry manure.



LIVESTOCK - DAIRY AND BEEF CATTLE, SHEEP

William O'Connor (1836-1912) had grown up on a dairy and cattle farm in County Cork, Ireland, before arriving in Australia with his parents in 1852. He put this knowledge to good use when he bought land at Hovells Creek in 1856. He established a dairy herd, selling milk, cheeses, and beef to the copper miners at Frogmore in the late 1800s.

Lindsay Berry had a dairy at *Kalaraville*, and most families had at least one milk cow supplying milk, cream, and butter for household consumption.

Recorded history shows Hovells Creek was good country for grazing cattle and sheep, and for lamb production. Con O'Connor grazed cattle along the creek on *Kiaora*, at times up to 400-500 head. In general, the area is thought to be more suited to sheep than cattle. Wool and lamb production have been the mainstays of farming at Hovells Creek.

When the Dunn brothers bought *Jerringomar* wool and sheep prices were strong, but there was little benefit for them as the 5598 acres only ran 1200 sheep in the first year, and 2000 in the second.

During the Great Depression of the 1930s, prices dropped, and the Dunn brothers struggled to keep going. When WWII began, Australian wool was purchased by the British government for military uniforms at thirteen pence per pound, and from then on, *Jerringomar* made a profit. Wool from Hovells Creek appeared at the London Wool Market sales in early 1932.

The Mercury; Thu 21 Jan 1932, p3

WOOL MARKETS, LONDON SALES

At the London wool sales today 9,294 bales were offered, including 2,951 from New South Wales; 1372 from Queensland; 1439 from Victoria; 1202 from Western Australia; 800 from South Australia; and 1188 from New Zealand.

Sales: Greasy wools: New South Wales, Hovell's Creek 12d, average 113/4d

The 1871 VB Riley map (p97) shows 'old sheep yards' on what is now Willow Glen.

Sheep farming involved substantial infrastructure – woolsheds for shearing; sheep yards to contain sheep; races to manage the sheep; and plunge dips for treatment of footrot. Footrot, a contagious bacterial disease, was treated with weekly footbaths of zinc sulphate until the symptoms disappeared.

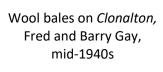
Old sheep dips can be found up and down the valley. Sheep were immersed in a 'bath' of a chemical compound to eliminate sheep scab and other ecto-parasites including ticks, lice, and blowfly. Sheep dip chemicals were first developed in the nineteenth century and commonly included arsenic, which was subsequently found to contaminate soil and water, as well as being toxic to humans. Arsenic-based sheep dips were removed from the market in June 1983, and the use of arsenic-based products for sheep and cattle was banned in January 1987.

In the first one hundred years of settlement, central shearing depots were shared by several properties, with sheep herded in from surrounding properties, and shearing teams accommodated in shearing quarters. Since the 1970s more properties have built their own shearing shed, with sheep yarded on their home turf. Shearing teams commute from shed to shed and live off-site in nearby towns.

The development of mechanical sheep shearing machinery and wool presses enabled more efficient baling for transport to regional rail terminals. By the 1900s machine shearing was the norm⁷⁶ enabling skilled shearers to clip wool closer to the skin yielding higher cuts per head. Until electricity came to Hovells Creek in the 1950s these units were powered by small diesel or kerosene generators. The shearing shed at *Grasmere* still uses a diesel generator. Blade shears were, and are, still used.

In 1895 Glanville Chudleigh bought 600 wethers for twenty-five cents a head. At that time, he ran one sheep per acre producing 2kg of wool per sheep. ⁷⁷ Today the dry sheep equivalent (DSE) is three per acre, each producing 6kg per head per annum.

The price of wool fluctuates according to market demand, seasonal variations, war demand (high peaks in WWII and the Korean War), and exchange rates. David Webster⁷⁸ comments, 'Years ago 30 bales of wool from 1000 sheep was a living area. Today, you need a lot more than that'.





Archie and Gilbert Dunn, at *Jerringomar*, were well known for their production of a top line of rams and wool production with a blood line from a Merino flock established by William Pitt Faithfull of Springfield,⁷⁹ Goulburn in 1838.

The Yass Tribune-Courier reported in 1933:

'No outside blood had been introduced into the stud for many years. The Jerringomar stud flock (reg No.533) is being carried on with a view to keeping this wonderful wool available. The sheep are bred on the same lines as the Springfield flock and no other blood has ever been introduced into it, so that they can truly be said to be of pure Springfield blood.

Messrs Dunn Bros. are proud of their stud and are pleased to show them at any time, and an inspection does not entail any obligation to buy; the sheep, which are of fine and medium wool, sell themselves.' (Yass Tribune-Courier; 8 June 1933, p4)

⁷⁶ https://www.sl.nsw.gov.au/stories/australian-agricultural-and-rural-life/sheep-shearing

⁷⁷ The Chudleigh Grapevine, 1995

⁷⁸ David Webster is a third generation landholder and sheep farmer at Reids Flat/Hovells Creek district (p190)

⁷⁹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William Faithful



A load of 96 wool bales, 1966 (courtesy of C Chown)



The first double-deck truck with a load of Clonalton calves, 1965 (C Chown)



A cattle truck at Kooringle, 50 years later, 2015 (K Hyde)

WATER

A key constraint to land use and settlement in rural Australia is access to a reliable water supply. In the Hovells Creek valley, fresh water for domestic use, livestock watering, fruit orchards, and homestead vegetable and flower gardens has been from Hovells Creek itself, from natural springs in the hills, from dams or ground tanks, and from shallow wells along the flood plain.

Current experience and historical records indicate Hovells Creek flows are dependent on rainfall in the broader catchment. These vary from floods lasting a few days to limited or no flows along much of the creek bed. Many of the natural springs in the valley are unreliable as a permanent water supply.

Early settlers dug shallow wells, six to ten metres in depth, along the alluvial floodplains of the valley, tapping into the water table flowing along the underlying rock base. These were originally lined with timber, but most now are lined with reinforced concrete.

Laurie Dunn recalls, in her memoirs, the well at north *Jerringomar* which was pumped by a kerosene and petrol engine. It was timber slabbed to the bottom. She says, *'The water was very clear but not very nice to drink. It was used for baths and the laundry'*.

Doug Dockery⁸⁰, in his twenty-five years at *Jerringomar* in the late twentieth century, found this timber lined, copper nailed well at north *Jerringomar* as well as the remnants of a windmill used to pump the water. He tried to clear it out a few times, but 'after each flood it filled again with debris'.

Shallow dams or ground tanks on secondary watercourses were constructed in the latter half of the 1800s using horse and bullock drawn scoops and were enlarged by tractors and bulldozers after the 1950s.

The iconic Australian wind pump was developed in 1876 by brothers George and John Griffiths in Toowoomba, Queensland, and subsequently became the renowned Southern Cross windmill of rural Australia.⁸¹ Several are still present in the Hovells Creek valley, although many have been replaced by fuel or solar powered pumps.

George Chudleigh put down bores and erected windmills to droughtproof *Glenbrook*. This worked well until the drought of 1957 when there was no wind. When electric pumps were added in the 1950s, the property was progressively subdivided, and stock water reticulated via polythene pipes and troughs. Modern rotary drill rigs have facilitated water production bores on several valley properties.



⁸⁰ Doug Dockery was at Jerringomar from 1977-2002, *p186*

⁸¹ https://www.southerncrosswindmills.com.au/our-history

More recent developments include the use of large steel, concrete or plastic water tanks; plastic 'polypipe' to reticulate water around farm; and steel or concrete troughs to provide water for livestock in otherwise 'dry' paddocks. The portability of troughs enables the subdivision of larger paddocks for grazing and livestock management.



A corrugated iron tank, a plastic tank, and a concrete water trough at Kooringle



CHAPTER 10 – NATIVE ANIMALS and BIRDS

Kangaroos, Possums, Echidnas, Koalas, Reptiles, Birds

KANGAROOS, WALLABIES, WALLAROOS

There are three main species common in Hovells Creek district – the Eastern Grey kangaroo, the Swamp Wallaby, and the Common Wallaroo – with the Eastern Grey by far the most numerous.

Entries in Thomas O'Shaughnessy's diaries in the 1880s and 1890s indicate he frequently shot 10-15 kangaroos or wallabies a week.

In the 1920s wallaby drives were held involving up to fifty people herding them into enclosures and killing them. The skins were tanned and stitched into rugs.

Laurie Dunn's experiences were different. She mentions the large numbers of kangaroos living and browsing in the paddocks during the mid-late 1920s and the 1930s. There were lots in the hills and in the scrub along the road into Cowra, which would bound out in front of their car. She recalls, 'They were much admired, and we never shot or molested them'.

Indications are that kangaroo and wallaby numbers from the early 1940s to the 1960s declined markedly. Comments made included, 'I didn't see a kangaroo until I was 18'; 'If we were out driving and saw a kangaroo in the paddock we'd stop and "ooh and aah""; 'You could walk in the hills all day and not see a kangaroo'; 'It was a novelty if you saw a kangaroo – you'd tell everyone at school about it'.

This can be attributed to the rabbit plague from the 1920s-1950s forcing kangaroos and other marsupials further west in search of feed. After the rabbit numbers were decimated by the release of myxomatosis in the 1950s, farmers began planting more crops and kangaroos moved back into the area, lured by a plentiful food supply.

Shooting kangaroos from the 1960s became a popular pastime again, with groups of farmhands roaming the hills at weekends. This kept the numbers down a little. The meat was fed to the working farm dogs.

The growing resistance in rabbits to myxomatosis during the next thirty years had only a small impact on the kangaroo population. After the first release of calicivirus in 1996 reduced the rabbit population a second time, kangaroo numbers exploded.

Jim Clements remarks, 'The kangaroos have taken over from the rabbits – just a bigger pest and they're harder on the fences!'

Kangaroo numbers now are out of control. They compete with domestic livestock for grasses and water, graze and trample crops, and damage fences. Kangaroos along roadsides have the potential to cause accidents and vehicle damage. Anyone driving at dusk or dawn knows to be vigilant for kangaroos leaping onto the road.



POSSUMS

Thomas O'Shaughnessy wrote in his diary that in June/July 1895 he set up to 100 'opossum snares' on an almost daily basis. While it is not clear exactly where he set his traps, there are suggestions it was south of Cowra and Darbys Falls.

In six weeks, Thomas caught and skinned 41 dozen (492) possums. He sent the skins by train to Sydney with Mr W Robertson to be consigned to McBurney, Wallis & Co Produce Brokers at Circular Quay, Sydney. His return from this sale was £7.14.3. The following month he caught and skinned 41 dozen and three possum skins which returned £5.11.6. A total of almost 1000 possum skins in two and a half months – and that from just one person's traps!



McBurney, Wallis and Co Woolgrowers Annual 1894, p44, states:

'Throughout last winter the demand for opossum skins was decidedly brisk and notwithstanding the large quantities placed upon the market each week prices were well maintained. We fear the market this winter will not be as profitable to the procurer as that of last winter, but still we expect to receive a large quantity, which we believe will be placed at remunerative prices.'

1080 was widely used for rabbit control before the 1950s and it is widely believed many possums picked up these baits which further reduced their numbers. Others claim 1080 was put onto carrots and possums do not eat carrots. Today possums are rarely seen, though can occasionally be heard scrambling across roof tops, or in ceiling spaces.

Possums have been protected since the 1974 National Parks and Wildlife Act. It is illegal to kill or catch and release them without a licence.

Kevin Tarrant comments, 'Some blokes used to shoot them and take them to Sydney, but the police and rangers got onto them a fair bit. They were dobbed in'.

David Webster remembers lots of possums in the 1950s, but their numbers declined in the 1960s-70s. His family had a number of possum skin rugs. On one occasion he trapped a possum and took it out to Wyangala, but firmly believes it found its way back to his house!

Possums eat mistletoe.⁸² The impact of fewer possums, whether because of 1080 or other reasons, has seen a marked increase in the amount of mistletoe in trees at Hovells Creek.

ECHIDNAS

Sadly, these quirky little creatures were killed in the early part of the twentieth century because they dug under fences and let the rabbits in. By the 1950s there were very few to be seen. These days, echidnas are quite common.

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⁸² https://www.anbg.gov.au/mistletoe/

WOMBATS

Wombats have not been resident at Hovells Creek in large numbers in the past, according to most long-term residents, and second and third generation locals.

In the past ten years, a few wombats have been seen and a number of burrows have been noted: near the Jerringomar Bridge; at the Reids Flat turnoff; at Forest Creek; and at *Riversteen*. A couple of dead ones have been seen at the sides of Frogmore Road.

David Webster recently found one sleeping in one of the dogs' kennels. He comments, 'Lazy thing; couldn't even dig its own hole!'

KOALAS

There have only been one or two reports of koala sightings in the Hovells Creek district in the past one hundred years. Phyllis McGann recalled wandering in the hills and along the creek as a child and seeing 'plenty of koalas'.

A tree below the spring-fed dam on *Willow Park* was always known as the 'koala tree', although no one has ever reported seeing a koala in this tree.

Other sightings mentioned have been around Rugby, Rye Park and Frogmore and include a dead one after a large bushfire in the mid-1940s, and scratch marks on trees, possibly caused by a koala.

The consensus is the valley is it not currently a koala habitat, though there may have been some in the past.

REPTILES – goannas and snakes

Laurie Dunn remembers her childhood on *Jerringomar* when there were lots of snakes, lizards, and goannas about, especially near water. On one occasion a big goanna was crawling up the inside wall of her bedroom. Her father, Gilbert Dunn, came with a shotgun and 'that was the end of that fellow'.

Other residents recall seeing goannas in the 1930s and '40s, but sightings are rare today.

Snakes, both eastern brown and red bellied black are common.

WATER RATS, PLATYPUS, TURTLES

Comments were made that there used to be more water rats, but they are rarely seen today.

There are reported sighting of platypus in the Lachlan River, but Hovells Creek does not have a regular water flow, so is not suited to platypus habitat.

Eastern long-necked turtles are common in large dams and other waterways. They lay their eggs in burrows on the banks. They can often be seen with their little snouts poking out of the water, or during mating season crossing the roads.



An eastern long necked turtle at Kooringle

BIRDS

There were mopokes which called frequently to each other, and on many nights, we listened to the curlews with their plaintive, haunting call.

We were often awakened by the laughing of the jackasses in the tall gumtrees along the creek. Early morning magpies, wrens, peewees and silver eyes, lovely warbling thrush, galahs screeching loudly amongst themselves were just some of the bird calls we were used to.

There were myriads of birds in those days, just everywhere, and so many kookaburras along Hovells Creek which was just by the house.

Laurie Dunn's memories of bird life at Jerringomar in the 1920s

White cockatoos, galahs and corella numbers have increased since more wide-spread cropping was introduced in the 1950s. These birds, regarded by some as 'pests' seem to know exactly when a crop has been planted and communicate to their friends where the good tucker can be found, as they arrive in their hundreds and gather on the ground pecking away for hours.

The Cowra Woodland Bird Program⁸³ attributes one hundred years of habitat destruction and woodland clearing to the decline in native bird species. A comprehensive report of bird surveys in the broader Cowra region (including two sites at Hovells Creek/Wyangala) by CWBP in summary says: 'Evidence from this study suggests that large-scale habitat restoration and revegetation efforts hold the key to improving the conservation stocks of declining woodland birds'. Quarterly CWBP bird surveys are held at sites near Hovells Creek; locals are welcome to attend.

In 2015 Damon Oliver, a bird specialist from the Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH), conducted a bird count on ten HCLG member properties. He spotted the following:

Threatened	Black-chinned Honeyeaters, Brown Treecreepers; Diamond Firetails, Flame
Species	Robins, Grey-Crowned Babblers, Hooded Robins, Scarlet Robin, Speckled
	Warbler, Superb Parrot, Varied Sittella.
Declining	Crested Shrike-tit, Double-barred Finch, Dusky Woodswallow, Eastern
and Rare	Yellow Robin, Jacky Winter, Peaceful Dove, Red-capped Robin, Restless
Species	Flycatcher, Southern Whiteface, White-browed Babbler, Yellow-tufted
	Honeyeater

Hovells Creek Landcare Group are working tirelessly on revegetation projects to restore habitat for native birds, with a focus on the iconic Superb Parrot.

Chapter 14 discusses HCLG projects for habitat.

Superb Parrot



⁸³ https://www.birdlife.org.au/projects/cowra-woodland-birds-program

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Concerned about declining numbers, Ken Chudleigh and Kevin Tarrant acquired 100-200 Diamond Firetail, Double-barred, Redbrowed, and other native finches and bred them in cages. Eventually these were released into the Hovells Creek district and are now sighted more frequently in gardens.

A Diamond Firetail finch

A general comment made by many residents is there are far more birds now than there used to be. Tree lot plantings with both large trees and shrubs have provided an inviting habitat and nesting sites for woodland birds; paddock tree plantings provide connectivity across open landscapes for small birds; and nesting hollows in standing trees (that used to be felled) for some species have all enabled bird populations to thrive.





Red-rumped parrot eggs in a hollow fence post at *Kooringle*; and a young one when hatched, showing the importance of hollows as nesting sites

In April 2007 a Tawny Frogmouth was spotted at *Kooringle* attracted by the multitude of Bogong Moths on their biannual migration to the Australian Alps. A rare sighting.

[The photo taken at the time has been lost, so a file photo is used here]





Pelicans are regular visitors to the large dam at *Kooringle*A black swan is a rarer sight



CHAPTER 11 – INTRODUCED PEST SPECIES

Rabbits, Foxes, Feral Cats, Feral Pigs

RABBITS IN AUSTRALIA

Domesticated European rabbits arrived in Australia with the First Fleet as a companion pet and as a food supply.

The consequence of their importation into Australia by the early settlers, and later release into the wild, had far reaching effects for the next two hundred years, including for the Hovells Creek area.

A colony of wild rabbits was first reported in Tasmania in 1827 in a newspaper article that noted, 'The common rabbit is becoming so numerous ... that they are running about on some estates by thousands'.⁸⁴ In 1857-58 Alexander Buchanan, an overseer for FH Dutton's Anlaby Estate in the mid-north of South Australia, released a number of rabbits for game hunting. In late 1859 Thomas Austin, a wealthy settler in Victoria, released twelve rabbits, sent by a relative in England, on his Winchelsea estate, also for the sport of hunting. They thrived, and by 1866 hunters had bagged 14,000 rabbits. It appears that because there was plenty of food, good ground cover and a lack of predators, conditions were ideal for them to multiply.⁸⁵

By 1880 rabbits had crossed the Murray River into New South Wales, reaching Queensland by 1886. By 1894 they had moved into Western Australia. In fifty years, they had invaded the whole country. It is estimated that by 1920 there were ten billion rabbits in Australia.

By 1887, pasture loss and landscape damage caused by rabbits compelled the New South Wales government to offer a £25,000 reward for 'any method of success not previously known in the Colony for the effectual extermination of rabbits'.86. This reward, approximately \$3,000,000 in today's value, indicates how serious the rabbit problem had become.

As rabbits became a significant pest many different methods of control were tried, including rabbit traps, fumigation and ripping of warrens, and bounty payments. Ultimately wire netting fencing to exclude rabbits from an area became the most effective method of control used by landholders, with its use increasing dramatically in the first half of the twentieth century.

Rabbits became a source of free meat and employment during the Depression years of the 1890s and the 1930s. Many landholders employed extra farmhands as trappers and shooters for meat or skins. Itinerant rabbit sellers, known as 'Rabbitohs', came with their trucks collecting rabbits, taking them to market, or skinning them on the spot ready for the pot.

The Akubra hat industry thrived on rabbit fur with 12-14 rabbit pelts used for each hat. The military slouch hats of WWI and WWII were made of rabbit fur — a positive use for harvested rabbits skins.

By the late 1940s the rabbit population had exploded, due in part to fewer trappers and shooters on the land controlling the rabbit numbers during WWII.

⁸⁴ Colonial Times and Tasmanian Advertiser; 11 May 1827, p3

⁸⁵ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rabbits_in_Australia

⁸⁶ The Sydney Morning Herald; 7 Sept 1887, p11

Desperate farmers applied renewed pressure on government bodies to find a viable solution for rabbit control. In 1950, trials of the release of a rabbit specific virus, myxomatosis, were conducted by CSIRO on the Murray River in Victoria. Rains in December that year increased the number of mosquitos, the carrier for the virus, and the disease spread rapidly, reducing the rabbit population from an estimated 600 million to about 100 million within a decade.

By the 1990s rabbits had built up resistance to myxomatosis, and once again the rabbit population was increasing with associated damage to grasses, crops, and the landscape. A new virus, RHDV1 (Calicivirus), was first released in Australia in 1996. Mortality rates were upwards of seventy percent. Over time the effectiveness of the virus decreased. To boost the RHDV1 strain's effectiveness, state and territory governments around Australia released K5, a new naturally occurring variant of RHDV1, in March 2017.⁸⁷



The rabbiter's truck, 1930s, nma.gov.au

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⁸⁷ https://www.agriculture.gov.au/animal/health/rabbit-haemorrhagic-disease-virus

RABBITS AT HOVELLS CREEK

In interviews with Hovells Creek residents, a common theme was that rabbits were a serious pest in the area from the late nineteenth century until the mid-1950s and were a major liability for local farmers and graziers.

A great deal of time, energy, and money was spent trapping, hunting, poisoning with cyanide and 1080, and gassing and ripping burrows in a constant battle to eliminate this pest. It was only the advent of myxomatosis in the 1950s that saw the rabbit population reduced to manageable numbers. The later release of calicivirus in 1996 saw a further reduction such that properties, which in the early 1900s still had numerous small warrens, were left with just the occasional rabbit living under a shed or around farm buildings. When calicivirus was first released, several locals drove to Cooma and places in Victoria, where it had already been released, to bring infected rabbits back to Hovells Creek to hasten its introduction.

Hovells Creek residents commented:

- There was a rabbit drought every summer.
- There was no danger of bushfires in the summer there was nothing left to burn.
- The ground would just move. You'd walk into a place and there'd be rabbits everywhere.
- Fertiliser was not used during the rabbit plague there was no point!
- When Vince and Cecil Hudson bought Spring Creek, it only had one rabbit burrow it was 700 acres in size!

Fumigating and ripping burrows

Fumigation of burrows was effective. Once the rabbits had been driven into their burrow by the dogs, carbon monoxide pellets were placed in the entrances which were then blocked with shovels full of soil, and the rabbits were gassed. There were thousands of burrows, so it was a recurring task.

Burrows still had to be ripped or dug out, or other rabbits would move in. As rabbits begin to breed from six months of age, there was always a housing shortage for new rabbit families.

Evidence of old warrens can still be observed as dips in the landscape, where warrens were ripped or dug out by hand.

The late Glenn Barry of Reids Flat told a story of working with Greg Picker to gas rabbit burrows: he unwittingly sat next to an open burrow, only to be enveloped in a cloud of poisonous gas, which caused him to cough for a week!



Shooting

During and after the Great Depression, most landholders employed at least one or two 'rabbiters' who came with a pack of kangaroo dogs. These men lived in huts or camped out and spent their days catching rabbits by trapping or shooting. They were paid a token salary but sold the carcasses and skins of the rabbits for additional income.

The remains of camps occupied by these men can still be seen in the hills behind Grasmere, Kondon and Graham, marked by rusting cans and empty beer bottles.

Tarry Tarrant was a full time 'rabbiter' at Riverslea in the 1940s. He worked for 10-12 years for Stanley Coward who, at that time, owned the 10,000 acre property.



Alan McDonald⁸⁸ shot these rabbits at Hovells Creek in one day in the early 1990s, during the second wave of rabbits.

Trapping

Hovells Creek children set traps on their way to school. Ken Chudleigh and his siblings often collected up to one hundred rabbits a day on their way home, then reset the traps for the next day's catch. When they got home, they had the job of skinning them all!

The Sydney Morning Herald; 26 May 1950, p11

RABBIT TRAPS

Bunyip Rabbit Traps have been off the market for some years. Bushby's* have a limited supply at 46s 6d doz.

Get in early before they all go.

*Bushby's was the main general store in Boorowa.



⁸⁸ Alan and Monica McDonald of McDonald Tree Farm Nurseries, (p188)

Wayne Hudson's first job was to trap rabbits five and a half days a week for which he was paid £7.10 a fortnight. In addition, he sold the rabbit carcasses and skins to the meat works.

Max Boulding began trapping rabbits from the age of sixteen. During WWII he and another worker set about one hundred traps a day. They camped in a tent on the Burrowa River. They pegged the skins out and were paid £6.8 a pound.

Trapping for rabbit skins was done in winter. At this time, the fur was thicker and worth more money. One can still see the nails in shearing sheds in the district on which skins were hung up to dry before they were collected by the rabbit carter.

Carcasses vs Skins

Although the rabbit was a notorious pest, they were also a valuable economic resource for Hovells Creek residents. In some years, the demand for carcasses was greater than for skins.

Rabbit meat was purchased by local carters to be taken to the freezing works established at Darbys Falls in 1920. Frozen rabbits were then packed in crates and shipped from Cowra by rail to Sydney. A freezing works was in operation at Reids Flat and only closed in the 1970s.

Ken Chudleigh says, 'I made a lot of money out of skinning them. If it was carcasses, we'd take the horse up to school and bring them back on the horse. Sometimes when we came home from school, we'd have to skin a hundred rabbits. I've got two older brothers and they'd spend, everybody spent, all their time skinning rabbits. We used to just slit them down the middle – leave the skins on. We'd hang them on the wire by the road and the collector would come down the road – there was one at Bigga and another one at Rugby – they were all around the district. In the summer you'd see the truck coming and there'd be a cloud of flies behind the truck. There was no refrigeration, nothing. He used to just hang them on a wire on the back of the truck – I don't think he put a tarp over them or anything. You can imagine by the time he got to the cool room ...!'

If skins were in high demand, they were dried, then pressed into wool bales with the same baling machine used for wool. A driver came from Cooma to collect the bales from properties along the road. Frank Norris, a shearer at the *Graham* woolshed, said that before WWII they pressed more rabbit skins than wool, and the income from the skins was higher than from wool. 'There was big money, 'cos they were getting paid by the farmer and then for the skins. It was a real good living: four shillings a pound.'

Barrier Miner, Broken Hill; Fri 14 March 1941, p3

£58 for RABBITS

In five nights at Cowra last week, Cecil Seaman*, of Hovells Creek, poisoned rabbits on a district property and was paid £58 by a local skin buyer for 2751 pounds of skins. Prices paid were 2 shillings a pound green and 4 shillings 1 pence a pound dried.

Editor's note - That equates to approximately \$4800 in 2021 money - not bad for five nights' work!

*Cecil Seaman worked at *Riverslea*. He married Patrick Neville's granddaughter, Adeline in 1928. Cecil died tragically in 1951 – crushed by a tractor while ripping rabbit burrows. (*One Patrick Too Many, 2008, p50*)

Poisoning

Baiting using strychnine or arsenic on thistle roots was widely used. In the 1940s, sodium fluoroacetate, commonly known as 1080, was used on chopped up thistle roots and carrots. Max Boulding worked with a team on *Graham* using this method and the numbers of rabbits were reduced to 'practically nothing'. Tarry Tarrant sometimes used plum jam on the thistle roots, which seemed to attract the rabbits; killing up to 700-800 a night.

The use of a sweetener, such as jam or sugar, appears to have been common. Mr Con O'Connor of *Kiaora* used sugar, though the efficacy of it was questioned, as the following article suggests:

The Carcoar Chronicle; Fri 28 May 1943, p1

Sugar for Rabbit Poison

The Hovell's Creek landholder, who applied to Young Pastures Protection Board for support in obtaining sugar to mix with poison baits for rabbits, is sticking to his guns, although the Board is doubtful of the efficacy of his idea.

Messrs. Steel and Frost, Cowra, wrote in regard to the sugar ration applied for some time ago by Mr C. O'Connor, of Hovell's Creek, for the purpose of mixing in rabbit poison.

Mr O'Connor's opinion was that thistle and strychnine bait was not effective without sugar, and that treacle and other substitutes attracted ants to a greater extent than sugar. Mr O'Connor would be pleased if the inspector would call and discuss the matter with him when he next visited Hovell's Creek. Dir. Edmonds said he knew of rabbiters who were making up to £30 a week and did not use sugar.

Fencing and Round-ups

Large paddocks were fenced into smaller areas with rabbit fencing (chicken wire). In the 1930s and '40s George Chudleigh of *Glenbrook* ordered semi-trailer loads of fencing materials – wire and netting and steel posts – for rabbit control.

Rabbits were cleared from a smaller paddock, then the landholders, farmhands, trappers, and shooters would move on to the next paddock.

Another effective method was to build a drafting race shaped like a Y. Families, farmhands, neighbours, and lots of excited dogs and children gathered together to drive the rabbits out of their burrows into the net. The adults and children banged tins and yelled and shouted 'coo-ee' to make a lot of noise. The frightened rabbits were driven into a small pen about 10ft by 10ft. They would all try to get over the top of the 3ft high netting by climbing on top of each other.

A chute was built at the narrow end of the Y. This led to a large pit, or a shipping container sunk into the ground, into which the rabbits fell where they were then killed. These roundups disposed of some thousands of rabbits at a time.

Several of these containers were found on *Midlands/Grasmere* covered by timber planks, rotting away many years after being used for rabbit roundups. They posed a danger to sheep and lambs which would sometimes fall into them.

While very few rabbits are now seen at Hovells Creek, evidence of their past occupation can be seen in large erosion gullies and the hummocky warrens that still dot some hillsides. Some old warrens show rip lines where bulldozers ripped through the warrens to kill the rabbits while still in their burrows.



On the granite hill tops many rocks have pieces of wire netting pushed into the cracks between them to block access to holes underneath.



Former rabbit burrows are clearly visible under these rocks.

FOXES IN AUSTRALIA

Like rabbits, the fox is not native to Australia. Since it was introduced for recreational hunting in 1855, foxes have spread across most of Australia, with the exception of the tropical north and some off-shore islands. Control of foxes relies heavily on conventional techniques such as shooting, poisoning, and fencing. In the future, a combination of biological and conventional control methods may be able to reduce the damage caused by foxes.

Foxes have played a major role in the decline of a number of species of native animals, of ground-nesting birds, small to medium sized mammals such as the greater bilby, and reptiles such as the green turtle. While land use change is cited as one of the key reasons for decreasing numbers in many native species, predation by foxes has also been a significant contributor to native animal decline and continues to undermine recovery efforts for threatened species as the mallee fowl, the bridled nail-tail wallaby, and the night parrot. The fox causes significant economic losses to farmers by preying on newborn lambs, kid goats and poultry.⁸⁹

FOXES AT HOVELLS CREEK

There are two views amongst Hovells Creek sheep farmers on the fox attacks on new lambs. One view believes fox predation and lamb loss is significant and fox control is essential. Others believe foxes only take dead lambs, or a twin if one is weaker than the other. Foxes are not a problem for cattle producers.

An observation made by many of the interviewees is there are more foxes now than 50-70 years ago. During the rabbit plague, there was an ample food supply for foxes. However, 1080 in baits, put out for rabbits, also killed a lot of foxes when they are the rabbit carcasses.

Landholders and shooters shot foxes for their skins, although not on any large scale. A fox skin fetched \$22 in 1986, but only \$8 four years later, as international demand declined. A fox whistle was used to attract a fox, then it would be shot.

Chicken and duck pens were easy pickings for foxes. Max Boulding left his dog tied up with a piece of string near his chicken pen at *Kooringle* to deter a fox which regularly invaded and stole his chickens. Max says, 'One night he broke the string, took off after the fox, and chased it way up the paddock barking at it. He didn't catch it, but the fox never came back'.

Ken Chudleigh relates an unusual incident about foxes at *Glenbrook: 'We would leave the bathroom light on at night and the bogong moths gathered at the skylight. A fox would jump up on the roof to get the moths. We heard one on the roof and when we went out, he was looking at us over the gutter! He jumped down and I shot him'.*

Control Methods

Fox poisoning with 1080 is regulated in NSW by the Pesticide Act 1978 and can be carried out only under specific conditions. Rural Lands Protection Boards prepare and supply 1080 baits for use by landholders. It is necessary to minimise the risk to domestic and native animals when laying fox baits. 91

⁸⁹ https://www.environment.gov.au/system/files/resources/1910ab1d-a019-4ece-aa98-1085e6848271/files/european-red-fox.pdf

⁹⁰ https://www.pestsmart.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2010/03/C15 fox.pdf

⁹¹ https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/resources/pestsweeds/factsheet4foxcontrol.pdf

Fox baiting at lambing season was not common in the past, but community baiting is now conducted every year which keeps fox numbers down. A notification is sent to landholders indicating when baits can be collected from a central location. Most, but not all, sheep farmers participate in community fox baiting programs.

It seems foxes are not just carnivores – eating rabbits, chickens, ducks, lambs, bogong moths and small native animals and birds. One resident had some beautiful rockmelons growing in her garden which were being eaten. On investigation it was found foxes were helping themselves to the melons, as well as ripe quinces straight off the trees.

Road-kill accounts for the death of some foxes.

FERAL CATS⁹²

The impact of feral cats on native Australian fauna is significant. They have contributed to the extinction of some ground-dwelling birds and small to medium sized mammals, and reptiles, killing and devouring hundreds a year.

There is evidence of feral cats at Hovells Creek, although not in overwhelming numbers. They are sometimes sighted around hay sheds (attracted by a plentiful food supply of mice), and on the verges of roads at night when they are out hunting.

Hovells Creek Landcare Group has cats traps available for members to borrow.

PIGS

Comments were made by Hovells Creek residents that there used to be lots of wild pigs in the 1950s, which disappeared in the next decade. Now the numbers seem to be building up again. One theory is that pig shooters bring wild pigs back from places out west, such as Brewarrina, Bourke, and Walgett, so they do not have to travel as far to go pig shooting.

In the past year or two shooters from Cowra have shot a large number of wild pigs – a recent report mentioned thirty in one weekend near Mount McDonald/ Milburn Creek/ Darbys Falls.

RECREATIONAL HUNTING AND FERAL ANIMAL CONTROL

Landholders in the Hovells Creek valley have different views on recreational hunting and feral animal control on their properties. In 2004 Elaine Barclay (University of New England) reported on landholder experiences across NSW and Queensland which found, while landholders rely on trusted professional and recreational shooters to help with pest management, there is little they could do to prevent illegal trespass and shooting on their land. Barclay found regular visits by trusted hunters deter others from entering a property and trusted hunters are prepared to guard their hunting territory against unwelcome entrants.⁹³

⁹² https://www.environment.gov.au/biodiversity/invasive-species/feral-animals-australia/feral-cats

⁹³ Barclay E. (2004). Attitudes to Recreational Use of Rural Properties. Rural industries Research and Development corporation and the Institute for Rural futures, University of New England, Armidale, NSW 2351.

CHAPTER 12 – WEEDS

Invasive Weeds and Weed Control

A weed is a plant growing where it is not wanted. Couch in a domestic lawn is not a weed, but once it spreads into the garden beds it becomes undesirable. Paterson's Curse is regarded as a weed by sheep, cattle, and especially horse owners, but as a source of pollen by beekeepers.

A weed to one person is not a weed to another. Natural sequence or holistic farming advocates are not as concerned about 'weeds' (as part of a natural system in pastures), as other farmers. Phalaris is a valuable pasture grass to many farmers, but an undesirable 'weed' to others with a focus on native species pastures.

In 2021 there is rarely a discussion with a farmer or rural lifestyle landholder without mention of rain: too little rain or too much rain, and *weeds*. Weeds, and weed control, are high on the list of rural landholder issues of concern at public meetings. Coolatai Grass for example (p127) invades both native pastures and nature reserves. Bathurst Burr (p129) in a wool clip reduces the sale value.

The Hovells Creek residents interviewed for this report all talked about 'problem' weeds.

The prevalence of weeds in the Australian landscape has been one of the biggest changes, and challenges, in the past 200 years. Many of Australia's most problematic weeds have been introduced from overseas.

There is little evidence of weed problems in the Hovells Creek area one hundred or so years ago. Bathurst burr was one of the first plants declared noxious in Australia: in South Australia 1862, and in NSW in Urana Shire (Wagga Wagga) in 1907. The first reference to weeds in NSW state-wide legislation is in the 1919 Local Government Act. In 1922 several prominent local landholders were fined for not controlling noxious plants.

The Burrowa News; Fri 16 June 1922, p4

Failing to destroy noxious plants

The Murrungal Shire Council proceeded against Thomas Smith, Walter Newham, Cornelius O'Connor, Thos. J. O'Connor, Frederick Elliott, Geo. Mercer Hall, and William Cummings for failing to destroy noxious plants on their holdings. Norman Smith, Noxious Plants Inspector for the Murrungal Shire, stated that he had inspected all the defendants' holdings and found noxious plants, namely Saffron Thistle, Narrawa Burr, Bathurst Burr and Stinkwort. The P.M. said that he could fine each defendant £50, but as the Council was not pressing for a heavy penalty, he would impose a fine of 20s in each case, together with 5s 6d Court costs, 7s 6d witness expenses, 6s car hire and 42s professional costs.

The apparent absence of a weed problem a century or so ago may be attributed to:

- fewer animals being moved in and out of Hovells Creek
- less hay being brought into the region potentially contaminated with weed seeds from other districts
- substantially fewer vehicles and people were moving through the valley.

Today B-double truckloads of animals and hay are moved in and out of Hovells Creek; earthmoving machinery travels through the area and from property to property; and Frogmore Road is a thoroughfare to the recreation facilities of Wyangala Dam. It is a regular route for motorcycle tourism.

All these vehicles have the potential to transport weed seeds on tyres, in bales of hay, and on stock. People harbour seeds on clothing and shoes. Weed seeds are swept along in flood waters, to be deposited in paddocks downstream. Wind and birds carry seeds from place to place with no regard for fences or property boundaries.

Weeds in New South Wales now fall under the Biosecurity Act 2015 which replaced the former controls under the Noxious Weeds Act 1993. The new legislation has resulted in a change in terminology with 'Noxious Weeds' now becoming 'Priority Weeds'. Control of weeds has become a shared responsibility between the NSW Department of Primary Industries, regional Local Land Services, local government ie. Shire Councils, and all landholders, both public and private. Ultimately, it is the landholder who bears the cost of weed control.

WEEDS OF MOST CONCERN TO HOVELLS CREEK LANDHOLDERS94

Priority weeds⁹⁵ of most concern to current Hovells Creek landholders are listed by Local Land Services as African Lovegrass, Blackberry, Chilean Needle Grass, Coolatai Grass, Serrated Tussock and Silverleaf nightshade. All invade farm pastures.

Coolatai Grass is regarded as one of the few perennial grasses capable of invading undisturbed natural ecosystems and is a major threat to natural biodiversity in stock routes, nature reserves, and National Parks

Coolatai Grass on the Darbys Falls Road at Wyangala.



Farmers and landholders note a few other weeds of economic and agronomic importance to them (some formerly declared noxious/priority weeds), including Bathurst Burr, Noogoora Burr, Paterson's Curse, St John's Wort, and some thistles.

The Noxious/Priority Weeds list changes from time to time, with some 'problem' weeds dropping off the list when they get out of control, much to the frustration of many landowners. One landholder interviewed noted that despite local government being responsible for weeds in their jurisdiction, Council policy includes a statement which provides some 'flexibility': 'Weed management in the area is conducted strategically, on a priority basis, as available funds allow'.

⁹⁴ Further information on priority weeds, the rationale for their declaration as priority weeds, their introduction to Australia, their prevalence in SE NSW, and control measures can be found on the NSW Government website https://weeds.dpi.nsw.gov.au/

St John's Wort was brought to Australia in 1875 as a garden plant.

Muriel Abraham, who can see the hills around Wyangala from her place says, 'St John's wort is spreading. It has invaded our farmland from the Wyangala state recreation area. The whole hill is yellow when it is in flower, but it is even more noticeable when it dies off – then it is all brown.

It was a weed that was taken off the noxious weeds list. When I asked about it, they rather sheepishly said because it was going to be too expensive to control!'

St John's Wort



Another landholder commented, 'My biggest problem lately is the **Scotch Thistle**. It's all over the property now and I've sprayed thousands of plants, I don't use a broad acre spray because it retards clover, so I've done it by hand. One year Elders decorated a scotch thistle as their Christmas tree – it was nine foot high!'

The Cowra Council has held information talks on **Silverleaf Nightshade** at Darbys Falls. It needs to be sprayed out before it sets seed, as is the case for most weed control.

George Chudleigh was very pedantic about control of **Paterson's Curse** and thistle. He would go around with his hoe and dig them out. Ken Chudleigh says, 'Brooklyn was covered with it – the PC beetle has done a great job of cleaning it up. It was ok for sheep but affected the liver after some years. It was terrible on horses'.

Biological control of Paterson's curse started in earnest in the late 1980s. Four insects have now been released: the crown weevil; the root weevil; the flower beetle, and the stem-boring beetle.⁹⁶





Paterson's curse/ Salvation Jane

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⁹⁶ https://www.ento.csiro.au/biocontrol/patcurse.html

A native of South America, **Bathurst Burr** is a small shrub with yellow-spined burrs. It was introduced to Australia in the early 1800s in contaminated grain or imported livestock. Bathurst burr was one of the first plants declared noxious in NSW in 1907.

Bathurst burr is amongst the most common and economically serious weeds in the Hovells Creek valley in Australian agriculture generally. The tiny hooks of the burr seed attach to the wool of sheep. Contaminated wool has a lower value as additional processing (and cost) is required to remove the burrs. Bathurst burr is a significant weed in summer crops horticultural crops. It thrives in the silt cleaned out of farm dams, an indicator of the long life of its seed.

It is no longer a declared 'priority weed' in NSW despite its economic impost on both landholders and industry.





Judy Refshauge,⁹⁷ of *Grasmere*, had a lot to say about weeds: 'When we first moved into the valley the weed problem was enormous. We had thistles galore – all different sorts. We had to spray saffron thistles before they flowered. We had Bathurst burr everywhere; we had devils claw everywhere and the sheep were carrying it around on their feet and spreading it'.

Boorowa News; Fri 27 Feb 1953, p1

TOO LATE TO DEAL WITH STINKWORT

Wet Season Cause of Advanced Growth

Following a complaint by Mr. A.C. Chown, of Reid's Flat, concerning the heavy growth of Stinkwort at Reid's Flat, Boorowa Shire Council decided at its meeting last Monday that it was too late this season to effectively destroy the menace. Speaking on the question, the President (Cr. A.G. Gorham) said it was rather a contentious matter. He considered that if they could control rabbits, they could prevent stinkwort in the district.

Cr. R. Kelly said the spread of Stinkwort to the district, he understood, was due to the heavy windstorms in 1924. On his property there were only small patches growing.

Cr. R.J. Forster: The whole of the Hovell's Creek area is one mass of Stinkwort. The only reason I can see for its spread this year, is due to having a wet summer and a good growth of green feed. In a dry season stock nip the crown out of it and keep it down.

It was considered by Councillors that it was late to eradicate it at present and decided to take no action.

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⁹⁷ Judy Refshauge (*p190*)

Another Hovells Creek resident observed, 'Weeds were not really a problem fifty years ago. The rabbits ate out the **Blackberries** and everything else because they were starving. If you did see a blackberry, you'd dig it out. There was a lot more labour with big families and everyone would help'. Once the rabbits numbers were substantially reduced by the introduction of myxomatosis, blackberry growth exploded!

Judy Refshauge commented, 'We sprayed as much blackberry as we could reach in the spring and then the following winter, we'd set fire to it. That worked very well, but we had to keep doing it. In the meantime, the birds were carrying the seed from our neighbours to our paddocks and dropping them, so we had new blackberries coming up. We had to go around the paddocks to make sure they were no little ones coming up'.

Biological control for blackberry includes the leaf rust fungus⁹⁸ which attacks the leaves and infects flower buds and unripe fruit and stops the blackberry producing daughter plants. Eight different fungus strains were released in 2020.⁹⁹



Blackberry invasion of pastureland and remnant vegetation on the floodplain

The Hovells Creek Landcare Group has worked with Local Land Services and local weeds officers on biological control strategies for blackberry, Paterson's Curse and St John's Wort with mixed success. The main control strategies used by both local weeds officers and landholders are chemical spray based products.

HCLG is currently coordinating a regional program to control **Serrated Tussock**.

⁹⁸ Phragmidium violaceum

⁹⁹ https://weeds.dpi.nsw.gov.au/Weeds/Details/18#control

CHAPTER 13 – PROPERTIES AND HOMESTEADS

The information in the following pages has been gathered and compiled from interviews with the participants, family history records, parish maps and land titles.

Parish Maps, which show portion boundaries, acreage, lot numbers, and early owners' names, include dates of only the very earliest purchases (pre-1861). Transfer of ownership can only be found by searching thousands of pages of Old System Records, including Register of Deeds, Indexes and Primary Application Records, a task beyond the scope of this book.

What is presented here is a broadly sketched outline of some of the Hovells Creek properties, of changing ownership, and the construction of homesteads, roughly sequentially from the earliest known settlers. It becomes evident as one reads about the families how interrelated they were through marriage.

Readers are referred to the map of the Hovells Creek valley on pages viii and ix at the beginning of this book for property names, locations, and known first occupants.

Attempts have been made to show accuracy as far as able. Apologies are extended to any family who has been misrepresented.

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The earliest known settlers such as Alexander Sligar, John O'Sullivan, and Hugh McDiarmid pre-date the 1850s. They are discussed in Chapter 2.

Known pioneer settlers who arrived at Hovells Creek after 1850 were:

- Michael Corcoran purchased Lots 20 and 21 in the Parish of Kenyu in 1854, later part of *Graham*.
- Thomas Smart purchased Lot 23 in the Parish of Kenyu in 1856, now Kiaora.
- John (1835-1918) and William O'Connor (1836-1912) purchased Lot 47 in the Parish of Graham in 1856. William stayed on Lot 47 (*Hillside*) while John moved a few years later to Lot 4, Parish of Graham, and the adjoining lots 21-27, Parish of Newham, all with Hovells Creek frontage, which became *Kiaora*.
- Patrick Neville (c.1816-1882) purchased Lot 4, Parish of Newham, 35 acres at £1 per acre in 1859, which he named Alta Villa (after the family home in Ireland). In 1862, 'Patsy' was granted two 'conditional purchase' blocks under the 1861 Robertson Land Acts, one adjoining Alta Villa (Laurel Grove), and Kember on the Boorowa River.
- Thomas O'Neill moved to Hovells Creek from Canowindra in 1862. Two of his sons, John and Thomas, were still there in 1918: John at *Clare View* and Thomas at *Willow Glen*, when they died within one month of each other, aged 72 and 71.

The Corcoran, O'Connor, and Neville family descendants are still in the district 165 years later.

. . .

Little is known of the dwellings of the earliest settlers at Hovells Creek. They may have lived in tents, gunyahs or bark shelters, replacing them later with slab huts with bark roofs, and occasionally with wooden shingle roofs.

Timber was widely available to construct slab or bark huts. They were typically built with walls of vertical or horizontal slabs of Red Box, Ironbark, or other long lasting timbers, and a roof frame of termite resistant Cypress pine or of Stringybark. Floors was rammed earth or Cypress pine planks.

Chimneys were constructed of brick or stone. The landscape is dotted with old chimney stacks while the rest of the slab hut is long gone, salvaged for other uses, including firewood.

In the late 1940s the remains of a rudimentary slab hut were found on William Hovell's 968 acre block, by then part of Archie and Gilbert Dunn' 5598 acre *Jerringomar*. Jim Clements recalls, as a boy, helping Grandfather Dunn pick up bricks from the old chimney stack.

Slab huts were replaced with timber-framed weatherboard houses, sometimes built adjoining an old slab hut; kitchens were in a separate building to reduce the risk of fire to the main house.

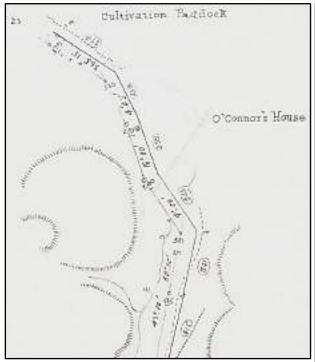
Corrugated iron sheeting came to Australia in the late-1850s and quickly made its way into rural communities as it was lightweight and could be carted on the back of a dray. Iron sheets replaced, or were fixed on top of, the existing bark or shingle roof.

Stone houses were built in the valley around 1880-1900. Quarrying and construction costs were high, and only four stone houses were built: *Sunnyside*, *Graham*, *Kiaora*, and *Guvesne*.

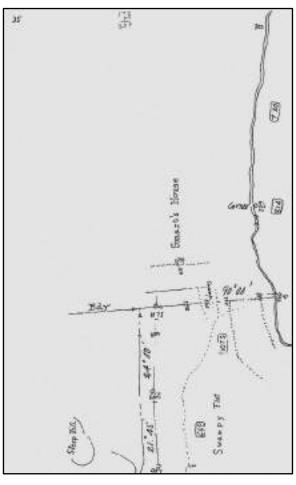


Sunnyside, 2021

Two of the earliest homesteads are noted on VB Riley's 1871 survey maps: O'Connor's House at Hillside, and Smart's House, located on Graham Lane on the west bank of Hovells Creek.



William O'Connor held *Hillside* from 1856 until his death in 1912. The property passed to two of his children, Kathleen, and James. They sold it to Glanville Chudleigh of *Glenbrook* in 1920, who renamed it '*Brooklyn*'.





Thomas Smart is noted on Lot 23, Parish of Graham, 30 acres, in 1856.

The names of Smart children appear on the application for a school at Graham in 1883 (p72).

The wedding of Bert Smart was held at St Joseph's Church in 1925.

Annie (Gemmel) Hudson's mother was a Smart.

All that remains of *Smart's House* today is the chimney.

GRAHAM: A CASE STUDY

by Liz Baker

Since 1992, John and Liz Baker have gathered a considerable amount of information about the history of *Graham*: the earliest settlers on the land; the significance of the *Graham* homestead in the Parish of Graham at Hovells Creek; and the families who lived in the grand stone house. *Graham*, both the property and the homestead *[italicised]*, are an example of development in the Hovells Creek valley.

EARLY OCCUPATION OF GRAHAM

In March 1878, Edward Kerr made a Conditional Purchase of Lot 99 of 40 acres in the Parish of Kenyu for £10. This is the block on which the *Graham* homestead was built in 1878.

Edward Kerr left Belfast, Ireland, in 1854, at the age of 16, to join his sisters in Sydney. On his arrival in Sydney that year, he was recorded as a single man, age 20, who could read.

Edward married Mary Ann nee Lynch in Sydney at St Mary's Cathedral on 27 May 1861. Mary Ann's family came to Australia from County Tipperary in 1841, when she was a child aged one. Edward was described as a draper and Mary as a dressmaker.

By 1867 Edward had become a dealer in goods travelling to inland NSW, verified by the recorded births of three of his children at New South Wales towns – at Yass, Berrima, and Marulan.

Edward was recorded living at Hovells Creek in 1871, assisting Mary Cunningham¹⁰⁰ run her goods store on Lot 5 in the Parish of Graham.¹⁰¹ The store was adjacent to the main track along the valley, which at that time ran along the eastern side of the creek, broadly following Meehan's 1820 route.

Mary Cunningham died in July 1872, five months after her husband, Phillip, and left over 300 acres of valley flats (held since 1851/1856) to Edward Kerr. In her will she wrote, 'I make this bequest in consideration of my personal friendship and regard for the said Edward Kerr for many acts of kindness and friendship shewn by him to me'. The value of her bequest was £350, a considerable amount of money at the time. In 1875 Edward received £280 from Phillip Cunningham's will. Edward continued to run the re-named the store 'Kerr's Store' and was appointed Postmaster at this location in August 1873.

After VB Riley's 1871 road survey, areas of the valley flats were mapped as portions to be made available for sale or conditional purchase. By 1877, Edward Kerr had occupied some of these portions for many years, including the yet to be allocated Lot 99. In 1877 another survey by VB Riley described the future Lot 99 as having the following improvements:

About 2 acres cleared and grubbed and enclosed with a log fence £12-0-0.

About 1 acre ploughed and trenched for planting fruit trees £11-10-0.

Upwards of 100 fruit trees, for which Kerr paid altogether £11-10-0¹⁰²

TOTAL £35-0-0

The combination of the bequest of land and money from Phillip and Mary Cunningham, and the improvements made to Lot 99, fulfilling the 'conditions of purchase', enabled Edward Kerr to become an official landholder at Hovells Creek.

¹⁰⁰ Phillip and Mary Cunningham are recorded on Parish of Graham maps as early as 1851 and 1856.

 $^{^{\}rm 101}$ Hovells Creek forms the boundary between the parishes of Graham and Kenyu

¹⁰² In February 1993, ten of the fruit trees remained – two apricots, two pears, two yellow cherry plums known as Mirabelle, one damson, one red cherry plum, one white fig and one apple.

CONSTRUCTION OF THE GRAHAM HOUSE

By the late 1870s Kerr was a wealthy man, owning much of the valley flats in the southern part of the Hovells Creek valley. The land was generally low lying and poorly drained so was unsuitable as a house site. Lot 99, on the slopes, was well drained; next to a creek; adjacent to his other land; beside the new road; had good land for growing vegetables and fruit trees; and, on its western boundary, provided an excellent source of granite rock for building.

In 1878, St Joseph's Church was built 3km to the south of Lot 99 by Mary Ann Kerr's brother-in-law, William Duncan. That same year, Duncan was contracted to build the *Graham* homestead in the Georgian style, with seven ground floor rooms, two attic rooms, and a verandah along the front of the house.

Granite rock for the church and the homestead was collected from rocky outcrops in the surrounding hills.

The exposed granite domes produce layers of rock which, when wedged off, break into pieces with square edges, a relatively easy task.





Graham, now Old Graham, in 2021

THE GLENCO INN

In 1881 a coach service from Crookwell and Binda to Cowra travelled through the valley near *Graham*. Edward and Mary Ann were inspired to open an inn and coach stop to attract passing travellers and generate some additional income. In anticipation they added an extension to the house in 1881-82 with a large bar room, a sitting room, and a cellar.

The roof of the original house was built with pit-sawn timber, while the roof of the extension used round Cypress pine bush poles, presumably cut from the adjoining hill where surveyor Riley had marked an area of pine scrub and where Black Cypress pines grow to the present day. While the walls of the seven original rooms were fine plastered with a smooth finish the extension walls were of roughly plastered unfinished stone. A Yorkshire stonemason, Valentine Pinder, was employed to do the stonework and Michael Murray of Gunning Flat to do the carpentry for the extension. It is possible Murray worked on the original building, but this cannot be verified. Pinder, a resident of Reids Flat, worked as a stonemason in the area until 1913.

On 26 April 1882, Edward Kerr appeared in the Burrowa (spelling used at that time) Licensing Court before the Chairman, Mr Ryan, charged with having liquor in his unlicensed house suspected to be for sale. Michael Murray, the carpenter, appeared as a witness, saying he thought the rum and gin seized by the police came from Sydney. He asserted he had been employed since February by Edward Kerr and had never seen any sale of liquor. He said the house was now finished and Edward Kerr planned to take out a license for a Public House. The case was dismissed. It is possible that Kerr had been selling sly grog to coach passengers and other travellers going past, in anticipation of obtaining a license. Selling sly grog was common at that time.

With the extension complete Kerr took out several mortgages with the Bank of New South Wales and the ledgers from the Boorowa branch (now held at the Westpac archives in Sydney) mention a ten-room stone house on the property in 1883, which was used as security in addition to 8500 sheep depasturing on his land.

The three-room extension enabled Edward to apply, in April 1884, for a Publican's licence at the Licencing Court in Burrowa for the house, now named the Glenco Inn. The house was described in the licence application as containing ten rooms (all the downstairs rooms) exclusive of those used by the family (which were presumably those upstairs). The Burrowa News reported: 'The Quarterly Licensing Court was held on Tuesday – the Licensing Magistrate (the Hon J. Ryan) and Mr Hume being present'. A publican's licence was granted to Edward Kerr for a hotel at Graham. (29 April 1884).

Notice of Application FOR A PUBLICAN'S LICENSE

Licensing Acts 1882-1883.

EDWARD KERR, of Graham, do hereby give notice that I desire to obtain, and will at the next Licensing Court to be helden at Burrowa on the 29th day of April, 1884, apply for a certificate authorising the issue of a publican's liceuse for premises situate at Graham, and to be known by the sign of the Glenco Inn, containing ten rooms exclusive of those required for the use of the family. The accommodation is in conformity with the provisions of sec. 30 of the Principal Act; and my application is made under sec. 11 of the "Licensing Act of 1883,"—viz., for reduction of license fee.

Dated the 12th day of April, 1884. (Signed.) On 24 May 1884, Queen Victoria's birthday, the opening of the hotel was celebrated with a Free Ball and Supper. FREE BALL

SUPPER.

QUEEN'S BIRTHDAY,
BATURDAY, 24th MAY.

E. KERR

BEGS to inform his friends and the
public that he will celebrate the
opening of his Botel at Graham, by a
Free Ball and Supper, on Queen's Birthday, Seturday, 24th May.

In November 1884 Edward died of 'disease of the heart' aged 46 years. He left Mary Ann £983 in his will, and ten children, the youngest being only two years old. Their eldest daughter, 22 year old Catherine, known as Kate, must have been a great help to her mother. However, it appears it was all too much for Mary Ann as she died the following August of 'disease of the heart accelerated by intemperance' (excessive alcohol) aged 45 years, leaving £103 to their son Gregory.

Soon after Mary Ann died, the two eldest children, Gregory and Kate, married. Gregory wed Adelaide Boake, the daughter of Barcroft Capel Boake, probably the best known Australian photographer of the second half of the nineteenth century, and the sister of Barcroft Boake, the Australian poet. Kate married a local man, Archibald Frazer.

In 1886 Gregory, acting as executor, sold the house and the considerable area of adjoining valley lands to John Smith of Narrawa. The house then became the homestead for Smith's property.

GRAHAM – THE SMITH ERA 1886-1924

John Smith of Narrawa established 'Smith Company Graham and Narrawa Ltd' in the years after 1886. The property bubble of the 1880s had burst, followed by the 1891-93 depression. However, John Smith successfully built the *Graham* estate up to 7,550 acres.

Little is known about John Smith and farming activities on his large holdings at Hovells Creek. Available information about his family shows he and his wife had eight sons: John Joseph, Patrick, Thomas, Peter, Daniel (known as Barney), Charles, Robert, and Henry, and two daughters, one of whom married Hovells Creek resident, Hugh O'Neill; another who married a Mr Bennett and resided in Sydney.

It is also known that the eldest son, John Joseph, became the managing director of The Smith Company and lived at *Graham* from 1886 until the property was sold in 1924. (*Cowra Free Press; 18 Aug 1925, p3*).

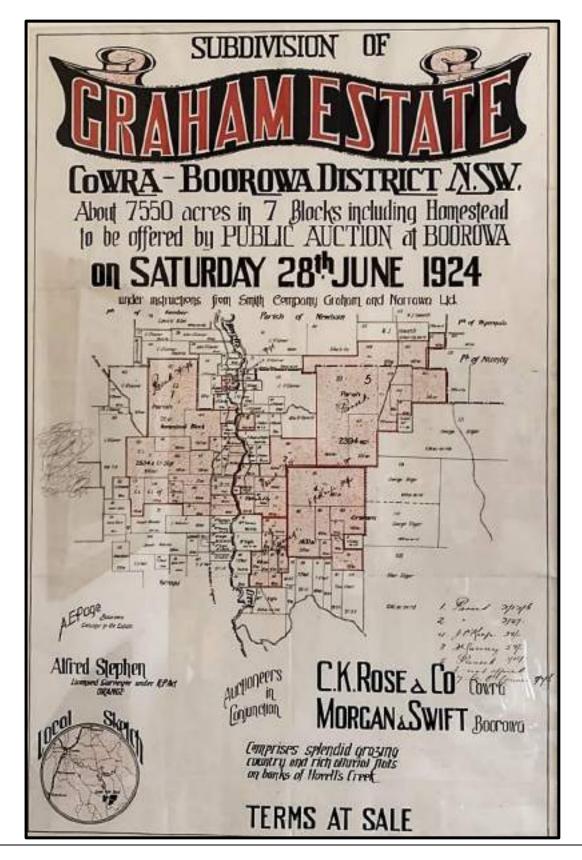
On the tuck pointing on the front wall of the house Barney Smith, as a young child, practised writing his name.

THE THE THE THE

In January 1924, Barney (Daniel William) Smith was found badly injured under the railway bridge in Cowra and later died from his injuries and pneumonia. He left no will, but his estate was worth £3000, representing his share of the *Graham* property. After Barney's death, his brother Robert (who lived at *Jerringomar*) listed the *Graham* estate for sale on 28 June 1924.

At the public auction, three lots were sold and three lots passed in. The sales were:

- J. O'Keefe (1,400 acres @ £1.19.0 an acre for hilly country)
- M. Carney (411 acres @ £2.19.0 an acre for good valley slopes)
- C. O'Connor (37 acres @ £8/7/6 per acre for valley flats).



GRAHAM - 1924-1992

In the next almost eighty years *Graham* and its adjoining land changed hands many times: Medway 1924, Power 1934, Kelly 1936, Walker 1948, Granger 1949, Barber 1950, Dwyer 1953, Norris 1954, Picker 1980, and Baker 1992.

Donald Medway, the first in the long line of *Graham* owners, purchased the homestead and 2,534 acres in 1924.

Donald and Margaret's daughter Mavis Whitty visited *Old Graham* in 2012. Mavis recalled many memories of living at the house and attending the Graham School:

The family kept chickens, turkeys, and guinea fowl. Donald Medway was a keen gardener, adding more fruit trees to the orchard Edward Kerr had planted in the 1870s. Mr Medway also grew a rose garden.

Mr Medway put pressed metal ceilings into some rooms, which was a great step forward as they stopped dirt falling through the cracks in the ceiling boards from the roof space into the room below.



He cut internal doorways through the stone walls between rooms because when the house was built most rooms were entered from the front verandah. These 'strangers' rooms', as they were known, were built in this way so travellers and overnight guests could be provided with accommodation without having access to other rooms in the house, including those occupied by the family. The house did not have a bathroom – baths were taken in a tin bath once a week, and there was an outside 'dunny'.

Mavis recalled when they first moved in there was no phone connected but she remembers when, later, an Ericson wall phone was installed. [Its painted outline was on the lounge room wall when restoration began in 1992 and where an identical phone was installed].



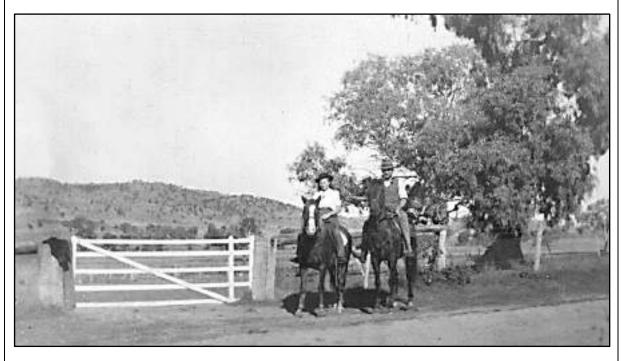
Mrs Medway used a sulky for transport, kept across the road in a garage, together with their Ford car. The horses were kept in the paddock across the road, so they could be harnessed quickly to the sulky.

Bede and Aaron Morrissy with a sulky at *Old Graham* such as the type used by Mrs Medway.



Graham in 1930
Right: Mrs Lily Margaret Anne Medway (nee Smith)
Left: Mrs McGraw – a lodger whose husband was working on construction of the road
Front: Eileen Anne Medway (Mavis's younger sister)

Mavis related the story of a serious accident her father had while trimming a tree branch overhanging the chicken house. The branch kicked back and knocked off his big toe. As a result of this accident, he developed tetanus and died. As was fairly common in those days, Mrs Medway remarried (a Mr Power) soon thereafter, because men were needed to run a property.



Mavis and her father rode their horses everywhere. The tree in the background is still visible today opposite the house, but it has deteriorated badly.

GRAHAM AS A GRAZING PROPERTY

The *Graham* five stand shearing shed was built in 1932 using timber and roofing iron salvaged from the Wyangala Dam construction camp. It became the depot shed for neighbours in that part of the valley. Wool stencils from four or five neighbouring properties were later found in the shed. Similar depot sheds were located at *Riverslea* to the north, with twelve stands, and also at *Jerringomar* in the centre of the valley.



The new *Graham* shearing shed, 1932

The shearers' quarters were located across the road from the shearing shed.

The building contained a kitchen, a dining room, and a row of bedrooms.

Each shearing team came with its own cook.

Only a chimney stack remains today.





Local lads
on the shearing team
I-r – Megs Hudson,
Vince Hudson, unknown,
George Smith, Jack Smith,
unknown, Jack Berry

Operating *Graham* as a grazing property in the 1900s was never easy. The rabbit plague was a major contributor to the many changes in ownership between 1924 and 1992. *Graham*, with its hilly and steep slopes, and sandy granite soils, made rabbit control very difficult. Discouraged owners sold up after a few years.

MEMORIES OF GRAHAM FROM FORMER RESIDENTS

A visit to *Old Graham* by Rex Perceval in 1992 provided a lot of information about the house and life there. Rex had lived at *Graham* as a child in the 1930s when his father was manager. Mr Perceval made a lot of improvements to the house. The underground stone water tank leaked, so he patched it with cement and Rex said it was always full after that. Mr Perceval added on the back verandah with a laundry at one end. A pitsaw was still in operation some distance up the hill [the site is still evident] but when they left the pitsaw was in the cellar room. Rex described the separate stone kitchen behind the house: 'There was a spacious dining room with a large open fire plus two small rooms. Outside there were pigeonholes for mail which was left there for neighbours to collect – this was when the Graham Post Office was located at the Graham house. There was a brick oven in the back small room'. Mr Perceval built two toilets much closer to the house, as visitors complained it was a long way to go to the old one, particularly at night! The orchard was still very large and was up the hill next to the shearing shed. There was an old bullock wagon stored under a tree just over the creek, near the chicken pen and roost. Rex said there were thousands of rabbits, which they trapped and skinned, and pressed the skins into bales. It was only in the 1950s they were brought under control.

Monica Field (nee Wade) and Betty Dwyer (nee Hudson, youngest sister of Phyllis McGann) visited *Old Graham* in 2013. Monica talked about when her father, Jimmy Wade, managed the property for Mr Walker who owned it in 1948. She said the separate stone kitchen behind the house was very dilapidated, so a new kitchen was set up in one of the front rooms in the house. A Beacon Light stove was installed in the fireplace and a sink put in under the front window, so Mrs Walker could see everyone passing by! It took nearly two days for a hole to be chiselled through the thick stone wall to allow a waste pipe to be installed. There was a well outside at the back with a concrete cover, but it was not used – even though Mrs Walker said there was always a problem of not enough water storage. [There was no sign of the well when work was done in that area during the restoration, but divining did show water to be present.] The orchard was very productive; Monica's father stored apples in the attic. The stables across the road near the cattle yards were used for the horses needed for transporting the family. The children went to the Graham School at its new location on Graham Lane. The road past the house was still unsealed, which made the house very dusty.

Noel Barber purchased the property in 1950 and Horace Menzies, who managed it for him, visited *Old Graham* in the 1990s. He said they used arsenic on thistles to poison rabbits. Horace recalled by the time he left *Graham* in 1953 the rabbits were under control. The *Graham* woolshed had a hand wool press at that time and Harold Tarrant (Kevin Tarrant's father), who worked for them, was one of the shearers. The old stone kitchen at the back was still there but it was in very bad shape. At some stage in the 1950s the kitchen was demolished, and the stone used by Council when realigning the road.

By 1954, when the property was sold to the Lawrence and Norris families, the house was in a dilapidated state. The owners lived across the valley in a new timber house at *Kalaraville*.

The former *Graham* homestead became the place where local men met to have a drink after work and to bet on the horses. The antique wall phone was kept connected and the beer was kept in the old Beacon Light oven!



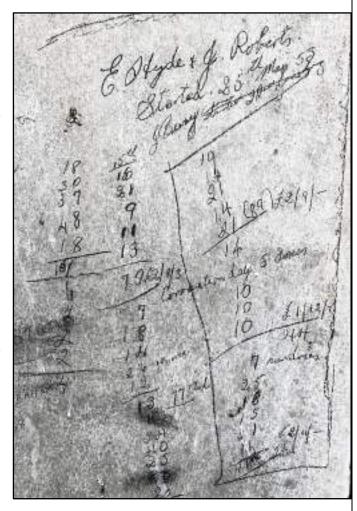
The Beacon Light stove in the living room with writing on the walls

When the Bakers bought the Graham house the walls of the family room were covered with phone numbers, notes on races horse and betting odds, and details of paddocks at *Graham* with the number of sheep in them. The house was still used by shearers to camp in when the shearing shed was being used by all the neighbours.

The shearers' sleeping quarters had been demolished by the early 1950s, but the kitchen and dining room was still being used. Before this building was demolished, photos were taken of pencilled notes on the fibro walls. The photo below shows E Hyde and J Roberts started shearing on 25 May 1953; a tally of sheep shorn; and the payment rate for shearing; and that five foxes were caught on Coronation Day, 2 June 1953.

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This brief account of *Graham* as a grazing property, and its succession of owners, illustrates how *Graham* typifies a pattern of property growth and dissolution. It shows the acquisition, aggregation, and subsequent changes in the ownership of land which has been repeated throughout the valley over the past 170 years.



RESTORATION OF THE HOUSE IN 1992

The next stage in the life of *Graham* began in 1991 when the Bakers came across the abandoned house by accident. It had by then been unoccupied since the early-1950s – there were holes in the roof and floors, doors hanging off, broken windows, a dead sheep in one room, and parts of a car body in another. The Bakers negotiated to buy it in 1992 and after seeking advice from Canberra heritage architect, Peter Freeman, employed Boorowa-based Bede Morrissey and his son Aaron to restore the house, assisted by Boorowa-based Frank and Garry Keefe who repaired the stonework. All work was done to Burra Charter restoration standards, which requires that like be replaced with like and that any changes be consistent with heritage practices.



The dilapidated state of the Graham house in September 1991

It was at this point that the house was renamed 'Old Graham'. This was because the previous owners, the Pickers, had taken the name Graham with them to their newly built home some distance away following their purchase of the property in 1980.

The ruins of a stone toilet at *Old Graham* were still evident near the back fence in 1991. It had been excavated in the 1980s for old bottles. Apparently, it was a 'two-holer' and there were two entrances, one for men and the other for women and children. A similar stone toilet still exists at *Kigora*.

In the course of the restoration all of the floors were lifted, to either be re-laid or replaced to improve airflow and because there was no damp course. All of the dirt removed was kept and when sieved produced a treasure trove of artifacts which told much about the former occupants.

Several coins were found, including an 1855 French dix centimes (ten cents). The earliest dates on Australian coins were an 1881 halfpenny; two pennies, dated 1866 and 1875; two silver threepences dated 1881 and 1887; an 1877 silver sixpence, and a 1917 Florin (2 shillings).

Lots of buttons were found plus a couple of collar studs – one for a very small child – which showed that the residents dressed up on occasions, possibly to attend church.

Several nit combs were found around the fireplace, where the children would have sat so the light from the fire could aid in nit removal. Some items show the kinds of activities pursued: games such as draughts, chess and backgammon; a harmonica and Jew's harp for making music. Precious items including a rosary, a silver ring, and a silver earring in the shape of an acorn would have been sad losses through gaps in the floorboards. A Gould's League badge dated 1938 shows someone was interested in birds. Children's toys included lots of marbles, a lead soldier, a miniature jug from a tea set, and leads for writing on slates.



Some of the items found under the floorboards

There were pieces of linoleum and wallpaper as well as a brass bed knob, spoons, and a penknife. A lot of pieces of broken glass including pressed glass from the shade of a kerosene lamp. A very small bottle with a broken top was identified as an opium vial, while a tall thin dark blue bottle survived unbroken in the filled-in cellar and is typical of bottles used for castor oil. A 1938 NSW 150th Anniversary medal and an 1878 Centennial pin badge were other interesting finds. There were two shopping tokens, one for Hordern & Sons and another for The Great Southern Draper, Newtown, Sydney.

Shards of china were interesting as some of them were from the Royal Doulton Australiana inspired dinner sets depicting wattle flowers and native heath. These were available for country people by mail order from companies in Sydney around 1900-1920 and came in green, brown, or black, but were also hand coloured for those who could afford it.

A Royal Doulton 'Wattle' platter of the same pattern as fragments found under the floor



A large number of bones from food – mainly lamb, beef, and chicken – and stones from peaches, apricots and plums provide clues to the locally grown food that was eaten. There were also many rat bones and remains of rats' nests which often contained scraps of wool, hair, wallpaper, and other items lost under the floor that could be used to line the nests.

In addition to bits and pieces found under the floor, other items were found hidden around the house. Placing ritual objects, as they are called, in a void in the home, was a traditional practice in Ireland and Britain, and was also practiced on the European Continent.

A well-worn child's shoe was found hidden in the roof to ward off evil spirits and witches to protect the children from harm. Several dead cats were found hidden under the floor, presumably placed there to protect the whole family. Whereas placing a dead cat in the roof was normal in the United Kingdom, placing one near the foundations of a house appears to have been more of an Australian practice. A brand-new shilling dated 1877 was found hidden in the roof – a shilling was a significant amount at the time. This was believed to bring good luck and wealth to the family.

All this reinforces the fact that in the nineteenth century there were many different beliefs about what caused illness, poverty, and wellbeing. Superstitions were a way of explaining these issues and the Kerr family, as early Irish settlers, brought these beliefs with them to Hovells Creek from their home country.





A well-worn child's shoe which had been mended was discovered hidden in the roof, and a mummified cat found under the living room floor.

Other discoveries during the restoration included two possums living in the roof, a large brown snake living in a hole in the walls, rats that gnawed a hole in the new plastic sewer pipe, and swallows that objected to losing their home!

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What does *Graham* illustrate about life in the Hovells Creek valley? It shows families accumulating wealth and land and then, as their circumstances changed, losing it. It shows many aspects of life in the valley, with a richness and variety illustrated by the wide range of items found under the floors. The impact of rabbits as a major pest is seen as undermining the viability of farms in the valley. Meanwhile, sudden death from accidents, tetanus, intemperance, or childhood diseases, such as diphtheria, was an ever-present risk that could be life-changing for many families and, in turn, for the properties they owned.

On 24 May 1994, exactly 110 years after the Glenco Inn was opened, a party was held to celebrate the restoration of the house. Neighbours, tradesmen who worked on the restoration, and others involved in the acquisition and history of the house enjoyed a barbeque lunch together.

Significantly every Hovells Creek valley resident from *Jerringomar* in the north to *Glenbrook* in the south attended the celebration lunch. A resident later wrote to the Bakers saying, 'It has done our hearts a world of good to see the restoration of 'Old Graham' to its former self. Congratulations to Bede and thanks to all involved'.



Hovells Creek residents at the Old Graham barbecue lunch included the following:

- Vince and Mary Hudson: Werrawee; son of George and Annie (Gemmell) Hudson, grandson of John Hudson, the blacksmith at Willow Park
- Wayne and Jenny (Power) Hudson: Willow Park, son of Vince and Mary
- Tommy and Betty Power: Kondon since 1950; bought from the O'Connors
- Chris and Patty Power: Kondon, son of Tommy and Betty
- Pauline Power: Rock End
- Greg and Lyn Picker: Graham since 1980s; bought the Graham land from Lawrence and Norris
- Steve and Megan Laver: Tatong, Reids Flat Road, grandson of Charles Chudleigh, Glanville Chudleigh's brother
- Doug Dockery: *Jerringomar*, 1977-2002
- Des and Shirley Corcoran: descendant of Michael Corcoran of Black Springs
- Barry and Penny Gay: Willow Glen since 1980s, son of Fred and Joan Gay of Clonalton,
 Reids Flat Road
- Ken and Beth Chudleigh: Glenbrook, grandson of Glanville Chudleigh
- Helen Lloyd: author of 'Boorowa' and 'Reids Flat' books.

Old Graham was listed by the National Trust in 2016.

KIAORA and GUVESNE

John O'Connor (1835-1918) is noted on Lot 4, Parish of Graham, and adjoining Lots 26 and 27, Parish of Newham, (Lot 26 is the *Kiaora* homestead block) in the late 1850s. He rapidly expanded his acreage and by 1860 held 3040 acres, along both banks of Hovells Creek. The property was held by the O'Connor family for the next 140 years. John O'Connor married Ellen Frost, the daughter of John Frost of *Forest Creek Station*, Lot 1, Parish of Kenyu, taken up in 1840 (p11).

Kiaora was built to 6000 acres and included Yeronga (3,200 acres) and Guvesne (2,200 acres).

After John's death in 1918 the property was divided between his children: Mary, Cornelius (Kiaora), John (Yeronga), and Thomas (Guvesne). Cornelius O'Connor ran the Kiaora block until his death in 1943. Mary, a single woman, lived at Kiaora with her brother, Cornelius. Another son of John's, William, left home at the age of thirteen in 1880, and rarely returned to Hovells Creek. William is buried at the St Joseph's Church cemetery.

Cornelius (Con), who had no children, left *Kiaora* to his nephews, John Bede O'Connor (son of his brother, John), and Frank O'Connor (son of his brother, Thomas). John Bede sold the *Kiaora* block to his cousin Frank in 1946 (who then owned both *Guvesne* and *Kiaora*).

Kiaora was held by Thomas's children, Frank (who died in 1992) and Vera, until 1997, when the *Kiaora* block was sold to Geoff and Lyn Picker, and the *Guvesne* block to descendants of Fred Hudson (1886-1964).

Guvesne was sold again in 2005 to descendants of Charles Chudleigh (Glanville's brother), of Frogmore (1890-94), later a teacher and school principal at Bigga (1894-1919).

The *Kiaora* and *Guvesne* houses are two of only four stone houses in the valley – *Graham* and *Sunnyside* are the other two.

While there are comprehensive records of when *Graham* was built, specific build dates on the other homes must be gleaned from available records, and the architectural styles of the era.

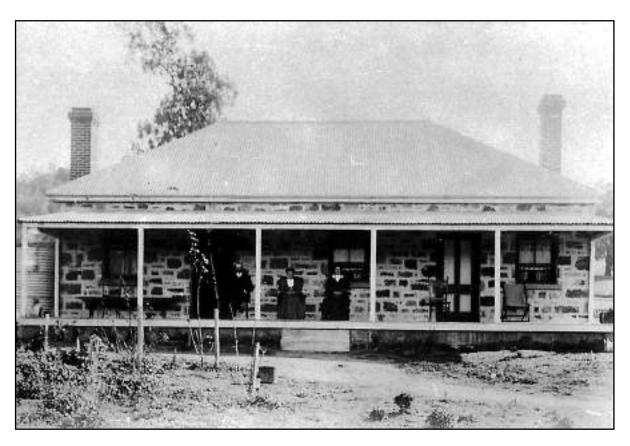
Evidence shows the early buildings at *Kiaora* consisted of a storage shed, a dairy, a stone house, a separate timber kitchen, stables with a circular yard, a woolshed, and a slab house (pulled down by John Bede O'Connor in the mid-1940s as it was considered an eyesore).

The stone house was built by Mr Mitchell from Cowra. The time frame given by O'Connor descendants is between 1880 and 1900.

Signatures of visiting priests were scratched into the bricks around the oven at the *Kiaora* house *[possibly no longer visible]*. It is likely visiting priests were accommodated at *Kiaora* by the O'Connor family home when they came to conduct services at St Joseph's Church.

Sadly, the house is now in a state of disrepair.

The *Guvesne* house is also built of stone, which might indicate it is of the same era, and perhaps by the same stonemason. However, as it is a Federation style (1890-1915), it is possible it was built later than the Georgian style *Kiaora* homestead. John's son Thomas O'Connor (1871-1954) married Lucy Kavanagh in 1910. Perhaps he built the house for his new bride, although it is possible it could have been earlier, as he was thirty-nine years old by then.



Con O'Connor, Mary O'Connor, and a friend on the verandah of *Kiaora*, 1904. Photographed by JJ Murphy Clonalton Studio, Reids Flat (courtesy of J O'Connor)



The *Guvesne* house has, in 2020-21, been substantially renovated. *Guvesne*, pre 2020 renovations (photo courtesy of J Laver)

ALTA VILLA, LAUREL GROVE, KEMBER, SUNNYVIEW

Patrick Neville (1816-1882) purchased Lot 4, 35 acres, Parish of Newham on Hovells Creek in December 1859 and named his block 'Alta Villa' after his former family home in County Limerick, Ireland.

Two additional blocks were purchased under the 1861 Robertson Land Act: one adjoining *Alta Villa* named *Laurel Grove*, and *Kember*, on the Boorowa River. Other blocks: *Sunnyview* (Parish of Kember), on the Lachlan River, and *Ballysteen* (Parish of Newham), north of William Hovell's 968 acres, were purchased later.

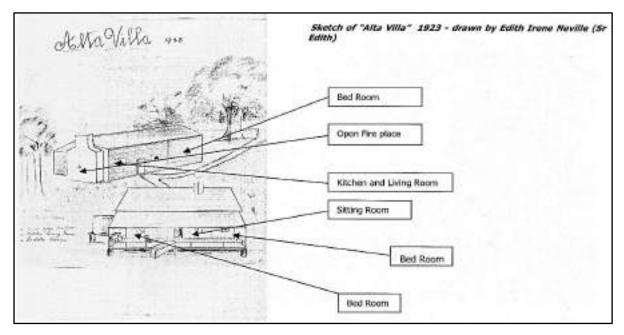
When Patrick died, 1468 acres (*Alta Villa* land title transfer, 1903) passed to his fourth son, Robert (1861-1934). Robert and his wife, Edith Franklin, moved to the *Alta Villa* homestead in 1898 where he lived until his death in 1934.

Daniel Neville (1864-1938), the sixth son of Patrick Neville, lived at *Sunnyview* (land title transfer 1903). Daniel married Ellen Jane Newham, the daughter of Thomas Newham, the second generation owner of Wyangala Station (*p49*). Daniel Neville chaired the inaugural meeting of the Jerringomar Bush Fire Brigade and was the first fire captain in 1930 (*p63*).

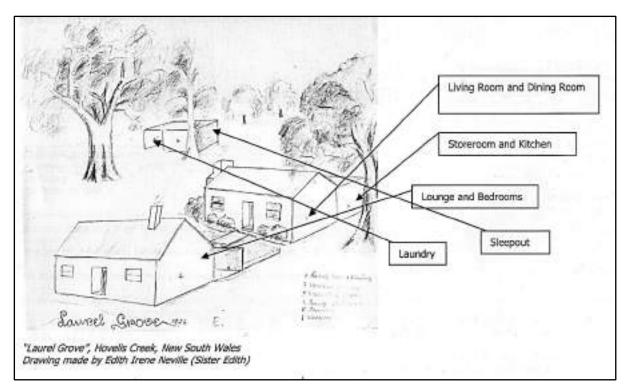
After Robert's death in 1934, *Alta Villa* passed to his nephews, Daniel's two sons: Harold Hastings and Oliver Clyde.

After their father Daniel's death in 1938, Hastings and Oliver sold the *Alta Villa* and *Kember* blocks and moved to *Laurel Grove* in the early 1950s. They renamed it 'Sunnyview' (after the original Sunnyview at the Hovells Creek/Lachlan River junction).

Ray Neville, the great grandson of Patrick Neville, grandson of Robert, purchased *Sunnyview* (formerly *Laurel Grove*) from the estates of his great-uncles Hastings and Oliver in 1984. Ray's son, Michael (a fifth-generation Neville), and grandson, Patrick (sixth generation), now help with the operation of *Sunnyview*, running cattle and sheep, and growing lucerne on the banks of Hovells Creek.



A sketch of the *Alta Villa* homestead drawn in 1923 by Edith Neville (Sister Edith), granddaughter of Patrick Neville, daughter of Robert Neville.



The Laurel Grove house, as drawn by Sister Edith Neville in 1924. Edith grew up at the Laurel Grove homestead.



Sunnyview, 1930s

The original *Sunnyview* block is now called *The Junction*.

These properties have been held by four generations of the Neville family for over 165 years.

WILLOW GLEN

Prior to the 1850s land in the Hovells Creek valley was divided into several large sheep runs. One of these was owned by John O'Sullivan, who appears on Parish maps on blocks along the west bank of Hovells Creek, centred on present day *Willow Glen*.

Thomas O'Neill moved to Hovells Creek with his family from Canowindra in 1862. A Parish of Kenyu map shows O'Neill's name on Lot 5, 150 acres, immediately to the north of the present day St Joseph's Church block. Names of other landholders that appear in the Parish of Kenyu of the mid-late 1800s are Phillip Cunningham, William Rummary, and William Bright. These blocks now form part of *Willow Glen*.

Thomas O'Neill's son, Thomas, continued on the family property, *Willow Glen*, until his death in 1918. His obituary notice states he was aged 71, and that his brother, John, of *Clare View*, which adjoined *Willow Glen*, had died only three weeks earlier.

Thomas (d.1918) is buried at St Joseph's Church at Hovells Creek. John's obituary notice states he was, 'A keen judge of stock, a good horseman, passionately fond of a good horse, and he owned some of the best in the district, which were always at the service of those in sickness or trouble'. ¹⁰³

Little more is known of the O'Neill family, or of other owners of *Willow Glen* until Lindsay Berry (*Kalaraville*) bought it in the mid-1900s. The *Willow Glen* property was sold to Barry Gay in 1984.

The Gay family have expanded *Willow Glen* to include *Willow Park*, *Werrawee*, *Sunnyside*, *Kondon*, and other portions.



Willow Glen, built in 1950

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¹⁰³ The Catholic Press; Thurs 25 July 1918, p24

WERRAWEE and WILLOW PARK

John and Mary Hudson arrived in Australia from Ireland aboard the 'Coromandel' in 1838. Their two eldest sons, James (1836-1921) and John (1839-1919) are believed to have been living at Gunning Flat [near Reids Flat] in about 1859. This is the same John Hudson who lost 500 bags of wheat in a fire (p100). James Hudson worked at *Graham* as a blacksmith in the early 1880s. Descendants of *this* John Hudson's family have been at Hovells Creek on *Werrawee*, *Willow Park*, *Spring Creek* and *Box Range* for over one hundred years.

Werrawee

The 'chain of ponds' reference in James Meehan's notebooks (p3) was subsequently named the Cunningham Ponds, after Phillip Cunningham. Phillip and Mary Cunningham took up Lot 5, 56 acres, in the Parish of Graham in October 1851. This is the site of the Werrawee homestead today. Cunningham bought Lots 27-31 and Lot 36 in November 1856, given him a landholding with frontage to Hovells Creek of 313 acres. Mary Cunningham left these blocks to Edward Kerr in 1872 (p134). These became part of the Smith Company Graham and Narrawa Ltd holdings, as they appear on the land auction map of 1924 when the Smith estate was sold (p138).



An aerial photograph of Werrawee, showing the Cunningham Ponds and the Werrawee homestead

Werrawee was co-owned and managed by Cecil and Vince Hudson, sons of George and Annie Hudson of Willow Park. They had a similar arrangement with Spring Creek and adjoining Box Range, on the Mt Darling Road, and Willow Park to the east, taking over the operation from their father, George.

Vince's son Wayne took over the management of *Werrawee* and *Willow Park*, and his cousin John McGann, bought *Spring Creek* and *Box Range* in 2001. Wayne sold *Werrawee* in 2006 and *Willow Park* in 2016, both of which are now part of *Willow Glen*.

Willow Park

John Hudson (1861-1948), son of James (1836-1919), was also a blacksmith. He married Ellen Healy (1851-1944) at Forest Glen in 1885. Their children were Frederick (1886-1964), Patrick (1887), George (1890-1957), Hannah May (1892-1985, who married Lindsay Berry of *Kalaraville*), and Albert (1895-1937). Albert had no children; he was awarded a Military Medal for gallantry in the field in WWI. A New Zealand war memorial plaque is in the park at Boorowa and a headstone at the cemetery at St Joseph's Church. John and Ellen, and Hannah May are also buried there.

It is uncertain when John Hudson, the blacksmith, moved to Hovells Creek. What is known is that *Willow Park* was the home of George (John's son) and Annie (Gemmell) Hudson. The homestead was built in around 1916. Cecil Hudson, in his later years, remembers moving into the *Willow Park* house as a little boy, 'about two years old'. It was added to at various times — enclosing a verandah, then adding another verandah as additional space was required. There were eight children in the family: Cecil (1915), Mabel (1916), Phyllis (1919), Edgar ('Ned', 1921), Daphne (1923), Vincent (1926), Patricia (1928), Elizabeth ('Betty', 1933).

In the early 1950s, Phyllis Hudson McGann returned to her childhood home with her four children to live with her parents, George and Annie.



Annie Hudson (nee Gemmell), with her 410 single barrel shotgun 'guarding' Willow Park.

This photo was taken around the time the underground cable was installed for the telephone.

A cable reel can be seen behind Annie.



KALARAVILLE

Lindsay Berry (1892-1979) looks about twelve years old in this Berry family photograph, which would date it at about 1904. JJ Murphy, Clonalton Studio Reids Flat was a photographer in the district and may have taken this family portrait.

Heading down Graham Lane, past the old Graham school, one crossed Hovells Creek and turned north to Lindsay Berry at *Kalaraville* on the flats, named the Kakadu Paddock. Turning south one came to Wayne Hudson at *Willow Park*, then further on to where Vince Hudson was at *Werrawee*.

John Berry, known as Jack, was Lindsay's father, seen in the photo holding Florence.

Lindsay was living at *Kalaraville* in 1929. On 12 December he wrote to the Chief Inspector of Schools, of behalf of the local community, requesting the Graham School be moved from next to St Joseph's Church to land on Graham Lane, donated by Mr Medway of *Graham*, which would place it much closer to the homes of most of the local children.

Lindsay Berry married Hannah May Hudson (1892-1985) in 1916.



The Berry family, taken in front of their home on 'Barnetoo' (near Reids Flat)
Standing: Epsy, Lindsay, Robert, Abraham, Joseph, Ethel
Sitting: Ellen Nora holding William, John William (Jack), holding Florence (photo courtesy of Glen Berry)
(likely taken by JJ Murphy Clonalton Studio, Reids Flat)

Kalaraville was held by the Berry family until it was sold to Greg and Lyn Picker in 1984.

RIVERSLEA

Historic 'Riverslea' on the banks of the Lachlan River sits a short distance below the Wyangala Dam wall. Its bespoke cement fence posts are found on many surrounding properties and tell local property owners that their land was once part of the 10,000 acre Stanley R Coward (1895-1951) property that ran from Darbys Falls to Wyangala Dam, and along Frogmore Road bordering Hovells Creek including North Gidgall and southwards to Riversteen.

Two earlier occupiers of what became *Riverslea* were: Edmund Markham¹⁰⁴ (1802-1866), noted in 1838 on County Bathurst, Parish of Dunleary, Lot 4, 1004 acres, on the north bank of the Lachlan River directly opposite present day *Riverslea*; and Edward Killen, noted by 1882 on the same map adjoining Lot 4. A 1904 land map shows Edward Killen holding vast acreage of land in the Parish of Newham south of the Lachlan in addition to portions to the north.

Riverslea gained notoriety in 1922 when Stanley R Coward hosted a party to which he invited renowned Australian war and trans-Pacific pioneer pilot, Charles Kingsford Smith. 'Smithy' arrived by plane with Cowra local George Campbell, landing on a *Riverslea* paddock. After the party, Smithy and Campbell tried to take off, but the plane tipped up on its nose and suffered considerable damage when a wheel got stuck down a rabbit warren. It remained in this vertical position for several weeks.

The existing *Riverslea* homestead was extensively renovated and reconstructed in 1936 by Stanley Coward. Bathurst architect Alfred Sambrook designed the additions in the 'Arts and Crafts' style, featuring floor to ceiling lead light windows and doors, and hand crafted joinery and archways.



When Stan Coward junior inherited *Riverslea* in the 1950s, he demolished two thirds of the large homestead, replacing a section of the house with a 1950s style wing.

Stan's sister, Radiance, was given a subdivision of land at Darby's Falls where she built a striking Cape Cod style house, 'Belmore', currently owned by members of Hovells Creek Landcare Group.

Subdivisions of Riverslea continued throughout the 1970s under the new ownership of Alan Houghton. Houghton added an iconic 1970s shag-pile bar and copper-art fireplace framed by Corinthian columns to a small room off the western veranda which remains a much loved feature of the house today.

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¹⁰⁴ frankmurray.com.au

By the 1990s *Riverslea* was a small 200 acre farm block owned by Phil and Cinda Millard. It was run as a piggery, and a Bed and Breakfast Enterprise, showcased in this 1997 Country Style magazine advertisement.

The Millards sold the woolshed block to actress Cate Blanchett in the early 2000s.

The homestead was run as a back-packers and horse riding facility at this time.

The Millards had a keen interest in native birds and Landcare, efforts expanded on by the next owners.



Gordon and Trudi Refshauge purchased *Riverslea* homestead on 160 acres in 2003. The property was expanded to 881 acres with the purchase of neighbouring *North Gidgall*, which also had cement fence posts, signifying the land was part of the original *Riverslea* holding. The sturdy wooden cattle yards prompted the Refshauges' decision to run cattle. The Refshauges have planted over 3000 paddock trees and shrub clusters, undertaken erosion gully repair work, and fenced out farm dams, recreating woodland and corridor links for their much revered Australian wildlife.



2015, Jo Vink from the National Trust of Australia (NSW) conducted a tour through the Riverslea homestead and commented, 'The restoration of Riverslea is a work in progress and the owners are to be congratulated on their dedication to authenticity and many years of hard work'.

RIVERSTEEN

In 1882 Lots 20, 48 and 106 were left to Patrick Neville's three daughters, Catherine, Mary Sarah, and Ellen in his will. These three lots now form part of *Riversteen* and are located to the north of William Hovell's (later John O'Connor's) 968 acre *Jerringoman*.

In the 1920s *Riversteen* formed part of the southern end of the vast 10,000 acre holding of Stanley Coward's *Riverslea*, evidenced by the concrete fence posts used throughout his estate.

When the adjoining property, *Ballysteen*, owned by Lindsay Berry, was incorporated into a portion of *Riverslea* an amalgamation of the two names became *Riversteen*.

The *Riversteen* house was formerly a worker's cottage during the construction of Wyangala Dam from 1929-35. The pre-fabricated cottage had been imported from Germany and erected on site – an original 'flat pack'!



In the 1970s Lindsay Berry's son, Graham, held *Riversteen* as well as *Grasmere* (renamed *Midlands* under their ownership). Graham's brother, Tony, lived at *Riversteen*.

Subsequent owners were Ken Chudleigh, of *Glenbrook* and *Brooklyn*, who purchased *Riversteen* in 1987. Ken's sons, Robert and Grant, built the new woolshed in 1990. Sam and Belinda Simpson from Yass were at *Riversteen* from 1993-2003.



Vern and Helen Troy, previously at the Quandialla/Bland district near West Wyalong have held Riversteen since 2003 and have upgraded the cottage.

JERRINGOMAR

John and Michael Smith of the Smith Company Graham and Narrawa Ltd purchased *Graham* in 1886. John lived at the *Graham* house, while his brother, Michael, moved a few miles north and built the original *Jerringomar* 'rubble stone' house in the early 1890s. 'Rubble stone' is a mixture of stones, in this case granite, with a lime and sand mortar between boards to form a wall. The walls are then rendered and scored with lines to imitate stone blocks.

By 1924, John's sons, Peter and Robert resided at *Graham* and *Jerringomar*, respectively. This has been deduced from an article in the Burrowa News on 11 January 1924, which reports that 'Barney' Smith, aged 44, was found seriously injured at the bottom of a railway viaduct and later died. The coronial inquest finds 'accidental death'. The article goes on to describe Barney as the fifth son of the late Mr and Mrs John Smith of Narrawa, near Gunning, and the brother of Peter (*Graham*), Robert (*Jerringomar*) and various other siblings (nine in all) who lived further afield. This was the same Barney Smith who practised writing his letters on the wall at the *Graham* house when he was a young child.

Vera O'Connor, who as a child lived at *Guvesne*, recalled going to school in the 'school room' at the *Jerringomar* house with Robert Smith's children in the early 1920s. Vera remembered there were eight of them, some of them early primary age, like herself.

Jerringomar, a 5598 acre property, was bought by brothers Archie (1878-1962) and Gilbert Dunn (1882-1955) in 1924. This area included *Grasmere*, *Benwerrin*, *Jerringoman* (the original William Hovell block), and the present day *Kooringle* block.

In 1929 the Dunn brothers sold 2184 acres of *Jerringomar* to Mr AE Clements. This included *Grasmere* and *Benwerrin*.

When Archie moved to the north *Jerringomar* pise house in 1945 (his wife, Lena, had died, and Gilbert was also on his own), the original *Jerringomar* homestead and 1200 acres was sold to Elijah Wright. He made renovations to the house, which included moving the kitchen inside and installing new cabinets and an AGA cooker.

In 1956 Elijah Wright sold 550 acres with frontage to Hovells Creek to Max Boulding, and the hillslopes of the rear block to Vince Hudson. Max had owned land on Bennett Springs Road, named *Kooringle*, so when he moved, he renamed his portion of the original *Jerringomar* block 'Kooringle', 'because it was easier for the mail'.

In 1977 Doug Dockery purchased the *Kooringle* block, as well as other portions of *Jerringomar* from John Fredericks (Margaret Dunn's son) in 1982, and *Balloch* (originally *Jerringoman*) from Bruce Clements in 1985, totaling 2700 acres. Doug held the re-amalgamated *Jerringomar* for the next twenty-five years. He sold 700 acres including the *Jerringomar* house, the sheds, and cattle yards to Keith and Jan Hyde in 2002, who are the current owners. Other portions were sold to adjoining landholders.

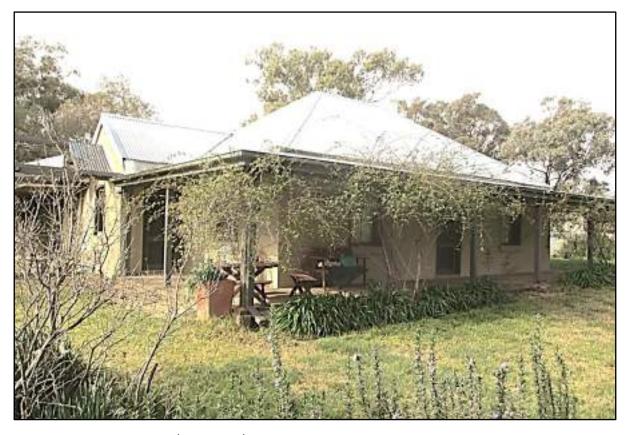
In 2006 Keith and Jan completely restored and renovated the original *Jerringomar* house, repairing large cracks in the walls, re-rendering, re-roofing, and replacing cracked glass in the windows. The house was sympathetically extended with a large living area, a new bathroom, and *an indoor toilet!*

The *Kooringle* name was retained, however a decision has been made in 2021, to revert to the name *Jerringomar*, in honour of the original name of the homestead, and with the warm approval of descendants of the Dunn family.



The original *Jerringomar* house built by Michael Smith (1890s) as it was in the 1920s when Archie and Gilbert Dunn and their families lived there.

(photo courtesy of Jim Clements)



Jerringomar/ Kooringle/ Jerringomar in 2021 (photo courtesy of K&J Hyde)

Laurie Dunn recalls in her memoirs:

When we came to 'Jerringomar' there was only one house for two families to live in – made of stone on a rise overlooking Hovells Creek. It was shared as two units, with a small extra kitchen made on a verandah. A new house about a mile away was commenced about a year later and we moved up to it as Aunt Lena said she'd rather stay where she was. 105

The building of that house was a wonderful event. Firstly, a sawmill was started, and the timber cut and milled, but most of it was left rough, as taking it to Cowra to be planed was too expensive. The walls were made of pise, which is mud held together with straw. A large circular pit was dug with a post in the middle to which a draught horse was tied. The horse walked round and round and churned up the mud which was made of earth and water poured in plus the straw and the hooves did all the mixing – no great machinery in 1926. Frames were erected for the walls and the wet mud and straw 'poured'. As it dried and the wooden frames removed, the walls were 'cut down' with a flat spade to make them straight and true.

We thought it a fine house. It was beautifully cool in summer with a wide verandah all around.



The pise house was left mostly unoccupied for many years after Archie and Gilbert left in 1955. Gilbert's grandson, John Fredericks, lived there for a few years when he inherited that portion of *Jerringomar* from his mother, Margaret. It was used as a rental property during Doug Dockery's ownership 1977-2002. It was in a poor state of repair in 2002 when it was sold as a Sydney family's weekender. It changed hands a few more times with various owners carrying out repairs. The current owner has substantially renovated north *Jerringomar*, and it is now a well maintained homestead on a six acre block.

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¹⁰⁵ Laurie refers to the original *Jerringomar* homestead as *Jerringomar* 'south' in her memoirs.

GRASMERE, BENWERRIN, GEWEROO (EUPON DOWNS)

In 1929, Archie and Gilbert Dunn sold 2184 acres to AE Clements. This was *Grasmere* and *Benwerrin*. In 1930 AE Clements purchased *Geweroo*, which he later made over to his son, Edley. It was on this block that Edley built a house for his new bride, Laurie Dunn. Edley and Laurie's sons, Jim, Robert, Donald and Bruce were born and grew up at *Geweroo*.

Jim Clements was left the *Benwerrin* block, which he still holds with his son, Gus, who manages the day to day operations.

Donald Clements inherited *Geweroo* when AE Clements died. An uncle, Richard Forster (a fire captain of the Jerringomar Bush Fire Brigade 1948/9), held *Grasmere* from 1946 until 1965, and built the current *Grasmere* house.

Bruce Brooks purchased *Grasmere* in 1965 and sold it to Graham Berry (Lindsay and Hannah Berry's grandson) in 1975. (Graham Berry also held *Riversteen* at this time).

Under Graham Berry's ownership the name was changed to *Midlands* because the property was midway between two other properties the Berrys owned.

In 1995 Judy and Bill Refshauge purchased *Midlands*. On learning of the original name 'Grasmere' which appeared on maps, they were keen to reclaim it. Judy said, 'I went down with a screwdriver one day to get the Midlands sign off, and under there I found Grasmere'.



Grasmere



Benwerrin



Geweroo, part of the Clements' family property, was sold to Ron Marsden c.1980 and renamed *Eupon Downs*.

Eupon Downs has had three owners since Ron Marsden. The past two owners have been members of the Hovells Creek Landcare Group.

Eupon Downs has recently sold (2021).

CHAPTER 14 – HOVELLS CREEK LANDCARE GROUP Establishment, Membership, Projects, Funding



The degradation of our environment is not simply a local problem, nor a problem for one state or another, nor for the Commonwealth alone.

Rather, the damage being done to our environment is a problem for us all – not just government – but for all of us individually and together.

Bob Hawke, 1989

ESTABLISHMENT/ MEMBERSHIP OF HCLG

The Hovells Creek Landcare Group (HCLG) was formed in 1995 mid way through the Decade of Landcare, which was established and strongly supported financially by the Hawke Federal Government. The Group was initiated when the secretary of the Graham Bush Fire Brigade, Mrs Sam Dobner (Alta Villa), posted a survey to all her neighbours seeking interest in forming a local group. The survey indicated shared concerns for the landscape, the environment generally, and interest in receiving assistance for on-farm rehabilitation work.

At that time funding support for projects was only available through a Landcare Group. Founding member, Muriel Abraham (*Gidgall*), recalls seeking support to address erosion gullies along Maryamma Creek. When asked which Landcare group she represented, she replied, 'Maryamma Creek Landcare Group'. 'And how many members are in your group Mrs Abraham?' Muriel replied, 'Just one, me!' The reply was, 'We're sorry, Mrs Abraham, but no support is available for your work'.

The reason to form a landcare group was apparent and the first meeting was held in a paddock on *Jerringomar* on 12 October 1995. The Group soon acquired local networking and social roles as members gathered for the bi-monthly meetings and seasonal on-farm tree planting.

An early member, Judy Refshauge (*Grasmere*), an experienced horticulturalist, played a key role in teaching other members to identify and collect local seeds. Judy propagated endemic trees and shrubs, and guided initial plantings. Muriel was relentless in her support of Judy, and the two proved to be a formidable team in identifying appropriate and rare species worthy of propagating and planting across the Group's area. For ten years, until her retirement, Judy collected and grew seedlings at the nursery she established at *Grasmere*, providing thousands of plants free of charge to HCLG members for local plantings. Initially, little knowledge was available on the range of suitable shrub species, and much was learned through trial and error. The collective experience on the most suitable trees and shrubs, how, when, and where to establish species, continues to grow.

The membership of Hovells Creek Landcare Group varies from second or third and even fourth generation full time farmers managing more than 2,000 hectares to other members who are 'retired' and live on smaller 40 hectare, or medium size, 500 hectare blocks. The strength of the Group has been bolstered by generational change and the arrival of newcomers to the area, some with professional qualifications in agriculture, engineering, or land management, who bring new experience and project management skills with them.

Members have fenced 29 kilometres of waterways, fenced 130 hectares of remnant vegetation (to exclude domestic livestock), and planted 56,800 native trees/shrubs since the formation of the Group in 1995.

From humble beginnings, the Hovells Creek Landcare Group Inc. has grown into an important self-help, locally based, support body of currently ninety farm family members {2021). Five of the original farm families remain, albeit with some generational change. The diverse and changing nature of HCLG activities, including management of regional environmental and local on-farm projects, is reflected in the work achieved in the past twenty-six years since the Group was formed.

OPERATION OF HCLG

Hovells Creek Landcare Group acts as a professional body to organise field trips, on-farm workshops, and field days, as well as managing funding support for on-farm projects.

The Group members meet bi-monthly to discuss key issues, progress of projects, and hosts a guest speaker presenting aspects of interest to the Group. These meetings are an opportunity to socialise and catch up over supper at the conclusion of the more formal part of the meeting.

An elected Executive – Chair, Treasurer, Secretary, Project Manager, meets on the intervening months to manage group finances, correspondence, and projects.

Since its establishment, HCLG has relied on its volunteer membership to organise field days, guest speakers and workshops; to apply, manage and report on Landcare project funding; and to host the annual Christmas function for members, neighbours, and friends.

In 2017, as Group membership grew, and as more funding support for major projects was received, HCLG engaged a Landcare Coordinator two days per week, to assist with the management of the expanding program. This paid support role helps administer, not only the on-ground Landcare project portfolio, but educational programs for members, guest speakers, field days, workshops, a website, a Facebook page, and newsletters.

Members have undertaken professional development and training programs such as property mapping, NSW Department of Primary Industry facilitated Landscan, Prograze, Paddock Plants and Lachlan Catchment Management Authority (LCMA) facilitated Holistic Management, Pasture Cropping and Cell Grazing. The shared experiences, and differing background of members have been valuable additions to Group discussion on the broad range of Landcare issues, such as:

- the importance of a deep rip or a double rip for tree planting site preparation
- weed control
- species site preferences
- erosion control techniques alternative phosphate fertilisers for the region's low phosphorus granite soils
- rotation or continuous grazing
- management of endemic parasitic mistletoe in our environment.

The Group has successfully managed grants from the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment; Meat and Livestock Australia; the Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal with Stockland Care Foundation; NRMA; the Great Eastern Ranges Initiative with the Foundation for National Parks; two NSW Environmental Trust grants; three National Heritage Trust grants; four Community Action Grants; five grants from South East and Central Tablelands Local Land Services; and has coordinated several LCMA funded projects on member properties and public land. HCLG has upgraded its operating systems to be more publicly accountable for its use of public and private funding.

KEY ACTIVITIES AND PROJECTS

Key activities are decided by the Group's needs and members' requirements. Application is made for funding grants by the Executive on behalf of the Group. While funding provides for materials such as fencing supplies, tube stock, and heavy machinery for restoration works, landholder members are responsible for on-ground works such as planting, tree guards, and on-going maintenance.

In 1997, the Hovells Creek Landcare Group commissioned the Lachlan Rural Consultancy to help develop its first Catchment Plan. LRC assessed resources and made recommendations on the most appropriate use, management, and priorities of those resources.

Two early studies were undertaken in collaboration with the NSW Department of Agriculture (now NSW Department of Primary Industries) and the then Department of Land and Water Conservation (DLWC).

The first study investigated the use of lime to address the low pH (4.5-5.5) and poor structure of the-soils in the valley to improve pastures for wool production.

The second study was a comprehensive survey of saline and swampy soils in the valley in 1999-2000 by DLWC. Much of the valley floor along the creek line and adjacent watercourse has always been 'swampy'. VB Riley noted these swampy areas in his 1871 field books (p29).

In a complementary study, University of Canberra students researched the salinity of water in Hovells Creek, finding the water leaving the valley into the Lachlan River to be less saline than water entering the valley-from the headwaters.-(Harvey & Moore, 2004)

The findings and recommendations have been integrated into local farm management practices, such as the application of lime and planting salt tolerant species.

Hovells Creek Landcare became involved with the *Lachlan Community Seed Collecting Project* in 2012. Many plant communities in the Lachlan Catchment, including the Wyangala region, are now listed as Endangered Ecological Communities (EECs) as a result of land clearing.

The project aimed to engage land managers and community groups to collect local native seed to be used in revegetation projects in their local area on private and public land.

HCLG members, Amy Walker and Trudi Refshauge undertook seed collection, storage, and propagation training with specialists as part of the project.

The collected seed was grown into tube stock for planting and/or sowing through a direct seeding machine.



DROUGHT RECOVERY

Drought recovery funding in 2007-08 allowed four HCLG members fronting the Lachlan River below Wyangala Dam to better manage their vegetation, soil, and water resources. The aims were to:

- remove stock, fence, and revegetate the riverbanks to enable recovery from drought
- better facilitate natural resource management during future droughts.

These plantings have matured well and by the end of the 2009/2010 summer it was impossible to ride a bike between the rows. There is now regrowth from self-seeding, ensuring the prospect of sustainability through self-replacement.

Side benefits of this drought project resulted in a rapid recovery of freshwater springs, reduced erosion, native vegetation growth along watercourses, and an increase in native bird species. There has been regrowth of native pastures, and an increase in shade and shelter for stock.

Conservation Volunteers Australia, 106 with volunteers from Korea, Germany, and England assisted with the tree and shrub planting on these properties.

HEALTHY FARM DAMS

In 2013 a workshop was held at Frogmore with the Boorowa Community Landcare Group with support from a number of NSW agencies. 107

The workshop addressed a number of issues including:

- Water quality and its effect on livestock health and productivity
- Problems associated with poorly managed dams
- The impact of stock and vegetation on farm dams
- Analysing dam health and developing management plans.



¹⁰⁶ http://www.conservationvolunteers.com.au

107 https://hovellscreeklandcare.org.au/images/Water-Qualityhow-it-can-effect-livestock.pdf

TREE PLANTING - Public Land Rehabilitation

In 2013 Hovells Creek Landcare undertook to coordinate restoration of vegetation on a two hectare area of the eleven hectare Riverslea Travelling Stock Reserve at the junction of Frogmore Road and Darbys Falls Road. This TSR is now used infrequently for travelling livestock but is used occasionally by local farmers for grazing stock.

Students from Wyangala Public School, with support from HCLG members, undertook the planting program in July/August 2013. A total of 425 trees and shrubs were planted at approximately a 50/50 ratio. HCLG has continued to undertake weed control and remove tree guards when the trees are sufficiently large.



2013

The same site in 2021

Note the white vehicle (top right) parked in the same position as the school

bus in 2013.



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KOORINGLE DAM PLANTING

Land surrounding dams on *Kooringle* was grassed, but not treed. This large two acre dam supports a myriad of water bird and animal life – pelicans, swans, ducks, turtles and the occasional water rat. Water evaporation was high with no trees to deflect prevailing winds away from the surface of the water.

This large tree planting of some hundreds of trees on the northern and southern sides of the dam have provided habitat for nesting ducks and turtles, a safe stopover for migratory species, and reduced evaporation.



2011



2017

K2W - KANANGRA TO WYANGALA

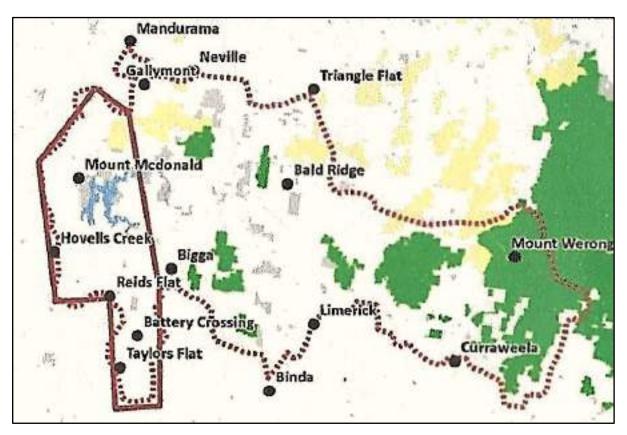
In 2013 Hovells Creek Landcare Group joined a consortium of regional Landcare and environmental groups in the Kanangra-Boyd to Wyangala (K2W) project, part of the Great Eastern Ranges Initiative. HCLG-developed an Action Plan for habitat management and land care in the western sector of the corridor, with considerable input from the local community, local landholders, and technical experts in wildlife and habitat management. The Plan included the lower Hovells Creek catchment bird migration corridor.

Four key Action Themes and Action Tasks/Projects were identified:

- Habitat Management, Revegetation, and Vegetation Enhancement
- Weed Management
- Feral Animal Control
- Cultural Heritage.

The Hovells Creek area, to the west of the Great Dividing Range, is at a critical intersection of the Kanangra-Boyd to Wyangala (K2W) east-west flyway and the north-south inland flyway of the grassy box-gum woodlands. The K2W corridor, with permanent waters along the Abercrombie, the Lachlan and tributary rivers and creeks (including Hovells Creek) is an important drought refuge for both migratory and threatened species.

A survey of eight HCLG member properties by NSW Office of Environment and Heritage staff in June 2015 found ten endangered and eleven rare and declining bird species amongst 102 species identified and mapped in the region. An environmental consultant worked with landholders to develop cross-property habitat management plans, and a program of paddock tree replacement and cluster plantings on member properties.



The Hovells Creek Landcare project area within the Kanangra to Wyangala (K2W) corridor

This project allowed critical habitat needs and values to be identified and specific species action plans to be incorporated into HCLG's ongoing work.

Hovells Creek Landcare Group informed and led the broader community in linking critical habitat connections. This knowledge continues to be used to strengthen and plan ongoing projects including field days, revegetation events, and wildlife surveys.

The NSW Minister for Primary Industry, Katrina Hodgkinson, launched the project at Reids Flat in front of a large audience of Hovells Creek and Reids Flat landholders at the Reids Flat Hall in May 2014.



Keith Hyde, Katrina Hodgkinson the NSW Minister, Melissa Cain (Mid-Lachlan Landcare) and child, Mary Bonet (K2W program coordinator), Gordon Refshauge (chair of HCLG)



Workshop groups discussed the importance of paddock trees for migratory birds

HCLG PADDOCK TREE PROJECT 2016-2019

Earlier HCLG projects and K2W program background research indicated scattered paddock trees are disappearing from our landscape. Many are well over one hundred years old, and many are dying. These are not being replaced naturally because self-set seedlings are grazed by both domestic livestock and kangaroos and are not becoming established. Paddock trees provide shelter for birds, bats, gliders, insects, reptiles, and mammals. They also support agricultural productivity through helping manage salinity, improving soil properties, and providing shelter for stock. It is therefore important they be replaced and protected until they become established.

HCLG planted 1500 paddock trees within individual stock proof guards in three-years from 1 Sept 2016 to 30 August 2019. Guidance for the planting was based on the Habitat Connectivity Plans prepared in 2016 and 2017 by the Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH) consultant for thirteen individual properties. The objective was to plant trees at 30-50 metre intervals within a 50-100 metre-wide corridor, creating 'stepping-stones' between existing patches of trees and shrubs for birds, insects, and small animals.

By the end of 2021, 1800 paddock trees have been planted across twenty-two local properties, representing some 42 kilometers of 100 metre-wide habitat connectivity corridors.



Paddock trees across the landscape

Close up of a paddock tree showing the weed mat, protective plastic tree guard against wind and small animals, and large mesh tree guard as protection against sheep, cattle, and kangaroos.

SAVING OUR SUPERB PARROT

A consortium of five Landcare groups (LachLandcare, Mid-Lachlan Landcare, Hovells Creek Landcare, Boorowa Community Landcare, and Upper Lachlan Landcare) are partnering with Cowra Woodland Birds, Greening Australia, and National Parks and Wildparks Service in a three year project (2020-2022) to protect the iconic Superb Parrot. The groups will deliver onground protection and restoration of important habitat for the threatened Superb Parrot. Information and awareness raising events have been held to encourage protection of Eucalypt trees with hollows that provide nesting sites for superb parrots.

The SOSP consortium provides funding for landholders to plant new paddock trees and shrubs and restore woodlands. These plantings will increase future habitat and landscape connectivity for superb parrots.

This community-based project adds to the work already being done by farmers and Landcare groups who have planted hundreds of thousands of trees and shrubs in paddocks, along fence lines, creeks, and rivers. These new habitats will support the survival of a range of other threatened woodland birds.





Superb Parrots are very choosy about the tree hollow they select for their home and nursery.

GULLY EROSION CONTROL

Gidgall

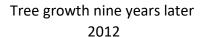
When Muriel and Geoff Abraham bought *Gidgall* near Wyangala in 1981, much of it was denuded and there were many deep erosion gullies.

Muriel, with support from family members, and Rover Scout groups from Sydney, transformed the landscape of *Gidgall*. Early ripping, fencing off key areas, direct seeding and planting has resulted in tens of thousands of trees and improved pasture.





Trees stock came from the HCLG nursery established in the late 1990s by Judy Refshauge at *Grasmere*, and from Greening Australia. This has vastly improved the gullies – the bottoms and the sides have revegetated, and active erosion has slowed or been stopped altogether.





During 2021 works have been completed at six sites on three properties, *Balloch, Kooringle*, and *Riverslea*, and are already proving their worth in the 2021 wet season. Seeding and planting of the six areas is in progress.

Balloch

The sides of this gully on *Balloch* were contoured with a dozer after the top soil was removed and set aside. After the dozer works, the top soil was replaced, and the area planted with grasses and trees to slow the flow of water.



The finished area with a dam at the bottom of the slope.





Riverslea

A roadside gully was lined with rocks.
Grasses will be planted to stabilise the rocks and soil.

SOIL EROSION CONTROL

Soil erosion on Hovells Creek farms and its impact on sedimentation and water quality in local creeks and rivers is a priority issue in both local and regional action plans. The build-up of a 140 kilometre long sand slug in the Lachlan River between Wyangala and Forbes has:

- resulted in the loss of deep holes for Murray cod breeding and fishing
- increased sedimentation ingress into town water supply pump stations
- the potential to increase downstream farmland flooding because the river has less capacity to handle peak flows released from Wyangala Dam.

Soil erosion action is largely left to individual landholders with limited regional or catchment coordination.

Hovells Creek Landcare has developed a program to address soil erosion on Category 1 and 2 watercourses* on eight properties. Plans are in place for works on another fifteen properties in 2022. This will involve tree/shrub planting and grass cover seeding to stabilise earthworks and to fence these areas off from livestock.

NSW Soil Conservation Service will do the design and earthworks and landholders will be responsible for fencing, planting, and seeding.

Some of this erosion arises historically from over clearing of erosion prone soils in the early days of settlement; denudation of the landscape by rabbits during the 1910-1950 period; and more recent overgrazing activity especially during dry/drought years.

This is a major collaborative project for HCLG project, and landholders. The next phase of local works within Category 3 and 4 watercourses*, including streambank and streambed erosion within Hovells Creek itself, will require input from NSW Fisheries and WaterNSW and associated regulatory approvals.

- *Stream ordering for a fictitious stream using Strahler (1952)¹⁰⁸:
- 1. Headwaters
- 2. First stream junction
- 3. Junction of two level 1 & 2 streams
- 4. Junction of two level 3 streams

 $^{^{108}\} https://www.industry.nsw.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0020/172091/Determining-Strahler-stream-order-fact-sheet.pdf$

DROUGHT AND CLIMATE CHANGE MANAGEMENT

Recorded history of the Hovells Creek valley shows it has been subject to 'droughts and flooding rains' for the past 120 years (p30). Rainfall variability has underpinned HCLG activity since its formation in 1995.

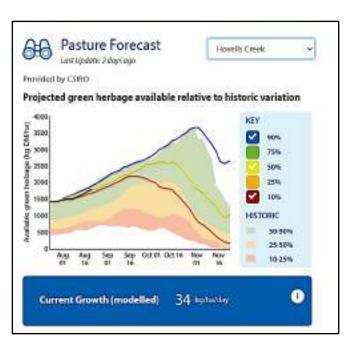
During the dry/drought years 2019-20, HCLG organised two 'Managing Dry times' workshops and social support meetings for regional landholders. A panel of experts addressed members and landholders on topics such as managing mental health; support tools for dealing with drought; and planning for future droughts.

Meetings and gatherings of Landcarers and their neighbours are key supports for rural communities. A 2021 report ¹⁰⁹indicates Landcare volunteers enjoy substantial improvements to their mental and physical wellbeing and a significant decrease to their healthcare costs. Forty six percent of respondents reported an improvement in their mental resilience. Ninety percent reported a stronger connection to their community.

• • •

An automatic solar-powered rainfall and soil moisture/temperature recorder was installed on *Willow Glen* in 2020, with LLS/National Landcare Program support. Recorded Data is linked to the South East NSW Farming Forecaster website¹¹⁰, which uses CSIRO GrassGro computing technologies, research records, and Bureau of Meteorology long term rainfall records to predict pasture growth scenarios for the coming season.

Two additional automatic rainfall/soil moisture probes will be installed in 2021/22 at other Hovells Creek locations.





Hovells Creek farmers are able to use this information to make informed decisions about livestock stocking rates or supplementary feeding decisions. The program will be extended in 2021-2022 through HCLG workshops enabling local farmers to input their own farm rainfall records and livestock management preferences.

(data from 10 Sept 2021)

110 https://www.farmingforecaster.com.au/

¹⁰⁹ published by KPMG in partnership with Landcare Australia and Holbrook (NSW) Landcare

Many smaller projects and initiatives have been carried out by HCLG including:

- control of feral animals especially foxes and feral cats
- control of weeds including the biological control of blackberries, St John's wort and Paterson's curse, and control of serrated tussock
- liaison with local government on weed management, roadside water and tree management
- grazing management options
- the impact of climate change on pasture productivity
- pasture options and tree stock selections

Local landcare has emerged as a key component of the local social and community support network. As a rural community, and in the absence of a local progress association, the Hovells Creek Landcare Group plays a key role in representing community interests to local shire and state government.

HOVELLS CREEK LANDCARE GROUP CHAIRMEN: 1995-2021

Bill Meiklejohn, Barry Gay, Keith Hyde, Geoff Walker, Gordon Refshauge

AWARDS

- Partner in the 2020 State Landcare Award for the collaborative Superb Parrot project.
- Finalist in the NSW Green Globe in 2019 (photo of current chair Gordon Refshauge with awards).

LOCAL LANDCARE CHAMPIONS

Muriel Abraham Alan and Monica McDonald Geoff Walker





FOR FURTHER INFORMATION GO TO:

www.hovellscreeklandcare.org.au www.facebook.com/HovellsCreekLandcareGroup

Landcare is more than planting trees, it's about creating community. (Muriel Abraham, 2018)

CHAPTER 15 – PAST, PRESENT, and FUTURE

The Hovells Creek area has seen enormous changes since James Meehan first traversed the valley just over two hundred years ago, and even more since European settlers began to arrive in the mid-to-late 1830s.

Attitudes towards land management have changed markedly from wide-spread ringbarking and clearing trees and vegetation in the late 1800s to the planting of tens of thousands of trees and shrubs since the 1980s. The combined efforts of Hovells Creek landholders have helped restore the landscape, while perhaps not to its original vegetated state, at least to a better place than 100-150 years ago. Gullies, formed as a result of early land clearing, exacerbated by rabbit denuded landscapes, are now being managed by local landholders with support from Hovells Creek Landcare and state agencies.

The Hovells Creek landscape contains significant patches of remnant woodland connecting residual old creek and paddock trees with new plantings by current landholders. Native ground-story grasses and herbs remain abundant in non-cultivated and well managed grazing paddocks, especially in the hill country. Hovells Creek landholders endeavour to maintain ground cover of native and introduced pasture and crop species at above seventy percent.

Forty to sixty acre land releases in the mid-1800s were rapidly combined to create viable parcels of land, with changing ownership in a handful of well-known names – the Nevilles at the northern end of the valley, the Dunn brothers and O'Connors in the centre, Edward Kerr, later the Smith family to the south, and the Hudsons to the east of Hovells Creek. The next phase was property division amongst family members and smaller subdivision sales.

In the past decade, many property owners have been in an acquisition phase with adjoining lots, or those in close proximity, being added to existing land holdings, either through direct purchase or lease arrangements. Hovells Creek has a strong core of young, well educated, farmer landholders with the next generation already in the nursery or at school. Paradoxically, in the past decade, some larger portions have been subdivided into 15-40 hectare blocks with road frontage and building entitlements, attracting retirees or tree changers. New landholders are being welcomed to the valley, adding new skills and diversity.

Improvements in communication technologies via satellite are generally good. Mobile technology remains a challenge. Road access, and 'work from home' opportunities are expected to increase demand for smaller rural lifestyle blocks in the central west and southern slopes of NSW. Hovells Creek is within commuter distance of Sydney and Canberra with many landholders having links to these major population centres.

Vehicle access to regional towns has improved from a boggy (at times) track to a well-used, progressively upgraded, bitumen all-weather road and substantial, mostly all-weather bridges. B-double trucks move large numbers of animals in and out of the area. The district is close to regional saleyards and abattoir facilities.

Landcare in the Hovells Creek region is strong and active, with support across a broad range of land management, and social support systems. In addition specialist farm technology and financial advisors are readily available for advice.

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Land values have increased significantly in the past few years – by as much as 100 percent, to \$3,000-5,000 per acre. No more land is being made, so what exists must be managed with care, while at the same time become more productive to justify return on investment.

The (current) key products from Hovells Creek farms are sold on international and domestic markets well beyond the farm gate. Demand for sheep and beef meat and wool remains strong.

Perhaps the greatest landscape challenge is the future management of the fragile, highly erodible, low fertility soils of the valley. Maintaining ground cover remains vitally important.

The second most significant challenge for local landholders is managing potential climate change and seasonal weather conditions. Expert advice to Hovells Creek landholders indicates they face possible increased summer and reduced winter rainfall. Land management and farming systems will need to adapt to predicted variations. Options exist for future conservation management, carbon sequestration and carbon trading as new sources of farm income. New and emerging solar and wind power provide alternatives for 'off grid' electricity generation or supplementation.

Environmental consciousness, broader community concerns about climate change and its potential impact, pressures for clean air and water, and habitat for rare and endangered species are all challenges for the future.

Regional landholders will continue to need access to reliable information and advisors with the required knowledge and expertise. They will need farm labour with the relevant experience and skills. The availability of contractors for spraying, planting, animal treatment, shearing, and harvesting will be critical.

Groups, such as Landcare, will play an increasing role and forum for local discussion, access to technical experts, and social support.

Collaboration in the district on landscape management issues such as habitat for rare and endangered species, soil erosion control, creek/river sedimentation, bush fire control, weed and feral animal control is strong.

Hovells Creek landholders can expect to face weed control challenges in the future. This will be especially relevant during the construction phase of the NSW Government's planned expansion of Wyangala Dam, ¹¹¹. Increased movement of people, vehicles, road plant and farm machinery in, out, and through the valley will focus attention on maintaining farm/land health, quarantine, and management processes.

Some HCLG members will be adversely impacted by higher water levels in the extended Wyangala Dam. On a positive note, Wyangala provides an important regional recreational resource and options for alternative economic ventures in the Hovells Creek valley.

New technological advances provide access to research on farm and land management issues, and farm productivity. The adoption of information and alternative strategies will be up to the individual landholder, their personal circumstances, and goals.

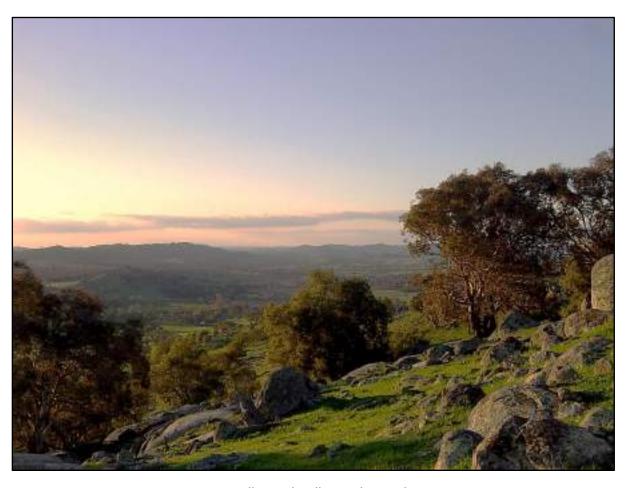
¹¹¹ As this book goes to print the Wyangala Dam project is still in the planning and review phase. (p51)

The Hovells Creek community is a strong, resilient, enthusiastic group that willingly embraces new ideas. The landholders work hard to implement these ideas to improve farm productivity, the landscape, and the environment, and their efforts are evident.

The Hovells Creek area is a small, but beautiful, corner of the vast Australian landscape. It is the responsibility of every landholder, whether they are the custodians of large productive family farms or smaller lifestyle blocks, to look after this special place.

Try and leave this world a little better than you found it and, when your turn comes to die, you can die happy in feeling that at any rate you have not wasted your time but have done your best.

Lord Robert Baden Powell (1857-1941)



Hovells Creek valley to the north

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APPENDIX 1 – PARTICIPANTS IN THE PROJECT

While at Hovells Creek I was much impressed with the high principle, the unswerving rectitude of purpose of the male inhabitants, the purity of morals and propriety of manners that characterise the females of that place. (Duncan Cameron, letter to the Goulburn Post, 1968)

The following people gave generously of their time to be interviewed for this project. Many are long term residents of the Hovells Creek vicinity, or descendants of families who have been in the area for three or four generations. They all have a wealth of knowledge of the district; of the changes in property boundaries and ownership; observations of the changes in farming practices; and valuable skills and expertise they contribute to the Hovells Creek district. Other participants are more recent arrivals with a deep commitment to improving the landscape.

MURIEL ABRAHAM

Muriel is a founding member of the Hovells Creek Landcare Group. In 1981, Muriel and her late husband, Geoff, purchased *Gidgall*, a 2000 acre property on Darbys Falls Road at the northern end of the Hovells Creek valley. Muriel said, *'It was in a very neglected state, but Geoff said, "I don't care, this is a challenge to improve the place"*. We commuted from Sydney and became weekend farmers. We just ran wethers'.

Muriel and Geoff organised shearing to be done in the school holidays so their son Ian and his friend Scott could come. The boys were studying agriculture at school and later at university. Before the shearing shed was built at *Gidgall*, the Abrahams walked their sheep to the neighbouring *Riverslea* woolshed with assistance from 'Webby' (Frank) Hudson. Webby's son, Gary, was one of their early shearers. Muriel remembers, 'Webby was a good mentor to Geoff and he'd organise a team of shearers'.

Muriel was recognised as a 'Landcare Champion' in 2018 for her dedication to planting tens of thousands of trees and shrubs on *Gidgall* to improve the landscape.

MAX BOULDING

Max Boulding was born in Boorowa in 1926. He moved to Phil's Creek, near Rugby, where he went to school. In the early 1940s, Max, then a teenager, worked on the *Graham* property with Mr Edgerton's horse team putting in dams. This was when the Kellys owned *Graham*, 1936-1948.

Max's first property, *Kooringle*, was along Bennett Springs Road. In 1956 Max purchased 550 acres from Elijah Wright on Frogmore Road, a part of the former vast *Jerringomar* property. He named this block *'Kooringle'* because *'it was easier for the mail'*. Max's new *Kooringle* included the original *Jerringomar* house, built by Michael Smith of Smith Company Graham and Narrawa Ltd in the early 1890s.

Max recalls, 'I was at Kooringle for about twenty years. We ran cattle and sheep. I shore 1100 sheep there one year. There were lots of willows on the creek then. We'd get willow grubs to go fishing at Burrinjuck'.

Max lived in Wagga Wagga, NSW, when he was interviewed in 2018.

CHARLIE CHOWN

Charlie is a long-term resident of Reids Flat. He was born at Bigga in 1941 and grew up at *Dinner Hill,* near Reids Flat. His family moved to a place on Tarrants Gap Road in 1954. He bought *Rosevale* and *Highfields* (to the east of Mt Darling) from his father Alfred in 1969.

Alfred Chown operated his own bullock team carting service for thirty-seven years, having started work with his uncle's team at the age of thirteen. The service carted wool out of the area and brought in fencing materials and other supplies. By 1964 bullock teams were no longer used, replaced by a carrier truck, which the Chown family continued to operate. Alfred also operated a sawmilling business from 1954-69. (p94)

Charlie began shearing when he was twelve and worked as a shearer for many of the landholders at Hovells Creek. He also maintained a working partnership in his father's carting and sawmilling businesses. Charlie says, 'I shore sheep for sixty-six years at Hovells Creek'.

KEN CHUDLEIGH

Ken's family have been a part of the wider district for 130 years. His grandfather, Joseph Glanville Chudleigh, came to the Frogmore area in 1892 and purchased land at Forest Creek, a tributary of Hovells Creek, in 1895. Glanville Chudleigh's holdings grew to include *Glenbrook*, and *Brooklyn*, (formerly William O'Connor's *Hillside* property).

When Ken finished school he worked on the family farm, *Glenbrook* (then run by his father, George Chudleigh), raising his own flock of one hundred sheep. Later he gained his wool classing certificate and became a wool classer on the family property and in the district, in addition to farm management on *Glenbrook*. He acquired properties in the Hovells Creek area – *Riversteen* (in 1987), and *Brooklyn* (in 1993), which had previously been owned by Ken's grandfather and had gone out of family ownership for some years.

Ken says, 'I always dreamed of being on a property and running it. I've always been very happy doing what I'm doing. I know they say it's a hard life, but it's not really – droughts and flooding rains are normal'.

LAURIE DUNN CLEMENTS

In 1924 Archie and Gilbert Dunn purchased *Jerringomar* from Mr Robert Smith, the seventh son of John Smith of Smith Company Graham and Narrawa Ltd. The Dunn brothers, their wives and Gilbert's two daughters, Laurie, aged six and Margaret, aged three, moved into the *Jerringomar* rubble-stone house built by Michael Smith (John's brother) in the early 1890s.

Jerringomar was a 6000 acre property, almost none of it cleared or improved. It was fenced into three paddocks. During the next three years they cleared 2500 acres of land and erected thirty-three miles of fencing.

In 1926 a new pise house was built about a mile to the north of the original *Jerringomar* house for Gilbert and his family. The property was run as one entity by the two brothers.

Laurie grew up on *Jerringomar* and married the neighbour AE Clement's son, Edley, in 1938. Their son Jim Clements, and grandson Gus Clements are still in the Hovells Creek district.

Laurie wrote her memoirs in 1980 recording her experiences and observations of life at *Jerringomar* from 1924-1938. Many of her stories are shared in this book.

JIM CLEMENTS (Laurie Dunn's son)

Jim Clements' grandfather, AE Clements, purchased 2184 acres from Archie and Gilbert Dunn of *Jerringomar* in 1929. This included *Grasmere* and *Benwerrin*. Jim's grandfather continued to acquire land and eventually owned most of the land between Hovells Creek and the Boorowa River, amounting to over 8000 acres. He ran merino sheep and a few breeding cows.

Jim's father, Edley, built a house at *Geweroo* (another block purchased by AE Clements) for his new bride, Laurie Dunn. Jim was born in 1939 and grew up at *Geweroo*.

When Jim's father, Edley, died in 1974, the property was divided between two of his sons, Jim and Donald, with Jim acquiring *Benwerrin* and Donald, *Geweroo*. *Geweroo* was sold in the late 1970s-early 1980s and renamed *Eupon Downs*.

Jim's son, Gus Clements, a fourth generation Hovells Creek farmer, now runs the day-to-day operation of *Benwerrin*. Merino sheep have been the main primary production by the Clements family.

Jim received a Long Service Medal for 50 years with the Graham Bush Fire Brigade in 2016.

DOUG DOCKERY

Doug owned *Jerringomar* from 1977 until 2002. He was only the fifth owner of *Jerringomar* since the early 1890s.

Doug removed the solid stone and concrete Hovells Creek crossing from the west bank to the east back leading to the *Jerringomar* woolshed and installed a steel beam bridge. The allowed thousands of tons of built up sand to move downstream and deepened the creek to reduce flood events.

Another important contribution was to remove willow trees from the banks of Hovells Creek in the 1980s and '90s and plant tree corridors and tree plots on *Jerringomar*.

Doug was an inaugural member of the Hovells Creek Landcare Group.

JOAN GAY

Joan's parents owned and operated a hotel at Cootamundra, and a rural property on Jugiong Road near that town. Joan met Fred Gay, who helped his parents run their farm at Frogmore, introduced by her brother who was working as an insurance salesman in the district.

Joan married Fred in 1942 and moved to *Clonalton* on Reids Flat Road, purchased from one of the Corcoran families.

Joan and Fred had four children of whom Barry, the eldest, adds his contribution below.

Joan was interviewed for this project when she was 103 years of age. She recalled much detail of her life and was delighted to share her memories, many of which are included in this book. Joan died a year after the interview.

BARRY GAY (Joan Gay's son)

Barry grew up on *Clonalton*. He remembers, 'We rode horses every day. Most kids helped to muster the sheep and get the cow in to milk'.

Barry purchased *Sunnyside* (1974), *Willow Glen* (1987) and *Werrawee* (2013). Barry's son, Nick, has added *Willow Park* (2016) and *Kondon* (2018) to the family property.

Nick has run the day-to-day operations of forage crops, sheep, and cattle on this large acreage since 2014.

Barry was captain of the Graham Bush Fire Brigade for twenty years, and chair of Hovells Creek Landcare Group in the early 2000s.

Barry comments, 'There were originally gums along the creek which were ringbarked, and willows planted in their place. Most of the willows were wiped out by floods'.

WAYNE HUDSON

Wayne Hudson is the son of Vince Hudson, and the grandson of George and Annie Hudson of Willow Park. Vince and his brother Cecil purchased Spring Creek (near Mt Darling) in 1945, and later Werrawee, adjacent to Willow Park on Hovells Creek.

Wayne attended the Graham School from the age of five, riding his horse with other children in the area, over the hills and along the boundary of *Kiaora* – a distance of some five to six miles from *Spring Creek*.

This involved bringing the horse in from the 90 acre house paddock, saddling up, riding to school, and riding home in the afternoon. If the weather was stormy, or the creek was up, he would stay at his Nana (Annie) Hudson's at *Willow Park*.

Wayne worked at various jobs in the district: rabbiting at *Jerringomar*; fencing contracting; wool pressing; and crutching. Wayne held a district record in 1967 for crutching 700 pregnant cross-bred ewes in eight hours with narrow blades. Later he worked as a carpenter with AV Jennings in Canberra. He has retired to Wyangala village.

PHYLLIS HUDSON McGANN

Phyllis was the daughter of George and Annie Hudson at *Willow Park*. She attended the Graham School in the 1920s.

Relatives on her grandmother's side were the Smart family. Smarts' cottage on Graham Lane is marked on VB Riley's 1871 survey map. Phyllis's grandfather was John Hudson, the blacksmith, a well-known farrier in the district. One of her brothers was Vince Hudson (father of Wayne), another was Cecil.

Phyllis married John McGann from Boorowa. After some years in Sydney, the family moved to Boorowa where Phyllis and her husband then separated. Phyllis took the four children to Hovells Creek to live with her parents, George and Annie Hudson at *Willow Park*.

Phyllis assisted her mother, Annie, with the operation of the Graham telephone exchange for many years.

Phyllis was interviewed for this project at the age of 99. Her memory was vivid, and she told many stories of growing up and living at Hovells Creek. Phyllis died a year later. It is a privilege to include many of her memories in these pages.

ANNE McGANN (daughter of Phyllis Hudson McGann)

Anne grew up on her grandparents' farm, *Willow Park* from the age of seven. She attended the Graham School, later Cowra High School, followed by teachers college.

Anne recalls, 'It was a terrific life. We'd go up into the hills with the dogs and chase and catch rabbits. We'd climb trees and make shanghais. We'd slide down the slippery grass on the hills on pieces of tin. No one worried about us, so long as we turned up for meals. I did stock work, marked lambs, delivered lambs, and shot crows'.

Anne is the keeper of the family scrapbooks into which Phyllis pasted hundreds of articles, newspaper clippings, notices and memorabilia pertaining to events and people at Hovells Creek. These have been an invaluable source of information for this book.

JOHN McGANN (son of Phyllis Hudson McGann)

John spent his early years in Sydney and Boorowa. When he was nine, he moved to live with his mother's parents, George and Annie Hudson at *Willow Park*. John attended the Graham School.

After leaving school, he worked for his uncle Vince Hudson, the Gorhams, and at Wyangala Dam as a labourer and a driver of earth moving machinery.

John relocated to Canberra for more than three decades, where he ran a successful farm machinery business. When *Spring Creek* and *Box Range* came on the market, John purchased these from family members, as well as the Wright block, and in 2001 the woolshed block at *Jerringomar*.

John now operates a substantial property with about 4000 breeding ewes. He explains, 'We breed half 'n half. Half the flock for cross-bred meat lambs and half for merino lambs to keep our merino breeders going'.

ALAN AND MONICA MCDONALD

The McDonalds established and operated McDonald's Farm Trees Nursery based at Darbys Falls, on a block purchased in 1990. They had previous experience growing for Greening Australia and Advanced Tree Growth on their quarter acre block at Blacktown, Sydney. In 1997/8 they moved to Darbys Falls to focus on the business full-time.

Over the next twenty years they expanded their nursery and became well regarded for their supply of high-quality trees for the Hovells Creek Landcare Group as well as Greening Australia and school groups. Their tube stock are propagated from locally sourced seed and grown in large shade houses to protect the seedlings from animals and strong winds.

The McDonalds supplied trees for the plantings at Sydney Olympic Park for the 2000 Olympic Games.

Alan and Monica were honoured as Landcare Champions in 2018.

RAY NEVILLE

Ray's great-grandfather, Patrick Neville (c.1816-1882) came to Australia from County Limerick, Ireland in 1841. After working as a labourer for his uncle at Milburn Creek just north of Hovells Creek valley, Patrick struck out on his own and purchased his first 35 acres at Hovells Creek in 1860 (although it seems he had squatted on that block since the mid-1850s).

The descendants of Patrick and Mary have been in the Hovells Creek/Darbys Falls community since then. Daniel Neville (1864-1938) was a councillor on the Murrungal Shire Council for twenty-eight years and was the first captain of the Jerringomar Fire Brigade established in 1930. Robert and John Neville, two of Daniel's brothers, were also members of the brigade.

Three properties at Hovells Creek: *Alta Villa, Laurel Grove* and *Kember* have been continuously held by various family members for the past almost 165 years. *Laurel Grove* (now named *Sunnyview* after another Neville block on the Lachlan River) was purchased by Ray Neville in 1984 where he now resides, runs cattle and sheep, and grows lucerne, assisted by his son and his grandson.

He comments, 'It is important to maintain ground cover and build up organic matter'.

JOHN O'CONNOR

While John has not resided at Hovells Creek, his ancestors owned property in the district for 140 years, a heritage of which he is rightly proud.

The generations of John O'Connors are – John of *Kiaora* (1835-1918); John James (1869-1940) of *Yeronga*; John Bede (1921-1995); and the interviewee, John James (1946-).

In 1856, brothers John (1835-1918) and William (1836-1912) O'Connor purchased Lot 1, Parish of Kenyu, 640 acres from Captain Alexander Robertson at the junction of Forest Creek for £500. This property was *Hillside*. Soon afterwards John O'Connor took up *Kiaora* and other blocks further north along both banks of Hovells Creek. By 1860 John held 3040 acres and, by the time of his death, had expanded his holdings to 6227 acres.

William O'Connor purchased William Hilton Hovell's 968 acre block in 1865.

Kiaora remained in the O'Connor family for 140 years. On John's death in 1918 the property was left to his children: Con held Kiaora until his death in 1943; John James was at Yeronga (on the Boorowa River); Tommy was on the Guvesne block. Eldest sister Mary lived with her brother, Con, until her death in 1934. Another son, William, was a wanderer and spent his life on the road.

In 1943 John Bede (son of John James) and his cousin, Frank (son of Thomas), were the beneficiaries of *Kiaora*. John Bede lived at *Kiaora* (with his wife, Clare) until 1946 when he sold his share to his cousin, Frank.

John, the interviewee, great-grandson of John O'Connor (1835-1918), lives in Sydney. He enjoys time on his lifestyle block, named *Hillside* on Milburn Creek, which enters the Lachlan River just upstream of the Hovells Creek/Lachlan River confluence.

JUDY REFSHAUGE

Judy and Bill bought *Midlands*, located on Bennett Springs Road, from Graham Berry in 1994, and lived there for eleven years. Under their ownership the name reverted to *Grasmere* as it had been when AE Clements owned it.

Judy, with her horticultural background, had earlier operated a small nursery at Murrumbateman, growing trees. She and Bill sought a larger block to run sheep and cattle. They spent considerable time improving their new property at Hovells Creek with the application of lime to raise the pH levels of the soils.

Judy was an inaugural member of the Hovells Creek Landcare Group, and successfully established a nursery at *Grasmere*, with seed collected and propagated from the district for other members to use in tree planting projects.

Further information on Judy's contributions to HCLG and her tireless seed collecting, and propagation is included in Chapter 14 – Hovells Creek Landcare Group.

Judy died in 2020. It is an honour to include her knowledge, experience, and the legacy of her contribution to the Hovells Creek Landcare Group in this book.

KEVIN TARRANT

Kevin was born at Darbys Falls; his mother was from Bigga and his father 'Tarry' Tarrant from the Mandurama area. Tarry Tarrant worked for Stanley Coward at *Riverslea* as a rabbiter in the 1940s.

Tarry also had a two acre vegetable garden and a number of milking cows near Wyangala. He sold produce to the army, who used to train around Wyangala Dam between the two World Wars.

After Kevin left school, he started working as a roustabout at the *Graham* shearing shed. His occupations included shearing and fencing. He also worked on the sand dredge at Darbys Falls, getting sand out of the river for the raising of the Wyangala Dam wall in the 1960s.

Kevin worked for Fred Gay on *Clonalton* for a number of years. He remembers, 'It was pretty good around here working on properties, shearing, and fencing and stuff'.

DAVID WEBSTER

David Webster's family has been in the Hovells Creek district for several generations. His great-great-grandfather came to Australia as a doctor at Parramatta in the 1830s and later settled in the Crookwell/Binda area. David's father bought *Woodlands*, Reids Flat, in 1935.

David did primary school by correspondence with his mother as his teacher but preferred to spend time outdoors in the paddocks. Later he attended boarding school at Newington College. Reids Flat to Sydney was an eight hour journey, so he only came home for school holidays. David remembers his parents putting him on the train at Goulburn or Yass and saying, 'See you in three months'.

David admits his links are closer to Reids Flat than Hovells Creek but knows most of the families at Hovells Creek and has observed the changes in the district for many years.

David and Sue now live at Northwood on Darbys Falls Road.

OTHER HOVELLS CREEK RESIDENTS WHO CONTRIBUTED VALUABLE INFORMATION:

Vera O'Connor (1915-2010) was the daughter of Thomas O'Connor, sister of Frank O'Connor. She grew up at *Guvesne*, later living at *Kiaora*. In the 1990s-early 2000s Vera shared her memories of growing up at Hovells Creek, her school days, and the neighbours.

Carly Hudson is the great-granddaughter of John Hudson, the blacksmith; great-granddaughter of George and Annie Hudson of Willow Park; and the granddaughter of Frank (Webby) and Heather Hudson (who operated the telephone exchange at Darbys Falls). Carly contributed a wealth of background about the Hudson family.

Ina Boulding (nee Power) shared some of her story and memories about the Power family at Hovells Creek two days before going to print. Ina's father, Albert Power, worked for the Clements on *Benwerrin* and ran his own block on the junction of Frogmore Road and Reids Flat Road. This block is still held by the Power family. Albert's brother Harold farmed *Rock End.* Ina's brother is Joe Power, and Tommy Power is her cousin (Harold's son). Joe and Tommy worked at Hovells Creek on shearing teams and other jobs. Ina attended the Graham School in the middle to late 1930s. Ina married Max Boulding and lived at his *Kooringle* property on Bennett Springs Road, later *Kooringle* on Frogmore Road before moving into Cowra with her four children.

ADDITIONAL SOURCES OF INFORMATION:

Thomas O'Shaughnessy 1835-1911

Thomas, born on 1 January 1835 in Sydney to Thomas Shaughnessy (later O'Shaughnessy) and Anne Byrne, kept a comprehensive diary covering events from 1835 (family stories, and memories) until 1903. These can be found at Frank Murray's 'My Early Pioneers and Their Lives': http://www.frankmurray.com.au/oshaughnessy

Thomas relates the stories of his move with his family to South Australia; time on the Bendigo goldfields; droving from NSW to Queensland; and agricultural, road construction, and mining activities in and around the Cowra district, including at Hovells Creek, from the 1870s-1900.

Thomas's diary includes comments on weather conditions and daily life in the late 1800s in the Cowra, Hovells Creek and Frogmore districts. He had frequent contact with John O'Connor of *Kiaora*.

Extracts from his diaries are included in various chapters of this book.

Trove – https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper

Archived articles from Government gazettes, advertisements, reported news, obituaries, letters to the Editor, and photographs, have provided a wealth of information on the Hovells Creek district dating back to the 1830s.

APPENDIX 2 - A TRIP BACK, by GF

The Burrowa News Friday 17 March 1911

It was late in the afternoon when I turned my horse's head from Reid's Flat in the direction of the road to Hovell's Creek. The first three miles of country would command the attention of those who delight in viewing nature in one of her most rugged aspects. To the left of the road, a precipitous range has reared its points skyward, with disconnected masses of rock, representing its front. But on the right the mountains slope gently upwards and offer good pasturage for stock.

And now we have reached the eastern margin of Gunning Flat. As the mountains on the south have receded here in parts for many miles the intervening space is represented by long reaches of rich agricultural land. To the north-west, the towering peak of huge Mount Darling dominates the surrounding landscape. Another prominent feature of the latter is a long avenue lined by tall poplars, and faced by a considerable sized residence – now, alas, falling into ruin.

Night found me enjoying the warm hospitality of Mr. A. Sligar¹¹² who holds some thousands of acres on the western extremity of Gunning Flat, whilst his brothers hold a larger area, embracing a great portion of Mount Darling and its surroundings. Mr. A. Sligar has a fair amount of land under crop, and the yield per acre has been most satisfactory. The adjacent estate is owned by Mr. D. Cavanagh and includes 8000 acres, some 2000 of which would give a good yield if cultivated.

Leaving Mr. Sligar's and passing through an uninteresting piece of country for a distance of some three miles, the road, formed of cuttings on the mountain side from almost a dead level, acquires an acclivity and you commence descending to the valley of the Hovell, the extreme southern end of which is struck two miles further on. When halfway down the cutting, huge masses of rock, tossed into the most fantastic forms, rise abruptly from the roadside. On the apex on the mountain, and towering skyward, stands a mass resembling the ruins of an ancient castle, whilst in other parts great monsters appear to be lying in wait for their prey. Close by the roadside a rock of some fifty tons or over, seen from a certain viewpoint, bears the exact outline of a human head, the proportions being perfect, even to the eyes, nose, and lips.

At the foot of the hills, on a gentle rise, a quarter of a mile from the road, stands *Sunnyside*, the residence of Mr. Grimson, late of Crookwell. The building is a commodious one of stone. Mr. Grimson has a fairly large property here and has done exceedingly well. He surprised the natives when he ploughed up a paddock of what appeared to be barren sand, and they said that he must be a fool, and that he must remember that he was not dealing with Crookwell land. But the 'fool' sowed oats and the oats grew eight feet high, and he took an immense crop of hay off it. Now he has corn growing eight feet high. He had twenty acres in last year and made a profit of over £4 per acre off it.

And now our wheels struck the Burrowa to Hovell's Creek road. This creek and valley extend for a distance of some twenty-five miles with on average width of one. Hovell's Creek — why not Jerringoman, the Aboriginal name? It is an immense relief, after viewing the parched grass on the mountain sides to descend into the valley and see the grass in heavy green swathes on each side of the road. The way through the valley is almost without an acclivity, and nearly every foot of it is suitable for agriculture and fruit growing.

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¹¹² This Mr A Sligar is a descendant of Alexander Sligar of *Oaky Creek Station*, Lot 7, on the junction of Hovells Creek and Oaky Creek, taken up in 1838. The granite stone homestead chimney is all that remains. The Mr A Sligar mentioned above secured a selection of 4000 acres at Reids Flat and is noted on Parish of Graham portion maps on Lots 108 and 68 on the eastern slopes of Mt Darling. This was *Glenview*, held until 1940 by the Sligar family.

The first dwelling to come in sight is Mr. O'Neill's, where a fair amount of cultivation is done, but not one fiftieth part of what might be done did a less costly mode of finding a market exist.

The next property is that of Mr. Webster, who also does a fair amount of cultivation. Then you arrive at *Graham*, the home of the Smith Bros. The dwelling, which is of stone, is a very large one, being formerly a hotel. The Smith Brothers own a great quantity of land here, comprising, besides much of the hill country, the whole of the valley two miles below.

A few miles or so below *Graham*, Mr. M. Smith has a very pretty residence¹¹³ on a well-chosen site and both he and his wife are noted in this part, as in fact are all the people of the valley, and none more so than the family of Mr. J. O'Connor, who owns one of the most valuable properties there.

At a mile below Mr. M. Smith's, I leave the valley, and turning west on the Cowra-road, am once more amongst the mountains; but the road is an excellent one, and after four miles drive, come in sight of Bennett's Springs, the home of the Harris Brothers. This is one of the oldest properties around the district and was taken up away back in the fifties [1856]. The house is of stone and of considerable size. A valley, rich in deep black soil, extends south from the homestead for a distance of over a mile. Amongst the many varieties of fruit trees in the orchard are a large number of orange trees that in season are always heavily laden with splendid fruit.

I did not call at Bennett's Springs on this occasion but leaving it on the left took a bush road for a distance of two miles, and arrived at Kember, the home of an old friend, Mr. W. Jones, where 1 am greeted with the usual warm and sincere welcome characteristic of the way in which Mr. Jones receives his friends.

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¹¹³ Originally *Jerringomar*, now *Kooringle*

APPENDIX 3 – TIMELINE OF GRAHAM PUBLIC SCHOOL

6.1884	Opened as a Provisional School; William L. Lyons as teacher-in charge
10.1884	Converted to a Public School
2.1885	Emily Sykes appointed
1.1886	Jane Burke appointed
12.1888	William Johns appointed
1.1990	William H. Shaw appointed
7.1891	Edward Egan appointed
5.1896	Converted to a half-time school with Clonalton; David O'Brien as teacher-in-charge
5.1901	F. Robinson appointed
9.1906	R. Rolfe appointed
8.1909	Reverted to Graham Provisional School; Harold V. Messner as teacher-in-charge
1.1910	Austin Hayes appointed
5.1915	Converted to a half-time school with Clonalton
1.1916	Reopened as a Provisional School; A.J. Whitty as teacher-in-charge
12.1916	Patricia Garrety appointed
10.1918	Douglas Threlkeld appointed
5.1920	Helen Rochfort appointed
5.1922	May Lucas appointed
1.1923	Roy Ford appointed
8.1929	Gladys Gay appointed
5.1931	Ivy Downes appointed
1.1934	Harry Triglone appointed
4.1935	Ivy Smart (nee Downes) re-appointed
5.1939	George S. King appointed
8.1940	Albert Durie appointed
1.1941	James G. Cox appointed
1.1942	Ivy Smart re-appointed
6.1943	Closed
1.1952	Reopened with Francis Phelan as teacher-in-charge
1.1953	George R. Torr appointed
1.1956	Arthur C. Smith appointed
2.1958	John Payne appointed
2.1960	John Clement appointed
2.1965	William Cox appointed
2.1966	Brian J. Ford appointed
12.1966	Closed because of small enrolments

Further information is held at the NSW State Archives.

APPENDIX 4 – BIRD SIGHTINGS AT HOVELLS CREEK by DAMON OLIVER 2015

Australian Grebe	Flame Robin	Sacred Kingfisher
Australian Pipi	Fuscous Honeyeater	Scarlet Robin
Australian Kestrel	Galah	Shining-bronze Cuckoo
Australian Magpie	Golden Whistler	Silvereye
Australian Pelican	Grey Butcherbird	Southern Boobook
Australian Raven	Grey Fantail	Southern Whiteface
Australian White Ibis	Grey Strikethrush	Speckled Warbler
Australian Wood duck	Grey Teal	Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater
Azure Kingfisher	Grey-crowned Babbler	Spotted Paradote
Barn Owl	Hardhead	Striated Paradote
Black-chinned Honeyeater	Hooded Robin	Striated Thornbill
Black-faced Cuckoo Shrike	Horsefield's Bronze Cuckoo	Striped Honeyeater
Black-fronted Dotterel	House Sparrow	Sulphur-crested Cockatoo
Blue-faced Honeyeater	Jacky Winter	Superb Fairy-wren
Brown Falcon	Laughing Kookaburra	Superb Parrot
Brown Goshawk	Little Corella	Tree Martin
Brown Songlark	Little Eagle	Varied Sitella
Brown Thornbill	Little Egret	Wedge-tailed Eagle
Brown Treecreeper	Little Friarbird	Weebill
Brown-headed Honeyeater	Long-billed Corella	Welcome Swallow
Buff-rumped Thornbill	Magpie Lark	Western Gerygone
Chestnut-rumped Heathwren	Masked Lapwing	Whistling Kite
Collared Sparrowhawk	Mistletoe Bird	White-bellied Sea-Eagle
Collared Blackbird	Nankeen Kestrel	White-browed Babbler
Common Bronzewing	Noisy Friarbird	White-browed Scrubwren
Common Starling	Noisy Miner	White-eared Honeyeater
Crested Pigeon	Owlet Nightjar	White-faced Heron
Crested Shrike-tit	Pacific Black Duck	White-naped Honeyeater
Crimson Rosella	Pallid Cuckoo	White-necked Heron
Diamond Firetail	Peaceful Dove	White-plumed Honeyeater
Dollarbird	Peregrine Falcon	White-throated Gerygone
Double-barred Finch	Pied Butcherbird	White-throated Treecreeper
Dusky Moorhen	Pied Currawong	White-winged Chough
Dusky Woodswallow	Rainbow Bee-eater	White-winged Thriller
Eastern Barn Owl	Red-backed Kingfisher	Willie Wagtail
Eastern Rosella	Red-browed Finch	Yellow Thornbill
Eastern Spinebill	Red-capped Robin	Yellow-faced Honeyeater
European Skylark	Red-rumped Parrot	Yellow-rumped Thornbill
Fairy Martin	Restless Flycatcher	Yellow-tufted Honeyeater
Fan-tailed Cuckoo	Rufous Songlark	

APPENDIX 5- BOTANICAL NAMES

The following table of species in the Hovells Creek area is by no means a complete list.

TREES	
Apple Box	Eucalyptus bridgesiana
Blakely's Red Gum	E. blakelyi
Grey Box	E. microcarpa
Red Box	E. polyanthemos
River Red Gum	E. camaldulensis
White Box	E. albens
Yellow Box	E. melliodora
River Sheoak	Casuarina cunninghamiana
Kurrajong	Brachychiton populneus
Black Cypress pine	Callitris endlicheri
White Cypress pine	Callitris columellaris

NATIVE GRASSES/ Ground Cover Species	
Kangaroo grass	Themeda triandra
Weeping grass	Microlaena stipoides
Poa Tussock	Poa sieberiana
Red grass	Bothriochloa macra
Spear grass	Austrostipa spp
Wallaby grass	Rytidosperma Austrodanthenia
Warrego summer grass	Paspalidium distans
Box grass	Paspalidium jubiflorum
Glycine	Glycine tabacina or clandestina

INTRODUCED GRASSES and Herbs	
Annual ryegrass	Lolium rigidum
Cocksfoot	Dactylis glomerata
Grazing canola	Brassica spp
Lucerne	Medicago sativa
Oats	Abena sativa
Phalaris	Phalaris aquatica
Sub-clover	Triflolium subterraneum
Tall Fescue	Festuca grundinacea
Triticale	Triticosecale

WILDFLOWERS and Native Food Plants	
Bluebells	Wahlenbergia spp
Bulbines	Bulbine bulbosa
Cherry Ballert or Native Cherry	Exocarpus cupressiformis
Chocolate lily	Dichopogon fimbriatus
Common Everlasting	Chrysocephalum apiculatum
Early Nancy	Wurmbea dioica
Fringed lily	Thysanotus spp
Milkmaid	Burchardia umbrellate
Narrow leafed New Holland daisy	Vittdinia muelleri
Scrambled eggs	Goodenia pinniaifida
Vanilla lily	Arthropodium milleflorium
Yam Daisy (Murong)	Microseris lanceolata

Major weeds	
African lovegrass	Eragrostis curvula
Barley grass	Hordeum leporinum
Bathurst burr	Xanthium spinosum
Blackberry	Rubus fruticosus
Chilean needle grass	Nassella neesiana
Coolatai grass	Hyparrhenia hirta
Fleabane	Conyza species
Noogoora burr	Xanthium occidentale
Paterson's curse	Echium plantagineum
Saffron thistle	Carthamus lanatus
Scotch thistle	Onopordum acanthium
Serrated tussock	Nassella trichotoma
Stinkwort	Dittrichia viscosa or graveolens
Silverleaf nightshade	Solanum elaeagnifolium
St John's wort	Hypericum perfortum
Sweet briar	Rosa rubiginosa
Thorn apple/ jimsonweed (not major)	Datura stramonium

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