

**THEMATIC HISTORY  
OF  
EUROBODALLA SHIRE**

by

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### **Acknowledgments and Sources**

After writing a good many other heritage study histories I was surprised by my first contacts with Eurobodalla, firstly by the richness of the history already written and secondly by the enthusiasm of the three historical societies, those of Moruya, Narooma and Batemans Bay. The very existence of three societies in a single shire is unusual in my experience and, I suppose, the richness of the written history may be seen as both a reflection of the enthusiasm of the local societies and a contributor to that enthusiasm.

Given the plethora of publications available, the main task in preparing this brief account has been one of selection and compression, whereas with some other similar areas, the problem has been finding the material.

Although the main sources used are listed at the end of the report, an earlier acknowledgment must be made of my debt to H.J. Gibbney's *Eurobodalla: History of the Moruya District* (Shire of Eurobodalla, 1989) and the excellent *Eurobodalla Almanac* compiled for the Moruya and District Historical Society by Noel Warry in 1991. The Shire is to be congratulated on the quality and scope of these publications.

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## THE HISTORICAL THEMES OF EUROBODALLA SHIRE AN OVERVIEW

For tens of thousands of years before European explorers visited the Eurobodalla area, Aboriginal people had exploited its abundant natural resources, living as hunter-gatherers along its extensive coastline and on the fringes of its other waterways. Familiar with every aspect of the flora and fauna of the coastal plain squeezed between the Great Dividing Range and the Pacific Ocean, they were perfectly adapted to the region. For the European settlers who began to penetrate the district in the 1820s it was at first an unknown: they hoped a living could be made from its timber and arable land despite its distance from market places and the serious transport obstructions caused by numerous waterways and a hilly hinterland.

Before gold was discovered in the 1850s in the mountains on the western fringe and along its waterways, the settlers were almost all small farmers for the area did not attract the colonial gentry who were then turning Eastern Australia into a vast sheep run. Significantly, the first farmer was an Irish tailor, Francis Flanagan, who was initially rejected by Governor Darling because he was not a gentleman by the standards of the ruling elite. When he applied for a land grant, the Governor "informed him that it was not the practice to give land to people of his class ...." <sup>1</sup> However, Flanagan was representative of those who would follow for the Shire in the last century was, par excellence, the domain of a class of hardworking small farmers: they were the backbone of the community and there were few who lived by wages alone.

The towns needed to provide services for a sparse population of self-sufficient farmers would have been elementary, indeed, if it had not been for goldmining and the timber industry. Gold mines gave Moruya the stimulus it needed between 1850 and 1870 but in the next decade their output fell away sharply. With gold failing, the district fell back on its extensive forests of spotted gum, stringy bark and ironbark. These became the seemingly endless resource for steam sawmills which were set up after 1850 to provide Australia with timber and to yield the raw materials for the boats and ships built in the district.

Apart from the produce of the mills, there were the railway sleepers cut and shaped in their thousands by a small army of the hardest, most industrious men in Australia. These were the sleeper cutters who worked in remote locations to make rail travel possible in those parts of the world which did not have the excellent hardwoods of New South Wales.

Although gold and timber helped the regional economy along, dairying developed into the district's main industry. Handicapped at first by their distance from the Sydney market, the settlers began to manufacture cheese. With T.S. Mort's Bodalla Estate showing the way, they built up an industry which stood them in good stead until the second half of the Twentieth Century. As Gibbney noted, "the name Bodalla soon became synonymous with the highest quality dairy produce". (p.104)

Responding to the endeavours of farmers, goldminers and timbercutters, little towns began to develop. Thus by 1890 the town of Moruya had about a thousand residents, considerably more than the villages of the area: Nelligen (about 500), Batemans Bay (about 250), Mogo (about 200).

The development of the industries and commerce of the district might have been more rapid and continuous if it had not been for its transportation problems. Just as the people depended on the ocean to link them to the outside world, so the reliability and efficiency of shipping services were governed in part by the availability of secure harbours. Yet Moruya was cursed by a shifting harbour bar and there were problems at some of the other ports, as well. Unexpected interruptions to the area's main form of transport for quite long periods did not auger well for trade and commerce. To make matters worse, floods and droughts came along with great frequency, a plague on both farmers and townsfolk.

Given the geography of parts of Eurobodalla Shire, flooding was bound to be a major problem and this is amply borne out by the Moruya and District Historical Society's *Eurobodalla Almanac* which records scores of serious floods between white settlement and 1990. Immense damage was done by these floods which were often caused by the co-incidence of heavy rain and strong easterly seas. The 1925 flood, though to be the most severe to that time, produced havoc in Moruya:

When the flood subsided next day the damage was assessed: All buildings on the river bank including the big cargo sheds of the shipping

company were crazy ruins fit only for demolition. Most of the water tanks in the town were polluted by silt and there was a temporary water shortage. Almost every building in the town centre had suffered some damage. The Yaragee flats, hitherto some of the richest farming land in the district, were covered with sand and temporarily ruined.<sup>2</sup>

With savage irony nature also inflicted severe droughts on the Shire, destroying crops and farmers' incomes and affecting the health of residents who had to depend on impure water supplies.

In the present century changing technology boosted the fortunes of the Shire: its deficits became assets as new transport systems and changing lifestyles transformed life in Australia. Before the rise of the motor vehicle, dairying in the Shire was declining, timber shipbuilding had largely disappeared and the gold of the area seemed to have been exhausted. Population was also declining as people moved to the cities in search of employment or to other more promising farming areas. However, as motor transport developed, governments began to improve the network of roads and bridges and Eurobodalla Shire's prospects were transformed.

The Princes Highway, vastly improving north-south access to the Shire, and improved road links to the interior, particularly the Australian Capital Territory, made the waterways of the south coast increasingly accessible to city dwellers keen to escape the confines and crush of life in the capitals.

Isolation, which had been a curse, was now an asset as first the motor vehicle, and then the passenger aircraft, made it possible for increasing numbers of people to holiday in or retire to the far south coast. Moreover, the tractor, bulldozer and timber jinker revolutionised the transportation of timber so that at least one of the district's traditional industries was able to expand.

Population trends indicate the effects of these changes. In 1911 Eurobodalla Shire had 4,226 residents, a figure that may not have included its Aborigines. There was slow growth in the next two decades but then a decline to 4,620 in 1941. After the war the population began to grow again and this time the trend was not reversed. By 1971 there were 8,600 in the Shire and ten years later, 16,500, while the population in 1991 was 27,100. As this growth was based on tourism and the desire for coastal



living, most growth has occurred in the seaside locations. In 1971 Batemans Bay had 2,100, ten years later this figure had grown to 4,900 and in 1991 the census showed 8,300 in Batemans Bay.

Not even the recent decline of the beef industry and restrictions on timber production could reverse this strong growth trend: Eurobodalla Shire has some of the living conditions most valued in the Twentieth Century and is particularly attractive to retirees.

## 1. ABORIGINAL CULTURE AND CONTACT WITH WHITE SETTLERS

The first Europeans to travel along the Eurobodalla coast were the survivors of the ship-wrecked *Sydney Cove* in 1797. Their supercargo, W. Clark, described the Yuin people of the area and noted their apparent dependence on sea foods. Well-received by these people, whom Gibbney believes may have been from Tuross, Clark wrote:

Met fourteen natives who conducted us to their miserable abodes in the wood adjoining to a large lagoon and kindly treated us with mussels, for which unexpected civility, we made them some presents. These people seem better acquainted with the laws of hospitality than any of their countrymen ... for to their benevolent treat was added an invitation to remain with them for the night ... As far as we could understand these natives were of a different tribe from those we had seen and were then at war with them. They possessed a liberality to which the others were strangers and freely gave us a part of the little they had ...<sup>3</sup>

These comments reveal the typical misunderstandings of the settlers, who could not comprehend that the hunter-gatherers really had an abundance of food and that their shelters were quite adequate for people accustomed to the climate and needing to move regularly to maintain their food supplies.

The Yuin are the Aboriginal people of the far south coast of New South Wales. They have lived in this region since The Dreaming, claiming the country from Cape Howe to the Shoalhaven and inland to the Great Dividing Range and possibly beyond.

As Merv Penrith, Chairperson of the Merrimans Local Aboriginal Land Council explains in a submission to this study, Yuin "culture has always been very rich, diverse and adaptable to survival ..." and central to that culture since the Dreamtime has been the relationship of the Yuin to their land, particularly to Gulaga (Mt. Dromedary), the focus of their cultural and spiritual life.

There may have been conflict with other Europeans before the next recorded contact between whites and blacks because the crew of the *Fly* were attacked without provocation at Batemans Bay when they were searching for water in 1808 and three sailors were killed. Thirteen years later another group of mariners were attacked in the same area and Governor Macquarie arranged for a reconnaissance of Batemans Bay late in 1821, possibly to investigate the cause of this attack.

This expedition, under the command of Lieutenant Robert Johnston R.N., discovered the Clyde River and explored it twenty five miles to the point where navigation was no longer possible. In January 1822 Alexander Berry, a natural scientist, also sailed into the Clyde and either he or Johnston named it after the Scottish River Clyde. Johnston enjoyed good relations with the Aborigines on this occasion though he was told of earlier clashes between the races.

After the arrival of the first settlers in 1828 there was a renewal of conflict, the first signs being the spearing of cattle. In 1830 the settlers complained that they were losing cattle at Batemans Bay, Mullenderra and south of Mt. Dromedary. This was a common occurrence during the early stages of white occupation of tribal territory and the settlers pressed the Governor to make a show of force against the offenders.

According to Gibbney, Lieutenant Lachlan Macalister, who led a patrol into the area, discovered the cause of these spearings and restored peace in an intelligent and humane fashion. Unfortunately, this source was accepted at face value, leading to the claim that this was the end of resistance to the settlers. In this Gibbney was mistaken for, as Michael Organ shows in *A Documentary History of the Illawarra and South Coast Aborigines 1770-1850*, there was a massacre at Murramurang in 1832. Hugh Thompson, a local contractor, witnessed the massacre of a number of Aborigines, including a pregnant woman and an elderly couple, by a party of settlers led by Joseph Berryman, the overseer at a station near Murramurang Point about 20 kilometres south of Ulladulla. After several months of procrastination by the Governor it appears that Berriman was not even tried for these murders and, as Organ shows,

It was ultimately up to the Governor and his administration (including the Attorney General) to protect the Aborigines. In this instance they failed in that duty, and it was not until the famous Myall Creek massacre of 1838 that they pursued the rights of Aborigines in a court of law to the fullest extent.

It would appear, from Laurelle Pacey's research, that the racial conflict which is recorded for other parts of the Shire did not occur in its southern portion:

Over the next thirty years [1797-1827] they [the Yuin] had contact with sealers, whalers and sailors, and sometimes with some conflict. There are no known records of any such contact near the Tilba district.<sup>4</sup>

Moreover, as Pacey and Hoyer show, good relations between the settlers and the Umbarra people of Wallaga Lake were to continue long after first contact:

Settlement of the Tilba district occurred without the conflict and violence seen in some other parts of Australia at this time. There appears to have been a good relationship between local Kooris and the early settlers. They all were part of the Tilba Community and went to many of the same sports days and social events.<sup>5</sup>

In the absence of population statistics for Aboriginals in the last century it is difficult to assess the impact of European diseases on the Yuin but it is likely to have been severe as it was in other areas.

As Howard Billing points out in a submission for this thematic history, archaeologists estimate that up to two thirds of the Aboriginals may have died before close contact with European settlers. Moreover, the process of settlement "forcibly dispossessed Aboriginal people of their land. This destroyed complex spiritual and economic cultures evolved over millennia."

According to Deborah Rose, estimates of the Aboriginal population of the Far South Coast range from Radcliffe Brown's low estimate of 3,600 to Butlin's high figure of 11,800 and she believed that loss of life among the Yuin was so severe that the 1788 total may have been reduced by 95% by the 1840s. Such a tragic loss of life would have been due to a range of causes including violence, disease and the loss of tribal land. It is not possible to provide population estimates for the study area but Rose describes the effects of white settlement on the Aboriginal population as "The Great Dying".<sup>6</sup> Nevertheless, by sheer determination and skilful adaptation the Yuin were able to survive in greater numbers than in some other coastal areas despite the disruption of their way of life and dispossession of much of their tribal land. Thus there has been continuity of Aboriginal presence in their original tribal territory.

From the arrival of the first settlers the Yuin accepted employment on a casual basis but in the last century rarely worked permanently for the newcomers according to William Bayley in *Behind Broulee*: "although some assisted in haymaking, reaping and sheepworking, they were undependable as a means of supplying labour."<sup>7</sup> However, Pacey and Hoyer point out that in the Tilba district the Aboriginals took permanent

employment on farms and as domestics and also worked as sharefarmers. Their detailed knowledge of the resources of the area and their special skills, made them invaluable at times. As guides, their assistance was essential and in 1841, when the schooner *Rover* was cast ashore in Broulee Bay, they helped to form a human chain which saved ten lives. According to Bayley, the Aborigines formed "the seaward end of the chain": their courage was rewarded with special plates.

Intermarriage between whites and blacks was not uncommon and many residents of the Shire are descended from the Yuin. Children of mixed race were attending Narooma Public School in 1891 and such children were not excluded as in some other districts of New South Wales. This suggests that race relations were more harmonious in the study area than in some other areas before the intrusion of the Aborigines Protection Board which was formed in 1884.

According to Rose,

The Yuin people's effort peacefully to accommodate Europeans in their midst and to adapt their own lives to circumstances which were beyond their control can be measured as a success. Their success, however, was to be systematically destroyed by the Board which existed allegedly to protect them.

An investigation of the History of the Aborigines of the Far South Coast of New South Wales in the Nineteenth Century, a thesis by Stuart Cameron, shows that by the 1880s the Yuin

had mastered the full range of pioneering skills. Most were employed, at least seasonally, and a few families lived independently on their own blocks of land which they farmed in the European style.

He believes that they

seem to have established for themselves a valuable place in a new society. Minimally, Yuin people were valued for their labour, of course, but they were also given credit for their tracking abilities, hunting and sporting abilities, and musical skills.

Claiming to assist the Aborigines, the Protection Board set out to concentrate them in settlements and to achieve this excluded them from land ownership as

individuals, condemning them to the status of "landless rural labourers or mere dependents of the Board".

The principal Protection Board reserve in the study area was established at Wallaga Lake although there were at least eleven by 1902 including four at Bodalla, two at Moruya, two at Batemans Bay and one at Currawan and Nelligen. The published list of Aboriginal Reserves in New South Wales does not reveal the fate of all these reserves but most were revoked after Protection Board policy changed in 1918, to favour the dispersal of settlements on reserves.

For two decades the Protection Board moved Aborigines to these reserves but from 1909 a change in policy saw able-bodied people forced off the reserves to seek work mainly as farm labourers and domestic servants. According to Norm Hoyer the Wallaga Lake people tended to fare better than Aborigines in some other areas, remaining "respected members of the community during this period and throughout the subsequent decades". Rose shows that the Wallaga Lake Reserve remained open and its families were not dispersed.

In the harrowing conditions of reserve life the Yuin ceased to practice their traditional tribal ceremonies and according to Billing, initiations were last performed at Mumballa in 1910. Moruya and District Historical Society records show that the last Yuin to speak his own language, Narramurrao (Percy Davis) died in 1968. This process was accelerated by the forced removal of Aboriginal children into the Board's training homes. The effects of this practice on the Wallaga people have not been fully researched but some Wallaga Lake women condemned these "kidnappings" in conversation with Rose.

During the Depression of the 1930s many Aborigines suffered further discrimination at the hands of the N.S.W. Government, being denied the "dole" given to other citizens and the population of Wallaga Lake Reserve grew from 73 in 1921 to 159 in 1939.

In 1933 the Protection Board was empowered to force people onto reserves and keep them there. Their wages could be received by the Board and it had the

power to terminate their employment. Reserves were managed by Board officials and residents were subjected to surveillance and interference in their private affairs.

### **The Aboriginal Welfare Board**

In 1940 the Aboriginal Protection Board was renamed the Aboriginal Welfare Board which was influenced strongly by anthropologists including A.P. Elkin. Nevertheless the new board continued to pursue a goal of assimilation and the eradication of Aboriginal culture. This aim was pursued by encouraging families to leave Wallaga Reserve, as D. Jordan points out, and "to cut themselves off from their family, their kin, their place of birth, their culture, and indeed their Aboriginal identity." Nevertheless, those who left the reserves at this time managed to retain their Aboriginal identity, according to Rose, and to re-assert it when conditions permitted.

In 1967 the Federal Government took over responsibility for Aboriginal affairs and all Aborigines were granted citizenship. In 1969 the Welfare Board was abolished and since then the Wallaga Reserve has become the property of the Yuin under the N.S.W. Land Rights Legislation. Another important development was been the creation of Aboriginal Land Councils, providing leadership and representing Aboriginal people in negotiations with State and Federal Governments.

As part of the cultural and spiritual revival of the Aboriginal people of Eurobodalla Shire, a thorough investigation of their history appears desirable as this thematic history, limited as it is by definition, has been handicapped by a scarcity of resources.

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## 2. EUROPEAN EXPLORATION OF THE EUROBODALLA AREA

Although James Cook in 1770 noted some topographical features of the Eurobodalla region, and named Mt. Dromedary and Batemans Bay, it was not traversed by Europeans until 1797 when a party of shipwrecked sailors made their way up the coast from Gippsland to Sydney. Later that year George Bass examined the Tuross Lake but no official interest in the area was shown until 1821 when Lieutenant Johnston, R.N., explored Batemans Bay on the orders of Governor Macquarie, naming Snapper Island and sailing up the Clyde River.

Johnston's reports on the area inspired a further investigation by Alexander Berry, Hamilton Hume and Thomas Davison in the *Snapper* and by Charles Throsby in search of a land route from Lake George to Batemans Bay. These early reports did not lead to white settlement in the study area, probably because of its relative isolation from Sydney and the interior and a scarcity of arable land between Murramurang and Batemans Bay.

Given the rapid geographic expansion of the Colony in the 1820s, the arrival of settlers on the far south coast was inevitable. In piecemeal fashion the more accessible south coast sites began to be occupied and in 1825 the Moruya River was recognised as the southern limit of areas approved for settlement. To facilitate the process the survey department undertook a survey of the Deua River Valley and a detailed exploration of the coast from Port Jackson to the Moruya River. The expedition from Araluen to the coast was led by Robert Hoddle who returned via Buckenboursa to the Clyde River. This survey was completed by March 1828.

The coastal survey which was conducted by Thomas Florance between April and July 1828, provided the Government with an accurate account of the coast as far south as Batemans Bay. With the Hoddle and Florance surveys complete, landseekers would be drawn to the far south coast and the Government would be able to accurately locate the sites they selected for settlement. To regularise the alienation of Crown Land the area available was divided into nineteen provisional counties and the most southerly, St. Vincent, was terminated at Moruya River. (Maps 1, 2 & 3)



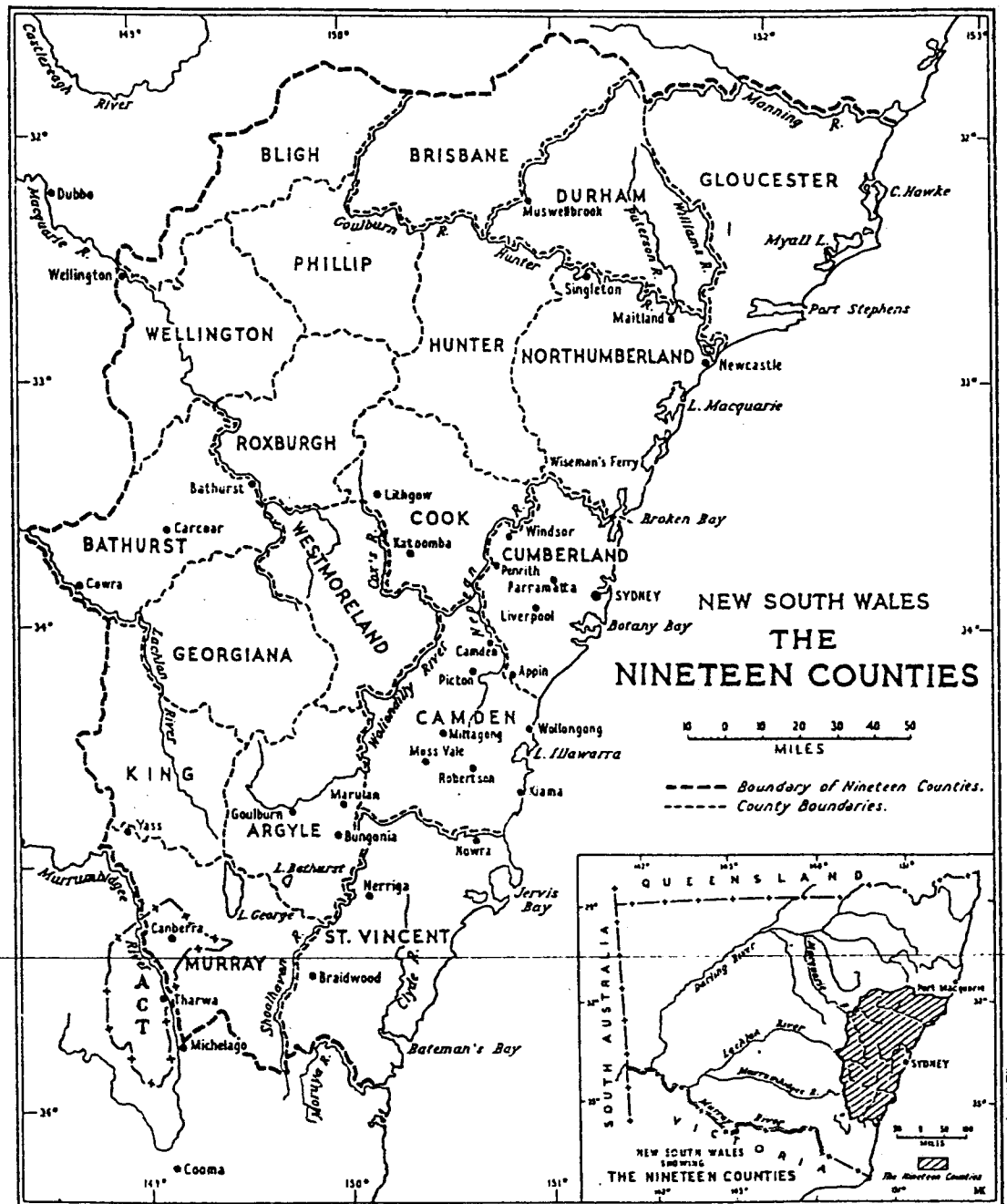
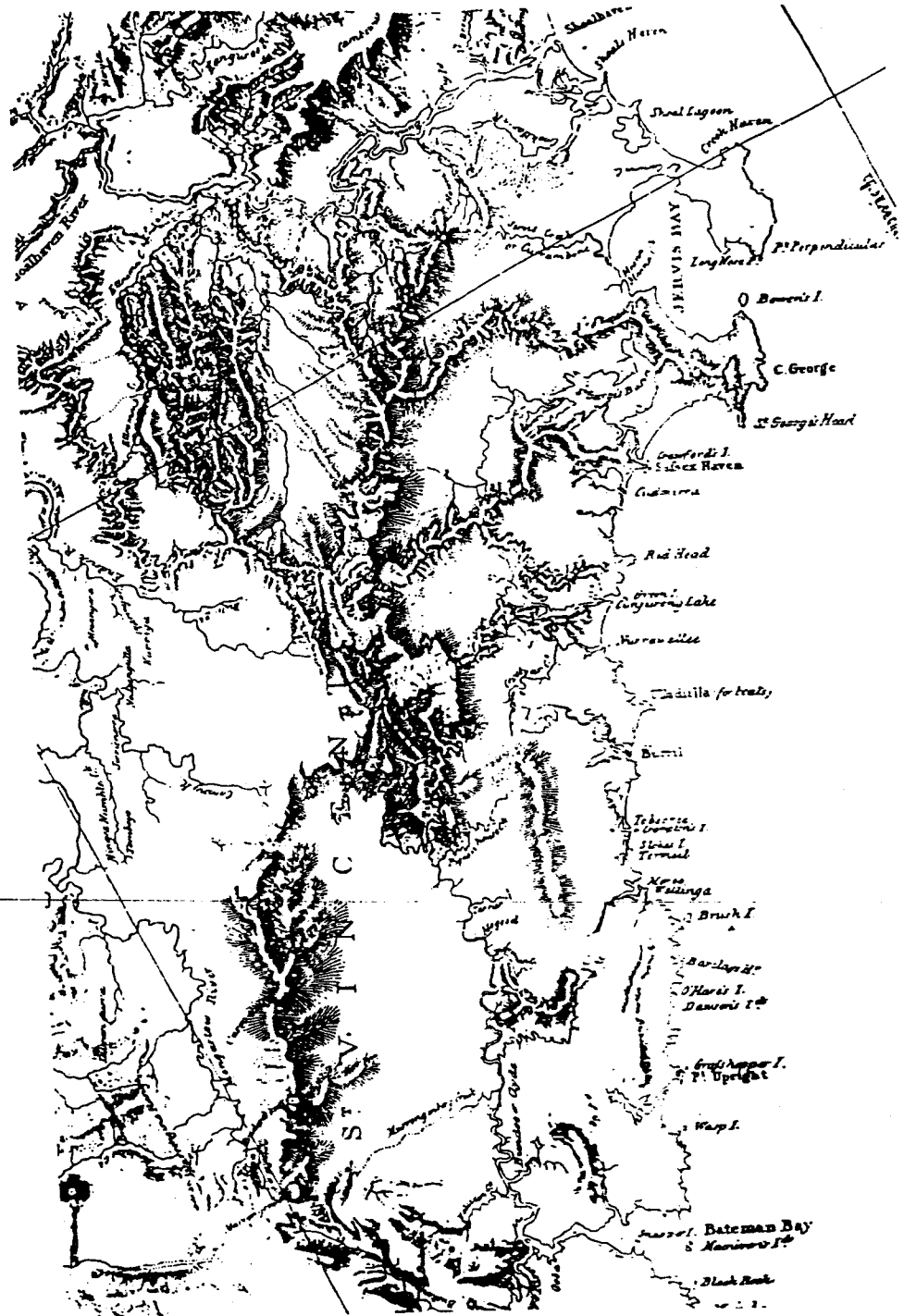


FIGURE 1 *New South Wales: the Nineteen Counties*

## MAP 1

From T.M. Perry, *Australia's First Frontier*  
showing the limits of approved settlement from 1825





### MAP 3

A map by Thomas Mitchell, 1834, showing the extent of exploration of Eurobodalla.

From R.F. Pleaden, *Coastal Explorers*

From this point the exploration of the study area became unofficial, conducted by settlers in search of land or pasture. The southern boundary of settlement was immediately breached as pastoralists from the Braidwood area pushed through the passes in the range in search of land for their drought affected herds. By 1830 there was trouble between Aborigines and stockmen at what was referred to as "Captain Raine's station near Mt. Dromedary", and three years later cattlemen were depasturing runs at Tilba Tilba.

### **3. CONVICTS AND EUROBODALLA**

As a late developing part of the N.S.W. coast, remote from Sydney, the Eurobodalla area did not experience the convict system to the degree that it affected many other areas. True, convicts were present in the official surveying expeditions and in the crews of some of the ships touching on the study area in the early period but the district was spared some of the more blatant trappings of the transportation system. However, the modern view of convicts as indentured civil servants is represented in the study area in the 1830s. Some of the workers bringing stock into the district were assigned servants but private assignment ceased about 1840, just as the Broulee Court House was being constructed. Thereafter, the first magistrates, F.C. Waldron and Captain William Oldrey, supervised the service of about a hundred convicts in their district. According to Gibbney, the most severe flogging ordered by their court was fifty lashes and the last punishments of this kind executed in the area occurred in 1843. Eurobodalla had escaped the worst of the convict period.

### **4. PASTORALISM**

As access to markets was the key to the early development of land in New South Wales, the first settlers in the area turned to pastoralism as a means of producing saleable commodities capable of being transported to Sydney or beyond. Cattle could be converted into salted meat, hides, horns and hooves, all saleable and capable of surviving transportation by sea without marked deterioration. Moreover, cattle were overlanded to Gippsland and Adelaide by men like William Coman and Joseph Hawdon. Thus cattle were the staple product of the 1830s and 1840s. Wool, too, was

saleable although the coastal plain was not suited to sheep and that form of pastoralism did not last past 1843.

Potentially the area was well suited to dairying but unimproved pastures and distance from the main market in Sydney was a problem. As Gibbney showed, most farmers kept a few cows and made salted butter and inferior cheese which they sent off in kegs, using the by-products to raise pigs for conversion into bacon or salt pork. Nevertheless, low yields and poor quality made dairying a cottage industry until the 1860s when T.S. Mort's work at Bodalla showed the way to increased productivity and profitability.

At Bodalla, Mort established a large scale cheese and bacon factory based on a formula of regimentation, Christian principles and pursuit of profit. This project was probably unique in Australia and cheese making became one of the area's basic industries.

As the century progressed the pastoral industry became progressively more important in the Moruya area, particularly the keeping of dairy cattle. The growth of demand for dairy products in Australia and overseas after the development of mechanical separation of milk and refrigeration strengthened the economics of farming in the study area.

D.J. Jeans' *An Historical Geography of New South Wales to 1901* shows how the large estates of T.S. Mort (Bodalla), H. Clark (Bergalia) and John Hawdon (Broulee) led the district into the dairying era. Mort planted the cleared section of his 22,000 acres with rye grass, cocksfoot, clover and prairie grass in order to run 1,000 cows. He employed 250 people excluding the army of children who performed the milking and turned out six tons of cheese each week from three factories. The associated bacon works processed 1,500 pigs each year. The success of these large operators inspired other farmers who made their own cheese or sold their milk to the bigger concerns. Butter was less important than cheese because it was more perishable: the Illawarra district tended to control the supply of butter to Sydney in this period.

A detailed description of "Bergalia" from the *Moruya Examiner* on 18 April 1882 indicates the nature of the larger dairying estates. The first cream separators appeared in the district in the 1880s and in the next decade farmers began to co-operate to create well-equipped factories. In 1891 the A.B.C. Cheese Factory, the first co-operative cheese factory in New South Wales, opened at Central Tilba: it would remain in use till 1981. The Moruya Dairy Society's cheese factory followed in 1892. It introduced pasteurising in 1919 and remained in production till 1971. The Bergalia Cheese Factory opened in 1893 and many others followed at Kiora, Buckenboursa, Corunna, Noorooma, Moggendoura, Deua River, Nelligen and elsewhere. These factories were updated or rebuilt from time to time to conform with changes to the Board of Health's regulations.

Dairying, mainly for cheese production, continued to be an important industry but much of the land was not ideal for the purpose and some farmers left the district in the early Twentieth Century. There were better prospects in Northern New South Wales and dairying continued to lose its small operators after the First World War.

One of the difficulties of the dairy farmers was the failure of their pastures in the summer but this problem was solved when J.P. Seccombe introduced paspalum in 1897. The conservation of fodder increased and as H.J. Gibbney and N.C. Hoyer show in *Taken at Tilba*, the Tilba district had more silos per farm than any other district in the state. The industry was also innovative in animal breeding and over its long history of dairying, three main cattle breeds were used: from Dairy Shorthorns to Jerseys and finally to Friesians.

## 5. AGRICULTURE

In Great Britain in the early Nineteenth Century the ownership of land was the key to high social status and the great majority of N.S.W. settlers wanted to become landed proprietors in their new homeland. However, land ownership was no guarantee of an adequate income, let alone an accepted place in colonial society. Having land might be a bulwark against hunger but the earning of an income from it depended to a large extent on access to markets.

Those who settled on the far south coast were well placed for subsistence farming but commercial agriculture was much more difficult to establish because really good farm land existed only in a few pockets. As Gibbney explains,

The lower Moruya river flats, the Moggendoura Valley, the coastal plain of Congo and Bergalia and the magnificent river flats of the lower Tuross offered the only serious possibilities for extensive settlement. On Jerramadra Creek, Wamban Creek, Buckenboursa Creek, the Tomago River and Mount Oldrey, smaller areas of farmland were created by clearing patches of what was otherwise unbroken forest.<sup>8</sup>

Potatoes were the Moruya district's first staple crop as they grew well on old swamps and river flats and they were well received in Sydney. Wheat was another successful early crop but competition from South American grain could make it unprofitable when shipped to Port Jackson. Even so, production grew to 15,000 bushels by 1861 but a few years later the disease "rust" struck, destroying this crop in coastal New South Wales.

Agricultural pursuits were hampered by a scarcity of labour but the struggling farmers tried a variety of crops in lieu of wheat. Cotton, arrowroot, tobacco and even sugar were tried in the 1860s and 1870s but increasingly the farmers turned to the growing of maize for use as feed for pigs and cattle.

## 6. LAND TENURE

For thousands of years the Yuin Aboriginals had divided their tribal territory according to its food resources, allocating sections to particular clans but retaining for the whole tribe outstanding sites of particular social or spiritual significance. This pattern of occupation was interrupted as white settlers took up large areas as farms or grazing runs and settled down to systematically exploit the land they received at the hands of the Crown.

In the 1820s when the area north of the Moruya River was opened to settlers the British Government was making free land grants to people with the capital to develop them. However, very few grants were made before policy changed in 1831,

making it more difficult to obtain land which had to be bought at auction with a minimum price applying.

The first grantee to occupy and farm his land was Francis Flanagan who is regarded as the father of Moruya. His grant of 1,280 acres was sited on the north side of the river at what he called Mullenderra. There were several other grants including one at Kiora to John Hawdon but the grants system that had such an impact on most of the other of the nineteen counties had little effect on the Moruya area. In the 1830s, with the new policy of purchase at a minimum price in force, development was slow, indeed, but there were some buyers including Captain William Oldrey R.N. who established a farm behind Broulee and managed to persuade the Government to recognise it as a site for a port and village in 1837.

The land to the south of the Moruya River could not be bought until 1848 when a new county, Dampier, was formed but as part of the Monaro Pastoral District it was exploited by squatters before then. Prominent among these was William Campbell who managed Gundary, a run established by W.R. Morris in 1835 on the southern side of the Moruya River opposite Flanagan's grant. Here, contrary to regulations governing pastoral leases, Campbell engaged in agriculture with profit. Moreover, when the area was offered for sale, he took advantage of his pre-emptive right as a leaseholder to buy valuable land on the southern side of the river.

In 1850 the Government began to implement its plan to abandon Broulee and lay out a new township and surrounding farm blocks. Surveyor Samuel Parkinson carried out this work in 1850-51 and this paved the way for successful auction sales in the Moruya courthouse between 1854 and 1856. (Maps 4 & 5)

The 1861 Free Selection Acts were designed to make crown land available to farmers at small cost. Many settlers moved into the area to take advantage of this policy, the first arriving in the Tilba district in 1868. According to Pacey and Hoyer, free selection had a dramatic effect on land tenure: "Over the next 30 or so years, the district was divided into portions of land 40 to 320 acres in size."





PLAN

RESERVE

MORUYA

1200 Feet  
Approx. 1000 to 1200 Feet  
1000 Feet

VILLAGE  
RESERVE

MORUYA

MAP 5

Plan of the village reserve at Moruya,  
N.S.W. State Archives

See the Chapter 4 on Land

1000 Feet  
1000 Feet  
1000 Feet

MORUYA 1850

This process led to the reduction of some of the large squatting runs in the area, notably that of Thomas Forster who held all the land between Wagonga Inlet and Wallaga Lake in 1848. When his holding was reduced to 3,000 acres by Free Selection, Forster, like many other leaseholders, exploited the act to retain some of the best land on his former leasehold. The act was also used by some of the selectors themselves, such as S.W. Bate, to build up large estates.

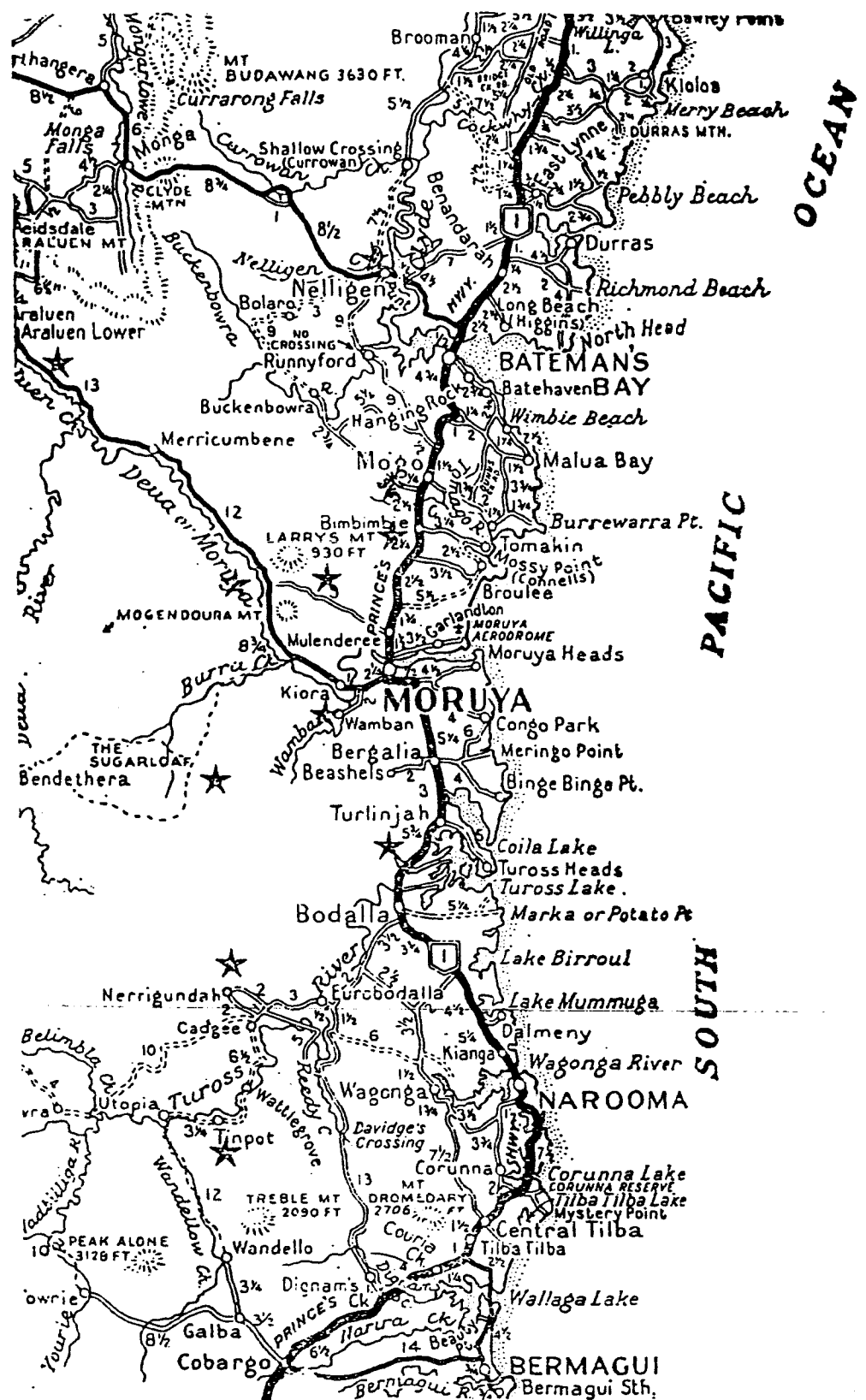
## 7. MINING

Gold mining was one of the Shire's most important industries from the 1850s until the early Twentieth Century. Early discoveries led to the rapid development of Nerrigundah and after alluvial mining of the streams draining the mountains to the west had declined, reef mining became a significant source of employment and wealth.

There were discoveries in the vicinity of Mt. Dromedary in the 1850s and although there was no "rush" to the area, as Pacey and Hoyer point out in *Tilba Times*, mining on "a small to modest but steady scale" was carried on profitably through the 1860s and 1870s: "alluvial mining peaked in 1875 with over 150 men working Dromedary and Punkally Creeks."<sup>9</sup>

There was a rush to Wallaga Lake in 1880 and that field extended as far north as Wagonga Inlet. There were discoveries at Kianga and at Corunna near Tilba Tilba in the 1880s and in the same decade reef mining began on Mt. Dromedary. The Cowdroy Brothers erected the first stamper battery in 1882 using steam power to crush the ore from two tunnels. Other reef mines were established on the mountain, using tunnels and shafts to extract gold from a variety of seams. These mines required expensive plant and involved major engineering and transport feats. Braithwaite and Pye's "Enterprise" mine is described in *Tilba Times*

A race 1.5 miles in extent supplies a splendid dam 50ft x 18ft, and 6ft 6in in depth, situated 147ft (vertical measurement) above the driving wheel of the battery, to which it is conveyed by 600ft of 7in iron piping. Mr. Braithwaite intends to increase the capacity of their dam by another 5ft in depth, when a practically unlimited supply of water will be available. The battery carries five stampers and is kept as bright as a new pin in a comfortable galvanised-iron building.<sup>10</sup>



## MAP 6

The location of major goldfields in Eurobodalla  
 From *Mining Gold and Silver on the Far South Coast*,  
 Moruya and District Historical Society, 1980.  
 The stars indicate locations

Mining of this type required massive disturbance of the environment to provide plant sites and housing for the mining communities as an 1898 description quoted by Pacey and Hoyer shows:

Comfortable dwellings stud the mountain's side at various points: the busy miner's pick and the whirl of machinery may be heard throughout the twenty-four hours (Sunday alone excepted). ... What strikes the visitor at first sight are the innumerable and ingenious methods which have been adopted to overcome the many apparently insurmountable obstacles which are met with at every turn. Great unwieldy boulders have gone down like nine-pins before the restless force of the miner's drill and the deadly dynamite; huge excavations have been made to provide a resting place for the batteries (worked in some cases by water and in others by steam); while a plentiful supply of water is carried from point to point by means of races which ... must total many miles.<sup>11</sup>

Another significant mining method with serious environmental impact was hydraulic sluicing which boosted alluvial mining in the 1870s. It involved the use of a water cannon to wash the dirt from creek beds through sluice boxes. At the turn of the century the Punkalla Gold Dredging Company was formed to dredge Punkally Creek by means of a dredge built on the site: returns were disappointing and the venture closed in 1903.

During the First World War mining almost disappeared but the silver mine at Sawyers Creek operated fitfully in the 1920s and the Mt. Coman gold mine near Nerrigundah was re-opened in 1931 and remained in production until 1950.

Another useful resource was the stone of the area and quarrying has contributed to the region's economic life as well as its buildings and those of other areas. Stone was extracted in several areas, the best known variety, that bar of fine-grained blue grey granite lying downstream of Moruya which has been quarried since about 1858 (Louttit Bros), contributing to local harbour construction, to various Sydney buildings, notably the General Post Office, the Bank of N.S.W. head office and Captain Cook's statue in the Botanic Gardens. This resource was exploited most intensively for the Sydney Harbour Bridge and led to the appearance of Granite Town in the 1920s.

There were two small quarries at Central Tilba, one of which supplied stone for the Rookwood Cemetery in Sydney, and another, on Montague Island, yielded material for the Sydney Post Office.

## 8. FISHING

The European settlers of New South Wales harboured great expectations of the fishing industry based on their experience of the rich fisheries of the North Sea. However, the fish resources of New South Wales were far inferior and the industry was slow to develop in the colony. Nevertheless, when it did so the Eurobodalla area played a significant part.

The perishable nature of scaled fish made commercial fishing impracticable before the development of ice manufacturing and refrigeration. However, oysters could be transported in good condition and prawns and fish could be dried and then sent to market. Oyster catching was being carried on in the Clyde River by 1842 and W. Latta began at Batemans Bay about 1860: a decade later he had forty oyster boats at work. Oyster catching was also practised at Nelligen in 1875 and by 1883 the Clyde River had a reputation for fine oysters. By 1913 Oyster farming was booming at Narooma. Clearly, fishing in its various forms has played an important role in the economy of the area from the middle of the last century.

Although fishing for sharks had already been tried in the waters off Narooma, big game fishing really began there after a black marlin was caught off Montague Island in 1933. According to Pacey, this led to the formation on the island of the first game fishing club in Australia in the following year. The discovery of the black marlin in these waters attracted the world famous novelist, Zane Grey, to the east coast for six months in 1935 and, though his main base was at Bermagui, other sportsmen stayed at Narooma.

Local waters were rich in yellowfin tuna and other marine species and fish canning began at Forsters Bay in 1937 (the first commercial cannery in Australia) and a new factory was built three years later: the cannery was dismantled by H.J. Heinz in 1976.

Commercial fishing continues to be important in the coastal towns and among the ranks of the professionals are Aboriginal fishermen. The Nye family employed the Moruya Aero Club's plane for fish spotting in 1955 and their family co-operative acquired a fishing trawler in 1974.

## **9. CHANGING THE ENVIRONMENT**

Over their very long occupation of the south-east coast of New South Wales, in excess of 30,00 years, the Aboriginals appear to have had minimal impact on the environment.

The only known practice likely to have had a significant effect on the environment was the burning of areas of land to encourage the growth of grasses and therefore increase the numbers of grazing marsupials available for hunting. It is possible that areas of open land almost devoid of trees noted by the early explorers were the result of what has been called firestick farming.

In contrast to Aboriginals' effects on the environment, the Europeans set out to transform it to suit the needs of their colonial and imperial economies. Ignorant of the effects of clearing the land for the planting of crops, the first settlers attacked the trees growing on alluvial soils, causing siltation of the waterways. Simultaneously, the introduction of hooved animals had a serious effect on the land, breaking it down and making it vulnerable to wind and water erosion, however, the limited area of land suitable for farming helped to protect the environment from some of the devastation that occurred elsewhere. In some areas there were problems because of floods, timber cutting and gold mining.

Flooding was a natural phenomenon in the section of the Shire north of Tuross but the problem was exacerbated by the activities of settlers. The first cattle were introduced to the area in the 1820s and clearing began at the end of that decade. Timber getting began at settlement and it continues to be a major industry.

The impact on the environment of alluvial gold mining in the Araluen area in the 1850s was severe and, although it is outside Eurobodalla Shire, there was

widespread damage to the riverine lands nearer the coast. The 1860s floods were the worst on record and Gibbney points out that the river was about two feet higher than the 1852 high water mark and "Broulee beach was strewn with the ruins of Araluen including five corpses." Hydraulic sluicing, which allowed the re-working of creek beds to extract gold in the Mt. Dromedary area permanently changed these watercourses.

An early attempt at fauna conservation resulted in an area at Mogo, from the village to the sea, being declared a Fauna Protection District. Another ground-breaking initiative was Judith Cassell's success in arranging National Trust protection for Montague Island's fauna and flora. Secured in 1953, this was a significant development in emerging Australian environmentalism.

A partial decline of farming early in the present century had some unfortunate effects on the environment. Some of the worst farm pests which had been kept in check by residents now had free rein and by 1920 Gibbney notes,

the list of noxious weeds reported in the Shire included Bathurst Burr, Blackberry, Sweetbriar, Red Ink Plant, Water Hyacinth, Mexican Poppy and Wild Verbena. Rabbits were seen for the first time in the upper Burra area in April 1899 and not long afterwards a rabbit was shot at Glenduart ... The Pastures Protection Board paid no bonuses on either foxes or wild pigs in 1897 but by 1906, foxes at least had appeared.<sup>12</sup>

Another serious threat to the environment has been bush fires, mainly caused by lightning but also by arsonists. There were serious fires in 1965 and since then fire fighting services have been upgraded and precautions taken against what is seen as a serious hazard.

The Shire has been severely affected economically by the decline of its timber industry in recent years and, apart from the usual concerns about the state of the environment, the district has experienced the on-going controversy about the exploitation of South Coast forests. The Deua National Park, the first in the area, was established in 1979



## 10. COUNTRY TOWNS

Although the Eurobodalla area had a relatively small population, even as late as its formation into a shire in 1906, it had many towns and villages. As shipping was the key to efficient transport in the Nineteenth Century the area's main urban centres were most likely to be on the coast unless large industries arose in the inland to support inland towns. There were no such industries in the study area.

### Broulee

With the sea as the highway the location of natural harbours was the key to urban development. The first town to be surveyed and gazetted, Broulee (Map 3), was conceded by the Government to please local landowners Oldrey, Hawdon and Maclean although the Surveyor General correctly forecast its failure. (Map 7)

Because the Moruya River's entrance was blocked by a sand bar most ships had to lie in the shelter of Broulee Island and pass their cargoes across the beach: this was a serious handicap. However, the first blocks of land were sold in 1840, a court house was built (1842) and a hotel established (1843) but within a decade the Government had created Moruya and closed down Broulee. This was done because small ships had found it possible to navigate the entrance to the River, probably because the sand bar had shifted.

### Moruya

The decision to create a new town at the mouth of the Moruya River was made in 1847 and the site on its south bank was surveyed in 1850 by S. Parkinson. Eighty lots were sold at the first sale in 1852 and from then on the town developed as a service centre for the settlers living between Batemans Bay and Wagonga Inlet. Its early growth was aptly described by H.J. Gibbney:

Moruya town grew rapidly at first. The sixteen buildings of 1859 had increased by 1861 to forty three, housing a hundred and twenty four males and a hundred and twenty six females. Because of the wide river, negotiable only by ferry or ford, the suburb of Mullenderry on the north bank was substantially independent with its own post office, hotels and school. Unformed streets which generated clouds of dust in

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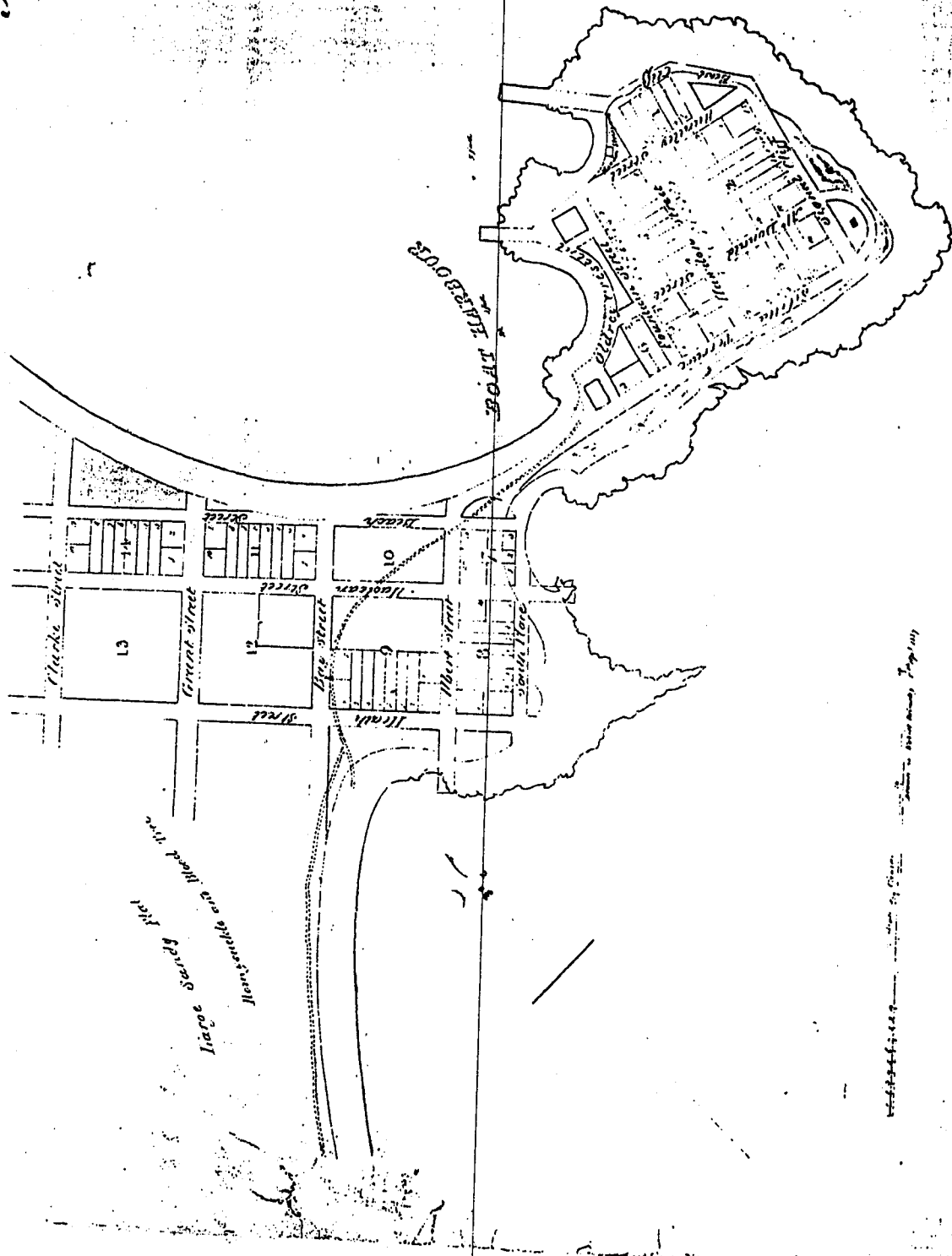
Office of the Surveyor of the State

BROULEE

1839

1839

Transmitted to the  
Land Office by the  
Surveyor of the State  
Approved and signed by the  
Minister of the Interior  
Announced in the  
Official Journal of the State



MAP 7

Plan of the village of Broulee, 1839  
N. S. W. State Archives

Transmitted to the Colonial Secretary  
for deposit in his office, by my  
order of the 10th of 1839

Archived to the S. W. for deposit in his office  
his order of the 10th of 1839

File No. 1044

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NLD B. 885B

BROULEE 1839

dry weather, became bogs when it rained as it did frequently and all streets crossing Vulcan Street vanished to the west in the swamp.<sup>13</sup>

By 1867 when the first directory of the town was compiled there were twenty nine businesses serving a town population of less than 500. These included nine stores, five hotels, two butcheries, two smithies and a saddlery. There were also several professionals and the town already had a printery. Working there was William Clements, who founded the *Moruya Examiner* in 1864: it is still being published. A court house was proclaimed in 1853 and constructed in 1868.

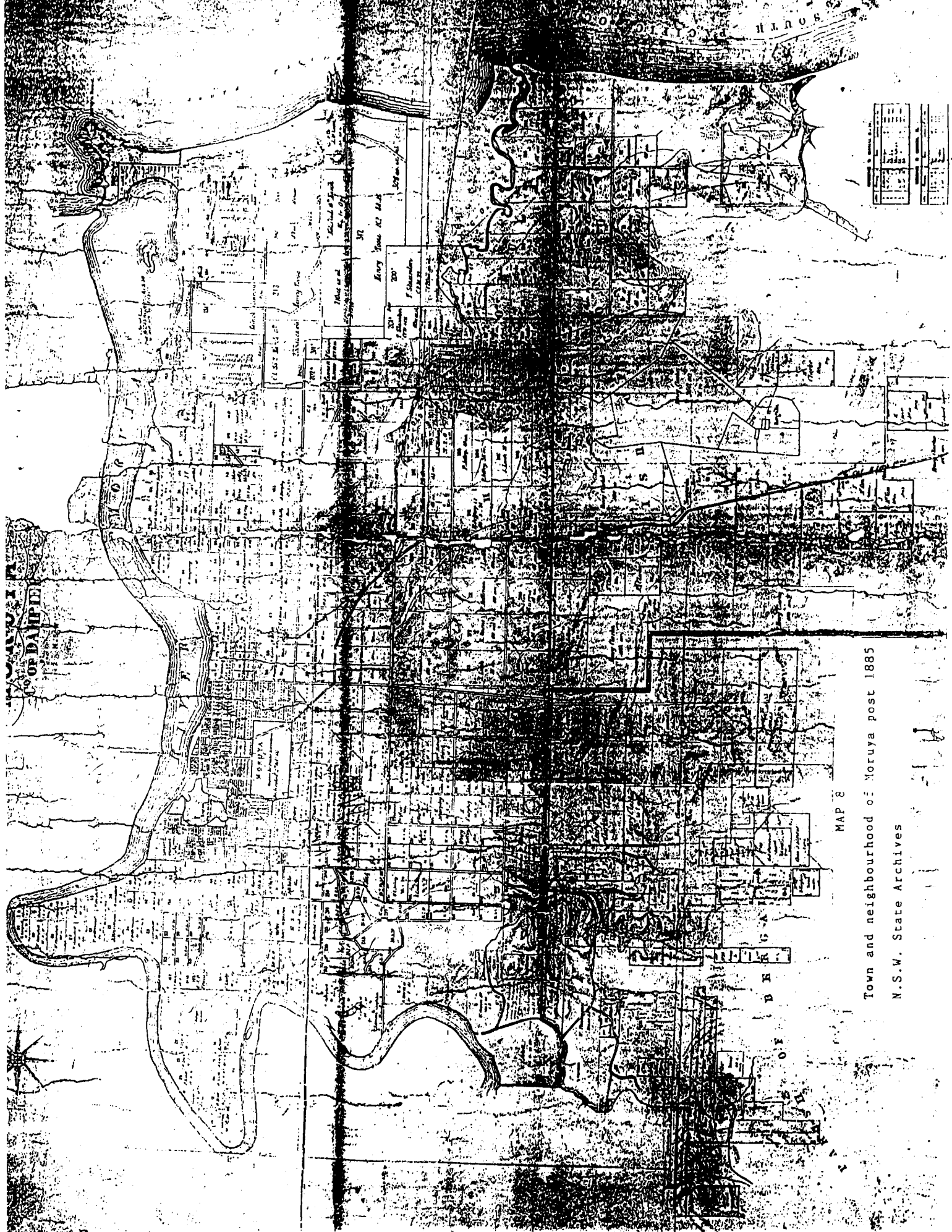
It is difficult for want of statistics to trace the pattern of town growth between 1867 and 1891 but in that year the census revealed a population in Moruya of 1,236. According to Gibbney, the town had already seen its best days and it did not exceed that total until recently. (Map 8)

As long as the area depended on sea transport Moruya suffered from periodic interruptions to its development caused by its harbour bar: it was not unusual for coasting vessels to be unable to enter or leave the port for long periods.

### **Batemans Bay**

Surveyor Florance appears to have created an official village reserve at Batemans Bay in 1828 but there was no move to develop it and in 1841 an attempt to market a private town next to the government reserve failed. However, there had already been some development as a visitor described it as a small settlement of half a dozen huts and a small shipbuilding yard. (Map 9)

In 1910 the *Country Trades Register* listed only eleven businesses in Batemans Bay: three were concerned with timber getting and processing, there was a shipwright, a blacksmith, two hotels and several shops. In 1947 the population was still less than one thousand. The transformation of this village into a busy town of 8,300 people by 1991 was caused by its suitability for tourism and improvements in road access. The town had been held back by the inadequacy of punt services but in 1956 a new steel bridge greatly improved accessibility to the Bay and from that time the growth rate of



MAP 8

Town and neighbourhood of Moruya post 1885

N.S.W. State Archives

[illegible]

Plan of allotments at Batemans Bay, 1859  
N.S.W. State Archives

[illegible]

Register of Transfers									
No.	Name	From	To	Amount	Date	Signature	Witness	Remarks	Initials
1	John Doe	1000	500	500	1/1/20	J. Doe	J. Smith		
2	Jane Smith	200	100	100	2/1/20	J. Smith	J. Doe		
3	Robert Brown	300	150	150	3/1/20	R. Brown	J. Smith		
4	Emily White	150	75	75	4/1/20	E. White	J. Doe		
5	Michael Green	250	125	125	5/1/20	M. Green	J. Smith		
6	Sarah Black	100	50	50	6/1/20	S. Black	J. Doe		
7	David Lee	200	100	100	7/1/20	D. Lee	J. Smith		
8	Anna Hall	150	75	75	8/1/20	A. Hall	J. Doe		
9	James King	300	150	150	9/1/20	J. King	J. Smith		
10	Elizabeth Young	100	50	50	10/1/20	E. Young	J. Doe		
11	William Scott	250	125	125	11/1/20	W. Scott	J. Smith		
12	Charlotte Adams	150	75	75	12/1/20	C. Adams	J. Doe		
13	Thomas Wilson	200	100	100	1/1/21	T. Wilson	J. Smith		
14	Mary Taylor	100	50	50	2/1/21	M. Taylor	J. Doe		
15	George Baker	250	125	125	3/1/21	G. Baker	J. Smith		
16	Isabella Clark	150	75	75	4/1/21	I. Clark	J. Doe		
17	Benjamin Hall	300	150	150	5/1/21	B. Hall	J. Smith		
18	Abigail King	100	50	50	6/1/21	A. King	J. Doe		
19	Samuel Lee	250	125	125	7/1/21	S. Lee	J. Smith		
20	Harriet Young	150	75	75	8/1/21	H. Young	J. Doe		
21	Charles Scott	200	100	100	9/1/21	C. Scott	J. Smith		
22	Frances Adams	100	50	50	10/1/21	F. Adams	J. Doe		
23	Edward Wilson	250	125	125	11/1/21	E. Wilson	J. Smith		
24	Elizabeth Taylor	150	75	75	12/1/21	E. Taylor	J. Doe		
25	George Baker	300	150	150	1/1/22	G. Baker	J. Smith		
26	Isabella Clark	100	50	50	2/1/22	I. Clark	J. Doe		
27	Benjamin Hall	250	125	125	3/1/22	B. Hall	J. Smith		
28	Abigail King	150	75	75	4/1/22	A. King	J. Doe		
29	Samuel Lee	200	100	100	5/1/22	S. Lee	J. Smith		
30	Harriet Young	100	50	50	6/1/22	H. Young	J. Doe		
31	Charles Scott	250	125	125	7/1/22	C. Scott	J. Smith		
32	Frances Adams	150	75	75	8/1/22	F. Adams	J. Doe		
33	Edward Wilson	300	150	150	9/1/22	E. Wilson	J. Smith		
34	Elizabeth Taylor	100	50	50	10/1/22	E. Taylor	J. Doe		
35	George Baker	250	125	125	11/1/22	G. Baker	J. Smith		
36	Isabella Clark	150	75	75	12/1/22	I. Clark	J. Doe		
37	Benjamin Hall	200	100	100	1/1/23	B. Hall	J. Smith		
38	Abigail King	100	50	50	2/1/23	A. King	J. Doe		
39	Samuel Lee	250	125	125	3/1/23	S. Lee	J. Smith		
40	Harriet Young	150	75	75	4/1/23	H. Young	J. Doe		
41	Charles Scott	300	150	150	5/1/23	C. Scott	J. Smith		
42	Frances Adams	100	50	50	6/1/23	F. Adams	J. Doe		
43	Edward Wilson	250	125	125	7/1/23	E. Wilson	J. Smith		
44	Elizabeth Taylor	150	75	75	8/1/23	E. Taylor	J. Doe		
45	George Baker	200	100	100	9/1/23	G. Baker	J. Smith		
46	Isabella Clark	100	50	50	10/				

Georgetown D.C.  
 George S. Howard with my letter  
 Apr 26 April 1977  
 John B. Borden (unc)

the town was one of the highest in the state. For the growth of tourism, see Theme 26.

## Nelligen

Because the Clyde River was navigable for about 21 miles the first town to develop on the river was Nelligen. Timber cutters were active in the area by the 1830s but gold discoveries in the interior pushed the Government into announcing the plan for Nelligen in 1854. To be situated on the south bank of the Clyde close to its intersection with Nelligen Creek (Map 10), the town was to be the port for Braidwood residents who had petitioned for a road from their district to the Clyde. The road was ready by 1856 and Reynolds describes the effect on the town:

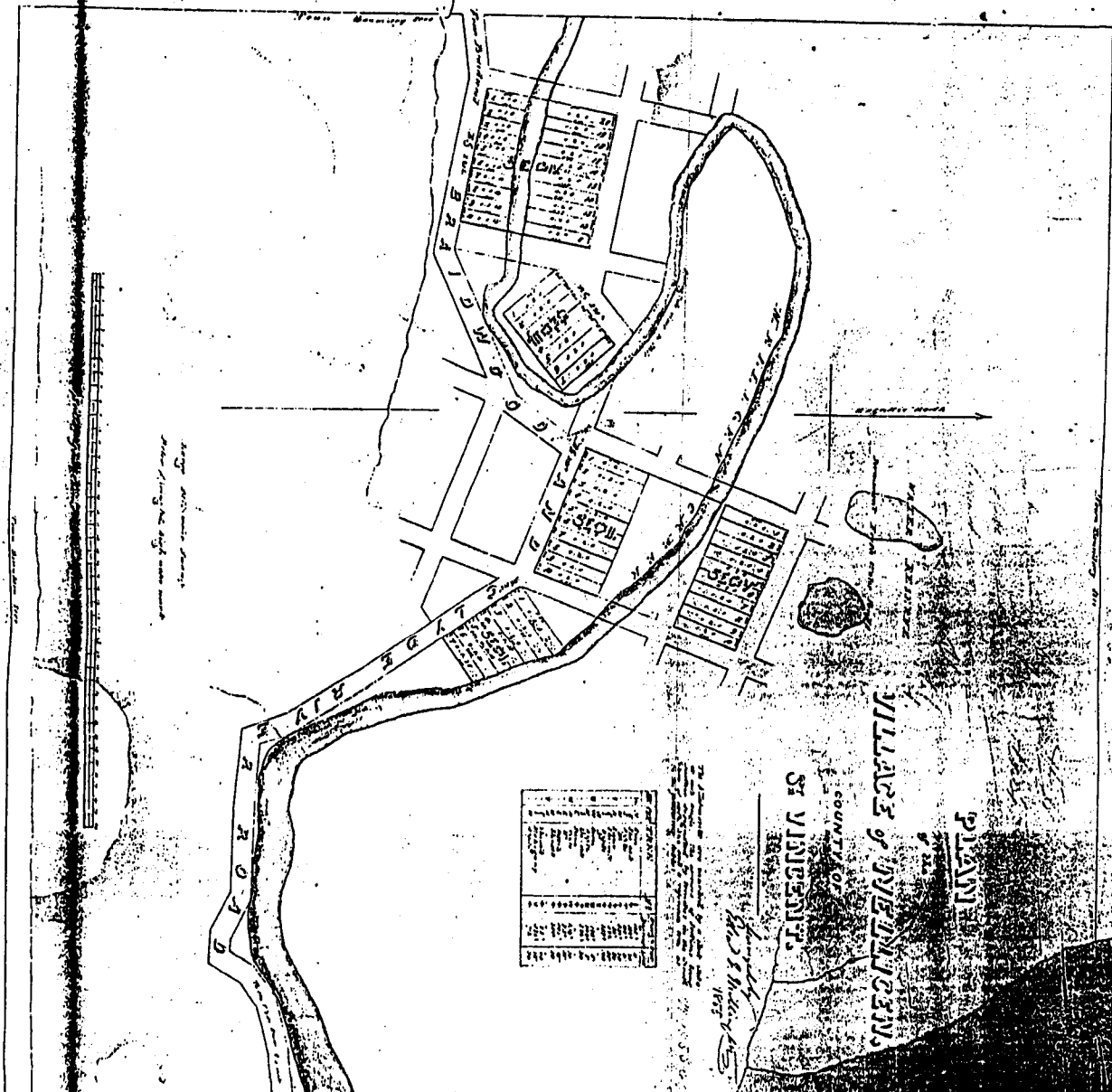
By the end of 1858 Nelligen was a stirring little township of bark huts, serviced by the two large stores of S. Richardson (of Braidwood) and Willson and Bush from which 18 or 20 teams left daily to convey goods, brought by twice weekly steamers from Sydney, for Braidwood and its surrounding goldfields. A Public House has been opened (Richardson's), and a retail store for Pott and Alexander. Other places are under construction.<sup>14</sup>

In 1858 the Nelligen area was surveyed and by 1860 it was described in these terms:

This place is assuming a degree of importance, for the time, second to no other district in the Colony. It is only about 3 years ago since the dingo, the opossum, and kangaroo could roam undisturbed by the presence of white man but they have had to retire to scenes more remote and congenial to their predatory and solitary habits. The gum trees, whose gigantic proportions were enough to frighten modest labour, have also been levelled to the ground, and on their sites are established one large warehouse, belonging to the Illawarra Steampacket Company, whose steamers visit here twice a week; also 4 public houses, 2 stores, two blacksmiths shops, one baker and all doing a roaring trade.<sup>15</sup>

The Braidwood road was much used in the late 1850s but the opening of the Southern Railway to Goulburn reduced the need for horse drawn drays to struggle up the road from the coast, a journey that could take three to four days. Still useful as a port for the surrounding area, Nelligen was also sustained by road transport to

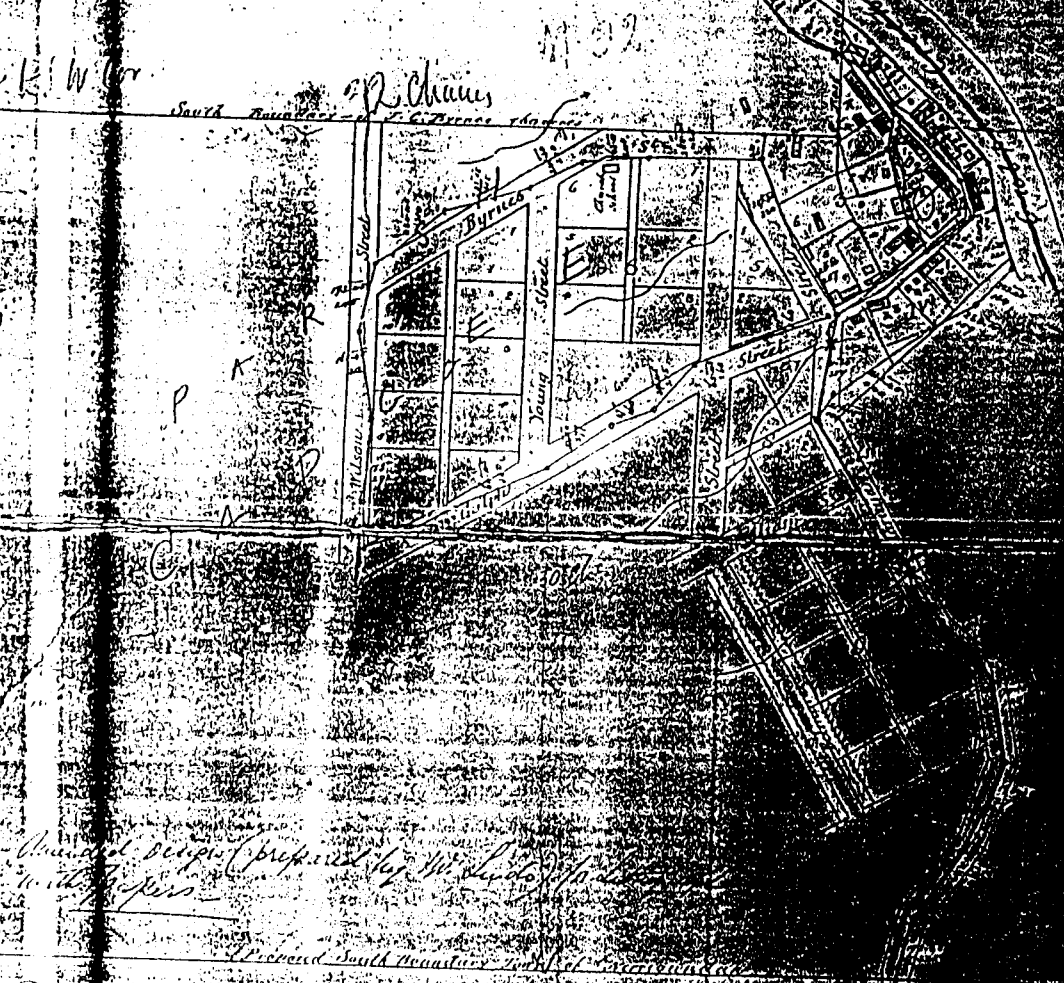




MAP 10  
Plan of the Village of Neilligen, 1855  
N.S.W. State Archives

167/1  
180

C. J.  
J. C. Barnes  
760 acres



Handwritten design prepared for the village of Nerrigundah

DESIGN FOR  
Village of  
Town of Nerrigundah  
and Cadge  
Parish of Nerrigundah, County of Dampier  
State of Western Australia

Forwarded to the Surveyor General by  
the Surveyor General of Western Australia

Surveyor General, Western Australia  
Perth, 1868

MAP 11

Design for the Village of Nerrigundah, 1868  
N.S.W. State Archives



Batemans Bay via a punt which opened in 1875. A vehicular ferry followed and road traffic through the town reached 30,000 by 1963. When a bridge across the Clyde opened in 1964 the commerce of the village declined: an era ended as it ceased to be a transport centre. Floods and bush fires also played a part in the slowness of Nelligen to grow and its population peaked at about 500 in 1890: by 1985 it had a permanent population of 177.

### **Nerrigundah**

Before gold was discovered on the Gulph Creek in 1861 Thomas Mort is alleged to have run cattle there. A rush began to the isolated, mountainous area and by March 1861 there were three stores, a boarding house, a hotel and a carpenters shop on the site of Nerrigundah. The area yielded considerable quantities of alluvial gold to a large population of miners including many Chinese. The rush soon passed but the Government laid out a town site there in 1868 (Map 11) and Nerrigundah continued as a small community based on gold mining.

Reef mining became the mainstay of the town in the late Nineteenth Century, the Mount Pleasant mine being one of the most important. From an estimated 11,000 at the peak of the rush the population declined to a few hundreds but the community supported Catholic, Presbyterian and Anglican churches and enjoyed a variety of sporting and social activities: there was a School of Arts and a Recreation Reserve.

Some Chinese remained in the town as storekeepers and the joss house was in use in 1891.

The last mine in the area closed about 1950 but a timber mill opened about 1960 and lasted until the 1980s, helping to ensure the survival of Nerrigundah.

### **Narooma and Wagonga**

The cattle run started in the Narooma area by Francis Hunt in 1839 was sold to Thomas Forster in 1848. It was very large, stretching to Wallaga Lake but it was curtailed when the Free Selection Act came into force in 1861. At about the same time Nerrigundah residents commissioned William Carruthers to survey and construct a

road to Wagonga Inlet as an alternative to the established route to the coast at Moruya. The key to this development and the history of the area for nearly a century was the navigability of the inlet by small ships.

Carruthers completed the road in 1862 and a small settlement, known as Wagonga, began to develop at the head of the inlet. (Map 12) The Government had the site surveyed in 1866 but did not proclaim the village for two decades and the first residents spread out between Wagonga and Punkally Creek. The name Punkalla came into use to denote the southerly end of this portion of the waterfront.

As Laurelle Pacey shows in *The Story of Wagonga Inlet*, population growth was slow but the inlet fulfilled a vital function as a timber shipping centre with a large number of sawmills there over an eighty seven year stretch beginning with Henry Withers' mill in 1883. There were about 200 residents in the area in 1866, finding work in farming, timber getting and gold mining. Alluvial gold was found in the creeks draining Mt. Dromedary and in 1892 a large gold bearing reef was discovered close to Punkalla Post Office. Gold was also dredged from Punkally Creek from 1902.

Development at the other end of the inlet where Narooma now flourishes did not occur until a punt linked the two sides of the river in 1894. First known as Wagonga Heads South, the village of Narooma was proclaimed in 1886. By 1888 it included Fuller's sawmill, a hotel and a handful of houses.

With a punt in use Narooma began to service mail coaches heading to Moruya and Bega. As roads improved and motor vehicles came into use early in this century Narooma was assured of growth as a transport and tourist centre. The original hand operated punt gave way to a motorised vessel in 1929 and a bridge in 1931.

By then Narooma was regarded as a popular seaside resort.

## **Bodalla**

Bodalla, first known as Boat Alley, was a large squatting run which passed from the hands of John Hawdon to T.S. Mort in 1860. Here the new owner established a remarkable private village for his employees at Wedget, a little to the

# HISTORIC WAGONA INLET

23 Quarry  
24 Site of Wither's then Fuller's mills (1882-early 1890's)  
25 Narooma Urban Jetty  
26 New receiving store  
27 Pilot's Station

NOTE  
The construction of the training walls since early this century, dredging and the breakwaters have considerably changed the shape of the entrance to the MILL BAY inlet

1 Government Wharf at Wagona  
2 Known site of a Wagona sawmill  
3 Tasker's Wharf  
4 Preddey's sawmill on Brice's Bay (burnt 1919)  
5 Clow's workshop & residence  
6 Wagona Cemetery  
7 Clyde Sawmilling Company's Wagona mill (c. 1920)  
8 Brice's "Hopeton", Post Office & Mine Warden's office  
9 Old mill site, possibly one of Fuller's (possibly early 1880's)  
10 Rayner's wharf  
11 Coman's mill (1884-88)  
12 Wagona Hotel (1888-1904)  
13 Probable site of Clow's mill  
14 Narooma Cheese Factory (1915-c.1944)  
15 Lynch Bros' Forsters Bay mill  
16 McMillan's Forsters Bay mill  
17 Launching site of "Wee Clyde" 1909  
18 Fish Cannery  
19 Mitchell's Mill, formerly Narooma Mill  
20 Launching site of "Kiangra"  
21 White's Wharf, formerly Bodalla Company Wharf.  
22 Shipbuilding sites 1902

NOTE  
The location of some of the mills are approximations based on knowledge available today

SCALE 0 0.25 0.5 0.75 1.0 km

Laurelle Penny  
Peter Phelps

- 23 Quarry
- 24 Site of Wither's then Fuller's mills (1882 - early 1890's)
- 25 Narooma Urban Jetty
- 26 New receiving store
- 27 Pilot's Station

The construction of the training walls since early this century, dredging and the breakwaters have considerably changed the shape of the entrance to the inlet.

**The location of some of the mills are approximations based on knowledge available today**

① Laurella Peasey  
Peter Photos

west of Bodalla. There had been an inn and post office at Wedget but after the southern road was re-aligned in 1870 the village moved to the Bodalla site. (Map 13) T.S. Mort died in 1878 but his family retained control over the estate and continued to run it according to the founder's Christian, paternalist principles. One of the consequences was a reputation of the highest quality for Bodalla produce.

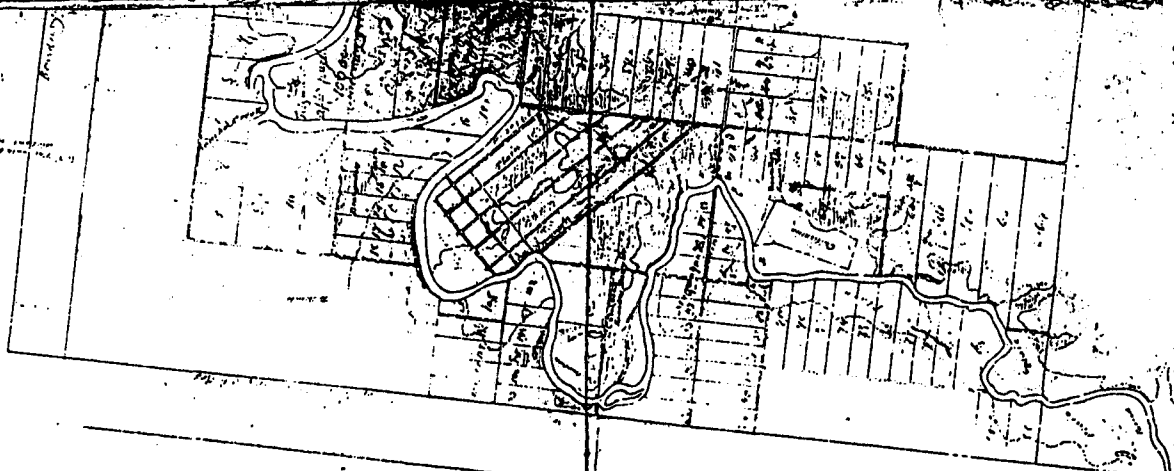
In 1923 the Bodalla Company subdivided its estate into dairy farms and set up the Bodalla Co-operative Cheese Society Ltd. to operate its cheese factories at Comerang and Trunketabella. This community of dairy farmers continued to flourish until a rationalisation of the dairy industry in the 1970s. The Bodalla Cheese Factory closed in 1987.

### **Tilba Tilba and Central Tilba**

H.J. Bate selected forty acres near Mt. Dromedary about 1868 and farmed so successfully that by 1879 his "Mountain View" estate consisted of 260 acres. R.M. Bate developed a private village called Tilba Tilba on his land and by 1892 it included a post office (1873), a handful of stores and a blacksmiths shop. Bate also planned a subdivision but it fell to his son and heir, R.M. Bate, to arrange the auction of thirty one allotments in 1894.

Complementing its role as a service centre to farmers, Tilba Tilba also benefited from the development of reef goldmining on nearby Mt. Dromedary where by the early 1890s twenty three leases were being worked. Reef mining required a stable workforce and the miners added to the business of the town.

The town was boosted by the establishment of the ABC cheese factory by the Tilba Tilba Co-operative Dairy Farmers Company in 1891. Situated at what was to become the village of Central Tilba, this factory prompted several shopkeepers and tradesmen to set up on the Wagonga Road close by. This land belonged to S.W. Bate who arranged his own subdivision and auction of land close to the factory in 1895. Half of the forty allotments were sold and Central Tilba began to develop, rapidly outgrowing the older village.



Map 13

Plan of Boatalley 1882 N.S.W. State Archives

B/1133

Design for Sub-division of ...

PLAN

Showing the proposed boundaries, and available land in the Township of ...

1882/1133

Part of Boatalley County ...

...

...

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H.J. Bate, the next owner of Tilba Tilba, recognising that it would not succeed commercially, adopted a different policy, fostering what Pacey and Hoyer have called "the concept of it being more like an English Estate with him its patriarch."<sup>16</sup> This led to his creating a town water supply in 1912 and a small hydro-electric system which powered the village from about 1928 until 1952.

Central Tilba continued as the service town for the surrounding dairies until its rejuvenation and restoration as a tourist centre. Slowly declining since the 1930s, it was threatened with closure by the amalgamation of the ABC and Bega Co-operatives in 1972. Salvation came at the hands of a small group of dedicated citizens who realised its potential for tourism and approached the National Trust to have it classified: this was done in 1974.

### **Granite Town**

The Dorman Long Company's decision to use Moruya granite for the Sydney Harbour Bridge pylons led to the creation of a unique village of stoneworkers on the north bank of the Moruya river. To draw stone from a quarry long used by the Ziegler family of monumental masons, the Company introduced about ninety families, mainly Scottish, who lived from 1925 until 1931 in a specially built township on a ridge on the coastal side of Malabar Lagoon. This Scottish town in the Shire had its own co-operative store and school but it was sold up and dismantled after the bridge was completed.

### **Mogo**

A brief gold rush to Cabbage Tree Creek appears to have given Mogo its start and fossicking continued afterwards but it was as a timber town that it grew in the 1880s after Lynch's mill was set up there. It received a government school (1869) and a School of Arts: by 1910 there were two general stores, one hotel, a butcher and a draper. A Labor Party Branch was formed in Mogo in 1909 and in 1926 it had an active progress association.

## Eurobodalla

Francis Hunt established a cattle run at Eurobodalla in the 1830s and free selectors moved into the area in 1862-3. It received the first public school in the Shire in 1864. However, the village remained very small and in 1910, just after its name had been applied to the Shire, the Merchants and Traders Association's *Country Trades Register* listed only two businesses in Eurobodalla, one cheesemaker and one carrier: as Gibbney remarked, it was obscure and almost moribund when the name was chosen.

### Town Population Changes 1971-1991

#### *Eurobodalla Shire Council - Population Statistics*

<u>Township</u>	<u>1971</u>	<u>1976</u>	<u>1981</u>	<u>1986</u>	<u>1991</u>
<b>Batemans Bay</b>	2100	3463	4924	6492	8308
<b>Bodalla</b>	186	230	224	291	327
<b>Dalmeny</b>	367	378	670	1104	1464
<b>Long Beach</b>	266	136	88	302	329
<b>Malua Bay</b>	107	272	503	694	848
<b>Moruya</b>	1655	1869	2003	2386	2528
<b>Mossy Pt. - Broulee</b>	208	416	709	950	1162
<b>Narooma</b>	1547	2038	2758	2864	3447
<b>Tomakin</b>	65	190	308	473	626
<b>Tuross Head</b>	249	465	835	1233	1621
<b>Rural Remainder</b>	<u>1655</u>	<u>2307</u>	<u>3475</u>	<u>4730</u>	<u>6435</u>
<b>Eurobodalla Shire</b>	8405	11764	16497	21519	27095

Source: ABS Census of Population 1991

## 11. MIGRATION

In one sense all those settlers who took up residence in the district after the 1820s were migrants entering the homeland of the Yuin Aboriginals. Like the vast majority of migrants arriving in New South Wales before 1850 they came from the British Isles. (For the strong representation of the Irish in the Moruya area see Section 30) The gold rushes which began in 1851 brought an influx of people from other

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PLAN

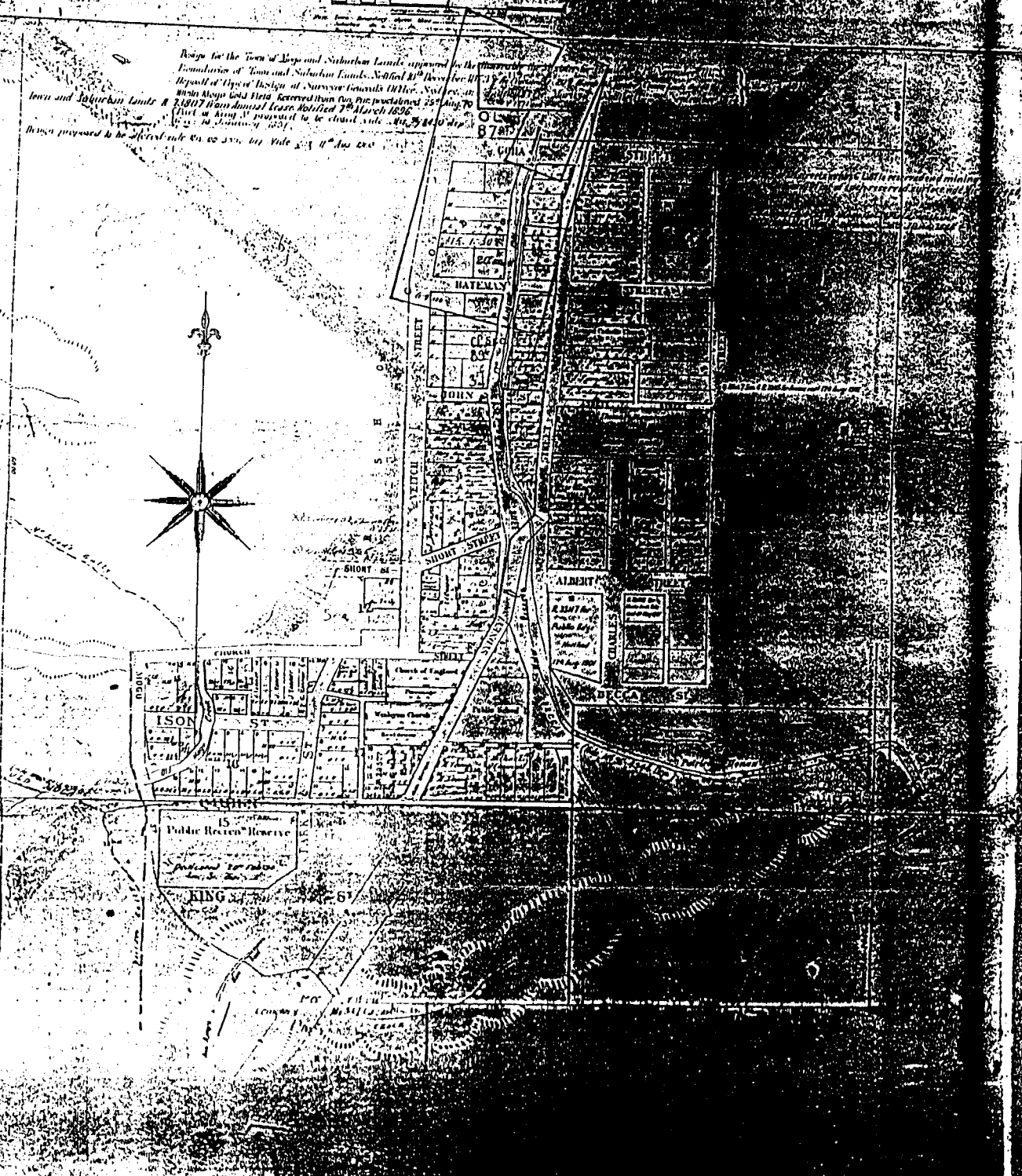
# TOWN OF MOGO

in the Parishes of  
GOBA AND BATEMAN  
County of St. Vincent

N. S. W. 1874

Scale of Chain in Feet

Design for the Town of Mogo and Suburban Lands, approved by the  
Commissioners of Town and Suburban Lands, notified by the  
Deposit of Plans of Design of Surveyor towards Office, No. 100, in  
which Mogo and Plans, received from the Commissioned 25th Aug 70  
town and Suburban Lands & 1807 from design of Town notified 7th March 1896  
which is being proposed to be closed with 1896, 7th Aug 70  
Design proposed to be closed with 1896, 7th Aug 70





European countries and from the Americas. The Britishness of migrant intakes in the second half of the last century confirmed the pattern of the pre-gold rush period and there was no dramatic change until after World War II. Although the great majority of people of Continental European origin who migrated at that time chose to live in industrial centres or in the capital cities of Sydney and Canberra, it is to be expected that Eurobodalla was indirectly affected because of its close links with Wollongong and Canberra, both of which had significant post-war migrant intakes. The study area does not appear to have received above average numbers of migrants from Asia and the Pacific Region in the last thirty years.

## **12. ETHNIC INFLUENCES**

Accepting the modern view of the Irish as belonging to a distinct ethnic group, the strong Irish influence in Moruya in its early period needs to be acknowledged here although it is dealt with in more detail under the religious theme. The Chinese were strongly represented on the goldfields and, as elsewhere, they moved on into storekeeping, market gardening, fishing and the clearing of bush on contract. Their presence will be evident in cemeteries and possibly in building styles. At Nerrigundah they built a joss house, had separate cemeteries and used ground cooking ovens.

## **13. TRANSPORT**

Access to the sea was the key to efficient transport in the pre-railway age in Australia and as the railways remained peripheral to the Shire, shipping continued to be important until the 1950s. The navigability of waterways and the availability of shipping exercised a controlling influence on the industries of the area and they were of fundamental importance to the life of the region.

As Gibbney pointed out, the sea was the only highway:

The sea provided the only really practicable highway and like the other ports on the coast, Broulee was served by a mosquito fleet of sailing craft ranging from cutters of seven or eight tons to barques, brigs, and top-sail schooners of 70 or 80 tons.<sup>17</sup>

The central role of shipping makes the coastal and riverine areas of the study area rich in heritage terms. All the paraphernalia of the shipping industry were once to be found on the coast and in the bays and rivers of the Shire, including lighthouses, signalling devices, the remains of ships, shipyard sites, wharves and cargo handling systems.

In comparison, the road network was slow to emerge because of the high cost of construction in a colony where labour was often scarce and governments short of money to employ it.

There were two significant approaches by land, that from the west and that from the north. In the beginning land travellers relied on the paths of the Aborigines but gradually routes suitable for wheeled vehicles were discovered. Thus, by the 1870s Moruya was at the hub of a network of roads to the south, the north and the west. The southern road ran to Bodalla, turned inland to skirt Wagonga Inlet and south past Mount Dromedary, and thence to Bega, via Dignam's Creek. To the north it was only possible to take a cart as far as Batemans Bay. As Gibbney points out, the only way to Ulladulla was via an old bush track through heavy forest. The western road up the Deua River Valley was always hazardous and often in bad condition.

The first significant improvements in road transport were the construction of fords and the provision of ferries but the coming of bridges was a major advance. The first public ferry at Moruya began in 1850 and the first bridge over the river there opened in 1876: no wonder it was a gala day. The bridge at Trunketabella opened in 1879.

The path to development in the present century lay with the construction of roads suitable for motor vehicles. The Princes Highway was nominated as a national road in 1922 and from that date the federal government made funds available for its improvement. In 1927 the Main Roads Department took over responsibility from the Shire and this was a further step towards incorporation into a national highway system. The major waterways were still a problem but Wagonga Inlet was bridged in 1931 and the ferry at Batemans Bay was finally retired in favour of a bridge in 1952. These

developments were of immense importance to the tourist industry and the future of the Shire.

Bus services became more common, gradually replacing the steamships but some people continued to travel by ship into the 1950s. By 1910 there were ten passenger motor buses operating between Bega and Nowra and the services have improved continuously since then.

The Illawarra Steam Navigation Company continued to carry cargo from the south coast ports until 1953 and after that date timber was carried by the ships of Allen Taylor and Company until 1954. An era ended when south coast cargo shipping finally ceased in that year.

Moruya Airport was opened in 1939 and used for military purposes during World War II. It was taken over by the Shire Council in 1964 and reconstructed to provide a 5,000 ft. runway capable of handling Fokker Friendships. A terminal was built at that time and night flying facilities were installed in 1971.

#### 14. COMMUNICATION

Postal communications began when the first office was opened in the main towns as follows: Broulee (1840), Moruya (1855), Bodalla (1857), Batemans Bay (1859), Wagonga (1863) Tilba Tilba (1873) and Narooma (1889) The dates of opening and closing of all post offices in the study area may be ascertained from N.C. Hopson, *New South Wales and Australian Capital Territory Post Offices*, 1984.

Since mail services depended on the vagaries of sea transport, a truly great leap forward in communications occurred when the telegraph system reached Moruya in 1868. It came via Araluen and placed the district in communication with the main cities of Australia in a few hours.

Perhaps the most important communication system in the history of the district was the development of local newspapers. The *Moruya Examiner*, in publication since 1864, and its successors not only provided news to the residents of an isolated area, they contributed enormously to the growth of community spirit.

The telephone reached Narooma before coming to Moruya in 1892, some eleven years after it started in New South Wales: the town's telephone exchange was installed at the Post Office in 1911 when there were nine subscribers.

The next startling improvement came in 1937 when the citizens of Eurobodalla began to receive radio programmes from 2 BE Bega. The under-development of the Shire is reinforced by the fact that television services reached Australia before electricity was connected to Nelligen and Durras Village in 1960-61.

## 15. UTILITIES

Services such as water, electricity and sewerage were slow to develop in the Shire because of its relative sparsity of population. The exception was Tilba Tilba where private enterprise supplied water (1912) and electricity (c.1928)

Acetylene gas was used to light some of Moruya's leading businesses from 1902 but moves to provide some street lights were rejected until three kerosene street lights were installed in 1922. Electric street lighting followed in 1931. Electricity came to Narooma in the 1930s. The Moruya Electric Supply Company was formed in 1931 but taken over by the Bega County Council in 1942. It began to supply Moruya in 1952: Bodalla in 1951: Nelligen in 1961.

The Shire has always been vulnerable to drought. In 1907 water was brought into Nelligen and Batemans Bay by ship because of a prolonged drought. Narooma had a water supply in the 1930s but the other main towns received reticulated water in the 1950s and the first sewerage scheme was introduced to Moruya in 1971: it was then extended to other centres.

Although the danger of fire was great in town and country, fire brigades were slow to appear. Disastrous bush fires in 1939 led to the creation of the first bushfire brigades, formed at Nelligen Narooma and Moruya in 1939. Fire brigades were not established until after World War II.

## 16. INDUSTRIALISATION

Basically Eurobodalla Shire has always depended on its natural resources. In the beginning timbergetting, agriculture and pastoralism were its only industries and manufacturers have generally passed it by. Nevertheless, the processing of milk into cheese began quite early by Australian standards and continued for over 120 years. Precious metals mining has also had an important influence on the development of the area and the larger mines used ore-crushers powered by steam engines and requiring engineering skills in their maintenance.

Possibly the most important other form of industry was sawmilling which was carried on, beginning in the 1850s, in dozens of different locations, not all of them recorded. Laurelle Pacey's research into the mills around Wagonga Inlet (Map 12) shows the extent of this form of industry. Equipped with steam-powered saws, these mills could be moved to new locations as timber was cut out and if a mill closed, its engine could be recycled into mining or agriculture. Gibbney noted early mills at Buckenboursa (1859), Tuross (1865), Nelligen (1871) and Tomago, later known as Tomakin (1876) but the industry temporarily declined in the 1880s. Frances Guy's mill at Batemans Bay was taken over by John and Albert Perry in 1901 to become a local institution, manufacturing a range of timber products including wheel spokes, naves and felloes, hardwood meat skewers (one million a week) and spindles for the Postmaster General (one million a year). Burnt down in 1908, it was rebuilt and continued in operation until 1960. Allen Taylor Company's mill at Benandarah closed in 1985.

Early in the present century G.W. Mitchell began operations in the Shire, running many mills, the largest at Narooma, others at Batemans Bay, Mogo and Moruya. John McMillan began late last century with a mill at Durass but then formed the Clyde Sawmilling and Shipping Company, operating more than twenty mills on the South Coast, with a large mill at Forsters Bay, others at Brice's Bay, Corunna and Stoney Creek.

From time to time timber was processed to produce tannin and eucalyptus oil and these were valuable by-products of this basic industry. Wattlebark was harvested in many parts of the Shire in the last century.

Wherever rich forests existed near waterways on the N.S.W. coast shipbuilding was also carried on and Eurobodalla Shire had a long history of constructing timber ships. From the 1850s until early this century small ships were produced mainly for use on the coast. Usually linked to the sawmills, shipbuilding was important for the employment it offered in mainly farming-fishing communities.

As a result of Zane Grey's catch of yellow fin tuna off the south-eastern coast, tests were conducted to determine the extent of the resource and Australia's first commercial fish cannery was opened at Narooma in 1937.

## 17. COMMERCE

As the towns developed in the last century, they provided the commercial services appropriate to small farming communities: general stores, hotels, blacksmiths, saddlers and bootmakers were their main features. By any test Moruya was the leading commercial town in this period and the Merchants and Traders Association's *Country Trades Register for 1910* shows that Narooma had three stores and a hotel: Batemans Bay three shops and two hotels: Nelligen had two stores and a hotel: Moruya had six stores, six hotels and a variety of more specialised businesses such as milliner, dentist, tailor, jeweller, newsagent, butcher, dressmaker, undertaker, cordial maker, solicitor, tinsmith, monumental mason, chemist, etc. The first bank came to Moruya in 1873.

After the 1939-45 War, as population grew the town centres acquired a wider range of services and this created strong pressure to redevelop historical sites.

## 18 & 19. SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

In a sparsely populated area like Eurobodalla, it would be remarkable if there were outstanding progress in science and technology. Nevertheless, in cheesemaking, particularly at Bodalla, advanced technology was employed in the second half of the

last century. In 1896 the ABC Cheese Factory at Central Tilba substituted Canadian style cheddar for the American style then usual in the Colony: this produced a cheese with longer shelf life. Tilba Tilba cheesemakers continued to be innovative in the present century with the Co-operative factory making Edam cheese for export to the East Indies in 1935 and H.J. Bate making Fetta and cottage cheese at his Mountain View farm in the 1940s.

In a special area of goldmining, too, there were particular achievements: in 1899 the technique of mining alluvial gold by mechanical dredge was introduced from New Zealand. As the first commercial fish cannery in Australia, the Narooma cannery employed technology new to the country.

## **20. GROWTH OF DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT**

As the political system evolved in New South Wales in the last century the Eurobodalla area was represented in the Parliament but to little avail according to Gibbney: no politician was ever able to do much to help the south coast because it "was an area of very limited political importance in comparison with other districts in the colony." Usually it tended to be neglected in favour of the more populous areas. Mainly represented by the conservative Henry Clarke, the owner of "Bergalia", the largest pastoral estate in the area, the district had to struggle for money for the maintenance of its roads, bridges and harbours.

In the present century the district has been represented mainly by Country/National Party members, with the Bate family to the fore although the town of Moruya has tended to be at political odds with the rest of the shire. Because of the high proportion of Irish/Catholics among its people Moruya showed radical leanings from at least 1891 when the journalist, William Boot, stood for Parliament on a democratic platform and received some support from the town.

In a shire of farmers, Moruya continued to be anti-establishment, voting strongly against conscription for the First World War and supporting the Labor Party although, as Gibbney points out,

Like their parliamentary representatives most citizens of the district were generally liberal and benevolent in their ideas but remained unrepentant petty capitalists believing firmly in the salutary virtues of independent free enterprise.<sup>18</sup>

Local government was introduced to Moruya in 1891 after proposals for a council had been defeated in 1883, 1885 and 1889. There was opposition from those who hated the thought of rates but there was general support for the council when the first elections occurred. The first aldermen were the storekeepers, Malachi McKeon and Michael Morris, the jeweller Benjamin Knappett, Patrick Browne, who grazed cattle at Jerramadra, three farmers, William Henry Simpson of Ninderra, Joseph Jenner of Newstead and John Jeffrey from the south-western outskirts of the town, and Charles Parbery, whose dairy supplied milk for the townsfolk. Simpson was elected the first mayor of Moruya and later became the first Shire President.

While Moruya's council struggled to improve the town the rest of the study area languished without the benefits of local government until the Shire of Eurobodalla was formed as a result of the N.S.W. Local Government Act of 1905 but some towns formed progress committees to lobby on their behalf. From 1906 there were two local councils and amalgamation followed in 1913 after a referendum in favour of it

## **21. LAW AND ORDER**

The secondary sources suggest that Eurobodalla has enjoyed a history as peaceful as any in Australia: the only threat to law and order occurring in the bushranging era. In 1865 the Jingera Mob led by Tom and John Clarke, was active in the Nerrigundah area, stealing gold and murdering in the process: they were finally captured and the leaders were executed in 1868. That was the end of the bushranging era on the south coast. Even the fierce arguments over conscription for overseas service during World War I failed to do any more than raise the temperature of political debate in Eurobodalla Shire.

## **22. DEFENCE**

There is very little evidence, if any, that the Yuin Aboriginals defended their tribal lands in the Eurobodalla area. If there were massacres (apart from the



Murramurang massacre in 1832) and battles and black heroes of the kind now recognised to have fought for their land in other areas, the records are deficient. It is worth noting that there are myths about local conflicts and it would be surprising, given experience in other parts of the state, if there were not more in the study area.

As to military matters in general, the district appears to have been less interested than some other areas of Australia. Gibbney points out that the Boer War was barely noticed although there were a few volunteers. In the 1900s when support for citizen defence forces was strong, units of light horse were active in Bega, Tilba Tilba, Araluen and Ulladulla but not in Moruya. However, when the First World War began the Moruya men responded in much the same way as others. At least two hundred enlisted, about twenty were killed and a great many were wounded but as the war progressed, the district was revealed to be determined to reject conscription for military service abroad and there was serious dissension about that issue. When hostilities ended all the towns erected war memorials except Moruya, whose council decided to build one but did not act on the decision.

Reactions to World War II were free of the dissensions of 1916-18 and recruiting to the armed forces from the Shire showed support for the cause. The district was much altered by this conflict. Coastal defences were organised, shipping off the South Coast was attacked by naval vessels and an air force base was constructed at Moruya in 1942. Observation posts were built at Mossy Point, Moruya Heads, and Narooma and at other suitable vantage points: they were manned by Volunteer Defence Corps personnel: women acted as observers in Moruya. A radar station was established at Burrewarra Point.

The air force base built at Moruya was to be the war's most significant development for the district as the small civil airport was expanded and developed. During the conflict it was No. 11 Operational Base from which Anson, Hudson and Mitchell bombers flew on anti-submarine and air-sea rescue missions. At the end of the war, an enlarged airport was returned to civil use on the eve of an era of tourist development. The war also created a temporary boom in small ship construction as

timber vessels were built on a riverside site to the east of Moruya and on the northern shore of Batemans Bay.

### **23. HOUSING**

In an area with abundant forests timber structures, first slab then sawn, predominated in the built environment. However, the presence of granite and other stones made it possible to construct in a more lasting fashion when technology and finance allowed. Bricks appear to have been less common in Eurobodalla than in other areas though there was a brickworks in Old Broulee Road Moruya until 1939.

Given the rarity of large estates, the mansions that occur in some other areas also first developed in the 1820s are absent: this was a community of farmers.

The popularity of the Shire for holidaying has had a marked influence on its housing stock. In Narooma, for example, boarding houses were the usual holiday accommodation early in this century: few now remain. A population profile prepared by the Town Planning Department in 1986 showed that the Shire had a similar housing pattern to that of the state average in 1981 but there were some differences: separate houses were more common in the Shire (87% compared to 74%); there was less medium density housing (6% to 15%); home ownership was more common (48% to 34%).

The study also revealed the popularity of the Shire for holiday home ownership: the Shire had the highest proportion of unoccupied dwellings of all N.S.W. local government areas (37% to 8%). Of those unoccupied dwellings 75% were holiday homes and they were most common in Mossy Point/Tomakin/Broulee.

### **24. SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS**

In any assessment of the cultural and social life of the Shire it must be remembered that its population at formation did not exceed 5,000 and that Moruya, the largest urban centre, only had 1,236 residents in 1891. Given the restrictions implicit in these statistics, the area had an active cultural and social life based on the institutions and organisations common to Australian small towns and farming

communities in the years since 1850. Among these the most important were the churches (see religious theme), the educational institutions (see education theme), the friendly societies and the Country Womens Association.

Although mechanics institutes and schools of arts had an educational strand in their agendas, their social role was usually dominant. A mechanics institute was said to be under construction at Nelligen in 1871 but it may not have been completed as a new one was opened there in 1903. Moruya acquired its Mechanics Institute about 1880 and its hall, designed by R. H. Barlow, was opened in the following year. There were many others in the district in the late Nineteenth Century as the Government gave financial assistance to the institutes and every hamlet needed a public hall for special occasions: Narooma's School of Arts (1895), Central Tilba (c.1896)

More common in the social life of the same period were the friendly societies or lodges which often built their own halls. By 1892 Moruya had a Good Templar's Hall, an Oddfellows' Hall and a Masonic Hall. These organisations would also have been active in some of the other towns.

An organisation of great importance in the life of country towns, the Country Women's Association, was formed in Sydney in 1922. It filled an urgent need by providing companionship and assistance to women and their families in country areas and it was active in Eurobodalla. The Red Cross, formed in Australia during World War I, was represented in Moruya from the early days of the conflict and raised money for the comfort of the troops.

In recent decades service clubs have arisen to fulfil some of the social and community roles of the lodges.

## **25. CULTURAL LIFE**

The district's entertainments usually took place in its public halls, churches and schools. Inevitably, those with special artistic gifts were drawn away to the city where financial rewards were greater. Hence Eva Mylott (1875-1919) was removed from Tuross Heads in 1883 to enjoy an international career as a singer. As Gibbney noted:

"The drift to the cities was already beginning in the 90s and rural areas everywhere were starting to lose those ... with intellectual or artistic potential".<sup>19</sup>

Of particular significance in the present century was the coming of motion pictures. In 1921 A.H. Preddy built the Amusu Theatre in Vulcan Street, Moruya, showing pictures there until 1937: after that it was used for various social purposes. In each of the main towns, "the movies" became the most popular form of entertainment until the introduction of television in 1956. The Narooma School of Arts has been showing movies since 1928 and is one of the oldest picture theatres in the state.

## 26. LEISURE AND TOURISM

Leisure was a luxury for the settlers of the area: subsisting was the goal but by the 1880s there was time to enjoy the usual Australian rural pursuits, such as sport and social occasions. The rise of tourism, it could be argued, was the turning point in the Shire's development. The drawbacks of its first century (isolation, forests, waterways) have become the basis of its prosperity in its second century.

Tourism into the area began in the 1890s when the Illawarra Steam Navigation Company offered excursions from Sydney to the South Coast, calling regularly at Batemans Bay and Narooma. However, the rise of large scale tourism in the Shire may be linked to the gradual improvement of roads and the increased availability of motor vehicles. From Canberra after the 1920s came increasing numbers of visitors, first to Jervis Bay and then to the Moruya/Batemans Bay area which became the prime focus for holidays and coastal recreation, according to the N.S.W. Tourism Commission's *South Coast Region Tourism Development Strategy* (1990).

In 1962 the sealing of the highway linking Canberra to the Shire was completed, making that route more attractive and in the previous year the last unpaved section of the Princes Highway between Eden and the Victorian border was sealed, facilitating access from the south. These developments enhanced the attractiveness of the Shire to visitors, stimulating tourism which had been growing from the 1920s.

Figures prepared for the Shire Council's *Oaklands Tourist Resort Narooma Local Environmental Study* (1988) show that by 1983 the number of visitors to the Shire had reached 352,000 and three years later it was 414,000. The most favoured town was Batehaven/Batemans Bay (42% of visitors) and Narooma was next (29%). Such a high number of visitors was reflected in the accommodation industry as the following Table shows:

SUPPLY OF TOURIST ACCOMMODATION IN EUROBODALLA SHIRE'S KEY TOURIST CENTRE

Tourist Centre	Tourist Accommodation							
	Hotels		Caravan		Camping		Holiday	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Bateman's Bay	17	38.6	9	31.0	-	0.0	21	41.2
Moruya	2	4.6	4	13.8	1	12.5	-	0.0
Narooma	14	31.8	4	13.8	-	0.0	19	37.2
Balance of Shire	11	25.0	12	41.4	7	87.5	11	21.6
Total	44	100.0	29	100.0	8	100.0	51	100.0

Source: Eurobodalla Coast Visitors Centre (October 1987)

The growing popularity of the Shire with tourists also affected the built environment. Land subdivisions became more common with subdivisions at Mossy Point (from 1927), Tuross Head (from 1928) and Dalmeny (from 1930). There was a pause during the war years but in the late 1950s the trend resumed with large scale resort subdivisions including Malua Bay (1960), Tomakin (1962), Surfside (1963) and Potato Point (1965): in the same period there were further subdivisions at the existing resorts of Tuross Head, Batehaven and Broulee. For the effects of these developments on housing see section 23.

The rapid growth of tourism has also stimulated the development of social and sporting clubs. At Batemans Bay, for example, new premises were created for the Soldiers Club (1960), the Bowling Club (1963), the Catalina Golf Club (1968) and Malua Bay Bowling Club (1979)

## 27. SPORT

In the Nineteenth Century residents of the Shire shared the emerging Australian passion for sport. Football, cycling, tennis, cricket and athletics were favourite pastimes in the Shire. Every town had its picnic races and organised racing came with the formation of the Moruya Jockey Club in the early 1870s. Race meetings, as Gibbney shows, were great social occasions all over the south coast and "the idea of the horseman as hero dies slowly around Moruya."<sup>20</sup> How appropriate, then, that Neil Lavis of Moruya won gold and silver medals at the Rome Olympics on "Mirrabooka" - a street in the town recognises those feats.

## 28. HEALTH

For a large part of the last century, childbirth was assisted by midwives, usually trained in the school of experience: they included Mesdames Nelmes and Lusty. Nursing, too, was carried out by the family and women with special skills but in 1886 a temporary hospital was opened in a cottage at Gundary donated by R.H. Harvison. Moruya Cottage Hospital opened in 1891 in a weatherboard building which cost £529. This lasted until 1954 when a new building was erected: it was modernised in 1972.

*Moruya - The First 150 Years* shows that Miss M. Constable conducted a private maternity hospital in the old Barron Jones Hotel on the corner of Campbell and Hawdon Streets in 1930. A private hospital was conducted by Dr. Birmingham at Narooma early this century.

A hospital of twenty beds was opened at Batemans Bay in 1970 to serve the area between Milton and Mogo.

## 29. WELFARE

Care of the destitute appears to have rested with the various churches before the introduction of social services in the present century.

A resource centre for women, known as a Women's House was opened in 1981 and moved into permanent quarters in the former Club House Hotel in 1988. At Dalmeny in 1983 the Eurobodalla Shire Nursing Home and Village was commenced.

### **30. RELIGION**

Almost the entire population of the area were professing Christians in the last century. A distinctive, if not unique feature of the area, was the predominance of Catholics in the Moruya area and this resulted from the influence of Francis Flanagan (1780-1863), the first settler in the district, whose estate "Shannon View" became an attraction for his Irish Catholic countrymen. Flanagan was a magistrate and able to offer some protection to other Irish settlers who, to begin with, were not destitute famine victims but like the Stantons, Comans and Flanagans, hard-headed farmers or small landed gentry. Such migrants encouraged others to come out from their homeland and by the 1860s the population of Moruya was more than half Catholic compared to about a quarter in the colony generally. This cultural mix had significant effects on the religious, educational and political life of the district.

Churches began to appear in Moruya in the 1850s although most ministers merely visited the area from other more populous bases. Schools, which sometimes doubled as churches, were also constructed in this period: the Presbyterian about 1841: the Catholic in 1847: the Church of England in 1860.

Religious intolerance was a powerful force in the first century after settlement but since World War II it has been dissipated and the various churches tend to work together in pursuit of common goals.

### **31. EDUCATION**

As explained in the religious theme the first schools in the study area were run by the churches and the prospect of public education was regarded with suspicion. However, there were no church schools in the south of the Shire and the first public school was opened at the village of Eurobodalla in 1864 but from then on they proliferated.

The schools, whether church or public, usually did not offer education past the primary level. Secondary public education as it is now understood did not exist in the Shire until Narooma Public became an intermediate high school in 1944. Moruya Public School was raised to an intermediate high school in 1955 and in that year it also prepared students for the Leaving Certificate for the first time. Narooma High School began in 1979.

It is not known when the Catholic School founded in Moruya in 1860 first offered post-primary classes but from 1883 it was conducted in association with the Convent of the Sisters of the Good Samaritan. The sisters of this order opened a boarding school and day high school in 1884 and this continued to offer secondary education until 1964 when the boarding school was also closed. This convent and school was a major institution in the cultural life of the town.

Adult education came to the district via its schools of arts and mechanics institutes which included a minor educational strand in their programmes.

Technical education was not well provided for in the Shire until 1977 when an out-centre of Nowra Technical College opened. It expanded rapidly and developed into the Eurobodalla College of Technical and Further Education, Moruya.

## 32. DEATH

In the absence of cemeteries the first settlers to die were buried on the farms. With the opening of the first church in 1851 burials began to take place in churchyards and cemeteries which existed at many locations in the Shire. Among those listed in *Cemeteries in Australia*, 1994, are six at Batemans Bay, one at Bodalla Estate, ten at Moruya, three at Narooma and five at Nelligen. The oldest of these appears to be the Congo Point Cemetery at Moruya (1837) but not all those listed in the register have been recorded in detail. Moreover, even this extensive list is incomplete as Tilba and Tilba Tilba Cemeteries are not included. The graves of Aborigines are known to the National Parks and Wildlife Service.



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### 33. IMPORTANT PEOPLE

The following names have been extracted from the biographical appendix to H. J. Gibbney, *Eurobodalla History of the Moruya District* and from N. Warry, *Sixteen Women of Early Eurobodalla*. According to Laurelle Pacey, Gibbney and Warry over-emphasise the importance of Moruya and she suggests additions which follow this list.

Anderson, Robert (1831-1905), carpenter

Anderson, Sarah (1871-1950), spinster

Barlow, Reginald H. (1831-1906), author and architect

Beashel, Patrick (1828-1915), farmer

Boot, Edward (1814-1899), surgeon

Bown, Elijah (1830-1926), farmer

Brice, Charles (1841-1914), farmer

Burnell, Henry Clay (1806-1888), farmer

Byrnes, Charles J. (1808-1873), squatter

Campbell, Archibald Montague (fl. 1900-1910), timber worker and poet

Campbell, R.C. (?), teacher

Campbell, Persia (1898-1974), academic

Campbell, William (? -1879), squatter

Caswell, William Stewart (1828-1909), magistrate

Chewying, George (? - 1929), storekeeper

Chewying, Sophie (? - 1929), storekeeper

Clarke, Henry (1822-1907), merchant and member of parliament

Clements, William John (1821-1877), founded *Moruya Examiner*

Colefax, Alice (1874-1942), wife and mother

Colefax, Charles (1845-1920), farmer

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Collett, William Truman (1820-1879), squatter  
Coman, William (1812-1895), farmer  
Constable, Olive, (1876-1939), newspaper editor  
Constable, William (1835-1928), farmer  
Corrigan, Joseph (1831-1916), butcher then farmer  
Couch, William (?-1853), postmaster, poundkeeper and gaoler  
Crapp, Charles (1822-1891), nurseryman  
Deane, Michael (1849-1937), drover  
Delofski, John (1834-?), farmer  
Egan, Patrick (? -1930), farmer  
Emmott, Abraham (1814-1895), storekeeper  
Flanagan, Francis (1780-1863), first settler in district  
Flanagan, William (1771-1863) squatter  
Fletcher, William (? -1866), bushranger  
Fletcher, Moses ( ? ) shipwright  
Flood, John (1823-1909), farmer  
Forster, Thomas (1807-1875), farmer  
Gannon, Timothy Thomas (1788-1868), farmer  
Gee, James (? -1912), blacksmith  
Greig, James (1832-1908), miner and farmer  
Grierson, T.N. (1853-1895), estate manager  
Guy, Francis (? -1910), timber miller and shipbuilder  
Harpur, Charler (1813-1868), gold commissioner, farmer and poet  
Harvison, Robert Henry (1848-1925), newspaper editor  
Hawdon, John (1802-1881), landowner  
Heffernan, Edmund (1808-1894), farmer

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Hunt, Rose Hannah (1881-1967), business woman

Hutchings, Charles Herbert (1855-1933), cheese maker

Hutchings, Louisa (1886- ?), selector

Hutchings, Mary (1836-1898), selector

Jeffers, Robert (1794-1867), farm manager

Jeffrey, Philip (1821-1900), farmer

Jenner, Josphe (1838-1923), farmer

Johnston, Bridget (1859-1939), schoolteacher

Jones, Ann Rees (?), pioneer

Keating, Martin (1847-1928), butcher and publican

Kirby, Edmund (1785-1879), farmer

Ling, Alfred (? -1888), bank officer and teacher

Little, Robert (1832-1925), brickmaker

Lodge, Oliver (? -1872), schoolmaster, also storekeeper and postmaster

Louttit, Joseph (1826-1895), seaman and quarryman

Love, Rev. James Graham (? -1912), Anglican clergyman

Luck, Jacob (1800-1887), farmer

McAlister, John (1812-1863), chief constable

McAuley (or McCawley), Bernard, (fl.1835-1850), publican

McKeon, John (1823-1887), farmer and storekeeper

McIntosh, John (1848-1927), farmer

Maclean, John Leyburn (1794-1873), settler

Maclean, Archibald (1817- ?), shipwright

Malabar, Abraham (1792- ?), seaman and convict

Mallon, John (? -1889), storekeeper and farmer

Manusu, Michael (ft.1851-1870), miner and publican

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Matthews, Ellen (1834-1902), pioneer

Morris, Michael (1841-1922), storekeeper and municipal councillor

Morris, William Turner (1801-1844), squatter

Mort, Thomas Sutcliffe (1816-1878), businessman

Mylott, Eva (1875-1920), opera singer

Mylott, Patrick (1838-1899), farmer and businessman

Nelmes, Ruth (1834-1920), midwife

O'Grady, Miles (? -1866), policeman

Oldrey, William (17? -1851), naval officer and land developer

Pfeiffer, Thomas (? -1907), farmer

Pollock, James (fl.1860-1870), storekeeper

Ross, John (1806-1871), shipmaster and pilot

Ross, Leslie (? -1919), telegraphist and airman

Russell, James (1835-1915), farmer

Ryan, Mary (1870- ?), singer

Shepherd, Edwin Albert Henry (1870-1937), solicitor

Simpson, William Henry (1845-1910), farmer

Solly, Georgy Henry (? -1902), naval rating

Stormon, Michael (1836-1925), farmer

Staunton, Patrick (1797-1854), farmer

Waddell, John (1797-1876), farmer

Waldron, Francis Charles (1808-1847), farmer

Walter, Thomas Edward (1850-1936), carpenter and diarist

Weatherhead, Alexander (1809-1901), farmer and writer

White, Anthony (1809-1924), farmer

Wilcox, William (1830-1904), farmer

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- Matthews, Ellen (1834-1902), pioneer
- Morris, Michael (1841-1922), storekeeper and municipal councillor
- Morris, William Turner (1801-1844), squatter
- Mort, Thomas Sutcliffe (1816-1878), businessman
- Mylott, Eva (1875-1920), opera singer
- Mylott, Patrick (1838-1899), farmer and businessman
- Nelmes, Ruth (1834-1920), midwife
- O'Grady, Miles (? -1866), policeman
- Oldrey, William (17? -1851), naval officer and land developer
- Pfeiffer, Thomas (? -1907), farmer
- Pollock, James (fl.1860-1870), storekeeper
- Ross, John (1806-1871), shipmaster and pilot
- Ross, Leslie (? -1919), telegraphist and airman
- Russell, James (1835-1915), farmer
- Ryan, Mary (1870- ?), singer
- Shepherd, Edwin Albert Henry (1870-1937), solicitor
- Simpson, William Henry (1845-1910), farmer
- Solly, Georgy Henry (? -1902), naval rating
- Stormon, Michael (1836-1925), farmer
- Staunton, Patrick (1797-1845), farmer
- Waddell, John (1797-1876), farmer
- Waldron, Francis Charles (1808-1847), farmer
- Walter, Thomas Edward (1850-1936), carpenter and diarist
- Weatherhead, Alexander (1809-1901), farmer and writer
- White, Anthony (1809-1924), farmer
- Wilcox, William (1830-1904), farmer

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Williams, Ann (1863-1942), traveller and settler

Wintle, Mrs. (1848-1930s), carrier

**Additional names suggested by Laurelle Pacey**

George Mitchell

Harry Mitchell

Carl Mitchell

R.M. Bate

H.J. (Harry ) Bate

S.W. Bate

Jeff Bate

Dame Zara Bate

Professor John McMillan

Daisy and Ted Street (of Streets Ice Cream)

Hyland family

Lynch family

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Notes

- <sup>1</sup> Gibbney, H.J., *Eurobodalla - History of the Moruya District*, Sydney, 1989, p.22.
- <sup>2</sup> *ibid.*, p.170.
- <sup>3</sup> *ibid.*, p.14.
- <sup>4</sup> L Pacey & N. Hoyer, *Tilba Times*, Narooma, 1990, p.2.
- <sup>5</sup> *ibid.*, p.5.
- <sup>6</sup> Deborah Bird Rose, A report on the cultural significance of Mt. Dromedary to Aboriginal people, presented to the Forestry Commission of New South Wales and the N.S.W. National Parks and Wildlife Service, 1990.
- <sup>7</sup> W. Bayley, *Behind Broulee - Central South Coast New South Wales*, Eurobodalla, 1978, p.20.
- <sup>8</sup> Gibbney, p.9.
- <sup>9</sup> Pacey and Hoyer, p.9.
- <sup>10</sup> *ibid.*, p.16.
- <sup>11</sup> *ibid.*, p.13.
- <sup>12</sup> Gibbney, p.172.
- <sup>13</sup> *ibid.*, p.68.
- <sup>14</sup> G.T. Reynolds (Snr.) *The History of the Port of Nelligen, Part I*, Batemans Bay, 1985, p.13.
- <sup>15</sup> *Sydney Morning Herald*, 5 October 1860.
- <sup>16</sup> Pacey and Hoyer, p.33.
- <sup>17</sup> Gibbney, p.40.
- <sup>18</sup> *ibid.*, p.147.
- <sup>19</sup> *ibid.*, p.138.
- <sup>20</sup> *ibid.*, p.71.