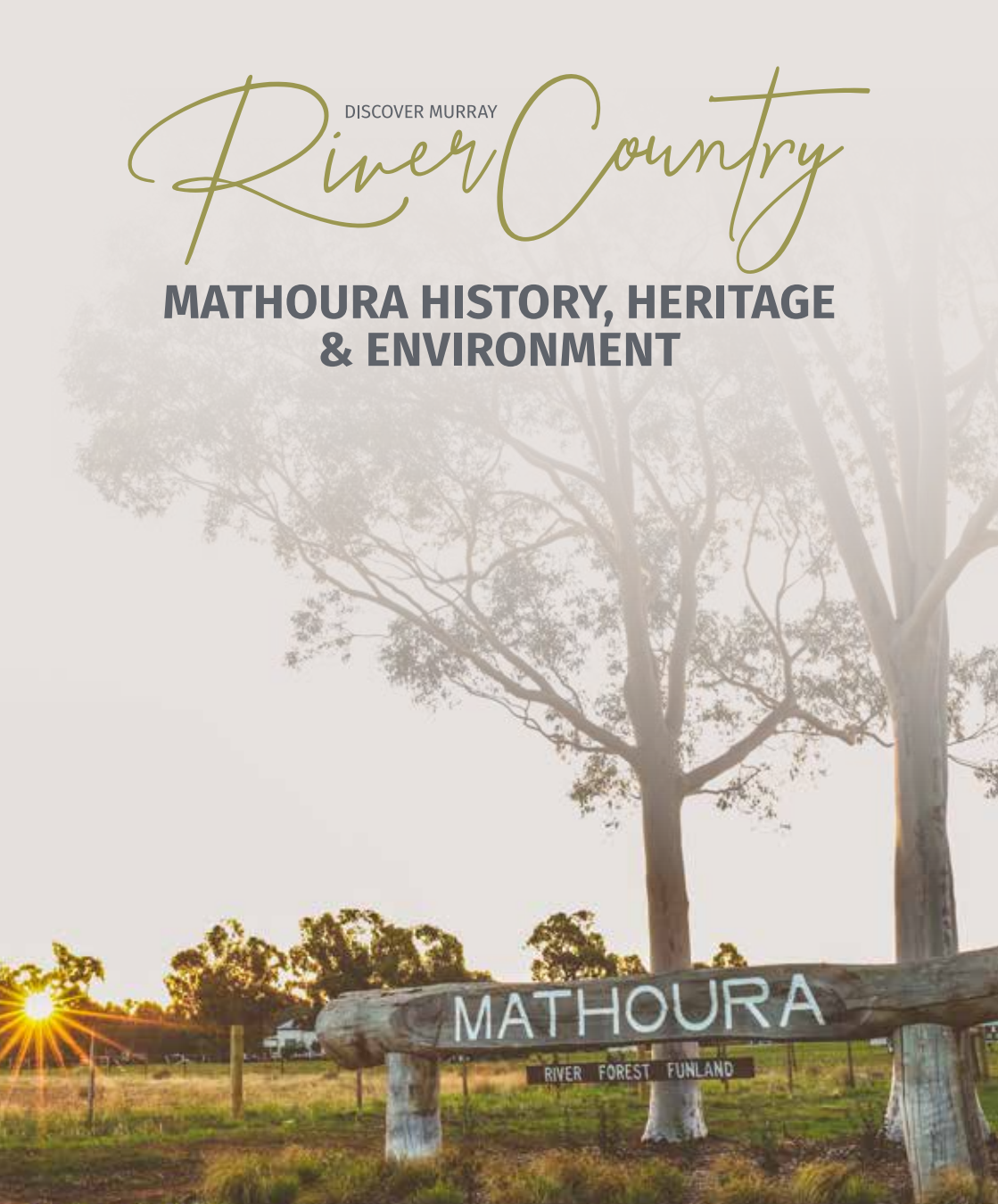


DISCOVER MURRAY

RiverCountry

MATHOURA HISTORY, HERITAGE & ENVIRONMENT



Moama | Barham | Mathoura | Moulamein | Murray Downs | Tooleybuc | Wakool

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Welcome

Mathoura is a spectacular gateway to one of the largest red gum forests in the world. It's an enchanted wonderland for lovers of the Australian bush, the river and the great outdoors.

Read about the township's fascinating history, heritage and environment, written by local historian David Joss.

WHAT'S INSIDE

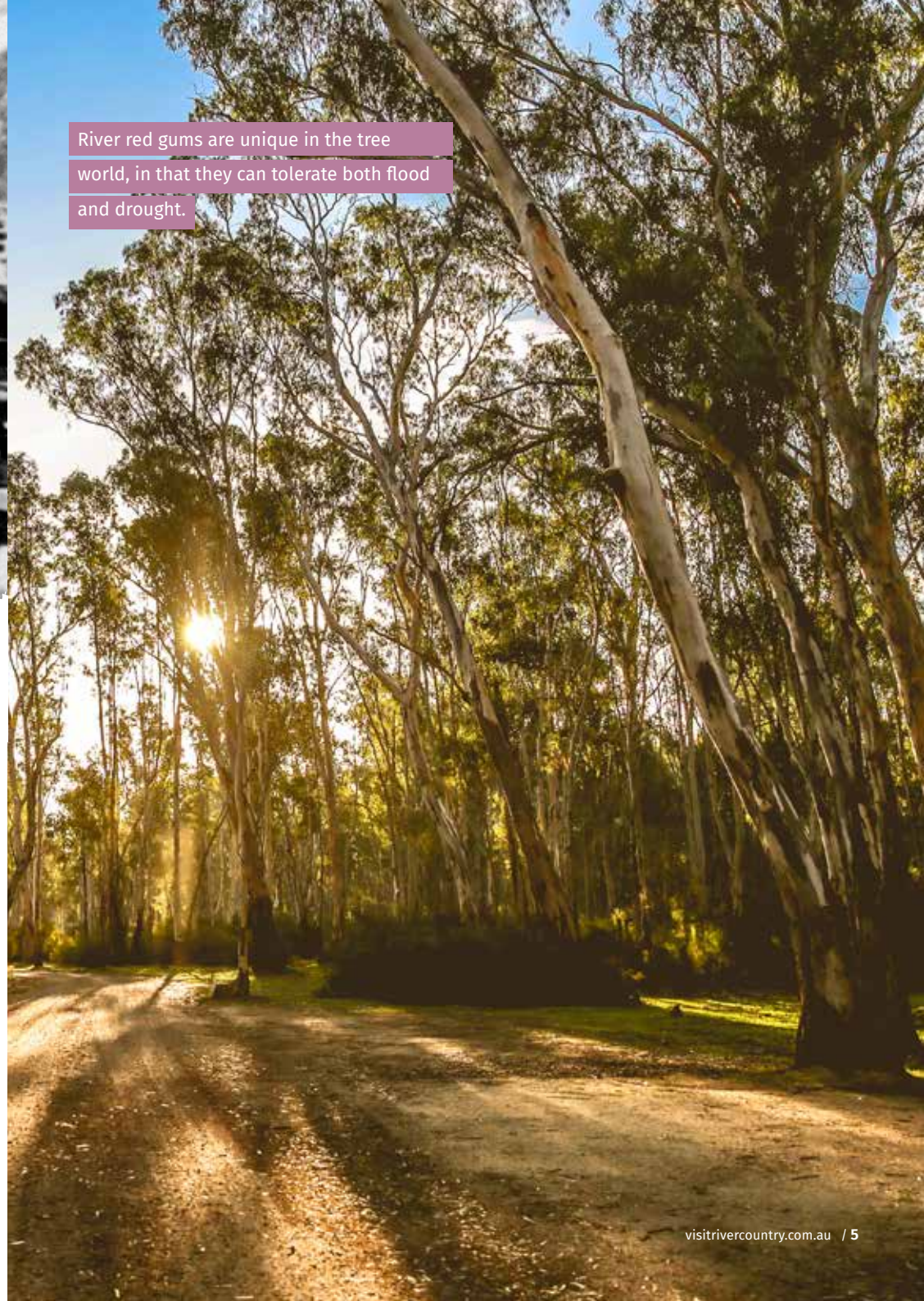
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Researched and written by David Joss for the Mathoura Visitor Information and Business Centre.

Sources: *A History of the Millewa Group of River Red Gum Forests* by Peter Donovan, NSW State Forests; *Galleries of Pink Galahs* published by Shire of Murray; various editions of *Pastoral Times Deniliquin*, *Melbourne Argus*, and *Echuca Riverine Herald*, articles published by Charles Sturt, *Recollections of Squatting in Victoria* by Edward M Curr, *Hotels of Western New South Wales* unpublished manuscript compiled by Peter Mill and Bill Mulham, *Saltbush Country* by John Bushby, Victorian Department of Sustainability and Environment, Victorian Association of Forest Industries, professional forester Vic Eddy, and scientific and government sources.



River red gums are unique in the tree world, in that they can tolerate both flood and drought.



River Red Gum

The Red gum is not an endangered species. River red gum is the most widespread member of the eucalypt family in Australia. It is also the most invasive of eucalypts and the most widely grown in plantations worldwide. However, river red gums are unique in the tree world, in that they can tolerate both flood and drought.

The Barmah-Millewa group of forests is the largest river red gum forest in Australia and the largest ecosystem of its kind in the world. The Cadell Tilt, a block of uplifted land running from near Echuca almost to Deniliquin, is the reason the forest is so large. When the uplift occurred (20,000-30,000 years ago), it blocked the course of the Murray, creating an enormous wetland. Over time the wetland silted-up and drained.

Before the arrival of humans, the Murray River was fringed by woodland that was wiped out by the Indigenous peoples' use of fire. It remained grassland until about 6,000 years ago when the river red gum invaded.

The Indigenous fire regime maintained a generally open woodland of large old trees. This encouraged more game, improving biodiversity. The Indigenous also used fallen timber for their campfires which burned day and night. Keeping the forest floor clean helped reduce the severity of wildfires.



Mathoura Timber Town

In Mathoura there is a spot where history, heritage and habitat come together.

After crossing the bridge, take the dirt road which turns sharply off Picnic Point Road to the left. A few hundred metres along the road you will come to a cattle grid.

Nearby, on the bank of the creek, is an old tree with a large scar. It has a sign identifying it as a canoe tree. Our earliest history involved the Indigenous people who lived in and gained their livelihood from the great red gum forest. Since the forest at that time flooded almost every year, they used bark canoes to get around. The white settlers also found bark canoes useful. One of the earliest settlers, James McLaurin, related in his memoirs that a bark canoe was used to transport a ton of flour from Ulupna (on the Victorian side of the Murray) to Deniliquin during one big flood.

The scars on other trees in the forest may also have been made by someone wanting to make a shield or a coolamon—a bark dish used for carrying items. After inspecting the canoe tree, walk back along the track about 50 metres.

Further into the bush towards the creek are the remains of a tree, scarred and felled by early white

settlers. Four rectangular holes about two metres above the ground show that this tree was felled by timber cutters. The holes were cut to hold the ends of planks on which the axe men stood as they cut into the trunk using a hand-operated crosscut saw. They were high off the ground because there is a flaw in the lower part of the tree which made that section unsuitable for milling. It was hard work and they were not paid danger-money. The men who felled this tree probably worked for the sawmill which was once located near the water treatment plant on the other side of the bridge. That mill gave Mathoura its start as a timber town.

From about 1870, a man named Robert Barbour had several sawmills in the district. He told a court hearing he had sold one of them to William Quiggin, who is known to have operated the mill beside Gulpa Creek. Quiggin in turn sold it to Charles Opitz and the mill is generally remembered as Opitz's Mill.

Although Barbour's main interest was cutting railway sleepers, many of which he exported to India, Quiggin's mill provided timber for almost any purpose. He advertised pickets for sale and was reported in the Pastoral Times to be providing very good weatherboards, all cut from the great red gums which surround this spot.



Nearby, on the bank of the creek, is an old tree with a large scar. It has a sign identifying it as a canoe tree.



Pictured:
Mr Barbour



Mathoura's Timber Heritage

When the first white settlers arrived in the Mathoura district they found a very different landscape to what we see today.

The first visitor was the explorer Charles Sturt. By 1838 he was a grazier with a property near Goulburn, and he wanted to fill in a large gap on the map. Following the Murray from the Albury district, he found the river fringed with open plains intersected with belts of trees. Reaching the place where the Edward flows out of the Murray near Picnic Point, he encountered large reed beds and enough local flooding to convince him to cross to the southern bank of the Murray.

In 1842 Henry Lewes founded Moira Station, south of Mathoura. He said the river flats were 'mostly clear swamp.' This is today's Moira Forest.

Thousands of years of deliberate burning by the Indigenous inhabitants of the region had kept the trees well away from the riverbanks. Within a few years there were squatters all along this section of the river, attracted by the open grasslands and permanent water.

With the Indigenous people no longer firing the land and squatters' stock grazing the flats, conditions were ideal for germination of the red gum seeds and they rapidly expanded into the forests we have today.

In 1859 the Deniliquin *Pastoral Times* recorded the first sawmill at work in the Mathoura district. It was owned by riverboat pioneer Francis Cadell, and was used to cut red gum timber for a boundary fence between the pastoral leases of Mathoura and Moira.

At first there was little regulation, but by 1875 sections of the forests had been reserved and the NSW government appointed the state's first forest ranger, John Manton. It was Manton's job to ensure the timber cutters had permits and paid royalties on all the trees they felled.

In the 1870s, small farms dotted Gulpa Island but their occupants fought a losing battle to keep the land clear of trees. Early in the 20th century most of the private land was incorporated into the forest reserves.

As settlement grew there was an increasing demand for construction timbers and the sawmills produced timber for houses, bridges, fences, wharves and railway sleepers.

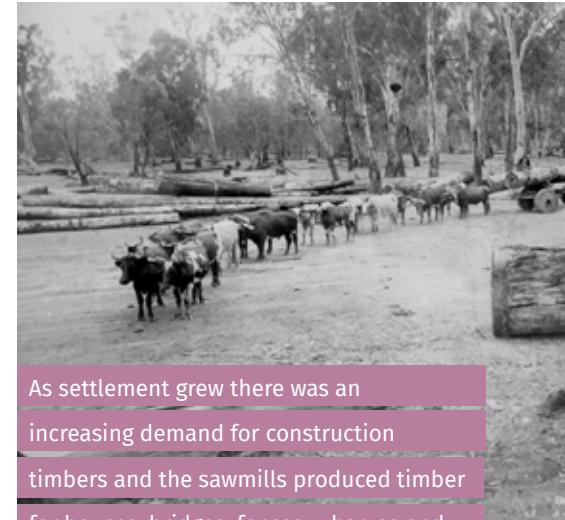
By 1985 the forest managers were able to boast that over the previous 66 years the red gum forests had provided enough timber for 116,000 houses, and sleepers for 8,000 kilometers of railway.

Living in Mathoura today are third and fourth-generation descendants of the early timber workers. Their ancestors provided sawn timber which built homes and vital infrastructure for a growing nation. Today's generation is justly proud of this heritage.

The waste timber, too small for sleepers, provided fuel for the mills and the riverboats. The Deniliquin & Moama Railway Company used it instead of coal to run its trains and to pump water from Gulpa Creek for its locomotives.

As Mathoura grew, a strong bond was forged between town and forest. It was an unwritten rule that, if fire broke out, tradesmen and businessmen

dropped what they were doing and went out to fight the flames, repaying the forest for its bounty. Local sports meetings featured wood chopping events, and when the town's main mill burnt down in 1916, the Douglas brothers—two local merchants—built a new mill to replace it, keeping the town employed.



As settlement grew there was an increasing demand for construction timbers and the sawmills produced timber for houses, bridges, fences, wharves and railway sleepers.





Mathoura's Pubs

From time to time a story surfaces that Mathoura at one time had up to a dozen pubs. The truth is that the town has never had more than five licensed hotels operating at the same time.

The first pub was an unlicensed establishment called Ward's Inn, which is shown on an 1848 map of the region. At the time, it was the only watering hole between the Wanderer Inn at Deniliquin and Maiden's Junction Hotel in Moama, initially catering for the overlanders who had begun bringing stock through the area.

Around 1853, Ward's Inn became the Redbank Inn, its licence held by William Carter who had been farming on part of Mathoura Station since about 1846. Carter set about improving the inn and soon had a vineyard, orchard and market garden established. When the coaches began running from Deniliquin to Melbourne around 1858, the Redbank Inn was an important stop. Horses were changed and meals or refreshments taken.

Carter continued to extend the Redbank, but he overextended his financial resources and by 1865 had become insolvent.

The inn was purchased by Henry Burton, whose circus had become an institution throughout the eastern colonies. The inn continued to operate, but now also became the winter headquarters for the circus.

Burton continued refining the hotel. He built what was called by the Pastoral Times a 'bush bar' to which he banished the town rowdies so that his more refined clientele might better enjoy the comforts of the main building.

However, Burton was declared bankrupt in 1880. He leased out the bush bar to Daniel O'Sullivan and used the main hotel building as his residence until 1883.

By 1868 the Redbank had competition. The Mathoura Hotel was established by Duncan Campbell on the corner of Jones Street and Carter Street. He held the license until 1871.

A third hotel opened in about 1873. The Kangaroo Hotel was built on what is now the Cobb Highway by Mrs Mary Ann Ryan. When Mrs Ryan died in 1898, her daughter Matilda took over. Although there was a succession of licensees, Matilda still owned the building when she was killed in a buggy accident in 1913. By 1913 it was known as Tattersalls Club Hotel. When it burned down in 1914 it was rebuilt on the corner of Lawrence and Livingstone streets, where it continues to trade.

In 1877 a fourth hotel began trading in Mathoura. It was the Railway Station Hotel and, as the name suggests, was part of the new railway station. The first licensee was Henri Menere who seems to have been Henry Burton's manager.

The hotel continued trading until 1925 when its final licensee, John Charleston, built a new hotel across the road and transferred the license there.

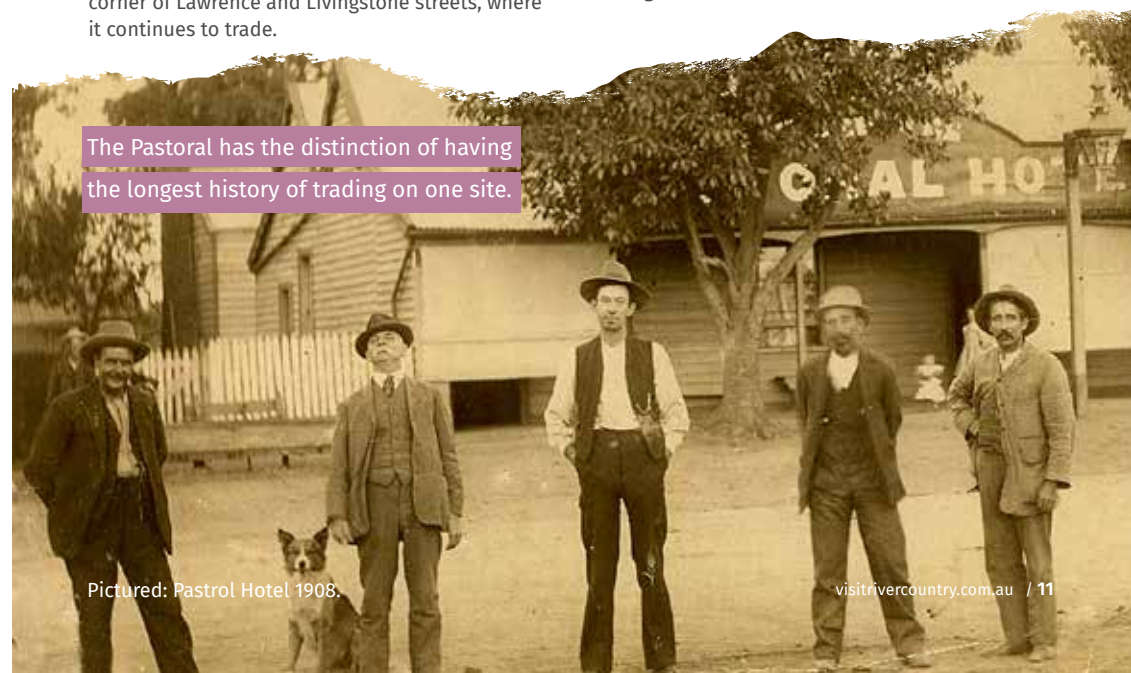
Delicensed following a fire, it became a B&B, trading as Charleston House.

The coming of the railway had a profound influence on Mathoura. The railway station was built some distance from the township, which at that time surrounded the Redbank, the Mathoura and the Kangaroo.

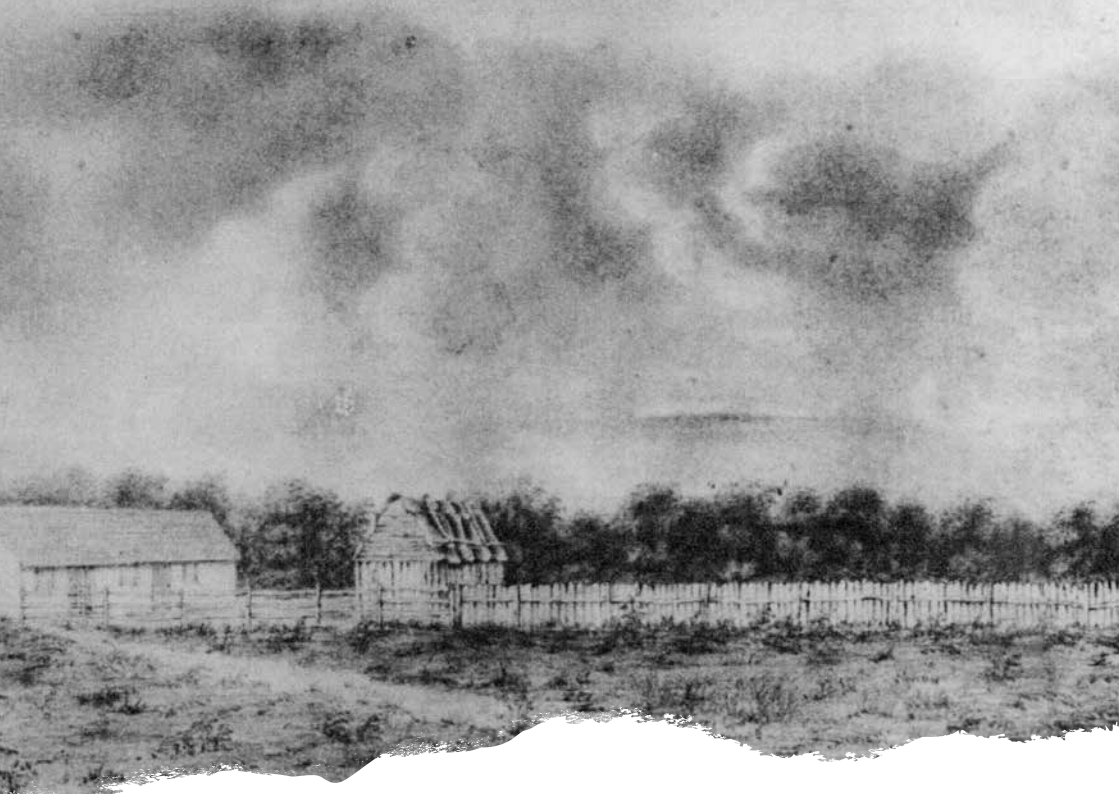
A gentleman named James Willoughby seems to have realised that the town was about to relocate. He opened the London Tavern in Livingstone Street in 1877. When his wife died in 1880, he moved to Deniliquin and it appears his pub was then renamed the Railway Hotel, even though the Railway Station Hotel was just up the street.

Around the turn of the 20th century the Railway was renamed the Pastoral Hotel. The Pastoral has the distinction of having the longest history of trading on one site.

The Pastoral has the distinction of having the longest history of trading on one site.



Pictured: Pastoral Hotel 1908.



Moira Station

Moira Station, about 15 kms south of Mathoura, was the first white settlement in the Mathoura district. It was taken up in 1842 by an Englishman, Henry Sayer Lewes, in partnership with Charles Throsby of Bong Bong, near Mittagong NSW.

He reached Moira on August 15, just as the first flood in many years arrived, writing, 'As the sheep were just beginning to lamb, we were compelled to halt here.'

Most of the following timeline was kindly compiled by former owner, Rex Watson.

- 1842** Multiple attacks on shepherds and stock by Indigenous Australians who naturally resented the intrusion on their traditional lands. A serious attack on September 27 was repelled with gunfire by a sergeant of the Border Police.

- 1843** John Oldbury Atkinson, Moira's overseer for the next 17 years, arrived with more stock.

- 1847** Lewes became a magistrate for the Deniliquin district and was active in public affairs. He improved productivity at his station and built a famous wool press.

- 1848** The boundaries of Moira were defined. The run was estimated to consist of 100,000 acres, carrying 3,000 cattle and 4,000 sheep.

1850 Bushranger Captain Melville committed two robberies before holding up Moira. He forced the cook to prepare a meal and stole some of the station's horses.

1852 Improvements to the property included a board and shingle cottage with detached kitchen, laundry and servants' quarters. 759 acres of land had been purchased surrounding the homestead. Stock numbered 7,000 cattle and 10,000 sheep enclosed by 50 miles of fencing.

1858 The Moira Inn was built. The first licensee, William Clifton, left in 1860 when it was taken over by Hugh Gracey. Although it was a Cobb & Co stopover, it was predominantly used by drovers, so like other inns along the track, it closed when the Deniliquin and Moama Railway commenced operating in 1876.

1860 When Henry Lewes' partner Charles Throsby died, Lewes, an executor of the will, was legally compelled to put the station up for sale and was not allowed to bid for it.

1862 The Hon. John O'Shanassy, a former Premier of Victoria, bought 5,500 cattle at five pounds a head with the leasehold of 148,000 acres given in. An opponent of the NSW land laws, he came into conflict with William Joachim who had selected land on Moira. The highest court of appeal ruled in Joachim's favour.

1866 O'Shanassy built the present 18 room homestead with extensive outbuildings.

1899 The property was sold to F. S. Falkiner & Sons. By this time, closer settlement had reduced its size to 40,485 acres, all of which had been converted to freehold. Falkiners ran an impressive Clydesdale draught horse stud on Moira.

1910 John Clark bought what remained of Moira, the homestead block of 10,200 acres for

six pounds ten shillings an acre, running it as the Moira Pastoral Company. Around the homestead a famous garden was developed.

1935 Moira Station was put up for auction at Scott's Hotel, Melbourne. It then comprised 10,200 acres of freehold and 35,000 acres of leasehold. However it was not sold and remained in the Clark family until the 1960s.

Several owners controlled Moira after the Clark family. The Moira Pastoral Company was purchased in 1971 by Rex Morton. The following year it was bought by Les Wison & Sons, and then by Tony Nigri in 1976. In 1996 it was sold to Mr and Mrs Frank Millar of Echuca and was then bought by Rex Watson, a drilling contractor, in 2003. The present owners are Ray and Leanne Smith, a local farming family with a long history in the dairy industry, who purchased the property in 2020.



Courtesy of Mrs Elizabeth Carroll, great-grand daughter

Henry Sayer Lewes, founder of Moira and first white settler in the Mathoura district.



The McLaurin Family Cemetery

One of the first white men to see the Mathoura district was James McLaurin who, fortunately for us, left a record of his early experiences there. In his memoir he recorded that he first travelled through the Mathoura area in 1840 as part of an overlanding party taking cattle to Adelaide. The party crossed the Edward River, and McLaurin wrote, *'The first time white men had crossed it and camped on the Gulpa Creek near Red Bank'*.

From Red Bank (Mathoura), the party traveled south, picking up the Murray near where Henry Lewes founded Moria Station two years later. In 1845, James and his three brothers, Alexander, Archibald and Robert, returned to the area and took up Gerapna and Cornella stations. These had originally been settled by the Cropper family but had been abandoned following a series of attacks by Indigenous inhabitants of the region.

The McLaurin family arrived in Australia in 1838. James was about 16 years old at the time. After working for a year in the upper Hunter region, he and Alexander signed on with Ephram Howe, who was assembling a large mob of cattle to drive to Adelaide. This was only a year after Joseph Hawdon had made the first overland trek there.

The McLaurin boys continued working for Howe until he became insolvent. One of Howe's scattered properties was Morocco Station, about halfway

between Mathoura and Tocumwal. Howe's empire crashed at about the time the Cropper family walked off Cornella. James wasted no time applying for the lease. After hearing the Croppers had left, James wrote, *'I then applied for the runs to Commissioner Bingham, and after some months, by paying 10 pounds got the licence. Bingham held a court at Hennessys on the Murray before we could take possession and Philips and Graves were allowed to take possession of Warbreccan on the same day, they being the first to take it up.'*

The Indigenous people continued to take stock from the McLaurins until about 1848, but never on the scale of the Cropper's losses. In 1848, two McLaurin brothers, Archibald and Alexander, left Cornella and operated a hotel at Seymour for several years, but eventually returned to the family property. The following year James and his brother Robert took a large mob of cattle to Melbourne, reaching their destination in little over a week. Their stock topped the market with the highest prices seen in years.

In 1853 James married, but his wife Ann died the following year. She was just 21 and is believed to have been the first person buried in the McLaurin family cemetery. The cemetery is close to where the family built their first homestead. In 1855 James began building a flour mill at Albury and was in Tumut when his mother died suddenly in 1856. At about the same time, his father suffered a fall from a horse while rounding up cattle. He broke his hip but lived to celebrate his 84th birthday. In 1855 the family bought Morocco Station to the north, east of Cornella and Derulamein. Five years later James moved to the Albury area where he remained for many years.

One of the first white men to see the Mathoura district was James McLaurin.





Arthur Mattingley, Mathoura and a Millinery War

In December 1906 a man named Arthur Mattingley paid a return visit to Mathoura.

Mattingley was a keen photographer, the secretary of the Australasian Ornithologists' Union and a very competent cameraman, described in *The Australian Dictionary of Biography* as 'a pioneer of Australian bird photography'.

He had been to Mathoura for a ten day trip in November, camping out in the wetlands taking many photos of the water birds, primarily egrets. However the baby egrets were not yet hatched and Mattingley decided to return because he wanted a picture of an egret feeding its young.

He got that and more. The photos that he took on that second trip shocked Australia and had considerable influence around the world.

Egrets are amongst the world's most beautiful water birds. During the breeding season, adult egrets grow long, gauzy plumes on their backs which, at the turn of the 20th century, were in great demand as decorations for ladies' hats.

The early 1900s were also a time of growing awareness of conservation issues, with the introduction of national parks. People like Mattingley were beginning to understand ecology and to question the morality of shooting for sport.

On his previous visit, Mattingley and a companion had camped near a major egret hatchery in the St Helena swamp bordering the Edward River. He lost no time heading back to it, but as he approached:

'...we could see some large patches of white, either floating in the air or reclining on the fallen trees in the vicinity of the egrets' rookery... There, strewn on the floating water-weed... were at least 50 carcasses of large white and smaller plumed egrets... the birds having been shot off their nests containing young... Plundered for their plumes. What a monument of human callousness!'

The savage destruction of birds for fashionable hats turned the bird fancier into a raging crusader. Mattingley had enlargements of his pictures displayed in Melbourne shop windows. He wrote an article denouncing the plume trade. It was published in *The Emu*—in those days the Australian birdwatchers' bible—and later picked up by most of the nation's major newspapers.

'The photographs which finally sealed the fate of the plume-traders were taken by A. H. E. Mattingley.'



In the following year, Mattingley and a delegation of prominent ornithologists met with Australian Prime Minister, Alfred Deakin. He doubted he could stop the trade through legislation, but immediately appealed to Australian women to 'save the lives of thousands of innocent birds' by refusing to buy feathered hats.

By 1909, Mattingley's crusade had gone international. Photographs which he supplied to the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) in London were reproduced in the society's quarterly magazine *Bird Notes and News*.

London was the centre of the international plume trade and the RSPB had been trying to shut down the trade in rare bird feathers for several years. But the industry had always countered the society's claims, denying that birds were being shot.

Now, for the first time, there was photographic evidence and the society used the images at every opportunity. They organised displays and had booklets printed in several languages for distribution throughout Europe. Thirty thousand German women were said to have signed a pledge to never again wear the feathers of egrets or birds of paradise.

Gradually the campaign took effect. Laws banning the importation of feathers were passed.

So effective had Mattingley's Mathoura photos been that in 1946, a north Queensland newspaper noted, *'The photographs which finally sealed the fate of the plume-traders were taken by A. H. E. Mattingley and published widely in Australia and abroad.'*



The Deniliquin & Moama Railway Company

When paddle steamers first reached Echuca in 1853, they travelled up from South Australia with the intention of delivering goods from that state to the Echuca region and taking back wool from the Riverina sheep stations.

The Victorian Government reacted by building a railway line—which was already being constructed to the Castlemaine and Bendigo goldfields—to the Murray.

It reached the river port in 1863, however for the people of Deniliquin it was nothing more than a tantalising glimpse of a new technology. They were serviced by Cobb & Co coach, and the fare cost more to get to Echuca than the rail fare to Melbourne. The journey also took longer. They began lobbying for a rail connection to either Sydney or Melbourne.

By 1866, the recently-formed Murray and Darling River Railway Association petitioned for a light railway between Deniliquin and Moama. It was given the green light by a select committee of the New South Wales parliament, but according to the *Pastoral Times* was rejected in the Legislative Assembly 'by an overwhelming majority'. More

lobbying followed. Freight charges were crippling the local economy. Just before the railway arrived, the cost of sending a ton of goods from Echuca to Deniliquin was quoted at between £5 and £6, more than double the cost of bringing the same goods from London to Melbourne.

Persistence eventually paid off with the governments of both Victoria and New South Wales agreeing to allow private enterprises to develop a line. And so was born the D & M Railway (for Deniliquin and Moama but affectionately known as the 'Dad and Mum'). Work on the line commenced late in 1875.

In January 1876 the *Pastoral Times* reprinted the following report from Echuca's newspaper, the *Riverine Herald*.

'The Government engine to be used for the ballasting in the laying of the Deniliquin and Moama line of railway is now at work... Since its temporary consignment to the new company it has been utilised to the fullest extent... Its services will greatly facilitate progress and materially lighten the labour of the men employed on the line... The line, it is now anticipated, will be opened about June next.'

The venture struck trouble again when, with the line almost completed, procrastination by both state governments meant that the promised iron

bridge over the Murray at Echuca was not ready. The D & M built its own bridge, a timber structure erected in a few months with the company's own money to get the trains across the river.

When the line opened in 1876, the trains were greeted with cheering crowds and great partying.

The boilers of the locomotives were fired, not with coal, but with the abundant local red gum firewood. Large stacks of fuel are visible in early photographs at not only the water tower (which still stands near the site of the now-vanished railway station) but also at the Gulpa Creek pumping station. Mathoura, as the central point on the line, became important as a refueling stop for the trains which ran twice daily in each direction.

Under the agreement negotiated with the state governments, the D & M—which had remained profitable for almost 50 years—was taken over by the Victorian Railways in 1923. Today the line carries most of the processed rice from the Deniliquin mill and a good deal of the region's other grain products with an occasional train stopping at Mathoura to pick up cereal grains.

When the line opened in 1876, the trains were greeted with cheering crowds and great partying.





The Cadell Fault

At some time in the last 60,000 years a minor bump in the earth's crust had a major effect on the Murray River and a couple of associated streams. It is claimed to be one of the world's most spectacular examples of seismic activity altering the course of a river.

Scientists are still working to explain exactly what happened and when, but recent research suggests that several large earthquakes pushed up the land between where Echuca Moama and Deniliquin now stand, damming what was then a very mighty Murray.

Until about 45,000 years ago, the Murray flowed westward through the area where Mathoura now stands. It is thought by some scientists that the uplifting of what we call the Cadell Tilt had begun some 20,000 years before this, but when the large block was suddenly thrust up, the river had nowhere to go.

The weir held back both the Murray and the Goulburn rivers, initially flooding two huge areas. Eventually the Murray turned north, with most of its water flowing through what we now call the Edward while still filling the northern lake and building silt jetties across it towards Barmah. The

Goulburn however, continued for some time to fill Lake Kanyapella which covered an area from south of Moira to the other side, where Echuca now stands.

The landscape then was quite different to what we see today. There were no great forests, and there were no river red gum trees at all. Pollen from soil tests shows that red gums invaded the area as recently as 6,000 years ago. At around this time the river banks were mostly open woodland and grassy plains, although the higher ground west of the uplift was arid.

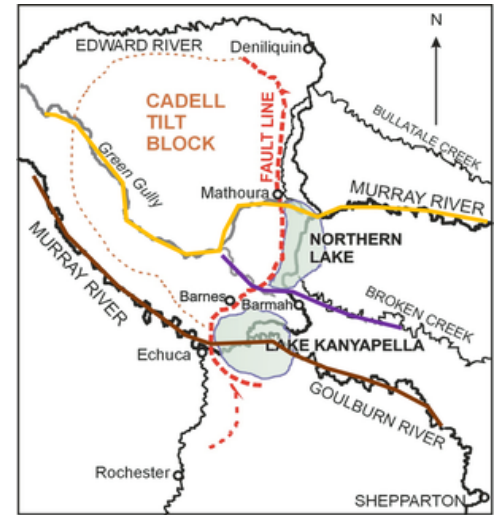
Until the end of the last ice age—about 20,000 years ago—glaciers covered the ranges near Mt Kosciuszko, contributing a steady stream of meltwater which fed the Murray for most of the year.

Once the Edward River was established, the northern lake began to drain, becoming a series of wetlands and swamps. However, the annual spring snowmelt continued to flood the area. Most trees would not have survived these lengthy inundations but Moira grass—a semi-aquatic perennial grass—flourished.

In more recent times, well after the arrival of the Indigenous Australians, the Murray established a new course southwards, joining the Goulburn which by then flowed through the present site of Echuca Moama. Lake Kanyapella had been drained by then.

Local Indigenous legend says that the Indigenous pioneers helped the river break through by digging through a sandhill. This may well have happened during a massive flood event. The 1870 flood was the largest ever recorded at Echuca but at that time the Indigenous people spoke of even bigger ones in the past.

Scientific testing by Dr Tim Stone on the section of river bank between Picnic Point near Mathoura and the Victorian town of Barmah has shown that the channel is only about 550 years old. The river here has straight-sided banks, whereas older sections show the normal sloping sides of a mature stream. A squatter, Edward Curr, was the first to document the appearance of the streambank at this point, remarking that its appearance was unusual for Australian rivers.



In the last 60,000 years a minor bump in the earth's crust had a major effect on the Murray River.



The Drover and Horse Sculpture

The sculpture outside the Mathoura Visitor Information Centre is one of 11 that tells the stories, tales and history of the Long Paddock Touring Route which follows the Cobb Highway from Moama to Wilcannia.

This sculpture, depicting a stockman trying to get his horse out of a swamp, was inspired by the stories of the difficulties confronting drovers as they brought large mobs of sheep and cattle through this area. The wetlands in the forest east of Mathoura were notoriously difficult to cross, particularly when the Murray River was in flood.

When the explorer Charles Sturt brought a mob of cattle down the Murray travelling to Adelaide in 1838 he reached the Edward River, but local Indigenous people indicated through sign language that he would not be able to travel any further because of floodwaters. After one of his stockmen found extensive flooding with swamps and creeks full of fallen timber to the north of the Edward, he crossed the Murray to what is now Victoria to continue his journey.

Sturt described the area occupied by the Barmah-Millewa Forest as 'a vast marsh' covered in tall rushes and very few trees.

In 1842, the first white settler in the area, Moira Station founder Henry Lewes, spent more than two weeks getting his stock across the flooded Edward River and Gulpa Creek to Moira; a distance of less than 20 kilometres.

Several stockmen are believed to have drowned in this area.

One has been identified as 40 year old Leith Mackenzie from the upper Murray. He drowned in 1864 while attempting to cross Gulpa Creek only a few hundred metres from where the sculpture is located. In 1875 Gulpa Creek also claimed the life of Johnson Grenfell of Clunes, Victoria. Another stockman who drowned on his way home from one of the local hotels, is remembered by Deadman's Creek on Picnic Point Road.

The artist, Corey Thomas, has sculptures displayed in Melbourne, Sydney, Coffs Harbour and Port Augusta. He is also represented in a number of private collections.

The Long Paddock sculptures are fast becoming an iconic stop on the Australian tourism bucket list.

The sculptures are not only a great photo opportunity, they reflect the heart and soul of these small rural communities. For more information on the Long Paddock Touring Route check out: www.longpaddock.com.au

The Long Paddock sculptures are fast becoming an iconic stop on the Australian tourism bucket list.



Mathoura Timber Heritage Walk,
Picnic Point

Timber Heritage Walk




Timber Heritage
MATHOURA

Mathoura is a beautiful town
with a rich timber heritage.
The timber heritage walk
takes you through the
timber industry's history
and the town's development
from the 1850s to the
1950s.

The timber heritage walk
is a self-guided tour
through the town's
timber heritage sites.
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