

*This publication is proudly supplied by the
Coastwide First National Real Estate team*

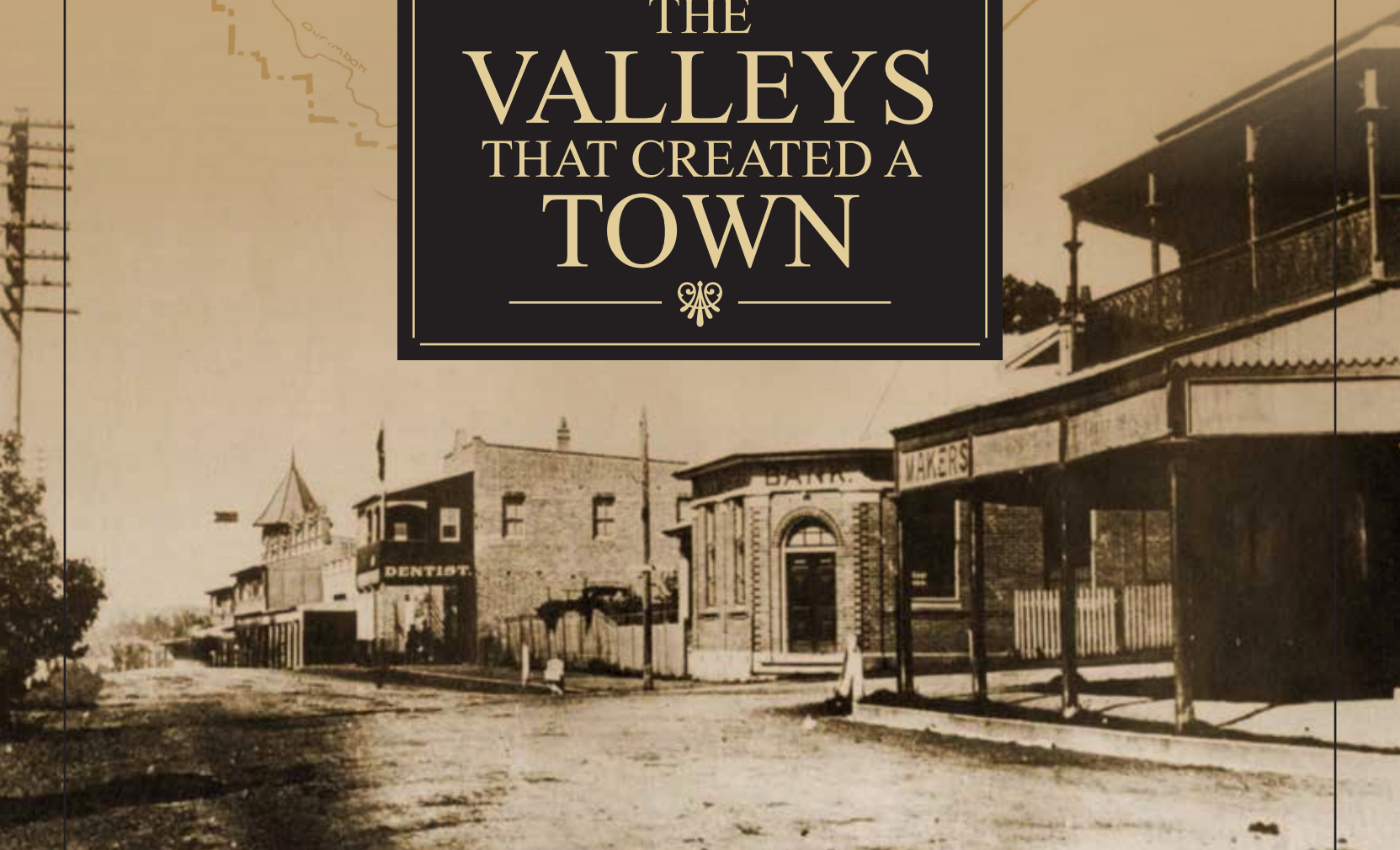


**first
national**
REAL ESTATE

Coastwide



THE VALLEYS THAT CREATED A TOWN



THE HISTORY OF THE YARRAMALONG AND DOORALONG VALLEYS

[illegible]

The following notes feature a few points drawn randomly from some of the articles.



**RURAL
SPECIALISTS**

Interest in the Yarramalong Valley started with cedar getters in the 1830s but Europeans had been travelling near and through the Valley for decades beforehand.

In the 1830s George Bloodworth, the son of a respected emancipist brickmaker, was illegally removing cedar from Crown land in Jilliby/Dooralong, Yarramalong and beyond.

Bloodworth's wife had a sister married to Richard Hill, a Member of the Legislative Assembly. It was probably Hill's association with Bloodworth, William Charles Wentworth, and Wyong's Cape family that led to him receiving a grant in the area of 843 acres.

The grant was from near Yarramalong School down to Wyong Creek and to the east. It encompassed Stinsons Lane and the Yarramalong Cemetery area. On 8 November 1854, Hill sold this land which he had probably never seen.

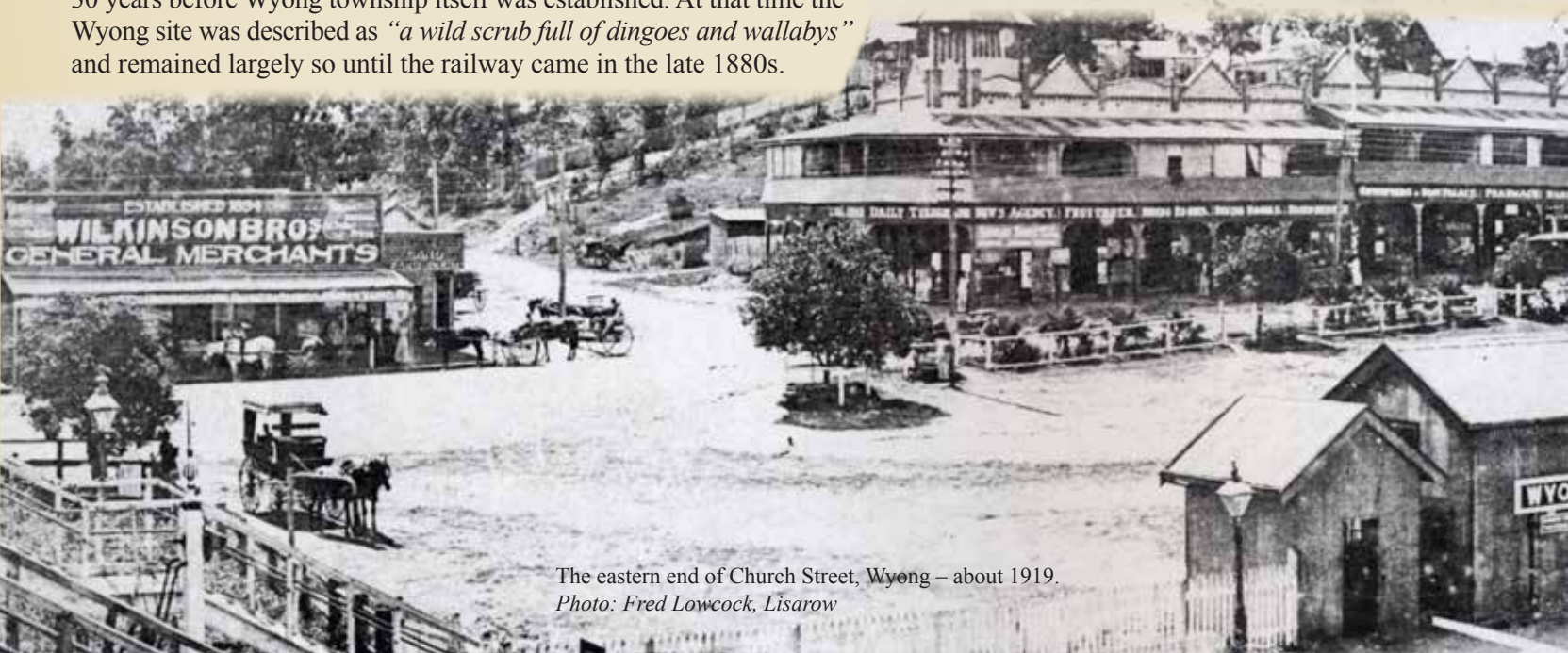
By 1866 settlers in the Yarramalong Valley included the Balls, Beavens, Boyds, Durringtons, Fannings, Hills, Kellys, Kennedys, Lettes, Morans, O'Neills, O'Tooles, Stinsons, Tobins, Waters and Watkins. A number of these were at Yarramalong and Wyong Creek although the Beavens were slightly higher up the Valley at Cedar Brush Creek.

These events, and similar ones in Dooralong Valley, took place some 30 years before Wyong township itself was established. At that time the Wyong site was described as *"a wild scrub full of dingoes and wallabys"* and remained largely so until the railway came in the late 1880s.

The Beginning of Settlement



Wyong's original Royal Hotel



The eastern end of Church Street, Wyong – about 1919.
Photo: Fred Lowcock, Lisarow

About Ravensdale and Cedar Brush Creek



There are Wyong residents who know little of Ravensdale or Cedar Brush Creek and many would not have visited them.

Yarramalong Road has a junction 3.3kms west of Yarramalong Village. Cedar Brush Creek is 7kms to the left and Ravensdale a similar distance to the right. Both had schools but neither has ever had a central township. Until recently John Laws, Neville Wran and Bryce Courtenay had homes at Ravensdale.

When was Cedar Brush Creek and Ravensdale settled?

Cedar Brush Creek, Ravensdale, Yarramalong and Wyong Creek were being settled from the mid 1850s. The settlers were often convicts who had “made good,” and their native born children. Stinson believed the first permanent settler in the Upper Valley was William Beaven, a convict from Herefordshire, who arrived from the Macdonald River with his wife Isabella (also a convict) in 1858. The Beavens settled at the junction of Brush Creek and Ravensdale Roads. They were, in fact, preceded in the lower part of the Valley at Yarramalong by the Lettes in 1853 and the Stinsons and Waters in 1856.

From where did the Upper Valley people come?

The Upper Yarramalong Valley, in particular, was initially occupied largely by people from such nearby places as the Hawkesbury River, Macdonald River, St Albans and Wollombi. Those areas were becoming so heavily populated that later generations had to move elsewhere for land. Many came to the Yarramalong Valley which was virtually “just over the hill”. Some of them or their family members went to the Dooralong Valley.

Electoral Rolls are far from reliable and no more than indicative but show that in 1884/1885, before the coming of the railway, the number of registered voters, in general terms, were 15 in Wyong compared with 47 in the Yarramalong Valley consisting of Cedar Brush Creek, Ravensdale, Yarramalong and Wyong Creek. The total population would have been larger because the Electoral Rolls did not include women and children. There would have been many of the latter.

This page Top: Brush Creek Sawmill. *Photo: Mrs Gwen Dundon;*
Centre: Brush Creek pioneer, Joseph (son of William) Beaven's home;
Bottom: Yarramalong Inn nearly one hundred years ago;

Opposite Top: Ravensdale intersection;
Centre: “Ravensdale Farm”, the property of James Waters;
Photo: Mrs Gwen Clark, Wyong;
Bottom: You are now entering Fernances Country. *Photo: Max Farley;*

Yarramalong

It has frequently been said that Yarramalong reflects an Aboriginal phrase for a “place of cedars”. Although the phrase conjures up pleasant thoughts, no one has yet found an Aboriginal word that sounds at all like “yarra” and means “cedar” or “tree” or anything along those lines.

On the other hand, a number of researchers claim that a Guringai tribe roamed in the Wyong Shire area from Broken Bay including Wyong, Erina, Tuggerah Beach and had a word “yerryman” (yarraman) meaning “horse”. The Aborigines soon came to link the cedar-cutting Europeans in the Yarramalong district with horses. It is interesting that much of the Yarramalong Valley has again become “a place of horses”, nowadays recreational horses.

Ravensdale

Many in the past have been tempted to repeat the simplistic explanation that the name meant there were many ravens there. Another largely incorrect explanation is that John Woodbury “settled at their Yarramalong property, Ravensdale, giving its name to the district”. Much nearer the mark is a comment by EH Stinson: *“The district of Ravensdale took its name from Ravensdale Farm, the property of the pioneer James Waters, ... James was born in Ireland and named it after an ancestral property in his homeland.”*

None of this, however, denies the Woodburys’ association with the district as property owners or occupiers or both. The closeness of the Waters and Woodbury families is shown by the fact that in 1881 after his first wife died, James Waters married Priscilla Woodbury.

“Fernances Country”

Everyone who has travelled up Brush Creek Road knows the prominent “FERNANCES COUNTRY” sign.

The explanation for the sign comes from Macka Fernance of Cedar Brush Creek who points out that the Great North Road crosses a creek before reaching Wollombi. The crossing point displayed a *Fernances Crossing* sign. A Brush Creek lady had a night out at the Wollombi hotel with a companion, driving home they souvenired the sign. The intention had been to give it to her near neighbours, the Fernances. In sober mood the next morning, she had second thoughts and decided to do no more about it. When she moved from the Valley she belatedly gifted it to Macka’s father, Keith Fernance. The authorities by then had since replaced the sign and the loss of the original one was no longer an issue. Keith felt the sign should be put to good use. He had the word “*Crossing*” replaced by “*Country*”. The *Fernances Country* landmark was born.

The Origin of Some Names



The Origin of Some Names

(continued)

Priests Ridge Road

This road in Cedar Brush Creek gained its name from two Cistercian monks - Fathers William O'Dillian Woolfrey and Henry Norbert Woolfrey. They were brothers who had been ordained in France before moving to Ireland. In about 1853 Father William acquired 100 acres in Yarramalong. For those who may not know the area the land is on the southern side of Brush Creek Road just a short distance from the junction of Brush Creek and Ravensdale Roads. It has been said the intention was to establish an orphanage for boys but it did not happen. The land became known as Priests Farm. Priests Ridge was on the west of this 100 acres. Priests Ridge Road ran along the ridge.

Coyne's Leap

"*Coyne's Leap*" has a place in the Valley's legends. John Coyne acquired that status by leaping on horseback over a turpentine tree 2.75 metres in diameter while being pursued by two policemen also on horseback. This was 300 metres to the west of Wyong Creek School. The tree had fallen down from the adjoining steep hill and rested across the creek bed. The police were unable to make the leap themselves and Coyne vanished. He was described as a notorious "bushranger". The most likely John Coyne was a 21 year old convict.

Time was to show that his "Leap" was not the only reason Coyne became part of Yarramalong Valley history.



Illustration is a drawing entitled, The Bushranger Pursued by E.C. May [trove.nla.gov.au].

The Valley's Industries

The Central Coast was a by-passed district in its early days with the only realistic access to the Sydney market being by water via the Hawkesbury. The handful of early settlers were subsistence farmers who relied on any animals they may have had and on the food they grew for themselves. Trees were only felled to make rudimentary shelters, to clear land for growing vegetables and crops and to make space for animals and poultry.

Timber

As more settlers arrived in the Valleys in the latter half of the 1800s, the potential to sell cut timber grew. It was, however difficult to transport timber to either Sydney or the Hunter. By the 1880s the most accessible timber had been removed. The industry languished.

The situation changed dramatically with the opening of the railway line from Newcastle to Sydney in 1887/1889. Yards for the loading of timber were established where the roads from the Valleys met the railway line. A town, Wyong, was created. This new phase of the industry peaked about 1910. No mills are left in the Valleys.

Dairying

The establishment of the Pioneer Dairy at South Tacoma in 1897 marked the beginning of large scale commercial dairying in the Valleys. In 1907 a co-operative, the Wyong Butter Factory, was set up near Alison Homestead. By 1921, 200 dairy farmers were sending both milk and cream to the factory. Market changes caused the industry to decline in the 1970s. Land prices increased and many dairy farmers sold out and put their capital to better use with less physical effort and a better lifestyle.

Orcharding

Orange trees had been growing in limited numbers in the Shire for many years but the coming of the railway made citrus a commercial industry. The Salmon brothers of Wyong Creek introduced citrus into the Yarramalong Valley in the early 1900s. It became a major industry in both Valleys but large scale orcharding had virtually disappeared by the late 1960s.

Poultry Farming

Poultry farming required relatively little land space and became a main industry when the citrus and dairying industries were declining. In 1961 the Central Coast was producing eight million eggs annually as well as large quantities of meat. The industry lost its commercial significance in the Valley with the advent of "battery" production elsewhere.

Top: Log being loaded onto a waggon. *Photo: Vernon Clifton, Lisarow*

Bottom: Orange orchard on Stinson's property, Yarramalong

The Valley's Schools



Ravensdale School. Photo: Mrs Gwen Dundon



Yarramalong School about 1882.

Government schooling began in the Valley in 1870. Many people now living in the Valley had their early education at one of the Valley's eight main schools, of which only Wyong Creek now operates. Before then, education was offered privately. There have been a number of schools in the Valleys of which only two (Wyong Creek and Jilliby) survive. Wyong Creek School (1870-1871) has been taken as evolving to become the Yarramalong School (1870-2009). Yarramalong School was first known as Wyong Creek School. Wyong Creek School (1883) was originally known as the *Wyong Creek Lower School*.

In brief:

- 1870-1871:** Wyong Creek School, Bunning Creek Road.
- 1870-2009:** Yarramalong School, 1554 Yarramalong Road.
- 1883-** Wyong Creek School, 583 Yarramalong Road.
- 1892-1957:** Ravensdale School, 227 Ravensdale Road.
- 1901-1980:** Cedar Brush Creek School, 318 Brush Creek Road.
- 1902-1943:** Wanda School, 1114 Yarramalong Rd, Wyong Creek.
- 1889-** Jilliby School, 352 Jilliby Road.
- 1903-2011:** Dooralong School, 1046 Dooralong Road.



Cedar Brush Creek School 1903

James Waters “Jimmy” (1834-1903)

Farmer/ Inventor

Jimmy Waters, destined to be known as “The King of Yarramalong”, was a 21 year-old when he arrived in the Yarramalong Valley in 1856 with his parents and five surviving siblings. He had been born in Ireland. He very soon acquired land in the Valley in the vicinity of 304 Ravensdale Road.

James was a genial soul and by no means restricted to rural activities. He took great interest in the political and economic affairs of the day and issues such as Free Trade, Protectionism, Land Tax and Federating the State colonies were topics for discussion.

21st century minds would be aghast to know he fathered 17 children. He married the 16 year-old Barbara Thompson in 1854 and they had 9 children in the following 18 years. She died aged 34 in childbirth. He then married 22 year-old Priscilla Woodbury in 1881. They had eight children. James died in 1903 and Priscilla outlived him by 53 years.

George Palmer Snr (1810-1888) *Teacher*

George Palmer arrived in the colony as a convict in 1836. He brought the name Palmer to the Valley in 1877 and it has been borne with rightful pride by several generations since the age of 67 he was appointed Teacher at the Yarramalong Public School and remained until ill health forced his retirement in 1884.

The Palmer family was to be important in the Valley for the next several generations. They provided transport services for people, for goods and for mail into and through the Valley.

Edward Powell Braithwaite (1891-1971)

Councillor/Cattle Breeder

All Valley residents know Woodbury Park at Mardi. Few would realise that the eastern section between the dam and Wyong River was really named Braithwaite Park. Ted Braithwaite was the eldest son of Edward Henry Braithwaite who came to Cedar Brush Creek in 1908 with his wife and nine children. He established the *Bebeah* dairy farm on the north side of Brush Creek Road some 500 metres up from Yorkies Bridge at the end of Cedar Brush Creek. He and two of his sons, Ted and Walter, became renowned as cattle breeders. Ted was a Councillor of Erina and Wyong Shires for many years and took an active interest in all aspects of Yarramalong Valley affairs.

Many in the Valley felt there should be a lasting tribute to him. The Wyong Creek Country Womens Association had a great deal to do with the creation of the Braithwaite Park at the eastern end of Woodbury Park. Unhappily no plaque is visible today.

Some Personalities



Barbara Thompson and James Waters.
Photo: Steve Waters, Gorokan



George Palmer, schoolmaster at Yarramalong.
Photo: Mrs Gwen Clark, Wyong

Some Personalities

(continued)



A Carson truck loaded with logs. Photo: Eric Carson, Tuncurry

Fred Carson (1873-1944) *Engineer/Innovator*

Fred Carson had been born in Denver while his parents were touring there. Fred's prime skills were in bridge building, frequently for the NSW Railways, the work however was spasmodic and he applied his endless energy and imagination to many occupations including the poultry industry, citrus, mining and cottage building.

Two of his "inventions" were unique methods of getting cut logs down from the surrounding hills to the Valley floor for cartage to Wyong. One was at the *Knoll* towards the end of Ravensdale Valley. Here he built adjoining "tramlines". When a log was placed in a waggon at the top, the weight travelling down brought an already used empty waggon up from the bottom to be re-loaded.

The other was called *The Chute* at Kingtree at the top end of Cedar Brush Creek. He fashioned *The Chute* to bring logs by gravity down the side of a cliff-face. It curved along the way. By 1935 Carson believed the Valley's timber was running out so he opened what came to be a large sawmill near Gloucester. He named the area Carsonville. A number of Valley timber workers from Yarramalong went with him. Fred Carson died at Gloucester in 1944.

1903 Electoral Roll



As a rule, electoral rolls don't make interesting reading but the 1903 Federal one is an exception. Why? Because it is the first to include women.

By combining the voters shown as living at Wyong Creek, Yarramalong, Cedar Brush Creek and Ravensdale we find a total of 310 persons made up of 169 men and 141 women. Rolls also show the occupations of voters. The first most striking information is that of the Valley's 141 women, 138 were engaged in *domestic duties*. How things have changed!

The overall figures can be split into sections. The first can be a combination of Yarramalong, Cedar Brush Creek and Ravensdale – the *Upper Valley* as it were, with the *Lower Valley* being Wyong Creek. The *Upper Valley* had 109 men and 82 women (total 191). It was male oriented compared to the Lower Valley where the figures were 60 men and 59 women (total 119). No doubt this was because the timber industry was concentrated at that stage in the *Upper Valley* and required male labour.

Australia was one of the first countries in the world to extend the vote to women, along with the right to stand for Federal Parliament.

Photo: Wyong District Pioneer Association

Not even WW2 stopped the Valley people enjoying a day at the races. Even in those highly regulated wartime days they staged race days and did so with all the trimmings punters expect. Keith Fernance commented in Bill Bottomley's oral history book *BACK THEN*:

Keith: *I should tell you about the horse races we used to have at Yarramalong in the war years – the Patriotic Race Meetings. You know where the bottom (Yarramalong) cemetery is? Well the racecourse was beside that long straight. It was about three and a half furlongs. It started off with saddle horses and anyone's horse around the place, then when they started betting they were bringing in old racehorses and all sorts of things... It was a pretty good track. They had a bookmaker there, and they had a licence to sell grog, and an eating house.*

Bottomley: *And this name – “Patriotic Race Meeting” ... ?*

Keith: *It was the only way they could get a licence. The money went to the war effort or something.*

“Patriotic Race Meetings”

Part of the 1919 Victory celebrations in Wyong

There are little bits of history all around us. The more of these one recognises, the more interest the Valley offers. Have you noticed a 20 metre uncut strip of land on the northern side of Yarramalong Road stretching down to the River? It is opposite 184 Yarramalong Road.

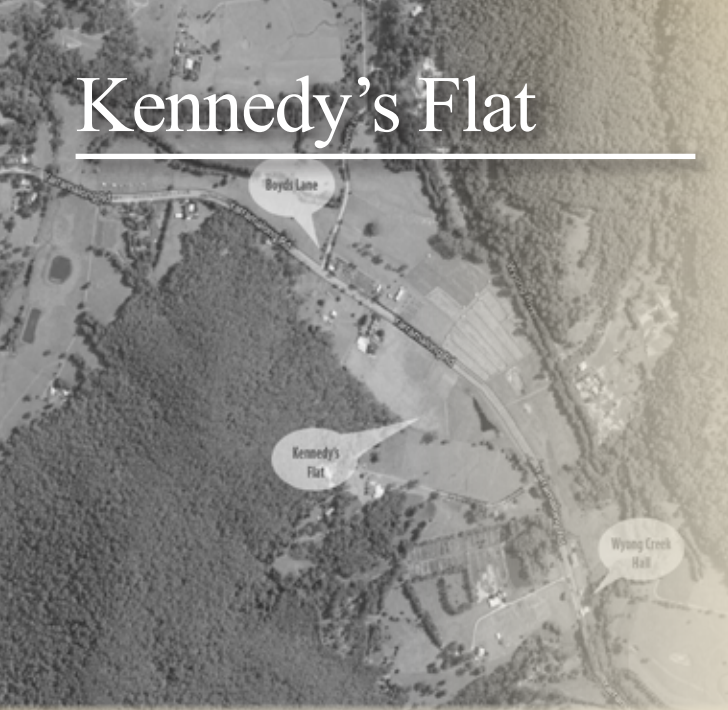
Local poet Bruce Walker explained that three bullock teamsters bought the lane well over 100 years ago to have access to water for their teams. Eventually it was given to Wyong Council and in 1990 the Council decided to sell it. Locals objected.

As a result it remains part of the Valley's heritage. The laneway led to a crossing place over Wyong River used by Aborigines for centuries. It is understood the area's first grantee, William Cape, used it take his stock into Dooralong Valley. It was known as Wallarobba Crossing.

Wallarobba Crossing

Bullock team at Yarramalong. Photo: Gary Gavenlock

Kennedy's Flat



This is the flat area along Yarramalong Road stretching westwards from Wyong Creek Hall almost to Boyd's Lane. In earlier times it was a popular place for picnics and sporting events such as horse racing and wood chopping competitions. The name comes from that of William Kennedy about whom little is known other than that he was one of the very first Valley settlers.

Before residing in the Valley he married Margaret McGuire in 1851. They had two daughters and a son "Ned" born in 1863. William seems to have moved alone to Maitland at about the time of Edward's birth and reportedly died there twelve months later.

In 1865 his widow, Margaret, married Simon Waight whose name was sometimes given as "Waite" or "White". Margaret was known locally as "Granny White".

Their son, Edward, was well known and highly respected in the Valley and continued to live at Kennedy's Flat. The original Kennedy home was replaced in about 1907. This very recognisable 1907 home, much extended, remains at 878 Yarramalong Road.

A Success Story



Mervyn Victor Richardson was born at Yarramalong in 1893 when his father, Archibald, was the teacher at Yarramalong School. The family left Yarramalong in 1895. Though his father was a teacher, Mervyn's schooling did not go beyond Primary. He nevertheless became a multi-millionaire by inventing the VICTA mower.

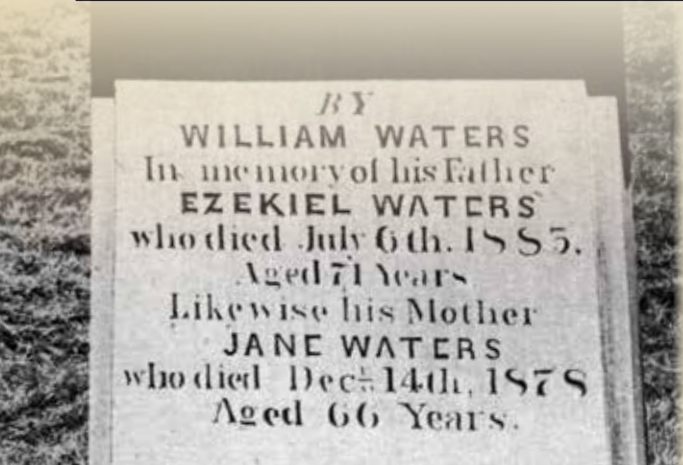
First White Child

It is a common practice for people to claim that "so-and-so" was the first child to be born in their area. Meaning white child of course. Making an unchallengeable selection is risky. Swancott, for example, said in his *Blue Gum Flat to Budgewoi*, published in 1963, that the honour went to James Ezekiel Waters who was born on 24 June 1859. This overlooks the fact that John and Sarah Lette arrived from Tasmania in 1853 and settled in Stinsons Lane where they had sons Frank (1854) and Donald (1856).

Top: Kennedy's Flat, Wyong Creek. [Google Maps]

Centre: Powerhouse Museum – Victa motor mower manufacturing archive.
www.vintagemowers.net

Bottom: The grave of the pioneer Ezekiel Waters



Coming up the Yarramalong Valley from Wyong there are several lanes which warrant mention. In sequence they are Lauffs, Kidmans, Chandlers and Boyds.

Lauffs Lane

The first Lauff was Johannes (John) from Frankfurt. He was a market gardener and owned a large estate in Rockdale. In 1859 he and his wife Elizabeth had a son, Charles, who was destined to come to Wyong Creek. Charles married and had five sons and two daughters. He came to Wyong Creek in about 1913 with four of his sons – John, William, Emile and Norman.

William had a son, “Charlie,” born in 1920. Charlie left Lauffs Lane just before his 14th birthday and spent most of his life in the Ravensdale district. In 1953 he bought a cottage, now known as “Charlie’s Cottage” at 25 Ravensdale Road where he lived until shortly before he died in 1996.

Kidmans Lane

Kidmans Lane runs north for a short distance from 467 Yarramalong Road. One of the Lane’s features is the heritage-listed *Gracemere* home. It is at 20 Kidmans Lane just a short distance up from the bridge on the left. During the 1940s and 1950s *Gracemere* was a popular guesthouse run by Allan Dudley “Dud” Kenyon and his wife Doris. There is no convincing explanation why Kidmans Lane was given that name. Perhaps it arose from mispronunciation or misspelling of the word “Kenyon”?

Chandlers Lane

Albert and Frances Chandler settled in the area about 1906. Both were Australian born. The Chandlers were first shown at Wyong Creek in the 1908 Electoral Roll. Albert was described as a farmer, orchardist and dairy farmer. They built a simple home, *Ferndale*, in what is now Chandlers Lane where they reared their nine surviving children.

Boyds Lane

Samuel Boyd came to Australia from Northern Ireland as a free settler in 1856. They lived on the south-western corner of Yarramalong Road and Chandlers Lane. Family members occupied the home until 1981. By that time a new home had been built to replace it. The question arises as to why Boyds Lane is 2kms further up Yarramalong Road from Chandlers Lane. James Boyd, a son of Samuel, acquired land including two 40 acre blocks west of Chandlers Lane on the northern side of Wyong Creek. The access lane from Yarramalong Road came to be called Boyds Lane. A son, William, was born in 1886. His home, *Bangalow*, is now on Wyong Council’s Heritage List.

The Valley’s Lower Lanes

Bullock team on the Yarramalong Road at Kennedy’s Flat between the Wyong Creek Hall and Boyds Lane

Yarramalong/ Wyong Creek Boundary



Stinsons home, *Hillview*, at 1376 Yarramalong Road is in Wyong Creek not Yarramalong. The boundary between Wyong Creek and Yarramalong is at Stinsons Lane.

For some reason the sign is placed 800 metres east of that point.

The Wyong Milk Factory



It is over 20 years since the *Wyong Milk Factory* closed in 1994 at Alison Rd opposite Cape Road, Wyong. Various known as the *Butter Factory*, the *Milk Factory* and locally as the *Co-op* it came to employ 80 people. The commercial dairy industry in the Shire really had its beginnings in 1897 with the establishment of the *Pioneer Dairy* at South Tacoma. The *Factory* began as the *Butter Factory* in 1907 to process butter for commercial sale. Later it pasteurised milk for Sydney. It had branch depots to collect milk at Gosford, Erina, Woy Woy, Toukley and Long Jetty. At one stage there were nearly 200 farms from the Yarramalong and Dooralong Valleys supplying milk. By 1982 there were only 12 milk suppliers left in the Wyong area including the historic *Pioneer Dairy*. In 1997 there were only two dairy farms in the whole Shire.

The Hannan Family



In 1940 the heritage-listed *Pioneer Dairy* had been bought by Norman Hannan, a newspaper publisher of note from Randwick. The Dairy closed in 1986 when the land was resumed by Pacific Power to build a power station which did not eventuate. The Dairy and its surrounds remain heritage-listed and are now available for recreational use and as wetlands for the preservation of wildlife. The Hannan family bought the Wyong Milk Factory land in 2004 and opened the way for the site to have new businesses and a new life.

Top: Stinson's homestead at Yarramalong as built about 1902.

Centre: The second factory which was opened on Saturday, November 26, 1921.

Photo: Norman O'Hara, Tuggerawong

Bottom: Wyong Milk Factory today

Had the cards fallen differently it was possible that the prime road to the Hunter Valley and Newcastle would at first have been routed through Yarramalong and Dooralong.

Way back when the Hunter Valley was being settled, the only practical way to get there from Sydney was by boat. A land route was needed and the idea of building a “Great North Road” was born. The Hawkesbury River was a barrier and the most practical place to cross it was as far inland as Wisemans Ferry.

The Aborigines had many walking tracks, one of which led from Wisemans to Maitland. One was used by Lieutenant Percy Simpson who had land near Cooranbong. Simpson was an engineer and was involved in planning and building the Great North Road. His proposal to have the Road adopt his “Track” was not taken up, however, because it was decided the greater need was for access higher up the Hunter Valley at Singleton rather than lower down at Maitland.

Simpson’s Track

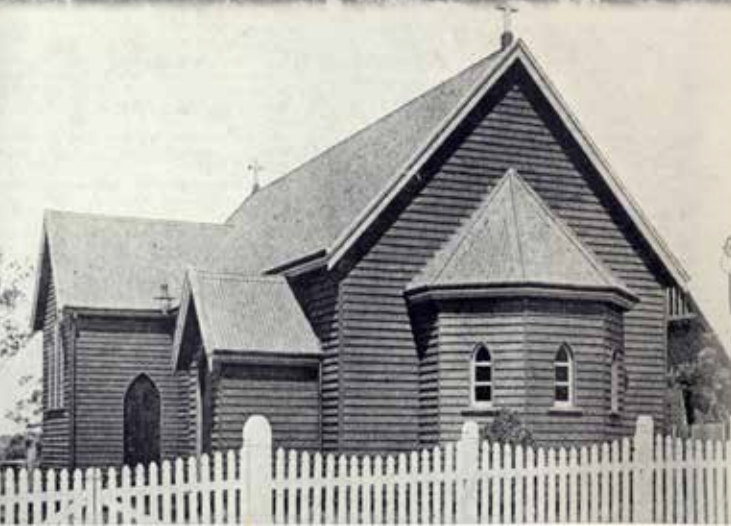
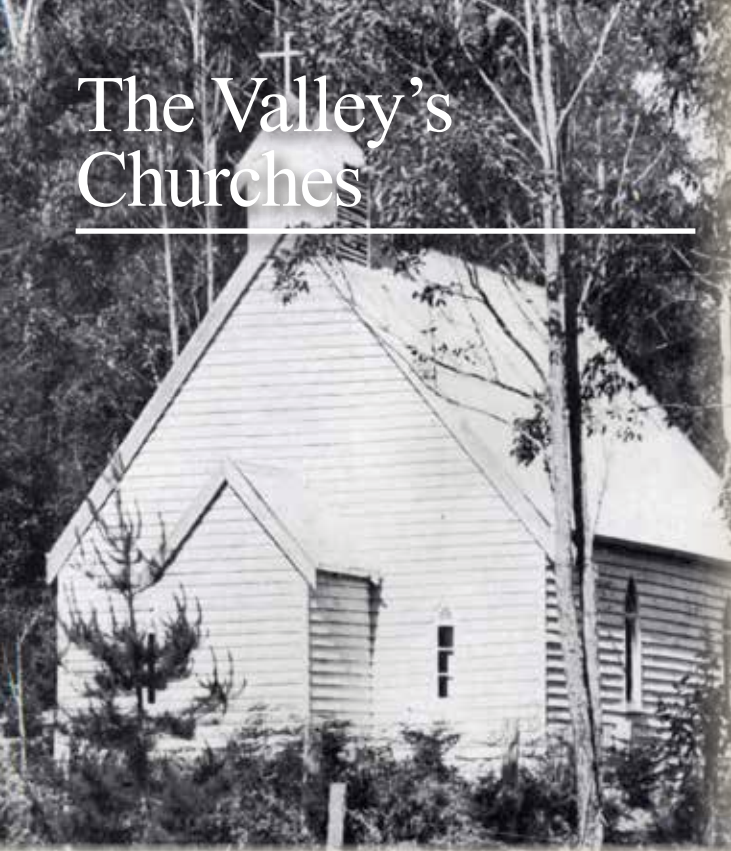
Photo source: EnduroExplorer.com – Convict Trail & Ten Mile Hollow Trail Guide

Providing the basic needs of often large families in the early days meant there was little time and even less opportunity for Valley residents, isolated as many were, to develop their artistic talents. Music there was aplenty, predominantly to sing to or dance to. There was little else by way of broader “cultural” activities. One notable exception was the work of artist John Salvana. Though not in the top bracket of Australia artists, Salvana was known particularly for his competent impressionist oils of rural NSW landscapes including those of Yarramalong. A number of his works were acquired by the Art Galley of NSW. He came to the Yarramalong Valley in 1927 and remained. Though he lived in Wyong he regularly stayed and painted at Kingtree in a slab hut near Yorkies Bridge. He died at Wyong in 1956. The community’s regard for him is evidenced by his being buried in the Yarramalong Cemetery. This cemetery is normally only for descendants of those already buried there.

John Salvana (1871-1956) *Artist*

John (Jack) Salvana’s “Six Miles a Day”. *Photo source: <http://www.artrecord.com>*

The Valley's Churches



Top: St Barnabas – the oldest church in Wyong Shire.

Photo: Mrs Gwen Dundon

Bottom: The St James Church of England in Byron Street

Before purpose-built churches were erected it was common in rural areas for religious services to be held by visiting clergymen in private homes or other suitable locations.

In the 1850s, a Cistercian monk, Father Odillon Woolfrey, in association with his brother Father Henry Norbert acquired property bordering Bunning Creek at Glenola (1880 Yarramalong Road). It came to be known as *Priests Farm*. This was intended for future church use but this did not eventuate. The first of several churches in the Yarramalong Valley was the Anglican **St Barnabas**, at 1671 Yarramalong Road. It was dedicated on 11 December 1885 and closed with its final service on 6 March 1977. The church building and graveyard have been maintained in good condition.

St Barnabas was followed only three months later on 24 March 1886 by another Anglican Church, **St Silas's** at 881 Yarramalong Road, Wyong Creek. In April 1900 it was destroyed in a violent gale. A private home is now on the site.

A new Anglican Church was opened in 1907/1908 at 393 Yarramalong Road, Wyong Creek. Known as **St Johns**, it appears to have closed about 1960 and now exists in the memory of only a few. A private residence is on the site.

A **Methodist Church at Yarramalong** opened on 30 October 1909 at 1867 Yarramalong Road, Yarramalong. It has no “name” because Methodist churches are normally identified by their location. Land was set aside next door on the north for a residence. How long the church operated is open to question but by the 1980s the building was being used as a shed. In the mid 1980s it was pulled down and a home built there. The building itself was moved to 801 Brush Creek Road where it was incorporated as a feature.

A **Methodist Church at Wyong Creek** is scarcely remembered today. It was opened in 1920. No physical evidence of it exists but is thought to have been in the vicinity of 656 Yarramalong Road. It was on land donated by William Walker, a dairy farmer who was active in establishing the church. William died on 19th November of that year. A funeral service for him was conducted for him before the official dedication. The church closed and was moved to Kangy Angy in 1926.

St Anne's Anglican Church at 1052 Dooralong Road opened in 1921 and closed in 1972. As with a number of other churches it, too, became a private home. St Anne's was the only church to be built in the Jilliby/Dooralong area.

As to Wyong itself, there were no purpose-built churches until the first decade of the 1900s. These were the St James Anglican Church in Byron St (1906); a Methodist Church at Baker Lane/Rankin St (1907); a Presbyterian Church at Margaret St, opposite Hargrave St, (c1907) and St Cecillas Catholic Church at Byron St (1908).

Yarramalong Valley lies alongside its sister valley to the north, Dooralong. They are separated by a low, tree-covered ridge which has a gravel road, *Watagan Forest Drive*, running along its top towards Cessnock. Each valley has a major road running from beginning to end.

Both valleys penetrate approximately the same distance inland. Dooralong extends 18kms to a section called Lemon Tree. It is wider than Yarramalong Valley with greater expanses of flat land. Yarramalong Valley is 25kms in length and has a “village” (with a shop), 16kms from Hue Hue Road. Dooralong Valley has two small “villages” – *Jilliby* 3.5kms from Hue Hue Road and *Dooralong* a further 6.5kms along.

William Cape

An early land grant was one of 1000 acres in 1825 to a distinguished Sydney schoolmaster William Cape. This first grant was in the Jilliby area.

Development

From the mid 1850s many families left the overpopulated Macdonald River area and the Hawkesbury district to set up small farms in Yarramalong and Dooralong. Other Dooralong settlers came from various places. The timber industry was important as were, later, the citrus, poultry and dairy industries. Names such as Bailey, Bridge, Beaven, Goldsmith, Murray, Smith and Woodbury became well known in both Valleys. Simpsons Track was an aboriginal route from Wisemans Ferry. Those settling in Dooralong Valley often arrived via Simpsons Track through Yarramalong, over the dividing ridge and down to Dooralong.

The Jilliby and Dooralong “villages” have experienced decline over the years. Neither has a shop but Dooralong once had a store and adjoining residence at 1050 Dooralong Road opposite St Anne’s Church. It was operated by the Chapman family.

The first **Dooralong Hall** opened in 1914 at 1020 Dooralong Road and was rebuilt on the same site in 1940. It remains widely used. A Jilliby School of Arts burnt down in the 1940s. It was at 556 Jilliby Road on the rise at the south eastern corner of the Jilliby and Durren Roads.

Although there was never an established Inn in the Dooralong Valley, “Granny” Earl continued her husband Joseph’s **Wine Shop** at 93a Hue Hue Road after his 1911 accidental death.

Sister Valleys – Yarramalong & Dooralong



William Timothy Cape
(1806-1863)

Sister Valleys – Yarramalong & Dooralong (continued)



Dooralong has had its share of residents of particular interest including:

Samuel McKimm (1886–1961) who came to Dooralong in 1908 and taught for 42 years at Dooralong School;

William “Jilliby” Smith (1860–1939) first arrived in Jilliby in 1882 from Macdonald River. He was a Director of the Wyong Co-op (Butter Factory) for 20 years and one of its first seven suppliers;

Thomas Bridge (1810-1900) and other members of the Bridge family made their mark in Dooralong. Some information is sketchy and requires confirmation. Thomas was born in Parramatta and married Sarah Fernance at Macdonald River in 1837.

Carston Borchgrevink (1864-1934) Local people found pronouncing “Borchgrevink” too challenging and dubbed him “Bottle-of-Ink”. He was born in Oslo and apparently built a forest nursery in Jilliby for the Government. People wrongly thought of him as being of low intelligence. He raised money in London to pursue geological and botanical research in the Antarctic. Worthwhile results were achieved. He was made a Fellow of the Royal Geographic Society and the King of Sweden made him a Knight. He died in Norway in 1944.

The Valleys Prosper



Notwithstanding many changes, the Yarramalong and Dooralong Valleys have been able to retain much of their scenic rural atmosphere. New and innovative pursuits have over time taken the place of the industries and activities that have passed into history. Turf farms sometimes replaced dairies; properties often became devoted to the breeding, spelling and riding of horses and specialist farms (alpaca, cattle breeding and grazing, deer, donkey, goat) came into being; hospitality activities (farm stays, function venues, dining locations) emerged. Even bee breeding and, for a time, wine production took place.

There exist many commercial possibilities available within the Valley to those with imagination and enthusiasm.

Top: Typical turn of the century house at Dooralong

Bottom: The Valley now boasts a variety of farm-stays, horse studs and even a few alpaca farms

Most who travel up Yarramalong Road towards the village would have noted the name Hamilton Hill on the entrance gate to the property at 1429 Yarramalong Road. Those not familiar with the Valley's past could be pardoned for thinking that the name refers to a specific hill named Hamilton. Not so. Irish-born Alexander Hill came to the Valley from Hexham with wife, Elizabeth, and some six Irish-born children in the mid 1850s. This was at much the same time as the better known Waters and Stinsons arrived also from Hexham.

The three families all took up land in 1856 in the Yarramalong/Stinsons Lane area and extended their holdings over the years. The Hills settled north of Wyong Creek with a bridge entrance from 1429 Yarramalong Road. Alexander and Elizabeth named their first-born son Hamilton. He had been born in Ireland 1834. Their land was held in the name of Alexander and Hamilton Hill. Hamilton was to name one of his own sons Hamilton.

The family name is also recognised by *Hills Lane*, which runs down from Yarramalong Road opposite the old Yarramalong School.

Wyong Council's 2014 Heritage List identifies 31 sites in the Yarramalong Valley. These are in Cedar Brush Creek (1), Ravensdale (4), Yarramalong (7) and Wyong Creek (9) Dooralong (6) and Jilliby (4).

Cedar Brush Creek: *The Stone house, timber slab barn and fencing*, 611 Brush Creek Rd.

Ravensdale: *Ravensdale Public School* (former), 227 Ravensdale Rd; *Dwelling*, 25 Ravensdale Rd; *Old Ravensdale Rd*; *Silos*, 457 Ravensdale Rd.

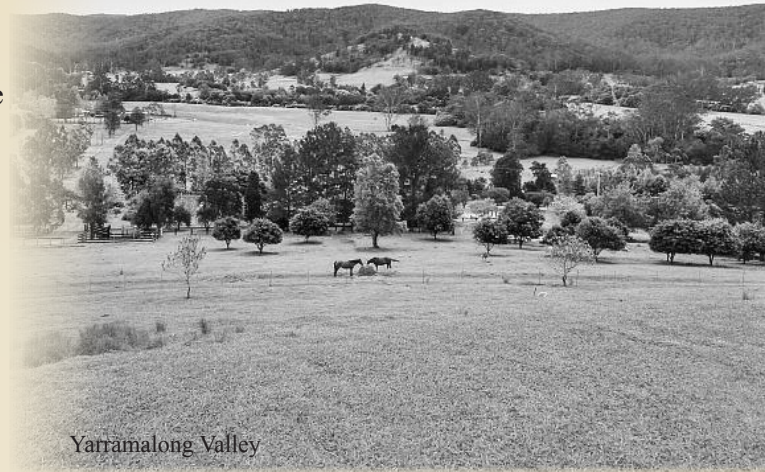
Wyong Creek: *Gracemere*, dwelling formerly guesthouse, 20 Kidmans Lane; *Bangalow*, 64 Boyds Lane; *Wyong Creek School*; 583 Yarramalong Rd; *Fernbank*, dwelling, 756 Yarramalong Rd; *Wyong Creek Community Hall*, 791 Yarramalong Rd; *Farm House, Silos, Farm Shed*, 798 Yarramalong Rd; *Ebenezer's Cottage*, former dwelling, sawmill, 1036 Yarramalong Rd; *Hillview*, 1376 Yarramalong Rd; *"The Salmon House"*, dwelling, 1208 Yarramalong Rd.

Yarramalong: *Yarramalong Cemetery*, 1474 Yarramalong Rd; *Yarramalong School*, 1560 Yarramalong Rd, is now the Yarramalong School Community Centre; *Linga Longa*, 1614 Yarramalong Rd; *Retail Store and Residence*, 1629A Yarramalong Rd; *Yarramalong School of Arts*, 1640 Yarramalong Rd; *Homeleigh*, dwelling, former guest house, 650 Yarramalong Rd; *St Barnabas Church, Graveyard*, 1669/1671 Yarramalong Rd.

Jilliby: *Silo and Dairy Shed*, 2 Watagan Forest Rd; *Jilliby Public School*, 352 Jilliby Rd; *Jilliby Cemetery*, 15 Jilliby Rd; *Simpsons Track*, (off Great North Rd).

Dooralong: *Dooralong Community Hall*, 1020 Dooralong Rd; *Dwelling*, 1021 Dooralong Rd; *Livestock Farm and Buildings*, 905 Jilliby Rd; *Dooralong Public School*; *St Anne's Church* (formerly), 1052 Dooralong Rd; *Post Office and Attached Residence*, 1061 Dooralong Rd.

Hamilton Hill



Yarramalong Valley

The Valley's Heritage Items



Wyong Creek Hall, then (Photo: Mrs Gwen Dundon) and now

Then



Now

Alison Road, Wyong as it appeared back in 1913



The current site of Coastwide First National in Alison Road, Wyong



**first
national**
REAL ESTATE

Coastwide

10 Alison Road Wyong NSW 2259
P (02) 4353 1999 **F** (02) 4351 1515
E realestate@coastwidenfn.com.au
W www.coastwidenfn.com.au



Also available online on  www.facebook.com/firstnationalcoastwide