

Copmanhurst Shire



A Thematic History

January 2004

Copmanhurst Shire
Community Based Heritage Study

Volume 2
A Thematic History of Copmanhurst Shire

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January 2004

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Cover photograph: Southgate Hotel, c.1938

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INTRODUCTION

The Shire

Copmanhurst Shire is situated in north-eastern New South Wales, to the north and north-west of the city of Grafton. It is mainly within the catchment of the Clarence River, and partly within that of the Richmond River. It adjoins the shires of Severn (to the west), Tenterfield (west), Kyogle (north), Richmond Valley (north-east), Maclean (east), and Pristine Waters (formerly Nymboida and Ulmarra Shires; south). It also has a short boundary in the south with the City of Grafton.

The Clarence River forms part of the boundary of the Shire in the south-west, from around Carr's Creek to near the junction of the Clarence and the Mann Rivers. In the west, the Gibraltar Range, the line of high country that forms the watershed between the Clarence River and the Rocky or Timbarra River, forms part of the boundary. In the north the boundary partly follows the Richmond Range, and partly Myrtle Creek. The Shire's eastern boundary approximates the Summerland Way, the main road connecting Grafton with the town of Casino on the Richmond River. In the south-east, the boundary follows Sportsman's Creek to the Clarence River near Lawrence, and then that river upstream for several kilometres. At its most southerly point, the shire adjoins the City of Grafton, first incorporated in 1859 as a municipality under the *Municipalities Act, 1858*. Copmanhurst Shire was proclaimed, and its initial boundary described in detail, in the *NSW Government Gazette* of 7 March 1906.¹ It was a creation of the *Local Government (Shires) Act 1905*, under which the whole of New South Wales, exclusive of the Western Division, the City of Sydney, and existing municipalities (such as Grafton), was divided into shires.

The shire has an area of 3,143 square kilometres, and a population (in 2002) of 4,252. The main population centre is Junction Hill, followed by the villages of Copmanhurst, Baryulgil/Malabugilmah, Southgate, and Whiporie.

The history of Copmanhurst Shire is linked inextricably with that of Grafton, and it is not possible to deal here with the history of the shire without reference to Grafton. There are two particularly important aspects to the relationship between the two. First, the shire has no major towns, and Grafton is the main service centre for the shire. Indeed, even the headquarters of the shire is situated in the City of Grafton. Such is the dominance of Grafton in the district that many small

¹ *NSW Government Gazette*, 7 March 1906, pp. 1593, 1607.

towns and villages in the shire have declined in recent decades as their functions and services have become centralised in the city of Grafton. Secondly, because the City of Grafton is constrained within a relatively small area, recent urban expansion has overflowed the city boundaries into the neighbouring shires of Copmanhurst in the north and Nymboida in the south (recently merged with Ulmarra Shire to form Pristine Waters). In the case of Copmanhurst, Grafton's expansion has seen the rapid growth of localities such as Junction Hill near the shire's boundary with the city. In the north, the shire has a strong connection with Casino in adjoining Richmond Valley Shire.

Copmanhurst Shire is almost wholly within the area described by Tindale in 1974 as the territory of the Badjalang (or Bandjalang) Aboriginal tribe. The far western part of the Shire intrudes into the territory of the Jukambal tribe, and the south-eastern part near Grafton into that of the Jiegera (or Youngai) tribe. The Badjalang merge in the north with the Arakwal (around Lismore) and the Widjabal (around Kyogle).²

Badjalang is one of about twenty closely-related dialects that were spoken in the north-eastern corner of New South Wales and the south-eastern corner of Queensland, from around Grafton to the mouth of the Logan River, and inland as far as the Great Dividing Range at Tenterfield and Warwick. These dialects became known collectively as the Bandjalang language, a term which was adopted, according to Crowley, as a display of tribal unity following the European invasion of the mid-nineteenth century.³ The language group is referred to more commonly now as Bundjalung, and its speakers as the Bundjalung people. The Badjalang dialect, or 'true' Badjalang, however, is restricted to that area north of the Clarence River, extending inland to Tabulam and Baryulgil, and to the coast around Evans Head, thus encompassing Copmanhurst Shire.

Historical Themes

Six historical themes have been used here to present the history of Copmanhurst Shire. These themes are:

² Tindale, N. B., 1974, *Aboriginal tribes of Australia: their terrain, environmental controls, distribution, limits, and proper names* (University of California Press, Berkeley).

³ Crowley, T., 1978, *The middle Clarence dialects of Bandjalang* (Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies, Canberra).

1. Exploration and pastoralism
2. Transport and communication
3. Agriculture and dairying
4. Mining and mineral processing
5. Forest industry and forest conservation
6. Townships (past and present)

1 EXPLORATION AND PASTORALISM

1.1 Discovery and early exploration

By the end of the eighteenth century, both James Cook and Matthew Flinders had sailed along and charted what is now the northernmost coast of New South Wales. Neither, however, discovered the Clarence River. Flinders came close on 11 July 1799, when sailing northward in the sloop *Norfolk*. He found the entrance to what he described as a 'wide shoal bay'. Unknown to Flinders, this 'bay' was in fact the mouth of the Clarence River.⁴

On 20 August 1828 Captain Henry Rous, commanding H.M.S. *Rainbow*, observed 'the mouth of a large River apparently running in a WNW direction'. He 'sent [the] pinnacle to sound for an entrance, but without success from the surf breaking so high on the bar'.⁵ Rous did not realise, it seems, that this was Flinders's Shoal Bay.

The western margin of the Clarence River basin was skirted in the winter of 1827 by Allan Cunningham as he followed the Great Dividing Range northwards from the Hunter Valley on the journey on which he discovered and named the Darling Downs.⁶ On his return leg, from a position somewhere near present-day Glen Innes, Cunningham 'had an extensive view of the line of country lying east towards Shoal Bay'.⁷ Little was then known of the intervening country, but Cunningham speculated that if the country surrounding Shoal Bay should be found to be 'well watered and sufficiently capable of improvement by cultivation to induce the Government at any future period to colonise it', then there appeared to be no obstacles to prevent 'ready and direct communication' between it and the 'western interior'.

⁴ Account of the proceedings of the *Norfolk*, in Collins, D., 1802, *An account of the English colony in New South Wales*. Volume 2 (T. Cadell jun. and W. Davies, London; reprinted 1975, A. H. and A. W. Reed, Sydney), pp. 163-165. Bibliographical details of Flinders's account of the voyage of the *Norfolk* can be found in Steele, J. G., 1972, *The explorers of the Moreton Bay district, 1770-1830* (University of Queensland Press, St. Lucia), p. 9.

⁵ Log of the Frigate *Rainbow*, 20 August 1828.

⁶ Cunningham, A., 1827, 'A report [to General Darling] of observations made during the progress of a late tour, on the face of the country, lying between Liverpool Plains and the shores of Moreton Bay, New South Wales', in Russell, H. S., 1888, *The Genesis of Queensland* (Turner and Henderson, Sydney). See also 'The late tour of A. Cunningham, Esq.', *Australian Quarterly Journal*, vol. 1(1), January 1828, pp. 65-85; vol. 1(2), April 1828, pp. 151-189.

⁷ Russell, *Genesis*, p. 124.

The Clarence River remained formally unknown in the early 1830s. A new map of the colony published by Arrowsmith about 1833 showed no large rivers between Port Macquarie and Moreton Bay. The *Sydney Herald*, however, pre-empted the discovery of one by remarking that 'it [could not] be questioned that the surplus waters of [this region] must find some outlet to the sea'.⁸

By 1835 the existence of a 'Big River' somewhere between Port Macquarie and Moreton Bay was well established, even though one had not been explored and mapped. Knowledge of this river was based on the reports of the numerous escaped convicts who had crossed it. During the decade after the establishment of the penal settlement at Moreton Bay in 1824, a veritable flood of runaways travelled the coast southwards in pursuit of freedom. Towards the end of 1835, the *Colonist*⁹ published a collection of statements made to the Police Magistrate at Port Macquarie by some recaptured convicts. These statements expressed, according to the newspaper, the 'vast capabilities' of the country and 'its peculiar suitability, as a place of permanent residence, for a numerous agricultural, pastoral, and commercial community'.¹⁰ Thus, the credit for being first to discover the Clarence River belongs not to any explorer, but collectively to the escaped convicts who crossed it after the early 1820s.

The apocryphal 'Big River' remained unexplored and formally unknown until 1838. In that year the river was explored to a distance of '120 miles' from the sea¹¹ by Capt. Alexander Butcher in the schooner *Eliza*. This voyage furnished the earliest known detailed, first-hand, published description of the river,¹² and its first map.¹³ Butcher ascended the river to a point a few kilometres upstream of the site of Copmanhurst.

Butcher was not the first, however, to navigate the Big River. On 5 May 1838, the Schooner *Susan* left Sydney with a party of sawyers, for the purpose of cutting

⁸ *Sydney Herald*, 8 July 1833.

⁹ *Colonist*, 17 December 1835.

¹⁰ *Colonist*, 24 December 1835, p. 409.

¹¹ Butcher had in fact travelled only about 70 miles.

¹² *Sydney Monitor and Commercial Advertiser*, Supplement, 10 December 1838; reprinted from *Sydney Gazette*, 8 December 1838.

¹³ 'Sketch plan of the "Big River" (Clarence) from an eye survey by Mr Butcher, Master of the Schooner *Eliza*, 1838', prepared by Surveyor James Warner, 27 December 1838. AONSW S.1033 (5611).

cedar 'from the banks of a river near Moreton Bay'. She was reportedly 'the first vessel which has gone to that place'.¹⁴ When the *Susan* returned to Sydney on 2 July with a cargo of cedar from the 'Big River', she created great interest. Navigation of the river was said to be 'safe for vessels of from 80 to 100 tons for 70 miles from its mouth', and its banks on either side to be 'thickly covered with the finest cedar'.¹⁵ Undoubtedly encouraged by the published reports of the *Susan's* voyage, Captain Butcher set off to further explore the Big River, and an account of his discoveries was published in Sydney in December 1838.¹⁶

The credit for discovering the Clarence River is often given to a convict named Richard Craig who, after escaping from Moreton Bay, spent a year making his way south towards Port Macquarie where he arrived in 1831. Craig was certainly not the only escaped convict to pass through the Clarence district,¹⁷ nor was he the first, but his reports of that country were perhaps more detailed and more convincing than others. It is probable that he made good use of his knowledge in his employ with Sydney timber millers Thomas and John Small, and it seems likely that it was at Craig's suggestion that the brothers sent the *Susan* to the 'Big River' in 1838.¹⁸ No official interest, however, seems to have been taken in the region until after Butcher's report late in 1838.

Further interest in the 'Big River' was soon demonstrated when on 14 May 1839 a notice appeared in the *Sydney Gazette* advising that the steamer *King William* would leave Sydney the following week (Monday 20 May) to explore it. The 'detention and stoppages in the river' were to be made under the direction of Captain Samuel Augustus Perry, the Deputy Surveyor-General.¹⁹ This expedition had been organised privately by Joseph Hickey Grose, the owner of the *King William*, with the view of 'affording parties interested in the discovery [of the Clarence] an opportunity of verifying, by personal observation, the accounts that

¹⁴ *Sydney Monitor*, 7 May 1838, p. 2.

¹⁵ *Sydney Monitor*, 4 July 1838.

¹⁶ *Sydney Gazette*, 8 December 1838, p. 2; *Sydney Monitor*, 10 December 1838.

¹⁷ Others are mentioned in *Colonist*, 17 December 1835.

¹⁸ Simpson, K., 'The story of Richard Craig', unpubl. typescript dated 26 September 1965, UNE Archives 3051/16 A335. Many other accounts of Craig's exploits can be found, although the details vary. See also Law, R. C. (ed.), 1987, *The Bawden Lectures*, 4th edition (Clarence River Historical Society, Grafton), p. 2.

¹⁹ *Sydney Gazette*, 14 May 1839. See also *Sydney Herald*, 12 April 1839.

had been received'. Perry was permitted to join the excursion in his official capacity and was directed to:

communicate to the Government such information as might appear to him essential towards the future opening of the country on the banks of the river.²⁰

In July 1839, shortly after his return to Sydney, Perry wrote to the Colonial Secretary of his tour to 'the river entering Shoal Bay', recommending 'speedily opening a direct and easy communication between New England' and the navigable portion of the river, and 'the formation of a town...where wharfs for the shipment of wool could be formed'.²¹ The master of the *King William*, Captain Francis Griffin, upon his return, urged the Governor to give the river a name 'in order that it may come before the public with a title somewhat more clear than its hitherto known appellative of the Big River'.²² Gipps subsequently bestowed on the Big River the name 'Clarence'.²³

The *King William* ascended the Clarence River as far as the First Falls, later known as Mylneford, and here remained for three days. During this time boat excursions were made upstream to the head of navigation (for small vessels) at what is now Copmanhurst. A prominent hill just below this place was given the name King William's Mount.

1.2 First European occupation

Although many escaped convicts had passed through the region in the 1820s and early 1830s, settlement of the Clarence did not begin until the late 1830s, and then only in an unofficial and temporary fashion. The precise date of arrival on the Clarence of its first non-indigenous inhabitants is unknown, but occupation had certainly begun by 1838. The region's first new inhabitants, however, were not graziers, but timber getters, who had come to exploit the forests which fringed the coastal rivers in their lower reaches. For instance, Warner's sketch of Butcher's survey of the river shows three cedar-getters' huts at the site of

²⁰ Perry, S. A., 'Report by the Deputy-Surveyor-General on the Clarence River, June, 1839' in Lang, J. D., 1847, *Cookland in north-eastern Australia* (Longman, Brown, Green and Longmans, London), p. 39.

²¹ This letter, dated 15 July 1839, is printed in the *Daily Examiner*, 17 December 1933.

²² Griffin to Sir George Gipps, 6 November 1839; reprinted in *SMH*, 4 October 1859.

²³ T. O. Harrington (for the Colonial Secretary) to T. Griffin, 14 November 1839; reprinted in *SMH* 4 October 1859. See also NSW, *Government Gazette*, 20 November 1839, p. 1312.

Copmanhurst. The subject of timber getting at this time is discussed elsewhere (section 5).

It is not known with certainty when the first graziers brought their flocks or herds to the Clarence River, but they undoubtedly had begun to arrive by the early months of 1840. The first list of names of persons granted pastoral licences under Gipps's act of 1839, for the year to 30 June 1840,²⁴ does not appear to include any on the Clarence. For the year commencing 1 July 1840, however, several licenses were granted to graziers occupying lands in the Clarence River catchment.²⁵ They included the following whose runs were within the present Copmanhurst Shire: Henry Thomas Crozier (Gordon Brook), Samuel MacKenzie (Southgate), and James Mylne (Eatonswill).²⁶

Great stimulus was given to the growth of pastoral settlement on the Clarence by the journey in 1839 of the *King William*, some of the passengers on which were the representatives of graziers looking for runs in new territory. Several runs were taken up as a direct result of this trip.²⁷ For instance, Joseph Hickey Grose, the owner of the *King William*, had 8,000 sheep overlanded from the Macleay River to his Copmanhurst run at the head of navigation of the Clarence River early in 1840 by Richard Craig, the ex-convict whose experience in the region as a runaway ten years before had equipped him well for the task. On 19 February 1840, the *Sydney Herald* reported that Grose's sheep were 'grazing on the banks of the Big River', and these were among the first stock in the region.²⁸

The influx of pastoralists and timber getters to the Clarence River which the return of the *King William* had inspired made it desirable, in the view of Governor Gipps, that a 'Town or Settlement' be formed at the head of navigation of the river (the future Grafton). Accordingly, Gipps sent a surveying party there, followed by a Commissioner of Crown Lands with his party of Border Police to 'preserve order' among the cedar cutters and stock owners who had already

²⁴ NSW, *Government Gazette*, 19 February 1840, p. 170; 3 June 1840, p. 541.

²⁵ NSW, *Government Gazette*, 22 July 1840, p. 692; 12 August 1840, p. 761; 11 November 1840, pp. 1194-1195.

²⁶ Based on a comparison of the names in the 1840 list with the more detailed, spatially referenced information in the 1848 lists.

²⁷ Law, *Bawden lectures*, pp. 10-14.

²⁸ The page of the newspaper on which this article appears is incorrectly dated 19 February 1839, not 1840, leading to the article being wrongly cited by several writers, for example, Law, *Bawden lectures*, p. 7.

established themselves.²⁹ When Commissioner Oakes set out for the Clarence River from the Macleay at the end of July 1840, he had expected to find the district 'infested by daring gangs of runaways...from Moreton Bay'. On arrival, he was 'agreeably surprised', however, to find the residents on the banks of the river to be 'stockholders of large capital, with extensive establishments in admirable order'.³⁰

In their arrival on the Clarence, Oakes and his party had been preceded by a team of three surveyors who by May were 'busily engaged in surveying the fine tracts of country in the neighbourhood of the Big or Clarence River'.³¹ These three contractors were the first surveyors to be engaged on the Clarence. Although in 1840 there still could be no freehold title in this region—it was still classified as 'beyond the limits of location'—the division of the lands about the Clarence into counties and parishes nevertheless was commenced in that year, part of a general process of surveying the colony in preparation for opening new lands for sale.

In consequence of the increased occupation of Crown lands (squatting) in the north of the colony generally in the late 1830s and the earliest 1840s, as well as the opening of the Northern District to sale which begun with the first land sales in Moreton Bay in 1842, the creation of further squatting districts became necessary. The old Port Macquarie District, which included the Clarence River district, was divided into two: a southerly Macleay River District (which included the Macleay, Nambucca and Bellinger Rivers), and a northerly Clarence River District. Henry Oakes was appointed Commissioner for the Macleay River District, based at Port Macquarie, and Oliver Fry was appointed to a similar position for the Clarence River District.³²

Oliver Fry established his headquarters at Red Rock, on the northern side of the Clarence River, about one kilometre upstream of the Orara River junction. Here were built the commissioner's house and office, and a police station. The site was occupied by Fry until about 1856, when his successor, Richard Bligh, relocated its legal and administrative functions downstream to Grafton. The Clarence River

²⁹ Gipps to Russell, 28 September 1840, *HRA*, Series I, vol. 20, p. 840.

³⁰ *Australian*, 8 October 1840, p. 2.

³¹ *Sydney Herald*, 8 May 1840, p. 2.

³² NSW, *Government Gazette*, 4 March 1842, p. 362. See also Gipps to Lord Stanley, 31 December 1842, *HRA*, Series I, vol. 22, pp. 448-449.

Historical Society held an excursion to Red Rock in 1932, at which time the site was a cultivated paddock.³³

By early 1841 the population of the Clarence District had grown to over 400 persons.³⁴ This population was predominantly male (82 per cent) and of the male population, 88 per cent were unmarried and 69 per cent were in the 'twenty-one and under forty-five' age category. The next decade saw the population of the district increase fourfold.

By 1843, the Clarence River District had become an important sheep grazing area, with 122,599 head (2.6 per cent of the sheep in the colony).³⁵ Cattle numbers were still relatively low, only 12,457 in the district (1.4 per cent of cattle in the colony), but this position would soon change as cattle replaced sheep as the dominant livestock in the region over the next several years.³⁶ By 1845 the Clarence River had advanced beyond its pioneering phase as a cedar shipping port and developed into a more diverse economy based mainly on sheep and cattle grazing and associated secondary products such as tallow, hides, butter, and sheepskins; and upon the export of wool overlanded from the New England tableland. Agriculture was still undeveloped on the Clarence at this stage (except for small quantities of corn and tobacco).

One of the first questions to engage the attention of Earl Grey after he took office as Secretary of State for the Colonies in June 1846, was that of 'the terms on which the inhabitants of New South Wales should be enabled to obtain Land, either by purchase or by authorized occupation, for pastoral purposes'.³⁷ This question had been the subject of much controversy for several years, and Grey's reassessment

³³ Law, *Bawden lectures*, p. 23; *Daily Examiner*, 4 June 1932.

³⁴ 'General Abstract of the Returns of Population and Houses in the different Counties, Commissioners' Districts beyond the Boundaries of Location, Penal Settlements, and employed on Board the Colonial Vessels, according the Census, taken on 2nd March, 1841'. NSW, Legislative Council, *Votes and Proceedings*, 1841.

³⁵ Return of livestock in the colony, September 1843, *HRA*, Series I, vol. 23, p. 764.

³⁶ John Dobie, one of the first Clarence River squatters, said in evidence to a select committee in 1854 that by then sheep had been removed from the district; Evidence of J. Dobie, M.L.C., 9 November 1854, 'Progress Report from the Select Committee on Crown Lands', p. 83.

³⁷ Earl Grey to Sir Charles Fitzroy, 29 November 1846, *HRA*, Series I, vol. 25, pp. 271-278.

of it culminated in the passage through the Imperial Parliament of the *Waste Lands Occupation Act* 1846.³⁸ This legislation was based on the principle of:

asserting the property of the Crown to the vast tracts of land now occupied by the stockholders of Australia, and at the same time enabling Her Majesty to make regulations having the force of law, by which the holders of wild lands will be rendered secure in their occupation for terms of not more than 14 years, and will at the end of their tenure be assured the value of any improvements which they may have effected.³⁹

On 9 March 1847 at Osborne House, Isle of Wight, an Order-in-Council was made, pursuant to the Imperial *Waste Lands Occupation Act* (the 'Squatting Act') of 1846,⁴⁰ for new rules and regulations for the occupation of Crown lands in the Australian colonies.⁴¹ Their essence was that the lands within New South Wales were to be divided into three classes, namely settled, intermediate and unsettled districts, and the established squatters were to be granted, without competition, leases of up to fourteen years over their runs. Furthermore, lessees would be given the pre-emptive right to purchase portions of their runs during the currency of their leases. The establishment of these districts did not interfere with the Pastoral Districts already set up, except to the extent that some of the unsettled lands within the pastoral districts were reclassified as intermediate or settled, paving the way for the development of agricultural settlement (see section 3).

The granting of 'fixity of tenure' under the 1846 act has been said to mark the 'termination of the squatting period' in New South Wales, and the 'commencement of genuine settlement' beyond the limits of location. From this time onwards, 'substantial homesteads' began to replace the 'temporary shacks'

³⁸ 'An Act to amend an Act for regulating the sale of Waste Land belonging to the Crown in the Australian Colonies, and to make further provision for the management thereof' (9 & 10 Vic., c. CIV).

³⁹ Earl Grey to Sir Charles Fitzroy, 29 November 1846, *HRA*, Series I, vol. 25, pp. 271-278.

⁴⁰ 'An Act to amend an Act for regulating the sale of Waste Land belonging to the Crown in the Australian Colonies, and to make further provision for the management thereof' (9 & 10 Vic. c. CIV).

⁴¹ *HRA*, Series I, vol. 25, pp. 427-438.

of the squatting period.⁴² The sites of these improvements were secured by the pre-emptive purchase of not less than 160 acres of the surrounding land.⁴³

1.3 Three notable pastoral runs

Of the several pastoral runs established in that part of the Clarence River district which currently constitutes Copmanhurst Shire, three are of particular relevance to this study. They are Yulgilbar, Gordon Brook, and Eatonswill, all of which border the river in the southern part of the shire. Each of these is discussed briefly below (the origins of these and other Clarence River runs are detailed by Thomas Bawden in his *Lectures*).

1.3.1 Eatonswill

Among the names published of 'persons who have obtained licences to departure stock beyond the limits of location, for the year commencing 1st July, 1840' was one James Mylne.⁴⁴ With his brother John, and as a direct result of the visit of the *King William* the previous year, James Mylne took up Eatonswill run in 1839 and first stocked it (with cattle) in mid-1840. The Mylnes established their homestead on the northern bank of the river, a little upstream of the First Falls where the *King William's* progress had been halted.

Immediately adjoining Eatonswill to the north-west was Copmanhurst run, taken up for Joseph Hickey Grose, owner of the *King William*. King William's Mount marked the boundary between these two runs. Copmanhurst was stocked with sheep early in 1840. Grose became insolvent in 1844 and Copmanhurst was sold; around the end of the 1840s it came into the ownership of the Mylnes and was incorporated into Eatonswill.

1.3.2 Gordon Brook

Bounding Copmanhurst run on its upstream side was Gordon Brook run, taken up by Captain H. T. Crozier in 1840. After Crozier's death, the run was sold to Dr John Dobie who held it until 1854. Dobie was another of the earliest Clarence River graziers, having taken up Ramornie on the southern side of the river opposite Copmanhurst as a result of the *King William* trip.

⁴² Campbell, J. F., 1932, "Squatting" on Crown Lands in New South Wales', *Royal Australian Historical Society Journal and Proceedings*, vol. 17, p. 85.

⁴³ Subject to certain restrictions relating to form and water frontage, and to the general minimum price of one pound per acre. See *HRA*, Series I, vol. 25, pp. 433-434.

⁴⁴ NSW, *Government Gazette*, 11 November 1840, p. 1194.

1.3.3 Yulgilbar

Yulgilbar run occupies the far western part of the present Copmanhurst Shire, and, unlike Gordon Brook and Eatonswill, includes territory on both sides of the Clarence River. Yulgilbar was taken up in 1840 by the Ogilvie family, comprising William Ogilvie and his sons Frederick and Edward. Like Copmanhurst, Yulgilbar was initially stocked with sheep, probably in 1841. Frederick Ogilvie died in 1846 and his remains were interred on the property. His father, William, died in 1859, after which Edward carried on as proprietor in partnership with his mother, Mary. She transferred her interest to him in 1862. Edward Ogilvie died in 1896 and is also interred on the property.

The history of Yulgilbar has been documented in detail elsewhere,⁴⁵ so there is no point in doing so here. It is worth referring, however, to some specific features of the property which are of particular historical interest. These are the present manager's residence, the Ogilvie burial vault, and the former Yulgilbar 'Castle'.

The present manager's residence is on the site of (and possibly incorporates part of) the original 1840s Yulgilbar homestead. On a nearby low hill is a vault containing the graves of Frederick Ogilvie (1846), Edward Ogilvie (1896), and Edward's son, Hubert (1877). In about 1860, Edward Ogilvie began building a new home, about two kilometres north-east of the original homestead, and overlooking the Clarence River. This became the most well-known feature of the property. It was a grand, two-storey structure, in the form of a square, with an internal courtyard, and towers at the two front corners. It was completed around 1866. The 'Castle', as it became known, was neglected and fell into disrepair in the period between the 1930s and 1960s, but the present owners of the property transformed the building into their residence in the 1980s and 1990s.

⁴⁵ Farwell, G., 1973, *Squatter's Castle: the story of a pastoral dynasty* (Lansdowne Press, Melbourne); Cannon, J., 1999, *Yulgilbar 1949-1999* (Hardie Grant Books); Wilkinson, I., undated, *Corn Beef and Damper: lives of the Yulgilbar selectors* (the author).

2 TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATION

2.1 Roads

In the earliest days of the settlement of the Clarence River, the river's economic importance was perceived as more than just the district's own natural resources of timber and arable land; perhaps equally importantly, it was seen as having the potential to provide an outlet to the sea for the products of the older-settled New England district. Indeed, only a few years after the river had first been explored from the sea in 1838, the graziers of the New England began conveying their wool clips by bullock dray to the navigable waters of the Clarence River.

The earliest dray route from the New England to the Clarence River descended the tableland to near present-day Tabulam, then followed the river southward through Yulgilbar and Gordon Brook stations to the site of Copmanhurst, then to the settlement at the present site of Grafton. The first load of New England wool is said to have been delivered to Grafton along this route early in 1842. As an alternative to following the northern side of the river into Grafton, the river could be crossed at Apple Tree Flat (now Winegrove), upstream of Copmanhurst, and a track taken along the southern side of the river, through Ramornie station, to what is now South Grafton.⁴⁶ Both were difficult routes, so unloading the wool at Grose's wharf (Copmanhurst) and sending it to Grafton by river became a more favourable alternative. Hall has suggested that most of wool-laden drays of the 1840s took this option.⁴⁷

A second route from the tableland to the Clarence River came into use at the end of 1842.⁴⁸ This continued eastward from Tabulam, crossed the Richmond Range, then proceeded through Busby's Flat and Wyan to Traveller's Rest and thence to Grafton. A little south a branch road could be taken to the Clarence River at Lawrence. Later a branch road led to Casino on the Richmond River from a little north of Traveller's Rest.

Accommodation houses and other services developed at several localities along the line of road. Within Copmanhurst Shire, some of the more important of these

⁴⁶ Hall, G., 1977, *The Road to the river*, 2nd. Ed. (Bording's Publications, Lismore), p. 11; Mackey, N. M., 2001, *European settlement in the Clarence River district before 1850* (Grafton Family History Centre, Whiteman Creek), p. 56.

⁴⁷ Hall, *Road to the river*, p. 14.

⁴⁸ Law, *Bawden lectures*, p. 37.

localities were, from south to north: Lawrence 'crossroads'; Traveller's Rest; Richmond River 'crossroads'; and Wyan.

About forty-five kilometres north of Grafton, on top of a long rise, a fork in the road was encountered. The right branch took travellers to Lawrence, about seventeen kilometres away, and the left branch onwards towards either Tenterfield or the Richmond River. At this road junction a public house was established in the early 1860s. It seems to have been last licensed in 1871, when known as the Flying Horse, but it continued to operate as an accommodation house for many years afterwards. This significant site is marked today by a circular, stone-rimmed well and a persimmon tree.

About six kilometres beyond the Lawrence crossroads and the Flying Horse, the Traveller's Rest Hotel was reached. The date of establishment of this hotel is uncertain; it was licensed as early as 1853, but seems to have been opened as an accommodation house by Walter Hindmarsh about 1843, shortly after the first use of the Old Road. Law cites evidence that it was operational in December 1845.⁴⁹ It is certainly the oldest roadside inn on the line between Grafton and the tableland, and for many years was the only one. It was destroyed by fire in 1905 and was not rebuilt.

About one kilometre north of the Traveller's Rest another junction in the road was reached. Here the right branch led to the Richmond River at Casino, and the left branch went on to Tabulam and Tenterfield. George Riley established his Halfway House Hotel here in 1877. It was later run by Riley's widow, Gertrude Fiesel. After this pub was delicensed, it was continued as an accommodation house, at least until 1901. A wine shop operated either at the same site or nearby from 1902 until 1926.

An alternative branch road to Tenterfield from the Richmond River road was later established near Myall Creek (just north of the present village of Whiporie). Here George Olive (1824-1905) briefly ran the Traveller's Home Hotel which operated from 1895 until 1897. Near the hotel site is the Olive family cemetery, where several of George Olive's relatives, and others, were buried.

The most northerly accommodation house on the Tenterfield road before the present boundary of Copmanhurst Shire was reached was at Wyan. This place

⁴⁹ Law, *Bawden lectures*, p. 160.

was an outstation of Wooroowoolgan run, and here a wayside inn known as the Commercial Hotel was established, probably in 1868. It last operated in 1880 or 1881.

The New Road

The route through Busby's Flat and Wyan surpassed the older one through Yulgilbar and Gordon Brook especially during the 1850s when many teams from the tableland off-loaded at Lawrence rather than Grafton. Grafton's position as the principal port on the Clarence River was confirmed, however, in 1859, when a new road was surveyed along the valley of the river towards Tabulam.⁵⁰ This road, which passed through Coaldale and Baryulgil, crossed the Clarence River at Yates's Flat, and joined the Old Road to the west of Tabulam, became known as the 'New Road' or 'New Line', although for much of its course it approximated the original dray route through Yulgilbar and Gordon Brook stations.⁵¹ Thus, within twenty years of the first settlement on the Clarence, two major roads connected the north side of the river at Grafton with the New England tableland at Tenterfield. Both of these passed through the country that now constitutes Copmanhurst Shire.

The opening of the 'New Road' in 1859 coincided closely with the discovery of gold in the upper Clarence districts, around the western boundary of the shire. During that year diggings were active at Fairfield, Pretty Gully, Timbarra, and Tooloom. In mid-1859 a regular fortnightly escort service was established to take gold from Timbarra to Grafton whence it was conveyed by steamer to Sydney.⁵²

As traffic increased on the New Road, accommodation houses (licensed and otherwise) and ultimately small settlements sprang up along the line as they had done, and continued to do, along the Old Road. Greaves surveyed a site for a village at Yates's Flat in January 1860 (see 2.3 Bridges and Crossing Places).⁵³ Licensed public houses were soon operating at: the junction of the old and new roads (now Junction Hill; 1861), Clifden (1862), Mountain View (1865), Coaldale (1863), and Yates's Flat (c.1862).

⁵⁰ 'Survey of new road from Grafton to Tenterfield', Sheet A, 1859, AONSW Map no. 5244.

⁵¹ Hall, *Road to the river*, pp. 98-100; 'Survey of new road from Grafton to Tenterfield', Sheet A, 1859, AONSW Map no. 5244.

⁵² Wilkinson, I., undated, *Forgotten country: the story of the Upper Clarence goldfields*, 3rd ed (the author), p. 62.

⁵³ 'Plan of the Town of Alice', 1860, AONSW Map no. 1240 and 1241.

The Junction Inn opened in 1861 at the point where the New Road left the Old Road, a few kilometres north of Grafton, at what is now known as Junction Hill (see 6.3.1 Pubs). About nine kilometres beyond Junction Hill, another fork in the road was reached, where the New Road branched to the right towards Coaldale; the left branch led to Copmanhurst. Between these two junctions were the Bellvue Hotel (est. 1865) and the Clifden Inn (est. 1862), both of which were in existence only briefly.

Farther along the New Road at Coaldale another public house was opened, and this was probably first licensed in 1863 (and probably not long beyond). The Coaldale Hotel, as this establishment was known, advertised 'good accommodation' for 'parties travelling the New Line'. It claimed to provide 'good beds', 'first-class liquors', and an 'excellent paddock for horses'.⁵⁴ At Yates's Flat, John McGrath opened a 'house of call and refreshment' in 1859.⁵⁵ He obtained a publican's licence in 1862, but probably did not operate beyond 1863.

In the early 1870s, two further mineral discoveries increased the use of the New Road to Grafton. The first of these was the discovery of tin in the New England in the early 1870s; near Inverell in 1871, and near Emmaville in 1872.⁵⁶ Most of this at first was conveyed from Tenterfield to both Lawrence and Grafton, but an alternative route, from Glen Innes to South Grafton, was completed in 1876.⁵⁷ As this gradually came into popular use it surpassed the Tenterfield-Lawrence and Tenterfield-Grafton roads as the major route between the New England and the Clarence River. During one week in 1874, for instance, the Clarence and New England Steam Navigation Company received at the South Grafton wharf nearly 40 tons of New England tin for shipping to Sydney.⁵⁸ The traffic from Glen Innes hastened the decline of Lawrence, but it boosted Grafton's position as the principal port of the Clarence, as it now received goods from two directions.⁵⁹

⁵⁴ *C&RE*, 10 March 1863, p. 1.

⁵⁵ *C&RE*, 21 February 1860, p. 2.

⁵⁶ Carne, J. E., 1911, *The Tin-Mining Industry and the Distribution of Tin Ores in New South Wales* (New South Wales Department of Mines, Sydney).

⁵⁷ Lee, R. S., 1988, *The Greatest public work: the New South Wales railways, 1848-1889* (Hale and Iremonger, Sydney), p. 79; Walker, R. B., 1966, *Old New England: a history of the northern tablelands of New South Wales 1818-1900* (Sydney University Press, Sydney), p. 121.

⁵⁸ *C&RE*, 26 May 1874, p. 5.

⁵⁹ Hall, *Road to the river*, p. 110.

Meanwhile, the discovery of gold at Solferino and Lionsville, also in the early 1870s, generated considerable traffic on the 'New Road' to Grafton especially during the first half of the decade (see 4.2.1 Lionsville-Solferino Goldfields).

Two Roads

Despite the completion of the Grafton-Glen Innes road in 1876, both the 'New Road' (through Coaldale and Yates's Flat) and the 'Old Road' (through Traveller's Rest, Wyan, and Busby's Flat) remained important transport routes until the 1880s. When the railway reached Tenterfield in 1886, however, the New England graziers found it unnecessary to send their wool by road to the Clarence River. Even the mines around Drake would send their ore up the mountain to meet the railway at Tenterfield.⁶⁰ The 'New Road' fell into disuse. Traffic between Tabulam and the Richmond River at Casino began to cross the Richmond Range at Mallanganee, avoiding the longer route through Busby's Flat and Wyan, and use of this section of the 'Old Road' also declined. The growth of the Richmond district, however, ensured the continued use of the road between Grafton and the Richmond River.

The main road within Copmanhurst Shire today is the Summerland Way, which links Grafton with Casino. The southern part of this road, below about Whiporie, follows, or approximates, part of the old wool road from Grafton to Tenterfield.

Ogilvie's Road

After the opening of the New Road in 1859, traffic on the Old Road declined, and as it did Lawrence declined in importance as a port compared to Grafton. Edward Ogilvie of Yulgilbar, determined to boost the trade of Lawrence where he had invested heavily, built his own road in 1862 from Yulgilbar, via Gordon Brook and Dome Mountain, to connect with the Old Road at Traveller's Rest.⁶¹ Ogilvie's Road, as it was known, was not a popular route and it soon fell into disuse.

2.2 Bridges and Crossing Places

The extraordinary width of the Clarence River created particular difficulties for transport throughout the district. Major crossing places developed at Harwood (where the Pacific Highway crosses the river; first bridged in 1967), and at Grafton (where the North Coast Railway crosses the river; bridged in 1932). Both

⁶⁰ Hall, *Road to the river*, pp. 113-114.

⁶¹ Davies, R. E., 1957. 'History of Clarence River and of Grafton, 1830-1880', part 27, *Daily Examiner*, 2 February; Hall, *Road to the river*, p. 104.

upstream and downstream of Grafton, where the river forms the boundary of Copmanhurst Shire, are many other, locally important crossing places. Some of these are discussed, starting with the farthest upstream, at Yates's Flat, near where the river emerges from adjoining Tenterfield and Kyogle Shires, and descending the river to Lower Southgate, near where it enters Maclean Shire.

2.2.1 Yates's Flat—Alice

When W. A. B. Greaves and his party surveyed the route of the New Road from Grafton to Tabulam in 1859, one of their last decisions was to take the road across the river at Yates's Flat, rather than to continue northward and join the Old Road on the eastern side of Tabulam. Once across the river the New Road followed the original 1840s dray line to Hamilton's Gap, and joined the Old Road to the west of Tabulam, a shorter route than the eastern alternative.⁶²

The existence of a formal river crossing at Yates's Flat on the New Road to Tenterfield made this a place of some importance. John McGrath opened an accommodation house there in 1859,⁶³ and Greaves returned to survey a site for a village in January 1860.⁶⁴ The first sale of allotments in the new village, which was called Alice after McGrath's wife, took place in October 1860.⁶⁵

A severe flood in 1863 ruined the Yates's Flat crossing and caused the New Road to be re-routed past the village of Alice and along the eastern side of the river to join the Old Road east of Tabulam, the alternative route that Greaves had discounted four years earlier. Afterwards, the village declined rapidly and the crossing was little used, remaining as a rudimentary affair until 1931 when a low level, timber bridge was completed.⁶⁶

2.2.2 Yulgilbar Crossing

Yulgilbar pastoral run was divided by the Clarence River, with the homestead situated on the eastern side, and the larger part of the run being on the western side. The Yulgilbar Crossing provided access from one side to the other. The crossing became particularly important in the 1870s when it was used by traffic between Grafton and the newly discovered Lionsville and Solferino goldfields. It

⁶² Hall, *Road to the river*, p. 99.

⁶³ *C&RE*, 21 February 1860, p. 2.

⁶⁴ 'Alice, county Drake, survey by W. A. B. Greaves, January 28, 1860', A.1737 (AO 1240-1).

⁶⁵ Hall, *Road to the river*, p. 106.

⁶⁶ Hall, *Road to the river*, pp. 104, 152.

is undoubtedly a consequence of this increased flow of travellers that a hotel was opened on the western bank of the river at Yulgilbar Crossing in 1873. Also as a consequence of the increased traffic generated by the goldfields, residents petitioned the Government to place a punt at the crossing, but this seems not to have eventuated.⁶⁷

A bridge was opened about 200 metres upstream of the old ford in December 1926. This was the first bridge to be built across the Clarence River in the Grafton district.⁶⁸ It was replaced in December 1966 by a new bridge, immediately adjacent to the old one on its upstream side. By this time the opening of the Washpool forests to logging had generated the traffic that justified the improvement of the crossing. A monument was erected above the river on the Lionsville side of the bridge to mark the occasion of the opening on 17 December 1966.⁶⁹

2.2.3 Carnham Crossing

Little has been ascertained of the history of Carnham Crossing, except that it has been of importance from an early date. It is known that a reserve 'for camping and access to ford' was created here in 1878; on the plan of this reserve, which was surveyed in 1883, the road/track from 'the junction' (of the Mann and Clarence Rivers) to Grafton is shown crossing the river here.⁷⁰

2.2.4 Winegrove—Apple Tree Flat—Lilydale

The big meander in the Clarence River which encloses Winegrove, Apple Tree Flat, and Lilydale has long been an important crossing place. From the early 1840s, a ford here allowed wool-laden drays from New England to take a track along the southern side of the river, through Ramornie, to South Grafton, as an alternative to following the longer route along the northern side. This crossing place was probably just upstream of the rocky falls near Denny's Creek at Winegrove.

⁶⁷ *C&RE*, 4 August 1874, p. 5.

⁶⁸ *Daily Examiner*, 3 September 1926, p. 4; 13 December 1926, p. 3.

⁶⁹ *Daily Examiner*, 19 December 1966, p. 2.

⁷⁰ NSW, *Government Gazette*, 5 April 1878.

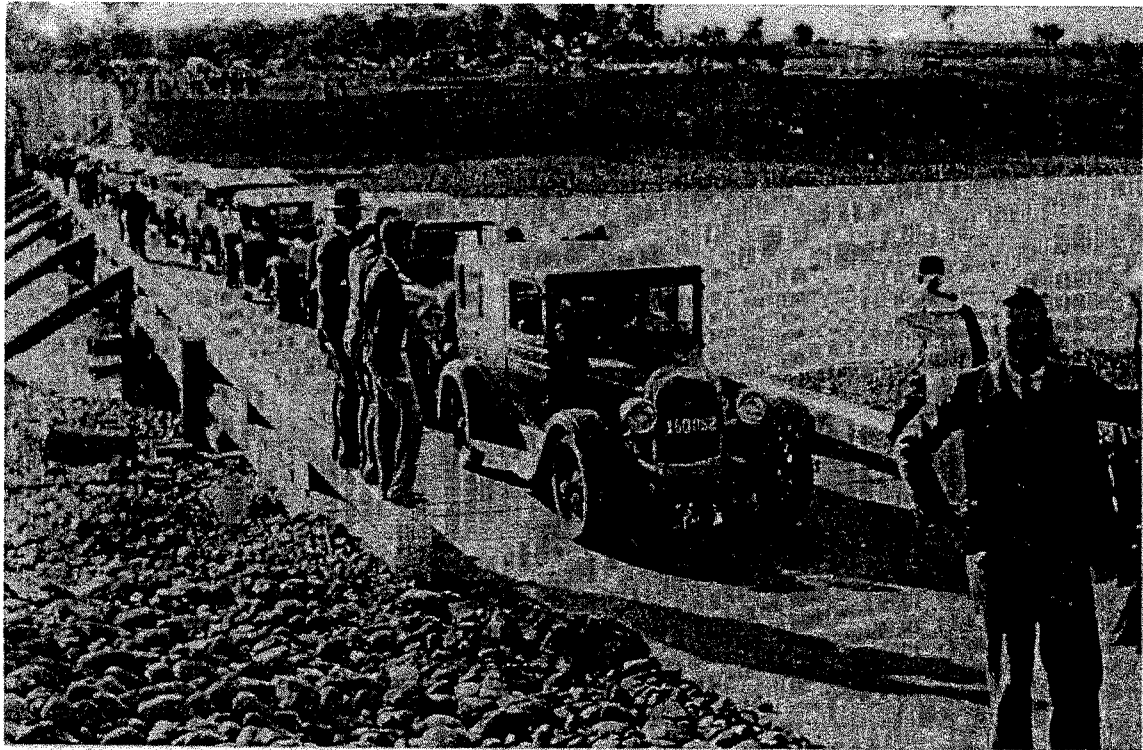


Figure 1: Opening of Lilydale Bridge, July 1934.

Later, a crossing developed several kilometres farther upstream, at Lilydale, on the opposite side of the meander. This served traffic between the Cangai copper mines, which were opened in 1901, and the wharf at Copmanhurst. A timber bridge (the Lilydale bridge; Figure 1) was opened here in July 1934 to replace the old ford. Bridge construction was prolonged by a succession of floods and freshes during the wet season, unlike at Yulgilbar where construction in 1926 took place during a severe drought. It was suggested that construction of the Lilydale bridge would have taken place many years earlier had it not been a boundary work requiring the co-operation of two local councils, Copmanhurst and Nymboida.⁷¹ A new concrete bridge replaced the original timber structure in 1996.⁷²

2.2.5 Copmanhurst and Upper Copmanhurst

From a transport perspective, the position of the village of Copmanhurst was a vital one. It was at the head of navigation on the Clarence River; the downstream side of the village fronted navigable water where a wharf could be established, and broad beds of shingle on the upstream side facilitated crossing. An 1870 survey plan of several portions of land on the southern side of the river opposite

⁷¹ *Daily Examiner*, 9 July 1934, pp. 4,7; 11 July 1934, p. 2.

⁷² *Daily Examiner*, 22 March 1996, p. 1.

the village show a ford where the track between Grafton and Ramornie station crossed the river just above the head of navigation.⁷³ A road from Cangai later crossed the river farther upstream at Upper Copmanhurst.⁷⁴ More is said elsewhere of Copmanhurst and Upper Copmanhurst (6.1 Present Towns and Villages).

2.2.6 *Mylneford*

About six kilometres downstream of Copmanhurst, the Orara River enters the Clarence from the south, soon after which the latter begins to execute another large meander. Within this loop, on the north side of the river, is encompassed the locality of Mylneford, which is the site of another historically important crossing place. It was to here, at First Falls, that the steamer *King William* had navigated the river in 1839. Later that year, the brothers John and James Mylne took up the station which became known as Eatonswill. They established their homestead on the north bank of the river just above First Falls.

The First Falls soon became an important, albeit dangerous, crossing place. Many people lost their lives attempting to cross the river there. Among the earliest was Matthew Maloney, an employee of the Mylnes of Eatonswill Station, who drowned there in 1861. He and others are buried at the Mylneford cemetery, on the north side of the river near the falls.⁷⁵

The First Falls ford was later replaced by a punt, which operated from a site about one kilometre downstream from the falls. The year of commencement of the punt has not been ascertained, though it was operating in 1892; it was removed after the Rogan Bridge opened in 1960.

2.2.7 *The Whiteman*

The Clarence River below Mylneford is devoid of the rocky 'falls' which at several places farther upstream presented obstacles to navigation but also opportunities to cross. Crossing the lower river without the aid of a boat or a punt has therefore never been an option. The first punt on the river operated between Grafton and South Grafton from 1859.⁷⁶

⁷³ 'Plan of 8 portions of land in reserve no. 34, Parish Turville County Fitzroy', 31 January 1870, F30.1810.

⁷⁴ Anon., 1927, *NSW Motorists' Road Guide* (H. E. C. Robinson, Sydney).

⁷⁵ *C&RE*, 31 December 1861, p. 2; *Daily Examiner*, 4 June 1932.

⁷⁶ Law, *Bawden lectures*, p. 54.

The next big bend in the river below Mylneford encloses the locality known today as The Whiteman, which was the lower limit of the Mylne brothers' Eatonswill run. A punt was installed here, probably in the 1890s, to facilitate access to Grafton by residents of the Whiteman pocket. A proposal in 1892 to relocate the Eatonswill punt to this site had met with strong protests so an additional punt was installed at The Whiteman.⁷⁷

Rogan Bridge, built two kilometres upstream, replaced this punt (and the one at Mylneford) after it opened in 1960. The site of the former punt is discernible today at the end of Old Punt Lane.

2.2.8 Seelands

Below The Whiteman, the Clarence River makes one final meander before it descends to Grafton. Here it encloses a long tongue of land on which is situated Seelands, the destination of the punt from Whiteman. Whiteman residents travelling to Grafton after their punt began operation would have had to travel to South Grafton and cross the river there. Later, however, they had a more direct alternative; to cross the river on a new punt from Seelands which would take them to the head of Carr's Creek near Junction Hill, on the Grafton side of the river. It has not been ascertained when the Seelands to Carr's Creek punt began operation or when it was discontinued.

2.2.9 Southgate and Lower Southgate

The next major river crossing place downstream of Grafton today is at Lawrence (Bluff Point), where a punt has operated since 1882, but this is in Maclean Shire.⁷⁸ Between Lawrence and Grafton, however, the Clarence River forms a short part of the boundary of Copmanhurst Shire, and here, at Southgate and at Lower Southgate, two historically important punts have operated. From Southgate a punt operated to the right bank of the Clarence River near Ulmarra; from Lower Southgate another ran to Brushgrove, on the southern tip of Woodford Island. Both are thought to have been operating in 1927 as they are shown in a motorists' guide published in that year.

⁷⁷ *C&RE*, 11 June 1892.

⁷⁸ Towner, D. S. and McSwan, E. H., 1985, *Ferries of the Lower Clarence* (Maclean District Historical Society, Macelan), p. 14.

The year of commencement of the Lower Southgate to Brushgrove punt has not been ascertained, but it was probably around 1900.⁷⁹ By 1909 a small hand-operated punt operated at the site, and the crossing took more than half an hour. This was later replaced by a new diesel-powered unit. The service was terminated on 14 October 1968.⁸⁰ No details of the Southgate punt had come to hand at the time of completion of this report.

2.3 Wharves

The Clarence River is navigable for small vessels as far upstream as Copmanhurst. First Falls was the limit of exploration of the river in 1839 by the *King William*, but Copmanhurst could be reached by smaller vessels. It therefore became an important shipping point for the produce of the immediate area and of areas farther upstream. Joseph Hickey Grose of Copmanhurst station established a wharf here, and this was used in the 1840s to load wool for river transport to Grafton. A government-funded public wharf was erected at Copmanhurst in the late 1870s at the request of local farmers who required such a facility for the transport of their maize harvest.

2.4 Railways

The construction of rail links between the New England tableland and the coast was an early dream of settlers in northeastern New South Wales. The government entertained many proposals over many years for such railways, including from Guyra to Glenreagh (part of which, between Glenreagh and Dorrigo was completed), Glen Innes to Grafton (never approved for construction), and Tenterfield to Casino (of which the section from Casino to Bonalbo was approved, but never completed).

The first official mention of the construction of a steam railway from the Clarence to the New England appears to have occurred in 1872. In that year Henry Parkes, in a policy speech made at Bathurst, outlined a new programme of railway construction which included a 'means of railway communication to the extreme Northern coast country, from the tableland of New England down to the Clarence River'.⁸¹ This would open up the 'navigable river Clarence' to the rich country of the New England and to the 'mineral lands of [the] northern borders'.

⁷⁹ Leslie, P. G., 1985, *Centenary History of Brushgrove, 1885-1985* (Brushgrove Cowper and District Progress Association), p. 24.

⁸⁰ Towner and McSwan, *Ferries*, p. 26.

⁸¹ *C&RE*, 10 September 1872.

Examination of the country between the Clarence and New England for the purpose of railway construction began in 1872, with routes being examined for surveys from Grafton to Glen Innes and from Lawrence to Tenterfield.⁸² Survey of a line from Lawrence to Tenterfield via Tabulam was commenced in October 1874.⁸³ Part of this line would pass through the northeastern corner of the present Copmanhurst Shire. Trial survey of a branch line from Wyan to Casino, 37 miles distant, was commenced in October 1875 and completed by the end of December. It was by this time very apparent that the rugged terrain would make construction of a line from the Clarence River to the tableland extremely difficult.

Despite further surveys in the 1870s and early 1880s, the idea of a railway from the Clarence River to the New England was officially abandoned by the late 1880s. Two things brought this about. First, the Great Northern Railway had opened to Glen Innes by 1884, making the Grafton-Glen Innes line, at least, a contradiction as it would compete with the Great Northern for traffic. Moreover, the real importance of Clarence as New England's outlet declined after the construction of the Great Northern Railway. Secondly, Parkes's railway policy of 1888 excluded a line from the Clarence to New England, and in its place proposed a new coastal trunk line connecting the Hunter River with the Tweed River. With this policy came the end for a long time of any prospect of having a New England-Clarence connection completed.

North Coast Railway

Although the North Coast railway line became Government policy under Parkes in 1888, it was to be a long time before the policy became a reality, and the proposal languished for many years. In 1899, representations were made to the Premier and the Minister for Public Works as to the need for a north coast railway. Plans were subsequently completed, an estimate prepared, and a report obtained from the Railway Commissioners, and the line was submitted in December 1902 to the Public Works Committee for inquiry and report. The committee had previously considered a section of line from Maitland to Taree (in 1898) but had recommended against its construction. Although a portion of the coastal line might not pay, the line as a whole was a different matter, and in its

⁸² Report of Commissioner for Railways, 1872-75, p.9.

⁸³ Herbert Palmer, 1 February 1875, *V&PLA* 1875-76, 4, 234,435.

1904 report the committee recommended construction of the railway from Maitland to South Grafton.⁸⁴ This line was opened to traffic in 1924.

In the meantime, a line between Grafton and the Tweed River had been completed. This had a somewhat independent origin. Although it was a logical part of the coastal railway, it had begun life under Dibbs's 1884 railway policy, where its primary purpose was to link the Tweed and Richmond Rivers with the more easily navigable Clarence River and thus facilitate the transport to market of the produce of these rich agricultural districts.

The Grafton to Tweed line was completed in three sections: Lismore to the Tweed (commenced in March 1891 and opened in May 1894), Lismore to Casino (opened in October 1903), and Casino to Grafton (opened in November 1905).⁸⁵ The latter section is most relevant to this report as it passes through Copmanhurst Shire over more than half of its 67 mile and 4 chain (about 108 km) length.

Of the original stations opened on the Casino to Grafton line in November 1905, nine were situated in Copmanhurst Shire. These were, from north to south: Myrtle Creek, Clearfield, Camira Creek, Whiporie, Banyabba, Lawrence Road, Gurrang, Warragai Creek, and Koolkhan. Later additions included Dilkoon (1907) and Kyarran (1926). None of these, however, were major sites; they generally consisted of just a platform and a single small timber station building (either a waiting shed, or ticket office with waiting room attached). In 1928 no station between Grafton and Rappville (i.e. none of those within Copmanhurst Shire) was manned.

Little remains today of the railway stations within Copmanhurst Shire. Most were closed in the early 1970s, Koolkhan and Warragai Creek were closed in the 1980s, and Banyabba in the 1990s.

⁸⁴ Report ... relating to the Proposed Railway from Maitland to South Grafton, NSWPP 1904 (2nd Session), 3, 467 et seq.

⁸⁵ Dunn, I., 2002, *The Railway from Nowhere to Nowhere: the Grafton to the Tweed Railway 1894-1932* (Eveleigh Press, Matraville, NSW).

3 AGRICULTURE AND DAIRYING

3.1 The Order-in-Council of 1847

The passage through the Imperial Parliament of the *Waste Lands Occupation Act* 1846, and the adoption of regulations under that act through an Order-in-Council on 9 March 1847 have been referred to above in the context of the pastoral occupation of Crown lands in the Clarence River district. It has also been mentioned that these regulations paved the way for the development of agricultural settlement in that region by providing for 'unsettled' lands outside the old limits of location to be declared 'settled' and 'intermediate'. It needs to be explained how this was so.

Prior to 1847, the 'whole of the sea coast between Moreton Bay and Port Macquarie, with the exception of the County of Stanley' (which surrounded Moreton Bay) was beyond the boundaries of location, that is, it was within the districts defined as 'unsettled'.⁸⁶ The Order-in-Council, however, effected the reclassification of some of these lands as 'settled'. In the Clarence district, and of relevance to Copmanhurst Shire, these included:

- i. The lands which may lie within the distance of ten miles from any point of the outward limits of...the town which has been established at the head of navigation of the River Clarence [later named Grafton].
- iii. The lands which may lie within the distance of two miles from either of the two opposite banks of...[t]he Clarence [River] from a point fixed by the Governor, at a distance not less than ten miles above the Government township, at the head of the navigation, and not less than fifty miles from the sea (measured in a straight line)...⁸⁷

The definition of zone III was later refined to include river bank land on the Clarence River to a point 'fifty miles from the sea, measured in a straight line' from the mouth.⁸⁸

The classification of these lands as 'settled' was intended, in principle, to reserve land close to navigable water from the operation of the Squatting Act for the 'settlement of an agricultural population'. On the Clarence, however, the fifty

⁸⁶ S. A. Perry, evidence, 15 June 1847, *HRA*, Series I, vol. 25, pp. 649-655.

⁸⁷ Earl Grey to Sir Charles Fitzroy, 30 March 1847, *HRA*, Series I, vol. 25, pp. 427-438.

⁸⁸ E. Deas Thomson to the Deputy Surveyor General, 4 September 1847, Appendix A in Select Committee on Crown Lands, 1854, p. 1179.

mile zone included not only all navigable waters but even encroached upon several pastoral runs beyond the head of navigation (Grafton).⁸⁹ 'Considerable portions' of the holdings of John Dobie (of Gordon Brook by this time) and three other licensed occupants,⁹⁰ including their homesteads, were brought within the class of settled lands, excluding them from the privileges of 'a lease for a term of years', the right of pre-emption, and an allowance for improvements.

These aggrieved pastoralists requested a modification of the regulations, limiting the settled lands on the Clarence to the navigable portion of the river only, and reclassifying the now settled lands above the head of navigation as intermediate.⁹¹ As a result of the squatters' complaint, Fitzroy suspended from sale 'until favoured with a decision by HM Govt' all improved lands which had been occupied under squattage tenure but which had been brought within the class of settled lands by the Order-in-Council. No record of the Government's decision on this matter can be found, but it is apparent that the limit of the settled land remained at fifty miles from the river mouth.⁹² The settled lands on the Clarence also included a roughly circular area (zone I) around Grafton, extending upstream as far as Copmanhurst, and downstream to Lower Southgate.

Initially, no lands within the Clarence region were classified by the Order-in-Council as 'intermediate'. This category had been created to 'provide for the probable Course of Settlement along the banks of navigable rivers', but such lands in this region had already been classified as settled. Within two years, however, the intermediate class of land would become the most significant in the region. In transmitting the Order-in-Council to Governor Fitzroy, Earl Grey was anxious that 'no undue extension should be given' to the unsettled lands which would thus be removed from the control of the Crown, and rendered unavailable to the public for purchase, for the long period of fourteen years.

⁸⁹ The boundary of the settled districts on the Clarence River is shown on AONSW Map no. 10314, County of Clarence, 1864; AONSW Map no. 10273, County of Drake, c.1863; AONSW Map no. 32433, County of Fitzroy, 1878; AONSW Map no. 24689, County of Gresham, 1898.

⁹⁰ They are not named in *HRA*, but possibly included the Mylnes, part of whose Eatonswill run was also affected.

⁹¹ Sir Charles Fitzroy to Earl Grey, 26 December 1847, *HRA*, Series I, vol. 26, pp.121-122.

⁹² This was near the junction of the Clarence and Mann Rivers, a point some 30 miles (50 kilometres) upstream of the head of navigation, and 60 miles (95 kilometres) upstream of the settlement.

It was thus embodied in the Order-in-Council that 'any county or counties of which the boundaries may be fixed and proclaimed on or before the 31st December, 1848' would be classed among the intermediate districts.⁹³ A total of thirty-one such new counties subsequently were proclaimed;⁹⁴ Copmanhurst Shire falls partly within two of these counties: Richmond and Clarence. The Coal Ridge, which formed part of the boundary between the Gordon Brook and Copmanhurst runs, also formed part of the western boundary of the county of Clarence. Besides the settled land described, and the intermediate lands embraced by the new counties, the remaining (western) lands within Copmanhurst Shire—about half of its area—remained after 1848 under the classification of unsettled lands.

Under the Order-in-Council, the Government was empowered to grant leases over runs within the unsettled districts for pastoral purposes for terms not exceeding fourteen years. In the intermediate districts the maximum term of lease would be eight years. Lands which were brought within the settled districts (the riverside land and the land surrounding Grafton, described above), but which were hitherto held under squatting licences, could be leased for a maximum term of one year. Hence, after 1848, most of the Clarence Pastoral District was in the intermediate category where it was available for only eight year lease.

The Order-in-Council of 1847 remained unchanged until 1859. In that year it was considered desirable to extend the settled districts of the colony and an act⁹⁵ was passed reclassifying as settled districts all the lands previously classed as intermediate districts. The immediate effect of the act was that several counties including Richmond and Clarence—and hence much of the area that later became Copmanhurst Shire—were reclassified from intermediate to settled land. This is how the situation remained until the next major change in land settlement policy was effected at the beginning of 1862.

The explicit intention of the reclassification of the Crown lands in the Clarence district to 'settled' and 'intermediate' in 1847 and 1848 was to facilitate the settlement of a population of agricultural smallholders in place of the pastoralists who had effectively monopolised the land in the region since the late 1830s and early 1840s. Despite this intention, however, by the end of 1861 relatively little

⁹³ Earl Grey to Sir Charles Fitzroy, 30 March 1847, *HRA*, Series I, vol. 25, pp. 427-438.

⁹⁴ NSW, *Government Gazette*, 30 December 1848, p. 1881.

⁹⁵ 'An Act to include the Intermediate within the Settled Districts' (23 Vic. no. 4; 22 December 1859).

land had been alienated in the region, and cultivation was not widely practised. The new leases which had been created in 1847 were for 'pastoral purposes' only, albeit with permission for the lessee to cultivate so much of the leased land as was necessary to provide 'grain, hay, vegetables, or fruit for the supply of [his] family and establishment'.⁹⁶

The pastoralists might have gone in for cultivation on a commercial basis on lands which they had purchased, but advantage was generally not taken of the provisions for the alienation of leased land by pre-emptive purchase. When the pre-emptive right was exercised, it was invariably in order to secure improvements, not to carry on agricultural pursuits. For instance, in the 1840s the Ogilvies secured 325 acres surrounding their homestead at Yulgilbar by purchase under their pre-emptive right, and later a further 890 acres including the site of Edward's 'Castle'. Similarly, John Dobie secured 178 acres around Gordon Brook homestead in the 1850s, and his successors (Bundock, Barnes and Smith) bought a further 1,340 acres. Plans of these pre-emptive purchases show relatively small areas under cultivation, including a vineyard at Yulgilbar and a 'garden' at Gordon Brook.

A more important reason for the failure of agriculture to follow the reclassification of lands was the small amount of land offered for sale at Government auction and purchased for that purpose. The first blocks were not put to auction in the Clarence district until about 1857, so little agricultural development occurred between the Order-in-Council and that year.⁹⁷ Among the lands auctioned by the Government in 1857 and 1858 were river-front blocks in the Parish of Great Marlow, within present Copmanhurst Shire; some between Grafton and Southgate, and some at Carr's Creek on the upstream side of Grafton.

Even at the end of 1861, on the eve of the coming into effect of the new *Crown Lands Alienation Act* and *Crown Lands Occupation Act*, a total of only 32,928 acres of land, mostly river-bank, had been alienated within the County of Clarence (about 3.6 per cent of 905,600 acres). Much less land had been alienated in the adjacent County of Richmond (0.2 per cent). Only a fraction of this was under

⁹⁶ Evidence to the Select Committee on the Minimum Upset Price of Land, NSW, Legislative Council, *Votes and Proceedings*, 1847, vol. 2.

⁹⁷ McFarlane, D., 'History of Clarence. Settlers' experiences. First Crown land sales', *Daily Examiner*, 23 October 1924.

cultivation, and further indication of the slow progress of agricultural settlement in the region is given by the census figures for the Clarence Pastoral District.⁹⁸ By 1861, only about 3,500 acres of land was under cultivation in the Pastoral District, mostly along the Clarence River. The principal crop was maize (70 per cent. of the area under cultivation), and the next most important crop was wheat (20 per cent.).

3.2 Free selection and the growth of agriculture

The Order-in-Council of 1847 remained in force until repealed by the *Crown Lands Alienation Act* and the *Crown Lands Occupation Act* 1861. These Acts were the next major landmark in the history of land settlement in New South Wales, and the next major factor affecting the evolution of the pattern of land settlement in the Clarence district. The avowed purpose of the Crown lands acts of 1861 was to substitute large numbers of yeoman farmers for the relatively small number of squatters who occupied the vast tracts of territory beyond the original 'limits of location'.⁹⁹ This change was to be effected by allowing each individual 'selector' to appropriate any portion of any pastoral leasehold at any time.¹⁰⁰ This had the potential to create conflict in areas where rich land, suitable for more intensive forms of land use such as agriculture, was held under pastoral leases issued in terms of the Orders-in-Council of 1847.

In the Clarence district, however, the progress of free selection was relatively harmonious, in contrast to the general trend. One important reason for this was the reclassification of Crown lands from unsettled to settled and intermediate which had occurred in this district in 1847 and 1848.¹⁰¹ By the time free selection

⁹⁸ 'Census of the Colony of New South Wales taken on the 7th April 1861', NSW, Legislative Council, *Journal*, vol. 9(2), Session 1862.

⁹⁹ See Baker, D.W.A., 1958, 'The origins of Robertson's land acts', *Historical Studies*, vol. 8, no. 30, pp. 166-182; Karr, C., 1974, 'Mythology vs. reality: the success of free selection in New South Wales', *Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society*, vol. 60(3), pp. 199-206; Robinson, M. E., 1974, 'The Robertson land acts in New South Wales, 1861-84', *Institute of British Geographers, Transactions*, no. 61, pp. 17-33; Gammage, B., 1990, 'Who gained, and who was meant to gain, from land selection in New South Wales?', *Australian Historical Studies*, vol. 24, no. 94, pp. 104-122.

¹⁰⁰ Except, of course, land reserved for public uses and land already purchased. Applications for conditional purchase could only be lodged at Land Offices on days when Land Agents were in attendance.

¹⁰¹ Section 1 of the Alienation Act of 1861 defined as 'First Class Settled Districts' the lands declared as settled by the 1847 Order-in-Council, and as 'Second Class Settled Districts' the lands converted into the

was introduced, therefore, grazing leases were already being phased out on the best agricultural land in the region. On the Clarence River, the river-side lands had been designated 'settled' in 1847, and pastoral leases reduced to a term of one year. Moreover, the creation of the four coastal counties in 1848, all intermediate lands, effectively divided the region into two broad zones: agricultural in the eastern portion of the district, and pastoral in the west.

Negligible agricultural development occurred in the Clarence district between the Order-in-Council of 1847 and the year 1857 when the first river-bank blocks were sold at public auction, and even then, agricultural development was slow. From 1862, however, agricultural production accelerated rapidly. For instance, the area under crop in the Clarence Pastoral District increased by 60 per cent from 1861 to 1862; maize production increased by more than 80 per cent (Table 3.1). Incidentally, the statistics also indicate that wheat declined in importance after 1861.

Table 3.1: Agriculture: (a) Clarence Pastoral District; (b) Grafton Police District

Year ended 31 March	Area under crop (acres)	Crops (acres)		Produce (bushels)	
		Maize	Wheat	Maize	Wheat
(a)					
1859	1,414	1,244	47	74,300	1,776
1860	1,961	1,721	100	115,020	2,400
1861	3,546	2,506	765	145,949	12,768
1862	5,718	5,210	318	265,934	5,829
(b)					
1859	1,339	1,214	42	72,840	1,680
1860	1,824	1,698	100	114,100	2,400
1861	3,393	2,448	741	144,114	12,636
1862	5,538	5,141	283	263,299	5,729

Notes: Police District and Pastoral District boundaries do not necessarily coincide, and where they do not the figures in (b) are for those parts of the Police Districts which fall within the Pastoral District.

Sources: Statistical Register of New South Wales for the years 1858, 1859, 1860, and 1861; Agriculture and Vineyards.

settled class by the 1859 Act, that is, those lands designated as intermediate under the Order-in-Council. All other Crown lands were classed as unsettled.

3.3 The rise of sugar

Maize, the first 'staple' crop in the Clarence district, thrived on the narrow strips of fertile soil which flanked the navigable reaches of the river and its lower tributaries. From 1857, the year the first farm was sold on the river, until the late 1860s, maize remained the principal crop grown by the Clarence River farmers, and the prosperity of the district was said to rise and fall with the price of maize.¹⁰² It was to facilitate the shipping of their maize crop that farmers sought Government assistance to establish a public wharf at Copmanhurst in 1876. They expected to ship 20,000 bags 'in the old style—that is on the backs of farmers' without a wharf.¹⁰³

By 1871, sugar cane was said to be the 'largest' crop on the Clarence River, superseding the original staple, maize, especially on the lower river, downstream of Grafton.¹⁰⁴ Sugar:

reigns supreme on all the cultivable lands of the Lower Clarence, and has even asserted its dominion over the soil beyond Grafton, where the maize fields have been invaded and flourishing colonies of cane established. There is scarcely a farm on Chatsworth, on the islands adjacent, or on the main land, where it does not clothe the fertile soil with a forest of living green.¹⁰⁵

The spread of sugar cultivation across the Clarence was spectacularly rapid. Although sugar cane was first grown experimentally on the river perhaps as early as 1860,¹⁰⁶ cultivation specifically for the manufacture of sugar was not widely attempted until several years later. By 1868 there were nine sugar mills in northern New South Wales and these produced a total output of about 60 tons.¹⁰⁷ The development of sugar growing in the region was watched carefully by the Colonial Sugar Refining Company Limited which in 1868 announced that, in return for assurances that sufficient area of land would be planted to cane, they

¹⁰² Meston, A., 1882, 'Report on the sugar industry on the Clarence and Richmond Rivers', Queensland, Legislative Council, *Journal*, 1882, vol. 31(2).

¹⁰³ *C&RE*, 30 January 1877.

¹⁰⁴ 'The Tourist. The Clarence in 1871', *Sydney Mail*, 2 September 1871, p. 860. This is a considerable exaggeration. Nevertheless, sugar was on the ascendency.

¹⁰⁵ 'The Tourist. The Clarence in 1871', *Sydney Mail*, 7 October 1871, p. 1015.

¹⁰⁶ 'The Tourist. The Clarence River in 1871. Sugar', *Sydney Mail*, 28 October 1871, p. 1114.

¹⁰⁷ Lowndes, A. G., 1956, *South Pacific enterprise: The Colonial Sugar Refining Company Limited* (Angus and Robertson, Sydney), p. 22.

would erect central sugar mills.¹⁰⁸ The company then proceeded to establish three mills, which commenced crushing in 1870: at Darkwater on the Macleay River; and at Southgate and Chatsworth on the Clarence River. This move firmly established sugar growing on a large scale, and in a small number of years sugar had attained a position of agricultural pre-eminence on the Clarence which it never lost. Indeed, the Macleay district soon proved unsuitable for cane growing and the Darkwater Mill was transferred to Harwood on the Clarence in 1873.

The phenomenal growth of the sugar industry in New South Wales is evident in the figures in Table 3.2. The importance of the Clarence district is evident in the following: of the total acreage under sugar cane in the colony in 1870, 1,281 acres (32.7 per cent) was in the Clarence; and of the total sugar produced, 2,247,280 lbs (63.1 per cent) was produced in the Clarence. In 1871, there were 1,310 acres under sugar cultivation in the Clarence Pastoral District (which included the Richmond and Tweed), 1,100 of which were on the banks of the Clarence River.¹⁰⁹

Table 3.2: Sugar cultivation and production, New South Wales, 1864-1870

Year	Area under cane (acres)	Sugar Production (lbs)
1864	2	280
1865	22.5	4,478
1866	141	5,700
1867	116	17,780
1868	646	134,740
1869	2,584	3,264,824
1870	3,917	3,563,704

Source: Sydney Mail, 28 October 1871; data from Statistical Register.

3.4 The dairying revolution

Dairying has been carried on in New South Wales since the earliest days. Indeed, part of the cargo of the First Fleet comprised four cows which presumably were intended to supply milk to the infant colony. In the 1820s dairy herds began to appear in the Illawarra district where early settlers specialised in the production of butter and cheese which could be transported with relative ease by packhorse

¹⁰⁸ Advertisement in *CRE*, 14 July 1868.

¹⁰⁹ 'The Tourist. The Clarence River in 1871. Sugar', *Sydney Mail*, 28 October 1871, p. 1114.

and then by small sailing vessels to Sydney for sale. Although small amounts of butter and cheese were exported overseas from the 1830s, dairying in New South Wales remained largely a local consumption industry until the 1880s.¹¹⁰

During the 1880s and 1890s dairying became established on a sound commercial basis, and developed as an important export industry. In 1897 it was said of dairying that 'no other industry [had] advanced with such rapid strides during the past few years'.¹¹¹ By 1900, there were 387 creameries and 168 butter factories in New South Wales. Butter production under the new factory system had increased to 8,049,656 lb in 1891 and to 18,817,747 lb in 1900, whereas production under the 'old system' had declined to 10,484,474 lb and then to 4,216,143 lb over the same period. Thus, by 1900 the factory system was clearly dominant over the older farm-based methods of production.¹¹²

At the end of the 1880s, the base of dairying in New South Wales remained firmly in the Illawarra district where the industry had begun. The next decade, however, saw the rapid expansion of dairying along the north coast, and a corresponding decline in the south.¹¹³ Although the expansion of dairying during the 1890s occurred along most of the north coast from the Hunter valley to the Queensland border, the most remarkable growth occurred in the northernmost coastal county, the County of Rous, and this reflects the concentration of dairying on the brush lands of the Tweed and Richmond Rivers. Nevertheless, dairying was significant in the Clarence district, and became an important factor in the rapid growth of settlement of that district.

The growth during the latter part of the nineteenth century of the dairying industry on the north coast of New South Wales was phenomenal. The rapidity and suddenness of this growth is expressed in the following figures. The butter production of the Clarence Electorate in 1871 was virtually nil, and in 1881 it remained insignificant. By 1891, however, production had increased to 1.2 million pounds, and in 1900 it exceeded 7.7 million pounds (Table 3.3). Seventy per cent of the 1900 production came from the Tweed and Lismore electorates, the former

¹¹⁰ Ashton, L. G. (ed.), 1950, *Dairy farming in Australia*, NSW edition (Commonwealth Department of Commerce and Agriculture), p. 1.

¹¹¹ Report on Agriculture and Forestry to 31 December 1897, p. 2.

¹¹² Ashton, *Dairy farming*, p. 6.

¹¹³ Jeans, D. N., 1972, *An historical geography of New South Wales to 1901* (Reed Education, Sydney), pp. 259-260.

embracing the catchments of the Tweed and Brunswick Rivers, and the latter including much of the Richmond's Big Scrub. The butter output of the Clarence and Grafton electorates, although much less, was far from insignificant.

Table 3.3: Butter production in north-eastern NSW, 1881-1900

Electorate	Butter made (lb.)	
	1881	1891
The Clarence	Very little made	52,636
Grafton	Very little made	140,010
The Richmond	Very little made	1,025,934
TOTAL		1,218,580
	1900	
The Clarence		537,671
Grafton		1,157,623
The Richmond		546,540
Lismore		2,866,760
Ballina		17,570
The Tweed		2,594,720
TOTAL		7,720,884

Notes: The Clarence Electorate was subdivided into three electorates (The Clarence, Grafton, and The Richmond) in 1880; The Richmond Electorate was subdivided into four electorates (The Richmond, Lismore, Ballina, and The Tweed) in 1893 (NSW, *Government Gazette*, 5 October 1893). The figures for each of the three years therefore correspond to essentially the same area of land.

Source: The North Coast District—Population, Agricultural, and Pastoral Statistics, Appendix A, Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works, 'Report...relating to the proposed railway from Grafton to Casino'.

The beginnings and spread of dairying throughout Copmanhurst Shire are indicated by the establishment dates and locations of the several dairy factories in the shire. The first was the Grafton Dairy Company's factory at Alummy Creek, which opened in March 1893 near the boundary between the shire and Grafton City. It was both a separating station and a butter factory, and drew its supplies from farmers in Alummy Creek and Carr's Creek. Only a year before, in 1892, the first Clarence River dairy factory had opened on the opposite side of the river at Ulmarra. The Grafton Dairy Company prospered, and in 1909 took over the Grafton factory of the NSW Fresh Food and Ice Company, which had opened in

Victoria Street, Grafton, in 1896. The Alummy Creek factory thereafter became a separating station for the Grafton factory.¹¹⁴

In February 1897 a creamery was opened by the NSW Fresh Food and Ice Company at Upper Copmanhurst, on the main road to Gordon Brook. Another was opened by the same company at 'Lower Copmanhurst' in January 1900. In the meantime, on the lower river, in September 1898 the Southgate Creamery opened, followed in October by the Lower Southgate Creamery.

A co-operative butter factory opened at Copmanhurst in September 1906.¹¹⁵ This took milk previously supplied to the local creamery of the Fresh Food and Ice Company, and avoided the need to send locally-produced cream to Grafton. The Copmanhurst Co-operative Dairy Company Limited continued to operate until 1920.

3.5 Swamp drainage

The best and most fertile agricultural land in the Clarence district was that narrow strip of higher ground along each bank of the river below about Grafton. It was this land on which sugar growing became established in the 1870s and about which it was said in 1882 that 'every acre' of this fertile land, for a distance of at least ninety miles on both sides of the river, was selected, all in farms of not more than 60 acres.¹¹⁶ The smallness of the area of such 'rich land' was 'truly astounding', wrote Archibald Meston in 1882, considering the size of the river, which averages half-a-mile wide for fifty miles.

The average width of the strip of good soil along each bank of the Clarence is not more than a quarter of a mile, in some places extending for a mile, and frequently narrowing to a couple of hundred yards.¹¹⁷

Especially given the very limited area of this prime agricultural land and the continuing need for land on which to grow crops, the idea was early formed of draining the vast swamps which lay immediately behind the narrow strips of higher ground. At very least, drains would speed the dissipation of water when

¹¹⁴ Ryan, M., 1995, *Norco 100: a centenary history of Norco, 1895-1995* (Norco Co-operative Limited, Lismore), pp. 260-270.

¹¹⁵ Ryan, *Norco 100*, pp. 273-276.

¹¹⁶ Meston, 'Report on the sugar industry'; *Sydney Mail*, 11 Nov. 1871.

¹¹⁷ Meston, 'Report on the sugar industry'.

floods occurred and so minimise the length of time that the land was flooded and unusable; at best, swamp drainage was an apparently a cheap and easy way to quickly make large areas of land permanently available for cultivation, and (important later) for dairy pasturage.

An early example of such an initiative on the Clarence was in the Parish of Great Marlow, which adjoins the City of Grafton to its immediate north, and includes Alamy Creek and the village of Southgate, within Copmanhurst Shire. As early as 1864 plans were being aired to drain a portion of this parish, and thus make available for agricultural purposes 'some hundreds of acres which have been useless since 1857' (when they were purchased), as they had been 'either under water or rendered inaccessible by it'.¹¹⁸

In New South Wales the *Drainage Promotion Act* 1865 provided for the establishment of unions of landholders of flood prone lands for the compulsory drainage of such lands. Then in 1902 the *Water and Drainage Act* authorised the expenditure of £200,000 per annum for five years on drainage and other works (water supply, conservation, irrigation) and provided for the constitution of trusts to administer the works. Responsibility for administering drainage trusts and unions rested with the Department of Public Works.

Although the *Drainage Promotion Act* operated from 1865, the golden age of swamp drainage occurred after the *Water and Drainage Act* 1902, and the *Water Act* 1912 which succeeded it, with dozens of drainage trusts being established in the first twenty years or so of the twentieth century in all the major coastal rivers, notably the Tweed, Richmond, Clarence, Bellinger, Nambucca, Macleay, Manning, Hunter and Shoalhaven. Examples of swamp drainage schemes which have operated in Copmanhurst Shire are Great Marlow Drainage Union, Lower Southgate Drainage Union, Everlasting Drainage Trust, and Sportsman's Creek Drainage Union.

One of the more interesting structures from this highly active period of swamp drainage in the early twentieth century is the Sportsman's Creek weir at Lower Southgate. The weir was built in 1927, and is part of a complex system of floodgates and drains within the Sportsman's Creek-Everlasting Swamp basin.

¹¹⁸ C&RE, 10 May 1864.

3.6 Agricultural Research

The idea of establishing a 'Model or Experiment Farm' in the Clarence district was canvassed at a meeting held for the purpose at Ulmarra in 1881, and the government was petitioned to establish such a farm at a site at Lower Ulmarra. Ultimately, however, the Department of Agriculture selected a site on the opposite side of the river at Alummy Creek. This was about 1886. It was not until 1902 that the Belindigarbar Experimental Farm opened on the site.¹¹⁹

In the words of its first manager, one of the functions of the Experimental Farm was to 'ascertain by experimentation' what crops were most suited to the surrounding country. Another important aim was to foster the dairying industry by introducing new fodder plants, and by herd improvement by careful breeding. It was also intended to facilitate the establishment of a mutton-sheep breeding industry, despite the failure of sheep in the past on the wet river flats of the district. Belindigarbar was one of several Experimental Stations established around New South Wales; others were Wollongbar (1893), Bathurst (1895), Glen Innes (1902), and Cowra (1903).¹²⁰

¹¹⁹ Anon., 2002. 'The early years: Grafton Experimental Farm, 1881-1908' (Grafton Agricultural Research and Advisory Station, Grafton).

¹²⁰ Anon., 'The early years'.

4 MINING AND MINERAL PROCESSING

4.1 Copmanhurst Shire Geology

Copmanhurst Shire straddles two major and contrasting geological provinces. In the east are the sedimentary formations of the Clarence-Moreton Basin. These overlie the much older and more mineralogically rich New England granites and even older altered sediments which are exposed in the west of the shire. The Clarence-Moreton Basin rocks within the shire have been an economically useful source of coal in the past, and have also been prospected for oil and natural gas.¹²¹ The ancient igneous and sedimentary rocks in the west have been the setting for a much greater diversity of mining and mineral processing activities. These have been based on such minerals and metals as asbestos, chromite, gold, copper, mercury, iron, and antimony. Mining and mineral processing is thus an important historical theme within the shire, and these activities have left a rich heritage.

4.2 Mining and Mineral Processing

An enormous number of mineral deposits and mines have been recorded in Copmanhurst Shire. On the Coaldale and Tenterfield 1:100,000 map sheets, which cover most of the mineral-rich, western section of the shire, the Department of Mineral Resources have identified more than 160 mineral deposit sites.¹²² Only a small number of these, being the more important sites, are detailed here.

4.2.1 Lionsville-Solferino Goldfields

Gold was discovered in the Rocky of Timbarra River, just beyond the western boundary of Copmanhurst Shire, in 1859.¹²³ The effect that this discovery, and later the discovery of tin, had on the development of transport routes through the shire has already been mentioned (2.1 Roads). It was not until the 1870s, however, that the gold 'rush' occurred within Copmanhurst Shire, when gold was discovered in the area between the Gibraltar Range and the Clarence River, west and north-west of Yulgilbar station. Subsequent production of gold in the shire

¹²¹ O'Brien, P. E., Powell, T. G. and Wells, A. T., 1994, 'Petroleum potential of the Clarence-Moreton Basin', in Wells, A. T. and O'Brien, P. E. (ed.), 'Geology and Petroleum Potential of the Clarence-Moreton Basin, New South Wales and Queensland', Australian Geological Survey Organisation *Bulletin* 241, pp. 277-290.

¹²² Barnes, R. G., Henley, H. F. and Henley, J. E., 1995, *Exploration data package for the Tenterfield and Coaldale 1:100 000 sheet areas*, 2 vols, Geological Survey Report no. GS1995/004 (NSW Department of Mineral Resources), Sydney).

¹²³ Wilkinson, *Forgotten Country*.

was mostly confined to this area (and mostly within the Parish of Churchill). The rushes to these new fields quickly spawned two new towns: Lionsville, and Solferino (see 6.2.3 and 6.2.4).

The earliest recorded production from the Lionsville and Solferino goldfields is for 1871, the year in which the Garibaldi Line of Reef was discovered by Messrs Marcolino and Madonna. The largest recorded annual production from the field was in 1874, and after 1876 production gradually declined until no gold was won in 1893. Minor work was then carried out until around 1911 when the field underwent a revival, mainly through few finds being made in old workings.¹²⁴

In November 1912 Mr A. Bancroft discovered the 'Mountain Maid' in an old trench on the Solferino Reef that had been opened in the 1870s. Similar new discoveries of rich ore were made on the Lion Line of Reef. The new discoveries resulted in a peak of production in 1913, after which there was a gradual decline until 1940, after which time there is no record of gold having been won from the area.¹²⁵

By no means was all gold from the Lionsville-Solferino area won by reef mining. Alluvial production took place at various times from 1871 until around 1940, mainly centred on Horseshoe Bend (about ten kilometres upstream of Yulgilbar station) on the Clarence River (which is more-or-less auriferous from its junction with the Tooloom River to near Yulgilbar), and various creeks near Lionsville and Solferino (Sandy Creek, Washpool Creek, Oakey Creek, Dingle Creek, and Solferino Creek). Alluvial production was generally contemporaneous with and of the same order of magnitude as that from reef mining.

4.2.2 Pucka Antimony Mine

The Pucka mine is situated in Portion 76, Parish of Yulgilbar, a little to the west of Pucka Ponds Creek, where antimony occurs as pockets of stibnite (the sulphide) in well-defined quartz reefs traceable for about 800 metres. The country rock is granite. It is the most northerly and the most extensively mined of three sets of workings in the locality.¹²⁶

¹²⁴ Lishmund, S. R., 1968, 'Solferino-Lionsville Gold Workings', Rep. Geological Survey NSW GS1968/115 (unpubl.); 'The Lionsville and Solferino Gold-Fields', *C&RE*, 22 April 1913.

¹²⁵ Lishmund, 'Solferino-Lionsville'; 'The Lionsville and Solferino Gold-Fields', *C&RE*, 22 April 1913.

¹²⁶ McClatchie, L. and Griffin, D. K., 1970, 'The mineral industry of New South Wales, no.2, Antimony', *Geol. Surv. N.S.W.*, p. 29; Carne, J. E., 1912, *The Antimony-Mining Industry and the*

It is uncertain when antimony was first discovered here. McClatchie and Griffin nominate 1875, but give no evidence.¹²⁷ In 1877 the *Clarence and Richmond Examiner* reported that 'a party of six thorough practical miners' intended to begin mining antimony 'on the Pucka Creek, Gordon Brook run' in 'a very short space of time'. 'Some years' previously, perhaps in 1875, 'as much as 50 tons' was raised, but mining was discontinued as the price for antimony was too low.¹²⁸ The price had risen sufficiently by 1877 to allow the resumption of mining.

According to McClatchie and Griffin, production from the Pucka mine since 1875 has amounted to 100 tons of ore, most of which was won in the periods 1891-92 and 1905-16.¹²⁹

4.2.3 Pluck Copper Mine

Copper has been mined at several locations in Copmanhurst Shire, notably around Fine Flower and Pulganbar. In the Pulganbar area, the Glamorgan Mine, on the southern side of Pulganbar Creek, operated as early as 1875; Flintoff's mine, later known as the Cu Co Mine, began operation nearby about 1887.¹³⁰

The Pluck mine was situated on the south side of Gordon Brook (the stream), about one kilometre south-west of Fine Flower, and about eight kilometres north of Pulganbar. It was first worked about 1883, and production to 1907 was about 80 tonnes. It is of particular interest because a small smelter was operated in conjunction with the mine, and ore was conveyed from the mine to the smelter by means of a tramway. Barnes *et al.* record that some slag remained on the smelter site in 1989, but it is unknown what now remains of the smelter, tramway, or the mine itself.¹³¹

Distribution of Antimony Ores in New South Wales (New South Wales Department of Mines, Sydney), pp. 42-43.

¹²⁷ McClatchie and Griffin, *Antimony*, p. 29.

¹²⁸ *C&RE*, 5 May 1877, p. 3.

¹²⁹ McClatchie and Griffin, *Antimony*, p. 29; Carne, *Antimony*, pp. 42-43.

¹³⁰ Carne, J. E., 1908, *The Copper-Mining Industry and the Distribution of Copper Ores in New South Wales*, 2nd ed. (New South Wales Department of Mines, Sydney), p. 188-189.

¹³¹ Barnes *et al.*, *Exploration data*, vol. 2, p. 136.

4.2.4 Yulgilbar and Pulganbar Mercury Deposits

Cinnabar, a sulphide of mercury, was one of the more unusual minerals found in Copmanhurst Shire. Cinnabar was discovered at Horseshoe Bend on the Clarence River in 1891, and at Yulgilbar, on the same river, half a kilometre west of Broadwater Crossing, in 1895. The Great Australian Quicksilver Mining Company Limited was formed in 1899 to work the Yulgilbar deposit. A reduction plant was erected and retorting operations were carried out briefly, but the operation was concluded in 1903.¹³² This is said to have been the first production of mercury on a commercial scale in Australasia.¹³³

A second mercury retorting operation was begun several years later at Pulganbar Creek, near Gordon Brook station. Retorting was begun here by the Pulganbar Mineral Prospecting Co. N.L. in August 1911, in a plant consisting of a rotating cast iron vessel of 1 ton capacity, fired from beneath.¹³⁴

The area around Pulganbar Creek had originally been developed for copper mining (see under 4.2.3). Flintoff's mine, later known as the Cu Co Mine, began operation about 1887 on the south-eastern side of Pulganbar Creek, the opposite side to the eventual site of the first Pulganbar mercury retorting plant.¹³⁵ In December 1911 the amalgamation took place of the Clarence Cu Co Mining Co. Ltd (Flintoff's) and the Pulganbar Mineral Prospecting Co N. L. to form the Pulganbar Quicksilver and Copper Mining Co. Ltd.

The original mercury retorting plant had proved unsatisfactory, so the new company immediately took steps to erect a larger and more up-to-date plant. This began operation early in 1914 on the south-eastern side of Pulganbar Creek, opposite to the original plant and to the principal ore deposit, the Federal Lode (Figures 2 and 3). Mercury production at Pulganbar was brief, ceasing in 1916.

¹³² Carne, J. E., 1913, *Mercury, or Quicksilver, in New South Wales*, 2nd ed. (New South Wales Department of Mines, Sydney), pp. 38-39; Kenny, E. J., 1924, 'Mercury', *Bull. Geol. Surv. N. S. W.*, 11, p. 9; Kenny, E. J., 1928, 'Mercury' in Andrews, E. C. (ed.), *The Mineral Industry of New South Wales* (New South Wales Department of Mines, Sydney), pp. 112-113; *Grafton Argus*, 9 July 1903, p. 2.

¹³³ *Grafton Argus*, 9 July 1903, p. 2.

¹³⁴ Carne, *Mercury*, pp. 39-41.

¹³⁵ Carne, *Mercury*, p. 39; Carne, *Copper-mining*, p. 189.

During the period 1914 to 1916, the Pulganbar company treated about 370 tons of ore obtained from the old Yulgilbar leases.¹³⁶

The ruins of the second Pulganbar mercury retorting plant comprise a series of brick furnaces and condensing chambers which ascend the hill beside Pulganbar Creek. The brick chimney which once stood at the upper end of the plant has collapsed, and the timber and corrugated iron roof which once covered the brick structures has been removed. No plans or early descriptions of the works have been found. Nevertheless, the remains are sufficiently well preserved that a close study of them should reveal the mode of operation of this unusual industry.

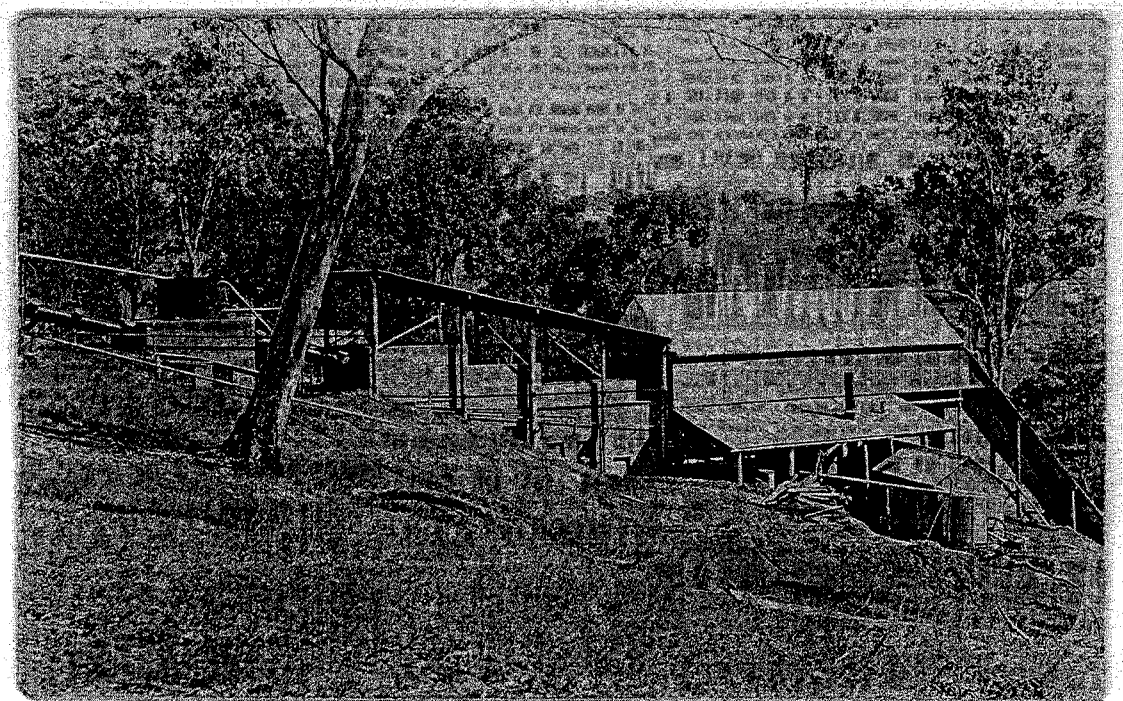


Figure 2: The second (c.1914) Pulganbar mercury smelter.

¹³⁶ *C&RE*, 24 December 1912, p. 7; 28 March 1914, p. 4; Gourlay, A. J. C., '30. Mercury' in McLeod, I. R. (ed.), *Australian Mineral Industry: The Mineral Deposits*, Bulletin no. 72, pp. 419-420.

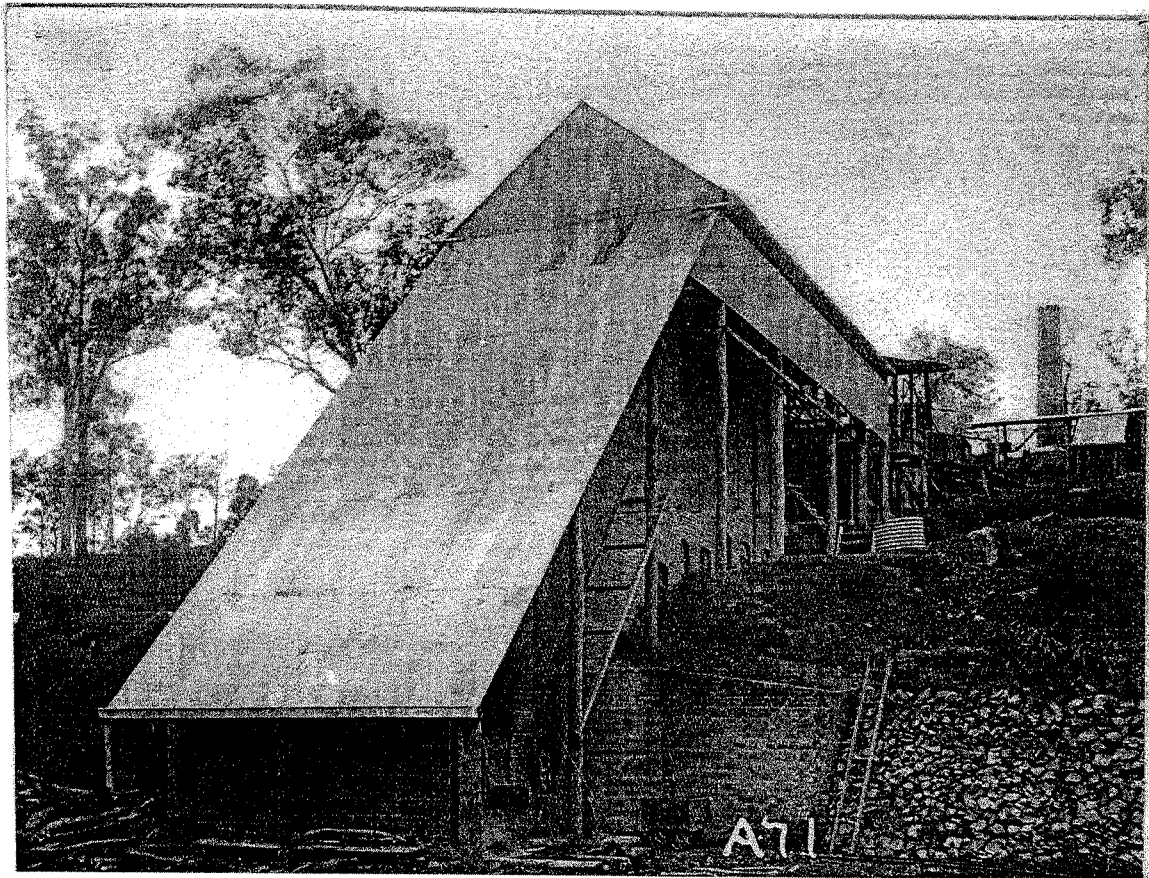


Figure 3: The second (c.1914) Pulganbar mercury smelter; view upslope from near Pulganbar Creek.

4.2.5 Fine Flower-Oakey Creek Area Chromite Mines

In 1891 the geologist T. W. E. David inspected various occurrences of chromite in the Parish of Pucka, on Oakey and Fine Flower Creeks, in Gordon Brook station.¹³⁷ Attempts were made to open these deposits in 1891 and 1895, but neither was successful, possibly due to the expense of carriage over rough roads to the river at Copmanhurst, nearly forty kilometres away.¹³⁸

The deposits of chromite within Copmanhurst Shire are associated with the Gordonbrook Serpentinite Belt, an elongated outcrop which occurs at the junction of the Mesozoic Clarence-Moreton basin sediments, and the Palaeozoic granites

¹³⁷ David, T. W. E., 1892, 'Report on the deposits of chromite at Gordonbrook, near Copmanhurst in the Parish of Pucka, County Drake', *Ann. Rep. Dep. Min. N.S.W.*, 1891, pp. 218-219.

¹³⁸ Suppel, D. W., 1968, 'The mineral industry of New South Wales, no.8, Chromium', *Geol. Surv. N.S.W.*

and metasediments, and extends roughly north-south in the western half of the shire. A total of twenty-nine chromite deposits have been recorded, the most significant of which occur around the southern part of the exposed Gordonbrook Serpentinite.¹³⁹

David had anticipated that the beginning of large scale iron-smelting in Australia might create a local demand for the Gordonbrook chromite for the manufacturing of chrome steel.¹⁴⁰ It was for a different use, however, that the chromite was ultimately exploited. This was for making refractories, for example to manufacture bricks for use to as furnace lining. In 1940-45, almost the entire New South Wales production of chromite came from deposits near Fine Flower. The demand was short-lived, however, and no production was recorded after 1945.¹⁴¹

Several abandoned chromite mines can be found today near Oakey Creek, and some of these are of potential archaeological interest. One in particular, the Hunter and McClymont mine,¹⁴² which was operational during the 1940s, has the remains of a short tramway used to convey chromite from the mine, down a steep hill to a point where it was loaded for transport.

4.2.6 Fine Flower Iron Mine

The main iron deposits within Copmanhurst Shire occur near Fine Flower. Of these, the most significant deposit (the Torrens deposit) is situated in portion 63, Parish of Pucka, about three kilometres west of Fine Flower. It comprises a thin, inclined, sheet-like mass of mainly magnetite which has been worked as an open cut. The total ore reserve was estimated in 1963 at 175,000 tonnes.¹⁴³

The operational history of this mine is not known in detail, but it was worked from 1961 to 1982, during which time an average of 200 tonnes of ore per week was removed.¹⁴⁴

¹³⁹ Barnes *et al.*, *Exploration data*, vol. 1, p.27.

¹⁴⁰ David, 'Report'.

¹⁴¹ McLeod, I. R., 1966, '5. Asbestos' in McLeod, I. R. (ed.), *Australian Mineral Industry: The Mineral Deposits*, Bulletin no. 72, p. 109; Suppel, 'Chromium', p. 10; Raggatt, H. G., 1928, 'Chromium', in Andrews, E. C. (ed.), *The Mineral Industry of New South Wales* (New South Wales Department of Mines, Sydney), p. 36.

¹⁴² Barnes *et al.*, *Exploration data*, vol. 2, p. 123.

¹⁴³ Barnes *et al.*, *Exploration data*, vol. 2, p. 132.

¹⁴⁴ Barnes *et al.*, *Exploration data*, vol. 1, p. 45.

4.2.7 *Baryulgil Asbestos Mine*

The Baryulgil asbestos mine is undoubtedly the best known of the numerous mining ventures within Copmanhurst Shire. It was one of the most recent, and certainly the most notorious. It became embroiled in the nation-wide controversy over asbestos which had its origins in the blue asbestos (crocidolite) mines of the Wittenoom district of Western Australia,¹⁴⁵ and later extended to the white asbestos (crysotile) mines of northern New South Wales.

The deposits of crysotile around Baryulgil are associated with the Gordonbrook Serpentinite Belt (see 4.2.5). The asbestos occurs as light-coloured cross-fibre veins in the massive deep-green serpentinite.

The Baryulgil asbestos deposit, the main one in the Gordonbrook Serpentinite Belt, was first 'developed' during the First World War (1914-1918) by The Asbestos Mining Company of Australia Ltd. This company went into voluntary liquidation on 1 June 1923, and the mine closed in 1924. Production for that early period is not known.¹⁴⁶

Development of the mine was recommenced by Wunderlich Ltd in 1940, and the first record of production is for 1941, when open-cut mining operations began.¹⁴⁷ The first consignment of asbestos was railed from South Grafton to Sydney in May 1941.¹⁴⁸ In 1944 the company Asbestos Mines Pty Ltd, an equal joint venture between Wunderlich Ltd and the James Hardie Group, was formed to continue the operation of the Baryulgil mine.¹⁴⁹

In 1953, James Hardie Asbestos Pty Ltd purchased all of Wunderlich's shares in Asbestos Mines Pty Ltd, and from then until 1976 the company was a wholly-

¹⁴⁵ Hills, B., 1989, *Blue Murder* (Macmillan, South Melbourne).

¹⁴⁶ MacNevin, A. A., 1970, 'The mineral industry of New South Wales, no. 4, Asbestos', *Geol. Surv. N.S.W.*, p. 33; Cannon, *Yulgilbar*, pp. 118-119.

¹⁴⁷ MacNevin, 'Asbestos', p. 33; Australia, House of Representatives Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs, 1984, *The Effects of Asbestos Mining on the Baryulgil Community* (Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra), p. 12.

¹⁴⁸ *Daily Examiner*, 27 May 1941, p. 4.

¹⁴⁹ Australia, HRSCAA, *Effects*, p. 12.

owned subsidiary of the James Hardie Group. On 23 September 1975, Hardie's shareholding in Asbestos Mines Pty Ltd was sold to Woodsreef Mines Limited.¹⁵⁰

The Baryulgil asbestos mine, which was situated on portions 12 and 122, Parish of Yulgilbar, was the source of the vast majority of asbestos produced in New South Wales from the Second World War until the end of the 1960s at least.

Asbestos Mines Pty Ltd ceased operation of the Baryulgil mine and associated mill on 24 April 1979. The quarry subsequently filled with water to form a lake, and reforestation of the tailings dump was undertaken.¹⁵¹ Little physical evidence of the operation remains today.

An important social consequence of the closure of the mine was that very little employment was available afterwards for the Aboriginal community of Baryulgil which had contributed most of the workforce of the mine during the nearly 40 years of its operation (see 6.1.2).¹⁵²

¹⁵⁰ Australia, HRSCAA, *Effects*, p. 41.

¹⁵¹ Australia, HRSCAA, *Effects*, pp. 12, 14-15.

¹⁵² Australia, HRSCAA, *Effects*, pp. 12, 14-15.

5 FOREST INDUSTRY AND FOREST CONSERVATION

In section 1 it was mentioned that timber, in particular the red cedar, was one of the principal reasons for the first occupation of the Clarence River district in the late 1830s. It is particularly notable, however, that cedar-cutting on the Clarence was a short-lived activity. Very little cedar was shipped from the Clarence in 1845 and 1846, suggesting that the most accessible cedar on that river—that in the river-bank brushes—had been depleted, and that the cedar cutters had moved to new areas—namely the Bellinger, the Richmond, and, most recently, the Tweed.

Much more important than the red cedar and other softwood species among the timber resources of the Clarence River were the various hardwood species. In the earliest years of New South Wales these were not greatly prized or sought after. As long as red cedar was available, there was little incentive to use hardwoods which, although stronger and more durable, had the disadvantage of being much more difficult to work. Nevertheless, hardwoods were ideally suited to some applications, and in others no alternative was available, so these timbers became commonly and widely used. They comprised many species with a wide range of properties.

By the late 1860s a small hardwood industry had developed in the Clarence district, cutting and sawing timber for both local use and shipment to Sydney. At least one mill on the Clarence in 1871 was processing hardwood. At Selman's, near North Grafton, about twenty men were employed, turning out 30,000 super. feet a week in 'cedar, pine, ironbark, and spotted gum, which are obtained and used for the most part in the neighbourhood'.¹⁵³

The export of such timber from the Clarence River to both intra- and inter-colonial and other destinations was a later and much more significant development. In 1867, for example, 130 'girders and piles', undoubtedly of hardwood and probably of ironbark, were included in the exports of the Clarence River. The export of girders and piles from that river occurred on a regular basis from 1875.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵³ 'Jottings by the way. The Clarence River District', *Town and Country Journal*, 8 April 1871, p. 426.

¹⁵⁴ 'Principal exports from the Clarence River by sea in the years 1857-1867 to July 1, 1886 (from shipping reports)', Appendix to evidence on northern rivers, Royal Commission—Conservation of Water, 1887, p. 186.

Although hardwood was used widely and commonly for construction purposes in the Clarence district from an early date, and had become a regular export by the 'seventies, the large scale export of hardwood sections for construction purposes was a later development. A boom in the trade in New South Wales hardwoods occurred in the late 1880s, initially as a result of demand created by the boom in public works, particularly railway construction and port improvement, which occurred in New South Wales and Victoria especially from about 1880, but was added to later by the demand for railway sleepers and construction timbers from countries overseas, both within and outside the British Empire. It was abetted by a government policy, instituted in the 1880s but pursued more vigorously in the 1890s, of encouraging both the local use and export of native hardwoods.

It is not known when inter-colonial¹⁵⁵ export shipments of hardwood from the Clarence River commenced, nor what quantities were initially being sent, but in October 1886 the Royal Commission on Water Conservation was told in Grafton that the hardwood of the district was being 'sent to New Zealand as fast as possible for the Harbour Trust Works there'.¹⁵⁶ In addition, local firms had contracts in 1887 for the supply of 4,500,000 super. feet of timber to Victoria for the Melbourne Harbour Trust.¹⁵⁷ Clarence River shipping statistics prepared for the Royal Commission show a dramatic increase in exports of 'girders and piles' and 'timber' from 1885, compared to the earlier years of the decade, and this is consistent with the trade with New Zealand and Victoria commencing about 1885.¹⁵⁸

5.1 The Clarence Forest Reserves

Even before the boom in hardwood exports from the Clarence River in the mid-1880s, official concern over the timber resources of the region led to the

¹⁵⁵ As opposed to coastwise shipments to Sydney.

¹⁵⁶ William Goodyer, 26 October 1886, evidence to Royal Commission—Conservation of Water, Third and Final Report of the Commissioners, 1887, p. 139.

¹⁵⁷ 'Coastal Districts of New South Wales', *Town and Country Journal*, 22 January 1887, p. 185.

¹⁵⁸ Appendix 2 to evidence on Northern Rivers, Royal Commission—Conservation of Water, Third and Final Report of the Commissioners, 1887. The available statistics are ambiguous on this point, so this is a tentative interpretation only. Clarence River export statistics compiled in January 1887 for the Railway Commissioners indicate that most of the timber shipped in 1886 was pine, not hardwood. See Appendix A, Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works, 'Report...relating to the proposed railway from Grafton to the Tweed', 1890.

establishment of a series of forest reserves. The first timber reserves in New South Wales were established in 1871 in the Murray River district to protect the river red gum forests which were being rapidly cleared to provide timber for railway construction. The motivation for the Clarence reserves, however, which were the second series of such reserves in New South Wales, was the protection of areas of native forest from clearance for agriculture.

In September 1871, shortly after the gazettal of the Murray River forest reserves, a series of fourteen reserves, comprising 734.5 square miles (about 190,000 hectares) was created for the preservation of timber in the Clarence, Richmond and Tweed River Districts.¹⁵⁹ Three of the reserves already had been surveyed, but most had not been examined. Consequently, at the beginning of December 1871, William Carron, botanical collector, was detached from the Botanic Gardens in Sydney to accompany the Government Surveyors and to help them to report on the portions of land selected as forest reserves. In addition to reporting on the fourteen reserves already gazetted, Carron selected and reported on further areas for reservation, bringing the number of areas to twenty. In January 1876, Carron was appointed as ranger to supervise the timber reserves in the Clarence River district.

Table 5.1: Forest Reserves, Clarence District, 1871-1872, wholly or partly within present Copmanhurst Shire.

Name of Reserve	No.	County	Area	Timber
Laurence	1	Clarence	25	Hardwood
Coalbrook	4	Clarence	25	Chiefly hwd
Mount Neville	6	Drake	40.5	Chiefly hwd
Alumy Creek	19	Clarence	71 acres	Brush

Notes: Areas in square miles unless otherwise noted. Number of reserve is number in Government Gazette.

Although some of the areas selected by Carron contained brush (softwood) timbers, the greater proportion of the area of the first reserves contained hardwood. The only area of brush near Grafton which Carron was able to recommend for reservation was a small area six or seven miles from North Grafton (Alumy Creek; Table 5.1) which, 'although the greater part of the larger timber trees has been cut out, there are a great many trees of various kinds which

¹⁵⁹ NSW, *Government Gazette*, 15 September 1871, p. 2054.

in the course of a few years will be valuable if allowed to stand'.¹⁶⁰ Four of the original Clarence forest reserves were wholly or partly within the present Copmanhurst Shire (Table 5.1).

5.2 The State Forest System

The forest reserve system that was begun in New South Wales in 1871 and 1872 comprised an area of 223 square miles on the Murray River and 734.5 square miles in the Clarence district. These original reserves were supplemented during the remainder of the decade until at the end of 1879 an area of 3.1 million acres (4,870 square miles) of timbered land had been reserved across the colony. In 1906 the area reached an all-time high of about 7.7 million acres.

Among the provisions of the *Forestry Act* 1909, which came into effect on 1 January 1910, was a requirement that a classification of the forest lands of the state would be carried out to determine which should be permanently dedicated as 'state forests' and which should remain temporarily reserved as timber reserves. Under the act, the creation and revocation of timber reserves—temporary reservations from sale for forestry purposes—remained the prerogative of the Minister, with the concurrence of the Secretary of Lands (s.12), but dedication of land as a state forest could be revoked only on the resolution of both Houses of Parliament (s.8). Thus, for the first time in New South Wales, forests could be given a secure status which placed them beyond the arbitrary influence of a single Minister or department. The 'state forest' thus became the cornerstone of New South Wales forest policy.

By October 1910, about 4.5 million acres of the reserved forest estate had been examined and reported upon in accordance with the requirements of the act. By December 1913, classification of the timber lands was still proceeding, and an area of about 3.4 million acres had been recommended by Forest Officers for proclamation as state forests. By the end of 1913, the first forty-five state forests had been proclaimed, comprising about 320,000 acres. Twenty-nine of the first thirty of these (numbers 1-19 and 21-29, comprising about 270,000 acres, or 84 per cent) were situated within the Counties of Rous, Richmond, Clarence, Fitzroy and Buller, that is, within the Clarence, Richmond and Tweed River districts, which highlights the importance of the forests in this region and the urgency of having them protected. One of these original state forests, Camira (no. 18), was within Copmanhurst Shire.

¹⁶⁰ 'Report on Timber Reserves in the Clarence River District', p. 1.

The process of timber reserve assessment and state forest dedication was mostly complete by the early 1920s, when the statutory target of 5 million acres had been reached. Several more state forests were created within (or partly within) Copmanhurst Shire by this time (Table 5.2). Because of the speed with which this process was undertaken, numerous mistakes were made, for example imprecise definition of boundaries, and inadequate assessment resulting in the inclusion of land unsuitable for forestry and the exclusion of good forest. Consequently, a process of rationalisation of the state forest estate, entailing the revocation of some areas and the dedication of new forested lands, continued for many years, into the 1940s. The dedication of Ewingar (1933) and Fullers (1926) State Forests occurred during this period of adjustment.

Table 5.2: State Forests in Copmanhurst Shire.

Name	Number	Year Dedicated
Camira	18	1913
Mount Pikapene (part)	170	1914
Fortis Creek (now defunct?)	172	1914
Washpool (most)	355	1917
Mount Belmore (most)	361	1917
Keybarbin	662	1918
Sugarloaf (part)	708	1919
Banyabba (most)	737	1920
Southgate	757	1920
Mount Marsh	770	1921
Myrtle (part)	559	1922
Fullers	800	1926
Ewingar (most)	845	1933

5.3 Exotic Softwood Plantations

In 1903, the value of timber imports into New South Wales exceeded exports by more than three times. Over 80 per cent of imports (by value) were for rough sawn softwood, which mostly came from New Zealand and the United States of

America.¹⁶¹ Although the problem of inadequate softwood resources did not diminish in importance in the following years, it was kept from prominence by the more immediate problem of protecting the native hardwood forests.

Following the Great War, and the dislocation of trade and commerce which was its consequence, there occurred across the nation—indeed, across the British Empire—a great awakening to the importance of forests as the source of raw materials for construction and industry. In post-war New South Wales, the Forestry Commission reviewed the organisation and working of the forests under its control. It embarked upon a ‘vigorous policy of afforestation’, using conifers in particular, with a view to ‘supplementing the State’s shortage of softwood, and ensuring a future supply of that essential commodity’.¹⁶² Land was sought in accessible localities where ‘inferior hardwood forests’ might be cleared for ‘conversion’ into coniferous plantations.¹⁶³ The Casino district became one focus in 1920 of the State’s new coniferous afforestation programme and, together with a later site on the edge of the tableland in the Glen Innes district, about 1,700 acres of exotic conifers were planted in the region up until the end of 1933.

In 1920, experimental sowings of the exotic species *Pinus radiata*, *P. canariensis*, and *P. ponderosa*, together with native hoop pine, were made at Mt Pikapene State Forest no. 170, on the Richmond Range to the south-west of the town of Casino. Although Mt Pikapene State Forest is partly within Copmanhurst Shire, the plantation area is not, so the plantations here will be discussed no further. More significant, however, was the creation in 1920 of Banyabba State Forest, between Casino and Grafton, principally for afforestation with exotic pines.¹⁶⁴ The plantation area of Banyabba State Forest is partly within Copmanhurst Shire. Planting commenced here in 1921 with *Pinus radiata*, but it was soon realised that this species was unsuitable, and a change was made to *Pinus caribaea* and *P. taeda* in 1924.

¹⁶¹ ‘Report of the Forestry Branch for the year 1903’, pp. 5-6. See also Dalrymple-Hay, R., 1904, ‘Forestry. The state’s consumption and supply of softwood’, *Agricultural Gazette of New South Wales*, 2 September, pp. 837-838.

¹⁶² ‘Report of the Forestry Commission for the year ended 30 June 1920’, pp. 1-2.

¹⁶³ ‘Report of the Forestry Commission for the year ended 30 June 1919’, p. 2; ‘Report of the Forestry Commission for the year ended 30 June 1920’, p. 2.

¹⁶⁴ Banyabba State Forest no. 737, originally comprising 5,300 acres, was dedicated on 9 January 1920.

Two events occurred in the early 1930s that radically changed the aspect of the State's softwood afforestation programme. The first of these was the dismissal in May 1932 of the Lang Labor Government and the instalment of the Stevens-Bruxner Coalition after a June election. In particular, this change of Government brought Roy Stanley Vincent to the office of Minister for Forests, a position which he retained until May 1941. The second significant event was the expiry on 4 October 1933 of the term of office of the Forestry Commissioner, Norman Jolly.¹⁶⁵ This gave the new Minister a convenient opportunity to undertake a major review of the operations of the Forestry Commission.

In December 1933, closely following Jolly's retirement, terms of reference were issued by Vincent to Stephen Kessell, the Conservator of Forests in Western Australia, for a wide-ranging inquiry into the indigenous forests and plantations of New South Wales. The many matters reported on by Kessell included the main plantation areas in the State. Kessell found the results at Banyabba to be sufficiently good to 'justify continuance of planting at a rate of 100 acres per annum'. A total of 773 acres had been planted there since 1920, comprising *Pinus radiata* (102 acres), *P. pinaster* (64 acres), *P. caribaea* (374 acres), *P. taeda* (186 acres), and various experimental areas (47 acres).¹⁶⁶

Kessell's June 1934 report formed the basis of a reform of the operations of the Forestry Commission instituted by the Minister. This reform was embodied in the *Forestry (Amendment) Act 1935*, the passage of which brought about a temporary cessation of exotic pine planting in New South Wales. Planting did not resume until after the Second World War.

5.3.1 Poplar plantations

A particularly interesting aspect of plantation timber production in Copmanhurst Shire are the poplar plantations which once stood along the Great Marlow Road between Grafton and Southgate. These were a landmark in that part of the shire, but most have now been removed.

¹⁶⁵ 'Report of the Forestry Commission for the year ended 31st December 1933', p. 11. The Secretary of the Forestry Commission, S. M. Tout, was appointed Acting Commissioner on 4 October 1933.

¹⁶⁶ Kessell, S. L., 1934, 'Forestry in New South Wales: A report on the indigenous forests, plantations, and forest industries of New South Wales with recommendations for future administration and practice', pp. 49, 51, 67.

Plantation establishment began at Great Marlow in 1958, but their origin lies in the wartime years of the early 1940s. At that time the Sydney-based Federal Match Company Pty Ltd became unable to obtain match splits from its regular suppliers in Finland. In 1942 the company began to erect a factory in Grafton, near the railway station, for the manufacture of wooden skillets (matchbox frames) and splints (match shafts), to be made hoop pine sourced from Clarence district forests and plantations.

In the mid-1950s the Federal Match Company began to investigate poplars as an alternative source of wood for match production. In 1958 the company made its initial plantations at Great Marlow of the eastern cottonwood (*Populus deltoides*), a native of eastern North America. In 1965 it was reported that the company was planting 100 acres per year; had planted 630 acres to date; and intended to plant 920 acres. By the mid-1970s this area was expected supply the company's needs continuously. The first harvest was expected to be in 1967.¹⁶⁷

Early in 1967 a new splint and skillet factory began operations at Great Marlow, replacing the original plant in Grafton.¹⁶⁸ Soon after, in 1973, Federal Match Company came under the control of its British-based competitor, Bryant and May. The Great Marlow factory continued in operation until 1984 when the change was made from wooden to cardboard match boxes. The plantations continued to stand for many years after the factory closed as a reminder of this once important local industry.

¹⁶⁷ *Daily Examiner*, 29 March 1965

¹⁶⁸ *Daily Examiner*, 20 January 1967

5.4 Nature Conservation

The creation in 1967 in New South Wales of the *National Parks and Wildlife Act* provided for the reservation 'for the people' of nineteen national parks and state parks,¹⁶⁹ located throughout the State, and containing about two million acres of land. Most of these parks comprised or included lands which had been reserved or dedicated for similar purposes under the Crown lands Acts at various times since the late nineteenth century. Despite their diverse origins, these national parks (twelve) and state parks (seven) all contained 'unique or outstanding examples of scenery or possess[ed] unique geographical, biological, or geological features while also providing opportunities for outdoor recreation amid superb surroundings',¹⁷⁰ making their permanent preservation desirable in the national interest. Centralisation of control over these parks, which hitherto had been managed separately by numerous trusts created for the purpose under various Acts, was achieved through the new legislation by the creation of a single agency, the National Parks and Wildlife Service, whose duty would be the 'care, control and management' of the original nineteen parks¹⁷¹ and any new ones created in the future. Under the act, such reserves would be irrevocable except by an act of parliament passed for the purpose, and the removal of timber from them under the *Forestry Act* would be prohibited.

The *National Parks and Wildlife Act* 1967 had a second principal function besides the reservation and subsequent care, control and management of national parks. This second function, implicit in the title of the act, involved the protection of native flora and fauna. Prior to the 1967 act, wildlife protection in New South Wales rested with the *Fauna Protection Act* 1948, and under this act, some fifty-two areas of land across the State had, by 1967, been dedicated as reserves for the protection, propagation, and study of native fauna. Consistent with the spirit of the new act in combining the management of national parks and wildlife under the one authority, these 'faunal reserves' in 1967 were renamed 'nature reserves', better expressing the perceived need to preserve the environment as well as, and in order to, preserve the fauna.¹⁷² Thus, in addition to the twenty-five national parks, state parks, and historic sites which the *National Parks and Wildlife Act* 1967

¹⁶⁹ In addition were six areas which were reserved as historic sites under the Act.

¹⁷⁰ J. B. M. Fuller, NSW, *Parliamentary debates*, 6 December 1966, p. 3115.

¹⁷¹ Five of the 'original' parks and historic sites did not have trustees and passed immediately to the control of the NPWS. Others remained under the control of the their trustees, but with the provision that control may later be transferred to the NPWS. New parks would pass immediately to NPWS control.

¹⁷² Lewis, NSW, *Parliamentary debates*, 1 December 1966, p. 3052.

reserved, fifty-two faunal reserves under the *Fauna Protection Act* 1948 were brought under the control of the National Parks and Wildlife Service in 1967.

None of the original, 1967 national parks or faunal reserves were within the Copmanhurst Shire, but soon afterwards, in December 1968, a substantial area of forested land within the shire was dedicated as Banyabba Nature Reserve. This reserve is adjacent to Banyabba State Forest and presently comprises about 15,000 hectares of land. The proposal to dedicate this area of then vacant Crown land as a Faunal Reserve under the *Fauna Protection Act* 1948 originated in 1966, when the Fauna Protection Panel undertook an investigation of the area, but two years passed before the reserve was proclaimed.¹⁷³

All other National Parks and Nature Reserves in Copmanhurst Shire are much more recent creations than Banyabba Nature Reserve (Table 5.2).¹⁷⁴ One other, however, is worthy of specific mention. This is Washpool National Park, part of which falls within the far western extremity of the Shire.

The Washpool region, then productive State Forest, became a focus of anti-logging protest in the Clarence Region in the late 1970s. Although mostly covered with wet sclerophyll forest, Washpool State Forest also contained the largest area of unlogged rainforest in the State. It was also one of twenty major wilderness areas in New South Wales identified in a study of wilderness published in 1976.¹⁷⁵ Despite this study, the Washpool remained virtually unknown to conservationists until 1978 when, during the course of the S.P.C.C. inquiry into the management of the Border Ranges, the Forestry Commission 'unintentionally let the cat out of the bag' by claiming that Washpool, not Wiangarie, contained the largest area of unlogged rainforest in New South Wales. Conservationists were soon examining the area and calling for a halt to road construction which was underway in preparation for logging. The public campaign which followed

¹⁷³ NSW, *Government Gazette*, 17 January 1969.

¹⁷⁴ The State Conservation Area (SCA) is a new reserve category, created by a recent amendment to the *National Parks and Wildlife Act* 1974.

¹⁷⁵ Helman, P., Jones, A. D., Pigram, J. J. J., and Smith, J. M. B., 1976, *Wilderness in Australia: Eastern New South Wales and South Eastern Queensland* (Department of Geography, University of New England, Armidale).

ensured that by the middle of 1981 Washpool was as well known as the Border Ranges and Terania Creek.¹⁷⁶

Table 5.2 National Parks, Nature Reserves and State Conservation Areas in Copmanhurst Shire

Name	Year Dedicated
Washpool National Park (part) (1)	1983
Fortis Creek National Park (2)	1997
Mount Pikapene National Park (part) (3)	1999
Banyabba Nature Reserve	1968
Mount Neville Nature Reserve	1987
Chapmans Peak Nature Reserve	1999
Warragai Creek Nature Reserve (4)	1999
Banyabba SCA	2003
Corymbia SCA (5)	2003
Gurranang SCA	2003
Laurence Road SCA	2003
Wombat Creek SCA	2003

(1) Formerly part of Washpool State Forest

(2) Formerly Fortis Creek State Forest

(3) Formerly part of Mount Pikapene State Forest

(4) Formerly part of Southgate State Forest

(5) Formerly part of Fortis Creek State Forest

Late in 1979, the NSW government decided late to examine the general question of rainforest logging in New South Wales. The process was too complicated to recount in detail here, but ultimately, at its meeting on 26 October 1982, Cabinet decided on a policy involving the conservation of certain areas of rainforest in national parks and nature reserves, and the phased reduction of rainforest logging in other forests and its cessation in the late 1980s. This 'rainforest

¹⁷⁶ A detailed account of the Washpool campaign is given in *How the rainforest was saved*, pp. 24-28. See also Falconer, R., 1980, 'Washpool wilderness: NSW's biggest rainforest to disappear?', *National Parks Journal*, vol. 24(3), pp. 8-10.

decision' added about 120,000 ha of forest in north-eastern New South Wales to the national parks estate, about 100,000 hectares of which was formerly state forest under the control of the Forestry Commission. The major components of this forest reallocation included the new Washpool National Park (27,715 hectares), adjacent to the existing Gibraltar Range National Park, and created from Dandahra Creek State Forest no. 353, part of Moogem State Forest no. 614, part of Billilimbra State Forest no. 815, and part of Washpool State Forest no. 355.

6 TOWNSHIPS: Present and Past

In the transport-constrained past, many towns and villages existed throughout Copmanhurst Shire. Each had facilities such as a school, churches, shops, pub, a school of arts, or a mechanics institute, which provided for many of the needs of the residents of the settlement itself, and of the surrounding area, as well as serving a greater or lesser number of travellers. Some of these centres served agricultural areas (e.g. Southgate and Carr's Creek) and others were associated with mining (e.g. Lionsville, Solferino, and Baryulgil). Some were given additional prominence by their location at important transport nodes (e.g. Junction Hill and Copmanhurst).

Whatever their *raison d'être*, most of the towns and villages in Copmanhurst Shire have dwindled, if not disappeared, in recent decades. Two most potent causes of the decline of small settlements can be identified. One is the rise of motor vehicles, especially since the 1950s, and to a lesser extent since the 1920s. The increased personal mobility provided by motor vehicles, lessened the need for such a high density of service centres. A second cause, especially relevant in the western part of the shire, has been the decline of the mining industry.

It is not intended in this section to deal in detail with, or even attempt to identify, all of the many small towns and villages which exist and have existed within the shire. The history of two of the three major present-day settlements (Copmanhurst and Baryulgil/Malabugilmah) is presented. Of the numerous former villages, four only have been chosen, and through these, many historical themes common to settlements across the whole shire are illustrated.¹⁷⁷ Junction Hill, the third major present-day settlement area, is not strictly a town, so it is not dealt with specifically; it is, however, mentioned elsewhere in various contexts.

6.1 Present Towns and Villages

6.1.1 Copmanhurst

In conjunction with the opening of the new Grafton to Tenterfield road in 1859, a site for a future village was surveyed at the head of navigation on the Clarence River. Although this site was not on the New Road, it was nevertheless a strategically important location. The plan of this future village, Copmanhurst, was prepared by surveyor W. A. B. Greaves in September 1859.¹⁷⁸ The site of

¹⁷⁷ Southgate and Whiporie are the other population centres in the shire today. Neither, however, are obviously villages; Southgate is dealt with under former villages, and Whiporie not at all in this section.

¹⁷⁸ 'Plan of the village of Copmanhurst', 1859, AONSW Plan no. 2395.

Copmanhurst fronted navigable water at the downstream end, and broad beds of shingle at the other. When the steamer *King William's* progress was halted at First Falls (Mylneford) during its pioneering ascent of the river in 1839, a small boat was used to explore the river farther upstream to '2nd falls', later the site of Copmanhurst.

The name of Copmanhurst came from Grose's sheep station that formerly occupied the site (see section 1.3). Greaves's 1859 plan shows an 'old hut', an 'old yard', and an 'old wool shed' within the surveyed village reserve. Nearby and to the west of the village reserve was the locality known as Smith's Flat, after a successor to Grose as lessee of the Copmanhurst pastoral run. A detailed account of the development of the village of Copmanhurst is beyond the scope of this work, but the following will provide a general appreciation.

The earliest pubs at Copmanhurst for which official records have been located, the Criterion and the Traveller's Rest, were established almost simultaneously, in 1873. There is evidence, however, of an earlier pub in the village. An newspaper notice published in 1865 advised that a store and an un-named public house in the village of Copmanhurst were to be auctioned. The notice also advised that: 'The surrounding neighbourhood is daily growing in importance. A large tract of land, adjacent to the...village, is at present being profitably cultivated by a thrifty band of settlers, who are continually increasing in numbers...' ¹⁷⁹

Samuel Cohen of Ulmarra opened a general store at Smith's Flat in 1871. He placed it in the management of Alex Agar, who was already in business in Copmanhurst as an auctioneer and general agent. ¹⁸⁰ Agar subsequently became licensee of the Criterion Hotel, which became a focal point for the community. In 1877, for instance, a public meeting was held at Agar's hotel to hear that, in response to an earlier petition, the government was prepared to grant the village 'telegraphic communication'. ¹⁸¹ In 1876, as a result of a similar meeting, the government had been petitioned to fund the erection of a wharf at Copmanhurst to ease the task of shipping the season's maize crop. ¹⁸²

¹⁷⁹ *C&RE*, 10 October 1865.

¹⁸⁰ *C&RE*, 10 October 1871.

¹⁸¹ *C&RE*, 24 April 1877.

¹⁸² *C&RE*, 30 January 1877.

When the village acquired a police station in 1881 some reservations were expressed about its location. It was erected on the village reserve, 'away from the population, so the official who will be stationed here will feel it rather lonely when he is at home'.¹⁸³ Rivalry between the settlement at Smiths Flat and the newer official village of Copmanhurst is a recurring theme in the early history of the area.

The first public school within the village of Copmanhurst was not opened until 1891, but a school had been established much earlier at Smiths Flat, about 3 kilometres to the west. This was sensibly known as Smiths Flat Public School, but, to confuse the issue, in 1889 its name was changed to Copmanhurst, despite its situation outside the surveyed village. Hence, when a school was established at the village in 1891 it was given the name Budgambi, as Copmanhurst was already allocated. In 1892 the problem was resolved when the Copmanhurst Public School at Smiths Flat was renamed Upper Copmanhurst, and the new school in Copmanhurst village was renamed Copmanhurst.¹⁸⁴

When Inspector Lobban of the Department of Education visited Copmanhurst in 1891 to assess its claim for a new school, he reported that the 'government township of Copmanhurst' had 'a local store, hotel, steamer's wharf, and receiving store, police office, and telephone office'.¹⁸⁵

The first Anglican church was built in Copmanhurst in 1871, and like the first school, it was situated to the west of the village reserve at what is now known as Upper Copmanhurst. In 1915 it was replaced by the present Church of the Holy Apostles in Copmanhurst village.

The City Bank of Sydney opened a branch at Copmanhurst in 1906, but this was short-lived, a decision being made the following year to close it. A branch of the Commercial Banking Company of Sydney was opened in 1923, and this remained in operation until the end of 1941. It was the victim of war-time 'rationalisation'. Photographic evidence indicates that the building occupied by the Commercial Banking Company of Sydney formerly operated as a branch of the English, Scottish and Australian Bank.

¹⁸³ *C&RE*, 6 August 1881.

¹⁸⁴ Anon., 1991, *Copmanhurst Public School Centenary, 1891-1991* (Copmanhurst Public School, Copmanhurst).

¹⁸⁵ Anon., *Copmanhurst*.

6.1.2 *Baryulgil and Malabugilmah*

The Aboriginal people who form the present Baryulgil community first occupied the land known as Baryulgil Square about 1918, according to evidence given in 1984 to the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs. Prior to this, they had resided on another area of Yulgilbar Station, about 10 kilometres away, which had been set aside for them much earlier.¹⁸⁶

The early tenure history of Baryulgil Square has not been investigated, although it has been said that by the mid-1940s a lease over the area had been granted to Harry Mundine, Norman Daley, and Kenneth Gordon, as trustees for the Aboriginal community. In 1960 the Square was gazetted as an Aboriginal Reserve (A.R. 82681), and in 1974 the freehold was granted to the Aboriginal Lands Trust of NSW in terms of the *Aborigines Act* 1969. When the Trust was abolished in 1983, the land was vested in the NSW Government.¹⁸⁷

In the meantime, the community in 1978 formed the Baryulgil Square Co-operative Limited as a community advancement co-operative society under the *Co-operative Act* 1923 (NSW). In 1980 the Aboriginal Lands trust granted a 99-year lease of the Square to the Baryulgil Square Co-operative Limited. The term of the lease, registered on 27 November 1980, was from 1 January 1980 until 31 January 2079. Membership of the Co-operative was limited to Aborigines living on the Square or descendent from one of the three original families at the Square—the Mundine, Daley, and Gordon families. The Directors were all to be members of those three families.¹⁸⁸

The abandonment of the old reserve and move to Baryulgil Square about 1918 coincided approximately with the beginning of the development of the nearby Baryulgil asbestos deposit. Aboriginal men from the Square certainly worked at the mine during its brief initial period of development, but it is not known whether the need for mine labour motivated those who encouraged the move.

The period from about 1940 until 1979 was, in a sense, Baryulgil's heyday. The operation of the asbestos mine provided employment for the Aboriginal community which set it apart from many other Aboriginal reserves in NSW

¹⁸⁶ Australia, HRSCAA, *Effects*, p. 11

¹⁸⁷ Australia, HRSCAA, *Effects*, p. 11; NSW, *Government Gazette*, 5 August 1960, p. 2447.

¹⁸⁸ Australia, HRSCAA, *Effects*, p. 15.

which were characterised by chronic poverty. Mine wages, although insufficient to ensure prosperity, at least made the people of Baryulgil relatively independent of Government welfare payments.¹⁸⁹ A special Aboriginal school operated at Baryulgil from 1938 until 1947.

Since the closure of the mine in 1979, the community has had virtually no employment prospects; the population of Baryulgil Square has dwindled as people moved away to seek work.¹⁹⁰ Further decline of Baryulgil Square resulted from another cause. In 1979, concern arose about the possible health risks to residents of the Square from its close proximity to the site of the Baryulgil mine and mill, and contamination of the Square itself with asbestos tailings used there as surfacing and fill. In 1980, a majority of residents decided to move from the Square to a new location nearby. A new organisation, the Malabugilmah Aboriginal Corporation, was set up by those who intended to leave the Square, and by March 1981, a new site had been acquired, development approval had been obtained from Copmanhurst Shire Council, and the site had been surveyed and earthworks begun. The first house in the new settlement, known as Malabugilmah, was opened and occupied on 2 July 1981.¹⁹¹

Also at Baryulgil, but separate from the Baryulgil Square settlement, a small cluster of buildings developed which could almost be said to constitute a village. These were a public school which began in 1917 and continues today; a public hall which opened in 1932 and became a focus of community activity; and a general store, to which was attached other functions including a post-office and telephone exchange. The general store no longer exists.

6.2 Former Towns and Villages

6.2.1 Southgate

The village of Southgate, situated on the bank of the Clarence River between Grafton and Lawrence, took its name from the Southgate pastoral run which once occupied the area. The village was a subdivision of rural lands owned by John Arnold. A government village some 10 kilometres further north (downstream) was originally named Southgate, but later became known as Lower Southgate to distinguish it from the private village (about which this brief account is principally concerned).

¹⁸⁹ Australia, HRSCAA, *Effects*, pp. 12, 15.

¹⁹⁰ Australia, HRSCAA, *Effects*, pp. 12, 15.

¹⁹¹ Australia, HRSCAA, *Effects*, pp. 15-16.

The introduction of sugar cane as an agricultural crop was a principal factor in the development of the Southgate area. Sufficient farmers were interested in the crop for the Colonial Sugar Refining Company to erect its first Clarence River mill at Southgate, and this began crushing in September 1870. The opening of the mill undoubtedly encouraged the establishment of the Southgate Hotel a little upstream in 1871. The hotel became a focal point of Southgate village (Figure 4), and a catalyst for its further development.

Edward Arnold became licensee of the Southgate Hotel in 1876, and the same year established a private sugar mill nearby. Two years later a two acre block adjoining Arnold's land was chosen as the new site of the Southgate Public School. The original school, established in 1867, was on flood-prone land a little south of the village of Southgate, and its removal to higher ground was considered essential. The new school, a brick building, was opened in 1882, and the old building and site were sold the same year. Southgate Public School continued to operate until 1975.¹⁹²



Figure 4: Main street of Southgate showing Wingfield's Store.

¹⁹² Anon., 1967, *Southgate: A Centenary of Schooling 1867-1967*.

The Southgate Hotel remained in operation until 1955 when its licence was removed to a new hotel in Coffs Harbour. The building, however, was retained as a private residence. Another notable business in Southgate was Wingfield's store (Figure 4), established in 1886 and closed in the early 1960s. Unlike the pub, however, the store was demolished (in 1964).

6.2.2 Carr's Creek

The village of Carr's Creek in its heyday included a public school (established 1877), an Anglican church (dedicated in 1899), and a School of Arts (opened in 1903). Associated with the School of Arts was the Carr's Creek Literary Institute, which provided reading material to subscribers as far away as Southgate and Yulgilbar.¹⁹³ Today the church and school are closed, but the School of Arts and its library remain as evidence of the former importance of Carr's Creek as a centre of community.

6.2.3 Lionsville

The town of Lionsville sprang up rapidly in the early 1870s following the discovery of gold in the south-western part of the Parish of Churchill at such places as the Garibaldi (1871) and Lion (1872) Reefs. J. W. Lindt, a Grafton photographer, visited the town in December 1872, and his photographs show that the many buildings erected by this time included a theatre, a hotel, and various stores.

J. B. Bassetti's Royal Hotel was first licensed in 1872. A second pub, Gray's Lion Hotel, was opened in the same year. Lionsville acquired a school in March 1877, although this operated half-time with the existing school in nearby Solferino.¹⁹⁴

The gold rush was short-lived (4.2.1), and Lionsville declined from the late-1870s. The *Town and Country Journal* in May 1878 described the township as 'almost deserted'.¹⁹⁵ That the Bank Hotel was not relicensed after 1877 is further evidence of this decline. The school persisted until 1882.

Lionsville did not, however, entirely disappear. The Royal Hotel remained in operation until the early 1950s (6.3.1), but by this time the thriving town was no

¹⁹³ C&RE, 9 June 1923.

¹⁹⁴ NSW Department of Education and Training, 1998, *Government Schools of New South Wales 1848 to 1998: 150 years*, 5th ed. (New South Wales Department of Education and Training, Sydney), p. 93.

¹⁹⁵ *Town and Country Journal*, May 1878.

more than a distant memory. Today the site of Lionsville is marked by a single standing building (believed to have been erected in the mid-1950s for use in the processing of honey), and the ruins of another building, which is believed to have been the home of the town's last resident until the late 1970s.

6.2.4 Solferino

Like Lionsville, the town of Solferino arose in the early 1870s in response to the discovery of gold reefs in the locality. It was situated on Solferino Creek, only a few kilometres north of Lionsville which preceded it briefly in establishment. Also like Lionsville, Solferino's rise was rapid and spectacular as could be expected of a town born of a gold rush.

By May 1872, James Laird, a Grafton publican, had erected the Solferino Hotel which was described as 'a very neat building, the like of which is seldom to be met with on a gold-field'. The population was then estimated to be about 1,000, and increasing at a rate of 'about twenty a day'.¹⁹⁶ A provisional school was opened in March 1874, and this was upgraded to a public school in April 1875.¹⁹⁷

Solferino's demise was almost as sudden as its rise. In early 1877 the *Clarence and Richmond Examiner* reported that Solferino had 'changed for the worse, as shown by the number of really fine dwellings, public houses, and stores, already fast going to decay and ruin'.¹⁹⁸ About the same time, the public school at Solferino was reduced to a provisional school because the 'required average for a public school could not be maintained'. The school operated half-time with Lionsville school after the latter was opened in March 1877.¹⁹⁹ The Solferino money order office was abolished in 1877.²⁰⁰ James Laird returned to Grafton in early 1877 to enter the butchering business, and this presumably marks the closure of his Solferino Hotel. The school was closed entirely in mid-1883.

6.3 Sub-themes

Within the broad theme of townships, many sub-themes could be considered. These include such things as utilities, commerce, government administration, law and order, housing, social institutions (halls, schools of arts, pubs), leisure, sport,

¹⁹⁶ *C&RE*, 23 May 1872.

¹⁹⁷ NSW Department of Education and Training, *Government Schools*, p. 131.

¹⁹⁸ *C&RE*, 27 February 1877, p. 4.

¹⁹⁹ *C&RE*, 7 July 1877, p. 3.

²⁰⁰ *C&RE*, 24 July 1877, p. 2.

health (hospitals), religion (churches), education (schools), death (cemeteries), and monuments (war memorials). It has not been possible within the scope of the project to deal separately with all of these topics, so where possible reference is made to them within various other sections. Nevertheless, two sub-themes are given special attention here: 'pubs' and 'education'. These have been chosen because systematic, official records are available for both, enabling relatively comprehensive and reliable overviews to be prepared.

6.3.1 Pubs (licensed public houses)

Licensed public houses have operated at more than twenty sites around the Copmanhurst Shire since the first, the Traveller's Rest, was established in the 1840s. Now, however, only two pubs remain in operation in the Shire: these are the Rest Point Hotel at Copmanhurst, and the Blue Goose Hotel at Junction Hill.

The Rest Point Hotel was opened in 1932, although it did not take its present name until 1951. A previous pub on the site, a two-storey building named Small's Hotel, opened in 1910, but was destroyed by fire in September 1931, occasioning the construction of the present single-storey building.

Small's Hotel was located on higher ground than its predecessor, the Commercial Hotel, which opened in 1881. The Commercial, situated on the road to the wharf, was within reach of floodwaters which rose eight feet up the walls during the 1887 flood.

The origins of the Blue Goose Hotel can be traced back to the Junction Inn which was established in 1861. This pub was destroyed by fire in 1880 and was replaced by another single-storey timber structure which suffered a similar fate when it was completely destroyed by fire in 1958. The present building was then erected. It was known as the Cabaret Hotel until the current name was adopted in 1974.

Little or nothing of significance remains of most of the many other pubs which operated within the Shire at various times (Table 6.1). The Southgate Hotel, however, is a notable exception (Figure 5). This pub was established in 1871 at Southgate, a village on the road connecting Grafton with Lawrence along the left bank of the Clarence River. It was closed in 1955 when its licence was removed to a new hotel, the Plantation at Coffs Harbour.

Table 6.1: Copmanhurst Shire Pubs

Location	Most Recent Name	Estd	Closed
<i>County of Clarence</i>			
Copmanhurst	Commercial	1881	1910
Copmanhurst	REST POINT	1910	extant
Copmanhurst	Criterion	1873	1880
Copmanhurst	Travellers Rest	1873	1875
Copmanhurst	unknown	1860s	c.1865
Southgate	Southgate	1873	1955
Junction Hill	BLUE GOOSE	1861	extant
Coaldale	Halfway Inn (?)	1862 (?)	
Mountain View	Mountain View	1871	1874 (?)
Bellevue	Bell-vue	1865	<1871 (?)
Clifden	Clifden Inn	1862	<1865
Clifden	Scharfenstein	1882 (?)	c.1901
Rich.-Clar. Road	Travellers Rest	1860	1904
Rich.-Clar. Road	Flying Horse	1867	1871
Rich.-Clar. Road	Halfway House	1877	1889
<i>County of Richmond</i>			
Wyan	Commercial	1868	1880
Myall Creek	Traveller's Home	1895	1897
<i>County of Drake</i>			
Yates's Flat	Travellers Home	1862	
Solferino	Solferino (Laird's)	1872	1877?
Garibaldi Reef	Reefers Arms	1873	
Lionsville	Royal (Bassetti's)	1872	1952
	Lion (Gray's)	1872	1874?
	Bank (Maurice's)	1876	1877
Yulgilbar Crossing	Clarence River	1873	1875



Figure 5: Southgate Hotel, Southgate, 1924.

Though long delicensed, the Southgate Hotel is worthy of special mention. It became a private residence after it closed in 1955, but has been little modified since then. Moreover, it appears to have been little changed since it was first erected. Many of the early Northern Rivers pubs were of this form but most have either been delicensed and demolished (especially those in rural areas), or rebuilt in a larger and more modern form (especially so of pubs in larger towns). The former Southgate Hotel remains, therefore, as a fine example of a late-nineteenth century, single-storey, timber, country hotel building.

6.3.2 Education

The first government school in Grafton, the Grafton Public School, was established in 1852. A second opened nearby at Strontian Park in December 1859. Strontian Park was a little outside the area which had been incorporated in 1859 as the Municipality of Grafton, so the Strontian Park School is the earliest within the area which later became Copmanhurst Shire.

Subsequently, more than forty other government schools were established within Copmanhurst Shire. These are listed in table 6.2 together with their dates of establishment and closure, and any other names under which they operated. The dates are useful indicators of the times when various localities within the shire supported active communities.

Only two schools, at Copmanhurst and Baryulgil, remain in operation in the shire. The present Copmanhurst Public School opened for lessons in August 1891, and operated in addition to an older school at nearby Smiths Flat (now known as Upper Copmanhurst). At Baryulgil a school opened 'half-time' with Fine Flower in 1917, became a provisional school in 1919, and has been a public school since the beginning of 1950.

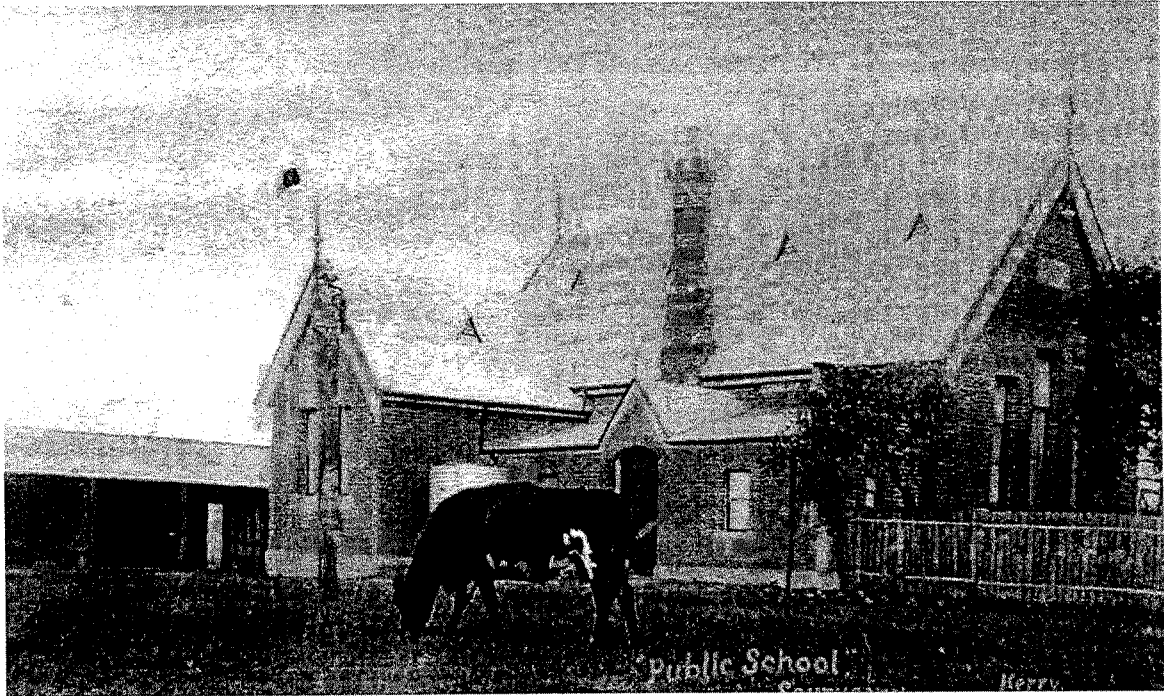


Figure 6: Southgate Public School, c.1900. This brick school was opened in 1882 and operated until 1975.

Of those schools which have closed, most have been removed, some remain but are unused (e.g. Southgate; Figure 6), some have been converted to private uses (e.g. Carr's Creek), and some have been converted to other public uses (e.g. Coalcroft, Alumny Creek).

Most notably, the Coalcroft School (closed 1971) has been incorporated into the Coaldale Barretts Creek Memorial Community Centre, and the Alumny Creek School (closed 1969) has been turned into an education museum. The latter serves as an important reminder of the network of small, local schools which once formed the basis of the education system in rural New South Wales.

Table 6.2a: Copmanhurst Shire Schools (County of Clarence)

<u>Estd</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Closed</u>	<u>Previous Names</u>
<i>County of Clarence</i>			
1859	Strontian Park	1902	
1866	Upper Copmanhurst	1938	Smiths Flat (-1889) Copmanhurst (-1892) Upper Copmanhurst (-1894) Urangbell (-1923)
1867	Southgate	1975	
1870	Lower Southgate	1947	
1872	Alumny Creek	1969	
1875	Coalcroft	1971	Coaldale (-1912)
1876	Clifden	1886	
1877	Carrs Creek	1964	
1882	Stockyard Creek	1935	Fern Glen (-1934)
1882	Whitemans Creek	1949	
1883	Winegrove	1932	
1891	COPMANHURST	extant	Budgambi (-1892)
1899	Gorum Borum	1905	
1901	Trenayr	1970	Millers Waterholes (-1912)
1908	Dilkoon	1933	Benleigh (-1911)
1910	Lawrence Cross Rds	1917	
1920	Upper Smiths Creek	1928	

Source: New South Wales Department of Education and Training, 1998. Government Schools of New South Wales 1848 to 1998: 150 years, 5th ed. (New South Wales Department of Education and Training, Sydney)

Table 6.2b: Copmanhurst Shire Schools (Counties of Richmond and Drake)

<u>Estd</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Closed</u>	<u>Previous Names</u>
<i>County of Richmond</i>			
1892	Whiporie	1971	Camira (-1912)
1894	Nandabah	1913	
1904	Wyan	1984	Wyan Hogarth (-1920)
1908	Myrtle Creek Upper	1916	
1908	Myrtle Creek Lower	1922	
1910	Camira Creek	1969	Camira Ck Rwy Stn (-1913)
1913	Collards Gate	1916	
1921	Clearfield	1940	
1924	Kippenduff	1936	
1951	Wyan Creek	1958	
<i>County of Drake</i>			
1874	Solferino	1883	
1877	Lionsville	1914	
1887	Pulganbar Creek	1893	
1892	Barretts Creek	1911	
1902	Yulgilbar	1911	
1909	Ewingar (?)	1916	
1911	Carmena	1917	
1911	Pulganbar	1924	
1913	Fine Flour	1924	
1917	BARYULGIL	extant	
1936	Upper Fine Flower	1942	
1938	Baryulgil Aboriginal	1947	

Source: New South Wales Department of Education and Training, 1998. *Government Schools of New South Wales 1848 to 1998: 150 years*, 5th ed. (New South Wales Department of Education and Training, Sydney)

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