Gilgandra Shire

Thematic History

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2009

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Introduction

The thematic history of Gilgandra Shire

This thematic history has been prepared as part of a community based heritage study undertaken in the Gilgandra Shire in 2008. It gratefully acknowledges the work of local researchers in recording the development of the region. Published and unpublished local history resources, and national reference materials, have been referred to in the preparation of this history, and as far as possible the recollections of current and former residents of the shire have been included in the study.

This is not intended to be a comprehensive history of the Gilgandra Shire. Those who are seeking more detailed explanations of people, places and events are encouraged to refer to the works cited in the reference list that is included in **Section 10 References**. Where gaps have existed in existing narratives attempts have been made to provide a more detailed analysis.

Locally based researchers and historians have very ably recorded many aspects of the story of the Gilgandra district through a series of historical narratives, reminiscences and oral histories. Local history resources include a multitude of published and unpublished research.

This history should not be treated as a definitive history. Other researchers are encouraged to add to the written record of the vast, complex and unfolding story of the Gilgandra region.

Special thanks for assistance with preparing and editing this history should go to John Miller, Gail Naden, Melissa Ryan, Merryn Spencer, Pat Jackson and Laurie McGrath,.

The Australian Historic Themes

This thematic history is designed to tell the story of Gilgandra Shire within a consistent national framework. This framework was designed by the Australian Heritage Commission to organise information on the history of places into areas of activity.

> *By emphasising the human activities that produced the places we value, and the human response to Australia's natural environment, places are related to the processes and stories associated with them, rather than the type of function or place …*
>
> *Themes are not intended to follow a chronological order. Rather, they are generic, and designed to be applied and interlinked, regardless of the period or place. They embrace prehistory to the modern period and a multiplicity of human activities.*[1]

This history has been organised within each National Historic Theme under the relevant New South Wales Historic Themes. The New South Wales themes are dealt with in alphabetical order under the general heading of the national themes.

[1] Australian Historic Themes Framework, 2001.

1. Australian Historical Theme: Tracing the evolution of the Australian environment

The environment exists apart from being a construct of human consciousness. However, a thematic approach recognises the human factor in the natural environment, and how our understanding and appreciation of the environment has changed over time.[2]

1.1 NSW Historical Theme: Environment – naturally evolved

The Gilgandra Shire sits within the Darling Plains Heritage Region. This region was defined in 1996[3]. The Heritage Office briefly defined the Darling Plains region as follows:

> *Broken country separates New England from the level Darling Plain to the west. Defined by aridity on its western boundary, signified by the shift from woodland to scrub and bushland, it extends over the plains draining rivers to the Darling, including subregions such as Liverpool Plains and the Pilliga Scrub.*[4]

This area is included in the Brigalow Belt South Biodiversity Region[5]. The geology and biodiversity of the region have been described in the Brigalow Belt South, NSW Bioregional Conservation Assessment Scoping Report. The geology of the Warrumbungles has also been adequately described by Whitehead in his work on the path of explorers Oxley and Evans[6].

The landforms of the area can be generally described as follows:

- **Liverpool Plains** *... extensive black soil plains punctuated by low sedimentary and volcanic hills. The grasslands and open woodlands on the alluvial plains and foot slopes of the hills have been mainly cleared and are used for cropping.*
- **Pilliga Outwash** *... a gently undulating plain of deep sandy soils formed by outwash from the sandstone hills to the east. Some of the more productive soils around the margins ... have been cleared for agriculture but most of the higher areas remain covered by State forests.*
- **Pilliga** *... contains extensive sandstone hills with areas of higher basalt peaks and has predominantly sandy soils. Much of the forest has been cleared, but there are large areas of State forest, especially on lands with rockier or shallower soils.*[7]

The Warrumbungle Range is the outstanding natural feature of the region and dominates the horizon of many parts of the shire. Much of the range has been declared as national park. The park encapsulates the major features of the former massive Warrumbungle volcano that is believed to have been active around 17 million years ago. It is one element of the impact of the movement of the Indo-Australian Plate over

[2] Australian Historic Themes Framework, 2001.
[3] Heritage Office, 1996. *Regional Histories*. p.13
[4] Heritage Office, 1996. *Regional Histories*. p.15
[5] Brigalow Belt South, NSW Bioregional Conservation Assessment Scoping Report. pp.9-13
[6] Whitehead, J., 2004. *Tracking & Mapping the Explorers Vol. 2*. pp.176-177 & 193-194
[7] Brigalow Belt South, NSW Bioregional Conservation Assessment Scoping Report. pp.12-13

a stationary hot spot in the earth's crust over tens of millions of years.[8] The modern landscape is the result of:

> *Thirteen million years of rain, wind and ice (that) have eaten away at the structure, stripping off successive layers of ash and lava to expose the volcano's inner workings … (creating) the dramatic landscape of today's Warrumbungle Range*.[9]

The Gilgandra Shire includes parts of the Warrumbungle National Park. The clear, dark skies of the region have made it an ideal location for astronomy.

Settlement patterns have been defined by watercourses that cross the region. The Castlereagh River winds from the south of the shire to the north. This river supported Aboriginal society in the area and European use of the land. The Castlereagh River, Marthaguy Creek, Terrabile Creek, Tooraweenah Creek and Wallumburrawang Creek have supported pastoral and agricultural activity for over 170 years and also defined patterns of European settlement.

[8] Fox, P., 1996. *Warrumbungle National Park*. pp.10-11
[9] Fox, P., 1996. *Warrumbungle National Park*. p.13

2. Australian Historical Theme: Peopling Australia

This theme group recognises the pre-colonial occupations of Indigenous people, as well as the ongoing history of human occupation from diverse areas.[10]

2.1 NSW Historical Theme: Aboriginal cultures and interactions with other cultures

The area covered by the Gilgandra Shire sits at the convergence of the territories of three Aboriginal language groups, the Gamilaraay to the northeast, the Wiradjuri to the south and the Wayilwan to the west[11]. Archaeological evidence suggests that Aboriginal people have occupied the land to the east of Gilgandra for up to 25,000 years and in the Warrumbungle Ranges for up to 17,000 years[12]. Numerous cultural sites testify to the complexity of Aboriginal culture and the people's relationship with the land.

> *The inextricable bond between life and land is a fundamental premise of Aboriginal existence. All features of the landscape, and all life within it, was created during a creation period by ancestral creatures; some human, some animal, some neither. This period ... is present in the landscape itself, and the stories and relationships form an integral part of the traditional law that guides all life.*
>
> *This relationship to the land extends to an in-depth knowledge of the incredible wealth of resources available in the local area, including foodstuffs and raw materials for tool and implement manufacture*.[13]

Josephine Flood has noted that "if a time scale of human occupation of Australia were represented by one hour on a clock, Aboriginal society would occupy over fifty-nine and a half minutes, European society less than half a minute"[14]. Despite the fact that the story of the Aboriginal people is "the longest continual cultural history in the world"[15] Somerville notes that "the threads of the story have been broken" [16]. Fragments of the past must be drawn together to attempt to understand the history of the first people of this region.

Specific Aboriginal sites around Gilgandra that have been identified and studied include rock shelters, open campsites and scarred trees[17]. Some caves in the Warrumbungle Ranges contain hand stencils, marked rocks and engravings[18]. The large waterhole in the Castlereagh River that characterised Gilgandra provided an attractive location for Aboriginal people. The Coonabarabran tribe of the Gamilaraay people camped on the eastern side of the river and Mole tribe of the Wiradjuri on the western side.

[10] Australian Historic Themes Framework, 2001.
[11] Somerville, M. et al, 1994. *The Sun Dancin', People and Place in Coonabarabran*. pp.46-47
[12] Fox, P., 1996. *Warrumbungle National Park*. p.52
[13] Fox, P., 1996. *Warrumbungle National Park*. p.48
[14] Flood, J., *Archaeology of the Dreamtime*, p.15
[15] Flood, J., *Archaeology of the Dreamtime*, p.15
[16] Somerville, M. et al, 1994. *The Sun Dancin', People and Place in Coonabarabran*. p.25
[17] Fox, P., 1996. *Warrumbungle National Park*. pp.50-51
[18] Fox, P., 1996. *Warrumbungle National Park*. p.51

The first European record of the Aboriginal people of the district comes from the diary of George Evans who passed through the area between Curban and Armatree in July 1818[19]. On 13 July Evans referred in his diary to 'a number of native fires about the base of the (Warrumbungle) range'[20]. He also noted on 14 July that he

> *suspected that we had been watched by the natives. I saw some of them, and our resting place was surrounded by their, smokes: they however did not attempt to molest us*.[21]

As squatters began to move into the country from the 1830s (refer to **Section 3.12 Pastoralism**), starting a struggle for resources, tensions began to be recorded. Connor recounts a series of incidents in 1837 that led to a punitive expedition by the NSW Mounted Police.

> *Kamilaroi (*Gamilaraay*) women were being abducted by stockmen and this probably led Kamilaroi men to kill Frederick Harrington in June at Charles Purcell's station in the Warrumbungles. On 21 September Lieutenant George Cobban of the 50th Regiment, commanding the Hunter River division of the Mounted Police, was ordered to look for Harrington's killers.*[22]

The expedition travelled hundreds of kilometres from its base at Jerry's Plains without finding a culprit. In 1838 a more serious expedition, reminiscent of the pattern of earlier British military expeditions against the Darug on the Hawkesbury, the Wiradjuri on the Cudgegong and the Wonnarua on the Hunter, Major James Nunn of the Mounted Police led an expedition to the Peel, Gwydir and Namoi Rivers. This party surrounded a Gamilaraay camp on Waterloo Creek, southwest of the present day Moree around 26 January 1838. In a brief battle possibly 50 Aboriginal people were killed.[23] This event caused alarm in government circles but response to it was overwhelmed by the Myall Creek massacre later in the same year and an escalation of conflict around the Port Phillip District.[24]

In parts of western New South Wales the Wiradjuri actively resisted the intrusion of European settlers into their lands. They have continued to retain a strong sense of identity despite persistent and repeated historical attempts to destroy them as a people. The loss of societal cohesion and impact of disease among Aboriginal people has been recorded in a number of places. As early as the 1790s, well before any Europeans ventured into the region, a small pox epidemic spread along traditional trade routes. A second epidemic occurred in the 1830s.

> *With no immunity to the virus, tribes were decimated. As the disease moved inland through the Wiradjuri region river system into South Australia it was interpreted as the result of the powerful magic of distant tribes who had unleashed the terrifying power of the Rainbow Serpent. … in the Wiradjuri region these times remained vivid for generations as a time of death. Fifty years later, the old people recalled how the sickness "Followed down the*

[19] Whitehead, J., 2005. *Tracking and Mapping the Explorers Vol. 2*. pp.140-142
[20] Whitehead, J., 2005. *Tracking and Mapping the Explorers Vol. 2*. p. 142
[21] Whitehead, J., 2005. *Tracking and Mapping the Explorers Vol. 2*. p.142
[22] Connor, J., 2002. *The Australian Frontier Wars*. p.107
[23] Connor, J., 2002. *The Australian Frontier Wars*. p.107-111
[24] Connor, J., 2002. *The Australian Frontier Wars*. p.113

> *rivers … Burying bodies was no longer attempted and the atmosphere became tainted with decomposing bodies.*[25]

As Europeans moved into the region they took up the prime grazing land along the river corridors and Aboriginal people were pushed onto marginal lands. Others lived on the fringes of European settlements 'out of curiosity or from whence they could participate in reciprocal exchanges'[26].

Aboriginal people of the region experienced incursions into their land, loss of resources and sexual exploitation. These things severely hampered the society's capacity to resist occupation of their lands, but it is clear that resistance continued for an extended period. In response to a situation of escalating violence on this and other frontiers of the colony Governor Gipps established the Native Police in 1839. Originally intended to protect all interests this force was allowed:

> *… to operate to protect settlers. White officers in charge of Aboriginal troopers, had substantial independence of the local magistracies and operated in accordance with the tradition of the punitive expedition, which was common enough in establishing colonies.*[27]

The violent suppression of Aboriginal peoples was one aspect of this period of colonisation. Accounts of isolated settlers in the region also carry a common sense that Aboriginal resistance, characterised as 'untrustworthiness', was an issue of concern to them.

Despite the European occupation of the land Aboriginal people continued to practice traditional laws and customs. 'R.H. Mathews documents that in 1893 there was a great gathering of the local Aboriginal people of the Castlereagh with the people of the Macquarie, the Bogan and the Barwon Rivers for a great initiation ceremony.'[28] Duke Tritton also noted a large corroboree held at Wee Waa in 1905 as one of the last such great gatherings in New South Wales[29].

As the frontier settled down and conflict diminished Aboriginal people worked alongside the Europeans, although they tended to be marginalised by the racial attitudes of the time. Some Aboriginal groups lived on the runs established by Europeans, working as shepherds and general hands. Crown leases for pastoral runs carried the following provision:

> *"And we do further reserve to the Aboriginal inhabitants of Our Said Colony, such free access to the said run and parcel of Land hereby demise, or any part thereof, and to the trees or water thereon as will enable them to procure the animals, birds, fish and other food on which they subsist."*[30]

Some families lived as station hands and servants on *Gulargambone Station*, *Tonbeburine*, *Muriman* and *Tooloon*. Mary Jane Cain of Coonabarabran noted that Aboriginal people 'made the best servants'[31].

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[25] Kabaila, P., 1996. *Wiradjuri Places. The Lachlan River Basin*. p.10
[26] Kabaila, P., 1996. *Wiradjuri Places. The Lachlan River Basin*. p.10
[27] Rowley, C.D., 1978. *The Destruction of Aboriginal Society*. p.39
[28] Gilgandra - Aboriginal History [Online]
[29] Tritton, D. 1964. *Time Means Tucker*. pp.25-26
[30] Gilgandra - Aboriginal History [Online]
[31] Cain, M. 1923. 'Coonabarabran in the 'Sixties'. p.370

Aboriginal groups also camped near their traditional places alongside the long water hole at Carlganda. During the course of the 19th century two camps of 'fringe dwellers' developed on the outskirts of the town of Gilgandra. The Tin City was located on the eastern side of the Castlereagh River and another camp at The Pines on high ground at the western end of town.

> *As the town of Gilgandra grew, the Aboriginal people camped permanently amongst the scrubby indigenous pines, which grew in the sandy soil near the Castlereagh River. Our families lived there in shacks and houses they built themselves, often out of material salvaged from the tip, which came to be located at the edge of "The Pines". The railway line was built along its eastern boundary and the Gilgandra showground and racecourse were carved out of "The Pines" during the 1900s. The camp endured throughout the 1900s with the men frequently away doing fencing, rail splitting, rabbiting and other work on various properties which developed in the area. The camp was never managed as a mission or Aboriginal reserve. It was the place where the Aboriginal people of Gilgandra lived, raising children, coming and going as work in the district required.*

Many Aboriginal people established co-operative farming ventures on land allocated by the government. Maynard notes that during much of the later part of the 19th century over 80 per cent of Aboriginal people in NSW were self-sufficient, 'combining European farming with traditional methods of food production'. After World War I revocation of Aboriginal farms commenced and there was a 'sudden acceleration of taking Aboriginal children from their families'[32].

The NSW Aborigines Protection Act was passed by the NSW Parliament in 1909. According to Faith Bandler this legislation:

> *... was an Act that denied equality to the Aboriginal people, that made them second-class citizens. It meant that their lives could be dominated by station managers, that their homes could be entered by police, that if a friend asked them to share a quiet drink they could be arrested and gaoled.*[33]

A 1915 amendment to the Aborigines Protection Act 'stated that any Aboriginal child might be removed without parental consent if the (Aborigines Protection) Board considered it to be in the interest of the child's moral or physical welfare'. Children were removed to institutionalised care.[34] The affects of this policy are still being felt in Aboriginal communities.

The Act also included a ban on the supply or consumption of alcohol. This ban lasted until the 1960s and was one of many small injustices that created resentment among the Aboriginal community.

In the 1990s Gilgandra Shire Council proposed to harvest the trees which gave "The Pines" its name. This was intended to create a sawmill to provide employment in the town.

[32] Maynard, J. For Liberty and Freedom: Fred Maynard and the Australian Aboriginal Progressive Association.
[33] Bandler, F & Fox, L. (eds), 1983. *The Time was Ripe.*
[34] Huggonson, D., 1993. 'Aboriginal Diggers of the 9th Brigade first AIF'. p.221

> *Council filed a non-claimant application to discover if any Aboriginal people were connected to the land. With the assistance of the NSW Aboriginal Land Council's Native Title Unit a native title claim was filed in 1994 on behalf of the families of the Wiradjuri, Kamilaroi and Wongaibon/Nyaampur people who had lived so long at "The Pines". The land was officially handed over to the Aboriginal people of Gilgandra on 15 December 2000. "The Pines" holds great significance to Aboriginal people as the land where our families lived for many generations.*[35]

2.2 NSW Historical Theme: Convict

Many of the first European settlers in the region were assigned convicts who worked as shepherds and labourers for the squatters.

> *The normal fate of the well-behaved convict was assignment to private service. ... the British government encouraged it, for it saved money by taking the prisoner off the government's hands. ... It scattered men throughout the colony, which broke up their 'evil associations', it taught the convicts those 'habits of labour' whose absence had so often started them on their criminal career, and it gave them experience, which would make it easier for them to gain useful employment when their sentence expired.*[36]

Writing in 1839 Charles Campbell indicated that the shepherd's life was excellent for reforming the behaviour of criminals:

> *He who leads it has constant but not laborious employment, enjoys the light of heaven and ... is secluded from the company of the drunken and dissolute.*[37]

Assignment created a cheap labour force that assisted many early free settlers to prosper. Convicts were sent with flocks of sheep beyond the limits of the colony (refer **Section 4.2 Land Tenure**) to become the vanguard of European settlement in areas such as those surrounding the Warrumbungle Mountains. Convicts and ex-convicts were in many cases the first Europeans with whom Aboriginal people had substantial contact.

Colonial governments encouraged assignment of convicts as it was a far cheaper method of keeping them than maintaining them in penitentiaries or on road gangs. In 1837 it cost £17 per year to keep a convict on a chain gang. A convict on assignment cost £4.[38] Landholders reaped the benefit of the cheap labour force provided by assigned convicts to build up their fortunes.

Some of the first crimes committed by Europeans in the area were the acts of convicts or escaped convicts. The murder of Abraham Meers in 1839 (refer to **Section 7.3 Law and Order**) was the first recorded killing of a European on the Castlereagh.

2.3 NSW Historical Theme: Ethnic influences

The variety of ethnic groups that have occupied or passed through the Gilgandra district have left little concrete evidence of their interaction with the place. There are longstanding records of Indian and Chinese workers being engaged on various properties around the region. Chinese market gardeners grew vegetables on the banks

[35] Gilgandra - Aboriginal History [Online]
[36] Shaw, A., 1977. *Convicts and the Colonies*. p.217
[37] Shaw, A., 1977. *Convicts and the Colonies*. p.217
[38] Shaw, A., 1977. *Convicts and the Colonies*. p.254

of the Castlereagh River at Gilgandra. Complaints about the state of the garden were raised in the meeting of the Gilgandra Progress Committee held in April 1905.[39]

Indian hawkers plied their trade in the district selling 'rolls of cloth, made up clothing and boots'. These traders provided women living in relative isolation on properties, mill sites or sleeper cutters' camps with one of their few links to the outside world. While most came from the contemporary countries of Pakistan or India these so-called 'Indians' came from many places. Jack Ayoub, who plied his trade in the region, came from Lebanon and other traders are known to have been of Irish descent.

> *Some of them worked on P&O boats and jumped ship on arrival in Sydney. Others came here to work as camel drivers during the construction of the Overland Telegraph from Alice Springs to Darwin, and never returned to the land of their birth.*[40]

These men generally started in trade with a 'bundle basket', a cane basket filled with 'needles, buttons, cottons, pins, safety pins, small mirrors and combs; also blankets, a billy can to boil water, a tin cup, tea, sugar, salt, a small saucepan and curry powder'. They were known colloquially as 'bundly basket men'.[41] As they sold goods and gathered savings many graduated to a cart or waggon and some eventually opened permanent stores in towns and villages throughout the region.

Charlie Ash Ma Talie was one Indian hawker remembered in the Breelong district. He drove a white covered waggon with drop-down sides and visited each farm in the area every year. He stayed overnight on most properties, resting his draught horse in a spare paddock. Like many Indian hawkers Charlie was a Muslim who was quite particular about food preparation. 'Only children and other Indians were permitted to be near Charlie's camp when he was doing his cooking'. He would never touch or carry pork products insisting that this would defile himself and his waggon, requiring the waggon to be burnt. Property owners often provided him with a chicken for his meals. He insisted on killing these himself according to halal requirements.[42] Another hawker who visited the district advertised himself as Shah Mahomet[43].

Settlers of German descent moved into the region in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. They brought with them their Lutheran traditions and established a Lutheran church in Gilgandra (refer to **Section 8.4 Religion**). A Lutheran section in the Gilgandra General Cemetery is also a testament to the presence of this group in the shire.

Churches and headstones in cemeteries provide a testament across the landscape to the ethnicity of the district's early settlers. Many of the early Europeans in the district were Scottish Presbyterians and Irish Catholics. Large Anglican sections in cemeteries also indicate the influence of English settlers in the region.

2.4 NSW Historical Theme: Migration

The first migrations of Europeans into the Gilgandra region occurred from the 1820s. Within a fairly short time of John Oxley's first journey through the district in 1818 (refer **Section 3.6 Exploration**) squatters were moving mobs of sheep and cattle from

[39] Bartley, B., 2005. *Gilgandra – New Town – Old Town*. p.19
[40] Hadfield, J., 2006. *The Best of Times*. p.123
[41] Hadfield, J., 2006. *The Best of Times*. p.124
[42] Mudford, J.&C., 1988. *Breelong and her Neighbours*. p.239
[43] Mudford, J.&C., 1988. *Breelong and her Neighbours*. p.240

the Liverpool Plains and the Bowenfels-Bathurst region. This movement is covered in **Section 3.12 Pastoralism.** Rolls notes that *Biamble*, James Walker's main sheep station employed over 60 men and no women in 1839. Outstations of *Biamble* such as *Goorianawa* and *Baradine* were operated for years by two men.[44]

It appears that Chinese workers were present in the region from as early as the 1830s. Andrew Brown's diaries noted that he was employing Chinese stockmen and labourers on the Castlereagh at this time[45]. The cessation of transportation of convicts in the 1840s created a shortage of cheap labour in New South Wales. This led to an increase in the 'numbers of Chinese people arriving as indentured labourers to work as shepherds and irrigation experts'. It appears that all of these workers came from Fujian province. Some may have been kidnapped.[46]

A number of authors have also noted attempts to bring Indian workers into the area. Attempts were made from the 1840s to supplement a shortage of convict and free labour with workers brought in from India. By all accounts this experiment failed. Chinese workers were found to be more adaptable[47]. Andrew Brown continued to engage Chinese shepherds and hutkeepers during the labour shortages of the 1850s gold rushes[48].

The gold rushes of the 1850s and 1860s led to increased immigration from many parts of the world with many coming from southern China in organised groups. In New South Wales the most prominent of these was the Yee Hing Brotherhood. This secret, triad-like organisation grew out of the disruption of the Tai Ping rebellion. This rebellion threw China into turmoil from about 1850. The Yee Hing organised groups of miners to come to Australia under a credit-ticket system.

> *Under this system, individuals secured credit for their passage through personal contacts in their local communities or through supportive merchant houses, often against the security of property. Workers repaid their loans with interest over time*.[49]

In was the role of societies such as the Yee Hing to ensure that debts were repaid by the immigrants once they arrived in Australia[50]. The Yee Hing operated from a base of local groups in regional communities, eventually formed the Yee Hing Company and, in 1911, formed the Chinese Masonic Society[51].

After the gold rush era great effort was put into clearing large tracts of land to foster pasture growth. Gangs of Chinese labourers were employed across the west to ringbark trees and carry out the three to four years of sucker bashing required to ensure no regrowth occurred. These gangs travelled from property to property, generally camping near a source of water.[52] John Lawrence Brown employed a gang of 300 Chinese labourers who built a dam on Baronne Creek on his Tondeburine run[53].

[44] Rolls, E., 1982. *A Million Wild Acres*. p.122
[45] Wilton, J., 2004. *Golden threads*. p.11
[46] Williams, M., 1999. *Chinese Settlement in NSW a thematic history.* p.4
[47] Cain, M. 1923. 'Coonabarabran in the 'Sixties'. p.370
[48] Rolls, E., 1982. *A Million Wild Acres*. p.155
[49] Fitzgerald, J., 2007. *Big White Lie*. p.62
[50] Fitzgerald, J., 2007. *Big White Lie*. p.64
[51] Fitzgerald, J., 2007. *Big White Lie*. pp.81-82
[52] Buxton, G., 1967. *The Riverina 1861-1891 An Australian Regional Study*, pp.247-248
[53] Gulargambone Historical Society Book Committee, 1992. *Gulargambone Homes & Holdings*. p.28

The Back to Gilgandra booklet records the story of two Scots named Gibson and Patterson who occupied *Tooloon*. They employed four Chinese workers on their property and enforced strict discipline back up with corporal punishment. This included liberal use of the stockwhip on their employees. One of the pair went missing one day and his body was discovered by an Aboriginal worker, buried in a stockyard. The four Chinese workers were arrested and charged with murder. One, named Cam, turned Queen's evidence and was reprieved. The other three were hanged. Cam later worked at Mrs Byrne's Hotel in Gilgandra and died in 1907 after a burning accident.[54]

Restrictions on land ownership by immigrants from China encouraged their pursuit of opportunities not dependent upon access to land and established a long association with retail and commercial enterprise. This trend was reinforced by a narrowing of employment opportunities for Chinese people after 1901 that saw a 'dramatic collapse of the NSW rural (Chinese) population in the early years of the 20th century'[55]. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries some Chinese migrants established 'stores and other businesses to supply … customers throughout' the colony[56]. An 'extensive' Chinese market garden was located in the centre of Gilgandra on land owned by Hannah Morris until this land was sold for the construction of the Imperial Hotel (later the Golden West Hotel) in 1909. The gardeners drew water for this garden using a horse and whim.[57]

Immigration restrictions ensured that many Chinese males were unable to be re-united with their families. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries many lone Chinese men worked tending gardens on pastoral properties or in village market gardens. A man named Cam was attached to the Bushman's Arms at Gilgandra. He had a vegetable garden in the vicinity of the current Wrigley and Court Streets.[58] Yap Tow worked for many years on *Ingledale* Armatree. When the property changed hands in 1906 Yap stayed with the new owners. He was skilled in carpentry, having learned his craft in China. Yap Tow died at *Callengeon*, Curban and was buried in the Curban Cemetery in 1924.[59]

Greek immigrants created another long held tradition in regional retailing. In 1916 there were reputed to be 625 Greek shops in Australia[60]. The very Australian institution of the Greek café is generally considered to have commenced in 1878 when Arthur Comino from Kythera opened a fish shop in Oxford Street, Sydney. 'Comino's shop was the foundation of the Kytherian community in Australia'[61]. Greek café proprietors regarded as having brought American food catering technology and practice to Australia in the 1920s. Greek cafes introduced the hamburger, soda fountains, milk bars and ice-cream sundaes to Australia.[62]

Much early Greek migration came from the island of Kythera and, consistent with other patterns of migration, migrants from Kythera tended to encourage other family

[54] Back to Gilgandra Committee, 1937. *Back to Gilgandra*. p.14
[55] Williams, M., 1999. *Chinese Settlement in NSW a thematic history.* p.36
[56] Williams, M., 1999. *Chinese Settlement in NSW a thematic history.* p.20
[57] Dormer, M., 1983. *The Bushman's Arms*. p.37
[58] Bartley, B., 2005. *Gilgandra Early Commercial Records*. p.53
[59] Lambell, M. & Byrne, N., 1997. *Pioneers and Personalities*. p.22
[60] Turnbull, C. & Valiotis, C., 2001. '*Beyond the Rolling Wave' A thematic history of Greek settlement in New South Wales.* p.19
[61] Risson, T., 2007. *Aphrodite and the Mixed Grill*. p.33
[62] Risson, T., 2007. *Aphrodite and the Mixed Grill*. pp.79-83

and community members to join them in the new country. Gilgandra demonstrates a remarkable example of this migration phenomenon. The Baveas, Georgopoulos (Poulos), Pentes, Protopsaltis (Psaltis), Sklavos and Yankellis (Kelly) families were the among the many Greek immigrants who settled in Gilgandra and operated cafes and other businesses throughout the mid 20th century[63]. The former ABC, Carlton, Monterey and Victory Cafes are remembered locally as elements of Gilgandra's remarkable Greek café culture. The ABC Café, the first of these, was established by Stavros Baveas in about 1917. Stavros is remembered as a great benefactor and sponsor of sporting groups.[64] George Poulos noted that the Kytherans left olive trees as 'living memorials' to their presence in the town[65].

Plate 2.1: This building, constructed by A.F. Garling, was the location of Stavros Baveas' ABC Café, the first Greek café in Gilgandra.

The mid 19th century saw an exodus of people from German states affected by the conflict and famines of the 1840s and 1850s. A number of these emigrants came to Australia, many seeking out opportunities to establish vineyards and small farms. Kasper and Mary Zell were one German family who left for Australia in 1851. Their son William Zell selected several portions of *Bringle* (originally part of Andrew Brown's *Tondeburine* run) in 1888. He and his wife Lillian Selina (nee Harris) of Tooraweenah, built a split slab hut as their first residence, developed the property and raised a family of nine children.[66]

The Anglo-Celtic population of the area grew after certainty was applied to land titles from the late 1830s and station owners began to move into the district with their families. As development and trade increased people moved from other parts of New South Wales. Moves towards closer settlement ensured that this inward movement of population continued well into the 1950s. Free selection and later soldier settlement saw people moving into the area from other farming areas that were undergoing rural restructuring.

[63] Brown, M., 2005. Kytherians in Gilgandra. [Online].
[64] Baveas, A., 2005. Stavros Baveas. [Online]
[65] Poulos, G., Olive Trees. Living memorials to the Kytherian presence in Gilgandra. [Online]
[66] Gulargambone Historical Society Book Committee, 1992. *Gulargambone Homes & Holdings*. pp.51-52

In the late 19th and early 20th century many settlers migrated into the district from Victoria. This movement of people was an outcome of processes that had commenced after the 1850s gold rushes in Victoria. As the dynamic of the goldfields moved towards reef mining and employment was available for fewer people settlers had moved north, seeking land in the pastoral districts of New South Wales. The failure of marginal wheat country in South Australia also forced farmers to move from that colony. Many of these people, taking advantage of the New South Wales Free Selection obtained holdings within the colony.

The period after World War II saw new patterns of migration. Newly settled migrants from Europe moved into many regional areas and made their mark. Former Forest Foreman Buster Davies recalled European migrants who worked in the Pilliga forests after the war:

> *Many of these migrants were told, when they arrived in Sydney, that there was work in the forests out west. So they immediately caught a train and arrived in the Pilliga to begin work as soon as possible. They were good workers, but found the heat difficult to bear. People were tolerant and accepting of these migrants, especially the Poles, and Yugoslavs. Buster, however, found the 'Ukrainians were hard to get along with'.*[67]

The post-war era also saw dramatic population movements within New South Wales. Ongoing downturns in the levels of labour required in the agricultural, pastoral and forestry industries have led to slow but inevitable reductions in the population of many outlying areas.

[67] Curby, P. & Humphreys, A., 2002. *Non-Indigenous Cultural Heritage Study*. p.43

3. Australian Historical Theme: Developing local, regional and national economies

While Geoffrey Blainey conceived of Australian history as dominated by 'the tyranny of distance' this concept is alien to Indigenous Australians. Eighteenth and 19th century developments in technology made it possible to link the continent to distant marketplaces, and the incentive for almost every expedition by the first European 'explorers' was the search for valuable resources. Much subsequent Australian history has revolved around the search for a staple on which to base regional economic development.[68]

3.1 NSW Historical Theme: Agriculture

Early settlers to the region grew grain crops for domestic consumption on stations and small holdings. Any surplus could also be sold. The period 1860 to 1880 saw a movement of wheat growing away from the coastal areas of New South Wales to the inland. This resulted from the combination of closer settlement encouraged by the Robertson Land Acts and outbreaks of rust in coastal wheat crops.[69] Ongoing government moves to develop closer settlement in the northwest of New South Wales were accompanied by efforts to encourage more wheat growing.

Farmers in the northwestern districts appear to have been slow to take up innovations in agricultural practice. The distance from commercial markets, difficulties with transport and the unavailability of suitable strains of wheat possibly worked as a disincentive to large-scale cultivation. Into the early 20th century farmers persisted with the ancient and difficult Scottish plough designs, crops were generally sown and harvested by hand, and wheat winnowed and threshed by teams of labourers.[70]

New technology was gradually introduced from other areas. American built McCormick horse-drawn harvesters were available in the late 19th century. A contractor at Binnaway had two of these and travelled the northwest working crops at harvest time. New, rust resistant varieties of wheat such as Federation were introduced at the beginning of the 20th century. These made farming more viable in the inland areas. Around 1908 the Australian built H. V. McKay & Co harvester was first demonstrated in the region.[71]

These technological developments, and the coming of the railway from 1902, encouraged broader cultivation of wheat from early in the 20th century. Soldier settlement schemes and other ongoing closer settlement also encouraged increases in the cultivation of crops. These developments led to the establishment of modern roller flour mills such as the Castlereagh Flour Mill at Gilgandra to mill the district's prime hard wheats (refer to **Section 3.10 Industry**).

Grain elevators were constructed along the railway lines of New South Wales from 1920[72]. These structures facilitated the storage and transport of bulk quantities of cereals, gradually replacing the tedious and labour intensive processes of bagging wheat and other crops for transport. A large Metcalfe grain elevator was constructed at Gilgandra in 1920 and smaller concrete grain elevators were constructed at Curban

[68] Australian Historic Themes Framework, 2001.
[69] Godwin, L., 1983. The Life and Death of a Flourmill: McCrossin's Mill, Uralla. pp.67 & 68
[70] Rolls, E., 1982. *A Million Wild Acres*. pp.211-213
[71] Rolls, E., 1982. *A Million Wild Acres*. p.213-214
[72] Ryan, K., 1990. Storing the Golden Grain.

and Armatree in 1930 and 1935[73]. Despite this some farmers continued to bag wheat well into the 1960s[74]. A large wheat shed still sits within the former Gilgandra railway yards. **Section 5.1 Labour** contains further information about the handling of bagged wheat.

Market gardens were established in a few locations on the banks of watercourses with a regular supply of water. Chinese market gardens were known to have operated beside the Castlereagh River at Gilgandra and Curban. The operators of these types of gardens often drew water from the river by means of traditional mechanised water lifting devices. Eric Rolls described a device installed in the Chinese market garden in Coonabarabran:

> *… a horse driven device of their own making… A wide endless belt of greased canvas with wooden slats nailed on at intervals ran under the water and up through a wooden channel*.[75]

Vegetable gardening was not the exclusive domain of Chinese settlers. Conditions in a number of the river and creek valleys of the district proved to be quite suitable for vegetable growing and many selectors grew vegetables to supplement their incomes from other farming activities.

3.2 NSW Historical Theme: Commerce

The earliest commercial undertakings in the region appear to have been inns and hostelries. These were established at suitable points close to river crossings or on specific transport routes. On more popular transport routes these inns were often combined with general stores. The Bushman's Arms Hotel (later known as the Telegraph Hotel) was constructed on the eastern side of the original Castlereagh River crossing at Gilgandra[76]. In the days of horse transport facilities for blacksmiths, farriers and the repair of livery were as important as inns and general stores.

Early commercial ventures in Gilgandra were described in the souvenir booklet issued for the 1937 Back to Gilgandra celebrations. The first appears to have been McTaggart's store located in Lower Miller Street. He evidently traded in nicnacs and small items. In the 1880s Russell and Moore of Dubbo opened a branch store in Gilgandra. This was the town's first general store. John Collison, Charlie Tym and James Hall and Son also operated stores in the late 19th century. In addition to the stores on the western side of the river John Fisher Smith opened a branch store on the eastern side near the present racecourse and later built a hotel on the corner of the Coonamble and Mendooran Roads.[77]

Gilgandra's coming of age as a commercial centre can be linked to the opening of the district to free selection and the construction of the Dubbo to Coonamble railway line (refer to **Section 3.15 Transport**). The Commercial Banking Company opened the first bank in Gilgandra on 28 July 1900. This was located in a small room in A. F. Garling's store. At the time Garling's Store was located on the site of the current National Australia Bank.[78] Later Charles Main constructed a store, which was replaced by larger premises constructed by A.F. Garling. Garling later moved his store

[73] Ryan, K, 1990. 'Storing the Golden Grain.' pp.17-19
[74] Rolls, E., 1982. *A Million Wild Acres*. p.220
[75] Rolls, E., 1982. *A Million Wild Acres*. p.298
[76] Back to Gilgandra Committee, 1937. *Back to Gilgandra*. p.14
[77] Back to Gilgandra Committee, 1937. *Back to Gilgandra*. p.14
[78] Back to Gilgandra Committee, 1937. *Back to Gilgandra Souvenir Booklet*. p.64

across the road.[79] The bank purchased this site in 1908 and a quite impressive banking chamber was constructed by Hocking Brothers in 1910[80].

Other banks followed with a branch of the Union Bank being established in Gilgandra on 22 May 1909. This bank was in the Gilgandra Weekly building and Mr. R. T. Menlove was the first manager. In 1927 a new bank building was constructed in Miller Street.[81] The Bank of new South Wales commenced trading in Gilgandra on 4 September 1909. A dedicated branch building was opened on 30 March 1922.[82]

Retailing in central commercial districts of towns, a phenomenon of the industrial revolution[83], has undergone major changes since the beginning of the nineteenth century. In New South Wales regional towns the earliest retailers appear to have been 'general providers', stores selling almost all the necessities of a growing community, operated by local owners[84]. The shopping and commercial precincts of regional centres have served as gathering and meeting places for decades as people have come to town to stock up on supplies and transact business.

Over time the general provider became less common as retailers began to specialise or to establish department stores. Regional retailers have faced ongoing change in the marketplace and the nature of delivery of retail services. From the 1870s Sydney-based stores such as Anthony Horderns mailed illustrated catalogues to customers across New South Wales 'to instruct people dwelling in the country in the theory and practice of SHOPPING BY POST'[85].

Chain stores such as Woolworths, established in Sydney in 1924, provided the next challenge to local retailers[86]. Many country-based businesses sought to emulate the model of the chain store by opening branches across a region. The latest challenge to retailers in regional centres comes from the development of shopping malls in regional centres. As the number of independent retailers declines, and as the populations of regional areas become more mobile larger towns are exerting more influence to the detriment of the retailers of smaller towns.

Many commercial enterprises helped to sustain the rural industries of the region through the vagaries of economic and weather cycles:

> *'Wool firms carried many farmers through hard times. They stocked everything to do with sheep from drenches to woolbales, tar, fencing materials, even boots. ... Customers were able to borrow from the wool firms against their next year's clip.'*[87]

[79] Back to Gilgandra Committee, 1937. *Back to Gilgandra Souvenir Booklet*. p.12
[80] Back to Gilgandra Committee, 1937. *Back to Gilgandra Souvenir Booklet*. p.64
[81] Back to Gilgandra Committee, 1937. *Back to Gilgandra Souvenir Booklet*. p.65
[82] Back to Gilgandra Committee, 1937. *Back to Gilgandra Souvenir Booklet*. p.47
[83] Webber, K & Hoskins, I., 2003. *What's in Store*. pp.10-11
[84] Webber, K & Hoskins, I., 2003. *What's in Store*. pp.17-25
[85] Webber, K & Hoskins, I., 2003. *What's in Store*. p.10
[86] Webber, K & Hoskins, I., 2003. *What's in Store*. p.24
[87] Shumack, E., 1999. *Going Bush to Goolhi*. p.9

Plate 3.1: The former Western Store in Miller Street, Gilgandra. The original large retail building on this site was constructed for local retailer A.F. Garling.

The cycles of boom and recession in regional areas can often be read in the architecture of their business districts. Alf Garling was operating a general store in Tooraweenah in the 1880s. The store was purchased by his brother Albert Edward Garling in 1897. Albert Garling was an enterprising man who became a stock and station agent, expert in windmill and agricultural machinery, photographer, income tax assessor, barber and ladies' hairdresser, motor mechanic and undertaker. In the absence of a doctor he also provided medical, dental and veterinary services, establishing a small consulting room with 'what was professionally assessed as the best medical equipment outside a doctor's surgery'.[88] The commercial core of Tooraweenah contains buildings that date from around 1910 to the 1930s, during the town's major growth period. A general store was established in Tooraweenah in 1908 by R.A. Finch and, in the spirit of the time, traded as the Federal Stores. This was followed in 1911 by the Mountain View Hotel. By 1914 the town hosted 15 businesses. The existing butcher's shop was constructed in 1925.[89]

Tooraweenah's first bakehouse was established in 1915 by Frank Farley and was later operated by F. Harder and CAW Maberley. A second bakehouse was erected in 1930 in Denham Street and was operated by Ozzie & Audrey Stevenson. Up to 1955 bread deliveries were made twice or three times per week to outlying properties as far as Gunnamoorooo in the present Warrumbungle National Park by horse and cart. After 1955 the school bus run handled some of the deliveries. Each afternoon the bus operators would collect the freshly baked loaves, handing one to each school child as they climbed aboard the bus.[90]

In the early and mid 20th centuries many small landholders and pastoral workers supplemented their incomes by trapping rabbits and selling their pelts. Skin buyer's

[88] Willott, G., 1984. *A Hundred Years of Education in Tooraweenah*. p.11
[89] Rohr, G. Notes on the History of Tooraweenah.
[90] Rohr, G. Notes on the History of Tooraweenah.

shops were an important element of local economies. The CWA hall in Tooraweenah was originally constructed as a wool and skin buyer's shop[91].

The business district of Gilgandra includes many buildings with associations to the development of the town. Jack Hitchen's Federal Stores were constructed on the corner of Miller and Bridge Streets during the early years of the 20th century. Jack Hitchen set up the town's first gramophone outside his store to attract customers. These premises hosted S.J. Glover's drapery, millinery, clothing, grocery and hardware business in 1935. During World War II it was occupied by Jack Pentes who sold icecreams and confectionary. Later Ray and Mary Naudin operated a grocery store here. They were followed by Cubby Collison who also operated a grocery store. Carol Stockham later operated a frock shop in this building. This was taken over by John Quayles.[92]

Opposite this building is the large store constructed by A.F. Garling who originally operated on the site occupied by the National Australia Bank. Charles Main constructed a store on this site prior to the 1890s. A.F. Garling acquired this store in the late 1890s. He enlarged it and by 1900 was hosting a branch of the Commercial Banking Company here. A.F. Garling had started business in Gulargambone where he operate the A.F. Garling IXL Stores. This store was sold to a Mr. Bourke.[93]

Some time around 1900 Garling constructed a store on the opposite side of Bridge Street. This store was named 'The Big A.F. Garling Stores'[94]. Tom Wrigley had built a hall on the corner of Bridge and Miller Streets. He later relocated his hall further up Bridge Street and the corner site was taken over by A.F. Garling. The opening of The Big A.F. Garling Stores was accompanied by a gala dinner attended by local Member of the Legislative Assembly Hugh McDonald[95]. A.F. Garling operated a large business as a general merchant. In 1917 The Big Stores was advertising fabrics, men's suits and overcoats, men's tweed caps and felt hats and boys' heavy tweed suits. A combustion stove branded for A.F. Garling, Gilgandra is located in the old shearer's quarters on Bearbong Station.

During the mid 20th century Garling's Big Stores were taken over by The Western Stores. The building façade was modernised in the 1930s or 1940s and the building renamed the Gilgandra Department Store.

3.3 NSW Historical Theme: Communication

The story of communication in the Gilgandra district is tied to the developments that occurred in the technology of communications during the 19th and 20th centuries. Postal services were supplemented by telegraphic communication, then the introduction of telephone services and ongoing developments in electronic communication. At various times posts have been carried by horses, horse drawn coaches, trains and motor vehicles.

A post office was established at Gilgandra on 1 January 1867 and operated until 1 January 1871. The first Postmaster was James Christian who was employed at a salary of £12 per annum. Mr Christian was succeeded on 16 March 1868 by Mr Murphy who resigned when the post office was closed. A second post office was established

[91] Willott, G., 1984. *A Hundred Years of Education in Tooraweenah 1884-1984*. p.23
[92] Bartley, B., 2005. *Gilgandra-Oldtown-Newtown*. p.50
[93] Gulargambone Historical Society Book Committee, 1992. *Gulargambone Homes and Holdings*. p.72
[94] Bartley, B., 2005. *Gilgandra-Oldtown-Newtown*. p.61
[95] Dormer, M., 1983. *The Bushman's Arms*. p.17

on the western side of the Castlereagh River on 15 May 1872 with J. Macauley as Postmaster. A telegraph office was established on 4 August 1882 with W.H. Golding as operator. On 1 November 1882 the post office and telegraph office were combined and Mr Golding appointed as Post and Telegraph Master. A telephone exchange was opened on 24 July 1908[96]. The present post office building was constructed some time around 1911[97].

James Strang and his family conducted the Armatree Post Office and store from their property Almond Bank on the East Coonamble Road from 1882. His son Alexander continued to operate the Post Office after his father's death and moved it to New Armatree after the construction of the railway in 1902.[98]

The residents of Tooraweenah petitioned for the establishment of a post office in January 1893. At that time the village was on the Gilgandra-Baradine mail run along which mails were conveyed twice weekly. This route included Bidden, Youlbung, Tooraweenah, Tunderbrine, Gumin Gumin, Tenandra, Panta, Wingadgen and Goorianawa. A postal receiving office, located in Garling's Store, was established in March 1893. In late 1895 Garling requested that a post and telegraph office be established as the work required in operating the receiving office occupied 'too much of my time for the salary received'. An allowance post office had been established by February 1896.[99] A telephone line from Gilgandra to Tooraweenah was constructed in 1900 and a telephone installed in the Post Office[100]. A telephone exchange was installed in December 1911 and a full Post Office erected in the same year.

Gilgandra's first newspaper was published 'in December 1904 by Alfred Porter and Thomas Crouch'. This newspaper, named "The Castlereagh", was published on Fridays in a four-page format. The paper was acquired in 1906 by P. McManus and J. Foley. A second newspaper was established in 1910. Known as "The Castlereagh Liberal" this newspaper was published by The Castlereagh Liberal Newspaper Co. to 'serve the interests of the man on the land politically'. It appeared in twice weekly editions but appears to have not been a commercial success. Mr. A. Perkins, editor of the newspaper, purchased the business from the company and commenced producing it as a weekly newspaper under the name "The Gilgandra Weekly". In December 1922 The Gilgandra Weekly was acquired by H. Campbell 'who later absorbed The Castlereagh. Campbell became somewhat of a regional media magnate who by 1937 owned the Coonamble Times, Nyngan Observer and Coonabarabran Times. [101]

3.4 NSW Historical Theme: Environment – Cultural landscape

The environment of the area is described in **Section 1.1 Environment – naturally evolved.** The volcanic outcroppings of the Warrumbungle Mountains are one of the principal features impacting on the development of the cultural landscape of the Gilgandra Shire. This range and its extending ridges are the source of the Castlereagh River and many creeks whose presence has influenced the pattern of Aboriginal interactions with the land and European settlement. River and creek geography has influenced the placement and growth of the area's principal town and has also had a major impact on the density of settlement. The Warrumbungle ranges continue to

[96] Back to Gilgandra Committee, 1937. *Back to Gilgandra Souvenir Booklet*. p.30
[97] Dormer, M., 1983. *The Bushman's Arms*. p.44
[98] Gulargambone Historical Society Book Committee, 1992. *Gulargambone Homes & Holdings*. p.84
[99] Willott, G., 1984. *A Hundred Years of Education in Tooraweenah 1884-1984*. pp.9-10
[100] Willott, G., 1984. *A Hundred Years of Education in Tooraweenah 1884-1984*. p.15
[101] Back to Gilgandra Committee, 1937. *Back to Gilgandra Souvenir Booklet*. p.33

impact on the economy of the region through the presence of the Warrumbungle National Park.

The first European engagement with region occurred in 1818 with Oxley and Evans' exploratory journey from the Macquarie River to Port Macquarie. They entered the shire from the west at Mount Bullaway (named Mount Exmouth by Oxley) on 8 August 1818[102]. From Mount Bullaway Oxley observed the Warrumbungle range that he named Arbuthnot's Range. He also described the area covered by the current Pilliga Scrub[103].

John Whitehead notes that, after European settlement of the region, 'there was a continuous movement of stock by the local squatters and their shepherds in, out and through the mountains' seeking the lush grasses that grew on the volcanic slopes and valleys of the range[104]. Fertile valleys adjacent to the range were also heavily grazed and farmed, and continue to provide rich environments for pastoral pursuits. Early pastoral runs within the mountains have been identified by John Whitehead as:

- Caleriwi was located on the northern side of Wambelong Creek. It was originally squatted on by Andrew Brown of Bowenfels[105] and taken up as leasehold by Robert Dawson in the 1840s[106]. Dawson ran only cattle on Caleriwi[107]. When Dawson failed in the 1840s depression the run was transferred to Charles Bury along with Walla Walla, Tenandra and Parmidman. allocated to Alfred Knight after World War I as a soldier settlement block. This run was later taken over by Keith Blackman.[108]
- Tannabar, located south of Mount Caraghnan and Belougery Gap, was leased by John and Louisa Knight in the 1850s in partnership with Henry Ball Lakeman[109]. The run was purchased by John Knight Junior in 1907[110].
- Tonderburn, located south of Wambelong Trig.

Geologists explored the area on a number occasions, the first such visit being undertaken by Government Geologist S. Sutchbury in 1852 in search of iron, coal and gold. Professor Edgeworth David explored the area in 1892 and again in 1911 and in 1905 H. I. Jensen carried out a geological investigation.[111] In 1916 Forestry Commission Forest Assessor Wilfred de Beuzeville, after assessing the forest resources of the Pilliga region, recommended that the Warrumbungles be set aside as a recreational reserve. In making his recommendation de Beuzeville noted that:

> *The country is generally remarkable in formation and has great wild and rugged beauty, with its high mountains showing fantastic shape against the skyline. Under proper management, it should become a great attraction not only for the dwellers of the surrounding plains, but also to the travelling public generally*.[112]

[102] Whitehead, J. 2004. *Tracking & Mapping the Explorers Vol. 2*. p.170
[103] Whitehead, J. 2004. *Tracking & Mapping the Explorers Vol. 2*. p.175
[104] Whitehead, J., 2008. *The Warrumbungles*. p.192
[105] Whitehead, J., 2008. *The Warrumbungles*. p.192
[106] Pickette, J. & Campbell, M., 1983. *Coonabarabran as it was in the beginning*. p.34
[107] Pickette, J. & Campbell, M., 1983. *Coonabarabran as it was in the beginning*. p.21
[108] Whitehead, J., 2008. *The Warrumbungles*. p.192
[109] Pickette, J. & Campbell, M., 1983. *Coonabarabran as it was in the beginning*. p.77
[110] Pickette, J. & Campbell, M., 1983. *Coonabarabran as it was in the beginning*. p.78
[111] Whitehead, J., 2008. *The Warrumbungles*. p.199
[112] Whitehead, J., 2008. *The Warrumbungles*. p.203

In other parts of the shire forestry, land clearing, pastoralism and agriculture have created landscapes of open pasture broken by ribbons of remnant bushland along waterways and the ridges and rocky places.

3.5 NSW Historical Theme: Events

The story of the Gilgandra district includes accounts of many events or the effect of events on the shire and its citizens. Two events that began in the Gilgandra Shire resounded across the nation and have become significant elements of the Australian story. These were the Breelong Massacre that occurred in 1900 and the 1915 Coo-ee March. The story of the Breelong Massacre is included in **Section 7.3 Law and Order**. A memorial to the people killed in the Breelong Massacre is located at the Breelong Historical Site on the Mendooran Road and a memorial to the Coo-ee march is located in Bridge Street, Gilgandra.

Gilgandra is renowned for the recruiting innovation that was planned and implemented here in 1915. The concept of a 'snowball march' that gathered recruits as it travelled across the country was implemented in the Coo-ee March that left Gilgandra in October 1915 (refer to **Section 7.1 Defence**). This caught the imagination of the nation and led to many other marches that 'were responsible for some 1,500 volunteers enlisting, while the enormous sensation caused by the marches probably caused three to four times that number to come forward'.[113] The Kookaburra March from Tooraweenah to Bathurst (refer to **Section 7.1 Defence**) was one of the many follow-up events that gathered in recruits.

Australia's traumatic experience of Wold War I led to spontaneous community action to create memorials. Government regulation limited fundraising for the construction of memorials until after the end of hostilities in 1918. During and after the war there was much debate about the role of memorials. Public opinion was divided between the desirability of pure monument and the creation of memorials that served a civic purpose[114]. The utilitarian point of view seems to have prevailed in the Gilgandra district with the erection of memorial halls in Gilgandra, Tooraweenah, Balladoran and Armatree.

The cessation of World War II saw the establishment government incentives that encouraged fundraising for utilitarian memorials. In a move consistent with this general trend the people of Tooraweenah chose a memorial that beautified their village. A sub-branch of the Returned Servicemen's League was established in Tooraweenah in October 1945. Membership quickly grew to 45 and an avenue of trees was planted along Bridge Street 'in memory of the men from the district who lost their lives in active service during World War II.[115] This avenue, sponsored by airline entrepreneur Arthur Butler, uses Grevillea Robusta and Jacaranda species, which show the blue and yellow of the Country Women's Association when in bloom. The Tooraweenah Recreation Ground was also developed in the 1950s as a memorial to the men of the district who lost their lives in the war.

The people of Armatree chose a simple memorial to those who gave their lives in World War I and World War II. A concrete plinth supporting a steel flagpole is set within an enclosure comprised of cyclone fencing and sections of cliplok cladding set on steel posts. Plaques on the front and sides of the plinth commemorate the district's

[113] Meredith, J., 1981. *The Coo-ee March*. p.8
[114] Inglis, K.S., 2001. *Sacred Places: War Memorials in the Australian Landscape*. pp.138-144
[115] Willott, B., 1984. *A Hundred Years of Education in Tooraweenah*. p.34

war dead and the unveiling of the memorial by NSW Governor Lieutenant-General Sir John Northcott on 18 May 1954. A more modern plaque identifies the members of the Armatree RSL club from 1946 to 1968.

Numerous smaller memorials throughout the district recognise the lives and service of people who have worked for the community. The murders committed at Breelong in 1900 are the most shocking event to have occurred in the district (refer to **Section 7.3 Law and Order**). These are memorialised in a small obelisk located beside the Mendooran Road near the murder scene.

Floods have been major defining events in the story of Gilgandra and district. The situation of Gilgandra on a bend of the Castlereagh River Early accounts of European settlement record the massive flood of 1874 that reached as far as the present post office in Warren Road. This flood occurred in January 1874 after a prolonged period of drought. Gilgandra postmaster John Fisher Smith recalled that on a very hot 22nd January he heard a 'weird wild noise from up the river'. He saw coming down the river what looked like 'a gigantic waterfall, literally speaking a majestic wall of white foam, fully thirty feet from the riverbed'. The area was flooded and Smith spent two nights and a day on the roof of his house. Stranded there he watched cattle, sheep, haystacks, furniture and other items floating past. Many district residents who were unable to reach high ground were trapped in trees until the floodwaters subsided a few days later.[116]

The 1950s was a particularly wet period with above average rainfall recorded over most of Australia. From October 1954 heavy rains fell over much of the eastern half of the country. In February 1955 the prevailing wet conditions 'combined with an intensifying monsoon depression in Queensland bringing torrential rain across New South Wales. On Friday 25 February rivers in the northwest slopes began to flood.[117]

The Castlereagh River at Gilgandra rose rapidly in the afternoon. According to Don Shaw, former Gilgandra chemist, businesses were warned that by midnight there would be three feet of water in the Miller Street business district. By 4:00pm there was over six feet of water in his shop and his entire stock was destroyed.[118] Large sections of Gilgandra were under water and massive holes were torn in a number of local roads. One of these holes was estimated to me 8 metres deep. 'Twenty four homes were totally destroyed and 350 were severely damaged'. Two people died in Gilgandra and a number were hospitalised as a result of injuries they received in the floods.[119]

Gilgandra Shire Council met regularly during March and April 1955 to deal with issues created by the flood. Many Aboriginal people had been evacuated from homes near the river and were being housed in unsatisfactory conditions at the Gilgandra Showground. Many of the districts roads were damaged and 125 toilets and 60 windmills were missing. Many buildings had been damaged in the flood and Council was required to make decisions on a vast range of matters including ordering the destruction of flood damaged food from Jack Pentes' store.[120]

[116] Bartley, B., 2005. *Gilgandra-Oldtown-NewTown.* pp.39-40
[117] Moore, J., 2008. 'And the Waters Rose' in Year of the Great Flood.
[118] Bartley, B., 2005. *Gilgandra-Oldtown-NewTown.* p.52
[119] Moore, J., 2008. 'And the Waters Rose' in Year of the Great Flood.
[120] Curran, J., 1991. *Gilgandra Shire Council*. pp.80-81

3.6 NSW Historical Theme: Exploration

The first European engagement with the present Warrumbungle Mountains occurred in 1818 with Oxley and Evans' exploratory journey from the Macquarie River to Port Macquarie. They entered the region from the northwest in July 1818 from a depot site at Mount Harris, having partly explored the Macquarie Marshes. On 7 July 1818 Oxley sent Evans forward from Mount Harris to investigate the line of a route to the north-east that he intended to travel.[121]

Between 8 and 17 July 1818 Evans and his party travelled from a point southeast of Quambone towards the locality of Gumin Gumin, crossing the Castlereagh River near Combara. Having reached the edge of the Warrumbungle Range they then turned south-west and crossed the Castlereagh River again at a point about half-way between Curban and Armatree. The party then travelled west towards Mount Foster then changed their direction to reach their starting point.[122] This was the first European incursion into areas now covered by Gilgandra Shire.

The year 1818 was extremely wet and the country was partly flooded and boggy, making progress with loaded horses very difficult. Conditions on the ground had forced Evans to change his route from that requested by Oxley. As he travelled through areas now included in Gilgandra Shire Evans commented on the various types of country traversed. The area between the Warrumbungle Range and the Castlereagh River he described as 'an open plain, over which was rather better travelling than we had latterly experienced'. He also described 'good open forest country, abounding with kangaroos'. As he approached the Castlereagh River he described the country as 'low and wet' with their journey being 'dreadfully bad and marshy'. Their journey through the country on the western side of the Castlereagh he described as 'extremely tedious and unpleasant'.[123]

After Evans had rejoined him Oxley's entire party set out in a north-easterly direction from Mount Harris on 19 July 1818 then turned south-east in the direction of the Warrumbungle Range (Arbuthnot's Hills)[124]. On reaching the range they climbed Mount Bullaway (named Mount Exmouth by Oxley) and described the Warrumbungle Range[125]. Oxley's group then headed through the Goorianawa Valley and the area around Bugaldie, passing through the Pilliga to the north of the Warrumbungles.

The area was later explored by pastoralists seeking good runs for their sheep and cattle (refer to **Section 3.12 Pastoralism)**.

3.7 NSW Historical Theme: Fishing

Fishing has played a minor role in the story of the former Gilgandra Shire.

3.8 NSW Historical Theme: Forestry

When John Oxley moved through the region to the north of the Warrumbungles in 1818 he noted:

[121] Whitehead, J. 2004. *Tracking & Mapping the Explorers Vol. 2*. pp.135-140
[122] Whitehead, J. 2004. *Tracking & Mapping the Explorers Vol. 2*. p.140
[123] Whitehead, J. 2004. *Tracking & Mapping the Explorers Vol. 2*. p.142
[124] Whitehead, J. 2004. *Tracking & Mapping the Explorers Vol. 2*. p.147
[125] Whitehead, J. 2004. *Tracking & Mapping the Explorers Vol. 2*. p.175

> *The appearance of the country passed over the most desolate and forbidding, but quite open, interspersed with miserable rocky crags, on which grew the cypress and eucalyptus. On the more level portions of the country a new and large species of eucalyptus and another of its genus (the iron bark) were the principal if not the only trees*.[126]

As early settlers had cleared native trees they used suitable timbers in the construction of dwellings and sheds (refer to **Section 4.1 Accommodation**). Initial timber milling was done using pit-sawing techniques. Over time pit sawing was replaced by steam-powered sawmills that operated within the region's forests and on their fringes. The back to Gilgandra Souvenir Booklet of 1937 noted that:

> *The district has been noted for many years as a prolific producer of timber, chiefly Cypress and Ironbark, and today it is still regarded as one of the principal individual Cypress producing areas of the State. The timber has generally been of excellent quality. The continual production for so long a period has continually been of inestimable benefit in the settlement of the district. The industry has given constant employment to a considerable number of men for a period of over 40 years.*[127]

Commercial timber getting began in the Pilliga as early as 1870s but a commercial sawmill was not established in Gilgandra until 1890. The Perseverance Sawmill, opened by George Wilkins in that year, was financed by Mr J. G. Brown of Dubbo. Brown also supplied a new engine to power the operation.[128] Prior to the establishment of the Perseverance Mill Wilkins had operated a series of small mills 'at varying distances from the town'. The Perseverance Mill was erected on the site of Hunter Park.[129]

As Gilgandra was not connected to the rest of the colony by rail the mill was entirely dependent upon local trade. The Perseverance Mill operated for a period of only six years during the worst period of the 1890s depression. This included a 'period when the plant was shifted to Collie to cut some 300,000 feet of timber.[130] The mill was eventually relocated to the Pilliga Scrub and was operating there in the 1930s[131].

A second mill was established on the Coonamble Road in 1894. Tom Jones of *Merrigal* owned this mill from 1898 until 1912. It was then taken over by a company trading as Gilgandra Sawmills with J.H. Hitchen, G. Rankin, R.J. Nelson and H. Paterson as principal shareholders. Nelson bought out the other partners in 1916. The company specialised in milling building materials and extended its operations to Gulargambone, Wellington and Tottenham and in 1936 was floated as R.J. Nelson and Sons Pty Ltd.[132]

A third sawmill was erected on the site currently occupied by St Stephen's Presbyterian Church by R. Townsend. This operation did not last long and Townsend transferred his operations to Mendooran.[133]

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[126] Whitehead, J., 2004. *Tracking and Mapping the Explorers*, Volume 2, p.191
[127] Back to Gilgandra Committee, 1937. *Back to Gilgandra Souvenir Booklet*. p.37
[128] Bartley, B., 2005. *Gilgandra – Oldtown – Newtown*. p.28
[129] Back to Gilgandra Committee, 1937. *Back to Gilgandra Souvenir Booklet*. p.36
[130] Bartley, B., 2005. *Gilgandra – Oldtown – Newtown*. p.28
[131] Back to Gilgandra Committee, 1937. *Back to Gilgandra Souvenir Booklet*. p.36
[132] Back to Gilgandra Committee, 1937. *Back to Gilgandra Souvenir Booklet*. pp.36-37
[133] Back to Gilgandra Committee, 1937. *Back to Gilgandra Souvenir Booklet*. p.37

The coming of the railway to the district in the early 20th century encouraged the development of sleeper cutting as a local industry. In 1891 the Gilgandra Progress Committee passed a motion to make the colonial government aware of the 'vast iron bark scrubs between here and Dubbo, in the neighbourhood of the tramway authorised to be constructed for carrying sleepers to Dubbo'. The committee also sought to have timber reserves established on parts of the 'Eringanaring and Old Harbour holdings'.[134]

S. Brookbank operated a sawmill at Balladoran and also at Curban. In addition he had a mill for many years near the site of the Railway Hotel in Gilgandra. M. Hector took over the mill in 1920. This mill was destroyed by fire in 1923 and a new mill was erected by A.C. Bailey in 1924. This mill was moved to various sites around the district. The Howard family of Biddon also conducted sawmilling operations prior to World War I.[135]

Sawmilling continued at Balladoran when J. Elsom established a mill there in 1925. This mill only operated for a short time and Elsom 'took over a plant from F.W. Mackenzie, of Biddon, which had been operated by H. Schwertfeger. Elsom subsequently moved to Tooraweenah, then to Gulargambone, Collie and Wellington. F. Walker operated a sawmill at Breelong for a time then moved to Dubbo and subsequently to Wellington.[136]

Some selectors supplemented their incomes with timber getting and timber milling activities. The Zell family operated a the Bringle Steam Saw & Moulding Mills on their property Bringle near Tooraweenah. This mill operated 'every second day allowing the intervening day for clearing scantling away, stacking the sawn timber away and servicing the steam engine and mill'.[137]

Sleeper cutting was an important aspect of the timber industry for many years. Sleeper cutting in the district commenced with the construction of the Dubbo-Coonamble railway line. This industry employed large numbers of men over an extended period of time. From 1936 to 1937 32,263 sleepers with a total value of £7,553/3/- were delivered to the railway depot at Gilgandra. At this time sleeper cutters were earning an average of £6 per week. In the same period 12,291 sleepers were delivered to the railway at Balladoran.[138]

It was possible to make 12/- a day sleeper cutting at a time when farm labourers were receiving 6/- per day.[139] Sleeper cutters lived a more transient existence, moving camps to access the hardwoods from which railway sleepers were fashioned. May Mead of Coonabarabran recalled the working conditions of members of her family who cut sleepers in the forest:

> *The men were sleeper cutters in those times and they used to cut sleepers up in the mountains and forest… They had to walk to find the ironbark trees so you were doin' a lot of walkin'… They didn't have much, the men, because sleeper cutters only get paid once a month. You had flour, sugar, tea, then you'd catch*

[134] Bartley, B., 2005. *Gilgandra – Oldtown – Newtown*. p.28
[135] Back to Gilgandra Committee, 1937. *Back to Gilgandra Souvenir Booklet*. p.37
[136] Back to Gilgandra Committee, 1937. *Back to Gilgandra Souvenir Booklet*. p.37
[137] Zell, L. & L., 1999. *Truth Prevails. William Zell Ancestors and Descendents 1785-1999*. p.83
[138] Back to Gilgandra Committee, 1937. *Back to Gilgandra Souvenir Booklet*. p.38
[139] Bull, R., 1986. *Binnaway on the Castlereagh*. p.58

> *your own rabbits or goats or whatever for the meat part of it, and buy onions and potatoes which weren't as dear as they are today. They'd set traps*.[140]

A Council prospectus of 1958 listed the district's secondary industries as cutting and milling timber. This document listed the area's timbers as pine, grey box, oak, kurrajong, yarran, beulah, wilga and ironbark. Two local timber mills were processing Cypress Pine and hardwoods. Sleeper cutting was also a profitable industry with approximately 45,000 to 50,000 hardwood sleepers per year being despatched from Gilgandra and Balladoran. An aggregate of £4,000 per month was paid by the Department of Railways to workers employed in sleeper cutting.[141]

In addition to supplying timber for milling and for railway sleepers the Breelong and Biddon State Forests hosted charcoal kilns. During World War II interned enemy aliens, mostly Italians and some Germans, were forced to work the charcoal kilns. The internees replaced local men who were released for other activities. Kilns were set up in the Mendooran, Eumungerie and Breelong State Forests.[142]

> *The kilns in the Breelong forest were erected in a circular fashion with a railway track around the area. Carts conveyed the dry timber to the kilns where it was loaded in and burnt. The lid was placed on top when the wood burnt down and mud was used to seal it. Later the charcoal was placed in wheat bags ready to be transported to the Balladoran siding.*[143]

Fred Alchin supervised the internees and charcoal production in the Breelong Forest. Jim Murphy was engaged to cart seasoned iron bark timber to these kilns. The iron bark was required to be in eight foot lengths with a thickness of six to 12 inches. Charcoal was bagged and delivered to Balladoran by Charlie Taylor, Pud McKenzie, Ken and Ray Diggs, Harry Stubberfield, Joe Sutton and Jim Murphy.[144] In the Biddon State Forest George McGarrity supervised the internees and George Lynch worked as night watchman[145].

3.9 NSW Historical Theme: Health

As with other services, colonial society depended largely on the family unit to provide medical care. Over centuries Aboriginal people had developed remedies to illnesses and injuries and the Europeans brought with them folk remedies from their countries of origin. There appeared to be some exchange of information and the application of the wisdom of different cultures to specific medical emergencies.

As the European occupation of the area consolidated formally trained medical practitioners moved into the region to provide health care, although in the early years the nearest doctor was in Dubbo. Gilgandra's first doctor was Dr. Taylor who came to the town in 1889. He practised from the Telegraph Hotel where he also lived. Dr. Burton established a medical practice in 1895, which he continued until his death in 1905. In 1901 a Dr. B.A. Leonard was practicing in Gilgandra. He sought to leave Gilgandra for Trundle in 1905 and he appears to have been having problems with

[140] Somerville, M. et al, 1994. *The Sun Dancin', People and Place in Coonabarabran*. pp.131-132
[141] Back to Gilgandra Week Committee, 1976. *Back to Gilgandra Week*
[142] Mudford, J. & C., 1988. *Breelong and Her Neighbours*. p.249
[143] Mudford, J. & C., 1988. *Breelong and Her Neighbours*. p.249
[144] Mudford, J. & C., 1988. *Breelong and Her Neighbours*. p.250
[145] Mudford, J. & C., 1991. *To Biddon and Back*. p.58

obtaining payment for his services. Dr. Leonard had trouble selling his practice in Gilgandra. [146]

Dr. Mario Giommi, an Italian physician, arrived with his wife in 1905. He established a private hospital in Miller Street and in 1907 moved to Warren. Dr Henry Peet had a practice in Gilgandra from 1908 to 1938. He lived in a house in Morris Street on the site of the present Ambulance Station and conducted his Idaleigh private hospital on the adjoining block. Dr. Alexander purchased Dr Peet's practice and his home in 1938.[147] Many other doctors have practiced in Gilgandra during the 20th century.

Over time private hospitals were established in areas where population had consolidated. Gilgandra had two private hospitals in the 20th century. Matron Field moved to Gilgandra from Coonabarabran in the 1890s and commenced operating a maternity hospital in Wrigley Street. She named this hospital Idaleigh after her daughter Ida. Dr Peet took acquired this hospital in 1908 and moved it to a larger house in Myrtle Street. Matron Field continued to manage the hospital until her retirement in 1910. On Matron Field's retirement Dr Peet appointed Nurse Chandler to manage Idaleigh. Nurse King took over in 1913 and Nurse Berryman in 1914.[148]

In response to increasing demand Dr Peet built a new brick hospital building at 12 Morris Street and transferred Idaleigh to this establishment. He also built a house on the neighbouring block. He operated at the new address with the help of Sister Mitchell and Harold Mitchell until he leased the hospital to three nurses with the surname of Zillman. The Zillman sisters sold Idaleigh to Sister May Townsend who sold it to Sister Goodwin in the 1920s. Idaleigh was later taken over in the 1930s by Sister Hill who combined it with her Chinnock private hospital.[149]

In 1905 Ellie Rendell returned to Gilgandra from Coonamble and commenced operating a maternity hospital in he parents' home in Castlereagh Street. She named this hospital Chinnock. Some time before 1923 she moved this hospital to a building at 11 Morris Street that had been used as a convent. In the 1930s Sister Margaret Hill, having moved from Mansfield in Victoria, acquired Chinnock and later moved it to Jack Hitchen's former home at 13 Morris Street. Sister Hill operated Chinnock as a nine bed hospital and had an operating theatre built on the southern side of the building. When she acquired Idaleigh Sister Hill moved Chinnock into the Idaleigh premises and operated a 14 bed maternity hospital there. Sister Hill sold Chinnock to Sister Coomby in 1946 and the hospital closed in 1952. Following its closure as a hospital the building was converted into flats.[150]

Philosophies of scientific parenting lead in the 20th century to an increasing amount of government involvement in teaching mothering skills and monitoring the health of babies. During the mid 20th century numerous baby health centres were established across New South Wales. In smaller communities these were often combined with other facilities, including CWA halls (refer to **Section 9.1 Birth and Death**).

Gilgandra has been served by a public hospital since 1916. On 25 October 1912 a meeting of subscribers was held to establish a hospital committee and appoint trustees. The first trustees of the hospital were A.W. Miller, A.F. Garling, H. Gibson,

[146] Bartley, B., 2005. *Gilgandra – Oldtown – Newtown*. pp.42-43
[147] Bartley, B., 2005. *Gilgandra – Oldtown – Newtown*. pp.44-45
[148] Bartley, B., 2005. *Gilgandra – Oldtown – Newtown*. p.44
[149] Bartley, B., 2005. *Gilgandra – Oldtown – Newtown*. p.45
[150] Bartley, B., 2005. *Gilgandra – Oldtown – Newtown*. pp.46-47

J. Skelton and Dr. Quinn. Plans for a hospital were received from the government architect in August 1913 and a grant of £1,250 made available in September that year. R.J. Nelson and Sons of Gilgandra commenced construction commenced in October 1913. It was opened on 16 August 1916. A new hospital was constructed in 1955. This has subsequently been replaced by a Multipurpose Centre.[151]

Moves were begun in the early 1940s to establish an ambulance service in Gilgandra. In January 1941 it was proposed to Council that 'if everyone on Gilgandra donated the sum of ten shillings per annum, the town could obtain a complete and efficient Ambulance Service.[152]

Following active representations by Mr Jack Morris of Gilgandra a public meeting was held in the Western Monarch Theatre in November 1943 to elect a committee for the establishment of an ambulance service[153]. In the same month Gilgandra Shire Council voted to donate £50 towards this project[154].

The Committee met with representatives of the Dubbo Ambulance Committee in December 1943 to discuss the possibility of a sub-station of Dubbo being formed in Gilgandra[155]. The Gilgandra District Ambulance Service was officially opened on 10 June 1944 with Sid Croxon as officer in charge. The service originally operated from the former Union Bank building in Miller Street, Gilgandra. This building was leased for £3 per week.[156]

In late 1949 a large house in Morris Street was purchased for £3,500 and converted into an ambulance station. This building was seriously affected by the 1955 flood and a voluntary committee was established to erect a new ambulance station on the site.[157] Gilgandra District Ambulance Service was amalgamated into the Orana Region on 1 September 1975[158].

3.10 NSW Historical Theme: Industry

The Gilgandra district has hosted a number of industries which were directly linked to the pastoral and agricultural pursuits of the district. Principal amongst these was the Castlereagh Flour Mill.

Many flour mills in New South Wales were driven out of business by supplies of cheaper South Australian milled flour from the 1880s onwards. The expansion of the railway network tended to facilitate the movement of cheaper imports into many areas of the colony. In many cases this tended to drive local industrial undertakings into bankruptcy and caused a restructuring of local economies. The relatively late arrival of the railway into the Gilgandra Shire created an opportunity for the creation of a modern flourmill in Gilgandra.

Construction of the Castlereagh Flour Mill was commenced adjacent to the newly constructed Gilgandra to Coonamble railway line in 1909. The mill was purpose designed by milling engineers Henry Simon Ltd to incorporate the Henry Simon

[151] Bartley, B., 2005. *Gilgandra – Oldtown – Newtown*. p.60-63
[152] Curran, J., 1991. *Gilgandra Shire Council*. p.41
[153] Bartley, B., 2005. *Gilgandra – Oldtown – Newtown*. p.55
[154] Curran, J., 1991. *Gilgandra Shire Council*. p.45
[155] Bartley, B., 2005. *Gilgandra – Oldtown – Newtown*. pp.56-57
[156] Bartley, B., 2005. *Gilgandra – Oldtown – Newtown*. p.55
[157] Bartley, B., 2005. *Gilgandra – Oldtown – Newtown*. p.56
[158] Bartley, B., 2005. *Gilgandra – Oldtown – Newtown*. p.57

milling system and was possibly constructed by Mr Dunkley of Wellington. Henry Simon patented a modern steel roller flour milling process in 1880[159]. The Castlereagh Flour Mill and Wellington Flour Mill were operated by Murdoch McLeod Pty Ltd in partnership with Gillespie Bros. & Co[160]. The Gilgandra mill was designed to mill the district's Premium (Prime Hard) wheat grades for blending with other wheat varieties for export.[161] It operated as a subsidiary of the Wellington Flour Mill[162].

The mill building was a small two-storey brick structure with a skillion roof and a single storey skillion-roofed structure clad in corrugated iron. When constructed the mill's boiler was located in a corrugated iron clad annex on the southern end of the mill and was vented by a tall steel stack. This annex and stack were later replaced by structures built in brick. A separate weatherboard clad office was constructed to the east of the mill and storage sheds along the railway alignment.[163]

Extensions and modifications to the mill during its operational life included the re-construction of the boiler house in brick and the erection of a canopy over the railway loading dock. Nine 60 ton silos were constructed from Cypress and Oregon timbers in 1952 and 1953. Grain from these silos was fed to the milling area by augers. 'In 1965 four steel silos were constructed using a very heavy gauge steel from World War Two fuel tanks transported to Gilgandra from the Pacific Islands'.[164] The mill also had large, wooden-framed wheat sheds capable of holding 80,000 bags of wheat[165].

From its opening in 1910 until the 1950s the mill was powered by a Tangye horizontal steam engine. Steam for this engine was provided by a wood burning Cornish boiler.[166] An electric motor was relocated from the Narromine Flour Mill after that mill's closure. This initially replaced the steam engine and boiler but burnt out after several months' operation, necessitating the return of the boiler and steam engine to service. The mill was finally electrified in 1959.[167]

The Castlereagh Flour Mill closed in November 1974[168]. The mill's buildings and silos subsequently hosted a produce business until they were destroyed by fire in 1997. When recorded in 2008 the mill site contained the fire damaged former office building, footings of the brick mill building, the brick smokestack and 1965 steel silos.

Rabbit freezing works were established across New South Wales in the early to mid 20th century to process the carcasses of rabbits that had proliferated across the landscape since the 1890s. In 1925 George Kilgour established a freezing works in Tooraweenah[169]. This rapidly became the largest business in the village. At peak production the freezing works was receiving between six and nine thousand rabbit carcasses per day.[170]

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[159] Mudford, C. & J.,1989. *'Clocking On' with Murdoch McLeod and the Castlereagh Flour Mill*. p.27
[160] Offner, R., 1975. The Flour Mill – Gilgandra.
[161] Mudford, C. & J.,1989. *'Clocking On' with Murdoch McLeod and the Castlereagh Flour Mill*. p.27
[162] Mudford, C. & J.,1989. *'Clocking On' with Murdoch McLeod and the Castlereagh Flour Mill*. p.29
[163] Mudford, C. & J.,1989. *'Clocking On' with Murdoch McLeod and the Castlereagh Flour Mill*. p.27
[164] Mudford, C. & J.,1989. *'Clocking On' with Murdoch McLeod and the Castlereagh Flour Mill*. p.27
[165] Mudford, C. & J.,1989. *'Clocking On' with Murdoch McLeod and the Castlereagh Flour Mill*. p.28
[166] Mudford, C. & J.,1989. *'Clocking On' with Murdoch McLeod and the Castlereagh Flour Mill*. p.30
[167] Mudford, C. & J.,1989. *'Clocking On' with Murdoch McLeod and the Castlereagh Flour Mill*. p.31
[168] Mudford, C. & J.,1989. *'Clocking On' with Murdoch McLeod and the Castlereagh Flour Mill*. p.46
[169] Willott, G., 1984. *A Hundred Years of Education in Tooraweenah 1884-1984*. p.23
[170] Willott, G., 1984. *A Hundred Years of Education in Tooraweenah 1884-1984*. p.32

Brick kilns were established in an area between Eura and Milda Streets in the early 1890s. It appears that these kilns manufactured substandard bricks and were abandoned. Sam Townsend subsequently established brick kilns on the site of the current Presbyterian Church and a clay pit opened on this site.[171] Kilns were also established on the southern side of Deep Creek near Eringanerin.

Other industries of the district have included various timber mills located around the district. The story of these undertakings is covered in **Section 3.8 Forestry**.

3.11 NSW Historical Theme: Mining

Aboriginal people were engaged in mining for centuries before the European occupation of Australia. Minerals were extracted to make stone tools and in some places ochres and clays were also mined. Minerals commonly used for toolmaking were quartz, silcrete, flint, obsidian, chalcedony and quartzite[172]. Many of these minerals were traded long distances. The presence of silcrete deposits in the Warrumbungle Ranges was noted by geologist G. H Dury in his 1969 study of volcanic crusts[173]. Given the geology of the region it is anticipated that mining of siliceous materials would have occurred in a number of places. The Gilgandra area has experienced very little mining activity since European settlement.

3.12 NSW Historical Theme: Pastoralism

The 1820s and 1830s in New South Wales were characterised by a push for new grazing lands beyond the Limit of Location established by Governor Darling. This was largely driven by growth in the colonial economy and increasing trade with Britain. The discovery of easy passes over the Liverpool ranges opened paths for squatters to move mobs of cattle and sheep into the rich Liverpool Plans. As these groups were moving out of the Hunter Valley others were moving livestock northwest from the Lithgow and Bathurst regions to establish runs along the Castlereagh.

Andrew Brown of *Cooerwull*, Bowenfels (at the western end of the Lithgow valley) is credited to be the first European to squat on the Castlereagh River. Brown spent the years around 1830 scouting runs for himself and his employer, James Walker of *Wallerawong*. Around the same time squatters such as the Cox brothers, Rouse brothers and representatives of William Lawson's extended family were moving into the region from the east and south[174].

Brown and Walker's sheep were driven to their properties at Bowenfels and Wallerawang for shearing each year. It was easier in those times to move living animals than dead loads of wool. When Charles Darwin visited Walker's *Wallerawong* in 1836 he noted that:

> *The sheep were some 15,000 in number, of which the greater part were feeding under the care of different shepherds, on unoccupied ground, at the distance of more than a hundred miles, and beyond the limits of the colony.*[175]

From 1833 early settlers in the Liverpool Plains region were pushed further north and westward after appropriation of substantial landholdings by the government supported

[171] Bartley, B., 2005. *Gilgandra Early Commercial Records*. p.53
[172] Mulvaney, J. & Kamminga, J., 1999. *Prehistory of Australia*, pp.213-214
[173] Langford-Smith, T., 1978. *Silcrete in Australia*, p.9
[174] Rolls, E., 1982. *A Million Wild Acres*. p.83
[175] Darwin, C., A Journey to Bathurst in January, 1836. p.42

Australian Agricultural Company[176]. During this period squatters were displaced and herds moved through newly discovered country in a game that Rolls described as having:

> *... rules more complicated than chess. And it was a rough game that extended outside the law of the land and often outside any moral laws. But few men stayed on the board for long. Flood, drought, depression, land laws kept bumping the board and many slid off.*[177]

The general pattern of these early incursions into the region appears to have involved the identification of suitable pastures and the movement of cattle or sheep into the areas identified. Convict labourers, indentured servants or employees were left in small groups in isolated situations to tend the herds and flocks. By all accounts they generally lived in miserable circumstances deprived of decent food and in constant fear of attacks by Gamilaraay or Wiradjuri groups, or bushrangers who had moved beyond the reach of the law. During the 1830s cattle driven out from Mendooran were being depastured along the Castlereagh River[178].

Governor Brisbane's mounted police kept some order, although often squatters and their servants took the law into their own hands. A few punitive military expeditions had been mounted on the fringes of the region to establish the rule of British law. These had included Morisset's expedition against the Wiradjuri around Mudgee and the upper Macquarie in 1824 and Nunn's 1836 military expedition to the Gwydir and Namoi[179]. Policing of the frontier was taken over in the 1830s by the feared and hated Border Police. (Refer to **Section 2.1 Aboriginal cultures and interactions with other cultures**)

In 1836 Governor Bourke established regulations, which legalised squatting beyond the limits of the Nineteen Counties[180]. The ensuing period, which coincided with the height of the economic boom of the 1830s, saw the consolidation of many landholdings around the Castlereagh.

Records indicate that John Jude and John Hall

> *... were the first people to hold licences to depasture stock on the Castlereagh River down stream from Mendooran. They lodged their application for a licence on 31st December 1836 with the description "Carlingangong North Western beyond Wellington Valley". By 30th September 1839 John Jude acquired a licence for the adjoining area called Armatree.*[181]

Andrew Brown extended his and James Walker's holdings, establishing properties between the Warrumbungles and the site of Mendooran. These were *Briambil* and *Cuigan*. From 1834, with the assistance of James Walker's nephew David Archer, and the guidance of the local Aboriginal people, Andrew Brown explored around and beyond the Warrumbungles, establishing stations on the watering points of *Yarragrin*, *Gundy*, *Bidden*, *Mogie Melon*, *Wallumburawang*, *Tooraweenah* and *Nullen*.[182]

[176] Rolls, E., 1982. *A Million Wild Acres*. pp.100-101
[177] Rolls, E. 1982. *A Million Wild Acres*. p.65
[178] Dormer, M., 1983. *The Bushman's Arms*. p.15
[179] Connor, J., 2002. *The Australian Frontier Wars 1788-1838*. pp. 59-61, 102-112
[180] Morrisey, S. 1978, 'The Pastoral Economy 1821-1850'. p.59
[181] Gulargambone Historical Society Book Committee, 1992. *Gulargambone Homes & Holdings*. p.77
[182] Rolls, E., 1982. *A Million Wild Acres*. pp.116-119

> *By 1836/37 licences were issued for stations along the river in the vicinity of the present day Gilgandra, Curban, Armatree and Gulargambone. Richard Rouse at Mundooran, Thomas Perrie at Breelong, James Bennett at Bearbong and Curban, Lowes at Carlganda and Yalcogreen, John Hall at Calingoingong and John Jude at Armatree*.[183]

By 1847 Andrew Brown held seven runs of 16,000 acres each. *Caigan*, near Mendooran, appears to have operated as the head station with stores being distributed and staff allocated from this point. Brown's runs to the west of the Warrumbungle Range were *Tondeburine*, *Mogie Melon*, *Illumurgalia* and *Beery*. His developments made a lasting impression on the development of the district south and east of Gulargambone.[184]

Alexander McGregor moved into the Gulargambone district in 1842. His daughter Ann married John Jones, a former convict who had apparently been assigned to McGregor. 'Ann and John's first home was at *Gunningbong*, later called *Bullagreen*. John and Ann Jones raised five sons. The family selected a number of runs and eventually controlled 'large tracts of country between Collie and Armatree'.[185]

In 1848 Thomas Spicer took up the *Carlgandra* run and John Merritt held *Eringanerin* on the eastern side of the Castlereagh River. *Castlereagh* (later *Boberah*), *Bongeabong* (*Bungy*) and *Marthaguy* were located on the western side.[186]

The economic downturn of the early 1840s impacted hard on pastoral runs at the fringes of settlement. Many squatters suffered severe losses and the pastoral industry was generally saved by the wholesale slaughter and boiling down of livestock. Their reduced fats were sold to Britain at a higher value than that of the animals' meat, hides or fleeces.

Increases in the price of wool in the late 1840s led to changes in land use and an increasing rise to dominance by sheep farming in the west of New South Wales. The fortunes of pastoralists were given an additional boost by the gold rushes of the early 1850s, which created an increase in demand for meat, and the American Civil War (1860-1864), which increased the English textile mills demand for wool. The gold rushes also led to shortages of labour on pastoral runs.

The implementation of legislation creating closer settlement in the late 19th century (refer to **Section 4.2 Land Tenure**) increased the number of people living on the land around Gilgandra. Despite this development much of the region around Gilgandra continued to be characterised by large cattle and sheep runs. Droughts, floods and adverse market conditions combined to drive many smaller and more marginal property holders off the land.

When John Jude died in 1866 he left *Armatree*, *New Armatree* and *Willancorah* to his son Page Otto Jude. 'Page Jude had already acquired *Illumurgalia West* and *Illumurgalia East* from Andrew brown in 1864'. Alexander McGregor had taken up

[183] Dormer, M., 1983. *The Bushman's Arms*. p.15
[184] Gulargambone Historical Society Book Committee, 1992. *Gulargambone Homes & Holdings*. p.26
[185] Gulargambone Historical Society Book Committee, 1992. *Gulargambone Homes & Holdings*. p.26
[186] Dormer, M., 1983. *The Bushman's Arms*. p.15

Merrigal on the western side of the Castlereagh in 1845. His grandsons 'held large tracts of land from Armatree to Collie'.[187]

Andrew Brown passed control of his massive runs over to his two sons, William and John, in 1880. William was killed on *Tondeburine* in 1882 and John took sole control of the properties. John and his wife Caroline Bradley had ten children, including six sons who lived to adulthood. A number of the Castlereagh runs were divided among these sons.

> *Francis Henry …, took over Caigan, John Lawrence (the Younger) – Dooroombah, Charles Henderson – Bergowen near Mendooran, George Leonard – Weenya, William Douglas – Rosewood, and Allan Houghton – Warrien. John Lawrence (the elder) carried on Tondeburine although living most of the time at … Methven at Bowenfels.*[188]

A 26 stand woolshed with Wolseley shearing machines was constructed on *Tondeburine* in the early 1900s. At that time the property of 40,000 acres was running 16,000 sheep. Selectors had taken up much of Brown's original 160,000 acres of Crown Land.[189]

Tensions between the growing number of landholders can be characterised in the mysterious destruction of a large dam constructed by John Brown on Baronne Creek. Not long after it was built (refer to **Section 2.3 Ethnic Influences**) the dam was breached by an explosion. Prior to the construction of the dam 'the creek had provided permanent water to small landholders downstream'.[190]

During the 19th century a network of travelling stock routes was established to facilitate the movement of stock around the colony. In many places stock routes traversed pastoral holdings. As stock was moved along these routes landholders had to be warned 24 hours in advance that stock would cross their boundaries.

> *This notice had to be given by hand, so that he could have time to shift his stock off the route and avoid getting them mixed up with the travelling mob. This was known as 'boxing up.' If this happened, the stock would have to be taken to the nearest yards and drafted out, and this might take several days. If the fault was with the drover he would have to pay the cost of drafting…*[191]

The last two decades of the 19th century saw the movement of settlers into country that had been ignored by the earlier pastoralists. Eventually farmers from Victoria, South Australia and southern New South Wales bought blocks of previously unimproved land 'very cheap'.

The fortunes of most post World War II soldier settlers in the region were supported by the wool boom of the 1950s. Demand for wool, partly created by the Korean War, encouraged wool agents to advance credit for purchase of much needed equipment to these settlers who were in many cases 'as free of money as a frog is of feathers' and lacking security to arrange bank loans.[192]

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[187] Gulargambone Historical Society Book Committee, 1992. *Gulargambone Homes & Holdings*. p.77
[188] Gulargambone Historical Society Book Committee, 1992. *Gulargambone Homes & Holdings*. p.26
[189] Gulargambone Historical Society Book Committee, 1992. *Gulargambone Homes & Holdings*. p.27
[190] Gulargambone Historical Society Book Committee, 1992. *Gulargambone Homes & Holdings*. p.27
[191] Tritton, H.P. (Duke). 1964. *Time Means Tucker*. p.26
[192] Shumack, E., 1999. *Going Bush to Goolhi*. P.10

The 20th century saw substantial changes in land management practices and pastoralism. The wool boom of the 1950s saw substantial investment in many rural properties with homesteads and woolsheds being modernised, modified or replaced. Closer settlement reduced the viability of many of the larger homestead and woolshed complexes.[193] The wool crisis of the 1970s and subsequent problems in the wool industry led to the abandonment of wool growing on many properties and a re-emergence of cattle raising as the principal pastoral industry of the region. Many woolsheds have not seen shearing since the 1970s.

The farming of sheep and cattle continue to be major contributors to the economy of the region. Many stations contain the infrastructure of a pastoral industry that has developed over a period of 180 years. These include *Bearbong*, *Berida*, *Biddon* and *Dooroombah*.

Dooroombah is located on land originally used by Andrew Brown of Cooerwull to depasture stock. Henry Denison Reid purchased 320 acres on 5 September 1863 and named his property Dooroombah. By 1876 the holding had been increased to 1,018 acres. In that year Andrew Brown began purchasing portions of the property. Andrew Brown's grandson John Lawrence Brown married Helen Douglas Mackenzie in 1898 and the couple moved to Dooroombah in 1900. The couple lived in a substantial board and batten cottage while the current homestead was constructed. The main homestead was completed in 1904.[194]

In 1907 the property was 11,773 acres . R.D. Cruickshank purchased 2,560 acres in 1909. John and Helen Brown stayed at Dooroombah until 1914. In 1918 A.W. McDonald purchased 6,000 acres, including the homestead. He held this until 1924 when it was sold to the Thompson Brothers who also owned Bedford Park. Henry Denison Reid was paying rates on the property in 1924, possibly as mortgagee. The property was sold to James Gordon Leeds in 1930. In 1934 Leeds sold it to John Connell. Connell retained Dooroombah until 1946 when it was purchased by Norman Webb. Dooroombah is currently owned by Peter and Louise Webb.[195]

Weenya homestead was constructed in 1912 for George Leonard Brown and his wife Linda May Gardiner. The couple had been married in 1911 and lived in an old cottage on the property while their new home was built. Timber for the construction was milled on the property. The property appears to have been created from 6,3000 acres purchased from the *Fernside* and *Mt Tenandra* runs between 1908 and 1910. It was originally named *Wirroona*. The name *Weenya* appeared in 1911 after the property was increased to 8,500 acres with a wedding gift of land from *Tondeburine*.[196]

The property, now 5,500 acres, was sold to M.R. McLean in 1919. 'In 1922 Weenya Pty Ltd was trading with R.B. Sanderson of 122 William Street, Melbourne, as Principal and probably in partnership with his brother-in-law, Len Brown, who paid the P.P. (Pastures Protection) Board rates in 1924. Ostriches were bred on *Weenya*

[193] Sowden, H., 1972. *Australian Woolsheds*. p.29
[194] Gulargambone Historical Society Book Committee, 1992, *Gulargambone Homes & Homesteads*. p.30
[195] Gulargambone Historical Society Book Committee, 1992, *Gulargambone Homes & Homesteads*. p.30
[196] Gulargambone Historical Society Book Committee, 1992, *Gulargambone Homes & Homesteads*. p.31

from 1920 and farmed for their plumes. This ceased after the fashion for ostrich feathers waned and the market for plumes collapsed.[197]
Emanuel James Gordon of Manly purchased *Weenya* in 1927. He appears to have leased the property out and sold it in 1932 to Thomas Brett of Woollahra. William Lambell bought the property in 1942 and raised a family there with his wife Eva. Their son Bill moved into the homestead with his wife Margery (Skinner) in 1961.[198]

Berida Station was first settled in the 1840s and was named *Berida* in 1862. At its peak, under the ownership of Edward Flood, the station was 160,000 acres comprising freehold and leasehold land.[199] Born the illegitimate son of an Irish convict in 1805 Edward Flood made a fortune as a building contractor in Sydney by the 1840s. An entrepreneurial businessman he began investing in pastoral runs in 1841 when he purchased Narrandera Station. By 1851 he had runs in the Clarence River District, 650,000 acres on the Lower Darling and runs in the Lachlan region. He sold most of his Riverina runs by 1866 and invested in other areas. In 1871 he held 31 runs in New South Wales and, in partnership with others, 18 runs in Queensland. Flood sold 'a large amount of property in 1875-1876. A long-time resident of Sydney and member of the New South Wales Parliament and successful company director Flood died in 1888 with an estate worth £428,000.[200]

It is believed that Edward Flood purchased *Berida* in 1862 and that at least two of his eight children were born there. Berida Flood was apparently born in the homestead in 1865. The original section of he homestead was possibly constructed between 1862 and 1865. It has been extended a number of times by various property owners. A billiard room, hallway and office were added in 1891 and a fridge room in 1935. A new wing, including office and accommodation were added to the homestead in 1941.[201]

[197] Gulargambone Historical Society Book Committee, 1992, *Gulargambone Homes & Homesteads*. p.31
[198] Gulargambone Historical Society Book Committee, 1992, *Gulargambone Homes & Homesteads*. p.32
[199] McCutcheon, 1999. Berida Woolshed Centenary 1899-1999.
[200] Rathbone: Flood, Edward (1805-1888). [Online]
[201] McCutcheon, 1999. Berida Woolshed Centenary 1899-1999.

Plate 3.2: Berida Woolshed. Built in 1899 this is one of the last great woolsheds in the district.

During the 1870s and 1880s the leasehold sections of the property were subdivided for selection and by 1884 the station had been reduced to 80,000 acres. In 1891 Berida's 60,000 sheep, 100 cattle and 104 horses were sold to the Berida Pastoral Company of Melbourne. Additional portions of the property were opened to selection in the 1890s and by 1949 when it was acquired for soldier settlement it was 40,000 acres.[202]

The original Berida Woolshed was a blade shed with 27 stands. In 1899 this shed was demolished and its materials re-used to construct a new 20 stand machine shed. The first shearing in this shed was in 1900. In 1934 the shed was converted to 14 stands. The original steam engine was replaced in 1910 by a Brown May engine. The annual shearing of 40,000 sheep took six weeks in good weather. In a good season up to 1,000 bales of wool were shorn. For many years this wool was purchased by woollen mills in the north of England and Scotland.[203]

John Whitehead notes that, after European settlement of the region, 'there was a continuous movement of stock by the local squatters and their shepherds in, out and through the (Warrumbungle) mountains' seeking the lush grasses that grew on the volcanic slopes and valleys of the range[204]. Fertile valleys adjacent to the range were also heavily grazed and farmed, and continue to provide rich environments for pastoral pursuits. Early pastoral runs within the mountains have been identified by John Whitehead as:

- *Caleriwi* was located on the northern side of Wambelong Creek. It was originally squatted on by Andrew Brown of Bowenfels[205] and taken up as leasehold by Robert Dawson in the 1840s[206]. Dawson ran only cattle on

[202] McCutcheon, 1999. Berida Woolshed Centenary 1899-1999.
[203] McCutcheon, 1999. Berida Woolshed Centenary 1899-1999.
[204] Whitehead, J., 2008. *The Warrumbungles*. p.192
[205] Whitehead, J., 2008. *The Warrumbungles*. p.192
[206] Pickette, J. & Campbell, M., 1983. *Coonabarabran as it was in the beginning*. p.34

Caleriwi[207]. When Dawson failed in the 1840s depression the run was transferred to Charles Bury along with *Walla Walla*, *Tenandra* and *Parmidman*. Allocated to Alfred Knight after World War I as a soldier settlement block. This run was later taken over by Keith Blackman.[208]

- *Tannabar*, located south of Mount Caraghnan and Belougery Gap, was leased by John and Louisa Knight in the 1850s in partnership with Henry Ball Lakeman[209]. The run was purchased by John Knight Junior in 1907[210].
- *Tonderburn*, located south of Wambelong Trig.

The Pincham family of Baradine and the Pilliga are descendents of James and Sarah Pincham who married in 1886. They had five children, Minnie, May, Alfred, Bruce, Roy and Coral, prior to James' death in 1896. James and his brother Bill operated a sawmill in Coonabarabran prior to 1896 and by 1909 Sarah had obtained a controlling interest in this mill. After this the operation was moved to Baradine.[211]

Through the successful operation and expansion of this business, and diversification into other commercial enterprises the Pincham family became reasonably prosperous. The family established additional sawmills at Milliwindi[212] and later at Bugaldie[213]. They purchased two pastoral properties, 'one about fifty miles north west of Coonamble, the other in the Warrumbungle Mountains.' Alf ran the latter property while Bruce took care of the mills.'[214]

According to Boyd Blackman of Gilgandra the woolshed currently known as Pincham Woolshed was originally constructed by Aught Knight who owned the *Strathmore* run in the 1920s and 1930s. Alf Pincham purchased *Strathmore* from Aught some time around 1936. There was originally a house near the creek not far west of the woolshed.[215] Brands of corrugated galvanised iron used in the shed indicate that it was possibly built after 1932.

As built the shed was quite small, originally comprising only the area under the gable roof and the current expert's room board. Its three stands were fitted with Lister ratchet shearing gear with an overhead drive. The woolshed had a very limited work area and the small wool room made difficult to bale and handle the wool clip. There was evidently only enough space in the original shed for 12 bales of wool. Immediately after World War II, possibly in 1946, the shed was extended to provide a larger wool room and storage area. Timber for the extension was cut on the hill above the shed and sent to Baradine to be milled. New yards were also constructed using timber posts and surplus landing mesh sheets. Shearing ceased in the Strathmore woolshed during the 1950s when all shearing was moved to the larger and better-equipped shed on *Belougery*.[216]

The stories of many other pastoral properties are included in **Section 4.2 Land Tenure.**

[207] Pickette, J. & Campbell, M., 1983. *Coonabarabran as it was in the beginning*. p.21
[208] Whitehead, J., 2008. *The Warrumbungles*. p.192
[209] Pickette, J. & Campbell, M., 1983. *Coonabarabran as it was in the beginning*. p.77
[210] Pickette, J. & Campbell, M., 1983. *Coonabarabran as it was in the beginning*. p.78
[211] Hadfield, J., 2007. *The Best of Times*. p.34
[212] Hadfield, J., 2007. *The Best of Times*. p.35
[213] Hadfield, J., 2007. *The Best of Times*. p.36
[214] Hadfield, J., 2007. *The Best of Times*. p.36
[215] Information provided by Boyd Blackman. 1 April 2008.
[216] Information provided by Boyd Blackman. 1 April 2008.

3.13 NSW Historical Theme: Science &
3.14 NSW Historical Theme: Technology

The application of technology and its impact on the cultural landscape is illustrated throughout this thematic history. Examples include the implementation of machine shearing in the pastoral industry (refer to **Section 5.1 Labour**), improvements in transport technology (refer to **Section 3,15 Transport**), advancements in agriculture (refer to **Section 3.1 Agriculture**), and developments in the provision of utilities to the towns and countryside of the shire (refer to **Section 4.4 Utilities**).

Inventiveness and curiosity are often characteristics of those who succeed on the land and the story of Gilgandra Shire includes a number of stories of people who have experimented with technology and succeeded in making practical machines. In 1934 15 year old Kel Anderson of Loch Levan began to construct his own gas producer to allow vehicles to be run on charcoal. His first rig was cobbled together with 'bits and pieces of old cars' and 'a one hundred pound grease drum'. By 1939 he had developed a practical gas producer and with Jock Lawrence he patented the 'Ajax' gas producer. They established a manufacturing facility in Parkes, manufacturing 80 gas producers in 1940. Unfortunately the company was forced into liquidation in 1941 'because of management problems'.[217]

Following a series of experiments on his father's property *Mountain View* near Biddon Cliff Howard (refer to **Section 9.2 Persons**) made the principle of rotavation a practical reality and in doing so established a multi-national business empire. According to Howard he watched his father's steam tractor, purchased in 1910, carrying out work around the farm and 'realised how much of the power of the engine was being wasted by pressing the ground solid enough to take the strain of pulling the plough'. He began to consider the possibility of creating a rotary plough that could till the soil without wasting tractive energy. He was undertaking an apprenticeship at an engineering firm in Moss Vale and studying engineering by correspondence. During his brief holiday breaks on the farm from 1912 he began testing various configurations of rotary tillers that could be powered by the farm's tractor. He fabricated a drive from the tractor using the transmission gear, chain sprockets and cogs from a derelict reaper and binder 'and many odd bits and pieces borrowed from various equipment around the farm'. [218]

Howard's first experiments were uninspiring with his rotary cultivator throwing soil sideways and making the worked ground uneven. The rig was successful in removing mallee roots. Returning to Moss Vale he built a hand driven test rig and began experimenting with various configurations of rotary cultivators. He eventually developed an 'L' shaped blade 'sloping back throughout its length to throw off weeds etc. He was assisted in his experiments by Everard McCleary and the pair resolved to start a company to manufacture rotary hoe cultivators. Their first machine, powered by a motorcycle engine, was too small to be of interest to large-scale agricultural producers. To meet the potential needs of broad acre farmers Howard developed a larger machine:

> *... that would cultivate the land fast enough to match .. big horse teams, having a seed drill incorporated so that seed sowing was carried out at the same time, and the chassis of the machine so constructed that the rotary hoe*

[217] Mudford, J&C., 1988. *Breelong and Her Neighbours*. p.251
[218] Gilgandra Historical Society, Undated. A.C. 'Cliff' Howard Inventor of the Howard Rotary Hoe.

could be easily detached and a combined reaper and thrasher mounted in its place to harvest the crop.[219]

The machine was almost ready for production when war broke out in 1914. Everard McLeary joined the Royal Australian Air Force and was killed in action in France in 1918. Howard, rendered unfit for enlistment by a motorcycle accident, travelled to England where he worked on munitions and aero engines.[220]

Plate 3.3: A 1932 model Howard rotary hoe on display at the Gilgandra Rural Museum.

After the war he tried to interest British agricultural firms in his invention but was unable to find serious investors. He returned to Australia where he built a practical rotary hoe on the frame of his father's old Buffalo Pitts steam tractor.[221] He patented his rotary hoe cultivator in 1920[222].

3.15 NSW Historical Theme: Transport

The earliest transport in the region was on foot. The Aboriginal people moved about this way, as did the early shepherds who moved at the same pace as the sheep they cared for. European settlers brought the horse and bullock drays or horse drawn wagons for heavy transport. As settlement developed in the area bullock and horse tracks developed. Some of these were later improved to become roads for heavier vehicles.

Early road routes tended to follow the lines of creeks and rivers, and the easier passes over ridgelines. The area covered by the Gilgandra Shire was traversed by a number of tracks. One of the main connections to the outside world followed the Castlereagh River from Mendooran. This was one route followed by wool drays on their way to the coast. It passed through Eringanerin and traversed the eastern side of the river to Coonamble. On the eastern side of the Castlereagh near the present town of Gilgandra this track met a track that crossed the river and led to Colli. This met another track from Dubbo through Balladoran.

[219] Gilgandra Historical Society, Undated. A.C. 'Cliff' Howard Inventor of the Howard Rotary Hoe.
[220] Gilgandra Historical Society, Undated. A.C. 'Cliff' Howard Inventor of the Howard Rotary Hoe.
[221] Gilgandra Historical Society, Undated. A.C. 'Cliff' Howard Inventor of the Howard Rotary Hoe.
[222] Howard, Arthur Clifford (1893-1971), [Online]

By 1884 traffic on these early roads had increased sufficiently to warrant the construction of a road bridge across the Castlereagh River at Gilgandra. The opening of this timber through truss bridge was celebrated with a dinner and dance held on a specially prepared section of the bridge deck.[223] This bridge did much to encourage the development of a town on the western side of the river.

In his memoir, *Time Means Tucker*, Duke Tritton, renowned swaggie, shearer and bush balladist, described the work of the bullocky. He noted two Gilgandra region bullockies who were working in the early 20th century. Ned Inglis of Baradine, aged almost 70 in 1905, had been driving bullocks all of his adult life. Before the railway was constructed over the Blue Mountains in the 1860s he had carted 'wool from Tondeburine to Circular Quay. His father had two teams and Ned at fifteen was driving one'[224]. While fencing the boundary between Gumin and Goorianawa Tritton met Billy Harlow, 'a professor in the art of bullock driving'[225]. He described how Harlow cared for his bullocks and how he drove his teams.

> *He never used a whip though he had one tied under the dray, and seldom spoke to his team above a normal voice. If he got into a tight place he would say in a reproving manner, "Well, what a useless lot of cows a man's stuck with," straighten them up and say, "Now then, you blanky blankards, show us what you can do." And I never saw them let him down.*[226]

Tritton noted that 'poor, patient bullocks … played a mighty part in making Australia a good place to live in'[227]. Bullock teams handled bulk transportation around the country well into the 20th century.

Tritton, who spent years on the roads in the early 20th century, also recounted a journey between shearings at two woolsheds by a group of shearers:

> *Dave had a sulky and Jack a bicycle and both had pens at Guntawang. ... So we put all the swags in the sulky and I rode with Dave. Jack rode the bike a few miles then leaned it against a tree and started walking. Dutchy ran behind the sulky till he came to the bike. Then he mounted it and rode past Jack. When he caught him up he got in the sulky and I ran behind, till we came to the bike. Then Jack took over and the performance was repeated. This method of travelling was used a lot in the bush. Two men with one bike could do fifty miles a day without much trouble.*[228]

As late as the 1870s the roads of the district were still being referred to as 'bush tracks'. A programme of government road building resulted in improvements in the condition of roads and the creation of new road routes. The road gangs employed to construct and maintain these roads helped to expand the population of the district.[229]

On the black soil plains coaching roads became almost impassable in wet weather. In some places sections of corduroy road were laid to provide an all-weather surface. Corduroy involved the placement of small cut logs or saplings side-by-side across the

[223] Jackson, P. 2005. *The Life and Times of Hannah Morris*. p.44
[224] Tritton, H.P. (Duke). 1964. *Time Means Tucker*. p.68
[225] Tritton, H.P. (Duke). 1964. *Time Means Tucker*. p.55
[226] Tritton, H.P. (Duke). 1964. *Time Means Tucker*. p.55
[227] Tritton, H.P. (Duke). 1964. *Time Means Tucker*. p.55
[228] Tritton, H.P. (Duke). 1964. *Time Means Tucker*. p.65
[229] Pickette, J. & Campbell, M. 1983. *Coonabarabran as it Was in the Beginning*. pp.115-116

direction of travel to provide a relatively stable, if rather bumpy, surface for the mail coaches. A section of corduroy road with an associated milepost and gateway survives on the Back Coonamble Road between Curban and Gulargambone. This was evidently built by Charles Law, owner of the nearby Wattle Park selection from 1895[230].

As Cobb & Co expanded their coaching routes across New South Wales the company obtained a growing number of mail contracts. Between 1874 and 1880 they established twice-weekly mail services linking Gilgandra to Dubbo and a service from Gulgong to Gilgandra via Cobbora and Mendooran then on to Curban, Gulargambone and Coonamble.[231] This service was later expanded to three days per week. Well-known drivers were James Brown, Paddy Murray and William Walden.[232]

As railways snaked out across the colony from the 1850s onwards they both revolutionised and supplanted earlier transport options. Coaching lines modified routes and opened new routes to adjust to the development of new rail termini. Coach operators appear to have been keen to establish routes to railheads developed under the ambitious 1879 railway expansion program of the Parkes-Robertson government.[233]

The Western Railway reached Wellington in mid 1880 and by 1881 Cobb & Co had extended its coach services via Mendooran and Dubbo to the railway. A connecting service from Mendooran was also available to Mudgee.[234] Duke Tritton recorded a time around 1907 when he worked briefly as relief driver on the mail coach running between Gulargambone and Baradine.

> *The coach was one of the famous Cobb & Co. coaches. ... I picked up the mail at Gular at three in the afternoon and came back to Box Ridge, stayed the night, left for Baradine at eight, dropping mail at about twenty four roadside mail boxes, changed horses at Goorianawa, then on to Bugaldi (sic) and Baradine, reaching there around four. The trip was just seventy miles. I did a round trip twice a week and found it somewhat boring unless I had passengers to yarn away the time.*[235]

Cobb & Co services through Gilgandra to Coonamble ceased around 1898. Bill Rowley tendered a lower price that Cobb & Co for the mail service on this route and was granted the contract.

> *Mr Rowley quickly got into trouble schedule difficulties through having insufficient horses for the Dubbo to Coonamble run, and insufficient sheds and grooms for the 'change overs'. ... The contract was taken over by Mr Adam Nolan, who saw this contract to the end, and incidentally, the end of Cobb 7 Co. in Gilgandra.*[236]

[230] Gulargambone Historical Society Book Committee, 1992. *Gulargambone Homes & Holdings*. p.87
[231] Page, J. & Nicholls, H., *Cobb & Co. Story Education Resource Kit*. 2.4
[232] Back to Gilgandra Committee, 1937. *Back to Gilgandra*. p.15
[233] Lee, R., 1988. *The Greatest Public Work*. p.97
[234] Pickette, J. & Campbell, M., 1983. *Coonabarabran as it Was in the Beginning*. p.117
[235] Tritton, H.P. (Duke). 1964. *Time Means Tucker*. pp.96-97
[236] Smith, W.&S., 1964. *A Flashback to Gilgandra of the Past. James Collison Born Gilgandra 29th June 1870.*

A proposed railway line to Coonamble was included in the Government Railway Policy of 1886. In 1899 a Parliamentary Committee considered four possible routes for the railway. These were:

- Dubbo to Coonamble,
- Mudgee to Coonamble,
- Narromine to Coonamble,
- Warren to Coonamble.

The Dubbo to Coonamble route was the only proposed route to pass through Gilgandra. This route was eventually chosen as being most 'in the public interest, as well as in the interests of the districts most concerned'. The committee also decided that the route would pass through Gilgandra.[237]

Construction of the railway from Dubbo commenced in 1901 and the first passenger train ran from Dubbo to Coonamble on 29 July 1902. Goods operations commenced in August 1902.[238] As the railway opened up the district to broad scale agriculture roads were constructed to the new railheads to allow for the transport of crops and other commodities. The impact of the railway is illustrated by the increases in traffic that occurred between 1903 and 1936.[239]

Item carried	1903	1936
Passenger journeys	7,590	23,997
Goods - tonnage	19,469	62,167
Wool - bales	20,821	47,436

In his book Duke Tritton recalled what he had been told of the construction of the railway. He noted that the line from Dubbo to Coonamble was built by American contractor Whitely King.

> *He paid no wages, but each man received a slip of paper at the end of each day. This voucher entitled him to collect food and goods to the value of five shillings from a store nominated by Whitely King. All the goods were of the highest price and the lowest quality. When the job was ended, the men who had worked for as long as twelve months were in the same position as when they had started and Whitely King was the only one to show a profit.*[240]

William N. Zell of Glengarry near Tooraweenah had a large dray built by blacksmith and coach builder D.R. Winton of Gulargambone. The wheels of this dray were eight feet in diameter and had seven inch steel tyres. The dray hauled loads of up to 240 bags of wheat to loading places such as Armatree.[241] Concrete grain elevators constructed at Gilgandra in 1920, Curban in 1930 and Armatree in 1935[242] allowed the introduction of bulk grain transport.

Roads were continually improved during the 20th century with ongoing advances in road construction techniques and funding for road improvements. After its foundation in 1906 Gilgandra Shire Council was pre-occupied with improving the district's roads. The existing timber bridge over the Terrabile Creek at Curban was constructed

[237] Back to Gilgandra Committee, 1937. *Back to Gilgandra Souvenir Booklet*. p.44
[238] Back to Gilgandra Committee, 1937. *Back to Gilgandra Souvenir Booklet*. p.44
[239] Back to Gilgandra Committee, 1937. *Back to Gilgandra Souvenir Booklet*. pp.44-45
[240] Tritton, H.P. (Duke). 1964. *Time Means Tucker*. p.60
[241] Gulargambone Historical Society Book Committee, 1992. *Gulargambone Homes & Holdings*. p.53
[242] Ryan, K, 1990. 'Storing the Golden Grain.' pp.17-19

during the 1920s and utilised innovations in timber girder bridge design introduced in the 1890s. During the inter-war period roads were constructed to provide for travel by motor car between major centres in the region. The road from Gilgandra to Tooraweenah via Biddon reached Tooraweenah during the 1920s and a road constructed to Coonabarabran[243]. By 1936 the Oxley Highway had bypassed Tooraweenah[244].

The village of Tooraweenah holds a unique place in the history of commercial aviation in Australia. In 1931 solo aviator Arthur Butler, on a record-breaking flight between England and Australia, landed his tiny Cowper Swift monoplane in the main street of Tooraweenah to refuel. Butler had a special connection to Tooraweenah and returned to develop Australia's first registered regional airport. In November 1938 Butler developed a 5,000 foot gravel and grass airstrip on land acquired from local grazier Alf Yeo. From this strip Butler developed an air transport service taking passengers and mail to Sydney via Cunnamulla, Bourke, Coonamble and Tooraweenah. Feeder car services brought passengers to and from Gilgandra and Coonabarabran. The original hangar for the airline's De Havilland Dragon bi-planes was a converted shearing shed.[245]

By 1947 the aerial service had expanded and 104 passengers per week were transiting through Tooraweenah. By this time airport facilities included a small terminal building, hangar and workshops. Flights to Sydney were undertaken by Douglas passenger planes and feeder services being provided by the Dragon bi-planes.[246] More information on Butler Airlines is included in **Section 9.2 Persons**.

In January 1946 Gilgandra Shire Council began investigating the possibility of constructing an aerodrome near the town of Gilgandra[247]. At the request of the Gilgandra Aero Club this aerodrome was named Middleton Field[248]. A survey was requested in 1953 but work on the airfield had not commenced by mid 1955[249].

[243] Willott, B., 1984. *A Hundred Years of Education in Tooraweenah*. p.24
[244] Willott, B., 1984. *A Hundred Years of Education in Tooraweenah*. p.56
[245] Rohr, K. Notes on the History of Tooraweenah.
[246] Rohr, K. Notes on the History of Tooraweenah.
[247] Curran, J. 1991. *Gilgandra Shire Council*. p.52
[248] Curran, J. 1991. *Gilgandra Shire Council*. p.64
[249] Curran, J. 1991. *Gilgandra Shire Council*. p.82

4. Australian Historical Theme: Building settlements, towns and cities

Although many people came to Australia in search of personal gain, the realised the need to co-operate in the building of safe, pleasant urban environments. Australian urbanisation and suburbanisation have special characteristics which set them apart from similar phenomena elsewhere in the world.[250]

4.1 NSW Historical Theme: Accommodation

The district has numerous examples of the dwelling places of the Aboriginal people. Caves and rock shelters have been recorded in a number of places (refer to **Section 2.1 Aboriginal cultures and interactions with other cultures**).

Many of the early settlers built huts of bark and shingle, split slabs or wattle and daub. Rolls described the process of curing bark and setting it as roofing material:

> *When the sheet of bark was lifted off (the tree) it immediately rolled up. Two men straightened it and held it to soften over a low fire. Then they spread it flat and weighted it to dry. The overlapped sheets were held on the roof by crossed saplings known as 'outriggers' or 'over purlins' lashed to the purlins… On earlier roofs they were lashed with greenhide. Sometimes they were pegged down with wooden pegs. Ironbark pegs, round or square, dried slowly over a fire were almost as long lasting as nails.*[251]

Many early houses were roofed or clad in shingles. The development of corrugated galvanised iron in 1847 revolutionised building design and construction in Australia. Cash constrained selectors, however continued to build houses of traditional materials well into the 20th century.

In some fringe communities materials for houses were scrounged from the refuse of the developing industrial economies of Britain and Australia. Packaging materials such as wooden crates and kerosene tins were used to build the houses of the poorest well into the 20th century. Marie Dundas described the house her family built behind the showground in Coonabarabran. This would not be dissimilar from homes constructed in the Pines at Gilgandra:

> *We built the house of whatever we could find … If we had a piece of good tin, we'd think we was the best kids in the scrub. Cardboard – we built it out of tin first – then they'd go chop the poles… then the tin on the roof, then we'd go down to … the goods shed and get every cardboard box 'e 'ad, then buy a packet of tacks, that's our walls, cardboard walls … if it rained too much we had to throw the walls away and go down the goods shed and get more walls.*[252]

As the post industrial revolution world impacted more and more on the Gilgandra district housing styles grew to reflect national and international trends. The towns of the area tend to reflect the patterns of house construction that have prevailed across Australia at various times, although regional variations are quite strong.

[250] Australian Historic Themes Framework, 2001.
[251] Rolls, E., 1982. *A Million Wild Acres*. p.292
[252] Somerville, M. et al, 1994. *The Sun Dancin', People and Place in Coonabarabran*. pp.151-152

Towards the end of World War II communities began to consider needs for future housing. In March 1945 the Gilgandra Progress Association requested that Council consider the following:

- Constructing at least ten homes each year,
- Establishing an Old Age Pensioners' Housing Scheme,
- Elimination of bag huts in Gilgandra and the prevention of further building of these,
- The provision of additional sanitary services.[253]

Government housing schemes were established in the late 1940s and early 1950s (refer to **Section 7.4 Welfare**).

Some vignettes of domestic life are covered in **Section 8.2 Domestic life**.

4.2 NSW Historical Theme: Land Tenure

Prior to European settlement land tenure across Australia 'was based upon birth and kinship rights subtly melded into a complete cosmology of life, birth, death and existence, which did not depend on separating land from person'.[254]

European settlers envisaged a totally different relationship to the land. They came with doctrines that saw land as a resource to be used for profit. The first pastoralists moved sheep and cattle into the area, beyond the boundaries of the colony to supplement the pastures of their landholdings in other areas. Some of these people never saw the land on which their stock were pastured.

In 1836 Governor Brisbane legalised squatting beyond the limits of the 19 Counties[255]. The following decades saw a transition in the economy and governance of New South Wales. The first steps to responsible government were taken under the Constitution Act of 1842, transportation of convicts ceased and land ownership laws were amended to allow for the purchase of improved crown lands. These and subsequent changes saw an increase in the occupation of smaller landholdings and a gradual increase in the number of pastoral properties owned and occupied by families.

An Act 'for regulating the Waste Lands belonging to the Crown in the Australian Colonies' was passed by the British Parliament in 1846 and brought into effect in 1847 through Orders in Council. These Orders in Council divided New South Wales into three districts:

- Settled Districts – the original 19 counties plus the counties of Macquarie and Stanley.
- Intermediate Districts – runs of up to 1600 acres could be leased for eight years with additional fees for larger holdings.
- Unsettled Districts – comprising much of New South Wales. Leases of 14 years could be granted for each run of 3,200 acres.[256]

During the term of these leases the lessee 'had the right to make a pre-emptive purchase'. By the 1840s most of south-eastern Australia had been leased under these

[253] Curran, J., 1991. *Gilgandra Shire Council*. p.48
[254] Kass, T., 2003 *A Thematic History of the Central West*. p.52
[255] Morrisey, S. 1978, 'The Pastoral Economy 1821-1850'. p.59
[256] Stuart, I., 2007. 'The surveyor's lot: making landscapes in New South Wales'. p.43

arrangements and the squatters were quickly perceived as having 'locked up' the land.[257]

Various legislative actions by the New South Wales Parliament during the late 19th century attempted to break the hegemony of the squatters over pastoral land and break the large landholdings of this group. The Robertson Land Acts of 1861 allowed for the selection of blocks of land from 40 to 320 acres. This legislation was intended to encourage immigration and create a class of landed yeomanry similar to that which existed in England. Many squatters used dummy purchasers to secure parts of properties over which they already held leases.

The free selection system allowed people with very little capital to take up landholdings at a cost of £1 per acre with a deposit of only 5 shillings per acre being required.

> *They had the option of completing the purchase after three years or of paying five percent interest more or less indefinitely on the balance. ... In the short term, free selectors were tenants of the Crown on very favourable terms. At least in theory but, in practice, selectors often had little capital beyond the deposit.*[258]

The Crown Lands Resumption Act of 1884 was another government-sponsored attempt to break up large landholdings. It required the halving of large properties leased from the Crown. Many large runs were broken up and portions subdivided for sale.

Selection of land continued into the 20th century. This was supplemented after World War I and World War II by the soldier settlement schemes that continued the process of closer settlement. During World War I Gilgandra Shire Council appointed a Special Committee to investigate the feasibility of soldier settlement in the district. This committee looked at the suitability, cost and number of farms for soldier settlement. The committee's report focused on the properties *Yarrandale*, *Claverton* and *South Balladoran*.[259]

During 1944 Council advised the Minister for Lands that closer settlement could be pursued on a number of properties in the district and proposed that subdivided lands could be used for wool and fat lamb production, and growing cereals for fodder conservation. Council's advice identified the properties *Berida*, *Munnell*, *New Merrigal*, *Bullagreen*, *Myall View*, *Myall Park*, *New Armatree* and *Nianbah* as being suitable for subdivision.[260]

After World War II soldier settlement holdings were created on the following properties in Gilgandra Shire:

- *Berida* 25 holdings
- *Bullagreen* 12 holdings
- *Myall View* 7 holdings
- *Rosehill* 4 holdings
- *Innisfail* 7 holdings

[257] Stuart, I., 2007. 'The surveyor's lot: making landscapes in New South Wales'. pp.43-44
[258] Townsend, N., 1993. Living on the Land: An Enterprising Selector. p.176
[259] Curran, J., 1991. *Gilgandra Shire Council*. p.26
[260] Curran, J., 1991. *Gilgandra Shire Council*. p.46

- *Breelong* 3 holdings
- *Alloway* 2 holdings
- *Wenoona* 1 holding[261]

In addition soldier settlement was proposed for the *Tondeburine* (refer to **Section 3.12 Pastoralism**) and *Bedford Park*. In 1947 in an attempt to forestall compulsory acquisition of their land for soldier settlement the Squatter Investment Company, then owners of *Tondeburine*, sold two blocks to returned servicemen. This proved fruitless and in 1948 both properties were acquired by the Government and ballot for 22 blocks held on 2 June 1949. The two large woolsheds and several small buildings on the properties were dismantled to provide building materials for the settlers.[262]

Like many soldier settler communities the Tondeburine settlers established tennis courts and a club house. Social gatherings and church services were held in the club house. A one-room school Public School was established in 1955.[263]

4.3 NSW Historical Theme: Towns, suburbs and villages

4.3.1 Armatree

The Armatree locality was developed from the late 1830s when John Jude took up the Armatree Run. Andrew Brown of Cooerwull near Lithgow also established his Illamagulia run near Armatree in the 1830s. Other settlers, including the Richardsons from Mendooran, Lloyds, Twiggs and Patricks also established properties in the area. The principal properties close to the current village of Armatree were Bullagreen, Nianbah and Sunnyside. These properties originally undertook predominantly pastoral activities, running sheep and cattle. Wheat was also grown on some properties, including John Nott's station, from the 1830s. It is presumed that this wheat was grown for local consumption.

A provisional school was established near the entrance to Wattle Park station on the eastern side of the Castlereagh River in 1885.[264] This school closed in 1912[265]. The Armatree post office had been established on the Strangs' Almond Bank in 1882 and was moved to New Armatree after 1902[266].

The existing village was established during the construction of the railway from Gilgandra to Coonamble in 1902-1903. During this period large camps of workers engaged in this project camped at Curban and Armatree.[267] The presence of railway construction worker families generally led to the establishment of schools and other community infrastructure wherever railways were constructed in New South Wales.

As in other areas the development of the railway opened up markets for wheat growing and the district became well known for the production of high-grade wheat. A hotel was constructed near the railway line in 1929. In 1949 the population of the district was boosted by the subdivision of Bullagreen for soldier settlement[268]. In its

[261] Bartley, B., 2005. *Gilgandra – Oldtown – Newtown*. p.27
[262] Gulargambone Historical Society Book Committee, 1992. *Gulargambone Homes & Holdings*. pp.28-29
[263] Gulargambone Historical Society Book Committee, 1992. *Gulargambone Homes & Holdings*. p.29
[264] Dormer, M., 1983. *The Bushman's Arms*. p.69
[265] Gulargambone Historical Society Book Committee, 1992. *Gulargambone Homes & Holdings*. p.88
[266] Gulargambone Historical Society Book Committee, 1992. *Gulargambone Homes & Holdings*. p.84
[267] Dormer, M., 1983. *The Bushman's Arms*. p.67
[268] Dormer, M., 1983. *The Bushman's Arms*. p.69

heyday the village hosted three stores and a stock and station agency. The last of these closed in 1970 and the post office closed in 1989. The village had two churches, Presbyterian and Church of England. The Church of England was moved to Tooraweenah.[269] The Armatree Police Station has apparently been relocated to Morris Street in Gilgandra.

4.3.2: Biddon

The locality of Biddon was first explored by Andrew Brown in 1834. Biddon was part of the Bundy Bundally run leased by Robert More Richardson from July 1855.[270] This property stayed with the Richardson family until the end of the 19th century. Their homestead was located on the western side of the present Newell Highway opposite the site of the Village of Biddon[271].

The village grew as families moved into the district to take up selections from the 1890s. The village was situated on Bidden Creek at the junction of the track linking Gilgandra and Coonabarabran and a track to Bearbung[272]. A post office was established before 1907, however at this time there was only one house in the village. A postal receiving office was re-established in 1908.[273] As families moved into the district home churches were established and by 1913 the Lutheran community had established a congregation at Biddon. A Methodist church had been constructed in 1910 and a Sunday School established in the same year.[274]

Like many other small regional communities the village prospered through the early to mid 20th century then fell into decline as farming became increasingly mechanised and transport services improved. The Biddon Public School, established as a Provisional School in 1910, operated until 1972[275]. The telephone exchange closed in 1974 and the Post Office in 1981[276].

4.3.3: Curban

John Ross Patterson was one of the early European settlers on the Castlereagh. He was evidently an employee of James Walker of Wallerawong, who held large runs in the region from the 1830s. In partnership with fellow employee James Gibson Patterson took up a run named *Bimble*. He later managed *Curban* for Robert Bennett. Patterson expanded *Curban* by adding extra portions.[277] Bennett built the first house at Curban[278]. By 1841 17 people were living at Curban. The census undertaken in that year recorded 13 adult males, two adult females and two female children.[279]

During the mid to late 19th century horse drawn coaches ran from Dubbo to Coonamble via Gilgandra three days per week. Coach drivers included James Brown, Paddy Murray and William Walden.[280] On the black soil plains coaching roads became almost impassable in wet weather. In some places sections of corduroy road were laid to provide an all-weather surface. Corduroy involved the placement of small

[269] Gulargambone Historical Society Book Committee, 1992. *Gulargambone Homes & Holdings*. p.88
[270] Mudford, C.&J., 1992. *To Biddon and Back*. p.10
[271] Mudford, C.&J., 1992. *To Biddon and Back*. p.19
[272] Mudford, C.&J., 1992. *To Biddon and Back*. p.26
[273] Mudford, C.&J., 1992. *To Biddon and Back*. p.48
[274] Mudford, C.&J., 1992. *To Biddon and Back*. pp.37-38
[275] Mudford, C.&J., 1992. *To Biddon and Back*. pp.70-89
[276] Mudford, C.&J., 1992. *To Biddon and Back*. pp.52-54
[277] Back to Gilgandra Committee, 1937. *Back to Gilgandra Souvenir Booklet*. pp.21-22
[278] Dormer, M., 1983. *The Bushman's Arms*. p.53
[279] Dormer, M., 1983. *The Bushman's Arms*. p.15
[280] Back to Gilgandra Committee, 1937. *Back to Gilgandra Souvenir Booklet*. p.15

cut logs or saplings side-by-side across the direction of travel to provide a relatively stable, if rather bumpy, surface for the mail coaches. A section of corduroy road with an associated milepost and gateway survives on the East Coonamble Road between Curban and Gulargambone. This was evidently built by Charles Law, owner of the nearby Wattle Park selection from 1895[281].

A police station was established at Curban in 1878. At this time the locality was also known as Terribile. A village had been surveyed and building allotments offered foe sale in the Village of Terribile in 1866. [282] The police station was relocated to Gilgandra after that town overtook Curban in population.[283] The decline of Curban was exacerbated by the construction of the Dubbo to Coonamble Railway Line to the west of the village. The village was situated on high ground between Terrabile Creek and the Castlereagh River and was easily cut off by floods.

In the mid to late 1920s a flying fox was constructed across the Castlereagh River at Curban by Albert Percy Walton. This flying fox was erected to allow children living on the western bank of the river to get to school when the river level was up. The flying fox also allowed Curban residents to reach Curban Railway Station on the western side of the river.[284]

The village was heavily affected by the 1955 flood as floodwaters from the Castlereagh River met the already swollen Terrabile Creek. The village hall was washed from its site in the old village and drifted to the bank of the Castlereagh River near the site of the current Curban Community Bridge. The hall's progress was so gentle that the piano remained in place on the stage with a glass of water still in place. The hall was demolished and parts used in the new hall constructed on the western side of the Castlereagh.[285] (Information provided by Doug Lummis August 2008)

4.3.4: Gilgandra

As was the case of many towns in the west of New South Wales Gilgandra grew around a water hole and river crossing in the mid to late 19th century. James Bishop established a store and hut at Gulgonda at the end of Lowe's Mathigi run. His wife Christina gave birth to a girl, Eliza, at Gulgonda Crossing in 1841 and another daughter, Sarah, in 1843.[286]

The name of Gilgandra is an adaptation of an Aboriginal word meaning 'long water hole'. This waterhole was frequented by Aboriginal people of the Coonabarabran tribe and the Mole tribe prior to European occupation of the area. Since European settlement the locality has been referred to as Frog Hollow, Gulgonda, Carlganda, Carlginda and Gilgandra.[287]

As Europeans settled along the Castlereagh larger settlements developed at Mendooran and Curban. These were originally the main administrative centres of the district. Gilgandra, located at the junction of the wool tracks from Dubbo and Mudgee, 'and those fanning out along the Marthaguy and lower Castlereagh', eventually outgrew both.[288] The breaking up of large runs for closer settlement during

[281] Gulargambone Historical Society Book Committee, 1992. *Gulargambone Homes & Holdings*. p.87
[282] Dormer, M., 1983. *The Bushman's Arms*. p.54
[283] Back to Gilgandra Committee, 1937. *Back to Gilgandra Souvenir Booklet*. p.40
[284] Information provided by Robyn Walton, June 2008.
[285] Information provided by Robyn Walton, August 2008.
[286] Dormer, M., 1983. *The Bushman's Arms*. p15
[287] Jackson, P., 2005. *The Life and Times of Hannah Morris*. p.28
[288] Dormer, M., 1983. *The Bushman's Arms*. p15

the 1870s, and consequent increase in population, created the need for a service centre. Businesses began to cluster around the two hotels that had been established on either side of the Castlereagh at Gilgandra.[289] The development of the business district of Gilgandra is covered in **Section 3.2 Commerce**.

The Village of Gilgandra was proclaimed on 8 December 1888, and a sale of Town Lots was held by the Crown at Coonamble on 23 October 1889[290]. By 1891 95 persons were living in 19 dwellings at Gilgandra[291]. The construction of the Dubbo to Coonamble railway line in 1902 led to a rapid increase in the development of the town. The railway supported the establishment of a viable agricultural industry and a solid sleeper cutting and milling industry. This encouraged immigration into the district from other districts of New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia, and increased prospects for employment. As the population increased more government and commercial services moved into the town.

Gilgandra Shire Council forced a major change to the look of the business district of the town when it passed a resolution in 1942 requiring the removal of verandahs in Miller Street[292]. Progress on this matter must have been slow and in 1951 Council granted an extra year for removal of verandah posts[293].

4.3.5: Tooraweenah

Andrew Brown of Cooerwull near Lithgow established a series of pastoral runs around the Upper Castlereagh River and Warrumbungle Range during the 1830s (Refer to **Section 3.12 Pastoralism**). Among these was the Tooraweenah Run that was taken up in 1837. A store was established on the northern side of Tooraweenah Creek in 1841 to provide supplies for Brown's shepherds and drovers. Stores were brought by waggon from Mudgee.[294]

Following the implementation of the Robertson Land Acts of 1861 the Toorawenah run was broken up into smaller holdings. Free Selectors began moving into the district surrounding Tooraweenah from this time. The first village school was established in 1884 and the first hotel in 1886[295]. By 1914 the town hosted 15 businesses. Among these was the Mountain View Hotel, built in 1911.[296]

Tooraweenah achieved some notoriety in 1931 when aviator Arthur Butler landed in the village on his record-breaking solo flight from England to Australia. He taxied his tiny Cowper Swift monoplane up the main street to refuel at Garling's garage. By 1938 Butler, who had an emotional connection to Tooraweenah, established an aerodrome near the town (refer to **Section 3.15 Transport**).[297] At one time Tooraweenah was recognised as the only village in the world with less than 200 inhabitants to possess a privately operated airport.

[289] Dormer, M., 1983. *The Bushman's Arms*. p.16
[290] Jackson, P., 2005. *The Life and Times of Hannah Morris*. pp.46-47
[291] Dormer, M., 1983. *The Bushman's Arms*. p.16
[292] Curran, J., 1991. *Gilgandra Shire Council*. p.39
[293] Curran, J. 1991. *Gilgandra Shire Council*. p.69
[294] Rohr, K. Notes on the History of Tooraweenah.
[295] Willott, B., 1984. *A Hundred Years of Education in Tooraweenah 1884-1984*. pp.6-8
[296] Rohr, K. Notes on the History of Tooraweenah.
[297] Rohr, K. Notes on the History of Tooraweenah.

4.4 NSW Historical Theme: Utilities

4.4.1 Fire Brigade

A Volunteer Fire Brigade was established in Gilgandra in December 1911 under the control of the Board of Commissioners N.S.W. Fire Brigades. This brigade was equipped with a manually operated, horse-drawn pumping unit. It attended its first fire, a shop fire in Miller Street, on 16 January 1912. A fire station was erected in 1915 and in 1923 a turbine engine replaced the original unit. The Gilgandra brigade was equipped with a Garford fire engine in 1926.[298]

4.4.2 Water

As Gilgandra developed individual property owners were responsible for the supply of water. Traditionally water was obtained from water tanks or from wells and bores. The sandy soil around Gilgandra and substantial underground aquifers led to the use of windmill-powered pumps for domestic supply. Most property owners had bores with windmill pumps attached. At one time Gilgandra was known as 'a town of windmills'. Windmills still exist in a few yards in the older parts of the town.

In 1916 Gilgandra Shire Council conducted a referendum on the installation of a reticulated water supply to part of the town. There was little interest in the proposal and it was scrapped.[299]

In 1945 Council discussed the possibility of a reticulated water supply for the town.

> *The Minister for Public Works was requested, under the seal of Council, to carry out an investigation, survey, preliminary design and an estimate of the cost.*[300]

There appears to have been little action on this proposal until February 1951 when a licensed surveyor was engaged to survey the town of Gilgandra for a water supply. The site for a water tower was chosen by Council in October 1951[301]. Council were still discussing the implementation of a reticulated water supply in 1954[302].

> *The water and sewerage scheme were in use by 1965. In 1966, Council took over the reticulation of the water supply. Flouridation of water followed in 1967.*[303]

A reticulated water supply was provided in Tooraweenah by 1956[304].

4.4.3 Sewerage

After its establishment in 1906 the Gilgandra Shire Council began moves to improve the general health standards of the community. 'In 1909 notices were served on two residents of Gilgandra to get rid of decomposed bodies of animals' and noxious weeds on their properties'. By 1910 an almost universal sanitary collection service had been implemented within the Gilgandra Urban Area. 'The Council waged constant war on those citizens who neglected to pay the sanitary rate'. The Council paid its scavenger

[298] Back to Gilgandra Committee, 1937. *Back to Gilgandra Souvenir Booklet*. p.43
[299] Curran, J., 1991. *Gilgandra Shire Council*. p.24
[300] Curran, J., 1991. *Gilgandra Shire Council*. p.48
[301] Curran, J. 1991. *Gilgandra Shire Council*. p.68
[302] Curran, J. 1991. *Gilgandra Shire Council*. p.79
[303] Curran, J. 1991. *Gilgandra Shire Council*. p.104
[304] Willott, G., 1984. *A Hundred Years of Education in Tooraweenah* 1884-1984.

4½d. per pan for emptying and cleansing the pans, including cartage, cutting wood, cleaning the depot, maintenance of the road to the depot and 'attention to the rubbish tip'. [305] In the early 1920s the cost of sanitary pans to ratepayers was raised to 8d[306].

During the 1920s septic tanks were becoming common in urban areas with many commercial premises installing and gradually upgrading septic systems. Problems of overflow of septic systems seemed to occur regularly.

Council discussed the installation of a sewerage scheme for Gilgandra in May 1946[307] and in 1950 engineering firm Gutheridge, Hoskins and Davey were asked to prepare preliminary reports for a water and sewerage scheme[308].

4.4.4 Electricity

The 1920s and 1930s saw an ongoing expansion of New South Wales' electricity supply network. Before 1950 electricity generation and supply in the state were the responsibility of local councils. In some areas power generating plant built for large industries or mines was used to supply local towns. In other places individual business proprietors installed electricity generating plant to supply their own premises and this supply was expanded to the town.

Gilgandra's first electricity supply was provided by Mr. A. Judd who constructed The Crystal Palace Hall in Miller Street in 1916. This building, located on the site of the current Morris Butchery, contained a direct current (DC) electricity generator. A cable was run under Miller Street to provide the Imperial Hotel with power and other premises in Miller Street were later supplied from the Crystal Palace site. The operation was eventually taken over by cinema entrepreneur Fred Brook.[309]

Mr. Herb Foran constructed the New Australian Hall in Warren Road and commenced movie screenings there in 1923. Foran constructed a DC power house to supply his indoor and outdoor cinemas with electricity. This power house contained three generators with 160 amp, 60 amp and 200 amp capacity. The power house was purchased by Gilgandra Shire Council in 1928 and installed a new 200 amp generator powered by a four cylinder National Engine. Fred Brooks was employed by Council to run the power plant and to erect and maintain a low voltage supply to the town.[310]

In 1946 Council investigated co-operating with Coonamble and Wingadee Shire Councils to investigate the establishment of a County Council Electricity Supply Scheme. By the end of that year it was decided that Council should make its own arrangements and would install an AC generating plant.[311] On the advice of consultants engaged to investigate the installation of a new electricity supply it was decided in December 1947 to construct a 22 kilovolt bulk electricity feeder from Dubbo rather than build a generating plant in Gilgandra[312].

Tenders for the construction of a 33 kilovolt line from Dubbo were accepted by Council in April 1948. The cost of the line was to be £15,431/5/2.[313] Gilgandra Shire

[305] Curran, J., 1991. *Gilgandra Shire Council*. p.18
[306] Curran, J., 1991. *Gilgandra Shire Council*. p.32
[307] Curran, J., 1991. *Gilgandra Shire Council*. p.53
[308] Curran, J. 1991. *Gilgandra Shire Council*. p.64
[309] Back to Gilgandra Week Committee, 1974. *Back to Gilgandra Week Celebrations*. p.64
[310] Back to Gilgandra Week Committee, 1974. *Back to Gilgandra Week Celebrations*. p.65
[311] Curran, J., 1991. *Gilgandra Shire Council*. pp.53-54
[312] Curran, J., 1991. *Gilgandra Shire Council*. p.56
[313] Curran, J., 1991. *Gilgandra Shire Council*. p.58

Council raised a loan to construct the line. Installation of the new line involved the conversion of the existing town supply from DC to AC. Fred Brook, owner of the DC generating plant, assisted Council with the changeover. Re-wiring of the town was commenced by early 1950.[314] By February 1951 all of the new transformers had been completed and AC 'power could be connected to all of the town except half of the main street'[315].

By February 1953 70 customers in Gulargambone and 12 in Armatree had been connected to the Council electricity supply[316]. The electricity supply reached Tooraweenah in January 1955 and a celebratory dinner was held in the village[317].

The Macquarie County Council was formed in the late 1950s and took over electricity transmission in the region[318].

[314] Curran, J., 1991. *Gilgandra Shire Council*. p.62
[315] Curran, J. 1991. *Gilgandra Shire Council*. p.67
[316] Curran, J. 1991. *Gilgandra Shire Council*. p.74
[317] Curran, J. 1991. *Gilgandra Shire Council*. p.80
[318] Gilgandra Shire Council, 1958. *Commemorating Opening of New Council Chambers at Gilgandra*.

5. Australian Historical Theme: Working

Although a lot of what we call work is related to the economy, most of it is not undertaken for profit. A great deal of the work is done in the home is neither paid nor counted as part of the national economy. Some of the most interesting recent social history written about Australia concerns work and workplaces.[319]

5.1 NSW Historical Theme: Labour

The diversity of work in a regional area is as diverse as the industries and communities that reside in that district. Gilgandra Shire is home to a wide range of occupations linked to the land and servicing the industries that rely on the land, whether these are pastoral, agricultural, forestry, the sciences or tourism. The transport infrastructure of the region has also required labour for maintenance and operations. Road maintenance workers once were engaged to maintain particular sections of roads and railway fettlers lived along the lines they were engaged to maintain. Others experiences of the transport industry are covered in **Section 3.15 Transport**.

A number of writers have documented historical experiences of work in the Gilgandra district and surrounding areas. The accounts of these writers have been drawn upon to provide a sketch of labour in the region for this thematic history.

Life and work in the pastoral regions of Australia are governed by the rhythms of the seasons and the cycles of rain and drought that affect the southern continent. The demands of work vary with the development of pasture, growth of crops and growth of wool.

Patterns of obtaining labour for rural work varied throughout the 19th and 20th centuries. Many of the early squatters were able to access the relatively cheap labour available through the system of assigning convicts to settlers. From the 1840s free labour replaced the virtual slavery of the convict system and squatters started to seek other workforces. In various parts of New South Wales in the 1840s squatters experimented with workers from India, China and the South Pacific with varying degrees of success[320]. In many areas Aboriginal people proved to be the most reliable workers[321].

Each pastoral station maintained its core staff members who undertook or oversaw maintenance or domestic work on the property. The ongoing employment of these people, overseers, shepherds, cooks, gardeners, domestic staff, stable hands etc depended on the prosperity of the station. One local example is Berida Station which, for much of its existence, maintained a broad range of staff who lived on the property. Berida's infrastructure included provision for the accommodation of these people and for the itinerant workers who undertook shearing, mustering and other duties. During the 20th century, and possibly in the 19th, the homestead area included stables, breaking yards, workshops including a blacksmith's shop, orchards, cultivation paddocks, chook houses, butchery, laundry and a merchandise store at which locals could buy provisions. All of these required staff to operate them.

The rural labour force was supplemented at various times of the year by itinerant workers who tramped between stations following the flow of work. Duke Tritton, who

[319] Australian Historic Themes Framework, 2001.
[320] Buxton, G., 1967. *The Riverina 1861-1891 An Australian Regional Study*, p.19
[321] Cain, M. 1923. 'Coonabarabran in the 'Sixties'. pp.370-371

spent years on the roads of the New South Wales northwest in the early 20th century as an itinerant worker, left detailed accounts of the life of the travelling bush worker. He recalled that stations issued travellers' rations to these itinerants 'as a means to ensure a plentiful supply of casual labour'. The travellers' rations prescribed by the Pastoralists' Union consisted of 'ten pounds of flour, ten of meat, two of sugar and a quarter of a pound of tea'. Most squatters added extras such as 'a tin of jam or baking powder, sometimes a plug of tobacco or, in the case of a sick man, some of the rough medicines of the period'. Pastoralists noted as providers of generous handouts were popular and, according to Tritton, always had a plentiful supply 'of men to choose from, but the tight ones were always avoided by any self-respecting swagman.[322]

The various tasks required to undertake a successful shearing were allocated before a shed started. The workers would elect an A.W.U. representative and then 'put in' a cook who then nominated his assistants. Other tasks around the shed, as described by Tritton, included:

- *The "penner-up" was an important man in a shed. When the musterers brought the sheep from the paddocks to the shed, the penner-up took charge of them and was responsible for keeping the catching pens full.*
- *Pickers-up took the fleece as it fell on the board and spread it skin-side down on the wool table.*
- *Wool-rollers, two at each table, would strip three inches of skirting around it, roll the fleece, throw it in a bin where the classer would examine it and place it in a bin according to its class. The skirting went to another table where the piece-pickers would sort it into grades, clean, stained and burry.*
- *The pressers were kept busy. They worked on a contract system at so much per bale, and the rules of the shed did not apply to them in regard to working hours. It was not unusual to see them working long after the shearers had finished for the day.*
- *"The expert" is another important man in the shed. He is responsible for the smooth running of the machinery and has to have a thorough knowledge of everything mechanical in the shed.*[323]

The late 19th and early 20th centuries saw many changes in the working lives of shearers. The change from hand to machine shearing changed the atmosphere of the sheds. Tritton described the last season of blade shearing at *Conimbla* station on the Castlereagh in 1905:

> *After the noise of the machines it was very quiet. Contrary to general opinion and well known song, shears do not click. The gullets of the hand-grips are filled with soft wood or sometimes cork. This stops the heels of the blades from meeting, so the sound is a soft "chop, chop" ... The machines of the time were no faster than the blades but they cut closer and a fleece would weigh up to two pounds heavier.... There seemed to be more rhythm in a "blade-shed", possibly because of the lack of noise. A big "machine-shed" sounds like ten thousand locusts on a hot day, with the whirring of the machines and the hum of the overhead gear and friction wheels.* [324]

[322] Tritton, H.P. (Duke). 1964. *Time Means Tucker*. pp.19-20
[323] Tritton, H.P. (Duke). 1964. *Time Means Tucker*. p.40
[324] Tritton, H.P. (Duke). 1964. *Time Means Tucker*. p.47

Shearers worked bent over with heavy strain placed on their backs. 'It was not unusual to see a man making his way on his hands and knees to his bunk. No one offered assistance as it was a point of honour to be able to reach one's bunk under one's own steam.'[325]

Prior to the beginning of the 20th century shearers worked on terms dictated by the squatter. Terms were harsh and the squatter had complete control over judging the quality of shearing and consequently the level of pay received by the shearers. A shearer not completing his contract was 'liable to a fine or even imprisonment'[326]. Shearers began organising by the 1880s to achieve improved conditions. The Australian Shearers' Union began staging strikes from 1888 and by 1891 were in full-scale conflict with the pastoralists and colonial governments[327]. The drought and economic downturn of the 1890s, Federation in 1901 and a large-scale shearers' strike in 1902 created circumstances leading to improvements in working conditions.

By the early 20th century pastoralists were required to provide improved accommodation for their shearers. In the 19th century 'accommodation was rotten .. huts built of bark or slabs, with leaking roofs, no windows, earth floors, bunks in three tiers and bare boards to sleep on'[328]. Following the Shearers' Agreement stations set about building better quarters.

Small landholders, taking up the increasing number of blocks opened up for closer settlement during the late 19th and early 20th centuries, provided a more stable labour source for many large properties. Many free selectors found their small properties alone could not provide a sustainable living for a family and were forced to seek outside employment. Selectors along Rocky Creek and in other places provided a ready source of labour for adjoining properties.

On top of the tasks required to provide food for a family women worked hard to keep households functioning:

> *There was the weekly wash – water to be fetched from the well, a fire lit under the copper clothes boiler and a small mountain of soiled clothes to be rubbed and scrubbed by hand in the big zinc washing tubs, the hanging out and taking in, the problem of getting clothes dry enough to wear in rainy weather, and the nightly toil of pressing them with flat-irons in front of the fire.*[329]

Itinerant workers and selectors sought other work when the sheds weren't shearing. Duke Tritton recounted bouts of rabbiting, dingo hunting, tent boxing, gold prospecting and fencing the boundary between *Gumin* and *Goorianawa*:

> *At Box Ridge we met two brothers, Alf and Bill Freeman, who wanted a couple of mates on a fencing contract. The fence was part of the boundary between Gumin and Goorianawa. ... Starting on the flat country at Goorianawa we climbed a watershed and followed it to the top of Mount Bulaway (sic.), the second highest peak in the Warrumbungles. There was no surveyed line ... we had to pick our own line going from one peak to the next highest, gaining height all the way til we reached the top. When the completed job was*

[325] Tritton, H.P. (Duke). 1964. *Time Means Tucker*. p.41
[326] Freeman, P., 1980. *The Woolshed: A Riverina Anthology*. p.60
[327] Freeman, P., 1980. *The Woolshed: A Riverina Anthology*. p.60
[328] Tritton, H.P. (Duke). 1964. *Time Means Tucker*. p.39
[329] Meredith, J., 1986. *King of the Dance Hall*. p.13

> *measured we were paid for fifteen and a quarter miles; as the crow flies it would be about five. Four feet high, three foot netting, three plain and three barbed wires, it was supposed to be dingo and rabbit-proof. We had to clear the line and cut the posts as we went.*[330]

As railways spread across New South Wales gangs of workers undertaking the heavy work of forming the railway bed and laying track moved with their families across the landscape. These people were often instrumental in establishing small villages along the line of the railway. Large groups of railway workers camped at Curban and Armatree during the construction of the Gilgandra-Coonamble railway line in 1902-1903. The work of some of these men was described as follows:

> *Ten men were engaged with horses to plough the land on either side of the pegged track. They then scooped the earth up to form the bed for the line. These men were paid 15/- per day for a man and horse*.[331]

In his books Eric Rolls provides some personal insights into work in the agricultural industries during the early and mid 20th century. This includes his description of the process of sewing and tipping wheat bags in the years before bulk handling of grains:

> *Until the 1960s farmers still bagged wheat on their farms. Carriers loaded the bags on their trucks and took them to the silos where contract tippers emptied them down the elevator chutes. The itinerant bag sewers … skewered the top of a loosely-filled bag with a needle thirty-five centimetres long, threaded it with a length of binder twine, drew the needle back, then tied the ends of the twine across the top of the bag. They devised quick methods for cutting the twine. Most rolled it round twenty-three litre oil drums, slashed it down one side, and tied the lengths together in bundles. They came into the paddocks about daylight, the twine dangling from keepers on their hips. They left at dark. Some sewed up to 1,200 bags a day. Bag sewing and tipping employed a lot of men in country towns. Then farmers equipped their header boxes with augers, carriers fitted bins to their trucks, and the grain was carried in bulk from paddock to ship.*[332]

Loading and trans-shipping wheat bags required large numbers of labourers. Stacking and lumping wheat were seasonal tasks that provided employment for many. The process of stacking wheat at the Murdoch McLeod flourmill was described by Cheryl and John Mudford.

> *In the early years the farmers came into the Mill with their bags of wheat loaded on their horse drays or waggons. Each bag was lugged onto the stack, one at a time, on the back and shoulders of the stackers. One sack was placed on top of another so that the stacker had the bag at a better height to throw over his shoulders.*[333]

Rolls also noted the post World War II push to increase the amount of land under crops:

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[330] Tritton, H.P. (Duke). 1964. *Time Means Tucker*. p.53
[331] Dormer, M., 1983. *The Bushman's Arms*. p.67
[332] Rolls, E., 1982. *A Million Wild Acres*. p.220
[333] Mudford, C. & J., 1989. *"Clocking On" with Murdoch McLeod and the Castlereagh Flour Mill.* p.35

> *Farmers fitted their old tractors with rubber tyres or bought new tractors already equipped with rubbers. They fitted old generators, batteries and lights and drove night and day. The cold at seven or eight kilometres an hour on an open tractor on a frosty night is unbelievable. I've taken off two pairs of gloves and slapped my hands together till my fingers had enough feeling to open my penknife to cut the twine on the bags of seed. My toes pained through two pairs of socks and boots thrust inside a cocoon of wheatbags seven thick. I've thought of knocking off but the lights of other tractors whose drivers were braving it have kept me there. Stupefied by noise and cold we sat and spiralled round our paddocks sowing wheat.*[334]

As noted in **Section 2.4 Migration** the latter half of the 20th century saw major changes in the technologies applied to work, and in the nature of local industries. These changes have had profound effects on the job skills required in the region and on the total number of persons employed. Much of the earlier seasonal work has gone with stations employing fewer hands and less opportunities for contract work. Smaller communities have consequently suffered declines in population and levels of commercial activity.

[334] Rolls, E., 1982. *A Million Wild Acres*. p.220

6. Australian Historical Theme: Educating

Every society educates its young. While European education places a great emphasis on the formal schooling system, education encompasses much more.[335]

6.1 NSW Historical Theme: Education

Literacy and education were generally valued in societies of the British Isles from which many of the early settlers of the district came. Scotland in particular maintained quite high levels of literacy in the early 19th century. In the frontier areas of New South Wales schooling of children was often carried out by members of households. Churches also played a role in educating young people. The Sunday School movement had originally commenced in the early 19th century by evangelical sects such as the Primitive Methodists to provide basic literacy and a knowledge of the Bible[336]. The establishment of schools in many areas was subject to sectarian divisions and sectarianism and religion have continued to play a major role in the politics of education in New South Wales. (Refer to **Section 8.4 Religion**)

The Sisters of St Joseph established a school at the first Roman Catholic Church in Morris Street in 1908. A small school building with slab walls was erected to accommodate the school. Some time after 1913 the original church building was moved from Morris Street to Wrigley Street to serve as a school and a new convent was built for the sisters. By the late 1930s three school buildings had been erected. These were replaced in 1954 by a new school. Changes in curriculum and standards, as well as falling student numbers, led to the closure of the secondary school in 1967.[337]

The Anglicans began a school in the building currently called Feetham House during 1911. Country children boarded at the house to attend classes with the children from Gilgandra. In 1912 Anglican Sisters from the Community of St Peter, Kilburn, London arrived in Gilgandra to conduct a girl's school, which they named St Hilda's. These sisters left in 1915.[338]

The government took the greatest role in education from the mid 19th century and dealt with applications from growing communities for the establishment of schools. In isolated areas the New South Wales government supported education through a system of subsidised schools. Under the subsidised school system parents provided a school building, a teacher and the teacher's board and lodging. The Department of Education subsidised the teacher's wage and provided school supplies. Subsidised schools were established at many locations throughout the Gilgandra Shire, including Bringle, Gowen, Greenwood and Uargon in the Tooraweenah area[339]. The former Uargon University, constructed by Jack Estens and Clive Armitage in 1928 and relocated to the Gilgandra Rural Museum in 1998, is one surviving example of a subsidised school.[340]

[335] Australian Historic Themes Framework, 2001.
[336] O, Brien, G., The Primitive Methodist Church.
[337] Hickmott, R. & Curran, J., 1976. *Back to Gilgandra Week*. p.36
[338] King, K., 2005. *Church in the Australian Bush*. pp.24-25
[339] Willott, B., 1984. *A Hundred Years of Education in Tooraweenah*. pp.66-70
[340] Gilgandra Rural Museum, Uargon University.

Plate 6.1: The former Uargon University located at the Gilgandra Rural Museum.

The first government supported school in the region was established at Gilgandra in 1881 a building owned by Hannah Morris. Student numbers grew rapidly and by early 1882 additional accommodation had been provided in the form of a tent.[341] By 1883 a site was dedicated for a school and a permanent school building constructed in 1884. During the 1880s various additions and modifications were made to the school as pupil numbers rose. By 1908 200 hundred children were attending the school. In 1911-1912 new brick buildings comprising four classrooms, assembly hall and offices were constructed on a site on the corner of Wamboin and Wrigley Streets. New weather sheds and toilet blocks were constructed in 1913.[342]

Numbers at the Gilgandra Public School continued to rise and additional buildings were required by 1915. The assembly hall was pressed into service as an infants' classroom and a new school block constructed in 1918. 'Extensive renovations' were made to the school in 1927, including the installation of electric light in the assembly hall. By 1929 the school had been upgraded to the status of District School. In 1937 a new block containing a manual training room, science room and staff room was constructed. By 1950 the school had become an Intermediate High School with separate Primary/Infants and Secondary school departments. A separate Infants Department was established in 1952. A new High School was constructed on a separate site in the 1960s. In 1977 Gilgandra Primary School became the first school in New South Wales in which children with moderate intellectual disabilities were streamed within a Public School.[343]

The people of Tooraweenah applied for the establishment of a school in June 1883. A Provisional School was established with the first teacher being appointed in January 1884. The original school building was constructed in pine slabs with a shingle roof. Following an increase in enrolments in this school was upgraded to a Public School in 1885. A new school building was constructed by Henry Irwin in 1886 at a cost of £82/10/-.[344] School facilities were upgraded in 1901[345]. Following petitions from local

[341] Gilgandra Public School Centenary Committee, 1981. *Gilgandra Public School Centenary 1881-1981*. p.5
[342] Gilgandra Public School Centenary Committee, 1981. *Gilgandra Public School Centenary 1881-1981*. pp.6-7
[343] Gilgandra Public School Centenary Committee, 1981. *Gilgandra Public School Centenary 1881-1981*. pp.8-9
[344] Willott, B., 1984. *A Hundred Years of Education in Tooraweenah 1884-1984*. pp.6-7
[345] Willott, B., 1984. *A Hundred Years of Education in Tooraweenah 1884-1984*. p.11

associations a new school building was constructed in 1911 by George Tupper[346]. In 1919 a building was relocated from Dooroombah to provide additional accommodation for the growing school[347]. The school population in Tooraweenah was nearing its peak in the late 1950s and in 1958 an additional classroom with office and staff accommodation were added to the school's facilities[348].

Other supported and provisional schools existed in various parts of the Gilgandra Shire. William Zell donated land on his *Bringle* property for the establishment of a supported school. It appears that initially classes were taught in the shearers' huts on *Bringle.* When these were destroyed by fire a fibro-clad building was constructed with a single school and a porch for the children's lunch bags and hats. Bringle[349] was made a Provisional School before 1922.

Two schools operated in the locality of Eringanerin. A one-room subsidized school was constructed on the western side of the Castlereagh River until 1916. A Provisional School was established in 1914 on a two acre reserve within the proposed Eringanerin Village area that had been mapped in 1877. Duncan Butler and Robert McKechnie had applied in 1913 to have a school established on the eastern side of the Castlereagh as the majority of the area's children lived on that side of the river.[350]

A standard one-room school building was constructed by R.J. Nelson of Gilgandra in May 1914 at a cost of £237/7/6[351]. The school closed after the introduction of a school bus service to Gilgandra in 1952[352]. The school building was relocated to Gilgandra Primary School and during the 1990s was removed to the New Life Camp Ground on the Mendooran Road.

The Biddon Subsidised School was established on Willaston some time prior to 1910. In 1910, following the arrival of new families in the district, application was made for the establishment of a Provisional School at Biddon. A building was constructed on land donated by Mr Mackenzie of Biddon in 1910-1911. Construction was undertaken by Mr Swirthwaite using timber donated by Mr Howard and milled on his *Mountain View* property. The cost of construction was subsidised by Mr Reichelt of Biddon.[353] Following the establishment of the Biddon-Greenwood school bus service in 1951 the Biddon Provisional School was elevated to the status of Public School. An additional building was transported to Biddon from Bearbong in early 1957.[354]

After soldier-settler families became established on the former Tondeburine and Bedford Park runs in the late 1940s and early 1950s agitation commenced for the establishment of school in the area. A Provisional School was established in the Tondeburine Tennis club in 1956. Mrs Parkes and Mrs Mihill obtained desks from the Gulargambone Public School to equip the makeshift classroom. By the end of 1956 the school had 22 pupils and had obtained a regulation government school building. A wet weather shed was constructed on the school site by Jim Mihill, Bert Parkes and Bruce Allan using materials supplied by the government. The school operated until 1968. The school building was removed to Tarambijal Depot Shed and the wet

[346] Willott, G., 1984. *A Hundred Years of Education in Tooraweenah 1884-1984*. p.17
[347] Willott, G., 1984. *A Hundred Years of Education in Tooraweenah 1884-1984*. p.21
[348] Willott, G., 1984. *A Hundred Years of Education in Tooraweenah 1884-1984*. p.41
[349] Zell, L.&L., 1999. *Truth Prevails. William Zell Ancestors and Descendents 1785-1999*. pp.85-86
[350] Mudford, J.&C., 1988. *Breelong and Her Neighbours – Along the Castlereagh*. p.179
[351] Mudford, J.&C., 1988. *Breelong and Her Neighbours – Along the Castlereagh*. p.180
[352] Mudford, J.&C., 1988. *Breelong and Her Neighbours – Along the Castlereagh*. p.182
[353] Mudford, J.&C., 1992. *To Biddon and Back*. p.70
[354] Mudford, J.&C., 1992. *To Biddon and Back*. p.73

weather shed to Tooraweenah Public School. The school building was later moved to Tooraweenah Public School.[355]

[355] Grosser, B., 1999. Tondeburine Bedford Park Soldier Settler Reunion 1949-1999.

7. Australian Historical Theme: Governing

This theme group is as much about self-government as it is about being governed. It includes all the business of politics, including hostility to acts of government.[356]

7.1 NSW Historical Theme: Defence

The Gilgandra district does not occupy a strategic geographic position in Australia and has not been a place where defence works, fortifications or defence manufacturing have played a prominent role. Memorials and honour boards throughout the district remember people from the towns, villages and properties of the area who served in Australia's conflicts. Soldier Settlement communities throughout the district also recognise this service.

The area has been involved in preparations for the defence of Australia. Local rifle clubs have long held an ancillary role in defence preparations[357]. Almost every town in New South Wales had a Rifle Club, 'the result of a movement which started up in 1840'. The Gilgandra Rifle Club was called out to assist with the hunt for the Governor brothers in 1900 (refer to **Section 7.3 Law and Order**). These clubs were considered to be part of the defence capability of the colony. Following Federation in 1901 Rifle Clubs were brought under the control of the Commonwealth as part of a philosophy of creating a citizen army. During World War I there were 1,550 Rifle Clubs in Australia. These provided 26,000 volunteers for the A.I.F.[358] Tooraweenah Rifle Club was formed in he early 1900s[359].

During World War I the Gilgandra district saw the emergence of a unique form of recruitment that was to capture the imagination of the Australian nation and the British Empire. As the disaster of the Gallipoli adventure began to unfold during 1915 Australia was faced with an urgent demand for volunteers to replace the many killed and wounded on the peninsula. At the same time recruitment levels dropped off and the government searched for new ways to increase interest in army service.

Gilgandra butcher R.G. (Dick) Hitchen suggested that a route march[360] be organised to attract volunteers across a large tract of the state of New South Wales. Bill and Dick Hitchen brothers moved to Gilgandra from Mudgee late in the 19th century. Bill Hitchen established a plumbing business in Bridge Street and Dick set up a butchery next to Bill's house in Miller Street.[361]

As the two men sat on the kerbing in front of the Miller Street butcher shop sharing a pipe and a yarn they discussed the possibility of a 'snowballing recruiting march' to attract men to join the army. They made a formal proposal to the recruiting authorities

> *... for three great route marches – from north, west and south, gathering up recruits from every quarter of New South Wales and creating three armies that would have marched on Sydney together.*[362]

This brilliant marketing ploy with potential to impact on the whole state was rejected by those in authority as it would be 'too costly and cumbersome, and it would not be

[356] Australian Historic Themes Framework, 2001.
[357] Carmichael, D., 1991. *Timor Valley*. p.16
[358] Meredith, J., 1981. *The Coo-ee March*. p.11
[359] Willott, G., 1984. *A Hundred Years of Education in Tooraweenah*. p.11
[360] Meredith, J., 1981. *The Coo-ee March*. p.8
[361] Meredith, J., 1981. *The Coo-ee March*. p.11
[362] Meredith, J., 1981. *The Coo-ee March*. p.11

an effective means of getting volunteers'[363]. Undeterred the Hitchen brothers decided to act at a local level. They established a committee with members drawn from local organisations including the Gilgandra Progress Association, the Parents and Citizens Committee, Hospital Committee, Jockey Club, Rifle Club and Recruiting Association.[364] Committee members included Bill Hitchen, Alex (Joe) Miller and John Robert Lee[365].

The committee began organising and promoting the route march and raising funds to cover costs. It was estimated that an amount of £200 would be needed. Secretary Joe Miller 'issued appeals in the local newspapers and organised collections in Gilgandra'. The community rallied around the cause and £200 was raised within one week. The committee also obtained 'a wagonette and two horses, and stores and gear enough to fill 10 waggons.[366] During the week before the march was due to commence Joe Miller sent telegrams to towns along the route seeking their support and assistance. He followed this up by making the journey by car as far as Wellington with Mr. McManus to arrange details of welcome and recruiting functions.[367]

A Tobacco Evening was held on the night of 7 October 1915 'to provide smoking material for the men on their march to Sydney. The meeting was chaired by W.A. Barden, Shire President. Bishop Long from Bathurst also addressed the gathering. 'Donations consisted of 68 tins of tobacco and 45 plugs of tobacco, 90 packets of cigarettes and enough cash' to cover the cost of the evening. The following night a grand farewell ball was conducted at the Australian Hall.[368]

Within days of the planned commencement of the march the recruiting authorities in Sydney decided to provide their support. On Saturday 2 October Mr. E.H. Palmer, Assistant Secretary of the State Recruiting Campaign, arrived in Gilgandra to check on preparations. The day before the commencement of the march four army 'officers arrived to take charge of affairs'.

> *Captain T.A. Nicholas, of Dubbo camp, was appointed by the military authorities to command the men, and Major Wynne was sent by the State Recruiting Committee to accompany the men on the march and report on same. ... A Medical Officer, Dr. Burkett, with the rank of Captain to examine the men, and Captain Cooper to swear in volunteers for enlistment, completed the squad.*[369]

On Sunday 10 October 1915, following a combined church service and a series of speeches, 26 volunteers marched out of Gilgandra on their way to Sydney. The parade, led by six local young ladies on horseback, was farewelled by a crowd of 3,000 people and the whistles of railway locomotives and the Castlereagh Flour Mill as it headed for Balladoran.[370]

Over the next month the men marched through Eumungerie, Mogriguy, Brocklehurst, Dubbo, Wongarbon, Geurie, Wellington, Dripstone, Mumbil, Stuart Town, Molong, Orange, Spring Hill, Millthorpe, Blayney, Bathurst, Glanmire, Yetholme, Meadow

[363] Meredith, J., 1981. *The Coo-ee March*. p.14
[364] Meredith, J., 1981. *The Coo-ee March*. p.11
[365] Meredith, J., 1981. *The Coo-ee March*. p.12
[366] Meredith, J., 1981. *The Coo-ee March*. p.14
[367] Meredith, J., 1981. *The Coo-ee March*. p.14
[368] Meredith, J., 1981. *The Coo-ee March*. p.15
[369] Meredith, J., 1981. *The Coo-ee March*. p.17
[370] Meredith, J., 1981. *The Coo-ee March*. pp.21-27

Flat, Wallerawang, Lithgow, Katoomba, Lawson, Springwood, Penrith, Eastern Creek, Rooty Hill and Parramatta, reaching Sydney on 12 November 1915. When greeted in Sydney by tens of thousands of cheering people the group's number had grown to 263.[371]

The Coo-ee March, undertaken by the 'Great Men of the West', was hailed as a great success and firmly placed Gilgandra on the map.

> *By January 1916, four more marches were on the road. The Men From Snowy River marched from Delegate to Goulburn; The Inverell Kurrajongs to Narrabri; the Kookaburras from Tooraweenah to Bathurst , and the North Coast Boomerangs from Grafton to Maitland.*[372]

On Wednesday 12 January 1916 a group of 25 volunteers left the Mountain View Hotel in Tooraweenah[373]. This group included

> *... 6 recruits from Collie, 6 from Wongarbon, 6 from Coonamble, 3 from Gilgandra, 3 from Tooraweenah and 1 from Gulargambone. A number of men from Binnaway, Bugaldi (sic) and Coonabarabran, had intended to join the march there, but could not get to Tooraweenah in time.*[374]

Calling themselves the Kookaburras the marchers spent their first night in the woolshed at Yarragrin where they were joined by some of the Binnaway and Coonabarabran men. They marched through Mendooran, Boomley Railway Construction Camp, Cobbora, Dunedoo, Craboon, Birriwa, Tallawang, Gulgong, Mudgee, Havilah, Lue, Rylstone, Kandos, Ilford, Capertee, Cullen Bullen, Portland, Sunny Corner, Yetholme and Bathurst. By the time the Kookaburras reached Bathurst the group included 100 volunteers.[375]

The Kookaburra march was conducted by the NSW State Recruiting Committee, with the assistance of Bill Hitchen from Gilgandra. It was led by Lieutenant Middenway and David Hugh Spring of Gulgong who was known as 'Captain Hughie'. Local fundraising committees for the march had been organised 'at Mendooran, Cobbora, Dunedoo, Birriwa, Tallawang and other centres along the route of the march'. These committees made sure preparations were in hand to feed and house the marchers.

> *During the first week of January 1916 the Army Recruiting Staff toured the Gilgandra district addressing meetings at Collie, Gilgandra, Tooraweenah and other centres in connection with the proposed Kookaburra March*.[376]

Other marches undertaken during 1916 included the Kangaroos from Wagga Wagga to Sydney, the South Coast Waratahs from Nowra to Sydney, the Wallabies from Narrabri to Newcastle and the Dungarees from Warwick to Brisbane[377]. 'Captain Bill' Hitchen helped to organise the Kookaburra, Wallaby and Waratah marches before his embarkation for England in early 1916[378].

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[371] Meredith, J., 1981. *The Coo-ee March*. pp.29-74
[372] Meredith, J., 1981. *The Coo-ee March*. p.85
[373] Rohr, K. Notes on the History of Tooraweenah
[374] Cameron, R., 1996. *The Kookaburra March Through Mendooran & Dundeoo*. p.2
[375] Cameron, R., 1996. *The Kookaburra March Through Mendooran & Dundeoo*. pp.2-9
[376] Cameron, R., 1996. *The Kookaburra March Through Mendooran & Dundeoo*. p.2
[377] Meredith, J., 1981. *The Coo-ee March*. pp.85-89
[378] Cameron, R., 1996. *The Kookaburra March Through Mendooran & Dundeoo*. p.2

During the 1920s a volunteer-based light horse troop was formed in the Gilgandra district. This formed part of a Local Volunteer Horse Brigade that drew on men from throughout the west. In 1936 a Civil Militia Training Group was formed. This included the light horse volunteers who were asked to participate in the filming of Charles Chauvel's 'Forty Thousand Horsemen' in 1940. A number of the members of the volunteer militia served in the Australian Imperial Force during World War II.[379]

Local people remember motor vehicles fitted with gas producer units during World War II to reduce dependence on oil which was a precious strategic resource. Gilgandra Shire Council purchased a gas producer for its Dodge utility in November 1941 and in March 1942 it was decided to purchase seven steel charcoal kilns 'in case fighting broke out in Australia'[380]. Issues relating to motor vehicles occupied Council's attention on a number of occasions during World War II. After some negotiation with the Allied Works Council and payment of £1,250 the shire's Speed Patrol vehicle was released for use by that authority[381].

Local communities worked in many capacities to support the war effort. In January 1942 the Tooraweenah CWA established a special War Workers Committee to produce camouflage nets, socks, pullovers and balaclavas from raw homespun wool.[382] This type of activity was repeated by community organisations across the country.

During World War II charcoal was manufactured in the Breelong/Lincoln State Forest by civil internees of Italian and German origin (refer to **Section 3.8 Forestry**). Following the spectacular military successes of British Empire forces in North Africa in 1940 British authorities were saddled with responsibility for 130,000 Italian prisoners of war. The majority of these prisoners were transported to camps in Australia, India, South Africa and Ceylon (Sri Lanka). In April 1943 the Australian government gave approval for small groups of Italian prisoners of war to be employed on individual farms. The prisoners were to be paid by the employing farmers and provided with accommodation and food. [383] Gilgandra Shire Council applied on two occasions from 1943 onwards to have a Prisoner of War Control Centre established in the district. Council was unsuccessful and was told that insufficient prisoners were available for the establishment of such a centre.[384]

7.2 NSW Historical Theme: Government and administration

The earliest forms of government administration in the district came through the Commissioners of Crown Lands who controlled the occupancy of rural properties and administered justice along the frontier from 1839. The Commissioner:

> *... was in charge of the Border Police. His duties were also to collect the fees, check on the boundaries of the runs and settle disputes. He was generally to see the smooth running of the affairs in his district. The powers given to these men were very wide. They had the right to grant licences or terminate them at any time. In their district their word was law.*[385]

[379] Mudford, J.&C., 1988. *Breelong and Her Neighbours*. p.221
[380] Curran, J., 1991. *Gilgandra Shire Council*. p.43
[381] Curran, J., 1991. *Gilgandra Shire Council*. p.44
[382] Willott, G., 1984. *A Hundred Years of Education in Tooraweenah 1884-1984*. p.33
[383] Fitzgerald, A. 1981. *The Italian Farming Soldiers*. p.33
[384] Curran, J., 1991. *Gilgandra Shire Council*. p.47
[385] Pickette, J. & Campbell, M., 1983. *Coonabarabran as it Was in the Beginning*. pp.22-23

Graham 'King' Hunter was the first Commissioner appointed to the Land District of Bligh. In 1839 he cancelled the depasturing licence of the Cox brothers' superintendent Roger Heenan, and cancelled the ticket of leave of one of their employees for taking an Aboriginal woman at gunpoint. He is also known to have cancelled the licence of a man named Pearce for 'living in adultery with a white woman' and to have given 'the middle of one of James Walker's lightly stocked runs to somebody else because he found no stock there'[386].

As the European settlements developed during the 19th century increasing numbers of government services moved into the district. These included policing and courts (**Section 7.3 Law and Order**), postal and telegraphic services (**Section 3.3 Communication**), education (**Section 6.1 Education**) and health (**Section 3.9 Health**). Other services such as Aboriginal welfare (**Sections 2.1 Aboriginal cultures and interactions with other cultures** and **7.4 Welfare**) and forestry management (**Section 3.8 Forestry**)

Prior to 1906 small towns and rural localities depended on the New South Wales Government for many services. 'The police were the custodians of law and order, and attended to matters concerning sanitation and health'.[387] In 1906 Shire Councils were formed across New South Wales after the passage of the Local Government (Shires) Act in 1905[388].

A Progress Association had been formed in Gilgandra in January 1903 to press for improvements in and around the town. The first elected committee consisted of prominent citizens of the town, including R.G. Hitchen, J.H. Hitchen, A.E. Smith, A.A. Mudie, E. Marriott, M. Morris, J.J. Murray and H. Mitchell.[389]

Gilgandra Shire was proclaimed on 6 March 1906. The shire included the town of Gilgandra and the villages of Breelong, Collie, Curban, Tooraweenah and Tonderbine.[390] An interim council was appointed in May 1906 to make arrangements for the conduct of a council election for representatives of three ridings. The interim council consisted of:

James Barling – Bongeabong
James Alfred Berryman – Hillside, Curban
Henry William Mitchell – Gilgandra
James Patrick – Myall Park
Robert Ballantyne Sanderson – Yalcogrin

James Patrick resigned on 13 June 1906 and was replaced by Henry Gibson.[391]

From its first meeting on 8 December 1906 the elected council dealt with the minutiae of the regulation of animal slaughter, nuisances and road maintenance. Following representations from the council the NSW Government declared an urban area in Gilgandra on 8 August 1907.

[386] Rolls, E., 1982. *A Million Wild Acres*. pp.131-132 & 150
[387] Curran, J., 1991. *Gilgandra Shire Council*. p.7
[388] Curran, J., 1991. *Gilgandra Shire Council*. p.8
[389] Curran, J., 1991. *Gilgandra Shire Council*. p.7
[390] Curran, J., 1991. *Gilgandra Shire Council*. p.8
[391] Curran, J., 1991. *Gilgandra Shire Council*. p.12

> *With the proclamation of an Urban Area, Council assumed responsibilities in the area over land, buildings and sanitation. The powers of Council in the area were amended and extended from time to time.*[392]

During the middle years of the 20th century the Gilgandra Shire Council developed the local road network, arranged the construction of new bridges and presided over the development of local utilities including a reticulated water supply, power generating plant and electricity supply network and sanitation systems. These schemes are further explored in sections on Transport (**Section 3.15 Transport**) and Utilities (**Section 4.4 Utilities**).

A new Council Chambers was constructed in 1958 and opened by the Honourable J. B. Renshaw, Minister for Local Government and Highways on 24 October 1958[393].

7.3 NSW Historical Theme: Law and order

For thousands of years the various Aboriginal groups who lived in the region administered justice according to traditional law. With the coming of the Europeans this system of laws was broken down. The early European settlers had moved beyond the limits of settlement and civil authorities were not initially stationed in the region to regulate their activities. Despite this British law was considered to operate in the region. A punitive expedition by the NSW Mounted Police in 1837 appears to have been the first formal exercise of British law in the region (refer to **Section 2.1 Aboriginal cultures and interactions with other cultures**).

The first recorded murder of a European in the region occurred in the vicinity of Curban on 6 August 1839. On that morning a party comprising escaped convicts Llewellyn Powell, James Lynch and Charles Clip 'raided John Hall's Carlingoengoen Station near the Castlereagh River. Powell and Lynch had absconded from James Walker's Wallerawong Station and Ellis from one of Edwin Rouse's properties.[394] Seeking to rob the station they accosted James Hand and his wife Anne and ordered everyone in the huts to come out. They shot at the door of one hut and Abraham Meers, a dairyman employed by Mr Hall, fired from inside the hut.[395] Meers' shot slightly wounded Powell in the head[396].

After being promised that no harm would come to him Meers left the hut and dropped his weapon. He asked the bushrangers to put down their arms. Lynch was the only one who did so. Powell led Meers away from the hut and ordered him to go down on his knees.[397] He then fired a pistol shot at Meers who jumped up and began to beg for his life. Powell said that Meers had attempted to take his life and would be killed. He then shot Meers in the face with a musket and Lynch fired a second musket ball into Meers' head.[398] The gang then stole tea, sugar and some clothes from the hut. They also stole a horse, ordering James Hand to saddle it.[399] John Hall returned to the

[392] Curran, J., 1991. *Gilgandra Shire Council*. p.15
[393] Gilgandra Shire Council, 1958. Commemorating Opening of New Council Chambers at Gilgandra.
[394] Sydney Monitor & Commercial Advertiser, 19 August 1839
[395] Leslie, J., 1979. *From Stockyards to Streets*. *The Story of the Development of Coonamble N.S.W.,* p.5
[396] Sydney Monitor & Commercial Advertiser, 19 August 1839
[397] Leslie, J., 1979. *From Stockyards to Streets*. *The Story of the Development of Coonamble N.S.W.,* pp.5-6
[398] Sydney Herald, 4 November 1839
[399] Leslie, J., 1979. *From Stockyards to Streets*. *The Story of the Development of Coonamble N.S.W.,* pp.5-6

property some time after the gang had left and arranged for Abraham Meers to be buried not far from the house[400].

Later that day Powell, Lynch and Clip were arrested by a party of five men led by James Walker's Superintendent David Archer. This party included ticket-of-leave men Edward Jerry and John Patterson, and assigned convict Thomas Maddox. They had been seeking Powell's group after they had committed a number of other robberies in the region. At the time they encountered Powell's group they were unaware of the murder of Meers. Powell, Lynch and Clip were convicted of the murder of Meers and hanged in Sydney. As a reward for their effort in capturing the felons Jerry and Patterson were granted conditional pardons and Maddox a ticket-of-leave.[401]

The first police station in the Gilgandra district was established at Curban in 1880. This was later relocated to Gilgandra. The relocated building was demolished around 1931 and for a few years the police operated from a room in the Gilgandra Court House in Myrtle Street. The present Gilgandra Police Station was constructed in 1934.[402] A police station was established in Tooraweenah in 1901[403].

Courts of Petty Sessions were held in Gilgandra in June 1884 with a permanent Court not being appointed until July 1911. A Court House was constructed in Court Street some time around 1915 and relocated to its present site in Myrtle Street in April 1929.[404]

Bushranging continued to be a problem in the region for some decades. The bushranging pair Angel and Thurston were active in the area around the west and south of the Warrumbungle Range in the 1880s. Accounts of their exploits vary, but there is a consensus in Tooraweenah that Thurston, a young man from a local family, was lured into crime by Angel. According to Duke Tritton the pair 'had been doing a lot of cattle duffing and a little bushranging on the side' before being arrested and locked up at Coonamble[405]. Another account suggests that Thurston, 'using the alias Billy White was flung into prison in Coonamble for supposedly forging a cheque'. According to this account he came into contact with hardened criminal Thomas Hobson, who used the alias Mark Angel, in the Coonamble lockup. Angel apparently encouraged White to join him in an escape. In the process Constable Mitchell was shot dead. [406] Despite being leg-ironed and handcuffed the pair managed to travel 22 miles to Mungerie Station where they 'got rid of their irons' in a timber-getter's camp. The pair took refuge in the Warrumbungle Range near Box Ridge. Their hideout is still known as Angel's Gap. Sympathetic locals from Box Ridge alerted them of police movements using a system fires and smoke signals.[407] Apparently one of the servants at Dooroombah would hang a red sheet on the clothesline when the police were about, thus warning Angel and Thurston not to approach the station[408].

[400] Statement sworn by John Hall at Wellington, 20 August 1839.
[401] Leslie, J., 1979. *From Stockyards to Streets*. *The Story of the Development of Coonamble N.S.W.,* pp.6-7
[402] Back to Gilgandra Committee, 1937. *Back to Gilgandra Souvenir Booklet*. p.40
[403] Willott, G., 1984. *A Hundred Years of Education in Tooraweenah*. p.15
[404] Back to Gilgandra Committee, 1937. *Back to Gilgandra Souvenir Booklet*. p.41
[405] Tritton, D., 1964. *Time Means Tucker*. p.66
[406] Willott, B., 1984. *A Hundred Years of Education in Tooraweenah 1884-1984*. p.8
[407] Tritton, D., 1964. *Time Means Tucker*. p.66
[408] Information provided by Kath Rohr, Tooraweenah.

A force of mounted police was sent to Dooroombah in the hunt for Angel and White. The pair crossed the range into Belar Creek where they hid for two months while most of the valley's men were away taking their wool clip to Mudgee. Angel and White tried to escape to Mudgee but were caught by police near the Belifante Bridge close to Gulgong. A gun battle ensued in which White was shot dead and Angel died later of shotgun wounds.[409]

The most notorious of the bushrangers of the region were the Governor brothers who, using their exceptional bush skills, and evidently the assistance of the Aboriginal population of the region[410], led police on a frantic chase back and forth across the region between July and November 1900.

Jimmy Governor was born in 1875 on the Talbragar River. He was the 'son of Sam (later Thomas) Governor (or Grosvenor), a bullock driver, and his wife Annie, nee Fitzgerald'. Educated at a mission school at Gulgong, Jimmy was described as 'short, good looking and part-Aboriginal with reddish hair'. He worked for a time

> *... at Wollar before becoming a police tracker at Cassilis from 15 July 1896 to 18 December 1897. He returned to Wollar and, after woodcutting at Gulgong and wool-rolling at Digilbar, married on 10 December 1898 Ethel Mary Jane Page, a 16-year-old white woman, at the Church of England rectory, Gulgong.*[411]

In April 1900 the couple moved to Breelong where Jimmy had been engaged by John Mawbey to cut and split fence posts. He was joined by his brother Joe, nephew Peter Governor and two Aboriginal men named Jacky Underwood and Jackie Porter.[412]

According to E. G. Ellis, a delivery cart driver who befriended the Governors, Mawbey supplied the group with rations, cooking utensils and tools and they made a camp three miles from Mawbey's house. John Mawbey's two sons became very friendly with the Governors and 'played cricket with them on Sundays.[413] Ethel Governor would collect provisions from the Mawbey house.

> *Mrs Mawbey and the family kept her in her place. They were never nice or tolerant to her as she expected of them. The girls would quiz her and, as she thought, made fun of her and sneered at her position. This caused her to become spiteful towards them and gradually embittered the Aboriginals towards the women of the homestead, more especially Ellen Kerz, the governess, and Grace Mawbey, the daughter.*[414]

Ellen Kerz and Grace Mawbey apparently taunted Ethel Governor about marrying an Aboriginal and made fun of her baby. Injury was added to insult when Thomas Mawbey rejected a large number of the fence posts and refused to pay for them. Regardless of this Mawbey used the condemned posts 'in his fence without compensation'.[415] Feeling quite aggrieved the Governors began to talk about becoming bushrangers[416]

[409] Willott, B., 1984. *A Hundred Years of Education in Tooraweenah 1884-1984*. p.8
[410] Somerville, M. et al, 1994. *The Sun Dancin', People and Place in Coonabarabran*. p.116
[411] Governor, Jimmy (1875-1901) [Online]
[412] Governor, Jimmy (1875-1901) [Online]
[413] Ellis, E., undated. 'The Breelong Tragedy'. p.48
[414] Ellis, E., undated. 'The Breelong Tragedy'. p.48
[415] Ellis, E., undated. 'The Breelong Tragedy'. pp.49-51
[416] Governor, Jimmy (1875-1901) [Online]

The situation came to a head on the night of 20 July 1900. Jimmy Governor decided to confront the women at the homestead that night when John Mawbey was away at the post office which he conducted. He sent his wife Ethel and the baby to Dubbo. She called in at McDonald's New Breelong property near the Castlereagh River and told them that her husband was planning to murder the Mawbeys that night. 'Mrs McDonald thought she was queer and did not treat her seriously'. At 10:00pm Jimmy Governor and Jacky Underwood went to the homestead and confronted the women.

Jimmy Governor stated in evidence that Helen Kerz said: 'Pooh, you black rubbish, you want shooting for marrying a white woman'. Jimmy Governor and his companions went into a rage with nulla nullas (or boondees) and a tomahawk. They bashed Mrs Sarah Mawbey in her bed also bashed her niece Elsie Clark. Mrs Mawbey lived for two days and Elsie Clark was seriously injured but survived. Jimmy and Jacky were searching for young Bertie Mawbey when they saw Helen Kerz (aged 21) and young Grace Mawbey (aged 16) fleeing from the house towards the post office. They chased the young women down and killed them. Percy Mawbey (aged 14) and his sister Hilda (aged 11) ran towards the creek and were caught when Hilda tripped and fell beneath a large tree. [417]

Bertie Mawbey, who had hidden under a bed, raised the alarm. Percy McDonald from New Breelong also rode to Breelong in the morning to check on the property. He found groups of men on horseback and in vehicles heading to the Mawbey homestead. A.F. Garling, storekeeper of Gilgandra, took charge of the situation and organised a patrol of the area until the police arrived.[418]

Citizens of Gilgandra, including the Gilgandra Rifle Club, took part in the initial manhunt for the Governor brothers and Jacky Underwood. Five hundred people attended the funeral of Hilda, Grace and Percy Mawbey in Gilgandra. Children from the public school marched in the funeral procession to the cemetery.[419] Newspaper articles from the time reported that business in Gilgandra was at a standstill 'and every man who can leave his womenfolk in safety is joining the pursuit. … Everyone is armed'. Many women left farms and sought the safety of the town.[420] (Bartley undated:31)

> *Underwood was quickly caught but Jimmy and Joe Governor, calling themselves 'bushrangers', went on a fourteen-week, 2000-mile (3219 km) rampage, terrorizing a wide area of north-central New South Wales. Seeking revenge on persons who had wronged them, they killed Alexander McKay near Ulan on 23 July, Elizabeth O'Brien and her baby son at Poggie, near Merriwa, on 24 July, and Keiran Fitzpatrick near Wollar, on 26 July. After committing numerous robberies as far north as Narrabri, and in the Quirindi district, they moved into the rugged headwater country of the Manning and Hastings rivers, pursued by Queensland black trackers, bloodhounds and hundreds of police and civilians. Exulting in outwitting their pursuers, the Governors blatantly broadcast their whereabouts and wrote derisive notes to the police. On 8 October the government offered a reward of £1000 each for their capture.*[421]

[417] Ellis, E., undated. 'The Breelong Tragedy'. p.52
[418] Ellis, E., undated. 'The Breelong Tragedy'. p.52
[419] Bartley, B., undated. *The Mawbey Murder Papers*. pp.28-29
[420] Bartley, B., undated. *The Mawbey Murder Papers*. p.31
[421] Governor, Jimmy (1875-1901) [Online]

After his capture Jacky Underwood was taken to Gilgandra where he was 'charged with the murders at Breelong at Police Court' on 22 August 1900[422]. 'A large crowd of people witnessed his arrival' in Gilgandra and the courtroom was crowded for the court hearing[423]. He was tried and hanged at Dubbo. Jimmy Governor was captured at Bobin near Wingham on 27 October 1900 and was hanged at Darlinghurst Gaol on 18 January 1901. Joe was shot dead by John Wilkinson north of Singleton on 31 October 1900.[424]

John Mawbey sold the property soon after the murders. He requested that the gum trees under which Hilda was murdered should never be felled. He evidently told the buyers that they 'Nature's Monuments' to his murdered family.[425] The remaining large eucalypt died in 2008, a victim of the prolonged drought conditions prevailing in this part of the country. The house has not been occupied since 1900 but has been respected by the owners of the property. The structure of the house has gradually fallen but its outline is clearly visible.

7.4 NSW Historical Theme: Welfare

The concept of welfare as a function of government developed from liberal and socialist philosophies of the 19th century. The desire to create a society characterised by fairness and a just allocation of resources was one of the defining notions of the federated nation that was established on the Australian continent in 1901. This was a utopian notion that, in the eyes of many, failed to eventuate.

During the 19th century and much of the early 20th century welfare was provided by benevolent institutions, the churches and friendly societies such as the Order of Oddfellows. During the 20th century government became increasingly involved in the provision of welfare services.

Aboriginal Australians experienced one of the earliest exercises of a government sponsored welfare system. The NSW Aborigines Protection Board was established in 1883. This was the instrument of a philosophy that encouraged separation of Aboriginal people from mainstream society. The Board established Aboriginal reserves where Aboriginal people in residence were provided with rations[426] and given separate schooling. This system has been described by Aboriginal people as a way of putting people away 'out of sight and out of mind'[427]. This was a system of control. Aboriginal people were not permitted to drink in hotels and a curfew applied to their visits to towns such as Gilgandra.

From the mid 20th century this system of exclusion and separation was gradually broken down as prevailing government philosophies changed. From the late 1940s the system was altered to encourage Aboriginal people to move to town. Aboriginal people were forced to live on the fringes of the town until well into the 20th century in camps at Tin Town on the eastern side of the Castlereagh River and at The Pines near the Gilgandra railway goods yard.

[422] Bartley, B., undated. *The Mawbey Murder Papers*. p.2
[423] Bartley, B., undated. *The Mawbey Murder Papers*. p.11
[424] Governor, Jimmy (1875-1901) [Online]
[425] Bartley, B., undated. *The Mawbey Murder Papers*. p.26
[426] Somerville, M. et al, 1994. *The Sun Dancin', People and Place in Coonabarabran*. pp.135-136
[427] Somerville, M. et al, 1994. *The Sun Dancin', People and Place in Coonabarabran*. p.172

During the 1955 flood many people were moved from Tin Town and relocated to the Gilgandra Showground where they were accommodated 'under extremely unhygienic conditions'. Representations were made by Council to the Aborigines Protection Board to provide assistance to these victims of the flood.[428]

The Great depression, which began in 1929 and led to massive unemployment across the country, led governments to develop systems for the delivery of social welfare and to utilise unemployed people on infrastructure projects. Local councils were actively involved in the delivery of 'emergency relief work in lieu of the dole'. In Gilgandra relief projects were used to provide public amenities, including improvement of Gilgandra Park and construction of a concrete swimming pool[429].

During the final days of World War II Gilgandra Shire Council undertook a number of consultations regarding the development of housing within the town. A master plan was developed and arrangements were made for the Housing Commission to construct homes. These homes were to be available for rent only and not for sale.[430] An initial ten houses were constructed and by the end of 1946 the Housing Commission applied for permission to construct an additional ten[431].

[428] Curran, J. 1991. *Gilgandra Shire Council*. p.81
[429] Curran, J., 1991. *Gilgandra Shire Council*. p.36
[430] Curran, J., 1991. *Gilgandra Shire Council*. p.50
[431] Curran, J., 1991. *Gilgandra Shire Council*. p.54

8. Australian Historical Theme: Developing Australia's cultural life

Australians are more likely to express their sense of identity in terms of a way of life rather than allegiance to an abstract political ideal. One of the achievements of this society has been the creation of a rich existence away from the workplace. While some of the activities encompassed in this theme are pursued for profit – horse racing and cinema for instance – the reason for being is the sheer enjoyment of spectators. While many people could not pursue careers in art, literature, science, entertainment or the church without being paid, those activities do not fit easily into categories of economy or workplace.[432]

8.1 NSW Historical Theme: Creative endeavour

Creativity has no formal boundary. Our society generally recognises a divide between the professionally creative and amateurs. In the working communities of regional areas creativity has often been expressed as an extension of daily life. Some residents of these areas have followed creative professions while many members of the community have worked beyond their normal occupations to provide pleasure and entertainment to others. **Section 8.3 Leisure** includes description of community activities such as dances and balls, which involved creative endeavour.

Banjo Paterson's 1892 ballad 'Travelling Down the Castlereagh' succinctly captures the massive changes that occurred in rural work patterns in the late 19th century. In this song Paterson mentioned the issues of Chinese non-union labour being used in woolsheds 'along the Marthaguy'.

A band was formed in Gilgandra around 1909. The bandmaster was Tom Kift who 'conducted a hairdressing saloon and book exchange at the Railway Hotel'. This band apparently failed and attempts were made to form another band in 1910. The second band included Les McMillan, Alex Connelly, Bob Fleming, the Weaver brothers, Frank Collins of Wellington, Ben Boardman and Joe Ferguson. Arthur Weaver was the bandmaster. Instruments were purchased from Palings Ltd in 1911. The band attempted to enter the Coonamble eisteddfod in 1913 but were unsuccessful. The band collapsed and Arthur Weaver later moved to Coonabarabran where he formed a band.[433]

The band re-formed under the leadership of Wally Hayward and struggled on for some years under various bandmasters. The band faltered during World War I as many of its members had enlisted.[434] The Gilgandra Town Band led a torchlight procession through the town on the evening of Saturday 9 October 1915 in an effort to boost the number of recruits who had enrolled to set of on the Coo-ee March the following day[435]. The band were also in the lead of the parade that accompanied the departure of the Coo-ees on 10 October.[436]

8.2 NSW Historical Theme: Domestic Life

A number of histories of the region recall the rhythms of domestic life and the recurring task required to maintain a household. These rhythms swing around the relentless battles to feed families and maintain an acceptable level of cleanliness and

[432] Australian Historic Themes Framework, 2001.
[433] Back to Gilgandra Committee, 1937. *Back to Gilgandra Souvenir Booklet*. p.39
[434] Back to Gilgandra Committee, 1937. *Back to Gilgandra Souvenir Booklet*. p.39
[435] Meredith, J., 1981. *The Coo-ee March. Gilgandra-Sydney 1915*. p.18
[436] Meredith, J., 1981. *The Coo-ee March. Gilgandra-Sydney 1915*. p.26

hygiene. Scientific discoveries of the 19th century highlighted the need for domestic cleanliness to fight disease or the possibility of disease. During that century cleanliness came to be associated with moral virtue. The most despised in society were most often assessed in terms of perception of their cleanliness with 'moral sensibility' being presumed to be 'governed by the same mechanisms a physiological health'. Under this paradigm 'a poor or sick person' was considered 'likely to be a evil person'[437]. The antithesis of this was the notion that 'cleanliness next to godliness'.

Regardless of circumstances most women took great pride in the presentation of their houses. The women involved in the research of Somerville's history of Burra Bee Dee had many memories of the daily routine of washing bedclothes, scrubbing floors and scrubbing tables. Children were co-opted to assist in tasks that contributed to domestic maintenance.

There are many accounts of cooking with camp ovens on open fires well into the 20th century. Relative prosperity translates into the sophistication of domestic working arrangements. The wealthy have always employed servants or contractors to handle difficult or unpleasant domestic tasks. Retailers have long prospered selling appliances to reduce the drudgery of domestic toil. The advent of electricity in the 1930s created markets for newer innovations and introduced much of the gadgetry of the 20th century to the area.

Much analysis of gendered spaces within homes has been undertaken in recent decades. Whilst informative many of these analyses seem to come from an upper class perspective that failed to recognise the role of the back door as the 'normal' entrance to most Australian homes or the importance of the kitchen as a gathering place. Sound archaeological analyses of the use of space within the homes of working people recognise the importance of the kitchen as a place of warmth in winter and a place of light for all kinds of close work.[438]

In most Australian homes the front door was a place to meet the representatives of authority, the policeman or the minister and the parlour or lounge was only used to entertain such figures, or to lay out the bodies of the newly deceased.

The introduction of the radio, whether powered by mains electricity or a car battery, tended to reinforce the role of the kitchen as a gathering place. Over time the radio tended to move into the living room and television, when introduced, was often regarded as such a status symbol that it was given pride of place in the living room.

House design in the 20th century tended to alter to reflect the advantages of domestic innovations. Kitchens moved into the main building and by the 1920s housing designers were promoting the 'servantless' house that included the modern innovations of electric or gas hot water and cooking, and electric house cleaning. The Californian Bungalow of the same era invariably included the innovation of a low-walled sleepout or sleeping porch to facilitate the Australian practice of sleeping on camp beds outside an oppressively overheated house on hot summer nights.[439]

[437] Upton, D., 1992 'The City as Material Culture'. p.61
[438] Casey, M., 2004. 'Falling through the Cracks: Method and Practice at the CSR Site, Pyrmont'. pp.35-40
[439] Butler, G., 1997. *The Californian Bungalow in Australia*. pp.18-19

8.3 NSW Historical Theme: Leisure

Much of the recorded local history of the Gilgandra district recognises the importance of leisure activities that were often communal occasions. Such activities included picnics, sporting events (refer **Section 8.6 Sport**), amateur theatricals and dances. In the days before mass media people tended to make their own entertainments that were often seasonal or planned around specific events such as Christmas, Queen Victoria's Birthday (later Empire Day) or community organised carnivals. Balls and dances played an important role in bringing communities together.

The published histories of the area all tell of dances where the participants danced all night to the sound of local musicians. Well into the 20th century groups of musicians would gather to play for dances and other entertainments. During the 1890s

> *... dances were held in the Mechanics Institute with music played by Joe Hanson of Collie (on the violin) and Jack Collison, Charles Fowler and Bob Diggs playing concertinas. Parties rode up to 40 miles to attend country dances – the boys carrying the girls' bal gowns in front of their saddles, for a quick change on arrival. Families went in a buggy with children asleep under a rug on the floor.*[440]

Celebrated dance musician Frank Bourke and his White Rose Orchestra held the first of many famous circuit dances in Gilgandra Shire in 1946. The term 'circuit dance' was used by Frank to describe the promotion and management system he developed to allow the White Rose Orchestra to become:

> *... a full-time dance band. They would advertise a ball in a town, print their own tickets, run the dance themselves, pay the rent on the premises and pocket the profit – if any*.[441]

The townships of Tooraweenah, Armatree and Gilgandra were selected for the first test of this concept. Advance publicity took the form of 'sturdy cardboard posters', advertising the Bourke Brothers' Band, placed in cafes, hotels and shops in the towns three weeks before the dances.[442] Heading off to Tooraweenah to band set up in the hall for their first circuit dance. The band waited and nobody came They were about to pack up at 9:30pm when headlights were seen on the road. By 10:00pm 'the hall was filled with a happy dancing crowd' who had each paid 2s. 7d. for their tickets.[443]

Another successful dance was held at Armatree on the following night. As they travelled to Gilgandra it started to rain. They 'looked a comical sight as they climbed from their truck, dressed in dinner suits and bow ties, with their clothes all wrinkled, wringing wet and splattered with mud from head to foot!' That night the dance crowd consisted of 'twelve Gilgandra girls and two fellows from Binnaway', who were mates of the Bourkes. The dance tour netted the group £7 10s., which they divided among themselves.[444]

Dances and community events were held in all kinds of venues, including halls, shearing sheds and in houses. Many of the recorded leisure activities were held to raise money for the hospital or other community ventures.

[440] Dormer, M., 1983. *The Bushman's Arms*. p.17
[441] Meredith, J., 1986. *King of the Dance Hall*. p.39
[442] Meredith, J., 1986. *King of the Dance Hall*. p.39
[443] Meredith, J., 1986. *King of the Dance Hall*. p.40
[444] Meredith, J., 1986. *King of the Dance Hall*. p.41

Travelling boxing troupes were a regular feature of Australian shows. The beat of a drum ringing out across the showground was a clarion to the call "Who'll take a glove?", leading young men to try their strength, courage and skill against young hopefuls or former champions[445]. During hard times the prize money from tent bouts was a much sought after. For more information on boxing shows and local boxers see **Section 8.6 Sports**.

A Recreation Ground Committee was established in Tooraweenah during the early 1950s 'to provide a playing area, so that children need not play in the street. Fundraising included rabbit drives 'held on eight consecutive weekends. A barometer was set up in the hotel to record the progressive total of funds raised. Land was donated by the Council and local residents commenced the task of levelling the ground and installing a cement cricket pitch.' A railing fence was financed by an Unemployment Relief Grant.[446]

The first documented movie screenings in Gilgandra took place in the Coronation Hall on the corner of Miller and Wrigley Streets some time around 1908. It is quite likely that these movies were shown by a travelling picture show man using portable equipment.[447] In 1912 H. Gibson built 'a large picture and dance hall at the western end of Bridge Street'. This was called the Australian Hall[448]. The Australian Hall was the venue for the grand farewell ball held on the night of Friday 8 October 1915 for the 35 Coo-ee volunteers prior to their departure for Sydney[449].

Gibson's Pictures were advertising programs at the Australian Hall in 1916 and were also promoting open air movie screenings at The Crystal Palace Hall. The Crystal Palace Hall was in Miller Street and was used for a variety of purposes, including as a skating rink.[450] Gibson sold his operation to 'Messrs. Zaccour and Smith (the former lessee and manager). The partnership traded as the Gilgandra Picture Company … from 1917'. Herb Foran appears to have run the operation from 1924 and F. Brook from 1926.[451]

The New Australian Hall, built in Warren Road by Herb Foran, commenced movie screenings in 1923.

> *This venue proved to be the main entertainment venue in Gilgandra catering for films, concerts, balls, plays etc. On the left-hand side of the hall an open-air theatre was constructed and this was known as the Australian Pictures.*[452]

F. Brook eventually purchased the New Australian Hall and, having secured a monopoly on cinema operations in Gilgandra, decided to construct a single modern cinema. His Western Monarch Theatre in Miller Street was opened on 13 December 1934.[453]

[445] Corris, P., 1980. *Lords of the Ring. A History of Australian Prize Fighting*. pp.75-76
[446] Willott, B., 1984. *A Hundred Years of Education in Tooraweenah*. p.36
[447] Kennedy, G., 2000. 'The Film Theatres of Gilgandra'. p.16
[448] Kennedy, G., 2000. 'The Film Theatres of Gilgandra'. p.16
[449] Meredith, J., *The Coo-ee March. Gilgandra-Sydney 1915*. pp.15-17
[450] Kennedy, G., 2000. 'The Film Theatres of Gilgandra'. p.16
[451] Kennedy, G., 2000. 'The Film Theatres of Gilgandra'. p.16
[452] Kennedy, G., 2000. 'The Film Theatres of Gilgandra'. p.16
[453] Kennedy, G., 2000. 'The Film Theatres of Gilgandra'. p.16

> *The Western Monarch building incorporated many unusual features. It was of reverse (back to front) design with the screen at the street end of the auditorium. Very few theatres were built in this manner. Other examples include the Croydon Park Cinema in suburban Sydney, the Civic Theatre in Gladstone, Queensland and the former Maya Theatre in the country Victorian town of Morwell. No doubt the main reason F. brook used this design was to incorporate an open-air theatre at the back utilizing a common projection room and rotating projectors. The open-air theatres were often grandiosely named Picture Gardens.*[454]

The auditorium, seating 750 patrons, was relatively unadorned. Plaster panels were used to decorate the ceilings. An open-air cinema was located between the rear of the building and the Castlereagh River. This also had seating for 750 patrons on canvas deck chairs and wooden benches. The cinema did not have a conventional foyer but featured a recessed open-air lobby accessed directly from the street. A vestibule, running most of the length of the building and containing a ticket booth, provided access to the cinema hall and open-air cinema. A projection box, cantilevered from the rear of the building, contained projectors that could be swung to allow screenings in the cinema hall or the open air.[455]

The Western Monarch Theatre was operated by F. Brook from 1934 to 1937, A.G. McGowen from 1937 to 1939, G.H. Towart from 1939 to 1941 and F. Brook from 1941 to 1971[456]. F. Brook installed and operated a DC (direct current) electricity generating plant that provided electricity to Gilgandra until the construction of a transmission line from Dubbo in 1950[457].

After F. Brook's death the cinema was sold to Mrs Dohnt in 1973. 'Allan Dohnt operated the theatre up to the time it closed in 1983/84. The contents of the theatre were auctioned in June 1984 and the building sold to the Christian Outreach Centre.[458]

The recessed entry area was enclosed to form four shops and an entrance to the Christian Outreach Centre. The front of the former dress circle was walled in to form a meeting area and a false ceiling hung over the stalls area, which is now used for church services.[459] The former projection box has been demolished but its supporting cantilever structure has been retained.

The current Fruit Mart, located next to the former Western Monarch Theatre, has a façade that mimics its larger neighbour. It is assumed that this building was constructed at the same time as the cinema to serve as a milk bar and refreshments area.

From the late 19th century the Warrumbungle ranges became a popular recreation place for residents of the region. During the 1890s Ernest Drocker, also known as Judge Drocker, travelled to the Warrumbungles region and took a series of stereographic photographs of the area[460]. Drocker's photographs not only have

[454] Kennedy, G., 2000. 'The Film Theatres of Gilgandra'. p.16
[455] Kennedy, G., 2000. 'The Film Theatres of Gilgandra'. pp.17-18
[456] Kennedy, G., 2000. 'The Film Theatres of Gilgandra'. p.19
[457] Curran, J., 1991. Gilgandra Shire Council. various
[458] Kennedy, G., 2000. 'The Film Theatres of Gilgandra'. pp.19-20
[459] Kennedy, G., 2000. 'The Film Theatres of Gilgandra'. p.20
[460] Whitehead, J., 2008. *The Warrumbungles*. p.196

wonderful landscape value but also include images of persons who trekked into the mountains with him.

From the early 1930s the area attracted the attention of Sydney bushwalkers and rock climbers, including the members of the 'Mountain Trails Club and Dr Eric Dark and Dot Butler, the 'barefoot bushwalker'. In 1937 Myles Dunphy, Secretary of the National Parks and Primitive Areas Council, lodged a proposal for the creation of a 'Warrumbungles National Monument Reserve'. Some concern was expressed that substantial parts of the proposed area were held under Crown Leases. This concern was partly allayed when Alfred Pincham, offered to donate a substantial part of his property 'Strathmore', including some of the most spectacular features of the range, to facilitate creation of the reserve.[461] When the Warrumbungle National Park was eventually gazetted in late 1953 'it consisted of a total area of 3,360 ha, extracted from the leases held by A.J. Pincham and his neighbour, Leo Gale[462].

A Trust was established to manage the Park, with trustees being appointed from the Department of Lands, the National Parks and Primitive Areas Council, Coonabarabran, Coonamble and Gilgandra Shire Councils and the local community. Norman Bruce Pincham also represented landowners.[463] The trust set about with the tasks of park management, including developing visitor facilities and walking tracks.

As part of this strategy the Trust resolved in August 1956 to develop campsites once maps were available. In December 1956 Keith Blackman offered land for the development of a camp site on Wambelong Creek. This was later developed as Canyon Camp. By February 1957 a decision had been made to proceed with the development of Wambelong Camp, just upstream from the sire offered by Blackman.[464]

On 26 May 1957 £500 was allocated by the Trust for the construction of No 2 Camp. This site was later to be named Camp Pincham after the late Alfred Pincham. In August 1957 it was decided to construct a road from Wambelong (Burbie) Camp to Camp Pincham. In November 1957 the Trust agreed on the location at Camp Pincham of a memorial for Alfred Pincham, and on wording for this monument.[465] A shelter shed at Camp Pincham was completed in November 1957. The Trust noted in its minutes that the shelter needed a more secure roof and a water tank.[466] By May the following year the shed had been completed by volunteers from Coonabarabran[467].

In 1959 four tram bodies were acquired at a cost of £150 each to provide accommodation within the national park[468]. These were modified to provide two accommodation units in each tram, having been fitted with extended roofs and ex-Railways Department washbasins. By 1960 six of these trams were in position at Canyon Camp[469]. The Warrumbungle National Park Trust held meetings in one of the trams[470].

[461] Fox, P., 1996. *Warrumbungle National Park*. p.63
[462] Fox, P., 1996. *Warrumbungle National Park*. p.66
[463] Whitehead, J., 2008. *The Warrumbungles*. p.237
[464] Whitehead, J., 2008. *The Warrumbungles*. pp.239-240
[465] Whitehead, J., 2008. *The Warrumbungles*. p.240
[466] Whitehead, J., 2008. *The Warrumbungles*. p.240
[467] Whitehead, J., 2008. *The Warrumbungles*. p.241
[468] Whitehead, J., 2008. *The Warrumbungles*. p.244
[469] Whitehead, J., 2008. *The Warrumbungles*. p.250
[470] Whitehead, J., 2008. *The Warrumbungles*. p.295

The condition of the trams deteriorated by the late 1960s and in 1967 it was recommended to the Trust that they 'be closed for six months because of a shortage of funds and staff'[471]. By 1973 the trams were in very poor condition and from 7 October 1973 Warrumbungle National Park Trust meetings were transferred to the Pincham Woolshed[472]. According to John Whitehead:

The Warrumbungle National Park Trust had its early meetings in the various Council Chambers and when the trams were installed, when vacant, the meetings were held in one of them. … The trams were very uncomfortable so when the former Strathmore woolshed became available, it was set up as a meeting and camp venue. The new Tourist information centre was used until the area became a District. The woolshed was used for six meetings up to the end of 1975. … A swag on the floor of the woolshed after a few reds around the camp fire are memorable.[473]

The Trust appointed Carl Dow as Park Ranger in September 1958. By December that year Dow had commenced track building in the Belougery Split Rock area. Trust Secretary Alick Gould of Coonabarabran was so impressed with his progress that he recommended the appointment of an assistant.[474] By 1959 the track from the Breadknife to Dagda in the Grand High Tops had been completed. Dow's talent for track building was described as follows:

> *I could do no more than marvel at the dedication of this man and the magnitude of the work he was performing. No matter what size the rock that blocked his path, he and his assistant were capable of removing it with a minimum of damage.* [475]

While working in the Grand High Tops area Carl Dow camped in a sheltered valley with a permanent creek below the site of the present Balor Hut[476].

During the 1950s and 1960s a number of huts were constructed at various points around the Grand High Tops. Dow's Hut, named in June 1959[477], appears to have been the first of these. Carl Dow resigned as Park Ranger in 1962 and was replaced by his brother-in-law, Henry Innes who was appointed as a full-time ranger. Huts were constructed at Danu and Ogda Gaps in 1963[478] and Ranger Hut at Camp Pincham in 1966[479]

According to the minutes of the Warrumbungle National Park Trust construction of Balor Hut commenced in March 1965[480]. A separate reference in the Trust minutes states that construction started in 1967[481]. This may refer to the completion of the hut. Carl Dow is credited with having built Balor Hut, however he had left the Trust's employment well before construction commenced. According to Carl's son Arthur it

[471] Whitehead, J., 2008. *The Warrumbungles*. p.283
[472] Whitehead, J., 2008. *The Warrumbungles*. p.295
[473] Whitehead, J., 2008. *The Warrumbungles*. p.298
[474] Whitehead, J., 2008. *The Warrumbungles*. p.242
[475] Whitehead, J., 2008. *The Warrumbungles*. p.244
[476] Information provided by Arthur Dow, Warrumbungle National Park. 26 February 2008.
[477] Whitehead, J., 2008. *The Warrumbungles*. p.244
[478] Whitehead, J., 2008. *The Warrumbungles*. p.254
[479] Whitehead, J., 2008. *The Warrumbungles*. p.257
[480] Whitehead, J., 2008. *The Warrumbungles*. p.257
[481] Whitehead, J., 2008. *The Warrumbungles*. p.283

is most likely that the hut was constructed by Henry Innes. The hut was apparently located to be close to a waterhole below Balor Peak. [482]

Balor Peak, like a number of other features on the Grand High Tops, was named on the suggestion of Myles Dunphy who wished to apply the names of Gaelic deities to points of interest in the park. Balor was king of Formor – 'Balor of the death-dealing eye; Balor of the mighty blows'[483].

In 1973 the first National Parks and Wildlife Service Plan of Management was prepared for Warrumbungle National Park. That year Park Ranger Dick Duggan and Trust Committee Member and Honorary Ranger John Whitehead undertook an inspection of all hut locations. They noted that visitors were dumping rubbish at all hut sites. Whitehead noted that 'all huts except Balor were eventually removed because of pollution problems'[484]. Balor Hut as the last of five such huts originally constructed along the Pincham Trail[485]. In recent years a skillion-roofed verandah has been added to the western side of the hut to provide shelter for walkers and a composting toilet constructed on the northern side of the saddle. The hut is managed by the Coonabarabran Bushwalking Club.

8.4 NSW Historical Theme: Religion

At the end of the 19th century religion in regional New South Wales was generally an identifier of the place from which individuals had emigrated, or in which their parents were born. '… Scots tended to be Presbyterians, the English Anglicans and the Welsh, Methodist while 70 per cent of the Irish were Catholics, the remainder being Anglican or Presbyterian. Some Germans were Catholics, some Lutheran.'[486] Old enmities from reformation era Europe and from the English conquests of the British Isles tended to create a Protestant-Catholic divide that lasted well into the 20th century.

Various denominations worked to create their own education structures to reinforce their doctrinal position to young adherents (refer to **Section 6.1 Education**). Perhaps the most successful of these was the Catholic education system which relied heavily on the sacrificial service of members of the teaching orders such as the Sisters of Mercy and Sisters of St Joseph. In celebrating the centenary of the work of the Sisters of Mercy in the Catholic Diocese of Bathurst in 1966 Bishop Albert Thomas said:

> *The pattern has not varied much, the duties have always been the same and the performance of the duties likewise the same. Children to be taught the Love of God, adults to be brought back from the wayward path, charity expressed for the love of Christ – these were and still are the purposes why the Sisters came, why they worked …*[487]

In the 19th century and though much of the 20th century the practice of Christianity was considered by many to be a vital aspect of citizenship. Much effort was made to bring Aboriginal people and immigrants from non-Christian countries under the influence of Christian teaching. Traditional aboriginal belief systems and practices demonstrated an inextricable link between land, people and belief. As mentioned in **Section 2.1 Aboriginal cultures and interactions with other cultures** these links

[482] Information provided by Arthur Dow, Warrumbungle National Park. 26 February 2008.
[483] Fox, P., 1996. *Warrumbungle National Park*. p.76
[484] Whitehead, J., 2008. *The Warrumbungles*. p.329
[485] National Parks and Wildlife Service, 2002. Warrumbungle National Park Guide to Walks. p.18
[486] Cremin, A., 2001. *1901 Australian Life at Federation: An Illustrated Chronicle*, p.74
[487] Sisters of Mercy, 1966. *Sisters of Mercy – Bathurst 100 years – 1866-1966*, Foreword

were largely broken during the period of European colonisation of the area. 'In many cases, white settlers and missionaries actively expunged Wiradjuri and Gamilaroi (Gamilaraay) cultural traditions in an attempt to 'civilise' and 'assimilate' Aboriginal people into white society.'[488] Aboriginal people also ministered to their communities with missions and other church organisations. In the early 20th century Sam Smith from Burra Bee Dee near Coonabarabran travelled around the region on such missions. During the 1950s Pastor Naden travelled the region from the Lachlan to Gulargambone in his red two-ton table top truck fitted out with a bed, table fridge and camping gear covered with a solid roof and sides.[489]

Special missions were also established in Western New South Wales to bring Christianity to Chinese immigrants. In the late 19th century the Methodist, Presbyterian and Anglican churches appointed Chinese-speaking ministers to carry out missionary tours throughout the colony.[490]

The Christian denominations also worked hard to reach their own nominal adherents in isolated localities. Churches were active in Gilgandra in the 1880s. When a dedicated school building was constructed in 1884 (refer to **Section 6.1 Education**) application was made for use of the school's tent for church and Sunday School purposes[491]. By 1897 the protestant denominations had built a Union Church in Wrigley Street, Gilgandra on the site of the existing Masonic temple[492].

After its formation in 1903 the Anglican Brotherhood of the Good Shepherd was quite active in the region around Gilgandra with its missionaries regularly travelling to outlying communities to minister the faith. In 1911 three bush brothers based in Gilgandra 'served 4,000 Anglicans in an area between Moriguy to Gulargambone, Collie to Mendooran, and from the Coboco Creek to the Warrumbungle Mountains. Each month they visited twenty six bush schools and eighteen centres for Sunday services, travelling on horseback along rough and poorly marked tracks.'[493] Prominent members of the Brotherhood included John Oliver Feetham, The Bushman Saint. Feetham House in Myrtle Street is named for John Feetham. A brief biography is included in **Section 9.2 Persons**.

The existence of places to worship was of equal, if not greater, importance to many of the people of New South Wales. As communities were established moves were made to create spaces and buildings for the practice of religious observances. Early settlers experienced isolation from the clergy of all Christian denominations. The first clergyman to visit the Castlereagh region was the Presbyterian Rev. Colin Stewart who made regular visits from his home in the Lithgow Valley from 1839[494]. As Stewart was under the patronage of Andrew Brown of *Cooerwull* it is not surprising that he included the Brown and Walker properties of the Castlereagh on his itinerary.

An Anglican priest travelled from Dubbo to conduct Evensong in the little Union Church on the second Sunday of each month. The Anglican Church of the Resurrection was constructed between September 1902 and March 1903.

[488] Fox, P., 1996. *Warrumbungle National Park*. p.48
[489] Kabaila, P., 1996. *Wiradjuri Places The Lachlan River Basin*. p.75
[490] Wilton, J., 2004. *Golden Threads: The Chinese in Regional New South Wales 1850-1950*, pp.99-101
[491] Gilgandra Public School Centenary Committee, 1981. *Gilgandra Public School Centenary 1881-1981*. p.6
[492] King, K., 2005. *Church in the Australian Bush*. p.5
[493] King, K., 2005. *Church in the Australian Bush*. p.20
[494] Pickette, J & Campbell. M., 1983. *Coonabarabran as it Was in the Beginning*. p.95

An Anglican priest travelled from Dubbo to conduct Evensong in the little Union Church on the second Sunday of each month.[495] The Anglican Church of the Resurrection was constructed between September 1902 and March 1903. This building had inadequate foundations and was subject to the movement of the area's reactive soils. By the end of World War I it was falling into disrepair. A sub-committee of the church Vestry was formed to consider options for fundraising to support the construction of a new church.[496]

At the end of the Great War the people of Bournemouth in England decided to offer '£1,200 as a peace offering to the town in the Empire outside England which had a good Church and War-service record'. This money was to be used to build a new church. Through the representations of Bishop Long of Bathurst in England Gilgandra was chosen over Moosejaw, Canada in 1919. The town was largely chosen because of the recruitment movement that started in Gilgandra with the Coo-ee March. The total of money raised locally and money donated by Bournemouth was insufficient to construct the desired church building. The Vestry sub-committee had envisaged a building capable of accommodating 500 people. By January 1920 the Vestry sub-committee was making arrangements to obtain a loan for an additional £2,000. Architect Louis Williams of Melbourne firm North and Williams prepared a Gothic Revival design and the tender of builder Mr. Ryan of Dubbo was accepted for construction in April 1921. The total construction cost was to be £4,200.[497]

A foundation stone had been laid by NSW Governor Sir Walter Davidson on 22 November 1920. As an economy measure the last bay in the western end of the building was omitted. Half of the original Church of the Resurrection was kept in place to accommodate worship as construction of the new building progressed. The Church of St Ambrose was consecrated by Bishop Long on 26 July 1922. Despite the church's previous experience with the reactive soils of the site the new church was built won very shallow foundations. Over time the ground has moved, causing cracks in the floors, walls and roof. In 1967 advice was sought on the cost of underpinning the foundations. This was estimated at $22,000.00. Twice this amount would have provided a new church.[498] Foundation weakness continues to be a problem.

By 1912 the Presbyterians of Gilgandra were in a position to construct a church building and decided to 'build one that would meet the requirements of a growing congregation for some time'. A building capable of seating 250 people was designed by Messrs. Power and Andrews of Sydney. Mr. R. J. Carson undertook construction under the supervision of Mr. Watson, architect of Dubbo.[499]

The first Roman Catholic Church in Gilgandra was constructed in Morris Street in 1900 on a site purchased from Mrs Miller. The small wooden structure measuring 15 feet by 20 feet was located next to the Chinnock Private Hospital. A convent was erected in 1908 'under the guidance of Father Barry of Coonabarabran' and sisters of the Order of St Joseph moved to Gilgandra from Perthville to begin teaching the Roman Catholic children of the district. Father Parker was the appointed as first Parish Priest for Gilgandra in 1913. He lived in rented cottage in Myrtle Street. A new Catholic Church was constructed in 1914. A presbytery and convent were constructed

[495] King, K., 2005. *Church in the Australian Bush*. p.5
[496] King, K., 2005. *Church in the Australian Bush*. p.37
[497] King, K., 2005. *Church in the Australian Bush*. p.37
[498] King, K., 2005. *Church in the Australian Bush*. pp.38-44
[499] Back to Gilgandra Committee, 1937. *Back to Gilgandra Souvenir Booklet*. p.55

soon after. The current St Joseph's Catholic Church was consecrated on 22 December 1974. [500]

A Methodist church was constructed in Gilgandra in 1910. The area had first been visited by a Methodist minister, Rev. J.S. Morris-Taylor in 1882. From his base in Dubbo he ministered at '32 preaching places' in the region. In 1889 Rev. W.F. Oakes was appointed to Coonamble. He held services in the Good Templars' Hall in Gilgandra. The Methodists were one of the protestant denominations to use the Union Church after its construction in 1897. The first permanent minister to Gilgandra, Rev. S. Bostock Jones, was appointed in 1910. A Methodist missionary Mr. Winn had served in a pastoral role prior to this. A Methodist church was constructed in 1910.[501]

Lutheran settlers from South Australia moved into the Gilgandra district in the 1890s to take up land. As these settlers established themselves they began to meet for worship in private homes. The first Lutheran meeting place in the district was the home of Mr J.G. Scholz who lived 'about four miles from Gilgandra on the Bearbong Road'. The homes of the Hanckel and Linke families between Biddon and Gilgandra were also used for worship. Lutheran ministers travelled from the Riverina and from Sydney to minister to the spiritual needs of Lutheran families in the district, including 'the Scholz, Hanckel, Reichelt, Linke and Semmler families'.[502]

Two Lutheran congregations were established in 1913 under the leadership of Rev. R.E. Graebner of Sydney. The congregations commenced services in the Methodist Church at Biddon and in the Union Hall at Gilgandra. Gilgandra services were later moved to the home of M. G. Molkentin. The first resident pastor, Rev. C. Venz, arrived in 1920. His parish extended 'from Biddon and Gilgandra in the north to Alectown and Forbes' in the south. He travelled this vast district on a motorbike.[503]

The Gilgandra congregation constructed a gothic style church in Elizabeth Street in 1925 using cement blocks. The Rev. W. Lehmann joined the church in the same year and was replaced by Rev. T. Koch in 1926. In 1933 the parishes of Gilgandra and Biddon formed a separate parish. Services continued to be held at Gilgandra and Biddon and preaching was conducted at Bearbong and Eumungerie.[504]

The Butler family, moving into the district in 1913 from the Western District of Victoria, began meetings of the Church of Christ in their home. They were joined by the Mudford family and a tent mission was held in 1926. From this time meetings were held in the I.O.O.F. Hall and a chapel was built in Warren Road in 1927.[505]

The built heritage of the Gilgandra Shire reflects the ascendancy of Christianity in its towns and villages. The district has collection of Anglican, Catholic, Methodist, Lutheran and Presbyterian Churches that were built by public subscription and community effort. Small church buildings, such as the Warrumbungle Community Church dot the rural landscape. Gilgandra also features places of worship of non-conformist Protestant denominations.

[500] Back to Gilgandra Committee, 1937. *Back to Gilgandra Souvenir Booklet*. p.53
[501] Back to Gilgandra Committee, 1937. *Back to Gilgandra Souvenir Booklet*. p.50
[502] Back to Gilgandra Committee, 1937. *Back to Gilgandra Souvenir Booklet*. p.56
[503] Back to Gilgandra Committee, 1937. *Back to Gilgandra Souvenir Booklet*. p.56
[504] Back to Gilgandra Committee, 1937. *Back to Gilgandra Souvenir Booklet*. pp.56-57
[505] Back to Gilgandra Committee, 1937. *Back to Gilgandra Souvenir Booklet*. p.58

8.5 NSW Historical Theme: Social Institutions

Australian communities share common threads of community endeavour. Social organisation, social services and social cohesion have long been supported by societies established for the good of their members and/or the good of the community. Volunteer effort drives and sustains many of these institutions. The built environment is studded with buildings, monuments and works which stand as testament to the development and impact of these organisations.

One of the most enduring of these is the Country Women's Association which was founded in New South Wales in April 1922. Formed to foster the 'community spirit' and a sense of 'self help'[506], the CWA has branches in almost all communities and is active in providing a focus for the women of the country. Early campaigns of the CWA included ongoing lobbying and agitation to improve women's health services and create maternity and mother care facilities in public health facilities[507]. CWA Branches continue to raise money for charities and community projects, as well as catering for social functions. The CWA was established in Gilgandra in December 1922. One of the earliest General Conferences of the Association was held in Gilgandra[508].

In 1926 a fund was inaugurated in honour of the Gilgandra branch's first President, Mrs McKellar, who died that year. This fund supported a bed in the Gilgandra District Hospital named the 'Mrs McKellar Memorial Bed'. The branch also began agitating for a Welfare Nurse to be employed in Gilgandra. In 1932 a health centre was established and a nurse from Dubbo began weekly visits. The Directors of the Western Stores and Edgeleys Ltd made the health centre was made possible by the making space available in their store.[509]

The branch also operated a Rest Room in Miller Street between 1929 and 1930 and in 1930 money was raised towards the construction of a mortuary at the Gilgandra District Hospital. The CWA also operated a second-hand clothing depot at the Council Chambers during the Great Depression.[510] A dedicated CWA building, 'comprising baby health centre, rest room, meeting room and kitchen was constructed in 1939 at one corner of Gilgandra Park in Warren Road. The baby health sister began her weekly consultations from this building. The service was later extended to two days per week. In 1968 the building was extended to incorporate a new baby health centre.[511]

In smaller communities the CWA facilities are often combined with the community hall. Armatree and Tooraweenah have a dedicated CWA halls. On 25 April 1925 a meeting was held to establish the Tooraweenah Branch of the Country Women's Association. A weatherboard building in Denham Street was purchased as a rest room. The cost of £160 was partly covered by a loan deposit provided by Charles Rohr. This building had been a wool and skin store, public library and roller skating rink. CWA meetings were held on the last Saturday of each month.[512]

[506] Kingston, B. (ed.), 1977. *The World Moves Slowly*. p.36
[507] Kingston, B. (ed.), 1977. *The World Moves Slowly*. p.36
[508] Back to Gilgandra Committee, 1937. *Back to Gilgandra Souvenir Booklet*. p.26
[509] Back to Gilgandra Committee, 1937. *Back to Gilgandra Souvenir Booklet*. p.26
[510] Back to Gilgandra Committee, 1937. *Back to Gilgandra Souvenir Booklet*. p.26
[511] Hickmont, R., & Curran, J., 1976. *Back to Gilgandra Week*. p.24
[512] Willott, B., 1984. *A Hundred Years of Education in Tooraweenah*. p.23

In January 1942 a meeting was held in the CWA Hall to establish a special War Workers Committee. The committee produced camouflage nets, socks, pullovers and balaclavas from raw homespun wool.[513] In 1970 Rose Sheldon was made a life member of the Tooraweenah CWA in recognition of 40 years of service[514]. A baby health centre was established at the Tooraweenah CWA Hall in the mid 1970s with a clinic sister in attendance every fortnight.

A number of friendly societies and lodges have operated in Gilgandra. In the days before large-scale government funded co-operative social welfare societies provided health and sickness benefits to members. These societies were also a point of social networking for people moving between communities. Lodge and society members often found referrals for employment or other assistance through these groups.

The Hibernian Australian Catholic Benefit Society (HACBS) opened a branch in Gilgandra in February 1915. The society paid sickness payments to its members and also operated a funeral fund. A welfare fund also provided 'assistance to distressed members' and funds from the society helped to pay the education expenses of young men seeking to enter the Catholic Priesthood on a needs basis.[515]

The Manchester Unity Order of Oddfellows (M.U.I.O.O.F.) also operated in Gilgandra. the Loyal Federal Lodge was formed in 1900 'under the jurisdiction of Bathurst'. The Independent Order of Oddfellows (I.O.O.F.) established a Lodge in April 1902, holding their first meeting in Bob Townsend's dining room in Bridge Street[516]. The Lodge later constructed its own hall.

Efforts to establish a Masonic Lodge in Gilgandra commenced in 1905 however there was insufficient interest to formally establish a group in the town. By 1909 11 locals were interested and held a meeting at the Royal Hotel. Discussions continued until 1911 when the group formally petitioned for a charter to be granted. Lodge Warrumbungle No.277 was consecrated on 5 September 1911 and a Lodge Room dedicated to Masonry by Very Worshipful Brother F.W. Cracknell on 25 September 1923. The original Lodge Hall was a small weatherboard building that had been constructed as a Union Church. This building, located on the site of the present Masonic Temple, was burnt down during the 'fire epidemic' of the 1920s. All of the Lodge's furniture and some regalia were destroyed in the fire. Meetings were held in the Church of England Hall until the present Lodge Room was constructed. [517]

8.6 NSW Historical Theme: Sport

Human beings have always engaged in competitive activities that have been designed to train members of society for work or war. Team sports have also been used to enhance social cohesion and redirect individual attention away from social or economic hardships. In regional areas sports have provided opportunities for communities to connect with neighbours and with persons in other communities. Tennis provides a powerful example of the role of sports in community development within the former Gilgandra Shire.

Tennis courts, and the remnants of tennis courts, dot the landscapes of almost all current and former communities. It is also unusual for pastoral properties to be

[513] Willott, B., 1984. *A Hundred Years of Education in Tooraweenah*. p.33
[514] Willott, B., 1984. *A Hundred Years of Education in Tooraweenah*. p.48
[515] Back to Gilgandra Committee, 1937. *Back to Gilgandra Souvenir Booklet*. p.31
[516] Back to Gilgandra Committee, 1937. *Back to Gilgandra Souvenir Booklet*. p.32
[517] Back to Gilgandra Committee, 1937. *Back to Gilgandra Souvenir Booklet*. p.38

without a tennis court. Tennis was particularly popular from the 1920s to the 1970s. When the soldier settlement community was establishing itself on the former Tondeburine and Bedford Park runs in the early 1950s a tennis club was seen as a priority. At a meeting on 1 April 1951 Carl Reitke offered land on a corner of his block for the establishment of tennis courts. The community commenced construction of courts and a year later a clubhouse was built. The clubhouse served as the first school in the area.[518]

Cricket has long been popular with communal cricket grounds being developed in many places. In the days when rural stations retained large numbers of hands many properties fielded their own cricket teams. The Tondeburine-Bedford Park soldier settler community constructed a cricket pitch near its tennis court in 1953[519].

Informal horse racing events have been held in the region from the early days of European settlement. The Gilgandra Jockey Club was formed some time around 1900 and the first race meetings held in a paddock near the site of the former Castlereagh Flour Mill. In 1905 a site of 100 acres was vested in a group of trustees. The original trustees were T. Gardiner, J.H. Hitchen, J.W. Lithgow, H. Gibson and M. Morris. This site is the location of the current racecourse. The area was fenced and tenders called for site clearing and the racetrack marked out. A grandstand was apparently erected during 1906.[520]

Polo was played in the Gilgandra district from 1905. E. Beveridge or *Tuglands*, Gilgandra established a polo club in 1922. The club held annual tournaments for many years with players competing for the Gilgandra Challenge Cup and the Warrumbungle Cup. The Gilgandra Challenge Cup was sponsored by Mr W. Dowling of *Gumin*.[521]

A Pastoral and Agricultural Association was established in Gilgandra in 1911. Its first general meeting was held at the Imperial Hotel on 25 May and a management committee elected. This meeting also resolved to investigate the availability of suitable sites for a show ground.[522] A report to the management meeting held on 11 September 1911 indicated that the Department of Lands had agreed to the allocation of a parcel of land 'adjoining the railway station. The committee agreed that a parcel of 40 acres should be applied for. The first agricultural show was held at the Gilgandra Race Course in May 1912 with 800 entries being received for competition.[523]

A Pastoral and Agricultural Society was formed in Tooraweenah 'through the efforts of Mr Thomas Sheldon, who personally canvassed the district for members. The first show was held in August 1914. Sheldon was one of the main horse exhibitors for many years and his family were active in other sections.[524] During World War II the format of the show 'was changed to that of a carnival with sporting events, horse events, cake stalls and chocolate wheel. All were conducted to raise money for the war effort.[525] In 1970 the Annual Show was officially opened by television personality Joe Martin. With 'guest stars Lyn Barnett, Don Spencer and Mike Dorsey,

[518] Grosser, B., 1999. *Tondeburine-Bedford Park Solider Settler Reunion 1949-1999*.
[519] Grosser, B., 1999. *Tondeburine-Bedford Park Solider Settler Reunion 1949-1999*.
[520] Back to Gilgandra Committee, 1937. *Back to Gilgandra Souvenir Booklet*. p.33
[521] Back to Gilgandra Committee, 1937. *Back to Gilgandra Souvenir Booklet*. p.47
[522] Back to Gilgandra Committee, 1937. *Back to Gilgandra Souvenir Booklet*. p.27
[523] Back to Gilgandra Committee, 1937. *Back to Gilgandra Souvenir Booklet*. p.29
[524] Willott, B. 1984. *A Hundred Years of Education in Tooraweenah 1884-1984*. p.18
[525] Willott, B. 1984. *A Hundred Years of Education in Tooraweenah 1884-1984*. p.33

Joe Martin entertained patrons at the Show Ball. Scenes from the show and ball were filmed by Channel 10 for 'The Joe Martin Show".[526] Rodeo yards were constructed at the showground in 1978[527].

In 1921 Gilgandra Shire Council gave permission for a golf links to be developed on part of the town common and a bowling green to be laid in a section of Gilgandra Park[528].

Rifle shooting has long been popular. This activity was supported by colonial and Commonwealth governments as part of the country's defence infrastructure (refer to **Section 7.1 Defence**). In the early 20th century the Coonabarabran Rifle Club conducted interclub shoots with Binnaway, Tooraweenah and Coonamble'.[529]

Other sports have been more closely linked to the skills required on the land or in the forests. Horse-pulls, wood chopping, camp drafts and polocrosse have all provided opportunities to demonstrate skills and abilities linked to the occupations of the contestants. These sports have grown beyond the occupational area to become pastimes in their own right.

Boxing was once considered an important element of developing character and physical ability. 'Boxing was taught in YMCA gymnasiums, in Police Boys Clubs, by priests and in the armed services.'[530] These young men tested their skills in the tent boxing shows that travelled the country. The first boxing shows toured New South Wales from the 1840s and boxing was a popular entertainment during the gold rushes[531]. Jimmy Sharman, the greatest of the travelling boxing show promoters, relied greatly on his own showmanship and the bravado of young men to build the popularity and success of his shows. His shows featured boxers with grandiose titles, including Rud Kee who was billed as the Champion of China[532]. His boxers often mingled with the crowd, pretending to be locals keen for a fight.

The Brander brothers from Tooraweenah were active sportsmen who improvised on their parents' property with punching bags hung from trees. Les Brander became the Country Middleweight Champion and unsuccessfully fought Ron Richards for the State title. His brother Lee became Light and Welterweight Champion of the Western District but was also unable to obtain a State title. Jack Brander was the most successful of all. His mother and sister made purple and gold satin boxing shorts and a shot silk dressing gown for his first bout in Sydney. At the height of a very successful career he defeated Ron McLaughlan for the NSW Welterweight title. He was defeated in a fight for the Australian Welterweight title by Hockey Bennell.[533]

During the 19th and early 20th centuries swimming holes in local creeks and rivers were popular places to cool off. A swimming hole was established in the Tooraweenah Creek in the 1920s and 'provided hours of relaxation for all during summer months'[534]. At Biddon a large dam located opposite the village became a

[526] Willott, B. 1984. *A Hundred Years of Education in Tooraweenah 1884-1984*. p.48
[527] Willott, B. 1984. *A Hundred Years of Education in Tooraweenah 1884-1984*. p.50
[528] Curran, J., 1991. *Gilgandra Shire Council*. p.32
[529] Carmichael, D., 1991. *Timor Valley*. pp.16-18
[530] Corris, P., 1980. *Lords of the Ring. A History of Australian Prize Fighting*. p.87
[531] Corris, P., 1980. *Lords of the Ring. A History of Australian Prize Fighting*. p.76
[532] Corris, P., 1980. *Lords of the Ring. A History of Australian Prize Fighting*. p.83
[533] Willott, G., 1984. *A Hundred Years of Education in Tooraweenah 1884-1984*. pp.24-25
[534] Willott, G., 1984. *A Hundred Years of Education in Tooraweenah 1884-1984*. p.23

community swimming place where children were taught to swim[535]. The two principal swimming places in Gilgandra were Humphreys Hole and the hole at Arthursleigh. In 1933 Gilgandra Shire Council prepared estimates for the construction of a reinforced concrete swimming pool in the town. This led to a vigorous debate about the wisdom of spending ratepayer funds on constructing a pool. Residents in rural areas expressed the need for improvements to the shire's roads in preference to the apparent frivolity of a swimming pool. The concept of a pool appears to have been popular in the town and in 1936 Jack Bartley was elected to Council with the objective of promoting the pool project.[536]

The swimming baths were finally constructed in 1939 as an unemployment relief project, with a grant being obtained from the New South Wales Government. The baths were made smaller than Olympic standard to fit the budget allowed for the project and were opened on 25 October 1939. By 12 April 1940 attendance at the pool reached 61,898 and income totalled £1.034/14/11.[537] During 1941 Council closed the pool during church hours on Sundays[538].

[535] Mudford, C.&J., 1992. *To Biddon and Back*. p.62
[536] Curran, J., 1991. *Gilgandra Shire Council*. p.35
[537] Curran, J., 1991. *Gilgandra Shire Council*. p.36
[538] Curran, J., 1991. *Gilgandra Shire Council*. p.42

9. Australian Historical Theme: Marking the phases of life

Although much of the experience of growing up and rowing old does no readily relate to particular heritage sites, there are places that can illustrate this important theme. Most of the phases of life set out below are universal experiences.[539]

9.1 NSW Historical Theme: Birth and death

Birth and death mark the beginning and end of life. The rituals and beliefs surrounding both are markers of culture. During the period since the European occupation of the Young district birthing practices have changed dramatically with a shift from traditional Aboriginal birthing and European home birthing guided by the wisdom of midwives to 20th century notions of assisted and medically supervised birth.

The isolation of many women in regional areas, and the distances from which help had to be called, led to the death of many women due to the complications of childbirth or post-natal crises. In colonial times women on average 'had a baby every 18 months to two years'[540]. Local histories contain tragic stories of early female deaths associated with childbirth.

Mary Gilmore's observations of the Wiradjuri people indicate that their midwives had very sophisticated approaches to birthing that ensured the safety of the mother and child. In accordance with tribal traditions older Aboriginal women selected special places for women to undergo labour. These places were screened off, the ground swept clean and fresh eucalypt leaves methodically laid to create a soft, clean and antiseptic carpet. Children were born on this mat.[541]

During the early years of European colonisation of the region the skills and care of Aboriginal midwives saved many otherwise isolated European women and their babies. Up to 80% of European births in this period 'took place on eucalyptus leaves in the manner of the Aboriginal tradition'.[542] Aboriginal birth practices also increased the efficiency of labour in ways not embraced by European society until the advent of the Active Birth movement of the 1980s.

> *In traditional Aboriginal society, the woman adopted the squatting position to give birth whereas non-Aboriginal women were restricted to lying flat on the bed. Research has shown that any position other than lying flat on the bed increases the pelvic outlet by 28%. Labouring women are now encouraged to birth in any position which suits them.*[543]

As the European population increased midwives from England, Scotland and Ireland began to practise in the various settlements of the region. These women were on call day and night to attend births in towns and on farms. As the 19th century progressed lying-in hospitals were established by midwives in country towns. A brief account of these hospitals is included in **Section 3.9 Health**.

[539] Australian Historic Themes Framework, 2001.
[540] Gaff-Smith, M., 2004. *Riverina Midwives from the Mountains to the Plains*. p.27
[541] Gaff-Smith, M., 2004. *Riverina Midwives from the Mountains to the Plains*. p.18
[542] Gaff-Smith, M., 2004. *Riverina Midwives from the Mountains to the Plains*. p.18
[543] Gaff-Smith, M., 2004. *Riverina Midwives from the Mountains to the Plains*. p.23

During his travels around 1907 Duke Tritton boarded at the home of Granny Ingles (Inglis[544]) at Box Ridge (Warrumbungle). He described her as follows:

> *.... a little grey-haired woman who was known for a hundred miles around. Where there was sickness, or babies to be born, Granny Ingles would be on the spot, and no distance was too great. Rain, hail or shine, she would answer the call. She claimed every man, woman or child of thirty years or younger in the district as "one of my babies".*[545]

Tritton recounted the events of one evening during his stay at Box Ridge. A man arrived at Granny's house 'driving a pair of knocked-up horses' and said his wife was having a baby. Granny quizzed him then ordered her buggy to be readied for travel. She went 15 miles over rough tracks to birth 'a beautiful girl' in a 'boundary rider's hut, just about one class above an aboriginal's gunyah'.[546]

Country women, led by the Country Women's Association, began to agitate in the 1920s for improved birthing facilities and mothercare support to 'save the babies for Australia'. The Association asserted:

> *... that five hundred nursing mothers were lost in 1924 in New South Wales through the lack of proper accommodation and nursing ... 'Women are no more born mothers than they are born lamplighters,' says a prominent worker of the Association. 'All women need to be taught to be good mothers. The city provides ample facilities, and it is the Country Women's Association's aim to provide suitable enlightenment to the women of the west.'*[547]

CWA rooms in towns and villages were used as baby health centres. The Gilgandra, Armatree and Tooraweenah CWA rooms have served this purpose.

Specific sites in Gilgandra Shire associated with birth include the former Idaleigh and Chinnock Private Hospitals located in Morris Street, Gilgandra (refer to **Section 3.9 Health**.

Gilgandra Shire contains many sites in which the dead have been interred or remembered. These range from Aboriginal burial sites to isolated European graves and small cemeteries on various properties, village cemeteries such as those at Curban and Tooraweenah, and the Victorian era Gilgandra General Cemetery. These cemeteries and isolated graves provide testament to the practices of burial prevalent during the 19th and early 20th centuries. Gilgandra's first cemetery was apparently located on the site of the present National Australia bank on the corner of Bridge and Miller Streets[548].

[544] Gulargambone Historical Society Book Committee, 1992. *Gulargambone Homes & Holdings*. p.14
[545] Tritton, D., 1964. *Time Means Tucker*. p.95
[546] Tritton, D., 1964. *Time Means Tucker*. p.96
[547] Kingston, B. (ed.), 1977. *The World Moves Slowly*. p.36
[548] Back to Gilgandra Committee, 1937. *Back to Gilgandra Souvenir Booklet*. p.64

9.2 NSW Historical Theme: Persons

Many people have played a role in the development of Gilgandra or have achieved great things either within the shire or as residents of the shire. A selection of stories of the shire's achievers is included in this section.

9.2.1 John Alexander Buckley VC

John Buckley was posthumously awarded the Victoria Cross in 14 December 1918 for 'most conspicuous bravery and self sacrifice'[549]. Prior to enlistment in the Australian Imperial Force he lived at *Homebush*, Armatree.

On 1 and 2 September 1918 Buckley's company of the 54th Battalion AIF were involved in operations at Peronne on France. They were pinned down by a German machine gun nest. Buckley and one other man rushed the emplacement, 'shooting four of the occupants and taking 22 prisoners'. Moving forward the company reached a moat with another machine gun nest covering the only available bridge. As some troops gave covering fire Buckley attempted to rush the bridge and take the post. He was killed by enemy fire.[550]

> *Throughout the advance he displayed great initiative, resource and courage, and by his effort to save his comrades from casualties he set a fine example of self sacrificing devotion to duty.*[551]

Buckley is one of four men whose names are recorded on the war memorial at Armatree.

9.2.2 Cecil Arthur Butler (1902-1980)

Born in England in 1902 Cecil Arthur Butler migrated to Australia with his parents some time around 1910. The family settled in Lithgow where Arthur attended Cooerwull Academy and later obtained an apprencticeship at the Small Arms Factory. In 1921 he transferred to the Australian Aircraft & Engineering Co. at Mascot. He obtained his 'ground engineer's licence in 1923 , and worked for the Larkin-Sopwith Air Craft Supply Co. Pty Ltd and Larkin's Australian Aerial Services Ltd as a ground engineer at Hay'. He gained his pilot's licence in 1927.[552]

In 1930 he designed and constructed his own all-metal, high-winged monoplane. 'Later that year he piloted a tiny Comper Swift from England to Australia in the record time of 9 days, 1¾ hours.' On his flight from England he landed at Tooraweenah to refuel, and to see his sweetheart Doris Garling. He and Doris were married at the Church of St Ambrose in Gilgandra on 30 March 1932.

> *With financial support from P. S. Garling (his wife's uncle), in 1934 Butler successfully tendered against stiff competition from established airlines for the Charleville (Queensland)-Cootamundra (New South Wales) section of the England-Australia airmail route; he fulfilled the terms of the contract for four years, using D.H. 84 Dragon aircraft. When the airmail contract expired, Butler Air Transport Co. carried on as a civil airline, serving centres in New South Wales and Queensland. During World War II Butler continued to operate some routes and also made aircraft parts for the government. He refused to accrue large profits from war-effort work and charged only to*

[549] Military Forces of the Commonwealth, Letter 13 September 1919.
[550] Military Forces of the Commonwealth, Letter 13 September 1919.
[551] Military Forces of the Commonwealth, Letter 13 September 1919.
[552] Butler, Cecil Arthur (1902-1980) [Online]

recover costs.[553]

At the end of World War II he registered a public company, Butler Air Transport Pty Ltd. With this company he established 'the largest and most successful airline operating in New South Wales'. Butler was keen to involve the company in the communities it served and encouraged his employees to buy shares in the firm. In 1947 employees owned 51% of Butler Air Transport Pty Ltd.[554] Butler was also active in civic improvement programmes. In Tooraweenah he arranged the planting of an avenue of trees that flower in the colours of the Country Women's Association.

He resisted efforts by the Commonwealth Government to nationalise Australia's airlines but the development of Butler Air Transport was severely hampered by the government's two-airline policy. In the early 1950s Butler became involved in a costly legal battle to avoid a takeover by commercial operator Australian National Airways Pty Ltd. In 1955 Butler Air Transport purchased two Vickers Viscount airliners. These gave the airline access to Melbourne but created conflict with other airline operators. When Reg Ansett acquired Australian National Airlines in 1957 he took over a large parcel of Butler Air Transport shares. He added to these by purchasing shares from Butler's employees, eventually acquiring a majority in the airline by stealth. Arthur Butler severed all connection with the company.[555]

> *He planned to start afresh with French Caravelle jets, but the Department of Civil Aviation rejected his request to import the aircraft in 1959 on the grounds that airports lacked adequate runways. In addition, there were doubts about his financial viability. Butler fought a dogged, rearguard action to re-enter the industry. It was to no avail. Instead of retiring to lick his wounds, he chaired the New South Wales Ambulance Transport Service Board and, with another famous aviator Nancy Bird Walton, raised funds for an air-ambulance service. In 1958 he was appointed O.B.E.*[556]

He suffered a stroke in 1968 and, 'although partly paralysed, he taught himself to type and in 1971 published a history of Australian civil aviation, *Flying Start*. He died on 13 April 1980 at Wahroonga.[557]

9.2.3 John Oliver Feetham

John Feetham arrived in Dubbo after emigrating from England in 1907. Prior to coming to Australia he had worked among the poor in London. On the invitation of the Bishop of London he took on the role of principal of the Brotherhood of the Good Shepherd in New South Wales. Gilgandra was one of the first towns Feetham visited after his arrival. From his base in Gilgandra Feetham travelled throughout the region. Renowned for his eccentricity and clumsiness Feetham was greatly loved by his flock.[558]

In his memoir Duke Tritton recounted a meeting with the Reverend Feetham at Hungerford. Tritton described Feetham as:

[553] Butler, Cecil Arthur (1902-1980) [Online]
[554] Butler, Cecil Arthur (1902-1980) [Online]
[555] Butler, Cecil Arthur (1902-1980) [Online]
[556] Butler, Cecil Arthur (1902-1980) [Online]
[557] Butler, Cecil Arthur (1902-1980) [Online]
[558] King, K., 2005. *Church in the Australian Bush*. p.19

> *A tall angular man, he rode at all times as if he was in a hurry to get somewhere, with arms and legs flapping in the traditional English style. His dress did not improve his appearance on a horse. White pith helmet, coat which seemed too small for him, baggy riding breeches stuffed into concertina leggings, made up an outfit that was very much out of place on the outback tracks. His horse was a huge animal, more of the coaching type than saddle, built more for strength than speed. But the sincerity of the man more than made up for any faults in his appearance. ... His heart and soul was in his work, and many a down-and-out swagman had cause to bless him for assistance when it was badly needed.*[559]

Feetham evidently had personal wealth and he used his own money to subsidise the:

> *... purchase of land and building of churches and schools in the northwest. ... In his annual report to vestry in 1912 he said ... that he had bought land at Bearbung, Collie and Tooraweenah. Feetham also bought the land for St Hilda's in Gilgandra. ... As a parting gift to Gilgandra he gave a substantial donation to their building fund.*[560]

He left Gilgandra to take up the role of Bishop of North Queensland. Affectionately referred to as the 'Bushman Saint' his work was recognised in 1962 when 'he officially became Australia's first Anglican Saint'.[561]

9.2.4 William Thomas Hitchen (Captain Bill)

William (Bill) Hitchen was born in Mudgee in 1872. Some time before 1900 he moved to Gilgandra with his brother Richard (Dick) and established a plumbing business, specialising in the installation of windmills. Dick commenced trading as a butcher in a shop adjoining Bill's house in Miller Street. By 1915 Bill was trading with his son and had established a branch of his business in Dunedoo. W.T. Hitchen & Son were agents for Buzacott and Alston windmills.[562]

A very civic-minded man Bill Hitchen was a member of the Gilgandra Progress Association, Parents and Citizens Association, Gilgandra Hospital Board, Gilgandra Jockey Club, Lodge Warrumbungle No.277, Gilgandra Recruiting Association and Gilgandra Rifle Club[563]. He took a leading role in organising the Coo-ee March in 1915 and as Captain of the Rifle Club and member of the Recruiting Association he took a lead role in preparations[564].

He was known affectionately to the Coo-ee Marchers as Captain Bill. Apparently a publicly shy man Bill Hitchen left speechmaking on the Coo-ee March to others, including former Methodist Minister John Robert Lee. Despite his age of 43 in 1915 and business responsibilities in Gilgandra he enlisted with the other Coo-ees. He was retained by the armed forces for a few months to help organise other marches (refer to **Section 7.1 Defence**).

[559] Tritton, H., 1964. *Time Means Tucker*. pp.80-81
[560] King, K., 2005. *Church in the Australian Bush*. p.28
[561] King, K., 2005. *Church in the Australian Bush*. p.28
[562] Cameron, R., 1996. *The Kookaburra March Through Mendooran & Dunedoo*. p.29
[563] Cameron, R., 1996. *The Kookaburra March Through Mendooran & Dunedoo*. p.29
[564] Meredith, J., 1981. *The Coo-ee March*. p.11

Bill Hitchen embarked with the Kookaburra marchers from Tooraweenah[565]. He fell ill on the voyage and was sent to England 'where the severe winter undermined his health'. He died at Harefield Park Hospital, London on 3 September 1916.

> *The news of 'Captain Bill's' death threw Gilgandra into a state of gloom, because for a month prior to this, he had been reported as improving. As a mark of respect the Gilgandra business people closed their establishments from 12 noon to 2:00pm on the following day. He left a widow, three sons and two daughters.*[566]

The former Hitchen house in Miller Street has been restored as a museum.

9.2.5 Arthur Clifford ('Cliff') Howard CBE (1893-1971)

Cliff Howard was born at Crookwell, the son of John and Mary Ellen Howard, in 1893. He attended school at Crookwell and Moss Vale and undertook an apprenticeship with an engineering firm in Moss Vale. While undertaking his apprenticeship he studied engineering by correspondence.[567] In 1908 John Howard moved to the Biddon area with his new wife. From 1912 Cliff Howard began experiments to develop a practical rotary hoe on this property (refer to **Section 3.14: Technology**).

Having developed and patented a practical rotary cultivator by 1920 Howard formed a syndicate Austral Auto Cultivators Pty Ltd in 1922.

> *The firm moved to Northmead, Sydney, in 1927. He continued to develop his ideas, building models to suit particular terrains and types of farming, a rotavator to fit a Fordson tractor and several types of hand-controlled machines. His DH22 tractor, designed in 1927 to work with rotary hoes, initiated the first large-scale production of tractors in Australia.*[568]

During the Great Depression Howard was able to raise capital for his company, now known as Howard Auto Culitvators. In 1938 he formed an English company Rotary Hoes Ltd. This company established branches in the United States of America, South Africa, Germany, France, Italy, Spain, Australia and New Zealand.[569]

> *It later became a holding company for a wholly owned subsidiary, Howard Rotavator Co. Ltd, to which it transferred the manufacture and distribution of rotavators, manure spreaders, trench diggers and soil stabilization machinery. The company received the Queen's award to industry in 1966.*[570]

The director of a number of companies in Britain he was appointed Commander of the British Empire in 1970. He died in Essex on 4 January 1971.[571] While Cliff Howard did not live in Gilgandra Shire, and most of his experimentation and business development was undertaken in other places, the inspiration for his invention came from his father's property *Mountain View* at Biddon and the rotary hoe is readily claimed as a 'Gilgandra Shire' invention.

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[565] Cameron, R., 1996. *The Kookaburra March Through Mendooran & Dunedoo*. p.29
[566] Cameron, R., 1996. *The Kookaburra March Through Mendooran & Dunedoo*. p.29
[567] Howard, Arthur Clifford (1893-1971) [Online]
[568] Howard, Arthur Clifford (1893-1971) [Online]
[569] Howard, Arthur Clifford (1893-1971) [Online]
[570] Howard, Arthur Clifford (1893-1971) [Online]
[571] Howard, Arthur Clifford (1893-1971) [Online]

9.2.6 Anthony McGrane OAM (1946-2004)

Tony McGrane was born at Forbes on 1 June 1946. A man with 'an absolute commitment to regional development'[572] he served in local government for many years before standing as an independent in the New South Wales Legislative Assembly. He was educated at the Marist Brothers College in Forbes and Red Bend Catholic College. He was a successful business person who worked as a farmer and grazier, hotelier and company director before entering Parliament in 1999 as Member for Dubbo. He served in this role for over five years until his death on 15 September 2004.[573]

Prior to entering Parliament Tony McGrane had served for 16 years as Shire President of Gilgandra Shire Council and as Mayor of Dubbo from 1991 to 1999. He was also a member of the New South Wales Shires Association and the New South Wales Local Government Association[574], serving on the Executive of the second organisation. Peter Woods, former President of the Local Government Association said of Tony McGrane:

> *No one in local government could claim to have made a greater contribution than Tony McGrane. As former president of Gilgandra Shire and Mayor of Dubbo city, his strong public support was proof of the dynamic manner with which he discharged his duties. He served with distinction on the State Executive of the Local Government Association including as Vice President (General), on numerous standing and statutory committees following a distinguished period on the Executive of the Shires Association.*[575]

9.2.7 Rawdon Middleton VC

One of the Gilgandra Shire's residents had the honour of being awarded the Victoria Cross during World War II. Rawdon Middleton lived at *Alloway* and attended the Burimalong School before being sent to boarding school to complete his education. He enlisted in the Royal Australian Air Force at the outbreak of World War II and became a flight sergeant in 149 Squadron, which was attached to Bomber Command in England.[576]

In November 1942 he was captain of a Short Stirling bomber that was part of a formation undertaking a bombing raid on the Fiat factory at Turin in Northern Italy. The aircraft was severely damaged by anti-aircraft fire. Despite losing an eye and being rendered partly unconscious Middleton wrestled the stricken bomber across the Alps and France to the English Channel. He ordered the crew to bail out over the channel. Five were saved and two drowned. Middleton was killed when he crashed the aircraft into the sea. He was posthumously awarded the Victoria Cross on 15 January 1943.[577]

9.2.8 Hannah Morris, 1829-1911

Hannah Morris was born in Treveglwys, Wales in 1829, one of four children of John Humphries and Mary Humphries (nee Edwards). He father was convicted of sheep stealing and transported to New South Wales in 1832. John was assigned to Gregory

[572] Black, P., 2004. Speech in NSW Parliament on Tony McGrane. [Online]
[573] Parliament of New South Wales. Mr Anthony McGrane [Online]
[574] Parliament of New South Wales. Mr Anthony McGrane [Online]
[575] Black, P., 2004. Speech in NSW Parliament on Tony McGrane. [Online]
[576] Hickmott, R. & Curran, J., 1976. *Back to Gilgandra Week*. p.61
[577] Hickmott, R. & Curran, J., 1976. *Back to Gilgandra Week*. p.61

Blaxland and worked in his run at Muswellbrook. Mary and the four children followed him out in 1851.[578]

Hannah moved to the Castlereagh after her first marriage in 1852 and lived a pioneering life in the growing region. This hardy woman survived physical hardship, the deaths of two husbands and the deaths of a number of her children. She was the licencee of the Bushman's Arms on the eastern bank of the Castlereagh River and is credited with being one of the great driving forces in the establishment of the town of Gilgandra.

In January 1852 Hannah married Thomas Wrigley, an overseer on the *Kirban* run[579]. Their first child was born at Tooloon on the northern section of the Kirban run[580]. In 1854 Thomas Wrigley was granted leases to *Corrodgery* and *Colli* on the Marthaguy Creek. Some time during 1855 Thomas and Hannah built the Marthaguy Inn on their run.[581] In 1859 they sold their leases and moved to *Carlgandra* where they made a home in an existing dwelling on the eastern side of the Castlereagh River. Thomas died in 1860 'in the hills between Cassilis and Merriwa' while on a trip to Muswellbrook to sell cattle and collect supplies.[582] Around this time Hannah was operating the Wayside Shanty at Carlgandra on the junction of the tracks between Mendooran, Coonamble and Colli[583].

Hannah Wrigley married Thomas Byrne, a widower and stockman, in January 1861 and together the couple operated the Bushman's Home Accommodation House on the eastern side of the Castlereagh River at Carlgandra[584]. Thomas Byrne became the holder of the first hotel licence in Gilgandra in July 1865[585]. In October 1866 Thomas was accosted by bushrangers on his way back from Mudgee with supplies. They stripped him and tied him to a tree near Sallabalah Creek. He was there two nights and a day before being freed by passing teamsters. Thomas died as a result of this ordeal.[586]

In July 1867 Hannah Byrne formally acquired the licence to the Bushman's Arms Inn and held this licence until 1871.[587] A post office and later telegraph office were operated from this building. Being located at a crossroads near a river crossing the Bushman's Arms attracted an increasing amount of trade as the region's population grew. The place became a changing station for coaching services to and from Coonamble and other businesses were established on Hannah's land surrounding the inn.

Hannah married John Morris in 1871 and the hotel licence was sold to Michael Morris. The town of Gilgandra gradually grew on land owned by Hannah Morris on the eastern and western sides of the Castlereagh River.[588] She is considered to be one of the founders of Gilgandra. Hannah was granted the honour of opening the newly

[578] Jackson, P., 2005. *The Life and Times of Hannah Morris*. p.5
[579] Jackson, P., 2005. *The Life and Times of Hannah Morris*. p.7
[580] Jackson, P., 2005. *The Life and Times of Hannah Morris*. p.8
[581] Jackson, P., 2005. *The Life and Times of Hannah Morris*. p.12
[582] Jackson, P., 2005. *The Life and Times of Hannah Morris*. p.16
[583] Jackson, P., 2005. *The Life and Times of Hannah Morris*. p.19
[584] Jackson, P., 2005. *The Life and Times of Hannah Morris*. pp.20-21
[585] Jackson, P., 2005. *The Life and Times of Hannah Morris*. p.23
[586] Jackson, P., 2005. *The Life and Times of Hannah Morris*. p.26
[587] Jackson, P., 2005. *The Life and Times of Hannah Morris*. p.32
[588] Jackson, P., 2005. *The Life and Times of Hannah Morris*. p.34

constructed road bridge over the Castlereagh River in 1884[589]. She also profited greatly from moves to open up crown lands in 1888 that led to the establishment of the town of Gilgandra[590].

9.2.9 Alf Yeo, 1890-1976

Alfred William Yeo was born at Cobbora on 17 August 1890, the son of David Yeo and Agnes nee Mason. He attended Tooraweenah and Dunedoo Public Schools.[591] On 15 December 1926 he married Aimee Murray[592]. Alf became a farmer and grazier on *Wattle View*, Tooraweenah where he was active in the Tooraweenah Agricultural Society, Railway League, Farmers' and Settlers' Association and Graziers' Association. He was elected to Gilgandra Shire Council between 1928 and 1931. He was later elected to the New South Wales Legislative Assembly as Country Party Member for Castlereagh, serving the electorate between 1932 and 1941.[593] His parliamentary career included holding the post of Minister for Lands in 1940-41.[594]

[589] Jackson, P., 2005. *The Life and Times of Hannah Morris*. p.45
[590] Jackson, P., 2005. *The Life and Times of Hannah Morris*. p.61
[591] Mr Alfred William Yeo (1890-1976) [Online]
[592] Alexander, J. (ed.), 1950. *Who's Who in Australia XIVth Edition, 1950*. p.777
[593] Mr Alfred William Yeo (1890-1976) [Online]
[594] Alexander, J. (ed.), 1950. *Who's Who in Australia XIVth Edition, 1950*. p.777

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